



NEW HISTORY
of the
NEW TESTAMENT,
of our
LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.
from his Birth
TO THE
Establishment of Christianity.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

With Answers to most of the controverted Questions,
Dissertations upon the most remarkable Passages,
and a Connection of Profane History all along.
To which are added, Notes, explaining difficult Texts,
rectifying Mis-translations, and reconciling seeming
Contradictions.

The whole illustrated with proper MAPS.

By the Rev.^d Thomas Stackhouse, A.M.
Late Vicar of Beenham in Berkshire

EDINBURGH.

Printed by SANDS, MURRAY, and COCHRAN,

For
James Neaves Bookseller in Kilmarnock.

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A
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
N E W T E S T A M E N T
Of our Lord and Saviour
J E S U S C H R I S T,
From his B I R T H,
T O T H E
E s t a b l i s h m e n t o f C H R I S T I A N I T Y.

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V O L. I.

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M D C C L X V.

T H E A P P A R A T U S T O T H E H I S T O R Y O F T H E N E W T E S T A M E N T.

BEFORE we enter upon an examination of matters relating to the Christian revelation, it may not be improper to inquire a little, how the dispensation of Moses, which certainly was sent from God, and confirmed by miracles, came to be superseded by this latter institution of Christ ; since this is one of the greatest prejudices which the Jews have conceived, and have reason, as they think, to urge against the divine authority of our religion, that has obtruded itself upon the world, and unjustly taken place of theirs, which, according to the divine ordination, (as they maintain), was to endure for ever.

“ (a) *An everlasting covenant*, and a (b) *statute*, or (c) *An objection, viz. ordinance for ever*, are so common appellations, say they, That the law of Moses is immutable.
 “ of our law, and the several branches of it, that we cannot but think, had God at any time intended a repeal, he would have given us previous notice of it, and signified his will to that purpose, in some express texts of scripture : But since, in the whole compass of our sacred books, we meet with no such thing, but, on the contrary, very frequent declarations of the perpetual and immutable obligation of the dispensation we are under, we account ourselves safe in adhering to Moses, and cannot but look upon Jesus as one of those false pro-

(a) Gen. xvii. 7. (b) Levit. xxiii. 14. (c) Exod. xii. 14.
 A 2 “ phets,

“ phets, (d) *who would thrust us out of the way, which the Lord our God has commanded us to walk in.* (e) *God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? And therefore (f) to suppose, that he has retracted his former, and substituted a new, revelation, is to argue him guilty, either of such levity in the new, or such weakness in the old establishment, as cannot, without the greatest degree of ignorance or impiety, be imputed to an all-wise, and consequently an unchangeable being.*”

Answered,
by shewing
the differ-
ent kinds of
the Jewish
law.

Now, in order to satisfy this objection, (g) we must observe, that the laws given to the Jews were of several kinds, *viz.* moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The moral, which considered them as men, contained their duty to God, their neighbour, and themselves: The ceremonial, which considered them as a church, regarded their purifications, their sacrifices, and other rites of religious worship; and the judicial, which considered them as a commonwealth, had respect to their conduct, and different conditions in life; to damages, punishments, and other civil matters. * Now, in relation to each of these we assert,—That the moral precepts of their law are so far from being repealed, that they are enforced, and exalted by the Christian rule of

(d) Deut. xiii. 5. (e) Numb. xxiii. 19. (f) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures. (g) Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3. c. 1.

* I lay no great stress on what may be observed of the different manners of delivering the three laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, but only let it be an occasion to suggest to us a right notion concerning the different nature of them. The ten commandments or moral law, was delivered on the top of the mount, and, in the face of the whole world, as it were, to signify, that it was of universal influence, and obliged all mankind: But the ceremonial was received by Moses in private, in the tabernacle; which may suggest to us, that it was of a peculiar concern, that belonged to the Jews only, and was to cease, when the tabernacle was down, and when the veil of the temple was rent: And as to the judicial law, it was neither so publicly and audibly given as the moral law, nor yet so privately as the ceremonial; thereby to intimate, that this kind of law is of an indifferent nature, and either may be observed or not observed, according as its rules suit with the place and government under which we live; *Edwards's Survey of Religion, part 2. c. 14.*

manners;

manners; that the ceremonial, which were never prescribed as matters of intrinsic goodness, but only as figures of things then to come, which, since their institution are come, were not so properly cast off as worn out; and that the judicial, which were peculiar to their country and nation only, after the dissolution of their state and government, ceased of course; and that God consequently, in this whole affair, can be chargeable with no variableness nor shadow of turning.

Whether our Blessed Saviour made any material addition to the moral law, as delivered by Moses; whether the rules he left us for governing (*h*) our passions, for suppressing (*i*) the first motions of unclean desires, for (*k*) forgiving injuries, and for enlarging the object (*l*) of our charity, by loving even strangers, even enemies, and doing good to all mankind; whether the commands so often repeated of forsaking all, and laying down our very lives for the sake of the truth, together with a restraint from such liberties, as were allowed by the Jews, in regard to polygamy and divorce; whether these, and some other precepts of the like nature, are not entirely new and peculiar to the gospel, or deduceable all (as the Jews contend) from the general command of *loving God with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves*, we shall not stay here to determine. This, we imagine, all will allow; that the excellence of a law, considered as a law, does not only consist in the subject-matter of the duties enjoined by it, but, proportionably, in all those other qualifications which contribute to the attainment of its proper end. Now, since the end of every law is the regulation of manners, by promoting the practice of the virtues which it requires, and suppressing the vices which it prohibits, it must necessarily follow, that every law must be more or less perfect, according as the plainness or obscurity of its precepts, or the weight or weakness of its sanctions appear to be.

(*m*) Since then the moral law, under the gospel-state, has explained mens duty more fully; and (if not extended it farther) expressed it in its just and utmost extent; since it has cut off all evasions from pretended ignorance, in many degrees of goodness and cases of great importance,

(*h*) Matth. v. 22. (*i*) Ibid. ver. 28. 29. 30. (*k*) Ibid. ver. 39. 42. (*l*) Ibid. ver. 44.; and Luke x 29. 37.
(*m*) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.

which

which neither the common people, nor even the teachers of the Jews held themselves obliged to before; since it engages our utmost diligence by express promises of eternal life, for which the law did no where positively covenant, but only for prosperity, and health, and the promised land; since it restrains the sinner by threatenings of certain and eternal vengeance, whereas the law denounced only temporal sufferings, affliction, and captivity, diseases, and bodily death; since the gospel-dispensation, I say, is an over-balance for all we can do or endure to attain it, and the gospel-penalty such, as no pleasure, or present profit, can make us amend for incurring; whereas the law (supposing it requires all that the gospel requires) does not propose a valuable consideration for the duties it enjoins, it cannot, I think, be denied but that the moral part of religion is exalted by the doctrine of JESUS CHRIST; and that, either by adding to the matter of it, or, at least, by adding to the clearness and strength, the efficacy and obligation of it, our Saviour hath left it a more perfect rule and motive to obedience, than he found it at his coming.

That God
all along
expressed a
contempt
for the ri-
tual law,

Long before his coming indeed, God, by the mouth of his prophets, had expressed a contempt of all ritual services, if they were not attended with moral virtue; that he *(n)* desired mercy, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God, more than burnt-offerings; that he was not pleased *(o)* with thousands of rams, nor ten thousand of rivers of oil; that *(p)* incense was an abomination to him, the new moons and Sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, he could not away with; and therefore he says, *(q)* I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices; but these things I commanded them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people. Now, it is certain, that at this time these things were part of divine worship, and that, on the very day when the Israelites departed out of Egypt, God instituted the Paschal sacrifice; and therefore we cannot imagine what should be the reason of his rejecting them, unless they were such *precepts* (as he tells them) *(r)* that were not good, i. e. had no intrinsic goodness in them, and judgments whereby they

(n) Hosea vi. 6.
(q) Jer. vii. 22. 23.

(o) Micah vi. 7.
(r) Ezek. xx. 25.

(p) Isaiah i. 13.

should

should not live ; designed indeed for types of some things future, but never to be of perpetual and unalterable continuance in religion.

And indeed, if we look into the nature of sacrifices in which was particular, we shall scarce be able to give a sufficient reason why, in the first ages of the world, and immediately after the fall, beasts should be slain in the worship of God, before they were used in food ; why God should accept the blood of any creature, or be pleased with taking away the life which he had given it ; or why a peculiar efficacy, towards the expiation of sin, should be supposed to reside in the blood, more than any other part, unless it had been upon account of the blood of Christ, which was typically prefigured by the blood of beasts. Unless, I say, we are prepossessed of this truth, that the sacrifices of the ancient law were prefigurative of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, (s) we can look upon the tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem as no better than so many slaughter-houses ; and the blood, and fat, and continual burning of flesh, would be a means to incite our disgust rather than our devotion. Such sacrifices as these (as the apostle justly argues) (t) *could never be able to make him, that did the service, perfect, as pertaining to the conscience* ; and therefore he concludes, that *the tabernacle was a figure for the time then present*, and that the ritual services then imposed were limited to a certain period, which he calls the *times of reformation* ; i. e. they were to endure only so long as till matters could conveniently be ordered better, and the condition of things would allow a more spiritual worship to be established in their stead.

Pursuant (u) to this, the opinion of some considerable Jewish writers is, that God would give a new law by the hand of the Messiah ; that the ceremonial should last no longer than his advent ; that then it should be lawful for them to eat swine's flesh ; and *that, in time to come, all oblations should cease, except the sacrifice of praise* : And therefore we may justly wonder, how they came to overlook that plain prediction of the prophet Jeremiah, (x) *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah* :

(s) Lamy's Introduction. (t) Heb. ix. 9. 10. (u) Kidder's Demonstration, part 3. c. 1. (x) Chap. xxxi. 31. &c.

Not according to the covenant, which I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; but this shall be the covenant, that I will make with them, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: From whence the (y) apostle infers, that the mention of a new covenant implies the first to be old, and liable to the fate of every thing that is so, which is, to be decaying, and ready to disappear.

and to be
repealed
upon the
coming in
of the Gen-
tiles.

Nothing, I think, can be plainer in Scripture, than the calling of the Gentiles into the bosom of God's church, when, according to the sacred phrase, (z) *his mountain shall be established in the top of the mountains, and all nations should flow thither; and when (a) pure incense should be offered in every place, and his name become great among the Heathens, from the rising of the sun, until the going-down of the same.* But now, how could this possibly come to pass, so long as the Levitical law subsisted? It was impossible for the Gentiles to come, three times every year, from the utmost parts of the world to Jerusalem, as the Jews were required to do; nor could there be any sense in their celebrating the Passover, and other festivals, in remembrance of a deliverance from Egypt, and other momentous events, when neither they nor their ancestors had any concern in them. These were the things which distinguished Israel, as God's peculiar, and this was (b) the partition-wall, which was to be broken down, whenever the prophecies, which declared that the Jew and Gentile should both be made one, should receive their accomplishment.

The truth is, (c) the judicial and ceremonial laws of Moses are like the municipal laws of any particular city, which are no longer in force, when once the prince or lawgiver has declared his intention to govern all his subjects, in all parts of his dominions, by one and the same law: And that the destruction of the city and temple of the Jews, and the miserable dispersion of that people, (which made it impossible for them to perform the precepts that were required of them), was to all intents

(y) Heb. viii. 8. 13. (z) Isaiah ii. 2. (a) Mal. i. 11.

(b) Eph. ii. 14. 15. (c) Kidder's Demonstration, part 3. c. 1.

and purposes, such a declaration, no one can doubt, who considers, that the providence of God, in such cases, is the interpreter of his written word, and that he cannot more plainly signify the repeal of any precept, and the release of all obligation to it, than by rendering the discharge of it absolutely impracticable.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that God gave the Jews plain and sufficient warning, before he made any change in the institution of Moses; that, in making this change, he acted the part of a wise prince, who accommodates his laws to the circumstances of his subjects; that, in the moral law he made no alteration, only the addition of stronger sanctions; that the ceremonial law he quite (*d*) *disannulled, because of the weakness, and unprofitableness thereof*; that the political law of course expired, after the destruction of the Jewish state and polity: and that therefore, when any laws of these latter sort are said to be appointed for ever, (*e*) the phrase *for ever* must imply (*f*) (as it often does) no more, than a periodical duration*, limited according to the nature of the thing, and the will of the law-giver.

(*d*) Heb. vii. 18. (*e*) Cave's Apparatus to the lives of the Apostles. (*f*) Vid. Lev. iii. 17.—xvi 31.—xxiii. 14.—xxiv. 3. Numb. x. 8.—xv. 15.—xviii. 8. &c.

* It is certain, and confessed among the Jews, that the word *Olam*, which we render by *ever*, does not always signify *eternity*, but a limited and determinate time. Thus much Joseph Albo confesses, and produces several instances for the proof it. To this purpose it is said of the servant, that he should serve *his master for ever*, Exod. xxi. 6. *i. e.* to the jubilee, because the year of jubilee was the utmost extent of that servitude. In like manner, Hannah says of her son Samuel, that he should appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever, 1 Sam. i. 22.; which yet can be meant of no longer a time, than that of his natural life, or that part of his life only in which he was capable of ministering legally. And so again, the doors of the temple are said to be everlasting, Psal. xxiv. 7. 9. *i. e.* the temple itself, and its gates were fixed and permanent, in comparison of the tabernacle, which was removed from place to place, and were indeed a fabric that was to last a long time; and therefore from this expression, the eternal obligation of the Levitical laws can by no means be inferred; on the contrary, all that is meant by it, is, that they should continue no longer than the Jewish state and polity did continue, as our learned Kidder, in his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, part 3, has abundantly shewn.

Without
any reflection upon
God.

(g) The Jews indeed are strictly required, not to add to the word which God commanded them, nor to diminish aught from it; but, though they were forbidden to do this, yet God himself was not bound by the prohibition. Their law stood upon divine authority, and was revealed by God; but it does not therefore follow, that the same authority which set it up, could not take it away. He nowhere tells us that this was his last revelation, or that he intended that we should take it as such; on the contrary, he expressly declares, that he would (h) make a new covenant, and that not according to the covenant which he had formerly made; and therefore, as it is no disparagement either to the goodness or wisdom, or immutability of God, to say, that the heavens and the earth, which he hath now framed, shall, at a certain time, (i) be dissolved, (k) and pass away, and in their place a new heaven, and a new earth, much more beautiful and glorious, succeed; so it reflects no dishonour upon him, to bring in a new covenant (l), established upon better promises, and, by the means of that, to vacate his former institutions.

An objection.

“But if the evangelical covenant was, in this respect, so much superior to the legal, why did not God communicate to mankind so great a favour sooner? Why was the Heathen world left in darkness so long? But, more especially God’s peculiar people, why were they kept under the beggarly elements of the law, when such a perfect and glorious dispensation lay all this while dormant in the bosom of Almighty God?”

Answered,
by shewing,
that there
was always
a covenant
between
God and
man,

Now, in answer to these questions, it might be sufficient to say, that so it pleased God to act, whose wisdom is infinite, and (m) whose glory it is (according to the thoughts of the wise man) to conceal the causes and reasons of his actions from mankind. But in calling Christ *the mediator of the New Testament*, (n) and *the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world*, he has vouchsafed to assign a reason for his delaying the gospel-dispensation so long. For this intimates to us, that there was all along, a covenant between Christ and his heavenly father, concerning the redemption of mankind; that, upon the foreknowledge of their transgression, Christ undertook to be their mediator, and engaged, as their proxy, to come down upon earth, to

(g) Kidder’s Demonstration, part 2. c. 1. (h) Jer. xxxi. 31.
(i) 2 Pet. iii. 12. (k) Rev. xxi. 1. (l) Heb. viii. 6. (m)
Prov. xxv. 2. (n) Heb. ix. 15. Rev. xiii. 8.

assume

assume human nature, to fulfil the law which they should violate, and to satisfy God's justice, by offering his blood a sacrifice for their sins; that, until the time should come for Christ to execute this engagement, all these things should be looked upon as actually done, his humiliation effected, his blood shed, God's justice satisfied, and man in a state of reconciliation with him; consequently, that there was a Saviour of the world, even before the world began, a constant mediator between God and man, a standing propitiation for sin, and a daily intercessor at God's right-hand, whose merits were available, and righteousness imputable, to all the race of Adam, though they, in their several generations, might not have the happiness to know it. And if this (as it seems to be) is the import of the words, then will it follow, that Christianity, in this sense, was as old as the creation; that mankind, in the earliest ages of the world, were under the same dispensation in effect, that we are now; had the same admission to the throne of grace; the same assistance (though not in degree) to live virtuously; and, (o) *if any man sinned, the same advocate with the father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the eternal propitiation for sin*: And the only difference is, (p) that what was originally engaged for, is since actually fulfilled; and the blessings, which they had, but were not acquainted with, God, in his good time, has declared unto us by an express revelation. But all this while they were under the same covenant, and (upon a proper use of the means afforded them) in the same state of salvation with us: For (q) *in every age, and every nation, he that feared God, and worked righteousness, was accepted with him*; and it is injurious to his goodness and justice, and other sacred attributes, to say, that he either is, or ever was, a respecter of persons.

And as he is no respecter of persons, so has he always discovered himself to be a God of order, and not of confusion; and therefore it seems requisite, that he should proceed by degrees, and not introduce the most perfect dispensation, till others, of an inferior and less perfect nature, had gone before. In the creation of the world we read, that trees, and plants, and all kinds of vegetables, were made before beasts, that have a sensitive life; and a fitness that less perfect dispensations should go before.

(o) 1 John ii. 2. (p) Edwards's Survey of methods of religion.
(q) Acts x. 35.

and that all kinds of beasts were made before man, who has a rational soul, and is the most excellent of all God's works in this lower world: And, in like manner, it is reasonable to suppose, that God should make a gradual increase in his revelations, and proceed from the shadow to the substance, from types to realities, and from lesser to greater discoveries: And to this purpose the Apostle to the Hebrews informs us, that the worthies, who lived under the law, and had (r) *obtained a good report by faith, received not the promise*, (i. e. the full intent of it, in the coming of Christ), *God having provided some better things for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect*. Tho' therefore we may think, with the royal preacher, that (s) *truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun*; yet we are to consider, that the darkness of the night, which may resemble the religion of nature, and the dawning of the day, which may represent the institutions of the law, were to have their stated periods, before our (t) *Sun of righteousness was to rise with healing in his wings*, i. e. the Prince and Saviour of mankind was to make his entrance upon the stage of the world, (u) not till after the legal services were expired, the predictions of the patriarchs and prophets accomplished, and the appearances of angels, and visions, of revelations, and extraordinary declarations from heaven, had made way for his arrival.

(x) What the Platonists hold concerning the several powers and faculties of mens souls, viz. that, in due time and place, they orderly awaken into act; and, when a lower power is extinguished, a more extended and enlarged capacity succeeds it, a more divine faculty and life spring up, and are invigorated; what these philosophers (I say) hold concerning human souls, is true of religion, and its several dispensations. There is a gradual subordination of these several oeconomies; and, upon the cessation and extinction of one that is inferior, a more sublime and perfect one arises in its room. What God has been pleased to substitute in place of that administration which he hath thought proper to revoke, is the Christian revelation, of the excellency of whose doctrines, both moral and speculative, we shall have occasion (y) to discourse hereafter; our present business is, to inquire into the merit of the

(r) Heb. xi. 39. 40. (s) Ecclef. xi. 7. (t) Mal. iv. 2.
(u) Edwards's Survey, vol. 1. (x) Ibid. (y) Vid. Dissert. 4.

books wherein these doctrines are contained; and herein to consider their truth and authority, their number and genuineness, their method, and style, and manner of composition, together with some other properties, and adjuncts, peculiar to them, as the rule of our faith and manners.

That, in the reign of Tiberius, there lived such a person as Jesus Christ, and suffered death under Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor in Judea, is what Christians in all countries profess; what Jews of all ages have acknowledged; and what even Heathen authors (such as Suetonius (z), Tacitus, and Pliny *jun.*) have recorded. That this Jesus had, from the very first, a succession of men to publish his doctrines, and to testify to the world the history of his life and actions; and that in a short space of time, a certain number of approved historians recorded them in writing, to be the pillar and foundation of all truth, (as the ancients call it), is what the earliest writers in the Christian church relate, and our present possession of the books themselves does imply. That the books, which have descended to us, are the same which these historians indited, the writers of the very next age, and every age since, have asserted; both Jews and Heathens, in their tracts against Christianity, have allowed; and the numerous passages cited from them, and, in their names, even to this day, do evince: And lastly, that the contents of these books, in their descent to us, have not suffered any considerable alteration, but, (excepting some few variations, occasioned by the negligence of transcribers), from the days of the apostles, and apostolic men, to the present age, have always been the same; the long continuance of the Autographa in the church, the many copies and transcripts taken from them, and their early translations into various languages, have, under the providence of God, been our security.

The truth and authority of the scriptures of the New Testament.

Since then we have in our hand authentic records of our Saviour's life and actions, let us look a little into them, and see, whether their authors have been defective in any of the marks and characters of true historians.

That the Evangelists were persons of too much truth and honesty to relate any wilful lies, is evident from the

The Evangelists true historians from their own characters,

(x) Vid. Grotius, De veritate Christ. relig.

whole

whole tenor of their writings ; wherein the strictest precepts about speaking truth, and the severest prohibitions of guile and dissimulation, either in our words or actions, do every where meet us. Men of cunning and artifice have all their fawning and insinuating ways to captivate the weak, and such as delight in flattery ; but with what plainness and simplicity do they go about to persuade men to become Christians, when they barely relate the matters of fact concerning the resurrection of Jesus, saying, that they themselves *were eye-witnesses of it*, and, upon the credit of this their testimony, expect that we should assent ? Had they been minded to aggrandize their master, they would have displayed indeed the wonderfulness of his birth, the many miracles he wrought, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, the voice from heaven declaring him to be the Son of God, the glories of his resurrection, and the triumph of his ascension ; but by all means would they have laboured to conceal the obscurity of his birth and parentage, the low condition of his life, and the shameful and ignominious circumstances of his death. Had they been minded to extol him above measure, as a great and a mighty worker of miracles, they would have expatiated upon every one that came in their way, and not comprised some in the short compass of a verse or two, and concealed others under a general enumeration, as we find they frequently do. Had they designed to set off themselves, their labours, and perils, and bold adventures, for the sake of the gospel, they might have described them in all their pleasing horror ; but (what is a singular instance of their truth and ingenuity) their own mean extraction and employments, their ignorance and mistakes, their ambitious contentions, cowardly desertions, and base denial of their Lord in the time of the greatest exigence and distress, they themselves have left upon record, for all succeeding ages to peruse and censure : Or, had they designed any private profit or advantage to themselves, they took the most improper method in the world, in publishing what to the Jews they knew would be a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness ; and what they could not but foresee, would expose both them and their companions to scorn and contempt, to dangers and hazards, to poverty and want, to bonds and imprisonment, and death itself.

Now,

Now, when persons are both above all secular interest, ^{their sufficiency of intelligence} and forward to lay open too their own faults and failings, merely for the sake of truth, it is a strong presumption, that they have no inclination to write falsehoods, if so be they are competent judges of what they are about, and have sufficient means of information in their power. And herein the evangelists could not be defective, because (even upon the supposition of no divine assistance or inspiration) they had persons enow living to give them full instructions, as to the great periods and actions of our Saviour's life. (a) Of his conception and birth, and other particulars preceeding his baptism, they might have an account from Simeon and Anna, and the parents of John, as well as from Joseph and Mary. Of his baptism, and what thereupon ensued, they might have intelligence from John and his disciples. Of his fasting and temptation, from the same John, who not unlikely retired with him into the wilderness, (where himself had been before), and continued with him until his return; and of the several transactions in his public ministry, they themselves (as well as the other apostles) were eye and ear witnesses, and as competent judges of what they heard and saw as the greatest philosophers living. By these, and several other helps, they might be supplied with proper materials for their respective histories; and when they had thus compiled them, (we speak still upon the supposition of no inspiration), their fidelity appeared, in their speedy committing them to writing. *

And indeed, if we look into the contents of the histories, as well as the characters of the historians, we shall soon perceive such a simplicity, as well as majesty, in their narrations, such purity in their precepts, and such sublimity in their doctrines, as plainly denote them to be of divine revelation. ^{and the contents of their gospels.}

Men of quick parts and ingenuity, it is true, may tell us cunningly-devised fables, and amuse their readers with tales and romances that had never any foundation in nature: but to frame such an excellent system of morality as is contained in the gospels; to give such an extraordinary account of the satisfaction for sin, and of the nature and office of a mediator; to feign the life and actions of a Messiah, which should accord so exactly with the predictions of the prophets, and the types and prefigurations of the Mosaic law; and to make the rewards and punishments of

(a) Grew's Cosmog. sac.

another life so agreeable to human reason, and so worthy of the Divine Majesty; this was a scheme which these poor illiterate men were no more able to invent, than they were to create a world. And yet, notwithstanding the great variety and difficulty of this province, it is wonderful to observe, how all the four evangelists, who wrote at different times, and in distant places, agree, not only in the main topics, but sometimes in the most minute circumstances; insomuch that whenever they seem to disagree, (*b*) (which chiefly arises from their not confining themselves to the same words, or the same order of time, and, with a little critical observation, may easily be reconciled), whenever they disagree, I say, it looks as if the Spirit of God designed on purpose that it should be so, not only that they might be distinct witnesses of the same things, but that all succeeding ages of the Christian world might see with their eyes, that they neither transcribed from one another, nor combined nor conspired together like crafty knaves.

I might here produce the testimony which God gave to the truth of the gospel, (*c*) *by signs and wonders, and by divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost*; and what a mighty proof the evangelists themselves gave of their fidelity in composing those writings, which they, and thousands more, were not afraid to seal with their blood: But because an agreement with other authors is always reputed a good token of historical probity, I shall rather take notice of some few facts, whereby the professed enemies of Christianity (both Jews and Pagans) have confirmed the authority of these sacred penmen.

The testimony of other authors.

The (*d*) coming of a king out of the east, who should do great and mighty actions, was a constant report, (founded on the Sibylline prophecies), which prevailed about the time of our Saviour's birth; and (*e*) Tacitus (as a great politician and statesman) will needs have it fulfilled in Vespasian or Titus, because they were called out of Judea to the empire of Rome. The appearance of a wonderful star at the time of his nativity, is mentioned by (*f*) Pliny, in his Natural history, under the name of a *bright comet*. The murder of the babes of Bethlehem is recorded by Dion, in his life of Octavius Cæ-

(*b*) Grew's Cosmog. fac. p. 304. (*c*) Heb. ii. 4. (*d*) Edwards's Truth and authority of the Holy Scripture. (*e*) Lib. 2. and 25. (*f*) Natural History, lib. 2. c. 4.

far; and Macrobius (who relates the thing more at large) tells us, that Herod, upon the account of the same jealousy, ordered his own son to be slain. The miracles that Jesus did, when he entered upon his ministry; the title he laid claim to of being the Messiah, or a divine person sent from heaven to redeem mankind; and the doctrines which he preached, (as they are recorded in the gospels), are acknowledged and confessed by Celsus, Julian, and Porphyry, as (g) several of the ancient fathers assure us. The death of our blessed Saviour, and the manner of his suffering under Pontius Pilate, and in the reign of Tiberius, is mentioned (as we said) both by Tacitus and Lucian. The universal eclipse, which happened at the time of his passion, is taken notice of by (h) Dionysius, before he was converted to the faith. The terrible earthquake, which was at the same time, is related by Dion, Pliny, and Suetonius; and the *rending of the veil of the temple*, (mentioned by three evangelists), is testified by the Jewish historian Josephus; who, among other passages, has given us this memorable one concerning our Saviour Christ. “At this time there was one Jesus, a wise man; “if I may call him a man; for he did most wonderful “works, and was a teacher of those who received the “truth with delight. He brought many to his persuasion, both of the Jews and Gentiles. This was Christ: “And though he was, by the instigation of some of our “nation, and by Pilate’s sentence, hung on the cross; “yet those who loved him at first, did not cease to do so; “for he came to life again the third day, and appeared “to them: And to this day there remains a sect of men, “who have from him the name of *Christians*.” A passage, which (as several * learned authors have fully proved) is far from being an interpolation.

That

(g) Orig. cont. Cels.; Cyril. cont. Julian; et August. Civ. Dei, lib. 22. c. 18. (h) Annal. lib. 18. c. 44.

* Upon the whole, I cannot see (says the translator of Josephus) the least reason to think this passage supposititious; on the contrary, there seems as much evidence for the truth and sincerity of this place in Josephus, as of any other in all his works: And it would have been far more strange, if, in his circumstances and time when he wrote, he had said nothing of Christ, than that he said what he does. Yet, if any one desires to be more fully satisfied in this particular, let him consult *Andreas Bosis’s Exercitationes hist. Critic.*;

That the apostles were actually inspired.

That God, who is a spirit, can speak as intelligibly to the spirits and minds of men, as men can speak to the ear, is obvious to our first reflections on the divine attributes; and that there was some necessity for God's communicating himself to the apostles in this manner, the difficulty of their province, which was to *preach the gospel to all nations and languages*, seems to imply. When Moses was sent to Pharaoh, and for fear of the face of so great a king, was ready to retract, God, to encourage him, gives him the promise, that (i) *he would be with his mouth, and with Aaron's mouth, and would teach them what they should say*: And in like manner, when our Saviour tells his disciples, that (k) *they should be brought before governors and kings for his sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles*; he bids them *take no thought how or what they should speak; for it shall be given unto you*, says he, *in the same hour, what ye ought to say; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of my Father, which speaketh in you*. Now, if Moses was inspired upon that particular occasion, and the apostles, in cases that were but personal, when brought before magistrates upon account of their religion, had assistance extraordinary imparted to them, (as whoever looks into their defences must certainly acknowledge that they had), there is much more reason for the same gifts and communications, in matters that were to be of general use to the church in all ages. To the end therefore that we might have no doubt concerning the doctrines which the apostles were to teach, we find our Saviour making them this farther promise: (l) *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you, i. e. whatever doctrines I have commanded you to teach, these he will remind you of continually; and whatever I have omitted teaching you, (because you are not yet capable of*

Chr. Arnoldus's Collection of letters concerning the testimony of Josephus; Vossius's Chronologica sacra, c. 17.; Huetius's Demonstratio evangel. prop. 3.; Patrick's Demonstration of the divine authority of the law of nature, and the Christian religion, p. 222.; Dr Cave's Historia literaria, part 2. p. 17.; and Mr Martin, a French author, who has handled this subject ex professo, discourse 1.

(i) Exod. iv. 12. 15. (k) Matth. x. 18. &c. Mark xiii. 11. &c. (l) John xiv. 26.

receiving

receiving them) these he will instruct you in : For, that this is the true import of the promise, we may learn from the ensuing words ; (m) *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ; but when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth, and he shall shew you things to come* : And from hence we may be assured, (n) that all the sermons and discourses of the Lord to his disciples, recorded in the evangelists, are faithfully delivered by his apostles, (as to the genuine sense and import of them), otherwise the Holy Ghost did not *bring to their remembrance all things, which he had said unto them* ; and that whatever they taught in any of their epistles, addressed to the Christian churches, they taught by the guidance and direction of the same Spirit, otherwise he did not *teach them all things, nor guide them into all truth*.

And indeed considering that (o) the end of these writings was to be perpetual monuments of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, and a standing rule of faith to Christians in all ages of the world, there was a certain necessity (for fear that the churches should fall into error at any time) that their authors should be directed and assisted, in the composition of them, by some infallible guide. And, accordingly, we may observe, that (whatever conceptions we may have of their modesty) they are no where ashamed of making open declarations of their being divinely inspired. For (p) *I am a minister of Christ*, (says St Paul), *according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me to fulfil (i. e. fully to preach) the word of God* ; and (q) *for this cause thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men ; but, as it is in truth, the word of God* ; and therefore, (r) *if any man be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge, that the things I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord*.

And that this was the acknowledgment of Christians in all ages from the beginning, viz. that the apostles, and other penmen of the books of the New Testament, were assisted in their writing, as well as in their preaching, by the Spirit of God, is evident from innumerable pas-

(m) John xvi. 12. 13.
before St Matthew.

(n) Vid. Whitby's general preface
(o) Vid. Du Pin's History of the canon.

(p) Col. i. 25.

(q) 1 Thess. ii. 13.

(r) 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

sages in the earliest fathers, and the constant (*s*) practice of the church, in reading these writings on the Lord's day, for the instruction of the people; in proving all their doctrines, and confuting heretics from their authority; and in esteeming such persons as denied their inspiration, no better than infidels: "For what wickedness is this?" (*t*) says an ancient author, "either they believe not the Holy Scriptures to be divinely inspired, and then they are infidels; or they pretend to be wiser than the Holy Ghost, and then they are mad, and possessed."

Now, if persons so near the times of the apostles, that some of them either conversed with them, or were acquainted with their immediate successors; if the churches, which received these writings from the very hands of the apostles, and kept still the originals or authentic copies of them, did so unquestionably receive them as inspired writings, and look upon them as the rule and pillar of their faith; if they read them, together with those writings of the prophets, which on all hands were acknowledged to be the word of God; proved from them all the doctrines of the Christian faith; received them as the perfect rule of Christian duty; confuted all heresies and erroneous doctrines from them; and represented those as infidels who questioned or denied their inspiration from the Holy Ghost; they doubtless were well assured, that, as such, they were delivered to them by the apostles, and other sacred penmen: And if this was matter of fact, what reason have we, in these latter ages, to call in question what was universally acknowledged by those who lived in the very time wherein the books were written, and sent to the churches of Christ?

That the primitive Christians had sufficient opportunities of knowing the genuine books of the New Testament.

That the primitive Christians had sufficient means and opportunities to distinguish the genuine and inspired writings, from what were apocryphal or spurious, no one can doubt, who considers, that the original writings of the apostles themselves (whose hands they were not unacquainted with) were in their custody; that though the apostles wrote to whole churches, yet particular men are frequently named in their epistles, which was a great means to ascertain their authority; that no sooner were these epistles sent (as is plain in the case of (*u*) St Paul) to particular churches, but they were published and read, with other

(*s*) Vid. Whitby's General preface.

(*u*) Col. iv, 16.; 2 Pct. iii. 16.

(*t*) Ibid. p. 14.

sacred scriptures, in their open assemblies; that copies authentically attested were immediately taken of them, sufficient to answer the number of the churches and church-officers, which the apostles had every where settled; and (what is more than all) that at this time there still remained the miraculous gift (x) of discerning spirits, whereby persons who were endued with it, were enabled to distinguish true revelation from impostures.

It is reasonable to suppose therefore, that, during this period of time, wherein the helps and advantages attending the church were so many, God should provide himself with a proper instrument to settle and determine the rule of our faith, and thereby preserve the Christian world from all future uncertainty. And accordingly, some have observed, that St John, who wrote his gospel and epistles against those heretics chiefly, who were the most notorious forgers of spurious, and corrupters of the true books of the Scripture, had his life prolonged by providence, that he might be able both to vindicate and complete the whole canon thereof. It is certain from Eusebius, that he revised the three gospels before he wrote his own; and Photius tells us another circumstance, *viz.* that the versions of the gospels were approved by him, as well as the originals; nor can we doubt, but that, in so long a life, he had seen the works of the rest of the apostles, and had given them his approbation: As what indeed could be more worthy his care, or more necessary at that juncture, than that he should ascertain the authority of those writings, which were to be the church's great preservative against those heresies, which, even then, became too numerous, and which, he could not but foresee, would occasion no small scandal and disturbance in future ages?

What gives a farther confirmation of this opinion is the testimony of the same Eusebius, who, (y) in his Ecclesiastical history, tells us, that in the beginning of the second century, about the time of St John's death, or immediately after it, there were great numbers of persons, disciples, who travelled over the world, building up churches, where the apostles had before laid the foundation, and preaching the faith of Christ in places that had never heard of it before; who carried the copies of the

That the canon of the New Testament was settled by St John.

This proved from Tertullian, Irenæus, and the confession of the enemies of the apostles.

(x) 1 Cor. xii. 10.

(y) Lib. 3. c. 37.
gospels

gospels to all the churches whither they went, and, not improbably, took along with them other parts of the New Testament besides, because they were owned and admitted every where soon after. Tertullian (z), who flourished at the end of the second century, tells us expressly, that the law and the prophets, the gospels and apostolic writings, were the books from whence we were to learn our faith; and, that we may know what he meant by apostolic writings, he appeals, as occasion offers, not only to the four gospels, but to the acts of the apostles, to all the epistles of St Paul, (except that to the Hebrews), to the first of St Peter, and the first of St John, as the writings of the persons to whom they are ascribed. Nay, Irenæus, (a) who lived before him, and conversed (as himself tells us) with Polycarp, and others, that had been instructed by the apostles, and immediate disciples of our Lord, mentions the code of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, and calls the one, as well as the other, *the oracles of God*, and *writings dictated by his Word and Spirit*. And what wonder indeed, if the first fathers of the church did so, when we find the greatest adversaries of the Christian name, even (b) Julian and (c) Celsus, acknowledging their genuineness by quoting their words, and referring us to them upon all occasions?

The common order of the genuine books.

Some difference indeed there always was in the primitive church, concerning the order wherein the epistles were placed, but none at all in relation to the gospels. The Acts of the apostles, as containing an account of what they did and suffered, were very properly placed after the four gospels, which are the several histories of our Saviour's life and actions. The epistles did not stand according to the order of time wherein they were wrote, but according to the number or dignity of the persons to whom they were addressed. The whole collection consists of 27 tracts: And we shall set them down according to the order wherein they now stand, which (as it appears from ancient commentators, as well as all Greek and Latin manuscripts) was the most common and general order wherein they always stood.

(z) De præscript. hæret. c. 36.
 Canon of the New Testament vindicated.
 cont. Jul. lib. 10. (c) Just. Mart. Dial.

(a) Vid. Richardson's
 (b) Vid. Cyril. Alex.

The

The four gospels of
St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, St John.

The Acts of the apostles.

The fourteen epistles of St Paul to
The Romans, Corinthians 1. Corinthians 2. Galatians,
Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, Theſſalonians 1.
Theſſalonians 2. Timothy 1. Timothy 2. Titus,
Philemon, the Hebrews.

The ſeven catholic epistles of
St James, St Peter 1. St Peter 2. St John 1. St
John 2. St John 3. St Jude. And

The Revelation of St John.

The goſpel of St Matthew, which, according to the *St Matthew*
ſenſe of all antiquity, was originally written in Syriac, (the
vulgar tongue, at that time, in Jeruſalem, and commonly
in the New Teſtament called *Hebrew*) (*d*) was, in the
apoſtles time, tranſlated into Greek, which tranſlation, in
the beginning of the church, was publiſhed in all nations,
preſerved without alteration, cited by Clemens Romanus,
Barnabas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, and, (*e*) after the cor-
ruption of the original, was always looked upon as authen-
tic and canonical.

The Goſpel of St Mark was originally the ſame as we *St Mark*,
now have it, compoſed in Greek by a diſciple of St Peter,
who, in his firſt epiſtle, ſtyles him (*f*) *his ſon*, becauſe ve-
ry probably he had converted him to the Chriſtian faith.
It was certainly reviſed and approved by that great apoſtle,
and from its firſt appearing, allowed to be canonical, as is
evident from ſeveral paſſages, which Juſtin Martyr, a very
early writer in the church, is known to cite from it.

The Goſpel of St Luke was written in more elegant *St Luke*,
Greek than ordinary, by a diſciple of St Paul, who at-
tended him in his travels, and continually aſſiſted him in
the labour of the miniſtry, as we may learn from the Hi-
ſtory of the acts, and (*g*) the advantageous character
which the apoſtle gives him. The apoſtle is therefore ſaid
to have aſſiſted him in the compoſition of his hiſtory,
which, upon that account, is quoted by Clemens Roma-
nus, Barnabas, and Irenæus, as ſcriptures of undoubted
authority.

(*d*) Du Pin's Hiſtory of the New Teſtament, vol. I. c. 2.

(*e*) Vid. Diſſert. 1. of this book.

(*f*) 1 Pet. v. 13.

(*g*) 2 Cor. viii. 18. &c.; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

and
St John.

The Gospel of St John was the work of our Saviour's favourite apostle, which, according to Eusebius, was published last of all, as a supplement of what the other evangelists had omitted; and, from its first appearance, (*b*) was always received as authentic scripture. Justin Martyr and Irenæus have both quoted passages out of it; and (what tends not a little to its commendation) the Platonic philosopher, Amelius, avers that the barbarian (as he calls St John) had hit on the right notion, when, in the first chapter of his gospel, he makes the Word of God incarnate.

The Acts
of the a-
postles.

The book that is called the *Acts of the apostles* (which, from the time of our Lord's ascension into Heaven, contains the history of what his followers did in Judea and Jerusalem, until the time that they dispersed themselves to preach in different countries; and then continues a more particular account of St Paul's travels and actions, until he was carried to Rome in the reign of Tiberius) was composed by St Luke, as himself testifies in his preface to Theophilus, and had this evidence of its antiquity, that it was rejected by the heretic Cerinthus, who was contemporary with the apostles.

St Paul:

The fourteen epistles of St Paul were all (except that to the Hebrews) received with a general consent, and read in the churches, even in the first ages of the apostles, as appears from the testimony of St Peter, who gives us this character of his brother's writings, *viz. (i) that in them there are some things hard to be understood, which they, who are unlearned, and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction.*

St James.

The catholic Epistle of St James, (not of James (*k*) the son of Zebedee, brother of St John, but of James the Just, our Lord's near kinsman, and bishop of Jerusalem), according to the account of Eusebius and St Jerom, did, in their time, stand in the canon of the New Testament, though it was not so commonly quoted by the most ancient of the fathers, as being both very short, and containing almost nothing but moral instructions.

St Peter.

The first Epistle of St Peter was all along received in every church as canonical; nor was there any great reason to call in question the genuineness of the latter, since

(*b*) Nichols's Conference with the Theist, vol. 2. part 4.
(*i*) 2 Pet. iii. 16. (*k*) Du Pin's Hist. of the canon, &c.
vol. 2. c. 2. sect. 9.

the author describes himself as a person who was present (1) at our Lord's transfiguration, and as the writer of the second letter to the same people, to whom he had directed his former, which are characters that can agree with none so well as with St Peter.

The first epistle of St John is allowed by all antiquity to St John. be authentic; nor were the other two ever disputed, whether they were divine writings or no, but only whether they were the compositions of the apostle whose name they bear; though it was not long before this dispute was decided by their admission into all the ancient canons of the New Testament, as having indeed the same spirit and sentiments, the same style and manner of expression with the first.

The epistle of Jude, the brother of James, though questioned by some, was, upon mature consideration, received into all the catalogues of sacred books, from the time of Clemens Alexandrinus: And the book of Revelation, (which is the last in the New Testament), for several reasons that (m) we shall hereafter assign, was the work of St John, and composed in the isle of Patmos, to which Irenæus, Eusebius, and several others, agree, that he was banished.

Some of these books indeed (as we have already hinted) were placed among the *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, or *doubtful pieces*, by the ancients; but for this many good reasons may be alleged. The epistle to the Hebrews had no time prefixed to it, which St Paul, out of a principle of modesty, might do, as not seeming to assume the office of an apostle to the Hebrews, which was St Peter's immediate province, and * for this reason it went under some suspicion of not being

(1) 2 Pet. i. 16. &c. following book.

(m) Vid. Dissert. i. in the

* Without entering into the testimony of the ancients, if we consult the epistle itself, we shall find circumstances in it that can scarce agree with any other person than St Paul: For it appears, that it was wrote in Italy, since the author of it salutes the Hebrews by the name of Brethren in Italy, Heb. xiii. 24. by a person who was in bonds, but shortly expected his liberty, Heb. xiii. 19. and who had Timothy for his fellow-labourer; which are three circumstances that agree in no other person but St Paul. It is certain, that St Luke (as some imagine) could not be the writer of this epistle:

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D

For,

being his. The second epistle of St Peter † was thought to differ in style from the first; that of St James, to maintain the doctrine of faith and good works, contrary to St Paul to the Romans; and that of St Jude, to quote a passage from an † apocryphal book; for which causes they might,

For, besides that the Hebraisms in it are much more frequent than in his gospel, it is evident that its author was a man of consummate knowledge in the ceremonies and mysteries of the Jews, which cannot be said of St Luke, who was originally a Gentile; and though others have ascribed it to Barnabas, yet, as it no where appears, that Barnabas ever staid in Italy, or was in prison there, to the great difference of style between this and the genuine letter of Barnabas (which is much rougher, and far less elevated) plainly shews that this was the product of a different pen; "and St Paul had reason (as Clemens of Alexandria informs us) not to put his name to the inscription of the letter, because, writing to the Hebrews, who had a long time borne a prejudice against him, and judging that he should become suspected by them, he acted prudently in making that concealment;" *Du Pin's History of the canon, &c. vol. 2. c. 2.*

† That there is a difference in the style of the first and second epistles of St Peter, is allowed; but it is not such a difference as ought to create any doubt of the genuineness of the epistle. One reason is, because this difference of style does not run through the whole epistle, but affects only one part of it. Another reason is, that this difference may be more probably accounted for, than by supposing the second epistle to come from another hand than the first. The second epistle is divided into three chapters; the first and the third stand clear of this difficulty, agreeing very well with the style of the first epistle: The second chapter is full of bold figures, and abounds in pompous words and expressions. It is a description of the false prophets and teachers, who infested the church, and perverted the doctrines of the gospel, and seems to be an extract from some ancient Jewish writer, who had left behind him a description of the false prophets of his own, and perhaps earlier times. If this be the case, where is the wonder, that a passage transcribed from another author, and inserted into the second epistle, should differ in style from St Peter's first epistle? Since all must agree, that though a man, when he expresses his own sentiment, writes in his own proper style, be it what it will, yet, when he translates from another, he naturally follows the genius of the original, and adopts the figures and metaphors of the author before him; *Bishop Sherlock's Dissertation 1. annexed to the Use and intent of proph. cy.*

† What the true ancient book was, which St Jude quoted, by whom penned, or of what authority in the Jewish church, no mor-
cal

m'ight, for some time, be rejected. The second and third epistles of St John were too much levelled against the heretics of that age, not to provoke their endeavours to hinder their reception; and the book of Revelations contained some things which aimed so directly at Rome and the empire, that it might not be thought prudent at first to admit it into the canon.

Nor can it in the least diminish the credit and authority of the New Testament, to alledge, that the first recognition of its controverted books was by the council of Laodicea, 330 years after our Lord's ascension, (n) since it is plain, that the business of that council was, to declare, not so much which were the authentic books of Scripture, as which were not; the growth of heretical books having made it necessary then, though not before, (for the better information of the people), to distinguish the true from the false. For that the true were known long before this council made their declaration, (o) is manifest from the fifty-ninth canon, which appoints, that no books which were *extra canonem*, i. e. none but such as were canonical, should be read in Christian assemblies; which title of canonical they had, because they were inserted in the apostles canons, and the apostles canons (according to the opinion of the best critics) were the canons of councils assembled before the council of Nice, because we

tal can tell: This only we know, that it was not among the canonical books. But, let the book be supposed to have been of as little authority as you please, yet if it contained a good description of the ancient false prophets, why might not St Jude make use of that description, as well as St Paul quote Heathen poets? Was it ever made an objection against the authority of his second epistle to Timothy, that he cites some ancient apocryphal book for the story of Jannes and Jambres? Or is it any diminution to the authority of the gospel, that our Saviour, (as many learned men think), in Luke xi. 49. quotes another such book, under the title of *the Wisdom of God*, and appeals to it, as containing ancient prophecies? If not, how comes it to be any objection against St Jude's epistle, that he quotes a prophecy of Enoch from the like authority? For these reasons little regard is due to the objection of the ancients against the authority of St Jude's epistle; and, accordingly, we are informed by St Jerom, that, notwithstanding this piece of criticism, it was, in his days, universally received in the churches. *Autoritatem, says he vetustate jam et usu meruit, et inter sanctas Scripturas computatur*; Bishop Sherlock, *ibid.*

(n) Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. 2.

(o) Ibid.

find them referred to in that council ; and were very probably styled *apostolical*, because they were made by men who lived next to the apostles days, and who declared, in those canons, what they had received from them.

Their late admission an argument for them.

But allowing these disputed books to be of later admittance than we have given them, yet the only just inference that we can deduce from thence, is, that since these books were not every where admitted upon their first appearing, this shews, that the church did not proceed rashly and carelessly in the affair ; and since they were every where admitted afterward, this shews, that, upon examination, clear proof and evidence was found of their genuineness ; and accordingly they have ever since been joined, by persons of all sects and opinions, to the rest of the books which we esteem canonical.

The case of other ancient books.

We readily grant, that, in the primitive times, there were other books, besides the Holy Scriptures, wrote by pious and learned men, and held in such high esteem, as to be read in Christian assemblies ; but then we are to consider, that (*p*) how justly soever we may value them, yet, upon inquiry, we shall find, that there is something human, something of infirmity, something of fallibility in them, which makes them inferior to what is apostolical ; that the best approved piece of them all (I mean the epistle of Clemens to the Corinthians) was, for many ages, supposed to be lost, and though, upon its appearing again, the best critics thought they had good reason to pronounce it genuine, yet they could not be sure that it was entirely free from corruption or interpolation ; that though these ecclesiastical writers (as they were called) were, for some time, read in churches, yet they were not read as canonical scriptures, but only in the nature of homilies, and exhortations to virtue and piety ; and that, in process of time, even this practice came to be laid aside, and nothing allowed to be read publicly, but what was of undoubted apostolic authority.

The canon of the New Testament continued entire.

This is the true history of the canon of Scripture, in the earliest times of Christianity ; and that it continued the same in succeeding ages, without any addition or mutilation, its being translated into so many tongues, in the four first centuries, and dispersed into so many hands,

(*p*) Grew's *Cosmog. sacra.*
Amynter.

Clerke's *Reflections on*

in so many different countries, as well as † the copies of great antiquity still extant among us, are a convincing argument; especially considering, that the several sects of Christians were, all along, so jealous and watchful over each other, that no spurious piece could be introduced, or genuine piece suppressed, without their knowledge and remonstrance; nor can we imagine, how any catalogue of books should be received, (exclusive of all others), but upon the clearest evidence and conviction of their containing the true and only authentic rule of faith and practice.

We readily own again, that, in the books of the New Testament, there is not that elegance of style, or accuracy of method, which may be observed in some human compositions; but then it ought to be considered, that as (r) too great a niceness about these matters is an argument of a little genius, and an employ unbecoming the dignity of the Spirit of God; so the apostle has given us a very good reason, why least of all it should have found a place in such scriptures, as were designed for the rule of our faith: (s) *And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and my speech, and my preaching was, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* (t) Strains of rhetoric, whereby the passions are raised to a great height, are sometimes necessary to gain a present point, and carry a cause by a violent and sudden transport, before reason can interpose; but, since religion was to be propounded upon reasonable motives, there was no need for any art of this kind, when the evidence of the

Its style
and method
vindicated.

† Such are the Cambridge copy, in Greek and Latin, containing the four gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles: that in the French king's library, containing St Paul's epistles; and that in the library of the Benedictines at St Germain's, all supposed to be above a thousand years old. The Alexandrian copy is believed to have been written by Thecla, above 1200 years ago; a Syriac manuscript, in the library of the Duke of Florence, and a Gothic translation of the four evangelists, formerly belonging to the abbey of Werdin, are each of them of above a thousand years antiquity; besides many more, which are in private hands; *Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. 2.*

(r) *Jenkins's Reasonableness, &c. vol. 2.*
1. &c.

(s) *Jenkins, ibid.*

(t) 1 Cor. ii.

miracles,

miracles, by which it was established, (here called the *demonstration of the Spirit, and of power*), afforded so many other more certain and convincing means of persuasion.

But there is another way of accounting for the want of elegance, as well as uniformity, in the style and method of the evangelical writers, and that is, by supposing, that, though the Spirit of God took care to direct and over-rule them all along, so as to make it impossible for them to record any thing but what was consonant to truth, and expressive of his meaning; yet he might nevertheless leave them to their own words and manner of expression, which, considering the difference of their parts and education, must necessarily occasion a great variety of style, and sometimes solecisms, or confusion of method in their compositions: (u) Which solecisms, if they were but expressive of their meaning, were, in that respect, as valuable as the greatest propriety of language; and which confusion the Holy Spirit might rather allow of, because it might be of use to prevent the scriptures from being corrupted or falsified, as they might have been, if either their historical parts had been digested into diaries or annals, or their preceptive part reduced to several distinct heads, and placed according to the rules of art.

Other objections;

What we have said in our former apparatus concerning the great obscurity, seeming contradictions, frequent digressions, tedious repetitions, false reasonings, and impertinent relations, that are complained of in the Old Testament, may, with a small variation, be applied to the solution of the like objections that are made against the New. It is reasonable to suppose, (x) that a book, written so many ages ago, since which all the circumstances of the world have been strangely altered; a book, written in languages which bear so little analogy to those we converse in; a book that delivers many new and unheard-of doctrines, which the world would know nothing of, unless they were recorded here; that speaks of many mysterious points concerning the divine nature, and the surprising dispensations of God's providence; that gives us an account of a spiritual kingdom, and another world, which, in this imperfect state, we can have no exact notices of; that combats all the vices and vanities of this wicked world, and, consequently,

(*) Nichols's Conference.
vol. 2.

(x) Jenkins's Reasonableness,

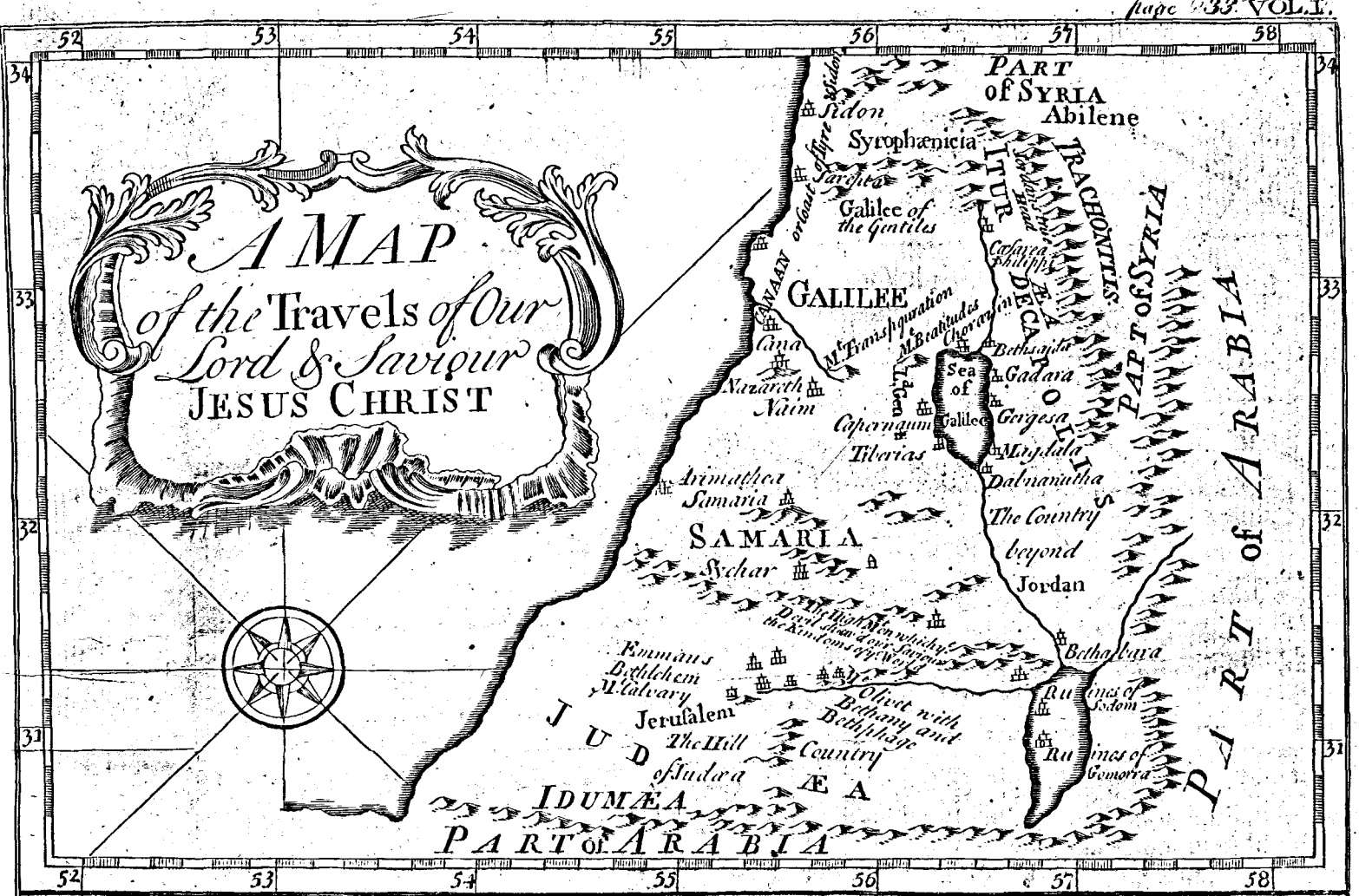
incites all the wit and malice of the loose and unthinking part of mankind to find out objections against it : It is reasonable to suppose, I say, that a book of this kind should be more liable to difficulties and exceptions, than any other of common composition. But then we are to consider, that this is a fault, not chargeable upon the Holy Scriptures, but upon human infirmities, the depravation of our nature, and the insufficiency of our understanding to comprehend the deep things of God.

What the use and character of the ancient Vulgate, as well as more modern Latin translations, both of the Old and New Testament, are ; and what the rise and occasion of the English version, which at present we make use of ; in what point of light we are to consider its defects, and, by what means and assistance, be enabled to make a better ; these were subjects that fell under our observation in our former preparatory discourse, and all we have to add in this place is, the great caution and sincerity, as well as skill and sagacity, that is requisite in every one that undertakes a work of this nature, bearing always in mind that awful denunciation, which is continually hanging over his head :
(y) If any man shall add to the things contained in this book, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written therein ; And if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

(y) Rev. xxii. 18. 19.

T H E

A MAP
of the Travels of Our
Lord & Saviour
JESUS CHRIST



*A MAP of the
Travels & Voyages
of S^r PAUL
And of y^e other Places
that are mention'd or
referred to in y^e Books of
y^e NEW TESTAMENT
that follow the Gospels*



This Draught shews y^e Situation of
such Places as are Mentioned or refer'd
to in y^e NEW TESTAMENT & lie
in y^e Region of y^e HOLY LAND

T H E H I S T O R Y O F T H E N E W T E S T A M E N T,

From the Birth of CHRIST to the Estab-
lishment of CHRISTIANITY.

C H A P. I.

From the Birth of Christ, to the Beginning of the first Passover.

The HISTORY.

AS soon as the time, foretold by the prophets †, for A. M. the incarnation of the Son of God, began to ^{3999, &c.} draw near, † the evangelist St Luke gives us this ^{Ant. Chris.} account ^{1, &c.} ^{ant. Aet.} ^{Vulg. 5.}

† The two principal prophets who determine the period when our Lord was to appear in the world, are Daniel and Haggai. Daniel foretels, that, at the end of the seventy prophetic weeks, i. e. at the expiration of four hundred and ninety years after the building of the walls of Jerusalem, the *Messiah should come*, chap. ix. 25; and Haggai prophecies, that before the destruction of the second temple, (even when the sceptre was departed from Judah, Gen. xlix. 10.) the desire of all nations should come, and by his frequent personal appearance in the temple, make the glory of that latter house much greater than that of the former, chap. ii. 7. &c.

† The word *Εὐαγγέλιον* signifies, in general, good news, and is of the same import with our Saxon word *gospel*; only in the sacred use of them both, there seems to be a metonymy, whereby the words that denote good news are set to signify the history of that

A. M. account of the birth of his great forerunner John the Baptist †.

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Ant. Chris.

1, &c.

aut. Ær.

Vulg. 5.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

While

good news, viz. of the birth and life, the miracles and doctrine, the death and resurrection of our Saviour Christ; all of which put together, do make up the joyful tidings which we call the *gospel*; and from this etymology of the words, the persons who have recorded the life and actions of our Saviour are called *evangelists*, or writers of the gospel. The works of this kind, which are received as canonical, are but four, viz. that of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John; but the spurious pieces which are handed down to us (even though several of them be lost) do exceed the number of forty. The truth is, the ancient heretics began generally with attacking the gospels, in order either to maintain their errors, or excuse them. To this purpose some rejected all the genuine gospels, and substituted others that were spurious in their room. This produced the gospels of Apelles, Basilides, Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and Gnostics. Others corrupted the true gospels, by suppressing whatever gave them any trouble, and inserting whatever might favour their erroneous doctrines. Thus the Nazarens corrupted the original gospel of St Matthew, as the Marcionites did that of St Luke; while the Alogians rejected St John, as the Ebionites did St Matthew; and the Valentinians only acknowledged St John, as the Cerinthians did St Mark; *Hammond's Annotations*; *M. Fabricius's Codex apocryphus N. Test.*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *gospel*.

† There are two places in the prophets referred to, both by our Saviour and his evangelists, wherein the Baptist is described under this character. The former is in the prophet Isaiah, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an high-way for our God*, chap. xl 3; and the latter (which is more plain and express) is in Malachi, *Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me*, &c. chap. iii. 1. Both the passages allude to harbingers, and such other officers, as, upon the journeys of princes, are employed to take care that the ways should be levelled and put in order, and all such obstructions removed as might hinder their passage, or render it less commodious; and the manner in which the Baptist thus prepared the way of the Lord, was, by his preaching, and by his baptism. By his preaching, he endeavoured to bring the Jews to a due sense of their sins; to abate their confidence in being of Abraham's seed, and punctual observers of the ceremonial law; and to forewarn all of the dreadful effects of God's anger, who did not bring forth fruits worthy of repentance: And by his baptism, when administered to such persons as were under the obligation of the law, he plainly shewed, that he was therein admitting them to some privileges,

While his father † Zacharias (who was a priest of the eighth course, *viz.* the course of Abiah) was executing his office at Jerusalem, (which was in the latter part

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23. Luke
vi. 1.

privileges, which they had not before, *viz.* the remission of their sins upon their faith and obedience to him, who was the messenger of the covenant. Since therefore the Baptist was born six months before our Saviour, and entered upon his ministry six months before our Saviour began his; and since no part of his doctrine terminated in himself, and his baptism referred every one to Christ for acceptance and salvation; he is very properly said to be his *harbinger*, a messenger sent to prepare his way before him, or to set all things in readiness for his approach, by putting an end to the old, and making an entrance into the new, dispensation, in which sense he is represented by the fathers as a kind of middle partition between the law and the gospel; of the law, as a thing now come to a period; and of the gospel, as commencing under him who was shortly to make his appearance; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. i.*

† Some of the fathers were of opinion, that this Zacharias was, at this time, high-priest, upon a false supposition, that the offering of incense was reserved to the high-priest only: But, besides the testimony of Josephus, who tells us expressly, that Simon, the son of Boethus, was high priest this year; it appears from St Luke himself, that Zacharias was no more than an ordinary priest of the family or course of Abiah, which, of the four and twenty courses, appointed by David for the service of the temple when it should be built, was the eighth, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10. For though it was the high-priest's prerogative, on the great day of expiation, to enter into the *holy of holies*, and there burn incense, which no ordinary priest might do, Levit. xvi. 12.; yet, in the common service of the day, each priest, whose lot it was, went every morning and evening into the *sanctum*, or body of the temple, and there burnt the daily incense upon the altar, which was placed before the veil of the most holy place, Exod. xxx. 6. &c. For these, and several other reasons, which annotators have produced, it seems plain, that Zacharias could not possibly be high-priest at this time; and, whatever credit may be given to the tradition, ——— That, by the order of Herod the Great, he was put to death between the porch and the altar, *viz.* in the inclosure that surrounded the altar of burnt-offerings; and that, when every one was ignorant of his murderer, a certain priest, thinking that he staid too long, entered into the temple, and found him dead, and his blood congealed upon the ground, and, at the same time, hearing a voice, that it should never be wiped out until his revenger came; whatever credit, I say, may be given to this tradition, it was doubtless upon this foundation, that many of the ancients

thought,

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Mark i. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

part of the reign of Herod the Great †) it came to his lot † to go into the temple with his censer in his hand, in order to burn incense, while the people without were † offering

thought, that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was that Zechariah, son of Barachiah, mentioned by our Saviour in the gospel, whose blood was shed between the temple and the altar; *Pool's* and *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*.

† St Luke, in particular, takes notice, that the time when our Lord's forerunner was to be conceived, was in the reign of Herod, son of Antipater, (for it was Herod Antipas that put him to death), commonly called *the Great*, who (under the Romans) fought his way to the government of the Jews, and came to his throne by the slaughter of their sanhedrim, by which means he extinguished all the dominion which, till that time, they held in the tribe of Judah, not in a single person indeed, (for that was extinguished in the Asmonæan family), but in a select number out of that royal tribe, and so verified the prophecy of old Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. *That the sceptre, or government, was departed from Judah, and the law-giver from his feet*, which was a certain sign that Shiloh, i. e. the Messiah, was shortly to come; *Pool's Annotations*.

† The several courses of the priests began on the Sabbath-day, and continued to serve till the Sabbath following; but, because they were now increased to a great number, (Josephus tells us, that there were no less than a thousand in each course), there were several parts of the priestly office (whereof burning of incense was one) which the course that then ministered seems to have divided among themselves, for the week that they were to attend, by lot; *Pool's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† A Jewish congregation, for the most part, consisted of all the priests of the course which was then in waiting, of the Levites, and of certain stationary men, (as they called them), who represented the body of the people, besides some other accidental worshippers; and, when the priest went into the sanctuary, or within the first veil, to offer incense, notice was given by the sound of a bell, that it was then the time of prayer; whereupon every one present offered up his supplications to God silently: And though this silent prayer was not commanded, yet there seems a manifest allusion to it in those words of St John, where, *at the offering of incense with the prayers of the saints*, it is said, *there was silence in heaven for half an hour*, Rev. viii. 1. &c. Nor is that passage in Ecclesiasticus, chap. l. 19. 20. any bad representation of this part of the Jewish worship: *And the people besought the Lord, the most high, by prayer before him, that is merciful, till the solemnity of the Lord was ended; and then he went down* (viz. Simon the high-priest) *and lifted up his hands over the whole congregation of the children of Israel, to give the blessing*

offering up their supplications in the court that was called *the court of Israel*. At the altar of incense † he was greatly surprised with the sight of an angel standing on the right side of it ; but the angel soon dissipated his fears with the joyful news, that God intended to bless him with a son, (whose name should be *John*), who would prove a person of uncommon merit, and be appointed to the office of harbinger † to the Messiah, who, in a short time, was to make his appearance.

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Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

blessing of the Lord with his lips ; Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.

† The Jews had a peculiar notion, that such like apparitions were always fatal to those that had them, and a sure token of their instantaneous death, Gen. xvi. 7. xxii. 11. 15. Exod. xx. 19. &c. ; but if this were not, it is natural for men to be affrightened at sudden and unusual things, especially at any divine appearances, whether of God himself taking a visible shape, or authorising an angel so to do. For though God does not make the appearances to affrighten us, yet such is the imbecillity of our nature, that we cannot but be startled at them ; and reason good there is, that God, by this means, should both declare his own glory and majesty, and humble his poor creatures, in order to make them more susceptible of his divine revelations ; *Pool's Annotations ;* and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† This word is derived from the Hebrew *Mashach*, to anoint, and is the very same with *χρίστος*, the anointed, in Greek. It is a name sometimes given to the kings and high-priests of the Hebrews, 1 Sam. xii. 5. &c. Psal. cv. 15. ; but principally, and by way of eminence, it belongs to that sovereign deliverer who was expected by the Jews, and whom they vainly expect even to this day, since he is already come at the appointed time, in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Jews were used to anoint kings, high-priests, and sometimes prophets. Saul, David, Solomon, and Joash, kings of Judah, received the royal unction ; Aaron and his sons received the sacerdotal ; and Elisha received the prophetical, at least God ordered Elijah to give it to him. But now, though Jesus Christ united in his own person all the offices of prophet, priest, and king, yet we no where find, that he received any outward or sensible unction ; and therefore the unction which the prophets and apostles speak of, with regard to him, is the spiritual and internal unction of grace in the Holy Ghost, of which the outward unction was no more than a figure and symbol ; *Calmet's Dictionary*.

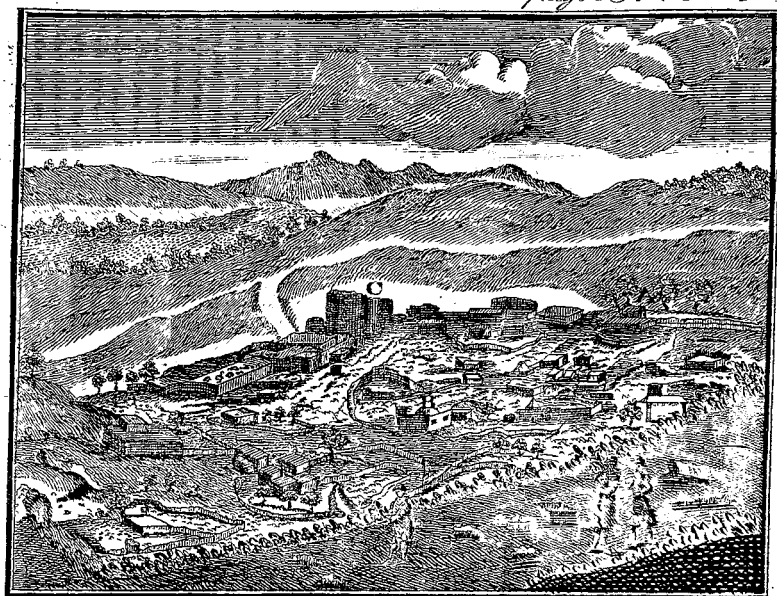
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Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

The ſenſe of his own great age, as well as his wife's long ſterility, made Zacharias || expreſs a kind of diffidence in this promiſe, and, for his farther ſatisfaction, deſire ſome miracle in confirmation of it: Whereupon the angel let him know, "That he was no leſs than Gabriel, " a ſpecial attendant on God's throne, and diſpatched on " purpoſe to inform him of this great happineſs; but " that, ſince he was ſo incredulous as to require a ſign, " he ſhould have ſuch an one as would be both a puniſh- " ment of his unbelief, and a confirmation of his faith; " for, until the birth of the child, he ſhould be both " deaf and dumb;" which accordingly came to paſs: For, when he came out to the people, (who waited to (a) receive his benediction), he made ſigns, that he was not able to ſpeak to them, and they thence inferred, that

|| The words of Zacharias to the angel are, *Whereby ſhall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years?* Luke i. 18. much of the ſame import with thoſe of Abraham upon a like occaſion, *Whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit the land of Canaan?* Gen. xv. 8. How then came it to paſs, that Abraham was gratified with a ſign in the ſame requeſt for which Zacharias was puniſhed with dumbneſs? Now, though there may be a very great ſimilitude in the words which are ſpoken by ſeveral perſons, yet there may, at the ſame time, be a very conſiderable difference in the heart and habit of mind from whence they proceed, which, we muſt allow, God can ſee much better than we can perceive by words. In relation to Abraham, then, the Holy Spirit bears him teſtimony, *that he ſtaggered not at the promiſe through unbelief, but was ſtrong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully perſuaded, that what he had promiſed, he was able to perform,* Rom. iv. 19. 20. &c.; and therefore if he aſked a ſign, it was not to beget, but to nourish and confirm, this faith in him. But in Zacharias, the aſking of a ſign favoured of perfect infidelity, in that he believed not an angel appearing to him in the name of the Lord, and in a place where evil angels durſt not come: An angel telling him his prayer was heard, which evil angels could not know; and acquainting him with things which tended to the glory of God, the completion of his promiſes, and the welfare of mankind, which evil angels would not do. His puniſhment therefore was the juſt reſult of his unbelief; but (what ſhews the mercy of God in inflicting it) it was a puniſhment of ſuch a nature, as carried with it an answer to his deſire, being no more than a privation of ſpeech, until the words of the angel were fulfilled; *Pool's and Whitby's Annotations.*

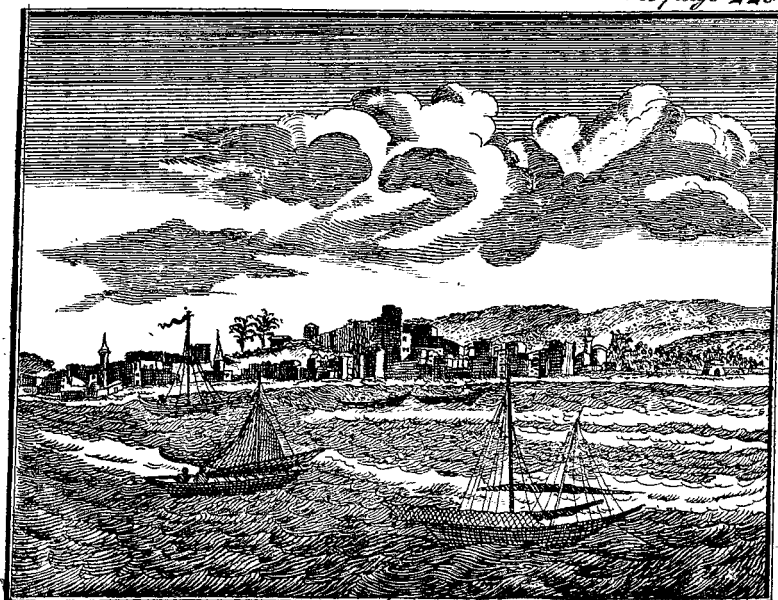
(a) Namb. vi. 24.



NAZARETH.

A. House & Shop of Joseph. B. Jews Synagogue C. Monastery

See page 220.



SIDON.

Gravin. Sculp.

Engraved for Mr. Stackhouses History of the Bible.

he had seen some extraordinary vision within. After the time of his ministration however was over, he returned home, and it was not long before his wife Elifabeth perceived herself with child, though her modesty made her conceal it for the space of five months.

Six months after Elifabeth's conception, the same angel Gabriel † was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin, named † Mary, (a near relation to Elifabeth, and

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Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† Nazareth was a city of the Lower Galilee, situated in the south part of that province, and so not far from the confines of Samaria, to the south, and nearer to the territories of Tyre and Sydon, to the north-west. According to Mr M.undrell's account, in his journey from Alepp, it is at present only an inconsiderable village, lying in a kind of round concave valley, on the top of an high hill. Here is a convent built over what is said to be the place of the annunciation, or where the blessed virgin received the joyful message brought her by the angel. It is built over the place, I say; because the chamber where she received the angel's salutation, was, above four hundred and fifty years ago, removed from Nazareth, and, according to the Roman legends, transported by angels to Loretto, then a small village in the Pope's dominions, but now become a city and bishop's see. Here is likewise the house of Joseph, the very same (as the friars of the convent tell you) wherein the son of God lived for near thirty years in subjection to man; and not far distant from hence, they shew you the synagogue wherein our blessed Saviour preached that sermon (Luke iv. 16.) whereby his countrymen were so exasperated, that they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong, Luke iv. 28. 29. for which reason that brow is to this day called *the Mountain of precipitation*; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

† In our translation, the words in the text run thus,——
To a virgin, espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the House of David; but, in my opinion, they might better be placed in this manner,——*To a virgin of the house of David, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, and the virgin's name was Mary*; because this agrees better with the words of the angel, *The Lord shall give him the throne of his father David*. For since the angel had plainly told the virgin, that she should have this child without the knowledge of any man, it was not Joseph's, but Mary's being of the house of David, that made David his father. Of her immediate parents, however, the Scripture tells us nothing, not so much as their names; but from tradition we learn, that she was the daughter of Joachim and Anna, of the royal tribe of Judah, and yet related to the race of Aaron, because Elifabeth, the wife of Zacharias,

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 Mark ii. 23
 Luke vi. 1.

and of the house of David) who had lately been † espoused to one Joseph, a person of the same pedigree indeed, but of

charias, was her cousin; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

† Espousing or betrothing was nothing else, but a solemn promise of marriage, made by two persons, each to other, at such a distance of time as they agreed upon. The manner of performing this espousal was, either by a writing, or by a piece of silver given to the bride, or by cohabitation. The writing, that was prepared on these occasions, ran in this form—"On such a day of such a month, in such a year, A, the son of A, has said to B, the daughter of B, *"Be thou my spouse according to the law of Moses, and the Israelites, and I will give thee for the portion of thy virginity, the sum of two hundred zuzims, as it is ordaineu by the law.*" And the said B has consented to become his spouse upon these conditions, which the said A has promised to perform upon the day of marriage. To this the said A obliges himself; and for this he engages all his goods, even as far as the cloak which he wears upon his shoulders. Moreover, he promises to perform all that is intended in contracts of marriage, in favour of the Israelitish women. Witnesses, A, B, C." The promise by a piece of silver, and without writing, was made before witnesses, when the young man said to his mistress, "Receive this piece of silver as a pledge that you shall become my spouse." Lastly, The engagement by cohabitation (according to the Rabbins) was allowed by law, Deut xxiv. 1.; but it had been wisely forbidden by the ancients, because of the abuses that might happen, and to prevent the inconveniencies of clandestine marriages. After such espousal was made (which was generally when the parties were young) the woman continued with her parents several months, if not some years, (at least till she was arrived at the age of puberty) before she was brought home, and her marriage consummated: For so we find, that Samson's wife remained with her parents a considerable time after espousal, Judg. xiv. 8. and that the blessed virgin was discernibly with child, before she and her intended husband came together, Matt. i. 18. Whether this method of betrothing was at first ordained, or only approved by God, Deut xx. 7. or whether it be now of any obligation to us Christians, we shall not pretend to determine. It is certain, that it has nothing that is typical, nothing of the carnal ordinance in it, but something very proper and convenient, viz. that the parties contracted may have some intermediate time to think seriously of the great change they are going to make in their conditions; to discourse more freely together about their domestic affairs; and to implore God's blessing and protection over them

of no higher profession than that of a carpenter. The angel, approaching the pious maid, began to congratulate her with "being highly in the favour of God, and blessed above all the rest of her sex; because she should have the happiness of bearing a son, called by the name of Jesus †, or Saviour, the long expected Messiah, to whom God would give the throne of his father David †, and of whose sovereignty and dominion there should be no end."

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Conscious of her own virtue, and yet surpris'd at this uncommon appearance and salutation, the Holy

them and theirs, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Mariage*.

† We read but of few instances in Scripture, where men had names determin'd for them by particular appointment from heaven, and before the time of their birth; and, as such names appear to be very significant, so the persons distinguished by them were always remarkable for some extraordinary qualities or events, which their respective names were design'd to denote. Our Lord's name indeed, in sense and substance, is the same with Joshua, that famous leader heretofore, who, after the death of Moses, settled the Israelites in the promised land, and subdued the enemies that oppos'd their entrance into it. But, as that earthly was a figure of the heavenly Canaan, so was the captain of that an eminent type of our salvation; and, if he was worthy to be called a Saviour, much more is this Jesus what his name imports; for he delivers us from the heaviest of all bondages, and from the most formidable of all enemies, as he, and he only it is, who saves his people from their sins; *Stanhope, on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.*

† The prophets, in their predictions, are very full and express, that the Messiah should be a great king, and descend from the line of David; vid. Psal. x. 16.; Isaiah ix. 6. 7.; Dan. vii. 14.; and Ezek. xxvi. 7.; and therefore the angel, in his message to Mary, characterizes him, as a successor to that prince's throne, and seems to accommodate himself, in some measure, to the prejudices of the Jews, and perhaps of the virgin-mother herself, who, being bred up in the synagogue, might expect that the Messiah should be a temporal prince, as well as they: But our Lord's kingdom (as himself plainly declares) is not of this world, nor of the like nature with other empires upon earth. His reign is in the hearts and minds of men; and his dominion is in the church, against which *the gates of hell shall not prevail*, and in which, *of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end*, Isa. ix. 7. *until the end cometh, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the father*, 1 Cor. xv. 24.; *Calmet's Commentary.*

A. M.
3999, &c.
Ant. Christ.
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 5.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

Virgin † began to expostulate with the heavenly messenger the possibility of the thing, since she had all along lived in a strict state of virginity †. But the angel, to satisfy her in this particular, told her, “ That this wonderful “ work was to be effected by the invisible power and “ operation of the Holy Ghost †; and, to shew her that “ nothing

† The words of her expostulation are, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Which some look upon as no more than a reply of admiration, and a desire to be further informed in what manner God intended to effect such a wonderful work; though others perceive in them some small indications of diffidence, but what might be more excusable, because there had been no such precedent of the divine power made in the world, as to cause a virgin to conceive, and bring forth a son; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Some are of opinion, that Mary, very early in her life, had made a vow of perpetual chastity, and that Joseph was appointed her husband, not to live with her in the ordinary use of marriage, but merely to be the guardian of her virginity: But, besides that no vows of perpetual virginity were ever in use among the Jews, it can hardly be supposed, that a Jewish woman, in whom barrenness was reputed a reproach, and looked upon as a curse, would be ever induced to make one. Among the precepts of the law, the Jewish doctors account matrimony to be one, Gen. i. 28. from which none are exempted, but they who devote themselves wholly to the study of the law: But, since this was not the Blessed Virgin's case, it reflects a dishonour upon her memory to imagine, that after she had entered into such a vow, she should admit of an espousal to Joseph, which could be for no other end, but merely to mock him; *Pool's and Whitby's Annotations.*

† The words in the text are, *the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*; wherein, according to the usual modesty of Scripture-language, is implied all that action of the Holy Ghost whereby the Blessed Virgin was enabled to become fruitful, and the place of ordinary generation was in this case supplied. Now, when this action is in Scripture represented as entirely the work of God, and yet is attributed to the Holy Ghost in particular, we are not to understand it so peculiarly his, that the two other persons, subsisting in the Godhead, should have no concern in it: For here that rule of the schools takes place, that the entire union of the divine nature makes all such actions common to all the three as do not refer to the properties and relations by which they stand distinguished from each other. As therefore the Holy Spirit began the first creation by moving (or brooding as it were) upon the face of the waters, so did he here begin the new creation, by conveying a principle, or power of fruitfulness, into a person otherwise

“ nothing was impossible to the Almighty, gave her to
 “ understand that her cousin Elizabeth (notwithstanding
 “ her old age, and former sterility) had been now six
 “ months with child :” Whereupon the Holy Virgin
 humbly acquiesced in whatever God had determined to do
 with her ; and, as soon as the angel was departed, made
 preparations for her journey to Hebron †, where her cou-
 sin Elizabeth lived.

As soon as she arrived at Zacharias’s house, Eliza-
 beth, upon hearing her first salutation, perceived that the
 child † sprang in her womb, and, being inspired with the
 Holy Ghost, she cried out, *Blessed art thou above thy sex !
 Blessed is the fruit of thy body ! and how vast is my felicity to
 be visited by the mother of my Lord !* And having, by the

A. M.
 3999, &c.
 Ant. Chris.
 1, &c.
 aut Ær.
 Vulg. 5.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 Luke i. 39.

otherwise incapable of it : And yet, as there, without the Father,
 and his divine Word or Son, *not any thing was made, that was made*,
 John i. 3. so did he here bring this second, *this creation of a new
 thing*, Jer. xxxi. 22. to effect, by the same co-operation of the whole
 undivided Trinity, as he had done the former ; *Stanhope on the
 epistles and gospels, vol. 1.*

† This very probably was the place where Zacharias and Eliza-
 beth lived, and where John the Baptist was born ; because it was not
 only one of the cities appointed for the priests to dwell in, Josh. xx. 7.
 but situated likewise in mountains, which running cross the middle of
 Judea from south to north, gave to the tract which they run along,
 the name of the *hill-country*. Hebron was ten leagues distant from
 Jerusalem, and about forty from Nazareth, which made it a long
 journey for the Blessed Virgin, had not her zeal to go and partake in
 her cousin’s joy (more than to satisfy her curiosity, whether what
 the angel had told her was true) made her surmount all difficulties ;
Wells’s Geography of the New Testament ; and Calmet’s Commentary.

† It is said indeed of the Baptist, that he *should be filled with the
 Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb* ; and from hence some have
 thought, that this extraordinary motion of the child in Elizabeth was
 an act of his own, and proceeded from a sensation of joy, which
 himself felt at the salutation of the Blessed Virgin : But, besides that
being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, means no
 more, than that the power of the Holy Ghost should be discerned to
 be upon him very early, it is certain, that infants in the womb are
 not capable of any joy themselves, as having no apprehensions of
 good to be enjoyed, or evil to be avoided ; but, as they are sensibly
 affected with the joy, or grief, or surprise of the parent, to whom
 they are united, the uncommon motion of the child, at this conjunc-
 ture must be occasioned by the joy which transported his mother ;
Hammond’s and Whitby’s Annotations.

A. M. 3999, *&c.* same prophetic spirit, assured Mary of the accomplishment of every thing that the angel had told her, she so transported the Blessed Virgin, that she broke out into a rapture of thanksgiving † to God, wherein she recounted his mercies, and the promises which he had made to the people of Israel, and which, by making her the blessed instrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

Ant. Chris. 1, *&c.* aut Ær. Vulg. 5. from the beginning of the Gospel to Matt. ix. 8 Elizabeth, and then returned home. Elizabeth, not long after, was delivered of a son; but, on the eighth day †, when the child was to be circumcised and named, his relations and friends were not a little surprised to hear that he was to be called *John* †, since none of the family bore that name; but their surprise became much greater, when they found that, upon this occasion, his father's speech was immediately restored to him, which he employed in the praises of Almighty God, who had wrought such prodigies among them.

Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
Luke i. 57.

† It was customary among the Jews, for pious and devout persons, when they found themselves inspired, upon great and solemn occasions, to celebrate the praises of God in songs made on purpose. Several of this kind we meet with in the Old Testament; but this of the Blessed Virgin is the first that occurs in the New, and, for the majesty of its style, the nobleness of its sentiments, and that spirit of piety, which runs through the whole, is inferior to none; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The Jews had a positive command in their law, that no child should be circumcised before the eighth day; because the mother, for seven days, was reputed unclean, and so was the child by touching her, Lev. xii. 1. 2.; but the law appointed no certain place in which circumcision was to be done, nor any certain person that was to perform it; neither did it enjoin, that the child should have his name given him at that time, only the custom prevailed of doing it then; because when God instituted the rite, he changed the names of Abraham and Sarah; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† The Jews, from their first beginning, seem to have made it a point of religion, to give such names to their children as were significative either of God's mercy to them, or of their duty to God, and from the passage now before us, (though it was no ancient usage), it seems to be a custom, introduced at least in the days of Zacharias, to call children by the name of their parents, or the nearest relations, (as it is usual now among us), if there was no particular reason to the contrary; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary.*

The Holy Virgin being returned to Nazareth, still concealed the mystery which God had wrought in her, from her espoused husband ; but her pregnant symptoms soon discovered it ; and though her deportment had been extremely chaste and modest, yet he might be well assured that she was with child. This raised no little concern in his breast ; but, being a merciful good man ||, and unwilling either to expose the honour of her family, which he thought she had stained, or to inflict public punishment upon her, (b) according to the sentence of the law, he

A. M. 3999, &c.
Ant. Chris.
1, &c.
aut. A. R.
Vulg. 5.
from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
Matt. i. 18.

|| The words in the text, as we translate them, are — *Joseph her husband being a just man* : But, if he was a just man, and was satisfied that his intended wife had, some way or other, violated her chastity, (as he knew nothing to the contrary at that time), instead of screening her crime, he ought to have brought her to punishment, Deut. xxii. 20. 21. Now, it is to be observed, that, upon the discovery of his wife's pregnancy, Joseph had the choice of three things, 1st, Either he might (notwithstanding this) have taken her to his house as his wife, because the law of divorce laid none under an obligation, but gave a permission only, (in case of some discovered uncleanness), to put away the wife : Or, 2^{dly}, He might give her a bill of divorcement, either in public or in private, (for that was left to his option), either before two or three witnesses, or before a proper magistrate, and that without specifying any crime against her : Or, 3^{dly}, He might, according to the law, have brought her upon her trial, whether, in the matter of her pregnancy, she had suffered a rape, or was herself consenting, Deut. xxii. 23. 24. Had therefore Joseph done the first of these, he must have acted counter to his own honour, and have incurred the common reproach, that he *who retained an adulteress is a fool*. Had he done the last of these, he was not sure of convicting her, because, upon examination, it might appear, that she had been forced ; and, in that case, the man that did it was to die, Deut. xxii. 25. ; or she might have been with child before her betrothing, and, in that case, she was only obliged to marry the person that had abused her, ver. 28. 29. Upon the whole, therefore, Joseph thought it the best and justest way to proceed upon the foot of a divorce. Mary's being visibly with child was reason sufficient to authorize his parting with her ; but he did not know for certain that she was guilty of adultery, or that consequently she deserved to die ; and therefore he did not think it right, by bringing her upon her trial, to expose her ; *Pool's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary* ; and *Spanheim's Dub. evang. part 1. dub. 31.*

(b) Deut. xxii. 23.

resolved

A. M. 3999, &c.
 Ant. Chris.
 1, &c.
 aut. Br.
 Vulg. 5.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

resolved upon a separation † with the utmost privacy : But before he came to put it in execution, an angel from heaven † appeared to him in a vision, informing him, “ That his wife’s conception was the immediate work “ of the Holy Ghost, and that she should bear a son, the

† The common way of separation among the Jews was, by the man’s giving the woman a letter of divorce. This, in their language, is called *Geth*, and the substance of it is to this effect. — “ On such a day, month, and year, and at such a place, I A divorce you voluntarily, put you away, and restore you to your liberty, even you B, who was heretofore my wife ; and I permit “ you to marry whom you please.” When the day of divorce comes, the Rabbi that attends, having strictly examined both parties, and finding that they are resolved to part, bids the woman open her hands, and, when she has received the deed, to close them both together, lest it should chance to fall to the ground. The man, when he gives her the parchment, (for on parchment the bill of divorce was to be wrote, in the presence of two Rabbins, and with many other trifling circumstances), tells her, “ Here is thy “ divorce. I put thee away from me, and leave thee at liberty to “ marry whom thou pleasest ;” and, when the woman has taken it, and the Rabbi read it over once more, she is entirely free. There is in this ceremony, however, to be remarked, that they always endeavour to have ten or twelve persons at it, besides the two witnesses who sign the deed. When therefore Joseph intended to dismiss Mary privately, it could not be, by having no witnesses at all, but as few as the nature of the thing would bear, and by giving her the letter of divorcement into her own hand, which she might suppress, if she thought fit, or by inserting no accusation against her in it, in case it came to be read before the company ; *Calmet’s Dictionary* under the word *Divorce* ; *Whitby’s* and *Beausobers’s Annotations*.

† This vision was in a dream, and while he was asleep ; and dreams, we know, were one way whereby God revealed his mind to the people formerly, Job. vii. 14. whereby he made himself known to his prophets, Numb. xii. 6. and not to prophets only, but to Pagan princes sometimes, as appears by the instances, both of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, Gen. xli. 1. Dan. ii. 1. But how to distinguish divine from natural dreams, it is difficult to say, unless it be by the clear and distinct series of their representation, and the forceable impression which they leave upon mens spirits ; whereas natural dreams, for the most part, are rambling and inconsistent, and “ who so regardeth them, (says the wife son of Sirach), is like “ him who catcheth at a shadow, or followeth after the wind ;” Ecclus. xxxiv. 2. ; *Pool’s Annotations*. Why God reveals himself by dreams, and in the night-time ; *vid. Spanheim’s Dub. evang. part 2. dub. 39.*

“ same

“ same person (c), whom the prophet had foretold under
 “ the name of *Emanuel*, or *God with us* :” Whereupon
 Joseph was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but
 taking the Holy Virgin home to him, he lived with her, to
 all outward appearance, in conjugal love, though he cer-
 tainly had no carnal knowledge of her, † till she was
 delivered

A. M.
 3999, &c.
 Ant. Christi
 1, &c.
 aut. Ær.
 Vulg. 5.
 from the
 beginning!
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

(c) Isaiah ix. 6.

† The word *first-born*, in Scripture, admits of various signifi-
 cations. Sometimes (and most commonly indeed) it denotes the el-
 dest of two or more children, as Eliab is called the *first-born* of
 Jesse, 1 Sam. xvii. 13; at others, the first that is born, without
 regard to any else, as when God says to Moses, *sanctify me all the*
first-born, Exod. xiii. 2. In some places it imports figuratively
 what is most dearly beloved by us; in which sense, God frequently
 calls the Israelites his *first-born*; and in others, what is most re-
 markable for greatness or excellency, as God promises David (who
 was but a younger brother of the family) to *make him the first-born*
of the kings of the earth, Psal. lxxxix. 27. In any of these three
 last senses our Saviour might very properly be called his mother's
first-born son, for as much as he was really her first child; her
 most and only beloved; and the most illustrious of his race: But
 then Joseph's not knowing his wife until she was delivered of her
 first-born son, seems to imply, that he knew her afterwards.
 Those who maintain the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Mother,
 tell us, that *usq;* which we render *until*, in several places of Scrip-
 ture, has relation only to the time which precedes, and not to that
 which follows, any event; so that *he knew her not until*, may be ta-
 ken in the same sense as *Samuel came not to see Saul till the day of*
his death, 1 Sam. xv. 35. *i. e.* he never came to see him: But,
 (besides that most of the passages, which are produced to this pur-
 pose, are far from coming up to the case in hand), since the angel
 commanded *Joseph to take Mary as his wife*, without any intimation
 that he should not perform the duty of an husband to her, it is not
 easy to conceive why he should live twelve years with her, and all
 that while deny that duty which both the law and the canons of
 the Jews command the husband to pay his wife, Exod. xxi. 10. If
 we imagine, that our Saviour would have been dishonoured in any
 other's lying in the same bed after him, we seem to forget how
 much he humbled and debased himself in lying in that bed first,
 and then in a stable and a manger. But, leaving this question to
 those who affect to be curious beyond what is written, we may safe-
 ly conclude with St Basil, ——— “ That though it was necessary for
 “ the completion of the prophecy, that the mother of our Lord
 “ should continue a virgin, until she had brought forth her first-
 “ born; yet what she was afterwards, it is idle to discuss, be-
 “ cause it is of no manner of concern to the mystery;”

Howell's
 History

A. M.
3999, &c.
Ant. Chris
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 5.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

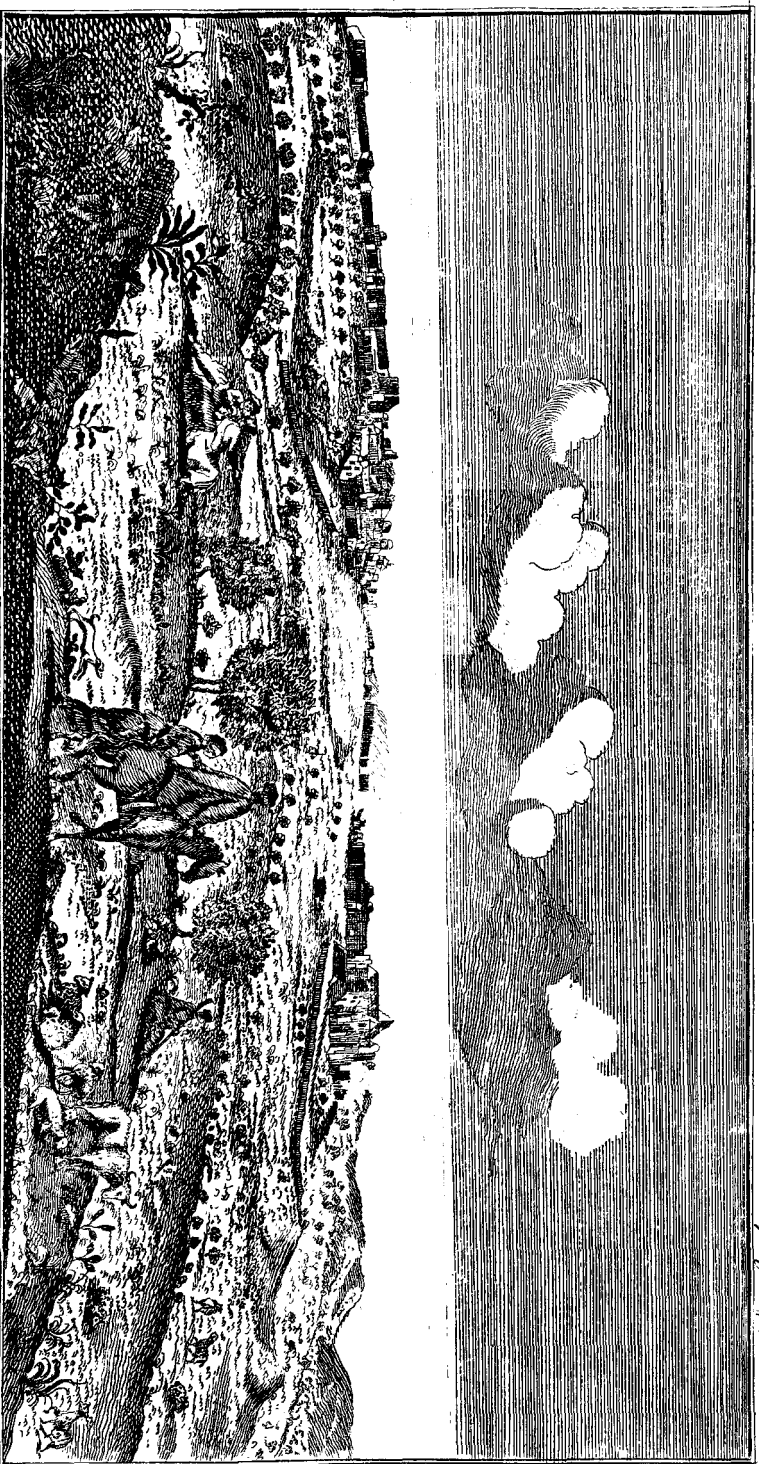
delivered of her first-born son, who, by a lineal descent, was true heir to the kingdom of Israel, as sprung from the house of David.

Some time before this, Augustus Cæsar had issued out a general edict, that all persons in the Roman empire, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain appointed places, according to their respective provinces, cities, and families. By virtue of this edict, Joseph, and his wife Mary, being both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, were obliged to go as far as Bethlehem †, which was the mother-city of their tribe, there

Luke ii. 1.

History in the notes ; Pool's and Whitby's Annotations ; and Spanheim's Dub. evang. part 1. dub. 28.

† Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born, (for there was another city of the same name in the tribe of Zebulun), is situate on the declivity of an hill, in the tribe of Judah, two leagues distant from Jerusalem, and near thirty from Nazareth ; so that we might justly wonder how the Blessed Virgin, big with child as she was, could be able to take so long a journey on foot, (for we hear of no other voiture that she had), were it not presumable, that the child, which she conceived without loss of her virginity, she might be enabled to carry without the sense of any load or uneasiness. What might possibly be the motive of her taking such a journey, is not so well accounted for by pretending that she was an heiress, and the sole relict of her family, which, upon this occasion, she was obliged to represent ; as it is by saying, that this was done by the especial providence and appointment of God, who ordered this inrollment (which Augustus intended to have had done before) to be delayed to this very time, and then instigated the Blessed Virgin to accompany her husband, that so Christ might be born in Bethlehem, according to the prediction of the prophet, Micah v. 2. and that his lineage and family might at that time be known, and preserved in the public tables. The birth indeed of our Blessed Saviour (more than its extent or riches) has made Bethlehem ever since a place of high renown, which is generally visited by pilgrims, and, at present, is furnished, not only with a convent of the Latins, but also with one of the Greeks, and another of the Armenians. Here are shewn you the very place where our Saviour was born ; the manger in which he was laid ; and the cave or grot in which the Blessed Virgin hid herself and her divine babe from the malice of Herod, for some time before their departure into Egypt. Here are shewn you likewise the chapel of St Joseph, the supposed father of our Lord ; the chapel of the Innocents ; as also those of St Jerom, St Paula, and Eustochium. About half a mile eastward from the town, you see



there to have their names and estates inrolled. The great conflux of people upon this occasion had already filled all the inns †, and houses of reception, so that no better place could be found for their lodging than a stable, where they had not been long, before the Blessed Virgin was delivered of a son, whom (herself performing the office of a midwife.†) she bound in swaddling cloaths, and laid down to rest in a manger. But, notwithstanding this obscurity of our Saviour's birth, God was pleased, that very night, by the message of an angel, with a radiant light surrounding him, to make a pompous revelation of it to certain poor shepherds, who were attending their flocks on the plains of Bethlehem; and, after one angel had delivered the joyful tidings, an innumerable company of the same celestial choir broke out all together into this triumphant doxology, *Glory be to God on high, peace on earth, and good-will towards men.*

A. M.
3999, &c.
Int. Chris.
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 5.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8 Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 3.
His mani-
festation to
the shep-
herds, old
Simeon and
Anna,

see the field where the shepherds were watching their flocks when they received the glad tidings of the birth of CHRIST, and not far from the field, the village where they dwelt; *Whitby's Annotations; Calmet's Commentary; and Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

† The inns in the east are, even to this day, large square buildings, but generally no more than one story high, with a spacious court in the middle of them. Into this court you enter in at a wide gate, and, on the right and left hand, meet with rooms that are appointed for travellers to lodge in. Those that come first, take the rooms they like best, but must be mindful to provide themselves both with bedding and victuals, because the rooms are perfectly naked, and have no furniture in them. It is some comfort however, that, for this lodging (such as it is) you will pay nothing, only a small toll to the town as you pass along; and have no reason to fear the loss of any thing you bring with you, because the master of the inn takes great care of the gate at night, and is indeed responsible for the safety of whatever baggage you carry into your lodging; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Which she could not have done, to be sure, had she been delivered in the common manner of other women: But it was always the opinion of the church, from the days of Gregory Nazianzen until now, (though before his days there were some opinions to the contrary), that, as there was no sin in the conception, so neither had the Virgin any pains in the production; for to her alone the punishment of Eve, that *in sorrow she should bring forth children*, did not extend; because, where nothing of sin was the ingredient, there nothing of misery could cohabit; *Taylor's life of Christ.*

A. M.
 4001, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 1, &c.
 aut Ær.
 Vulg. 3.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23
 Luke vi. 1.

No sooner was this heavenly concert ended, but the overjoyed shepherds, remembering the signs which the angel, before he disappeared, had given them, immediately hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the Virgin-mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the God-like babe, whom, in humble reverence, they adored, and then returned, praising and extolling the mercies of God, and, to the great amazement of all that heard them, publishing in all places what they knew concerning this child. As soon as the child was eight days old, his parents had him circumcised † according to the law; when, pursuant to the order which the angel had given before his conception, they called his name *Jesus*; and, as soon as he was forty days old, two other ceremonies were performed, viz. the purification † of his mother, and the presentation

† Our Blessed Lord, as he was the supreme lawgiver of the world, was not in strictness bound to the observation of his own law, nor did he stand in any need of circumcision, considered as a remedy against original sin; because, in his incarnation, he had contracted no pollution; but, as he was *made of a woman, made under the law, and came* (as himself testifies, Matth. iii 15.) *to fulfil all righteousness*, it became him to receive the character which distinguished the Jews from all other nations. Among the Jews, indeed, it was thought a reproach to keep company with persons that were not circumcised: *Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them*, is the accusation which they brought against St Peter, Acts xi. 3.; and therefore, as our Lord was sent chiefly to the lost sheep of Israel, he could not have been qualified for their acceptance and free conversation, had he not submitted to this ordinance. Of him was that most glorious of all the promises made to Abraham intended, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, Gal. iii. 16. And therefore fit it was, that he should have the seal or testimony of circumcision, in order to shew, that he was truly and rightly descended of that ancestor: And, as he was come to be the Mediator of a new and better covenant, it was but decent that the former should recede with honour, and that it might do so, himself should approve of a sacrament, which was both of divine institution, and a means of admission into that former covenant; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. i.

† The law concerning the purification of women, we have in the 12th chapter of Leviticus, wherein it is ordained, that a woman, after bearing of children, should continue for a certain

sentation of her first-born. Tho' therefore her son's immaculate conception needed not that ceremony; yet the Holy Virgin went up with Joseph to Jerusalem, there to offer the sacrifice † prescribed by the law for her own purification, and there to present her son to the Lord, by delivering him into the priest's hands, and redeeming him again for five shekels. But, while she was in the temple performing this, old Simeon † (who had long waited for the redemption

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

main number of days, in a state which the law termed *unclean*. For the seven first days, all conversation or contact polluted them that approached her, and for three and thirty days more, (which in all amounted to forty), she was still (though in an inferior degree) reputed unclean; but, at the expiration of this term, if her child was a son, (for the time was double for a daughter), she was commanded to bring a burnt-offering, and a sin-offering, which wiped out the stain which the law laid upon her, and restored her to all the purity and privileges she had before. Now, though the miraculous conception of the Blessed Virgin set her quite above any obligation to the law of impurity, yet, since her being a mother was sufficiently notorious, though the manner of her being so was a secret; it was fit that she should submit, as the known mother of a son, to the ceremonies expected from her. Her sin-offering was not indeed due in any sense; but she lay under the same legal incapacity in the eye of the world as other women did, and was to be restored to the temple by it. Her burnt-offering was not due, as that of other parents is, to commemorate a deliverance from pangs and danger; but never sure were thanks so justly due for any son as this; never from any mother as from her, who had the honour to bring forth her own, and the world's Saviour, the blessing and expectation of all the earth. As therefore he was circumcised in his own person, though the mystical and moral part of circumcision had nothing to do with him; so his mother submitted to all the purifications of any other Israelitish woman, though she partook not in any degree of the infirmities and pollutions common to other births; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

† What the Blessed Virgin offered, we read, was a pair of turtles, which being the oblation appointed only for the meaner sort of people, Lev. xii. 6. 8. discovers the poverty of Joseph and Mary, that they could not reach to a lamb of the first year, the offering which they who had ability were obliged to make; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† Some are of opinion, that this Simeon was the son and successor of Hillel, a very famous doctor in the Jewish church before our Saviour's time, and that he was either the father or master of Gamaliel, at whose feet St Paul was educated. But

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

redemption of Israel, and had been promised, by the mouth of heaven, that he should not leave this world, before he had seen the illustrious person who was to affect it) came in, and taking the blessed infant in his arms, in an heavenly ecstacy praised God for the completion of his promises, in letting him live to see the Saviour of the world, before he quitted it. And no sooner had he ended his divine rapture, but an ancient widow of the tribe of Aser, whose name was Anna, and whose piety and devotion, sincerity of life, and constant frequentation of the public worship, were very remarkable, coming into the temple, and being herself likewise excited by a prophetic spirit, gave God thanks for his infinite mercies; testifying, that this child was the true Messiah, and declaring the same to all such devout persons in Jerusalem as waited for his coming.

Matt. ii. 1.
and to the
wisemen of
the east.

After these legal performances, and solemn testimonies in favour of the child, Joseph and Mary returned to Bethlehem ||, where, in a very short time, they were visited

(besides that, we can hardly suppose, how a person of this note could make so public a declaration in favour of our Lord, and yet no more notice be taken of it) if we look into the several revelations, which God at this time was pleased to give of his Son, we shall find, that none of them were directed to any of the Pharisees, or principal doctors of the law, but that to Joseph a carpenter, to Zacharias an ordinary priest, and to a company of poor shepherds, such discoveries were made: And therefore, it is much more reasonable to presume, that this Simeon, to whom God had revealed the time of Christ's coming, was some honest plain man, more remarkable for his piety and devotion, than any other quality or accomplishment. When he came into the temple, it is said, that among the other mothers who brought their children to be presented to the Lord, he observed the Holy Virgin all shining with rays of light, and that, putting the multitude aside, he went directly to her, gave her his blessing, took the child Jesus in his arms, and being divinely inspired, pronounced the canticle, *Nunc dimittis*. Nicephorus relates, that, as soon as he returned the child to his mother, he died; and Epiphanius adds, that the Hebrew priests refused to give him burial, because he had spoken of our Saviour with too much advantage. But these traditions may be groundless fictions; *Pool's Annotations*; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Dictionary*, under the word *Simeon*.

|| The words in St Luke are, *When they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee,*

sited by certain strangers, coming from afar, of a rank and character somewhat extraordinary. For God, to notify the birth of his Son to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, caused an uncommon star to arise in the east, which some wisemen, or astronomers, in those parts observing, and understanding withal, that this was to signify the birth of the Messiah promised to the Jews, travelled to the metropolis of Judea, there inquiring after this new-born prince, that they might testify their homage and adoration of him. Their public character and appearance, and their openly calling him the *King of the Jews*, put Herod † into a great consternation, and the whole city indeed into no small commotion, as both fearing and hoping something extraordinary.

A. M. 4001, &c.
Ann. Dom. 1, &c.
aut. Ær. Vulg. 3.
from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23, Luke vi. 1.

Herod however, being resolved to destroy this supposed rival in his kingdom, immediately assembled the whole body of the Sanhedrim, and demanded of them the very place where the Messiah should be born. Bethlehem, in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah (they told him) was

Herod's murderous intentions against him disappointed.

Galilee, to their own city Nazareth, chap. ii. 39. which must be interpreted of some time at least after they had performed these things. For, upon supposition, that the Magians came to Bethlehem, after that Joseph and Mary had been at Jerusalem with the child, upon the child's return from thence, his parents must have taken Bethlehem in their way, and there made some small stay, (in which time we suppose that the wisemen came), before they departed to the place of their settled abode: Because the other two suppositions, *viz.* That the wise men came to Bethlehem before the presentation of the child at Jerusalem, or, that they came not till he was in the second year of his age, when his parents, upon some business or other, happened to be at Bethlehem, are attended with more difficulties than can easily be surmounted; *Vid. Spanheim's Dub. evan. part 2. dub. 25. 26.*

† Herod, who was naturally of a jealous and suspicious temper, knew very well, that himself was hated by the Jews, and that the Jews were then in full expectation of the Messiah (a prince that was to subdue all other nations) to come and reign over them, and had therefore great reason to fear, that this rumour of a king's being born among them, confirmed by such extraordinary means, as persons coming from a far country, and conducted to Jerusalem by the guidance of a wonderful star, might be a means to excite sedition among the people, and occasion perhaps a revolution in the government; *Calmet's Commentary.*

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut Ær.
Vulg. 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

the very spot which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Micah, had marked out for this great event; which when he understood, he dismissed the assembly; and sending for the above-mentioned astronomers, with the utmost secrecy he inquired of them the exact time of the star's first appearance, and then dismissed them to Bethlehem, with orders to make diligent search for the young prince, and, when they had discovered where he was, to bring him word to Jerusalem, that he, in like manner, might go and pay him his homage: But this pretence of worshipping was no more than a cloak to his intention of killing the child.

These persons, however, having received the king's instructions, † departed towards Bethlehem, and, in their way, were very agreeably surpris'd with a new sight of the same miraculous star they had seen in their own country, which went before them, and (like the fiery pillar in the wilderness) directed them to the very house where Jesus and his mother abode. As soon as they entered in, they fell prostrate on the ground, according to the eastern custom, and, having in this manner adored the child, † presented him with the richest products of their

† Some, upon this occasion, are apt to wonder, why none of the Jews should have the curiosity to attend the wise men in their journey to Bethlehem; and the reason, that is commonly assigned for their omission in this respect, is the dread they might have of offending the tyrant under whom they lived: But, as it is highly probable, that when the wise men came to Jerusalem, they made their immediate application to court, as the most likely place where to gain intelligence of him that was born king of the Jews; and, as it is much to be questioned, whether Herod when he convened the doctors of the law, made any mention of the wise mens coming, but nakedly propounded the question to them, "Where Christ was to be born?" So there is great reason to presume, that he sent them away so privately, that, if any of the Jews had been courageous enough to have gone along with them, they possibly might not have had an opportunity. The greater wonder of the two therefore is, that Herod should send none in whom he could confide; to be present at the discovery of this rival prince, and to bring him word thereof, if not dispatch him: But in this, the protection and providence of God was visible; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Some of the ancients are of opinion, that in the presents which these eastern sages made, they had a mystical meaning, and designed to signify their acknowledgment both of the divinity,

their country, gold, and precious odours, more particularly frankincense and myrrh.

Having thus performed their homage and congratulations, these eastern strangers were thinking of nothing more than to return to Jerusalem, and acquaint Herod with the happy discovery they had made; but God, who knew the heart of that tyrant, prevented them by a vision that very night, which directed them into their own country another way; and, not long after, sent an angel to Joseph, to acquaint him with Herod's intended cruelty against the child, and to order him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother, and there to continue till farther notice; which Joseph instantly obeyed, and, for fear of discovery, taking the advantage of the night, with all possible speed set forward for Egypt.

A M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

In the mean time, Herod waited impatiently for the return of the eastern sages; but, at length, finding himself deluded, and his most secret and subtle designs blasted, he fell into a most violent rage and fury; and, having resolved to effect by cruelty, what he had been disappointed of doing by policy, he sent out his soldiers, and † made

His massacre
cring the
children at
Bethlehem,
and wretch-
ed death.

a

nity, royalty, and humanity of our Blessed Saviour: For the incense, say they, was proper to be given to him as a God, the gold, as a king, and the myrrh, as a mortal man, whose body was to be embalmed therewith. But all this is no more than the sport of a luxuriant fancy. It is certain, that the eastern people never came into the presence of their princes without some presents, and that their presents were usually of the most choice things that their country did afford. All that they meant, therefore, was to do homage to a new-born prince of a neighbouring nation, in the best manner they could; and if what naturalists tell us be true, *viz.* that myrrh was only to be found in Arabia, and frankincense in Sabæa, which is a part of Arabia, and that this country was not destitute of gold, 2 Chron. ix. 14. and at the same time, was famous for men conversant in astronomy, this makes a very probable argument, that the wise men came from thence. But of this we shall see more hereafter; *Pool's Annotations.*

† It is thought strange by some, that Josephus, who writes the life of Herod in most of its circumstances, should make no manner of mention of the murder of these innocents: But, when it is considered, that Josephus was only born in the first year of Caligula, and the thirty-seventh of Christ; that he wrote his history of the Jewish wars (which he extracted from public records) in the fifty-sixth year of his age; and that it can scarce be supposed an action

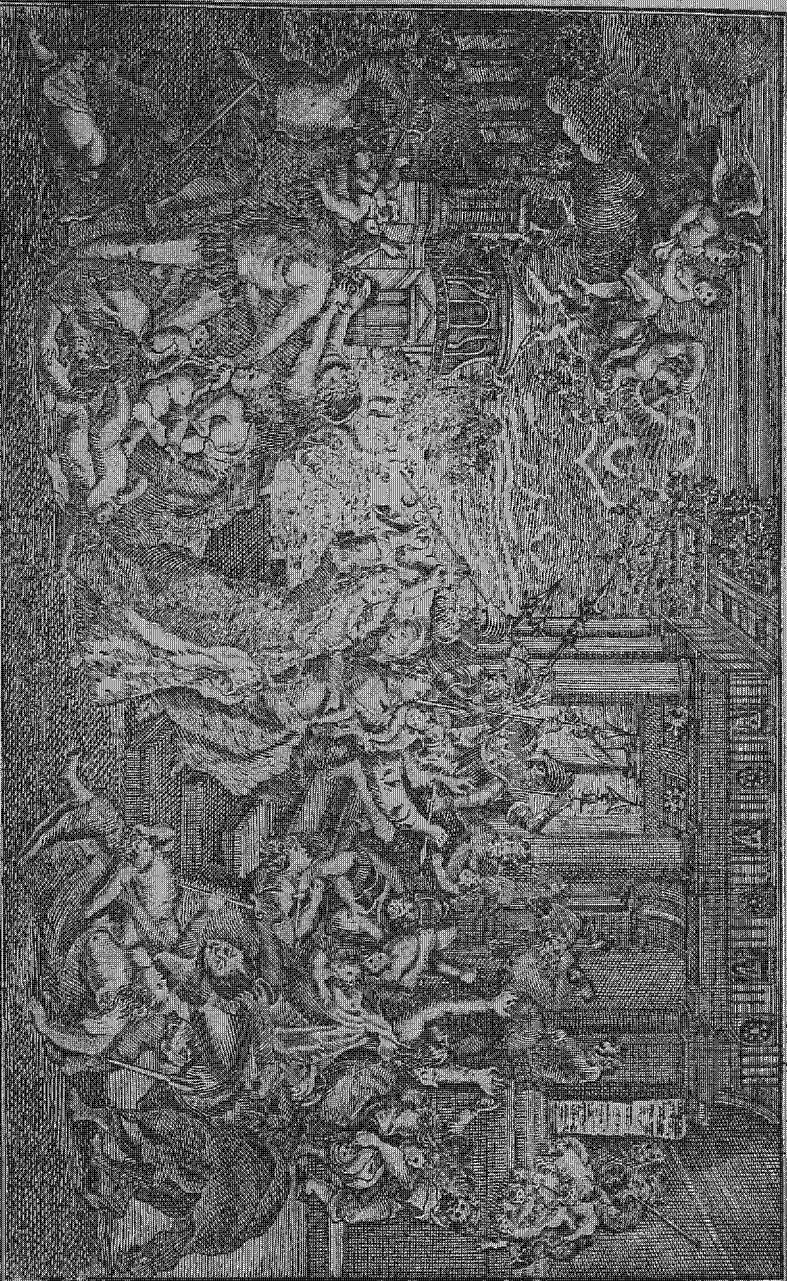
56

A. M. 4001, &c. a bloody massacre of all the children in the city of Bethle-
 Ann. Dom. hem, and the neighbouring towns, that were || two years
 1, &c. of age, and under, including herein the whole time,
 aut Ær. and more, that the wise men had told him, and not doubt-
 Vulg. 3. ing, but that, in this general slaughter, he should dispatch
 from the beginning the young prince whom he so much dreaded : But God
 of the Go- had provided him with a safe retreat. The shrieks, how-
 spels to ever, of tender mothers for their innocent babes, and the
 Matt. ix. 8. groans of expiring infants, which, on this occasion, filled
 Mark ii. 23. the skies, were inexpressible, and were one reason, doubt-
 Luke vi. 1. less, why the divine vengeance, not long after, overtook
 this tyrant, and * smote him with a strange and terrible
 distemper,

so inglorious to the memory of Herod as this massacre was, should be preserved in the Jewish records ; it is not so very wonderful, that he, who wrote above ninety-three years after the fact was committed, should make no mention of it : nor is it very material that he did not, since we find Macrobius, an Heathen author, about the latter end of the fourth age, not forgetting to acquaint us, that “ Herod the king ordered to be slain in Syria (which, in Roman authors, is frequently set for Judea) some children, that were under two years old ;” though he is mistaken in the circumstances of the story, when he makes Herod’s own son to be one of them ; *Saturn. lib. 2. c. 4.*

|| Some will needs infer from hence, that this dreadful massacre was not committed until our Lord was almost two years old, because they were children of that age, and under, whom Herod ordered to be slain : But, besides that the word *διετης* may signify one who has lived one year only, and so the words *ἀπὸ διέτους καὶ κατωτέρως*, may be translated, *from a year old, and under* ; Herod might possibly think, that the star did not appear till some considerable time after the young king’s birth, and so (to make sure work) might be induced to slay all born at Bethlehem a year before, and more, even to the time of the star’s appearing : For he who had the heart to slay three of his own sons would hardly be sparing of the blood of other people’s children ; *Whitby’s Annotations.*

* The disease of which he died, and the misery which he suffered under it, plainly shewed, that the hand of God was then, in a signal manner, upon him. For, not long after the murder of the infants at Bethlehem, his distemper (as Josephus informs us) daily increased, after an unheard-of manner, and he himself laboured under the most loathsome and tormenting accidents that can be imagined. “ He had a lingering and wasting fever, and grievous ulcers in his entrails and bowels ; a violent cholic, an insatiable appetite, venomous swelling in his feet, convulsions in his nerves, a perpetual asthma, and stinking breath, rottenness in his joints
 “ and



Herods Cruelty, Math. Ch. II. V. 36.

Engraved for W. Blandish's History of the Jews, published by JAMES ARNOTT.

distemper, which put an end to his wicked and brutal life.

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

“ and privy members, accompanied with prodigious itchings, crawling worms, and intolerable smells, so that he was a perfect hospital of incurable diseases.” And thus he died in horrid pain and torment, being smitten by God for his many enormous iniquities. For, setting aside some appearances of generosity and greatness, there was never a more complete tyrant than he. He suppressed and changed the high-priest’s office as he thought fit, and even profaned the temple itself. He slew the legal king of the Jews, extirpated all the race of the Maccabees, destroyed the whole Sanhedrim, and substituted others in their room: Nor was his rage confined to the Jews, but descended to his own family and nearest relations, even to the executing his beloved wife Mariamne, and his own sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, upon slight and trivial occasions. So wicked a prince, as he was conscious he had been, could not (he knew) occasion any true lamentation at his death, but rather a great deal of gladness and rejoicing all the kingdom over; and therefore to prevent this, he framed a project, which was one of the most horrid that ever entered into the mind of man. All the nobility, and most considerable men in every city, town, and village in Judea, upon pain of death, he summoned to come together to Jericho, where he was then lying sick, and, when they were come, commanded his soldiers to shut them all up in a spacious place, called the *Hippodrome*; when having called his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, with some choice friends, he told them with tears, “ That he was sensible of the Jews hatred to his government “ and person, and that his death would be an high satisfaction to “ them; that his friends therefore ought to procure him some so- “ lace in the midst of his bitter anguish, which if they performed “ according to his order, the mournings and lamentations at his “ death would be as great and magnificent as ever any prince had ; “ and this order was, that, on the same hour when he expired, the “ soldiers should surround the Hippodrome, and put all the inclosed “ persons to the sword, and then publish his death, which (as he “ said) would cause his exit to be doubly triumphant; *first*, for “ the posthumous execution of his commands; and *secondly*, for “ the quality and number of his mourners.” But Salome and Alexas, not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, chose rather to break their obligation, than make themselves the executioners of so bloody a design; and therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they opened the Hippodrome, and permitted all that were shut up in it to return to their respective homes; *Josephus De bello Jud. lib. i. c. 18.*; *Prideaux’s Con-
nection, part 2.*; and *Eachard’s Ecclesiastical history, l. b. i.*

A. M. (d) Before his death, he had, by will, (which, in
 4001, &c. some measure, Augustus confirmed), settled his dominions
 Ann. Dom. upon his sons, and his sister. Archelaus he had made his
 1, &c. successor in that part of his kingdom which included Ju-
 aut Ær. dea, Idumæa, and Samaria: to Philip he had given
 Vulg. 3. Auronitis, Trachonitis, Panæa, and Batanea: to Herod
 from the Antipas, Galilee, and Peræa: and to his sister Salome,
 beginning of the Go- some particular cities, with a considerable sum of money.
 spels to Matth. ix. After his death therefore, (which was notified to Joseph
 8. Mark ii. by a vision), God ordered him to return, with the child
 23. Luke and his mother, into the land of Israel, which Joseph
 vi. 1. readily obeyed; but, when he arrived in Judea, hearing
 Matt ii. 19. that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the coun-
 Joseph re- try, and being apprehensive that the cruelty and ambition
 turns with of the father might be entailed upon the son, he fear-
 him, and ed to settle there; and therefore, being directed by God
 his mother, in another vision, he retired into the dominions * of his
 and settles brother Herod Antipas, in Galilee, to his former habita-
 at Naza- tion in Nazareth, where the strange occurrences of our
 reth.

(d) Joseph. Antiq. lib. 17. c. 8.

* This Antipas his father Herod had once appointed to be his successor in his kingdom, but afterwards expunged him out of his will, and only made him tetrarch; but, not long after his brother's accession to the throne, he went to Rome, with a purpose to dispute the kingdom with him, on pretence that his father's former will, by which he was constituted king, ought to take place before the latter, which was made when his understanding was not so perfect. Both the brothers procured able orators to set forth their pretensions before the emperor, but the emperor nevertheless refused to decide any thing concerning their affair, nor did he at length give Archelaus the title of a king, but only of an ethnarch, with one moiety of the territories which his father enjoyed; but these, in a few years after, he, by his ill conduct, forfeited. Of all the sons of Herod, indeed, this Archelaus is said to have been of the most fierce and bloody temper. At his first accession to the government, (under the pretence of a mutiny), he had killed near three thousand of his subjects; and therefore Joseph, hearing of this, might well dread to go and settle in any part of his dominions; but, as Antipas was a man of a more mild disposition, and the birth of Jesus not made so public in Galilee, and at Nazareth, as it was at Bethlehem, and even at Jerusalem, by the coming of the wise men, and what happened at the purification of the Blessed Virgin, it was thought more advisable to retreat into this village, than to set up his abode in any populous city; *Pool's Annotations.*

Lord's

Lord's birth were not so well known. † After this, we have no certain account either of him, or his parents, only that they annually repaired with him to Jerusalem at the passover; and that, as his body increased in stature, so, || more especially the faculties of his soul were enlarged, being highly replenished with wisdom, and the grace of God.

A. M.
4001, &c.
Ann. Dom.
1, &c.
aut. Ær.
Vulg. 3.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Mark ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

In the mean time, (e) Archelaus, following the steps of his father, made himself so odious to the Jews, that the principal men among them, joining with those of Samaria, made a public complaint of him to Augustus, who, upon a full hearing both of his crimes and vindication, deprived him of his government, confiscated all his goods, banished him to Vienna, a city in Gaul, and reduced his dominions to the form of a Roman province, which, for ever after, was ruled by a governor sent from

† N. B. That the vulgar Christian æra, according to Dionysius Exiguus, which commences four years after the true time of Christ's birth, may begin to be computed much about this time, viz. from the beginning of the fourth year of Archelaus's, and the thirty-first of Augustus's reign, computing from his victory over Anthony and Cleopatra.

|| The words in the text are, *Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man*, Luke ii. 52. But if it be asked, how he, who was the eternal wisdom of the father, could be improved in any quality of his mind? The answer is, that all things in Scripture, which are spoken of Christ, are not spoken with respect to his entire person, but only with respect to one or other of the natures that are united in that person. His divine nature was infinite, and, consequently, capable of no improvements, but his human was: And therefore, though the divine *Λογος* was united to the human soul by its conception, yet might the divine nature communicate its powers to the human by distinct and gradual illuminations; and, accordingly, we may observe, that all public manifestation of it to the world seems to have been industriously declined, till ripeness of years and judgment had carried him up to the perfections of a man. So little reason have we to suppose, that he, who condescended to be like us in body, should think it below him to be so too in that other no less essential, but much more noble, part of us, our soul, without which, it was impossible for him to be man; so little reason to imagine, that the divine essence in him supplied the place and offices of intellectual faculties; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 2.

(e) Jewish Antiq. lib. 17. c. 12. et De bello Jud. lib. 2. c. 2.

A. M. Rome, who was called by the name of *Procurator*, but, in some cases, was subject to the president or governor of Syria.

4012, &c.
An. Dom.
12, &c.
Ær. Vulg.
8, &c.

from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

Christ's dis-
puting with
the doctors
in the tem-
ple at
twelve
years of
age, and li-
ving with
his parents
afterwards.

When Palestine was reduced to this state, and our Blest Saviour now advanced to the twelfth year of his age†, he went up with his parents (according as their custom was) to Jerusalem at the time of the passover. His parents, after a stay of the whole seven days, having performed the usual ceremonies of the feast, were now returning, with great numbers of their neighbours and acquaintance, towards Galilee; and, never doubting, but that Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on patiently for a whole day's journey: But, when night came on, and, among their relations and particular friends they could hear no tidings of him, it is not easy to imagine the greatness of their fears and || apprehensions, which made them return to Jerusalem with the utmost speed, to make all possible inquiry for him.

† At

† It is commonly observed by those that are learned in the customs and institutions of the Jewish church, that, till a child was twelve years old, he was not obliged to go to Jerusalem at the time of the passover; and that though their youth were usually thirteen before they were brought before the masters of the synagogue to give an account of their proficiency in religion, (which answers in a great measure to the Christian rite of confirmation), yet, since the season then appointed was accommodated to the capacities and attainments of children in general, without forbidding those of qualifications extraordinary, and whose genius (in the Jewish phrase) did run before the commandment, to appear sooner, our Saviour might offer himself to his examination a year before the common time: And this is the best reason that can be assigned for his staying behind his parents, when he could not but know, that they were departed from Jerusalem without him, and for his being found in one of the rooms adjoining to the temple, where the doctors of the law used to meet, not only to resolve the questions that were brought before them, but to examine likewise and confirm such of the youth as they found to be qualified for that ceremony, which (according to the same authors) was usually performed by devout prayers and solemn benedictions; *Grotius in Luke ii. 45.*; *Beausobre* and *Fool's Animations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.*

|| It may seem a little strange, perhaps, that Mary and Joseph, who had been sufficiently instructed, one would think, in the great article of Christ's divinity, and therefore must certainly know,

† At the end of three days, they found him in one of the rooms of the temple, (probably in that of the grand Sanhedrim), sitting among the learned doctors, and masters of Israel, hearing them discourse, and propounding such questions to them as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at the ripeness of his understanding. Nor were his parents less surprised to find him in that place; but, when his mother told him, with what impatience they had sought him, and, in some measure, blamed him for putting them in such a fright, the excuse which he made for himself was, *Know you not, that I must be employed in my Father's house?* Words, which, though she at that time did not rightly understand,

A. M.
4012, &c.
Ann. Dom.
Ær. Vulg.
9, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

know, that, as he was the power and wisdom of God, he could neither fall into any danger, nor come to any harm, should so mightily afflict themselves, when they came to miss him. The reason which Origin (Hom. i. 9. in Luc.) seems to assign, is, not that his parents supposed that he was lost, or come to any mischance, but were apprehensive that he had withdrawn himself to some other place, and was possibly gone up to heaven, there to continue, until his eternal Father should think proper to send him down again: But the most easy and natural solution is, that without ever considering what they had sufficient reason to believe concerning his divinity and omnipotence, they suffered themselves to be carried away by their natural tenderness; and could not, without great concern, see themselves deprived of his company, uncertain of what had befallen him, or for what possible reason he should absent himself from theirs. It must not be denied however, that though something may be allowed to a parent's fondness, yet it does not appear from their whole conduct, and especially from Mary's complaint, and our Saviour's reply, ver. 48. 49. that they had, as yet, a clear and perfect knowledge of his divine nature in union with the human; and therefore the evangelist has remarked upon them, "that they understood not the saying which he spake unto them," ver. 50.; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

† The words in the text are, *after three days they found him*; but we need not from thence infer, that they were three days a seeking him, but rather, that it was three days from the time they set out from Jerusalem; going on their journey the first day; returning to Jerusalem the second; and finding him in the temple on the third: For, since they found him in the temple, which, in all probability, was the first place they sought for him in, we can hardly imagine, that they should be three days in Jerusalem before they found him; *Pool's Annotations*.

A. M. 4012, &c.
Ann Dom.
Ær. Vulg.
9, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
Luke ii. 51.

she took care nevertheless for ever after to register in her mind !

Being thus happily found by his parents, he returned with them to Nazareth, and there living in all dutiful subjection to them, wrought (very probably) with his reputed father in the trade of a carpenter; and, after his father's death, (which is supposed to have happened about a year before the preaching of John the Baptist), (f) still continued in the same occupation: As indeed we can scarce help inferring, from the rude treatment of the Nazarenes his towns-men; as also from the total silence of the evangelists, as to the intermediate actions of his life †, that, though he *grew in favour with God and*

man;

(f) Mark vi. 3.

† It may possibly be made a question, Why the evangelists have given us no account of our Saviour's life, from the twelfth year of his age, till he began his ministry, which (according to the vulgar æra) was about the thirtieth; because if, in this intermediate space, he did any thing worthy of remembrance, it ought in all reason to have been recorded. But when it is considered that the end of the sacred penmen was, not so much to gratify our curiosity, as to consult our profit, we cannot but admire the great wisdom of God (by whose inspiration they wrote) in passing by the less active parts of our Lord's life, which would certainly have swelled their gospels to immensurable volumes, fit for the perusal of none but the studious, and such as had plenty of time at their command; whereas now, taking the four gospels together, they make but a small book, and separately, no more than little manuals that may be carried about with us where-ever we go; may be soon read over, and easily remembered even by men of mean capacities and no great leisure: And yet they contain all the transactions of our Saviour's life which chiefly concern us to know; I mean, such as relate to his mediatorial office, as that he came into the world to teach us, to die, and to rise again for us; to instruct us by his heavenly doctrine, as our prophet; to offer himself a sacrifice on the cross, as our priest; and to loose the bands of death, and ascend triumphant into heaven, as our king. *Illa ergo tempora*, says the learned Spanhemius, *notata, quæ nobis impensa, quæ in munere transmissa, quæ ad ἀσφάλειαν fidei nostræ sufficere visa, quæ Christum exhibent, vel in cathedra, vel in cruce, vel in throno. Sic etenim ostensum, illa tantum nobis quærenda et vestiganda esse in Messia, quæ actus officii, tum prophetici, tum sacerdotalis, tum regii, cujus causa venit, concernunt.* For there are also many other things, says the evangelist, that Jesus did, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might be-
lieve

man, yet (considering his excellencies) he lived in a very obscure manner, and, till the time of his manifestation to Israel, shewed no miraculous marks to distinguish him from the rest of mankind.

A. M.
4018, &c.
Ann. Dom.
Ær. Vulg.
15, &c.

(g) In the eighteenth year of our Saviour's life, died Augustus Cæsar at Nola, in Campania, (after a reign of near forty years), to the inexpressible grief of all his subjects, and was succeeded by Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia, by a former husband, but a prince of a quite contrary disposition to his predecessor. In the second year of his accession to the empire, he recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gratus (who was the fourth governor in these parts since the banishment of Archelaus) to succeed him. (h) Gratus, having continued in Judea about eleven years, was at length recalled, and Pontius Pilate (a person too like his master Tiberius, of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a * cruel and covetous disposition) was sent governor in his place. In the first year of his coming, (which was the fifteenth year of Tiberius, from the time that he was admitted to reign in copartnership with Augustus), * John the Baptist began

from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
The death
of Augu-
stus, and
disposition
of Judea.

A. M.
4033, &c.
Ann. Dom.
to 30, &c.

lieve that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name, John xxi. 25. and xx. 31.; Spanheim's Dub. evang. part 2. dub. 96.

(g) Joseph Antiq. lib. 18. c. 3. and Dion. (h) Ibid.

* Josephus has given us several instances of Pilate's great cruelty in the course of his government, viz. that he caused the Roman soldiers to fall upon a great number of Galileans, (very likely the followers of Judas Gaulonites), and to slaughter them like so many sheep in the temple, and on the very day appointed for the killing of the passover, and so mingled their blood with their sacrifices, Luke. xiii. 1. That when the people clamoured against his taking some of the sacred money out of the temple, he ordered the soldiers, upon a signal given, to fall upon them with large battoons, so that many died of the blows which they received, and many were trodden to death in the throng: And that the Samaritans, as well as the Jews, felt the severity of his administration, when he destroyed great numbers of them near Tirathaba; and of those whom he took, that were of any interest or quality among them, struck off their heads; Josephus *De bello Jud. lib. 2. c. 8. and Antiq. lib. 13. c. 5.*

* How John passed the former part of his life, the Scripture is silent; but there is an ancient tradition in the church, that Elizabeth, hearing of the sad havock which Herod's barbarity had made among

A. M. to open his commission for the preparation of our Saviour's way before him, † by preaching *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

4033, &c.
Ann. Dom.
Ær. Vulg.
30, &c.

He

from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

among the infants of Bethlehem, fled into the wilderness to secure her child from the tyrant's rage, and there attended him with all the care and tenderness of an affectionate mother: That the child was about eighteen months old when his mother thus fled with him; but, after forty days, she died, and his father Zachariah, at the next time of his ministration, was by the command of Herod (because he would not discover the place of his son's concealment) put to death: That, in this destitution of natural parents, God sent an angel to be his nourisher and guardian, (as he had formerly done to Elijah, when he fled from the rage of Ahab), until he came of strength to provide for himself, and that then he lived in the manner that the evangelists have described. When he began his preaching, it is not so well agreed. Lightfoot, and some others who believe that our Saviour was born in September, and that John was now beginning to be thirty years of age, are of opinion that he began his ministry about the passover; but Usher, and his followers, do, with more probability, suppose, that his preaching began upon the tenth day of the seventh month, (which answers to our nineteenth day of October), five days before the feast of tabernacles, upon the great day of expiation, when the high-priest entered the holy of holies, and when so solemn a fast was enjoined, that whosoever did not afflict his soul at that time, was to be cut off from the people; *Howell's History*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *John*.

† The meaning of this phrase is, that John preached repentance, Matth. iii. 2. and baptized those that were penitent, in token of the remission of their sins, even as they, on their parts, received baptism in testimony of the sincerity of their repentance. Now, baptism, we know, was no new or strange thing among the Jews. It was acknowledged, and practised, as an emblem of purification from past guilt, and a rite of entering solemnly into covenant with God. The expositors of their law agree, that this ceremony passed upon the whole congregation of Israel, just before the law was given at mount Sinai; and their custom, in all succeeding ages, has been to receive their Heathen proselytes by baptism, as well as by sacrifice and circumcision. In conformity to this therefore, John both administered and exhorted his followers to this ordinance of baptism, as an evidence of their penitence for past sins, and profession of better obedience for the future: But then, as faith is a qualification for baptism, as well as repentance, he propounded our Lord for the object of faith to all who received this ordinance at his hands: *For John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should be-*

lice

He had been † bred up in the wilderness, and lived an austere life. * Locusts and wild honey, such as nature produced in these desert places, was the chief diet he lived upon,

A. M. 4033, &c.
Ann Dom.
Æv. Vulg.
30, &c.
from the beginning

lieve in him, who should come after him, i. e. on Christ Jesus, Acts xix. 4. It is a great mistake therefore in some, to suppose, that the baptism of John was, in substance, the same with what Christ did afterwards institute: For John neither did, nor could, baptize his disciples in the *name of the Holy Ghost*, as the apostles did, because the *Holy Ghost was not yet given*, John vii. 39.; he did not baptize them in the name of Christ; for had he done so, there had been no occasion for the question, *Whether he himself were the Christ*, or not? Luke iii. 15. Herein therefore lay the imperfection of John's baptism, that though it prepared men to be Christians, yet it did not make them so; and therefore we find St Paul baptizing again some disciples at Ephesus, (who had before received the baptism of John), in order to fit them for the reception of the Holy Ghost, Acts xix. 5. 6.; *Whithy's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

of the Gospels to Matth. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.

The preaching of John the Baptist, and his manner of life.

† A wilderness, among the Jews, did not signify a place wholly void of inhabitants, but a place that was more mountainous, less fruitful, less peopled, and where the habitations were more dispersed, than in other parts of the country. For, as it is incongruous to suppose, that the baptist should preach the doctrine of repentance to stocks and stones, and wild beasts; the wilderness here must be understood in a comparative sense, and consequently the wilderness of Judea, where he preached and baptized, must be that tract of land which lay on each side of the river Jordan, on the confines of Enon and Salim; *Whithy's Annotations*; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*; and *Spanheim's Dubia evang. part 2. dub. 97.*

* There is no reason for running into criticisms; what the common diet of the Baptist was, whether fowl, or fish, or herbs, or wild pease, (for the word ἀγρίδες has been made to signify all these), since the thing is notorious, that locusts (in the most obvious sense of the word) were creatures which the Levitical law looked upon as clean, and allowed the Jews to eat, Levit. xi. 22. That they were a common food, as the ancients affirm, (Pliny, lib. 17. c. 3. and Strabo, lib. 16.) in Afric, Persia, Syria, and even Palestine itself; that, according to the account of some modern authors, in some places they are brought in waggon-loads, and sold in the market for the common people to feed on; and that they are frequently seen upon the banks of the river Jordan, of the same form, but much larger than ours; and being either fried in oil, or dried in the sun, are accounted a good sort of food. As little reason is there for men to puzzle themselves about what this μέλι ἀγριον, or *wild honey*, means, since every one knows, that Judea was so famed for plenty

A. M.
4033, &c.
Ann. Dom.
Ær. Vulg.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

upon, and a † loose coat made of camels hair, and fastened with a leathern girdle, the only garb he wore; and therefore no person was so proper to inculcate the doctrines of repentance and reformation, as he, who, by his free and resolute preaching, joined with this great severity of life, soon procured a vast auditory, and numerous profelytes of all ranks and qualities, from Jerusalem, and

of honey, that, in several places of Scripture, it is said to flow with honey; and from the instances of Samson, Judg. xiv. 8. and Jonathan, 1 Sam. xiv. 25. it must be concluded, that wild honey, such as either distilled from the boughs like dew, or was found in the cliffs of rocks, or hollow trunks of trees, was no uncommon thing in that country. But though these locusts and wild honey may very properly be taken in their natural and most obvious sense, yet it must not therefore be thought, that John never eat any thing else, but that, for the generality, he made use of such slender diet, and contented himself with what the desert place, which he chose for his habitation, could afford him; *Spanheim's Dubia evang. part 2. dub. 99.*

† We are told by some authors, that the hair of camels about the Caspian sea, was formerly the finest in the world, of which was made a very fine stuff; and that, in the empire of the great Cham of Tartary, in the city of Calacia, the metropolis of the province of Tangouth, there is a kind of cloth, which the inhabitants call *zambelotte*, (the same, no doubt, with what we call *camelot*), made of wool and camels hair, perfectly good, and as fine as any cloth whatsoever. But there is reason good to think, that John's habit was far from being of this kind, because it would not so well suit with the condition of a man living in a wilderness, to whom our Saviour opposes those that are *cloathed in soft raiment*; would not so well agree with the evangelist's design of setting forth the baptist's austerities in his habit, as well as his diet; nor comport so well with the description of Elias, whom he came to represent, *an hairy man, and one girt with a girdle of leather about his loins*, 2 Kings i. 8. Though therefore we may not infer from the expression, that the Baptist's habit was mere sack-cloth, (as some would have it), yet we cannot but conclude from thence, that it was plain and coarse, such as became the place where he lived, (where camels, we are told, were in great plenty), and a prophet and preacher of righteousness to wear. For so in the poem, written by Paulinus, it is described.

Vestis erat curvi fetis conferta cameli,
Contra luxuriam molles duraret ut artus,
Arceretque graves compuncto corpore somnos.

Ælian's History, c. 24.; Hammond's Annotations; and Spanheim's Dub. evang. part 2. dub. 98.

all Judea, and all the region about Jordan, confessing their sins before God, and entering into this new institution by baptism.

Among the great multitudes that came to his preaching and baptism, there were Pharisees †, and Sadduces not a few, whose confidence and immorality he sharply reproved; while, at the same time, he exhorted the common people to works of extensive charity; the publicans †, to avoid oppression and injustice; the soldiers, to abstain from plunder and violence; and every one, in short, to beware of those crimes to which their employments and manner of life did most expose them.

A. M.
4933, 376.
Ann Dom.
Æt. Vulg.
30, 376.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† We have already, in a separate dissertation, given a particular account of the rise and principles of the several sects among the Jews, and need only take notice here, that the Pharisees are thought to take their name from the word *Parash*, which signifies *separation*, because they were separated from all others in their extraordinary pretences to sanctity, and some particular observances; and that the Sadducees (who were directly opposite to the Pharisees both in temper and principles) derived their name, either from *Saduck*, who lived near 300 years before our Saviour's birth, and is supposed to be the founder of the sect, or (as some think) from *Sedeck*, which signifies *justice*, because they pretended to be the only exact distributors of justice, and were rigid indeed in the execution of it; *Eachard's Ecclesiastical history*, in the introduction.

† The publicans were persons of no particular sect, nor of any religious function among the Jews, but certain public officers whom the Romans employed to collect their tributes, tolls, and imposts. This office was once of great account among the Romans, and conferred upon none less than the equestrian order; but, when it came to fall into the hands of the Jews, who farmed it of the Romans, it soon became base and infamous, and more especially odious to the Jews upon these two accounts: 1st, Because these tributes were looked upon as a standing instance of their slavery, which they, who made such boasts of their being a free-born people, and invested in that privilege by God himself, could least of all endure. And, 2^{dly}, Because these publicans, having farmed the customs of the Romans at high rates, did generally make use of all methods of extortion and oppression, to enable them both to pay their rents, and to raise some advantage to themselves. Upon these accounts, the publicans, as conspiring with the Romans both to impoverish and enslave their countrymen, became so universally abhorred by the Jewish nation, that they held it unlawful to do them any act of common courtesy, nay, even to eat or to drink with them, for which we find them so frequently blaming our Saviour; *Eachard's Ecclesiastical history*, in the introduction, page 27.

A. M. These solemn admonitions, pronounced with so much
 4033, &c. weight and authority, procured him a mighty veneration
 Ann. Dom. among the people, insomuch, that several began to look
 Vulg. Ær. upon him as the promised and now expected Messiah; but,
 30, &c. to remove all thoughts of this kind, he freely declared,
 from the "That he only baptized them with water to repentance,
 beginning of the Go- "and a new life; but that there was one coming, and rea-
 spels to "dy to appear among them, who would baptize them
 Matt. ix. 8. "with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who so far ex-
 Mark ii. 23. "ceeded him in power and excellency, that he was not
 Luke vi. 1. "worthy to do for him the meanest or most servile office."
 Matt. iii. 11. These were the doctrines which John preached, and this
 Mark i. 7. the testimony which he gave of Jesus, even before he had
 Luke iii. 16. the happiness to know him.
 His testimo- After John had continued in his ministry for several
 ny of our months, our Lord thought fit to remove from his private
 Saviour, retirement at Nazareth, and, taking leave of his mother
 and our Sa- and his trade, passed over into Judea, to Bethabara †, on
 viour's bap- the banks of the river Jordan, where John was then bap-
 tism. tizing.

A. M. He, who was innocence and purity itself, had certainly
 4034, &c. no need of the baptism of repentance, but being minded
 Ann. Dom. to honour and sanctify the institution †, he offered himself
 30, &c. to

† Bethabara does, in the Hebrew language, signify as much as a place of passage; and therefore, whereas we read, Josh. ii. 7. 23. that there was a fording place over Jordan not far from Jericho; and again, Josh. iii. 16. that the people passed over right against Jericho, it is probably conjectured, that hereabouts stood Bethabara, and was the place of reception and entertainment for passengers out of Judea into Peræa, or the country beyond Jordan; nay, it is imagined by some, that, in the very same place of the river where the ark stood, while the Israelites passed over, our Blessed Saviour (the ark of the covenant of grace) was baptized by John the Baptist; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament.*

† There are some other reasons which might induce our Lord to come to John's baptism, besides what himself alledges, viz. the performance of all righteousness, or whatever had a tendency to the people's edification; as, that he might authorize this baptism of John by his public approbation; that by this rite he might be initiated to his prophetic office, and consecrated to the service of God; that hereby he might abolish the ceremony of the Jewish baptism, and more effectually recommend that of his own institution, to which this of the Baptist was an introduction; and, more especially, that, in the presence of the Baptist, and all the company that had resorted

to John, and when John, inspired with a prophetic spirit †, knew him, and thereupon endeavoured to decline the office, he gave him such reasons for the expediency of the thing, as made him no longer hesitate, but immediately baptized him. Jesus † was no sooner got out of the water,

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

to him, he might obtain the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and of his heavenly Father, to confirm John in the belief of his being the promised Messiah, and to induce the people, as soon as he began his ministry, to follow and attend to him; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words in the text are these, *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan, unto John, to be baptized of him, but John forbade him*, Matth. iii. 13. 14.; but how could John forbid him, when he says of himself, *I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*, John i. 33. Now to this it may be answered, that since one part of John's ministry was to bear witness of that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, it was highly necessary that our Saviour should be unknown to him in person, before he came to his baptism, that the world might have no suspicion of any collusion, or that the Baptist testified of him by compact. Though, therefore, he had never seen the face of our Saviour, because they were bred up in different countries, yet, by a particular revelation, he knew that he was already come into the world, and was shortly to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and therefore, when our Saviour came, and presented himself to be baptized, he had immediately another revelation, that this was the great person of whom he had been told before; even as Samuel, having been told by God, that, *on the morrow, a man should come to him to be the captain over his people Israel*, 1 Sam. ix. 16. upon Saul's appearing, had another inspiration, resembling the Baptist's here, *Behold the man of whom I spake to thee*, ver. 17.; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The observation of the Greek church, in relation to this matter, is this, that he who ascended out of the water must first descend down into it; and consequently, that baptism is to be performed, not by sprinkling, but by washing the body. And indeed, he must be strangely ignorant of the Jewish rites of baptism, who seems to doubt of this, since, to the due performance of it, they required the immersion of the whole body to such a degree of nicety, that if any dirt was upon it, that hindered the water from coming to that part, they thought the ceremony not rightly done. The Christians, no doubt, took this rite from the Jews, and followed them in their manner of perform-
ing

A. M. 4034, &c. Ann. Dom. 30, &c. from the beginning of the Gospel to Matt. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. water, but, as he was making his addressees to heaven, the sky on a sudden was divided by a great radiancy †, and the Holy Ghost (in the manner of a † dove) descended upon his sacred head, with an audible voice from heaven, wherein God declared him “ his beloved Son, in whom “ he was well pleased.”

Matt. ix. 8.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

ing it. Accordingly, several authors have shewn, that we read no where in Scripture of any one's being baptised, but by immersion, and, from the acts of councils, and ancient rituals, have proved, that this manner of immersion continued (as much as possible) to be used for thirteen hundred years after Christ. But it is much to be questioned, whether the prevalence of custom, and the over fondness of parents, will, in these cold climates especially, ever suffer it to be restored; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† The words of St Matthew are, ——— *Lo, the heavens were opened*; in St Mark, *cloven* or *rent*. The common people of the Jews indeed were of opinion, that the heavens were firm and solid, and that the fire, which fell from thence upon the face of the earth, burst through this firmament, and made an opening in this vast convex that surrounds us: And therefore it is, that the evangelists express themselves in this manner, in accommodation to the prejudices and capacities of the vulgar. But by the phrase we need understand no more, than that a sudden beam of radiant light came darting from the skies, (like a flash of lightning from the clouds), and made it seem as though the heavens had been opened or rent to let it out; because, to the naked eye, the air at that time seems to divide, to make a clearer and fuller way for the light; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations.*

† The ancients were generally of opinion, that the Holy Ghost in his descent upon our Saviour, assumed the real shape of a dove, which, at that time more especially, was a very proper representation of his dove-like nature, Isaiah xlii. 2. and of all such as were to receive the same Spirit, and are required to be as harmless as doves; but most of the moderns (though they allow, that the Blessed Spirit did, at this time, assume a visible shape, to render his descent manifest) do maintain, that the *ὁμοειπεσε* relates not to the body or shape of a dove, but to the manner of a dove's descending, and lighting on any thing; and thence they infer, that it was this body of light which issued from the skies that came down upon Christ, and, while he was praying, hung hovering over his head, just after the manner and motion of a dove, before it settles upon any thing. Whether of these opinions should prevail, it is idle to dispute, since neither of them are destitute of some countenance from Scripture, neither of them injurious to the dignity of the Holy Ghost; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Hammond's Annotations.*

Our Blessed Lord, being thus by baptism, and the unction of the Holy Ghost, prepared for his prophetic office, A. M. 4034, *Chr.* Ann. Dom. 30, &c. was, by the impulse of the divine Spirit, carried further into the wilderness of Judea; where, after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, † (as Moses did on Mount Sinai), and was now very hungry, the devil † assumed a bodily shape, and set upon him with a threefold temptation. beginning of the Gospels to Matth. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. 1st, From his hunger he took occasion to tempt him to despair, and distrust of his father's care of him, who had abandoned him in that condition, and therefore persuading him that he was not the Son of God, he put him upon the experiment of his being such, by making the stones become bread: But our Saviour soon answered him by a (h) passage out of the Scripture, intimating, that "God, when he pleased, could employ means extraordinary for the support and nourishment of men." 2dly, His next essay was, to try how far pride and presumption would affect him; and therefore, carrying him through the air, and setting him upon the † highest part of the temple, he

put

† Whoever considers the frailty of human nature, cannot but allow, that so great and so long an abstinence, without any sense of hunger, (for the evangelists tells us, that our Saviour was only hungry afterwards), must be altogether miraculous, and so no duty to us; and, if he reflects withal, that the end of his fast was not to chastise or subdue that body, which was never irregular, (as the design of all our fasting is), he must allow, that our Saviour, in this particular, set no precedent to us; and therefore it is cruelty, or a superstitious folly at least, in a matter so supernatural, to enjoin men to follow his steps; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† This word; which answers exactly with the Hebrew *Satan*, signifies a *calumniator* or *accuser*; and, as it occurs in Scripture always in the singular number, is supposed to denote that evil spirit who tempted our first parents, the chief of the rebel angels, and the avowed enemy of the saints, 1 Thess. iii. 5. and 1 Pet. v. 8. &c.; *Beaufobre's Annotations.*

(h) Deut. viii. 3.

† According to the description that Josephus gives us of the temple, which Herod built, we hear of no pinnacles, or lofty towers above the rest of the building; and therefore have reason to think, that *πτερύγιον*, which is rendered *pinnacle*, should rather signify the battlement, or that parapet-wall which was carried round the top of the temple, (as well as private houses, Deut. xxii. 8.), to keep men from falling from the roof: And, if we may be allowed to conjecture on what part of the battlement it was that the devil placed our

Saviour,

A. M. put him upon the proof of his being the Son of God, by
 3034, &c. throwing himself off from thence, and flying in the air,
 Ann. Dom. alledging a text out of the Psalmist (i) to encourage
 30, &c. him: But Jesus as soon answered him by another text,
 from the commanding men (k) not to tempt God or depend upon
 beginning his providence for their conservation in dangers of their
 of the Go- own seeking. 3dly, His last experiment was, to tempt
 spels to Matt. ix. 8. him with the charms of ambition; and therefore, trans-
 Mark ii. 23. porting him again through the air, to the top * of an ex-
 Luke vi. 1. ceeding

Saviour, it seems very likely, that it was on the top of that gallery, whose building (according to the same author) was so prodigious high, and the valley underneath it so stupendously deep, that it turned one's eyes and head to look from the top to the bottom of it, and was indeed one of the most confounding spectacles under the sun; *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Jewish Antiquities*, lib. 15. c. 14.

(i) Psal. xci. 11. (k) Deut. vi. 16.

* The best account that we have, both of the wilderness and high mountain where our Lord was tempted, is in the travels of Mr Maundrell, (for the ancients tell us very little of them), who informs us, ——— That in his journey from Jerusalem to Jordan, after he had passed over Mount Olivet, he proceeded in an intricate way, among hills and vallies interchangeably; and, after some hours travel in this sort of road, arrived at the mountainous desert, into which our Blessed Saviour was led by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil: "A miserable dry place," says he, "it is, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward. ——— From the tops of these hills of desolation, we had, however, a delightful prospect of the mountains of Arabia, the Dead sea, and the plains of Jericho, into which last we descended after about five hours march from Jerusalem. As soon as we entered the plain, we turned upon the left hand, and going about one hour that way, came to the foot of the Quarantania, (so called from our Lord's forty days fast), which, they say, is the mountain where the devil tempted him with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms and glories of the world. It is very high, and steep, and its ascent not only difficult, but dangerous." This is the account which our countryman gives us of the place where our Saviour was probably tempted: But it is not supposable, that, even from the highest mountain of the world, the devil could shew all the kingdoms of it; and therefore the most rational account of this matter is, that, "as he was the prince of the power of the air, he formed an airy horizon" (as Dr Lightfoot expresses it), "before the eyes of Christ, which

"might

ceeding high mountain, he there made a lively representation to him of all the kingdoms of the world, with all their dazzling glories, at one view, and then told him, that “ these, with all their pomp and splendor, were delivered “ to his disposal, and should be given to him, if he would “ but acknowledge his benefactor, and worship him :” But this was a boldness and blasphemy, such as provoked our Lord to exert his divine power, and to command him peremptorily to be gone, but with this *memento* out of the Scripture likewise, (1) *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve* : Whereupon the devil left him for that time, and angels, sent from heaven, came with refreshments for him, after his triumphant combat.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
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vi. 1.

During our Saviour’s fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his faithful forerunner John the Baptist, being thus assured both by the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven, that Jesus was the true and long expected Messiah, made full and open declarations of it to all the multitude that came to hear him ; and when the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem had sent a deputation of their Priests and Levites, (who were of the sect of the † Pharisees),

John i. 19.
John’s second testi-
mony concern-
ing our
Saviour.

“ might carry such a pompous and glorious appearance of kingdoms, states, and royalties in the face of it, as if he had seen “ those very kingdoms and states in reality.” God, we are told, caused Moses to see the whole land of promise from the top of Nebo, (as it is generally thought), by representing it to him in a large plan or map of it, in all the vallies round about him ; and, in like manner, (by divine permission), in all the vallies round about the high mountain on which our Lord stood, the devil might make a large draught of the stately edifices, the guards, and attendants of kings and princes, appearing in their splendor, visible to his eye, which he could not have seen so advantageously had he stood on a plain ; *Wells’s Geography of the New Testament* ; *Calmet’s Commentary* ; and *Pool’s* and *Whitby’s Annotations*.

(1) Deut. vi. 13.

† The Sanhedrim (whose business it was to take cognizance of the pretensions of all prophets when they began to appear in the world, and to inquire into their authority and mission) thought proper, out of their body, to depute such as were of this sect, because, as they were persons who believed the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, they were better qualified than the Sadducees (who believed neither) to inquire of John, Whether he was Elias ? Being in this particular mere Pythagoreans, and fancying, that the soul of one great or good man might frequently pass into another’s

A. M.
4034, &c.
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Matth. ix.
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vi. 1.

fees), to demand of him, Who he was? He very readily acknowledged that he was not the Messiah, whom they expected, nor Elias, who (as they imagined) would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet † risen from the dead; but then he gave them to understand, that, though he was not Elias himself, yet he was that prophet whom Isaiah intended, when he called him *the voice of one † crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord*; that his baptism was only of water, but the efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not; one, who succeeded him indeed in time, but so far surpassed him in dignity, that he was not worthy so much as to be his servant.

John i. 29. The very next day, after the departure of the Pharisees, as our Saviour was returning from the wilderness to Bethabara, John pointed him out to the multitude, as *the immaculate Lamb † of God, which taketh away the sins* of

body. Vid. Joseph Antiq. lib. 18. c. 2. and De bello Jud. lib. 2. c. 8. And as they were the patrons of tradition, and exact in all the ordinary rules and customs that were to be observed, they were the properest persons to examine into this new rite of baptism, by way of preparation for the Messiah, of which their traditions were wholly silent; and therefore they ask him, Why baptizest thou? *i. e.* “Why usurpest thou an authority which belongs to none but either to the Messiah, Elias, or some prophet, by initiating us, who are already under the covenant, into a new doctrine by baptism, which is usually administered to none but Heathen proselytes?” And from hence it appears, that the Pharisees were the properest men to send to the Baptist upon this message; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† It was a received tradition among the Jews, that at the coming of the Messiah, several of the ancient prophets should arise from the dead; *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† It is the opinion of some, that John chose rather to preach, and to fulfil his ministry, in the wilderness, than in the temple, in order to make a more illustrious difference between himself, who was but a messenger, (whose office it was to prepare his Lord's way), and his Lord himself, of whom it was prophesied, that he should frequently appear and teach in the temple, Mal. iii. 1.; *Pool's Annotations*.

† Under the Jewish law, when any sacrifice was offered for sin, he that brought it, laid his hand upon it, according to the commandment of God, Levit. i. 4. iii. 2. iv. 4. and, by that rite, transferred his sins upon the victim, which, after such act,

is

of mankind; and then freely declared, that he was the very person, of whose superiority, both in dignity and existence, he had spoken, and of whom, by certain tokens, he both knew, and could bear record, that he was the Son of God.

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann. Dom. 30, &c.
from the beginning of the Gospels to
Math. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.
John i. 35.
The coming in of his disciples

To two of his own disciples, the next day, he gave the same testimony, inasmuch that they left their old master and followed Jesus; and when Andrew † (who was one of them) went and discovered the same thing to his elder brother Simon, he, in like manner, became one of his disciples, to whom, the day following, were adjoined Philip, an inhabitant of the city Bethsaida †, and an intimate friend of his (m) named Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and supposed to be the same with the apostle Bartholomew.

is said to take and to carry them away. Accordingly, in the daily sacrifice of the lamb, the stationary men, who were the representatives of the people, laid their hands upon the lambs that were to be offered, and when they were thus offered, they are said to make an atonement for their souls, Exod. xxx. 15. 16.; and, in analogy hereunto, Christ is here called, by way of eminence, the Lamb of God, because God intended to lay upon him, who was manifest to take away sin, 1 John iii. 5. and came to suffer in our stead, the punishment due to the iniquities of us all; *Whitby's* and *Beaufobre's* Annotations.

† The other, in all probability, was John, the beloved apostle and evangelist, (because he describes the circumstances of the time and conversation that passed so very punctually, John i. 40.); but in this, and several other places of his gospel, (according to his wonted modesty), he chuses to conceal his name; *Hammond's* Annotations.

† There is no mention of this place in the Old Testament, and the reason is, because (as Josephus tells us) it was but a very small village, till Philip the Tetrarch built it up to the bulk and appearance of a very magnificent city, and gave it the name of *Julias*, out of respect to Julia, the daughter of Augustus Cæsar. Its original name, in the Hebrew tongue, imports a place of fishing, or else hunting, and for both these exercises it was very commodiously situated. As it belonged to the tribe of Naphtali, a country remarkable for its plenty of deer, Gen. xlix. 21. it was excellently fitted for the latter of these pastimes; and as it lay on the north end of the lake of Gennezareth, just where the river Jordan runs into it, it was so commodious for the former, that two of the persons just now mentioned, viz. Peter and Andrew, were fishermen by trade; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

(m) John xxi. 2.

A. M.
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Ann. Dom.
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from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

John ii. 1.
His first mi-
racle of
turning wa-
ter into
wine at the
marriage-
feast.

- This Nathaniel, at his very first coming, upon our Saviour's expressing some tokens of his omniscience, made a liberal confession of his being the Messiah, the Son of God ; whereupon our Saviour assured him, that, in a short time, he should have a fuller conviction of his divinity, when he should see the angels of heaven † ascending and descending (as they did once in the vision to Jacob) to attend the person, and execute the orders of the Son of Man †.

With these five disciples, Jesus †, and his mother, were invited

† To ascend and descend, to come and go, (according to the Hebrew manner of expression), denotes a free and familiar commerce ; and such, no doubt, was the ministry of angels, at our Saviour's temptation and agony, at his resurrection and ascension. The words however must be owned to be a plain allusion to Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12. 13. on the top of which was the divine Majesty, and the angels ascending to receive his commands, and descending to execute them : And therefore others have thought, that Christ by these words intended to inform his apostles, " That the " miracles which they should soon see him perform, would declare " the divine Majesty present with him, and giving him such com- " mands as he was to execute in his prophetic office, as clearly " and manifestly, as if they had seen the angels of God ascending " and descending upon him ;" *Whitby's Annotations.*

† It is observed by several, that only Ezekiel in the Old Testament, and our Saviour in the new, are called by this name ; that our Saviour is never so called but by himself ; and that this is the common appellation that he gives himself. Ezekiel was doubtless so called, to distinguish him from those spiritual beings, with whom he so frequently conversed ; And our Saviour took upon him that title, not only to distinguish his human from his divine nature, but to express his humility likewise, and want of reputation, while he continued in the form of a servant. Chemnitius, however, puts another construction upon this title : He thinks, that as the term *Messiah* (which is commonly called *Christ*) was taken out of Daniel, so that other of the *Son of Man*, is taken from thence likewise ; for behold one, like the son of man, (says the prophet), came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, chap. vii. 13. and that therefore our Saviour did usually call himself so, in compliance to the prophecy, as well as to assert his humanity, and declare himself his Father's servant, according to the character given of him by Isaiah xlii. 1. ; *Pool's Annotations.*

† In all probability it was at some relation's house, that this marriage was kept, because Mary was so solicitous for the supply of wine ; and the opinion of the ancients is, that it was at the house of Alphaeus,

invited next day to a marriage-feast in Cana †, a small place in Galilee, not far from Nazareth. At this solemnity there happened to be a scarcity of wine, which when his mother understood, she made her application to him, in hopes that, by some means or other, he would not fail to supply the defect. In other instances, no doubt, she had been made sensible of his supernatural power; and therefore (though his answer to her seems to carry in it the appearance of a denial) she still expected something extraordinary from him; and therefore ordered the waiters to obey his commands with the utmost exactness.

A. M.
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Ann. Dom.
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from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

The custom of the Jews, in all their entertainments, was to use frequent washings; and for this purpose there were, in a certain private room, six water-cisterns, containing each about twenty gallons of our measure. These our Saviour commanded the servants to fill up to the brim, and when they had so done, to carry the liquor to the governor of the feast, for him to distribute to the rest of the company, as the manner then was. But when the governor had tasted it, he was not a little surprised; and calling to the bridegroom, told him, with a pleasant air, That, at most entertainments like this, it was an usual thing for people to bring out their best wine at first, and worse, when the guests had drank plentifully; but that he, contrary to the common custom, had reserved his best to the latter end of the feast.

This was the first miracle our Saviour did in any public manner, which proved both a manifestation of his own divinity, and a confirmation of his disciples faith. From Cana he went down to † Capernaum, the place where he

Alphæus, otherwise named *Cleophas*, whose wife was *Mary*, the sister or cousin-german of the Blessed Virgin, and who, at this time, married his son *Simon the Canaanite*, *Matth. x. 4.*; though others will have it, that the bridegroom was *Nathaniel*; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† This is called *Cana of Galilee*, to distinguish it from another town of the same name, mentioned *Josh. xix. 28.* belonging to the tribe of *Asher*, not far from the city of *Sidon*, and so situated much more north than this Cana was; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† This city is no where mentioned in the Old Testament, either under this, or any name like it; and therefore it is not improbable, that it was one of those towns which the Jews built

A. M.
 4034. &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 30. &c.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23.
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he usually afterwards resided ; but his stay at this time was not long there, because his purpose was to go to Jerusalem at the approaching feast of the passover †.

As soon as our Saviour came to Jerusalem, the first thing he did was to reform the public abuse and profanation of the temple, occasioned by the shops which money-changers had set up, and the beasts which the deal-

The first
 passover.
 John ii. 15.
 His clearing
 the temple,
 and work-
 ing many
 miracles at
 Jerusalem.

built after their return from the Babylonish captivity. It stood on the sea-coast, *i. e.* on the coast of the sea of Galilee, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, Matth. iv. 15. 16. and consequently towards the upper part thereof. It took its name, no doubt, from an adjacent spring of great repute for its clear and limpid waters, and which (according to Josephus) is by the natives called *Capernaum*. As this spring might be some inducement for the building of the town in the place where it stood, so its being a convenient washing place from Galilee to any parts on the other side of the sea, might be some motive to our Lord for his moving from Nazareth, and making this the place of his most constant residence. Upon this account Capernaum was highly honoured, and is said by our Lord himself to be exalted unto heaven ; but because it made no right use of this signal favour, it drew from him the severe denunciation, that it should be brought down to hell, Matth. xi. 23. which has abundantly been verified ; for so far is it from being the metropolis of all Galilee, (as it was once), that it consisted long since of no more than six poor fishermen's cottages, and may perhaps be now totally desolate ; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† This feast is so well known, and has been so fully explained at the time of its first institution, Exod. xii. that we need only remind our reader, that, from the word *Pasach*, which signifies to *leap* or *skip over*, the Jews gave the name of *Pascha*, or *Passover*, to that great festival, which was annually appointed, in commemoration of their coming forth out of Egypt ; because the night before their departure, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over the houses of the Israelites, which were marked with the blood of the lamb, killed the evening before, and for this reason called the *paschal lamb*. The feast itself began on the fourteenth day of Nisan, which is the first month in their sacred, but the seventh in the civil year, and answers in part to our March and April ; but as the Jews began their days at six in the evening, this feast was to continue seven days complete, and so ended on the one and twentieth day in the evening ; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word.

ers therein used to bring into the court of the Gentiles †. This our Lord's zeal for his Father's honour could not well brook; and therefore, with a scourge made of cords, he drove all the sellers ‖ and barterers from the sacred ground, overturned the tables † of the money-changers, and

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beginning
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spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† There were three courts belonging to the temple. The court of the priests, where the altar of incense stood: The court of the Israelites, where the Jews that were clean, and the profelytes of justice, *i. e.* those who had embraced circumcision, and the whole law of Moses, met at their devotions; and the court of the Gentiles, where the unclean Jew, and the Gentile, who owned the true God, without professing Judaism, were permitted to come and worship. Now, under the same pretext of having the sacrifices near at hand, as well as out of a contempt of that court, where the Gentile worshippers were permitted to enter, the priests, for their sordid gain, had permitted beasts and poultry to be brought within this court, and graziers and hucksters, (whose business properly was in the markets of Jerusalem), to mix with people at their devotions, which was an abuse notoriously scandalous; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Eachard's Ecclesiastical history*, chap. 3.

‖ It may possibly be asked, how our Blessed Lord, with nothing but a whip in his hand, should be able to execute this heroic act upon a multitude of people, who might suffer damage in their wares, and consequently be in a disposition to resist him? Now, whoever considers, that our Saviour had done enough already to prove himself a prophet sent from God, and that the general concession was, that a prophet thus sent had sufficient authority to rectify disorders; if he remembers, at the same time, the great reverence that was constantly paid to the temple, and what titles of honour and respect were given it by God himself, cannot but allow, that the present abuse of it was abominable, our Saviour's zeal in redressing it commendable, and that, from all thinking and disinterested persons, it would consequently meet with countenance and approbation. Nor is it to be doubted, but that a consciousness of guilt in the profaners themselves, might, in some measure, contribute to their submission and acquiescence, even in the same manner as his enemies were struck backwards with a sense of their own guilt, as well as the majesty of his appearance, and fell down to the ground, when they came to apprehend him in the garden, John xviii. 6.; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Bishop Smallbrook's Vindication*, page 146.

† It was an appointment of the law, that every man, from twenty years old and upwards, should annually pay into the treasury of the temple, in order to defray the expence of the daily sacrifices, the sum of half a shekel, Exod. xxx. 12. 15. This, and the voluntary oblations

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beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John ii. 18.

and commanded those who dealt in doves or pigeons, to take away their goods, and make his Father's house no longer a house of merchandise.

This extraordinary procedure incensed the Jews to such a degree, that they came and demanded of him by what authority he did these things, and to give them some evidence of his having a commission so to do : But to this he made no other reply, than by foretelling his own resurrection, expressed in the metaphor of the temple, which they understood of the temple at Jerusalem, that had been ||

oblations of people of all ranks, occasioned a necessity of changing greater coin into less, and very often of foreign coin into that which was current in the nation. Under the pretence, therefore, of having things near at hand, the priests took this opportunity to gratify their covetousness, by letting out places to money-changers, who, to make up their rent, (which very likely was exorbitant), might extort from those that came to them, or (as Origen imagines) give them ἀργύριον ἀδόκιμον, *base money*, instead of good, and so made the temple a den of thieves; *Whitby's Annotations on Matth. xxi. 13.*

† Whether it were the priests, the magistrates, or the common people, that put this question to our Saviour, it is certain, that they do not in the least pretend to justify the profanation which he had thus reformed ; and therefore their principle seems to have been, “ That, let the corruptions and abuses in a church be never so great, yet they were not to be reformed, but either by the ordinary authority of the magistrate, or by an extraordinary authority from God. “ Such an authority they were ready to acknowledge in prophets ; but “ then they expected, that those who pretended to this, and to “ have their mission from God, should be able to prove that mission “ by some miraculous operations.” But how they came to put this question to our Lord, after they had seen his miracles, and knew that he claimed a divine commission, and had told them, *that the works he had done in his Father's name bore witness of him*, John v. 36. can be imputed to nothing but their perverseness, and obstinate infidelity ; *Pool's Annotations.*

|| From Herod's beginning to rebuild the temple, to this first pass-over after our Saviour's baptism, it is agreed, that the time was exactly six and forty years ; but then Josephus, *Antiq. lib. 15. c. 14.* tells us, that the whole was finished in nine years and an half. But this is to be understood of the grand building only, since (according to the same author, *lib. 20. c. 8.*) several new works and decorations were still carrying on, and near eighteen thousand men employed therein, even to the time that young Agrippa was made king of Judea, which was about the sixtieth year of the Christian æra ; *Calmer's Commentary* ; and *Beausobre's Annotations.*

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six and forty years a-building, but he, of the temple † of his own body, which in three days after they had slain it, he promised to revive. Tho' therefore at this time he refused to work any miracle at the instigation of the Jews, yet, shortly after, we find him working many, which surprised the whole city, and excited the curiosity of one person in particular, whose name was Nicodemus, (a considerable man in the Sanhedrim, and of the sect of the Pharisees), to repair to him, (but privately, and in the night-time, for fear of being known), and to declare freely to him, "that he verily believed he was come immediately from heaven, because the miracles || which he wrought were a demonstration of it."

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† Hereupon our Blessed Saviour took occasion to let him know, that this belief was not the only qualification requisite to become his disciple, and then proceeded to instruct

His discourse with Nicodemus concerning regeneration, &c.

† The Jews had a maxim, or proverbial speech among them, that "the sanctuary of sanctuaries was the Messiah;" and therefore there could be no impropriety in our Saviour's calling his body a temple; for if the apostle calls our bodies *the temple of God*, as he does, 1 Cor. iii. 16 and 2 Cor. vi. 16. how much more does that title belong to the body of Christ, in which the fulness of the God-head dwelt always, and inseparably? *Pool's* and *Beaufobre's Annotations*.

|| But are miracles alone a demonstration of a person's being sent by God? Nicodemus was not ignorant of the caution which Moses had given the Jews against false prophets, Deut. xii. 1. &c.; nor does he here speak of miracles in general, but of those particular ones which Jesus had done in the time of the passover: and these were so great in their nature, so solid in their proof, so beneficial in their effects, and in their end so well designed to confirm a doctrine every way suitable to the divine attributes, and to fulfil the prophecies concerning the Messiah, the Sun of Righteousness, who was to rise with healing in his wings, Mal. iv. 2 that there was the greatest assurance that none, without an omnipotent hand, could do them. Not to say that Nicodemus might have both examined the doctrine, and inquired into the life of Jesus, before he made that inference from his miracles; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Some have imagined, from the seeming abruptness of the answer which our Lord gives Nicodemus, that Nicodemus might have put some previous question to him, (not recorded by the evangelist), concerning the means of attaining the kingdom of God, *i. e.* eternal happiness, or of qualifying himself to be a disciple of the Messiah; for in that sense the kingdom of God is likewise taken. But

A. M. 4034, &c. Ann Dom. 30, &c. from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.

fruct him in the great mystery of regeneration, telling him, "That, as no production could transcend the nature and condition of its parent, flesh, for instance, though never so much diversified, could still produce no more than flesh; so this formation of a new creature was to be effected by different principles, namely, by the water of baptism † washing away sins, and by " the

(besides that the term *answered* does not always, in the New Testament, signify a reply to a question already propounded, but very frequently no more than the beginning of a new speech) the connection between the compliment which Nicodemus makes our Lord, and our Lord's reply to it, will not be amiss, if we can but suppose in the words this implication:—"Thy acknowledgment of my divine mission and authority, free and generous though it be, will not be sufficient to render thee a member of that kingdom which I am going to set up; for, except a man be born again, *i. e.* renewed in his mind, will, and affections, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and so become a new creature, he cannot see the kingdom of God, *i. e.* he cannot be a Christian here, or a saint hereafter;" *Pool's, Whitby's, and Hammond's Annotations.*

† Those who make the water and the Spirit, here mentioned by our Saviour, one and the same thing, (which to every common reader, must, at first sight, appear to be distinct), would do well to consider, that the question between Christ and Nicodemus was about what was requisite to prepare a man for the kingdom, *i. e.* God's church, and make him partaker of the gospel-blessing. Certain it is, that baptism by water was not only the common method of receiving proselytes into the Jewish church, but it is declared likewise by our Lord himself to be the ordinary way of entering into his kingdom; *for he that believeth, and is baptized, says he, shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16.; and therefore he gave commission to his apostles to make disciples in all nations by baptizing them, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* Nay, so far are the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit from superseding the necessity of this ordinance, that, in the apostolic age, we find them rather esteemed a proper predisposition for it: For, when the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his company, in the same manner that it fell upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, *Acts ii. 1.* what is St Peter's inference from these miraculous gifts? Is it that the persons on whom they rested had no need of baptism? No; but rather, that these extraordinary gifts were a full evidence, that they were the proper objects of it; for, *can any one (says he) forbid water, that these should not be baptized?* So far is the baptism of the Spirit (even where it is undeniable) from excluding the baptism of water, and so

strong

“ the Holy Spirit, giving a power and efficacy to mens
 “ endeavours to do well; which spirit bloweth where it
 “ listeth, and is as the wind, certain and notorious in its
 “ effects, but secret in the principle and manner of its
 “ production.”

A. M.
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 30, &c.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

This doctrine of regeneration (which to Nicodemus †
 seemed so very abstruse) “ our Saviour proceeds to tell
 “ him was no more, in respect of other mysteries of the
 “ gospel, than the earth is in comparison of the heavens;
 “ and so goes on to acquaint him with matters of a more
 “ sublime nature; with his descent from heaven, his
 “ death, his ascension, and the blessing of that redemp-
 “ tion which he came into the world to accomplish. He
 “ instructs them in the love of the Father, the mission of
 “ the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eterni-
 “ ty. He upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and
 “ declares the difference between a pure and corrupt con-
 “ science, the shame and fears of the one, and the con-
 “ fidence and serenity of the other.”

This is the substance of our Saviour’s discourse to Nico-
 demus, who afterwards became a convert; and no sooner
 was the passover ended, but our Lord, in company with
 many of his disciples, who, by his miraculous works,
 were convinced of his divinity, went about the province

John’s
 third testi-
 mony con-
 cerning our
 Saviour,
 and his be-
 ing ast into
 prison.

Among a proof is the instance before us, that the graces of the Spirit
 may be the foundation of a just claim to baptism, but never (where
 the sacrament can be had) a lawful dispensation to any man for the
 refusal or neglect of it; *Whitby’s Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the*
epistles and gospels. vol. 3.

† Our Blessed Saviour might well wonder at Nicodemus’s igno-
 rance in the point of regeneration, when this was the common no-
 tion of proselytisin among the Jews, that he who was washed and
 circumcised, was looked upon as a *recens natus*, an infant new-
 born: And where there were so many passages, in the law and the
 prophets, relating to this very doctrine; for what else can the
 meaning be of the circumcision of the heart, commanded by Mo-
 ses, Deut. x. 16. of the renewal of a clean and right spirit, prayed
 for by David, Psal. li. 10. of the putting God’s law in the inward
 parts, mentioned by Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. 33. and the giving his
 people a new heart, and a new spirit, promised by God, Ezek.
 xxxvi. 26.? These, and many more, were intimations of the doc-
 trine of regeneration; but the Pharisees were so taken up with their
 rites and traditions, that they gave small attention to the spiritual
 things of nearer and much greater concernment to their souls;
Pool’s and Beausobre’s Annotations.

A. M. of Judea †, making profelytes where-ever he came, and
 4034, &c. causing them to be baptised by the hands of his disciples,
 Ann. Dom. because himself was employed in greater affairs, viz. in
 30, &c. teaching the people, and relieving their necessities.

from the beginning of the Go- John the Baptist had, at this time, removed his station
 spels to from Bethabara to Ænon, a place remarkable (as its name
 Matt. ix. 8. imports) for springs and waters, and therefore of great
 Mark ii. 23. convenience for baptising. While he was there, a dispute
 Luke vi. 1. happened to arise between his disciples and certain Jews,

who were present, which of the baptisms, that of John,
 John iii 23. or that of Jesus, was preferable? And when his disciples,
 by way of appeal to John, came, and acquainted him,
 that the person, of whom he had given such honourable
 testimony, received profelytes (and that in vast numbers)
 by the same ceremony of baptism as he did, John repeated
 the same testimony again, and reminded his disciples, how
 frequently he had told them, "That the person of whom
 " they spake, was the Messiah, whom God had sent into the
 " world for the salvation of mankind, and himself no
 " more than his herald; and that his ministry therefore
 " was now going to decline, even as, upon the ap-
 " proach of the sun, the glory of the morning-star de-
 " creases." And having said many things of the like na-
 ture to prove Jesus to be the Son of God, and of co-equa-
 lity with the Father, he closed up his commission with
 these important words, *He that believes on the Son, hath ever-
 lasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see
 life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Matt. xiv. 3. John was at this time in the territories of Herod
 Mark v. 17. Antipas*, and, as he was a man of great freedom of
 Luke iii. 19. speech,

† The evangelist does no where mention the particular place
 where our Saviour began his baptism; but there is reason to presume,
 that it was somewhere about Jericho, because there it was, that
 John the Baptist first entered upon his ministry; because it seems ex-
 pedient, that he should open the first scene of his office where
 his faithful forerunner had given such glorious and advantageous tes-
 timonies of him, and, in one and the same place, complete John's
 baptism of repentance for sins, (which was preparatory to his com-
 ing), by the baptism of remission of sins, which he alone had
 proper power to give; *Calmet's Commentary.*

* This Antipas, or Anupater, (for they are words of the same
 signification), was the son of Herod the Great, by one of his wives,
 named

speech upon all occasions, he was not afraid, when he came to Herod's court, to reprove him for his many enormities, and particularly, for his cohabiting with Herodias *, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still li-

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

named Cleopatra, a native of Jerusalem. In his first will, his father (as we said before) named him successor to his kingdom; but, afterwards he changed his mind, made his son Archelaus king of Judea, and gave to Antipas the title only of *Tetrarch of Galilee and Petraea*, which made him appeal to Augustus at Rome, in order to have his father's former will confirmed, and the latter reversed; but he did not obtain his end; *Joseph. Antiq. lib. 17.*

* This woman was the daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice, sister to King Agrippa, and grand-daughter to Herod the Great. She was at first married to her uncle Philip, son of the same Herod by Mariamne, by whom she had a daughter named Salome, the same who pleased Herod so well in her dancing; and how she came to run from one brother to live with another, Josephus has thus related the story. ————— “Antipas, in his passage to Rome, “made some stay with his brother Philip, where he fell so passionately in love with his wife Herodias, that he could not forbear expressing it to her, and promised her withal, that, at his return from Rome, he would put away his own wife, and marry her. Upon these conditions Herodias accepted of the offer, and, as soon as Antipas was returned, and his wife gone, (for she, having notice of the engagement between her husband and Herodias, made her escape to her father Aretas king of Petraea), she, with her daughter Salome, left her husband Philip, and coming directly to Antipas, for ever after lived with him in a state of incest, Lev. xviii. 15. Nor was her ambition much less criminal than her lust: For, growing uneasy to see her brother Agrippa promoted to the title of a king, while her new husband Antipas had no more than that of a tetrarch, she pressed him so much, that he determined to make a journey to Rome, with an intention to ask the like dignity of Caligula the emperor; but the emperor, being prejudiced by several letters, which Agrippa had written against Antipas, instead of advancing him, deprived him of his tetrarchy, and condemned him to perpetual banishment.” The emperor, however, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, shewed an inclination to pardon her; but she chose rather to follow her husband in the calamity she had brought upon him, than to owe any thing to her brother's fortune; so that they were both confiscated, and banished together, first into France, and afterwards into Spain, where they died; *Jewish Antiq. lib. 8. c. 9.*

A. M. 4034, &c.
 Ann. Dom. 30, &c.
 from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John iv. 1.

ving. This exasperated the woman against him to such a degree, that, though Herod at first had some esteem and reverence for him, yet, by her malicious instigations †, she prevailed with him to cast him into prison, with a purpose to have him destroyed, whenever she could find out a proper opportunity.

About the time of John's imprisonment, our Lord, who, by the hands of his apostles †, had been baptizing for near seven or eight months in Judea, understanding that the Pharisees began to be envious at him for the great multitudes of people that resorted to him, resolved to leave that province, and pass into † Galilee, in order to enter upon the

† The evangelists have assigned the true reason for the Baptist's imprisonment: But since the Pharisees, very probably, represented him as an author of a new sect; a promoter of seditions and rebellions, and a person dangerous to the government, by reason of the multitude of his followers, Antipas craftily made that his pretence (as appears from Josephus, lib. 18. c. 7.) for confining him; and the better to remove him from the people, sent him bound out of Galilee, into Petriæa to a strong castle, called *Macherus*, near the Dead sea, and towards the borders of Arabia, where he continued above a year in prison; *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, c. 2.

† Several reasons may be assigned, why our Saviour delegated the office of baptizing to his apostles. 1. because it was no wise proper for him to baptize in his own name. 2. Because the baptism that was peculiarly his was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, Acts xi. 16. 3. Because it was an office of more importance, to preach the gospel, than to baptize. 1 Cor. i. 17. And, 4. Because Christ's baptizing of any might possibly have occasioned disgusts and jealousies among the disciples, in the same manner as, in the early ages of the church, we find people valuing themselves and despising others, upon their being baptized by such or such an eminent apostle, 1 Cor. i. 12.; *Beausobre's annotations*.

† It is a province of Palestine, which extends itself chiefly into the northern parts thereof. The tribes which it contains, are Issachar, Zebulun, Naphthali, and Asher, with part (as some say) of Dan, and Peræa, beyond the Jordan. On the north, it is bounded by Lebanon and Syria; on the west, by Phœnicia; on the south, by Samaria; and on the east, mostly by the river Jordan, and the sea of Galilee. It is generally divided into two parts, the Upper and the Lower Galilee, whereof the former is called *Galilee of the Gentiles*, Matth. iv. 15. either because it was chiefly possessed by the Gentiles, with Jews interspersed among them, or rather because it bordered upon Gentile nations, such as the Phœnicians, Syrians, and Arabians. The whole country (according to Josephus) was fruitful, and well cultivated, and the people laborious and industrious. The number

the more solemn part of his ministerial function. In this journey it was necessary for him to pass through Samaria † : and, as he travelled on foot, and the weather was hot, when he came within a little of † Sychar, he sent his disciples in to the city to buy provisions, and sat himself down by the side of a famous well, called *Jacob's well* †.

While
A. M.
4034, *etc.*
Ann. Dom.
30, *etc.*
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

number of its towns and villages was prodigious great, and so well inhabited, that the least of them did not contain less than fifteen thousand souls. The natives were a bold intrepid race of men, who defended themselves bravely against the foreign nations that surrounded them; but then their wealth and prowess made them seditious, and very apt to rebel against the Romans; for which they sometimes suffered very much; *Whitby's Alphabetical table*.

† It is a province of Palestine, (so called from its city of the same name, that was once the capital of the kingdom of Israel), which lies exactly between Judea to the south, and Galilee to the north, and extends itself from the Mediterranean sea westward, to the river Jordan eastward, taking up the most considerable part of what formerly belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of Jordan; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† Sychar is only a corrupt pronunciation of Sychem, or Shechem, which is the capital of the country that was once called *Samaria*. At present it is called *Naplosa*, and stands in a narrow valley, between Mount Gerizzim on the south, (at the foot of which it is situated), and Ebal on the north. On Mount Gerizzim they had once a temple, which seemed to rival that of Jerusalem; but in the time of the Maccabees, it was destroyed by Hyrcanus, and what they have now is only a little place of worship, to which, at certain seasons, they nevertheless repair for the performance of the rites of their religion; but what those rites are, it is not easy to say. The whole place, in short, is strangely decayed from what it was anciently; for it consists only of two streets, that lie parallel under Mount Gerizzim, but is full of inhabitants, and the seat of a Bassa; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† It is much to be questioned, whether the well that is at present shewn to travellers as Jacob's well, be that where our Saviour discoursed the Samaritan woman, because it seems to be too remote from the town for women to come thither to draw water; unless we may suppose, that the city did formerly extend itself farther that way than it does now. However this be, the well is at present covered with a small vault, into which you get down by a very straight hole, and then removing a broad flat stone, you discover the mouth of the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, about three yards in diameter, and
thirty

A. M. While he was sitting there, a woman of a loose life and
 4034, &c. conversation came out of the city to draw water; and
 Ann. Dom. when he requested some of her to drink, she, perceiving
 50, &c. that he was a Jew, took the freedom to ask him, how he
 from the beginning of the Go- could offer any such request to a Samaritan, since there were
 spels to so great feuds, and so little dealings † between them and
 Matt. ix. 8. the Jews? Little did the woman know the excellency of
 Mark ii. 23. the person who asked her so small a favour; but in some
 Luke vi. 1. measure to convince her, our Lord took occasion from
 hence, under the metaphor of water, to discourse to her
 Our Savi- of spiritual blessings; and, to make her sensible of his om-
 our's dis- niscience, he reminded her of some passages of her life, par-
 course with ticularly of the † five times she had been divorced for her
 the woman adul-
 at Jacob's well.

thirty-five in depth; and to confute the story, which is commonly told to travellers, (*viz.* that it is all the year dry, except on the anniversary, when our Saviour sat upon it, but that then it bubbles up with abundance of water), Mr Maundrell tells us, that when they came to sound it, they found no less than five yards of water in it; *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*; and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† The chief reasons of the Jewish hatred against the Samaritans were these three; 1st, The foreign extraction of the Samaritans, they being most of them descendents from the Cutheans, whom Salmanazar sent to Samaria, when he carried away the ten tribes into captivity, 2 Kings xviii. 9. 2^{dly}, The difference of their religion and worship, so far as that of the Samaritans was a kind of mixture of Jewish and Pagan rites together; and, 3^{dly}, The rival-temple, which the Samaritans had built on Mount Gerizzim, and consecrated to Jupiter Olympius, in order to avoid the persecution of Antiochus; *Josephus, Antiq. lib. 12. c. 7*. These were the chief causes of the animosities between them. The Jews, however, did not carry their resentment so high, but that, in some cases, they would traffic or buy any thing of them; but then the Pharisees came in with a tradition, that they were not to borrow any thing of them, or receive any kindness from them, nor drink of their water, nor eat of their morsels. This, however, our Lord despised, as having no foundation either in the law of God, or equity, and as tending to impair the law of common friendship and humanity; and therefore we find him asking to drink with the Samaritan woman, and afterwards going into the city, and eating with the Schehemites; *Beausobre's and Whithy's Annotations*.

† The words of the text are, *thou hast had five husbands*; but whether five successively, and after the death of one another, or five from whom she had been divorced for adultery, is not agreed. The
 most

adulteries, and of the state of fornication wherein she then lived.

Convinced by this discovery that he was a prophet, she propounded to him the great question so much controverted between the Jews and Samaritans, *viz.* Which was the proper place of public worship, Gerizzim or Jerusalem? To which our Saviour, in his answer, gives manifestly the preference to the Jewish form and place of worship; but makes it a question of no great moment, since the time was approaching when all sacrifices and ceremonial rites should cease, and when God, who is a spirit, expected to be worshipped in a more † rational and spiritual manner, than hitherto he had been.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

Our

most modern interpreters, however, judge that she had been married to five several men, but so behaved herself towards them, that for her adultery, or some other froward behaviour, they had given her a bill of divorce. This seems more likely to be the true sense, than that, after the death of five legal husbands, she should live in whoredom with a sixth person; *Pool's Annotations.*

† The Jews gave it out, that the Samaritans worshipped God in the image of a dove: but this seems to be a mere forgery upon them, 1st, Because among all the idols which they worshipped when they came from Assyria, there is not the least hint of the image of a dove. 2^{dly}, Because Josephus, who, in several places of his history, inveighs against them bitterly, does no where charge them with this crime. And, 3^{dly}, Because it is a thing utterly inconsistent with the law of Moses, which they embraced; for, as it forbids all images, so it requires men to sacrifice the dove to God; and surely nothing can be more absurd, than to worship that which we are bound to sacrifice. It is very likely, therefore, that the Samaritans had no false objects of worship among them, and yet they, as well as the Jews, might not be furnished with right apprehensions of the true one. They both were to blame, no doubt, in confining the worship of God to any particular place, and thinking that he could not be rightly adored, but either at Gerizzim, according to the one, or at Jerusalem, according to the other, when his presence is certainly every where, and in every nation *he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts x. 35. They, as well as the Jews, might think that God was pleased with outward ordinances, with sacrifices and expiations, which sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh; but perhaps they never supposed that these things were but types and figures of what was to succeed, and therefore to be of no longer continuance, than until the substance of the things themselves was come. They doubtless both had some expectations of a Messiah; but perhaps

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

Our Saviour, before he had done talking with the woman, and just as his disciples were returned from the city, had informed her, that himself was the (*m*) Messiah, whom she spoke of; whereupon, leaving her water-pots, she ran into the city, proclaiming aloud, that she had met with a person, who had told her all the secrets of her life, and who could be no other than that great prophet who was to come into the world; so that the inhabitants waited on him at the well, invited him into their city, received him with great civility; and though some believed on him from the testimony of the woman, many more did so, from their own conviction, in hearing his sermons and divine discourses.

John iv. 46.
His curing
the noble-
man's son,
which con-
verted his
family.

After two days stay in the city, our Lord proceeded to Cana, where he had changed the water into wine, and where the Galileans, who at the passover had seen the miracles which he did at Jerusalem, received him with great kindness and respect. Hither it was that an officer belonging to the court came, and addressed himself to him with great humility and reverence, desiring him that he would come and cure his son, who was just at the point of death; and when, with more importunity, he renewed his request, and our Lord, to shew the excellency of his power, that could cure in absence as well as presence, dismissed him with this assurance, that his son was restored to health; the believing father joyfully returning home, was by the way congratulated with the welcome news of his son's recovery; and inquiring of his servants the hour when the child began to amend, by the account which they gave him, he perceived that it was at the very instant that Jesus had declared to him, *thy son is well*:

it never entered into their heads, that he should be the angel of the covenant, who, with the incense of his blood, *should offer up the prayers of all the saints upon the altar that is before the throne*, Rev. viii. 3. So that our Saviour, by this part of his discourse with the woman, plainly intimates, that after his resurrection, and the promulgation of his gospel, not only the Jews and Samaritans, but the people of all nations whatever, should have righter notions of God, the only object of religious worship, of the extent and universality of his church, of the qualifications requisite in true worshippers, and of the Mediator appointed by God to introduce and enforce their prayers; *Whitby's Annotations, and Calmet's Commentary.*

(*m*) Her words are, *I know that the Messiah cometh, who is called Christ*, John iv. 25.

where.

whereupon both he, and his whole family, being convinced of our Saviour's divinity, were converted to the Christian faith.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
Luke iv. 14.
His base u-
sage at Na-
zareth, and
removal to
Capernaum.

The imprisonment of John had put an end to his ministry; and therefore, to supply that loss, our Saviour himself began to preach the sum and substance of the gospel, faith, hope, and repentance, in the province of Galilee; and this he did in such an extraordinary manner, that he was admired by all, and his fame spread through the whole country. Coming however to Nazareth, the place of his education, he went into the synagogue † on the Sabbath-day, and when he † stood up, and read (as the custom for laymen

† That the synagogue-worship was, at this time, loaded with rites and ceremonies of human invention, that the priests were very defective in the discharge of their functions, and the manners of those who met there very much corrupted, no one can doubt, who is at all acquainted with the Scriptures, and the Jewish history; and yet, we find, that our Saviour and his disciples (as members of the church of Nazareth) went constantly every Sabbath-day to these synagogues, preserving thereby *the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, and not upon slight pretences, forsaking the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is*, Heb. x. 25; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† What the nature and design of synagogues were, and, at what time, and upon what occasion, they were at first erected by the Jews, we have, in a particular dissertation, already discussed, and need only take notice, that tho' every synagogue had a settled reader, to whom was allowed an annual stipend, yet, when any grave and learned person came in, (especially if he was a stranger), it was customary to make him the compliment of reading the portion of Scripture appointed for the day, Acts xiii. 15. which he always did in a standing posture. For, as the law was given with reverence, say the Jews, so it is to be handled with reverence; and, when he had read what he thought fit, he might, if he was so disposed and qualified, expound, or comment upon it. The character which John the Baptist had given of our Saviour, and the miracles which he had lately done in Cana and Capernaum, might possibly excite the curiosity of the master of the synagogue to hear him read, and expound; read in Hebrew, and expound in Chaldee, as Ezra had introduced the custom. In reading the law, people were confined to the lesson of the day; but the Rabbins have observed, that, in reading the prophets, there was a greater licence allowed; and therefore, tho' our Saviour might read just where the book opened, yet there seems to be a good deal of the hand of God in directing him to a place which related to himself, and gave him so fair an opportunity of declaring the purpose of his coming into the world, viz. to

A. M. laymen was at that time) a passage in the prophet Isaiah, 4034, &c. beginning with these words, (n) *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, &c.* which he applied to himself, (but in general terms), and spake thereupon with so much gracefulness, that the eyes of the whole congregation were turned upon him, admiring his discourse; many who had known him in the disadvantages of his education, began to have abject thoughts of him upon the meanness of his extract, as if he had been no more than a carpenter's son; so that his taking an occasion to upbraid them with their ingratitude and insensibility, so far provoked the whole assembly, that they hurried him out of the city, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which it was built, with a design to have † cast him down from thence, and destroyed him, had not he, by a miraculous power †, withdrawn himself from the fury of these wretched people, and left their city.

Ann. Dom.
30, 176
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

publish redemption and liberty, pardon and reconciliation with God; *Beausobre's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

(n) Isaiah lxi. 1.

† Such kind of popular executions were sometimes tolerated, and, under pretence of zeal for the law, several were put to death, (especially in times of public calamity, and when the Jews were in their greatest distress, Joseph. De bell. Jud. lib. 5.), without the formality of justice. But what made the Nazarenes so exceeding outrageous against our Saviour was, his declaring them unworthy of the miracles he had done at Capernaum, his equalizing himself to some of the greatest of the ancient prophets, and, by the instances of the Sidonian woman, and Naaman the Syrian, plainly intimating, that his gospel should chiefly be received by the Gentiles; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† How he got out of their hands, when they had laid hold of him, the Scripture does not tell us; nor is it our concern to be curious to inquire. We know very well, that it was an easy thing for him, who was God as well as man, to quit himself of any mortal enemies: But how he did it, whether it was by blinding them for the present, or making himself invisible, or merely by allaying their rage, and changing their wills, it is impossible to determine. Which way soever he did it, it was certainly something miraculous, and therefore deprived the Nazarenes of the liberty of complaining that he had done no miracles among them; *Pool's Annotations*, and *Calmet's Commentary*.

This

This barbarous treatment of the Nazarenes made our Saviour remove from them, and settle his habitation in Capernaum, which was the metropolis of Galilee, and by reason of the lake †, which was near it, a place highly convenient for his designs. He had not long been here before great multitudes flocked to him; and as he was walking one day by the side of the lake, with a crowd of people pressing upon him, he saw two fishing vessels ‖, one belonging to Peter and Andrew, and the other to James

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

and
Matt. iv. 13.
Luke iv. 31.
Matt. iv. 18.
Mark i. 16.
Luke v. 1.

† This lake, which (according to Josephus) is forty furlongs in breadth, and in length an hundred, was, in the times of the Old Testament, called *the Sea of Chinnereth*, Numb. xxxiv. 11. but the writers of the New have given it three different appellations. For as it is called *the Sea of Galilee*, from the province of Galilee in general, so it is called *the Sea of Tiberias*, from a town of that name, standing on its western shore, and *the Lake of Genesareth*, from that particular tract of Galilee which bounded it a great way, on the western side. The lake lies upon a gravel, which makes its water both of a good colour and taste. It is softer than either fountain or river water, and withal so very cold, that it will not grow warm, tho' set in the sun in the hottest season of the year. The river Jordan runs thro' the midst of it, which stocks it with a great variety of fish, of a peculiar taste and shape, not to be equalled in any other place. In short, it was a common saying among the Jews, that "God loved the sea of Galilee more than any other sea," which holds so far good, that this sea, above all others, was honoured with the divine presence of our Blessed Saviour, while he dwelt at Capernaum, very frequently, and even once, after he was arisen from the dead; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

‖ St Matthew and St Mark, in their relations of this transaction, are pretty uniform; but St Luke differs from them so widely, that interpreters have been at some pains to reconcile them. For, whereas the two former tell us, that these fishermen were casting a net into the sea, St Luke informs us, that they were gone out of their ships, and had washed their nets, besides some other variation in the manner of the call of the four apostles. But not to enter into a minute examination of particulars, we ought to consider, that some allowances are reasonable, and necessary to be made for the variation of circumstances in one historian, who makes it his business to recount matters distinctly, and at large, and in another, whose intention it is, only to declare facts in general, without entering into the series and order of each action. Now, this is the case of the two former evangelists, They designed no more than a summary account of these four apostles call, and their compliance with it; and therefore they

A. M. and John, (who were all partners and companions in that
 4034, &c. business), and stepping into Peter's ship, he desired him to
 Ann. Dom. put a little from the shore, that from thence he might
 30, &c. preach to the people.

from the beginning of the Gospels to
 Matt. ix. 8. Peter and his companions had been hard at work all
 Mark ii. 23. night, but without any manner of success; and therefore,
 Luke vi. 1. when sermon was ended, and our Saviour ordered Peter to
 launch out further, and to let down his nets for a draught,

he modestly told him of their unsuccessful toiling all night,
 but, nevertheless, in obedience to him, he was willing :
 Nor had he cause to repent; for, upon letting down the
 nets, they inclosed such a multitude of fishes, that their
 tackle began to break, so that they were forced to call to
 their partners in the other ship, to come to their assistance,
 because the draught was such that it loaded both the vessels
 so very deep, that they were in some danger of sinking before
 they got to shore.

The wonderful
 draught of
 fishes,
 which ama-
 zed St Pe-
 ter.

Amazed at this marvellous sight, and dreading the
 visible appearance of so great and so divine a power just
 by him, Peter threw himself down at our Saviour's feet,
 desiring him † to depart from him, because he was a per-
 son

they contented themselves with setting down a part, so much first,
 as relates to Andrew and Peter, and afterwards what related to
 James and John. But St Luke, who proposes to shew the man-
 ner, and whole process of the call, records the miracle at large, and
 interweaves several remarkable passages, which were not need-
 ful to be mentioned in the brief account of St Matthew and St
 Mark, but highly conducive to St Luke's purpose of undertaking
 to describe the miraculous draught of fishes, (Luke v. 10.), which,
 upon our Lord's command to make a fresh experiment, was taken;
Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.

† We have several instances, both in the Old and New Testa-
 ment, of persons struck with dreadful apprehensions at the presence
 of the divine Majesty, or even of some angel or a prophet deliver-
 ing a message from him. And therefore Grotius supposes, that Pe-
 ter's case was much the same with that of the widow of Sarepta,
 when she complained to Elijah, *What have I to do with thee, O thou
 man of God, art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance?*
 1 Kings xvii. 18. But others more justly think, that Peter's words
 are expressive, rather of his high sentiments of our Lord, and the
 consciousness of his own unworthiness to be found in such a person's
 company, and that therefore they do not a little resemble that glo-
 rious declaration of the centurion in the gospel, *Lord, I am not wor-
 thy, that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word
 only;*

son no ways worthy of his presence. But our Saviour bid him be of good comfort, and from the present incident, took occasion to inform him, that he had a nobler work and employment for him, even the † gaining of mens souls to salvation, if he would adjoin himself to him; and having given the like invitation to the other three, Andrew, James, and John, they all obeyed his call, and leaving their vessels, nets, relations, and employment, † became ever after his constant and inseparable disciples.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

After

only, and my servant shall be healed, Matt. viii. 8.; Calmet's Commentary; and Pool's Annotations.

† The words in our translation are, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men*, but in the Greek ἀπὸ τῆ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἐσθ' ἰσχυρὰν, there is something very remarkable. For it does not say, that Peter should catch men, as people generally do wild beasts or fishes, in order to kill them, and eat them; but that he should take them alive, as such fish and wild creatures are taken that are designed to be put in stews and parks; and therefore the sense of the word is, — *Thou shalt be a fisher of men*, but such a fisher, as shall preserve them alive; as shall retrieve them, in short, from error and ignorance, and death; and conduct them to truth, and knowledge, and eternal life; Hammond's Paraphrase; and Calmet's Commentary.

† Towards the conclusion of the first chapter of St John's gospel, we meet with a call of some five of our Lord's disciples, about a year prior to this; but, by the account of the other evangelists, it appears that they did not, at this time, become our Saviour's constant attendants, because it is presumable, that though he took this opportunity to make himself known to them, yet he had not as yet any immediate occasion for them, and therefore remitted them to their respective trades. Only Philip is supposed to have retained to him from the very first, because he seems to have called him in a formal manner, as he did not, at that time, the rest, John i. 43.; and because we find no further interview between him and Philip upon this score, as there was between him and three, at least, of the rest, Luke v. 10. 11. These three disciples, therefore, viz. Andrew, Peter, and John, were twice called; but the former calling was rather a warning to hold themselves in readiness for it, than an actual engaging them in his service; but now in Philip, we meet with no other call than what he had at first; and therefore, though the fathers, and some ancient writers, have given the honour to St Andrew, of being the first disciple; yet that prerogative is evidently St Philip's. For tho' Andrew and Peter were the first that came and conversed with our Lord, yet we find them returning to their trades again, and not ordained to their discipleship, till after the

times

A. M. After the choice of these four disciples, our Saviour re-
 2034, &c. turned with them into the city; and, on the next Sabbath-
 Ann. Dom. day, went into the chief synagogue, and there preached to
 30, &c. the people, with so much force and authority, and in a
 from the manner so widely different from their usual teachers the
 beginning of the Go Scribes †, that all were astonished at him; and, to increase
 spels to their admiration, one in the congregation, whose body
 Matt. ix. 8 was possessed with an unclean spirit †, cried out in an
 Mark ii. 23. hideous manner, *Let us alone, what have we to do with*
 Luke vi. 1. *thee,*

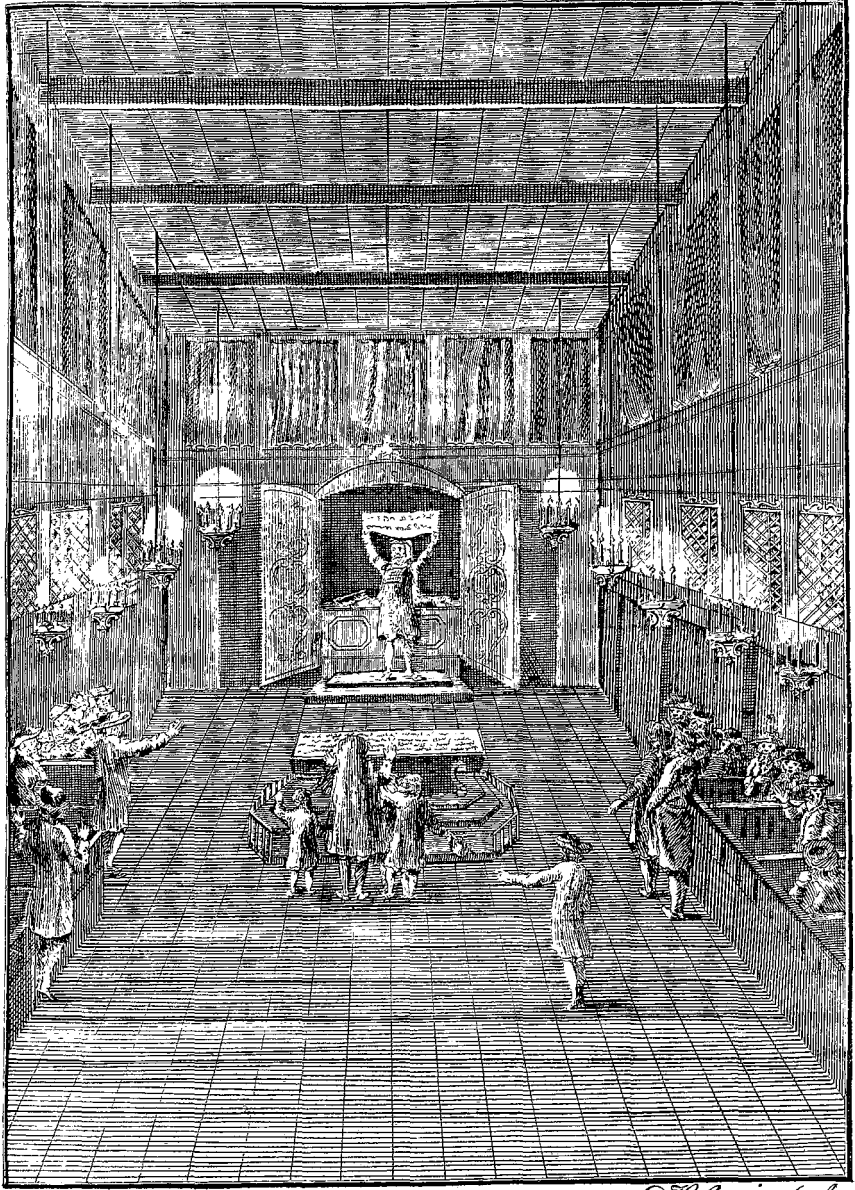
Mark i. 23.

Luke iv. 33.

His cure of time that the Baptist was cast into prison; *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Howell's History*, book 2. in the notes.

† There are several opinions, wherein the excellency of Christ's preaching, above that of the Jewish doctors, did consist. Some think, that his teaching was not so much in the manner of an instructor, as a legislator, and one, who, in his own name, had power to propound the terms of life and death. But though this, in relation to Christ's divinity, be certainly true, yet it is not so agreeable, either to his prophetic office, or his frequent declarations, "that the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but his who sent him; and that he spake not of himself, but as his Father had commanded him," John vii. 16. and xi. 51. Others imagine, that the excellency of Christ's preaching consisted in the miracles wherewith he confirmed his doctrine; for so the evangelist represents the matter: *They all marvelled, saying, What new doctrine is this? For with authority he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they obey him,* Mark i. 27. But because another evangelist tells us, that it was his doctrine, without his miracles, that astonished the people, Matth. vii. 29. others are of opinion, that his excellency lay in the graceful and lively manner of his delivery, not like the teachers of the Jews, who read their lectures of the law so coldly, so perfunctorily, as never to affect the hearts of their hearers; and that, in short, he spake as a prophet, who had a full commission from God to deliver his message to them; not as the Scribes, who pretended only to deliver the traditions of their forefathers; *Whitby's and Foal's Annotations.*

† Those who are minded to depreciate our Saviour's miracles will needs persuade us, that the Jews, having a notion that the diseases, whose symptoms they could not account for, were inflicted by devils, whom God might employ to chastise mankind, did therefore give the name of evil spirits to several distempers, which proceeded merely from natural causes; that, of these distempers, such as had any thing loathsome or nauseous attending them, they generally called by the name of *an unclean spirit*; and that, because sepulchres, of all other places, were reputed the most polluted; therefore whenever any crazy or melancholic people took it in their heads so frequent such places, they were always said to be possessed with such



H. Gavin Sculp.

The Jewish Synagogue.

Engraved for M.^r Stackhouses History of the Bible

thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? A. M.
 † *I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.* But Je- 4034. &c.
 fus, who wanted the testimony of no such confessors, com- Ann. Dom.
 manded his silence, and departure out of the poor man's 30. &c.
 body; which immediately was done, to the great surprife from the
 and amazement of all the spectators. beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

such spirits; see *Beausobre's Annotations, in Matth. iv. 24. and*
x. 1. But how groundless this whole hypothesis is, we shall take
 occasion to shew at large, in our answer to the objections belonging
 to this chapter.

† It may justly be made a question, whether the devil, who
 possessed this man, did actually know our Saviour to be the Son of
 God, as he pretended? There are two evangelists who relate this
 miracle, and, in the conclusion of it, both tell us, that our Saviour
suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him to be Christ,
 Mark i. 34. Luke iv. 41. But, notwithstanding this, some inter-
 preters do not scruple to affirm the contrary, viz that the devil had
 no perfect perception of our Lord's divinity, until his resurrection
 from the dead. The state of humiliation which he chose, the ob-
 scurity which he lived in, and the persecutions which he suffered,
 without ever employing his power to redress them; the care which
 he took to conceal his most renowned actions, and to refer the glory
 of them all to God alone, deceived the devil, and kept him in sus-
 pense. For, had he known Jesus, say they, he would never have
 put it into the heart of Judas to betray, or of the Jews to crucify him,
 since this was the proper way to accomplish man's redemption. But
 the answer to this is obvious,——That though the devil did
 know Jesus to be the Messiah, yet he did not know the mystery of
 man's redemption. When he first essayed our Lord in his tempta-
 tions, he spake indeed in a different manner, *If thou be the Son of*
God; but, by his defeat, he soon perceived that his antagonist was
 more than man. Though, therefore, he perfectly knew him to be
 the Son of God, yet seeing him invested with our nature, he might,
 very likely, be so far infatuated, as to think, that, by destroying
 his humanity, he might possibly defeat God's great design. For
 how sublime soever we may suppose his intellectual faculties to be,
 yet the wonderful work of man's salvation by the death of Christ,
 the apostle plainly tells us, is what no finite understanding could
 comprehend, until *God was pleased to make all men see, what is the*
fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath
been hid in God, to the intent that now, unto principalities and
powers in heavenly places, might be known, by the church, the mani-
fold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purpo-
sed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. iii. 9. &c. *Cabnet's Commentary.*

A. M.
4014, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

Matt. viii.

34

Mark i. 30.

Luke iv. 40.

Mark i. 35.

Luke iv. 42.

From the synagogue our Lord retired to Peter's house, where his wife's mother lay sick of a fever; but, upon his approaching the bed-side, and taking her by the hand, he commanded the fever † to depart, and that moment restored her to such perfect health, that immediately she arose, and (as if she had never been sick) waited on the company. This, and the other miracle in the synagogue, (as soon as the sun was set, and the Sabbath ended), gathered all the city together about Peter's house, bringing demoniacs ||, and diseased people of all kinds, and begging the relief of this heavenly physician, who very readily cured them all, by a touch only, or the imposition of his hand.

The next morning he retired very early into a private place, that, being free from the noise and importunities of the multitude, he might have an opportunity to pray: but even in his solitude he was found out; and therefore, to disengage himself from such a croud of attendants, he told his disciples, that the purport of his mission was to preach the gospel in other neighbouring cities; and therefore, leaving Capernaum, he made a progress into Galilee, preaching in their public synagogues, curing all kinds of distempers, and dispossessing all demoniacs that were brought to him.

Mark i. 40.

Luke v. 12.

In his pro-

gress thro'

Galilee, he

cures a le-

per, and at

Capernaum

a paralytic,

&c.

In his progress through Galilee, he met with a man over-spread with a foul leprosy †, whom, upon his humble petition,

† Fevers are common distempers, and very often cured by ordinary means, so that the nature of this miracle did not lie in the cure of an incurable disease, but in the manner of the cure; which was with a touch; the suddenness of it; her fever immediately left her; and the perfectness of it, in that she was able to rise and wait on the company. This is said to be Peter's wife's mother; and from hence it may be presumed, that Peter, who was himself of Bethsaida, had married a woman of Capernaum, and there lived with his mother in law; *Fool's and Beausobre's Annotations*

|| This plainly shews, that the curing of diseases, and the casting out of devils, were two distinct things, and consequently the error of those, who, in their annotations upon the very texts where they are mentioned separately, endeavour to persuade us, that the devils cast out were only diseases; *Wibby's Annotations*.

† A leprosy was a distemper very common among the Jews. It proceeded from a general corruption of the blood and juices; rendered the person tainted with it extremely loathsome and deformed;

tion, with one touch † he immediately healed, but at the same time † gave him strict charge not to discover it to any

A. M. 4034. &c.
Ann. Dom. 30, &c.
from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8. Ma. xii. 23. Luke vi. 1.

deformed; and, in hot countries especially, was of all distempers the most spreading in the body, and the most contagious to others. But then, with regard to the notions of the Jews, and their law concerning it, it was still more detestable. It separated the person infected with it from all civil and religious communion. It distinguished him by all the outward significations of sorrow and shame. It was generally looked upon as a plague inflicted by God for some enormous crime. It was thought so far above the power of art, that the very attempt to cure it by medicine was esteemed an impious presumption. In short, it was dreaded as the highest of legal pollutions, and required a great variety of lustrations, before the patient could be restored to the privilege of a Jew, Levit. xiii.; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.*

† But how came our Saviour to run the hazard of making himself unclean, Lev. v. 3. by touching one that was manifestly so? Now, whatever the law concerning the leper's uncleanness might be, it seems as if the priest that officiated about him was not affected by it, because we find him directed to make so near an examination and inspection into his distemper, Lev. xiii. 14. &c. Aaron, we may observe, though he officiated about his sister Miriam in her leprosy, is not said to have contracted any pollution by it; and therefore well might a much greater high priest than Aaron, in virtue of his office, claim the same immunity. But then, in virtue of his divinity, it was impossible for him to incur any legal uncleanness. As therefore the effect wrought upon this leper was a plain demonstration, that the finger of God was in it, and he consequently approved of the action; so the Jews make it a received rule, that a prophet might vary from, and even change, the ritual law: And from hence we may infer, that as Elijah and Elisha both might touch the dead children whom they raised to life again, without imputation of uncleanness, 1 Kings xvii. 19. and 2 Kings iv. 34. so might our Saviour touch this leper; though the opinion of some is, that he did not properly touch him as a leper, because the moment that he stretched out his hand, the leprosy was cured: but if it were not, the observation of Theophylact (in Luc. vii. 13.) still stands good, viz. "That our Lord might touch the leper, in order to shew that it was not necessary to observe those lesser matters of the law; that touching an unclean person did not defile one that was pure himself; and that the only thing indeed that did defile was the leprosy of the soul;" *Calnet's Commentary, and Whitby's Annotations.*

† If it be asked, Why our Saviour should so often command the concealing his miracles? we may assign for reasons, not only his

modesty

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann Dom. 30, &c.
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beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
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any one, until he † had presented himself before the priest, and offered the sacrifice that was appointed for a testimony

modesty and great humility, that there might be no appearance of ostentation in him. and that the Jews might have no pretence to accuse him of seeking his own glory, Matth. xii. 16. but because at this time it was not proper to irritate the scribes and Pharisees (who had already made him quit Judea) too much. He knew that in such a determinate space, they would bring about what God in his counsel had decreed. In the mean time, he was to *work the works of him that sent him, while it was day*, John ix. 4. and to propagate his gospel, as much as possibly he could, both among the Jews and Gentiles, which could not have been so conveniently done, if the greatness of his miracles had once provoked the malice and envy of his enemies to make their utmost opposition against him. He knew likewise the mad and capricious humour of the multitude, and had reason to apprehend, that they might *come and take him away by force, and make him a king*, John vi. 15. if all his miracles had been blazed abroad, before he had sufficiently instructed them in the spiritual nature of his kingdom. As therefore he was far from being a friend to popularity or sedition, he desired that several of his miracles might be suppressed, lest any bad consequences should attend the publication of them, until his own resurrection from the dead should be an undeniable proof and confirmation of all the rest. And this I take to be the reason of his referring the Pharisees, when they came to demand a sign of him, to that of the prophet Jonah, Matth. xii. 39. whereby he implied, that he would use no more means for their conviction, until, by the miracle of his resurrection, his divine power, and the completion of the ancient types and prophecies should be so dilucidly manifested, as to leave them without all excuse; *Calmet's Commentary; Beausobre's and Hammond's Annotations.*

† The priesthood, at this time, was much degenerated from its primitive institution, and many human rites and ordinances were added to God's law concerning the priest's examination of the leper who pretended to be clean; and yet our Lord sent this leper to submit to all these new-invented ceremonies, as knowing that though they did indeed corrupt, yet they did not extinguish, the divine institution. The divine institution was no more than this,—That when a leper was cured he was to appear at the city-gate, and the priest was to examine whether he was truly healed or no; that if he was, the priest received him into the city, and by degrees into the temple, whither he should bring two clean birds of any kind, (the marginal

note

mony † of his cure : But the poor man, out of the abundance of his joy, could not refrain from publishing it abroad where-ever he came, which still increased our Saviour's fame, so that he avoided returning openly into the city of Capernaum, lest the multitude of his followers should give some umbrage to the state; and therefore, having finished his progress through Galilee, (which lasted for almost three months), he retired into a desert place, and there employed some part of his time in prayer.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

Upon leaving his retirement, he went privately into Capernaum, but it was not long before he was discovered; and as soon as he was, such vast crouds were gathered together to hear his sermons, and to bring their diseased for cure, that the house where he was, and all the court-yard about it, were not sufficient to contain them. In the house were many great persons, Pharisees, and doctors of the law from Jerusalem and Judea, as well as Galilee, who, led thither by their curiosity, sat hearing his discourses, and observing his miracles, when four men came

Matt. ix. 2.
Mark ii. 3.
Luke v. 18.

note says sparrows), and, having made a bunch of cedar and hyssop mixed together, should tie them with a scarlet ribbon made of wool; that to this bunch of cedar and hyssop one of these birds should be fastened alive, and the other killed by the leper that was cured, and its blood received in a vessel, filled with water; that, when this was done, the priest should take the bunch with the live bird, and having dipped both in the water, tinged with the blood of the other bird, should seven times sprinkle the leper with it; and that, after this, the live bird should be let loose to flee where it would, and the person thus healed and purified, should again be admitted to the society of the healthy, and a communion in religious offices, Lev. xiv. 1. &c.; *Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations*.

† Various are the senses of the words, *a testimony to them*; for, they may signify, that the gift or oblation, which the leper was to carry, would be a means to evince the perfection of his cure, when the priests had examined and admitted it as such; that this would likewise be an evidence to the people, who stood at that time and saw him cured, when they should hear that the priests had pronounced him clean; a proof to the priests, that himself was an observer of the law, by requiring his patient to comply with the ceremonies of it; and a full demonstration, that he was a prophet come from God, since they themselves owned, that a leprosy could only be cured by the finger of God; *Beausobre's*, *Hammond's*, and *Whitby's Annotations*.

bearing

A. M. bearing a paralytic † on his bed ; but finding it impossible to
 4034, &c. pass through the throng, they adventured to uncover the
 Ann. Dom. house ‖, and to let down the sick man, bed and all, into
 30, &c. the very room where he was sitting.

from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to

Matt. ix. 8. † The word comes from *παράλυσις*, which signifies *to resolve* or *re-*
 Mark ii. 23. *lax*, and seems to imply, that this distemper is a relaxation of the
 Luke vi. 1. nerves, though it sometimes proceeds from other causes. It is always

attended with great weaknesses, and obstructions of the blood and
 juices, which deprive the limbs of their motion, and sometimes oc-
 casion great pain. The distemper is reckoned above the power of
 all medicines to remove ; and yet our Saviour cured it several times
 merely by a word's speaking ; *Pool's Annotations.*

‖ But how could they possibly uncover the house, when they
 could not so much as get to it, much less get upon it, by reason of
 the throng that was before the door ? Now, to have a right notion
 of this matter, we must observe, that the houses in Judea were,
 for the most part, even as they are to this day, (*Sandys's travels*,
 p. 36.) low built, and flat-roofed, and surrounded with a battle-
 ment about breast-high, according to God's own injunction,
 Deut. xxii. 8. ; so that, to go up to the top of their houses, the
 Jews had two ways ; one, by a pair of stairs within the house, lead-
 ing up to the trap-door, which lay even with the roof ; and the o-
 ther, on the outside of the house, by a ladder, or pair of stairs ra-
 ther, either fixed or moveable, by which they could ascend to the
 roof when they pleased, without ever going into the house itself,
 Since this then was the general fashion of Jewish houses, we need
 not doubt, but that this at Capernaum was of the same figure and
 make ; and therefore the bearers of the paralytic, finding that they
 could not come at the door by reason of the crowd, bethought them-
 selves of another expedient. They went round about a private way,
 and coming to the stairs, which stood on the outside of the house,
 up these they carry him, and presently gain the top. But, finding
 the trap-door (or way of the roof, as the Jews call it) shut against
 them, immediately they go to work, and forcing it open, (which
 St Mark calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the roof*, chap. ii. 4. because
 the door, which lay even with the roof, when let down and shut,
 was reputed a part of it), they conveyed him down that way, which
 St Luke calls *letting* him down through the tiling, *i. e.* through the
 roof, which (except where the door was) was all paved with large
 tiles, and by this means they found it no difficult matter to place him
 in the midst before Jesus ; *Calmet's Commentary* ; and *Pearce's*
Vindication of our Saviour's miracles.

Our Blessed Saviour, being not a little pleased with such an instance † of their faith, and reliance on his mercy, was resolved to cure the man; and accordingly, in the first place, he gave him an absolution † from his sins. This provoked the indignation of the scribes and Pharisees, as deeming him guilty of blasphemy †, because none (as they

A. M.
4034, &c.
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beginning
of the Go-
spels to
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Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† Some have supposed, that, because the history makes no mention of any faith, but that of the friends and bearers of this impotent man, that therefore the patient himself had no part in that virtuous disposition, which inclined our Saviour to compassionate him; and thence they infer, how far a man may be benefited by the faith and intercessions of others in his behalf. But it is a mistake to think, that the words *their faith* exclude that of the sick person: For had he not been persuaded, that Christ was able to cure him, he would never have suffered himself to be presented to him, in a method so troublesome to his weak condition. We read indeed of no petition that he made to our Lord, but the violence of his distemper might possibly have deprived him of the use of speech; or, if it had not, the very spectacle of a body so debilitated, the manner of the action, and the fatigue which he must have undergone in it, all spake for him, and carried a more moving eloquence than it was possible for any tongue to utter; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.*

† The Jews were of this persuasion, — That every disease of the body (those especially which were of a grievous nature) were sent upon men for the punishment of their sins; and though they might carry this maxim too far, John ix. 3. yet sure it is, that the Scriptures represent most of the calamities of life as the natural effect of mens iniquities. And therefore some have observed, that as the word *sins* is frequently put for the punishment of sins, our Saviour's forgiving the man's sins was no more than a declaration of his intention to cure his distemper: Whereas it is plain, that our Saviour speaks of them as two distinct things, when he puts the question to the company, *Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee? or to say, Take up thy bed and walk?* Matth. ix. 5.; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† This word, in Heathen writers, signifies no more than slander, or calumny, or opprobrious language of any kind, such as tends to impair a man's good name; but, in the sacred style, it means unworthy and injurious talk concerning God's nature or attributes; as when we ascribe unto him such qualities as belong not to him, or rob him of those that do; to him, the infirmities of man; or to man, the perfections of God. This is the nature of the sin; and the punishment of it under the law, was *stoning without the gates of the city*, Lev. xxiv. 15. 16.; *Calmet's Commentary.*

imagined)

A. M. imagined) could forgive sins, but God alone. But he, knowing their secret thoughts, first reprov'd their censoriousness; and then, by curing the patient before them, plainly demonstrated what authority he had to forgive sins. For though the power of healing be much inferior to that of forgiving sins; yet, because it is not so easy to impose a cure upon the world, where mens senses are witnesses, as remission of sins, which is a secret and invisible operation; therefore all the people, who were convinced by their eyes of the efficacy of Christ's last words, *Rise and walk*, were satisfied of the truth of the former, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*: And accordingly they glorified the Almighty, who had manifested such power on earth, and being filled with reverential fear, declared, that *they had seen strange and wonderful things that day*.

Matt. ix. 9. While our Lord continued at Capernaum, he went out one day (as frequently he did) to the lake-side, and finding one Matthew †, otherwise named Levi, the son of Alphaeus, a rich publican, sitting in his office, he asked him to be one of his disciples, who immediately † took
Mark ii. 14.
Luke v. 27.
 He calls
 Matthew
 the publi-
 can, and a-
 pologizes
 for his con-
 versing with
 sinners, and
 his disciples
 not fasting.

† Grotius, and those that follow him, are of opinion, that the Levi mentioned Luke v. 27. is not the same with Matthew, in **Matt. ix. 9.** because Matthew never calls himself *Levi*, nor does Mark or Luke ever call Levi *Matthew*. But the answer to this has long since been given by St Jerom, in **Matt. ix. 9. viz.** that the other two evangelists (as their charity and good nature became them) endeavour to cover the infamy of their brother's former way of life, and therefore never call him the *publican*, lest they should seem to reproach him with the remembrance of his former conversation, but speak of him under his other name; though he, out of his great humility, in the gospel written by himself, does not only take the more commonly known name of *Matthew*, but adds that odious title likewise of *Matthew the publican*. Since then the custom of having more names than one, is known to have prevailed among the Jews; and as St Mark calls him *Levi*, the son of Alphaeus; so Matthew, in all church-history, is said to be the son of one of the same name; and since the history of the person, called *Levi* in Mark and Luke, agrees so exactly with what is said of him, who, in the other evangelist, is called *Matthew*, that there is not one circumstantial difference to be perceived, we cannot but conclude that this Matthew and Levi were one and the same person; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

† The old enemies of our religion, Julian and Porphyry, accused Matthew of folly and inconsiderateness, in following a man whom

fook his gainful employment, and afterwards became both an apostle and evangelist. Within a few days after his conversion, Matthew invited our Saviour and his disciples, and, among others, some of the profession which he had forsook, to a feast. The scribes and Pharisees (who accounted all in a manner sinners, besides themselves, but more especially these * publicans) began to expostulate with these disciples, how it came to pass that their master, who set himself up for a preacher of righteousness, and a reformer of others, came to be so intimate with these lewd and lost wretches, as to sit and eat with them at the same table: But, when our Saviour undertook the argument, he gave so fair an account of the reasons for his conversing with these people, as made the very ob-

A. M.
4034, &c.
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23. Luke
vi. 1.

whom he knew nothing of. But St Jerom's reply is, — That he could not want a sufficient knowledge both of our Saviour's doctrine and miracles before his call. The publicans, we find, were great frequenters of the synagogues, and other places where our Saviour taught, and, of all others, expressed the greatest eagerness to be instructed by him; and therefore, if Matthew was of the same disposition, he could not want opportunities of being acquainted with our Saviour's preaching, and of the wonderful works which he did every where, but more especially at Capernaum. It is very probable, therefore, that Matthew, upon such conviction, was inclinable to become one of our Saviour's disciples, even before he asked him: But if he was not, the lustre and majesty of the divinity hid under the manhood, but shining conspicuously in the face of Jesus Christ, was enough to attract every one that he cast his eyes upon; at least, that powerful impulse which he, to whom all hearts are open, knew how to inject into Matthew's breast, could not fail to do it: And from this supernatural movement doubtless it chiefly was, that so readily, and without the least hesitation, he left all, and followed Christ; *Calmet's Commentary*.

* Nor was it only among the Jews, but among the Heathens likewise, that the name of a *publican* was infamous. For, according to their writers, they were accounted no better than thieves and cheats: Free violence, and unpunished rapine, and shameless covetousness, were their public profession. Πάντες κλέωνται πάντες ἑσθίουσιν ἀπραί, was the saying of the poet; and it is said of Theocritus, that being asked, Which was the cruelest among the beasts? His reply was, "That, of those in the mountains, the bear and the lion; but of those in the city, the publicans and sycophants;" *Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations*.

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann Dom.
30, &c
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

jection † become his apology. But all this would not content the Pharisees; and therefore, joining with some of John's disciples, that were then present, they came and demanded of him, why it was that his disciples observed no fasts, when ‡ they, and John's disciples, were known to

† The arguments which our Saviour uses to the Pharisees for his keeping company with publicans and sinners, are these three: 1st, *They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*, Matth. ix. 12.; by which he intimates to them, that, in conversing with such sort of persons, he was about the discharge of his proper business; and that, as a physician's profession did sometimes call him among patients that had the most virulent distempers; so he, whose office it was to heal souls, ought not to refuse his assistance to those whose circumstances most of all wanted his help and advice. 2d, God's saying, in the Prophet Hosea, chap. vi. 6. *that he would have mercy*, meaning thereby all the kind offices whereby we promote our neighbour's advantage, *rather than sacrifice*, i. e. the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law; whereby he taught them, that though these latter might, in their due place and season, be acceptable to God, yet charity to the souls of men (which was the highest act of mercy, and that, wherein he was then employing himself) was much more esteemed by him. 3. That *he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; or that the great design of his appearance in the world was, to change the corrupt manners and dispositions of men; a change, which the righteous standing less in need of, should no more grudge the opportunities of it to sinners. than the healthful ought to think themselves disparaged, when the physician forbears the visits to them which he makes to the sick. Some commentators however have observed in this last argument a severe irony, and thus they expound it; "I am not come to cure those that think themselves well, nor to save those that account themselves righteous, as you Pharisees seem to do; but I am come to cure those who find themselves sick, and are sensible of the burden of their manifold iniquities, as these publicans seem to be;" *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.; and Calmet's Commentary.*

‡ Besides the public fasts appointed by the church, the Pharisees in general did fast two days every week, and those of more strictness than ordinary, four. The disciples of John too, who was himself a man of such abstinence, that our Saviour says of him, *He came (comparatively) neither eating or drinking*, Matth. xi. 18. did, no doubt, in a great measure, follow the example of their master; and, now that he was confined in prison, might, very probably, double their fasts and their prayers to God for his deliverance. And if they and the Pharisees were able

to keep many? " To which he replied, " That it was not
 " the proper season for the † friends of the bridegroom to
 " fast and afflict themselves, while they had the bride-
 " groom's company, but when they were deprived of it ;
 " and that it would be as imprudent and preposterous a
 " thing, to impose rigorous austerities upon his disciples,
 " (who were but novices in religion, and inured to ano-
 " ther way of life), as it would be to sew a piece of new
 " cloth upon a rotten garment, which, upon any stress,
 " would make the rent worse ; or to put new wine † into
 " old

A. M.
 4014, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 30, &c.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.

able to do this, why should the disciples of Christ be deemed insuffi-
 cient? Now, to this it may be answered, that among the Jews
 there were not only the sects of the Essenes and Pharisees, who led
 an austere life, but also schools of the prophets, many of whom
 were Nazarites, and consecrated to the service of God ; and that,
 besides these, the Jews had likewise academical and private schools,
 from whence might come disciples to John, and the Pharisees, al-
 ready trained up to fasting and penance, and other severe duties of
 religion. But now it is certain, that the disciples of our Lord were
 chosen from their fishing-trade, and so came to him wholly unac-
 quainted with, and unsuited for, these austerities, which to impose
 upon them now was not necessary, because his continuance among
 them was not to be long, and after his departure they would have
 occasion more than enough, to exercise these, and many more
 painful duties, in the propagation of the gospel, and the persecutions
 which should attend it ; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The Baptist, in his discourse to his disciples, had compared
 our Saviour to a bridegroom, and himself to his friend, or chief
 guest, John iii. 29. ; and therefore, as our Saviour designedly makes
 use of the same allusion, his argument runs thus,—" I am the
 " bridegroom, and my church is my bride ; as long as I am here
 " lasts the marriage-feast, and my disciples are the children or
 " friends of the bridegroom, and so are not to mourn, but to rejoice
 " with me while this time lasts : But, at my death and departure,
 " this bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then it will be
 " time for them to fast and mourn ;" *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The bottles which were in use in the east, and at this time are
 very common in other countries, were not made of glass, as ours
 are, but were certain bags made of goats-skins, being well pitched
 and sewed together. They are very good vessels to preserve wine,
 oil, or any other liquor in ; and in this respect, more especially,
 very convenient to carry from place to place, because, fall they ne-
 ver so often, they will not break, unless they be very old or decayed.
 In which sense our Saviour compares his disciples, before the descent

A. M. " old leathern bottles; which, upon the least fermenta-
 4034, &c. " tion, would both burst the bottles, and destroy the li-
 Ann. Dom. " quor; for see the prevalence of custom, and how diffi-
 30, &c. " cult it is to change an inveterate habit, for as much as
 from the " (n) none having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith
 beginning " the old is better."
 of the Go
 spels to
 Matt. ix. 8.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.

The O B J E C T I O N.

" **M**EN that take matters upon content, and read his-
 " stories without ever examining into them, may
 " perhaps imagine, that the evangelists have given us a
 " fair and rational account of our Saviour's doctrine and
 " miracles, without incurring any of the absurdities or
 " inconsistencies that are so manifest in other writers; but,
 " if we take a nearer inspection of the books that have
 " descended to us under their names, we shall find them
 " relating such incredible stories, so frequently mistaken in
 " matters of fact, so generally misapplying passages in the
 " prophets, so inconsistent with themselves, and so contra-
 " dictory to one another, that some of the objections
 " which Jewish or Heathen infidels have advanced against
 " them, have not been thought groundless or insignificant.
 " For what a lamentable thing is it, that the two
 " evangelists, Matthew (o) and Luke (p), in deducing
 " our Saviour's lineage, should, almost in every article,
 " disagree, and thwart one another; or (were it possible
 " to reconcile them) that they should both make their pe-
 " digrees terminate in Joseph, who was no more than the
 " reputed father of Jesus, and not in Jesus himself, as
 " born of the Virgin Mary, from whom alone he had his
 " human nature, and whose genealogy, in this case, was
 " only to be regarded? What a plain contradiction is it,
 " that St Matthew (q) should introduce our Lord as af-
 " firming to his disciples, that Elias was already come in
 " the person of John the Baptist; and St John (r) put it

of the Holy Spirit upon them, to old bottles, because they were not
 capable either of comprehending or practising all that perfection
 which he came into the world to teach mankind; *Calmet's Commen-*
tary.

(n) Luke v. 39.
 (q) Chap. xviii. 11. 12.

(o) Chap. i. 1.
 (r) Chap. i. 21.

(p) Chap. iii.

" in

“ in the mouth of the Baptist to assert the very contrary, A. M. 4034, &c.
 “ which he certainly would not have done, had he been the Ann. Dom. 30, &c.
 “ person predicted by the (s) prophet? And what a sad
 “ mistake in point of chronology, that St Luke should from the beginning of the Gospels to
 “ make the taxation appointed by Augustus, which hap- Matt. ix. 8.
 “ pened before our Saviour’s birth, fall out when Cyre- Mark ii. 23.
 “ neus was governor of Syria, though (according to the Luke vi. 2.
 “ account of all other historians) he did not succeed Quin-
 “ tilius Varus in that government, (t) till above twelve
 “ years after.

“ Isaiah makes mention indeed of a virgin’s (u) con-
 “ ceiving, and bearing a son, which St Matthew (x) has
 “ applied to the conception and birth of our Blessed Sa-
 “ viour; but as the word *Alma*, used by the prophet, does
 “ not necessarily denote a *virgin*, but sometimes a *young*
 “ *woman* that has had knowledge of man; there is reason
 “ to believe, that it should bear this signification, when
 “ referred to the mother of Jesus, because it is difficult
 “ to imagine, how a woman should conceive, and bear a
 “ son, and still preserve her virginity. And indeed, if
 “ this be not the proper acceptation of the word, we can
 “ hardly assign any reason, why our Saviour should make
 “ choice of a woman to be his mother, who was betro-
 “ thed and married to a man, rather than a pure virgin,
 “ who had no such engagements upon her.

“ Whoever looks into the writings of the prophets,
 “ must observe, that all along, down from the time of
 “ David, the Messiah is foretold under the character of a
 “ very powerful prince, who was to reign over the house
 “ of Jacob for ever; and therefore, it is absurd to put
 “ the son of Mary (who was born meanly, lived poorly,
 “ and died ignominiously) upon the world for that person,
 “ who is represented as one of the most glorious kings that
 “ ever was, or ever shall be, in the universe. It is ab-
 “ surd to tell us, that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt
 “ in him bodily, and yet to relate the story (y) of the
 “ descent of the Holy Spirit upon him; unless we can
 “ suppose, that this accession of the third person in the
 “ Trinity could enable him to do more than the Divinity,
 “ which always resided in him: But much more ab-
 “ surd is it, upon the like supposition, to talk of (z) his

(s) Mal. iv. 5. 6. (t) Joseph. Antiq. lib. 18. c. 1.; and
 Prideaux’s Connection, part 2. lib. 9. (u) Chap. viii. 14.
 (x) Chap. i. 22. 23. (y) Matth. iii. 16. (z) Chap.
 iv. 1.

“ being

A. M. " being tempted by the devil, when the devil, if he knew
 4034, &c. " him, would not have dared to do it; and, if he did not,
 Ann. Dom. " the Divinity wherewith he was armed, must have made
 30, &c. " him impregnable to all his assaults; so that the only end
 from the " of this transaction must have been to shew, that God
 beginning " was able to sustain and overcome the temptations of the
 of the Go- " devil.
 spels to

Matt. ix. 8.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

" Miracles are generally supposed to be the manifesta-
 " tion of this Divinity residing in our Saviour, and the
 " curing of demoniacs is always accounted one of the
 " greatest of this kind; but, as it is difficult to assign any
 " reason, why dæmons at this time were more numerous
 " in Judea, than in any country we ever read of, we have
 " reason to think, that the persons represented in the New
 " Testament as demoniacs, were only such as were af-
 " flicted with strange diseases, fits of the mother, convul-
 " sions, falling sickness, and the like; which the sacred
 " penmen (according to the idiom of the Hebrew language)
 " express in this awful manner.

" The first miracle that our Saviour did, was his turn-
 " ing water into wine at a marriage-feast; but how he,
 " who is all along represented as a very grave and sedate
 " person, should vouchsafe his presence at a wedding,
 " which is usually a scene of levities and excess; how he
 " came to give his mother so rough and undutiful an an-
 " swer, that interpreters have been at some trouble to put a
 " tolerable construction upon it; and above all, how
 " he came to supply the company, which had already
 " drank enough, with such a large quantity of wine, as
 " almost denotes him an encourager of intemperance, are
 " points that the evangelists have left to the perverse con-
 " jectures of unbelievers.

" The completion of prophecies, in the person and
 " action of our Blessed Lord, is certainly (a) a strong
 " evidence of his being the Messiah; but, in the applica-
 " tion which the evangelists make of several of these,
 " their scope is commonly so perverted, their words so
 " corrupted, and their sense so wrested from its plain
 " and obvious meaning; such shreds, and loose sentences
 " are culled out for this purpose, as have no manner of
 " relation to the Messiah, but such as have received their
 " completion in some other person, many ages before;
 " and upon every pinch, such figurative and mystical in-

(a) 2 Pet. i. 19.

" interpretations

“terpretations (as quite expound away the true importance
“of the prophecies) are fled to for shelter, that all that the
“gospel-writers seems to have done upon this head, is only
“to impose upon the world by a parcel of citations, and
“applications of prophecies, which, upon examination, will
“be found nothing to the purpose.

“(b) St Matthew, for instance, (to name one evangelist
“for all), having given an account of the conception of
“the Virgin Mary, and the birth of Jesus, informs us (c),
“That *all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was*
“*spoken by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be*
“*with child, and shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call*
“*his name Immanuel!* But the words, as they stand in I-
“saiah (d), relate to a young woman in the days of Ahaz,
“as appears by their context, and cannot, in any tolerable
“construction, have relation to the birth of our Saviour,
“whose name was not Immanuel, but Jesus.

“The same evangelist informs us, that Jesus was carried
“into Egypt, from whence he returned after the death of
“Herod (e), *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of*
“*the Lord by the prophet, Out of Egypt have I called my*
“*son*; which words are no where to be found but in the
“prophet Hosea (f); and yet, (g) according to their plain
“and obvious sense, they are no prophecy, but relate to a
“past action, viz. the conducting the children of Israel
“out of the land of Egypt.

“Again, the same evangelist, (h) having given us the
“account of the slaughter of the children in Bethlehem,
“and in the coasts thereof, immediately subjoins, that
“*then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah (i)*
“*the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard,*
“*lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel*
“*weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, be-*
“*cause they are not*; whereas it is plain from the context,
“that this lamentation, in its primary sense, does not re-
“late to the massacre of the children in Bethlehem, but to
“the ten tribes being carried away into captivity, and

(b) Collins's Grounds and reasons.

(c) Matth. i. 22. 23.

(d) Chap. vii. 14.

(e) Matth. ii. 15.

(f) Chap. xi. 1.

(g) Collins's Grounds and reasons,

(h) Math. ii. 17,

(i) Chap. xxxi. 15.

“cannot,

A. M. " cannot, without manifest violence, be applied to the o-
 4034, &c. " ther.
 Ann Dom. " Once more, the same evangelist, having given us a
 30, &c. " short account of the return and settlement of our Lord's
 from the " short account of the return and settlement of our Lord's
 beginning " parents in the city of Nazareth, acquaints us farther, that
 of the Go- " the reason of their doing so was, (k) that *it might be*
 spel. to " fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, *He shall be call-*
 Matth ix. 8. " ed a Nazarene, which is directly forging a quotation up-
 Mark ii. 23. " on us, because there is no one of the prophets that ever
 Luke vi. 1. " said or wrote any such thing. They no where tell us,
 " that the Messiah was to dwell at Nazareth; nor can his
 " dwelling at Nazareth (supposing they did) be any ground
 " for his being called a Nazarene.

" The place foretold by the prophet for his birth and
 " habitation, was Bethlehem, and thither the wise men
 " were directed to repair; but now what sort of persons
 " these wise men were, and from what part of the world
 " they came, what kind of star that was which conducted
 " them, and how they could know that it portended the
 " birth of the king of the Jews; how the justice and mercy
 " of God can be assailed, in suffering so many harmless
 " babes to be massacred at Bethlehem upon the account of
 " Christ, or how Christ's conduct may be accounted for,
 " in discovering himself so freely to the Samaritan woman,
 " when he had all along given such strict charge to his ap-
 " postles to conceal what they knew of his being the Mes-
 " siah and Son of God; these, and some other points in
 " this period, the evangelists have given us no manner of
 " satisfaction in, and have therefore left us at large, either
 " to form conjectures of our own, or to call in question
 " the truth of their narrations."

Answered That the evangelists were persons of too much probity to
 by shewing deal in lies, and cunningly devised fables, is evident from
 that there is their writings; wherein we find, not only the strictest pro-
 no contra- hibitions against guile and dissimulation, both in words and
 diction in deeds, but such evident tokens of their simplicity and God-
 our Lord's ly sincerity, as show that they would not be prevailed upon
 genealogy. to conceal truth, even though it might tend to their lasting
 dishonour. For let any one tell me, how they can be sup-
 posed capable of forging any thing for the advancement of

(k) Math. ii. 23.

their

their cause, (*l*) who have not been wanting to record the obscurity of their master's birth and life, the poverty and reproaches he endured in his ministry, the ignominy of his passion and death, and the terrors and agonies of his mind upon the approach of them; nay, who have not dissembled their own faults and failings, their mean extraction and employments, their ignorance and mistakes, their cowardly desertion of their Lord, and many unsuccessful attempts to convert others by their preaching? Men that were thus frank and open in their proceedings, could never designedly palm any falsehoods upon the world; and if they were mistaken in some passages, it must be esteemed their misfortune, not their crime.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Math ix 8.
Mark i. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

They were indeed illiterate men all, except St Luke, and brought up in mean employments; so very mean, that we cannot suppose them capable of writing a regular history of any kind, had they not been directed in it by the Spirit of Truth; but then to frame such an excellent system of morality as is contained in the gospels; to give such an extraordinary account of the satisfaction for sin, and of the nature and office of a mediator; to feign the life and actions of a Messiah, which should agree so exactly with the predictions of the prophets, and the types and prefigurations of the Mosaic law; this they were no more able to do, without the assistance of the same Divine Spirit, than they were to create a world: And yet, notwithstanding the great variety and difficulty of this province, it is wonderful to observe how all the four evangelists, who wrote at different times, and in distant places, agree, not only in the main topics, but sometimes in the most minute circumstances, (*m*) inso- much that whenever they seem to disagree, (which chiefly arises from their not confining themselves to the same words, or the same order of time), it looks as if the Spirit of God designed on purpose that it should be so, not only that they might be distinct witnesses of the same things, but that all succeeding ages of the Christian world might see with their eyes, that they had neither transcribed from one another, nor combined together like crafty knaves.

(*l*) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.
Cosmolog. fac. pag. 304.

(*m*) Grew's

A. M. (n) The truth is, though the evangelists nowhere contradict themselves, or one another, yet they were not so solicitous to prevent their being suspected of doing so by injudicious and rash men, as they would have been had they recorded any thing but truth; because it is suitable to the simplicity of truth, not to be over-nice and curious about every punctilio, and smaller circumstance, (as the manner of falsehood is), but to speak fully and intelligibly, and then leave it to men whether they will believe or not. Instead of criticising, therefore, upon some difficult parts of the evangelical writers, we ought to consider their whole design, method, and contrivance; and if in these we find them rational and uniform, the common candour of mankind will hinder us from thinking them capable of any gross mistakes or inconsistencies, and where we perceive the appearance of any such, put us upon the charitable office of adjusting and reconciling them.

There is indeed a great and uncommon difference between St Matthew and St Luke, in their genealogies of our Saviour; but to accommodate this, we may observe, 1st, That these two evangelists were men of different nations, and in that respect had different designs. For (o) St Matthew was by birth a Jew, wrote his gospel for the benefit of the Jewish converts; and wrote it, very probably, in their language: And as he adhered to the received custom of the Jews in this matter of genealogy, he began his deduction no higher than Abraham, the father of the Hebrews; but St Luke was a Gentile, and may truly be called the evangelist, as St Paul was the apostle, of the Gentiles; and therefore when he comes to relate the pedigree of Jesus, he takes a different method, and carries it up as far as Adam, the father of all mankind.

2^d, We may observe likewise, that St Matthew (p) intends only to set down our Lord's † political or royal pedigree,

(n) Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian religion, vol. 2. c. 8.

(o) Bishop Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. c. 14.

(p) South's Sermons, vol. 3.

† That St Matthew uses the word *begat* only in a political sense, is clear from hence, — That he applies it to him who had no child, even to Jeconiah, of whom it is expressly said, Jer. xxii. 30. that God wrote him childless; whereupon, being deposed by the king of Babylon, Zedekiah
his

pedigree, by which he had a right to the crown of the Jews, but St Luke shews his natural descent through the several successions of those from whom he took flesh and blood : And, to this purpose, we find St Matthew (as we said just now) beginning his reckoning only from Abraham, (q) to whom the first promise of the kingdom was made ; whereas St Luke runs his line up to Adam, the first head and fountain of human nature ; which plainly shews, that the one deduced only his title to the crown, and the other the natural descent of his humanity.

3d, We may observe farther, that as David had several sons by former wives, so by Bathsheba likewise he had three besides Solomon, whereof the eldest, next to him, was Nathan, and that Christ descended naturally from David, not by Solomon, but by Nathan : For, though it be frequently said in Scripture, that the Messiah should spring from David, it is never said that he should descend from Solomon ; for which reason St Luke only deduces Nathan's line, which came into the possession of the throne (upon Jeconiah's captivity, and want of issue) in the person of Salathiel.

4th, We may observe again, that the crown of Judah, being now come into the line of Nathan in the person of Salathiel, and after him, in the great and renowned Zorobabel, forasmuch as the two evangelists agree from Jeconiah to Zorobabel, and after him divide, (each ascribing to him a different successor, viz. the former Abiud, and the latter Rhesa), we may rationally suppose, that these two were the sons of Zorobabel, and that from Abiud, the elder brother, lineally descended Joseph, according to the computation of St Matthew, and from Rhesa, the younger brother, descended Mary, of whom Jesus was born, according to the description of St Luke.

5th, Once more we may observe, that it was a custom of the Jews, not to reckon the woman by name in her pedi-

his uncle, was made king, and afterwards, upon the removal of him likewise, (there remaining no more of the line of Solomon), Salathiel, being next of kin, was declared king of the Jews ; which Salathiel, upon that account, is said by St Matthew, chap. i. 12. to have been begotten by Jeconiah, not because he was naturally his son, but only legally or politically so, as succeeding in the kingdom during Jeconiah's captivity ; *South's sermons, vol. 3.*

(q) Gen. xviii. 8.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

A. M.
4034, &c
Ann. Dom
30, &c
from the
beginning
of the Go
spels to
Matth ix.
8. Mark ii
23. Luke
vi. 1.

gree, but to reckon the husband in right of his wife, for which reason, we are not to think it strange, that we find Joseph twice reckoned, first in his own right, by St Matthew, and then in his wife Mary's right by St Luke; for it is certain, that Mary was properly the daughter of Eli, and that Joseph, who, in the account succeeds him, is so reckoned, not as his natural son, but as his son-in-law, instead of his wife Mary, as the manner of the Jews was: And accordingly it is remarked by some learned men, that that St Luke (*r*) does not say of Joseph, that he was the son of Eli, but only τῷ Ἡλὶ he *was of Eli*, i. e. related to him, and belonging to his family, as his son-in-law. Fit however it was, that the genealogy of Jesus should be deduced from Joseph, because it was so generally received by the Jews, that Jesus (*s*) was the son of the carpenter, (*t*) the son of Joseph; so that if Joseph had not been acknowledged to have been of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David (*u*), since, according to the received rule of the Jews, "the family of the mother is not called a family," they would not have failed to have objected this as a just prejudice against all our Lord's pretences of being the Messiah.

The sum of these observations, in short, is this—
(*x*) That the royal line of David by Solomon being extinct in Jeconiah, the crown and kingdom passed into the next younger line of Nathan (another son of David) in Salathiel and Zorobabel; which Zorobabel having two sons, Abiud and Rhesa, the royal dignity descended of right upon the line of Abiud, of which Joseph was the last; and he marrying the Virgin Mary, who sprung from the line of Rhesa, the younger son of Zorobabel, and (as some imagine) having no issue himself, his right passed into the line of Mary, being next of kin, and, by that means, upon Jesus her son; so that he was both naturally the son of David, and also legally the king of the Jews, the latter of which is accounted to us by St Matthew, as the former is by St Luke.

This seems to be a pretty clear deduction of our Saviour's pedigree, and is capable of giving a fair solution to a great many of those objections, which arise from the different names, or the unequal numbers in the names,

(*r*) Chap. iii. 24. (*s*) Matth. xiii 55. (*t*) John vi. 42.
(*u*) Whitby's Annotations. (*x*) South's Sermons.

or the unequal distances from each other, which are discernible in the two genealogies. But perhaps interpreters might save themselves the trouble of giving a reason for several difficulties occurring therein, by saying that St Matthew (*y*) (concerning whom the main dispute is) recites his account as he found it in the authentic copies of the Jews, who doubtless in every family had preserved some known and approved genealogy of their descent from Abraham, the father of their nation, in whom they so much gloried, and from whose loins they expected the promised Messiah.

A M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

That even in our Saviour's time, the Jews (*z*) had genealogical tables, wherein they kept an account of their families and tribes, is evident from what Josephus says, *viz.* (*a*) That he gave the succession of his family, as he found it written in the public books; nor need we question but that the like, or greater, care was employed to preserve the stems of the royal family of David. Since then the Jews, who lived in the time when the gospels were published, (though exactly curious in things of this nature, and withal maliciously bent against Christ and Christianity), never once endeavoured to invalidate the account which these evangelists give us; this seems to be a sufficient proof that these genealogies, when first they came abroad, were neither thought erroneous, nor inconsistent, but agreeable to the public records then in use; and if any difficulties now arise in them, they are not to be attributed to any real and intrinsic cause, but accidentally to the ignorance of interpreters, for want of proper helps, at this distance of time, whereby to explain them.

It may seem a little incongruous perhaps, that the Baptist should deny what our Saviour confirms concerning him, *viz.* that he was the Elias who was to be sent before, to make preparations for his coming; but in this there will be no manner of contradiction, if it does but appear that the affirmation of the one, and the negation of the other, proceed upon different considerations. Now the state of the matter is this,——The Jews at this time were in full expectation of the Messiah; but then, it was an universal belief among them, that Elias should

In our
Lord's af-
firming
John to be
Elias.

(*y*) Bishop Kidder's Demonstration, part 2. c. 14. (*z*) Whitby's Annotations on Matth. i. 2. (*a*) Chap. iv. 5.

A. M. appear before him, and that this appearance should be a
 4034, &c. certain token of his coming: This belief they founded
 Ann Dom. upon the prophecy of Malachi, *Behold, I will send you E-*
 30, &c. *lijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful*
 from the *day of the Lord*; but then they imagined, either that the
 beginning body of Elijah was preserved in paradise, and should again
 of the Go- appear upon earth at this season appointed for it, or that
 spels to 8 his body being dissolved, God would infuse the spirit of
 Matt. ix his body being dissolved, God would infuse the spirit of
 Mark ii. 23. Elijah into a new one, created for that purpose. When
 Luke vi 1. therefore the great council at Jerusalem sent to inquire of
 the Baptist, Whether he was either the Christ or Elias, now
 returned from heaven, (as they imagined he was to do
 upon Christ's appearance), to this their sense of the que-
 stion he replies, in exprets terms, that he was neither the
 one nor the other. But this does not at all interfere
 with our Lord's affirming, that he was the person fore-
 told under the name and character of Elias, in the true
 signification of Malach's prophecy. He was not indeed
 the very Elias, who had lived in king Ahab's time, of
 whose second coming into the world the Sanhedrim now
 inquired, according to their misconstruction of that pro-
 phesy; but, according to the true construction thereof,
 he was the person who came in the spirit and power of E-
 lias, of whom Elias was a type, and whose temper and
 manner of life Elias much resembled.

How usual a thing it is for persons, who resemble others
 in qualities, offices, or actions, to be described by the
 names * of those whom they resemble, no one can be ig-
 norant, who is the least acquainted either with the phrase
 of Scripture, or with the common forms of speech. Thus
 the Messias is promised by the name of *David* (b), because
 he was to be a king; Zadock the high priest, and his
 sons, are recorded by the name of *Aaron*, and his sons,
 by reason of their office; and, among us, it is no un-
 common thing to call the rich man, a *Cræsus*; the wise
 man, a *Solomon*; the warrior, a *Cæsar*, an *Alexander*, or

* Thus the poet calls *Turnus* another *Achilles*:

——— *Alius Latio jam partus Achilles,*

Natus et ipse dea ———

And elsewhere he uses the same liberty of speech:

Altera erit Typhis, et altera, quæ vchat Argo,

Delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella,

Atque iterum in Trojam magnus mittetur Achilles.

Virgil, Æn. 6. et eclog. 4.

(b) *Ezek. xxxiv. 23. 24.*

the

the like; and where then, I pray, can be the misapplication, in our Saviour's calling the Baptist by the name of *Elias*, when, in the severity of his life, his zeal for God's glory, his suffering persecution, his bold rebuking of vice, his reproofs of Herod, and the hatred of his incestuous queen, answerable to the prophet's chidings of Ahab, and the malice of Jezebel, he so nearly resembled the Tishbite? (c) He was not indeed the real Tishbite; but, by the answer which he returns to these delegates from the Sanhedrim, (d) *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, &c.* he plainly intimates, that he was the very messenger promised in Malachi, and came to discharge the office assigned to him in that prophet. So far is John's answer from contradicting what our Lord asserts of him, that it is indeed a confirmation of it.

A. M. 4034, *Græ.*
Ann Dom. 30, *Græ.*
from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

The better to understand the nature of that taxation, which St Luke (e) refers us to, we must observe, that every fifth year, it was a customary thing to take an account of the citizens of Rome, for which purpose there were proper officers appointed, who were called *censurs*; (f) that their business was to make a registration of all the Roman citizens, their wives and children, with the age, qualities, trades, offices, and estates, both real and personal of them all; that Augustus Cæsar was the first that extended this to the provinces, and three times in his reign, first, in the twenty-eighth year before the Christian æra; secondly, in the eighth year before it; and, thirdly, in the fourteenth year after it, caused the like description to be made of all the provinces belonging to the Roman empire, and that this second enrolment, which was in the eighth year of the vulgar Christian æra, *i. e.* three years before that in which Christ was born, was the description to which St Luke refers us.

Now, supposing the execution of Cæsar's decree, in every province of the Roman empire, to be committed to the governor of it; the carrying this work through all the countries that made up the province of Syria, *viz.* through Syria, Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, and Judea, could not well take up less than the space of three years; for if

(c) Kidder's Demonstration, part 2. c. 16; and Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1. (d) Mark i. 3. (e) Chap. ii. 1. (f) Prideaux's Connection, part 2. lib. 9.

A M.
40:34, &c.
Ann. Dom
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1

Joab (*g*) was nine months and twenty days in taking an account only (*h*) of the ten tribes of Israel, and in them only of such persons as were able to bear arms, we cannot think it unreasonable, that the execution of the survey, which extended to all manner of persons, their possessions, qualities, and other circumstances, should in so large a province take up less than three years.

It is to be observed farther, that though the registration was made at this time, yet the taxes thereupon were not paid till Judea was made a Roman province, and Publius Sulpitius Quirinus (who in Greek is called *Cyrenius*) was made governor of Syria; for, before Archelaus was deposed, the Jews paid their taxes to their princes, and their princes paid their tribute to the Roman emperors; but, when Archelaus was deposed, and Judea made a Roman province, the tax was levied according to the valuation that was made eleven years before.

Upon the whole therefore it appears, that in this affair there were two distinct particular actions, done at two distinct particular times, *viz.* first, the making of the survey, and then the levying the tax thereupon; so that, if what is said in Luke ii. 1. be understood of the former of these, and what is said in ver. 2. only of the latter, this will remove all difficulties, and reconcile that evangelist with Josephus; and that it is to be thus understood, we have the opinion of many learned interpreters.

The truth is, (*i*) this levy of the tax, (which was settled eleven years before), in the time when Cyrenius was procurator of Syria, * was attended with so many commotions and

(*g*) 2 Sam. xxiv. 8.
fobre's Annotations.

(*h*) 1 Chron. xxi. 6. (*i*) Beau-

* The account which Josephus gives us of this matter is this,
"Cyrenius, at this time, says he, was sent governor by
"Cæsar into Syria. He was a man of eminent fame, a Roman
"senator, and one that had passed through all the degrees and of-
"fices of honour up to the dignity of a consul. Coponius, who
"commanded the horse, went along with him as governor of Ju-
"dea; but Judea being already annexed to Syria, it was Cyre-
"nius's province to tax and cefs the Jews, and to make seizure of
"the monies and moveables of Archelaus. The Jews grumbled at
"this way of assessing at first, but, through the persuasion and au-
"thority of the high-priest Joazar, the son of Boethus, they were
"persuaded to submit and comply without any farther trouble, until
"one Judas, a Gaulonite, of the city of Gamala, together with
"one

and seditious tumults, that the evangelist thought he could not make mention of its being decreed, without giving some hint of the manner of its being executed: And therefore he puts it in, by way of parenthesis, that *(k)* *this taxing was first made (i. e. first put in execution) when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

There is a passage indeed in the prophet Isaiah, which St Matthew applies to the birth of Jesus, yet according to the context, it seems at first sight to have a more immediate reference to another event; but let us examine the history from whence it is taken. In the days of Ahaz king of Judah, (and probably in the second or third year of his reign), Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, united their forces to come against Jerusalem, which put the king and his people in such consternation, *(l)* *that their hearts were moved* (according to the scripture-expression) *as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind.* Hereupon Isaiah is commanded to take his little son Shear-jashub with him, and to go and meet Ahaz, in order to assure him, that the design formed against him by the two confederate kings should not prosper: But finding no credence with the king, the prophet undertakes to perform whatever miracle he should ask, in confirmation of the truth of what he had promised him. Ahaz however still refusing, out of a specious pretence of not being willing to tempt God, the prophet turns from him, and addressing himself to the nobles of the royal blood, *(m)* *Hear ye now, O house of David, says he, the Lord himself shall give you a sign,*

Or in his
application
of the pro-
phesy of
Isaiah,
c. vii. 14.

“ one Sadducus a Pharisee, inveigled the people into a revolt:
“ Taxes, they said, were only marks of slavery, and therefore the
“ whole nation should do well to stand up for an universal liberty;
“ and one lucky hit would make them free and easy for ever, and
“ advance them in their reputation, as well as secure them in their
“ possessions. This was enough to put the multitude in tune for any
“ sort of mischief; nor is it to be expressed the havoc these turbu-
“ lent incendiaries made in the nation, and what murders, rob-
“ beries, and depredations, without distinction of friend or foe,
“ they committed, under the pretence of advancing the common
“ good of liberty and property, when nothing but passion and pri-
“ vate interest was at the bottom;” *Antiq. lib. 18. c. 4.*

(k) Luke ii. 2. *(l)* Isaiah vii. 2. *(m)* Ibid. ver. 13. 14.

A. M. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call
 4034, &c. his name Immanuel.
 Ann. Dom.

30, &c. Now, not to insist upon the original word *Alma* †, which (as (n) learned men have observed) signifies almost always a virgin untainted by man, and which the Greek translators before Christ (who were not interested in the controversy, and yet knew the signification of Hebrew words much better than any moderns can pretend to) have so rendered this place; and not to insist on the tradition which prevailed among the Jews, not long before our Saviour's appearing, viz. That the Messiah should come into the world in such an extraordinary manner, that no man should know whence he was, and (as the Talmud expresses it) that his birth should be like the dew of the Lord, as drops from the grass, expecting not the labour,

† *Alma* comes from an Hebrew word, which signifies to hide, and very fitly agrees with the custom of the eastern countries, who were wont to keep their daughters, while they were in their virginity, from all company and public conversation, and interviews. Thus, it is said, upon a public and extraordinary consternation, that the virgins, who were kept in, ran, some to the gates, and some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows, 2 Maccab. iii. 19. But there is another, and more proper signification, which, from the same word, that signifies to hide or cover, this *Alma* will bear, viz. as it denotes one who has not known man, or, according to the scripture-phrase, one whose nakedness has not been uncovered. The knowledge of a woman is expressed in the law of Moses by uncovering her nakedness; and, agreeably hereunto, *Alma* is a most proper word for a virgin, who is covered, and whose nakedness was never uncovered, or revealed by the knowledge of man. This account is perfectly agreeable to the Hebrew manner of speech, and to the style of the law of Moses. But this is not all; as several learned men have shewn, that there is a great affinity between the Hebrew and Punic language, this makes the words of St Jerom more remarkable: *Lingua Punica, quæ de Hebræorum fontibus manare dicitur, proprie alma virgo appellatur; i. e.* In the Punic language, which is said to be derived from the Hebrew, she who is properly a virgin, is called *Alma*, in Isaiah, chap. vii. especially considering, that St Matthew renders it by the word *παρθενος*, which signifies a virgin, properly so called, the very same word that the LXX interpreters made use of, about three hundred years before St Matthew wrote his gospel, and consequently long enough before this controversy arose between Jews and Christians; Bishop Kidder's Messiah, part 2. c. 5.

(n) Kidder's Demonstration, part 2. c. 5.

or action of men; not to insist on these things, I say, (though they make very much for Christ's title to the prophecy), (o) how can we imagine, that, after so pompous an introduction, and so important a name, the prophet should mean no more at last, by a virgin's conceiving, than that a young woman should be with child? What, does Isaiah offer Ahaz a miracle, either in the depth or in the height above? and when he seems to tell the house of David, that God, of his own accord, would perform a greater work than they could ask, does he sink to a sign that nature produces every day? Is that to be called a wonder (which word implies an uncommon, surprising, and supernatural event) which happens constantly by the ordinary laws of generation? How little does such a birth answer the solemn apparatus which the prophet uses, to raise their expectation of some great matter? *Hear ye, O house of David, — Behold, the Lord himself will give you a sign, worthy of himself, and what is it? why, a young married woman shall be with child.* How ridiculous must such a discovery make the prophet, and how highly must it enrage the audience to hear a man, at such a juncture as this, begin an idle and impertinent tale, which seems to banter and insult their misery, rather than administer any consolation under it.

(p) But of what use or consolation could the future birth of the Messiah be to the house of David at that time? Of very great use, without all doubt; for it assured them of the truth of God's promise, in that he would not suffer them to be destroyed, nor (q) *the sceptre to depart from Judah*, until the Messiah came. It assured them of his almighty power, in that he could create a new thing in the earth, by making a virgin conceive, and thereby shew himself able to deliver them from their most potent enemies; and it assured them likewise of his peculiar favour, in that he had decreed the Messiah should descend from their family; so that the people to whom he had vouchsafed so high a dignity, might depend upon his protection, and, under the shadow of his wings, think themselves secure. (r) In short, God had promised the Messiah should spring from the tribe of Judah, and from the family of David, even while that tribe, and that family, continued a polity

(o) Bishop Chandler's Demonstration of Christianity. (p) Collins's Grounds and reasons, page 43. (q) Gen. xlix. 10. (r) Spanheim's Dub. evang. part 1. dub. 27.

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1.

undefstroyed; and therefore, since that promise was not yet absolved, nor the Messiah as yet come, there was no fear of the extinction of Judah, and the house of David, at that time, whatever their present distress might be; but as God's promises were immutable, they had all manner of reason to believe, that the enemies now combined against them would, by some turn of Providence or other, be disappointed in their design.

Why our
Lord chose
a virgin that
was mar-
ried to be
his mother

Thus one great prophecy at least in the Old, as well as sundry promises in the New Testament, made it a thing necessary that when the Son of God came to be incarnate, he should be born of a pure and immaculate virgin; and it is impious to dispute the possibility of the thing, when God Almighty was the agent of it: But why this virgin should be (s) married, rather than a single woman, is the other question we are to resolve. And in order to do this, we must observe, that by this means Mary's genealogy, not only by her father's side, (which St Luke has recorded), but by her husband's likewise, (which St Matthew has done), came to be deduced; and so we have a double testimony, that she sprang from the seed of David, and, according to the promises of old, was the true mother of the Messiah; that by this means we have the testimony of her husband Joseph concerning her virginity, who was not a little uneasy in his mind, before he had satisfaction given him by the angel, and might possibly have been the first that would have blasted her reputation, had he not been fully convinced of her innocence and modesty; that by this means our Lord's birth was secured against all imputation of spuriousness, and his mother's character protected from the persecution of opprobrious tongues, which she must have endured, (if not the censure of the law), and brought withal a perpetual scandal upon her family, had not her pregnancy, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, been concealed under the umbrage of a common husband; and that by this means our Lord was provided with a guardian in his childhood and minority, and his mother with a companion in her journey she was shortly to take, from Nazareth to Bethany, and from thence into Egypt, and both of them with a supporter, who, by honest labour in his proper occupation, might provide them with the necessaries of life.

(s) Kidder's Demonstration, part 2. lib. 5.

These,

These, and several other reasons, might be assigned for our Lord's chusing to be born of a virgin that went under the notion of being married; but how he came to be a man of poverty and affliction, to leave meanly, and die ignominiously, when (had he been the true Messiah) he must, according to the representations made of him in the prophets, have appeared as one of the greatest monarchs in the world. This is the grand objection of the Jews; and therefore, to give it a proper solution, it ought to be considered that the (†) Messiah, in order to accomplish the prophecies concerning him, was to sustain three different characters; for he was to be a prophet and a priest, as well as a king. The predictions indeed which refer to his kingly office, are more in number, and enlarged upon more copiously, than either of the other; yet both the other are so essential to the character of the Messiah, that had any one of these been wanting in him, the scheme of man's redemption had been broken and imperfect: And yet it is certain, that these three offices require operations, not only distinct and peculiar to each, but such as could not equally be exercised at one and the same time, by one and the same person.

As a prophet, the Messiah was not only to teach and instruct his people, but to undergo the common fate of prophets, in being despised, contradicted, persecuted, and in bearing testimony of the truth of his doctrine, by the example of his sufferings for it. As a priest, he was to make sacrifice for the sins of his people, which in this case could not be otherwise done than by offering his own blood, and consequently dying in their stead. Now, both these, in the course of things appointed by God, were to go before the entrance upon his kingly office, because the prophecies mentioned this last as a recompence for the faithful discharge of the other two. This is a matter that both the (u)royal and (x) evangelical prophet express so very plainly, that St Paul in effect does but expound those passages, when he tells the Hebrews (y), that Jesus, *for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour*: and the Philippians (z), that *for his taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, God had highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every*

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
In what
sense he is,
and will be,
a most po-
tent prince.

(†) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol 3. and his 7th sermon at Boyle's lectures. (u) Psal. xxii. (x) Isaiah liii.

(y) Chap. ii. 9. (z) Chap. ii. 8. 9.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1

name, &c. Since therefore his regal office was not to commence till after he had accomplished his other two, to complain, that his kingly power was not exercised at his first coming, is to misunderstand the prophecies, and confound the order of events: it is to expect a full accomplishment of predictions within a very narrow space; that strictly belong to an office still in exercise, and to which, the Scripture says, *(a) there shall be no end.*

2. It is to be observed farther, that the style and manner of the prophets, especially when they treat of subjects uncommon, sublime, and spiritual, abound with figurative schemes of speech; and such pompous and bold metaphors and descriptions, taken from sensible objects, as awaken in our minds the most lofty imaginations we are capable of. This the Jews themselves make no difficulty to allow, and *(b)* some of their greatest doctors have laid it down for a rule, in the interpretation of the prophets, that in many places they are not literally to be understood, by reason of those metaphorical expressions, whose true intent is to represent things, according to our capacity, by images familiar to our senses. If therefore most of these great and pompous things that are said in the prophets concerning the glorious reign of the Messiah, may be understood of the spiritual benefits which we have received by his coming; such as, the graces of our regeneration and sanctification, the wisdom of his laws, the comforts of his ordinances, the holy and peaceable temper which his gospel inspires, the large extent of its propagation, and the blessed effects which in all places where it is sincerely believed and practised it produces: If things be reduced to this sense, I say, I cannot see but that the character of a powerful prince has been fulfilled in our Saviour already; for what king was ever so prosperous as he, who, by the propagation of his gospel, has enlarged his dominions so wonderfully over the most distant regions of the habitable world? Or what conquest was ever so glorious as that which he hath gained over the errors and prejudices, the lusts and passions of wicked and mistaken men, nay even over all the powers of darkness, and sin, and death, and hell?

But be it granted, (as it seems indeed very probable), that several passages in the prophets relate to the temporal

(a) Isaiah ix. 7. (b) Maim. More Nevoch, part 2. c. 39.
47.; Menas Ben. Israel Qu. in Gen. xxx.

greatness, prosperity, and peace, that shall attend the government of the Messiah; yet we are to consider,

3. That, before the consummation of all things, there will be an enlargement of Christ's kingdom, even here upon earth. For, though he have all power both in heaven and earth, already vested in the human nature, united with his own divine person, yet is not that power so visibly and fully executed, as it shall one day be; nor are all those glorious effects as yet accomplished, which the prophets foretold, when describing the victorious and peaceable, the unlimited and everlasting, dominion of the Messiah. The enlightening of the Jews and Gentiles, by bringing such multitudes of the one, and so many nations of the other sort, to the acknowledgment of the truth, is already a partial completion of the prophecies; but there is still a nobler in reserve, when the fulness of both shall come in. He reigns now actually in the hearts of men, and subdues the most formidable of our enemies, by the holiness of his laws, and the mighty operations of his grace; but that dominion and conquest will be much more absolute, when the time comes for every enemy to be utterly destroyed. Though therefore the whole be not, yet abundantly enough has already been fulfilled, to make us acquiesce in a steadfast assurance, that what is still behind will most certainly come to pass. For, sure, how meanly soever they that consider things imperfectly, may think of a despised and crucified man; yet there is nothing so gloriously great that may not most reasonably be expected from that very man when (c) *declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*

It is made a strong objection by the Socinians, against our Saviour's being the Son of God, that, at the time of his baptism, the Holy Ghost descended upon him, for which there had been no manner of occasion, say they, had the Divinity (which was certainly no less powerful than the Holy Ghost) been personally united to him. While our Blessed Saviour was discoursing concerning his approaching death, and a voice from heaven was heard speaking unto him, he told the people, (who seem'd to be divided in their opinions of it), (d) *This voice came not because of me, i. e. to satisfy me of the divine favour, or to comfort me against the agonies of death, but for your sake,*

(c) Rom. i. 4.

(d) John xii. 30.

that

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

A. M.
6034, &c.
Ann. Dom
30, &c
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

that ye might believe in me: And, in like manner, it might be a sufficient answer to this objection, that this visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon our Saviour *was not for his sake*, or to convey any virtue or power, that he was not equally possessed of by the divine nature that resided in him, but for the sake of the Baptist, and those that were then present with him, even to inform them of the excellency of his person, and divine mission: For so the voice, which immediately follows the prodigy (*e*) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; (*f*) *Hear ye him*, plainly shews, that this whole transaction was designed for the instruction of all the company. Our Saviour indeed was now entering upon his prophetic office, and fit it was, that the world should have some previous notice of it, before he came to open his commission. When he came to offer himself to John for baptism, John indeed, by some sudden inspiration, knew him; but he had not, as yet, made any public declaration of that knowledge; and therefore God took care to give the company this glorious manifestation of his being his Son. and a person sanctified by this descent of the Holy Ghost upon him to declare his will to the world, (according to the prophecy (*g*) concerning him), and whose words and doctrine it therefore concerned all men to hear and obey. Our Blessed Saviour indeed, as he was God, had no need of this unction of the Holy Spirit, but as he was to execute the prophetic office, it was expedient for him to have it: For, as a prophet is not to speak in his own name, but in the name of God, and what he has suggested to him by the Spirit of God; so this prophetic office was to be performed, not by the divine nature of our Lord, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “ We must therefore (with a great divine (*h*) “ of our church) distinguish between the excellencies and “ perfections of Christ, which flowed from the hypostatical union of the two natures, and those which flowed “ from the donation and anointing of the Holy Spirit. “ From the hypostatical union of the natures flowed “ the infinite dignity of his person, his impeccability, his “ self-sufficiency to fulfil the law, and satisfy the divine justice; as from the anointing of the Spirit flowed his knowledge of all evangelical mysteries, the doctrines and pre-

(*e*) Matth. iii. 17. (*f*) Ibid chap. xvii. 5.
xiii. 1. (*h*) Dr Lightfoot, on Mark xiii. 32.

(*g*) Isaiah

“ cepts,

“cepts which he delivered in his Father’s name, and the A. M.
 “many miraculous works which he did in confirmation of 1034, &c.
 “his mission and doctrine.” For this is plain to every one Ann. Dom.
 that looks into the gospels, that almost in every page our 30, &c.
 Saviour (i) owns his mission from God; that the doctrines from the
 which he taught were not his own, but God’s; that they beginning
 were all dictated by the Spirit of God; and that the mi- of the Go-
 racles which he exhibited, in testimony of these, proceed- spels to
 ed from the same Spirit of God. Upon the whole, there- Matt. ix. 8.
 fore, we may conclude, that Jesus Christ being now in a Mark ii. 23.
 state of humiliation, and emptied of the form of God, Luke vi. 1.
 acted, in things relating immediately to his prophetic
 office, not as God, but only as a prophet sent from God;
 not by the power of his divine nature, but of that Spirit
 by which he was anointed, and sanctified to that office;
 though (notwithstanding this quiescence in the Deity) be-
 ing still God, of the same essence derived from the Father,
 he might do many other things by virtue of his divinity,
 such as discerning the hearts of all men, walking upon the
 sea, and stilling the stormy winds with a word, &c. And
 as this divinity was part of the doctrine he was to publish,
 he might, without any contradiction to himself, assert,
 that God was properly his Father, and he properly his Son;
 that he and his Father were one; and *that all men were to
 worship the Son, even as they worshipped the Father.*

Something of the like nature is to be said in relation to And his
 our Saviour’s being tempted by the devil, viz. that though being tempta-
 his divinity did set him far above the utmost opposition of ed by the
 any created being, yet did not that divinity exert itself up- argument 2]
 on all occasions, but sometimes suspended its operations, gainst his
 and was quiescent, as we said before. (k) That the divi- divinity.
 nity was thus quiescent in Christ, until he entered upon the
 public exercise of his prophetic office, is generally thought
 by most orthodox divines; that, in all the actions relating
 to the execution of that his office, it ceased in the like
 manner to act, we have just now endeavoured to prove;
 and it is generally thought, that this was the case of his
 temptation by the devil, in which his divine perfections ly-
 ing by, (as it were), and forbearing to engage, he is to be
 considered abstractly as a man, though much more perfect
 than any other man. For fit it was, that he (who for this

(i) Vid. Whitby’s Preface to the gospel of St John. (k) Stan-
 hope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

very reason, perhaps, is called the second Adam) should overcome the great enemy of mankind, in that very nature alone, and unassisted, wherein the first Adam was so miserably foiled.

Whether the devil might know that our Saviour was in reality the Son of God, or only some peculiar favourite of his, divines are at a stand to determine. It is the observation of Origen, that (l) all the while that our Saviour was under the temptation, he never confessed himself to be the Son of God : And therefore, (m) since the dispensation of the gospel was not fully and perfectly understood by good angels, but gradually manifested to them, it is no wonder that the devil should be ignorant of the mysteries of the gospel, particularly that *great mystery of Godliness, God's manifestation in the flesh*. The devil therefore, seeing our Saviour, after he had been (n) declared the Son of God, so long in the wilderness with wild beasts, and hungry, without any food to sustain him, might be induced to question whether he was indeed the Son of God, in the most proper and highest sense of the words, and thereupon incited to assail him : But if even he knew him never so well, such is his inveterate malice, that it hath often prevailed with him to attempt things very foolish and impossible. For what could be more so, than for a creature to attempt to be like God, or to annul the truth of the prophecies concerning Christ ? What could be more pernicious to him than the death of the Lord of life for the redemption of mankind ; and yet this he attempted with the utmost eagerness, and by setting all his instruments to work to accomplish it, though (o) *it was impossible for our Lord to be held under the power of death* : Whatever Satan, therefore, might conceive of Christ, (as Petavius retorts the argument upon the head of Crellius), he could not but certainly know from the Scriptures, that he was to be the Redeemer of mankind, and the author of their salvation ; that he was *the seed of the woman who was to bruise his head, to sit on the throne of his father David, and there rule for ever* : And therefore, knowing all this, he could not hope to prevail in his temptations of our Lord, unless he could believe that he was able to reverse both the decrees and oath of

(l) Hom. 6. in Lucam. (m) Eph. i. 10. and 1 Pet. i. 12.
(n) Matth. iii. 17. (o) Acts ii. 24. 25.

God. Whether therefore the devil knew, or knew not, our Saviour, it may well be deemed an infatuation in him, to think of being able to pervert him, as he had done our first parents in their obedience to God; but then, it was far from being a foolish or unnecessary thing for our Lord thus to suffer himself to be tempted, (q) since thereby he hath instructed us, that not any, the best, and most exalted degree of virtue sets men above temptations; and since thereby he has encouraged us to hope for his assistance and support under the like circumstances; both because, (r) *himself hath suffered, being tempted*, and because (s) *he was in all points tempted like as we are, he cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*. These were the true ends and reasons, why our Saviour suffered temptation, and the proper and natural inference from hence is that which the same author to the Hebrews makes, (t) *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need*.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

There are few things wherein mankind seem to be more agreed, than in the acknowledgment and acceptance of miracles, as an authentic and indisputable testimony, that the persons intrusted with such power were employed by God; because the constant apprehensions, which both reason and revelation have given us of God, are, that he will not employ his power (as no true miracles can be done without the concurrence of his power) to deceive his creatures; and therefore, the reasoning of Nicodemus, when he came to visit our Saviour, was right, (u) *We know that thou art a teacher come from God, because no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him*. Since miracles then are the avowed effects of a divine power, we must certainly be mistaken in our judgment of them, when, with regard to their author, we esteem one greater than another. In effects indeed, that are produced by human power, we are apt to say, that some of them are greater than others, i. e. that they require more and greater degrees of power for the production of them; but this distinction vanishes in our consideration of the Supreme Being, to whose omnipotence the greatest effect we can imagine, gives no limitation, but is equal with the smallest, under the

Miracles,
in respect
of God, all
alike.

(q) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2. (r) Heb. ii. 18. (s) Ibid. chap. iv. 15. (t) Ibid. ver. 16. (u) John iii. 2.

A. M. compass of his acting. To us perhaps, it may seem a greater cure to dispossess a demon, than to drive away a fever; but in the hand of the Son of God, while he dwelt among us, they were operations equally easy; and yet a misconception in this matter has certainly led some into an opinion, that the several demoniacs mentioned in the gospels, were only so many persons afflicted with some strange and uncommon diseases.

4034, &c.
Ann Dom
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 9.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

That de-
moniacs
were differ-
ent from
people dis-
eased.

But that these demons, or evil spirits, which our Saviour, his apostles, and the primitive Christians, expelled out of the bodies of men, could not be diseases, is plain both from the Scriptures, and ecclesiastical writers, who make a constant and manifest distinction between the curing diseases and casting out of devils; for, when the evangelist tells us, that (x) *they brought unto Christ all sick people, that were taken with divers diseases, and those which were possessed with devils, and those that were lunatic, and had the palsy, and he healed them*; when (y) *he gave to the apostles power against evil spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases*; and accordingly, (z) *they healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many devils*; when Irenæus (a) informs us, that the Christians, in his days, “did truly cast out devils, and heal the sick “by imposition of hands;” and (b) Origen, that “they “cast out devils, and healed many diseases;” can any one of tolerable understanding think, that the diseases healed, and the devils cast out, were one and the same thing?

That there were evil spirits of this kind, the Holy Scriptures have taken such abundant care to acquaint us with their origin and fall, their names and numbers, their government and orders, their malicious designs, and employments, &c. that no one can doubt of their existence, who believes these holy oracles to be true. That both among the Jews and Gentiles, before our Saviour's advent, men were possessed with these evil spirits, is evident from the testimony of (c) Josephus, who tells us of a very powerful form of exorcism, which descended from Solomon, who learned of God; and from the testimony of (d) Plutarch, who acquaints us, that the exorcists of

(x) Matt. iv. 24. (y) Ibid. chap. x. 1. (z) Mark i. 74.
(a) Lib. 2. c. 16. (b) Contr. Cels. lib. 1.
(c) Antiq. lib. 8. c. 2. (d) Sympof. lib. 1. q. 5.

most nations advised those that were possessed, to repeat the Ephesian letters. And, that these evil spirits, in our Saviour's time, were distinct substances, and not the diseases of mankind, is evident from the circumstances of their ejection, from their expostulating with him, *What have we to do with thee? Art thou come to destroy us? Art thou come to torment us before the time?* And from his commanding them sometimes to be silent, and sometimes to come out of the man, and enter into him no more, &c.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

The truth is, these apostate spirits had gotten so far possession of the world, that they began to rival God in his worship; and therefore one end of his Son's incarnation is said to be this, *(e) that he might destroy the works of the devil, and (f) overcome the strong one, and divide his spoils.* And this, by the way, may suggest a reason, why at or about the time of our Saviour's advent, and perhaps more especially in the places which he frequented, God might permit the devil to exert himself in an unusual manner, in order to be the more signally triumphed over by the Saviour of the world, and those that were delegated by him to convert mankind to his religion. Nay, had I leisure to proceed to ecclesiastical writers, I might easily shew how victorious the name of *Christ* was over these principalities and powers of darkness, even after his departure out of this world; for "that our Lord was sent for the destruction of these evil spirits, you may now learn, says Justin Martyr, *(g)* from what is done before your eyes; for many Christians, throughout all the world, and in every city of your empire, have healed many that were possessed of the devil, and still do they eject them, by the invocation of the name of *Jesus*, whom none of your inchanters, conjurers, or forcerers, were able to expel:" And give me a man, *(says Tertullian, (h)* in that noble challenge of his to the Heathen powers), give me a man here before your tribunals, that is visibly possessed by the devil; and if, when he is commanded by any Christian to declare what he is, he don't immediately confess himself to be a devil, not daring to lie to a Christian, then let the blood of that Christian be shed before you in that very place." But I forbear, and so proceed to

Why there
were more
of them a-
bout our
Saviour's
coming.

(e) 1 John iii. 8. *(f)* Luke xi. 21. 22. *(g)* Apol.
1. p. 45. *(h)* Apol. c. 23.

A. M. the next objection, which relates to our Saviour's behaviour at the marriage-feast.

4034, &c. Ann. Dom. Our Blessed Saviour indeed was a person of so grave and serious a deportment, that whatever instances we find of his pity and compassion to mankind, of his grieving and being troubled, and even weeping upon some occasions, we can meet with none of his laughing, nor any token of a mirth or joy extraordinary, in the whole history of his life : But we must not from hence infer, that he was of a stiff and precise temper, or in any degree an enemy to such forms of civility, or social usages, as were then in practice. If therefore we may be allowed to suppose (what seems indeed highly probable) that this marriage at Cana was between persons of his own kindred and acquaintance, and that by the very rules of celebrating such festivals among the Jews, all excess and intemperance was excluded, then will it follow, that it could be no disparagement to our Saviour's character to accept of the invitation that was made him, and to be present at such a meeting.

30, &c. from the beginning of the Gospels to Matth. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. That our Saviour might, consistently with his character, go to a marriage.

Among us indeed (especially among the vulgar sort) there are sometimes, on these occasions, liberties taken that are not so justifiable ; but, among the Jews, there was always the greatest decency and sobriety imaginable observed in the celebration of their marriages. (i) To this purpose a governor of the feast (as some say of the sacerdotal race) was always chosen, whose office it was to have the superintendency of the dishes and wine, and to oblige the guests to observe all the decorums that religion required ; and not only so, but other persons, at this time, were likewise appointed to break glass-vessels, as a common signal, to give the company notice, that they had already drank enough, and were not permitted to run to excess. Under this regulation, it is scarce imaginable that the guests, at a Jewish marriage, could be guilty of any intemperance, and least of all at this in Galilee, where our Saviour's presence and observation, the gravity of his behaviour, and the seasonableness of his discourse may well be presumed to heighten the decorum, and to keep all the company under a proper restraint.

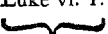
That there was no excessive drinking there. What therefore the governor of the feast says to the bridegroom, (k) in relation to the water that was turned

(i) Lewis's Antiquities of the Hebrew republic, vol. 3. (k) John ii. 10.

into wine, is to be understood only as a general representation of a custom, usual at other festivals, which was, to bring the best wine at first, and towards the conclusion, that which was worse; which custom (as the governor tells him) was not observed here; for the difference between this entertainment and others is, that *thou hast kept the good wine until now.* (1) So that, *when men have well drunk*, is only a circumstance thrown in to illustrate the comparison, or describe the latter end of a feast, and has no manner of reference to the condition of the company then present. But allowing the words *ὅταν μεθύσῃς* to be a description of the condition that the company were then in, yet it will by no means follow, that they had proceeded to any intemperance, because the words are equally capable of an innocent, as well as vicious meaning. (m) *Μεθύειν* indeed, in its primitive signification, means no more than *drinking after the sacrifice*; and as there is nothing in the etymology that determines this to be done to excess, or beyond the proper bounds of joy in a festival, so there are several instances in Scripture, wherein it was certainly done according to the rules of sobriety and moderation. Thus, (to mention one out of many), in the LXX's version of Genesis, where it is said, that (n) *Joseph's brethren drank, and were merry with him*, the words are *ἐμεθύσαν μετ' αὐτοῦ*, and yet no one can imagine, but that, in their present circumstances, thinking no other than that he was the governor of Egypt, and being apprehensive that he had no good design against them, they were too much upon their guard, and solicitous about their own safety, to give any way to intemperance in his presence: And, if the expression here, and in (o) several other passages, may be taken in a virtuous sense, we cannot but conclude, (unless we can suppose that St John designed to expose his master's behaviour upon this occasion), that he intended we should understand him in the most favourable acceptance.

We indeed, in our translation, say, that the water-pots, wherein the wine was created, (p) contained two or three firkins a-piece; but some, who have looked more nicely into *μετρητός*, or *measure*, here spoken of, (q) have brought it so low, as to make the whole six pots hold no

(1) Dr Pearce's Vindication of our Saviour's miracles, part 3.
 (m) Ibid. (n) Chap. xliii. 34. (o) Vid. Whitby's Annot. ad locum. (p) John ii. 6. (q) Vid. Cumberland, of weights and measures.

A. M. more than about fourteen or fifteen gallons of our English
 4034, &c. measure. But not to descend so low, we will suppose, at
 Ann. Dom. present, that the quantity of wine made by our Saviour at
 30, &c. this feast, was as large as our translation represents it; yet,
 from the whoever considers the nature of the Jewish marriages,
 beginning of the Go- how they were celebrated with feasting and rejoicings,
 spels to not only on the day of solemnity, (as it is with us), but
 Matth ix 8. for six or seven days after, and that at these feasts, not on-
 Mark ii. 23. ly all their relations, and neighbours, and acquaintances,
 Luke vi. 1.  were invited, but that it was well taken likewise, if any
 others (though not invited) would come to partake of the
 entertainment, and bear a share in the joy: Whoever con-
 siderers this, I say, cannot but imagine, that a very large
 quantity of wine must needs be requisite at such a time,
 since it was to be a supply, not for that day only, but for
 all the succeeding days, until the time of the feasting was
 expired.

Or if there were, Christ not charge-
 able with it. Nay, even supposing farther, that our Lord, upon this
 occasion, did not confine himself to a precise quantity,
 proportionate to the company, or period of the festival,
 and (what is more) (r) that some of the company might
 abuse his liberality by their intemperance, (which is a con-
 cession not to be gathered from the text), yet he cannot
 therefore be charged with the administering to their excess,
 by making such an ample provision, any more than we can
 charge the providence of God with being instrumental to
 all the gluttony and drunkenness which is committed in the
 world, merely because he affords that meat and drink,
 which men of inordinate appetites abuse to excess. The
 truth is, as it is an high commendation of providence, that
 it crowns us with plenty, (whatever use we make of it),
 and bestows upon us all things richly to enjoy; so was it
 not unbecoming a person, invested with a divine commis-
 sion, to give, on this occasion, an eminent instance of his
 flowing liberality, and, by his generous provision for the
 family, to leave a grateful memorial of his benevolent re-
 gard to two persons that very likely were his relations,
 and had just entered into the honourable state of matri-
 mony.

No inde- Since therefore our Lord answered, in so free and plen-
 cency in tiful a manner, his mother's request at last, there seems
 our Lord's to be something in their supposition, who, from the pro-
 reply to his priety (s) of the Greek expression, think that his mother

(r) Whitby's Annot. in locum.

(s) ὁ τσιφεῖσθαι οἶνον, ver. 3.
spake

spake to him, before the wine was out, but when it grew
 so low that she plainly perceived there would not be enough
 for the company; and therefore our Saviour's reply to her
 will very justly bear this sense, *Ti keni g'roi*; "What is it
 "to you or me? i. e. the care of providing wine upon this
 "occasion does not properly belong to you or me; but
 "admitted it did, *My hour is not yet come*. It is too soon
 "as yet to set about it; because it is highly fitting that the
 "necessity of that supernatural supply, which I intend them,
 "should be a little more felt, in order to recommend the
 "benefit itself, and to give the manner of attaining it a
 "power of making a deeper impression on their minds."

A. M.
 4034, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 30, &c.
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

This seems to be no unnatural construction of the words,
 and removes all the seeming harshness of our Saviour's an-
 swer, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* We mistake
 the matter, however, very much, if we think that the
 word *γυνή*, which we render *woman*, was any title of disre-
 spect or indifference, (as it seems to be in our translation),
 since it is frequently used by the best authors, when the
 highest marks of esteem are intended. The polite Xeno-
 phon himself puts it in the mouth of one of his Persian
 chiefs, when he was addressing himself to a captive lady,
 and comforting her under her unfortunate circumstances;
 and certainly a time there was, that our Lord called his
 mother by this appellation, when he was far from being
 harsh or undutiful to her, even when he was hanging on
 the cross, and tenderly recommending both his mother to
 the care of his beloved apostle, and that apostle to his mo-
 ther's love and affection, (t) *Woman, behold thy son*. So
 little does our Saviour's conduct, in this whole transac-
 tion, deserve these horrid and impious censures which of late have
 been thrown upon it!

Whatever some modern Jews and infidels may alledge a-
 gainst the abuse (as they pretend) which the writers of the
 New Testament have put upon the prophecies of the Old,
 by applying them to a wrong sense; (u) no man need be
 told, that an attempt of this nature had been as imperti-
 nent, the affront to man's reason as insolent, and the event
 as fruitless, nay as fatal to their cause, had they imposed
 a false, or even controverted, sense upon the predictions
 confessedly relating to the Messiah, as it would have been

That the
 prophecies
 in the Old
 Testament
 are not mis-
 applied in
 the New.

(t) John xix. 25. 27.
 lectures, sermon viii.

(u) Stanhope's Sermon's at Boyle's

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann. Döm.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

had they urged such predictions as were not acknowledged to belong to him at all. The truth is, if the Jews understood the prophecies relating to the Messiah in one sense, and the apostles, in their address to them, applied them in another, we cannot see how they could ever have made one profelyte, being in the same condition with what St Paul describes, when he tells us, that (x) *he who speaketh in an unknown tongue* (and why not he that speaketh in an unknown meaning?) *speaketh to the air, and becometh a Barbarian to him, that heareth but understandeth him not.* So that every Jew converted to the Christian faith is an implicit proof of the apostles applying the ancient prophecies in a sense that was then current and familiar to them.

That the famous prophecy in Isaiah (y) is thus applied by St Matthew (z), to prove that Christ was born of an immaculate virgin, we took occasion, in our answer to the fourth of these objections, to shew. The remaining allegation is, that the name of the person of whom the prophet speaks was to be Immanuel; whereas the name of that son of Mary, of whom St Matthew speaks by God's express command, was Jesus; and therefore the words of the prophet are misapplied by the evangelist.

In what
sense Jesus
was Imma-
nuel.

Now, nothing is more common in Scripture, than by the calling or naming of a person or thing, not to mean that that person or thing would be commonly distinguished by that name, but only that it should have such properties and qualities in it as that name did denote; or, in other words, that it should really be what the full sense of that name imported. Thus, of the city of Jerusalem it is foretold by the prophet, (a) that it should *be called the city of righteousness*, when it really was to be such a city; for in the foregoing words it is promised, that *God would restore her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning.* And in like manner, though it be declared by this prophet (b), that the wonderful child which God promised to the house of David should be called *Immanuel*; yet if he was but what that name properly imports, *God with us*, in a most eminent and peculiar manner, it is not to be doubted but that the pro-

(x) 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

(y) Chap. vii. 14.

(z) Chap. i. 23.

(a) Isaiah i. 26.

(b) Ibid. chap. vii. 14.

phesy received its full completion in the person of our Saviour Christ.

A. M.
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Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

For, besides God's universal presence, there is a presence of favour and distinction, whereby he is said to be, in a more peculiar manner, with those whom he loves, and blesses above others. And, in this regard, the child here spoken of, is justly called Immanuel, because (as St Paul speaks) (c) *God was in him, reconciling the world to himself, for his sake and sufferings not imputing their trespasses unto them; so that by him (d) they, who were some time afar off, are made nigh, have access to the Father, (e) are accepted in the beloved, and become, of enemies and strangers, friends and children, inasmuch, that God vouchsafes to dwell in them, and to be one of them. And, as God unites us to himself by grace, so did he, in this child, condescend, by an ineffable generation, to unite our substance and nature to himself, to be perfect God, and perfect man, (f) that so he might be the first-born among many brethren, and redeem the children from death, who are partakers of flesh and blood, by himself taking part of the same. Let it not then be any more objected, that the child in the prophecy could not be called Immanuel, whom we confess to have been called Jesus; for he is therefore our Immanuel, because our Jesus; therefore, most eminently, most literally, God with us, because, by so miraculous an union, a Saviour of his people from their sins.*

It may seem perhaps surprising to some, that St Matthew should so frequently introduce his citations with a *This was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet*: But whoever considers the idiom of the Hebrew tongue, cannot but know, that the phrase, answering to the expressions, *that it might be fulfilled*, means no more, than that *hereby was verified*, or that *this event answered to the prediction*, or the like. Nay, the Jews were accustomed to say, that a passage of Scripture was then fulfilled, when any thing happened that was applicable to it; and therefore it is no wonder, that St Matthew, who himself was a Jew, and very probably wrote his gospel in the Hebrew tongue for the benefit of his countrymen, should naturally fall into their style and manner of expression.

(c) 2 Cor. v. 19.
chap. i. 6.

(d) Eph. ii. 13. 18.
(f) Rom. viii. 29. Heb. ii. 14.

(e) Ibid.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii
23. Luke
vi. 1.

The cita-
tion in
Matt. ii. 15.

Now, whoever considers the state of the Jews in Egypt, their bondage, and danger of utter extinction, by reason of the decree which passed for the destruction of all their male children (had not the providence of God prevented the execution of it) will soon perceive the cause, why Egypt is made in Scripture the common figure and emblem of extreme danger, and imminent death; and why a deliverance out of Egypt should be applied to every great act of preservation, where there seemed to be no visible means of escape; insomuch, that whenever any instance of such a watchful and protecting providence happened, it was an usual and proverbial speech among the Jews (who were wont then, as they are still, to apply sentences out of holy writ to the common occurrences of life) to say, in Scripture phrase, *Out of Egypt have I called my son*, or, *He hath called him out of Egypt*, i. e. he hath rescued him from the jaws of death, or from the like danger that the Israelites were in when he brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand and a stretched-out arm. Since Joseph then was ordered to flee to Egypt, and to tarry there until Herod was dead, for this reason, because Herod sought the young child's life; this distinguishing preservation of Jesus, by means of his retreat, till the danger was over, will justify the evangelist (even though it had been any other country, as well as Egypt, whereunto he retired) in applying to him the proverbial saying upon that occasion, (g) *Out of Egypt, i. e. out of manifest danger, have I called my Son*.

In Matt. ii.
17.

The deportation of the ten tribes from their native country into a foreign land, there to die, or live in slavery, was so grievous a calamity, that the prophet Jeremiah (h) (by way of prosopopœia) introduces Rachel, the favourite wife of Jacob, that great progeniture of the Israelites, making bitter lamentation for their loss, and refusing all consolation, because there were no hopes of their recovery. And the murder of so many innocent babes at Bethlehem, by the bloody decree of Herod, was an event so dolorous to their tender parents, that the evangelist, when he came to relate it, thought he might justly (by way of accommodation) apply the words of the prophet, and, in the name of all the miserable mothers that had lost their children, make Rachel, upon this occasion, (and as a farther accomplishment of the prophecy),

(g) Matt. ii. 15.

(h) Chap. xxxi. 15.

return to her weeping again. The rather, because Rachel, having been long dead before the captivity, may, with equal propriety, by the evangelist, as she is by the prophet, be introduced weeping; the rather, because she was (i) so fond a lover of children, that she is fitly enough brought in here in the room of the tender mothers who wept for the loss of theirs; and the rather, because the slaughter of the Bethlemites might be called that of her children, because among them (k) was the place of her sepulture, after that she had lost her life in the bitter pangs of child-birth.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
50, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

There is no prophet, we own, wherein it is expressly said, that the Messiah should be called a *Nazarene*; (l) but the observation of St Jerom, in his comment upon this place, is not amiss, viz. that when St Matthew (m) mentions the word *prophets* in the plural number, (whereas, in other places, he had always cited some particular prophet), he thereby shews, that he did not take the words from the prophets, but only the sense. Since then the title of *Nazarene*, both Jews and other enemies of Christianity have always, by way of contempt, given to our Blessed Saviour, because he was supposed to come out of that very city, from whence it was thought impossible, that (n) any good thing should come; and since most of the prophets speak of Christ, as a person that was to be reputed vile and abject, (o) a stranger to his brethren, and even an alien to his mother's sons, (p) despised and rejected of men, despised and esteemed not, here is the plain sense of the words, *he shall be a Nazarene*; (q) and the angel, by God's appointment, no doubt, sent him to this contemptible place, that he might thence have a name of infamy and contempt put upon him, according to the frequent intimation by the prophets.

And Matth.
ii. 23. ex-
plained and
vindicated.

(r) The word we render *wise men*, in its original, signifies *magicians*; which, however, now it bespeaks not so good a character, was, nevertheless, heretofore a name of very innocent and honourable signification. The studious and inquisitive, whose business and profession led them to search into nature, its most abstruse causes and effects,

Who these
wise men
were.

(i) Gen. xxx. 1. (k) Ibid. xxxv. 19. (l) Bishop Kid-
der's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 2. c. 2. (m) Chap.
ii. 23. (n) John i. 46. (o) Psal. lxxix. 8. (p) Isaiah
liii. 3. (q) Whitby's Annotations in locum. (r) Stanhope
on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.

and

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

and more particularly into the motions and dispositions of heavenly bodies, were distinguished by this title : And in what profound veneration and respect they were held, appears from the most important matters, both sacred and civil, being committed to their administration. They were the counsellors, the judges, the priests, the princes, in a word, the oracles of the eastern countries. But, as the best arts are sometimes perverted to ill purposes ; so it happened to these, that, falling into the hands of bad men, who met with people ignorant and credulous, and not only easy, but even glad, to be deluded, they degenerated into the cheats of judiciary astrology ; and these abuses grew so general, as, at last, to fix an ill sense upon the word, and a scandal on the science itself.

It were a wrong and great indignity to the persons now before us, not to believe them of the nobler and better sort ; but we can hardly be persuaded (though some would endeavour to do it) that they were persons of royal dignity, (s) because we cannot reasonably suppose, that the evangelist would have omitted a circumstance of so great moment, both for their honour and our Lord's. We can hardly think, but that some account would have been given of their royal train and equipage, and that all Jerusalem would have been moved as much to see their entry, as they were to hear their questions : Nor can we imagine, that it would have been decent in Herod to have received them with no more respect ; to have dismissed them to Bethlehem without attendants ; much less to have laid his commands upon them to return back, and bring him an account of the child, as soon as they had found him, had they been persons of equal rank and dignity with himself. Upon these considerations we may justly deny them the title of *kings*, though we cannot but allow them to be persons of great wisdom, learning, and integrity ; of which ours, and some other translations of the Bible, have been so sensible, as very prudently to decline the odious name of *magicians*, and to call them *the wise men of the east* ; but what part of the east it was that they came from, few interpreters have agreed.

Whence
they came.

(t) Some have imagined, that these travellers came out of Persia ; others from Chaldea, others from Arabia, and others again from Mesopotamia. All these countries

(s) Whitby's Annotations on Matth. ii. 1. &c.
hope on the epistles and gospels, vol 1.

(t) Stan-

lay

lay eastward from Jerusalem and the Holy Land ; and in each of these, some antecedent notions of the Messiah may be accounted for. In Chaldea and Persia, by the captivity of the Jews, and the books of Daniel ; in Arabia, by the nearness of their neighbourhood, and frequent commerce ; and in Mesopotamia, besides these common helps, they had the prophecy of their countryman Balaam, concerning a star (u) that should come out of Jacob to direct them. (x) But as we know of no record, wherein this prophecy was preserved, but the book of Moses, which the people of Mesopotamia neither read nor believed, so it seems evident, that Balaam's words do not refer to a star that should arise at any prince's birth, but to a certain king, who should be as glorious and splendid in his dominions, as the stars are in the firmament. Upon the whole, therefore, it seems most likely, that these wise men came out of Arabia (y), (which according to Tacitus, was the bound of Judea eastward), not only because the gifts which they presented were the natural products of that country, which was famous likewise for its magi, inasmuch that Pythagoras (as Porphyry informs us) went into Arabia to acquire wisdom ; but because its neighbourhood to Judea might give these wise men the advantage of discerning the star better than any more distant nation had.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

What the
star that
conducted
them was.

For, that this star was no celestial one, and such as might be seen at a vast distance, its motion, contrary to the ordinary course of stars, its performing the part of a guide to the travellers, and that by day, very probably, as well as night, its accommodating itself to their necessities, and disappearing and returning, as they could best, or least be without it ; and (what is a circumstance as remarkable as any) its pointing out, and standing over the very place where the child was, (which the height and distance of common stars makes it impossible for them to do), are a sufficient demonstration. It seems not improbable, therefore, that what the evangelist calls a star, was only that glorious light (z) which shone upon the Bethlehem shepherds, when the angel came to impart unto them the tidings of our Saviour's birth ; for that this light was exceeding great, is clear from that expression, which styles it the (a) *glory of the Lord*, and that it was a light from hea-

(u) Numb. xxiv. 17.

(y) Ibid.

(z) Ibid.

(x) Whitby's Annotations.

(a) Luke ii. 9.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

ven hanging over their heads, the words in the (*b*) Greek, as well as (*c*) Latin version, sufficiently inform us.

Now, every one knows, that such a light, at a great distance, appears like a star; or at least, after it had thus shone about the shepherds, it might be lifted up on high, and then formed into the likeness of a star, where standing vertically over Judea for some time, it might direct the Arabian astrologers (whom so strange a phenomenon could hardly escape) to the capital city, as the likeliest place to gain intelligence of the new-born king, whose *star they had seen in the east*, i. e. from the place of their abode, which was in the east: For, should we suppose that this light was placed in any part of the eastern hemisphere, it would have denoted something extraordinary among the Indians, or other eastern nations, rather than among the people of the Jews.

Now the
wise men
came to un-
derstand
what the
star meant.

(*d*) But how came these eastern sages to know this star, or luminous appearance in the heavens, (place it where we will), denoted the birth of a king? Now, for the resolution of this question, it must be observed, what (*e*) some Heathen historians tell us, *viz.* "That through the whole east it was expected, that about this time a king was to arise out of Judea, who should rule over all the world." Nor could it well be otherwise, since, from the time of the Babylonish captivity, we find the Jews dispersed (*f*) through all the provinces of the Persian monarchy, and that (*g*) in great numbers, and (*h*) many people of the land becoming Jews; and, after their return home, increasing so mightily, that they were dispersed through Africa, Asia, and many cities and islands of Europe, and (as Josephus (*i*) tells us) where-ever they dwelt, making many proselytes to their religion. (*k*) Now these wise men, living so near to Judea, the seat of this prophecy, and conversing with Jews, i. e. with those, who every where expected the completion of it at that time, as soon as they came to see this extraordinary star, or body of light hovering over Judea, they might rationally conjecture, that it signified the completion of that celebrated prophecy, concerning the king of Jewry, over the center of

(*b*) Περὶ λαμψεν αὐτοῦ.
Whitby's Annotations.

(*c*) Emicuit ex alto.
(*e*) Tacit. Hist. et lib. 5.; Suet. De vita

(*d*) Whit-

Vesp. c. 4.

(*f*) Esther iii. 8.

(*g*) Ibid. chap. ix. 2.

(*h*) Ibid. chap. iii. 13.

(*i*) Antiq. lib. 14. c. 12.

(*k*) Whitby's Annotations.

which

which land, they, being then in the east, might see this meteor hang.

Not long after the departure of these eastern sages from Bethlehem, we find a prodigious multitude of innocent babes inhumanly put to death, upon the account of him whom these wise men came to adore. But, to vindicate the justice and goodness of providence in this proceeding, we need not appeal to God's universal dominion over all his creatures, and the right he has to take away, in what manner he pleases, the being which he gives us; we need only consider the present life, not as our last and final state, but as one whose principal tendency is to another; and then it will appear, that there is no certain measure to be taken of the divine justice or goodness, towards us, without taking in the distributions of that other life, which, indeed, is the main end of our living at all. What Solomon, therefore, in his Wisdom, says of the righteous in general, is much more verified in the case of these harmless babes:

(*l*) *In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery; but they are in peace: For, though they were punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality.* (*m*) For a frail, a short, a troublesome, a dangerous life, God gives them the recompence of an immortal, a securely happy, a completely glorious one; which not only vindicates, but magnifies his goodness and liberality to them. He considers their infancy, and the noble fruit which might have sprung from these tender plants, had they been allowed to grow to full maturity, and accordingly rewards them: For, though they wanted the will of martyrdom, which riper years may have, yet it must be allowed, that they were clear of that voluntary and actual sin which those riper years would have contracted: And therefore, as in the most literal sense, (*n*) they were not defiled with sensual pleasures, but left the world in virgin-innocence, as they were truly redeemed from among men, whose early translation to a state of bliss prevented the hazards and temptations of a wicked world; and, as they were (strictly speaking) the first fruits unto God and the Lamb, who began to shed their blood in the cause of a new born Saviour, so God hath been pleased to vouchsafe them a peculiar honour, (*o*) *to sing, as it were, a new song before the throne, and to follow the Lamb whither-*

A. M.
4034. *&c.*
Ann Dom.
30. *&c.*
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

The Beth-
lehem mas-
sacre no re-
flection on
providence.

(*l*) Wisdom iii. 2. *&c.* (*m*) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1. (*n*) Rev. xiv. 4. (*o*) Ibid. ver. 3. 4. 5.

A. M. *soever he goeth, because in their mouth was found no guile; for they were without fault before the throne of God.*

4034. &c.
Ann. Dom.

30. &c.
from the

beginning

of the Go-

spels to

Matth. ix.

8. Mark ii

23. Luke

vi. 1.

Our Lord's

discovery of

himself to

the Samari-

tan woman

accounted

for.

We have but one objection more to answer, and that is a seeming inconsistency in our Saviour, in discovering to the Samaritan woman his divine character, which he had so often desired his disciples to conceal. Our Saviour, it is true, was so far from making any unnecessary declarations of himself, that, both upon (p) St Peter's confessing him to be the Christ, and (q) after his transfiguration, wherein he was declared to be the Son of God, we find him charging his disciples to say nothing of this, until his resurrection: (r) because their testimony, in these points, might not only be like a matter concerted between him and them, but because indeed they were not qualified to be his witnesses in these things, until they had received power from on high, by the coming down of the Holy Ghost. It is to be observed however, that, when our Lord is himself fairly called upon, and especially by persons invested with authority, he never once conceals his divine nature and commission.

When (s) the Jews came round him in Solomon's porch, and said unto him, *How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly;* his answer is express, *I told ye, and ye believed not: The works, that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me; for I and my Father are one.* When he stood before the judgment-seat, and the high-priest demanded of him, (t) *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God,* his answer is, *Thou hast said;* or, (as St Mark (u) expresses it) *I am;* and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Nay, there are some instances, wherein, of his own accord, and without any provocation of this kind, he freely discovers who he was: for, having cured the man that was born blind, and afterwards meeting him accidentally, (x) *Dost thou believe on the Son of God,* says he? Whereupon the man asking, *Who is the Son of God, that I may believe on him?* Our Saviour replies, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he who talketh with thee:* And therefore we need less won-

(p) Mark viii. 29. (q) Matth. xvii. 9. (r) Whitby's Annotations on Matth. ix. 30. (s) John x. 24. &c. (t) Matth. xxvi. 63. 64. (u) Chap. xiv. 62. (x) John ix. 35. &c.

der, that, when this Samaritan woman had first of all confessed him to be a prophet, and, (as her words seem to imply) (*y*) was a little dubious, whether he was not the Messiah, our Saviour should prevent her inquiry, and tell her voluntarily that he was. Especially considering, that (*z*) such a declaration might be a means to prepare her, and the rest of the Samaritans, whenever his apostles should come and preach the gospel unto them, to receive their testimony, as we find (by the history of the apostolic acts) that they did it with great gladness.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix 8.
Mark i. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

Thus have we endeavoured to satisfy all the exceptions of any weight, that the lovers of infidelity have hitherto made to this part of the evangelical history; and, if Christianity stood in need either of the support or testimony of Heathen authors, we might say, that the incarnation of Christ, the Son of God, is no more than (*a*) what the Greeks (as Julian avers) affirm both of Æsculapius and Pythagoras, viz. that they were both the sons of Jupiter, though they appeared in human nature, which doctrine (in the evangelist St John) Amelius*, the master of Porphyry, allows to be true: That the birth of our Blessed Jesus of a virgin immaculate is no more than (*b*) what the ancient Jewish doctors expected in their Messiah; and therefore Simon Magus, who greatly affected that character, pretended that his mother Rachel bore him without the loss of her virginity: That the new star, or body of light, which, upon our Saviour's birth, conducted the wise men to him, (*c*) is acknowledged by Julian, tho' he

Several Go-
spel-facts
proved by
Heathen te-
stimonies.

(*y*) Ibid. chap. iv. 25. (z) Whitby, in locum. (a)
Huetii Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2. c. 13.

* This Platonist, upon reading the beginning of St John's gospel, swore by Jupiter, "That the Barbarian (as he called him) had hit upon the right notion, when he affirmed, that the Word, which made all things, was in the beginning, in place of prime dignity and authority with God, and was that God who created all things, and in whom every thing that was made, had, according to its nature, its life and being; that he was incarnate, and clothed with a body, wherein he manifested the glory and magnificence of his nature; and that after his death, he returned to the repossession of his divinity, and became the same God which he was before his assuming a body, and taking the human nature and flesh upon him;" *Euseb. Præp. 9. evang. lib. 11.*

(b) Huetii Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2. c. 15. (c) Ibid. Demonst. prop. 3.

A. M. would gladly ascribe it to natural causes; is set off with great eloquence by Chalcidius *, in his comment upon Plato's Timæus; and perhaps might be that very phænomenon *, which Pliny (d) describes under the name of a comet: That our Lord's forerunner, John the Baptist, was such a person as the gospel represents him, viz. an exhorter of the Jews to the love, and practice of virtue, and to regeneration by baptism and newness of life, we have an ample testimony in Josephus (e): That our Lord himself was certainly a prophet, Phlegon †, who was the emperor Adrian's freed man, acknowledges, and, in his history, has related several events which he foretold; that he was (f) a great worker of miracles, the authors of the Talmud own; nor can Celsus and Julian, his bitterest enemies, deny it, only they would gladly impute them to a wrong cause, his great skill in magical incantations: That human bodies were frequently possessed with devils, who afflicted them with grievous and tormenting diseases, is the joint concession both of (g)

4034, &c.
Ann Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

* In his relation of some portentous significations of stars, he adds: "Est quoque alia venerabilior et sanctior historia, quæ perhibet ortu stellæ cujusdam insolitæ, non morbos mortisque præ-nunciaras, sed descensum Dei venerabilis, ad humanæ servationis rerumque mortalium gratiam, quam a Chalceis observatam fuisse testantur, qui Deum nuper natum muneribus venerati sunt;" *Hammond's Annotations on Matth. ii. 2.*

* The words of Huetius concerning this matter are these, —
"Scribit Plinius exoritur fuisse aliquando cometam candidum, argenteo crine ita fulgentem, ut vix contueri posset quisquam, specieque humana Dei effigiem in se ostendentem;" *Quæst. Alnet. lib. 2. c. 16.*

(d) *Lib. 2. c. 25.* (e) *Antiq. lib. 18. c. 7.*

† He composed an history, digested by Olympiads, as far as the year of Christ 140. In his history he takes notice, that, in the Olympiad, which determines about the middle of the 32d year of the common æra, there happened the greatest eclipse of the sun that ever had been seen, inasmuch, that the stars were visible at noon-day, and that afterwards there was a great earthquake in Bithynia. Several critics believe, that this was the darkness which happened at the death of Jesus Christ, which is a matter we shall have occasion to inquire into, when we come to that part of his history.

(f) *Huetii Demonst. prop. 3.*

(g) *De Myster. sect. 2. c. 6.*

Jamblicus,

Jamblicus, and Minutius Fœlix *; and that our Blessed Lord had the power of curing these, (*h*) and of destroying the dominion of evil spirits, where-ever he came, is the great complaint of Porphyry, who makes it no wonder that their cities should be wasted with plagues, since Æsculapius, and the rest of the gods, ever since the admission of the Christian religion, were either become usefess or fled. So prevalent is the force of truth, that it seldom fails to draw conversions from those who least of all intend them.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

DISSERTATION I.

Of the Four Evangelists, and their Writings.

BEfore we proceed any farther in the history of our Blessed Saviour's life, it may not be amiss to give some short account of the four evangelists that have recorded it. I call them four, because whatever spurious pieces gained credit in the world afterwards, the tradition of the church from the beginning of the second century makes it evident, that the gospels then received were only the four gospels which we now own.

St Matthew, who stands in the front of these evangelists, St Matthew's life. and is generally allowed to be the first who committed the gospel to writing, was the son of Alpheus, a Galilean by birth, a Jew by religion, and a publican by profession. Among the Jews, as well as other nations, the custom at this time prevailed of having more names than one; and therefore we find his brother evangelists, St Mark (*i*) and Luke (*k*), giving him the name of Levi, with a civil intent to avoid all mention of his former not so reputable profession, before he was called to the apostleship; but (what is no less an instance of his own modesty) in the gospel written by himself, he not only takes the name by which he was most commonly known, but generally adds the odious epithet to it of

* The words of Minutius are worth observing, — “Impuri Spiritus vitam turbant, somnos inquietant, irrepunt etiam corporibus occulte, ut spiritus tenues; morbos fingunt, terrent mentes, membra distorquent, et ad cultum sui cogunt.” In Octavo.

(*h*) Huetii Demonst. Prop. 3.

(*i*) Chap. ii. 14.

(*k*) Chap. v. 27.

Matthew

A. M. *Matthew the publican* ; intending thereby, no doubt, to magnify the grace of God, and the condescension of our Blessed Saviour, who did not disdain to take into the highest dignity of the Christian church, those whom the world rejected, and accounted vile.

4034. &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Math. ix 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

(l) Whether he was born in Nazareth or no, it is certain, that his ordinary abode was at Capernaum, (m) because his proper business was to gather the customs on goods that came by the sea of Galilee, and the tribute which passengers were to pay that went by water ; for which purpose there was a custom house by the sea-side, where Matthew had his office, or toll-booth, there sitting at the receipt of custom. Our Lord having lately cured a famous paralytic, retired out of the town, to walk by the sea-side, where he taught the people that flocked after him ; and having espied Matthew in his office, he asked him to become one of his disciples ; whereupon, without any manner of hesitation, without staying so much as to settle his accounts, and put his affairs in order, *he left all and followed him.*

We cannot but suppose, that as he lived in Capernaum, the place of our Lord's usual residence, and where his sermons and miracles were so frequent, he must have been acquainted with his person and doctrine before this time ; and consequently in a good preparation to receive the call with gladness. And that he did so, a good evidence it seems to be, his entertaining our Lord and his disciples at dinner next day in his house ; whether he invited several of his own profession, in hopes, no doubt, that our Saviour's company and converse might make the like impression upon them.

From his election to the apostolate, he continued constantly with our Lord, during his abode upon earth ; and, after his ascension, for the space of eight years, preached the gospel in several parts of Judea : But being now to betake himself to the conversion of the Gentiles, he was intreated by the Jews, who had been converted to the Christian faith, to commit to writing the history of our Lord's life and actions, and to leave it among them as a standing record of what he had preached to them ; which

(l) Kirstin, in vita 4 evang. says he was, part 22. (m) Cave's Lives of the apostles.

accordingly

accordingly he did, and so composed the gospel which we have now under his name. A. M. 4034, ~~672~~
Ann. Dom. 30, ~~672~~

(n) The countries in which he preached were chiefly Parthia † and Æthiopia, in the latter of which he converted multitudes, settled churches, and ordained ministers to confirm and build them up; and having signalized his zeal in the ministry of the gospel, and his contempt of the world in a life † of most exemplary abstinence, he is, most probably, thought to have suffered martyrdom at Nadabar, a city in Æthiopia; but of the time and manner of his death, no certain account is transmitted to us. from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 2.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

At the request of the Jewish converts, (as we said), and, as some add, at the command of the rest of the apostles, St Matthew wrote his gospel, about eight or nine years after our Lord's resurrection: For that it was extant before the dispersion of the apostles, is plain from Bartholomew carrying it with him into India, where (as Eusebius (o) informs) it was found by Panætus, when he went to propagate the faith in those parts, and by such as retained the knowledge of Christ, was reputed a valuable treasure. His writings.

As it was primarily designed for the benefit of the Jewish converts †, whatever some moderns may say to the contrary,

(n) *Cave's Lives of the apostles.*

† As for what is related by Nicephorus, of his going into the country of the Cannibals, and constituting Plato, one of his followers, bishop of Myrmena; of Christ's appearing to him in the form of a beautiful youth, and giving him a wand, which he pitching into the ground, it immediately grew up into a tree; of his strange converting the prince of that country; of his numerous miracles, peaceable death, and sumptuous funeral, with abundance more of the like nature, they are justly to be reckoned among those fabulous reports that have no ground either of truth or probability to support them; *Cave's Lives of the apostles.*

† Clemens Alexandrinus tells us, that he abstained from the eating of flesh: and that the chief of his diet was herbs, roots, seeds, and berries; *Pædag. lib. 2. c. 1.*

(o) *Hist. eccl. lib. 5. c. 10.*

† Those who maintain, that St Matthew wrote in Greek, produce these arguments for their opinion. 1st, That some of the fathers (such as Origen, Epiphanius, and St Jerom) quote indeed the Hebrew of St Matthew, but quote it as a book of no great authority, which they would not have done, had it been the true original. 2d, That had St Matthew wrote in Hebrew, the Hebrew names in his gospel would not have been interpreted into Greek,

nor

A. M. 4334, *Gr.* contrary, the voice † of all antiquity must carry it against
 Ann. Dom. 30, *Gr.* them, that it was originally wrote in Hebrew, not in the
 from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8. ancient pure Hebrew, (for that, in a great measure, was
 lost among the vulgar), but in a language commonly used
 at that time by the Jews of Palestine, (and therefore still
 called

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

nor would he have quoted the Old Testament, according to the Septuagint translation. 3d, That the Greek language was then very common in Palestine, and all the east. And, 4th, since all the other authors of the New Testament wrote in Greek, why should St Matthew alone write his gospel in Hebrew? But, to these arguments it may be replied, 1st, That the uniform testimony of all the ancients, who tell us that St Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew, is certainly of very great weight; but then, we must know, that there were two of these copies of St Matthew, the one pure and uncorrupted, of which they have spoken with great esteem, the other depraved by heretics, which they have contemned, and looked upon as apocryphal. 2d, The Hebrew names, interpreted into Greek, prove the very contrary to what would be inferred from it; for this demonstrates that the translation was Greek, and the original Hebrew. 3d, Of the ten passages in the Old Testament, that St Matthew cites in his gospel, there are seven of them which resemble the Hebrew more than the Septuagint; in the other three the Septuagint and the Hebrew themselves agree; but the plain truth is, that St Matthew quotes by memory, and relates, not so much the words, as the sense, of the passages. 4th, However common the Greek tongue might be in Palestine among the better sort of people, yet it is certain, that the generality of the Jews spoke commonly what they called *Hebrew*, which was Syriac and Chaldee mixed with Hebrew. And, 5th, Though all the rest of the New Testament were written in Greek, yet that is no argument why this part of it should; though, if convenience were considered, it should rather, one would think, be adapted to the general use and capacity of those for whom it was wrote. The dispute, however, is about matter of fact, and this is a fact attested by all the ancients, many of whom had seen the original, and were capable of making a judgment of it; *Whitby's Prefatory discourse to the four evangelists*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word *Matthew*.

† All the ancients, with one consent, assure us, that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew. Papias, Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, St Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, St Jerom, St Austin, St Chrysostom, the author of the Latin Commentary on St Mark, which is ascribed to St Chrysostom, and the author of the Synopsis of the Scripture, which bears the name of *Athanasius*, are a cloud of witnesses who depose this; and therefore strange it is, that any should question its being originally written in that language, when the thing is so universally

called the *Hebrew tongue*, because wrote in Hebrew characters), which was the Syriac, with a mixture of Hebrew and Chaldee.

This gospel of St Matthew was, for a long time, in use among the Jews, who had been converted to Christianity, and when, some time before the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem, they retired to Pella, they carried it thither along with them; from whence it was diffused into Decapolis, and all the countries beyond Jordan, where the Judaizing Christians still made use of it in the time of Epiphanius (*p*) and Eusebius (*q*) of Cæsarea. But these Christians (*r*) did not preserve this sacred *depositum* with all the fidelity they should have done. They added to it several things, which perhaps they might have heard from the mouths of the apostles, or from their immediate disciples, and this in time brought it under the suspicion of other believers. The Ebionites, at length, got it into their hands, and by their additions and defalcations, in favour of some errors they had fallen into concerning the divinity of our Saviour and the virginity of the Blessed Mother, so corrupted it, that, at length, it was given up by other churches which adhered to the form of sound doctrine. It continued, however, a long time in its primitive purity in the hands of the Nazarenes, or first believers in Palestine, who (though they were zealous in the observation of the law) embraced no such opinions as the Ebionites did, nor made any alterations in the gospel. But after the extinction of this sect, we hear no more of the genuine gospel of St Matthew, because the ancient Greek version, which, in the apostolic times, was made from it, having always preserved its primitive integrity, did, long before this, universally prevail, and was looked upon as authentic as the original; for, though its author be uncertain, yet every one

A. M.
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Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

versally and uncontrollably asserted by all antiquity, not one, that I know of, after the strictest inquiry I could make, dissenting in this matter; and who certainly had far greater opportunities of being satisfied in these things than we can have at so great a distance; *Du Pin's History of the canon*, vol. 2. c. 2.; and *Cave's Lives of the apostles*.

(*p*) Epiphanius. Hæres. 29. c. 7. (q) Hist. eccl. lib. 3. c. 25. (r) Calmet's Dictionary, and Preface to St Matthew's gospel.

A. M. who mentions it, always ascribes it to some one apostle or other.

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spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
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When St Matthew began to write, the great question among the Jews was, Whether our Blessed Saviour was the true Messiah or no? and the main tendency of his gospel seems to prove this. For he shews, by his mighty deeds, that he was the Christ, the Son of God; that his mother Mary was a virgin; that he was not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and that his miracles were not magical operations, nor the effects of any human art, but incontestible proofs of the power of God, and of his divine mission. (s) St Ambrose observes, that none of the apostles have entered so far into the particulars of our Saviour's actions †, as has St Matthew; that none of them have related the history of the wise men coming from the east, or the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and some others, but he; that, in short, he has given us more rules for the conduct of life, and more lessons of morality, suitable to our necessities, than any; and all this (t) in a natural and easy style, (though sometimes mixed with Hebraisms), such as becomes an historian, and especially a sacred historian, whose narration should be free from affectation, and all such trifling ornaments as do not agree with the gravity and dignity of his subject.

St Mark's
life.

Though the name of *Mark* seems to be of Roman extraction, yet the evangelist now before us was born of Jewish parents, and originally descended from the tribe of Levi. What his proper name was, or upon what change or accident of life he might assume this, we have no manner of intelligence; but as it was no unusual thing for the Jews, when they went into the European provinces of the Roman empire, to conform to the cu-

(s) Ambros. Pref. in Luc.

(t) Beaufobre's Preface sur St Matthieu.

† If we compare St Matthew with the three other evangelists, we may perceive a remarkable difference in the order and succession of our Saviour's actions, from chap. iv. 22. to chap. xiv. 13. which has much perplexed chronologers and interpreters. Some pretend, that St Matthew should be followed, but others think it more reasonable to submit to the authority of the other three, especially since St Mark, who follows him close enough in every other thing, forsakes him in this particular. However this be, it can prove no prejudice to the truth of facts, which are the essential part of the gospel; and as to the order of time, the sacred authors are not always sollicitous to follow it exactly; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word *Matthew*.

froms

stoms of the country, and while they continued there, to be called by some name of common use; so some have conjectured, that when Mark attended upon St Peter to Rome, he might at that time take upon him this name, which he never returned to Judea to re-assume his own) he for ever after retained. In the writings of the apostles we read of several called by this name. There is John (*u*), whose surname was Mark (*x*); Mark, the sister's son of Barnabas; Mark, (*y*) who was employed in the ministry; Mark, whom St Paul calls his fellow-labourer (*z*); and Mark, whom St Peter (*a*) styles his son: But which of these was the evangelist, or whether the evangelist might not be a person distinct from each of these, has been a matter of some doubt among the learned.

That he was one of the seventy disciples, and among them one of those who took offence at our Lord's discourse of (*b*) *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood*, some of the ancients have affirmed; but Eusebius (*c*), from Papias, who was bishop of Hierapolis, and lived near those times, tells us positively that he was no hearer or follower of our Saviour. He was converted by some of the apostles, and most likely by St Peter, to whom he was a constant retainer, and served him in the capacity of an amanuensis, and an interpreter. (*d*) For though the apostles were divinely inspired, and, among other miraculous powers, had the gift of languages conferred on them; yet the interpretation of tongues seems to be a gift more peculiar to some than others; and it might be St Mark's talent, either by word or writing, to expound St Peter's discourses to those who understood not the language wherein they were delivered.

He accompanied St Peter in all his travels, preached Christianity in Italy, and at Rome, and at the request of the Christians in those parts, composed his gospel, which St Peter afterwards revised and approved. From Italy he went into Egypt, and having fixed his chief residence in Alexandria, he there, and in the country round about, propagated the Christian faith with such success, that multitudes of both men and women, not only became con-

(*u*) Acts xii. 12. (*x*) Col. iv. 10. (*y*) 2 Tim. iv. 11.
 (*z*) Philemon, ver. 24. (*a*) 1 Pet. v. 13. (*b*) John vi.
 60. (*c*) Hist. eccl. lib. 3. c. 39. (*d*) Cave's Lives of
 the apostles.

A. M.
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from the
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verts, but engaged themselves likewise in a more strict profession † of the religion that he taught them than ordinary. From Alexandria he removed westward; and passing through the countries of Marmarica, Pentapolis, and some others in his way to Libya, (though the people were barbarous in their manners, as well as idolatrous in their worship), by his preaching and miracles, he not only converted, but, before he departed, confirmed them in the profession of the gospel. Upon his return to Alexandria, he preached with all boldness, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for the continuance thereof, by constituting governors and pastors in it. (e) The great number of miracles which he wrought, and the reproaches which some of the converts made upon the senseless idols of the Egyptians, so exasperated their rage, that they were resolved to destroy this introducer of a new religion among them. It was at the time of Easter when the great solemnities of their god Serapis happened to be celebrated; at which festival the minds of the people being excited to a passionate vindication of the honour of their idol, they broke in upon St Mark, then engaged in the solemn celebration of divine worship, and, binding his feet, they dragged him through the streets, and other rugged places, to a precipice near the sea; but, for that night, they thrust him into a dark prison, where his soul, by a divine vision, was strengthened and encouraged

† Philo, in his *Treatise of a contemplative life*, gives us a long account, and high commendation, of a set of people, (whom he calls *Θραπευταί*), who, in a pleasant place near the Maræotic lake in Egypt, formed themselves into religious societies, and lived a strict philosophic life, and these Eusebius (Hist. eccl. lib. 2. c. 16.) affirms to have been Christians, converted and brought under these admirable rules by St Mark, at his coming into Egypt: But whoever seriously considers Philo's account, will plainly find, that he intends it of Jews, and professors of the Mosaic religion, and not of Christians; partly because it is improbable that Philo, being a Jew, should give so great a character and commendation of Christians, who were so hateful to the Jews at that time in all places of the world; partly because Philo speaks of them as an institution of a considerable standing, whereas Christians had but lately appeared in the world, and were later come into Egypt; and partly because many things in Philo's account do no way suit with the state and manners of Christians at that time; *Cave's Life of St Mark.*

(e) *Cave's Lives of the apostles.*

under

under the ruins of a shattered body. Early next morning the tragedy began again. For, in the same manner as they had done the day before, they dragged him about, till, his flesh being raked off, and his veins emptied of blood, his spirits failed, and he expired: But their malice died not with him; for taking the poor remains of his body, they threw them into a fire, and so burnt them; but his bones and ashes the Christians gathered up, and decently intombed near the place where he usually preached.

A. M.
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Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
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(f) After the defeat of Simon Magus, (whereof we shall have occasion to say more hereafter), the reputation of the Christian religion grew so great, and converts at Rome became so many, that they were desirous to have in writing those doctrines which had hitherto been imparted to them by word of mouth only. St Mark, to whom this request was made, accordingly set himself to recollect what he, by long conversation, had learned from St Peter, who (when the other had finished the work) perused, approved, and recommended it to the use of the churches: And for this reason it is, by some of the ancients, styled St Peter's gospel; not that St Peter dictated it to St Mark, but because St Mark did chiefly compose it out of that account which St Peter usually delivered in his discourses to the people: And accordingly St Chrysostom (g) observes, that the evangelist, in his nervous style and manner of expression, takes a great delight to imitate St Peter.

His writings.

† This gospel indeed was principally designed for the use of the Christians at Rome, and from hence some may be

(f) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4. (g) Hom. 3. in Matt.

† The original Greek copy, under St Mark's own hand, is said to be extant at Venice at this day, written (as they tell us) by him at Aquileia, and thence, after many hundred years, translated to Venice, where it is still preserved, though the letters are so worn out with length of time, that they are not capable of being read. There are likewise some Greek manuscripts, wherein the twelve last verses of this gospel are omitted; but they are extant in the greatest number of the most ancient and authentic copies, as well as in the works of Irenæus, an author of prior date to any of the manuscripts that want them. It is not to be questioned therefore, but that they originally belonged to St Mark's gospel, and were suppressed by some ignorant or conceited transcriber, upon the account of some seeming contradictions between St Matthew and this other evangelist, which,

A. M.
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Matt. ix. 8
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be apt to think it highly congruous, that it should at first be written in the Latin tongue : But it must be considered, (*h*) that as the Jewish converts, in that city, understood but little Latin, so there were very few Romans that did not understand Greek, which (as appears from the writers of that age) was the genteel and fashionable language of those times; nor can any good reason be assigned, why it should be more inconvenient for St Mark to write his gospel in Greek for the use of the Romans, than that St Paul should, in the same language, write his epistle to that church.

We cannot compare St Matthew and St Mark together, but must perceive, that the latter had seen the writings of the former, because he often uses the same terms, relates the same facts, and takes notice of the same circumstances; but we must not therefore infer, that all he intended in his work was simply to abridge him: (*i*) Because he begins his gospel in a different manner; he omits several things, particularly our Lord's genealogy; he varies from him in the order of the narration; he relates some facts that the other has omitted; he enlarges upon others in many particulars, and (what is no mean argument of his truth and impartiality in all the rest) the shameful lapse and denial of his beloved master St Peter he sets down, with more and more aggravating circumstances than any of the other evangelists have recorded.

St Luke's
life.

St Luke, who, by some ancient authors, is called *Lucius* and *Lucanus*, was a Syrian by birth, a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician. Antioch (*k*), the metropolis of Syria, was, at this time, a city celebrated for the pleasantness of its situation, the fertility of its soil, the riches of its traffic, the wisdom of its senate, the learning of its professors, and the civility and politeness of its inhabitants, by the pens of some of the greatest orators of their times; and yet, above all these, it was renowned for this one peculiar honour, that in this place it was, where the disciples were first named Christians.

In Antioch there was a famous university well replenished with learned professors of all arts and sciences,

which, with a small skill in critical learning, may be easily reconciled; *Cave's Lives of the apostles*; and *Beaufobre's Preface sur S. Marc*.

(*h*) *Cave's Lives of the apostles*. (*i*) *Beaufobre's Preface sur S. Marc*. (*k*) *Cave's Lives of the apostles*.

where

where St Luke could not miss of a liberal education ; however, he did not only study in Antioch, but in all the schools of Greece and Egypt, whereby he became accomplished in every part of human literature : and, as the Greek academies were then more especially famous for the study of physic, our evangelist, for some time, applied himself solely to the practice of that ; and, after his conversion, continued, very likely, in the same profession, which was far from being inconsistent, but rather subservient to the ministry of the gospel, or the cure of souls.

A. M.
4034, *Gre.*
Ann Dom.
30, *Gre.*
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

As to his other accomplishment, the art of painting, the ancients knew nothing of it. Nicephorus (*l*) is the first author that mentions it ; and though a great deal of pains has been taken to prove, that some pieces still extant were drawn by his own hand, yet the ancient inscription found in a vault near St Mary's church, in the Via lata at Rome, (the place where St Paul's house is said to have stood), where mention is made of a picture of the Blessed Virgin, as one of the seven painted by St Luke, is an argument of better authority for his skill in that art, than any that the Jesuit Gretser, in his laborious treatise, (*m*) has produced. But whether ever our evangelist painted the Blessed Virgin or not, it is certain that he has left us so many particulars (omitted by others) relating to the conception, birth, and infancy of her son, (*n*) that he seems to have been acquainted with her, and to have had some share in her confidence.

That he was one of the seventy disciples, is a notion inconsistent with his own declaration, in the preface to his gospel, wherein he informs us, that the facts therein contained were communicated to him by others, who had been (*o*) eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word from the beginning : And therefore the most probable opinion is, that as the Jews lived in great numbers, and had their synagogues, and schools of education at Antioch, St Luke was at first a Jewish proselyte, but afterwards, by St Paul, (while he abode in this city), converted to the Christian faith. A companion of his travels and sufferings he plainly appears to have been, if not from his first conversion, at least from the time of St Paul's first going into Macedo-

(*l*) Lib. 2. c. 43.
Luca pict. c. 18. 19.
(*o*) Luke i. 2.

(*m*) De imagine non manif. et a St
(*n*) Grotius, in Luke ii. 51.

A. M. 4034, *Gr.*
 Ann. Dom.
 30, *Gr.*
 from the
 beginning
 of the Go-
 spels to
 Matth. ix.
 8. Mark ii.
 23. Luke
 vi. 1.

nia; for there, in his account of the apostles actions, he changes his style, and (*p*) includes himself ever after as a party concerned in the narrative.

The truth is, he followed him in all his dangers, was with him at several arraignments at Jerusalem, and accompanied him in his desperate voyage to Rome, where he still attended on him, to serve his necessities, and supply those ministerial offices which the apostle's confinement would not suffer him to undergo. Nay, it appears from a passage of St Paul (*q*) to Timothy, that he returned with him to Rome the second time, waiting on him in the same capacity, and especially in carrying messages to those churches where they had planted Christianity: Nor can we well forbear thinking, that he continued his attendance on him until the apostle had finished his course, and crowned his ministry with his martyrdom; by which kind offices he infinitely endeared himself to St Paul, who owned him for his fellow-labourer, and called him *the beloved physician*, (*r*) and *the brother, whose praise is in the gospel, throughout all the churches*.

After the death of St Paul, how he disposed of himself is not so certain. Some are of opinion, that he returned into the east, and in Egypt and Lydia, preached the gospel, wrought miracles, converted multitudes, and constituted guides and ministers of religion; but others rather think, that he travelled into Dalmatia, Gallia, Italy, and Macedonia, where he spared no pains, nor declined any dangers, that he might faithfully discharge the trust committed to him. (*s*) Upon his coming into Greece, those who make him die a violent death (for some are of a contrary opinion) tell us, that he preached with great success, and baptized many converts into the Christian faith, till a party of infidels, making head against him, drew him to execution, and, for want of a cross whereon to dispatch him, hanged him upon an olive-tree, in the eightieth year of his age.

His writings.

We have two pieces of his, *viz.* his Gospel, and the History of the apostolic acts, wrote for the use of the churches, and both dedicated to Theophilus: but who this Theophilus was, it is not so easy a matter to determine,

(*p*) Acts xvi. 10.
 viii. 18.

(*q*) 2 Tim. iv. 11.
 (*r*) Cave's Life of St Luke.

(*r*) 2 Cor.

since

since many of the ancients themselves have taken this name in a general appellative sense, for *a lover of God*, a title common to every good Christian; but others (with better reason) have thought, that it is the proper name of some person of distinction, since the title of *most excellent* is annexed to it, which is the usual form of address to princes and great men. But who this person of distinction was, it is impossible to tell only we may suppose, that it was some considerable magistrate, whom St Luke had converted, and to whom he now dedicated his books, not only as a testimony of honourable respect, but as a means of giving him a farther information of those things wherein he had instructed him.

A. M.
4034, &c.
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Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

(t) The occasion of his writing his gospel was (as himself intimates) the rash and wrong accounts given to the world by some, who, either out of ignorance or design, had misrepresented the actions and doctrines of Christ, and sowed the seeds of error in the church. It is certain, that this evangelist is more circumstantial in relating the facts, and more exact in the method and order of them, than either of the two who wrote before him. (u) The history of Zacharias, the generation of John the Baptist, the angel's coming to the Blessed Virgin, Elizabeth's salutation of her at the first interview, the occasion of Joseph and Mary's going to Bethlehem, the circumstances of our Saviour's birth there, the publication of it to the shepherds, and the testimony which Simeon and Anna gave to him in the temple; these, and several other pieces of history, as well as the parables of the lost sheep, lost piece of money, and returning prodigal son, &c. are not related by any other evangelist. His history therefore is an excellent supplement of what they have omitted; nor does it in the least detract from the authority of his relations, that he himself was not present at the doing them: For, if we consider who were the persons from whom he derived his account of things, he had a stock of intelligence sufficiently authentic to proceed upon; and, when he had finished it, had the sanction and approbation of an apostle divinely inspired, (as himself likewise was), even of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to confirm it.

(t) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.
Argument on St Luke.

(u) Pool's

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom
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from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii
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Whoever looks into the beginning of St Luke's history of the apostolic acts, may easily perceive that it is a continuation of what he had related in his gospel; for it takes up the story at our Saviour's ascension, and continues it to St Paul's arrival at Rome after his appeal to Cæsar, and so, properly speaking, is but one history divided into two parts. The main difference between the Gospel and the Acts is, that in the former he writes from the information he had from others, but such as were true and authentic witnesses; in the latter, from his own knowledge; and personal concern in the things he relates.

His chief design, in the composition of this work, was, to write a true history of the apostles, and of the foundation of the Christian church, in opposition to the false Acts, and false Histories, which began then to be dispersed about the world. This history, however, does not comprise the acts of all the apostles, but confines itself chiefly to the most remarkable passages of two, St Peter and St Paul, and even of these two, it gives us but a short and summary account. St Peter's story carries it down no lower than his deliverance from Herod's imprisoning him, and the death of his persecutor, which happened in the year of our Lord 44; and yet the apostle lived four and twenty years after this. And in like manner, the history of St Paul is far from being complete: for, as from the time of his conversion, there is very little said of him, to his coming to Iconium, which was twelve years after; so his story proceeds no farther than to his first coming to Rome, in the year of our Lord 58; and yet after this he lived ten years, and having preached the gospel in Spain, and other parts of the west, at last returned to Rome, and there suffered martyrdom.

(x) It must be owned, however, that the evangelist is more particular in his account of St Paul, than of any other of the apostles, and that not only because he was more signally active in the cause of Christianity, but because St Luke was his constant attendant, an eye-witness of the whole carriage of his life, and privy to his most intimate transactions, and therefore capable of giving a more full and satisfactory relation of them.

(y) The evangelist's design, in short, was not to compose a large volume, but only to single out some few things which he thought necessary for the instruction of the faithful; and in this respect his work may be called *An historical demonstration of the truth of the Christian religion*; since there in we perceive our Lord's promises fulfilled, in his mission of the Holy Ghost, in his resurrection, and ascension into heaven, in the sovereign power he exercises there, in the miracles he enabled his followers to work, in the rise and wonderful progress of his religion, and, in one word, in the Christian church becoming the church universal by the call to the Gentiles.

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
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from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

We have only one thing more to remark concerning this history, viz. That as St Luke wrote it at Rome, and at the end of St Paul's two years imprisonment there, with which he concludes his story; so his way and manner of writing is exact and accurate; his style polite and elegant, sublime and noble, and yet easy and perspicuous, flowing with a natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical design, and all along expressed in a vein of purer and more refined language than is to be found in the other writers of the sacred story.

St John, though the last in order, yet first in quality, among the evangelists, was by birth a Galilean, the son of Zebedee and Salome, (one of those devout women who constantly attended our Lord in his ministry), and brother to James, who (to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name) is generally called *James the Great*. Before his adjoining himself to Christ, he seems to have been a disciple to John the Baptist, and is thought to have been that other disciple who (in the first chapter (2) of his gospel) is said to have been present with Andrew when John declared Jesus to be the Lamb of God, and thereupon to have followed him to the place of his abode.

He was by much the youngest of the apostles; yet was he admitted into as great a share of his master's confidence as any. He was one of those to whom he communicated the most private passages of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he went and restored Jairus's daughter to life; one of those to whom he exhibited a specimen of his divinity, in his transfiguration on the mount; one

(y) Beausobre's Pref. sur les Actes des apôtres. (x) Ver. 35. 40.

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
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from the
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of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8
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of those who were present at his conference with Moses and Elias, and heard that voice which declared him the beloved Son of God; and one of those who were companions of his solitude, and most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden. Thus, of the three who were made the witnesses of their master's actions, which he saw convenient to conceal, St John had constantly the privilege to make one. Nay, even of these three he seems, in some respects, to have the preference; to be known by the most desirable of all titles, *the disciple whom Jesus loved*; to have the honour of † leaning upon his Lord's bosom at meat; to have the intimacy with him to ask him a question, *viz.* (who in the company was the traitor?), which even St Peter himself had not courage to do; and (what is the highest instance of his affection) to have his mother, his sorrowful and disconsolate mother, with his last dying breath, committed to his care and comfort: (a) which peculiar tokens of his master's favour and esteem, some have ascribed to the apostle's eminent modesty, others to his unspotted chastity, others think it an indulgence due to his youth; but they seem to have the brightest notion who impute it to a nearness of relation, and a peculiar sweetness of disposition conspiring to recommend him.

(b) Upon the division of the provinces, which the apostles made among themselves, Asia fell to St John's share, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but staid at Jerusalem, at least till the death of the Blessed Virgin, which was about fifteen years after our Lord's ascension. After he was thus released from his trust, he took his journey into Asia, and industriously applied himself to propagate Christianity, preaching where the gospel had not yet taken place, and confirming it where it had been already planted. Many churches of note and eminence were of his foundation; but the chief place of his residence was at Ephesus, where, though St Paul had many years before settled a church, and constituted Timothy

† Among the eastern people the custom was, not to sit on chairs, as it is with us, but to lie along at meals upon couches; so that the second lay with his head in the bosom of him that was before him.

(a) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1. (b) Cave's Life of St John.

bishop

bishop of it, yet considering that it was a city of exceeding great resort, both upon the account of its traffic, and the conveniency of its port, the apostle thought he could not be seated more commodiously than here for dispersing the knowledge of his doctrines to natives of several nations and quarters at once.

A. M.
4034, *etc.*
Ann. Dom.
30, *etc.*
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

After several years (some says twenty-seven) spent here, he was accused to Domitian (who had then begun a severe persecution) as a great asserter of atheism and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire; so that, by his command, the proconsul of Asia sent him bound to Rome, where, as Tertullian relates, (in a manner importing the fact abundantly notorious), he was plunged into a cauldron of oil set on fire; but God, who had reserved him for farther services to the truth, restrained the heat of it, (as he did in the fiery furnace of old), and so preserved him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. The emperor, however, unmoved with his miraculous deliverance, ordered him to be banished to Patmos, a small desolate island in the Archipelago, where he remained several years, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ; and where he was vouchsafed those visions and prophetic representations which he then recorded in his book of Revelation, reaping this great advantage from his exile, that though he was cut off from the society of men, he was the more entertained with immediate converse of heaven.

Upon the death of Domitian, and the succession of Nerva, who rescinded all the odious acts of his predecessor, and, by public edict, recalled those whom the other's fury had banished, St John took the opportunity to return into Asia, and fixed his seat again at Ephesus; the rather, because the people of that place had lately martyred their bishop Timothy. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon him the government of the large diocese of Asia-Minor, erected oratories, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner that the circumstances of those times would permit; and having spent his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, travelling from east to west to instruct the world in the principles of the holy religion which he was sent to propagate;

A. M. propagate; and * shunning no difficulties or dangers, to
 4034, &c. redeem mens minds from vice, error, or idolatry, he fi-
 Ann Dom. nished his course, in the beginning of Trajan's reign, in a
 30, &c. good old age, and, in the ninety-ninth year of his life,
 from the died a natural death, and was buried near Ephesus; a
 beginning of the Go- wonderful pattern of holiness and charity, and a writer so
 spels to profound, as to deserve (by way of eminence) the charac-
 Matt ix. 8. ter of *St John the divine*.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.

His writings. The first in time, though placed last, is his *Apocalypse*, or book of *Revelation*, which he wrote in his confinement at Patmos. After the preface, and admonition given to the bishops of the seven churches in Asia, it contains the persecutions which the faithful have suffered from the Jews, heretics, and Roman emperors, down as far as Julian the apostate. After this we have a view of that vengeance which God has exercised against the persons of persecutors, against the Roman empire, and the city of Rome, which is described under the name of *Babylon*, the great prostitute, seated upon seven hills; then we have a description of the peaceable and flourishing state of the church for a thousand years, and, after some molestation from the Turk, (as is supposed), the happiness of the

* Eusebius (Hist. eccl. l. 3. c. 23.) gives us a very remarkable instance of this—In his visitation of the churches near Ephesus, he was much taken with a beautiful young man, whom he took, and, with a special charge, committed him to the education and instruction of the bishop of the place, who undertook the charge, instructed and baptized him. After this he thought he might a little relax the reins of discipline; but the youth made a bad use of his liberty, and, being debauched by evil company, made himself captain of a gang of highwaymen, the most loose, cruel, and profligate wretches of the country. St John, at his return, understanding this, and having sharply reproved the negligence of his tutor, resolved to find him out, and without any consideration of what danger he entered upon, in venturing himself among men of such desperate fortunes and abandoned consciences, he went to the mountains, where there usual haunt was; and being there taken by the sentinel, he desired to be brought before their commander, who no sooner espied him coming towards him, but he immediately fled. The aged apostle followed after, but being not able to overtake him, he passionately intreated him to stay, promising to undertake with God for his peace and pardon. He did so, and both melted into tears; and the apostle having prayed with and for him, returned him a true penitent and convert to the church; *Cave's Life of St John*.

church

church triumphant, fet off with all the imaginable beauties of rhetoric; and, at last, we come to a formal conclusion of the whole matter, and a severe commination to all those who shall presume either to add or diminish any thing from this prophecy.

(c) That St John the evangelist was the author of the book of revelation, all the most ancient ecclesiastical writers were agreed, until Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, (in his answer to one Nepos, another Egyptian bishop, who had revived the gross notion of Cerinthus, concerning the Millennium, in order to evade the use which this Nepos had made of the Apocalypse) called in question its authority, by asserting, "that several of the ancients had disowned this book to have been wrote by any apostolic man; that Cerinthus had prefixed John's name to it, to give the better countenance to his dream of Christ's reign upon earth; and that (though it might be the work of some inspired person) it could not possibly be St John's, because its style, matter, and method, did by no means agree with his other writings." Now, whoever looks into the ancient writers of the church, will find, that Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who (according to (d) Irenæus) had seen St John; Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, who (according to (e) St Chrysostom) was conversant with the apostles; Justin Martyr (f), Irenæus (g), Clemens (h) of Alexandria, and Tertullian (i), authors all of the second century, are unanimous in their ascribing this work to the same hand, from whence the gospel and epistles did proceed; and that therefore the opinion of one private doctor should not prevail against the authority of so many writers, who were either cotemporary, or nearly subsequent to the apostles. For, be it allowed, that there is a diversity of style, yet does not every able writer vary that according to the nature of the subject he is upon? In history, the style should be simple; in epistles, familiar; and in prophecies, majestic and sublime; and therefore what wonder is it, if, in arguments so vastly different, the same person did not always observe the same tenor, and way of writing? Nothing can be more different in their method and diction, than the book of Proverbs and the book of Canticles, and yet few have doubted, but that So-

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix.
8. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.

(c) Beausobre's Pref. sur l'Apocalypse. (d) Iren. lib. 3. c. 3. (e) Hom. in Ignatium. (f) Dial. cum Tryph. (g) Lib. 4. c. 37. (h) Strom. 1. (i) De resurrect. c. 58.

A. M. 4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matth. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

lomon was the writer of both : But now, that Cerinthus should be the author of a book, which contains doctrines directly opposite to the errors which he broached, is a thing incredible. For, whereas Cerinthus did not believe that God made the world, or that Christ died, and rose again; the author of the Revelation (*k*) ascribes to God the work of the creation, and calls our Blessed Saviour (*l*) the *first begotten of the dead*; and whereas Cerinthus made Jesus merely the son of Joseph, and a being different from that of Christ; the author of the Revelation calls him expressly (*m*) *the Son of God*, and makes him (*n*) one and the same person with Christ. Though therefore there may be some similitude between St John's expressions, and the notions of Cerinthus, in regard to Christ's reign of a thousand years, yet it had been much more prudent in Dionysius, to have given a spiritual sense and interpretation of these expressions, than to ascribe to a wicked and sensual man (as Cerinthus was) a book, which breathes nothing but piety and holiness, an awful dread of God, and a devotion such as the angels perform in heaven.

The truth is, all circumstances concur to intitle our apostle to be the author of this book. His name frequently expressed in it; his writing it in the island of Patmos, whither none but he was banished; his directing particular epistles to the seven churches of Asia, which had either been planted or cultivated by him; and his styling himself *their brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*; these, and many more circumstances that might be mentioned, added to the doctrine contained in it, which is highly suitable to the apostolic spirit and temper, do evidently bear witness, that this book was the work of St John, and, consequently, of divine and canonical authority.

(*o*) Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are the three epistles, which St John wrote. The first of these is catholic, calculated for all times and places, and contains most excellent rules for the conduct of the Christian life, and for preservation against the crafty insinuations of seducers. The other two are but short, and directed to particular persons: the one to a lady of honourable quality; and the other to the charitable and hospitable

(*k*) Chap. x. 6. (*l*) Rev. i. 5. (*m*) Chap. ii. 18.
(*n*) Chap. i. 5. (*o*) Cave's Life of St John.

Gaius,

Gaius, so kind a friend, and so courteous an entertainer, of all indigent Christians.

(*p*) Eusebius, and after him St Jerom, informs us, that St John, having perused the other three gospels, approved and confirmed them by his authority; but observing withal, that these evangelists had omitted several of our Saviour's actions, such especially as were done before the Baptist's imprisonment, he wrote his gospel in order to supply what was wanting in them: And because at this time there were several heretics (such as Cerinthus, Ebion, and their followers) sprung up in the church, who denied the divine nature of Jesus Christ, another end of his writing was, to antidote the world against the poison of these heresies, by making it appear, that our Blessed Saviour was God from all eternity, and before his incarnation; (*q*) and that as other evangelists had written the series of his generation according to the flesh, he might write a spiritual gospel, beginning from the divinity of Christ: which was a subject reserved for him (as the most excellent person) by the Holy Ghost.

When therefore the bishops of Asia, and several ambassadors from other churches, had been for some time soliciting him, he caused them to proclaim a general fast, to seek the blessing of heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking; and when this was done, he set about the work, and † completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the ancients generally resembled him to an eagle soaring aloft within the clouds, whither the weak eye of man was not able to follow him: for “ as the evangelical writings

A. M.
4034, &c.
Ann. Dom.
30, &c.
from the
beginning
of the Go-
spels to
Matt. ix. 8.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

(*p*) Hist. eccl. lib. 3. c. 24.
John's gospel.

(*q*) Whitby's Preface to St

† His gospel was originally wrote in Greek, but in a Greek that abounds with Hebraisms, as do the other evangelists. His words are peculiar to himself, and his phrases used in an uncommon sense, which may possibly make his way of writing not so grateful to some nice masters of eloquence. In citing places from the Old Testament, though he sometimes makes use of the Septuagint, yet he usually translates from the Hebrew original, and generally renders them word for word: For being an Hebrew of the Hebrews, and admirably skilled in the language of his country, this probably made him less exact in his Greek compositions, wherein he had no advantage besides what was immediately communicated from above. But what he wanted in the politeness of his style, was abundantly made up in the excellence and sublimity of his matter; *Cave's Life of St John.*

A. M. 4034, &c. " (says (r) St Basil) transcend all the other parts of the Holy Scriptures; because in other parts God speaks to us by his servants the prophets; but in the gospels our Lord, who is God blessed for evermore, speaks to us himself: So among all the evangelical preachers none is like St John, the son of thunder, for the sublimity of his discourses, beyond any man's capacity duly to reach and comprehend."

Ann. Dom. 30, &c. from the beginning of the Gospels to Matt. ix. 8. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.

C H A P. II.

From the Beginning of the second Passover to our Lord's Transfiguration; in all, one Year and about four Months.

The HISTORY.

A. M. 4035, &c. OUR Blessed Saviour was now in the second year of his public ministry, when the near approach of the passover † (which was the second after his baptism) called him to Jerusalem. On the south-east side of the city there was a famous pool †, and an hospital called *Bethesda*,

Ann. Dom. 31, &c. from Matt. xiii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matth xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

(r) Hom. 16. tom. 1.

† From the time that our Lord first began his ministry to the conclusion of it, there had been four passovers held at Jerusalem; all, except the last, are not mentioned by the three first evangelists; but St John has been mindful to set every one down; the first, chap. ii. 13. the second, chap. v. 1.; the third, chap. vi. 4.; and the fourth, chap. xiii. 1.; *Pool's Annotations*.

The second passover, John v. 5.

† The word *Κολυμβήθρα* signifies any *pool*, or *head of water*, that is deep enough for a man to swim in: But as, in hot countries more especially, the use of constant bathing was highly necessary, for which purpose it was usual in every great city to have public baths erected, some have imagined, that this pool was a large basin of water of this kind; and that the porticos about it were places made for the convenience of dressing or undressing in the shade, for those that were minded to bathe. However this be, it is certain, that in ancient times there were two pools, within the compass of the mount, on which the temple stood, the one called the *upper pool*, 2 Kings xviii. 17. and the other, the *pool of Siloam by the king's garden*, Neh. iii. 15. that St Jerom (who himself had been at Jerusalem) makes mention of two reservoirs, one filled with the rains that fall in the winter, and the other with water of a deep red colour,

Bethesda †, which consisted of five porticos, in which lay a great multitude of poor impotent people, with distempers of all kinds; waiting for the moving of the water; for at certain times an angel came from heaven, and putting the pool in a fermentation, conveyed such a medicinal virtue into it, that the first person who entered it, after such commotion, was cured of whatsoever distemper he had. On the Sabbath-day our Saviour came to this place; and seeing a poor paralytic †, who had been in that condition for the space of eight and thirty years, and lain there a long while in expectation of a cure; but all in vain, because, whenever the water was moved, some one or other always stepped in before, and prevent-

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Our Saviour
cures the
paralytic
on the Sabbath-day,
and vindicates himself for so doing before the sanhedrim.

colour, as if it still retained a tinge of the victims that formerly were washed in it; and that Mr Maundrell, in his travels, page 107. informs us, that when he was there, he saw still remaining what was reputed the pool of Bethesda, whereof he gives us the particular dimensions, and tells us, that at its west end there seem to be some old arches, not unlikely the porches in which sat that multitude of lame, halt, and blind, which are mentioned by St John, chap. v.; *Dr Pearce's Vindication of our Saviour's miracles*; and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, chap. 4.

† Some will have this word to signify a *drain*, or *sink-house*, because the water which came from the temple, and the place where the victims were washed, by subterraneous passages, ran into it; but most interpreters expound it *an house of mercy*, so called, say some, because the erecting of baths was an act of great kindness to the common people, whose indispositions, in hot countries, required frequent bathing; though the generality rather think, that it more properly had that name from God's great goodness shewn to his people, in giving this healing virtue to these waters; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Pearce's Vindication of our Saviour's miracles*.

† The word ἀσθενία, which we render *infirmity*, or *weakness*, is indeed a general name for almost all distempers; but here it is so limited in its signification, by the circumstances occurring in the man's history, that it can properly denote no other disease than what we call a *confirmed palsy*. For, besides that the symptoms of no other distemper do so exactly agree with the description given of this infirmity, both in point of its long continuance, and extreme weakness; the very word *weakness*, in its most obvious sense, answers exactly to such a relaxation of the nervous system, as the palsy is known to be; and (what is no mean circumstance) our Saviour makes use of the same form, and method of cure, to this very man, that he applies to another paralytic, *Rise, take up thy bed and walk*, Matth. ix. 6.

A. M. ed him; † he immediately healed him with a word's speaking, and at the same time † ordered him to take up his bed, and walk home; but while he was doing this, the Jews exclaimed against him for bearing a burden on the

xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matth.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

† If it be asked, how it came to pass, that of the multitude of infirm people, who lay at this pool, our Saviour should think fit to cure but one? the answer is obvious, because he was an object most to be compassionated of any in the place, not only because he was too feeble to step into the water himself, and too poor to have any to assist him, but, more especially, because he had been now a long while in this condition, and yet still depended upon the good providence of God for an opportunity to be cured at one time or other. To cure at once whole multitudes, indeed, sounds more popular, and carries the face of a more extensive goodness; but, besides that our Saviour might, in this case, very probably conform to the rule of cure established providentially at Bethesda, which was, to heal but one person at one time, his great design in every action of this kind was to prove his character and commission from God, to which end one single and incontestible miracle was as sufficient an evidence as a thousand. The short is, since our Lord was at liberty to do what he would with his own, or to bestow his favours where he pleased, his goodness was conspicuous in chusing the most helpless object, and his wisdom no less manifest, in leaving the rest to the standing miracle of the pool; *Bishop Smallbrooke's Vindication of our Saviour's miracles*, p. 525.

† It is very observable, that whenever our Lord did any miracle, he generally adjoined some circumstance or other, to denote the truth and reality of it. Thus, after his multiplication of the loaves and fishes, he ordered his disciples to gather up the fragments, which amounted to twelve baskets full. Upon his changing the water into wine at Cana, he commanded the servants to carry it to the ruler of the feast, for him to taste it. When he had healed the leper near Capernaum, he sent him to present his oblation in testimony of his cure. And here, for the same reason, viz. the demonstration of the completeness of his cure, he bids the paralytic take up his bed and go home. But why did he this on the Sabbath-day? Even to make his divine power and mission more universally known, especially in Jerusalem, the capital of the nation, and centre of the Jewish church, by first working this miracle on the Sabbath-day, when there were more people at liberty to view and consider it; and then, sending his patient along the streets, in a very uncommon manner, and, to make the people more inquisitive, with his bed upon his back; *Calmer's Commentary*.

Sabbath-

Sabbath-day, which was † directly (a) contrary to their law. The man excused himself, by declaring, that the person who had miraculously cured him, commanded him so to do, which he thought a sufficient warrant; but, when they understood that it was Jesus, they (b) brought him before the Sanhedrim, with a design to take away his life, as an open profaner of the Sabbath. Here, in defence of himself, he alledged,—That, “since God (from whose rest they took the observation of the Sabbath) did, on that day, and all others, exercise the works of providence, preservation, and mercy, there could be no reason why he, who was his Son, and invested with full authority from him, (as (c) he proves immediately in a set speech before the council), might not employ himself on the Sabbath, as well as any other day, in actions of the like nature;” which provoked the Jews still more and more against him, for they looked upon him now, not only as a Sabbath breaker, but a blasphemer likewise, who, by making himself the Son of God †, had claimed a co-equality with him.

What

† The prohibition runs in these words:—*Thus saith the Lord, Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath-day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem, neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath-day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the Sabbath-day, as I commanded your fathers,* Jer. xvii. 21. 22.; and according to the Jewish canons, those who did this, were punishable, either by death or scourging. It must be acknowledged therefore, that our Saviour’s injunction to the late impotent man, was contrary to the letter of the law; but then it may be justly said, that it was not contrary to the sense and intention of it. The law only prohibited civil labour, and restrained men from carrying such burdens as they were wont to do in the way of their trade; but it did not forbid the doing of any thing that might be a testimony of God’s mercy or goodness to mankind. As therefore the Sabbath was made for the honour of God, and this action was a public monument of his mercy and power, the man, properly speaking, did not break the Sabbath, neither did our Lord deserve any censure from the Jews, especially considering, that as he was a prophet, even by their own rules, he had power to require what was contrary to the ceremonial rest of the Sabbath; *Pool’s* and *Whitby’s* *Annotations*; and *Calmet’s Commentary*.

(a) Jer. xvii. 21. (b) John v. 16. (c) Ver. 19. ad finem.

† From hence it seems to follow, that though the Jews had very high

A. M. What the result of our Saviour's defence before the
 4035, &c. Sanhedrim was, we cannot tell, because none of the evan-
 Ann. Dom. gelists have acquainted us; but the sequel of the history
 31, &c. informs us, that it noways abated the malice of the Pha-
 from Matt. risees, because, on the very next Sabbath-day, upon his
 xii. 1. Mark disciples pulling some ears of corn †, (as they passed thro'
 ii. 23. Luke the fields), rubbing them in their hands, and so eating
 vi. 1. John them, because they were really hungry, they began again
 v. 1. to them, because they were really hungry, they began again
 Matt. xvii. to clamour against this violation of the Sabbath; until
 14. Mark our Saviour, in vindication of his disciples, both from
 ix. 14. Luke the example of David † and his attendants, (who ate the
 ix. 37. John thew-

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

He vindicates his

disciples

for eating

the ears of

corn on the

Sabbath-

day,

high conceptions of the Messiah, and were confident, that when he came, he would be a mighty prince, and subdue all other nations under his feet; yet they never once imagined that he would be God, or, in the strict and sublime sense of the word, *the Son of God*, though in the very prophecies, which (as they themselves acknowledge) relate to the Messiah, he is called *IMMANUEL*, *Isaiah vii. 14.* and elsewhere, *the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, Isaiah ix. 6.*; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† What our Lord's disciples did, in this case, could not be accounted any unjust invasion of another's property, because the law had indulged them thus far: — *When thou goest into thy neighbour's standing corn, thou mayest pluck the ears with thy hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle to thy neighbour's standing corn, Deut. xxiii. 25.* It was not then for plucking the ears of corn, much less (as some say) for breaking their fasts, before they had celebrated the public offices, (which was contrary to the custom of the Jews, *Acts ii. 15.*), that the Pharisees took exceptions to the disciples; but for plucking them on the Sabbath-day, whereof they thought this action (which at other times was lawful enough) to be a violation, and accordingly our Saviour's whole vindication of them turns upon this supposition; *Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

† There is something very cogent in our Saviour's argument, taken from David's practice, because, according to the concession of the Jews themselves, his example contains two things tending to excuse the violation of the Sabbath; 1. That they suppose, that David and his men fled on the Sabbath-day, and yet were not guilty of breaking the rest of the Sabbath; for *our masters think it lawful, say they, in him whom the Gentiles, or thieves, pursue, to profane the Sabbath, by the preservation of his life, even as David, when Saul pursued to kill him, fled and escaped.* 2. That their own canons allowed the laity to eat of the shew-bread for the preservation of life; for *it is a small thing, say they, to hold, that it is lawful for us to eat of the bread removed from the table; it would be lawful for us, in the extre-*

mity

shew-bread †; which it was unlawful for the laity to eat) A. M. when they were hungry, and from the example of their own priests, who performed the work of the temple on the Sabbath-day, endeavoured to convince them, “ that works of necessity were sometimes permitted, even to the breach of a ritual command; that acts of mercy were the best and most acceptable method of serving God upon any day whatever; that it was inverting the order of things, to suppose, that man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man: But, if even it were not so, that he, as the Son of God ||, and, consequently, Lord of the Sabbath, had a power

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
from Matth. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37, John vii. 1.

mity of hunger, even to eat of the bread, now sanctified upon the table, if there were no other. And indeed this opinion, that it was lawful to violate the Sabbath for preservation of life, seems plainly to have obtained before the translation of the Septuagint, who render the words in Exod. xii. 16. to this purpose, *Ye shall do no servile work on it, but that which shall be done for the safety of life; Whitby's Annotations.*

† The shew-bread (which in Hebrew is literally *the bread of faces*) was so called, not because it was set upon the golden table which was in the sanctuary, but because it was placed *before the Lord*, i. e. not far from the ark of the covenant, which was the symbol of his more immediate presence. These loaves, according to the number of the tribes, were twelve: They were made four square, covered over with leaves of gold, and were of a considerable bigness, having about three quarts of flour in each. They were served up hot every Sabbath-day, and, at the same time, the stale ones, which had been exposed the whole preceding week, were taken away, and allowed to be eat by none but the priests, and that only in the holy place, which was the tabernacle at first, and afterwards the temple, Lev. xxiv. 5. &c. And the reason of this institution seems to have been, to represent, in a more lively manner, to the people, God's government and presence among them; that, as the tabernacle first, and then the temple, was his palace and place of residence, so these weekly services of bread, wine, and salt, (say the Jews), were to denote his habitation among them, as if he had been an earthly prince, for whom such provisions are made; *Calmer's Dictionary*, under the word; and *Lamy's Introduction*.

|| There are some who pretend to infer, from the passage of St Mark, chap. ii. 27. that the words in St Matthew, *The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath*, chap. xii. 8. are of the same import with, *The Sabbath was made for man*; so that *the son of man* is here put for *all men* in general, and, consequently, the sense of the words must be, that every one is *lord of the Sabbath*, to ob-

serve

A. M. 4035, &c. " power to dispense with the ceremonial laws (d) concerning it."

Ann. Dom. 31, &c. Not long after this, our Saviour left Jerusalem, and from returned into Galilee, where on another Sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 1. while he was preaching, there stood before him a man, Mark. ii. 23. whose right-hand was shrunk, and withered; and, when Luke vi. 1. the Scribes and Pharisees insidiously watched him, whether John v. 1. he would cure him or not, our Lord bad him stand up in to Matt. xvii. 14. the midst of the assembly as an object of public commi- Mark ix. 14. seration, and turning to these superstitious observers of the Luke ix. 37. Sabbath, put the question || to them, whether they *thought* John vii. 1. *it lawful, on the Sabbath-day, to do good, or ill, actually* Matt. xii. 9. *to save life, or negligently to destroy it?* And then, from Mark iii. 1. Luke vi. 6. their

and himself, for curing the man with the withered hand on the same. serve or dispense with it, according to the call or exigency of his affairs. But besides that the phrase, *Son of Man*, which is used no less than eighty-eight times in the New Testament, is, in all other places, set to denote our Blessed Lord, and in Dan. vii. 13. from whence it is originally taken, it is thought by all ancient Jews, as well as Christians, to signify the Messiah only; it is plain, that these two passages are distinct propositions in St Mark, chap. ii. 27. 28. and that they can relate to no other than our Saviour Christ; because he tells the Pharisees, and therein means of himself, that, in that place, *there was one greater than the temple, i. e.* whose prophetic office was of more consequence to the world than the sacerdotal administrations in the temple, and ought therefore, least of all, to be interrupted by a superstitious observation of the Sabbath. *The Sabbath was made for man*, must therefore signify, that it was first appointed for the good and benefit of man; and, being so, it cannot reasonably be supposed to oblige him to any thing so contrary to humanity as starving or debilitating his nature; and therefore, as *the Son of Man came not to destroy mens lives, but to save them*, he must have power, in such cases as concern the good and welfare of mankind, to dispense with the strict rest of the Sabbath which the law required; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

(d) Mark ii. 27.

|| This is not contrary to what St Matthew, chap. xii. 10. tells us, viz. That they asked him, because both are true. They asked him, *Whether it was lawful to heal?* And he, in reply, says, *I also will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil?* Luke vi. 9. We are not however to suppose, that, by doing evil, our Saviour propounded to the Pharisees, Whether, on the Sabbath-day, it was lawful to do that, which, on any other day, is utterly unlawful? for then without doubt, they would have had a ready answer for him;

but

their own practice, in running to the relief of any dumb creature on the Sabbath-day, he fairly inferred, that whatever their hypocritical pretences might be, they themselves esteemed it lawful to do good on that day; and so, looking about him with some marks of indignation for their strange perverseness, he commanded the poor man to stretch out his lame hand, and that very moment it became as sound as the other.

The Pharisees, however, though silenced by his arguments, and surprised at his miracles, would not surcease their malice, but joined in consultation with the Herodians (though a sect quite opposite to them in principles) how they might take away his life; which when our Saviour understood, he withdrew with his disciples * toward the sea-

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 13.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Mat. xii. 14.
Mark iii. 6.
Luke vi. 11.

but only, whether, according to the institution of the Sabbath, it was lawful to do good, or not to do it, to save life, or not to save it, when a man had it equally in his power. And the reason why our Saviour instances in saving a life is, because it was a maxim then among the Jews, that, on the Sabbath-day, all servile work was prohibited, except where the life of any man or beast was concerned; but the modern Jews are of a contrary opinion, and, in hatred to Christians, (as Grotius thinks), have loaded the observation of the Sabbath with such trifling and superstitious practices, as their forefathers and ancient doctors knew nothing of; *Whitby's* and *Beau-fobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

* It was a direction which our Saviour gave to his disciples, *When they persecute you in this city, flee to another*, Matt. x. 23. and a rule which himself put in practice: For when by his doctrine and miracles he could do no good upon men by reason of the hardness of their hearts, Mark iii. 5. he usually departed, and retired, that he might give place to their wrath, and secure himself from their malice, Matt. xii. 15. and John viii. 59. When the providence of God brings trials upon us, we may reasonably hope, that his mercy will be magnified in our rescue from them; but there is not the same assurance due to those troubles which our own forwardness or indiscretion involve us in. God hath no where promised to work miracles for our deliverance, nor engaged to save those who are not careful to save themselves. He hath commanded us to *take up our cross*, when he lays it in our way; but he hath not commanded, that we should go out and seek it; nay, or that we should meet it, when we can pass by another way, and honestly, and with a good conscience, escape from it. He hath promised to succour them that are tempted, *i. e.* such as are purely passive in the thing; but, when men break their ranks, and, without orders

A. M. sea-side; but which way soever he went, his name was
 4035, 61 now grown so famous, that vast multitudes, not only out
 Ann Don of Galilee, but from Jerusalem, from the provinces of
 31, 66. Judea, and Idumæa †, and all the country about Jordan,
 from as far as the Mediterranean sea, to the coasts of Tyre and
 Matt. xii. 1 Sidon, hearing the report of his miraculous power to cure
 Mark ii. 23 all diseases with a word of his mouth, the touch of his
 Luke vi. 1 hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came, with their
 John v. 1 hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came, with their
 to Matt. xvii. 14 sick and possessed, for help, and, as fast as they came,
 Mark ix. 14 he cured them. Nay, to such a degree was his fame in-
 Luke ix. 37 creased, that the very devils and unclean spirits public-
 John vii. 1 ly confessed that he was the Son of God, till, upon all
 occasions, they were restrained and compelled to silence.
 Matt. x. 1 Finding some inconvenience in the pressures of the
 Mark ii. 13 people, he ordered his disciples, for the time to come, to
 Luke vi. 12 have a small vessel always in readiness for him to step into
 upon occasion; and so retired to a solitary mountain †,
 where
 His ch sing
 his twelve
 apostles,

from their commander, will needs march up (as it were) to the mouth of a loaded canon, by turning their own tempters, this is not courage, but fool hardiness; and, whatever expectations these men may cherish of God's assistance in such cases, they are not the effects of a vigorous faith, and well-grounded trust, but of a blind and hot-headed presumption; *Stanhope's Occasional sermons*.

† Though this be no more than a Greek name derived from the Hebrew *Edom*, yet it is not to be understood of the original habitation of the Edomites, mount Seir but rather of that southern part of the province of Judea, which, during the captivity of the Jews at Babylon, being left desolate, or not sufficiently inhabited by its natives, seems to have been possessed by the neighbouring Idumæans. These Idumæans, when afterwards conquered by the Maccabees, chose rather to embrace the Jewish religion than to quit the habitations they had taken possession of; and, though hereupon they were incorporated into the body of the Jewish nation, yet that tract of Judea which they inhabited did not so soon lose the name of Idumæa, derived from them, but retained it, not only in our Saviour's days, but for a considerable time afterwards, *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† Some have thought that the words ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τῷ Θεῷ, should be rendered *in an house of prayer of God*, or in a *synagogue* dedicated to the service of God; but then they will be concerned to find out any house of prayer which at this time stood on a mountain, or any place (except the temple) which was called by

where he continued all night in prayer, intending next morning to make an election of some particular persons, both to be witnesses of his actions and discourses, and, after his departure out of the world, his vicegerents upon earth, founders of his church, and propagators of his gospel.

The number of these, according to the patriarchs, was twelve; Simon (who is likewise named *Peter*) and Andrew; James † (commonly called *the Great*) and John; Philip and Bartholomew †; Matthew and Thomas; James,

A. M.
4035. *etc.*
Dom.
31. *etc.*
from
Matt xii 1.
Mark ii 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii 1.

by that name: Nor can we conceive why our Lord should go into a mountain to pray, if it were not for the privacy and retirement of it, which he could not have had in any common place of divine worship. Our Saviour, however, being about to send out his twelve apostles, thought that so great a work as this could not be done, without offering up his solemn addresses to God for their success; and accordingly having found out a place of retirement, he thither betook himself, and as the evangelists inform us, continued *all night in prayer*, leaving the bishops and governors of his church an example what they are to do in the great and momentous affair of appointing persons to the ministry of the gospel; *Whitby's* and *Fool's Annotations*.

† These two brothers our Saviour calls *Boanerges*, a word composed of two Hebrew or Syriac words, but what have suffered some alteration in their passing into the Greek language. For whether it be that the Greek transcriber has mistaken them, or that this might be the corrupt way of pronouncing them in Galilee, certain it is, that the originals are *beni rehem*, denoting *sons of thunder*, or of a *tempest*; a name given to them in allusion to the natural heat and zeal of their temper, and that vehemence and efficacy wherewith our Saviour foresaw that they would preach the gospel. Of the former of these they gave an early instance, in their desire to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, Luke ix. 54.; and, in the Acts of the Apostles, we find that Peter and John are the chief actors and speakers in the defence and propagation of the gospel, and that the zeal of James and Peter seems to be the reason why the one was slain by Herod, and the other imprisoned, in order to the like execution; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The name given here to this apostle, is not his proper but patronymical name, and imports only the son of *Tholomew*, or *Tolmai*: So that we are still at a loss for his personal name, unless we will admit of the conjecture, that he was indeed no other than Nathanael. To this purpose it is remarkable, 1st, That as no other evangelist makes mention of Nathanael but St John, so he never

A. M. James, † (commonly called *the Less*), and Simon † the
 4035, &c. Canaanite; Judas, the brother of this James, and † Ju-
 Ann. Dom. das Iscariot, who so justly deserved the title of *traitor*.
 31, &c. To

from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

once makes mention of Bartholomew. 2dly, That in the catalogue of the apostles, Philip and Bartholomew are always coupled together, and were, very probably, sent out together to preach the gospel: And fit companions they were, supposing Nathanael to be the man with whom, it is plain, that Philip had an intimacy, and was the first instrument of bringing him to Jesus. 3dly, That this Nathanael is by St John, chap. xxi. 2. named in company with several of the apostles, upon our Saviour's shewing himself at the sea of Tiberias, after his resurrection, which the evangelist tells us was the third time of his doing so, ver. 14. and some presumption that he was one of them. 4thly, That, at the two former times, it is expressly said, that he appeared to the eleven, John xx. 19 26. And here, at the third time of his appearance, those that are named with Nathanael are all of that number. From these considerations, it is more than probable that Nathanael was one of the apostles; which can only be accounted for, by supposing that St John calls the same person by his proper name, *Nathanael*, whom the other evangelist calls by his patronymical, *Bartholomew*; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4*

† Thomas, in Hebrew, or Syriac either, signifies a *twin*, and so is the same with Didymus, that other name whereby this apostle is sometimes called.

† Some are of opinion, that Simon is here called the *Canaanite*, from Cana, a little town in Galilee, the place of his birth and habitation; but others rather think, since this apostle is by St Luke, chap. vi. 15. called *Zelotes*, the *Kanavites* and *Zelotors* are perfectly the same, just as Cephias and Peter, Tabitha and Dorcas are. That there was a faction among the Jews, a little before the destruction of their city and nation, who assumed to themselves the title of *zealots*, (out of an hypocritical ostentation of holiness, though at the same time in their hearts and practices they were the lowest of men), we have given a sufficient account above, p. 120.; but whether that faction was in being in our Saviour's time, or whether to be of the number of such zealots, may not be an injury and reproach to this apostle's memory, is much to be doubted; *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† This man's surname may be taken, either from the place of his birth, which was Carioth, in the tribe of Issachar, whereof we have mention in Josh. xv. 25. and Amos ii. 2 or from the Syriac word *Secariat*, denoting *the purse or wallet* which it was the office of this Judas to carry; or from the word *Aphara*, or *Iscara*, which signifies *to strangle*; and therefore a
 name

† To these he gave the name of *apostles* †, and as he perceived the multitude gathering round him, these he called nearer than the rest to him, and began that most excellent discourse, which comprises all the great principles of the

A. M.
4035, *etc.*
Ann. Dom.
31, *etc.*
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23 Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Math. xvii.
14. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37. John viii.
1.

name which the evangelists might give him after his death : But all these etymologies are no more than mere conjectures; *Hammond's* and *Beaufobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The wisdom of Christ saw fit to admit Judas into the number of his disciples, that by him the counsel of God, in giving up his Son to death, and the predictions of the prophets might be fulfilled, Acts i. 16. This very person, however, is by our Lord sent to preach the gospel, to cure diseases, and to cast out devils, who had himself a devil, John vi. 70. thereby to teach us, that the mission of a person may be valid, though he be not sanctified; and that in things belonging to the ministerial office, we should hearken even to such persons and obey them; *Whith's Annotations*.

† The word *ἀπόστολος* signifies *an envoy*, and was a name given by the Jews to any messenger in general, but more especially to such persons as were sent by the high-priest, and heads of the people, to collect the tithes, and other dues belonging to the temple or synagogue, or to carry their orders and mandates to the cities and provinces, when any affairs relating to religion were transacted; and to this custom St Paul seems to allude, where he styles himself *an apostle, not of man, neither by man, but of Jesus Christ*, Gal. i. 1. Our Saviour indeed, as he was no lover of innovations, took the word from among the Jews; but then he raised it to a much higher and more honourable signification: for himself declares, that he sent out his apostles, even as his Father sent out him, John xx. 21. *i. e.* with a full commission to act in his stead, even as he did in God's: and accordingly we may observe, that as the Father gave judgment to the Son, John v. 22. so in effect the Son gives judgment to the apostles, Matth. xix. 28 and Luke xxii. 30; that as the Father gave the Son power to forgive sins upon earth, Matth. ix. 6. so the Son gives power to the apostles to remit sins on earth likewise, John xx. 23.; that as the Father gave the Son the honour to sit down with him on his throne, so the Son gave the apostles the privilege to sit with him on thrones, Matth. xix. 28. and Luke xxii. 30; and that as the Father gave the Son to be the foundation or corner-stone of the church, Matth. xxi. 42 so the Son gave the apostles to be foundations upon a foundation; for so the church is said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles, *Christ being the chief corner-stone*, Eph. ii. 20.; *Hammond's Annotations*.

A. M. Christian religion, and is commonly called the † *sermon on the mount*.
 4035, &c. Ann. Dom.

31, &c.

from Matt

xi. 1. Mark

ii. 2; Luke

vi. 1. John

v. 1. to

Matth. xvii.

24. Mark ix.

14. Luke ix.

37. John vii.

1.

Matth. v. 1.

Luke vi. 20.

His famous

sermon on

the mount.

Herein he pronounces divers blessings, both spiritual and temporal, to such as the generality of the world esteemed miserable; to the poor in spirit, or humble minded; to the kind and merciful; to the pious mourners; to the peace-makers; to the meek and patient; to the pure in heart; to such as hunger and thirst after righteousness; and to such as are persecuted upon the account thereof. Herein he instructs the apostles more especially in their duty; and in several comparisons setting before them the high station wherein he had so lately placed them, and how much it would redound to

† The mountain where our Lord delivered his discourse is generally supposed to be Tabor: for by comparing St Mark, chap. iii. 13. with the other two evangelists, Matthew, chap. xiv. 22. and Luke, chap. vi. 12. &c. we may perceive, that it was not far distant from some part of the sea of Tiberias, whither our Lord had retired very lately from the Pharisees, and about five or six leagues from Capernaum, whither he returned after his descent from this mount. But then the question is, whether this sermon be the same with what we find recorded by St Luke, chap. vi. 20.? Now, in order to resolve this, we may observe, 1st, That the sermon in St Matthew was delivered before the healing of the leper, chap. viii. 2.; whereas St Luke, who promises to discourse in order of what Christ did, gives us first the story of the leper, chap. v. 12. and then an account of Christ's sermon, chap. vi. 20. 2^{dly}, That the sermon in St Matthew, our Lord preached on the mount, and called his disciples up to him; whereas St Luke informs us, that our Lord came down with his disciples from a mount, and stood in the plain, and from thence preached what he recorded, ver. 20. And, 3^{dly}, That St Luke omits the much greater part of the sermon, as it is recorded by St Matthew, mentions only four beatitudes; whereas St Matthew speaks of eight, and has added four woes, ver. 24. &c. whereof we find no indications in St Matthew. Since the sermons then are so very different in their matter, as well as in the circumstances of time and place, it is reasonable to suppose, that they are not the same; though considering that after both the sermons we find our Lord returning to Capernaum, and healing the centurion's servant, Matth. viii. 5. and Luke vii. 1. we may probably conjecture, that he spake the sermon in St Matthew, whilst he was sitting on the mount, to his disciples; but that in St Luke he afterwards spake when he came down into the plain, chap. vi. 20. in the audience of all the people, chap. vii. 1.; *Whitby's Annotations.*

their

their honour, if they behaved well, and to their dishonour, if otherwise; he recommends to them, above all other things, purity of life and conversation. Herein he expounds the true meaning, and shews the just extent of several moral precepts, viz. the laws against murder, against adultery, against perjury; that concerning retaliation, and that of loving our neighbour; and rescues them from the wretched glosses and interpretations which the Jews had put upon them. Herein he explains, and teaches the proper method of performing with acceptance, the several duties of charity to the poor, prayer, and fasting. Herein he dissuades us from all covetous inclinations, and anxious thoughts concerning the things of this world, from a consciousness of our being under the providential care of God; and having laid down several other precepts and instructions, he concludes the whole with this admonition,——*That whoever heard, believed, and practised the things contained in his discourses, would, in the event, be like a wise builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock, not to be affected by wind or weather; but that he who heard and practised them not, would be like a man who built his house upon the sand, soon to be blown down by the winds, and washed away by the floods* †.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

This sermon was delivered with such a grace and majesty, as gained the applause of the whole audience, and made them very readily declare their sense of the difference between such divine discourses, and the jejune harangues † of their ordinary teachers, the scribes; and,

to

† The word which we render *floods*, is in the Greek ποταμοί, which, tho' it chiefly signifies *rivers*, i. e. such streams as arise from springs, does frequently denote *land-floods*, or *torrents*, which are occasioned by any tempestuous sudden rains; for so Eustathius explains the word, in his notes upon this passage in Homer, Iliad 4.

Ὡς δ' ὅτε χεῖμαρροι ποταμοὶ κατ' ὄρεσφι ῥέοντες,
Ἐς μισγάχειαν συμβάλλουσιν ὄσειμον ὕδωρ
Κρηνῶν ἐκ μεγάλων, &c.

† The words in the text are, *He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes*, Matth. vii. 29. But they certainly are mistaken, who interpret the words in this sense:—*“He taught them as the author of the doctrine which he preached; as one who had authority in his own name to propound the terms of life and death;”* because it is not only contrary to the nature

A. M. 4035, &c. to confirm his doctrine by the testimony of miracles, our
 Ann. Dom. Blessed Saviour, upon his descent from the mount, healed
 31, &c. a leper, and then remitted him to the priest, to make his
 from oblation, in acknowledgment of his cure.

Matt. xii. 1. At his return to Capernaum he cured, at a distance,
 Mark ii. 23. the favourite servant of the Roman centurion †, who had
 Luke vi. 1. made an ample declaration of his divine power, and
 John v. 1. thereupon received from him as ample commendation of
 to Matth. xvii. 14. his faith; and, at his arrival at the gates of Naim †, he
 Mark ix. 14. restored to life a widow's only son, as the people were
 Luke ix. 37. carrying him out to his funeral, to the great joy and
 John vii. 1. comfort of his parent, and the no less wonder and asto-
 Mat. viii. 5. nishment of the spectators, who, upon this occasion,
 Luke vii. 1. His curing
 the centu-
 rion's ser-
 vant, and
 raising the
 widow's son
 at Naim.

Luke vii. 11. nature of his prophetic office, but to his own frequent declarations,
 that *the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but his who sent him; and that he spake, not of himself, or in his own name, but as he had heard from his Father, and as he had commanded him to speak,*
 John vii. 16. 17. 18. viii. 28. xii. 49 xiv. 10.; and therefore
 the truer interpretation is, what Lightfoot and others give us, viz.
 “ That he spake as a prophet, having authority from God to deli-
 “ ver his message to them, and not as the scribes, who pretended
 “ only to deliver the traditions of their forefathers, and to teach
 “ them no more than what they had learned from Hillel, Sham-
 “ mai, Abtalien,” &c.; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† He was an officer, commanding an hundred men, much of the same rank and station of one of our captains, and belonged to the iron legion, (as it was called), which was usually quartered in Judea; *Howell's History*, in the notes.

† Naim, or Nain, so called for the pleasantness of its situation, was a town of Galilee, about two leagues from Nazareth, and not so much from mount Tabor, between which and the city ran the river Kison. From our Saviour's meeting the funeral coming out of the gates, we may learn, that it was a custom among the Jews to bury their dead in the day-time, when the nearest friends and relations followed the corpse, which was usually carried in procession through the streets and public places, to the coemiteries, which were generally at a considerable distance from the city, because they looked upon their graves as places full of pollution; whereas we Christians, in hopes of a joyful resurrection, and upon presumption that many of those whose bodies are reposed in the earth are in a state of felicity in heaven, look upon these places with great respect and veneration, and accordingly have our tombs erected always very near, and sometimes within the body of our churches; *Whitby's Table of places*; and *Calmet's Commentary on Luke vii. 12.*

glorified

glorified God, and publicly declared, that (e) a mighty Prophet was sprung up among them; and that God † had visited his people. A. M. 4035, &c. Inn. Dom. 31, &c.

Upon the fame of this, and several other miracles, which our Saviour did daily, John the Baptist, who was still in prison, sent two of his disciples to inquire of him, † whether he himself was the promised Messiah, or some other person was to appear in that character? As our Lord was at that time working many miracles ‖, curing the

from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

(e) Luke vii. 16.

† The people of Naim do, in these words, acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, or that great prophet whom Moses had promised to the Jews: *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken.* Deut. xviii. 15.; for they describe this prophet in the very same terms that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, makes use of to denote the Messiah: *The Lord hath visited his people,* Luke i. 68.; *Galmet's Commentary.*

His answer to the Baptist's disciples, and commendation of him.

† The words in the text are, *Art thou he that should come*, or rather, *he that is coming*? For the prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament were so plain, and yet his person or name so unknown to the Jews, that they were wont to express it by some circumlocution, and more especially, by this of ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *he that cometh*; for so he is termed Matth. iii. 11. xxi. 9. Luke vii. 20. xix. 38. John xii. 13. and Heb. x. 37. &c.; and this name they gathered from Habakkuk, where he is called, *he that shall come*, chap. ii. 3.; and from Daniel, where he is styled, *he that cometh with the clouds of heaven*, chap. vii. 13.; *Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations.*

‖ If it be asked, How the seeing of these things done by our Saviour could be a sufficient argument to John's disciples, that he was, in truth, the Messiah? The reply is, that the performance of these things was exactly answering the character which the prophet had given of the Messiah, viz. That, *at the coming of God to save them, the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; that the lame should leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing,* Isaiah xxxv. 4. &c.: And therefore, instead of giving them a direct answer, which might be liable to the old objection of his bearing record of himself, John viii 12. our Saviour refers them to the miracles they saw him do; miracles of the same kind that were predicted of the Messiah, and then leaves it to their own master to draw the conclusions from thence; which was a method of conviction more short and strong, and withal more agreeable to our Saviour's modesty and great humility, than any long detail of arguments would have proved; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Galmet's Commentary.*

A. M. deaf, the blind, the lame, &c. and instructing the people that were gathered about him; instead of giving a direct answer to their question, he bad them go, and report what they saw to their master. And having thus dismissed them, he began to discourse to the people concerning John, giving a large encomium of the austerity and holiness of his person, † the greatness of his function, and divinity of his commission; and hence taking occasion to blame the perverseness of the age, in rejecting both his and the Baptist's testimony, (though the Baptist was a man of a mortified deportment, and he a person of a free and affable behaviour, so that † nothing would please them),

4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. xi. 7.
Luke vii. 24.

† Maimonides observes, that though the Jews generally reckon eleven degrees of prophecy; yet two of these were something more sublime and excellent than ordinary prophecy. The one of these was what they call the *gradus Mosaicus*, when the prophet had a familiar converse with God upon all occasions; and the other, when he had his revelations, not from a dream or ecstasy, but an immediate dictate of the Holy Ghost. Of this sort was John the Baptist, who was plainly told by the Father, Matth. iii. 17. John xiii. 3.; and, as plainly proclaimed it to others, that Jesus *was the Lamb of God*. Other prophets spoke of the coming of Christ, but then they did it in a dark and obscure manner. They saw him only at a distance, in a dream, or in a vision of the night, and couched their predictions under a veil of enigmatical phrases; but the Baptist spake of him openly and distinctly. He knew him; he was conversant with him; he pointed him out to the people; had, in short, the honour of baptizing him, and hearing the voice from heaven testifying of him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. And, upon these accounts, we find him called a great and illustrious person, Luke i. 15. *one filled with the Holy Ghost*, and, by way of excellence, the *Prophet of the Most High*, ver. 76.; *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words of our Saviour, to illustrate this, are these, — *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented*, Matth. xi. 17. which seem to be a proverb, founded upon a custom among the Jewish children, to imitate what they saw done by others upon greater occasions, and particularly the custom in festivities, or funerals; when, in the former, as soon as the musician struck up a tune, the company began to dance to his pipe; and, in the latter, as soon as some old women had begun the mournful song, the rest followed, lamenting and beating their breasts. These the children were used to act and personate in the streets at play;

them), he proceeded to upbraid the several cities where most of his miracles had been wrought, *viz.* Chorazim, Bethsaïda, and more especially Capernaum, with their obstinacy and impenitence; and having declared that the mysteries of the gospel-revelation were better adapted to the humble and modest than to the proud and worldly-wise, he concludes his discourse with an exhortation to such as were thus qualified to be his (f) disciples, *Come unto me †, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, &c.*

No sooner had he finished this discourse, but a rich Pharisee (whose name was Simon) † invited him to dinner; but while he was at table there happened an incident somewhat remarkable: For a certain woman, who

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke vii.
36. His ap-
ologizing
for the wo-
man in Si-
mon's
house, and
absolving
her from
her sins.

and when one had begun the musician's part, and another the old woman's part, and the rest did not follow them in theirs, this gave occasion to the proverbial saying which our Saviour applies to the present purpose, in this sense, "I and John have both of us invited you to enter into the kingdom of heaven, or to turn to God by repentance. John, by the austerity of his life, and I, by my affability and courtesy, have endeavoured to recommend ourselves; but all to no purpose. You will neither mourn with him, nor laugh with me; but for that very reason, censure and revile our different behaviour, accounting him, for his reserved temper, no better than a melancholic kind of mad man; and me, for my open and free conversation, a mere glutton and wine bibber;" *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

(f) Matth. xi. 28.

† *To come unto Christ*, in the phrase of the New Testament, is to believe in him, and to become one of his disciples; and this invitation our Saviour gives to all mankind in general, and to the Jews in particular. To all mankind, forasmuch as all (without the knowledge of Christ) are heavy laden with the burden of their sins, and the calamities incident to life; are surrounded with a cloud of ignorance, and held in bondage through the fear of death: and to the Jews in particular, as they, under their dispensation, were oppressed with a load of ceremonies, *a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, Acts xv. 10. besides the additional weight which the Pharisees laid upon them, by their traditions, *heavy burdens, and grievous to be born*, Matth. xxiii. 4.; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Is it not a little strange, that any interpreters should ever imagine, that this is the same story with what we find related in Matth.

A. M. not long before † had been noted for a lewd liver, came
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.

from xxvi. Mark xiv. and John xii. since the histories agree scarce in any thing, unless it be in bringing the alabaſter box of ointment, and anointing our Saviour's feet, which in thoſe countries, eſpecially at great entertainments, was no uncommon thing. But now the anointing in the other evangelists was done at Bethany, within two miles of Jeruſalem; this in St Luke in Galilee; that in the houſe of one Simon the leper; this in the houſe of one Simon a Pharifee; that but a little before our Saviour's paſſion; this a conſiderable time before it: at that Judas was offended for the waſte of the ointment; at this Simon for the woman's touching our Saviour: upon that occaſion our Lord vindicates the woman from one head of argument, and upon this from another. So that all circumſtances make it plain, that theſe were different actions, done by different perſons, and at different times; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Who this woman was, the goſpel no where tells us. We read indeed of three perſons who by ſeveral evangelists are ſaid to have anointed our Lord's head and feet, viz. Mary Magdalene, Mary the ſiſter of Lazarus, and this other woman, whom St Luke calls a ſinner: And ſome commentators make theſe three to be one and the ſame perſon. It is to be obſerved, however, that the ſiſter of Lazarus is all along repreſented as a perſon of great ſobriety and virtue, who always lived at Bethany, was none of our Lord's attendants, nor ever came into Galilee; and conſequently was a woman diſtinct from Mary Magdalene, who was of his retinue, Luke viii. 2. and from this other woman who anointed his feet in Simon's houſe: But whether this Mary Magdalene, and this woman here called a ſinner, might not be the ſame perſon, is not ſo eaſy to determine. The characteristic of Magdalene is, that ſhe was the perſon out of whom our Lord had caſt ſeven devils; but then if the ejection of theſe devils be underſtood (as ſome will have it) in an allegorical ſenſe, the words will well enough ſuit with the ſinner in St Luke; or ſuppoſe they were real devils, the ejection of them might be ſome time before her coming into Simon's houſe, and (as our Saviour's vindication of her ſeems to imply) her reformation conſequent thereupon, though Simon knew nothing of it. For theſe reaſons ſome have imagined, that the ſinner in St Luke and Mary Magdalene were both the ſame perſon; and that ſhe was called Magdalene from the town and caſtle of Magdal, where her huſband, who had been a man of great diſtinction, but then dead, had lately his habitation. It muſt not be diſſembled, however, that the moſt general and prevailing opinion is, that theſe were two different and diſtinct women; *Calmet's Diſſert. ſur les trois Maries; and Hammond's Annotations.*

into the house, and † throwing herself at the feet of Jesus, washed them with the tears which flowed from her eyes, and then, having wiped them with her hair, she kissed them, and anointed them with very precious ointment †.

Simon, who still retained something of the censorious spirit of his sect, seeing this woman thus busy in expressing her love and veneration for Jesus, began to think within himself, that † he could not possibly be a prophet, other

wife
 A. M.
 1035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. x. i. v.
 Mark. ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 8.

† The manner of the eastern people was to lie upon a kind of bed or couch while they were at meat; to put off their sandals before they lay down; and to have their servants and domestics stand behind at their feet; so that this woman wanted not an opportunity to express her devotion to our Lord, while he was in this posture; *causobre's Annotations.*

† That it was a customary thing among the ancients, especially at great entertainments, to use ointments and costly perfumes, appears from several authorities. The Psalmist plainly informs us, that this was the custom of the Jews, when, in acknowledgment of God's great bounty to him, he declares, *Thou hast prepared a table for me; thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full,* Psal xxiii 5. The Scholiast upon Aristophanes acquaints us with the same custom among the Greeks, when he makes it a rule, that they who invite to an entertainment should bring forth to their guests crowns and ointments, *στέφανος, & μύρα παρτίθεισαν.* And that among the Romans the like usage prevailed, is evident from that sharp, but jocular epigram in Martial:

Unguentum fateor bonum dedisti
 Convivis heri, sed nihil scidisti.
 Res falsa est, bene olere, et esurire.
 Qui non cœnat, et ungiatur, Fabulle,
 Hic verò mihi mortuus videtur.

Lib. 3.

The general custom indeed, upon these occasions, was, to anoint the head, and very seldom the feet: But, besides that the latter was a token of more humility, and no less esteem in this woman, she could not perhaps have an opportunity of coming at our Saviour's head, without giving some disturbance to the company; *Hammond's Annotations.*

† Though the Jewish religion permitted harlots of their own nation to enjoy all the privileges of other women, except that their oblations were rejected as impure, yet the Pharisees, who pretended to a greater degree of sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil usage, or the common benefits of society, and thought religion itself, and the honour of every prophet, concerned in this precipitancy. This was the reason of Simon's making this

A. M. wife he would have known the woman to be infamous, and consequently not suffered her to touch him : But our Saviour, who well understood Simeon's thoughts, proposed to him a parable of a certain creditor, who had two debtors, one of which owed him ten times as much as the other, but because both of them were insolvent, he frankly forgave them both ; and then, gaining from him a confession, that the debtor to whom the larger sum was forgiven would in gratitude be bound to love the creditor most, he turned to the woman, and (by way of application) not only apologized both for her behaviour and his own, but reproached his host likewise, for having omitted some instances of respect and civility which this contemptible woman (as he esteemed her) had abundantly supplied. And therefore, in return for such uncommon kindness, he gave her a full pardon and absolution of her sins, which some in the company seemed to resent, as an invasion of the divine prerogative ; but that gave him no manner of uneasiness.

Upon his leaving Naim, he made a progress, for some months, round other parts of Galilee, accompanied with his apostles, and several devout women, whom he cured of fundry diseases, and who, in gratitude, attended his person, and, out of their own substance, administered to
 Luke viii. 1. His curing a demoniac at Capernaum, whereupon the Pharisees blasphemed, and he sharply reproves them.

this objection within himself : But therein he draws three false conclusions : 1st, That had Jesus been a prophet, he must have known what the woman was ; as if prophets knew every thing, and were able to look into the secrets of the heart. 2dly, That as this woman was a sinner, our Saviour should not have suffered her to touch him ; as if the external touch of a person engaged in any vicious course, could communicate pollution to one that was innocent. And, 3dly, That this woman, whom he knew to be a sinner some time before, was still in the same condition ; as if it were not in the power of God at any time to touch the heart, and in a moment to inspire sincere repentance ; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† It was customary, says St Jerom, on Matth. xxvii. 55. among the Jews, for women, and especially for widows, to minister necessaries to their teachers ; and this, without any scandal or imputation upon their honour. Our Saviour lays it down as a general rule, that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, Luke x. 7. ; and the apostle accounts it no more than justice, that they who sow to others spiritual things, should be allowed to reap their carnal, 1 Cor. ix. 11. Of what condition

to his necessities : Till returning, at length, to his own city Capernaum, such multitudes of people, upon the rumour of his being come again, resorted to him, that neither he, nor his disciples, could find time to eat. But *his meat was to do the will of God*, by healing the sick, and relieving the oppressed; and therefore, as soon as a poor demoniac, both blind and dumb, was brought before him, he immediately restored him both to his speech and eye-sight, inso-much that all who saw it were greatly astonished, and, with a general voice, declared, that the person who did such wonderful works could be no other than the promised Messiah.

A. M.
4035, *Gr.*
Ann Dom.
31, *Gr.*
from
Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. xii.
22.
Mark iii. 22.
Luke xi. 15.

The Pharisees, however, and doctors of the law, who came from Jerusalem, gave another turn to this miracle. They ascribed it to the power of the devil †, even to Beelzebub †, the chief of the devils; and therefore our

“ Blessed

dition or quality these women were that attended our Lord, we are not told : They might be virgins, widows, or wives, who had an allowance for themselves from their husbands : However, it could be no injustice done their families, to give unto him, who was Lord of all, that they and their husbands possessed; and who, *though he was rich, yet, for our sakes, became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich*, 2 Cor. viii. 9. ; *Whitby's* and *Pool's Annotations*.

† That which made the Pharisees thus calumniate our Saviour's miracles, was their finding the people induced by them to believe that he was the son of David, Matt. xii. 23. which was but another word for the Messiah, the King of the Jews. For, though they might have some apprehensions, that if this belief obtained, it might possibly bring the power of the Romans upon them, John xi. 48. ; yet their chief fear was, that the greatness of his miracles, and excellence of his doctrine would put an end to their credit and authority among the people, since they were conscious to themselves, that they could not vie with him in either ; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† By several passages in the gospel it seems evident, that the Jews, at this time, had a notion of a kind of empire, and subordination among the infernal powers, and that the prince of this empire was called *Beelzebub*. *Beelzebub* signifies properly the *God of flies*; but why a name of so mean an import should denote the head of the apostate angels, is not so easy a matter to determine, unless we will admit of this conjecture, viz. That as the people of Ekron had an idol which they styled *Beelsamen*, i. e. the *God of heaven*, by other nations called *Jupiter Olympius*, the Jews, who used to give

nick-names,

- A. M. "† Blessed Saviour, by the comparison of a kingdom, or
 8035, &c. "house, divided against itself, (which is the readiest way
 Ann. Dom. "to bring it to desolation), shews the absurdity of their
 31, &c. "allegations, since, by that means, the devil would
 from "take the most effectual course to destroy his own em-
 Matt. xii. 1. "pire. Nay, he argues from their own pretensions of
 Mark ii. 23. "having certain allowed exorcists † among them, that
 Luke vi. 1. "evil spirits might be cast out by the finger of God;
 John v. 1. "that, when they were apparently so, it was very mani-
 20 Matt. "fest,
 xvii. 14. "that, when they were apparently so, it was very mani-
 Mark ix. 14. "fest,
 Luke ix. 37. "fest,
 John vii. 1. "fest,

nicknames, or names of contempt, to all false gods, called it sometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *God-fly*, because these Heathens worshipped it under the figure of that insect, and sometimes *Beelzebub*, or the *God of ordure*, because some sort of flies delight to feed on excrements. However this be, it is certain, that the apostles, in several places of their writings, do seem to insinuate, that among the apostate spirits, there was one superior to the rest, whom therefore they call *the prince of darkness*, Luke xxi. 53. *the prince of this world*, John xii. 31. and *the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. who, in the days of Tobit, went under the name of *Asmodeus*, chap. iii. 8. and is now by the Jews generally called *Sammael*, and by the Christians *Lucifer*; *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The argument which our Saviour employs against the Jews upon this occasion is what we call *ad hominem*. He supposes, as they did, that among evil spirits there was a form of government, which was to last unto the end of the world, and in it a certain subordination, which made it subsist; and from this principle he argues, — "That it was impossible, that an empire divided against itself should last long; incongruous to think, that a prince, who knew his own interest, would send part of his forces to engage his own generals, and compel them to surrender to the enemy, what they had lately taken from them; and therefore a thing utterly incredible, that the prince of the devils should give orders to other inferior devils to quit the bodies which they had taken possession of; and consequently, that he should expel any in the name or by the authority of *Beelzebub*;" *Calmet's Commentary*.

† That it was customary among the Jews to cast out devils by the invocation of the name of the Most High, we may learn from Justin Martyr, who, in his dialogue with Trypho, tells him, "that if any Jew exorcised a devil in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, perhaps he would obey him;" from what Irenæus tells us, *viz.* "That by the invocation of the name of God, even before the advent of our Lord, men were saved from evil spirits, and all kind of demons;" and, from what Origen (*contra Cels.*) affirms, *viz.* "That the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being used by the Jews, in the incan-
 "tation

“ fest, that the kingdom of God, or the Messiah, was
 “ come among them; that obstinately to resist the evi-
 “ dence of such miracles, or to ascribe them to a diabolical
 “ power, was that sin against the Holy Ghost, which is of
 “ a nature unpardonable; and that, since they had been
 “ so impious, as to blaspheme the Holy Spirit by which
 “ he wrought them, nothing less could be expected, than
 “ that the devils ejected by him, finding no where among
 “ the Heathens such desirable habitations of rest and con-
 “ tentment, as among them, would endeavour to return,
 “ with several others worse than themselves, and, by their
 “ prodigious wickedness and obstinate infidelity finding
 “ them more prepared than ever to receive them, would
 “ there take up their settled abode; and having made
 “ them more incredulous and obdurate, more impure and
 “ wicked, more hypocritical and blasphemous than they
 “ were before, would bring upon them too a more la-
 “ mentable destruction.”

All this however hindered not the scribes and Pharisees
 from demanding of our Saviour some new sign or miracle
 in evidence of his mission; but as he had given them a
 sufficient number of these already, he only referred them
 to one, that would not come to pass till after his death,
 namely, that of Jonas, whose deliverance from the
 whale's † belly, after three days confinement, was an
 eminent type of his resurrection, after as long a conti-
 nuance ¶ of his body in the bowels of the earth: And
 thence

“ tation of devils, did great miracles:” And, if this was a common
 practice among the Jews, then will the force of our Saviour's argu-
 ment be this,—“ You make no doubt, but that your exorcists, who
 “ use the name of God, do eject devils by virtue of that name;
 “ and how partial is it then in you, to pass an unjust censure upon
 “ me, in whom you see far greater evidences of the finger of God,
 “ in my casting out all manner of evil spirits, and healing all kinds
 “ of diseases?” *Whitby's Annotations.*

† The word in the original signifies not a *whale*, but any *large*
fish; and some naturalists are of opinion, that it was not a whale,
 whose gullet is too narrow for that purpose, but rather what the
 Greeks call the *Lamia*, or *Dog-fish*, (as we shewed elsewhere),
 whose throat is more capacious, that swallowed up Jonah; *Vide*
vol. 4. p. 222.

¶ But how can our Saviour be said to have continued as long in
 the grave, as Jonah did in the whale's belly, when there were no
 more than two nights, and one whole day, between his death

A. M. 4035, &c. thence he took occasion to remind them, "that the in-
 Ann. Dom. 31, &c. habitants of Nineveh †, a Pagan city, and also the
 from "queen of Sheba † should rise up in judgment † against
 Matt. xii. 1. "that generation, and condemn it, because the former re-
 Mark ii. 23. "pent at the preaching of Jonas, and the latter took
 Luke vi. 1. "a vast journey to partake of the benefits of Solomon's
 John v. 1. "wisdom; whereas they refused to hearken to one,
 to Matt. xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14. and his resurrection? Now, for a resolution of this, we must ob-
 Luke ix. 37. serve, 1st, That the Hebrews began their computation of a natural
 John vii. 1. day from the evening or night preceding; so that, from one
 sun-set to another sun-set, they reckoned a complete day, even as
 Moses does, when he says, *The evening and the morning were the
 first day*, Gen. i. 5. 2dly, That it is a common thing with them,
 as well as other nations, to put part of a day for the whole; so that,
 whatever is done in any part of the day, is properly enough said to
 be done on that day: And, 3dly, That they usually reckon that
 to be done in so many days, or so many days and nights, which be-
 gins in any part of the first, and ends in any part of the last day.
 Now, allowing this manner of computation, and reckoning that the
 first day began on Thursday at sun-set, and ended upon Friday at
 sun set; since our Saviour died on Friday about three in the after-
 noon, by putting a part for the whole, here we have one day. Sa-
 turday is allowed on all hands to be another; and, since the third
 day began on Saturday at sun-set, and our Saviour rose on the morn-
 ing following, that part of the day being likewise put for the whole,
 is fairly computed for the third. The Hebrew child, according to
 law, was to be circumcised the eighth day, but then the day of its
 birth, and of its circumcision, were both counted; and, in like
 manner, if we reckon the day on which Christ died for one, and
 that on which he rose for another, including withal the night be-
 longing to the former, we may properly enough say, that, in imitation
 of the prophet Jonah, "he was three days and three nights in the
 "heart of the earth;" *Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations*; and
Bishop Kidder's Demonstration, lib. i. c. 8.

† This city is generally supposed to have been built by Nimrod,
 was situate upon the river Tigris, and famous once for being the
 metropolis of the first, i. e. the Assyrian empire; *Wells's Geography
 of the New Testament*.

† Sheba, or Saba, is a province of Arabia Felix, lying to the
 south of Judea, and on the extreme part of the continent, and being
 bounded by the ocean, is therefore said to be *the utmost part of the
 earth*; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† This is spoken in allusion to a custom among the Jews and Ro-
 mans, which was, for the witnesses to rise from their seats, when
 they accused criminals, or gave any evidence against them; *Beau-
 sibre's Annotations*.

" who

“ who was incontestibly † greater than either Jonas or Solomon.”

While he was continuing his discourse in this manner, word was brought that his mother † and some other kinsfolk were at the door, desiring to speak with him; (for fearing either that he might be too much transported by his ministry, or grow faint for want of eating, or be endangered by the throng, they came to get him away); but being dissatisfied with their unseasonable interruption, he took occasion to inform the audience, “ that all worldly relations were of less consideration than the ties of duty and reli-

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Mark iii. 21.
31. Luke
viii. 19.
Shews who
are his true
relations.

† Since God had promised Solomon, that as there was none like him before him, so after him none should arise like him for wisdom, 1 Kings iii. 12. our Saviour’s declaring that in this respect he was greater than Solomon, must be plainly avowing himself to be more than man; *Whitby’s Annotations.*

† The words in the text are, *His mother and his brethren*, Matth. xii. 46.; but as the word *brethren* (according to the language of the Jews, Gen. xxix. 12. Levit. x. 4.) is of great latitude, these brothers are supposed to be either Joseph’s sons by a former wife, and so our Saviour’s brothers-in-law, or the children of Mary the wife of Cleophas, and so his cousin-germans. There is, indeed, a tradition in the church, that before his espousing the Virgin Mary, Joseph had another wife, whose name was Ischa, by whom he had six children, four sons, James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude, and two daughters, whose names, some say, were Esther and Thamar, others Mary and Salome. But whoever compares Matth. xiii. 55.—xxvii. 56. Mark xv. 40. and John xix. 25. together, will find that the four persons there said to be our Saviour’s brothers, were the sons of Mary the wife of Cleophas, (or Alpheus, for the name is all one), and sister to the Blessed Virgin; and so these brothers of his (as we said) were no more than his cousin-germans. Others, however, strenuously maintain the former opinion, viz. That Mary the mother of Jesus was their mother, i. e. their stepmother, and they consequently his brothers-in-law; and that, 1st, Because this opinion retains the proper signification of the word *brothers*, in which the Jews always seem to use it, when they speak of our Lord’s brothers and sisters; and, 2^{dly}, Because it agrees with the sense of antiquity, which, ever before St Jerom’s time, (says the learned Pearson), looked upon them as the brothers of our Lord, who lived with his mother, and are therefore so frequently found together, Matth. xii. 46. John ii. 12.; *Calmet’s Commentary*; and *Beausobre’s* and *Whitby’s Annotations.*

A. M. 4035, &c. " gion; that the names † of mother and brother, which
 Ann. Dom. " are sanctified by the laws of God and nature, were made
 31, &c. " much more sacred, when a spiritual kindred does super-
 from " vene;" and so turning to his disciples, he declared, " that
 Matt. xii. 1. " they were his truest relations who heard the word of
 Mark ii. 23. " God, and practised it."
 Luke vi. 1. The same day he went out of the house where he com-
 John v. 1. monly abode, and, for the greater conveniency of teaching
 to Matth. xvii. 14. the people, repaired to the sea-shore, where, being followed
 Mark ix. 14. by the same multitudes, to avoid the throng, he went on
 Luke ix. 37. board a vessel, and from thence taught them in parables,
 John vii. 1. (an usual way of instruction among the Jews, but what he
 Matth. xiii. had not practised before), thereby to engage the atten-
 1. Mark iv. tion, and accommodate himself to the capacity of those
 1. Luke viii. that heard him. By the parable of the sower, he repre-
 4. Instruct- sented the different successes of the gospel, according to the
 the multi- different dispositions of its hearers; by the tares growing
 tude in pa- among the good seed, the mixture of the wicked and God-
 rables. ly under the same profession of Christianity; by the grain
 of mustard-seed, and the little piece of leaven, the won-
 derful increase and propagation of the gospel from small
 beginnings; by the treasure in the field, and the pearl
 of great price, the inestimable benefits that would ac-
 crue to the true professors of religion; but that the pro-
 fession of it would include a mixt multitude, and be there-
 fore like a net cast into the sea, which incloses fishes of
 all kinds, some good and some bad, the good to be pre-
 served, but the bad cast away. This is the explication

† We have another speech of our Saviour's much of the same im-
 port with this. For when a certain woman in the company, upon
 hearing his excellent doctrine, broke out into this exclamation, *Bless-
 ed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!*
 his reply is, *Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God
 and keep it,* Luke xi. 27. 28.: *for whosoever shall do the will of
 my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and
 mother,* Matth. xii. 50.; which texts do not derogate any thing from
 the honour truly due to the Blessed Virgin, as the mother of the Mes-
 siah; but only shew the folly of some who exalt her above Christ,
 whom, considered only as his mother, Christ himself seems here to
 set beneath every true believer; though, considered as a believer like-
 wise, she has a just title to pre-eminence; and it is by that she is in-
 finitely more happy than if she had only been his mother according
 to the flesh; *Chrysost. hom. 45.; Calmet's Commentary; and Fool's
 Annotations.*

which

which our Lord gave his disciples of these several parables; and when, by their answer, he perceived that they understood them all, he concluded his discourse with one simile more, viz. That (g) every gospel-teacher ought to resemble a well furnished house-keeper †, who brings all things out of his repository, both old and new, according to the occasions of his guests.

He had not continued long in Capernaum, before he resolved to cross the lake or sea of Galilee, and to that purpose had ordered his disciples to prepare a vessel for him: But just as he was going on board, a certain scribe † came, and offered to attend him where-ever he went;

A. M.
4235, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. viii.
but 18. Luke
ix. 57.

(g) Matth. xiii. 52.

† And what this house-keeper was in his own family, that should every minister of the gospel be in the church of Christ. He should be thoroughly instructed in the word of God, and capable of amassing a plentiful provision of all knowledge, both sacred and profane. *To bring out of his treasure*, or storehouse, *things new and old*, was a kind of proverbial saying among the Hebrews, and denoted a man's giving a plentiful or liberal entertainment to his friends, and such as came about him. And therefore, as the householder, if a man of substance and sufficiency, of a large stock, and as large a mind, will entertain his friends and guests with plenty, and variety of provisions, answerable to the difference of mens palates, as well as to the difference of the seasons; so our gospel-scribe, or teacher, in the entertainment of his spiritual guests, is not always to set before them only the main substantials of religion, whether for belief or practice, but, as the matter shall require, to add also illustration to the one, and enforcement to the other, sometimes persuading, sometimes terrifyiug; and accordingly addressing himself to the afflicted and desponding with gospel-lenitives, and to the hard and obstinate, with legal corrosives; and, since the relish of all is not the same, he is to apply to the vulgar with plain familiar similitudes, and to the learned, with greater choice of language, and closeness of argument, and so suit his discourses to the various circumstances, tempers, and apprehensions of his hearers; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *South's Sermons*, vol. 4.

† What might possibly be the motive of this scribe's offering to attend our Saviour, the conjectures of commentators have been different. Some think, that he did it with a sincere desire to become his disciple; others, with a design to turn spy upon him; some, out of a spirit of vanity, to distinguish himself, by being a retainer to a master

A. M. but when he understood, that no temporal emolument was to be obtained by such attendance, he very probably retracted. A disciple of his own at the same time desired leave † to bury his father before he went along with him; but he commanded him to follow him, and to leave such offices to the children † of this world; and, when another

John v. 1.

to Matth.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

Matth. viii.

23. Mark

iv. 36.

Luke viii.

22.

master in so great reputation among the people; and others, out of a principle of self-interest, that he might obtain some post of honour and advantage, upon our Lord's advancement to his kingdom. This, indeed, seems to be the most probable ground of his resolution; and accordingly, the design of our Saviour's answer is, to discourage him from being his disciple upon such secular views, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his own head* Matth. viii. 20.; and therefore much less any accommodation or prospect of preferment for his followers; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† Some are of opinion, that the disciple who requested this was St Philip, who was the first that adjoined himself to Jesus, and that his father was not actually dead, but only grown so very old, that he could not live long; and therefore the purport of his address to Christ is, "That, for the small remainder of his father's life, he might be permitted to live with him, but that, after he had paid his last offices to him, he would not fail to return again, and devote himself entirely to his service:" But others understand the words in a literal sense; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words of the text are, — *Let the dead bury their dead*, Matth. viii. 22. which is a form of speech common in all sorts of authors, when in the same place they use the same words twice, though very frequently in different senses. Thus the Psalmist, speaking of God, says, *With the froward thou shalt shew thyself froward*, Psal. xviii. 26. even as Moses introduces God speaking of himself, *If ye walk contrary to me, I will also walk contrary to you*, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. where the words *froward* and *contrary*, as they relate to God, denote the punishments which he intended to bring upon the obstinate, and are the rather used, because the same words went before. And, in like manner, *Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me*, may signify, *Let others bury the dead; thou hast work of more consequence to do*. It must not be dissimbled, however, that, by the dead, both sacred and profane authors do frequently mean, not only those who in a natural sense are dead, but those likewise who in a spiritual sense are so, by being alienated from the life of God, and dead in trespasses and sins. Thus Clemens of Alexandria,

other was for taking leave of his family, and disposing of his effects before he went, our Saviour let him know, (b) *that whoever laid his hand on the plough †, and looked back, was not fit for the kingdom of God.*

While the ship was under sail, and Jesus asleep in the stern, there arose a most terrible storm, so violent and impetuous, that the whole ship was almost swallowed up by the waves. Hereupon his disciples, in great consternation, awoke him; and when he arose, at his rebuking the waves, they obeyed his command, and immediately composed themselves into a profound calm †, to the no small astonishment of every one that saw it.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark x. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Alays the
storm at
sea, and
cures two
demoniacs
outrageous
ly mad.

andria tells us, that the philosophy of the Barbarians called those dead, who deserted their doctrines, and subjected their minds to sensual pleasures, which Philo calls the death of the soul, entombed in passions and all manner of wickedness. And therefore the full import of our Saviour's words must be, "Let those who are unconcerned for the things of God, and unfit to engage in promoting them, perform such offices which they can do, as well as others; but thou who hast begun to follow me, and to attend upon the kingdom of God, go on with resolution, and without allowing thyself any avocation from that work:" Hereby teaching us, that they who are called to the preaching of the gospel, and the salvation of souls, should not suffer any earthly business, which may be done as well by others who are unfit to be employed in spirituals, to give them the least impediment or molestation; *Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations.*

(b) Luke ix. 62.

† *To put the hand to the plough*, is a proverbial saying, not only among the Greeks and Hebrews, but many other nations, and denotes, in general, the beginning of any enterprize. This our Saviour applies to spiritual husbandry; and thereby gives us to understand, that as he who undertakes to plow, should not look behind him, for fear of making his furrows crooked or unequal; so he that engages in the ministry of the gospel, should not suffer himself to be incumbered with much serving about other matters, but, in the language of the apostle, *forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ*, Phil. iii. 13. 14; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmer's Commentary*.

† The stilling the raging of the sea was so peculiar a prerogative of God, Psal. lxxxix. 9 and cvii. 25. 29. that it is not at all to be wondered that our Saviour's disciples should be convinced of a divine power residing in him who was able to do this with the breath of his command; *Whitby's Annotations.*

The.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. viii.
28. Mark
v. 1. Luke
viii. 26.

The next morning, as our Lord landed on the east side of the lake, in that part of the province of Trachonitis †, which is called *the country of the Gadarens* †, two demoniacs || most grievously distracted, with some poor rags about

† This country, which is so called by the Greeks from its rough and craggy mountains, together with Ituræa, made in our Saviour's time one tetrarchy, *i. e.* one fourth part or rather division (for they were not equal parts) of the kingdom of Herod the Great when he died. It was anciently called *Argob*, Deut. iii. 13. and, according to the best account, is bounded to the east by Arabia Deserta; to the west, by Batanæa; to the south, by Ituræa; and to the north, by the country of Damascus: And as it was a province full of rocky hills, which served for an harbour to a great number of thieves and robbers, it often found employment for Herod the Great (as we may see in the history of Josephus) to expell them; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*; and *Whitby's Table*.

† This, in St Matthew, is called the country of the Gergesens, because it lay in the neighbourhood of the two cities Gadara and Gergefa, which were both situated within the district of Decapolis. Gadara, which took its name from the tribe of Gad, (to whom it fell by lot in the division of the land), was a famous city beyond Jordan, the capital of Paræa, (as Josephus De bello, lib. 5. c. 3. tells us), and stood eastward of the sea of Tiberias, about sixty furlongs from the shore. Gergefa was a place of some importance likewise, according to the same historian; and the adjacency of these two towns made the evangelists call the country that lay between them, sometimes by one name, and sometimes by another; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

|| There is some difference between the evangelists in their account of this cure: For whereas St Mark, chap. v. 2. and St Luke, chap. viii. 28. take notice only of one demoniac; St Matthew, chap. viii. 28. makes mention of two. Now, to reconcile this seeming difference, Dr Lightfoot ingeniously conjectures, that one of these two was a Gergesen, and a Jew, and so in casting the devil out of him, our Lord did no more than what he had frequently done in Judea; but the other a Gadaren, *i. e.* one of an Heathen city, as Josephus testifies; for which reason St Mark and St Luke take chiefly notice of him, as a more remarkable instance, because he and the Syrophœnician woman were the only two Heathens we read of that our Saviour cured. But there is a farther reason for the evangelist's taking notice of one rather than the other, and that is, — That the one, in his behaviour, was more remarkable than the other; was possessed with an unclean spirit, called himself *legion*, and could not be bound with fetters or chains; went about naked,

bout them, came running towards him, and fell at his feet and worshipped him. Hideous spectacles were they both; but one, much fiercer than the other, made dismal outcries both day and night, and cut his flesh with sharp stones; and though he had been often bound with fetters and chains, yet he as often broke them to pieces, ranging (with his companion) among the rocks † and tombs, and so very furious and outrageous, that no traveller durst pass that way. Upon their approach to Jesus, the devils (who spake by their mouths) declared him to be the Son of God, and expressed their fear of his being come to * torment them before their time. They acknowledged their number to be vastly great, and (if he cast them out of the possessed persons) implored him to suffer them to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding on the mountains not far off. Accordingly he permitted them: Whereupon the whole herd, to the number of two thousand, ran violently upon the rocks, and casting themselves head-long into the lake, were all drowned, and utterly lost.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

naked, and cutting himself with stones; and when he was cured, distinguished himself, by desiring to follow Christ: Circumstances all which St Matthew omits, but St Mark and St Luke have particularly related, and, upon these accounts, might very likely think, that he fell more properly under their consideration than the other; *Whitby's and Beausobre's Annotations.*

† The tombs, which the evangelists here mention, are said to be in the mountains, and in the wilderness: For the custom of the Jews was, to have their tombs, like so many little cells, cut out in the sides of caverns, and hollow parts of rocks and mountains, at some distance from their towns, and usually in very lonely and desert places; into which it was usual for the devils to compel those whom they possessed, in order to confirm men in the vain persuasion, that the souls of those who died in any crime, were, after death, turned into devils; *Hammond's Annotations.*

* St Jerom, upon the passage now before us, is apt to imagine, that as slaves, who have a long while run from their master, no sooner see his face, but they bethink themselves of the punishment which they have deserved; so the devils, finding our Saviour upon earth, thought, at first sight, that he was come to judge and condemn them; and therefore they ask, *Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* i. e. before the time of the last judgment, when they expect no other than to be eternally punished, or (as the Scripture expresses it) *to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone for ever*; Calmet's Commentary.

A. M. The keepers of the swine fled in the utmost fright, and
 4035, &c. reported this strange accident in the city of Gadara and
 Ann. Dom. the neighbouring villages, which brought great multitudes
 31, &c. to the place, where they found the man (who had been
 from the more furious of the two) sitting at our Saviour's feet,
 Matt. xii. 1. cloathed, and in his perfect senses. But, whether it was
 Mark ii. 23. that they took amiss the destruction of the swine, or
 Luke vi. 1. thought themselves unworthy of his divine presence, so it
 John v. 1. was that they intreated our Lord to depart out of their
 to Matt. xvii. 14. country; which accordingly he did; † but, instead of per-
 Mark ix. 14. mitting the man (out of whom he had cast the most devils)
 Luke ix. 37. to go along with him, as he desired, he ordered him (i) to
 John vii. 1. return to his house, and his friends, and there to declare what
 He leaves wonderful things the Lord had done for him.
 Gadara

Matt. xi. 18. As soon as our Lord had repassed the lake, and was
 Mark v. 22. returned to Capernaum, the people came flocking about
 Luke viii. him as usual; and, while he was teaching them, one
 41. Jairus †, a chief ruler of the synagogue, falling prostrate
 And re- at his feet, humbly besought him to come and cure his
 turning to daughter, who was at the point of death; not doubting
 Capernaum, cures but that, if he laid his hands upon her, she would instant-
 the woman ly recover. The forwardness of the ruler's faith claim-
 of her ed our Saviour's compassion and assistance; and therefore
 bloody flux. he immediately rose, and followed him: But, as he was
 on the way, and pressed with great throngs of people, a
 certain

† One reason, as some imagine, why this man desired to be with Christ, was his fear lest the devil, at his departure, might seize upon him again; and it was partly to avoid the suspicion of vain-glory, whereof our Lord might have given some umbrage, had he carried about with him all those upon whom his greatest miracles were wrought, and partly to shew, that in his absence he was able to protect such as believe and trust in him from the malice of evil spirits, that he would not accept of his company; *Whitby's Annotations.*

(i) Mark v. 19.

† Some learned men are of opinion, that this ruler of the synagogue was the president of the consistory of the twenty-three judges, who were appointed in every city to punish such offences as were not capital; but it is more generally thought, that he was not a civil magistrate, but a leading man in the synagogue of Capernaum, who had, in a great measure, under his direction such things as related to the service of God. We are to observe, however, that the word ἀρχισυνάγωγος is sometimes taken in a strict sense, for the person who was the president,

certain woman †, who had been diseased with an unnatural flux of blood for twelve years, and (in hopes of a cure) had in vain spent all her estate upon physicians, being now confident, that if she could but come to touch the hem of his garment, she should be healed, pressed forward; and having got a touch of it privately, (as she thought), found herself perfectly sound. But she was not unknown to Jesus; and therefore, when he, perceiving that † virtue was gone out of him, turned about in the throng, and demanded

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt. xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

dent, the head and master of the synagogue, who (according to this acceptance) was but one; and, at other times, in a larger sense, so as to comprehend the presbyters and elders likewise, in which sense, the rulers of the synagogue were more than one. How many they were, it is no where defined, because that depended upon the largeness of the city, and the number of those who frequented the place of divine worship; only we may observe, that Jairus was not the chief president, because he is called *one of the rulers of the synagogue*, Mark v. 22.; *Vertinga De regim. synag. lib. 2. c. 11.*; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations*.

† Eusebius tells us for a certainty, that this woman was a Gentile, living in Paneas, or Cæsarea Philippi, a town situate near the head of the river Jordan, Hist. eccl. lib. 7. c. 18.; and upon the report of others, relates this story. "That, by the gate of this woman's house, was erected a brass statue, bearing the effigies of a woman upon her knees in the posture of a suppliant; that, opposite to her, there stood the effigies of a man in brass, resembling our Saviour, stretching out his hand to the woman; that, at the feet of this statue, an unknown plant sprung up, which, reaching to the border of his garment, became a present remedy against all manner of diseases, and that these statues were standing, even unto the time of the Emperor Maximianus, who took them away from this city." But (not to insist on the many exceptions that might be made to this story, which favours much of the superstition of later times) how a woman, who, as all the evangelists inform us, had spent all that she had, should be able to erect two such costly statues, or how the Jews, in all their wars, or the Gentiles, who were both bitter enemies to Christianity, should suffer such a confirmation of it to remain so long, we can by no means imagine; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† Hence it is evident, that the virtue, whereby our Saviour did these miraculous cures, was not communicated to him, but resided in him, and consequently proves that he was God. For the virtue whereby the prophets and apostles did their cures is ascribed to

A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom. 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 24. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1. manded who it was that † had touched him? The poor woman came trembling, and, falling down at his feet, declared to all the company, both the cause, and miraculous effects of her touching him, which he was so far from blaming, that he commended her faith, and imputed her cure to the wonderful strength of it.

During this transaction, the delay proved fatal (as one might imagine) to Jairus; for a message was brought him, that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no occasion to give Jesus any farther trouble; but our Saviour, who overheard what the messenger said, bid the father not fear, but only believe, and then he should find the blessed effects of his faith in the recovery of his daughter: But he had scarce spoke these words, when approaching the house, he found the musicians *, and

God; as when it is said, that *God did special miracles by the hand of Paul*, Acts xix. 11.; but the miracles done by Christ are imputed to the virtue which went out of him, and healed all that sought to touch him, Luke vi. 19. The virtue's going out of him, however, is a popular expression, which must not be taken in its literal sense, as if it were a quality distinct from the person of Christ; and what might pass from him to another; because the divine power residing in him was incapable of any alienation or diminution, be the cures he performed never so many, never so miraculous; and therefore the only meaning of the expression must be, that it went out, with regard to us, or according to our conceptions and apprehensions of things, when it discovered and manifested itself in the cure of some disease. or any other outward effects; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Our Saviour's disciples, we find, admired at his asking this question, Mark v. 31.; but the reason for his doing so, we may suppose, was to discover to the people the greatness of the miracle, which without this examination, might have gone off without being known; to shew them the strength and virtue of the woman's faith and confidence in his power; and thence to convince Jairus, who began a little to stagger in his faith, that he was able to revive his daughter, even though she was dead, if he did but believe; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

* In all the books of the Old Testament, there is not the least hint given us of any musical instruments employed in funerals. We read indeed of a good deal of mourning for the dead, of mourners hired on purpose, and of the dismal ditties which these people sung, to excite sorrow in others: But the use of music was reckoned an incongruous thing, and no wise comporting

and mourners already come, who were deploring her death with melancholy tones and loud lamentations, according to the custom of those times. He desired them however, as he went in, to cease their funeral ceremonies, because at that time † there was no occasion for them; and so, with the young woman's parents, and Peter, and James, and John, going into the chamber, he approached the bed where she lay, and taking her by the hand, commanded her to arise; at which powerful word she immediately revived, and walked round the room, to the no small amazement of her parents. At his departure, he ordered them to give her something to eat, and left a strict charge with them that they should make the miracle a secret; but their joy was too great to conceal, what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought they were obliged to divulge.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

porting with the solemnity of this sad season. Among Heathen authors there is frequent mention made of it, as a thing long in use both with the Greeks and Romans; and therefore we may presume, that from these nations it was that the Jews borrowed, and adopted it into their funeral ceremonies. That among them it was in use in our Saviour's time, at least among persons of the better rank, is plain from the passage now before us; that it was an established custom in the time of Josephus, is evident from his own testimony; and that it grew into a kind of superstitious use, in the times following, is evident from what the Rabbins enjoin, viz. that none, even of the meaner sort, should, at the funeral of a wife, have fewer than two flutes, besides the voices of old women, who, by their sad modulation, were to extort lamentation from others; *Selden's Uxor. Hebr. lib. 3. c. 8.*; *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmét's Commentary*.

† The reason which our Saviour gives for this, is,—That *the maid was not dead, but asleep*, Matth. ix. 24. Now, in several places of the New Testament especially, death is called *a sleep*, John xi. 11. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 6. &c.; and therefore our Saviour only makes use of this word of a softer signification, not so much with a design to impose upon those to whom he directed his speech, as to testify his humility, and great modesty, in his desire to conceal his divine power. The persons he spoke to were certainly those who were preparing for her interment, and performing the funeral rites belonging to it; and therefore he only intimates, that she was not so dead as they accounted her, i. e. not to come to life again before the resurrection; but that her death was no more than what he could remove with the same facility as another might be awakened out of sleep; *Whitby's* and *Pool's Annotations*.

In

A. M. In his return from Jairus, our Lord was followed in the streets by two blind men, imploring his aid, who, as soon as he had entered the house, came after him, and, when he had cured them, were dismissed with a strict charge to conceal the miracle, which, out of the abundance of their joy, they could not do. And, no sooner were the blind men gone, but the people brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil, which when he had cast out, the person immediately recovered his speech, to the great astonishment of the multitude, who unanimously acknowledged that the like had never been seen in Israel; only the Pharisees persisted in their old malice, and insinuated to the people, as formerly, that he ejected devils by the help of some supreme devil, who had the rest under his controul, and with whom he was confederate.

After a short stay at Capernaum, our Lord departed, with his disciples, into some other parts of Galilee. About a year before, he had been barbarously treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, the place of his education; and yet, notwithstanding this, he was resolved once more to make them a fresh tender of mercy. To this purpose he went into their synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and taught the people; but (instead of being converted to the faith) tho' they were astonished at his abilities, they were scandalizing his person, and began to upbraid him with the meanness † of his parentage and employment, as they had done before; insomuch, that being sensible that † a prophet never wanted honour but in his own country, he did

† The word *τεκτων* is of general signification, and denotes any worker, either in wood, metal, or stone; but the tradition of the church has all along been, that our Blessed Saviour was, what our translation has specified, a carpenter; and Justin Martyr assures us, that he made ploughs and yokes, which at that time were the carpenter's business. However this be, it is certain, that by the Jewish canons, all parents were bound to teach their children some trade; that their most celebrated rabbins thought it a great reproach not to be of some profession; and that there was a peculiar reason, why our Saviour should be of one, and that no very liberal one neither, even to take off all suspicion of his being bred up in curious arts, which his enemies, at all times, were forward enough to say, notwithstanding the disadvantages of his education; *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† This was a common proverb among other nations, as well as the Jews; and therefore Aristides was wont to say, That a philosopher

did not abide with them long; nor did he work any miracles there (except the cure of a few sick persons) by reason of their infidelity.

Upon his departure from Nazareth, he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel, and curing all kinds of diseases among the people; and, as he observed, one day the numerous throngs and multitudes that resorted to him, he looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, as so many sheep dispersed and destitute of shepherds; and from thence formed a resolution to send out his twelve apostles (by two and two together) into the more distant parts of Judea, whilst himself continued preaching in Galilee, and the places adjacent.

To this purpose * he invested them with a full power to cure all diseases, eject devils, and even raise the dead. He gave them instructions in what manner they were to behave in the places whither they went; but forbade them, at the same time, to address themselves to any of the Gentiles, or Samaritans, but only to the lost † sheep of the house of Israel.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. ix. 35.
Mark vi. 6.
Sends out
his apostles
and gives
them their
commis-
sion.
Matth. x. 1.
Mark vi. 7.
Luke ix. 1.

philosopher was never worse than at home; *Grotius on Matth. xiii. 57.*

* Among all the accounts which the Heathens have given us of their famous magicians, and workers of wonders, there are none to be found who ever pretended to a power to delegate their virtue to others, or to impart their power to them, upon the invocation of their names, or belief of their doctrine. Hence Arnobius (*advers. Gent. lib. 1.*) having summed up the miracles which our Saviour did, adds, That he not only did them by his power, but permitted many others to do them by invocation of his name, nor did he any peculiar and astonishing miracles himself, that he did not enable his little ones and even rustics to perform. Whereupon he asks those he writes to, Did ever that Jupiter whom the Romans worship in their capitol give the like power to any mortal? And then concludes this to be a demonstration of a truly divine power: for to transfer your miraculous power to a man, and to give authority and strength to a creature to do that which you alone can do, is an infallible evidence of one who hath power over all, and the causes of all things at his beck; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† He calls all Israel *sheep*, though they were not obedient to the voice of the shepherds, as being all chosen people. He calls them *lost sheep*, because they were in great danger of being lost and ruined, by the ignorance and wickedness of their guides; and to them the apostles were sent, because they were the children of the kingdom,

A. M. 4035, &c. Israel. He told them the consequences of their ministry, which, (after his death more especially), instead of intitling them to temporal advantages, would expose them to sundry kinds of persecutions; but for their encouragement, he acquainted them, that those who rejected their message should be treated with severity, at least at the righteous judgment of God; whereas those that received them kindly, and gave (were it but a cup of cold water) to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, should in no wise miss of their reward. With this commission the apostles went into all the parts of Palestine, where the Jews inhabited, preaching the gospel, and the doctrine of repentance as part of it, working miracles for its confirmation, and † anointing the sick, for a token of their recovery, whilst our Lord continued the course of his ministry in Galilee.

Ann. Dom. 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Mat. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1. Matt. x. 16. Matt. xi. 1. Mark vi. 12. Luke ix. 6.

The murder of John the Baptist, and its occasion. It was now about a year since Herod Antipas had committed John the Baptist close prisoner to the castle Machærus †, and upon the return of his birthday

Mat. xiv. 6. Mark vi. 21.

dom, Mat. viii. 12. to whom the promise of the Messiah was made, Gen. xvii. 1. and of whom as concerning the flesh he came, Rom. ix. 5; and therefore it was the divine will, that they should be first honoured with the preaching of the gospel, and alone enjoy the ministry of Jesus Christ and his disciples, while he continued upon earth: But upon their rejecting of so great salvation, the apostle's commission was enlarged. For it was necessary (says St Paul to the Jews) that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 46.; *Whitby's and Beaufobre's Annotations.*

† That it was usual with the Jews to prescribe oil as a proper thing to anoint the sick, in order to their recovery, Dr Lightfoot, upon Mark vi. 13. has fully proved; nor can we think that the apostles, having no command from Christ to do so, would have used this ceremony, had it not been customary among their countrymen: But whether they did it symbolically, in hopes of obtaining to the patient the oil of gladness, or only medicinally, it is certain, that the virtue which attended it (when used by the apostles) could not be natural and inherent in the oil, but must be supernatural, and derived from him who sent them, because this unction always produced a certain and constant cure in those that were anointed; *Whitby's Annotations*

† Both the city and fort that were called by this name, were situated beyond Jordan, about two leagues from that river, on the north-east side of the Lake Asphaltites, or Dead-sea, and not far distant

day †, having made a splendid entertainment for the Lords and chief officers of his dominions, he was infinitely pleased with the dancing of a young lady, daughter to his unlawful wife Herodias †, inſomuch that in the height of his mirth and jollity, he promiſed (with the addition of an oath) to grant her whatever ſhe demanded, † though it amounted to half of his dominions. Unwilling to loſe ſo fair an opportunity, ſhe immediately conſulted with her mother what favour to aſk, who, being prompted by the height of her malice and revenge, named the head of John the Baptiſt † to be given her; which the daughter accordingly demanded of the king, in the preſence of the whole aſſembly.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

This

diſtant from the place where the river diſcharges itſelf into it. It was in the hands of Aretas King of Arabia when he married his daughter to Herod Antipas; but how it afterwards came into Herod's poſſeſſion (as it certainly was when he beheaded John the Baptiſt) we have no account from hiſtory; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† That it was an uſual cuſtom with kings to celebrate the day of their birth, and that of their acceſſion to the throne,* (for the word may be applied to either), with great ſolemnity, we have an example as old as Pharaoh, Gen. xl. 20.; nor need we doubt but that on ſuch joyful occaſions there were muſic and dancing, and all manner of diverſions to entertain the company: But that perſons of the firſt rank and diſtinction ſhould act any part in theſe diverſions, was a rare unwonted thing; and therefore St Chryſoſtom, in Matth. hom. xlix. is of opinion, that Herodias, foreſeeing what would happen, forced this young lady upon a thing which would better become an actreſs upon the ſtage; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† This Herodias, (as Joſephus relates the matter), in contempt of the laws of her country, was married again to Herod, the natural brother of her huſband, ſeparating herſelf from him whiſt living, although he had a child by her; ſo that being guilty both of inceſt and adultery, ſhe might well be called his unlawful wife; *Antiq. lib. 18. c. 17*.

† An offer like this we find Ahaſuerus (a great Aſſyrian monarch) making Queen Eſther, chap. v. 3.

† It may not be improper here to take notice of the remarkable providence of God, in avenging the death of this righteous man upon Herod, Herodias, and her daughter. 1^{ſt}, As the war between Herod and Aretas King of Arabia was occaſioned by Herod's wicked contract with Herodias to ejeſt his daughter, who was his lawful wife, and to marry her who was his brother Philip's; ſo Joſephus declares, that the Jews looked upon his putting John to death as the cauſe of the miſcarriage of his army, God being angry with him for the death of John the Baptiſt. 2^{dly}, Envyng the glory of her brother

A. M. This strange request at first caused an exceeding damp
 4035, &c. † upon the king's spirits; but having recovered himself,
 Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
 from

• Matt. xii. 4 ther Agrippa; upon whom Caligula had conferred the title of a king,
 Mark ii. 23 Herodias prevailed with her husband to repair to Rome, in order to
 Luke vi. 1 request the like favour upon the Emperor; but the Emperor having
 John v. 1 received a bad impression against him, instead of granting what he
 to Matt. desired, deprived him of his government, and banished both her and
 xvii. 14 him to Lyons in France, where they lived ingloriously, and died mi-
 Mark i. 14 serably; and this, according to Josephus, (Antiq. lib. 18. c. 9.),
 Luke ix. 37 was done in punishment of her envy, and of his readiness to hearken
 John vii. 1 to her solicitations. And, 3dly, Of her daughter it is related, that
 as she was going over the ice in winter, the ice brake, and let her
 in up to the head, which, upon the meeting of the ice again, was se-
 vered from her body. And this story, if it be true, (as it is confi-
 dently told us by Nicephorus, Hist. eccl. lib. 1. c. 20.), is a wonder-
 ful instance of God's avenging providence; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† Herod was no more than a tetrarch, or one of those four among
 whom his father's kingdom was divided; but St Mark, chap. vi. 14.
 gives him the title of a king, as himself no doubt was fond enough
 of it, and perhaps, in the provinces under his dominions, was ge-
 nerally called by it. Why he came to be concerned at the young la-
 dy's desiring so strange a boon as that of the Baptist's head, is no
 wonder. The very mention of such a thing from such a person,
 and in such an assembly, was enough to shock any man of less than
 uncommon barbarity; but then the evangelists inform us, that He-
 rod had conceived a good opinion of the Baptist, as a just and holy
 man, and when he heard him, (as he did it very gladly), in many
 things he followed his advice, Mark. vi. 20.; and not only so, but
 feared the resentment of the people likewise, (with whom he was in
 high esteem), when they should come to be informed of the cause
 and circumstances of his death, Matth. xiv. 5. There might, how-
 ever, be another reason, less observed, for Herod's concern upon
 this occasion. It was now his birth-day; and it was usual, even a-
 mong Heathen princes, at such a time to be gay and merry, to think
 of no ill omens, to surcease all contentions, and not so much as to
 deprive of life even condemned criminals, on that day when the
 sovereign of the country received his, lest they should offend or sad-
 den the genius that presided over their nativity: And therefore it is
 more than probable, that Herod, who was more than half a Pagan,
 might have the same notion of the thing. But if he had not, it can
 hardly be thought but that such an execution would damp the joy of
 the meeting, and procure him more enemies among the thinking part
 of the company, than the non-performance of a wicked and illegal
 oath could have done; *Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Com-
 mentary*.

(out

(out of a pretended reverence to his oath, and respect to his nobility then present), he sent an executioner †, who beheaded † John, and brought his head in a charger to the young lady, which she presented to her mother; but, as for his body, his disciples, when they came to hear of his death, took care † to bury it, and to bring Jesus the news of the tragical fate that had befallen their master.

About the same time that Jesus was informed of John's death by his disciples, his own apostles returned from their several journies, and gave him an account of all their transactions. The fame of the miracles which our Saviour, both by himself and his apostles, had wrought, gave Herod some umbrage to think, that the person who did them was John, whom he had unjustly murdered,

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. xix. 1.
Mark vi. 30.
Luke ix. 7.
John vi. 1.
Upon hear-
ing of his
death, our
Saviour re-
moves into
the desert,
where he
feeds the
multitude,

† The word *σπικυλάτωρ*, which we render *executioner*, in the history of the Roman emperors, signifies a *soldier of the guard*; and among the Jews, Romans, Chaldeans, and Egyptians, it was customary for one of the king's guard to be the executioner of those whom he had condemned to death; *Hammond's Annotations*.

† Thus died the great fore-runner of our Blessed Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, in the thirty-fifth year of his age, and was the first who suffered upon the account of the gospel, though seldom called the first martyr. "He was indeed a man (according to the character which Josephus gives of him) endued with all virtue, who exhorted the Jews to the practice of justice towards men, and piety towards God, and also to baptism, which would become acceptable to God, if they renounced their sins, and to the cleanness of their bodies, added the purity of their souls;" *Antiq. lib. 13. c. 7*.

† When Herodias had got the Baptist's head in her possession, it is said, that she thrust his tongue through with her bodkin, and for fear that the head if buried with the body, should be reunited, and rise again to disturb her unlawful lust, and disquiet Herod's conscience, she buried it in her own palace; but where his disciples buried his body, the evangelists have not informed us; only we are so told, that, in the time of Julian the apostate, his tomb was shewn at Samaria, where the inhabitants of the country opened it, and burnt part of his bones; but the rest were saved by some Christians, that carried them to one Philip, an abbot at Jerusalem, who presented them to St Athanasius; but some time after, when Theodosius built a church in honour of the Baptist, in the place where the temple of Serapis stood, Ann. Dom. 396. these holy reliques were

A. M. 4035, &c. *Ann. Dom.* 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 13. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

dered, and who now very probably † was risen from the dead to revenge his blood upon him; and therefore, knowing the subtilty and cruelty of that prince, our Saviour ordered his apostles to prepare a vessel, wherein he, and they only, might cross the sea of Galilee, and retire for a little while from the multitude to a desert near Bethsaida. But in vain was it for him to think of concealing himself: The people, seeing where he took shipping, ran after him on foot by the lake side, and, though they had a great circuit of land to take, were got into the desert almost as soon as he; which singular instance of their zeal so affected his compassion, that though he came to that place for the sake of retirement, he could no longer withhold his presence from them; but, ascending a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he there first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God, and having afterwards cured their sick and diseased, he, at last, fed them all, to the number of five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley-loaves, and two small fishes, (having at

reposed in it: Though what became of his head we no where read; only the Abbot Villeloin tells us in his memoirs, that he saw one at Amiens, but that this was the fifth, or sixth head of the Baptist, that, in the course of his travels, he had the honour to kiss; *Theoderet. Hist. eccl. lib. 3. c. 3.*; *Ruffin. Hist. c. 27.*; and *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

† Several of the ancient Jewish writers, as well as some modern Rabbins, are of opinion, that the souls of men and women, when they died, went into other bodies, insomuch that they imagine, that the soul of Moses was the same with that of Abel; and that of the Egyptian, whom Moses slew, the same with that of Cain: But whether the Jews had this notion of the transmigration of souls, (as Josephus, *De bell. Jud. lib. 7. cap. 25.* and Philo, *De somniis*, seem to tell us), it can hardly be thought, that what Herod here says, in regard to our Saviour, was spoken in allusion to it, because it is not conceivable how the soul of John, lately dead, could enter into the body of Christ, which, for thirty years and upwards, had been informed by another soul. And therefore his words must be understood, not of the transition of the Baptist's soul, but of his reviviscence, or returning to life again. For, as it was an opinion among the Jews, that, at the coming of the Messiah, some of their prophets would rise from the dead, Herod had some reason to suppose, that John, whom all the Jews held to be a prophet, might be permitted to return into the world, and perhaps to avenge his death upon the tyrant; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

first

first invoked a blessing † upon them), and that with a plenty so exuberant, that the very fragments † which remained filled twelve baskets.

This miraculous multiplication made such an impression upon the multitude, that they no longer doubted of his being the Messiah, and were therefore resolved to set him up for their king by main force; but he, knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples (who were forward enough perhaps to join in the thing) immediately to take shipping, and to pass by Bethsaida || to Capernaum,

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Marth. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

† The evangelists make use of two words upon this occasion; *blessing* and *giving thanks*; and by the former of these, some interpreters understand the multiplying virtue, which he then commanded down upon the sustenance that he was going to give to the people, and its marvellous increase in the hands of the distributors, whereby it became a repast sufficient for so large a multitude: Though others think, that he did no more than what we call *saying grace*, i. e. thanked God for his bountiful provision of all things, and begged his blessing upon what he was going to dispense among the people, that it might tend to the wholesome nourishment of their bodies. However this be, it is enough to warrant the indifferent use of these two words, that the forms of address to Almighty God, upon the use of his gifts for our refreshment, have usually been of a mixed nature, as consisting partly of praises, and partly of petitions; because the end of such devotions is manifestly twofold, viz. to render our acknowledgements to God for his liberality, and then to beg of him, that the good creatures which he hath given us may be sanctified to our use; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.*

Avoids being made king, and walks upon the surface of the sea.

† It was a sufficient reason for our Saviour's ordering the fragments to be gathered up, and put in baskets, that, from them, might appear both the reality of the miracle, and the exceeding greatness of the increase; but because our Lord assigns another, by saying, *Gather up the fragments, that nothing may be lost*, he hath herein shewed us, that all reserving for the future is not unlawful; that charity is very consistent with frugality; indeed not only that they may, but that they should, go together; for God will be sure to make a mighty difference between the virtue and the specious extreme beyond it; between the liberal and the lavish man; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.*

|| St Mark tells us, that our Saviour ordered his apostles to cross the sea, and wait for him on the other side, at Bethsaida, chap. vi. 45. St John writes, that accordingly they entered in-

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from Matt.
xiii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matth. xvii.
x4. Mark ix.
x4. Luke ix.
37. John vii
1.
Matt. xiv.
24. Mark
vi. 47.
John vi. 17.

pernaum, whilst himself dismissed the multitude; and (when he had so done) continued, till after midnight, in meditation and prayer.

In the mean time, the ship where the apostles were on board, was tossed with a great storm in the middle of the lake. The waves ran so high, and the wind was so contrary, that, as soon as morning appeared, they had not got much above a league on their voyage, when our Saviour came walking † upon the surface of the sea, and drew near towards the ship. This strange appearance † (which they took for a spirit) increased their fear not a little. Our Lord indeed, to dispel it, told them who he was; but Peter, still doubtful, wanted a demonstration, which when he permitted him to try, and the apostle, upon the experiment, was ready to sink, graciously reached out his hand, and, with a gentle rebuke for the weakness of his faith, setting him again upon the top of the waves, walked along with him to the vessel; which they

to the ship, but instead of going where they were directed, they steered their course towards Capernaum, chap. vi. 17; and yet, after all, if we will believe St Matthew, they landed at last, neither at Bethsaida, nor Capernaum, but in the country of Genesareth, chap. xiv. 34. Now, to reconcile this, we need only remember what all the evangelists tell us, *viz.* that while the apostles were on board, there arose a strong gale of wind, which, blowing from the north, proved, in a manner, quite contrary to them, so that, instead of making the port of Bethsaida, which is on the north coast of the sea of Galilee, the next morning they found themselves on the opposite side, not far from Tiberias, and to the south of Capernaum. Though therefore our Saviour ordered them to go to Bethsaida, yet they could not do it, because the wind was against them. Their next attempt therefore was to get to Capernaum; but even that they could not do; but being forced to yield to the storm, were carried a good way below to the south of it, from which they just touched at Nazareth, and thence proceeded to Capernaum; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Among several other instances of God's omnipotence, Job mentions this as one, that *he treadeth upon the waves of the sea*, Job ix. 8.

† It was a common opinion among the Jews, that spirits did sometimes appear, clothed in an human form; but what put the the apostles at this time in the greater fright, was their imagining, that those who appeared at night, were usually evil spirits, and that this, which they now saw, might possibly be the demon who had raised the storm; *Beausobre's Annotations.*

had no sooner entered, but the winds, knowing their duty to their sovereign, ceased. This the rest of the disciples observing, came and adored Jesus, acknowledging his omnipotence, and admiring the divinity of his power and person; and as it was not long before the ship gained the port, great numbers out of the country, as soon as they understood that he was arrived, brought their sick and diseased on beds, and laid them before him in the streets, beseeching him to permit them only to touch the border of his garment, and as many as touched him were made whole.

The multitudes whom our Lord had miraculously fed in the desert near Bethsaida, were in expectation of finding him the next morning on the mountain; for they had seen the disciples take shipping without their master, and no other vessel left for him: But perceiving that he was gone, as well as his disciples, and having an opportunity of other vessels from Tiberias, they passed over with all expedition to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the synagogues; and being in no small surprise, desired to know of him how he got thither? But instead of gratifying their curiosity † with a direct answer, he, who knew their corrupt expectations, and that they came after him, not so much for his miraculous gifts as the gratification of their own appetites, took occasion from thence to discourse † to them of a certain food, different from what he had given them

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
John vi. 22.
His discourse to the people whom he had fed concerning spiritual food, which gave disgust.

† We may observe from several parts of the gospel, particularly from Luke xiii. 23. 24. John xii. 34. 25. that it was usual with our Blessed Saviour to answer nothing to such curious questions as had no tendency to edification, but to divert the people from them, by proposing some more profitable subject; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† Our Blessed Saviour, through the greatest part of the sixth chapter of St John's gospel, takes an occasion, from the multitudes coming after him out of a greedy desire to be fed, to discourse to them of spiritual blessings, under the metaphors of meat and drink; and for his apology in so doing, we may observe, that among the Oriental and Jewish writers, no metaphor was more common than this; that to this purpose Solomon, in his book of Proverbs, introduces Wisdom crying in the streets, *Come, eat of my bread, and drink of my wine, which I have mingled*, Prov. ix. 5. *For they that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty*, says the wise son of Sirach; "for the soul (as Plato expresses it) is nourished by receiving and practising good things; and wisdom, temperance, and piety, are the food of a soul that can suck them in:"

That

A. M. them in the desert of Bethsaida, infinitely more deserving
 4035, &c. of their inquisition, and whereof the manna in the wilder-
 Ann. Dom. ness was no more than a figure, or a type. What this food
 31, &c. was, he signified to them, viz. The merits of his future
 from death and passion, which alone could be available for the
 Matt. xii. 1. obtaining of eternal life to such as believed in his divine mis-
 Mark ii. 23. sion, and descent from heaven.
 Luke vi. 1. fion, and descent from heaven.

But these sublime truths, which for the present he thought
 to Matth. xvii. 14. proper to couch in terms obscure and figurative enough, so
 Mark ix. 14. gravelled the intellects of his auditory, that even his disci-
 Luke ix. 37. ples began to murmur, and many of his followers, mista-
 John vii. 1. king the words in a literal, which he intended in a spiritual,
 sense, and thence inferring that he was not such a Messiah
 as they imagined, wholly deserted him, insomuch that he
 began to suspect the fidelity of his very apostles, until Pe-
 ter (in behalf of all the rest) declared their fixed purpose
 of adhering to him, upon full conviction that he was the
 Messiah, the Son of the living God. But notwithstanding
 this liberal and frank confession, our Lord gave them to
 understand, that they were not equally sound; for among
 the twelve whom he had selected, one of them was to prove
 a traitor, meaning this of Judas Iscariot, who justly deser-
 ved that name, because he afterwards betrayed him.

Whether our Blessed Saviour was at Jerusalem on
 the third passover after his baptism, the evangelists have
 not informed us; but it is very probable, that he who came
 to fulfil all righteousness would not neglect so great an or-
 dinance. Upon this presumption, it is most generally be-
 lieved that he was there, though very likely he might not
 stay long, but as soon as the festival was over, return into

That as our Saviour calls himself the bread which came down from
 heaven, Philo upon the words of Moses descants, "what food can
 " God rain down from heaven, but that heavenly wisdom which he
 " sends down upon the soul that desires it?" That as he exhorts the
 people to labour for the meat that perishes not, Philo declares,
 that the wisdom of God is the "nurse and nourisher of those that
 " desire incorruptible diet;" *L. De eo quod deterius*, p. 137. And
 from hence we may perceive why our Saviour insists so much upon
 this metaphor, even because it was familiar to the Jews, and used by
 their most celebrated writers; *Whitby's Annotations*.

Galilee,

Galilee, (*k*) because the rulers, at Jerusalem, lay in wait for an opportunity to put him to death. A. M. 4035. *Ec.* Ann. Dom. 31. *Ec.*

Upon his return into Galilee, a certain number of scribes and Pharisees † were sent from Jerusalem to be spies upon his actions, and to criticise upon his doctrine. These men observing, that, when he and his disciples were to eat, they frequently sat down without washing their hands, contrary to the common custom of the Jews, which (as they pretended) was founded upon a tradition *, expostulated with him the reason for so doing : Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. But John vii. 1.

(*k*) John vii. 1.

Mat. xv. 1. 4.
Mark vii. 1. 4.
His vindicating the use of eating with unwashed hands.

† The Sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem, and was the supreme court in all religious affairs, sent messengers to John the Baptist, when he began his preaching, inquiring who he was, and by what authority he baptized, John i. 19. And as the Pharisees had charged our Saviour's disciples with a violation of the Sabbath, in plucking and rubbing the ears of the corn, and himself with the same crime, in curing the sick on the Sabbath-day, it is not improbable that these accusations had reached Jerusalem, and that the scribes and Pharisees, here mentioned, were emissaries sent from the Sanhedrim to watch and observe our Saviour. And this seems the rather to be so, because they were so very ready (when they could find him guilty of no violation of the laws of God) to pick a quarrel with him about some rites and ceremonies of the church, which he and his disciples thought not so very necessary to be observed; *Pool's Annotations.*

* The traditions, in the Jewish church, came to gain credit, upon this presumption, that Moses, when he received the law from God on mount Sinai, which he recorded in his five books, was instructed at the same time in several things, which God enjoined him not to commit to writing, for fear that the Heathens should transcribe them : That, in these things, Moses instructed his successor Joshua, and, from Joshua, they were transmitted, through the elders of the people, by oral conveyance only, until Ezra, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, collected them all together, and made the Cabbala, in seventy two books, which was kept by Gamaliel, and others that succeeded, as heads of the Sanhedrim, until the destruction of Jerusalem : That, about an hundred and twenty years after this, R. Judas, the son of Simon, composed a book of them, called *the Mishna*, i. e. *the second law*, which is indeed the most ancient collection of traditions that the Jews have : That, three hundred years after this, R. Jonathan, meeting with more, compiled them into a larger volume ; and an hundred years after this, another Rabbi made a collection of such as were found among the Jews who remained in Babylon : That these two (which

A. M. But (instead of answering them directly) he put another
 4035, *Ann. Dom.* question to them, by way of recrimination, *viz.* Why
 31, &c. they, by their pretended traditions †, vacated the laws
 from of God, particularly, that so solemn one of honouring
 Matt. xii. 1. their
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1. are a kind of supplement and explication of the Mishna) are called,
 to Matt. the one the Talmud of Jerusalem, and the other, of Babylon; and
 xvii. 14. that by these the Jews, at this day, are governed in matters eccle-
 Mark ix. 14. siastical, all the world over. In relation to the particular custom of
 Luke ix. 37. washing before meat, their canon is, that "Whosoever despiseth
 John vii. 1. "the washing of hands, is worthy to be excommunicated; he
 "comes to poverty, and will be extirpated out of the world:" For
 (according to the sense of one of their doctors, *viz.* R. Aquiba)
 "he that takes meat with unwashed hands, is worthy of death;"
 and therefore when the same doctor was in prison, and had not wa-
 ter enough both to drink and wash his hands, he chose to do the
 latter; because "it is better, says he, to die with thirst, than to
 "transgress the tradition of the elders." It is no wonder then that
 persons inured to those notions, should so readily take exception at
 our Saviour's omitting what were indeed (though they thought not
 so) matters of an indifferent nature; *Pool's*, *Whitby's*, *Hammond's*,
 and *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Lightfoot* on Matth. xv. 2.

† The way whereby the Jews made the law of honouring and
 subsisting their father and mother of no effect, was, by pretending,
 that whatever their parents requested of them, was a *Corban*. *i. e.*
 that they had devoted it as a gift or offering to God, or to his tem-
 ple; and whatever was thus devoted, was not to be touched, be
 the necessity ever so urgent: For their canon about vows was,—
 "That they reach even to things commanded, and take place, as
 "well in things required by the law, as things indifferent; that a
 "man may be so bound by them, that he cannot, without great sin,
 "do what God had commanded to be done; and that, in this case,
 "if he makes a vow, which cannot be performed without break-
 "ing a commandment, his vow must be ratified, and the com-
 "mandment violated." This was a superstition which the Phari-
 sees, and other doctors of the law, who had a property in the gifts
 and oblations that were made to the temple, thought themselves con-
 cerned to indulge; and therefore, when any pretended that their pa-
 rents stood in need of their help, they told them, that if they did
 but acquaint them that it was a gift, or that they had vowed such a
 portion of their estate to sacred uses, that would, before God, ex-
 cuse them from relieving them: Nay, they affirm farther, that if
 a man did but in a passion say, that the thing which another ask-
 ed of him was a Corban, though it were not actually consecrated
 to religious uses, this was vow enough to prevent his relieving
 that other person, even, putting the case, that it were his own fa-
 ther;

their parents, and relieving them in their wants? And thereupon looking upon them as so many hypocrites †, with whom he disdained to hold any farther converse, he turned to the multitude, and informed them, “ that true piety did not consist in outward ceremonies, but in a sincere observance of the laws of God ; that no pollution could be in what entered into a man’s mouth, but only in what proceeded from it ; for (as he afterwards explains the thing to his disciples) whatever we eat does not affect the mind, the only feat of defilements ; for it passes into the stomach, and is soon thrown out of the body, so that, be it never so gross or unclean, it cannot pollute the eater : But all pollution is from within, from the corruption of the heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste desires, unholy purposes, immodest and indecent speeches, &c. These are the things that leave a lasting stain upon the soul, which a thing so merely external, as omitting to wash before meat, cannot do.”

This was a doctrine not well pleasing to the Pharisees, as his disciples told him ; but they were a set of people whose censure he justly despised, *blind leaders of the blind*, (as he properly enough calls them), whose vain traditions,

ther ; unless they should absolve him from it, which they would undertake to do for so many shekels of silver, Levit. xxvii. Such abundant reason had our Blessed Saviour to charge the Jewish doctors with making one of the greatest commands in the second table of the law void by their traditions concerning vows ; *Pool’s* and *Whitby’s Annotations*, and *Pocock’s Miscel.* p. 415.

† In several places of the gospel, our Lord calls the Pharisees hypocrites, not only because they placed the worship of God, and a great deal of sanctity and religion, in ceremonies of human institution, and though they pretended to extraordinary purity, did all their good works to be seen of men, Matt. xxiii. 5. ; but more especially in this place, because, being superstitiously careful to avoid the outward pollution of the body, by abstaining from the touch of any thing which they reputed unclean, and washing their hands whenever they thought they had done so ; they left that which was within, viz. their hearts and affections, full of iniquity, uncleanness, extortion, and excess, Matt. xxiii. 25. and Luke xi. 39. But from Christ’s example in this particular we must not be forward to pronounce men hypocrites, because we have neither that authority, nor that knowledge of their hearts, which he had ; *Whitby’s Annotations*.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
10. Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

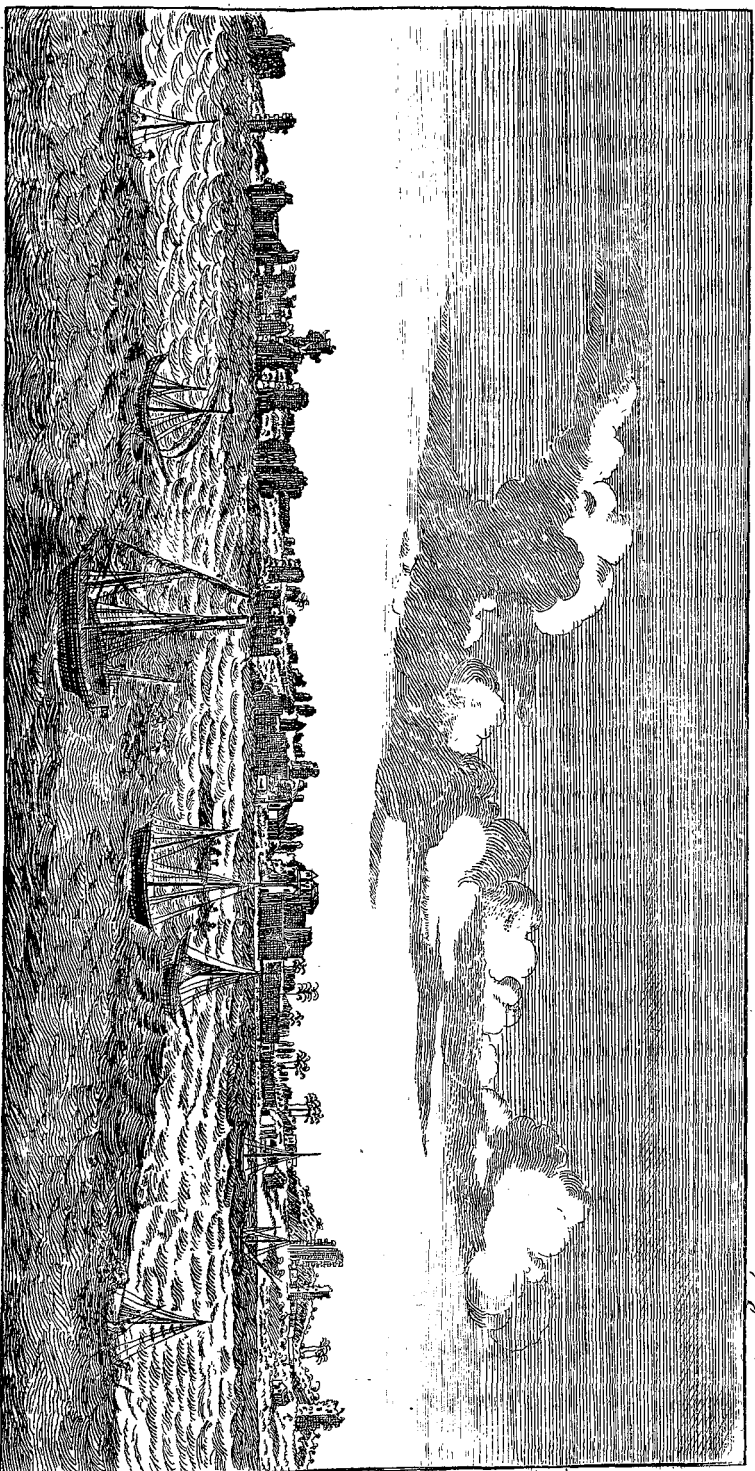
Mat. xv. 21.
Mark vii.
24.
And cure of
the Syro-
phœnician
woman’s
daughter,
and several
others.

A. M. as having nothing of divine institution in them; his purpose was to abolish. And from thence, in departing to the coasts of Tyre † and Sidon, he entered into an house, with a design to conceal himself; but a certain Syro-phœnician woman, having got intelligence where he was, came, and earnestly requested of him to cure her daughter, who was sadly tormented with a devil. Our Lord (for the trial of her faith) seemed at first to take no notice of her, until his disciples (to get rid of her importunity) desired him to grant her request, and dismiss her. His ministry, he told them, was confined to Judea, nor was he properly sent to any, but the lost sheep of the house of Israel. All this the poor woman heard, but so far was she from being discouraged by such coldness, that, advancing nearer, she threw herself prostrate at his feet, im-

4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

† Both the ancient and present condition of Tyre we have had occasion to take notice of before, p. 10. in the notes: And now to do the like to Sidon: It is generally supposed to have taken its name from Sidon, a son of Canaan, Gen. x. 15. and upon that account to be one of the most ancient cities in the universe. It was formerly very strong both by art and nature, having on the north-side a fort, or citadel, built on an inaccessible rock, and invironed on all sides by the sea. The commodiousness of its situation made it a great place of trade, which brought in vast riches, and made the inhabitants not a little luxurious, insomuch that to live *after the manner of the Sidonians*, is the Scripture-phrase, Judges xviii. 7. for to live voluptuously. At present it is strangely altered from what it was; for though it is well enough stocked with inhabitants, yet it is very much shrunk from its ancient extent, and much more from its splendor, as appears from the great many beautiful pillars which lie scattered up and down in the gardens without the present walls. Tyre and Sidon were seated both on the Mediterranean sea, about twenty miles distant from each other, and the country adjoining to them, which lay to the west and north of Galilee, was called the coasts or territories of Tyre and Sidon. The old inhabitants of this tract were descendents of Canaan, (for Sidon was his eldest son), and continued in possession of it much longer than they did of any other part of the country. The Greeks call it *Phœnicia*, and when, by right of conquest, it became a province of Syria, it took the name of *Syro phœnicia*; and from hence the woman, whom St Matthew calls a *Canaanite*, is by St Mark styled a *Syro phœnician*, as being, both by religion and language, a Greek; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*, c. 7.; and *Micaudrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*.

ploring



CITY OF TYRE Engraved from W. S. Mackenzie's History of the New Testament Published by J. A. MEDROS.

ploring his help for her child; and when (in an harsh metaphor) he told her, that *it was not proper to work those miracles for an Heathen, which were originally designed for God's people, the Jews*; the afflicted mother owned indeed the truth of what he had alledged, but then (continuing the same figure) she humbly hoped, *that a poor distressed Heathen might, in some small measure, partake of the mercies, which were more peculiarly promised to the Jews*. Which answer was so highly expressive of the woman's humility, faith, and reliance, that he granted her petition; so that, when she returned home, she found her daughter laid up on the bed, and perfectly well.

A M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Math.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

From the coasts of Sidon, our Lord passed eastward to Decapolis †, and from thence, towards the sea of Galilee, where, in his way, he cured a deaf and dumb man, by putting his fingers † in his ears, and some of his spittle upon his tongue; and thence repairing to a mountain, he not only cured every person that was brought unto him, whatever his malady or distemper was, but, in the conclusion, fed all the multitude, which amounted to four thousand men, besides women and children, (and who, for three days successively had been attending him), with seven loaves, and a few small fishes.

Mat. xv. 29.
Mark vii. 31

† It is a country in Palestine, which was so called, because it contained ten cities, some situated on the east, and others on the west side of the river Jordan; the first and principal city is Scythopolis; and the rest (according to Pliny) are, 2d, Philadelphia; 3d, Raphanæ; 4th, Gadara; 5th, Hippos; 6th, Dion; 7th, Pella; 8th, Gerasa; 9th, Canatha; and 10th, Damascus; tho' others reckon them after another manner, as Pliny himself observes, lib. 5. c. 18.; *Calmet's Dictionary*, under the word.

† Christ often made use of visible signs to represent that divine invisible virtue which was inherent in him, and which, upon that occasion, he intended to exert; and therefore, because deaf persons seem to have their ears closed, he put his fingers into the man's ears, to intimate, that, by his power, he would open them; and, because the tongue of the dumb seems to be tied, or to cleave to the palate, therefore he moistened it with spittle, to signify that he would loose and give free motion to it. These, it is true, were not capable to effect the cure, but they had this use in them, that they excited the observation and attention of the people before whom these cures were wrought; *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

Having

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from

Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Mat xv. 29.
Mark viii.
10.
His reason-
ing with the
Pharisees
and Saddu-
cees, and
with his
own dis-
ciples.
Mat. xvi. 5.
Mark viii.
14.

Mark viii.
22.
His curing
a blind man
at Bethsai-
da, and
making
trial of his
apostles
faith.

Having thus dismissed the company, he embarked with his disciples for the coast of Dalmanutha †; but no sooner was he arrived there than the Pharisees, joining with their enemies the Sadducees, came, and demanded of him a sign from heaven, in order to convince them that he was the true Messiah: But having first upbraided them with their acuteness in discerning the face of the sky, and from thence the prognostics of fair or foul weather, and their blindness in not perceiving the manifest signs of the Messiah's coming, he remitted them (as he had done before) to the miracle of his own resurrection, and so sailed back with his disciples.

His disciples, in the hurry of their departure, had forgot to take bread with them; and therefore, when our Saviour, in their passage, gave them caution to take care of the leaven * of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and they were ignorant enough to take his words in a literal sense, he first gently reprov'd the blindness of their understandings, and the shortness of their memories, who had so soon forgotten his miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, at two different times, and then gave them to understand, that his words did not concern the leaven of bread, but the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

With this discourse they landed at Bethsaida, which (though the birth-place of several of his apostles) had by the perverseness and infidelity of its inhabitants so offended him, that, when a blind man was presented to him for

† What St Matthew calls *Magdala*, St Mark names *Dalmanutha*, and the reason hereof is, because these two places lay very near together, and Dalmanutha very probably within the precincts of Magdala; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*; and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

* The leaven of the Pharisees was their hypocrisy, and too scrupulous observance of the traditions of their elders; and that of the Sadducees was their denial of the existence of angels and devils, the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul; so that the meaning of our Saviour's caution to his apostles is: — To avoid the principles of those, who place the sum of their religion in outward performances, which avail nothing to the sanctification of the soul; and to reject all such doctrines as tended to subvert religion, by cutting off all hopes of happiness in a future state; *Calaneo's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

cure, he would not do it in the city in the sight of the inhabitants; but taking him out of the gate, he anointed his eyes with his spittle, and laid his hands on them. The man at first saw objects indistinctly, men like trees walking; but when our Lord had laid his hands upon him the second time, he restored him to his perfect sight; and so sent him home, with a charge † not to return into the city, nor to discover the thing to any person belonging to that place.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matth. xvi.
13. Mark
viii. 27.
Luke ix. 18.

From that place he departed into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi †, where, being minded to make some trial of his apostles faith and proficiency, he demanded of them what opinion mankind had of him, and whom they took him to be? Some (say they) take you to be John the Baptist † risen from the dead; some Elias sent down from heaven; and others Jeremias, or some other of the ancient prophets, restored

† The reason of our Saviour's giving the man this charge is founded upon the insid. lity of the people of Bethsaida, wherewith he upbraids them, Matth. xi. 21.

† This city is situated near the head of the Jordan, and was by the Canaanites called *Laisb*, or *Lechem*, Judg. xviii. 7.; but being taken by some of the Danites, it was by them called *Dan*, and it is generally reputed the utmost border northward of the land of Israel. It was usually called by Heathen writers *Paneas*, from the adjoining spring Paneum, or Panion, which is commonly taken for the fountain-head of Jordan. Augustus Cæsar gave it, and all the territories belonging to it, to Herod the Great. He having rebuilt the place, gave it and the tetrarchy of Iturea and Trachonitis, to which it adjoined, to his youngest son Philip, who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, so as to make it the capital of his dominions, and chief place of his residence, gave it the name of *Cæsarea Philippi*; partly to compliment Tiberius Cæsar, who was then Emperor; partly to preserve the memory of his own name; and partly to distinguish it from another Cæsarea, mentioned in Acts x. 1. situate on the Mediterranean, and built by his father in honour of his great benefactor Augustus Cæsar; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† Those who held that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, were of the same opinion with Herod the tetrarch, Matth. xiv. 2. and seem to have imbibed the notion of the Pharisees, who (according to Josephus) used to say, that a good man might easily return to life again. Those who took him for Elias, ran into the general opinion of the nation, that Elias was to come before the Messiah, and anoint him when he came; and therefore, notwithstanding his doctrine

A. M. restored to life again : But when he continued asking what
 4035, &c. their notion of him was, and Simon † (in name of the
 Ann. Dom. rest) had made an open confession that he was Christ, the
 31, &c. Son of the living God, he not only allowed that confession
 from to be true, and what was confirmed by the attestation † of
 Matt xii. 1. God himself, but, in allusion to the name he had given
 Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. him,

John v. 1.

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

doctrines and miracles, they could not conceive him to be the Messiah, so long as his mean appearance was contrary to their expectations : And those who thought him to be Jeremias, seem to have espoused the sentiment of some of their doctors, who looked upon that prophet as the head of the whole order, not improbably upon the character which God gives him, *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet to the nations*, Jer. i. 5.; *Whitby's and Beau-sobre's Annotations.*

† That the rest of the apostles knew and believed the great truth which St Peter here declares, no one can doubt who calls to mind the attestation made of it before by John the Baptist, John i. 24. the frequent confessions of it by evil spirits dispossessed before their eyes, Mark iii. 15. and that full declaration of it in the name of the whole fraternity, *We believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*, John vi. 69. For which reason we find the fathers, upon this occasion, speaking of St Peter as the mouth, the tongue, the voice of the church, and a kind of foreman to the rest of the apostles ; for this they might think a matter of decency and good manners, a means to prevent confusion and disorder, and a token of that union and harmony which was among them, that one man should speak for all the rest. And why that one man should be St Peter, rather than any of the rest, may very reasonably be imputed to the seniority of his age, the natural fervour of his temper, and his longer attendance upon our Blessed Saviour than several of the rest had been employed in. These are sufficient reasons for his delivering the judgment of the company, and for our accounting his confession the common voice of all, to a question which had evidently been propounded to them all ; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

† The words in the text are, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my Father which is in heaven*, Matth. xvi. 17. But how did God reveal this to St Peter ? Those who pretend that he had a particular revelation, not vouchsafed to any others, without which he could not have owned Christ to have been the Son of God, must not only allow the like revelation to Nathanael, John i. 49. to the centurion who was present

at

him, which signifies a *rock* † or *stone*, he told Simon, “ That he would make him a foundation-stone, or a prime minister † in building his church, which should be so

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

at our Lord's crucifixion, Matth. xxvii. 54. and to all others who made declaration of the same faith; but must likewise excuse all those Jews who did not believe in Christ, because it was not in their power so to do without this peculiar revelation. Without running ourselves into these premunires therefore, we may reasonably conclude, that the sense of our Saviour's words is this, ——— “ What others say of me, viz. that I am John, Elias, Jeremias, or the like, this thou has learnt from men; but the faith which thou hast now confessed concerning me, though it required of thee a due attention to the proofs given of it; yet since those proofs are the doctrine which I teach from God, and the miracles done in confirmation of it, are apparently the finger of God, thy faith must be acknowledged to be the result, not of human wisdom, but of divine revelation. God has given thee a teachable and intelligent mind, to perceive, by my doctrine and miracles, that I am the true Messiah, notwithstanding the obscurity of my appearance, and therefore thou mayest be truly said to be taught of God, because my doctrine is the word, and my miracles are the power, of God;” *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmer's Commentary*.

Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

† Peter was so called, either because his being the apostle of the Jews, to whom the gospel was first tendered, might make him, in some sense, one of the first foundations of the Christian church, Eph. ii. 20. or because the firmness and resolution wherewith he supported the Christian cause, even to the day of his martyrdom, was very eminent and remarkable; *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† It is very evident, that, whereas the word *church* is capable of two senses, and taken, in common speech, sometimes for a society of persons worshipping God, and sometimes for a place set apart for the public performance of such worship, our Saviour intends it here in the former of these senses; and that the building of this church (which is a metaphor of frequent use in the New Testament) signifies the doing all those things, either in private Christians or public communities of them, which may contribute to their growth in grace and goodness, their mutual strength and support, their perfection and continuance; and accordingly, Christians, thus united together, are called a *spiritual house*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *an heavenly building, fitly framed together, and an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Eph. ii. 21. 22.; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 4.

Vol. I.

F f

“ firmly

A. M. “ firmly established, that all the power † and policy of its
 4035, &c. “ enemies should not be able, at any time, to destroy it ;
 Ann. Dom “ and that, for the more orderly government of it, he
 31, &c. “ would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven ;
 from “ so that his sentence, whenever it should regularly ex-
 Matt. xii. 1. “ clude or admit any person into the bosom of the
 Mark ii. 23 “ church upon earth, should, in like manner, be ratified
 Luke vi. 1. “ and confirmed in heaven.” But then to prevent the ill
 John v. 1. “ use that might be made of this discovery, he strictly char-
 to Matt. “ ged his apostles || not to declare to any man, that he was
 xvii. 14. the Messiah.
 Mark ix. 14
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

Perceiving

† The words in the text are,—— The *gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, Matth. xvi. 18. Some interpreters mean by the word *hades*, which we translate *hell*, the state or place of the dead ; and by the *gates of hades*, the power of death ; and so the words, applied to the members of Christ’s mystical body, or to particular Christians, will mean, “ That though, at present, death has the dominion over them, yet shall not his conquest of those that die in the Lord, be absolute and final. They shall not continue dead to all eternity ; but shall revive, a second time, to a better life, and triumph over this last great enemy of mankind.” Others by *hell* understand the place of infernal torments ; and so, by an easy figure, apply it to the devil and his angels, inhabiting those regions of darkness ; but then, because the gates of cities are not only, in all countries, places of strength, but, among the Jews more especially, were places of judicature, and where magistrates met to consult for the security of the public, it hence comes to pass, that by *the gates of hell*, they mean the strength and policy of the wicked, and so make the sense of our Saviour’s promise to be this,—— “ That, notwithstanding all the wicked contrivances of Satan and his instruments, to destroy the profession of Christianity in the world, yet all their power and policy should not be able to effect it. Christ’s holy religion should stand and flourish, in despite of their wicked contrivances ; and, however a defection might happen in some particular places, to the end of the world, he should never want a society of men, confessing, with St Peter, “ that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*,” Matth. xvi. 16. ; *Whitby’s* and *Hammond’s Annotations* ; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 4

|| In several parts of the gospel we find our Saviour injoining the people whom he had cured, not to make any publication of his miracles, Matth. viii. 4 and ix. 30. ; but it is an injunction of a particular nature, not to discover that he was the Christ, though this was an article necessary for every man to know and believe in order to his salvation. Now, though this was a point necessary for all

Perceiving by this discourse with Peter, that his disciples had got a right notion of his office and divinity, he began thence forward to prepare their minds for his sufferings, and to talk more openly of his death and resurrection. One day therefore, as he was insisting on the sufferings which he was to undergo at Jerusalem ||, and Peter, unable to endure a thought so disagreeable to the dignity of his master, desired him to desist †, he gave him

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
a Mark i. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

to know, yet the apostles were not the proper persons at this time to declare it, because it might look like a kind of confederacy between them, if they should prove too lavish in the commendations of their master. It would much better become his infinite wisdom therefore, to find out himself a proper opportunity for the discovery of this great truth, without drawing the envy of the Pharisees upon him, and obstructing the progress of the gospel, which could hardly be believed, considering the low circumstances wherein he appeared; and which, had it been believed, might have encouraged the attempt of the Jews to come, and make him a king, John vi. 15. What therefore our Saviour says to his three apostles, in relation to his transfiguration, that they should *tell no man of it, until he was risen from the dead*, Matth. xvii. 9. is applicable to this passage likewise. For, after his resurrection, they were by office to be his witnesses, and to declare to others that he was the Christ, because they could then do it, not only without suspicion of confederacy, but with great advantages and success, after that Christ had taken possession of his kingdom, and had testified this, by sitting down at the right hand of power, and, by sending down upon them the Holy Ghost, to enable them to confirm their testimony; *Pool's, Beausobre's, and Whitby's Annotations.*

|| Jerusalem was the place where this tragedy was to be acted, because, as our Lord observes, a prophet could not suffer out of that city, Luke xiii. 33.; for there sat the Sanhedrim that was to try him; and there lived the Roman governor who had the power of life and death, and was to condemn him; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† Peter's words in the Greek are *ἰλέως σοι, Κύριε*, Matth. xvi. 22. which we may render *propitius esto tibi, Domine, favour thyself, or be kind to thyself*. "Since the rulers at Jerusalem have such malevolent designs against thee, why shouldst thou think of going any more among them? If they intend to evil intreat thee, and take away thy life, *be thou kind and favourable to thyself*; avoid the danger by keeping at a distance from it, and consult thine own preservation by continuing here." This seems to be the proper sense of St Peter's words, and they were doubtless spoken with a good intention, and singular affection for his master; but still

Matt. xvi.
21. Mark
vii. 31.
Luke ix. 22.
Letting
them into
the know-
ledge of his
future suf-
ferings;

A. M. a very sharp rebuke †, as a person whose advice crossed
 4035, &c. his gracious purposes of man's redemption, and favoured of
 Ann. Dom. nothing but worldly grandeur; and therefore, to extinguish
 31, &c. in them all notions of a temporal kingdom, he called his
 from disciples, and told them, that "Whoever pretended to
 Matt. xii. i. " profess his religion, should take up his cross †, or pa-
 Mark ii. 23. " tently
 Luke vi. i. " tently
 John v. i. " tently
 to Matt.
 xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14. they argued great weakness in him, in pretending to contradict one
 Luke ix. 37. whom he had just before acknowledged to be *the Christ, the Son of*
 John vii. i. *God*, and denote him ignorant of the redemption of mankind by that
 death which God in his wise counsel had determined; *Pool's Annotations*; and *Young's Sermons*, vol. 2.

† The words of our Saviour upon this occasion are,—*Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence to me*, Matth. xvi. 23. Not that we are to think, that our Saviour ever imagined that St Peter, in this advice, had any pernicious designs against him, as the great enemy of mankind has, when he tempts and deludes them into sin; but his only meaning is, that his interposition in this affair was very unreasonable, and highly repugnant to his design of coming into the world, which was to save it. "Thou thinkest per-
 " haps, says he, Peter, that, in this thy advice, thou shewest thy
 " kindness to me, as a friend that respects my welfare, and art
 " tender of my preservation; but, instead of that, thou art an ad-
 " versary to me, (for so the word *Satan* signifies, Numb. xxii. 32.
 " 2 Sam. xix. 23. 1 Kings v. 4. &c.), in thy endeavouring to
 " draw me aside from doing what is my Father's will and com-
 " mand, John x. 18. I told thee that I must suffer; that such
 " is the determinate counsel of God, and such my fixed purpose
 " and resolution; and therefore all advice to the contrary is so far
 " from pleasing, that it is an offence to me; I cannot away with
 " it; and therefore *get thee behind me, Satan*: For, though there
 " is no malice in thy intention, yet imprudently hast thou run upon
 " the same advice, that Satan uses the most successfully of all o-
 " thers to undo men by, and that is, the advice of self-indulgence.
 " For favour thyself is the most artificial of all the suggestions of
 " the devil; because that being made specious with the pretences
 " of reason and justice, and sweetened by its agreeableness to that of
 " self-love, with which all men do naturally abound, it seldom fails
 " of being swallowed, though poison and death lurk under it;"
Pool's and Whitby's Annotations; *Calmet's Commentary*, and *Young's Sermons*, vol. 2.

† Among several nations, it was a custom for the criminal to bear the cross whereon he was to suffer, to the place of execution; Liplius De cruce, lib. 2. c. 65. And, in allusion to this, our Saviour makes use of the phrase, to denote our chearfully bearing those trials and persecutions which the divine providence

dece

“ tiently submit to all manner of persecutions, in sure and
 “ certain hope of an happy immortality, which he would
 “ procure for his followers, when he was in his kingdom,
 “ in which some, that were then present among them,
 “ ere it was long, (but certainly before the day of their
 “ death), † should see him happily instated.”

A. M.
 3035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

About

dence brings upon us in the execution of our duty, and our adherence to his most holy religion; *Pool's* and *Beaufobre's Annotations.*

† Our Saviour's words are these : — *Verily, I say unto you, there are some of them, who are standing here, who shall not taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom,* Matt. xvi. 28. Some interpreters, both ancient and modern, understand this passage of our Lord's transfiguration on the mount, in which there was some glimpse of the glory of his father, and the attendance of angels; but, besides that this happened too soon (no more than six days) after these words were spoken, to need the expression of *some of them not seeing death* until it came to pass, which must at least denote some distance of time; it is very plain, that, at this wonderful sight, none of the three apostles could behold Christ coming in his kingdom, because his kingdom did not commence till after his resurrection, when *all power both in heaven and earth was given him,* Matt. xxviii. 18. Others imagine, that the passage relates to the great day of judgment, because it is said, that Christ will *reward every man according to his work,* chap. xvi. 27. But then, on the other hand, it may be alledged, that there was none in the company then standing there, who was not to die, or to taste of death (which is the Jewish phrase) long before the coming of that great and terrible day of the Lord: And therefore, others have concluded, that this coming of Christ in his kingdom relates to another event, *viz.* the destruction of the Jewish church and nation, wherein our Lord may properly enough be said to *come in the glory of his Father, and with his angels,* and to reward the Jews in destroying them, and Christians in preserving them, according to their works. This happened above forty years after our Saviour's death, when some of the company (as particularly John the evangelist was) might be then alive, and witnesses of the accomplishment of our Lord's menaces against that devoted city and nation. This is the popular interpretation at present; but I cannot see, why the other parts of our Saviour's exaltation may not be taken into the account; for, as he began to enter upon his kingdom by his resurrection, and ascension into heaven, so his sending the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, as well as the terrible judgment which he brought upon the Jewish nation, may all be looked upon as the effects and

A. M. ¶ About eight days after this, our Lord, to revive the
 4035, &c. hearts of his disciples, as well as to instruct them more
 Ann. Dom. fully in the nature of his kingdom, thought it not impro-
 31, &c. per to give some of them at least a specimen of his
 from Matt. future glory; and accordingly, taking with him his three
 xii. 1. Mark most intimate apostles, Peter, James, and John, he a-
 ii. 23. Luke scended an high mountain †, and there, (while he was em-
 vi. 1. John ployed in prayer) he was suddenly transformed into another
 v. 1. to kind of appearance; for a bright lustre darted from his
 Matt. xvii. face, more glorious than the sun, and a dazzling splen-
 24. Mark
 ix. 14. Luke
 ix. 37. John
 vii. 1.

consequences of his glorious reign; *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's An-*
notations; and *Calmet's Commentary*

¶ What St Luke calls (ὥστε ἡμέραι ὀκτώ) *about eight days*, chap. ix.
 28. St Matthew and St Mark make *after six days*: But the reason
 of this seeming disagreement is, that the two last evangelists com-
 pute only the entire days between our Saviour's discourse and his
 going up into the mount, and therefore style them six: whereas St
 Luke, including both the days of his discourse, and his ascent, calls
 them eight days. And this is evident from the word ὥστε, which,
 when any sum is mentioned, is always added to signify, that it is not
 exact, but wants something to make it complete, as may be seen in
 Matt. xiv. 21.; Luke i. 56.—iii. 23.—xxiii. 44.; John iv. 6.—
 xix. 14.; Acts ii. 41. &c.; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† That this was mount Tabor, (which stood in the midst of
 the Lower Galilee, at an equal distance between the Mediterranean
 and the sea of Tiberias), is a matter confirmed by the voice of all
 antiquity. But some modern writers are of a different opinion, be-
 cause Tabor (say they) does not stand in the way between Cæsarea
 Philippi and Capernaum, and that our Saviour travelled from Cæs-
 area to this mount, (which is almost through the whole length
 of Galilee), is a little too much to suppose; *Lightfoot* in Mark
 ix. But this he had space enough to do in the six intervening days
 between his discourse and his transfiguration; and that he really did
 so, is made very probable, both from St Matthew and St Mark,
 who seem to intimate, that after he had finished his discourse with
 his disciples, he entered immediately upon his journey; and, accord-
 ingly, we hear nothing more of him, until the expiration of six
 whole days, Matt. xvii. 1. Luke ix. 28. As to the description of
 the mount itself, see vol. 3. p. 171. in the notes, only we may add
 here, from Mr Maundrell, that on the top of it are three grots, so
 made to represent the three tabernacles, which St Peter proposed
 to erect, in the astonishment that possessed him, at the glory of the
 transfiguration; *Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*, p. 112. 113.

dor, piercing from his body through his garment, made them appear whiter than snow, and more radiant than the light. During this heavenly scene there appeared Moses and Elias, cloathed with all the brightness and majesty of a glorified state, familiarly conversing with him, and discouraging of his death and sufferings.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

While the intercourse continued between these three, Peter and his two fellow apostles were fallen asleep; but waking just before their departure, they were exceedingly surprised and terrified at the sight of so much glory and majesty. Peter indeed begged of his Master, that they might continue in that happy place, and erect three tents, one for him, and the other two for Moses and Elias: But while he was thus talking, scarce knowing what he said in his fright and transport, a bright and shining cloud suddenly came over them, and a voice from thence proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.* Upon which the apostles were seized with a greater consternation than ever, and fell prostrate upon the ground; but upon our Lord's touching and encouraging them, they looked up, and saw none but him; for the other two were vanished.

As they descended the mount, he strictly commanded them not to tell any man what strange things they had seen until he was risen from the dead. They were ready to obey his commands, but did not rightly understand his last words †; and therefore they had some altercations among themselves concerning the meaning of his rising from the dead: And another difficulty they had to solve; for having seen Elias with our Saviour upon the mount, they could not forbear asking him, What reason the scribes and Pharisees had for asserting that that prophet was to come upon the earth before the Messiah? To which our Saviour replied, That these Jewish doctors were not mistaken in their notion, because Elias was in effect come already, and had received the same bad treatment from his countrymen that himself in a short time was to expect; from whence they perceived, that by the Elias he spoke of, he plainly intended John the Baptist.

The

† The doctrine of the general resurrection they could not but understand; for that the Pharisees believed, Acts xxiv. 15. and of that Martha makes acknowledgement, John xi. 24.: nor could they be ignorant of the meaning of any particular man's rising from the dead;
for

A. M.

4035, &c.

Ann. Dom.

31, &c.

from

Matth. xii.

1. Mark ii.

23. Luke

vi. 1. John

v. 1. to

Matt. xvii

24. Mark

ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

The OBJECTION.

“THE pool of Bethesda (if what St John (a) relates of it be true) was certainly one of the most remarkable places in all Jerusalem. Its cures were so wonderful, and so highly conducive to the honour of the Jewish nation, that for what reason the other evangelists should say nothing of them, we can hardly imagine; but why Josephus (b), who professedly wrote the history of the Jews, and is always forward enough to boast in their praise, should give us no manner of account of this peculiar manifestation of God’s distinguishing providence over that people, is a thing utterly unaccountable. Since the evangelist therefore stands alone in this story, it would have been some satisfaction to his readers, had he a little more minutely recounted, when this pool first acquired its miraculous quality, and how long it retained it; upon what particular occasions, and how oft, the angel descended to trouble its waters; and by what means its waters, when troubled, became both impregnated with a sanative virtue, and yet so limited in their operation, as to cure but one diseased person at once.

“ (c) The raising of the widow’s son to life again might possibly be a true miracle, (d) though instances there have been of the mistaken death of persons, who, from a state of lethargy, have revived; as might be (e) the case of

for of that they had instances in the Old Testament, and had lately seen an example of it in the gates of Naim, Luke vii. 15. But being taught out of the law, that Christ was to abide for ever, John xii. 34. and that of his kingdom there should be no end, Luke i. 33. they could not tell how to reconcile his death (which was to be previous to his resurrection) to the predictions of the prophets, and their own conceptions of his temporal kingdom; and therefore we may observe, that when Christ was dead, their hopes died with him: *We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel*, Luke xxiv. 21.; but that at his resurrection they revived again, which made them ask, *Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* Acts i. 6.; *Whitby’s Annotations.*

(a) Chap. v. 2 — 8.

(b) Woolston on the miracles.

(c) Luke vii. 11. — 16.

(d) Woolston on the miracles.

(e) Luke viii. 41. &c.

“ the

“ the ruler’s daughter likewise, (*f*) because we find our Saviour so strictly enjoining her parents to conceal the miracle. But whatever may be said in behalf of these, it is highly improbable that what (*g*) happened to the demoniacs, in the country of the Gadarens, should be true, (*h*) not only because the Jews, who dwelt in these parts, were prohibited to eat swine’s flesh, and, (*i*) under the pain of an anathema, forbidden to keep any in their country; but even upon the supposition that the swine belonged to the neighbouring Gentiles, it will be no easy matter to vindicate the goodness and justice of Christ, in permitting so large an herd thus to be destroyed, and their owners injured in so egregious a manner.

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

“ (*k*) Our Lord’s transfiguration on the mount was, doubtless, a glorious sight; but still we are at a loss for the reason of his appearing in such an extraordinary manner at this time rather than another; (*l*) for his making a mountain rather than a valley the scene; and his apostles (who were of his party) rather than the multitude (who wanted conviction) the witnesses of this his majesty: nor can we conceive why the true Moses and Elias (not any spectres or apparitions in their likeness) should be present with Jesus on the mount, and the apostles over-hear them discourse together, and yet not leave us one word of what was the subject of their conversation.

“ We cannot but admire likewise, why John the Baptist, who was sent into the world for this very purpose, that he might (*m*) bear witness of Christ, (as if he had now forgot himself, or was grown diffident of what he had so often testified to others), (*n*) should send his disciples to inquire of him, whether he was the true Messiah or no. Why our Blessed Saviour, who, as a teacher sent from heaven, was to instruct the people in the most plain truths, made use of the parabolical method, (wherein there is a manifest obscurity), especially since the declared end of his doing so is said to be, (*o*) *that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand*: Why he did not (*p*) vouchsafe the Pharisees a sign from heaven,

(*f*) Woolston, *ibid*. (*g*) Matth. viii. 28. &c. (*h*) Woolston, *ibid*.
(*i*) Spencer, *de Leg* Heb. p. 117. (*k*) Matth. xvii. 1. &c.
(*l*) Woolston, *ibid* (*m*) John i. 6. 7. (*n*) Matth. xi. 2. &c.
(*o*) Luke viii. 10. (*p*) Matth. xvi. 1. 3.

A. M. "to approve himself the prophet foretold by Moses, especially since the sign of the prophet Jonas (which was only typical of his future resurrection) was incompetent for
 4035, &c. "ly typical of his future resurrection) was incompetent for
 Ann. Dom "a present sign, and incapable of giving them any satisfaction : Or, lastly, why he made such mean instruments,
 31, &c. "as obscure illiterate fishermen, to be the first preachers
 from Matt. "of the gospel, when, in all subsequent ordinations, a tolerable stock of knowledge and learning, as well as some
 xii. 1 Mark "influence and authority among the people, is thought no
 ii. 23. Luke "bad qualification for that office.
 vi. 1. John "Whether the evangelists have given us a right repre-
 v. 1. to "sentation of our Saviour's behaviour, we shall not pre-
 Matt. xvii "tend to determine ; but a person of a philosophic soul,
 14. Mark "much more of a divine original, should be seated above
 ix. 14. Luke "all passionate resentments, one would think, and look
 ix. 37. John "upon his enemies (if he had any) with pity and contempt,
 vii. 1. "rather than with (q) anger and indignation : And so calm
 "and composed should his whole deportment be, as to
 "give no umbrage to any, much less to his nearest rela-
 "tions, (who may be presumed to know him best), to call
 "in question the soundness of his intellectuals, or to come
 "to apprehend him at any time, under pretence that (r)
 "he was beside himself.

"Whatever some Protestants may imagine, we cannot
 "but think, that our Blessed Lord invested St Peter with
 "a certain pre-eminence above the rest of his apostles,
 "when upon him he promises (s) *to build his church, and*
 "*to give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven* : But what
 "the (t) unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost does
 "properly import, and in what sense we are said (u) *to eat*
 "*the flesh of the Son of Man, and to drink his blood*, both
 "Protestants and Papists have been at a long puzzle to find
 "out : And therefore no wonder that some of our Lord's
 "first disciples, upon hearing of these (x) hard sayings,
 "which are not yet discovered, and perhaps never will,
 "(y) *went back, and walked no more with him.*"

Answered
 by shewing
 that St
 John's go-
 spel was to
 supply the
 defects of
 the other
 evangelists.

St John, according to the general sense of antiquity, having perused the other evangelists, and observed in what particulars they were defective, at the persuasion of the o-

(q) Mark iii. 5.

(r) Mark iii. 21.

(s) Matth. xvi. 18. 19.

(t) Ibid. xii. 31.

(u) John vi. 53.

(x) Ibid. ver. 60.

(y) Ibid. ver. 66.

ther

ther bishops of Asia, was prevailed upon to write his gospel as a supplement to their omissions. Whoever will give himself the trouble to compare his history with that of the other evangelists, will find this notion in a great measure verified. For (not to mention other particulars) our Saviour's miracles, antecedent to his resurrection, as they are recorded by St John, are no more than eight. 1st, His turning water into wine at the marriage of Cana in Galilee. 2^d, His telling the Samaritan woman the secrets of her life. 3^d, His healing the nobleman's son at Capernaum. 4th, His curing the lame man at the pool of Bethesda. 5th, His feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes. 6th, His walking upon the surface of the water, and calming the storm at sea. 7th, His giving sight to a blind man by anointing his eyes with clay. And, 8th, His raising Lazarus from the dead. Now, all these are omitted by the former evangelists, except the 5th and 6th, which St John seems to have recorded chiefly to introduce a moral discourse which our Saviour took occasion to make to the people, and which the other sacred penmen had omitted; which is a plain argument that the intent of St John's gospel was to supply the defects of the other three; and that therefore their silence is no manner of argument against St John's account of the pool of Bethesda.

It may seem a little strange indeed, that Josephus should give us no account of it, especially when the sanative virtue of its waters, occasioned by so extraordinary a means, could not but redound to the honour of his country. (z) But when it is considered that the like omissions have been frequently made by other historians, who in their writings have neglected to insert several considerable matters of antiquity, merely because they were so familiar and well known to them: (a) When it is considered that Josephus, in particular, wrote his history for the information of the Greeks and learned Romans, who were Heathens, and for fear of shocking their belief, is very tender of dwelling too much upon miracles: When it is considered, that he is entirely silent in several other instances that bear some relation to our Saviour Christ; that he does not so much as intimate the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, mentioned by St Matthew (b), nor give any clear account of the Roman census

(z) Bishop Smallbrooke's Vindication, p. 498. (a) Dr Pearce's Vindication, part 4. p. 19. (b) Chap. ii. 16.

A. M
4035, &c
Ann. Dom
31, &c
from
Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1
to Matt.
xv i. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

or taxation, which occasioned our Lord to be born at Beth-
lehem, as it is recorded by St Luke (c) : When it is confi-
dered, that the miraculous cure of the impotent man by Jesus
had so visible a connection, that he could not, in decency,
give an account of the one without making some mention
of the other ; and therefore chose rather to decline the hi-
story of both : And, lastly, When it is considered, that
this pool (according to (d) Tertullian) “ ceased to be bene-
ficial to the Jews, upon their final perseverance in blas-
phemy and infidelity against Christ ;” there is no wonder
at all that Josephus, who was very defective in other mat-
ters, and no great lover of miracles, should omit giving us
an account of a pool, whose virtue was extinct and gone
when first he wrote his antiquities, and which he could not
well make mention of, without giving an implicit honour
to Christ.

When't first
had and lost
its sanative
quality.

That upon the death of our Blessed Saviour this pool
might lose its sanative quality, is no improbable conjecture,
because the Jews no longer deserved such a peculiar blessing ;
but when at first it came to be impregnated with it, is not
a matter of so easy solution. The words in the text are,
that *an (e) angel went down (κατά καιρὸν) at a certain season,*
which (f) a learned author chuses rather to render *at the*
season, (i. e. of the passover), and troubled the water ; from
whence he infers, that the first time of this supernatural
moving of the water, and consequently of the pool's recei-
ving a miraculous healing quality, was at this passover ;
which was the second after the commencement of our Sa-
viour's public ministry : and the reason he assigns for its be-
ing this rather than any other passover, is, — “ That our
“ Saviour, having gone through all the cities of Galilee,
“ and most of the other parts of the country of Judea,
“ preaching and healing diseases, came up to Jerusalem at
“ the passover, with an intent to fix his abode there ; that
“ to prepare his way before him, God might give this pool
“ an healing quality, (g) thereby to shew the Jews (in a
“ typical manner), that the messenger of the covenant was
“ coming among them, to *open a fountain (h) to the house*
“ *of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and*

(c) Chap. ii. 1. 2. (d) Adv. Jud. c. 13. (e) John. v. 4.
(f) Dr Pearce's Vindication, part 4. (g) Whitby's Annotations
on John v. 4. (h) Zech. xiii. 1.

“ *for uncleanness* ; but that, instead of giving him a kind
 “ reception, they took counsel together how they might
 “ take away his life, which made him withdraw himself
 “ from them, and, upon his departure, the miraculous
 “ virtue of the water ceased.” The only objection against
 this hypothesis is, that it makes the miracle of no more
 than a week or ten days continuance, which is too short a
 space for so great a company (as is here represented) to
 be gathered together ; to have taken up their abode (as it
 were) in the apartments of this hospital ; and to be ac-
 quainted so perfectly (as the paralytic, in his discourse with
 our Saviour, seems to be) with the nature of the pool,
 and the manner of its preternatural perturbation. And
 therefore, (to follow the generality of commentators),
 though we should suppose, that its medicinal virtue began
 at the time of this second passover, yet we may still adhere
 to the opinion of Tertullian, and say, that, at certain times
 at least, it continued with the Jews (and a singular bles-
 sing it was) until they had filled the measure of their ini-
 quity, (*i*) by denying the holy One, and the just, and by
 killing the Prince of life.

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matt.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

How the waters of this pool came by their fanative qua-
 lity, opinions, in some measure, have been divided. Our
 (*k*) learned Hammond (who sometimes affects a singularity
 of interpretation) supposes, that the waters became medi-
 cinal by being impregnated with an healing warmth from
 the blood and entrails of the sacrificed beasts that were
 washed there, and that the angel in the text is not to be
 understood of any of those celestial beings that are usually
 distinguished by that name, but only of a common messen-
 ger, *viz.* an officer or servant of the priests, who, at a
 proper season, was sent by him to stir the pool. The great
 (*l*) Bartholine supposes, that these waters were naturally
 medicinal, and that their commotion was occasioned by
 an extraordinary fermentation of some mineral in them ;
 and therefore he makes the angel no more than a divine
 power, which originally gave this efficacy, though it was
 exerted in a natural way. But besides that the word *ἀγγελος*
 seldom occurs in the former, and never in this sense, in
 any historical narrative in Scripture, there are these plain
 objections against both hypotheses, *viz.* (*m*) That, be the

How it
 came by it.

(*i*) Acts iii. 14. 15. (*k*) Annotations on the 5th chapter of
 St John. (*l*) De paralyticis N. Test (*m*) Whitby's
 Annotations ; and Bishop Smallbrooke's Vindication, p. 507.

A. M. waters impregnated with what ingredient we please, (had
 4035, &c. their operation been mechanical), they must necessarily have
 Ann. Dom. cured more than one person, at every commotion or fer-
 31, &c. mentation; and yet they never can be supposed of efficacy
 Matt. xii. 1 enough to cure all manner of diseases, in an instant, and
 Mark ii. 23 at one single immersion, as the waters of Bethesda are re-
 Luke vi. 1 presented to do: And therefore, waving all such ground-
 John v. 1 less suppositions, we may be allowed to set the authority of
 to Matt. an ancient father of the church against these modern names,
 xvii 14 and say, "That the angel, which descended at a certain
 Mark ix. 14 season, gave the water its medicinal virtue; for the na-
 Luke ix. 37 ture of the water was not sanative in itself, (if it had,
 John vii. 1 "cures would have always happened), but the whole de-
 "pended on the virtue communicated to it by the angel."

Why it cu- Now the true reason why the virtue thus communicated
 red but one to the water by the operation of an angel, was effectual on-
 at once. ly to the curing of one person at one time, was to evince
 the miraculoufness of the cure. Had many been cured at
 once, the sceptic might have imputed their cures to the na-
 tural virtue of the water, and, upon this supposition, been
 emboldened to ask, "Where is the wonder of this? Do
 "not many medicinal baths cure various kinds of diseases,
 "and multitudes of such as labour under each disease,
 "provided their case be curable? Had one only indeed
 "been cured, the first that could get in after the troubling
 "of the water, there would have been then a great and
 "real miracle: But now the numbers make the fact suspi-
 "cious. To make it appear a miracle indeed, its effects
 "should have been confined and limited to particular
 "times, and persons, and otherwise so circumstantiated,
 "as that the power of God, and not of blind nature,
 "might have been apparent in it." But all this language
 is effectually silenced by the method which the wise provi-
 dence of God took in this case, and the miracle established
 upon such evident conviction, as the mouth of infidelity it-
 self cannot gainsay.

The raising That the widow of Naim's son, and the ruler of the sy-
 the widow's nagogue's daughter, were both of them really dead, is evi-
 son, and dent from the sense of all that were about them, who were
 Jairus's actually carrying the one to his burial, and making prepa-
 daughter, ration for the funeral of the other; so that had not our
 both real Blessed Saviour been confident of the divine virtue residing
 miracles. in him, whereby he was able to recover them to life again,
 it would have been madness in him to have attempted to
 do it.

"He

“ He might suppose, perhaps, that there was a mistake
 “ in the people that were about them, and that these two
 “ young persons might possibly be in a lethargic state.”
 But, besides the folly of presuming upon a thing, which
 scarce happens once in a century, how could he tell, that,
 upon his touching the bier of the one, or the hand of the
 other, and calling upon them, they would instantly awake?
 And if they did not awake at his call, his whole preten-
 sions of being a prophet sent from God, with a power to
 restore life to the dead, must as effectually have been ruin-
 ed, as if the persons here supposed in a lethargy only, had
 actually been dead. But now, if we examine a little into
 our Lord’s conduct in both these cases, we shall find that he
 acted not upon any supposition of mistake in the people,
 but out of the fulness of the Godhead that dwelt in him
 bodily. He, coming to the city of Naim, attended, with
 his disciples, meets at the gate the funeral of a certain
 young man, the only son of a woman that was a widow.
 The consideration of her destitute condition moved his
 compassion indeed; but, for all that, he might have let
 the funeral pass. None of the company either asked or
 challenged him to raise the dead youth: It was entirely his
 own offer; and an offer that no wise man, who set up for
 a prophet, would have ever made, had he not been con-
 scious (as we find he was) that he was able to perform it.

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. xii. 7.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 2.

While he was at Capernaum, a person of some note re-
 quests of him to go and heal his daughter, who was at the
 point of death. Before he could get to the house, a mes-
 senger comes, and acquaints the father, that she was ac-
 tually dead. (n) Here our Lord had a fair opportunity to
 excuse himself; for, though he might pretend to cure dis-
 eases, (which was all that Jairus requested of him), yet it
 did not therefore follow that he was to raise the dead. But,
 instead of retracting, he offers, of his own accord, to go
 forward, and tells the father, (as he afterwards did), that
 he would raise her to life again: (o) *Be not afraid; only be-
 lieve, says he, and she shall be made whole*; which he could
 never have said from any other principle than a consciouf-
 ness of that (p) *almighty power whereby he is able to sub-
 due all things to himself*.

But, though our Lord was conscious of his divine power, Why our
 Saviour
 charged her
 parents to
 conceal the
 latter.

(n) Defence of the Scripture-history, p. 17.
 viii. 50.

(p) Phil. iii. 21.

(o) Luke
 yet,

A. M. yet, upon his coming to the ruler's house, instead of
 4035, &c. making any ostentatious boast of it, we find him, by the
 Ann. Dom. modesty of his expression, the *maid is not dead, but sleep-*
 31, &c. *eth*, endeavouring to conceal it. It is, in a great measure,
 from
 Matt. xii. 1. indeed, owing to his modesty, and great humility, that,
 Mark ii. 23. instead of proclaiming, he requires the people so frequent-
 Luke vi. 1 ly to suppress the fame of his marvellous works: But, in
 John v. 1. the present case, he might have some regard to the charac-
 to Matth. xvii. 14. ter of Jairus, as ruler of the synagogue, and, by this ad-
 Mark ix. 14. vice of silence, dispense with his speaking publicly of a mi-
 Luke ix. 37 racle, which might possibly draw the malice of the scribes
 John vii. 1. and Pharisees upon him, as well as upon himself. In the
 case of his raising Lazarus, we find, that, (*q*) *because, by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus, the chief priests consulted, not only how to destroy Jesus, but to put Lazarus likewise to death*: And much of the same design might have been suspected, (which our Saviour, by this kind caution, endeavoured to prevent), if it once came to their knowledge, that so great a man as a governor of a synagogue, by the miraculous recovery of his daughter, had forsaken the religion of his ancestors, and was become a convert to the Christian faith.

No injustice in the destruction of the swine of Gadara. Gadara was one of the cities beyond Jordan, belonging to the country called *Decapolis*, which was sometimes in the hands of the Jews, and sometimes of the Syrians, but, at this time, was inhabited by both. The Syrians were Heathens, and, consequently, made use of swine, not only for food, but for sacrifices likewise: And it is not improbable, that the Jews of the country might be tempted to feed swine, by the advantage they made in selling them to their Heathen neighbours. (*r*) This was against a prohibition of their law, it is true; but laws, we know, are not always observed, and perhaps least of all at Gadara, which, being in the extremity of the Jewish territories, and under the jurisdiction of Heathens, left the Jews without any restraint upon them, but that of conscience, which is too frequently violated for the sake of gain.

To bring the matter then to a narrow compass. The swine which were destroyed, in consequence of the permission which our Saviour gave the evil spirits to enter into them, belonged either to the Jews, or Gentiles of

(*q*) John xii. 10. 11. (*r*) Dr Pearce's Vindication, part 2.

Gadara :

Gadara: If they belonged to the Jews, it cannot be denied, but they were justly punished for breaking their own laws and constitutions, which forbade them to keep any; nor can our Saviour's right of inflicting the punishment be called in question, because it was a received maxim among the Jews, that any person invested with the character of a prophet, and acting by the Spirit of God, might, without the assistance of a magistrate, put the laws in execution against offenders: And therefore, we, who acknowledge our Jesus to have been more than a prophet, can never be at a loss to account for his exercising an authority among the Jews, which (according to their own confession) was allowable in the lowest of that order. But, if the Heathens of Gadara were the owners of these swine, our Saviour might be induced to permit the devils to enter into them, not only to teach them the sacredness of the Jewish laws, which they, on account of the prohibition of swine's flesh, may be supposed to have ridiculed; but to cure them likewise of their idolatrous worship of demons, and to engage them to embrace the Christian faith. For when they saw our Lord's power over such a multitude of devils, exhibited in their possession of such a number of swine, (had they made a right application of the miracle), they could not but perceive the truth and divinity of his doctrine, and the madness of their worshipping such impure spirits, as were both cast out of the men at his command, and could not enter into the swine without his permission.

They could not but perceive, I say, that our Saviour was a prophet sent from heaven; that what he did was by a commission from God; and, consequently, that he could not be guilty of any injustice in the destruction of the swine, which, upon this supposition, was not his act, but the act of providence. He indeed, as a man, had no right to destroy the people's swine; but God, who is the supreme proprietor of the whole earth, most certainly had; and shall we then complain of him for such a punishment as this, when every day we see more surprising instances before our eyes? When we see him laying whole nations waste with pestilence, with famine, and with earthquakes, shall we confess his sovereign authority in these cases, and yet, upon the loss of two thousand swine, cry out, and say, Why hast thou done this? The Heathens themselves (upon the supposition of a providence) will acknowledge this to be unreasonable; nor can our Saviour

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

A. M. (as acting by a divine commission) ever be justly blamed, because he once or twice did the same thing which God does every day.

from But, after all, whether the proprietors were Jews or Gentiles, (s) the words in the text do not imply, that our Saviour was either principal or accessory to the destruction of the swine. St Mark, indeed, tells us, that *he gave the devils leave*; and St Luke, that *he suffered them to enter into the swine*; but by this is meant no more, than that he did not prevent them; that he did not interpose his divine power, in order to hinder them from entering; but, if this made our Saviour a sharer in the destruction of the swine, by parity of reason, it will make God (because he permits it) answerable for all the evil that is done under the sun. Thus, whether we suppose the Jews or Heathens owners of the herd of swine, our Saviour's permitting the devils to enter into them made him not accessory to their destruction; or, if it be said, that he did it with a punitive intent, it was either to make the Jews suffer for the breach of their law, or the Heathens for their obstinate idolatry; which his character of a prophet, and the testimony of his being the Son of the Most High, without all controversy, authorised him to do.

The end of
Christ's
transfigu-
ration.

To know the true end and design of our Saviour transfiguration, it may not be improper to look back a little into the context, where we find, that after Peter's confessing him to be (t) *the Christ, the Son of the living God, from that time he began to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day*. Nor was this all; for he foretold them, that they likewise were to suffer many grievous persecutions for his name's sake; and therefore he recommended to them the unpleasant doctrines of (u) *self-denial, and taking up the cross, and following him*, with this great (though distant) encouragement, that (x) *when the Son of Man should come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, he should then reward every one according to his works*.

These predictions, doctrines, and promises, were so contrary to the expectation of his disciples, who hoped in him to have a temporal prince and deliverer, a restorer

(t) Dr Pearce's Vindication, part I. p. 28. (t) Matt. xvi. 21. &c. (u) Ibid. ver. 24. (x) Ibid. ver. 27.

of the decayed state of Israel, and promoter of themselves to great honours and employments, that our Saviour thought proper, (not many days after), in order to revive their faith and trust in him, and (y) to fortify their minds against what was likely to ensue, to take as many with him into the mount, as made up a legal evidence, and there to give them ocular conviction of what he had promised, in recompense of what they were to suffer, by assuming, for a while, the lustre * and appearance of a glorified body; which so raised their drooping hearts, that we find St Peter immediately declaring, (z) *Lord, it is good for us to be here; and, if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* For the design of these words is, not only to secure his master, by staying in that retreat, from the sufferings and death, which would be the consequence of his going up to Jerusalem, (as St Chrysostom and others understand it), but to express likewise the pleasure and satisfaction he took in this transfiguration, and glorified company; and how he resumed fresh spirits and comforts from a miracle, which was emblematical of the glorious state, not of Christ only, but of all good Christians, after their resurrection.

The only instance we have in Scripture of any transfiguration like unto this, is in the case of Moses, (a) after he had been forty days and forty nights with God on mount Sinai; for, upon his descent, we are told, *that the skin of his face so shone, that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him; and therefore he put a veil on his face, while he talked with them.* That our Blessed Lord, in the act of his transfiguration, might probably have respect to this preceding one of Moses, and, both in the nature of

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Why on 2
mountain,

(y) Young's Sermons, vol. 2. p. 260.

* This is the proper meaning of the word μεταμορφῶθαι. For μορφή, both in the Old and New Testament, doth not signify the essence or constituent properties of a man, but only his external shape or appearance: As when it is said of Belshazzar (Dan. v. 10.), and of Daniel (chap. viii. 28.) that ἡ μορφή ἠλλιώθη, *their forms were changed*; of Nebuchadnezzar, that ἡ μορφή αὐτοῦ ἐπέστρεψεν ἐπ' αὐτόν, *my form returned to me*, (Dan. iv. 36.); and of Christ, that he appeared to two of his disciples, ἐν ἑτέρᾳ μορφῇ, *in another form*, Mark xvi. 12.); and therefore the word which is derived from it, can extend no further than to a change of the outward form or appearance only; *Whitby* on Phil. ii. 6.

(z) Luke ix. 33. (a) Exod. xxxiv. 28. &c.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Why the
three apo-
stles, and
not the
multitude,
admitted to
it.

Shewn,
from the
nature of it.

the change, and the place where it was wrought, design some conformity thereunto, is what we are at liberty to suppose; and consequently can account why the scene of this transaction was in a mountain, rather than a valley: And why the three apostles, Peter, James, and John, and not the whole multitude, were allowed to be spectators of it, we have several reasons to alledge.

For besides that this was a vouchsafement, fit only to be communicated to such as were of his more immediate confidence, and stood in the highest degree of his esteem; to such as, for their zeal and affection to him, were honoured and distinguished (*b*) with a peculiar title, and, after his resurrection, appointed by providence to be the great pillars of his church; and besides, that it would have looked like vanity and ostentation in him to have taken the multitude into the mount, and there made a public sight of his miracles, which was the thing he always carefully declined: Besides this, I say, there seems to be something in the transfiguration itself, which might have been of dangerous consequence for the multitude to have been admitted to.

St Peter, who himself was one of those who were with him on the holy mount, gives us this account of it. (*c*) *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, says he, when we made known unto you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Now, (*d*) by his majesty in this place, most properly is to be understood that lustre and radiancy wherein he appeared, when his *face shone as the sun, and his garments* (pierced through with the beams that were darted from his body) *became as white as light:* (*e*) *For to shine as the sun,* is a phrase expressing something belonging to celestial majesty; and *white* and *splendid* garments are proper for kings, and (*f*) royal ministers of the heavenly court. And, in like manner, by the *excellent glory*, from whence the voice proceeded, can be meant nothing but the bright and shining cloud that then appeared, which the Jews call the *Shechinah*, and is made up (as most imagine) of an host of angels, the constant

(*b*) Luke vi. 13.
Whitby on 2 Pet. i. 16.
Rev. iii. 4.

(*c*) 2 Pet. i. 16. &c.
(*e*) Matth. xiii. 43.

(*d*) See
(*f*)

symbol of the divine presence : and how great and magnificent this symbol is, we may, in some measure, learn from the vision of the prophet Daniel (g) : *The ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was like the fiery flames, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream had issue from before him ; thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Supposing then that this was the manner of our Saviour's transfiguration ; that not only, in his own person, he was arrayed with all his glory and lustre, but had likewise an angelic host surrounding him, two of the greatest prophets of ancient ages attending him, and a voice from heaven, declaring him to be *the well-beloved Son of God* : While the multitude stood by, and saw and heard all this, it would have been almost unavoidable, but that, upon such conviction of his being the Messiah, (h) *they would have taken him by force, and made him a king.* But since (as our Saviour tells us) his (i) *kingdom was not of this world*, nor to come with the pomp and obfervation which the Jews expected ; and since one of his great concerns was, that no disturbance of the civil government should be occasioned by him, or laid to his charge, he wisely made choice of three only, (but these the principal of his apostles), to whom he exhibited a specimen of his future glory ; which had he done to the multitude, it might probably have occasioned a general insurrection ; and, as he came down from the mount, he charged them, *that they should tell the vision to no man, till after his resurrection.*

From the word *ὄραμα*, which we render *vision*, some have supposed, that Moses and Elias were not there in their proper persons, but that the apostles, in their fancy and imagination, had only a strong idea or impression of them ; or, at most, that their spectres, or some shadowy resemblances of them, only were there. Since the evangelists, however, speak of them in a personal character and capacity ; since they represent them, as talking with Christ, and speaking of his decease, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem ; since they tell us, that when they were come out of the ecstasy into which this vision had cast them, they saw two men standing with him ; it is

(g) Dan. vii. 9. 10.

(h) John vi. 15.

(i) Ibid. xviii. 36.

A. M. much more probable to think, that Moses and Elias were
 4035, &c. really there, and that God had, somewhere or other, from
 Ann. Dom. the time of their departure out of this world, preserved
 31, &c. both their bodies to this end. The Scriptures, indeed, are
 from exprefs as to Elias, that he was translated into heaven by
 Matt. xii. 1. the ministry of angels, refembling (*k*) a chariot of fire, and
 Mark ii. 23. horses of fire; and it is a pretty general opinion, (*l*) both
 Luke vi. 1. among Jewish and Christian authors, taken (as is supposed)
 John v. 1. from some apocryphal book, that Moses did not die, but
 to Matt. was translated into heaven, or some terrestrial paradise, in
 xvii. 14. the same manner as were Enoch and Elias. There is a pas-
 Mark ix. 14. sage in St Jude, where (*m*) Michael the archangel is said to
 Luke ix. 37. contend with the devil, and dispute about the body of Mo-
 John vii. 1. ses, which (if taken in a literal sense) will greatly favour
 this opinion; for if we can but suppose that (*n*) the con-
 test between this good and evil angel concerning Moses's
 body, related not to its burial, (as some will have it), but
 its assumption into heaven, or some other place of happi-
 ness, which the devil might oppose, and urge the obliga-
 tion of his dying the common death of all men, for this
 reason more especially, because he had once taken away the
 life of an Egyptian: If we can but suppose, I say, that the
 contest arose upon this subject, then we may easily conceive
 both how Moses might subsist in a separate state from the
 time of his assumption, and how he, together with Elias,
 might be dispatched from thence upon this occasion, to set
 off the lustre of our Lord's transfiguration, by their appear-
 ing at the same time in their resplendent robes of glory.

And what
 subjects
 they dis-
 cussed on.

And indeed, if this was the purpose of their errand,
 what subject can we suppose so proper, and so well be-
 coming the conversation of three such illustrious persons,
 as the redemption of mankind by the death and passion of
 the Son of God? what these two ancient prophets had in
 their times imperfectly revealed, nay what the angels of
 heaven desire at all times to look into, viz. the harmo-
 ny of the divine attributes in this stupenduous work,
 (*o*) the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and know-
 ledge of God, and (*p*) the breadth, and length, and depth,
 and height, of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;
 (*q*) mysteries which have been hid from ages, and from ge-

(*k*) 2 Kings ii. 11. (*l*) Vid. Dissert. de Calmet sur la mort et la
 sepulture de Moÿse, vol. 3. (*m*) Jude, ver. 9. (*n*) Vid. Whitby
 in locum. (*o*) Rom. xi. 33. (*p*) Eph. iii. 18. 19. (*q*) Col. i. 26.

nerations,

nerations, but are now made manifest to the saints : These were the sublime subjects (for these are implied in (r) their speaking of Christ's decease) of their conversation at this interview ; and, in comparison of these, how jejune and worthless are all the wise sayings of philosophers, or compositions of human wit ? With good reason, therefore, might the great apostle of the Gentiles, (who himself was no mean proficient in what the world falsely calls knowledge), instead of the (s) excellence of speech and wisdom, determine to know nothing among his Corinthians, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified : For (t) we preach Christ crucified, says he, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God ; for (u) of God he is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

A. M.
4035, *etc.*
Ann. Dom.
31, *etc.*
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Why the
Baptist sent
to inquire
concerning
Jesus.

The Scriptures, upon all occasions, acquaint us, that the Baptist, through the whole course of his ministry, had borne constant and ample testimony to our Saviour's divine mission ; that he exhorted those who came to him to rest their faith, not on himself, but on him that should come after him ; and that as soon as he was acquainted who he was, by a visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and a voice from heaven, he made it his business to dispose the Jews in general, and his own disciples in particular, to receive and reverence him, by testifying every where, that he was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, who came from above, and spake the words of God, and to whom God had not given the Spirit by measure. And yet after all this, (x) some are of opinion, that the Baptist might have the same conception of Christ's temporal kingdom that the rest of the Jewish nation had ; and that his long and irksome imprisonment might by this time have tempted him to doubt, whether he, who by birth was his relation, and from whose assistance, very probably, he expected a deliverance, was in reality the Messiah. (y) It seems, however, not a little injurious to the character of the Baptist, to suppose either his constancy so shaken, or his behaviour so inconsistent with itself, as, after such open and solemn declaration, to admit of any doubt, whether our Lord were he that should come, *i. e.* the long promised and universally expected Messiah.

- (r) Luke ix. 31. (s) 1 Cor. ii. 1. 2. (t) Ibid. i. 23.
(u) Ibid. ver. 30. (x) Lightfoot and Beaulobre in locum.
(y) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.

And

A. M. And therefore † the safest way is to conclude, that he did
 4035, &c. not send this message with a design to satisfy any scruples
 Ann. Dom. of his own, but purely for the sake and conviction of his
 31, &c. disciples who brought it; to set them right in their notions,
 from and confirm them in the belief of Jesus, and so turn them
 Matt. xii. 1. over to their proper and better master, now that himself
 Mark ii. 23. was upon the point of leaving the world. And this was
 Luke vi. 1. the rather necessary, because their immoderate zeal, and
 John v. 1. partial respect for the Baptist, had hitherto made them averse
 to Matt. to Jesus, and envious at his honour and miracles. What
 xvii. 14. John had discoursed to them formerly upon this subject had
 Mark ix. 14. made but little impression upon them; and therefore, in
 Luke ix. 37. compassion to their infirmities, he condescended to have
 John vii. 1. their scruples propounded in his own name: And our Sa-
 viour's method of resolving them (which was by shewing
 them that the miracles which he wrought were the same in
 kind that the Messiah was to do) gave so great satisfaction,
 that when their former master was gone, they repaired to
 him with the melancholy news of his death, and (accord-
 ing to the received tradition) for ever after became his con-
 stant disciples.

Our Sa-
 viour's pa-
 rables a-
 greeable to
 the eastern
 way of rea-
 soning.

(*) The frequent use of parables and emblems in

† There are three other opinions which have their followers a-
 mong the ancients. One is mentioned by the author of the *Questions*,
 that go under the name of *Justin Martyr*, viz. That the Baptist was
 not in the least doubtful whether Jesus was the true Messiah, but on-
 ly was desirous to know, whether he, of whom he had heard so ma-
 ny wonderful things, (whilst under confinement, and unable to sa-
 tisfy himself), was the same person of whom he had given testi-
 mony, and declared to be the Messiah. Others think that the
 meaning of the question was, Whether Jesus should die for the re-
 demption of mankind? But surely he who long before had styled
 him the *Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world*, John i.
 29. with allusion no doubt to the sacrifices slain under the Jewish
 law, gave sufficient intimation that he was not ignorant of this great
 truth. Others again imagine, that the sense of this inquiry is,—
 Whether Jesus should come to the Hades, or place of souls depart-
 ed (whither the Baptist foreknew that himself was shortly to go) ?
 and whether he should preach his coming, and be his forerunner
 there, in the like manner as he had been upon earth? But this is an
 imagination too extravagant to receive any countenance from the pre-
 sent, whatever it might meet with in former ages; *Calmet's Com-
 mentary*; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and go-
 spels*, vol. 1.

(*) Whitby's Annotations on Matth. xiii.

the

the discourses and writings of the oriental sages, and especially of the Jewish doctors *, is so very well known, that a man must discover his ignorance, who pretends to assert that our Blessed Saviour attempted any innovation, when he first began to instruct the people in a parabolical way ; since several of his discourses of this kind, particularly that (z) of the rich glutton, and (a) of the foolish virgins, (b) are acknowledged to be borrowed from the writings of their Rabbins.

The truth is, (c) the eastern way of reasoning was so different from that of the west, that the soundest philosophy of Greece or Rome would have been mere jargon and cant at Jerusalem. The only method of reasoning, which was agreeable to the Jewish taste, was to usher in an handsome simile, or story, apposite to the matter in hand ; to apply a smart saying of some ancient worthy ; or to bring good proof from their law, or ancient tradition ; but to go to prove morality to them (as Plato or Tully do) from the eternal rules of justice, from the rectitude and honourableness of virtue, and the pravity and turpitude of

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Mark.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

* The Jews, above all nations, delighted in this way of reasoning. Their books, at this day, are full of such parables as our Saviour used ; and are generally introduced in a form of speech not unlike his. *Whereunto shall I liken such or such a thing ?* Nay, in the Talmudical treatises, such as the treatise Killaim, there is a dispute of sowing upon the rocks and stones, and of mixing wheat and tares together ; and in Peah, (a tract in the Jerusalem Talmud), there is mention made of a tree of mustard-seed, which one might climb up into, like other trees. So that our Saviour was by no means to blame, but rather highly to be commended, for pursuing this parabolical way of teaching morality, which was the most celebrated method among the Jews. For his farther vindication, however, some have observed, that what our Saviour delivered in this manner did not contain the fundamental precepts and doctrines of the gospel, (for these were taught with sufficient clearness in the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters of St Matthew), but only the mysteries relating to the progress of the gospel, and the event of it among Jews and Gentiles ; and the Jews themselves acknowledge, that the predictions of this nature were usually taught in allegorical and emblematical expressions, being not so necessary to be known, as were the fundamental rules of faith and manners ; *Lightfoot's Harmony of the New Testament*, page 20. ; *Nichols's Conference*, part 3. page 413. ; and *Whitby's Annotations on Matth.* xiii. 10.

(z) Luke xvi. 19. (a) Matth. xxv. 1. (b) Sheringham, Præf. (c) Nichols's Conference, part 3. page 413.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

And not
obscure.

vice, would have been such a way of talking, as the wisest men of their way of education would have greatly despised; and therefore our Blessed Saviour (who was well acquainted with the temper and customs of the people with whom he conversed) took care that his way of instructing them should be such as was most agreeable to their education, and consequently such as would tend more to their edification, than if he had introduced the philosophic method of morality, which was only in use in such nations as were destitute of the benefits of a divine revelation.

The Heathens indeed couched their religious mysteries under fables and allegories, out of a principle both of fear and policy, to conceal them from the contempt of the vulgar, and to excite the study and curiosity of the learned. But in this latter design they seem to be mistaken, because the learned could no sooner look into the matters hid under these fables, but they must have discovered their shame, absurdity, and ridiculousness. The design of our Lord's speaking to the people in parables was quite contrary to this, as himself declares, *viz. (d) because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand*; which words, * both in sacred and profane authors, are a proverbial expression, concerning men so wicked and so slothful, that either they attend not to, or will not follow, the clearest intimations and convictions of their duty; and therefore, to awaken their attention, and make the stronger impression upon them, our Saviour was forced to have recourse to parables.

This passage, indeed, in the other evangelists that men-

(d) Matth. xiii. 13.

* To this purpose the prophet Jeremiah, to a revolting and rebellious people, which had cast off the fear of God, speaks in this wise; *Hear now this, ye foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes, and see not, which have ears, and hear not*, chap. v. 21. And in like manner God speaks to Ez. kiel: *Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; that have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious house*, chap. xii. 2. Philo uses the phrase in the same signification; for, speaking of those that were addicted to wine, and sensual pleasures, he says, *ὁρῶντες, ἐκ ὁρᾶν, ἔ ἀκούοντες, ἐκ ἀκούειν*, *They seeing, see not, and hearing, do not hear*; and Demosthenes mentions it as a common proverb, *ὁρῶντας, μὴ ὁρᾶν, καὶ ἀκούοντας, μὴ ἀκούειν*; *W hitby's Annotations on Matth. x.*

tion

tion it, seems to bear a different sense, (e) *unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables, that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand*: Or, as it is in St Luke, (f) *that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand*: As if our Lord had spoken to the multitudes in parables, *i. e.* in a plain and familiar way, on purpose that they might not understand him, which, besides the contradiction, seems to include a spice of malevolence, where there never was any. (g) But all this is occasioned by the mistake of our translators, who, both in St Mark and St Luke, have rendered the word *ὅτι*, by *that*, which should have been *because*; for this gives the words a quite different turn: In St Mark, *because seeing they do see, and not perceive*, and in St Luke, *because seeing they see not, and hearing they understand not*. The natural import of which is this,—“That the Jews, by reason of their prejudices, “not being able to understand the great mysteries of the “gospel, our Saviour, out of love to their souls, accommodated himself to their capacities, by speaking to them “in parables, *i. e.* in metaphors and similitudes, borrowed “from things temporal and corporeal, in order to bring “them to a more competent understanding of his doctrine.”

(h) *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not to them*, does not therefore imply, that our Saviour's parables were dark and obscure, and that by speaking to the people in this manner, he had a design to conceal any truth that was requisite for them to know; but only, that he made a fuller discovery of his doctrine to his disciples, than it was necessary at that time to make to the multitude; that he instructed them in private, and enlarged upon the sense of his parables, and let them into the knowledge of several things, that were not yet proper to be communicated to all, because they were his peculiar friends, and his constant companions; were more disposed to receive his doctrine; were afterwards to be the preachers of it; and at length to seal the truth of it with their blood.

They were honest and well-designing men; but it would be doing too great a compliment to their understanding, to say, that there was any thing extraordinary (until

(e) Mark iv. 11. 12.
History, in the notes.

(f) Chap. viii. 10.
(h) Matth. xiii. 11.

(g) Howell's

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
10 Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

A. M. they were endued from above) in their sagacity and penetration : And therefore, we are not to impute it to the obscurity of our Saviour's parables, that we find his disciples so frequently at a loss for the meaning of them, (since some of them were quoted from Jewish authors, and many of them taken from the most obvious and common things), but we should rather impute it to their natural dulness and want of apprehension, as we find our Saviour himself does, when, upon their requesting him to expound the plain parable of the sower, he could not forbear saying, with admiration, *(i) Know ye not this parable, and how then shall ye know all parables?*

Why he would not shew a sign from heaven.

It was not then to cloud and obscure, but rather illustrate and inforce his meaning, that our Lord delivered himself so frequently in parables ; and the reason why he refused to gratify the Pharisees in their desire of a sign from heaven, was, because he had already done miracles enough to satisfy them; had not their obstinacy been proof against all conviction. In that very chapter (*k*) wherein they make this insolent demand, they had seen, before their faces, (*l*) a withered hand made whole, and, (*m*) upon the ejection of a devil, a blind and dumb man restored to his sight and speech ; but observe the turn which their resolute infidelity gives to the miracles : (*n*) *This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils :* And yet these very men have the modesty, in a few verses after, to come to the person they had just before reviled and blasphemed at this rate, with this arrogant demand ; (*o*) *Master, we would see a sign from thee.* After such an affront, would it have become the meekest man upon earth to gratify these men in any request whatever ? But much more, would it have become the majesty of the Son of God to prostitute his divine power, merely to satisfy the curiosity (for that was all they wanted to have satisfied) of such abandoned miscreants ?

The sign, which they wanted to see, may be supposed to be, either such (*p*) a shower of manna, as Moses ; or such (*q*) a clap of thunder, as Samuel ; or (*r*) such a fall of fire, as Elijah ; or (*s*) such an arrest of the sun, as

(i) Mark iv. 13. (k) Matt. xii. 28. (l) Ver. 13.
 (m) Ver. 22. (n) Ver. 24. (o) Matt. xii. 38. (p)
 Exod. xvi. 14. (q) 1 Sam. vii. 10. (r) 1 Kings xviii.
 28. (s) Josh. x. 12.

Joshua once called for. Now, supposing that our Saviour A. M. had been flexible enough to humour them in their unreasonable request (t), what grounds have we to think, that these aerial or celestial prodigies would have wrought in them any more conviction than those miracles which were incontestable, done in their presence, within their feeling, and compass of examination? These, we see, they imputed to a diabolical power, and much more might they do it to those that were at so vast a distance, since they could not be ignorant of what is said of the prince of the power of the air in the book of Job, viz. That the fire, which fell from heaven, and consumed that holy man's substance, as well as the wind which overturned the house, where his children was met together, were the effects of Satan's procuring.

4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 39.
John vii. 5.

What notions the ancient Jews had of the power of magic, we cannot positively say; but it is certain, that the Heathen magicians made it their boast, * that they could stop the course of the sun, moon, and stars, turn them into darkness, as they pleased, and make them obey their voice: And, if the Pharisees had the like notions of these things, their demanding a sign from heaven was to no manner of purpose; because, upon their own supposition, that our Lord acted by a magical power, what they desired him to do, was not above the sphere of his ability, and, if they thought it so, it could never have wrought in them any good conviction; because the same hardness of heart, and hatred of him, would have kept them under the same persuasion still, that all his wonders, whether above or below, whether in heaven or on earth, whether on human or celestial bodies, were done by the assistance of the devil.

Since then no sign that the Pharisees could ask (even had our Saviour condescended to work it) would have been effectual to their conviction, our Saviour was not unkind in remitting them to one, that would not fail of convincing them, that what he did was not by a diabolical but divine power. For, since it was agreed on all hands, that a person, when dead, (whatever he had in his lifetime), could not then have the devil at his command; if, after they had crucified him, they should find him restored to

The significance of the sign of Jonas.

(t) Calmet's Commentary on Matt. xii. 28.

* Quæ sidera excantata voce Thesſala
Lunamque cælo deripit.

Hor. in Canidiam.

A. M. life again, this would be a sign wherein there could be
 8035, &c. no fallacy; that as his restoration was from the hand of
 Ann. Dom. God, so his commission had all along been from the same;
 31, &c. and (u) that, as Jonas's miraculous escape from the whale's
 from belly (wherewith the Ninevites were doubtless acquainted)
 Matt. xii. 1. was a powerful means to confirm to them the truth of his
 Mark ii. 23. prophetic office; so now, though all Christ's miracles,
 Luke vi. 1. while living, prevailed but little, yet, after his death and
 John v. 1. resurrection from the grave, he would then be credited,
 to Matt. xvii. 14. in the same manner as Jonas was; (x) *he would then draw*
 Mark ix. 14. *all men after him*, and the very Pharisees themselves would
 Luke ix. 37. be prevailed upon to acknowledge his divine mission.
 John vii. 1. This is the sense of his comparing himself so often with the
 prophet Jonas: And that the chief priests and Pharisees
 understood the comparison in this sense, is manifest from
 what they say to Pilate: (y) *Sir, we remember that that*
deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will
rise again; for I nowhere remember, that he made any
 declaration to the chief priests and Pharisees (tho' he did it
 frequently to his apostles) of his intended resurrection af-
 ter three days, but only in this comparison of himself to
 Jonas.

Why Christ Had human wisdom indeed been consulted in the elec-
 made tion of Christ's apostles, it would have made choice of the
 choice of profoundest rabbins, the acutest philosophers, and the most
 mean men powerful orators, who, by the strength of reason, and
 to be his arts of eloquence, might have triumphed over the minds
 apostles. of men, grappled with the stubbornness of the Jews, and
 baffled the fine notions and speculations of the Greeks and
 Romans; but then it must be allowed, that one argument
 for the proof of the divinity of the Christian religion had
 been lost. Nay, it might have been objected, "That no
 " wonder, indeed, that this religion should thrive so well
 " in the world, when it had all human advantages to assist
 " it, and was supported and carried on by the united
 " force of the reason and eloquence of such renowned
 " scholars." But now, by making choice of weak and
 illiterate persons to be his apostles, and first publishers of
 the gospel, our Lord has taken an effectual means, that (z)
our faith should not stand (as St Paul expresses it) *in the*
wisdom of men, but in the power of God, because their
speech and their preaching was not with enticing words of

(u) Whitby's Annotations on Matt. xii. 39. (x) John xii.
 32. (y) Matt. xxvii. 63. (z) 1 Cor. ii. 4. 5.

man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.

And, indeed, what less than a divine power could have enabled a few illiterate mechanics, who had no art, no address of their own, to propagate a new and unheard-of religion, contrary to the laws every where established, and contrary to men's natural passions and appetites, with such a wonderful success, as, in the space of twenty or thirty years, to extend it over all the principal parts of the Roman empire, and, in the next age, to fill all places, cities, and islands, castles and boroughs, palaces and senates, courts and camps, with multitudes of converts, as the great apologist, Tertullian, justly glories? Doubtless, if ever there was an intervention of divine power in human affairs, it was here, *when (a) God chose the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise and mighty*, and when simplicity and ignorance not only had the advantage, but absolutely triumphed over all the wit, and learning, and power, and policy of the world.

That therefore the mighty force of Christianity, to make its way through the greatest obstacles, might more evidently appear, the instruments which our Saviour employed in the propagation of it, (so far as their own abilities, either natural or acquired, were concerned), were the meanest that can be imagined, but, by an extraordinary communication of his Blessed Spirit to them, he inspired them with the gift of languages, that they might be able to address themselves to people of all nations; with the power of working miracles, that they might be able to confirm the truth of the doctrine which they taught; and, upon all emergencies, *(b) with such a mouth and wisdom, as all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist.*

These, and several other gifts extraordinary, did more than supply the natural defects which the apostles laboured under in the execution of so great a work; but now that these gifts are withdrawn, our religion established, and the canon of the holy Scriptures completed, their successors have a different province to manage. Instead of travelling all the world over, and compassing sea and land to gain proselytes to the Christian faith, their duty is, to keep in order the things that are settled, and *(c) to feed the flock of God that is among them, taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as lords over God's*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(a) Ibid. i. 27.

(b) Luke xxi. 15.

(c) 1 Pet. v. 2.
inheritance,

Why learning, &c. is required in Christ's ministers now.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

inheritance, but as ensamples to their flock; and, instead of delivering to their respective churches such writings as might, in all ages, be the pillar and foundation of truth, their business is to study the Scriptures, which they have received, to defend their authority, and expound their sense; (d) to preach the word, (as the apostle to Timothy specifies their office); to be instant in season, and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; and what compass of learning and share of influence among the people are requisite to a due discharge of all this, (as (e) a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of God), wants no detail of arguments to prove, since we find the great apostle St Paul, amidst all the gifts that were then dispensed to the church, and the particular revelations which were vouchsafed him, upon the consideration of the weightiness of his office, crying out, and saying, (f) Who is sufficient for these things? Upon the whole, therefore, we may observe, that it was highly requisite, that the apostles and first publishers of the gospel, and the present ministers and preachers of it, should be men of different characters and abilities; that the former of these (for the more effectual discharge of their office) should have several kinds of gifts supernatural, the latter no more than was the product of their own labour and acquisition; or (to speak in the phrase of the Scripture) that as, at first, our Saviour (g) gave some apostles; some prophets; and some evangelists; so now he should appoint some rulers, some pastors, and some teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Why our
Saviour
might be in-
nocently
angry with
the Phari-
sees.

(h) That anger, considered in itself, and upon all occasions whatever, is unlawful, neither the most rigid philosophers, nor the most severe Christians, have ever been able to prove. It is one of those passions that are implanted in us by the God of nature. The first motions of it seem to be mechanical, and the hastiness or slowness

(d) 2 Tim. iv. 2.
ii. 16.

(e) Ibid. ii. 15.

(f) 2 Cor.

(g) Eph. iv. 11. &c.

(h) Stanhope on the

epistles and gospels, vol. 3.

of

of it depends in a great measure upon the temper of the body, and the animal spirits : So far then as it is natural, we dare not account it criminal, for fear of making God, who hath implanted it in us, the author of sin: Those who define it *a desire of revenge*, or of doing evil to another, purely because he has done so to us, make it indeed a sinful passion, and a plain violation of that command which requires us *(i)* *not to avenge ourselves, but rather to give place unto wrath*; but if it be considered *(k)* as proceeding upon a desire of obtaining satisfaction for some injury done to us, or to those for whom we are concerned, the honour of God, the reverence due to the laws, the love of virtue, and the protection of good men, may make this not only innocent, but highly necessary and commendable. There is a tameness of spirit that justly deserves censure; and in some cases we even do not well unless we are angry : And for this reason, I make no doubt it was, *(l)* that our Blessed Saviour, on some occasions, suffered himself to be seen in some degrees of this passion, namely to evince the lawfulness of it, and, by his example, to confute the doctrine of those Heathen Stoics, who condemned the use of all passions, and were for making those natural tendencies which God has given us altogether superfluous.

For religion admits of no such paradoxical notions : When it requires us to be *(m)* slow to wrath, it allows of the passion upon a just provocation, and only blames him *(n)* *who is angry with his brother without a cause*; and when it gives us this caution, *(o)* *Be angry and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath*, it supposes the thing itself warrantable, and only prohibits the excess or long duration of it. It is the rash, causeless, and continued anger, that our holy religion condemns : But who shall say, that our Saviour's resentment to the Pharisees was not upon good grounds, when they, by their traditions, had made void the moral law, excused men from doing what God had commanded, and laid upon them other unnecessary burdens, which he had nowhere enjoined ? When the pride and arrogance of their sect, and their contempt and hatred of all that contradicted them, made it necessary for him to use

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23 Luke
vi. 1: John
v. 1. to
Matth. xvii.
14. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37. John vii.
1.

(i) Rom. xii. 19. *(k)* Whitby's Annotations on Matth. v. 22.
(l) Nicholls's Conference, part 3. p. 410. *(m)* James 1. 19.
(n) Matth. v. 22. *(o)* Eph. iv. 26.

A. M. some smartness in his reprehensions, thereby to excite them
 4035, &c. to a sensibility of their errors? They (p) had consulted
 Ann. Dom with the Herodians how they might destroy him; the works
 31, &c. which he did by the finger of God, they had ascribed to
 from a diabolical power; and therefore no wonder that he should
 Matt. xii. 1. look upon them with indignation, because of the hardness
 Mark ii. 23. of their hearts. But when there was no such cause for any
 Luke vi. 1. degree of anger, and where the glory of God was not im-
 John v. 1. mediately concerned, his whole life was the most perfect
 to Matt. pattern of meekness and patience, according to that pre-
 xvii. 14. diction concerning him, (q) *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor*
 Mark ix. 14. *cause his voice to be heard in the streets; a bruised reed shall*
 Luke ix. 37 *he not break, and a smoking flax shall he not quench.*
 John vii 1

What is
 meant by
 our Sa-
 viour's be-
 ing beside
 himself.

But how comes it then, that St Mark, in his gospel, re-
 presents our Saviour as a person that was supposed (r) to be
 beside himself? Various are the significations which are
 given to the word *ἐξῆν* in this place; but there are three
 that bid fairest for the solution of that difficulty. (s) In
 the preceding verse it is said, that the multitude came so
 fast upon him, that he had not time to take any food to
 recruit his spirits; and thereupon some interpreters would
 have the word signify his fainting through hunger, or
 being in danger of falling into a deliquium by spending his
 spirits, and taking no manner of refreshment to revive them.
 (t) Others had rather mean by the word such an extasy, or
 transport of mind, as those who are moved with a vehe-
 ment zeal, or prophetic spirit, are wont to be affected with;
 and consequently that his friends apprehensions were, that
 in the execution of his prophetic office, *i. e.* in his preach-
 ing and instructing the people, he expended his strength
 too much, forgetful of that care and preservation
 which he ought to have had of himself. But for my
 part I cannot see why the word may not here be taken in
 its common and ordinary sense, for what is called *madness*
 and *distractiō*. We acknowledge, indeed, that our Lord,
 neither in his actions or gestures, shewed ever any symp-
 toms of a disordered mind; nor could his relations, from
 any behaviour of his, conceive any such thing of him:
 but then the words in the text *ἐλεγον γάρ*, *for they said,*

(p) Mark iii. 6. (q) Isa. xlii. 2. 3. (r) Mark iii. 21.
 (s) Whoby in locum. (t) Hammond's Annotations.

may not relate to his friends, but to other people who had raised this report of him. The Pharisees had given out that he had a devil, and did all these miracles by a confederacy with him; and others who did not run to this length of blasphemy, said nevertheless, that he was mad, and his head turned; and when this came to his friends ears, they, out of a charitable design perhaps, went to apprehend him, supposing that he might possibly be under some such disorder; and not rightly understanding the end of his mission, as the evangelist (*u*) informs us that some of his kindred did not believe in him. And indeed, (*x*) if we consider with ourselves how common a thing it is to look upon those who think, or speak, or act in a manner different from other people, as fools and madmen; how this was the fate (*y*) of the young prophet before Jehu's companions, and of St Paul (*z*) before Festus; we shall not think it strange that our Lord should fall under the same opprobrious imputation, or that his relations, (who had no true conception of him or his office), hearing of this rumour, should endeavour to get him into their custody, and so prevent his exposing himself to the scorn and derision of those that hated him. For though some of the people were of opinion that *he spake as never man spake*, (*a*) yet many of them said, *he has a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?*

The name of Peter or Cephas, (as it is in the Syriac), our Blessed Lord gave to Simon, when his brother Andrew first brought them together; and in allusion to this name it is, that he calls him the *rock*, or *stone*, upon which he intended to build his church. Some indeed by this *rock* think, that our Saviour intends himself, (*b*) and that, in uttering these words, he pointed at his own person, as he seems to have done upon another like occasion, when he speaks to the Jews, (*c*) *destroy this temple*, (meaning his own body), *and in three days I will raise it up*: But the sense seems abstruse, and the transition abrupt, that our (*d*) Saviour, speaking to Peter, and calling him a *rock*, should, with the same breath, pass to himself, and yet not say, *upon myself*, but *upon this rock*, (and St Peter was the

(*u*) John vii. 5. (*x*) Calmet's Commentary in locum.
 (*y*) 2 Kings ix. 11. (*z*) Acts xxvi. 24. (*a*) John
 x. 20. (*b*) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4. (*c*)
 John ii. 19. (*d*) Pool's Annotations on Matth. xvi. 18.

A. M. only rock he mentioned), *will I build my church*. Others therefore would rather have St Peter's faith and confession to be the rock here spoken of, as it must be acknowledged indeed, that, in this confession of his, the sum and substance of the Christian doctrine is comprised; but then it should be considered, that as our Lord, without all doubt, meant to say something singular to St Peter, as a reward of his frank confession of him, if this confession was all the rock he intended, here was nothing particular said to the apostle, and yet, at the same time, the whole grace of the allusion to his name was entirely lost. It is reasonable therefore to think, (*e*) that as our Saviour here directs his speech, not to the whole college of the apostles, but to St Peter only, and seems to promise him something peculiar as the reward of his liberal confession, the sense of the expression should be, that he would, in a more eminent manner, make use of his ministry, in laying the first foundation of the Christian church, both among the Jews and Gentiles, as we find he did the former, (*f*) in his most efficacious sermon at the day of Pentecost, and the latter, (*g*) in the conversion of Cornelius and his company.

What is meant by the *Keys of the kingdom of heaven*.

There is a passage in Isaiah, which (as some imagine) helps us to the knowledge of what our Saviour means by *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*; it is where God foretels Eliakim, (*h*) that he will call him, and cloath him with the robe of Shebna, (who (*i*) was over the household), and strengthen him with his girdle, and commit his government into his hand, and lay the key of the house of David † upon his shoulder, &c. Now, because the key was an ensign of great honour and power, and what the chief stewards in princes palaces usually wore, as an indication of their office, our Saviour makes use of this expression, to denote that authority and jurisdiction wherewith he invested the apostles and their successors in the administration of the affairs of his church. But, besides the key of government,

(*e*) Whitby's Annotations in locum. (f) Acts ii. (g) Ibid. x. (h) Isa. xxii. 20. (i) Ibid. ver. 15.

† This custom of carrying keys upon mens shoulders may seem very strange to us: but the ancients had their keys made very large, and in the form of a sickle, and the weight and shape of them was such, that they could no otherwise be carried conveniently, but as we see our reapers carry their sickles; *Calmer's Dictionary* under the word *Key*.

there

there is (*k*) *the key of knowledge*, which the scribes and Pharisees are blamed for having taken away; and therefore as the use of a key is to open a door or gate, we should rather think the import of Christ's promise here to Peter is, (*l*) that he should be the person who should first open the mysteries of the gospel-dispensation, both to Jew and Gentile; by the power of his preaching, make the first converts among both; and, by the rite of baptism, receive such converts into the pale of the Christian church: And by the *binding* and *loosing* which follow, (though † some are willing to extend them to the power of excommunication and absolution), I should rather be inclined to think, that, according to the language then in use among the Jews, our Saviour means the forbidding or permitting such and such things; that (*m*) he is here declaring his will, that his apostles should settle the affairs of his church by virtue of their infallible spirit; should determine what was lawful or unlawful for Christians to do, and that such their determinations

A. N.
4035. &c.
Ann. Dom.
31. &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(*k*) Luke xi. 52.
xvi. 19.

(*l*) Whitby's Annotations on Matth.

† This indeed is the common acceptation of the words; and our learned Archbishop Potter, in his discourse of church-government, chap. 5. looks upon this *binding* and *loosing*, when applied to things and not persons, not only as a manifest force upon the words, which the Scriptures never use in any such sense, but false in fact likewise, because the apostles had no power either to make or declare any thing to be unlawful, which was not before made and declared by Christ to be so: And therefore though he owns, that, in the text, *things* and not *persons* are expressed, yet he nevertheless asserts, that it is very common to put adjectives of the neuter gender, instead of substantives, and so to express *things* when *persons* are understood. This manner of expressing substantives by neuter adjectives, can hardly be contested; but then we cannot but think, that the word *binding*, when put for imposing laws or injunctions upon us, is no uncommon phrase in Scripture, since we find our Saviour complaining of the scribes and Pharisees, *for binding heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laying them on other mens shoulders*, Matth. xxiii. 4. Nor can we see how the apostles (who had no precept from their master to that purpose) could have absolved proselytes from the observation of the Jewish law, Acts xv. 28. 29. had they not had power and authority given them by the Holy Ghost, to declare *some things which Christ had not declared before*.

(*m*) Poole's Annotations on Matth. xvi. 18.

should

A. M. should be ratified in heaven : “ *Whatsoever thou shalt bind*
 4035, &c. “ *on earth*, i. e. declare to be forbidden, shall expose the
 Ann. Dom. “ man that commits it to punishment ; and *whatsoever thou*
 31, &c. “ *shalt loose on earth*, or declare to be lawful now, (tho’ for-
 from “ merly forbidden), shall be allowed to be done, without any
 Matt. xii. 1. “ one’s incurring my displeasure :” So that in this sense
 Mark ii. 23 the words are a foundation of our faith and obedience to
 Luke vi. 1. the doctrines and commands of the apostles, and of the
 John v. 1. to Matth. cessation of the ritual precepts of the law of Moses.
 xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37. According to this exposition, the sense of our Lord’s
 John vii. 1. promise to Peter (supposing it personal, and directed to him
 only) will be this ---- (n) “ Thy name signifies a *rock*, and,
 “ suitable to that name shall be thy work and office ; for
 “ upon thee, i. e. upon the strength of thy preaching,
 “ shall the foundation of my church be laid. Thee I will
 “ appoint to make the first converts, both of Jews and
 “ Gentiles, to my holy religion, and, by the ordinance of
 “ baptism, to admit them into the communion of saints ;
 “ and to thee I will give power to enact laws, for the good
 “ government of my church ; to determine what is proper
 “ or improper to be done, and to release my people from
 “ the observation of legal ceremonies.”

Which
 gives him
 no superio-
 rity over
 the other
 apostles.

This is the full force of our Saviour’s speech to Peter ; and yet it neither denotes nor implies any oecumenical, pastoral power in him (much less in his successors) above the rest of the apostles. For, if he be here called the *rock*, or *foundation-stone*, the same honour is attributed to the rest, where it is said, that (o) *we are built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*. If he had the power of the keys intrusted with him, and thereby admitted the first converts, both Jews and Gentiles, into the Christian church ; both James and John exercised the same office, in converting those of the circumcision ; and St Paul opened the kingdom of heaven to many more Gentiles than ever he did. If he had authority to discharge the converts he made from the observation of the ceremonial law, St Paul, without doubt, had the same with regard to this, and perhaps a clearer notion of the Christian liberty, than St Peter seems to have had,

(n) Whitby, *ibid*.

(o) Eph. ii. 20.

when he gave occasion to the other to (p) withstand him to the face, and so frequently to declare, *that we are not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*: And, whatever the sense of binding and loosing may be, it is certain, that the same power and authority was given, in as ample a manner, to all the apostles in general, where it is said, (q) *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*: And again, (r) *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained*. So wisely did our Blessed Saviour settle an equality among his apostles, that (s) *there might be no schism in his church, but that (t) in him all the building fitly framed together, (as the apostle continues the metaphor) might grow unto an holy temple in the Lord!*

A. M.
4035. *Gr.*
Ann. Dom.
31, *Gr.*
from Matt.
xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(p) Gal. ii. 11. 16.
xx. 23.

(q) Matth. xviii. 18.

(r) John

* It is certain, that the rest of the apostles did not conceive any peculiar power or pre-eminence to have been given to Peter, because, after this promise made to him, James and John desired to be next in dignity to our Lord; as also among them and the other apostles, there was a contention who should be greatest; which could not well have happened, if they had understood that this honour had been already granted to Peter. It cannot be denied, indeed, but that some of the apostles were superior to others, both in personal merit and order of place. St Paul speaks of some, *viz.* James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, Gal. ii. 9. *i. e.* principal supporters of the church, and were accounted chief apostles, 2 Cor. xi. 5.; and it is remarkable, that in all the catalogues of the twelve apostles which are extant in the Scriptures, Peter is constantly placed the first, as Judas is the last: From whence we may observe, that, as Judas, who kept the bag, and was a thief, John xii. 6. was last of all the twelve, so Peter, who had the first place, does all along through the whole history of the gospels, shew a greater zeal for our Lord's honour and service than any of the rest; *vid.* page 447. in the notes. But, whatever might be the true reason of this order, it is certain, that nothing more was founded on it than a mere priority of place: and that neither Peter, nor any other apostle, had any power or authority over the rest, according to that of St Cyprian, *De unitate ecclesie, Hoc erant utique et ceteri apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio præditi et honoris et potestatis*; Archbishop Potter's Discourse of church-government, chap. 3.

(s) 1 Cor. xii. 25.

(t) Eph. ii. 21.

Nothing

A M. Nothing certainly can be plainer in Scripture, than that
 4035, &c. the sin against the Holy Ghost, which our Saviour men-
 Ann. Dom tions as a sin unpardonable, is to be understood of the
 31, &c. Pharisees imputing the miracles, which he wrought by the
 from Matt. power of the Holy Ghost, to the power of the devil; and
 xii. 1. Mark yet, I know not how, a great many learned men have
 ii. 23 Luke made shift to mistake it. (u) A denial of Christ's divinity,
 vi. 1. John a denial of his religion for fear of suffering, a wilful oppo-
 v. 1. to sition to the truth, a malicious envying other men's graces,
 Matth. xvii gross relapses into sin, or final impenitence, and perseve-
 14. Mark ix. rance therein, have, some by one, and some by others,
 14 Luke ix been made the characteristics of this sin; and yet the very
 37. John vii occasion of our Saviour's discourse concerning it cannot
 1. but give us quite different conceptions.

Several no-
 tions about
 the sin a-
 gainst the
 Holy Ghost.
 What it
 really is.

(x) He had just now healed one possessed of a devil,
 blind, and dumb, whereat the people were much amazed,
 and began to say among themselves, *Is not this the son of*
David? i. e. the promised Messiah: Which when the
 Pharisees understood, they gave this vile and malicious turn
 to the miracle, *This fellow does not cast out devils, but by*
Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. This calumny our Saviour
 undertook to confute, by shewing how unlikely a thing it
 was, that the devil should lend him his power to use it
 against himself; and then proceeds to discourse of this sin,
 (y) *Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy*
(which is of another nature) shall be forgiven unto
men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be
forgiven unto them. The Pharisees therefore are the per-
 sons charged with the sin, and the sin is, their attributing
 what was done by the finger of God to a diabolical power.

Dr Whit-
 by's notion
 groundless.

(z) A learned annotator of our own is of opinion,
 that, though our Saviour entered upon this discourse, be-
 cause the Pharisees imputed his miracles to a confederacy
 with Satan, yet his chief design was to deter his hearers
 from blaspheming the ensuing dispensation of the Holy
 Ghost, which, upon his resurrection, and ascension, he had
 promised to send down from heaven: So that this sin against
 the Holy Ghost neither was, nor could be committed, when
 our Saviour spake these words, not until the time that
 its miraculous gifts were communicated to the apostles,

(u) Tillotson's Sermons, vol. i. (x) Matt xii. 22. (y)
 Ibid. ver. 21. (z) Whitby, in his appendix to the 12th
 chapter of St Matthew.

which

which was on the day of Pentecost. But (besides that our Blessed Saviour had not as yet made mention either of his own ascension, or of the mission of the Holy Ghost) since the power, whereby both he and his apostles wrought their miracles, proceeded from the same Divine Spirit, a reviling this power, when our Saviour did the miracle, must be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, as much as it was when his apostles did it; and so the difference amounts to nothing.

(a) Our Blessed Lord indeed, to show that he was sent from God, wrought miracles, such as did plainly evince a divine power and presence accompanying him. These miracles (to which he frequently appeals) the Pharisees were eye-witnesses of, and therefore could not deny them; yet such was their hatred and opposition to him and his doctrine, that, rather than allow his divine mission, they were resolved to ascribe all he did to the power of the devil. Their design in this was to destroy the whole credit of Christianity, and, by making him a confederate with Satan, to represent his religion as the work and contrivance of hell, and such only as would tend to the mischief and destruction of mankind. To slander and calumniate the Son of Man, was a great sin no doubt, but such as might more easily be forgiven them, because of his state of humiliation, and poor appearance, which might occasion their dislike: But to represent the Spirit of God as an apostate angel, and, whatever he did for the good and salvation of mankind, as the work and intrigue of the devil, is a sin of such a horrid nature, as may well deserve a particular exemption from the general promise and covenant of pardon.

(b) God, no doubt, can, if he will, work so powerfully upon the minds of men by his grace and Spirit, as to convince the most obstinate; and, supposing them to be convinced, and repent, it cannot be denied, but that they would be forgiven: And therefore, when our Saviour says, that such as blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven, it is reasonable to suppose, that he means, that when men are come to such a degree of inveterate malice, God (as he justly may) will withdraw his grace from them, and leave them to the bent of their perverse minds, which will insensibly en-

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.

The heinousness of the sin;

(a) Tillotson's Sermons, vol. 1.

(b) Ibid.

A. M. gage them in a further opposition to the truth, and sink
 4035, &c. them finally into perdition; so that being deserted of
 Ann. Dom. God, and, for want of the necessary aid of his grace,
 31, &c. continuing finally impenitent, they become incapable of
 from forgiveness both in this world, and in that which is to come.
 Mart. vii. 1. The short then of all is this, that the sin against the Holy
 Mark ii. 23. Ghost is unpardonable, not because there is not a sufficien-
 Luke vi. 1. cy of merit in Christ to atone for it, or of mercy in God
 John v. 1. to the Father to forgive it, but because those who commit it
 to Matth. xvii. 14. are of such a refractory and incorrigible spirit, that they
 Mark ix. 14. resist the last and utmost means of their conviction, and,
 Luke ix. 37. consequently, neither will nor can repent; especially, if
 John vii. 1. God in judgment, (as it sometimes happens), and (c) be-
 cause they received not the love of the truth, that they might
 be saved, should send upon them a strong delusion, that they
 might believe a lie.

That which has made some passages in the 6th chapter
 of St John's gospel, and especially the command of (d)
eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of Man, a
 matter of so much perplexity, is the want of attending to
 the occasion of his discourse, and the figurative forms of
 expression that were then in use in the eastern nations.
 Our Lord, it seems, but the day before, (e) had fed a
 great number of people with a very small matter of provi-
 sions. The day following they resort to him, in hopes of
 the same bounteous supply. Our Lord, who knew their
 design, rebuked their greedy appetite. They, in return,
 reminded him of Moses's liberality, (much superior to his),
 in providing them manna for the space of forty years.
 Hereupon, our Lord took occasion to acquaint them, (f)
 that he was the bread of God, which came down from heaven,
 highly preferable to manna; forasmuch as that gave only
 their forefathers a transitory, but this an everlasting life
 to the whole world: For (g) *he that cometh to me* (conti-
 nues he) *shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me*
shall never thirst; and, again, (h) *I am the living* (or ra-
 ther *life-giving*) *bread, which came down from heaven; if a-*
ny man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread
that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life
of the world. (i) *For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is*

(c) 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11. (d) John vi. 53. (e) Ibid.
 ver. 9. 10. (f) Ibid. ver. 33. (g) Ibid. ver. 35. (h)
 Ibid. ver. 51. (i) Ibid. ver. 54. 55.

drink

drink indeed : He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom. 31, &c.

Now, whosoever considers the genius of the eastern languages, abounding in lofty, and sometimes abstruse, figures, and how common a thing it was, among the Jews especially, to use the metaphors of eating and drinking in a spiritual sense, viz. to denote the exercise or improvement of any of the intellectual faculties of the soul, will not be much surprised at our Saviour's expressing himself in this manner. *(k)* *Ho, every one that thirsteth,* (says the prophet, exhorting the people to hear his instructions), *come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price ; and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.* To the same purpose we frequently find Philo calling wisdom and virtue the food of the soul, which nourishes it to eternal life ; and *(l)* the Talmudists telling us, " that all the eating and drinking which " is mentioned in the book of Ecclesiastes, relates to the " observation of the law, and good works : " Nay manna, in particular, (according to the sense of some Jewish authors), was an eminent type of Christ ; and therefore " the " good man," *(m)* says Philo, " lifts up his eyes to heaven, " looking to the manna, the divine and heavenly λόγος, the " incorruptible food of the soul, that loves God ; " and if this was the Jews sense of things, our Saviour was guilty of no presumption in styling himself the *true bread which came down from heaven*, nor of any absurdity in insisting upon a metaphor which so frequently occurred in the best of their authors. The only question is, Whether our Saviour's words in this place are to be taken in a literal or metaphorical sense ? *i. e.* Whether they relate to a corporeal or spiritual eating his flesh ?

There is something so shocking in the very notion of one man's eating the flesh of another, that when the Jews heard our Saviour (as they imagined) discourse at this rate, they might well say, *(n)* *How can this man give us his flesh to eat ?* " *(o)* Will he cut it to pieces, and distribute to every " one of us a share ? It is no agreeable thought to eat human flesh ; but (supposing we could bring ourselves to

Not to be taken in a literal sense.

(k) Isaiah lv. 1. 2. *(l)* Maimon. More. Nev. lib. I. c. 10.
(m) L. De eo quod deterius, pag. 137. *(n)* John vi. 52.
(o) Calmet's Comment. in locum.

A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom. 31, &c. from Matt xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matth. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

“ that) how could he multiply himself into so many parts, as that each of us might have one ? Or how could himself subsist, if he should, in this barbarous and inhuman manner, cut and mangle his own body ?” This seems to be the reasoning of the Jews upon the case : (p) But, on all hands, it is agreed, that they mistook the sense of our Saviour’s words, and fancied such a meaning in them as he never intended ; whereas, had the literal sense been the proper and intended meaning, it is certain, that they imposed no false construction upon what he said ; since, upon this supposition, he intended that this human flesh should properly be eaten, and they, in their questioning the truth of what he said, meant no more.

We may observe farther, that when our Saviour knew within himself that the abstruseness of his discourse upon this subject had given some disgust to his disciples, (q) he said unto them, *Does this offend you ? What, and if ye should see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before ?* The only sense of which words can be, “ (r) Are you offended that I thus speak of giving you my flesh to eat ? Do you look on this expression now as a thing so very absurd and unintelligible ? What then will you think of it, when this body is removed hence into heaven ? *i. e.* How will you then be scared, and think it still more difficult, and more impossible to apprehend, how ye shall then eat my flesh, and drink my blood, provided ye go on to understand my words in a gross and carnal manner ?” For St Athanasius has well observed, that our Saviour here mentions his ascent into heaven, that he might divert his disciples from entertaining a carnal sense of his words : And therefore his argument is, — “ Since it will be then impossible for you to eat my flesh corporeally, when it is so far removed from you ; by this you may perceive, that my purpose is, that you should understand my words in a spiritual sense.”

We may observe again, that when several disciples revolted upon the account of this hard saying, (as (s) it is called), and our Saviour was apprehensive that his apostles might do the like, St Peter, in the name of the rest, answers him, (t) *Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the*

(p) Whitby’s Annotations in locum.

(q) John vi. 61. 62.

(r) Whitby’s Annotations.

(s) John vi. 60.

(t) Ibid. ver. 68.

words of eternal life : Whereas, had he understood our Saviour as speaking here of oral manducation, his answer very probably would have been to this effect : " Whatsoever appearance there may be of inhumanity, absurdness, and impossibility, in eating thy natural flesh, and drinking thy blood, yet we believe it because thou hast said it, who art truth itself, and able to make good thy words." But since we hear nothing from him of this tendency, we may reasonably conclude, that he had no such notion of our Saviour's words. And indeed our Saviour, one would think, had done enough to explain his own meaning, when he tells us, that the eating which he intends is (*u*) believing on him, and that it was such an eating as would make a man (*x*) live for ever ; that (*y*) flesh (if we could eat it) profiteth nothing, since the soul can only be nourished by spiritual food ; and that therefore the words which he spake unto them were spirit, *i. e.* were to be understood in a spiritual sense, otherwise they would not be conducive to eternal life : And therefore (*z*) Eusebius introduces our Saviour as thus addressing his disciples, " Do not think that I speak of that flesh wherewith I am compassed, as if you must eat of that ; neither imagine that I command you to drink my bodily blood, but understand well, that the words which I have spoken unto you, they are spirit and life." For (as St Austin (*a*) lays down the rule for the exposition of Scripture-phrases) " If the saying be preceptive, either forbidding a wicked action, or injoining a good one, it is no figurative speech ; but if it seems to command any wickedness, or to forbid what is profitable and good, it is figurative. Accordingly this saying, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood*, seems to command a wicked thing, and is therefore a figure, injoining us to communicate in the passion of our love, and sweetly and profitably remember, that his flesh was wounded and crucified for us." (*b*) In this sense, his flesh and blood are *ἀληθῆς, truly meat and drink* ; because the eating of this flesh by faith in his salutary passion doth nourish the soul to life eternal ; and the drinking of his blood by faith, as that which was *shed for the remission of sins* does refresh

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(*u*) Ibid. ver. 47. (*x*) Ibid. ver. 51. (*y*) Ibid. ver. 63.
(*z*) De eccles. theolog. lib. 3. c. 12. (*a*) De doctrin. Christian.
lib. 3. c. 16. (*b*) Whitby's Annotations on John vi. 55.

A. D. the person, thirsting after righteousness, and convey into
 8035, &c. him a principle of living well, and of living for ever.
 Ann. Dom. Thus we have gone through the several objections that
 31, &c. are usually made to the facts contained in the evangelical
 from history of this period; and (if it would be of any farther
 Matth. xii. satisfaction to those that delight to make them) we might
 x. Mark ii. shew, that whatever is recorded of our Blessed Saviour, the
 23. Luke like, in one instance or other, the Heathens themselves
 vi. 1. John have acknowledged in their deified heroes, and great men :
 Matt. xvii. (c) That the same power of curing all kinds of diseases the
 14. Mark Greeks ascribe to their Æsculapius, and the Egyptians to
 ix. 14. their Serapis and Isis : That Hadrian (according (d) to Spar-
 Luke ix. 37 tianus) was cured of a fever by the touch of a certain blind
 John vii. 1. man : That Sesostris King of Egypt, upon offering a sacri-
 { Heathen tes- fice to the god Mnevis, was restored to his eye-sight : That
 timonies relating to Vespasian (if we may believe Tacitus) cured a man of his
 this part of the evange- lameness, and another of his blindness, by anointing his
 lical histo- eyes with spittle, in the manner that our Saviour did ; and
 ry. that Apollonius Tyanæus (whom (e) Philostratus sets up as
 a powerful rival of our Lord's miracles) cured a young man
 that was possessed with a devil ; and when he had restored
 him to his right senses, received him into the number of his
 disciples. Simplicius, in his Dissertations upon Epictetus,
 seems to promise to all pious and wise men the power of
 calming the waves of the sea ; and how Neptune rebuked
 and allayed the winds, which, without his permission, had
 raised a tempestuous storm, is a story well known, and well
 set off in (f) Virgil. Every poet almost mentions this same
 Neptune's riding in his chariot on the surface of the sea ;
 and the tradition is, that to his son Euphemus, and his ne-
 phew Orion, he gave the faculty of walking upon it with-
 out fear of sinking. Nothing can be more common a-
 mong the fictions of these writers, than the transfiguration
 of their gods upon one occasion or other ; and that our
 Saviour's method of electing his disciples might not want
 a precedent in profane history, (g) we are told, that the
 famous eastern philosopher Confucius, out of the three
 thousand followers that he had, made choice of seventy.

(c) Huetii Quæst. 18. Alnet. lib. 2. (d) Ælius Spartian. Ha-
 drian. c. 25. (e) Philost. Vit. Apoll. lib. 4. c. 6. (f) Æncid 1.
 (g) Martin, Hist. Sinica, lib. 4.

two of principal note, and, out of these, of twelve only to be his more immediate companions, and to whom he committed the hidden mysteries of his philosophy : But our happiness is, that the credibility of the Scripture-history wants no such weak supports as these.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 5.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 3.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

DISSERTATION II.

Of the Prophecies relating to the Messiah, and their Accomplishment in our Blessed Saviour.

ONE great evidence of our Saviour's divine mission, and, consequently, of the truth of his religion, is the completion of the ancient prophecies, relating to the Messiah, in his person, doctrine, and miracles. He indeed makes more frequent appeal to his miracles : (*b*) *The works which the Father hath given me to finish*, says he, *the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me* : But since, at the same time, he lays claim to the character of being the person spoken of by Moses and the prophets, when he bids the people (*i*) *search the Scriptures, because they testified of him* ; it is certain that his title to the Messiahship must be tried by the testimony of the prophets ; and that all the miraculous works which he did, will not prove him to be the Messenger of the covenant, whom God was to send, unless the several predictions, which his servants the prophets gave of that renowned person, are found to unite and agree in him. It can hardly be thought, but that God almighty, who designed such an inestimable benefit for mankind, as the sending his own Son into the world for the redemption of it, should give some previous notice of his coming, and draw his picture (as it were) so much to the life and likeness, that, when the original should be brought to view, it might be known and distinguished by it. It is acknowledged, I think, on all hands, that the prophets, at sundry times, and in divers manners, have done this ; (*k*) that each of them, in his turn, have drawn a feature, (if I may so say), and left some masterly stroke behind him of this great personage that was to come from heaven ; that one has described his parentage, another the time, another the place, and an-

(*b*) John v. 36. (*i*) Ibid. ver. 39. (*k*) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lecture.

A. M. other the uncommon manner of his birth ; that some
 4035, &c. have taken notice of the most remarkable actions and e-
 Ann. Dom. vents of his life, and several of the most minute and altoge-
 31, &c. ther singular circumstances of his death ; that by some his
 from resurrection is foretold, by others his ascent to the throne
 Mat. xii. 1. of God, and by others, the perpetual duration of his
 Mark ii. 23. kingdom : And, if the prophets are allowed to have done
 Luke vi. 1. this, our only inquiry is, Whether the lineaments, which
 John v. 1. they in their several capacities, have drawn of the pro-
 to Matth. xvii. 14. mised Messiah, (when all brought together), be answerable
 Mark ix. 14. to the account, which the evangelists have given us in their
 Luke ix. 37. history of the Blessed Jesus ?
 John vii. 1.

tho' they We readily own indeed, that there is a great obscurity in
 be obscure. the ancient prophecies. They are generally penned in a
 very exalted style, and abound with so many bold meta-
 phors, and hyperbolical expressions, so many allegories and
 parables, and other abstruse forms of speech, as make it
 very difficult for the interpreters of Scripture to discover
 their true scope or meaning. The prophecies relating to
 the Messiah are still more obscure ; because, as they con-
 sider him in the different capacities of his humiliation and
 exaltation, unless this distinction is taken along with us,
 when we apply them to one and the same person, they will
 seem to load his character with contradictions. But still,
 since it is acknowledged, that the great design of prophecy
 was to acquaint the world with the Messiah, and that, up-
 on whatever particular occasions God sent his messengers,
 he always made this one part of their errand, we can hard-
 ly believe, that he would multiply these messages to no
 purpose ; or, when he pretended to reveal this matter to
 them, mock them with unintelligible words, and leave
 them as much in the dark as he found them. He might
 indeed, for wise purposes, (1) *multiply visions, and use si-*
mitudes, and (m) dark speeches, by the ministry of the pro-
phets ; but in this grand discovery of all, he certainly left
 such indications as enabled those, who *looked for the re-*
demption of Israel, (and accordingly made it their business
 to search the Scriptures, and inquire into the marks of the
 Messiah), to attain a competent knowledge of them : Nor
 can it well be doubted, but that the Jews had some fixed
 and well-known rules, (though they have not descended to
 us), whereby they distinguished the passages in the pro-

(1) Hosea xii. 10.

(m) Numb. xii. 8.

phetic writings, which related to this important subject, from any others, because we find, that (n) when Herod summoned the Sanhedrim together, and demanded of them where *Christ was to be born*, they readily replied at *Bethlehem in Judea*, having the prophecy of Micah (o) to that purpose ready to produce.

We acknowledge again, that the prophecies concerning the Messiah were delivered not only in an obscure manner, but in different proportions, and at very distant times. Thus to Adam and Eve he was promised in general, (p) as a man; to Abraham, (q) as his posterity; to Jacob, (r) as descending from the tribe of Judah in particular; to David, that he should be of his family, and (s) the fruit of his body; to Micah, that he should be born at Bethlehem (t); to Isaiah, that his birth should be miraculous, and his mother a virgin (u); to the same prophet, that his death should be for (x) the redemption of mankind; to Daniel (y), when the precise time of his suffering should be; to Haggai, lately, and Zechariah and Malachi, that (z) all these events should be accomplished before the destruction of the second temple. (a) Now, (not to mention any more), if we compute the seasons of these few, the general prediction of a Saviour in human nature, will be found to bear date before that of his being Abraham's seed, about two thousand and fourscore years; from this, to the declaration of his particular tribe, were two hundred and fourscore years; thence to the prophecy of his particular family, above six hundred years; after that, to the signification of his miraculous nativity, more than three hundred years; and from thence to the time of his public appearance in the world, three hundred and fifty years, or thereabouts. Now, since these prophecies were thus delivered by degrees, and at such distant and different times; it may easily so happen, that, considering them singly and apart, we may find some other person and event, to which they may be adapted, without any great violence to the text; but then the right way in this case to make a judgment, is, not by separate and particular passages, but by the connection of the whole, by the exact

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann D. m.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

And delivered at several different times.

(n) Matth. ii. 3, &c. (o) Chap. v. 2. (p) Gen. iii. 15.
(q) Ibid. xxii. 18. (r) Ibid. xlix. 10. (s) Psal. cxxxii. 11.
(t) Chap. v. 2. (u) Isaiah vii. 14. (x) Ibid. liii. (y)
Chap. ix. (z) Hag. ii. Zeck. xiv. Mal. iii. (a) Stanhope
on the epistles and gospels, vol. i.

A. M
435, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from

Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

The pro-
phesies re-
lating to
the Messiah
fulfilled in
our Saviour.

coincidence, and entire agreement of all the prophecies, which, at several times, denoted the Messiah, brought into one point of light, and laid together. This is the only method we have to determine the matter: And accordingly, let us now look into some of the principal passages of our Saviour's life, as it is recorded by the evangelists, and so see whether they do not exactly agree with the several characters which the prophets have given us of the Messiah.

Our Lord Jesus, we are told, (b) was conceived and born of a pure virgin, without the concurrence of any man; for so the prophecy had foretold, that (c) *the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, and that (d) *a virgin should conceive, and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel*. He was descended (e) of the family of David, and born (f) at the town of Bethlehem; because, in favour to that king, God had promised that (g) *he would establish his seed for ever*, and that (h) *out of Bethlehem a Ruler of Israel should come, whose goings-forth had been from everlasting*: And he was born (i) in the reign of King Herod, i.e. before the total dissolution of the Jewish government, and during the standing of the second temple; because one prophecy says, that (k) *the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh come*; and another, that (l) *the desire of all nations should come*, and, by his presence, *make the glory of God's latter house greater than that of the former*.

Well: but before his appearance in the world, (m) John the Baptist was appointed his forerunner, and came to bear witness of him, because the Lord, by the mouth of his prophets, had said, (n) *Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; (o) he shall cry in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight an high-way for our God*. When he made his appearance in the world, he took up his chief residence (p) in the province of Galilee; because the prophet, speaking of the inhabitants of that country, tells us, that *upon them*

- (b) Matth. i. 18 and Luke i. 26. &c. (c) Gen. iii. 15.
(d) Isa. vii. 14. (e) Matth. i. 1. and Luke i. 27. (f)
Matth. ii. 5. 6. (g) Psal. lxxxix. 4. (h) Micah v. 2.
(i) Matth. ii. 1. (k) Gen. xlix. 10. (l) Haggai ii. 7.
(m) Matth. iii. 1. and Luke vii. 27. (n) Mal. iii. 1.
(o) Isa. xl. 3. (p) Matth. ii. 22. 23.

who

(q) *who dwelt before in the land of the shadow of death, did a great light shine, when they had it to say, Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, &c.* When he came to converse in it, such was his quiet and inoffensive temper and behaviour, that the prophet did not misrepresent him, when he styled him (r) *the Prince of Peace*, and one who (s) *would not cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets.* When he entered upon his public ministry, the very actions which the evangelical prophet had foretold of the Messiah, he performed to a title; for (t) *he preached good tidings to the meek, and proclaimed liberty to the captives; he (u) opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf; he made the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.*

A M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

But, during the course of his ministry, our Saviour, we read, lived in a very mean, obscure condition, and suffered at last a violent death: And why so? Because of the Messiah it was foretold, that (x) *he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; who should be cut off from the land of the living, and pour out his soul unto death.* But, for whom should he suffer all this? (y) For us men, and our salvation: For so it was appointed, that the Messiah should (z) *bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows; that he should be wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; because the Lord would lay upon him the iniquities of us all.* And in what manner was he to suffer? With a patience and meekness answerable to the prophecy, (a) *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.*

It might seem a little strange, that our Lord, who all his life-time affected no popularity, should, a little before his death, (b) make his public entry into Jerusalem, and in a manner so very singular, had not the prophet called upon *the daughter of Zion (c) to rejoice greatly, because her King was coming unto her, bringing salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of*

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|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| (q) Isa ix. 2. 6. | (r) Ibid ver. 6. | (s) Ibid. xlii. 2. |
| (t) Ibid. lxi. 1. | (u) Ibid xxxv. 5. 6. | (x) Ibid. liii. 3. |
| (y) Col i. 14. | (z) Isa liii. 4. 5. 6. | (a) Ibid. ver. 7. |
| (b) Matth. xxi. 2. &c. | (c) Zech. ix. 9. | |

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c
from
Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

an ass. Strange, that (*d*) he should be betrayed by his own disciple, to whom he had been so very kind, had not the Psalmist foretold it in these words: (*e*) *Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me:* And strange, that of all other deaths, he should be sentenced to crucifixion, which was neither a Jewish punishment nor proper to be inflicted (*f*) for the crime of blasphemy, (*g*) that was alledged against him, had not the same royal prophet determined the matter in these words: (*h*) *They pierced my hands, and my feet; they stand staring, and looking upon me.*

Such then was the will of God, that the Saviour of the world should be crucified; but in what company did he suffer? The gospel tells us, (*i*) *between two thieves*, because the prophecy had declared, that he should (*k*) *be numbered with the transgressors*. But how did the spectators behave while he was thus hanging on the cross? Just in the manner that the Psalmist described: (*l*) *All they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shoot out the lip, and shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him.* What did they give him to drink in the mean time? * A narcotic potion was generally allowed, in such cases, to stupify the sense of pain; but in his, nothing but vinegar was allowed; because the prophecy before had specified the liquor: (*m*) *They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink:* And what became of his cloaths? All disposed of according to the pro-

(*d*) Matth. x. 4. (*e*) Psal. xli. 9. (*f*) Levit. xxiv. 16.
(*g*) Matth. xxvi. 65. (*h*) Psal. xxii. 16. (*i*) Matth.
xxvii. 28. (*k*) Isa. liii. 12. (*l*) Matth. xxvii. 39. &c.
Psal. xxii. 7. 8

* For this the Jews ground themselves upon the words of Solomon: *Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that are of an heavy heart: let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more,* Prov. xxxi. 7 The usual potion of this kind was frankincense in a glass of wine; and there is a tradition among them, that the ladies of the city of Jerusalem were at this charge, out of their own good will, for the ease of the poor sufferers: But notwithstanding this custom, what God foretold was fulfilled; *Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, p. 80.*

(*m*) John xix. 28. 29; Psal. lxix. 21.

phency:

phesy: (n) *They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*

But under all these provocations and indignities, what did he do? Why he prayed to God for the forgiveness of his crucifiers; because the prophet had foretold, that (o) *while he poured out his soul unto death, he should also make intercession for the transgressors.* In his greater agonies, what were his ejaculations to God? The same that the royal Psalmist, personating the Messiah in his extremity, has left upon record: (p) *My God, my God, look upon me: Why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my help, and from the words of my complaint?* What the words wherein he gave up the ghost? The very same that the Psalmist, in another place, had prescribed: (q) *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* But after our Saviour's death, in what manner was his body disposed of? Contrary to the custom of the Romans, who left those that suffered in this manner hanging upon the cross until they were consumed; and, contrary to the intention of his enemies, who wished him no better than a malefactor's funeral, he was honourably and nobly interred; because it was pre-ordained, that (r) *he should make his grave with the rich in his death.* After his burial, what became of his body? It was raised again, and restored from the state of the dead; because, in confidence of this, he laid down his life, that (s) *God would not leave his soul in hell, nor suffer his Holy One to see corruption.* After his resurrection, and continuance for some time upon earth, what did he do next? In the sight of his disciples, and several other spectators, ascended triumphantly into heaven; for so the divine order was. (t) *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* After his ascension into heaven, what did he finally do? Sent down the Holy Ghost upon his apostles, to enable them to propagate his religion all the world over; for such is the purport of the prophecy: (u) *Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, that (x) the mountain of the Lord's*

A M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xi. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(n) Matth. xxvii. 35. Psal. xxii. 18. (o) Luke xxiii. 34.
Isa. liii. 12. (p) Matth. xxvii. 46. Psal. xxii. 1. (q) Luke
xxiii. 46. Psal. xxxi. 5. (r) Matth. xxvii. 57. Isa. liii. 9.
(s) Matth. xxviii. 6. Psal. xvi. 10. (t) Luke xxiv. 51. Psal. xxiv.
7. 9. (u) Acts ii. 1. &c. Psal. lxxviii. 18. (x) Isa. ii. 2.

house

A. M. *house might be established on the top of the mountains, and ex-*
2035, &c. *alted above the hills, and that all nations should flow unto it.*
Ann. Dom.

31, &c. Upon the whole, then, we may perceive, that the several things which the prophets had foretold of the promised
from Messiah, were fulfilled in the person and actions of our
Matt. xii. 1. Blessed Saviour; but then there is something farther to be
Mark ii. 23. considered in this matter, and that is, the visible interposi-
Luke vi. 1. tion of an over-ruling Providence, in the completion of
John v. 1. these predictions. (y) For that our Lord should be born
to Matt. of a virgin, contrary to the known laws of nature, at the
xvii. 14. city of Bethlehem, when he was conceived at Nazareth, and
Mark ix. 14. under the declension of the Jewish polity, as it was predict-
Luke ix. 37. ed: That upon the cruelty of Herod he should be carried
John vii. 1. into Egypt, upon the succession of Archelaus, return into
 Judea, and settle his abode in the obscure country of Ga-
 lilee, whence no good thing, much less so eminent a proph-
 et, could have ever been expected to come: That the
 judge who pronounced him innocent should deliver him to
 death, and to the death of the cross, who (had he been
 guilty) must, by the law of the land, have been stoned:
 That he who had so many enemies should be betrayed by
 one of his disciples; and by a disciple who carried the bag,
 and consequently all his master's riches, for a vile sum of
 money; and that this money, the price of blood, should
 be employed in a work of charity, to buy a field to bury
 strangers in: That he who spent all his time in doing good,
 should be doomed to suffer among thieves and malefactors;
 and the multitude, who were wont to pity dying criminals,
 should insult and deride him in his greatest misery: That
 in the division of his cloaths, they should cast lots for his
 coat, and, contrary to the usage of the country, in the
 midst of his agonies, give him vinegar to drink: That,
 contrary to the practice of the Romans, he that was cruci-
 fied should be permitted to be buried, and, although he
 died among malefactors, have persons of the first rank and
 character joining together in his honourable interment:
 These, and several other particulars that might be produced,
 are so very strange and surprising, that they must needs strike
 every pious and devout soul with a profound sense of the
 unspeakable wisdom, as well as goodness of God, in ac-
 complishing in Jesus what he had promised and foretold of

And that
 by a visible
 interposi-
 tion of Pro-
 vidence.

(y) Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, p. 131.

the

the Messiah, by ways and means to human wisdom very unlikely, and very disproportionate. And, if the predictions relating to the Messiah have, in this wonderful manner, and by the particular direction and appointment of providence, thus met in the Blessed Jesus, like lines in one common center, the natural result of this contemplation is, *That Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.*

(z) For, can it be imagined, with any worthy conception of God, that a work of love and wonder, so great as the sending his son to redeem the world, should be in agitation for full four thousand years; that each succeeding age, in this long space, should have some notices of it; that the several characters he was to sustain, should be described by different prophets, living at times and places so remote, that no confederacy could be suspected; that each of these prophets should draw, some one line of him, and some another, and point him out, some in one capacity, and some in another; and above all, that every one of these strokes or lineaments should be directed by the unerring hand of God, to make at least one finished picture, on purpose that the original, when it appeared, might be found out, and distinguished by it; can it be imagined, I say, that a God of infinite truth, wisdom, and goodness, would have ever permitted, much less appointed, that our Blessed Lord should, in every part and line, be so exactly like that piece, unless he intended, that we should receive him as the true original? Unless we can entertain a thought so unworthy of God, I say, as that he designed to impose upon us in this whole dispensation, we cannot but conclude, that he would never have permitted all the marks belonging to the Messiah, to have concurred in the life of our Blessed Saviour, and by these marks, have suffered so many millions of souls to have been mistaken in the object of their faith and worship, and thereupon, without any fault of theirs, deluded into the heinous sin of idolatry, had he not appointed the man Christ Jesus to be the great Saviour of the world, and the Lord of life and glory.

“ But, you are frequently mistaken (says the Jew, to avoid the force of this) in your application of these prophetic passages to your Jesus, which properly be-

A. M.
4035. &c.
Ann. Dom.
31. &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vi. 1.
Which is a
certain
proof of
our Savi-
our's divine
mission.

(z) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

“ longed

A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

“longed to another person, and in him received their utmost accomplishment. The 22d Psalm, for instance, which complains of the sufferings and indignities which its author endured, you refer to the Messiah, and thence apply to your Jesus; whereas it relates entirely to David, and the troubles he underwent under the persecution of Saul. (a) The prophecy of Micah, which makes mention of a ruler, *whose goings forth had been from everlasting*, (whatever use you make of it), was only intended of Zerubbabel who was sprung from the ancient house of David; and that famous 53d chapter of Isaiah, which is so frequently cited by the apostles, when rightly inquired into, is nothing else but a lively description of the sufferings of the Jews under the Babylonish, or some other captivity. Thus, by misapplying, and misinterpreting several texts, in such a sense, as the Jewish church never received, and the Spirit of God never intended, you bedeck your Jesus with feathers that are none of his own, and then cry out, How well he becomes them, and how exactly they besit him!”

Answered,
by shewing,
that the
Christian
interpreta-
tion of the
prophecies
is true.

The completion of prophecies, in the person of our Saviour Christ, is one of the most general arguments that the first Christians made use of, in order to convert such as were persuaded of their divine authority. St Peter, (b) in his first public sermon that he made, out of the 16th and 110th Psalms, cites two passages, which he plainly shews, could not be intended of the patriarch David, to prove our Lord's resurrection, and exaltation to glory. (c) St Paul, who, by being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, understood the force of his argument, uses more proofs of this kind, than any other writer of the New Testament, as the least cast of an eye into his epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews, will shew: (d) And St Matthew, who wrote his gospel for the use of the Jews more particularly, and for that reason (as some imagine) in the Hebrew tongue, is more express and copious in his application of the prophecies to our Blessed Saviour than any of the other evangelists.

Now, (to mention no more than these) how absurd would it have been for these apostles, who were no stran-

(a) Collins's Discourse of the grounds and reasons, p. 44.
(b) Acts ii. 14. &c. (c) Ibid. xxii. 3. (d) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.

gers to the Jewish way of arguing, to alledge any passage in the prophets as relating to the Messias, which properly belonged to another person, in whom it had its accomplishment? Such a method of proceeding could not fail of discovering their confidence and folly, of exposing them to the scorn and ridicule of their adversaries, and, instead of gaining profelytes, of ruining the cause, which by such unfair practices they endeavoured to maintain. It is but supposing then, that these apostles were men of common sense, and desirous to promote the cause that they had taken in hand, and then we can hardly think, that they argued from any prophecies concerning the Messias, but such as really belonged to him, and such as the whole Jewish church acknowledged so to do.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

St Peter, by virtue of the sermon which he preached on the day of Pentecost, made about three thousand converts to the Christian faith; and yet, it is obvious that the whole hinge of his discourse turns upon the testimony of the prophets: Had he therefore applied this testimony, either to persons, to whom it did not belong, or in a sense contrary to its true intendment, his doctrine must have been exploded at once, and could never have met with such uncommon success. And, in like manner, as to the subsequent conversions which the apostles made, (e) how can we imagine, that such a number of Jews of all degrees, rulers, priests, and scribes of all sects, men of learning, and who, by their station and profession, were obliged to know the Scriptures, should forsake the religion they were accustomed to, upon the authority of passages, which, in their proper meaning and intendment, were so far from countenancing, that they openly confronted the new religion they were to embrace; and all this without any view of worldly interest, with the certain hazard of their lives here, and the loss of God's favour hereafter, in case of insincerity?

Upon the whole, therefore, we may conclude, that every Jew, converted to the Christian faith, is an implicit proof, that the apostles allegations of the ancient prophecies, both as to the ground and sense of them, were agreeable to their received notions of them; inasmuch that, were we at leisure to enter into particulars, we might

(e) Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity.

A. M. shew, that it is hardly possible to name one single prediction of the many applied to the Blessed Jesus, which one or other of their most celebrated writers do not acknowledge to belong to the Messiah.

4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
fish, and put them upon new measures in the application of such predictions as they saw must needs have been fulfilled while their state and temple stood: Whoever considers the darkness and ignorance that would necessarily ensue upon their long dispersion, and many sad calamities, when they fell into the hands of persecuting powers, who hated them and their religion most implacably: Whoever considers their neglect of applying themselves to the study of the written law, and attending wholly to their oral, and affecting to be curious in ceremonies, while they continued careless of their doctrines: Whoever considers their violent prejudice against Jesus and his disciples, which, as it stuck at nothing, though never so false or wicked, to oppose them, might easily put them upon tampering with the Scriptures, and, by interpolations or defalcations, labouring to make them look another way: And, lastly, whoever considers that judicial blindness and hardness of heart, so often and expressly threatened, and so visibly and lamentably inflicted upon this once elect people of God: [May he, in his infinite mercy, so open their eyes, that they may see the wondrous things of the law, and its agreement with the blessed gospel!] Whoever considers these things, I say, will not be at a loss for reasons why the present synagogue have departed from the sentiments of the ancient, and are so earnest to apply to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Zorobabel, or any other person of note, what their ancestors never thought of attributing to any other than the promised Messiah.

Why the
modern
Jews have
departed
from it.

The 22d
Psalm not
applicable
to David.

(g) One of their famous interpreters, in his comment upon the 22d Psalm, after some feeble efforts to wrest that evidence out of our hands, makes at length this am-

(f) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.
Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.

(g) Stan-
ple

ple confession : " Our great masters," (*h*) says he, " have
 " interpreted this psalm of Messiah the King ; but I shall
 " interpret it of David himself, that we may have where-
 " with to answer the heretics." But, with all his art and
 subtilty, he can never make it out. how David, with any
 propriety, can say of himself, (*i*) *As for me, I am a worm,*
and no man, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the
people. The greatest affliction that ever befel that prince,
 was his expulsion from his capital city, upon the rebellion
 of his son Absalom ; and (*k*) Shimei's cursing and upbraid-
 ing him may seem perhaps to countenance this complaint,
 (*l*) *All they that see me, laugh me to scorn, they shoot out their*
lips, and shake their heads ; but we no where read in his hi-
 story, that his enemies ever (*m*) *pierced his hands or his feet,*
 much less that, after they had made an end of him, *they*
parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture.
 It was our Blessed Saviour alone in whom this prediction
 was verified ; of him alone, that his enemies took up the
 taunting proverb, and said, (*n*) *He trusted in God that he*
would deliver him, let him deliver him, if he would have him ;
 to him alone, that these words can, with any tolerable con-
 struction, belong, (*o*) *Many oxen are come about me, fat*
bulls of Bashan close me in on every side ; they gape upon me
with their mouths, as it were a ramping and roaring lion ;
 as he indeed appropriates the whole psalm to himself, when,
 in his dying minutes, he uttered this citation, (*p*) *My God,*
my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?

David, indeed, in all his troubles, had no occasion to
 make this lamentation ; for though the malice and perfec-
 tions of Saul were upon him, yet he had always abund-
 ant reason to say of God, (*q*) *Thou art my stony rock, and*
my defence, my Saviour, my God, and my might ; my buckler,
the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge : Therefore will
I follow upon mine enemies, and overtake them ; neither will
I turn again till I have destroyed them. His splendor and
 greatness, his victories and conquests, the reduction of his
 foes, and the enlargement of his kingdom, made him a pro-
 per emblem of our Saviour's exaltation, and triumph over

- (*h*) R. Sol. Jarchi. (*i*) Psal. xxii. 6. (*k*) 2 Sam. xvi. 7. 8.
 (*l*) Psal. xxii. 7. (*m*) Ibid. ver. 17. 18. (*n*) Ibid. ver. 8.
 (*o*) Ibid. ver. 12. 13. (*p*) Ibid. ver. 1. (*q*) Psal. xviii. 2. 37.

A. M. our spiritual enemies ; but there are few passages in his life
 4015, &c. resembling of his sufferings, and none at all that will justi-
 Ann. Dom. fy this complaint, (r) *I am poured out like water, and all my*
 31, &c. bones are out of joint ; my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
 from Matt. xii. 1. *and my tongue cleaveth to my gums* : So true is that obser-
 Mark ii. 23. vation of Grotius, (s) “ That partiality was the cause of
 Luke vi. 1. “ these new explications among the Jews, and that those
 John v. 1. “ which they formerly received, agreed very well with the
 to Matt. “ sense of Christians.”
 xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14. Upon the decree of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jews,
 Luke ix. 37. we find Zorobabel, among other princes of the people, su-
 John vii. 1. perintending matters, and taking upon him the government
 of the tribe to which he belonged ; but that he should be
 the person intended by Micah's prophecy, is a thing im-
 possible ; because he was not born in Bethlehem, which is
 the place assigned for the birth of a ruler that the prophet
 mentions, but in Babylon, as his name imports. That it
 was essentially necessary for the Messiah to be born in (t)
 Bethlehem, and no where else, is plain from the answer
 which the scribes and Pharisees make Herod, upon his con-
 sulting them, and their quotation of Micah for the proof
 of it ; is plain from the general notion which, not only the
 learned, but the vulgar, at this time, had imbibed, viz.
 “ (u) That Christ was to come of the seed of David, and
 “ out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was born ;”
 and is plain from the petition in their liturgy, wherein they
 still pray for the advent of the Messiah, in these terms : (x)
Shake thyself from the dust, arise, put on thy beautiful gar-
ments, O my people ; by the hand of Benjessè, the Bethlemite,
bring redemption near to my soul : So that the prophecy, in
 all reason, must be applied to the person that was born
 there, and not to one whose place of nativity was in a dis-
 tant country. It is to be observed farther, that Zorobabel
 was never any ruler of Israel ; for though he might be at
 the head of the captivity for some years, yet it was without
 the title and authority of a governor, and when he had
 executed his commission, he returned to Babylon, and there
 died. But even supposing he were never so much a go-
 vernor, it is certainly carrying the matter too far, to say

Nor the
 prophecy
 of Micah
 indeed to
 Zorobabel.

(r) Ibid. xxii. 14. 15. (s) Grotius De verit. lib. 5. sect. 18.
 (t) Matth. ii. 1. &c. (u) John vii. 42. (x) See Bishop Chand-
 ler's Defence of Christianity,

of him, that he (y) should stand and rule in the strength of the Lord, and in the majesty of the Lord his God; much more it is so, to say, that the going forth or birth of this ruler was of old, and from the days of eternity, (as the marginal note has it), which is only applicable to the Messiah, and, in a proper sense, only verified in our Blessed Saviour, (z) who in the beginning was with God.

And, in like manner, if we consider the words of the prophet Isaiah, in the 53d chapter, and compare them with our Lord's history, as the evangelists have recorded it, we shall soon perceive, that they are applicable to none but our Blessed Saviour only; for (to wave other arguments that might be drawn from them) with what propriety of construction can any of these passages, (a) *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed*, be applied to the Jewish nation? When ever did we hear that the Jews bore the griefs, and carried the sorrows of others; that they were wounded for other mens transgressions, and bruised for iniquities not their own? The public calamities which God, at any time, sent upon them, are by all the prophets imputed to their own sins; but the person here afflicted is said to have done *no violence*, *neither was any deceit found in his mouth*; and does this character suit them under any captivity, or other sort of calamity, that the prophet might have in view? If we will believe him, it is plain, that he had another opinion of them, when, in the very beginning of his prophecy, we find him lamenting them and their captivity, in these words: (b) *Ah, sinful nation! A people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they are gone backwards; wherefore your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers*.

The sum of our answer is this: If our Saviour and his apostles cannot be supposed, with any justness of reasoning,

(y) Micah v. 4.
(b) Ibid. i. 4. &c.

(z) John i. 2.

(a) Isaiah liii. 4. 5.

A. M. or prospect of success, to alledge prophecies concerning the
 4035, &c. Messiah, which the Jewish church, at that time, did not
 Ann. Dom. acknowledge to be intended of him; if all the prophecies
 31, &c. thus alledged do even yet appear, by several of their most
 from renowned doctors, to be interpreted of the Messiah; if
 Matt. xii. 1. the 22d psalm cannot, with any propriety of construction,
 Mark ii. 23. be applied to David, nor the 4th chapter of Micah to Zo-
 Luke vi. 1. robabel, nor the 53d of Isaiah to the Jewish nation in ge-
 John v. 1. neral; and if good reasons may be assigned, why the pre-
 to Matt. sent and ancient doctors of the Jewish church do differ in
 xvii. 14. the manner of applying the predictions of the prophets;
 Mark ix. 14. then is the Christian interpretation of them, which appears
 Luke ix. 37. to be plain and natural, and has antiquity on its side, not
 John vii. 1. to be less esteemed, because some, out of partiality and pre-
 judice, have forced their wits to invent another.

Why we
 Christians
 ought to ad-
 here to the
 present ap-
 plication of
 the prophe-
 cies.

Nay, even supposing that there were more grounds than
 what hitherto have appeared, to dispute the justness of the
 allegation of any prophecy; yet still we Christians must a-
 ver, that the application of Christ and his apostles is to be
 preferred before that of any other, because it was attended
 with such irresistible proof of its truth and fidelity, as must
 overbear all objections to the contrary. (c) For upon a dis-
 pute of the application of some passage, or a competition
 of two different senses of the same passage, can any thing
 in nature be more decisive than the testimony of God? And
 can the testimony of God appear by any stronger evidence
 than by the power of miracles supporting the allegation? God
 certainly knew the intention of every prophecy deli-
 vered by his Spirit; and therefore, if Christ and his apostles,
 when they applied any prophecy to the Messiah, gave the
 best proof that could be given of their being sent by God,
 and of their speaking and acting by his commission, God
 himself must be understood as confirming their application.
 The authority of the application, or of the exposition, must,
 in such a case, be equal to that of the prophecy; for there
 cannot be a better proof that the prophet was sent from
 God, than the expofitor gives of his mission; and the rea-
 son for his assenting to the one as well as the other, is on
 both sides the same.

(c) Rogers's Necessity of revelation.

The

The result of this whole inquiry is this, — That, since our Blessed Saviour appeals to the writings of the prophets for the proof of his being the Messiah or messenger sent from God to deliver his will to mankind ; and since the marks and characters which the prophets give of the Messiah, are found all to agree and unite in him, according to the account which the evangelists give us of his life, we have all the reason in the world to believe, that he was really the person he pretended to be ; that his doctrine, consequently, is the word of God, and his religion (d) *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation, and hath appeared unto all men ; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world ; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.*

A. M.
to 15, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

CHAP. III.

Containing an Account of Things, from our LORD's Transfiguration to his last Entry into Jerusalem.

THE HISTORY.

THE day following our Lord's transfiguration, (for that transaction was very probably in the night-time †), as he came down from the mount, he perceived the scribes in deep debate † with the apostles he had left behind him, and while he was inquiring into

Matt xvii.
4. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37.
Our Saviour
cures the
lunatic,
who was
likewise a
demoniac.

(d) Tit. ii. 11. &c.

† The evangelist acquaints us, that while our Saviour was at prayer on the mount, St Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep, Luke ix. 32. which, in some measure, confirms the conjecture, that the transfiguration was in the night ; a time much more proper for the display of the lustre of such an appearance, than if it had happened in the broad day-light ; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† What the subject-matter of this debate was, the evangelists have not informed us ; but it seems not unlikely, that the scribes

were

A. M.
 35, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from Matt
 xii. 1. Mark
 ii. 23. Luke
 vi. 1. John
 v. 1. to
 Matth. xvii.
 14. Mark ix.
 14. Luke ix.
 37. John vii.
 7.

into the subject of their dispute, a certain man, breaking through the crowd, came and fell prostrate at his feet, and besought him to have pity upon his only son, a deplorable object, a lunatic ||, and possessed, deaf and dumb, often thrown upon the ground, and into the fire and water,

were disputing with the apostles about *their master's method of ejecting devils, and the power which, in that matter, he had conferred upon them*; because, in the case before them, they saw them nonplussed, and not able to cast a devil out of one, who, in his absence, was brought to them. This is the rather probable, not only because our Saviour's dispossessing devils was what gruelled and vexed the scribes and Pharisees more than all his other miracles, and forced them to the sorry refuge of ——— *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils*; but because, upon his coming to the timely relief of his apostles, and demanding of the scribes, what they were questioning and disputing about, it immediately follows, *One of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit: — And I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, and they could not*, Mark ix. 17. 18.; *Pool's Annotations.*

|| The word *σεληνιαζεται*, coming from *σελήνη*, the *moon*, answers exactly to the English *lunatic*, from *luna*; but there is a mistake in rendering it: For whereas the English word *lunatic* is commonly taken for a *mad man*, such a one especially, whose distemper grows worse towards the full of the moon, it is plain, from all symptoms, such as being convulsed, foaming at the mouth, grinding his teeth, falling into the fire, and bruising and tearing himself, &c. that the disorder under which this person laboured was an epilepsy, or the falling-sickness. Now, the reason why this disease is expressed by the word *σεληνιαζεται*, is, because the moon has the same influence on it that it has in madness. Both distempers lie in the brain, and the changes of the moon affect those that are subject to the one, as well as the other. When therefore the evangelists tell us of this epileptic, that the devil *took him*, that he *threw him down*, *cast him into a fit*, and made him *tear and bruise himself*, the meaning of all this is, that as, in those days, it was a common thing for the devil to have power over mens bodies, which power he employed in bringing diseases upon them; so it was in the present case. The devil, that possessed this young man, cast him into frequent fits of the falling sickness, (as all demoniacs, we find, have one distemper or other attending them), of which there was no way to cure him, but by casting out the devil; *Hammond's Annotations.*

racked

racked with violent convulsions, accompanied with dismal out-cries, foamings, bruises, and torments, and every way in so desperate a condition, that his disciples, in his absence, were not able to cure him. Our Lord, upon hearing of this, was † not a little grieved at the want of faith in his disciples, but ordered the child to be brought to him. As he was drawing near, the devil began to rack him with convulsions, which put the father in a terrible fright: and when our Lord commanded the evil spirit to depart out of the young man, and never to molest him more; after some hideous out-cries, he tore and distorted him to such a degree, that he left him breathless on the ground so that many concluded he was quite dead: But Jesus, taking him by the hand, lifted him up, and delivered him to his father, perfectly cured, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. And when his disciples in private desired to know the reason why they could not cast out this spirit, he imputed it, partly to their want of faith, and partly to this spirit's being of a kind † which was not to be ejected without fasting and prayer.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark x. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

From

† The rebuke which our Saviour utters upon this occasion, *O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, &c.* Matth. xvii. 17. see us to be intended for the whole company, and every one to have a share in it, in proportion to their deserts. The disciples are not exempted; for they are charged with infidelity, ver. 20. The father of the patient is pointed at, for his faith was wavering, Mark ix. 21. &c. And the whole nation of the Jews is included in it; for this was expressly their character of old, *A very froward and perverse generation, and children in whom is no faith*, Deut xxxii. 5. 20.; *Beausobre's annotations*.

† Josephus, who himself was a Pharisee, and well acquainted with the notions of every sect among the Jews, gives it for a current opinion, that the demons, in his and some preceding ages, were nothing else but the souls of wicked men, who, after death, took possession of the living, and were continually either afflicting and tormenting, or exciting and soliciting them to such sins as they found were agreeable and complexional to them; and that, according to their different ways of vexing or tempting those that they possessed, they had different appellations given them, an *unclean spirit*, a *deaf and dumb spirit*, a *spirit of infirmity*, &c. In conformity to this notion perhaps it is, that our Saviour here takes notice of the different kinds of

A. M. From the mount of transfiguration, our Lord proceed-
 4035, &c. ed in his journey through the other parts of Galilee to-
 Ann. Dom. wards Capernaüm, and, as they were in their way, he
 31, &c. acquainted his disciples, the second time, with his ap-
 from proaching death and resurrection, desiring them to take
 Matt xii. 1. good notice of what he told them; but the hopes of a
 Mark ii. 23. temporal kingdom had so intoxicated their minds, that they
 Luke vi. 1. found it very difficult to believe †, or conceive what he
 John v. 1. said, and yet they were afraid to ask him to explain it.
 to Matth. xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

In

Matt. xvii. 22. evil spirits, and as, among wicked men, there are different degrees
 of impiety, and some are more hardened and profligate than others;
 Mark ix. 31. so he seems to intimate, that some of these spirits are more desperate
 Luke ix. 44. and malicious than others, Matt. xii. 45. But all of them obstinate
 He foretells enough, and (might they have their own option) unwilling to leave
 his death to the bodies they have taken possession of. Here they think themselves
 his disci- safe, and, in some measure, screened from the divine vengeance;
 ples, to and therefore we find them, at some times, crying to our Lord,
 whom he *Let us alone; what have we to do with thee? Art thou come to tor-*
 recom- *ment us?* Matt. viii. 29. And, at others, when commanded to
 mends hu- depart, tearing and torturing the possessed, and quitting their habita-
 mility and tion not without much reluctance, Mark ix. 26. The apostles, no
 forgiveness of injuries. doubt, had conjured this evil spirit before in their master's name,
 and, on several occasions, had found the prevailing power of faith,
 even when theirs was not so well improved, as it was at present;
 and yet, how faith becomes necessary in the exorcism of devils, when
 we find strangers doing it in the name of Christ, Mark ix. 38.;
 or how the faith of the apostles came to be defective now, when,
 not many days before, it was so very effectual; why some evil spi-
 rits were proof against the name of Christ, whilst others fled at the
 bare mention of it; and why some surrendered at the first summons,
 while fasting and prayer were the only artillery that could dis-
 lodge others: These, and many other questions that might be raised from
 our Saviour's words, are points wherein the best commentators we
 have met with, have not once attempted to give us any satisfaction;
Calmet's Commentary.

† The words in the text are, *They understood not this saying,*
and it was hid from them, Luke ix. 45. They understood our
 Saviour's words, no doubt, and what the import was of his
 being *delivered into the hands of men, and put to death*; but
 then they could not comprehend, how their master, whom they
 knew to be the Messiah, and Son of God, and whom, conse-
 quently, they believed to be immortal and eternal, could
 possibly be put to death, or suffer the affronts and outrages
 of

In the same journey there arose a dispute || among the apostles, which of them should have the chief place of dignity † in their master's kingdom, still dreaming of a temporal

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

of men. These notions to them seemed incompatible, and therein they conceived a mystery, which they could not understand: But the modern Jews have endeavoured to reconcile these two notions, by inventing the distinction of Messiah Ben Joseph, who was to die, and Messiah Ben David, who was to triumph, and live for ever; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

|| There is some small difference in the several ways wherein the evangelists have related this matter. St Matthew tells us, that *the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* chap. xviii. 1. St Mark, that Christ put this question to them, *and they held their peace*, chap. ix. 34.; and St Luke, that they had been disputing this point among themselves, and Jesus, *perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, took a child, &c.* chap. ix. 46. 47. Now, to reconcile this seeming repugnancy, we must observe, that, as our Saviour was going to Capernaum, his disciples followed him, *discussing among themselves* (as St Mark has it) *who of them was to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*; that, when they came to him in the house, having still the same ambitious notion in their minds, he asked them, *What was it you discussed of in the way?* But they, being ashamed to tell him, held their peace; and and that then our Saviour, who well understood what the subject of their discourse had been, endeavoured, by the example of a child, to cure their distemper. and to inform them what disposition of mind was proper to qualify them both for his kingdom of grace here, and his kingdom of glory hereafter. St Matthew indeed, according to our translation, represents the thing, as if the disciples had put the question to their master, *Who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?* But that the participle *λέγοντες* relates not to Jesus, but to the disciples, and means not the external speech, but the inward reasoning of their minds, is obvious from their silence, which St Mark takes notice of, and our Saviour's perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, which St Luke remarks: For, had themselves propounded the question to our Saviour, (as the version in St Matthew seems to imply), we cannot see why they should not answer his demand, which tended to the same purpose; nor can we imagine why he should be represented as perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, had they already declared these thoughts in plain words; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The apostles, as well as the other Jews, had imbibed the notion (which they never got quit of, until the descent of the Holy

A. M. ral sovereignty. This our Saviour by his Divine Spirit
 4035, &c. knew; and therefore, to give an effectual check to their
 Ann. Dom. ambitious thoughts, he first informed them, that the only
 31, &c. way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to
 from be lowly in his own esteem; and then, calling a little
 Matt. xii. 1. child †, and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed
 Mark ii. 23 him as a pattern of meekness and humility; recommended
 Luke vi. 1 such children, and, in them, all humble Christians, to the
 John v. 1 favour of mankind; cautioned them against doing any in-
 to Matt. jury †, or giving any offence to such, because of their
 xvii. 14 guardian
 Mark ix. 14
 Luke ix. 37
 John vii. 1.

Holy Ghost instructed them better) that the Messiah, when he came upon earth, should erect a temporal kingdom; and (as the Jews in general expect) that they should then be constituted lords over all other nations; so the apostles (who believed their master to be the Messiah) were naturall led to think, that they should have the preference before all other Jews; and that, since the King Messiah (according to the custom of other sovereigns) was to have some officers of the highest rank, they made no question, but that some of them would be made choice of, though they were not so well agreed who were the fittest, or most deserving of these high posts of honour. Some of them were our Lord's relations, and others had parts and endowments extraordinary; of some he had given high commendations; and others he had admitted to a participation of his most secret retirements. These things might possibly raise some emulation among them. And therefore, as our Saviour's dominion was not of this world, he plainly tells them, that all such worldly desires and expectations were inconsistent with that spiritual kingdom which he was to erect, and wherein he, *who desired to be first, was to be last of all, and servant of all*, Mark ix. 35.; *Whitby's and Fool's Annotations.*

† Some of the ancients are of opinion, that this child was St. Ignatius, who was afterwards bishop of Antioch, and famous in the Christian church for his writing and lying in the defence of the truth. However this be, it is certain, that a child, who has no concern for dominion or empire over others, who is free from all covetous desires of wealth, and knows nothing of what a post of honour mean, was, in this case, a very proper emblem of that simplicity, innocence, and humility, that our Lord requires in all his disciples. *Gaimet's Commentary; and Whitby's annotations.*

† The words in the caution are, — *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*, Matth. xviii. 6. To offend

guardian angels *; and, to remove the occasion of all such offences, exhorted them to mortify their inordinate affections, though they were as dear to them as an eye, an hand, or a foot, because his heavenly Father (like a diligent shepherd that delights in the recovery of a stray-sheep) was unwilling that any believer should perish. Together with these reasons against scandal and offences, he prescribed some excellent rules in relation to brotherly reproof, church-censures, and forgiveness of injuries; and

A. M.
4035, 6c.
Ann. Dom.
31, 7c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

offend or scandalize, is to discourage men in the profession and practice of religion, and by indignities and persecutions, as well as by bad examples, to occasion their apostatizing from the faith: For we can hardly imagine, that so severe a punishment as is here threatened, should be inflicted for a crime of less aggravation than what this amounts to. Grotius, upon the place, is of opinion, that the mill-stone about the neck alludes to a custom of drowning among the Syrians. But St Jerom thinks that this manner of execution was in use among the Jews; for (according to Dr Alix) it was customary for them to cast execrable men into the Dead-sea, with a stone tied to them. It is certain from Diodorus Siculus, and others, that among the Greeks this was the ancient punishment for sacrilegious persons; and from Suetonius we may learn, that for the pride and covetousness wherewith some in public offices had infested the province where they lived, Augustus had them cast into the river, with great weights about their necks; *Whitby's Annotations.*

* It were too nice perhaps to say, that every distinct man has his distinct guardian angel. It may be true sometimes, that many have but one; and it may be true, at other times, that one has many, as we find Jacob had at Mahanaim, and Elias at Dothan: but this we may safely affirm, that no good man is without an angel, to inspect his behaviour, and to solicit his well-being. To this purpose, Abraham tells his servant travelling to Nahor, *The Lord will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way*, Gen. xxiv. 40.; and Jacob makes mention of one who had redeemed him from all evil, and wishes the same protection to his children, Gen. xlviii. 16. The Psalmist gives us express testimony, that the *angel of the Lord standeth round about those that fear him*, Psalm xxxiv. 7. And that passage which the devil applies to our Saviour, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, and keep thee in all thy ways*, is delivered by the Psalmist as true of every servant of Christ, as well as of Christ himself; *for they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*; Young's Sermons, vol. 2.

A. M. for the enforcement of this last duty, he propounded the
 4035, &c. parable of a certain king, who, calling his servants to ac-
 Ann. Dom. count, found that one of them owed him an immense sum,
 31, &c. no less than ten thousand talents†, which, upon his in-
 from solvency, and humble petition, he freely forgave; and yet,
 Matt. xii. 1. this very wretch was no sooner out of the king's presence,
 Mark ii. 23. than he seized upon his fellow-servant for a trifle of a debt,
 Luke vi. 1. a debt of an hundred pence only, and cast him into prison,
 John v. 1. even though he had used the same pathetic intreaties to
 to Matth. him that himself had done to the king his master: which
 xvii. 14. Luke ix. 37. when the king came to understand, he sent for the un-
 John vii. 1. grateful villain, upbraided him with his baseness and cruel-
 ty, and then, in great rage, ordered him to prison until he
 should discharge the whole debt: *And † so likewise shall my
 heavenly Father (says our Lord in the application) deal with
 all such as will not forgive their brother's trespasses from their
 hearts.*

While he was giving these instructions to his disciples,
 he was interrupted by John, the son of Zebedee, informing
 him of a certain stranger, † who cast out devils in his name,
 but

† Which, in our money, amounts to one million eight hundred
 and seventy-five thousand pounds; whereas the hundred pence that
 his fellow-servant was indebted to him, was but about three pounds
 two shillings and six pence.

† The doctrinal observation that properly results from the text,
 is this, — That our sins, once forgiven, may, by a forfeiture of
 that pardon by our future misbehaviour, be again charged upon us;
 for God's pardons in this life are not absolute, but conditional only.
 According to the petition of the Lord's prayer, they are answerable
 to our dealings with others, and are likely to be no longer continued
 to us than we perform the condition; *Whitby's and Hammond's
 Annotations.*

† That this man did truly cast out devils, our Lord's answer sup-
 poses, and his disciples saw with their eyes: But then the question
 is, — How a person who did not follow Christ could cast out de-
 vils in his name: To which it may be answered, *1st*, That this per-
 son might believe in Jesus, without being one of his retinue, and fol-
 low his doctrine, though he did not his person. *2dly*, He might do
 miracles in the name of Jesus Christ, without being one of his true
 disciples, even as Judas is supposed to have done, and those others to
 whom our Lord will profess, *I never knew you; depart from me, ye
 workers of iniquity*, Matth. vii. 23. Or, *3dly*, He might be a dis-
 ciple of John the Baptist, and so do his miracles in the name of
 Christ,

but because he was not of their fraternity, that he had forbidden him; which conduct Jesus by no means could approve of, because he looked upon it as a sure argument, that whoever did miracles in his name, could be no enemy to his person.

With this discourse they arrived at Capernaum, where the collectors † of a certain tribute for the use of the temple, came to Peter, and asked him if his master was accustomed to pay it? And, when Peter went in to acquaint him with the officers demands, *Of whom* (says our Lord, preventing him) *do the kings of the Gentiles take tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?* Peter answered, *Of strangers: If so,* (rejoined our Saviour), *then are the children free;* meaning, that since Gentile kings did not exact tribute of their own household, this tribute, which was paid to God for his temple, was not due from him, who was his Son, nor from them, who were his domestics; however, to avoid all occasions of offence, he ordered him to go, and cast an hook into the sea, because in the mouth of the first fish that he caught he would find a

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.
He pays
the tribute-
money by
a miracle

Christ, shortly to come. But by what means soever it was that he did them, it is no small confirmation of the truth of Christianity, that our Saviour's name was thus powerful, even among those that did not follow him, and therefore were incapable of doing any thing by way of compact with him; *Whitby* and *Pool's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Every Jew that was twenty years old, was obliged to pay annually two Attic drams, or half a shekel, (about fifteen pence of our money), for the use of the sanctuary, *Exod. xxx. 13. 16.* or to buy sacrifices, and other things necessary for the service of the temple: And that this was the tribute which the collectors here demanded, and not any tax, payable to the Roman emperors, (as some imagine), is evident, not only from our Saviour's argument, *viz.* that he was the Son of that heavenly king to whom it was paid, and, consequently, had a right to plead his exemption; but from the word *διδραχμα*, which, according to *Josephus*, [*Antiq. lib. 18. c. 12.*], was the proper word for this capitation-tax that was paid to the temple at Jerusalem; whereas the Cæsarean tribute-money was the denarius, a Roman coin, and would have been gathered by the usual officers, the publicans, and not by the persons who are here styled (as by a known title) *they that received the δίδραχμα*; *Hammond's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

A. M. 4035, &c. piece of money †, just of proper value to give to the collectors for them both; which accordingly came to pass.
 Ann. Dom. 31, &c. About this time the † feast of tabernacles drew near; from and some of our Lord's relations (out of vanity more than good will) were very earnest with him to go up to Jerusalem at this great concourse of people, in order to shew his miracles in the capital, which hitherto (as they said) had been concealed in an obscure part of the world: But our Lord, for the present †, would not yield to their importunity, tho', in a short time, he set forward to Jerusalem, but in a very private manner, for fear of awakening the jealousy of his enemies. As he was to pass through the province of Samaria, which would not receive him in his journey to Jerusalem.

† This piece of money is called *sarap*, which amounted to four drachmas, or one shekel, in our money about half a crown; and the reason why our Saviour paid for none of the apostles but St Peter only, was, because these receivers demanded it only of those that dwelt at Capernaum, (as our Saviour and St Peter did), leaving the other apostles to pay it in the several places of their abode; *Hammond's Annotations*.

† The feast of tabernacles, kept in commemoration of the Israelites sojourning in the wilderness, and living in tents for the space of forty years, was one of the three great annual festivals, wherein all the males were obliged to appear at Jerusalem. It began to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month Tizri, (which answers in part to our October and September), and is the first month of their civil, and the seventh in their sacred year; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Our Saviour's words upon this occasion are, ———— *Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet to this feast, for my time is not yet fully come*, John vii. 8. Here Grotius takes notice, that the particle *ἐτι*, which answers to *not yet*, was not originally in the text, because (according to St Jerom; contra Pelag. lib. 2.) Porphyry accuses Christ of inconstancy and mutability, in saying, *I go not up to the feast*, when afterwards he went; and therefore, he very modestly concludes, that this particle was added by some Christians, to avoid the force of this objection. But why must Christians be accused of altering the Scriptures, merely to save the credit of an Heathen, and professed enemy to Christianity, who might either read negligently, or meet with a deficient or corrupt Latin copy? Especially since it is certain, that St Chrysostom reads this particle; that the Syriac and Arabic versions, the Alexandrian, and most other ancient manuscripts, have it; and that it entirely agrees with the sense both of the preceding and subsequent words; *Whitby's Annotations*.

of Samaria †, he sent some of his apostles to provide him lodgings † in one of the villages; but the inhabitants, perceiving that he was going to Jerusalem to the feast, * were so uncivil as to refuse him entertainment.

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
This Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.

† Samaria was a province that lay between Galilee and Judea, and our Saviour's nearest way to Jerusalem was through it. But when it may be questioned, why the Samaritans, who lived at a less distance from Jerusalem than the Galileans, came to be more corrupted in their religion? To which the most probable answer is,

—That when the king of Assyria had taken Samaria, and carried away the people captive, 2 Kings xvii. in their room he planted colonies of his own subjects, who were gross idolaters, and more especially in the country of Samaria, properly so called, because it was a province which lay in the heart of his new conquest, and might therefore keep the others, that depended on it, in subjection. Now, these idolaters, mixing with the Jews that were left behind, made up a strange medley of religion, which was not quite reformed, even in our Saviour's time; and therefore he tells the Samaritan woman, at Jacob's well, *Ye worship ye know not what*, John iv. 22; whereas the people of Galilee, having few of the Assyrians planted among them, kept their religion more pure and unmixed, and, after the destruction of the temple of Gerizim by John Hyrcanus, held constant communion with the temple of Jerusalem, even though Gabinius, when he was governor of Syria, had built the Samaritans another; and in relation to this communion it is, that our Saviour tells the same woman, (speaking of himself, among other Galileans), *we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews*.

† The great multitude that accompanied our Saviour, and the little or no provision that he usually carried with him, made it necessary for some to go before to make preparation for his reception; and his two apostles, James and John, are supposed to be the persons employed in this capacity; because we find them, in particular, resenting the indignity put upon their master; *Calmet's Dictionary*.

* Josephus tells us, — “ That, as it was an usual thing for the Galileans to travel by the way of Samaria to Jerusalem, upon the celebration of their festivals, one time, as they passed by a village, called *Nais*, under the jurisdiction of Samaria, and situated in the great Plain, there happened a quarrel between the passengers and villagers, wherein several of the Galileans were slain, and which afterwards occasioned a civil war between these two provinces.” And as it was a common thing for the Samaritans

A. M. This indignity put upon their master, so exasperated
 8035, &c. James and his brother John, that they desired leave of
 Ann. Dom. him (in imitation of † Elias) to command fire down from
 31, &c. heaven to consume such inhospitable wretches; but instead
 from of giving any such permission †, our Saviour took care to
 Matt. xii. 1. inform them, that the marks of a Christian were meekness

Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matt.

xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

ritans to be angry with the Galileans in general for passing by their temple to go to Jerusalem; so they might much more resent it in our Saviour, because, as he was accounted a *prophet sent from God*, by this action he plainly decided the controversy between them and the Jews, touching the place which God had appointed for his religious worship; *Joseph. Antiq. lib. 20. c. 5.; Jewish Wars, lib. 2. c. 11.; and Whitby's Annotations.*

† The history of Elias (to which the apostles refer us) is doubtless that, where, by the direction of God, that prophet called for fire from heaven to destroy those captains and their companies whom King Ahaziah sent out to apprehend him, 2 Kings i. 10. &c. And when these two apostles desired the like judgment upon the village of Samaria, for refusing to receive their master, they verified their name of being *sons of thunder*, which, upon account of their fiery zeal, their master had before given them, Mark iii. 17.

† What the two apostles had to alledge in behalf of their intended severity against these Samaritans, was, — That they were Schismatics, and had set up another temple in opposition to that at Jerusalem; that they were heretics, and, together with the worship of the God of Israel, had mixed that of Pagan idols; that the person whom they had affronted, had a character much superior to that of Elias; and that, by an exemplary punishment inflicted on this village, they might convince the rest of the Samaritans of God's displeasure against their way of worship, and of the divine mission of their master, who was the true Messiah. But notwithstanding these plausible allegations, our Saviour rebuked them, and in his rebuke gave them to understand, that a spirit of severity towards erroneous persons, in whomsoever it is found, is highly opposite to the calm temper of Christianity, which is *pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy, and good works*, James iii. 17.; and that it was repugnant to the end for which he came into the world, which was to discountenance all fierceness and rage, and furious zeal, that occasion so many mischiefs among mankind, and to beget in all his followers such a disposition as exerts itself in *love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, and meekness*, Gal. v. 22 23. even to those of the most contrary tempers and persuasions; *Whitby's Annotations.*

and

and love, not fury and revenge; that the true end and design of his coming into the world *was, not to destroy, but to save mens lives*; and (that he might prove his doctrine by his practice) when ten leprous persons, who came out of the neighbourhood, where he had been so rudely treated, presented themselves with loud cries to him for help, his compassion was as ready to relieve, as their necessity to ask; for while they were going to † shew themselves to the priest, (as he directed them), they all found themselves cured. But see the great ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten who received this miraculous blessing, but one returned to give our Saviour thanks, and he was a Samaritan.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke xvii.
11.

Having thus returned good for evil, and the greatest kindness for the most palpable affront, our Lord proceeded on his journey, and came to another village, where he lodged that night; but before he arrived at Jerusalem, he sent out seventy † of his disciples, by two and two together,

Luke x. 2.

† By the *priests*, to whom our Saviour remits these lepers, we are to understand the priests at Jerusalem; for we can hardly suppose that he would send them to those of mount Gerizzim, when himself, both in his words and practice, had sufficiently declared the illegality of their institution: And therefore, by sending them to Jerusalem, where they were to make their offerings for their cleansing, Lev. xiv. 2. &c. he not only decided the controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans, but gave them likewise to understand, that, before they reached Jerusalem, he would undoubtedly heal them; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Hammond's Paraphrase*.

† Those who would have it, that these missionaries were chosen according to the number of the Sanhedrim, imagine, that they were seventy-two, though the round sum only be mentioned; but the general testimony of the ancients is, that they were no more than seventy. What their names were, is a thing unknown, only we have an uncertain account of twenty-eight of them out of Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Papias; and these are,——Matthias, Mark, Luke, Barnabas, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, Nicholas, Justus, Apelles, Sosthenes, Rufus, Niger, Cephas, Thadæus, Arifton, John, Barfabas, Andronicus, Junius, Silas, Lucius, Manaen, Mnason, and Ananias. Now, whereas some compare the bishops to the apostles, and these seventy to the presbyters of the church, and thence conclude, that these two orders in the ministry,

nistry,

A. M. ther†, (in the same manner as he had sent his twelve apostles) into those places which he himself, in a short time, intended to visit, and gave them instructions much of the same import with what, upon the like occasion, he had given his apostles.

4035, &c. The feast of tabernacles always continued eight days; **Ann. Dom** but, for some time after his arrival, our Saviour did not **31, &c.** appear publicly, which occasioned no small inquiry, and **from Matt.** various discourses concerning him; some saying that he **xii. 1. Mark** was a good man, and others, an impostor, who deluded **ii. 23. Luke** the people. At length, when every one began to despair of **vi. 1. John** seeing him, about the middle of the feast, he shewed him- **Matth. xvii.** self openly, and went and taught in the temple, to the **14. Mark ix.** great admiration of the Jews, who were not a little sur- **14 Luke ix.** prised to find him, whose education had been destitute of **37. John vii.** all learning, so perfect in the Scriptures: But, to obviate **1.** this exception, he gave them to understand, that the doc- **John vii. 10.** trine wherein he instructed them, was not of human acqui- **His appear-** sition, but divine inspiration; and that it was a very base **ing, and** and ungenerous thing in them, to endeavour to take away **preaching** the life of one, who taught them nothing but what was **at the feast** agreeable to the law of Moses, whereof they made so loud **of Taber-** a profession. In this manner he preached to the people **nacles, and** **the designs** **of the San-** **hedrim a-** **gainst him.**

nistry, one inferior to the other, were instituted by Christ himself, there is this difference in the matter,——That the seventy received not their mission (as presbyters do) from bishops, but immediately from our Lord, as the apostles did, and were sent upon the same errand, and with the same powers. There is, however, I think, this foundation for that wherein St Chrysostom and others place the superiority of bishops over presbyters, *viz.* that the power of ordination belongs to them alone: For, though the commission to preach the gospel belonged to the seventy, as well as to the twelve apostles, yet the power of conferring the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands was peculiar to the twelve, Acts viii. 14. &c. And this seems to be the reason, why the conferring of the Holy Ghost, for the use of the ministry, (which is done by the imposition of hands), has perpetually been esteemed peculiar to those bishops, who, in the ecclesiastical style, are always called the successors of the apostles; *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Eachard's Ecclesiastical history*, lib. 1. c. 5.

† That they might be of mutual assistance to each other, and their testimony of more force and validity; *Peel's* and *Beaufobre's Annotations*.

for

for the remaining part of the feast; and, † on the last and greatest day thereof, took occasion, from the custom of fetching water from the fountain of Siloah in great pomp, and pouring it upon the altar of burnt-offerings in great abundance, to acquaint them with the future effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he intended to send down upon all those that believed in him.

Those who knew the great hatred which the ruling part of the nation had conceived against him, admired to hear him speak with so much freedom and intrepidity; and those who had seen the number and greatness of his miracles, were by them convinced that he was the true Messiah; but the prejudice of his being a Galilean, and not acknowledged by any of their rulers and learned rabbies, led others into a contrary persuasion. In the conclusion, officers were sent from the Sanhedrim to apprehend him; but they were so taken with his person and preaching, that they became his disciples; for, upon their return, they told the council, that they could not execute their office,

A. D.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
x. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

† From the 29th chapter of the book of Numbers we learn, that on the first day of this feast, thirteen bullocks were to be offered; on the second, twelve; on the third, eleven; on the fourth, ten; on the fifth nine; on the sixth, eight; on the seventh, seven; and on the eighth, or last, only one; so that, in regard to the sacrifices, the last day was the least of all, and yet the Jews accounted it the greatest, because on that day the King of Israel (as the Talmudists love to speak) was entertained by his own people only, and not by those of any other nation. For their tradition is, that on the first day of the feast, their ancestors (when the temple was standing) sacrificed seventy bullocks for the seventy nations (for they suppose just so many) that are upon the face of the earth; but on the last day no more than one, but that in the name of the people of Israel only. And, as they imagine that an earthly prince may sometimes (instead of a vast entertainment) desire but a small collation with his first favourite, that they may have an opportunity of some familiar converse together; so, upon the account of the intimate friendship with God, which the Jews on that day thought themselves admitted to, and the excessive joy which, from the sense of that friendship, they expressed in all the outward significations of music, singing, and dancing, the last day of the feast of tabernacles was always accounted the greatest; *Saronhusii Conciliationes, in loca V. T. apud Johan.*

VOL. I.

Q q

because

A. M. because † *never man spake like him*; so that the Pharisees, who were part of the assembly, being more enraged at their reason which they gave, than the neglect of their duty, upbraided them for being so easily seduced, and for following the error of an ignorant mob; until Nicodemus, who had formerly conversed with our Lord, and was indeed a secret disciple of his, seeing with what violence his enemies were bent against him, could not forbear interposing in his behalf, by urging the unlawfulness of condemning a person without hearing; so that, after some reflections thrown upon him, as a favourer of this Galilean †, who could have no pretensions (as they said) to the title of a prophet, the assembly † broke up, without proceeding any farther against him; because, indeed, as yet his time was not fully come.

In

† In these words there are two things remarkable: 1st, The power of Christ's preaching to change the frame and temper of mens spirits; for these men came with hearts alienated from Christ, and with intention to apprehend, and carry him before the chief priests, but returned with great admiration of his excellency and worth. 2dly, The honesty and integrity of these men is very remarkable; for they do not return with a pretence, that they feared the multitude, and therefore thought it dangerous to apprehend him, but ingenuously confess, that they could not prevail with themselves to lay violent hands upon a person whose discourses were so excellent and divine; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† Our Blessed Saviour was neither by birth nor by descent a Galilean; but, admitted he had been so, it is a false assertion to say, that no prophet ever arose out of Galilee, since Nahum, though originally of the tribe of Simeon, (according to the testimony of St Jerome, who himself was a Galilean), was born in that province, and in Elcisi, the same town which that father came from; since Jonas was undoubtedly of Gath-hepher, in the tribe of Zebulun, which lay in the land of Galilee, 2 Kings xiv. 25.; and, in the opinion of several, Malachi was of the same tribe, and born in the city of Sapha: For, as there can be no reason in nature, so is there no declaration of the divine will, why a Galilean should not be inspired with the gift of prophecy, as well as any other Jew; *Fool's and Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Some are of opinion, that the party of Sadducees in the council, who held the rites and traditions of the Pharisees in great contempt, joined with Nicodemus, in not having Christ
condemned

In the evening, Jesus repaired to the mount of Olives, about a mile from the city, and where he sometimes used to pass the night with his apostles. Early next morning he returned to the temple, and as he was teaching the people, that were gathered about him, the scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman, taken in the act of adultery, and desired him to give his judgment in the case. Their purpose was to find an occasion of accusing him, either of assuming a judicial power, if he condemned her, or of nulling the law, if he acquitted her : But he (as if he had not much minded them) stooped down, and wrote † something with his finger upon the dust of the pavement ; till, upon their importuning him for an answer, he raised himself up, and said, † *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
John viii. 1.
His conduct towards the woman in adultery.

condemned without a fair hearing, which was no more than what the law required, Deut. i. 16. 17 ; *Pool's Annotations.*

† It is generally agreed, that, upon this occasion, our Lord wrote some memorable sentence or other, but what that sentence was, the conjectures of learned men have been various. Some have imagined, that it was the reproof against a rigid and uncharitable temper, which occurs in his sermon on the mount : *Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?* Matt. vii. 3. ; others, that it was the very words, which, upon raising himself up, he pronounced to the woman's accusers : *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,* John viii. 7. ; and others again, that it might rather be that passage in the Psalmist : *Unto the ungodly, said God, Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth ? Whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers,* Psal. l. 16 &c. But all this is mere guess-work : And it seems more prudent, to say nothing of the actions of our Saviour, when we are not admitted to the reasons of them ; *Calmet's Commentary ;* and *Beaufobre's Annotations.*

† The Rabbinical writers tell us, that, when a man or woman was convicted of adultery, they were led out to the brow of an hill, with their hands tied behind their backs, where their accusers pushed them down headlong ; that, if with the fall they were killed, there was no more done to them ; but if they were still alive, the same accusers were to roll great stones upon them, and if these did not dispatch them, the company then all took up stones, and quite overwhelmed them with them. But we have nothing of all this in the law of Moses. In all the places where he makes mention of

A. M. *the first stone*; and so stooping down, wrote as before.
 4035, &c. This unexpected answer baffled these insidious accusers,
 Ann. Dom. who, thoroughly convinced of their own crimes, retired,
 31, &c. one by one, and || left the woman alone; so that, when
 from Matt. xii. 1. our Lord lift up himself again, and found none but the
 Mark ii. 23 woman standing by him, he asked her, what was become
 Luke vi. 1 of her accusers, and whether any one had condemned her?
 John v. 1 And, when he understood, by her answer, that no one had,
 to Matt. xvii 14. † *Neither do I condemn thee, said he, go, and sin no more.*
 Mark ix. 14. After
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

this punishment, we only find, that the criminal was to be led out of the city, *and stoned with stones till he died*, and that *the hands of the witnesses should be first upon him, to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people*; Deut. xvii. 7. It is in allusion to this passage, that our Saviour says, *Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone*; because it badly becomes those who are guilty either of the same or greater crimes, to be so very zealous for the punishment of others. This however hinders not, but that magistrates, who are intrusted with the execution of the laws, should put them in force against malefactors, even though themselves are not entirely exempt from sin; but still it reminds them, that they should execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and as much moderation as the law will allow them; considering that they themselves are not free from guilt, but as obnoxious to punishment for other sins, as those poor creatures are, who have fallen into crimes that are punishable by human judicatures; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Pool's Annotations*.

|| In the very next words it is said, that the woman *stood in the midst of the people*, and our Lord's apostles, who were his constant attendants, were doubtless not far from him; the meaning therefore of the expression must be, that she was left without any of her accusers, who, out of shame, sneaked away; being convicted in their consciences, that, whatever the woman was, they were no proper evidences against her: For, "Non modo accusator, sed "ne objurgator quidem ferendus est" (says Tully, in Verron. Orat. 5.) "is, qui, quod in alio reprehendit, in eo ipse reprehenditur." Nor is it to be wondered, that upon this occasion, all the woman's accusers departed from her, since the Jews themselves own, that adulteries did multiply under the second temple, when their Rabbins came to permit every one "to have four or five wives," and said, that they sinned not, if, after the example of the patriarchs, when they saw a beautiful woman, they desired to "have her;" *Just. Mart. Dial. p. 363.*; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Hitby's Annotations*.

† Both Selden and Fagius are of opinion, that this woman might

After this interruption, Jesus returned to the business of instructing the people, and, in a sublime discourse, opened several great mysteries of Christianity, viz. his divine mission, his co-equality with the Father, his ability to give eternal life to his followers, and the necessity of believing in him, which would be more evident after his crucifixion; and thence taking occasion to expose the wickedness and degeneracy of those, who sought to take away his life, and how unlike to the behaviour of the sons of God and Abraham (whom they boasted themselves to be) such causeless and inveterate malice was, he so provoked them with his severe reflections, and especially with the superiority which he claimed above Abraham, that they took up stones to cast at him, had he not miraculously conveyed himself out of their hands.

Before our Lord left Jerusalem, the seventy disciples, whom he had sent to preach the gospel, returned from their journey and ministry, greatly rejoicing, because the very devils, by virtue of his name †, were subjected to them; whereupon

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
x. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.
John viii.
11.
His preach-
ing to the
people the
mysteries of
Christianity
Luke x. 17.
Promising
eternal life
to his dis-
ciples.

might come under the number of them whose case is thus represented in the words of Deuteronomy: *If a damsel, that is a virgin, be betrothed to an husband. and a man find her in the city, and he lie with her. then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city, and ye shall stone them with stones, that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife, Deut. xxii. 23. 24.* The punishment of stoning, which this law mentions, and the accusers of this woman here insist on, seem to favour this notion; and the indulgence which our Saviour shewed her, looks as if she had suffered some kind of violence, though she was not entirely innocent. Our Saviour, however, could not act in the capacity of a judge, because that was no part of his present ministry: Though therefore he was so far from approving her conduct, that he sufficiently blamed her, in bidding her *sin no more*, yet was he restrained from pronouncing any sentence of condemnation upon her; because the end of his coming at this time into the world was, *not to judge the world; but to save it, John xii. 47.; Selden, Uxor. Heb. lib. 3. c. 11.; Fagius in Deut. xxii. 22.; and Calmet's Commentary.*

† The power which our Saviour gave to the LXX, when he sent them out to preach the gospel, was only that of healing the sick where-ever they went, Luke x. 9.; but finding that, upon naming their master's name, they were able likewise to cure those that were possessed of devils, this they made the greater matter

A. M. whereupon our Lord promised them still greater success;
 4035, &c. invested them with power to tread upon the most venomous
 Ann. Dom. beasts †, and all the malignant instruments of Satan, with-
 31, &c. out the least harm; and, at the same time, gave them
 from assurance of a blessing more peculiarly theirs, viz. that
 Matt. xiii. 1. their † names were recorded in heaven; and so broke out
 Mark ii. 23. into a rapture of joy, glorifying God for concealing the
 Luke vi. 1. mysteries of the gospel from the great and wise, and re-
 John v. 1. vealing them to the simple and ignorant, and to his dis-
 10 Matt. ciples more especially, who, in virtue of that revelation,
 xvii. 14. enjoyed an happiness which many kings and prophets had
 Mark ix. 14. in vain desired.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

Our

matter of their joy, and, at their return, told it with more pleasure, because it was no part of their commission. It is to be observed, however, that our Lord himself cast out devils by a divine power residing in himself; his disciples only, in virtue of his name, or by a power derived from him. Seeing then that this power accompanied them in all parts of the world, it was necessary that Christ's presence should be with them every where, and such a presence was a certain proof of his being God; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Hammond's Paraphrase*.

These words seem to have a plain allusion to those of the Psalmist, where, under the metaphor of *treading on the scorpion and basilisk*, Psal. xci. 13. God promises the good man a more than common protection from all sorts of dangers and enemies. But there is no reason, however, I think, why our Saviour's words may not here be taken in a literal sense, since they agree so well with what he promises all true believers in another place, *they shall take up serpents*, (as we find one fastened upon St Paul's hand without doing him any harm, Acts xxviii. 2.), *and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them*, Mark xvi. 18; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words allude to a known custom in well-governed cities, where registers are kept of the names of their inhabitants, and do plainly denote the title which believers have to eternal happiness; but by no means an absolute election to it. For, as a citizen, when he misbehaves egregiously and thereupon becomes infamous, has his name razed out of the city-register, and is himself disfranchised of all his privileges; so we read of some, whom Christ threatens *to blot their names out of the book of life*, Rev. xxii. 19. For "as men" are written in this book (says St Basil in Isa. iv. 3.) when they are "converted from vice to virtue, so are they blotted out of it, when they" backslide from virtue to vice. Of the twelve we read that one was certainly

Our Lord had scarce ended his discourse, when a doctor of the law stood up, and inquired of him, what was necessary to be done for the attainment of that eternal life †, which he was so very liberal in promising to his followers. Whereupon our Lord remitted him to the law, which, according to the doctor's own account, consisted chiefly in the love of God and the love of our neighbour. But when he demanded farther what the notion of a neighbour † implied? our Lord thought proper to answer this

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

certainly a reprobate; and though it becomes us to hope better of the LXX; yet our Saviour's words give us no room to think that they were all predestinated to eternal life, since his meaning only is, that his disciples, instead of estimating their happiness from the power of working miracles, should rather make it consist in this,—That he had called, chosen, and separated them from great numbers that would perish; that he had given them the grace of faith and admission to the Christian covenant, but that on themselves it was incumbent, by the preservation of their faith, and the practice of good works comporting therewith, *to make their calling and election sure; Hammond's and Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary.*

Luke x. 25.
And stating
the true no-
tion of a
neighbour.

¶ The law of Moses does no where expressly promise eternal life to those that observed its precepts. It is wholly taken up with temporal blessings and prosperities; and yet the generality of the Jews were not destitute of the hopes of another life, because their writers, a little before, and after the captivity, are very full of it, so that it became the prevailing opinion of the whole nation, and was received by their two principal sects, the Pharisees and Essenes; for as for the Sadducees, who had other notions of the matter, their religion was very little, and their principles purely Epicurean; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† In our Saviour's time, the Pharisees had restrained the word *neighbour*, to signify those of their own nation, their own religion, and their own friends only; and all who differed from them in any of these respects, they indulged the people the liberty to hate; nor would they permit them to extend the least office of common civility to any such. But our Saviour overthrew these false maxims of the Jewish doctors, and reduced the precept of universal charity to its first intention, when, in this parable of the Jew and the Samaritan, he plainly demonstrated, that no difference of nation or religion, no quarrel or resentment, no enmity or alienation of affections, can exempt us from owning any person to be our neighbour; *Whitby's Annotations.*

question.

A. M. question, by telling him, — “ That, once upon a time,
 4035, &c. “ a certain Jew, as he was travelling in the road between
 Ann. Dom. “ † Jerusalem and Jericho, was robbed, stripped, barba-
 31, &c. “ rously used, and left almost dead with his wounds; that
 from “ by chance a priest † came that way, and saw the poor
 Matt. xii. 1. “ wretch weltering in his blood; but the horror of the
 Mark ii. 23. “ sight did not affect him; he passed along unconcerned;
 Luke vi. 1. “ that next came a Levite; but he too was as void of ten-
 John v. 1. “ derness and compassion as was the priest, though both
 to Matth. “ of them were of the same country with the sufferer; that
 xvii. 14. “ at last a Samaritan, a stranger, and one abhorred by the
 Mark ix. 14. “ Jews, seeing this distressed person, with great compas-
 Luke ix. 37. “ sion came to him, raised his head, recalled his fainting
 John vii. 1. “ spirits, and closed his gaping wounds with the best medi-
 “ cines † he had; then, mounting him on his own horse,
 “ he gently conveyed him to the first inn, where, at his
 “ own cost, he entertained him, while he staid with him,
 “ and, at his departure †, promised the host to be at what-
 “ ever

† Between Jerusalem and Jericho (which were about seven leagues distant) the road was very infamous for murders and robberies; for in it was a place called *the valley of Adommim*, or of *bloody men*, because of the great quantity of blood that was there spilt; and for this reason it is, that our Lord lays the scene of his parable in this place; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† To make the description more lively, our Saviour instances in two men, a priest and a Levite, who took no pity of this Jew in distress, though they were of the same religion and country; nay, though they were the ministers and teachers of the religion which he professed, and might therefore be presumed, even in virtue of their office and education, to have more extensive notions, and hearts more capable of tender impressions, than the ruder vulgar: And, for the same reason, he introduces a Samaritan as acting a different part, and taking all imaginable care of this wounded Jew, though between Jews and Samaritans there was a most inveterate hatred.

† The words in the text are, *pouring in wine and oil*; oil, to ease and assuage the pain; and wine, to cleanse and heal the wound: And these things the good Samaritan had about him, because the inns in the eastern countries (even as it is still) afforded nothing, but barely house-room; and therefore the custom was, for the traveller to carry all kinds of necessaries, both for his bed and board, along with him; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The words in the text are, — — *when he departed he took out two pence*, Luke x. 35. The *δυνατόν*, which we ren-
 der

“ ever expences more should accrue.” From which plain narration, the Doctor himself † could not but conclude, that the Samaritan was the neighbour to the person in distress, and consequently that the notion of a neighbour comprehended men of all nations, and all religions whatever.

As soon as the feast of tabernacles was ended, our Lord departed from Jerusalem, and, in the beginning of his journey, went to a small village called *Bethany*, about two miles east of Jerusalem, where he was joyfully received by a woman named *Martha*, who, with her sister *Mary* and her brother *Lazarus*, was highly in favour with him. While *Martha* was busy in making preparation for his entertainment, her sister *Mary* sat with the company listening to his instructions; and when *Martha* complained to him that her sister had left the whole burden of the business upon her, and thereupon desired him to send her to her assistance, our Lord commended *Mary's* choice, and though he did not slight *Martha's* civility, yet her sister's devoutness and attention to his doctrine († which was one thing chiefly necessary) he preferred before it.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke x. 38.
He prefers
Mary's
choice; and
both teach-
es and en-
courages his
disciples to
pray.

Upon

der a penny, was a kind of Roman coin, much about sevenpence half-penny of our money. In the New Testament (for it never occurs in the Old) it is usually put for a piece of money in general, *i. e.* for a shekel, which was the most common coin among the Jews before they became subject to the Greeks and Romans; so that, in this sense, what the Samaritan gave the host amounted to five shillings, or thereabout, which is more consistent with the rest of his character, than that he should leave so small a matter behind him; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Had our Saviour propounded the parable in this manner,— That a certain Samaritan fell among thieves, and that a priest and a Levite passed by without offering him any help, this doctor of the law might have replied, That he did nothing but right, because the Samaritan was no neighbour of theirs: But now, as he makes a Jew the subject of the parable, and the object of the Samaritan's compassion, he draws him in to acknowledge the voice of Nature, which declares that every man is neighbour to his fellow-creature, and that the law of Moses has not annulled, but perfected the law of nature, by commanding us to *love our neighbour as ourselves*, Levit. xix. 18.; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† Interpreters have given themselves some trouble in determining what that one thing is which our Saviour accounts needful. Some

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke xi. 1.

Upon his return to Galilee, as he was one day praying with his disciples in a private place, † they taking it into consideration how necessary it was for them to be directed in the right performance of that duty, desired of him to compose a form of prayer for their use, as the Baptist had done for his disciples: Whereupon he not only gave them the same excellent form (called *The Lord's prayer*) which he had given them about eighteen months before, in his sermon on the mount, but encouraged them likewise, from the consideration of God's goodness, and fatherly affection, (far more indulgent to his children than any earthly parents were to theirs), to be constant in their petitions to him, with fervour †, importunity, and an indefatigable perseverance, as the likeliest way to obtain a gracious answer to them.

Luke xi. 14.
Inveighs a-
gainst the
scribes and
Pharisees.

Not long after this, upon our Lord's curing a demoniac that was dumb, the Pharisees renewed their old senseless cavil, of his ejecting devils by Beelzebub, which he confuted by the same arguments he had formerly used upon that account; and when they again demanded of him a sign from heaven, he again made them the same reply. Nay not only so, but when he was invited to dinner one day by a certain person of that sect, who was not a little offended at his sitting down to meat without washing his

of the ancients are of opinion, that our Lord, in this expression, told Martha that one dish was enough. But besides the lowliness of the sense, the great company that attended our Lord, seventy disciples and twelve apostles, to be sure, if no more, shews the incongruousness of it. Others will have this one thing needful to be a life of meditation and contemplation, which Mary had all along addicted herself to; but her chusing to take the advantage of our Saviour's company, to hear him for an hour or two, rather than prepare a supper for him, is not foundation enough for this conjecture; and therefore we cannot but think that the most general interpretation concerning the care of the soul, with reference to eternity, is the best; *Pool's Annotations.*

† These disciples must have been some of the seventy who were not present when our Lord delivered his sermon on the mount, wherein he first of all prescribed to his apostles this form of prayer; *Beausobre's Annotations.*

† The word *ἀναίδεια* properly signifies *impudence*, and might here be used in conformity to that saying of the Jews, *The impudent man overcomes the modest and the bashful, how much more God, who is goodness itself?* *Whitby's Annotations.*

hands,

hands, he took occasion from thence to inveigh very severely against their ridiculous superstition, in affecting outward neatness in their manner of living, while they neglected to cleanse their souls from internal pollutions. And so proceeding to reproach both them and the scribes, the teachers of the law, with their pride and prevarication, their hypocrisy and spirit of persecution, he so exasperated them, that they used all possible methods to insnare him in his speech, and to find some accusation against him, whereby they might destroy him.

One of the company, however, seeing with what authority he reprov'd, and determin'd among the people, desired of him † to arbitrate between him and his brother, concerning an estate which had lately fallen to them : But this office he chose to decline, and thence took occasion to preach against covetousness, or placing our felicity in worldly possessions ; and to inforce this, he propounded the parable of a certain rich man, who, when he had acquired e-

† The practice among the Jews of referring civil matters to ecclesiastical persons as judges, began in the captivity of Babylon, when, by this means, the Jews avoided the bringing their differences before Heathen judges. Under the dominion of the Romans, they were indulged a greater liberty, and had civil courts made up of persons of their own religion. In cases of private difference between man and man, it was usual to make either the consistory of three, or some others chosen by the contending parties, arbitrators. Whether both these brothers had agreed to refer their difference to our Lord's determination, or this one of them only desired him to interpose his authority, if not to injoin, at least to persuade, his brother to come to an accommodation, it is difficult to say, because the Scripture is silent : But this we may observe, that the ordinary rule of inheritance among the Jews was, for the eldest son to have a double portion of his father's estate, and the rest to be divided equally among the other children ; but in what came by the mother, the eldest had no prerogative above the rest ; the division among them was equal. Whatever then the controversy between these brothers was, our Saviour might very justly refuse to intermeddle in it ; and that, not only because it was inconsistent with his design of coming into the world, which was to promote mens spiritual, rather than their temporal interests, but because it might probably have drawn upon him the envy and calumny of the Jewish rulers, who might be apt to say that he took upon him an office to which he had no call, in prejudice to them who were legally appointed to it ; *Pool's* and *Whitby's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

A M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Lukexii. 13.
Preaches a-
gainst co-
vetousness,
and exhorts
to watch-
fulness, a
prepara-
tion for
death and
judgment,
and for a
timely re-
pentance.

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom. 31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt. xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

state enough, proposed to indulge himself in voluptuousness, but was sadly disappointed by the intervention of a sudden death. He therefore exhorted his disciples not to be too anxious about the things of this life, but to cast their care upon God's providence, who, having promised them a kingdom in heaven, would not fail of supplying them with what was necessary here. He exhorted them to charity, to watchfulness, to preparation against the day of judgment, or the arrest of death, and (under the emblem of stewards or governors in great mens houses) recommended gentleness and temperance, and cautioned them against indulging themselves in any kind of excess, upon the confidence of their Lord's absence or delay.

Luke xiii 1. While he was thus discoursing to his disciples, news was brought him of * the massacre which Pilate had caused to be made of some Galileans, while they were offering their sacrifices at the altar; and the consequence which he drew from thence (as well as from another sad accident that had lately happened in Jerusalem, where the fall of the tower of Siloam † had destroyed no less than eighteen

* The general opinion is, that this piece of history relates to the sedition which Judas Gaulonites raised against the Roman government in Judea, when he, and one Sadducus a Pharisee, possessed the people with a notion, "That taxes were a badge of their slavery; that they ought to acknowledge no sovereign but God himself, nor pay any tribute but to his temple." It was in Galilee, very probably, where this Judas first broached these sentiments, and there acquired such a multitude of followers and abettors, as made Josephus call him Galilæus, as well as Gaulonites; *Antiq. lib* 18. c. 2. Nay all his followers in general, though they were of different provinces by birth, obtained the same name. But when they came to Jerusalem, at one of the great festivals, and began to spread these seditious notions against Cæsar, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, having had intelligence of it, caused a considerable number of them to be slain in the temple while they were sacrificing; *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† The fountain of Siloam rose at the foot of the wall of the east part of the city of Jerusalem. The tower called after its name was doubtless built upon the wall not far from it; and being now become ancient, might fall upon such a number of people, either passing by or standing under it. But how this accident came to pass, we have no manner of certainty, because this passage in St Luke is the only place where we find any mention made of this piece of history; *Calmet's Commentary*.

persons)

persons) was, not that these sufferers were greater sinners than their neighbours, but that their sufferings were intended to lead others to repentance, which, if they did not, in all probability they would meet with the like, or worse judgments*: And then, to engage them all to a speedy repentance, he set forth the patience of the Almighty towards them, in the parable of a fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard ordered to be cut down, because for three years †, it had bore no fruit; but, upon the

A. M.
4035, *62.*
Ann. Dom.
31, *62.*
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 19.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

gardener's

* To verify this prediction of our Saviour's upon the impenitent Jews, we may remember what Josephus has told us of them, *viz.* that under the government of Cumanus, twenty thousand of them were destroyed about the temple, Antiq. lib. 20. c. 4. That, upon the admission of the Idumæans into the city, eight thousand and five hundred of the high-priest's party were slain, insomuch that there was a flood of blood quite round the temple, De bello Jud. lib. 4. c. 7. That, upon the threefold faction that happened in Jerusalem, before the siege of the Romans, "the temple was every where polluted with slaughter; the priests were slain in the exercise of their function; many, who came to worship, fell before their sacrifices; and the dead bodies of strangers and natives were promiscuously blended together, and sprinkled the altar with their blood;" De bello Jud. lib. 6. c. 1.; and that, upon the Romans taking the city and temple, "mountains of dead bodies were piled up about the altar; streams of blood ran down the steps of the temple; several were destroyed by the fall of towers, and others choaked in the sultry ruins of the galleries over the porches;" De bello Jud. lib. 7. c. 10.

† Some of the ancients are of opinion, that by these three years we are to understand the three dispensations under which mankind have lived, *viz.* under the natural law, from the beginning of the world to the time of Moses; under the written law, from Moses to Jesus Christ; and under the evangelical law, from Jesus Christ to the end of the world. Others rather mean by them, the three kinds of government under which the Jews had lived, *viz.* the government of judges, from Joshua to Saul; the government of kings, from Saul to the Babylonish captivity; and the government of high-priests, from the captivity to the time of Jesus Christ. But these explications are a little too arbitrary; nor will the three years of our Saviour's preaching among the Jews come up to the point, because the Jews were not destroyed the next year, (as the barren fig-tree was to be cut down), but forty years after our Lord's ascension. All that is meant by the expression, therefore, is, that God gave them

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from

Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

Luke xiii.
10.
Cures the
crooked
woman,
and con-
futes the
ruler of the
synagogue.

gardener's promising to use a more than ordinary care and diligence about it, he was prevailed on to let it stand one year longer, but with this determination, that if it still continued unfruitful, he would not then fail to cut it down.

Every Sabbath-day our Lord's custom was to preach in one of the Jewish synagogues, and, while he was thus employed, he observed a woman, who, for the space of eighteen years, had laboured under a spirit of infirmity, which bowed down her body so, that she was not able to lift herself up. Here was a proper object for his compassion and power to exert themselves; and therefore, calling the woman to him, he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she became straight, and glorified God. At this the ruler of the synagogue † became so very envious and displeased, that he told the people, — There were six days in the week allowed by God for labour, and that on those they might come for cure, but not on the Sabbath, which was a day appointed for rest. But our Lord soon made him ashamed of his hypocrisy †, by an argument drawn from their own practice of loosing an ox or an ass from

them all the time, and all the means, that could be desired, to make them inexcusable; and the term of three years seems rather to be mentioned, because the fruit of some fig-trees come not to maturity till the third year; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† In every synagogue there was a considerable number of doctors of the law, who in the gospel are frequently called rulers or governors, and over these there was usually one chief president. But the person here seems not to have been the chief president, but one of the subordinate rulers, because we find him, not addressing himself directly to Christ, (which, not improbably, had he been the president, he would have taken courage to do), but only to the people in general; though by them he obliquely struck at our Saviour; *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Our Saviour declared this ruler of the synagogue to be an hypocrite, partly because he placed his holiness in the observation of the ritual precepts of the law, (such as bodily rest on the Sabbath-day) to the disparagement of the works of mercy, and other great matters of eternal obligation; and partly because he pretended to a great zeal for the performance of God's commands, when, all the while, he was rather acted by a malevolent envy to the glory of Christ, which he, to whom his heart was open, perfectly knew; *Whitby's Annotations*.

the

the stall on the Sabbath-day, and leading them away to watering; and much more then might he be permitted to cure, on that day, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan, for so many years, had afflicted with a fore disease. Whereupon his adversaries were silenced, but the people were all glad, and rejoiced at his glorious actions.

The feast of dedication † was now approaching, when, after several removals, our Lord repaired again to Jerusalem, and, as he was walking in the streets on the Sabbath-day †, saw a poor man that was blind from his very birth. Upon his calling the man to him, his disciples asked him, whether it was the * man's own, or his parents sin, that had brought

A. M.
4635, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
John ix. 1.
And cures
the man
that was
born blind,
upon which
ensue several
alterca-
tions.

† When Judas Maccabæus had cleansed the temple, which had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphaneus, he again dedicated the altar, (1 Maccab. iv. 59. and 2 Maccab. x. 8.); and this is supposed to be the dedication, in memory of which the Jews continued to celebrate a feast, which fell out in the winter, in the month Cisleu, between the 13th and 14th of our November; and being the same, in all probability, with what in the gospel is called τὰ ἑγκαίνια, was honoured and approved by our Saviour's presence, though but of human institution; *Whitby's Annotations*; *Hammond's Paraphrase*; and *Eachard's Ecclesiastical History*, lib. 1. c. 5.

† It has been observed before, that our Saviour made choice of the Sabbath-day, as a day wherein he did many of his mighty works. It was on this day that he cured the impotent man who lay at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 10. On this day that he healed him who had the withered hand, Matth. xii. 10.; and now on this day likewise, that he gave sight to the man who was born blind, John ix. 14.; and possibly he might chuse this, because it was the day whereon he ordinarily preached that heavenly doctrine, which he confirmed by these miraculous works; or perhaps, that he might instruct the Jews (if they would have received instruction) in the right observation of the Sabbath, and arm his disciples against that pernicious doctrine of the Pharisees, viz. that it was not lawful to do good, or perform works of mercy and compassion, on that day; *Pool's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

* What the disciples might mean by the sin of the blind man's parents, is no hard matter to solve, considering the strict prohibition in the law, Levit. xx. 18. of not coming near a menstruous woman, which was thought to have so ill an influence upon the child, as to make it obnoxious to leprosy, or mutilation, and might, consequently, be the cause of this person's blindness: But what we are to understand by his own sin, before he

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matth.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

to Matth.

brought that calamity upon him? But his blindness, as he told them, was not sent for a punishment of any one's sin, but † for the greater manifestation of God's glory; and so spitting upon the ground, he made some clay, and having anointed his eyes therewith, he † sent him to wash them in the pool of Siloam; which accordingly he did, and returned with such perfect eyesight, that his neighbours were a-

was born, is not so easy to be determined. That it cannot relate to the original sin which he brought into the world with him, is evident, because all mankind (our Lord only excepted) are equally guilty of this; nor does this entail upon them any corporeal imperfection: And therefore the sin here intended must be something special and personal. Now, whoever considers that the opinion of the Platonists and Pythagoreans concerning the pre-existence of souls, their transmigration from one body to another, and being sent into bodies better or worse, according to their merit or demerit, had obtained among the Jews, and more especially among the Pharisees, need not much wonder to find our Lord's disciples infected with it, or, at least, desirous to know their master's sentiments about it. The author of the book of Wisdom, where speaking of himself, he tells us, *that, being good, he came into a body undefiled, i. e. free from any notable infirmity*, chap. viii. 20. gives countenance to this doctrine; and, in the writings of Philo, (*De gigant. p. 285. et De somniis, p. 586.*), and of Josephus (*De bello Jud. lib. 2. c. 12.*), we have it confirmed to us: And therefore the disciples may well be supposed to inquire here, whether our Lord allowed of the prevailing notion, *viz.* that the soul of this man might be put into this imperfect body, for the punishment of what he had done, either in or out of the body, in a pre-existent state; *Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† It must not be thought, that God did any ways actively concur to make this man blind, though, in his wisdom, he thought fit to leave this imperfection in the plastic matter, whereof he was formed, unrectified, that thereby he might shew his miraculous power in giving sight to such an one for the confirmation of Christ's doctrine; thereby display his goodness, in illuminating both the soul and body of this man at once; and thereby give all others, who beheld this miraculous cure, a powerful motive to believe; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† We read of nothing medicinal in this water, only our Lord was pleased to send the blind man to wash his eyes here, as a probation of his faith and obedience, in the same manner as, of old, Naaman the Syrian was sent to wash in the river Jordan, 2 Kings v. 10.; *Poel's Annotations*.

mazed,

mazed, and began to question whether he was the same man that used to sit begging, until he assured them, that he was the very person; and, to satisfy them farther, not only told them who his physician was, but in what manner his cure was effected.

Various were the censures and opinions of men upon this occasion. The Pharisees, to diminish the credit of the miracle, said that Jesus could not be a prophet sent from God, † because he violated the Sabbath; but others again replied, that no impostor could be permitted to work such miracles as had apparently the finger of God in them. Those who were averse to believe the miracle, or in hopes of making the thing look intricate, sent for the parents of the man that was cured, and asked them these three questions, Whether he was their son? Whether he was born blind? and, Whether they knew how, and by whom, he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly, that he was their son, and was born blind; but, as to the last, they referred them to him, who (as they told them) was of age to answer for himself; not daring to say any more for fear of the Sanhedrim, who had made an † order

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1:

† And yet they themselves acknowledge, that a prophet might do and command things contrary to the rest required by the Sabbath, which they also prove by the example of Joshua, who commanded, that *the ark should be carried round Jericho, the armed men going before and after it seven days*, one of which must be the Sabbath, Josh. vi. How then could that which prophets, by the known principles of the Jews, were allowed to do, prove that Jesus was no prophet, especially if we consider, that, by these actions of mercy and goodness, he did not indeed violate the rest of the Sabbath, but only their corrupt traditions concerning it; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† The general opinion is, that, among the Jews, there were three kinds of excommunication; that the first was called *Niddui*, that is to say, *separation*, which lasted for thirty days, and separated the person from the use of all things holy: The second was called *Cherem*, or *execration*, which excluded the person from the synagogue, and deprived him of all civil commerce: And the third, *Shammatha*, or *excision*, which removed him from all hopes of returning to the synagogue any more. But Selden (*De Synedr. Hebr.*) maintains, that these three terms, *Niddui*, *Cherem*, and *Shammatha*, are sometimes synonymous; and that the Jews, properly speaking, never had more than two sorts of excommunication, the

A. M. order to excommunicate any person who should acknow-
 4035, &c. ledge Jesus to be Christ. Him therefore they began to ex-
 Ann. Dom. amine; and to draw him from the good opinion he had
 31 &c. conceived of his physician, bid him ascribe the glory of his
 from Matt cure wholly to God, and not to look upon Jesus with any
 xii. 1. Mark veneration, who was a sinner and Sabbath-breaker, and
 ii. 2; Luke consequently could not come from God. To which the
 vi. 1. John man boldly replied, "That it was very unaccountable that
 v. 1. to Matth. xvii "they should not perceive from whence the man was,
 14. Mark ix. "whom God had endued with such a miraculous power
 14. Luke ix. "of opening the eyes of one born blind, † a thing that
 37. John vii "was never heard of before since the world began; and
 1. "that since it was a certain truth, || that God heareth not
 "sinners, if he were not sent, and empowered by God, he
 "could never do such wonderful cures as these." This
 provoked them so highly, that they first upbraided him
 with his former blindness, as a character of some extraor-
 dinary ill in him, and then cast him out of the synagogue
 with disgrace; but Jesus shortly after met him, and receiv-
 ed him into his own church. He declared himself to him,
 that he was the Messiah; and the poor man, believing on
 him, immediately fell down prostrate at his feet, and ado-
 red him.

After

greater and the less; though most are agreed, that it was the greater
 sort of excommunication which the Sanhedrim threatened to any one
 that should confess that Jesus was the Christ, because the parents of
 the blind man were so fearful of it, that they durst not speak out;
Cainet's Dictionary, under the word *Excommunication*

† They who lose their sight by a disease, may be cured; but no
 man, no not Moses, or any of the prophets, ever did, or ever could,
 without the assistance of a divine power, give sight to one born
 blind; for which reason the Jews reckon this among the signs of
 the Messiah, that he *should open the eyes of the blind*; *Whitby's An-*
notations

|| But doth not God hear sinners. Then whom can he hear,
 since no man liveth, and committeth not sin against God? It is
 true indeed: But then the sinners which the poor man may be
 supposed here to mean, are not those who become such through
 ignorance, weakness, or human infirmity, but such notorious
 and presumptuous sinners, as go on in their impieties, with an
 high hand, and an hardened heart, of whom the Spirit of God
 declares, *When they spread forth their hands, I will hide myself*
from them, and when they make many prayers, I will not hear,
 Isa. i. 15. The maxim however is here to be understood, not
 in

After that our Lord had received the poor man's homage, he continued his discourse, and under the allegory of a † shepherd and his sheep, proved the Pharisees to be

A. M.
4015, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, 32.

no from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
o. Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

in a general but restrained sense, viz. that God useth not to honour notorious and flagitious sinners, (especially when they pretend to come with a message from him), by giving them a power to work miracles, in order to confirm the truth of what they say. For this is the force of the poor man's argument, — That Christ could not be such a notorious sinner as he was represented to him, because it was inconsistent with the attributes of God, to honour such persons with his presence and assistance, in doing such works as none could do, without a divine power committed to them; *Pool's Annotations.*

John x. 1.
He shews
the Phari-
sees to be
false guides,
and him-
self the
true one,
and, upon
asserting his
divinity, is
in danger
of being
stoned.

† That this allusion was very proper and pertinent with regard to the persons to whom our Saviour addressed his discourse, the condition and custom of that country may convince us. For the greatest part of the wealth and improvement there consisted in sheep; and the examples of Jacob and David in particular, are proofs that the keeping of these was not usually committed to servants and strangers, (as it is among us), but to men of the greatest quality and substance. The children of the family, nay, the masters and owners themselves, made it their business, and esteemed the looking to their flocks, a care and employment in no case below them. Hence probably came the frequent metaphor of styling *Kings the shepherds of their people*. Hence the ancient prophets describe the Messiah in the character of a *shepherd*; and our Blessed Saviour, to shew that he was the person intended by the prophets, applies the same character to himself, thereby to represent his government of the church, and tender concern for mankind: *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom; shall seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away; shall bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick, and gently lead those which were with young*, Isa. xl. 11. and Ezek. xxxiv. 16; all lively emblems of our Lord's pastoral care, and of the various methods which he hath employed to accommodate his dispensations to our wants, in order to promote our eternal salvation. And as the character of a shepherd did well become our gracious Saviour, so there is something in the very nature and disposition of sheep, (which appears so innocent and inoffensive, so peaceable and gentle, so patient and submissive, so honest and undefigning), as carries a near resemblance to that plainness and probity, that modesty and humility, that quietness and submission, which are indeed the first

A. M.
4035 &c
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.

no better than blind guides, nay than thieves and robbers, who had † climbed up into the sheeptold, or made themselves rulers and governors in God's church, without any proper commission from him. Upon the same ground he condemned all those false Christs † who before him had usurped

xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

elements of the Christian religion, as well as the qualifications requisite to the reception of it. It is to be observed, however, that as the shepherd's art in managing his sheep (in the eastern countries) was different to what is among us, (to which purpose we read of his going before, leading, and calling his sheep, and of their following, and knowing his voice; whereas our shepherds go after and drive their sheep), so these several expressions do, in the moral, denote our Lord's receiving into the number of Christians all those humble and obedient souls that come to him in the spirit of meekness, not in the cloathing, but in the real qualities, of his sheep, and making provision for their growth in grace and improvement in all virtue and Godliness of living; *tenhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.;* and *Hammond's Annotations.*

† According to the primary institution of God, it was the proper province of the sons of Levi to teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord had spoken unto them by the hand of Moses, Levit. x. 11.; and therefore it was required that the priests' lips should preserve knowledge, and the people seek his law at their mouths, Mal. ii. 4. 7. But (however it came about) no sooner did their traditions grow in esteem, than the scribes and Pharisees, not only took upon them to be the guides and teachers of the people, but maintained likewise, that others were to receive authority to teach from their commission and ordination to that office; though we nowhere find that they received any such authority from God: for which reason our Saviour represents them as a plantation which his Father had not planted, Matth. xv. 13.; and bids his disciples beware of their doctrine, Matth. xvi. 12. because they taught for the doctrines of God the commandments of men, and made void the commandments of God by their traditions, Matth. xv. 6. 9.; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† In several of the Greek copies, as well as the Syriac, Persian, and Gothic, the words *before me* (for our Saviour in the text speaks in his own person) are omitted; and some critics are of opinion, that this omission was early, because the Manichees (according to Theophrast) made no scruple to infer from hence, that the prophets of the Old Testament had not their mission from God. Our Saviour, however, in several places where he quotes them, has sufficiently established the authority of the prophets; and by this passage means

ed the title of the Messiah, and asserted his own right to it by an argument that no other shepherd durst produce, viz. his laying down his life for his sheep ||, which were to consist of Gentiles † as well as Jews, and all together make up one flock.

Before the conclusion of the feast, as he was walking in Solomon's porch †, several of the Jews came, and required

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

no more than that all those who before him had taken upon them the title and quality of the Messiah (such as Theudas and Judas Galilæus, whereof we find mention Acts v. 36. 37.) were thieves and robbers, because they usurped a character which they had no right to; and that all before him, who either had not their commission from God, or could not prove it by extraordinary miracles, (such as the authors of the Rabbinical traditions, and of all the other reigning sects among the Jews), were far from being the true shepherds of God's people; *Calmer's Commentary*.

|| His sheep are here supposed by some to be his elect and peculiar friends; and thence they infer, that Christ laid down his life for them only. Now, if we respect the counsel of God, and the design of Jesus Christ, nothing is more certain than that he gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and tasted death for every man, Heb. ii. 9. and was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2.; but then because the world can no otherwise lay hold on the benefits of this propitiation, than by believing, and being obedient to the voice of this shepherd; he therefore is said to do this more eminently for his sheep. The apostle, I think, has determined the whole controversy in a few words, — *He died for all, that they who live might not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them*, 2 Cor. v. 15.: so that if any perish, it is not because he died not for them, but because they will not perform the conditions required to make his death efficacious to them; they will not live unto him who died for them; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† These our Saviour calls *his other sheep*, John x. 16. by way of anticipation, because he foreknew that many of them (when once his gospel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready reception, be converted and baptised; and because the ceremonial law (which was the partition-wall between the Jews and Gentiles) was shortly to be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with the Jews that believed in his name; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† This porch consisted of some stately cloisters on the east side of the temple, and not far from the court of the Gentiles. It was called

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A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1

quired him to tell them (in positive terms) whether he was the Messiah or not. To which his answer was, That he had already sufficiently informed them of that, but to no effect; that the miracles which he wrought in his Father's name, were a full evidence of his mission; that the reason † why they believed him not was, because they were not of a disposition proper for his sheep; that to such as were his sheep, and followed him, he would give eternal life; and that none could pull them out of his, or

ed Solomon's, either to preserve the memory of that great prince, or because it was built according to the model of that which he erected, 1 Kings vi. 3.; for both in the temple which Zorobabel, and in that which Herod rebuilt, the plan of Solomon's was chiefly observed, though some variations might be allowed of: And in this porch our Saviour was walking, because at this time it was winter, and here he found a cover from the injuries of the weather; whereas in the summer-season it was customary with the Jews to walk in the open courts of the temple; *Eachard's Ecclesiastical history, lib. I. c. 5.; Whitby's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary.*

† Some are of opinion, that the words in the text *καὶ γὰρ*, which we render *because*, are not rational, or do not render a reason for these peoples infidelity, but only intimate that their infidelity was consequential to their not being his sheep; or, in other words, that they could not believe because they were not elected. But to obviate this we must observe, that the reason which our Lord here assigns for this defect of faith, is doubtless such as made it a great crime in them; for sure that must be such for which they were to die in their sins, John viii. 24. It is therefore certain, that this unbelief cannot be resolved into any natural defect of knowledge on their part, nor any act of reprobation on God's part, but purely to the want of a teachable and well disposed mind. For were it the same thing, to be one of Christ's sheep and to be predestinated to faith and salvation, the import of our Saviour's words must be this,—“Ye therefore believe not, because ye are not of the number of the elect, but of those whom God hath from eternity rejected.” Now, by this account of the matter, our Saviour would not have accused but excused the infidelity of the Jews; and they, with as good reason, might have replied to him,—“We therefore believe not, because God, by his act of reprobation, hath shut the door of faith against us, and so our infidelity is not to be imputed to us, but God;” *Whitby's Annotations.*

his

his Father's hands, because he and his Father were one †. Upon this last expression, the Jews concluded him to be a blasphemer, and were going to stone him; and tho' he reminded them of the many good actions he had done for them in his Father's name, and endeavoured to apologize for his calling himself the Son of God, (even because in Scripture we find judges and magistrates frequently so styled, and much more than might he, who was consecrated and sent by God, assume that title) yet all this would not appease their rage, so that he was forced to leave the city, and went thence over Jordan to Bethabara, where John had formerly baptised; where great multitudes resorted to him, both to hear his instructions, and to be healed of their diseases; and where he made many disciples, because the place put the people in mind, that whatever John had reported of him was true.

A. M.
1015, &c.
Ann Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
John x. 40.

While he continued in these parts, a certain person put a curious question to him †, concerning the number of those

Luke xii.
Shews the
difficulty of
attaining
salvation,
and the
wretched-
ness of the
Jews in
rejecting it.

† That is, one in essence and nature; one in authority and power; and not barely one in will and consent: And that this is the genuine signification of the words, appears, 1st, From the original text, where it is not said, I and my Father are *one* *us*, *person*, in the masculine gender, but *iv*, *one thing*, in the neuter. Now, if *thing* be not the Divine Being they cannot be one; for since the Father is confessed to be God, the Son cannot be one thing with the Father, if he be not God too. 2^{dly}, It appears from the context, where our Saviour, having, in the preceding verses, ascribed the preservation of his sheep to the power of his Father, *None is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands*, John x. 29 ascribes the same also to his own power, *Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand*, ver. 28. plainly intimating, that his sheep were equally safe in his own hand, as in his Father's; because, says he, *I and my Father are one*, ver. 30 And, 3^{dly}, It appears from the verses which immediately follow; for when the Jews took up stones to stone him, as guilty of blasphemy, because he made himself God, he does not evade the charge, by saying, that he only conspired with the will of God, as all true prophets did; but appealed to the works which he performed by the power of the Father residing in him, which plainly carries it to an unity of power, not of will only; and then St Chrysostom's inference is undeniable, that "if the power be the same, the essence also is the same;" *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The man, who proposed this question to our Saviour, had doubtless in his thoughts the common opinion of the Jews, that

all

A M. those that should be saved : whereupon he took occasion
 4035. *etc.* to admonish his hearers, " That they ought to use their
 Ann Dom. " utmost endeavours to enter in at the strait gate * of
 31, *etc.* " salvation, because the number of those, who should not
 from " attain it, would be large; that they ought to do it with
 Matt. xii. 1 " all expedition, because, when once the gate was shut,
 Mark ii. 23 " and the means of salvation withdrawn, all pretences of
 Luke vi. 1 " having heard the glad tidings of the gospel, and of ha-
 John v. 1. " ving been conversant with him upon earth, would gain
 to Matth. " them no admittance; that all workers of iniquity
 xvii. 14. " should be utterly excluded; and therefore the Jews, in
 Mark ix. 14. " particular, would have cause to lament, when they
 Luke ix. 37. " should see many Heathens, from all parts of the earth,
 John vii. 1. " possessed of the glories of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac,
 " and Jacob, and all the ancient prophets, while them-
 " selves (who were the heirs of the kingdom) should be
 " thrust out, and so made the last, who were once the
 " first."

At

all the Israelites (how much soever they may suffer in this) might have their portion in the world to come; but this was a question of too much needless curiosity for our Saviour to answer, because it is no part of our concern, how many shall be saved? But only how, and by what means, we are to work out our own salvation: And therefore he took occasion from hence to instruct the man (and in him all others) in what might be of much more substantial benefit to him; *Whitby's Annotations.*

* This expression of our Blessed Saviour's, whether it was borrowed from the Heathen fables or no, is extremely like them: For Cebes tells us, that, at the first entrance upon a course of virtue, there is a little gate; that after we have passed this gate, there is a narrow ascent; and that the way following is rough and rugged, because it is not much frequented; but that, "after we have got up to the top of the hill, the rest is smooth and easy, free from all obstructions, and leading to the regions of felicity." Nay, Hesiod, who was much older than Cebes, has given us the same description of the paths of virtue:

Μακρὸς δὲ ὁ ὁρθὸς οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτὴν,
 Καὶ τρηχὺς τὸ πρῶτον ἵπην δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἴκηται
 Ῥηιδίη δ' ἡπειτα πῖλει, χάλεπῃ περ ἴῤυστα.

Oper. et Dier. lib. i. lin. 288.

And hence we may perceive, to our comfort, that though the ways of virtue and religion are not, at their first entrance, so very agreeable, yet, in process of time, they will be found to be ways of pleasantness, *Christ's yoke easy, and his commandments*

As he was discoursing in this manner, some of the Pharisees, who could no longer bear with patience the power and authority which he had gained among the people, in hopes of getting rid of him, ¶ came and suggested the danger he was in from Herod Antipas, so long as he continued in Galilee, which was part of his dominions : But far from betraying any fear upon such information, he let the Pharisees know, that, having but a few days longer to live, he was determined to devote them to the relief of the distressed, the curing diseases, and casting out devils ; and as to Herod's † subtilty, and designs against his life, they

were
Luke xiii.
31.

ments not grievous; *Cebetis Tab.*; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

¶ But, whether they came upon their own account, or by the instigation of Herod, is the question. — If they came upon their own account, it is certain, that they came not out of any kindness to our Saviour ; because the whole history of the gospel informs us, that they were far from having any affection for him ; and therefore they must come with a design, either to scare him out of Galilee, where he had been too popular for them, or to drive him into a trap which they had laid for him in Judea. This seems to be a genuine interpretation enough of the sense of the evangelist ; and therefore, in our history, we have followed it : But still it seems not improbable, that, considering the present circumstances Herod was under, he might send these messengers to our Saviour. He had but lately gained himself no good reputation among the Jews, by murdering John, whom all the world looked upon as a prophet : And therefore, seeing that our Saviour excelled John, especially in the fame and renown of his miracles, he was unwilling to augment the odium which already lay upon him, by any fresh acts of violence to a person, that was reputed a prophet, much superior to the Baptist, whom he had slain : He had got a notion too, that the Baptist, at least the soul of the Baptist, in another body, was risen from the dead, and what the effect of his ghost's haunting his dominions might be, he could not tell ; and therefore he might think it convenient to put these Pharisees upon some expedient to get our Saviour (whom possibly he might take for John revived) removed farther from him. However this be, it is certain, that either he or the Pharisees, or both, had a mind to have him gone somewhere else, and that, for this purpose, the message was brought him ; *Pool's Annotations*.

† The subtilty of that prince is implied in the answer which our Saviour makes to the Pharisees, and which looks indeed as
VOL. I. T t if

A. M.
4035. &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c
from

Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Luke xiv.
1.
Cures the
dropfical
man, re-
commends
humility,
and repre-
sents the
different
fuccess of
the gospel.

were altogether superfluous, because he foreknew, that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem †, which was the place appointed (as it were) for the slaughter of all the prophets; and hereupon he broke out into a most pathetic exclamation against the inhabitants of that unhappy city, reproaching them with their rejecting the kind offers of the gospel, and with their killing the messengers sent from God, and then denouncing their sad approaching destruction and calamity.

One Sabbath-day, when Jesus was invited by a Pharisee of some distinction to dine with him, a man distempered with the dropfy came after him; and, when several of the company narrowly observed how he would behave upon this occasion †, he first cured the poor man, and then

if they had been sent from him, *Go tell that fox*, Luke xiii. 32. The expression, however, may be taken either in a mild or an harsher sense. If a mild, it may denote that exquisite policy wherewith this prince conducted his affairs all his lifetime, siding sometimes with the Jews, sometimes with the Romans, sometimes with the Pharisees, and sometimes with the Sadducees, just as it suited his interest: But, suppose it to be taken in an harsh sense, it will nowise affect our Saviour's character, nor infringe the command of not "speaking evil of the ruler of the people," since our Lord was a prophet sent from God, and the office of a prophet is, not to spare kings, when they reprove their offences, Jer. i. 15; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† Some are of opinion, that, because the Jews had referred to the Sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem, the whole cognisance and trial of prophets, therefore a prophet was not to suffer out of that city; but this interpretation seems to enervate our Saviour's sentiment, whose design certainly was, to represent the city of Jerusalem, so accustomed to shed the blood of the prophets, that there was scarce a possibility for any prophet's dying out of it; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The presence of the dropfical man, and its being the Sabbath-day, would involve our Saviour (as they thought) in this difficulty, — That either, by forbearing to heal at that time, he would betray his fear, and strengthen their superstitions with regard to such ritual observances; or else, that, by doing it, he must incur the censure and odium of a Sabbath-breaker, and a contemner of the law: But he, who was well aware what spies he had upon him, so ordered the matter, as to accomplish what he saw fit, without any opportunity given for his enemies to compass their ends by it; *Stan-hope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 3.

justified

justified his doing so, by the same argument he made use of to those who reprehended him for curing the crooked woman on the Sabbath-day. Observing, however, how eager the guests were to take every one the uppermost places at the table, he endeavoured to convince them, how commendable it was for a man to seat himself in a place below, rather than above, his rank and condition, because daily experience shewed us, that humility was a virtue, which was so far from debasing, that it raised and exalted the person who practised it. And then, turning his discourse to the master of the house, whom he found too regardless of the poor and needy, he gave him (and in him all others) the good advice || of inviting the poor, the blind, and the lame, who could make no requital, rather than his own friends †, or rich acquaintance, who were able to return the compliment, to his entertainments, and in so doing, he might depend upon a recompence from God in the kingdom of Heaven.

A. M.
4935, 66.
Ann. Dom.
31, 66.
from
Matt. xii. 7.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

At

|| Whether this precept is to be understood in a literal sense or no, may in some measure admit of a debate. Our Saviour, when he acted the part of a rich man, in feeding the multitude, had people of the meanest rank, and, among these, the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, (who daily resorted to him for cure), for the chief of his guests: But most men think, that these extraordinary actions of his were no proper patterns for us in the dispensation of our charity, but that we answer the intent of the precept as well, if we do what is equivalent to us in respect of charge, and more advantageous to them and their families, by sending them meat, or money, to refresh them at home; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† The words in the text are, *When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours*, Luke xiv. 12. It is to be observed, in our expounding of Scripture, that, as comparative particles are sometimes used in a sense negative, (for so we find the chief priests moving the people, *ἵνα μᾶλλον Βαραββάν ἀπένδω αὐτοῖς*, *that he should rather release Barrabas to them*, i. e. that he should release Barrabas, and not Jesus), so negative particles are oft used in a sense comparative; as when we read in Prov. viii. 10. *Receive my instructions, and not silver*; and in Joel ii. 12. *Rend your hearts, and not your garments*, the meaning is rather than silver, or your garments; in like manner as here, *Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren*, i. e. be not so much concerned to call them, as the poor. For it can hardly be

T t 2

thought,

A. M.
4935, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

At the hearing of these last words, one in the company repeated that common saying among the Rabbins, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread † in the kingdom of God*; whereupon our Lord took occasion to represent the different success of the gospel, the rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles, under the † emblem of a feast, to

thought, that our Saviour's intent in this precept was absolutely to forbid all invitations of our neighbours or friends to dine or sup with us. This is an act of kindness and civility, and of good tendency sometimes to maintain and promote amity and friendship among neighbours and acquaintance; but his only meaning is, that we should not invite them, out of a prospect of a compensation from them again, which is making a kind of traffic with our generosity; but, instead of this, that we should expend our money in the exercise of charity to such as are in no condition to make us a retribution; *Whitby's* and *Pool's Annotations*.

† From the ensuing parable it appears, that *the kingdom of God* here does not signify *the kingdom of heaven*, in its most exalted sense, but only *the kingdom of the Messiah*, whereof this carnal Jew here speaks according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious temporal kingdom, in which the Jews should lord it over the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all those earthly blessings and delights in which they placed their felicity; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† If we compare this with another passage elsewhere, Matth. xxii. 2. we may be farther satisfied, that, by *the kingdom of heaven* is here represented the *gospel-dispensation*; and this, as it ministers true plenty and pleasure, all that men can want, and all that they can wish, to render them perfectly happy, is compared to a supper. The bounty and infinite love of Almighty God are signified by the greatness of that supper, and the multitudes bidden to it. The first bidding implies all the previous notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The second bidding, when all things were ready, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered, for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his apostles, and other preachers of the gospel, to the same purpose. The excuses sent for their absence, are the prejudices and passions, and worldly interest, which did not only hinder those Jews from coming into the faith, but disposed them likewise to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinacy and contempt. The guests brought in from abroad to supply their places, are the Gentile world, to whom (after that the Jews had thrust

to which those that were invited, upon fundry pretences, refused to come, so that the master of the house was obliged to send out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the high-ways and hedges, to collect a sufficient complement of guests, being determined, that *none of those, who were first invited, should taste of his supper.* A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom. 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matth. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1. Luke xiv. 26. Shows the qualifications necessary to become Christians, and vindicates his own conduct in conversing sometimes with sinners.

As he was going from the Pharisee's house, where he dined, being attended with a mighty concourse of people, he began to explain † to them, what they were to trust to, if they intended to become his disciples; that they were ‡ to renounce even some of their most lawful affections, and prepare themselves to undergo the most unjust persecutions, if they thought of making profession of his religion; and therefore (that they might not fail in the day of trial) he advised them to consider well before-hand, what such a profession would cost them: "For, as he,

thrust it from them) the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made: And the declaring, that *none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper*, denotes the giving those Jews over to a reprobate sense, and leaving them under that infidelity and perverseness, in which they continue hardened to this very day; *Stand on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.*

† It was a custom of the Jewish doctors, to lay down before their profelytes what inconveniencies would attend upon their precepts; and, in conformity to this, our Saviour acquaints his disciples with two things that would be a means to deter them from embracing his religion, viz. the difficulty of the duties that would be required of them, and the greatness of the sufferings to which they would be exposed.

‡ The words in the text are, — *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*, Luke xiv. 26. But their meaning in this place is not, that a man should, properly speaking, hate his father and his mother; for certainly our Blessed Lord, who enjoins us to love our enemies, would never make it our duty to hate our parents: And therefore the word *μισέειν* (which is an Hebraism) must necessarily here be taken in a lower sense, viz. *to love, or esteem less*, in the same manner as it is said of Leah, that *Jacob hated her*, Gen. xxix. 31. i. e. did not love her so well as he did Rachel: For that this, and no more, is here the import of the expression, is plain from a parallel text, *He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me*, Matth. x. 37; *Whitby's Annotations.*

" who

A. M. " who begins to build, and has not money to accomplish
 4035, &c. " it, leaves his work imperfect, and himself becomes ridi-
 Ann. Dom. culous; or as he that designs a war, and has not men
 31, &c. " and money enough to go through with it, had better
 from " never have engaged in it; so he that undertakes to be a
 Matt. xii. 1. " Christian, must resolve to renounce all that is precious,
 Mark ii. 23. " and to bear all that is afflictive to him in this world, or
 Luke vi. 1. " else he will never be able to hold out."
 John v. 1. to Matth. " Among the great multitudes that daily resorted to our
 xvii. 14. Saviour to hear his discourses, were many publicans and
 Mark ix. 14. sinners †. This gave great offence to the scribes and Pha-
 Luke ix. 37. risees †, who murmured at his condescending goodness,
 John vii. 1. in so freely conversing and eating with such infamous
 Luke xv. 1. people. But, to vindicate himself in this respect, he com-
 pared his conduct to that of a man, who having an hun-
 dred sheep, lost the ninety and nine † in quest of one †
 which

† They whom the Scripture generally, and this portion of it in particular, characterises by the name of *sinners*, are the habitual and obdurate, the great and eminent offenders; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 3.

† The scribes and Pharisees looked upon the publicans as unfit to be conversed with upon any account, even though it was to reclaim them from their evil courses. Our Saviour had told them, that he conversed among such people as their physician, and not as their companion, and that therefore his proper business was among such patients, Matth. ix. 12. 13. But this apology would not silence their murmurings, because their opinion was, that God had cast off all care of them, and never intended to grant them repentance unto life; *Burkit and Whitby's Annotations*.

† Here Christ sets ninety and nine just persons in opposition to one sinner, not that it is so in proportion; for there are very few who live according to the rule that is prescribed them; but because, even upon a supposition that it were so, such is the value of our immortal souls, that great care and pains ought to be taken even for the sake of one; *Grotius in locum*.

† A sheep, when once it has strayed away, is a creature remarkably stupid and heedless. It goes wandering on, without either power or inclination to return back, though each moment it is in danger of becoming a sacrifice to every beast of prey that meets it. And such, in truth, is the condition of people addicted to vice, when they have broken out of God's fold, and forsaken the pleasant pastures which he provides for them. They grow careless and inconsiderate,

which was gone astray ; to that of a woman, searching, with all diligence, for a piece of silver † that was lost, and rejoicing exceedingly when she found it ; and to that of a father †, receiving his returning prodigal son with all the indications of joy and tenderness, notwithstanding the re-monstrances of his elder brother : For under the name of the *elder brother*, he reproveth the unjust murmurings of the Pharisees, who were displeased at his entertaining sinners, though the salvation of such was the main end of his coming into the world.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Having thus exposed the pride and envy of the Pharisees, he proceeded, in the next place, to reprove their covetousness, and, at the same time, to instruct his disciples what the proper use was that they were to make of their riches. To this purpose he introduces an unjust steward,

Luke xvi. 1.
Shews the
manner in
which we
are to em-
ploy our
riches, and
the miser-
able conse-
quence of
unchari-
tableness.

siderate, and are exposed to snares and temptations every moment. They are hardened by custom ; are depraved in their affections and judgment ; are neither disposed to grow wiser, nor of themselves capable of conquering inveterate habits of vice, though they should now and then shew some good inclination to attempt it ; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.*

† By this comparison of a lost piece of money, we are given to understand, that God esteems the souls of men precious, and reckons them among his wealth and his treasures. And this indeed they are ; made and formed by his own hand ; impressed with his own image and superscription ; and from that stamp, which carries a resemblance to the great king of the whole world, deriving all their currency and value. But when they abandon God's laws, and forsake the divine and rational life, a life of goodness and wisdom, renounced for one of sensuality, and madness, and mischief, then they are lost ; lost to themselves ; lost to God. Then this coin is debased ; the impression obliterated and gone ; and that piece of money, as to the worth and use of it, is in a manner as if it were no longer in being ; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.*

† This parable is deservedly reckoned a master-piece in its kind, and what cannot be paralleled by any of the apologues or allegorical writings of Heathen authors. It is adorned and beautified with the most glowing colours and lively similitudes. It is carried on and conducted with admirable wisdom and proportion, in the parts as well as in the whole ; and there is so exact a relation between the things represented, and the representations of them, that the most elevated understanding will admire, and the lowest capacity discover

the

A. M. steward †, who, after having abused his trust, and wasted
 4035, &c. his master's substance, is contriving what provision to make
 Ann. Dom. for himself (which he does by abating his master's debtors
 31, &c. in their bills) when he came to be removed from his place;
 from Matt. and thereupon he teaches his disciples, not to imitate the
 xii. 1. injustice, but the forecast and policy of this steward, by
 Mark ii. 23 employing their earthly † riches to make them friends in the
 Luke vi. 1 persons
 John v. 1 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37

John vii. 1.

the excellent and most useful moral that lies under so thin and fine a veil.

† There is a good deal in this and the following parable, that alludes to the notions of the Jewish Rabbins, and their manner of expressing them. "The fruits of the earth, says one of their doctors, are like a table spread in an house; the owner of this is God; man in this world is, as it were, the steward of this house: If he behaves himself well, he will find favour in the eyes of his lord; if otherwise, he will be removed from his stewardship;" *Kinchi on Isa.* xl.; and so the scope of this following parable seems to be this: — That we are to look upon ourselves, not as lords of the good things of this life, as though we might use them at our pleasure, but only as stewards, who must be faithful in the administration of them. The parables indeed make mention of no other goods but those of riches; but we must not therefore imagine, that rich men only stand in the capacity of stewards, since every advantage of nature or of grace, as well as those of fortune, our life, our health, our strength, our wit, and parts, our knowledge natural and acquired, our time, our leisure, our every ability, our every opportunity, our every inclination to do well, are all our master's goods; all intrusted with us; all capable of benefiting others; and will all, at last, be brought to our account; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. 2.

† The words in the text are, — *Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*, - Luke xvi. 9. Now, *mammon*, or *mammona*, is a Syriac word, and properly denotes *riches* or *treasure*. It comes from an Hebrew root, which signifies, *to be hid*, and is therefore thought to comprehend, not only gold, silver, and other metals, that are hid in the bowels of the earth, but stores likewise of corn, wine, and oil, (a great part of the riches of the eastern people), which they often buried in subterraneous caverns, to conceal them from their enemies. These are called the *mammon of unrighteousness*, because they frequently occasion much iniquity in the world, and are often acquired by very indirect means; but our Lord, by this expression, must not be supposed to command alms

persons of the poor, that when they came to leave this transitory world, they might, by this means, be received into everlasting habitations in heaven; and so the children of light become as prudent in things relating to their salvation as the children of this world were in the management of their temporal affairs.

This discourse made little or no impression upon the Pharisees; and therefore (to awaken their attention) he propounded to them the parable of a certain rich man †, living in pride, and ease, and luxury, who, after his death, was carried into the dismal regions of the damned; and of a certain poor beggar, named Lazarus †, lying at his gate,

A. M.
1035, 60.
Ann. Dom.
31, 60.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke xvi.
14.

to be given of that which is gotten by fraud or injustice, because such charity can never be acceptable to God. No; the duty of those who have acquired wealth unrighteously, is, to make restitution to the persons they have injured; if these be dead, then to their heirs or executors; and the poor are only then receivers of the fruits of injustice, when a person is conscious that he has been unjust, but does not know the persons to whom he has been so; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† Whether this representation, which our Saviour here makes of the different fates of the rich man and the poor, be a parable or a real history, is a matter wherein several commentators are not agreed. We are told however, that in several manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, there are these words in the beginning of the 19th verse, *He spake to them another parable*, and that this very parable is in the *Gemara Babylonica*; from whence it is cited by the learned Sheringham, in the preface to his *Ioma*; as indeed, if we look into the circumstances of it, such as the rich man's *lifting up his eyes in hell*, and seeing *Lazarus in Abraham's bosom*, his discourse to Abraham, his complaint of being tormented with flames, and his desire that Lazarus might be sent to *cool his tongue*, or, at least, to convert his surviving brethren: If (together with the great gulph that is fixed between the two places of bliss and torment) we do but consider these particulars, I say, we must needs conclude, that, as they cannot be understood of any departed soul, in a literal sense, they must be an allegorical representation of things invisible, by terms in some measure suitable to the opinion of the Jews concerning the state of souls after death; *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† Lazer, which, according to most, is but a contraction from Eleazer, is the very same with Ani-achad, a poor man in the *Gemara*,

A. M.
6035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

gate, full of sores and ulcers, and desiring the fragments that came from his table, who, when he died, was transported by angels into Abraham's bosom † : " That, in " these different states, the poor man, in compensation " for his former misery, enjoyed all the felicity that his " heart could wish ; while the rich man, in punishment " of his luxury, and want of mercy to the poor, was forced to undergo the most inexpressible torments, without " being able to procure so much as one drop † of water " to cool his inflamed tongue, and without being able to " prevail

mara, and properly signifies *one without help*, or rather *one that has God only for his help* : But, in the times of our Blessed Saviour, we may observe, that it was a common name among the Jews, and given to men of some distinction, as we find it was to the brother of Martha and Mary ; *Whitby's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† The garden of Eden and paradise, the throne of glory, and Abraham's bosom, were common expressions among the Jewish doctors, to denote a future state of felicity ; for so Josephus, in his discourse of the Maccabees, says of good men that " they are gathered to the region of the patriarchs, and that Abraham, Isaac, " and Jacob, do receive their souls : " And they tell us farther, that the souls of such men are carried thither by angels ; for so the Targum on Cant iv. 12. says, that " no man hath power to enter " into the garden of Eden, but the just, whose souls are carried " thither by the hands of good angels." Our commentators, however, have perceived something peculiar in the phrase of *Abraham's bosom*. They imagine, that the Jewish notion of paradise was, a place abounding with delights and perpetual feasting, where Abraham, the great founder of their nation, enjoys the uppermost place at the table, and while all his children sit down with him, some at a nearer, and some at a farther distance from him, he who has the honour to recline upon his bosom, (as Lazarus is here represented), is in a higher degree of felicity than ordinary. But others deride all this notion, and assert, that *Abraham's bosom* was so called, not from any posture of guests at table, but from little children, whom their tender parents do sometimes take in their bosom, and sometimes cause them to sleep there. For since *those that die in the Lord*, say they, are said to sleep, or *rest from their labours*, where can they be said to enjoy this rest or sleep better than in the bosom of the father of the faithful ? *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations* ; and *Calmet's Commentary*.

† A good deal of this is to be taken in a figurative sense ; but our Saviour might possibly insert this passage in the parable, on purpose

“ prevail for the once despised Lazarus to be sent upon a
 “ message of a monition to his surviving brethren, because
 “ they had Moses † and the prophets for their instructors,
 “ or a standing revelation of the divine will (and if † it
 “ prevailed not with them, nothing would) for the direc-
 “ tion of their lives.”

A. M.
 1035. Ec.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, Ec.
 from
 Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

Of the great numbers of people who attended our Lord where-ever he went, some came out of necessity, others out of curiosity; some out of a spirit of devotion, and others out of a spirit of captiousness, and with an intent to entangle him in his discourse. Of this last sort were the scribes and Pharisees, who taking the question of di-

Mat. xix. 3.
 Mark x. 2.
 Re esta-
 blishes the
 sacredness
 of mar-
 riage, and
 states the
 voices.

purpose to strike at a vain imagination which some of the Jews were apt to entertain, viz. that hell-fire had no power over the sinners of Israel, because Abraham and Isaac came down thither to fetch them from thence, which could not fail of being effectually confuted, when they heard Abraham, as it were with his own case of dis-
 mouth, declaring, that no help was to be expected from him, when once they were got into that place; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† Moses and the prophets comprehend all the several dispensations of God's mercy, as expressed either in the Old or New Testament. They signify the whole revealed will of God, and whatever he hath set down therein, as necessary to our attaining eternal life and happiness. Whatever doctrine can be proved out of them, we are bound to embrace it without a new miracle; as, on the other hand, whatever doctrine is inconsistent with them, we must reject, though an angel from heaven, or one from the dead, should come and preach it to us; *Bishop Sharp's Sermons*

† One rising from the dead certainly could not do it, because he could come with no greater authority, deliver no better motives to repentance, nor give men any greater assurance of the truth of what he said, than what they had already. That a resurrection from the dead was not sufficient to convince them, is plain from hence, that our Saviour had raised Lazarus, and yet the Pharisees were not the more obedient to his doctrine. Nay, though they had the most clear proofs of his own resurrection, from the testimony of their own prophets, and their guards that kept the sepulchre; from the testimony of their own senses, of the apostles, and five hundred witnesses at once; and all this confirmed by miraculous effusions of the Holy Ghost, and a multitude of wonders wrought in his name; yet all this was insufficient to reclaim that wicked generation from their iniquity, or to provoke them to repentance; *Bishop Blackhall's Sermons at Boyle's lectures; and Whitby's Annotations.*

A. M. 4035, &c. Ann. Dom 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

voces † to be somewhat intricate, put it to our Saviour ; but he, limiting the permission of such separations to the case of adultery only, reminded them of that strict and natural union † between man and wife, which God had appointed at their first creation, and was not, consequently, to be disannulled by any human institution. Here the Pharisees, thinking that they had got the advantage of the argument, objected the precept (a) of Moses, wherein he permitted the husband †, in many cases, to give a bill of divorce

† The Jews, at this time, were divided in their opinions as to the matter of divorces. Some of them, who followed the sentiments of the school of Shammai, held, that the wife was to be put away only for the crime of adultery, because Moses directs, that this might be done, in case the husband had found some uncleanness in her, Deut. xxiv. 1. But others, who adhered to the notions of the school of Hillel, (and they by much were the greater number), maintained, on the contrary, that this was permitted to be done for any cause whatever ; because, in the same verse it is expressed, that if she found not grace in her husband's eyes, she was divorceable. This was the question which the Pharisees brought to our Saviour, thinking, that he must have decided it, either against the law of Moses, or against the determination of one of these two famous schools, and, one way or other, have become offensive to the people ; but our Saviour evaded all this, by reducing matrimony to its original institution : *Whitby's and Beaufobre's Annotations.*

† This is a matter which the Heathens themselves seemed not unacquainted with ; and therefore it is said in Hierocles, that " Nature prompts us to marriage, in that she hath made us so, that two should live together, and have one common work to beget children ;" and that tale of Plato, in his Convivium, " That man, at first, was made male and female, and that, though Jupiter cleft them asunder, there was a natural love towards one another, and an inclination to heal human nature, by making one again of two," seems to be only a corruption of the account in Genesis, of Eve's being made out of Adam's rib ; *Whitby's Annotations.*

(a) Deut. xxiv. 1. &c.

† The Pharisees, in their reply to our Saviour, seem to intimate that the lawfulness of divorces was founded upon a divine command : *Why then did Moses command to give her a bill of divorcement, and put her away ?* Mark x. 4. But Moses nowhere commands, but only, in some cases, permits the doing of this ; nor is the design of the whole precept to give any encouragement to this practice, but

only

divorce to the wife ; but to this our Saviour replied, That, though under the Mosaic dispensation, God knowing their obstinacy, and perverse inclinations, allowed a dispensation † in this point, by tolerating divorces ; yet, according to the original institution of marriage, it was not so ; and therefore, to reduce the matter to its primary establishment, he determined that all divorces, for any less cause than that of fornication, were illegal, and on both sides attended with adultery ; which when some of his disciples heard, and (since the engagement was so rigorous) began to express their dislike of marriage, our Lord allowed it to be true, that in those who had the gift of continency, a

A M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matth. xvii.
14. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37. John vii.

only to provide, that (in case men will be so perverse and hard-hearted, as to turn away their wives upon every slight occasion) the thing might be done in a proper and public manner, not by word of mouth, but by bill of divorcement, delivered in form, that, when the woman is thus dismissed, she may not be quite ruined, but left at her liberty to become another man's wife ; *Deut xxiv. 2.*

† But here the question is, — Whether this dispensation excused the common divorces among the Jews (which our Saviour looks upon as an infringement upon the primitive institution of marriage) from all sin, especially that of adultery, in the sight of God ? It is granted, indeed, that these divorces were contrary to the equity and genuine intention of God's first institution of marriage ; but then it must be added, that God, by his servant Moses, had dispensed with his own institution ; that under such his dispensation, there could be no prohibition ; and that, where there was no prohibition, there could be no transgression ; unless we can suppose, that God could forbid and permit the same thing at the same time. Our Saviour, indeed, upon this occasion, prescribes a new law, which had not before obtained among the Jews ; he retracts the dispensation that Moses had given ; he reduces marriage to its primitive institution ; and, except in cases of adultery, allows of no divorces, but accounts them all null and invalid : However, under the Mosaic dispensation it was not so. From the permission given to the women, when they were thus divorced, to be married to others, it is evident, that these divorces quite dissolved the bond of matrimony, otherwise we must say, that God gave these women, when they married again, a toleration to live in a state of adultery, and so, at long run, the whole commonwealth of Judea must, by a divine permission, have been filled with adulteries, and a spurious offspring ; which is incongruous to the wisdom and purity of Almighty God to imagine ; *Whitby's Annotations.*

single

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
31, &c.
from

Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1
to Matt.
xvi. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

Luke xvii.
1.

Reminds
his disciples
of several
duties, e-
specially of

humility,
and fore-
warns them
what is to
befal Jeru-
salem, and
how they
were to e-
scape it.
Luke xvii.
10.

single life was more conducive towards the attainment of the kingdom of heaven; but that those who had it not, and thought proper to marry, ought by all means to adhere to the first institution.

After this, he began to remind his disciples of several things he had instructed them in before, viz. of the impossibility of preventing scandals and offences; of the duty of forgiving our brother his repeated transgressions; of the necessity and efficacy of faith, in order to be heard in our requests to God; of humility in the performance of our duty, because at the best we are but unprofitable servants; and especially of humility in our addresses to God, for which he gave them a parabolical instance, in the behaviour of a Pharisee † and publican; the

† The Pharisee's temper is sufficiently discovered in the form of his prayer: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican*, Luke xviii.

II. The style is insolent and boasting; that of an herald, rather than a suppliant; and does not so much render God his praises, as proclaim his own. But, admitting this lofty opinion of his own excellencies to be never so just, yet what warrant or privilege could he have to disparage and vilify his brethren? *I am not as other men*: What could be more fulsome vanity, than thus to set himself off, as an exception to a whole world at once? *Or even as this publican*: To break that bruised reed, and, with scornful reproaches, to fall foul on a wounded soul, whose penitent sorrow called for the compassion of every stander by. The publican, quite contrary, in all his expressions, in all his deportment, speaks nothing but shame and confusion, the tenderest contrition, and most profound humility. He stands afar off, as not presuming upon a nearer approach to the presence of so holy a Majesty. He lifts not up so much as his eyes to heaven, but, by the guilt and melancholy of his countenance, takes to himself the ignominious titles so liberally bestowed by his scornful companion. He smites upon his breast, as conscious of the pollutions lodged there; looks not abroad, but confines his thoughts to his own misery; alledges nothing in his own behalf, no mixture of good to mitigate the evil of his past life; feels no comfort, seeks no refuge, except in the mercy of a forgiving God: brings no motive to incline that mercy, but a sorrowful sense of his own unworthiness, and an humble hope in God's unbounded goodness: And therefore upon this, this saving, this only supporting attribute, he cast himself entirely, with a *God, be merciful to me a sinner!* Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.

Pharisee,

Pharisee, vaunting over his own praise at his devotion, and preferring himself before all others : but the publican, with a dejected heart, confessing his sins, and imploring God's mercy ; and yet the latter (according to our Lord's judgment) departed more acceptable to God than the other ; because the divine decree is, *that pride should be abased, and humility exalted.*

The Pharisees, who waited for the coming of the Messiah, and had drawn up a romantic scheme of his appearing with the utmost glory of a temporal prince, came, about this time, and demanded of him, *when the kingdom of God* †, whereof he had told them so much, *was to ap-*

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Luke xvii.

† Whether the Pharisees put this question to our Saviour in derision, because in his discourses he had so often mentioned the kingdom of God, or in sober seriousness, because, at this time, they were in strong expectations of the coming of the Messiah, and his erecting a secular kingdom among them, is not so easy a matter to determine. Their contemptible opinion of Christ inclines some to think the former ; but their generally received opinion about the Messiah gives some countenance to the latter : But, in whatsoever sense they intended the question, our Saviour's answer perfectly fits them. Only we may observe, that by the kingdom of God here, the Pharisees and our Saviour meant two very different things : The Pharisees, a flourishing kingdom, wherein the Messiah was to reduce all other nations under the Jewish yoke ; but our Saviour, a kingdom of wrath and vengeance, which he designed to exercise even upon the Jews themselves ; and withal a spiritual kingdom, which he intended to erect in the hearts of men by the kindly operations of his word and Spirit, when his gospel should be more fully propagated. For this is the meaning of that comparison, *As the lightning, which shineth from one part of heaven to the other part under heaven, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be in his day,* Luke xvii. 24. He had told them, that the kingdom of God was already come among them, and had appeared in the purity of his doctrine, and the miracles which he had wrought to confirm it, though not in that glaring light as to make them take a proper notice of it ; and here he tells them farther, that, after his resurrection, it would shine with such a fresh and glorious brightness, by the effusion of the Holy Ghost on his disciples, as would render it equal to the splendor of the sun, shining from one part of heaven to the other, and cause it to be propagated, almost as quick as lightning, through the world : and that then this Son of Man, so scornfully rejected by them, would also appear suddenly, and gloriously, to revenge upon them their infidelity, and the affronts which they had offered to him ;

Peel's and Whitby's annotations.

year ?

A. M. 4035, &c. *pear?* To which he gave them in answer, "That it should
 Ann. Dom. "not appear with any outward pomp or splendor, as they
 31, &c. "vainly imagined; and that, in truth, it was already be-
 from "gun among them, though they had no perception of it:"
 Matt. xii. 1. And then, turning to his disciples, he strictly cautioned them,
 Mark ii. 23. not to be deluded by false Christs, and false prophets*, who
 Luke vi. 1. would pretend to shew them the kingdom of God, where
 John v. 1. it was not; and that, before he could enter into his glori-
 to Matth. fied state, he was to suffer many things, and be rejected by
 xvii. 14. the Jews; but that, after his death, he would give incontest-
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

* The distinction between false Christs and false prophets, is, that the former took upon them to be Christ, and came under that name; the latter were such as promised and foretold false things. Among the number of the false Christs, who appeared in the time prefixed by our Saviour, *i. e.* between his resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem, are generally reckoned, Doctheus, who (according to Origen) gave it out, that he was the Christ whom Moses had foretold, Cont. Cels. lib. 6. pag. 289.; Simon Magus, who bewitched the people by his sorceries, and made himself pass "for the great power of God," Acts viii. 9. 10.; and those many more whom the "time of the advent of their King Messiah" (as Josephus expresses it) "prevailed with to set up for kings;" De bello jud. lib. 1. Among the number of false prophets who appeared in this period, are likewise reckoned Theudas, (not the person mentioned Acts v. 26.), who, in the government of Fadus, promised his followers, that he would divide the river Jordan, (as it was in the days of Joshua and Elias), and give them a free passage, Joseph. Antiq. lib. 20. c. 1. The Egyptian Jew, who, in the government of Felix, drew thirty thousand after him to the mount of Olives, where he promised, by his prayers, to make the walls of Jerusalem (as those of Jericho once did) fall flat on the ground; thence drive the Roman forces; and there fix the seat of his empire: De bello Jud lib. 2. A certain magician, who, in the government of Festus, led great numbers of Jews into the desert, and promised them a deliverance from all their troubles, Antiq. lib. 222. And several others (as the same historian informs us, De bello Jud. lib. 7.) who taught the Jews, "even to the last, to expect help and deliverance." Good reason therefore had our Blessed Saviour to caution his disciples against all such pretenders to a divine mission, since, according to his prediction, and, as the same historian expresses it, "the land, at this time, was quite over-run with impostors and seducers, who drew the people after them in shoals, though the Roman governors were so very severe, that there hardly a day passed without the execution of some of them;" Antiq. lib. 20. c. 6.

able proofs of his power and dominion, by the wonderful propagation of his gospel, and by the speedy and amazing vengeance which he intended to take of that nation. He therefore exhorted them, not to imitate the security of the people in Noah's time, or of the inhabitants of Sodom, nor to express any concern for the destruction of their country, as did Lot's wife for the burning of Sodom †; but to use their utmost care and diligence (when they saw the Roman † armies advancing) not to be involved in the

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

general

† Instead of making haste to save herself, as the angel had commanded her, she, out of a vain curiosity, must needs look back, either regretting what she had left behind her in the city, or concerned for those that were destroyed in it, till she was overtaken with the flames, and changed into a statue of salt, or into the condition of a corpse salted and embalmed, which continued as a monument of her disobedience for many ages after. And, in like manner, if any of our Saviour's disciples neglected the advice, which he here gave them, and continued in Jerusalem, when the Roman army had closely invested it, they, very likely, were involved in the common destruction; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† The words in the text are, — *Wheresoever the body or the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together*, Matt. xxiv 28. Luke xvii. 37. These words which our Saviour here makes proverbial, seem to have been borrowed from that passage in Job, where he speaks of the eagle in this manner: *She dwelleth, and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood; and where the slain are, there is she*, Job xxxix. 28. &c. Upon the account of the swiftness, the strength, and invincibleness of this bird, no doubt it was, that the Romans made the eagle their ensign in war: And therefore our Saviour, by making use of this expression, gives us to understand, that the Romans would come upon the Jews with a sudden destruction; surround them so, that there should be no escaping their hands; and, in whatsoever country they found them, there put them all to the sword. For the eagle, mentioned in Job our translators have rendered by a word, which signifies a *vulture*, a bird consecrated to Mars, because it loves to feed upon man's flesh; and therefore by a kind of natural instinct, "travels along with armies, in expectation of the carcases that fall there." Nor is it an uncommon thing for the prophets to express the day of God's vengeance under the idea of a feast, which he hath prepared for the ravenous birds and beasts of the field; for thus saith the Lord, *Speak unto every feathered fowl,*

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. xii. 1
 Mark ii. 23
 Luke vi. 1
 John v. 1.
 to Matt.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37
 John vii. 1.

general calamity: And because, in involving some, and preserving others, there would be much of God's distinguishing providence concerned; he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being discouraged at any thing; and, to this purpose, propounded a parable of a poor woman, who, by her continued importunity alone, prevailed with an unjust judge † to vindicate her wrongs, though he feared neither God nor man.

Shortly after this, Jesus crossed the river Jordan into Perea †, where he was followed again by vast multitudes

Luke xviii. 2.
 Matt. xix. 13.
 Mark x. 13
 Luke xviii. 15.
 He receives the little children kindly, and shews the danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion.

fowl, and to every beast of the field; assemble yourselves, and come, gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood, even the flesh of the mighty, and the blood of the princes of the earth, Ezek. xxxix. 17. 18.; Vid. Isa. xxxiv 6. and Jer. xlii. 10.; Hammond's Annotations; and Calmet's Commentary.

† Though it were blasphemy to think, that God acts upon the same motives with this unjust judge, yet this we may learn, from the nature of the parable, that, if a person, who neither fears God nor regards man, who had neither any sense of religion or humanity, may be supposed to be so far prevailed upon by the earnest prayer of a miserable necessitous creature, as to grant the request made to him, and to administer relief to the supplicant, merely upon the continuance and importunity of the petitions that are put up; how much more ought we to think that God, who is infinite goodness itself, who is always kind and bountiful to his creatures, who delights to do them good even without their desiring it, and who is able to do them good, with much less pains than they can request it; how much more ought we to think, I say, that this God, upon our earnest and hearty prayer to him, (especially if we be importunate, and persevering in our devotions), will return us a kind answer, and grant us such supplies, such protection or assistance, as shall be needful for us? *Bishop Smalridge's Sermons.*

† This word is derived from the Greek πέραν, *beyond*, and signifies *the country beyond Jordan*, or on the east side of that river. It was bounded (according to Josephus) to the west, by Jordan; to the east, by Philadelphia; to the north, by Pella; and to the south, by Macheron; and was a fruitful country, abounding with pines, olive-trees, palm-trees, and other plants, that grew up and down in the fields in great plenty and perfection; and, in the excessive heats, was well watered and refreshed with springs and torrents from the mountains; *De bello Jud. lib. 3. c. 2.*

of people, whom he both taught, and cured of such distempers as they had, insomuch, that several of the company, perceiving how ready he was to do good to all that came unto him, brought their little children † with them, in order to partake of his divine benediction; but his disciples, thinking it below the dignity of their master to be disturbed and interrupted by infants, at first refused admittance to those who brought them, until Jesus, having reproved them for so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of these babes, as a pattern for their imitation, commanded them all to be introduced, and, taking them up in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them, and so departed from the place where this transaction happened.

A M
4035, *Ge.*
Ann. Dom.
31, *Ge.*
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
x. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.

As he was on his journey, a young person of distinction, who was very rich and wealthy, desired to know of him, what he was to do in order to attain eternal life. Our Saviour proposed to him the observation of the moral law, and remitted him, in particular, to the commandments of the second table †, as a certain sign of his keeping those of the first;

Matt. xix.
16.
Mark x. 17
Luke xvii
18.

† The parents who brought their children to Christ, were doubtless such as believed him to be a prophet sent from God, and were persuaded, that the touch, or imposition of his hand, would be of great benefit to them, both to draw down a blessing from heaven upon them, and to preserve them from diseases, which they saw him cure in persons more advanced in years. We may observe therefore, that though these children were no more than infants, (as appears by our Saviour's taking them up in his arms, Mark x. 16.), yet their parents thought them capable of spiritual blessings, and of receiving advantage by our Saviour's prayers. They however might bring them, with no farther intent than what is customary among the Jews even now, when they present their children to any of their famous doctors, *viz.* to obtain his blessing; but by the reason which our Saviour gives for their admission into the kingdom of heaven, it appears, that he perceived something in them (besides their being emblems of humility) that qualified them to come unto him; and what could that be, but a fitness to be dedicated to the service of God, and to enter into covenant with him early (as the Jewish children did) by the rite of baptism, (which was his institution), even as the other did by that of circumcision? *Calmet's Commentary*; and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† We must not imagine, because our Saviour refers this young man to the precepts of the second table only, that therefore they are of more obligation to us, than those of the first,

A. M. 4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Mat. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1

first; but when the young gentleman told him, that all these he had made it his study to observe from his youth, and our Lord, who knew his covetous temper, and was willing to touch the secret fore of his mind, told him, that if he aimed at perfection in religion, his only way would be to sell his estate †, and give it to the poor, in hopes of a greater treasure in heaven, and to come and be one of his disciples; the young man went away very pensive and melancholy, being loth to part with his present possessions for

or that, by performing them alone, we may attain eternal life: Our Lord has elsewhere determined, that the great commandment of all is, *to love the Lord our God with all our hearts*; and here he instances in those of the second table, not only because the love of our neighbour is an excellent evidence of our love to God, but because the Pharisees (of which sect very probably this person was one) thought these commandments of trivial account, and easy performance; and yet by some of these it was, that our Saviour intended, by and by, to convince this inquirer, that he neither had nor could keep them; *Pool's Annotations.*

† Since our Blessed Saviour here requires of this young man, not only to withdraw his heart from an inordinate love of his possessions, but to sell them all and give the money to the poor, we may be sure that this was a particular command to him, in order to convince him of the insincerity of his pretended love to life eternal, and not a precept common to all Christians. That there were rich men in the church, we learn from several passages in Scripture, 1 Tim. vi. 17. James i. 10. and ii. 2. St Peter, in his speech to Ananias, permits Christians to retain what is their own, Acts v. 4. and St Paul does not injoin the Corinthians to sell all, and give alms, but only requests them to administer to their brethrens wants out of their abundance, 2 Cor. viii. 14. So that if riches fall into the hands of one who knoweth how to use them to God's glory, and the relief of indigent Christians, as well as to supply his own needs, it seems a contradiction to conceive, that God requires him to part with them, and so divest himself of any farther opportunity of promoting his glory, and doing good to his needy members. This precept therefore of selling all we have, can only take place when we are in the same situation with this young man, *i. e.* have an express command from God so to do, or when we find that our riches are an impediment to the securing of our eternal interest; for in that case we must part with a right hand, or a right eye, the nearest and dearest things we have, *rather than be cast into hell-fire*; *Whitby's Annotations.*

any

any treasure in reversion. Whereupon our Lord, turning to his disciples, began to declare what an insurmountable obstacle riches, without the grace of God, were to any man's salvation, and that *it was easier* (according to the Hebrew proverb) *for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, † than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven*: At which expression, when his disciples were not a little startled, to remove their fears, he let them know, that the salvation of the rich (though a matter of some difficulty) was not impossible with God, who could change the hearts and affections of men as he pleased.

When the apostles heard their master bidding the young man sell all, and give it to the poor and follow him, and promising him, for a reward, a treasure in heaven, they began to think, that possibly it might be their case, and

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Matt. xix.
27. Mark x.
28. Luke
xviii. 28.

† There are three different opinions among interpreters concerning the meaning of this proverbial saying. Some imagine, that, at Jerusalem, there was a gate, so very low and narrow, that a loaded camel could not pass through it, and that, by reason of its littleness, it was called *the needle's eye*; but all this is a mere fiction, devised on purpose to solve this seeming difficulty. The Jews indeed, to signify a thing impossible, had a common proverb among them, that *an elephant cannot pass through the eye of a needle*. Now, our Saviour, say some, was pleased to change this proverb from an *elephant* (which was a beast that few had seen) to a *camel*, a creature very common in Syria, and whose bunch on his back hindered him from passing through any strait entrance. But others, not able to discern any analogy between a *camel* and a *needle's eye*, think, that the word *κάμηλος*, here signifies a *cable*, or thick rope, which mariners use in casting their anchors; and that the rather, not only because there is some similitude between a *cable* and a *thread*, which is usually drawn through the eye of a needle, but because the Jews (as the learned Buxtorf acquaints us) have a proverb of the like import relating to the cable, as they have to the elephant; for so they say, that as "difficult is the passage of the soul out of the body, as that of a cable through a narrow hole." Whether of these two interpretations takes place, it is a matter of pure indifference: Only we may observe, that the application of the proverb to the rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, must not be understood absolutely, but only so as to denote a thing extremely difficult, if not impossible, without an extraordinary influence of the divine grace; *Galmel's Commentary*; *Hammond's* and *Pool's Annotations*.

the

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

the promise, in like manner, concern them; and therefore, when (in the name of the rest) Peter desired to know of him what reward they were to expect, who had actually relinquished all and followed him; his reply was, that at the general resurrection †, *when himself should be seated upon his throne of glory, they also should sit upon twelve thrones* †, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*; and that not only they, but all others likewise, who, for his

† The word, in the original, is *καταγυμνasia*, which properly signifies a *new* and *second* state, and is used among the Pythagoreans for the return of the soul, after it had left one body to take possession of another: And agreeably hereunto it is used, by sacred writers, to denote either the future resurrection, which will be the reunion of the soul and body, or that great change which was to be effected in the world by the preaching of the gospel, and, more especially, by the mission of the Holy Ghost after our Lord's ascension into heaven; *Hammond's Annotations*.

† Some interpreters refer these words to that authority, both in matters of discipline and doctrine, which the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, were, by our Lord's commission and appointment, to exercise in the Christian church; but most understand them of the honours that are to be conferred upon them in a future state. And here some have taken great pains to determine what judgment these persons shall pass; as that they shall condemn the errors of wicked men by their doctrines, and the malice and obstinacy of infidels by their persecutions, &c. while others have undertaken to assign them their parts in the process of the last great day, and represent them, as so many assessors, to the supreme Judge sitting upon the examination and trial of mankind, while all the rest stand at the bar. But though we are well assured, that such a judgment shall be, yet, as to the particular circumstances and formalities of it, the Scripture seems to give us but a slender insight; and therefore, setting aside all dark conjectures about this matter, the most safe and probable way of applying this passage, is, to look upon it as spoken after the manner of men, to signify, in general, a brighter crown or more exquisite degree of happiness and glory. The apostles accompanied and stuck close to Christ in his low estate. They kept the faith under the greatest pressures and temptations. They were indefatigably diligent, undauntedly constant in their labours and sufferings for the truth, and most eminently serviceable in advancing the kingdom of Christ upon earth; and therefore they shall receive an eminent distinction in the kingdom of heaven; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.*

and

and the gospel's sake, should quit any worldly advantages or possessions, should receive such comforts † in this world as would vastly surpass their losses, and in the world to come, eternal life: But then, to shew them that such high rewards proceeded from the bounty of Heaven, and no other title, he represented the freedom of God, in the distribution of his favours, under the emblem of a certain master of a family, sending labourers into his vineyard †, some sooner, and some later, but giving them all the same wages: Wherein, though he seemed kind to some, yet was he unjust to none, because he paid them all according to his agreement, and (having done so) was then certainly left to his option, whom to make objects of his liberality.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Our Saviour had not been long in Perea, before he received a message out of Judea, from two sisters in Bethany †, Martha, John xi. 1. Upon the news of Lazarus's sickness, our Saviour goes to Bethany.

† That is, the comforts of an upright conscience, a full content of mind, the joys of the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and hopes of glory. They should have God for their father, and Christ for their spouse, and all good Christians for their friends and brethren, who would honour, succour, and support them, more than those that were allied to them by the strictest bonds of nature; *Whitby's Annotations.*

† This parable is, in a great measure, taken from the Jerusalem Talmud, where we have an account of a king's hiring labourers, and paying one, for a few hours work, the whole day's hire, which occasioned great murmuring among the rest. It is our Saviour's custom, we may observe, to make frequent use of Jewish proverbs in his discourses, and some learned men have taken notice, that the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, is chiefly compiled from the Jewish liturgies. Since, therefore, he was to teach the people in a parabolical way, he thought it no disparagement to his parts, to employ such of their parables as were proper to his purpose of illustrating the spiritual matters of his kingdom; as well knowing, that these parables, which were in common use, and familiar to them, would be less offensive, and better remembered by them, than those of his own invention; *Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations.*

† Bethany took its name from the tract of ground wherein it stands, so called from the word *bethan*, which signifies the *dates of palm-trees*, that grew there in great plenty. It was a considerable place, situated at the foot of the mount of Olives, about fifteen furlongs, or near two miles, eastward from Jerusalem; but at present it is but a very small village. One of our modern travellers acquaints us, that at the first entrance into it, there is an old ruin, which they call

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom
 31, &c.
 from
 Matt xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

Martha, and Mary, of the dangerous sickness of their brother Lazarus, a person highly beloved and esteemed by him; but he proposing, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well as his own divine power and mission, by a greater miracle than a simple cure would be, delayed his going until Lazarus was dead †, and then set forward.

While he was in his journey, he took his apostles aside, and † told them still more plainly what the event of it would

Mat. xx. 17
 Mark x. 32.
 Luke xviii. 31.
 In his journey he corrects his apostles mistakes, cures two blind men, and dines with Zaccheus the publican.

call *Lazarus's castle*, supposed to have been the mansion-house where he and his sisters lived. At the bottom of a small descent, not far from the castle, you see his sepulchre, which the Turks hold in great veneration, and use it for an oratory, or place of prayer. Here, going down by twenty-five steep steps, you come at first into a small square room, and from thence creep into another that is less, about a yard and a half deep, in which the body is said to have been laid. About a bow-shot from hence, you pass by the place which they say was Mary Magdalen's habitation; and then, descending a steep hill, you come to the fountain of the apostles,* which is so called, because (as the tradition goes) these holy persons were wont to refresh themselves here, between Jerusalem and Jericho, as it is very probable they might, because the fountain is both close to the road-side, and is very inviting to the thirsty traveller; *Whitby's Alphabetical table; Wells's Geography of the New Testament; and Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*

† Our Saviour's stay for two days after the message, and modest address of the two mournful sisters, kept them indeed a little longer in suspense and grief; but it shewed his perfect wisdom and goodness, as it made the wonderful work more remarkable, and conducive to the fuller conviction of the spectators. Had he gone before Lazarus was dead, they might have attributed his recovery rather to the strength of nature than to Christ's miraculous power; or had he raised him as soon as he was dead, they might, peradventure, have thought it rather some trance or extasy, than a death or dissolution: But now, to raise a person, four days dead, offensive, and reduced to corruption, was a surprise of unutterable joy to his friends; removed all possible suspicion of confederacy; silenced the peevish cavilling, and triumphed over all the obstinacy of prejudice and infidelity; *Bishop Blackhall's Sermons.*

† In the course of the gospel, we find our Lord forewarning his disciples, no less than three times, of his approaching sufferings and resurrection. The first intimation of this kind was in the coasts of

Cæsarea

would be ; namely. that at this time of his going to Jerusalem. the chief-priests and scribes would apprehend, and condemn him, and then *deliver him to the Gentiles, who would scourge, and mock, and crucify him* ; but that *on the third day he would rise again*. Upon the mention of his resurrection, which they vainly imagined would be the beginning of his terrestrial greatness, James and John, by the mouth of their mother Salome †, requested of him.

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31 &c.
from Matt.
xiii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. J hn
v. 1. to
Matth xvii.
14. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37. John vii.
1.

Cæsarea Philippi, when, after St Peter's confession of him to be *the Christ, the Son of the living God*, he began to *show unto his disciples, how that he must suffer many things*, &c. Luke ix. 22. The next we meet with was immediately after his transfiguration in the mount, when, as he came down from thence, with the three apostles who were the companions of his privacies, he reminded them of what he had told them before, *viz. That the Son of Man should be delivered into the hands of men*, Luke ix. 44. The third warning was that which he gave his apostles apart, when he was going to Jerusalem to suffer. or, as some rather think, when he was going to Bethany, in order to raise Lazarus from the dead : And it is observed of these several warnings, that they rise by degrees, and grow more full and distinct, in proportion as the things drew nearer. Thus, the first is delivered in general terms : *The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected, and slain, and raised the third day*. The second is enforced with this solemn preface, *Let these sayings sink down in your ears*, Luke ix. 44. And the third descends to a more particular description of that tragical scene : *He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on : and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again*, Luke xviii. 32. 33. Now, whether we consider the danger the apostles were in of being oppressed with an affliction so sensible as the death of their master ; or the general mistake wherewith they were infected, concerning the splendor and worldly pomp of the Messiah's kingdom, or the fear as that would necessarily rise from a crucified Saviour, this method of forewarning his disciples of what was to come upon him, was highly requisite, to sustain them in their tribulation, to rectify their sentiments, and remove all offences ; as it shewed that his death was voluntary, consonant to the predictions of the prophets, and agreeable to the council and appointment of God, and the shame of his crucifixion abundantly recompensed by the glories of his resurrection ; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2.*

† This their mother might be encouraged to ask, upon the account

A. M. to have the first places in his kingdom. The first places
 4035, &c. in his kingdom, he told them, were to be disposed of ac-
 Ann. Dom. cording to the predetermination of his Father ; but a pro-
 31, 36. per qualification for them it was, to be able to take the
 from greatest share of the bitter cup of his sufferings *, which
 Matt. xii. 1. very probably might be their fate † ; and when the am-
 Mark ii. 23. bition
 Luke vi. 1. to Matt.
 John v. 2. xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37
 John vii. 1.

count of her near relation to the Blessed Virgin, her constant ac-
 companying our Saviour, and diligent attendance upon him ; and
 might conceive some hopes of her sons future exaltation, from the
 pompous name which our Lord had given them, and the great privi-
 lege to which he had admitted them (but excluded others) of at-
 tending him in his privacies ; *Whitby's Annotations* ; and *Stanhope*
on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.

* It was anciently the custom, at great entertainments, for the
 governor of the feast to appoint to each of his guests the kind and
 proportion of wine they were to drink, and what he had thus ap-
 pointed them, it was thought a breach of good manners, either to
 refuse, or not drink up. Hence a man's cup, both in sacred and
 profane authors, came to signify the portion, whether of good or e-
 vil, which befalls him in this world. Homer introduces Achilles,
 thus comforting Priamus for the loss of his son :

Δοιοὶ γὰρ τε πίθοι κατακείσθαι ἐν Διὸς ὕδαϊ
 Δάφρον οἷα διδώσι. κακῶν, ἑτέρος δὲ ἰάων
 Ὅ μιν καμμίξας δάη Ζεὺς περπέκραννος, &c.

II. xxiv,

Not unlike what we meet with in the Psalmist, *In the hand of the*
Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full mixed, and he
poureth out of the same : As for the dregs thereof, all the ungodly of
the earth shall drink them out, Psal. lxxv. 9. 10. And what our Sa-
 viour means by the expression, we cannot be to seek, since, in two
 remarkable passages, Luke xxii. 42. and John xviii 11. he has
 been his own interpreter ; for *lethalè poculum bibere*, or *to taste of*
death, was a common phrase among the Jews, and from them we
 have reason to believe that our Lord borrowed it ; *Stanhope on the*
epistles and gospels, vol. 4 ; and Whitby's Annotations.

† This prediction was literally fulfilled in St James, who was put
 to death by Herod, and so, in the highest sense of the words, was
 made to drink of our Lord's cup ; and, though St John was not
 brought to suffer martyrdom. yet his being scourged and imprisoned
 by the council at Jerusalem, Acts v. 18. 40. put into a cauldron of
 burning oil at Ephesus, Euseb. lib. 3 c. 18. and banished into
 Patmos, *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ*,
 Rev. i. 9. may well be supposed to be some part of that bitter cup
 which our Saviour drank ; and that he, who underwent such tor-
 ments, as nothing but a miracle could deliver him from, may, with
 very

bition of these two brothers provoked the indignation of the other ten apostles, he declared to them all, that his kingdom † was far different from those of this world, whole

A M.
1035, &c.
Ann Dom.
31, &c.
princes from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

very great justice, be esteemed a martyr; *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol 4.*

† The words in the text are, — *The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: But, whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, Matth xx. 25. 26.*; and from hence some have interred, that our Saviour forbids them who will be his disciples, or the subjects of his kingdom, the exercise of all civil and ecclesiastical dominion. But if it be considered, that civil government was, from the beginning of the world, instituted by God (and therefore called *his ordinance*, Rom. xiii. 2.) for the punishment of evil doers, and for the defence of those that do well; that Christianity, when it came into the world, made no alteration in things of this nature, but let the magistrate, after his conversion still bearing the sword, in the same manner as he did before; and that the exercise of his power is a thing so sacred, as to intitle not only princes, but even their deputed ministers of justice, to the style of *gods* in Scripture; it must needs be allowed, that what is reputed so honourable, and so beneficial, so strict a bond of human virtue, and so firm a guard against all kinds of wickedness, can never be forbidden in any Christian commonwealth. And, in like manner, since among the gifts distributed for the use of the church, we read of *government*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. and find mention made of *those who are set over us in the Lord*, 1 Theff v. 12 to whom we must yield obedience, and submit ourselves, Heb. xiii. 7. 17. since we find that the apostles had the rod, 1 Cor. iv. 21 and power given of the Lord, *to deliver to Satan*, 1 Cor. v. 5. and *to revenge all disobedience*, 2 Cor. x. 6. and since, in the nature of the thing, it is every whit as impossible for a church to subsist without ecclesiastical government, as it is for a state without civil, it must needs follow, that the one is necessary, and of divine institution, as much as the other. All, therefore, that our Saviour can be presumed to forbid in these words, is such a dominion, whether in church or state, as is attended with tyranny, oppression, and a contempt of the subjects that live under it. Such, for the most part, was the government that obtained in eastern countries; and therefore, in contraposition to this, our spiritual rulers are put in mind, that they *feed the flock, which is among them, taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords of God's inheritance, but en-*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

Matt. xii. 1
Mark ii. 2
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1
to Matt.

xvii. 14.
Mark x. 14
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

Matt. xx. 29.
Mark x. 46.
Luke xviii
35.

princes and governors strove to exercise their utmost power and dominion over their subjects; whereas, whoever expected to be great and chief among his followers, must be a servant to the rest, according to his own example, who came, not to take state upon him, but to serve others, and even to lay down his life for their redemption.

As he drew near to Jericho, attended with a numerous company, one Bartimeus, who had long sat by the wayside begging, hearing the noise of a vast crowd of people passing by, and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, (with † another blind man, who begged along with him), called aloud upon Jesus to have mercy upon him. The people who accompanied our Lord, supposing that the man asked an alms, bad him cease his noise; but the benefit which he desired was of greater moment, and therefore he raised his voice, and, with more importunity, cried, *Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!* Which when our Lord perceived, he commanded both him and his companion to be brought before him; and, upon their declaring what favour they expected, he touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight, and followed him, glorifying God, as indeed all the company did, who had been eye-witnesses of this miracle.

Luke xix. 1.

As our Lord was passing through Jericho, a certain man, named Zacheus, of great wealth and figure among the publicans, was not a little desirous to see him; but, as he was a man of a low stature, and could not gratify his curiosity in the crowd, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, where he could not fail of having a full view of him. When our Saviour came near the place, he called

samples to the flock, 1 Pet. v. 2. 3. that their highest station in the church is not so much a place of dignity, as a charge and office, which subjects them to the wants and necessities of those they rule over, and that the most honourable post they can have in Christ's kingdom, is only a larger ministry, and attendance upon others; for, *Who is Paul? Who is Apollo? But ministers by whom ye believe,* 1 Cor. iii. 2. *For we preach not ourselves,* (says the apostle to the Corinthians), *but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus's sake,* 2 Cor. iv. 5; *Whitby's* and *Beausobre's* Animations.

† St Mark and St Luke both make mention only of one blind man, the son of Timeus, upon this occasion; but this they doubtless did, because he was better known than the other, and bore

called him by his name, and bad him come down, because he intended to be his guest that day: Whereupon Zaccheus received him with the greatest expressions of joy and respect, whilst others could not forbear reflecting upon him, for entering the house of a man of so scandalous a profession. But, notwithstanding all their censures, our Saviour, who from the intuition of his heart, as well as his own declaration, knew him to be a just and charitable man pronounced him and his family in a state of salvation, and that he, though a publican, and an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, was nevertheless one of those to whom the promises † made unto Abraham did belong.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 13.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Matt. xxv.
14
Luke xix.
12.

The nearer they came to Jerusalem, the more the disciples began to think, that their master had taken that journey to the Passover, on purpose to seat himself upon his throne, and assume his regal authority; and therefore, to cure their minds of all such thoughts, he propounded a parable † to them, “ of a certain great man, born heir to

“ a

bore the greater part in this transaction; *Beausobre's Annotations.*

† Whether Zaccheus was a Jew or Gentile, our commentators are not agreed. The majority of them account him a Jew; but the words of our blessed Saviour, *This day salvation is come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*, Luke xix. 9. do very much incline us to think the contrary. *Abraham believed*, we are told, *and it was imputed to him for righteousness*, Rom. iv. 22. And therefore Zaccheus is here called *his son*, because he readily believed in the divine mission of our Saviour Christ: *For the seed of Abraham was not that only, which is of the law, but that also, which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all*, Rom. iv. 16. It is not to be doubted therefore, but that this day, in pursuance of our Lord's declaration, Zaccheus was fully converted to the Christian faith; but whether he was afterwards ordained by St Peter to be bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, is not so very clear from Church-history, but that they who advance this notion may be supposed to have confounded him with another Zaccheus, bishop of that church, who lived in the second century; *Calmet's Commentary.*

† This parable, we may observe, consists of two parts. The former of which is contained in Luke xix. 12. 14. 15 to 27 and relates to the rebellious subjects of this prince, who *went into a far country to receive a kingdom*; the latter is included in the 13th, 15th, and so on to the 27th verse, and relates to this prince's servants,

A. M. " a kingdom, and going into a far country to take pos-
 4035, &c. " session of it ; but before he departed, calling his servants
 Ann. Dom " together, and giving each a sum of money to trade
 31, &c. " withall, until he should return. The reason of his jour-
 from " ney to this foreign land was, because his own country-
 Matt. xii. 1 " men, over whom he had a right to reign, were obsti-
 Mark ii. 23. " nately set against him, and disclaimed him for their king:
 Luke vi. 1
 John v. 1
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14. servants, to whom he had committed his money for them to improve
 Luke ix. 37 in his absence ; and the explication of the whole is generally suppo-
 John vii. 1 sed to be this ; — The nobleman or prince here, is our Lord him-
 self, the eternal Son of God ; his going into a far country to receive
 a kingdom, is his ascension into heaven, to sit down at the right
 hand of the Divine Majesty, and take possession of his mediatorial
 kingdom ; his servants may be either his apostles and disciples, who
 upon his return, were to give an account of the progress of his gos-
 pel, or Christians in general, who, for every talent, whether nat-
 ural or acquired, are accountable. His citizens are, unquestionably,
 the Jews, who not only rejected him with scorn, but put him to an
 ignominious death ; and his return, is the day of his fierce wrath, and
 vengeance upon the Jewish nation, which came upon them about
 forty years after this time, and was indeed so very terrible, as to be
 a kind of emblem and representation of that great day of accounts,
 when he will render to every one according to his works. It is obser-
 ved however, by some commentators farther, that our Lord took the
 rise of this parable from the custom of the kings of Judea (such as Herod
 the Great, and Archelaus his son), who usually went to Rome to receive
 their kingdom from Cæsar, without whose permission and appoint-
 ment they durst not take the government into their hands. In the
 case of Archelaus indeed, the resemblance is so great, that almost
 every circumstance of the parable concurs in him. He was this
 εὐγενής, or man of great *parentage*, as being the son of Herod the
 Great. He was obliged to go into a far country, *i. e.* to Rome,
 to receive his kingdom of the Emperor Augustus. The Jews, who
 hated him because of his cruel and tyrannical reign, sent their mes-
 sengers after him, desiring to be freed from the yoke of kings, and
 reduced to a province of Rome. Their complaint however was not
 heard : He was confirmed in the kingdom of Judea ; and, when he
 returned home, tyrannised for ten years over those that would have
 shook off his dominion : But then there is this remarkable difference
 between his case and that in the parable, that the Jews, upon their
 second complaint to Cæsar, prevailed against him, and procured his
 banishment to Vienna ; *Calmel's Commentary* ; and *Beaufobre's* and
Whitby's Annotations.

“ When

“ When therefore he had obtained his new kingdom, and
 “ was returned home, he first called his servants, with
 “ whom he had intrusted his money, to an account, reward-
 “ ing the diligent with gifts proportionate to their im-
 “ provements, and punishing the negligent with perpetual
 “ imprisonment ; and then taking cognizance of his coun-
 “ trymen, who, upon his going to be introned in an-
 “ other kingdom, disclaimed all obedience to him, he or-
 “ dered them, in his presence, to be put to death as so
 “ many rebels ;” intimating hereby both the punishment
 of negligent Christians, and the destruction of the contu-
 macious Jews.

A M.
 4035, 66.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, 66.
 from
 Matt xii. 1.
 Mark ii 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.
 John xi. 17.
 He raises
 Lazarus
 from the
 dead, which
 brought the
 Sanhedrim
 to a resolu-
 tion to cut
 him off.

By the time that our Lord arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had now been four days dead † and buried ; and several friends, and others from Jerusalem, were come to condole with the two sisters †, Martha and Mary, for the loss of their

† It was customary among the Jews (as Dr Lightfoot tells us from Maimonides, and others) to go to the sepulchres of their deceased friends, and visit them for three days ; for so long they supposed that their spirits hovered about them : But when once they perceived that their visage began to change, as it would in three days in these countries, all hopes of a return to life were then at an end. After a revolution of humours, which in seventy-two hours is completed, their bodies tend naturally to putrefaction ; and therefore Martha had reason to say, that her brother's body (which appears by the context to have been laid in the sepulchre the same day that he died) would now, in the fourth day, begin to stink ; *Whitby's and Hammond's Annotations.*

† The time of mourning for departed friends was anciently, among the Jews, of longer continuance. For Jacob they mourned forty days, Gen. l. 3. and for Aaron and Moses thirty, Numb. xx. 29. and Deut. xxxiv. 8. For persons of an inferior quality, the days, very probably, were fewer, but some they had for all, and the general term, both among the Jews and Gentiles, was seven ; for so Ovid brings in Orpheus lamenting the death of his wife :

Septem tamen ille diebus
 Squalidus in ripa, Cereris sine munere, fedit :
 Cura, dolorque animi, lacrymæque, alimenta fuere.

Metam. lib. 10.

An expression not unlike that in the royal Psalmist, — *My tears have been my meat day and night*, Psal. xlii. 3. During this time their neighbours and friends came to visit them, and to alleviate their sorrows with the best arguments they could. They pray with them ;
 they

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

their brother. Upon the first news of our Lord's approach, the two sisters, attended with some of the company that was in the house, went out to meet him; and, pouring out a flood of tears for the loss of their dear brother, fell prostrate at his feet, and wished, over and over again, that he had come a little sooner; for then they were certain that he would not have died. The sight of their tears and sorrow, accompanied with the lamentations of their followers, affected the Son of God so, that he groaned within himself; and then demanding where they had laid the body †, he followed them to the place, sympathizing with their sorrow, and weeping as well as they, which made some of the company remark how well he loved him, and others wonder why he did not prevent his death †. When he was come to the grave †, and had ordered the stone to be removed from it, (after a short address of adoration and thanksgiving to his Father for his readiness to hear him),

they read with them the 49th Psalm: Pray for the soul of the dead, and distribute their comforts in proportion to their loss; but no body opened his mouth until the afflicted person had first spke, because Job's three friends, who came to comfort him, we find did the same, Job ii. 13. All which ceremonies made the concourse to Martha's house, at this time, the greater, and gave more Jews an opportunity to be the eye-witnesses of her brother's resurrection; *Pool's* and *Beaufobre's Annotations*; and *Basnage's History of the Jews*, l. 5. c. 22.

† This our Saviour could not but know, who knew all things, even the secrets of men's hearts; yet he thought proper thus to ask, that, being conducted by them to the sepulchre, there might be no resemblance of any fraud or confederacy; *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The words in the text are, — *Some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?* John xi. 37. which some imagine were spoken only in admiration, that having given sight to a blind man, that was a mere stranger to him, he did not cure his sick friend: But others conceive a vile sarcasm in the words, as if they went about to weaken his reputation, in a miracle wherein he had manifestly shewn his divine power, because he did not preserve his friend from dying; *Pool's Annotations*.

† The common form of a burial-place among the ancient Jews, was a vault, hewn out of a rock, six cubits long and four broad, in which eight other little cells, or niches (or, as some say, thirteen), were

him), † he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*; whereupon he that was dead immediately arose from his bed of darkness, and in such sound health, that when his grave clothes were unloosed, he was able to walk along with them to Bethany.

This great and apparent miracle caused the utmost surprise and astonishment among all the spectators, and the greatest part of them was, from that time, convinced, and believed on him; but others, more obstinate, went and reported the thing to the Pharisees at Jerusalem, who thereupon called together their Sanhedrim, where, after some solemn debate, it was concluded, “That whether the man “was a prophet sent from God or not, for fear of giving “any umbrage to the Roman powers †, it was highly expedient

A. M.
4035, 66.
Ann. Dom.
37, 66.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
John xi. 45.

were usually made, as so many distinct receptacles for the bodies that were to be laid in them. The mouth or entrance of this vault was closed with a large stone, which, whenever they buried any, was removed; and our Saviour here ordered the removal of that which lay upon Lazarus, to make the miracle appear more evident, because it would have looked more like an apparition than a resurrection, had Lazarus come forth when the door of his sepulchre was so firmly shut; *Goodwin's Jewish Antiquities*; and *Pool's Annotations*

† As our Blessed Saviour, in virtue of his union with God the Father, had naturally, and in himself, a power of working miracles, there was no need for his addressing himself to heaven every time that he did any: However, upon this and some other occasions, we find him praying to God under the title of his *Father*, that all the company might know, that what he did was by a divine, not a diabolical, power, and that God, in granting his petition, acknowledged him to be his Son; *Beausobre's Annotations*.

† The Jews, seeing the miracles which Jesus did, (this especially of raising Lazarus), did greatly fear, lest, taking upon him the public character of the Messiah, he would attempt to make himself king, and by the admiration which he had gained among the people, be quickly enabled to accomplish his ends, unless he was timely prevented. If then he was permitted to go on in his pretensions, the consequence seemed visible to them, that the Romans, to whom they were already subject, would look upon this as a rebellion, and so be provoked to come with an army and destroy them utterly. That this was their fear, is evident from the many groundless objections which they made against our Saviour, as that, He forbade to give tribute to Cæsar, and that he made himself a king, and so

A. M. "pedient that he should die, rather than that the whole
 4035, &c. "nation, for his sake, should incur the danger of being
 Ann. Dom. "ruined : " And from that time they entered into a com-
 31, &c. bination to have him apprehended and put to death ; but,
 from as *his hour was not yet come*, at present he declined their
 Matt. xii. 1. fury, by retreating from the public, and retiring to a little
 Mark ii. 23. place, called *Ephraim* †, in the tribe of Benjamin, where
 Luke vi. 1. he continued, for a few days, with his apostles, until the
 John v. 1. time of the Passover was approaching.
 to Matt. xvii. 14. Six days before that solemn feast began, our Lord, in
 Mark ix. 14. his way to Jerusalem, called at Bethany, where he was
 Luke ix. 37. kindly entertained at supper † by the two sisters of Lazarus,
 John vii. 1. Martha

John xii. 2.

He sups at

Bethany

with Laza-

rus, where

Mary an-

noints him

with Spike-

nard, at

which Ju-

das repines,

but he vin-

dicates her.

opposed the title of *Tiberius*. Not that they desired the continuance of Cæsar's dominion over them, but the apprehension of a still farther conquest from the Romans, made them unwilling to provoke them, and that more especially because they had an ancient tradition, that one Armolus, (which is, by an easy change, Romulus), before the end of the world, would come and destroy them. This seems to be but the depravation of some prophecy from God, which foretold the coming of the Romans in the last days (meaning thereby the days of the Messiah) to destroy them. It demonstrates however, that they both believed and expected, that the Romans were the people, from whom the change of their religion, and the total subversion of their government, were to come ; and for this reason they were, upon all occasions, so very fearful to offend them. But herein they were sadly mistaken : For the prophecy of the Romans coming to destroy their temple and nation was fulfilled, not by their letting Christ alone, or believing in him, but by their thus opposing and conspiring against him ; *Hammond's Annotations*.

† It was situated between Bethel and Jericho, about twenty miles to the north of Jerusalem ; *Josephus De bello, lib. 5. c. 8*.

† Some interpreters are of opinion, that this was the same supper which our Saviour was invited to in the house of Simon the leper ; that St John has related it in its proper place, as a thing which happened six days before the passover ; but that the other evangelists have mentioned it, by way of recapitulation, to shew what might be the probable occasion of Judas's treachery, even his vexation for being disappointed of the money that might have been made of this precious ointment, had it been sold and put into the bag for him to purloin. But others suppose, that this supper was different from that which is mentioned, Matth. xxvi. 6. and Mark xiv. 3. 13, Because this was in the house of Lazarus, John xii. 2. that in
 .the

Martha and Mary. Martha, according to her custom, dressed the supper, but Lazarus, whom he had raised, was one of the company that sat at table with him, while Mary, to express her love and bounty, took a vial of the most valuable essence, made of spikenard †, and, pouring it upon his feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her hair, so that the whole house was filled with the fragrance of its perfume. This action Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his master, and had, at that time, the custody of the bag, wherein money, for charitable and other necessary uses, was kept, highly blamed, as a piece of prodigality, in throwing away what might have been sold for three hundred pence †, and given to the poor; not that he valued the poor, but because he was a greedy wretch, who was always purloining some part of the public money to himself. Our Saviour therefore, who knew the sincerity of Mary's and the naughtiness of Judas's heart, in a very

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.

the house of Simon the leper, Matth. xxvi. 6. 2dly, Here Mary anoints the feet of Christ, John xii. 3.; there a woman not named pours ointment on his head, Matth. xxvi. 7. 3dly, This supper was six days before the passover, John xii. 1.; that only two, Matth. xxvi. 2. Mark xiv. 1.; and if the suppers were not the same, the Mary that anointed Christ's feet here, and the woman that anointed his head there, were not the same; *Calmet's Commentary*; *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† Nard, or spikenard, is a plant that grows in the Indies, with a very slender root, a stalk small and long, and several ears or spikes, even with the ground, from whence it has the name of *spikenard*. The Indian nard (if it be right) must be of a yellowish colour, inclining towards purple, with long spikes, and the bristles of its spikes large and odoriferous. Of the blade or spike of this nard, the ancients were used to make a perfume of great esteem; and, when genuine, very precious. Pliny tells us, [Nat. hist. lib. 12.], there were nine several herbs which imitated nard, and that the great price it carried, tempted many to adulterate it; but where it was found pure and unsophisticated, there it obtained the name of *nardus pisfica*, which is the epithet that occurs in Mark xiv. 3. and John xii. 3. unless, as some think, it may be a mistake in the copiers for *spicata*; *Calmet's Dictionary* under the word; and *Whitby's* and *Hammond's Annotations* on Mark xiv. 3.

† As the Roman penny was seven pence halfpenny of our money, so three hundred pence must amount to nine pounds seven shillings and sixpence.

A. M. gentle reply, commended what she had done, as a season-
4035, &c. able ceremony † to solemnize his approaching death; but
Ann. Dom. blamed the other's pretended concern for the poor, since
31, &c. objects of this kind they had always with them, but his
 from continuance among them was not to be long. While they
Matt. xii. 1. were sitting at this supper, great numbers of Jews, out of
Mark ii. 23 curiosity, came to Bethany, not only to have a sight of Je-
Luke vi. 1 sus, but of Lazarus likewise, whom he had raised from the
John v. 1 dead; but, when the Sanhedrim understood that the re-
xvii. 14. surrection of Lazarus occasioned many people to believe on
Mark ix. 14 Jesus †, they consulted how to destroy him likewise.
Luke ix. 37
John vii. 1

In the mean time, Jesus, having tarried all night at
Matt xxi. 1 Bethany, set forward next morning with his disciples, and
Mark xi. 1. others attending him on his way to Jerusalem. When he came
Luke xix. to a place called *Bethphage* †, on the side of mount Olivet †,
29 he
John xii. 22.

In the morning he enters Jeru-
 salem, riding upon
 an ass, and
 with the
 joyful ac-
 clamations
 of all the
 company,
 tho' himself
 lamented
 the fate of
 the city.

† It was a custom in these eastern countries, for kings and great persons, to have their bodies at their funerals embalmed with odours and sweet perfumes; and, in allusion hereunto, our Saviour here declares of Mary, that she, to testify her faith in him, as her King and Lord, had, as it were before-hand, embalmed his body with precious ointment for his burial.

† Never was there rage and malice more unreasonable than this; for admitted that Christ had broke the Sabbath, and spoken blasphemy, yet what had Lazarus done? No crime was ever alledged against him; and yet these rulers of the people conspire to put him to death, merely to preserve their own honour and reputation. But see the providence of God, which, notwithstanding all their contrivances, was pleased to preserve him, as a monument of his glory, and a testimony of the miracle which Jesus performed on him, thirty years after our Saviour's death; *Pool's* and *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Taylor's life of Christ*.

† Bethphage signifies *the house of figs* or *dates*, and might very probably have its name from the several trees of these kinds that grew there. It was a small village of the priests, situate on mount Oliver, and, as it seems, somewhat nearer Jerusalem than Bethany; *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

† This place, doubtless, had its name from the great number of olive trees that grew upon it. It lay a little without Jerusalem, on the east side of it, about five furlongs from the city, says Josephus; but he must be understood of the very nearest part of it, since St Luke makes the distance to be a Sabbath-day's journey, *i. e.* eight furlongs, or a mile, unless we suppose, that he means the summit of the hill, from which our Saviour

he sent two of his disciples into the village, to bring from thence an ass, and her colt, * which was not yet backed, that, to accomplish a remarkable prophecy (b), he might

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1.

Saviour ascended, Acts i. 12. Mr Maundrel tells us, that he and his company going out of Jerusalem at St Stephen's gate, and crossing the valley of Jehosaphat, began immediately to ascend the mountain; that, being got above two thirds of the way up, they came to certain grottos, cut with intricate winding and caverns under ground, which were called *the sepulchres of the prophets*; that a little higher up were twelve arched vaults under ground, standing side by side, and built in memory of the apostles, who are said to have compiled their creed in this place; that, sixty paces higher, they came to the place where Christ is said to have uttered his prophecy concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem; and, a little on the right hand, to another, where he is said to have dictated a second time the Lord's prayer to his disciples; that, somewhat higher, is the cave of a saint, called *Pelagia*; a little above that, a pillar, denoting the place where an angel gave the Blessed Virgin three days warning of her death; and, at the top of all, the place of our Blessed Lord's ascension; *Wells's Geography of the New Testament*.

Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

* It is well remarked by Grotius, that such animals as were never employed in the service of men, were wont to be chosen for sacred purposes, inasmuch, that the very Heathens thought those things and sacrifices most proper for the service of their gods, which had never been put to profane uses. Thus the Philistines returned the ark in a new cart, drawn by heifers that had never before undergone the yoke, 1 Sam. vi. 7.; and thus Apollo's priest admonished Æneas:

Nunc grege de intacto septem mactare juvencos
Præstiterit, _____

Æn. 6.

But the chief design that our Saviour might have, in the orders which he gave to his disciples, was, that the prophecy might, by this means, receive its full completion: *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass*. The former part of the verse is taken from Isa. lxii. 11. and the latter, from Zech. ix. 9. Both by the Jews are acknowledged to relate to the Messiah; and, with regard to the latter, R. Joseph was wont to say, *May the Messiah come, and may I be worthy to sit under the shadow of the tail of his ass*; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Surerhusii Concil. in loc. ex V. T. apud Matthæum*.

(b) Isa. lxii. 11. Zech. ix. 9.

ride

A. M. ride thereon to Jerusalem †. The disciples † did as they
 4035, &c. were ordered; and, having mounted their master on the
 Ann. Dom. colt;
 31, &c.
 from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

John vii. 1.

¶ A great contest there is among learned men, whether our Lord rode upon the ass, or the colt, or on both alternately. Those who contend for his riding upon both, observe from the words of the prophet Zechariah, chap. ix. 9. that mention is made of riding both upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass; and from St Matthew, chap. xxi. 7. they observe farther, that the disciples, having brought the ass and the colt which our Saviour had sent them for, put on them their cloaths, and set him thereon. Since, therefore, the relation of St Matthew thus literally agrees with the prophecy of Zechariah, and both expressly assert, that our Saviour did ride upon the ass as well as the colt, they see no reason why these texts should not be taken in their most plain and obvious meaning, and do thence infer, that, for the more exact fulfilling of the prophecy, our Saviour did actually ride part of the way upon the one, and the remaining part upon the other. The generality of interpreters, however, are against this. They suppose, that, as there was no occasion for our Saviour's riding upon both in so short a journey, and as the other three evangelists only make mention of the colt, there seems to be a necessity for admitting of the figure called *enallage numeri* in this place; and that, as when we read, that the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat, Gen. viii. 4 we understand only upon one of them; so here, when St Matthew tells us, that the disciples brought the ass and the colt, and put their cloaths on them, by *ἐναυον αὐτῶν*, he must necessarily mean, *ἐναυον ἑνὸς αὐτῶν*, upon one of them, i. e. the colt, as the words of the prophecy itself will fairly bear: Nor was there any other reason for bringing the mother along with it, but that foals will not usually go without their dams; Wells's Geography of the New Testament, part 1.; and Surenhusii Concil. in loca ex V. T. apud Matthæum.

† Very remarkable is our Saviour's prescience, even as to the most minute matters, in the orders which he gives his disciples, viz. 1. You shall find a colt; 2. On which no man ever sat; 3. Bound with his mother; 4. In bivio, or where two ways meet; 5. As you enter into the village; 6. The owners of which will, at first, seem unwilling that you should unbind him; 7. But when they hear that I have need of him, they will let him go. And no less remarkable is the cheerful obedience of these disciples to a command, which carnal reasoning might have started many objections against, and which nothing less than a stedfast persuasion, that he who sent the message would be sure to give success to it, could have prevailed upon

colt, he proceeded as it were in triumph, towards the city, amidst the loud acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crouds of people came forth to meet him, with branches † of palm-trees in their hands, some spreading their garments * in the way, others cutting down branches, and strewing them where he was to pass, and

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

upon them to execute, as they did, without any demur or delay; *Whitby's Annotations*; and *Stanhope on the epistles and gospels*, vol. I.

† At the feast of Tabernacles, it was a custom among the Jews, not only to sing Hosannas with the greatest joy, but also to carry palm-branches in their hands, Lev. xxiii. 40. and to desire (as the Jews still wish at the celebration of this feast) that they may rejoice in this manner at the coming of the Messiah. Nor was it only at this festival, but upon any other occasion of solemn rejoicing, that the Jews made use of this ceremony: For so we find, that, upon the enemies evacuating the tower of Jerusalem, Simon and his men “ entered into it, with thanksgiving, and branches of palm-trees, and “ with harps, and cymbals, and with viols, and hymns, and songs,” 1 Maccab. xiii. 51. Nay, the very same manner of expressing their joy prevailed among other nations, as well as the Jews; for so Herodotus relates, that they who went before Xerxes, as he passed over the Hellespont, strewed the way with myrtle-branches: And therefore we need less wonder that we find such of the company as were by our Blessed Saviour's miracles convinced of his being their King, and the promised Messiah, testifying their joy upon this his inauguration into his kingdom, in such a manner as they, as well as other nations, upon such joyful occasions, were accustomed to; *Whitby's Annotations*, and *Surenhusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Matthæum*.

* It was a common practice among the people of the East, upon the approach of their kings and princes, to spread their vestments upon the ground, for them to tread, or ride over. In conformity to which custom, we find the captains, when they proclaimed Jehu king, putting their garments under him, 2 Kings ix. 13.; and Plutarch relating, that when Cato left his soldiers, to return to Rome, they spread their cloaths in the way, which was an honour (as he observes) then done to few emperors. But the Jews that accompanied our Saviour at this time, looked upon him as greater than any emperor; as a prince that was come to rescue them from the Roman yoke, and reduce all nations under their subjection; and therefore, in this manner they chose to testify their homage and veneration of their universal monarch, making now a public entry into his capital of Jerusalem; *Whitby's Annotations*.

all,

A. M. all, as it were with one voice, crying †, *Hosanna to the Son*
 2035, &c. *of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!*
 Ann. Dom. *Hosanna in the highest!*
 31, &c.

from In this triumphant manner they advanced, till they came
 Matt. xii. 1. to the descent of mount † Olivet, when the whole body of
 Mark ii. 23. disciples, being transported with the honours shewn to
 Luke vi. 1. their master, broke out into raptures of thanksgivings, and
 John v. 1. loud doxologies to God, for all the mighty works which
 to Matth. they had seen; while the whole body of the people, as
 xvii. 14. well those that went before, as those that followed after,
 Mark ix. 14. joined with the disciples in their Hosannas and acclama-
 Luke ix. 37 tions; so that when some Pharisees, being envious of his
 John vii. 1 glory, desired him to command their silence, *If they should*
 Luke xix. *be silent, he told them, † the very stones would proclaim his*
 37. *praise.*

But,

† *Hosanna*, or rather *Hofa-na*, is an Hebrew word, which signifies, *Save, I beseech thee*, and was a common acclamation, which the Jews used in their feast of Tabernacles, not only in remembrance of their past deliverance from Egypt, but in hopes likewise of a future one, by the coming of the Messiah. Now, the reason why the acclamations, upon this occasion, ran rather in these words, than in the common form of *Long live the king*, or the like, was, because in the character which the prophet gives of the Messiah, he is called a *Saviour*, or *one bringing salvation* to them, Zech. ix. 9. And therefore, to shew the excellency of this above all other kings, the people address him in words taken from the Psalmist, *Help us now, O Lord, send us now prosperity*, Psal. cxviii 25. But because *Hosanna* is likewise a form of blessing, and, in the inauguration of princes, people are always pleased with the sightful succession; therefore they adjoin, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, i. e. the Lord prosper, and heap favours and blessings upon him. Now, because God had promised the Jewish nation a king descended from that royal line, therefore they continue their good wishes, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*; and because again it is natural for men, in such transports, to reiterate their joyful acclamations, even as if they desired to make them reach heaven as well as earth, therefore it is added, *Hosanna in the highest*; *Hammond's* and *Beausobre's Annotations*; and *Surenhusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Mattheum*.

† Between this mount and the city of Jerusalem, there lay nothing, but only the valley of Jehosaphat, through which ran the brook Kedron; *Calmet's Commentary*.

† This is a proverbial expression, and signifies no more, than that God was determined to glorify our Saviour that day; and therefore,

But, notwithstanding all this glorious procession, as he advanced nearer to Jerusalem, so as to have a full view of the city and temple, he paused, and looked steadfastly on the city, and then, with tears in his eyes †, made this lamentation over it: *Oh! that thou hadst known, at least in this thy appointed day, the things conducing to thy peace; but now, alas! they are hidden from thine eyes. For the fatal time shall come, when thy enemies * shall throw up trenches about thee, hem thee in on every side, destroy thy children, demolish thee, and * not leave in thee one stone upon*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 13.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
on John vii. 13.

fore, if these his followers should be prevailed upon to hold their peace, and say nothing in his praise, God would find out some other means (though not so competent perhaps) to make it effectually be known; *Beausobre's* and *Whitby's Annotations*.

† The tears which our Saviour shed upon this occasion, were such as proceeded from a profound charity, and deep commiseration of the evils that were coming upon Jerusalem, in both which virtues he came to be an example to us; and therefore his behaviour in this respect could not be unworthy of himself. They farther shew, that the calamities which beset that impious city might have been avoided, had they made a right use of the time of their visitation; otherwise, his tears may rather be looked upon as the tears of a crocodile, than those of true charity and commiseration; *Whitby's Annotations*.

* How exactly this prediction was fulfilled by the Romans, we may learn by the Jewish historian, who not only tells us, that in this very Mount Olivet, where our Lord spake these words, the Romans first pitched their tents, when they came to the final overthrow of Jerusalem; but that, when Vespasian began the siege of it, he encompassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side; that to this purpose (how impracticable soever the enterprise might seem) Titus prevailed with the soldiers to build a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, quite round the city, with thirteen turrets in it, which, to the wonder of the world, was completed in three days; and that, when this was done, all possibility of escaping was cut off, and the greatest distress that ever beset a city ensued, whereof that author gives a very lively, but most dolorous account; *Joseph. De bello, lib. 6. c. 13. &c.*

* How exactly this was likewise fulfilled, the same historian relates, viz. That Titus, having ordered the soldiers to lay the city level with the ground, and to leave nothing standing but three of the most famous turrets, that over-topped the rest, as monuments to po-

A. M. on another, because thou wouldest not know the time of thy visitation †.

4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.

31, &c.

from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23. "

Luke vi. 1. "

John v. 1. "

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14

Luke ix. 37

John vii. 1.

The O B J E C T I O N.

AND a strange visitation, no doubt, it was, when the great and long expected King of the Jews made his solemn entry into the capital of his dominions, in so inglorious and absurd a manner. Had he been carried indeed in a triumphal chariot, with the nobles of the nation attending him, and heralds before proclaiming his great and wonderful acts; nay, had he been but mounted upon a tolerable horse, with a little riding furniture to set him off, and a company of honest yeomen, each on his own steed, to make up the cavalcade, something then might have been said to the matter: But, to represent him riding upon an ass, the most contemptible of all creatures, without either bridle or saddle, and nothing but an old coat or two thrust under him; without one person of figure in his retinue, and nothing but a noisy rabble running before, and bauling out, *Hey for our King, for our King for ever*; this is making such a farce of the whole matter, and setting our Saviour out in so ridiculous a dress, as badly comports with the gravity of his behaviour upon all other occasions. Well might the town be in an uproar, to see a king inaugurated in this mock manner; and well might the mob, when the ferment of their joy was over, reflect on what they had done, and turn their Hosannas into *Crucify him*: But what colour of excuse can we make for the four evangelists, who have all related this part of our Saviour's history so much to his disadvantage, and (c) thence given occasion to such an excess of profane wit and ridicule?

sterity of the Romans power and conquest in taking the place, his orders were so punctually executed, and all the rest laid so flat, that the place looked as if it had never been inhabited; *Joseph. De bello, lib. 7. c. 18.*

† The word *visitation* may be taken either in a good or bad sense, for either the mercies, or judgments of God; but here it denotes the former, and particularly the dispensation of the gospel, first by the ministry of John, then by the preaching of Christ himself, and afterwards by the labours of his apostles and disciples; *Beausobre's and Pool's Annotations.*

(c) Bishop Sherlock's 4th dissertation.

“ Well

“ Well had it been for their credit, if the three first A. M.
 “ had omitted this account of our Saviour’s entry, as they 1035, &c.
 “ have done that of his raising up Lazarus from the dead. Ann. Dom.
 “ In this St John stands alone, but not without some sus- 31, &c.
 “ picion of the truth of his narrative, when he represents from
 “ the very person, whom (in the beginning of his gospel) Matt. xii. 1.
 “ he extolled so gloriously, sinking into a passion below Mark ii. 23.
 “ the dignity of some Heathen sages, and foolishly (d) Luke vi. 1.
 “ weeping for the loss of a friend, whom that very mo- John v. 1.
 “ ment he was going to restore; and when he represents to Matth.
 “ his friend, who was dead, coming forth from his se- xvii. 14.
 “ pulchre, though (e) bound hand and foot with his grave- Mark ix. 14.
 “ cloaths, (which is not so easy, one would think, to be Luke ix. 37.
 “ done), and at the same time having his face (that it John vii. 1.
 “ might not be known who he was) bound about with a
 “ napkin.

“ These circumstances look a little oddly, and seem to
 “ impair the strength of the miracle; as our Saviour’s
 “ (f) curing the man that was born blind (another piece
 “ of history, wherein St John stands alone) by a kind of
 “ whimsical eye-salve made of dirt and spittle, sounds not
 “ a little romantic; unless we may suppose, (g) that under-
 “ hand he made use of a proper medicine, and had pri-
 “ vately in his mouth some sanative and balsamic matter,
 “ which, dissolved in spittle, might effect the cure.

“ The truth is, whatever high commendations may be
 “ given of the gospel of St John, as an history greatly con-
 “ ducive to our Saviour’s honour, and calculated on pur-
 “ pose as it were to assert the doctrine of his divinity; yet
 “ it is no small objection to its authority, that the whole
 “ account of the woman taken in adultery, and brought
 “ before him, is supposed to be a forgery, and therefore
 “ omitted in the best copies; and if we look into some o-
 “ ther passages during the same period, we shall soon per-
 “ ceive, that it falls infinitely short of the orthodox cha-
 “ racter which some have given it.

“ For when (according to St John) we find Christ de-
 “ claring, that (h) *he was to work the work of him that sent*
 “ *him; that (i) the doctrine which he taught, was not his*
 “ *own, but his that sent him; and that he (k) spake not of*
 “ *himself, but as his Father had taught him, so he spake, can*

(d) John xi. 35. (e) Ibid. ver. 44.
 (g) W. O. O.’s Discourse: on the miracles.
 (i) Ibid. vii. 16. (k) Ibid. viii. 28.

(f) John ix.
 (h) John ix. 4.

A. M. “ we think otherwise, than that he acknowledges his inferiority to the Deity, (*l*) as subject to the command of another, which the true God can never be; and as receiving his instructions from another, which, had he a divine besides the human nature, he must have been the prime author of?

Ann. Dom. 31, &c.

from Matt. xii. 1

Mark ii. 23

Luke vi. 1

John v. 1

to Matt. xvii. 14

Mark ix. 14

Luke ix. 37

John vii. 1

“ The very Socinians allow, that, in respect of the commission which he had from God, the Scriptures might indulge him with a title extraordinary; and when (*m*) the Jews took up stones to stone him for assuming (as they thought) a co-equality with God, how is it that this beloved apostle of his brings him off? Why; by making him acknowledge himself to be God, in the same sense that judges, and other great magistrates, are so called, *viz.* (*n*) in virtue of the divine authority where-with they are invested.

“ Nay, well it were if St John was the only sacred penman who seems to impair the truth of Christ's divinity: But if we look into two other evangelists (*o*), we shall find them, on a very remarkable occasion, doing the same thing. For when the two sons of Zebedee came and requested of our Lord to have a certain pre-eminence in his future kingdom, these writers make him modestly decline all power of conferring such like honours and dignities as the peculiar prerogative of God alone: (*p*) *To sit at my right hand, and my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father*: Words that he never would have spoken, say the ancient Arians, had he not been conscious of an inferiority.

“ But even besides these, there are other difficulties in the compass of this part of the evangelical history, that we cannot so well account for. For if innocence is better than amendment, and there is no proportion in the numbers, why is *there* (*q*) *more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance*? If the Judge of all the earth cannot but do right, and will reward every one according to his works, why does the householder, in the parable (*r*), make the wages of all the labourers in the vineyard, of those that wrought but one hour, and of

(*l*) Whitby in locum.

(*m*) John x. 31.

(*n*) Ibid.

ver. 34. 35.

(*o*) Matth. xx. 20. and Mark x. 35.

(*p*)

Matth. xx. 23.

(*q*) Luke xv. 7.

(*r*) Matth. xx. 12.

“ those

“ those that bore the heat and burden of the day, equal ? A. M.
 “ If our Saviour, at other times, in his travels from Galilee to Jerusalem, met with no let, no incivility from the 4035, &c.
 “ people of Samaria, why did they once, merely *(s)* be- Ann. Dom.
 “ *cause his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem,* 31, &c.
 “ deny him the common rights of hospitality ? And *(to* from
 “ name no more) supposing the last was the greatest day Matth. xii.
 “ of the feast of tabernacles, yet why should our Saviour, 1. Mark ii.
 “ on that more than any other, cry out, *(t)* *If any man* 23. Luke
 “ *thirst, let him come unto me, and drink ;* nor can we con- vi. 1. John
 “ ceive where the passage is, or in what sense it is to be v. 1. to
 “ understood, that *he who believeth in Christ, shall out of* Matth. xvii.
 “ *his belly have rivers of living waters flowing.*” 14. Mark
ix. 14.

(u) At a former passover, when the people, in admiration of our Saviour's miracles, would have paid him kingly honours, he withdrew, and refused that unseasonable testimony of their zeal, because the accepting these honours then would have been liable to misrepresentation, and might have obstructed the efficacy of his preaching. But now that the course of his prophetic office was finished, and the time of his leaving the world, and returning to his Father, so near at hand, he thought it not amiss to accept of their readiness to acknowledge and proclaim his royal dignity, and himself to go up to Jerusalem in a more public manner than usual, that thereby he might exasperate his blood-thirsty enemies, and so draw on his intended passion.

To exasperate his enemies indeed, a more pompous appearance might have been more conducive and more agreeable to his regal dignity ; but in this our Saviour was not left to his own option. Since the prophet, so long before, had prescribed the form of his entry into Jerusalem, as a characteristic of his being the true Messiah, there could be no deviating from it, even though he could have procured his numerous guards, and triumphal chariots, splendid attendants, and other ensigns of royalty, to adorn the day of his inauguration. (x) *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy king cometh unto thee ! He is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the sole of an ass.* This is the prophecy whereby our Saviour was di-

(j) Luke ix. 53. (t) John vii. 37. 38. (u) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. i. (x) Zech. ix. 9.

rested,

A. M. 4035, &c. rected, at this time, in his approach to Jerusalem; and, to
Ann. Dom. justify his conduct in this particular, it may not be amiss to
31, &c. inquire a little into the true reason of it.

from To this purpose we may observe, (with a learned prelate
Mat. xii. 1. (y) of our own), that the law which God gave to the kings
Mark ii. 23. of Israel (whenever there should be any) (z) not to multi-
Luke vi. 1. ply horses to themselves, was founded upon a special pro-
John v. 1. mise, that he would continue to be (as he had all along been)
to Matth. xvii. 14. (a) their defence against their enemies; that this was a law
Mark ix. 14. wherein every prince that was to succeed to the government
Luke ix. 37 of Israel was concerned, and designed for a standing trial,
John vii. 1. both of prince and people, whether they had trust and con-
The reason fidence in God; that while this law was observed the troops
of the pro- of Israel were victorious, and though few in number, and
phesy rela- of Israel seemingly unfit for action, proved an over-match for royal
ting to this matter ex- armies; that when it came to be laid aside, and kings, as
plained, they declined in their confidence towards God, began to
multiply their horses and chariots of war, they soon sunk in
their military successes, till at length the whole land was car-
ried away captive: And therefore, (b) *Woe unto them, says
the prophet, that stay on horses and trust in chariots, because
they are many, and in horsemen, because they are strong, but
look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord.*

and ap-
plied.

Now to apply this to the prophecy before us. Since the
kings of Israel were obliged to renounce the assistance of
horses and horsemen, and to depend on God for success in
the day of battle; and since those who did so were their
nation's deliverers, and those that did otherwise were de-
stroyers of it, under which of these capacities, think we,
should the King whom God promised to the daughter
of Jerusalem come? Should he appear (as some of the late
kings of Israel did) in all the pomp and pride of war, sur-
rounded with horses and chariots, in direct opposition to
the law of God? Or should he appear, like some of the
ancient worthies, (c) *who by faith subdued kingdoms, and out
of weakness were made strong?* Kings who feared God, and
therefore feared no enemy, and who, though mounted on
asses, were able to put to flight the thousands and ten thou-
sands of chariots and horses that came against them? To

(y) Bishop Sherlock's fourth Dissertation, annexed to his Use and
intent of prophecy. (z) Deut. xvii. 16. (a) Ibid. xx. 1.

(b) Isaiah xxxi. 1. (c) Heb. xi. 33. 34.

resolve

resolve us in this inquiry, the prophet himself comes in to our aid : for immediately after his description of the promised king, he adds, *(d)* *and I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem*; plainly shewing that the character given of the Messiah, viz. that he should ride on an afs, was in opposition to the pride of their warlike kings, who, by their strength in chariots and horses, had ruined themselves and their people.

Thus necessary it was for the promised Messiah, and for our Saviour, consequently, who came in that character, to approach the daughter of Zion, riding on an afs, even though it were a creature more despicable than we imagine it. But, after all, it is mere prejudice, and too fond an attachment to the manners and customs of our own country, that make us conceive any thing contemptible in an afs, or any thing ridiculous or inconsistent with the gravity and dignity of our Blessed Saviour in riding upon him. For *(e)* if we look into other countries, particularly into Judea, we shall find persons of the highest distinction usually so mounted. We shall find *(f)* the chief governors of Israel, described in the Song of Deborah, as riding on white asses; and *(g)* the thirty sons of Jair, who was judge and prince of the country for two and twenty years, riding upon as many asses, and commanding in thirty cities. Nay, we shall find Absalom, (though in other respects *(h)* a man of pomp), in the very day of battle, *(i)* mounted on a mule, the colt of an afs, and, on his coronation-day, Solomon provided with no better equipage. And therefore we can never account it any reproach for the meek and humble Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on the sole of an afs, when David, the greatest of his ancestors, and Solomon, the wisest, (as long as he was wise), rode in the same manner.

(k) The persons who attended him in this procession were a mixed multitude, consisting of disciples and common people, such as were moved to do thus, from the doctrines and miracles which they had heard and seen, and were forward to pay him what honour they could. They had no quality or outward splendor, indeed, no titles or

(d) Zech. ix. 10. *(e)* Bishop Sherlock's fourth Dissertation, annexed to his Use and intent of prophecy. *(f)* Judg. v. 10. *(g)* Ibid. x. 4. *(h)* 2 Sam. xv. 1. *(i)* Ibid. xviii. 9. *(k)* Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom
37, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matth. xvii.
24. Mark ix.
24. Luke ix.
37. John vii.
1.

eminent posts to recommend them; but they were very remarkable for their sincerity and honest zeal, their hearty affection to Christ, and firm persuasion of his being the true Messiah; and these, to him who is no respecter of persons, and who came to set up a kingdom not of this world, rendered those tributes of praise and acknowledgment (though from men mean and insignificant as to any temporal respects) more acceptable, more becoming his character, and more truly for his honour, than any dissembled or interested homage of rulers or rabbins, the greatest or wisest of the Sanhedrim, could have been; for external advantages are of no consideration with God, while they want good dispositions within to recommend them.

and the
reason of
their turn-
ing so sud-
denly a-
gainst him.

Whether this was the same multitude, or not another spirited up, that clamoured so loudly against our Blessed Saviour but five days after these joyful exclamations, it is much to be questioned; but supposing it was, whoever considers the subtle management of men in post and power, and the easiness and servile fears usual in those of a mean depending condition, will not be much surpris'd at such a sudden change. Popular applause is at all times a very fickle and uncertain thing: But in the case before us, there were some incidents which might occasion this instability. Our Saviour, after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, seemed to assume a kind of sovereignty: He purged the temple from its abuses, healed the diseases of the people, received the hosannas of the children, and for some few days, preached, exhorted, and rebuked with all authority; so that, during this time, no one almost doubted but that he was the mighty prince who was to gird his sword upon his thigh, and bring salvation unto Israel. But when, instead of this, they saw him fallen into the hands of his enemies, and quite deserted by his friends; apprehended by the public officers as a common malefactor, hauled from one high-priest to another, and there blindfolded, spit upon, buffeted, and insulted; when, in the midst of all this distress, they saw him left alone, without any disciple to stand by him; any messenger from heaven, (as they might expect), or any exertion of his own power, to rescue him; nay, on the contrary, when they saw that one of his own servants had sold and betrayed him, another denied and abjured him, and all unanimously had fled and forsook him; and yet these were the persons who, for some years, had been his constant companions, and consequently were the best judges of his merit and pretensions: When the multitude,

multitude, I say, saw matters reduced to this extremity, and that terror and desertion was on every side, while the rulers conspired to take away his life, it is no wonder, that, at the instigation of these rulers, they changed their tone, as they saw the scene change, and their hopes vanish, and struck in with the prevailing party: For, whoever has seen a great man disgraced at court, (even though before he was the nation's darling), may easily satisfy himself, what very exceeds the affections of the populace are; how apt they are to bend to every wind of faction and interest, and to be swayed by every calumny, or malicious insinuation, even when most zealous, and seemingly most sincere.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

If we take a view of the vast extent of the subject which the evangelists had before them, and the intended brevity of their books to make them more useful to the generality of mankind, we cannot but perceive, that it was absolutely necessary for them to omit several things which must have occurred to their remembrance. The whole four gospels, bound together, make not a large volume, but each singly is a very small book; and yet, besides the miracles of our Saviour, attended, as they are, with the circumstances of place and time, the names of the persons and the occasions of their being wrought, they have, in these small tracts, inserted an account of the wonderful manner of our Saviour's birth, the dangers of his infancy, the miraculous appearances of providence in his favour, and his removals and journeyings from one place and country to another. They have recorded the substance of his doctrine in plain terms; they have set down many parables, spoken by him, together with their explications; and given us a full account of the mission of his twelve apostles, and the other seventy disciples. The cavils and questions of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, together with his answers and solutions; the observations and reflections of the people; his public discourses before all, and his private instructions to his disciples; his predictions of his own sufferings; of the destruction of Jerusalem, and many other events; a long and particular account of his prosecution, condemnation, and crucifixion; as also of his resurrection and ascension, (not to mention the history of the birth, preaching, baptism, and sufferings of John the Baptist, his forerunner); are all comprised in a short volume. And therefore, having such plenty of matter before them, they were obliged to be silent as to

Why three of the evangelists have omitted the account of Lazarus's resurrection.

A. M. some particulars, after they had related others of the like nature, for fear of incurring that prolixity which they had determined to avoid. And hence it is easy to suppose, in behalf of the three first evangelists, that, when they came to a certain period in their history of the ministry of Jesus, and observed, that they had given a sufficient account of his doctrine and miracles, being to reserve a space for his last sufferings and resurrection, they thought proper to pass over in silence whatever happened between that period and his last journey to Jerusalem. Thus some have observed, that, from the time when our Saviour returned into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan, which (as St John (*m*) tells us) was soon after the feast of the Dedication, (and that was always observed in winter), to the time of his last going up to Jerusalem, a little before Easter, these three evangelists make no mention at all of any journies or movings from thence; and yet from this country (according to St John's account) it was, that Jesus afterwards came up to Bethany, and raised Lazarus, and then (*n*) *went into the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.* And therefore, since these sacred penmen, for the avoidance of prolixity, thought it not proper to take any notice of what passed in this interval of time, they could not (with any justness or propriety) introduce into their gospels an account of the resurrection of Lazarus.

But there is a farther reason, which some learned men (*o*) have given us for their silence in this respect. They tell us, that, according to an ancient tradition, Lazarus lived thirty years after his being raised from the dead, and that, as the latest of these three evangelists wrote but fifteen years after our Lord's ascension, they might think it a needless matter to mention a miracle concerning a person living so near Jerusalem, when the fame of it was so great, and so many witnesses living to attest it: Nor can they suppose, but that, in point of prudence, the evangelists declined mentioning this story, for fear of exasperating the Jews, and giving their rage and malice a fresh provocation to cut off Lazarus. But now St John, undertaking to write his gospel, on purpose to supply the omissions of the former evangelists, above sixty years after our Lord's ascension, when, by the death of Lazarus, and most of

(*m*) John x. 22.
Whitby on John xii.

(*n*) Ibid. xi. 54.

(*o*) Grotius and

the witnesses, who were present at his resurrection, the same of it might be much impaired, had good reason to perpetuate his memory by a full and particular rehearsal.

He had not, however, given us so fair and unexceptionable an account of the matter, had he not represented our Blessed Saviour compassionating the circumstances of his friends, and weeping upon so sad an occasion as the death of Lazarus. For "there is something in human nature" (as an ingenious author (*p*) elegantly expresses it) resulting from our very make and constitution, while it retains its genuine form, and is not altered by vicious habits, or oppressed by stupidity, which renders us obnoxious to the pains of others, causes us to sympathise with them, and almost comprehends us in their case. This compassion appears eminently in those, who, upon other accounts, are justly reckoned among the best of men. They, who (of all writers) undertake to imitate nature most, often introduce even their heroes weeping. The tears of men are, in truth, very different from the cries and ejaculations of children; they are silent streams, and flow from other causes: commonly some tender, and perhaps philosophical reflections." And in the case now before us, there might be other considerations, besides the loss of Lazarus, and the lamentation of his friends, that might draw from our Saviour these tears of compassion.

He might at that time be affected with the thought of the many afflictions to which human nature is liable in this imperfect state; and his groans and inward grief might proceed from the want of faith observable in the sisters, and the company attending them, and a diffidence of his ability to raise the dead, notwithstanding they had seen so many, so frequent manifestations of a divine and omnipotent power residing in him. He knew, that the obstinacy and inveterate prejudices of some of the spectators, and of the generality of the Jewish people were such, that the astonishing miracle he were going to work would not have its due effect upon them. This recalled to his mind that scene of misery and desolation which he foresaw would overtake them; and therefore he grieved, and sighed deeply at the prospect of the calamities which that perverse people were bringing upon themselves, and which all his endeavours, his miracles and sufferings, could not prevent. So that,

(*p*) Religion of nature delineated, sect. 6. p. 136.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
Why our
Saviour
wept at his
grave.

A. M. upon the whole, the concern which our Lord expressed up-
 4035, &c. on this occasion, proceeded from the noblest motives, wis-
 Ann. Dom dom, goodness, friendship, compassion, and every view
 31, &c. that is just and laudable, when he sympathised with his
 from friends, and grieved for his enemies.

Matt. xii. 1. With these genuine expressions of solemn grief and sor-
 Mark ii. 23 row, our Saviour drew near to his friend's sepulchre,
 Luke vi. 1. which (as we may conjecture) was an hollow place hewn
 John v. 1. in a rock, whose entrance (which was closed with a stone)
 to Matth. xvii. 14. lay level with the surface of the earth : But then, we have
 Mark ix. 14. so imperfect an account of the funeral habits that were in
 Luke ix. 37. use among the Jews, that we can form no notion how far
 John vii. 1. Lazarus, when revived, and set upon his feet, might be
 No decep- able of himself to walk to the mouth of his tomb. In this,
 tion in the however, we may satisfy ourselves, that our Saviour, who
 miracle of was able to recal his soul from its separate state, and con-
 his resur-vey fresh life into his body almost putrified, could give that
 rection; body, though bound hand and foot, a power of moving
 forward, even tho' we suppose (as most of the ancients do)
 that herein he put himself to the expence of a second mi-
 racle, because the proper demonstration of the reality of
 the resurrection was, not to send any body into the tomb
 to unbind him, which might occasion a suspicion of some
 clandestine practice, but to have him come forth alive, in
 the presence of all the spectators, fairly, and without any
 change or alteration in his funeral-dress, but what was
 made before the people themselves, by our Saviour's saying,
Loose him, and let him go.

That some or other in the company was ready enough,
 upon this occasion, to obey our Lord's commands, can
 hardly be doubted ; and therefore it is very wonderful
 that (had there been any collusion in the matter) among
 so great a multitude, no one should have had sagacity e-
 nough to find it out. But the truth is, they none of them
 suspected any such thing. They none of them thought
 that, when a man had been four days buried, there wanted
 any proof of his being dead. They none of them thought
 that Christ was only a pretended worker of miracles ; for,
 how unwilling soever they were to own him for their Mes-
 siah, by long experience they were convinced that he was a
 person mighty in word and deed.

nor in that
 of his cu-
 ring the
 man that
 was born
 blind.

Of all the wonderful deeds that we find recorded of
 him, there is none, I think, that is related so fully, and set
 off with so many circumstances, to prevent the least suspi-
 cion of fraud, as that of his curing the man who was
 born

born blind. The evangelist has expended a whole chapter upon it, and therein acquainted us with some previous questions of his disciples, which led to it; the uncommon manner of his performing it; the surprise and astonishment of the blind man's neighbours, when they saw such an alteration wrought in him; the man's open and undisguised relation of the matter, and repeated attestation of the greatness and reality of the cure; the great disturbance and perplexity which it gave the Jews; their examining, and cross-examining the man, who still continued firm and uniform in his account; their tampering with his parents, who avowed the truth of his being born blind; and at last, (when they saw that they could prevail nothing, but the more they examined, the more evidence they found), their rage and malice, which carried them to such a degree as to excommunicate the poor man, and cast him out of their synagogue. These, and some more circumstances, are told in such a plain, convincing manner, as shews the whole story to be too well founded, for any cavils or fictions to weaken or impair.

Our Saviour might have had some sanative balsam in reserve; but what would all the balsam in the world have availed towards the cure of the distemper we are now considering? Physicians and surgeons, who have studied the texture of the eye, and made the cure of its maladies their chief employ, may give us indeed something that will strengthen the optic nerves, when weakened or relaxed: or, by some outward operation, may remove such obstructions as would otherwise impede the sight: *But, (q) since the world began, (as the poor man here excellently argues), was it ever heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind?* And (as he might have added) by a medicine so incongruous as a plaister of clay; because the uncommonness of the application is so far from diminishing, that it rather raises, the credit and reputation of the miracle: At least, it must be allowed to be as great and triumphant a display of a supernatural power, to work a cure by means that have no fitness to that end, as it is to do it without any means at all. In the former case, the person who undertakes the cure, has only the distemper to contend with; but here he has a double difficulty to conquer, and must not only controul the power of the disease, but change the repugnant qualities of bo-

(q) John ix. 32.

A. M. dies, and make them productive of quite contrary effects.
 4035, &c. (r) The fathers here say, that Christ, to illustrate his mi-
 Ann. Dom. raculous power, used that to anoint the blind man's eyes
 31, &c. with, which was the greatest impediment to seeing, and
 from most pernicious to the eyes. But though all must allow,
 Matt. xii. 1. that the method which he here made use of, was of no sig-
 Mark ii. 23. nificance as to the cure of the man's blindness, yet was it,
 Luke vi. 1. nevertheless, highly pertinent, in order to convince the spec-
 John v. 1. tators, as well as the patient himself, of his sovereign vir-
 to Matth. tue, which could produce such a wonderful effect, by no
 xvii. 14. other application but what was indifferent, if not obstruc-
 Mark ix. 14. tive to the cure.
 Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

Why the
 history of
 the woman
 taken in a-
 dultery
 came to be
 disputed.

Some of the ancient fathers were so rigid in their cen-
 sures against adultery, that they would not admit any per-
 sons convicted thereof into the communion of the church,
 even after the longest penance; and carried their zeal and
 resentment to such an height, as to think it no great harm
 to kill them. No wonder then, if men of such severe o-
 pinions were unwilling to receive into the canon of Scrip-
 ture the history of the woman taken in this crime, be-
 cause, as they imagined, it gave permission to lewdness,
 since our Saviour sent her away without condemning her;
 whereas, (s) in his present circumstances, he had no com-
 mission to pass sentence upon her, though, in bidding her
 (t) go, and for fear of the divine judgment, repent, and *sin*
no more, he sufficiently declared himself against all such
 practices.

Its genu-
 ineness.

* Upon a different persuasion however it was, that this
 passage came at first to be marked as dubious, and, in
 time, was quite thrown out, as spurious, in many ancient,
 especially Greek, copies: But, in opposition to this, we
 need only observe, (u) that this part of history was found
 in the sixteen manuscripts, which Stephanus, in all the se-
 venteen (save one) which Beza, and in that infinite num-
 ber, which our learned Mills has made use of; that Tatian,

(r) Whitby's Annotations on John ix. 6. (s) Whitby's
 Annotations on John viii. (t) John viii. 11.

* The words of St Austin upon this occasion are these,—" Ut
 " nonnulli modicæ fidei, vel potius inimici veræ fidei, credo metu-
 " entes peccandi impunitatem dari mulieribus suis, illud, quod de
 " adulteræ indulgentia Dominus fecit, auferrent de codicibus suis;
 " quasi permissionem peccandi tribuerit, qui dixit, *jam deinceps noli*
 " *peccare*;" De conjug. adult. lib. 2. c. 7.

(u) Calmet's Commentary, and Whitby's Annotations.

who

who lived in the year 160, *i. e.* sixty years after the death of St John, and Ammianus of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 220, and made their several harmonies of the gospel out of the copies then in use, do both (as appears from the canons of Eusebius) relate it; that most of the copies of the east (according to Selden's report) retain it; and tho' it be not found in some manuscripts, (as the Greek code, cited by Cotelierius, expresses the matter), yet it is entire in the ancient manuscripts, and all the apostles make mention of it in the constitutions which they set forth for the edification of the church.

This is enough to vindicate the truth and sincerity of this part of St John's history from the censures of critics who suspect it; and to rescue his doctrine from such false constructions as the adversaries of our Lord's divinity would put upon it, we need only be mindful to distinguish between his divine and human nature, and not to apply such words and actions of his as relate to the one, to the prejudice of the other. Those who deny the Deity of Christ, do nevertheless acknowledge, that he was a prophet sent from God, and invested with a high commission. Now, under this character he could only appear and act in virtue of his human nature, and must thereupon be deemed subservient to the orders and commands of his heavenly Father: And therefore, as the very office of a prophet requires, that he should speak nothing of himself, not deliver his own mind or doctrine, nor seek his own glory, but speak all things in the name, and do all things for the glory of him that sent him: So are we not to wonder that we find our Blessed Lord, though he had in him *all the fulness of the Godhead*; yet, in his prophetic capacity, speaking and acting as if he had no power but what was given him from above, (even as ambassadors here on earth are obliged to pursue their master's instructions), and therefore professing so frequently, that he delivered no doctrine of his own invention, nor did any thing but what he had a commission to do.

The Socinians indeed allow, that the commission wherewith our Saviour was sent into the world, to do and reveal God's will, was reason enough to intitle him to the appellation of *the Son of God*, and that this is all that he pretends to when he seems to clear himself to the Jews from any higher assumption. But now (x) it appears from a

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Christ's
speaking
and acting
not of him-
self.

His calling
judges and
magistrates
gods.

(x) Bishop Bull, De judicio eccl. cath.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23
Luke vi. 1
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1

due inspection of the context, that Christ did not intend to say or prove, that he was the Son of God, as being only his ambassador, extraordinarily instructed, and so sent into the world; but on a far more excellent account, viz. that, before he came into the world, he was with God the Father, and so was his true and essential Son, as being God of God, and partaking of the same nature as a son does with his father. From the 25th to the 30th verse inclusively, it is manifest that our Lord discoursed to the Jews in such a manner, that they still thought he was asserting his Godhead; and therefore (*y*) *we stone thee*, say they, *because thou, being a man, makest thyself God*, viz. by calling God so emphatically, and with such peculiarity, his Father, as that he was so to him alone, and so that (*z*) *he and his Father were one*. But to this our Saviour does not answer, by denying, either that he was God, or that he had ever challenged to himself that dignity, which (had he been only man) had been the most proper thing he could have said to take off the objection of his blasphemy; but, instead of that, he seems rather to argue, that he was so the Son of God, as to have the divine nature in him: “For if judges and magistrates, says he, are called gods, from an imperfect resemblance, and participation of the divine authority, how much more may I be called God, who am both by nature the Son of God, and, in the most excellent manner, authorised by him?” For this he signifies, by saying, that (*a*) *his Father had sanctified him, and sent him into the world*; wherein he still declares, that God was his Father, and that he was first sanctified, and then sent, which plainly implies, that he was the Son of God in heaven before his mission into the world; and therefore, as an additional proof of his divine original, he appeals to the divine operations he performed: (*b*) *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him*.

And seeming to deny that (*c*) *all power was given unto him both in heaven and earth*; and that unto his disciples, (*d*) *he had appointed a kingdom, even as his Father had appointed unto him*; when St Paul styles him the (*e*) *righteous Judge, who shall give*

When therefore our Blessed Saviour says of himself, that (*c*) *all power was given unto him both in heaven and earth*; and that unto his disciples, (*d*) *he had appointed a kingdom, even as his Father had appointed unto him*; when St Paul styles him the (*e*) *righteous Judge, who shall give*

(*y*) John x. 33.

(*z*) Ibid. ver. 30.

(*a*) Ibid. ver.

36. (*b*) Ibid. ver. 37. 38.

(*c*) Matth. xxviii. 18.

(*d*) Luke xxiii. 29.

(*e*) 2 Tim. iv. 8.

a crown of righteousness to all that love his appearance; and St Matthew, (f) that king, who shall separate the sheep from the goats, and (g) reward every one according to his works; it can hardly be thought, that to distribute rewards in the kingdom of glory, is a prerogative peculiar to the Father alone, and such as no way belongs to the Son, because our Saviour, in his reply to Zebedee's children, tells us, (h) that to sit on his right hand, and on his left, was not his to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it was prepared of his Father; since the whole and only design of the passage is to shew, that those rewards shall not be distributed upon such conditions, and in such a manner, as these petitioners vainly imagined. (i) To this purpose we may observe, that the words, shall be given to them, are only a supplement made by the translators, for they are not in the original, which is literally thus,—To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but, or except to them alone, for whom it is prepared of my Father: And this means no more, than that the honours and degrees of happiness in the other world are not the Son's to give, in the sense that these apostles fancied, i. e. he does not give them absolutely and arbitrarily; he is not led by partiality and fondness, and respect of persons; he is not carried by humour, or vanquished by the importunity of friends and suiters, as earthly princes are, but is limited by the considerations of equity and strict justice, from which it can never be consistent with the perfections of his nature to depart: For that the whole process of the final judgment, and consequently the dispensation of future rewards and punishments, is to be transacted by our Blessed Saviour, we have this express testimony in Scripture, (k) The Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23. Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matt. xvii.
14. Mark
ix. 14. Luke
ix. 37. John
vii. 1.

Though we are not much acquainted with the condition of angels, or the ingredients of their happiness, yet thus much the Scripture has informed us concerning them, that (l) they are ministering spirits, sent out to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation; and therefore we may reasonably presume, that they are full of tenderness for their charge, solicitous for their particular safety, and extreme-

Why the
joy in hea-
ven for a
converted
sinner is so
very great.

(f) Matth. xxv. 31. &c. (g) Ibid. xvi. 27. (h) I-
bid. xx. 23. (i) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.
(k) John v. 22. 23. (l) Heb. i. 14.

A. M. ly glad of any good that befalls them. (m) How these
 4035, &c. heavenly hosts were affected with the salvation of mankind
 Ann. Dom. in general, is evident from the hymn with which they at-
 31, &c. tended at the birth of Christ, to welcome him into the
 from world; and though their nature be far distant from us
 Matt. xii. 1. mortals, and their bliss exquisite beyond what we are able
 Mark ii. 23. to conceive; yet, in regard that both their nature and
 Luke vi. 1. their bliss are finite, their joy may certainly admit of an
 John v. 1. increase; and as often as a sinner is converted from the
 to Matth. evil of his ways, there may spring up a fresh object, and a
 xvii. 14. large and literal addition to it.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

But can this properly be said of God too, whose perfec-
 tion of happiness allows no such accumulation? No, doubt-
 less; and therefore with respect to him, we must interpret
 this, as reason and religion oblige us to understand many
 such like passages where human parts and passions are attri-
 buted to him. As therefore the Holy Ghost, meaning to
 represent his displeasure and our baseness, does it, by say-
 ing, that we provoke him to anger, kindle his fury, grieve
 and weary his spirit, and the like; so here, by saying, that
 God rejoiceth over a repenting sinner, is intended, that
 such repentance is highly agreeable to him, and that were
 his nature capable of the same unequal motions with ours,
 the joy of a father or a friend, for retrieving the person he
 loves best, and had been most in pain for, would be but a
 feeble and a very faint image of that satisfaction which this
 excites in him, who loves us better than the tenderest pa-
 rent, or most affectionate friend upon earth does, or can
 do.

But why should the degree of joy be so intense upon
 this occasion? Why should the reformation of one sinner
 raise it above the safety of many souls, who never fell
 from their integrity? and the ninety nine sheep, which
 never strayed, excite less of it than one poor silly wanderer?
 In order to resolve this difficulty, we must observe, (n)
 that, in the parables of the gospel, it is usual to represent
 all of the same kind, though they be sometimes the greater
 number by one man. Thus, in the parable of the mar-
 riage-supper, the man who had not on his wedding gar-
 ment, (according to the sense of most interpreters), repre-
 sents all wicked men; and in that of the several talents,
 the slothful servant, who hid his in a napkin, is said to be

(m) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 3.
 by's Annotations on Luke xv. v. 7.

(n) Whit-

one, whereas they who improved theirs, are three; and yet it can hardly be doubted, but that there are fewer who receive the grace of God to any good purpose, than they who receive it in vain; and in like manner, though, in the preceding parables, there is mention made but of one lost piece of silver, and of one strayed sheep, yet is that one the representative of the whole tribe of sinners, which do certainly out-number the few that are righteous; and therefore, according to this acceptance, the joy in heaven may be allowed to be greater, because the objects that give occasion to it are more.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

But even if this were not, as these words were spoken of God after the manner of men, so are they to be understood in a sense agreeable to human passions. Now, in ourselves we perceive, that, in obtaining what we passionately desired, in regaining what we looked upon as lost, and in securing what was in great and imminent danger, our joy is strong, and our delight transporting. The surprise of an escape, which we did not expect, and the regaining of a treasure we had given over as gone, is entertained with rapture, because it is a kind of new accession to our fortunes, and like a thing we never enjoyed before. A loving father, no doubt, finds great comfort in seeing all his children in a perfect state of health; but if one of them chance to fall sick, beyond expectation of recovery, to see him out of danger, administers more present joy than does the constant health of all the rest; and, in like manner, though a continued course of goodness be in itself most valuable, yet the recovery of a lost sinner, the reviving one dead in trespasses and sins, the seeing him snatched as a firebrand out of the fire, when he was just going to fall into it, gives a more fresh and lively joy; and therefore, (o) *it is meet*, says the father in the parable, that, upon this occasion, *we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, was lost; and is found.*

Some interpreters are of opinion, that the parable of the Lord of the vineyard, paying all his labourers alike, is to be understood of the gift of grace, or first admission to the privileges of the gospel, and not of the fruition of glory; because the wages here mentioned are given to the envious and unthankful. But allowing this to be no more than a passage inserted for ornament and illustration only, or that it may mean a reward so surprisingly great, as, among

God's justice cleared in the distribution of rewards.

(o) Luke xv. 23. 24.

3 C 2

men,

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from

Matt. xlii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

men, would provoke the envy of others; yet, if we state the case of the several labourers in the parable, as it includes the Jews and Gentiles in general, and private Christians in particular, we shall find no injustice in what the Lord of the vineyard did unto them.

(p) To the Jews God was pleased to make the first express discoveries of his will by a written law: In process of time the like benefit was extended to the Gentiles. They readily accepted it, and, by so doing, became partakers of the same grace and precious promises with those who had long been brought up under the legal, and from that, removed sooner under the evangelical dispensation. The apostles left all and followed Christ. The primitive Christians gave in their names to his doctrine, and continued stedfast in it, at the certain peril of their liberties, their fortunes, their lives; and yet, in any after-ages of Christianity, they, who live and die (though quietly and peaceably) in the sincere profession of this religion, are promised the kingdom of heaven as a reward for their faith and obedience.

In like manner, some have the happiness of a pious education, and carry on their early virtue through the several stages of life; others, who either wanted that advantage, or have neglected to improve it, run into the same excess of riot with the unthinking part of the world; and yet, if these, though late, see their follies, and effectually forsake them, the promise of God standeth sure, (q) *that, at what time soever the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.* This is the whole sense of the parable, and these are the common cases to which it is applied: But we mistake the meaning of it widely, if we think that it denotes an equality of rewards in the kingdom of heaven, since we have this assurance given us, that as there (r) *is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, so also is the resurrection of the dead.* Those that are raised to everlasting life, shall indeed be all glorious; but still the glory of some shall be greater than that of others. Every good Christian shall, no doubt, be admitted to a state of felicity; but when we consider these words of our Saviour, (s) *I have appointed*

(p) Ezek. xviii. 26.

(q) Stanhope on the epistles and go-

spels, vol. 2.

(r) 1 Cor. xv. 41. 42.

(s) Luke xxiii.

29. 30.

unto

unto you a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, we cannot but infer, that there are some particular marks and instances of glory, wherewith the apostles of our Lord will be honoured above other Christians. And, in like manner, though a late penitent (if he be sincere) shall be received to mercy at last, yet he has not ordinarily any reason to expect a degree of glory equal to his, who has never swerved from his duty, or quickly returned to it. His bliss shall be perfect indeed, though it be not the most exalted, and though he be less happy than some other Christians, yet he shall be much happier than he deserves.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matth. xii.
1. Mark ii.
23. Luke
vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Though the difference between the Jews and Samaritans, in matters of religion, was great, and no small obstruction to all civil intercourse; yet it was not at all times carried to such an height as to deny to each other the common rights of hospitality. Our Saviour himself was, once upon a time, (t) when he met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, kindly received by the people of Sychar, for the space of two days; but then he was returning out of Judea; whereas he was now going up to Jerusalem, with a purpose to celebrate the feast of Tabernacles. The Samaritans had likewise a feast of the same kind, though not observed at the same time, (u) of as old a date as the first separation under Jeroboam, and instituted both in imitation of, and in opposition to the great festival that our Lord was now going to solemnize; and therefore, (x) his travelling through their country, with a set purpose to do this, was looked upon as an affront to their way of worship: For it argued our Lord's judgment in this case to be, that Jerusalem was the only place where these feasts could be regularly celebrated, and consequently, that the keeping them upon mount Gerizzim, and the temple there, was a presumptuous innovation, directly contrary to the will and law of God.

"But why was our Saviour alone treated in this rude manner, when every traveller to Jerusalem, upon the like occasion, declared against the Samaritan schism as much as he did, and yet, for any thing we find, met with better entertainment?" Now this different sort of treatment can be resolved into nothing, but the different character of the travellers. The Samaritans might think,

(t) John iv. (u) 1 Kings xii. 32. 33. (x) Stan-
hope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 4.

that

A. M.
 4035, &c.
 Ann. Dom.
 31, &c.
 from
 Mat. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth.
 xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

that the opinions and practices of common people were not worth their regard, but that it would be of mighty consequence, if a person, so eminent as Jesus, should declare against them; and therefore, since his going to worship at Jerusalem on this solemn occasion would, in all common acceptance, bear this meaning, they contrived to prevent, as much as in them lay, the influence which that supposed indignity might have, by revenging it with another, of not receiving him; because such refusal, they thought, was a constructive disowning of his authority, and a plain declaration to all people; that whatever esteem and veneration others might have for this famed man, they themselves took him for no prophet.

What is
 meant by
 rivers of
 waters
 flowing out
 of the bel-
 ly.

(y) In the feast of Tabernacles, it was a custom among the Jews, (derived, as some imagine, from the institution of their prophets Haggai and Zechariah) on the last day, more especially, to fetch water from the fountain of Siloah in great pomp and solemnity, with trumpets, and other musical instruments, going before them. At such fountains, it was usual to build receptacles, or wells, and, in the middle of them, to have pipes and cisterns laid, through which the water passed, and, coming out at cocks, was received in urns, or large big-bellied vessels, and so carried to the temple. The water thus carried was given to the priests, who, mixing it with the wine of the sacrifices, offered it to God by way of intercession for the blessing of rain against the approaching seed-time. And, during the whole festivity, they read the 55th chapter of the prophet Isaiah, which begins with these words, *Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, &c.*

Now, whoever looks into the method of our Saviour's preaching, may easily perceive, that it was customary with him to take occasion from some obvious thing or other, to discourse of spiritual blessings, and frequently to make use of phrases metaphorically taken from the matter in hand. Pursuant hereunto we find him, in allusion to the customs of this feast, beginning his invitation with words, not unlike what we have cited from the prophet, (z) *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* Water is, by God himself, represented as no bad emblem of the dispensation

(y) Whitby's, Hammond's, and Beaufobre's Annotations.
 (z) John vii. 37.

of

of grace; for (a) *I will pour water, says he, upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.* Which he explains in this manner,——*I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;* and (b) the frequent libations, in the feast of Tabernacles, were supposed, by the Jewish doctors themselves, to have had a mystic sense in them: And therefore the meaning of our Saviour's words is this,——“That whoever was desirous of the spiritual blessings which were prefigured in this festival rite, if he would become his disciple, and believe in him, as the promised Messiah, he would communicate to him such gifts of the Holy Ghost, and in such a plentiful measure, as the world was not yet acquainted with; for (c) *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*”

Whence it is, that our Saviour borrowed this metaphorical expression, is a matter not so well agreed by the learned: some think from the proverbs of Solomon; (d) *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom a flowing brook.* Others, from the 32d of Isaiah, (e) *Behold a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment, and a man shall be as rivers of waters in a dry place:* And others (with more probability) from the 58th of that prophet; (f) *Thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.* However this be, it is certain, (g) that our Saviour, taking the rise of his discourse from the customary libations at this time, had under his view and consideration the make and figure of the water-vessels that were used on this occasion, which, by reason of their large bellies, being able to hold a great quantity of water, were therefore proper emblems of that plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he intended to send upon the Christian church, when (h) *to one should be given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, faith, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing, by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of*

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|---------------------|
| (a) Isaiah xlv. 3. | (b) Surenhusii Concil. ex V. T. apud Johannem. | (d) Prov. xviii. 4. |
| (e) Ver. 1. 2. | (f) Ver. 11. | (g) Surenhus. ibid. |
| (h) 1 Cor. xii. 8. &c. | | |

Spirits:

A. M. *Spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; and to another,*
 4035, &c. *the interpretation of them.*
 Ann. Dom.

31, &c.

from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23.

Luke vi. 1.

John v. 1.

to Matt.

xvii. 14.

Mark ix. 14.

Luke ix. 37.

John vii. 1.

The evi-

dence of

miracles.

DISSERTATION III.

Of our Blessed Saviour's Miracles, and their Excellency.

THAT the accomplishment of ancient prophecies, in the person and actions of our Blessed Saviour, was one of the external evidences of his divine mission, and consequently of the truth of our most holy religion, was the subject of our last dissertation; and how far the evidence of the miracles which he wrought is available to the same great end, we shall now endeavour to set before our reader.

(i) To this purpose we must observe, that a true miracle is properly such an operation as exceeds the ordinary course of things, and is repugnant to the known laws of nature, either as to its subject-matter, or the manner of its performance. For though we readily acknowledge, that there are beings in the spiritual world, which are able to perform things far exceeding the power of men, and therefore apt to beget wonder and amazement in us; yet, that any created beings, and consequently agents of a limited power, are capable of working such miracles as our Saviour did; are capable of controlling the course of nature, of supplying mens natural defects, of giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and life to the dead, (which are miracles relating to the subject-matter), or of doing any of these things in an instant, by a touch, by a word, at a distance, and without any kind of outward means, (which are miracles regarding the manner of their performance), is a thing impossible; unless we can suppose, that limited, inferior, and created beings, have an equal power of creating, controlling, and restoring, with Almighty God, which is contradiction enough in all conscience.

Miracles, a sufficient testimony of a divine mission.

It was upon this persuasion, therefore, viz. that true miracles are the sole operation of God, that the world has all along agreed to acknowledge and accept of miracles as an authentic and indisputable testimony, that the persons intrusted with such power were certainly sent and commissioned by God. To this purpose we find Pharaoh's magi-

(i) Bishop Smallbroke's Vindication.

cians

cians confessing, (k) that the miracles which Moses and Aaron exhibited were the finger of God; and, in the controversy between Elijah and the priests of Baal, it was readily accepted as a fair proposal, that he (l) *who answered by fire from heaven should be unanimously served and worshipped as God.* The less reason have we then to wonder, that we hear a learned ruler of the Jews accosting our Lord in these words, (m) *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him;* or that a mean man, who had been born blind, should confront the whole assembly of the Pharisees, with this one argument, (n) *Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of the blind: if this man were not of God, he could do nothing;* or, that our Blessed Saviour himself should so frequently appeal to the miracles he wrought, as proper testimonies of his divine mission, (o) *The works which my Father hath sent me to finish; the works which I do in my Father's name, the same bear witness of me, that my Father sent me.*

Our Saviour indeed, and his apostles both, do often appeal to the predictions of the prophets relating to the promised Messiah, as fulfilled and accomplished in him; and the truth is, unless the validity of this appeal can be supported, miracles alone, or exclusive of this testimony, would not be a sufficient evidence of our Lord's commission: But then it ought to be considered, that when, among the particular predictions of a person promised to the Jews as their Messiah, it was foretold, that he should (q) *be like unto Moses;* that (r) *the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him;* that (s) *he should open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf;* and that *he should make the lame to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.* Miracles became then an essential ingredient of his character, and a sure test of his being a prophet sent from God.

(t) Some modern Jews, indeed, when pressed with the evidence of our Saviour's miracles, make this their subterfuge,——That the Messiah, at his coming, was not to perform any wonders of this kind, but only to manage the

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
John vii. 1.
Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

That the
Messiah was
to work mi-
racles.

(k) Exod. viii. 19. (l) 1 Kings xviii. 24. &c. (m) John iii. 2.
(n) John ix. 32. 33. (o) Ibid. v. 36.
(q) Deut. xviii. 15. (r) Isaiah xi. 2. (s) Ibid. xxxv. 5. 6.
(t) Maimonides, H. Melach. et Milch. cap. xi.

A. M. Lord's battles, and to overcome the people that were round
 4035, &c. about him. But that this was not of old the sense of the
 Ann. Dom. Jewish nation, is evident from the words of the people in
 31, &c. our Saviour's time: (u) *When Christ cometh, will he do*
 from more miracles than these which this man hath done? Nay,
 Matt. xii. 1 (x) an author of theirs, of no great antiquity, (after his
 Mark ii. 23 having mentioned the three glorious gifts, viz. prophecy,
 Luke vi. 1 miracles, and the knowledge of God, which the Israelites,
 John v. 1 to Matt. in the time of their captivity, had lost), gives us to under-
 xvii. 14 stand, that, upon the appearance of the Messiah, the re-
 Mark ix. 14 turn of miracles was justly to be expected, in completion
 Luke ix. 37 of this prophecy, — (y) *I will pour out my Spirit upon all*
 John vii. 1 *flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old*
 men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

And our
 Saviour as-
 suming that
 character.

Since the Messiah then was to work miracles when he
 came into the world, if we consider the design of our
 Blessed Saviour's mission, viz. (z.) that he was a teacher
 sent from God to abolish a form of worship, which had
 incontestably been established by the power of miracles in
 Moses, and to introduce a new religion, repugnant to the
 wisdom of the world, in many mysterious doctrines, and
 abhorrent to the vicious inclinations of men, in all its righ-
 teous laws and precepts; that he was appointed, in short,
 to destroy the kingdom of the devil, and upon its ruins
 to erect a kingdom of righteousness, there was an absolute
 necessity for him to be invested with a power of working
 miracles: Otherwise, his pretensions to this high character
 had been ridiculous, and the Jews with good reason might
 have demanded of him, (a) *Master, we would see a sign*
from thee; what sign therefore dost thou do, that we may see,
and believe? But this demand is effectually silenced by our
 Saviour's being able to make the reply, — (b) *If I had not*
done among you the works which none other man did, ye had
not had sin; but now ye have both seen, and hated both me
and my Father.

John the Baptist, who was born a little before our Sa-
 viour, was his fore-runner, (c) He appeared at the time
 when the Messiah was expected; and, being much famed
 for his virtue and sanctity of life, was followed by the

(u) John vii. 31. (x) Abravanel in Joel. (y) Joel ii.
 28.; and Acts ii. 17. (z) Stillingfleet's Orig. sacræ, page
 172. (a) John vi. 30. (b) Ibid. xv. 24. (c) Kid-
 der's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 1. page 45.

people,

people, who were prone to take him for the prophet who was to come, as there was not indeed, at that time, a greater person born among women: And yet the divine providence so ordered the matter, that, as great as he was, he wanted this character of the true Messiah, *viz.* the working of miracles; and therefore our Saviour, comparing himself with the Baptist, a burning and a shining light indeed, but who himself did no miracles, (d) *I have a greater witness*; says he, *than that of John; for the works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that I am the Messiah, or (which is all one) that my Father hath sent me.*

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

And well indeed might our Lord be allowed to claim a pre-eminence, not above the Baptist only, but above every prophet that went before him; when, upon so many occasions, he exercised a power and authority, not inferior to that of God; when, by the same omnipotence wherewith he created all things, at first, he multiplied a few loaves, and two fishes, into a sufficiency to feed five thousand; when, at his command, the wind and the sea grew still; and unclean spirits departed from mens bodies, confessing him to be the Son of God; when acute diseases, and chronic griefs, (e) such as no length of time, no skill, no remedies, no expence could assuage, were equally cured with a touch, nay, with the touch of his garment, with a word, nay, with a word that operated effectually upon the absent, and at a distance; when persons at death's door, nay, actually dead, and dead for some time, were commanded back to life and health; and himself, when slain by the Jews, and committed to the grave, was (according to his own prediction) raised from the dead, by the same divine Spirit whereby he quickeneth and enliveneth all things.

These, and many more actions of the like nature, recorded in the gospel, are plain demonstrations of a divine power residing in our Blessed Saviour: But then there is something farther to be said concerning these miraculous acts of his, *viz.* that they were exceedingly well chosen to characterize the Messiah, in regard of their suitability to the end and design of his coming.

(f) The law was enacted with a very terrible pomp, such as spoke it to be (what indeed it was) a dispensation of

(d) John v. 35. 36.

(e) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's lectures.

(f) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 1.

A. M. servitude and great severity. But the gospel is a covenant
 4035, &c. of reconciliation and peace, of friendship, nay, of son-
 Ann. Dom ship with God, intended, not so much to strike awe upon
 31, &c. mens minds, as to charm and win them over by all the
 from Matt. endearing methods of gentleness and love; and therefore,
 xii. 1. Mark the wonders that bore testimony to its truth, were works
 ii. 23. Luke of mercy and kindness, such as never wrought any harm,
 vi. 1. John but always brought comfort and advantage to the needy
 Matt. xvii and distressed; (*g*) sustenance to the hungry, supplies to
 14. Mark those in want, safety to them that were ready to perish,
 ix. 14. Luke speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, eyes to the blind,
 ix. 37. John understanding to the disturbed, strength to the impotent,
 vii. 1. limbs to the maimed, health to the sick, life to the dead,
 and release to souls and bodies held in bondage by the devil. These, these are the wonders, by which our Jesus proved his mission, wonders of gentleness and pity, of beneficence and love, wherein he manifestly excels, and, as it were, triumphs over all the prophets that went before him. They proved their commission by acts of divine vengeance, and sore plagues, as well as by cures and corporeal deliverances; whereas our Blessed Lord (*k*) went about always doing good; healing diseases and infirmities, but inflicting none; and releasing from death, but never hastening it; insomuch, that through the whole course of his ministry, we have not one instance of his power exerted in the suffering or annoyance even of his bitterest enemies.

When John the Baptist had heard of the works which (*l*) Christ did, he sent two of his disciples with this message to him, *Art thou he that should come, (i. e. the promised Messiah), or look we for another?* To whom our Lord returned this answer, *Go, and shew John again these things, which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up.* The answer is, in a great measure, taken from the prophet Isaiah (*m*), describing the great operations of the Messiah; and, by remitting the Baptist to them, our Saviour intended to shew, that he must of necessity be the person he sent to inquire after, because he had not only the power of doing miracles, but even of doing the self same miracles that the evangelical prophet had predicted of the Messiah.

(*g*) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures. (*k*) Acts x.
 28. (*l*) Matt. xi. 2. &c. (*m*) Chap. xxxv. 5.

(n) Now, of all the great attributes of God, there is none that shine brighter and more amiable in our eyes, than truth and goodness: The former cannot attest a lie, nor the latter seduce men into dangerous and destructive mistakes. And yet, if God should communicate any part of his power to an impostor to enable him to work miracles, and such miracles in kind as were foretold of the true Messiah, in confirmation of his pretences, what would become of these two sacred attributes? To suspect, I say, that Almighty God is capable of employing his infinite power, with a design to mislead and delude mankind, in what relates to their eternal concerns, is to destroy and subvert his very nature, and to leave ourselves no notion at all of such a being. Nay, for him to permit the same evidences to be produced for errors, as for truth, is, in effect, to cancel his own credentials, and to make miracles of no significance at all. And therefore, how artfully soever some impostors may contrive their delusions, yet we are not to doubt, but that, if we examine, 1st, The works themselves, and their manner of being done; and, 2dly, The persons themselves, and the ends for which they do them, we shall be able to discern the difference between real miracles and lying wonders.

(o) 1st, Then, in relation to the works themselves, it is required, that they be possible, since no power whatever can effect that which is strictly impossible; that they be probable, since the divine power will hardly concern itself in what favours of fable and romance; that they be not below the majesty of God, as he is the ruler and governor of the world, nor inconsistent with his character, as he is a good and gracious being; that they be done openly, before a sufficient number of witnesses; readily, without any previous forms or ceremonies, which may make them look like incantation; and upon all proper and important occasions, to denote the permanency of that divine power by which they are effected.

2dly, In relation to the person pretending to a divine mission, it is required, that he be a man of good report for his unblameable conversation; that he be in the perfect exercise of his reason and senses, and constant and uniform in the message he delivers; that the doctrine which he endeavours to establish by his miracles, be consistent with

(n) Stanhope on the epistles and gospels, vol. 2. on miracles.

(o) Chandler

the

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
and there-
fore a proof
of his di-
vine mis-
sion;

A. M. the principles of true reason, and natural religion, consist-
 4035, &c. ent with right notions and worship of God, and consist-
 Ann. Dom. ent with the former revelations he hath made of his will ;
 31, &c. of a tendency to destroy the devil's power in the world, to
 from recover men from their ignorance, to reform them from
 Matt. xiii. 1. their vices, to lead them into the practice of virtue and
 Mark ii. 23. true godliness, by proper motives and arguments, and, in
 Luke vi. 1. short, to advance the general welfare of societies, as well
 John v. 1. as every man's particular happiness in this life, and in his
 to Matth. xvii. 14. preparation for a better. And now to observe a little how
 Mark ix. 14. all these characters meet in the Blessed Jesus.
 Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

That Jesus of Nazareth was a person of great virtue and goodness, in full possession of his reason and senses, and constant and uniform in the message he delivered to mankind, not only the whole tenor of his conduct, as it is recorded by the evangelists, but the nature of his doctrine, and excellency of his precepts, the manner of his discourses to the people, and the wisdom of his replies to the insidious questions of his adversaries, are a plain demonstration : And that (*p*) *this Jesus was a man approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of all the people*, is manifest, not only from the testimony of his friends and disciples, but (*q*) from the concession of Heathen historians, as well as the traditions of the Jewish Talmud, wherein the memory of them is preserved.

These miracles indeed were above the skill of men or angels to effect ; but they were not therefore impossible, because subject to the power of Almighty God ; for the same agent, who formed the eye, could restore the blind to sight ; he, who wrought the whole frame of our bodies, could as easily cure the maimed, or heal the diseased ; and he, who causes the rain to descend, and to water the earth, that it may minister bread to the eater, and seed to the sower, could be at no loss to change water into wine, or to multiply the loaves and fishes for the relief of the hungry.

These miracles again, being acts of mercy as well as power, were not consistent with the character of an impostor, or the agency of any wicked spirit ; but that God should have compassion on his creatures, and exercise his

(*p*) Acts ii. 22. (*q*) See Bishop Chandler's Defence, where he proves this, as well as the traditions of the Talmud, by several instances, p. 429.

tender mercies over *the works of his own hands*; that he should give bread to the hungry, limbs to the maimed, and release to such as were under the captivity of Satan, is no improbable thing at all. These were actions suitable to his majesty, and highly comporting with his wisdom and goodness, since they naturally tended both to beget reverence in the minds of men towards his messenger, and to reconcile them to the belief and obedience of his heavenly will.

Now these miracles our Saviour did openly, in the temple, in the synagogues, and on the festivals, when the concourse of people was greatest, and when the doctors of the law, who came on purpose to insnare him, were sitting by, and beholding what was done. These he did readily, and with a word's speaking: For, (r) *Peace, be still*, quelled the raging of the winds and waves; (s) *Young man, arise*, revived the widow's son; (t) *Ephphatha, be opened*, gave the deaf man hearing; and (u) *Lazarus, come forth*, raised him from the grave who had been four days dead. These he did frequently, and upon all proper occasions; for, from the time that he entered upon his ministry, scarce a day passed without some fresh instance of his power and goodness, insomuch that if all his actions of this kind had been particularly recorded, (x) *the world itself* (as St John, by an elegant hyperbole, declares) *would not contain the books which should be written*: And (what crowns all) these he did with a design to establish a religion, whose business it is, to give men the most exalted thoughts of God and his providence, and the greatest certainty of future rewards and punishments; to oblige them, by the strongest motives, to observe and practise whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report; to persuade them to mortify every inordinate affection, and to attain those excellent dispositions of mind, which will make them resemble God, and best prepare them for future happiness; in a word, to establish the practice of the two great virtues, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour, upon these two excellent principles, of faith in God, as the rewarder of those that seek him, and faith in Jesus Christ, as the Saviour and Judge of mankind.

A. M.
1035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

(r) Mark iv. 39.
34. 35.

(s) Luke vii. 14.
(u) John xi. 43. 44.

(t) Mark vii.
(x) Ibid. xxi. 25.

And,

A. M. And, if such be the end and design of the Christian religion, there is little reason to suppose (as the Jews are very willing to object) that the devil could have any hand in assisting our Saviour to effect such miracles as gave credit to the first appearance, and strength and success to the propagation of those doctrines, which were calculated on purpose to destroy his dominion in the world, and, upon its ruins, to erect the kingdom of God and his Christ. The devil is not so silly a being, as to join forces with his avowed enemy, in order to ruin and depose himself: And if our Saviour could hope for no assistance from that quarter, the pretence of his doing his miracles, † by virtue of the name *Jehovah*, stolen out of the sanctuary, and used as a charm, is a fiction too gross and palpable to stand in need of any confutation.

Were performed without assistance,

and beyond the competition of any other.

Philostratus indeed, in his history of the life of Apollonius †, sets him up for a great worker of miracles; and some,

† The account which some later Jews give us of this transaction, is thus related.— That, in the time of Helena the queen, Jesus of Nazareth came into Jerusalem, and in the temple found a stone, (on which the ark of God was wont to rest), whereon was written the Tetragrammaton, or more peculiar name of God; that whosoever should get the name into his possession, and be skilled in it, would be able to do what he pleased; that therefore their wise men, fearing lest any of the Israelites should get that name, and destroy the world, made two dogs of brass, and placed them at the door of the sanctuary; that whenever any had gone in, and learned that name, these dogs were wont, at their coming out, to bark so terribly, that they forgot the name, and the letters they had newly learned. But when Jesus of Nazareth, say they, went in, he not only learned the letters of this name, but wrote them in a parchment, and hid it, as he came out, in an incision which he had made in his flesh; and though, through the barking of the dogs, he had forgot the name, yet he learned it afterwards from his parchment: And it was by virtue of this, say they, that Jesus restored the lame, healed the leprous, raised the dead, walked upon the sea, and did all his other miraculous works; *Fug. Fidei, part 2 cap. 8. sect. 6.* as quoted in Kidder's Demonstration, part 1. p. 40.

† This Apollonius, by the enemies of Christianity, set up as a rival to our Blessed Saviour, in point of his life, miracles, and predictions; and therefore it may not be improper, in this place, to give our reader a short sketch of some of the principal incidents of his life and transactions. About three or four years before the vulgar

some, of late times, have been bold enough to name him in competition with our Blessed Saviour. But, besides that, this history of Apollonius has no other voucher than his servant Damis, (who was confessedly a weak and ignorant person, and consequently very capable of being imposed upon by the artful juggles of his master), the very miracles related therein are, for the most part, ridiculous, unworthy the character of a prophet, and (as the learned Photius speaks) full of follies and monstrous tales. Nay, in the highest instance of his miraculous power, *viz.* his raising a dead

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matt.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.
dead

gar Christian *Æra*, he was born at Tyana, a town of Cappadocia, (from whence he was named *Tyaneus*), of an ancient family, and rich parents; but to make his birth more resemble our Saviour's, it is said, that Proteus, under the form of a sea-god, acquainted his mother, that he himself was to be born of her, and that, at the same time, she was surrounded with swans, which assisted at her labour, and, by their singing and gaiety, seemed to presage the infant's future glory. However this be, while he was a youth, he was observed to have a great natural genius, an excellent memory, and was in his person so very beautiful, that he drew the eyes of all men upon him. When he was fourteen years of age, his Father sent him to Tarsus in Cilicia, in order to study rhetoric; but he chose rather to apply himself to philosophy, and, in a few years, professed himself of the Pythagorean sect. Pursuant to this he abstained from the flesh of all animals, as reputed impure, lived upon nothing but fruits and vegetables; and though he did not condemn the use of wine, yet he chose rather to abstain from it, as being apt to disturb the serenity of the mind. He was a person of great mortification and abstinence, renounced marriage, and professed continence, and affected to live in the temple of *Æsculapius*, to make it be believed that he was his peculiar favourite, and, by his assistance, was enabled to perform cures. Before he appeared in a public character, he kept silence for the space of five years; but as he did not totally refrain from company, he usually spoke by signs, or, when there was a necessity for it, wrote some words. After this five years silence, he came to Antioch, and there endeavoured to improve upon the Pagan religion. The doctrines which he taught were delivered in a plain preceptive manner, and with a better grace and authority than the philosophers at that time were accustomed to. After some stay at Antioch, he undertook a long journey, in order to converse with the Brachmans of India, and, in his way, to visit the Persian Magi. At Nineveh he contracted an

A. M. dead woman to life again, (y) Philostratus himself suspects
 4035, &c. (as he says the company did) that there was some confede-
 Ann. Dom. racy

31, &c.
 from

Matt. xii. 1.

Mark ii. 23. acquaintance with one Damis, who attended him ever after, and

Luke vi. 1. wrote an account of his life, sayings, and actions, which have been

John v. 1. transmitted to us in the history of Philostratus the Sophist. Upon

to Matt. his return from the Indies he went to Ephesus, where he was re-

xvii. 14. ceived with all the tokens of respect imaginable, was followed and

Mark ix. 14. admired by people of all ranks and conditions, and, by making his

Luke ix. 37. observations upon the chirping of a bird, which came to call its

John vii. 1. companions to pick up some corn which happened to be spilt, gained

himself the reputation of a very great prophet. From Ephesus he removed to Athens, where he instructed the people in the ceremonies of their religion; in the manner, and time, and place, of their offering up sacrifices, libations, and prayers, with other superstitious rites; and where, by commanding a devil to go out of a young man, and in token of his being dispossessed, to overturn a statue, which stood by, he obtained the character of a mighty worker of miracles. In the twelfth year of Nero he came to Rome, where, having spoken some disrespectful words against the emperor, he was prosecuted by his favourite Tigellinus; but, to his great surprise, when his prosecutor opened the bill of accusation against him, he found nothing but a fair piece of paper, without one word written in it; and not long after, upon his restoring a young woman, who seemed to fall down dead as she was going to be married, to life again, he was accounted by all a great magician at least, if not a person sent from heaven. When Nero ordered all philosophers to depart from Rome, he left the place, and (to pass by other circumstances of his itinerant life) he was in Asia Minor, when Domitian ordered him to be apprehended for speaking with some freedom against his tyranny, and sent to Rome; where, notwithstanding the emperor's cruel usage of him, he behaved with incredible magnanimity, and, upon his trial, being honourably acquitted, immediately vanished out of the court, and was that very day seen at Puteoli, which is very near fifty leagues from Rome. When Domitian was slain, he resided at Ephesus; and, as he was then discoursing to the people, he gave them to understand, that the fatal stab was that moment given him; which accordingly proved true; for not long after an express arrived, that Domitian was dispatched in the manner he had mentioned, and Nerva unanimously declared emperor. Nerva, upon his accession to the throne, is said to have sent Apollonius a letter, desiring him to come and assist at his councils, to

(y) Vid. Vit. Apoll. lib. 4. c. 16.

which

racy and collusion in the matter ; but, if even it were not so, the doctrines which Apollonius taught, and the zeal he professed

A. M.
4235, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from Matt.
xii. 1. Mark
ii. 23: Luke
vi. 1. John
v. 1. to
Matth. xvii.
14. Mark ix.
14. Luke ix.
37. John vii.

which he returned an answer by his servant Damis ; but before Damis came back his master was dead ; though as to the place and manner of his death, we have no certain account. After his death, however, he had statues erected, and divine worship paid to him ; but, as he left few or no disciples behind him, his memory, which for a little while was greatly honoured, dwindled away by degrees, and, upon the downfall of idolatry, utterly ceased.

This account we have from Philostratus, who from the commentaries of Damis, and a book of one Maximus, which he happened to light on, wrote the life of Apollonius, above an hundred and twenty years after his death ; but whoever looks into it will see how much his fabulous history falls short of the gravity and simplicity of the gospel. The truth is, Julia, the wife of the emperor Severus, affected to be thought a learned woman, and therefore she set up for a wit, which was attended with an immoderate desire and thirst after novelty. She was continually surrounded with poets, sophists, grammarians, &c. Philostratus made one of the number, and from her he had the memoirs of Damis, to which he added, either from common fame, or his own fancy, whatever he thought would hit the taste of the empress, or work himself into the favour of Caracalla, who had Apollonius in high esteem, and were both great admirers of the marvellous. So that, where-ever the subject came not up to the magnificence which the author desired, he usually added all the ornaments which his imagination could invent, and, without any regard to truth, or even probability itself, (witness the conversation between Apollonius and the ghost of Achilles, and the long digressions on the panthers of Armenia, the elephants, the phoenix, the satyrs, the pygmies, &c.), made it not so much an history, as a wild romance ; in which light all the great men, not only Christians, but Pagans, and ancients as well as moderns, that have had occasion to mention it, look upon it. Philostratus, however, might have a farther design in writing the life of Apollonius : For, as the Christian religion, by the strength of its miracles, had now made its way in the world, those who endeavoured to oppose it, and yet could not deny the reality of its facts, were at length reduced to this expedient, viz. to produce miracles in Paganism, and every other argument that they thought Christianity could boast of, by way of contraposition. As therefore the actions of Jesus were handed down to us by the four evangelists, who wrote an account of the principal occurrences of his life, so they, in like manner, set about writing the lives of their philosophers, in hopes of finding their account in

A. M. 4035, *6*.
 Ann. Dom. 31, *6*.
 from Matt. xii. 1.
 Mark ii. 23.
 Luke vi. 1.
 John v. 1.
 to Matth. xvii. 14.
 Mark ix. 14.
 Luke ix. 37.
 John vii. 1.

professed for the Pagan idolatry, together with his excessive pride, ambition, and vain affectation of divine honours, are a plain indication that his miracles were false, and his most surprising performances either the effects of magic, or downright cheat and imposture.

Tacitus (z) indeed tells us of two cures, one of a blind, and the other of a lame person, which Vespasian pretended to work at Alexandria; but, whoever reflects on the situation of his affairs at that time, will perceive some reason to suspect a collusion. He was now in a dispute with himself what to do, whether to assume the Roman empire, or restore the ancient form of government, a commonwealth. The restoration of the latter, was what Dion and Euphrates, two eminent philosophers, advised; but Apollonius (whom he likewise consulted upon this occasion) with great vehemence persuaded the contrary, and (being himself accustomed to such artifices) might not improbably suggest to Vespasian the necessity of some miracle or other, in order to recommend him to the people as a person highly favoured by the gods.

And indeed if we consider what an obscure person, and of what mean original, Vespasian was, there seems to be the greater reason why Apollonius, and others of that party, should think of some expedient or other to raise him a reputation in the world, answerable to the new station of life they had advised him to accept: And, whoever considers farther, (a) what various artifices were at that time made use of, to procure an opinion of di-

thus opposing miracles to miracles, and magic to the power of God: And, for this reason, they have been more especially careful to accommodate the transactions of their great men to the more remarkable passages in our Saviour's life, as the learned Huetius shews, in many instances relating to Apollonius, and thereupon concludes in these words: "Id præterea spectasse videtur Philostratus, ut invalescentem jam Christi fidem et doctrinam deprimeret, opposito hoc omnis doctrinæ sanctitatis, et mirificæ virtutis fictitio simulacro. Itaque ad Christi exemplar hanc expressit effigiem, et pleraque ex Jesu Christi historia Apollonio accommodavit, ne quid Ethnici Christianis invidere possent;" *Vid. Huet. Demonstr. Evang. page 566.; Fleury's Eccles. Hist.; Tellement's Hist. des Empereurs, vol. 2.; and a Dissert. at the end of the translat. of Houteville's Crit. and hist. discourse.*

(z) Hist. lib. iv.

(a) Stillingfleet's Orig. sac. p. 171.

vinity

vinity in the emperors, will not much wonder, that such report should be spread of them, or that certain persons should be suborned to feign such distempers, and then to give it out, that the touch of the emperor's hand had cured them; though it must be confessed, (b) some are of opinion, that what is reported of Vespasian to this purpose, cannot fairly be denied, and might perhaps be providentially intended, to give some dignity and superior character to a person, who (in conjunction with his son Titus) was appointed by God to be a signal instrument of the divine vengeance on the Jewish nation.

A. M.
4035, &c.
Ann. Dom.
31, &c.
from
Matt. xii. 1.
Mark ii. 23.
Luke vi. 1.
John v. 1.
to Matth.
xvii. 14.
Mark ix. 14.
Luke ix. 37.
John vii. 1.

Allowing then, that God, for wise ends of his providence, might, now and then, permit some eminent person to do a real miracle; yet what is this to that vast number and great variety recorded of our Saviour, who, in the small space of his ministry, did more wonderful works of this kind, than what Moses and all the prophets put together, from the earliest account of time that we read of, are known to have done?

especially
in the num-
ber of them.

(c) The Jews indeed, to swell the account of Moses's miracles, reckon each of those that he did in Egypt double; one, as a miracle of justice, in punishing Pharaoh and his people, and the other, as a miracle of mercy, in preserving the Israelites from the like destruction. But, after all their pains and contrivance, the sum amounts to very little, in comparison to the many that are recorded of our Blessed Saviour. The miracles of all the prophets put together, by the Jews own computation, do not equal those of Moses; and yet we must remember, that Moses lived an hundred and twenty years, forty of which were one continued scene of action; and that the compass of the prophets, from the creation of the world, to the destruction of the second temple, includes three thousand and some hundreds. Lay this together, and it evidently follows, that such extraordinary demonstrations of the divine presence and power were very thin, and sparingly exhibited, when set against the innumerable instances of them, in the three, or (at most) four years preaching of the Blessed Jesus. And, if the wonders related by the evangelists, as done by himself, in so short a time, do far exceed what both Moses and all the prophets did, what shall we say to those many more that are not related? What to the infinitely more

(b) Vid. Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 1. p. 62.
(c) Stanhope's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures.

A. M. still, that were done by the apostles and disciples, in confirmation of the doctrine he had taught? Doubtless, the miraculous power which he communicated to them was infinitely great, when, in order to obtain cures, (d) *the people brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them*; and when, from (e) *Paul's body were brought into the sick handkerchiefs, and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and evil spirits went out of them*.
 4035, &c. Ann. Dom 31, &c. from Matt. xii. 1. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1. John v. 1. to Matth. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 14. Luke ix. 37. John vii. 1.

To sum up what hath been said on this subject. Since a real miracle is such an operation as can be done by none but God, or such as are appointed by him, and was therefore, in all ages, acknowledged as an authentic proof of a divine mission; since the prophets, in their predictions of the Messiah, represent him as working miracles of a kind and merciful nature; and our Saviour, when he entered upon his ministry, and assumed that character, displayed a wonderful power in works of the same kind; since that power could proceed from no other cause but a communication from God, and yet to imagine, that God would communicate any part of his power to give sanction to an impostor, is a thing repugnant to his sacred attributes; since, upon examination, it appears, that all the marks and characters of true miracles concur in the works of Jesus, but violent suspicions of trick and artifice in those that are named in competition with him; since, besides these characters of their truth, the number of those which he did, (besides those that were done by persons acting in his name, and by his authority) was greater than what all the true workers of miracles, viz. Moses, and the prophets, had done through the whole compass of the Old Testament: Since these things appear to be thus, I say, we are under a necessity to conclude, that our Blessed Saviour must have been the true Messiah promised to the Jews, and characterised in the writings of their prophets; that he was the great messenger of the covenant sent from God; for (f) *if he had not been of God, he could have done nothing*; and consequently, that the message which he delivered to us, containing this covenant, or (what is all one) that the religion which he hath settled in the world, and confirmed by so many incontestible proofs, (so far as the testimony of miracles is available), cannot but be true.

(d) Acts v. 15. 16. (e) Ibid. xix 11. 12. (f) John ix. 33.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.