

A VINDICATION OF THREE OF OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES: VIZ

by Nathaniel Lardner

Nathaniel Lardner's theological work addressing resurrection and Christian living.

14 Chapters

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Chapter 0

A Vindication of Three of Our Blessed Saviour's Miracles: viz

The

PREFACE.

THE ensuing Vindication was drawn up, about nine months since. But it was done for my own satisfaction, without any view to a publication at that time. And when the Reverend Dr. Harris's Remarks on the case of Lazarus came out, I thought, the Public and Mr. W. had received in a short compass a full answer to all the material objections of the Discourse, with which these papers are concerned.

Nor did I determine to send them to the Press, till after I had seen a passage in Mr. W's Defence of his Discourses, p. 61. where he says: "Whoever was the author of the foresaid treatise, [the trial of the witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus] he humbly and heartily begs of him to publish, what in the conclusion of it, he has given us some hopes of, The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Lazarus, because his Rabbi's objections to it are a novelty and curiosity, which, by way of such a reply to them, he should be glad to see handled." I also wish, the ingenious author of that performance may be at leisure to grant Mr. W's request. In the mean time, Mr. W. still expressing a particular regard for his Rabbi's objections, I thought it not amiss to send abroad this Vindication, which I had by me.

If Mr. W. by way of such a reply means a reply drawn up with the wit and spirit of that Author; I freely own it much above my capacity, and am not so vain as to attempt it. If by way such a reply he means a reply without abusive raising terms, or invoking the aids of the civil magistrate, I have done it in that way. I wish Mr. Woolston no harm; I only wish him a sincere conviction and profession of the truth effected and brought about by solid reasons and arguments without pains or

penalties. And in this point I agree exactly with the learned Dominican, De Maussac, who in his Prolegomena. to Raymond Martini's Pugio Fidei, writ against Moors and Jews, says: [1] "We must with Tertullian openly profess, that the new Law does not defend itself by the sword of the magistrate: forasmuch as it has pleased Christ the author of it; that no man should be forced to the embracing of his Law by the punishments of this life, or the fear of them, as appears from many places of the New Testament, not only of Paul, but also of John, and Luke, and Matthew. Nor is it, as the same Father says at the end of his book to Scapula, a part of Religion to force Religion, which must be taken up freely, not upon compulsion. Who shall lay upon me the necessity of believing what I will not, or of not believing what I will (as Lactantius says)? Nothing is so voluntary as Religion. In which, if the mind be averse, Religion is quite destroyed. Faith is to be wrought by perswasion, not by compulsion. Severity has always done harm, and always will do harm: And our minds, like noble and generous steeds, are best managed with an easy rein; rather by reason than by authority, rather by good words than by threats."

When, at the erecting the Royal Society, into which were freely admitted men of different religions and countries, some, it is likely, were apprehensive of this free converse of various judgments, Dr. Sprat [2] frankly asserts, "That our doctrine and discipline [those of the Church of England] will be so far from receiving damage by it, that it were the best way to make them universally embraced, if they were oftner brought to be canvassed amidst all sorts of dissenters:--That there is no one profession amidst the several denominations of Christians, that can be exposed to the search and scrutiny of its adversaries, with so much safety as ours."

Dr. Bentley in a Sermon at a public Commencement at Cambridge says: [3]

"It has pleased the Divine Wisdom, never yet to leave Christianity wholly at leisure from opposers; but to give its professors that perpetual exercise of their industry and zeal. And who can tell, if without such adversaries to rouse and quicken them, they might not in long tract of time have grown remiss in the duties, and ignorant in the doctrines of Religion?".

These learned men have assured us upon the foundation of the scriptures, of the fathers, and reason, that all force on the minds of men in the matters of belief is contrary to religion in general, and to the Christian religion in particular; and that severity instead of doing good has always done harm.

These points might be enlarged upon, but nothing new can be offered. Possibly some good men may still be in some doubt concerning the issue of admitting the principles of religion to be freely and openly canvassed. But I think, that such may find satisfaction even upon this head in the passages I have quoted, provided they will be pleased to consider them. However I will add a few observations briefly upon this matter.

It is an old saying, which has been much admired and applauded for its wisdom, that Truth is great, and strong above all things. There is certainly some real excellence in truth above error. Great and important truths are clearer than others, and not likely to be mistaken, but to shine the more for examination. The Christian religion in particular, as contained in the New Testament, abounds with evidence.

These are considerations taken from the nature of things. Experience is on the same side. The Christian Religion triumphed for the first three hundred years over error and superstition, without the aids of civil authority, against the veneration of ancient custom, against ridicule,

and calumny, false arguments, and many severe persecutions. From small beginnings by its own internal excellence, and the force of that evidence with which God had clothed it, and the industry and zeal of its honest professors, it spread itself over the Roman Empire and the neighbouring countries.

The Christian church had in the same space of time a triumph within itself over those false and absurd opinions that sprang up under the Christian name. "These heresies, Eusebius [4] says, "soon disappeared one after another, being continually changing into new forms and shapes. But the catholic and only true church, always the same and constant to itself, spread and increased continually; shining out among Greeks and Barbarians by the gravity, simplicity, freedom, modesty and purity of its manners and principles." This joint victory over Gentilism, and over heresies, was [5] obtained, as he intimates, by the writings and discourses of the Patrons of truth at that time. And indeed it could be owing to nothing else, but to those methods, supported by holy lives and patient sufferings.

Our own time also affords a convincing instance to all that will open their eyes to observe. The Protestant states and kingdoms of Europe, as they enjoy greater liberty than others, proportionably exceed their neighbours in the justness of their sentiments, and the goodness of their lives. Indeed there is among us Protestants a great deal of vice and irreligion, which all good men observe with grief and concern, and some very bad and selfish men delight to aggravate and magnify with a view to their own evil designs; but still without vanity, if we are barely just to our circumstances, sure we have some reason to glory over some of our neighbours in this respect. Which advantage can be ascribed to no other cause so much as to the liberty we enjoy. For introduce among us the tyranny they are under; and we shall be as

ignorant, as superstitious, and corrupt, as they.

If then men should be permitted among us, to go on in delivering their sentiments freely in matters of Religion, and to propose their objections again Christianity itself; I apprehend, we have no reason to be in pain for the event. On the side of Christianity I expect to see, as hitherto, the greatest share of learning, good sense, true wit, and fairness of disputation: which things, I hope, will be superior to low ridicule, false argument, and misrepresentation.

For ought I can see, in an age so rational as this we live in, the victory over our enemies may be speedily obtained. They will be driven to those manifest absurdities, which they must be ashamed to own; and be silent in dread of universal censure. But suppose the contest should last for some time, we shall all better understand our Bibles; we shall upon a fresh examination better understand the principles, and the grounds of our Religion. Possibly some errors may be mixed with our faith, which by this means may be separated, and our faith become more pure. Being more confirmed in the truths of our Religion, we shall be more perfect in the duties of it. Instead of being unthinking and nominal, we shall become more generally serious and real Christians: each one of which advantages will be a large step toward a compleat and final victory.

This victory obtained upon the foot of argument and perswasion alone, by writing and discourse, will be honourable to us and our Religion: and we shall be able to reflect upon it with pleasure. We shall not only keep that good thing we have received, but shall deliver it down to others with advantage. But a victory secured by mere authority is no less to be dreaded than a defeat. It may appear a benefit for the present, but it really undermines the cause, and strikes at the root of our holy profession. Will any serious and sensible Christian, in the

view of a future judgment, undertake to answer for the damage thereby brought to the doctrine of his Saviour, the meek and patient Jesus? as meek in his principles, as in the example he has bequeathed us.

I might now address myself to our adversaries, and tell them: That it is a very desirable thing, that all authors should write, as scholars and gentlemen, at least like civilized people: That it is a point long since determined, that in controversial writings authors should confine themselves to things, that is, the merits of the cause, without annoying persons That it is grievous to all sorts of men, to have those things which they respect, treated with indecency. I might tell them, that other mens reputations are as sacred as their own. I might remind them, that Christians at this time, generally speaking, are in as good temper, as they were ever known to be: That some, being of opinion that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that it is his pleasure, that men should not be compelled to receive his law by the punishments of this life, or the fear of them, leave men to propose their doubts and objections in their own way: That others have openly declared, that they ought to be invited; and others, that they ought to be permitted to propose their objections, provided it be done in a grave and serious manner. Christians have also lately shewn an instance of their moderation toward some books published in opposition to their principles. These are things, which, one would think, should have some effect on ingenuous minds; and draw them off from the design of any rudeness or indecency in their attacks on the sentiments commonly received among Christians. I might also remind our adversaries of some examples of an admirable decorum observed by the disciples of Jesus in their arguings with Jews and Gentiles. But really one has little encouragement from some late performances to enlarge upon these particulars. And perhaps it would be judged ridiculous, to imagine,

that any men should oppose the gospel with the same spirit, with which it was at first taught and propagated.

Besides, as all men are more concerned for the good conduct of their friends, than of others; so have I been chiefly solicitous on this occasion about the conduct of those who are engaged in the same cause with myself; that it may be such, as is best suited to the nature of those sublime principles they profess, and most for the lasting honour and interest of our Religion. And though the things here said may be at first disagreeable to some, who are, or have been in part of a different sentiment; it is not impossible, but that upon calm and cool reflexion they may obtain their approbation.

[1] Nam cum Tertulliano palam est profitendum, Legem novam non se vindicare ultore gladio: quod Christo ejus auctori placuerit neminem ad receptionem suae Legis cogi hujus vitae poenis, vel earum metu, ut patet ex variis Novi Testamenti locis, tum Pauli, tum Joannis, tum Lucae, tum Matthaei: quod non sit Religionis, eodem teste ad Scapulam in fine, cogere Religionem, quae sponte suscipi debet, non vi. Quis mihi imponat necessitatem vel credendi quod nolim, vel quod velim non credendi (ait Lactantius)? Nihil tam voluntarium quam Religio. In qua si animus aversus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est. Fides autem suadenda est, non imperanda; nocuit enim, & nocebit semper rigor: & ingenia nostra, ut nobiles & generosi equi melius facili freno reguntur, docendo magis quam jubendo, monendo quam minando.

[2] History of the Royal Society, p. 63. 2d. Edit.

[3] Page 3. Quarto Edit. 1696.

[4] Allon ep' allous haireseon kainotomoumenon. huporrheouson haei ton proteron, kai eis polurropous kai p9olumorphous ideas allote allos phtheiromenon. Proseei d' eis auxesin kai megethos, aei meta ta auta kai hosautos echousa, he tes katholou kai mones al thous ekklesias

lamprotes, k.l. H. E. I. 4. c. 7.

[5] Omos d'oun kata tous deloumenous authis paregen eis meson he
aletheious eantes uper machous, ou di agraphon auto monon ele9nchon,
all8a kai di engraphon apodeouxoon kata ton athe... ..reseon
strateuomenous. ibid.

A Passage of Origen out of his Books against Celsus, concerning these

three Miracles.

I HAVE in the Vindication proluxly shewn, that the literal histories of these miracles is rational, consistent, and credible: so that we may be safe and easy in understanding them in their literal sense, whatever any fathers or other people may say to the contrary. I shall however here set before the reader a passage of Origen writ about A. D. 245, which passage I have chosen, not only as containing a testimony to the real performance of these miracles in their literal sense, and shewing, that Origen argued the Messiaship of Jesus from miracles; but also as containing an excellent observation concerning the credibility of the Evangelists. The reader will likewise perceive, that in Celsus's time, who flourished about the middle of the second century, the miracles of Jesus were much talked of and well known to Heathens: and that the Christians in the time of Celsus, or before, believ'd the miracles of Jesus, and argued his divine mission from them.

"But this, says Origen, is no new thing with Celsus, when he is not able directly to oppose the miracles which Jesus is recorded to have done, to asperse them as jugling tricks. To which I have already often replied according to my ability. And here [6] he makes us answer him; That we therefore believe him to be the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the blind. He adds; and, as you say, raised the dead, For certain, we do believe him to be the Christ and the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the blind. And we are confirmed in it, because that in the Prophets it, is written: Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear, and the lame man leap

as an hart. And that he raised the dead, and that this is not a fiction of those that wrote the gospels, is evident hence; that if it had been a fiction of theirs, they would have related, many persons to have been raised up, and those who had lain a long time in their graves. But it not being a fiction, there are few of whom this is related: for instance, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (of whom I do not [7] know why he said, she is not dead, but sleepeth, expressing somewhat peculiar to her, not common to all dead persons) and the only son of a widow, on whom he had compassion, and raised him up, after he had bid the bearers of the corpse stop; and the third, Lazarus, who had been buried four days."

A

ever. p. 43. l. 6. for despair any longer, r. hope no longer, p. 104.

l. 18. for in his, r. is his.

[6] --Kai nun de phesin hoionei hemas apokeinasthai, hoti dia tout' onomisamen auton einai Huion Theou, epei cholous kai tuphlous etherapeuse. Prostithesi de kai to hos umeis phate, aniste nekrous. hoti men oun golous kai tuphlous etherapeuse, dioper Christon auton kai Huion Theou nomizomen; delon hemin estin ek tou kai en protheteiais gegraphthai; Tote.--Hoti de kai nekrous aniste, kai houk esti plasma ton ta euangelia grapsanton; paristatai ek tou, ei men plasma en, pollous anagegraphthai tou anastantas, kai tou... ede chronous echontas pleionas en tois mnemeiois. epei d' ouk esti plasma, panu euarithmetous lelechtheu, ten te tou archisunaghogou thugatera (peri hes ouk oid' hopos ...pen, ouk apethanen, alla katheudei; legon ti peri autes ho ou pasi tois apothnousi prosen) kai ton monogene tes cheras huion. eph' ho splagchnistheis anesthesen, stesas tou... pherontas ton nekron; kai teiton Lazarontetarten hemeran en to mnemeio echonta. Cont. Cels. 1. 2. p. 87.

[7] Origen, it seems, did not then think of the reason of this, I have assigned the plain reason of it, p. 52. See also, p. 105.

VINDICATION, &c.

MR. W. begins his fifth Discourse, p. 1, 2. with saying, that he is now to take into examination the three miracles of Jesus's raising the dead, viz. of Jairus's daughter, Matth. ix. Mark. v. Luke viii. of the widow of Naim's son, Luke vii. and of Lazarus, John xi: the literal stories of which, he says, he shall shew to consist of absurdities, improbabilities, and incredibilities, in order to the mystical

interpretation of them.

I have read over his examination of these miracles, and am still of opinion, that the histories of them are credible.

I. I will therefore first consider all his objections against these literal stories.

II. I will consider the Jewish Rabby's letter inserted in this Discourse.

I will shew, that the histories of these three miracles are well circumstanced, and have in them the marks and tokens of credibility.

§. 1. Answer to Mr. W's first Objection.

I WILL first consider all Mr. W's objections to these literal stories.

Mr. W. says in his preamble, before he comes to propose his objections in form: That these three miracles are not equally great, but differ in degree, is visible enough to every one that but cursorily reads, and compares their stories one with another.--The greatest of the three, and indeed the greatest miracle, that Jesus is supposed to have wrought, is that of Lazarus's resurrection; which, in truth, was a most prodigious miracle, if his corps was putrified and stank; and if there were no just exceptions to be made to the credibility of the story. Next to that, in magnitude, is Jesus's raising of the widow's son, as they were carrying him to his burial.--The least of the three is that of his raising Jairus's daughter, p. 4, 5.

For my own part, I will not pretend to affirm, that these three miracles are equally great, tho' the difference is small:; But I should think it highly probable, that the Being which can give life to a person really dead, tho' but for a quarter of an hour, or even a minute, is able also to raise to life another that has been dead many days. The length of time in which a person has lain dead from the time he expired does indeed somewhat increase the certainty of his death. But the difficulty of the work of a resurrection from real death is so very great, that length of time from the decease can add but little to it. This alone (if it be true) ruins Mr. W's first observation, however plausible it may have appeared to some. And he himself says, p. 3. He believes, it will be granted on all hands, that the restoring a person, indisputably dead, to life again, is a stupendous miracle.

If then it shall be made appear, that the three persons here mention'd

were indisputably dead, and raised to life again; or that there are no just exceptions against the credibility of these stories; we have in the gospels, three stupendous miracles which were wrought by Jesus Christ; and we have no occasion to have recourse to any mystical interpretations.

1. Observe, says he, p. 6. that the unnatural and preposterous order of time, in which those miracles are related, justly brings them undersuspicion of fable and forgery. The greatest of the three is indisputably that of Lazarus's resurrection; but since this is only mentioned by St. John, who wrote his gospel after the other Evangelists;--Here is too much room for cavil and question, whether this story be not entirely his invention: Again: If Matthew, the first writer had recorded only the story of Lazarus, whole resurrection was the greatest miracle, and if Luke had added that of the widow of Naim's son; and John lastly had remember'd us of Jairus's daughter--then all had been well; and no objection had hence lain against the credit of any of these miracles, or against the authority of the evangelists: But this unnatural and preposterous order of time, in which these miracles are recorded (the greatest being postpon'd to the least) administers just occasion of suspicion of the truth and credibility of all their stories, p. 9, 16.

On the contrary I maintain, that St. John the last Evangelist's recording a miracle omitted by the former, even supposing it to be greater than any related by them, does not administer any just occasion of suspicion of the truth and credibility of all their three stories, or of any one of them.

If there is any force in this argument of Mr. W. it must lie in some one or more of these following suppositions:

1. That some of the three former Evangelists have expressly declared,

they have related all the miracles, or all the greatest miracles, which Jesus ever wrought, or which they knew of.

2. Or, if they have not expressly declared this, that however they have in their way of writing shewn an affectation of mightily encreasing the number of our Saviour's miracles, or of setting down all and especially the greatest which they knew of.

3. Or else, that the later Evangelists have betray'd a fondness in their gospels, to record more in number, or greater in degree, than those who went before them; and thereby give ground for suspicion of forgery and invention.

4. Or lastly, that the omission of a miracle recorded by the last Evangelist, if it had been really done, is absolutely unaccountable.

1. That some of the three former Evangelists have expressly declared, they have related all the miracles, or all the greatest miracles that Jesus ever did, or that they knew of. This they have none of them said. Nor is it so much as pretended, they have said so. Indeed they have often declared the contrary.

2. Or, If they have not expressly declared this; that the former Evangelists have however by their way and manner of writing shewn an affectation of mightily encreasing the number of our Saviour's miracles, or of setting down all; and especially the greatest which they knew of. This Mr. W. charges them with: To aggrandize the fame of their Master, as a worker of miracles, he says, was the design of all the Evangelists, especially of the three first, p. 7. This does not appear from their histories, but quite the contrary. Having related two or three miracles wrought by Jesus in any place, they content themselves therewith, though they knew of many other. St. Matthew in his eighth chapter, having set down the miraculous cures of a leper, of the centurion's servant, and of Peter's wife's mother, relates no more

miracles particularly, but only says in general: When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick, Matth. viii. 16. And in divers other places he affirms, many to have been healed, and many other mighty works to have been done, beside those he puts down. Mark has taken the same summary method upon many occasions. And at even, says he, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gather'd together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils, Mark i. 32-34. St. Luke has followed the same compendious way of writing. Having related a cure, in a synagogue, of a man which had spirit of an unclean devil, and of Simon's wife's mother, he adds: Now when the sun was setting, all they which had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God, Luke iv. 40, 41.

As they do not multiply their particular relations of miracles, but omit great numbers which they knew, so neither do they affect always to take the greatest in degree, or those that seem so. I do not pretend to understand all the various degrees of miracles. But it appears to me a more showy and affecting work to cure a demoniac, than to heal a person with a fever. But yet Matthew in the chapter just quoted, at the same time that he relates the cure of Simon's wife's, mother, omits all particular accounts of those which were that same day delivered from evil spirits, though there many such instances. There is in all the gospels but one particular account of any person cured by only touching the hem of Christ's garment; namely, the woman with the bloody issue. And yet there were many other such cases. St. Matthew says, that in the

land of Gennesaret, they besought him, that they might only touch the HEM of his garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole, Matth. xiv. 35, 36. St. Mark assures us of the same thing. For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to TOUCH him, as many as had plagues, Mark iii. 10. And in another place he says: Whithersoever he entred,--they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the BORDER of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole, Ch. vi. 56. St. Luke also confirms this account: And the whole multitude sought to TOUCH him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all, Luke vi. 19.

Nay, there is a great deal of reason to think, that the Evangelists did know of more persons raised to life by Jesus, than those they have particularly mentioned. St. Luke, having given the history of raising up the young man, says immediately: And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying; Art thou he that should come, or look we for another.--Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John, what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk,--the DEAD are raised, Luke vii. 18, 19, 22. In St. Matthew our Lord says the same thing in his answer to John's enquiry: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk,--the dead are raised up, Mat. xi. 5. He says, The dead are raised, in the plural number. St. Matthew therefore must have known of more than one, tho' he has given the particular history of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter only.

Farther, in answer to this assertion, that the design of all the Evangelists was to aggrandise the fame of their Master, as a worker of miracles; I would observe, that the gospels, though but short

histories, are not filled with accounts of miracles. There are whole chapters together containing nothing, but an account of our Saviour's pure and heavenly doctrine. Other chapters contain nothing but parables, which are also interspersed here and there in other parts of the narration. Other chapters are taken up with the cavils of the Pharisees and others, and our Saviour's answers to them, with discourses to the disciples, and divers other matters. So that the miracles alone, separate from the discourses and arguings which they occasion'd, make but a moderate part of the Gospels. Many miracles undoubtedly the Evangelists have related. Nor had Jesus proved himself to be the Messiah, if many miracles had not been perform'd by him. Such things were expected of the Messiah, when he came, by every body. Therefore it was, that, as St. John observes, Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did, John ii. 23. And in another place, Many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done? Ch. vii. 31. Nor is there any ostentation in the working of any of these miracles, or in the manner in which they are related: But they are done for the confirmation of that excellent doctrine, which Christ taught, and that all men might know that the Father had sent him, and that the word he taught was not his own but the Father's. If I do not the works of my Father, says he to the Jews, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him, John x. 37, 38. And to the disciples: The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: But the Father that dwells in me, he doth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works sake, Ch. xiv. 10, 11.

Since then the first three Evangelists appear not to have given an

account of all the miracles of Jesus which they knew, nor of all his greatest miracles, nor of all those which he had raised from the dead: since they have not filled up their gospels with accounts of miracles or other wonderful appearances, and have writ all without any marks of affectation or ostentation; it can be no prejudice to the credit of another later historian of Jesus, tho' he relate some few particular miracles not expressly mentioned by the foregoing.

3. Or else, that the later Evangelists have in their gospels betrayed a fondness to record more in number, or greater in degree, than those that went before: and thereby give ground for suspicion of forgery and invention. Here St. John, the last Evangelist, in point of number, is perfectly innocent; he not having related half so many miracles, as any one of the former. The offence therefore, if there be any, must be this, that later Evangelists relate greater miracles than the foregoing. And this Mr. W. would insinuate to have been the practise of all in general. For he says, p. 11. That the first was sparing and modest in his romance; and the second, being sensible of the insufficiency of the former's tale, devises a miracle of a bigger size; which still not proving sufficient to the end proposed; the third writer, rather than his Prophet's honour should sink for want of a resurrection miracle, forges a story of a monstrously huge one. To this I answer, that a general conclusion ought not to be drawn from a particular instance, or two: Supposing, that the raising of the widow's son of Naim, related by Luke, be greater than that of raising Jairus's daughter, recorded by Matthew; and that the raising of Lazarus recorded by St. John be greater than either of the two former, a suspicion of forgery and invention cannot be fairly admitted, unless an affectation of enlarging miracles appear also upon other occasions. For which reason we will take a view of the conduct, first of all, of the three

former Evangelists, and then of St. John.

In the first place we will take a view of the conduct of the three former Evangelists. Matthew relates a story of Christ's feeding a multitude in a miraculous manner. He says, there were five thousand of them fed with five loaves, and that twelve baskets of fragments were taken up, Matth. xiv. Neither St. Mark, (Ch. vi.) or St. Luke (Ch. ix.) have related a greater miracle of this kind; but tell the same story with the same circumstances: whereas if they had been disposed to invent, the two later Evangelists might have easily told a much greater miracle of this sort than Matthew had done. Again, St. Matthew has given an account of raising Jairus's daughter, Ch. ix. 18. St. Mark wrote after him, and yet he has not told any greater resurrection story, but only the same, Ch. v. 23. Nay sometimes a later Evangelist lessens a miracle, that had been told by a former: so far are they from forging huge miracles, rather than their Master's honour should sink for want of them. Thus Matthew tells of TWO possessed with devils in the country of the Gergesenes healed by Jesus, Chap. viii. 28. But Mark who wrote after him, mentions but one of those men, Ch. v. 1. Matthew also speaks of two blind men restored to sight near Jericho, Ch. xx. 29; Mark mentions only Bartimeus, Ch. x. 46. and St. Luke says: There was a certain blind man by the way side begging, &c. Ch. xviii. 35. There is another thing very observable. One and the same Evangelist, who has given an account of a very great miracle of a certain kind, does sometimes a good while after relate another miracle of the same sort, but a great deal less than the former.

Thus Matthew first gives a history of five thousand fed with five loaves and two fishes, and says there were twelve baskets of fragments, Ch. xiv. But when he afterwards speaks of another miracle of this kind, he mentions but four thousand fed with seven loaves and a few small

fishes, and but seven baskets full of fragments, Ch. xv. These miracles are in the like order recorded in St. Mark, Ch. vi. viii. Nay if the raising of the widow of Naim's son be a greater miracle than raising Jairus's daughter, as Mr. W. supposes; then St. Luke has given an account of his resurrection stories also in this method. For the former is in the seventh, and the latter in the eighth chapter of his gospel. It is utterly unaccountable, that a forger of miracles should fall into such a method. He who forges stories of miracles knows they are false. His reader's mind must be humoured. By a lesser he may be prepared to receive a greater, which, if told first, had perhaps induc'd him to throw away the whole tale. Besides a forger of miracles certainly designs to entertain his reader, whereas in this way instead of being entertain'd he must be disappointed. And there can be no reason assign'd, why the Evangelists should have taken this method, as I have shewn they have done, more than one of them, in several instances, but that they had a strict regard to truth, and that the things they relate had been indeed so done. It serves to convince us also, that they had no undue desire to aggrandise their Master; that they have not used art in their compositions, or indulg'd their own fansie or invention; but have followed a certain train of real, tho' wonderful and surprizing actions.

Now we will take a view of the conduct of St. John, the last Evangelist. It is St. John in particular, that Mr. W. means, when he says The third writer, rather than his Prophet's honour should sink for want of a resurrection miracle, forges a story of a monstrously huge one, p. 11. But this is somewhat strange, that Mr. W. should impute such an action to St. John; since he has himself said, p. 7. That to aggrandise their Master, as a worker of miracles, was the deign especially of the three first. Moreover Mr. W. allows, p. 9. that one

resurrection miracle is sufficient. Why then should it be thought, that St. John hath given an account of one raised from the dead, but that he knew it had been really done?

But not to rely on these observations of Mr. W. though so much in our favour: let us observe St. John's conduct on other occasions; one instance, as I said, not being sufficient. It is he who has inform'd us of the turning water into wine at Cana in Galilee, John ii. 1. I am fully persuaded, this was a real miracle. But it appears to me, (and I suppose to others likewise) one of the lest miracles any where ascribed to our Saviour. If St. John forg'd miracles, Why did he put down here so inconsiderable an one? Why did he not tell a huge one? He had full scope here, as much as any where, the former Evangelists not having begun so soon in their account of our Saviour's ministry: as is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the harmony of the gospels.

Nor may any say, that the reason of St. John's relating here so small a miracle was, that he judged it not proper to tell a great miracle at first, but to reserve such an one, and particularly the huge miracle of Lazarus's resurrection for the last. For soon after this he relates a surprising miracle of a great cure wrought on a person at a distance, and that the son of a nobleman. So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee.--And there was a certain noble man, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him, that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the POINT OF DEATH.--Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And afterwards upon enquiry when the fever left him, the father knew, that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth. This is again the second miracle, that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee, John iv.

46-54.

Let us view St. John in another place. In the sixth chapter of his gospel he relates a story of Christ's feeding a multitude in a miraculous manner, which is, that he fed five thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and that they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. This is just the same, with what the three other Evangelists had told before. But why did not St. John, if he indulged invention, forge here, or somewhere else, a story of a monstrously huge miracle? It had been altogether as easy for him to have told a story of about ten or twelve thousand men, or more, fed with two loaves and one small fish: and to add, that when all had eat to satisfaction; there were twenty or thirty baskets full of fragments taken up.

There is no reason then to suspect the truth of the history of Lazarus's resurrection, purely because it is a greater miracle than those recorded by the former Evangelists. If the miracle recorded by St. John be greater than those recorded by them, it is not owing (for any thing that yet appears) to St. John's invention, but to truth and real matter of fact, and his regard to it, which was equally the concern of them all.

4. The last pretended ground of suspicion of fable and forgery to be considered is, That the first Evangelists omission of a miracle, recorded by the last, if the miracle had been really done, is absolutely unaccountable. Let us hear Mr. W. who is here very copious, in his way, saying the same thing over and over in different words. What could be the reason, he asks, p. 6. that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who all wrote their gospels before John should omit to record this remarkable and most illustrious miracle of Lazarus?--What then was the reason, I ask it again, that the three first Evangelists neglected to

record this renowned miracle of Lazarus? p. 8.

To which I answer, that we are under no obligation to account for the omission of the former Evangelists. It would be no sufficient ground to refuse our assent to St. John's history of the raising of Lazarus, though we could think of no manner of reason at all for its being omitted by the three former.

However a variety of reasons for this omission offer themselves. I have already shewn, the Evangelists have not affected to increase the number of our Saviour's miracles, but pass'd by many, and those very great ones, which they knew very well. Mr. W. himself allows, that one miracle of a resurrection is sufficient. He says likewise, p. 3. that the restoring a person indisputably dead, to life again, is a stupendous miracle. (I hope to shew hereafter, that every person said to have been raised to life by our Saviour had been certainly dead, and that therefore every one of these instances are stupendous miracles.) If then the lest of these, is a stupendous miracle, Why should we cavil with the Evangelists for not putting down, every one of them, the greatest miracle of all, if indeed there be a difference? Is it not very reasonable to suppose, that an Evangelist might content himself with the relation of one person raised from the dead; since one instance is sufficient, and is a stupendous thing?

Another very common occasion of omissions in writers is a regard to brevity. Mr. W. himself could not help thinking of this excuse, the studying brevity, p. 9; but he would not allow it to the first Evangelists. Nevertheless, I think, they have the best title to this excuse of any men that every wrote. The four gospels bound together do not make a large volume: each one singly is a very small book. And yet the Evangelists had before them the most copious and engaging subject. Beside the miracles of our Saviour, with circumstances of time and

place, the names of the persons, occasions of working them; and divers other extraordinary testimonies given to him from heaven, they have actually inferred in these pieces an account of the wonderful manner of our Saviour's birth, the dangers of his infancy, the miraculous appearances of Divine Providence in his favour, his removals and journeyings from one place and country to another. They have recorded the substance of his doctrine in plain terms, again and again. They have set down many parables spoke by him, together with their explications. Here is a mission of his twelve apostles and other seventy disciples. They have also given the cavils, and questions, of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, and our Lord's answers to them; the observations and reflexions of the people; our Lord's public discourses before all, and his more 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 our Saviour's 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 our blessed Lord's forerunner.

He who considers this great number and variety of matters contained in the gospels, (as also the engaging nature of them, by which an historian must be much inclined to dwell upon them, both for his own sake and for the pleasure and entertainment of others) must needs allow, that the Evangelists have ardently desired and most carefully studied brevity, or their works had rose to a great bulk. They have certainly aimed at this all along, in almost every part of their accounts. And I have before shewn they have done this in their relations of miracles; since having given a particular history of some few, they mention many others in a summary way only. It is not at all

strange then (we have here a very good reason of it) that when an Evangelist had given an account of one person raised from the dead, it being a stupendous miracle, he contented himself therewith.

Nor ought the Evangelists to be blamed for aiming at brevity. They deserve very high commendations both for the design itself, and for their excellent execution of it. Their intention was to give a history of Jesus, that all men might believe him to be the Christ, and might have life through his name. It was absolutely necessary therefore to put down the doctrine of Christ, and also somewhat under each one of those heads abovementioned. But though the subject was extremely copious; these books being intended for the use of all, for the learned and unlearned, for the poor, the rich, the busie, for all ranks and orders of men in all times, it was highly needfull they should be short. Great books are tedious and distasteful, many books are troublesome. And I am perswaded, that the Evangelists have much more effectually consulted the benefit of mankind by their short gospels, than by writing, as they might have easily done, many more, or much larger books of the history of Jesus Christ.

I have proved a regard to brevity in general, and particularly in the account of miracles, and have also shewn that this design was necessary and reasonable. This study of brevity must certainly have obliged each one of them to observe silence upon some matters, after they had related others; that they might reserve room for some important events, essential parts of their history, still behind: lest they should proceed to a length and prolixity, they had resolv'd to avoid. It is therefore very easy to suppose in behalf of the three former Evangelists, that when they had come to some certain place or period in their history of the ministry of Jesus, they observ'd they had given a sufficient account of his doctrine and miracles: and since they must

reserve room for an account of his last sufferings, and his resurrection, they resolv'd to pass over in silence what happen'd between that period and the time of his last journey to Jerusalem, where he suffer'd.

Such a period as this may be observ'd in the three former Evangelists, by which means they had not an opportunity of relating the resurrection of Lazarus. I will shew this particularly of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

St. Matthew says, Ch. xix. 1, 2, 3. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him tempting him, &c. From which verse to the sixteenth verse of the next chapter follows an account of the question of the Pharisees concerning divorce, Jesus's receiving little children, the young man that came to Christ, some discourses between Christ and the disciples about riches, and a parable. Then at ver. 17. of that chapter (the twentieth) are there words: And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, &c. From which 'tis plain, that Jesus was then going toward Jerusalem, a little before his last passover.

St. Mark says, Ch. x. 1. And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the farther side of Jordan, &c. From whence to the 31st verse is an account of the Pharisees question concerning divorce, the little children brought to Christ, the young man that came to him, a discourse between Christ and the disciples about riches. Then at ver. 32. it is said: And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, &c. From which it appears, that St. Matthew and St. Mark have given no particular account of any journeyings of Jesus and have spoke but very little of any thing else concerning him (except some discourses in the

place of his retirement) from the time he came into the country beyond Jordan, till they find him in his way to Jerusalem, before his last passover.

The same thing appears to me in St. Luke also. But that I may not be tedious, I will decline showing that particularly at present. I may the better be excused, because he has two resurrection miracles, which is one more than is sufficient.

Now the time of our Lord's coming into the country beyond Jordan may be learnt from St. John. It was soon after the feast of dedication, John x. 22. which was observ'd in the winter. For he says: They sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized: and there abode. And many resorted unto him, ver. 39, 40, 41. From which country (according to St. John's account) Jesus afterwards came up to Bethanie, and rais'd Lazarus; and then went into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples, John xi. 54. These removes the other Evangelists have omitted for the sake of brevity, or some other reason. Therefore the resurrection of Lazarus could not be well brought into their relation.

There is another reason of their silence about this matter, concurring with their study of brevity. The design of a writer may be collected from his work. From the three first gospels it appears, that the design of the three first Evangelists was to give an account of the most public part of our Lord's ministry. They therefore entirely pass over the former part of it, and begin their relation after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Thus Matthew, Ch. iv. 2. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. Mark i. 14. Now after that John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And that St. Luke also

begins his account of our Lord's ministry at about the same time, is apparent from his gospel. See Ch. iv. 14, &c.

For the same reason that they omitted the former and lest public part of his ministry, before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, they have also slightly pass'd over what happen'd from our Lord's arrival beyond Jordan, till he is going up to his last passover. For in this interval he lived somewhat more privately than he had done before. He receiv'd all who came to him, either for instruction, or to be healed by him; but he did not go about the cities and villages of Judea preaching publickly, as he had done for some time before.

St. John observing what had been the method of the three former Evangelists, and that they had given a very sufficient account of that part of Christ's ministry which succeeded the imprisonment of John the Baptist, resolv'd to supply their omissions. By which means he was led to give some history of things done by Jesus between his temptation in the wilderness and the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and also of some things that happen'd between our Lord's going into the country beyond Jordan, and his journey to the last passover at Jerusalem, in which last interval the miracle of Lazarus was perform'd.

We have here (so far as I am able to judge) a fair account of the occasion of the omission of Lazarus's resurrection by the three former Evangelists, and of its relation by St. John.

Once more: Since the miracles of Jesus were so numerous (according to the account of all the three first Evangelists) that they could not be all particularly related without an inconvenient and unnecessary prolixity; these Evangelists might very reasonably prefer some miracles before others, and in particular the miracle wrought on Jairus's daughter before that on Lazarus. If one of these miracles were to be omitted, I would ask, which of the two it should be? I can readily

answer for myself; I should choose to omit that of Lazarus rather than the other. And though all men should not presently decide with me, I believe that most would waver in the choice.

The raising any person to life is an amazing and truly divine work.

Jairus was a ruler of a synagogue, of an order of men generally averse to Jesus: Lazarus was a friend. The miracle therefore on Jairus's daughter is more unexceptionable in this respect than that on Lazarus. All the miracles of Jesus, considering his blameless character, and the circumstances with which they are related, are really unexceptionable. But there are degrees in all kinds of things, and one miracle, even of Jesus himself, may be more unexceptionable than another; which is an important thing in a miracle, as well as the greatness of the work itself. In this respect the raising of Jairus's daughter is preferable to that of Lazarus. I pass by the honour that results to Jesus from the earnest entreaties of so considerable a person as Jairus, that he would come and lay his hands on his daughter, who was at the point of death, or even now dead.

Moreover the miracle on Jairus's daughter was perform'd in the very height of Christ's public ministry, when there were great numbers continually attending on him; enemies undoubtedly and spies, as well as other people. But to Bethanie Jesus came privately with his disciples, and unexpectedly, to raise Lazarus. There happened indeed to be there at that time friends of the Pharisses (as I suppose there were every where) who went away, and told them what Jesus had done. But his arrival at Bethanie was perfectly unexpected to all, and a surprise even to the family of Lazarus. The evidences which there are in the relation, that our Lord's coming to Bethanie at that time was unlook'd for, shew that there was no concert between him and his friends there: But for the same reason the Pharisees might not be so well prepar'd to

observe this miracle as some others.

To conclude this point: Mr. W. says: p. 9. If Matthew the first writer, had recorded only the story of Lazarus, whose resurrection was the greatest miracle; and if Luke had added that of the widow of Naim's son; and if John lastly had remember'd us of Jairus's daughter, which the other Evangelists, not through ignorance or forgetfulness, but studying brevity, had omitted, then all had been well.

Undoubtedly, all had been well then, because there are not in the gospels any tokens of forgery or fiction, but plain marks of a real history of matter of fact, and of the strictest regard to truth. But all things are as well now. And if Lazarus's story had stood in the three first gospels in the room of that of Jairus's daughter, there might have been as much room for exceptions, as there is now, as appears from what I have just said about the circumstances of these persons. Nor is there any good objection to be brought against the present order. The three first Evangelists have wisely taken that miracle, which occurred to them in the course of our Lord's most public ministry, and which is in all respects most unexceptionable.

Upon the whole, the reasons I have here offer'd of the silence of the three first Evangelists about Lazarus's resurrection are such as readily offer themselves to my mind; they arise out of the gospels themselves; and they appear to me to be of no small weight. But they are not intended to the prejudice of any other probable reasons assign'd by Grotius, or Dr. Whitby, or any other learned and judicious writers [8] . And whether the reasons offer'd by me or others appear fully satisfactory, or not, is not very material: We not being obliged, as I said at first, to assign any reason at all for this omission.

I have endeavour'd to put the force of this objection of Mr. W. into the four beforementioned suppositions, which I have considered. But

there are yet several particulars he has mention'd under this head of what he calls the unnatural and preposterous order of time, which I suppose we must not pass by. He says then: p. 6. Since this [Lazarus's resurrection] is only mentioned by St. John, who wrote his gospels above sixty years, according to the best computation, after our Lord's ascension; here is too much room for cavil and question, whether this story be not entirely his invention.

No wise and honest man ought to countenance cavil. It is sufficient that there be no just reason for doubt and question, as there is not here. If any man were now to write a history (never heard of before) of some person raised from the dead, about sixty years ago, in a town not far from one of the chief cities of Europe; and should mention time and place; and names of persons concern'd, as St. John has done, he would find no credit with any one. Indeed the design is so foolish and extravagant, that no one will attempt it when there is a liberty of enquiry, as there certainly was in St. John's time, the friends of christianity being fewer than its opposers. But there is no reason to suppose St. John first told this story now, sixty years after our Saviour's ascension. He had undoubtedly told it before an infinite number of times, in conversation, and in public discourses, before many people, when the fact might be enquired into, and easily known to be true or false. Eusebius, who took a great deal of pains to get the best information concerning the authority of all the books of the New Testament informs us from the ancients. "And when now Mark and Luke [he had spoke of Matthew before] had publish'd their gospels, they say that John, who had hitherto all along preach'd only by word of mouth, was induced to write [9] " &c.

From which we learn two things; first, that St. John had spent his time in preaching Jesus Christ, from the time of our Lord's ascension:

Secondly, that his gospel contains the substance of his preaching. For he wrote what he had hitherto taught only by word of mouth.

Consequently he had often told his hearers this story of Lazarus's resurrection, long before he wrote his gospel.

Soon after our author says: p. 7. The first writer of the life of an hero, to be sure makes mention of all the grand occurrences of it.--If a third or fourth biographer after him shall presume to add a more illustrious action of the hero's life, it will be rejected as fable and romance; tho' for no other reason than this, that the first writer must have been apprised of it, and would have inserted its story, if there had been any truth in it.

How the lives of heroes are writ, I do not know, not being read in legends and romances. But omissions are common in the lives of princes and other great men. Suetonius is allowed to be an excellent biographer, and was a very curious and inquisitive person. Yet no one doubts of the truth and credibility of several things omitted by him, concerning those emperours whole lives he has writ. The three first Evangelists have not related all the grand occurrences of Christ's life. They expressly say, they have omitted a great number of them. If, they had professed to be particular, and to take great care to omit nothing, there had been some ground for this objection: but to make it now a man must have first lost all modesty.

But it will be said: The objection is not, that the raising of Lazarus is another occurrence, or another grand occurrence omitted by the three former historians; but that Lazarus's resurrection is a most prodigious miracle, p. 4; a huge and superlatively great miracle, p. 7; the miracle of miracles, *ibid*; a monstrously huge one, sp. 11.) in comparison of the other; and especially of the first, which is an imperfect and disputable miracle in comparison of the other two, p. 9.

This indeed Mr. W. does say, and he is obliged to say it, however contradictory it may be to what he says at other times. For if the later miracle related by the last writer be only somewhat greater, more considerable than the former, the argument is of no force. Let us therefore see what the Evangelists say. According to St. Matthew, the first writer, Jairus's daughter was dead before Jesus came to the house, for the musicians were come to make lamentations for her. And according to St. John, Lazarus had been dead four days [10] . He mentions no longer time, But according to Mr. W's representation of the resurrection of Lazarus; that it was a superlatively great miracle, a monstrously huge one, in comparison of the other; one would be apt to conclude, that Lazarus had been said by St. John to have been dead at least forty or fifty years, whereas he does not say half so many days. The difference as to time between that of the widow of Naim's son and Lazarus is still less; for he was not only dead, but carried forth to burial.

I argue therefore against Mr. W. thus: St. John's miracle exceeds in degree the other two but a small matter, therefore he did not invent and forge it. For if he had had a design of forging a miracle, from a sense of the insufficiency of the former, he would have made it prodigiously or vastly greater than these, which he has not done. The reader will judge, whether this be a confutation of this objection of Mr. W. or not.

I will add farther: The miracle on Lazarus exceeds that on Jairus's daughter in but one circumstance, which is that he had lain dead a little longer. In several other respects the miracle on Jairus's daughter is superior to that on Lazarus; for Lazarus was a friend, but Jairus was a stranger and a ruler of a synagogue; and the miracle on his daughter was perform'd in the most public part of our Lord's

ministry. St. John therefore did not invent the story of Lazarus from a sense of the insufficiency of the former: for if he had invented, he would have related not only a history of a person dead much longer than the other, (as I shewed just now) but the person to be the subject of his miracle would have been a stranger, and a rabby, a ruler, or a nobleman, or some other person of figure: and he would have placed it, in all likelihood, in the most public part of Christ's ministry. What I say here appears to me to be of the highest degree of probability: That if St. John had contriv'd a miracle, because he judged the former not sufficient, he would not have taken a friend of Jesus for the subject of it; and he would have related it with several other different circumstances.

One quotation more from our author, before we leave this article. Supposing John (who was then above a hundred, and in his dotage) had not reported this miracle of Lazarus; but that Clement (joining it with his incredible story of the resurrection of a Phoenix) or Ignatius, or Polycarp, or the Author of the Apostolical Constitutions had related it; would not your christian critics have been at work to expose it? p. 12.

. This argument is proposed with great airs of assurance, but I cannot see the force of it. As, to Clement's story of the Phoenix, we have nothing to do with it here, that I know of; it not being a christian miracle, but an old heathen story told by many authors, though with somewhat different circumstances. If Clement, Ignatius, or Polycarp had given the history of a miracle of Jesus, writ in a credible manner, with proper circumstances, I make no doubt but a due regard would be had to their authority; in proportion to their nearness to the time of Jesus.

As for John's being above a hundred, when he writ his gospel; it shews

us he was thirty years of age or more, when Jesus lived here on earth; and therefore was arrived at years of discretion, and was able to judge of things. That he was in his dotage, there is no proof. His gospel is not the work of a man in his dotage. Let Mr. W. shew me any where out of the bible, so fine, and yet so simple, so natural a narration of a matter of fact, as that of the cure of the man blind from his birth, contained in the ixth chapter of St. John's gospel: Let him shew me any where else such a prayer, as that recorded in his seventeenth chapter: Let him shew me such discourses, so affectionate, so moving, so every way excellent, as those in his fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters: I say, let him shew me any where else such things as these, not writ by any man in his dotage, but in the prime of life, and the full vigour of his wit and understanding.

[8] See Dr. Harris's Reasonableness of believing in Christ, p. 3. 4.

[9] Ede de Markou kai Louka ton kat' autou... euangelion ten ekdosin pepoiemenon, Ioannen phasi ton panta chronon agrapho kechremenon kerugmati, telos kai epi ten graphen elthein toiasdou charin aitias. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 24.

[10] St. John says, Ch. xi. 17. When Jesus came he found that he had lain in the grave four days already But, ver. 16. Martha says to Jesus: Lord by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Therefore the former four days were incompleat, and it was but the fourth day since his burial. Mr. Woolston therefore (to do him justice) is in the right, when he says, p. 30. "If those four days are number'd according to the arithmetick of Jesus's three days in his grave, they are reducible to two days and three nights." So it is: part of the day on which he was buried, then two whole days, and part of the day on which he was rais'd, and three nights. Thus, I suppose, if Lazarus died on the first day of the week, he was buried on the second, and raised

on the fifth. He had been dead four days compleat, or thereabouts;
buried four days, incompleat.

§. II.

Answer to Mr. W's second objection.

I pass, says Mr. W. p. 15. to a second observation.--What became of these three persons after their resurrection? How long did they live afterwards? And of what use and advantage were their restored lives to the church or to mankind? The evangelical and ecclesiastical history is entirely silent as to these questions, which is enough to make us suspect their stories to be merely romantick or parabolical; and that there were no such persons raised from the dead; or we must have heard somewhat of their station and conversation in the world afterwards.

If I may speak my mind freely: This, and all that follows under this observation, is mere idle and impertinent harangue. I have so good an opinion of the generality of mankind, as to suppose them wiser than to be capable of being mov'd by it, to admit any doubt of the truth of these histories.

We are not concern'd to know, what became of those persons, whom Jesus cur'd or restor'd to life. A miracle on the body does not mend the dispositions of the mind. Some of those whom our Saviour heal'd were ungrateful. Of the ten lepers who were all cleansed as they were going to shew themselves to the high priest, according to our Lord's direction, there was but one that return'd to give glory to God, Luke xvii. 12. Others there were, who published every where the things that God had done for them. Some of these the Evangelists have mention'd. But were they or ecclesiastical writers after them obliged to write the lives of all whom Jesus and his apostles healed?

For the truth of these miracles we have the testimony of the Evangelists, honest and credible men. Their testimony is confirm'd by

the event. The gospel of Christ had not had the mighty progress in the hands of the apostles, which it had, if these things had not been true. What they did, who were the subjects of these works, we do not need to know particularly. But the event, or the great progress of the gospel in a short time, renders it highly probable, that many of these persons by modest and humble acknowledgments of the benefits they had received, by satisfying inquisitive persons, and by other means, according to their several Nations, help'd forward the work of the apostles and others engaged in spreading the doctrine of Christ.

Our author, speaking of Lazarus, who is said by [11] Epiphanius, (though without any certainty) to have lived thirty years after he was raised, asks, p. 16 How did he spend his time all that while? Was it to the honour of Jesus, to the service of the church, and propagation of the gospel?

Why very probably; so long as he lived, he spoke, upon all proper occasions, of this miracle wrought on himself, and of the other miracles perform'd by Jesus upon others; and exhorted men, suitably to his station and circumstances, to believe on him as the Messiah. But it is most probable, that our Saviour did not give him a special commission, like that of the apostles, to go preach the gospel. I believe our Lord had a greater regard to the decorum of things, or if you please, to the rules of modesty and prudence. There was nothing better, than for Lazarus to stay at home, to be ready to answer enquirers, who might come to Bethanie to know the truth of the fact reported concerning him. Abroad the testimony of others was more worth than his own. And St. John's short account of his resurrection is more valuable than an history of it writ by Lazarus himself would have been. And of Jairus's daughter, and of the widow of Naim's son, which is astonishing, we read nothing at all, p. 17. Not astonishing in the

lest. Women are seldom admitted to public posts. The apostles did not allow women to speak in the church. It is no wonder therefore, that Jairus's daughter has been nowhere mentioned, but on occasion of the miracle wrought upon her. Should her private conversation afterwards have been recorded? I think it was not necessary. And after all, she may have been eminently useful some way or other, though we have heard no more of her. The memory of many great actions has been entirely lost. We have no authentic accounts of the preaching of many of the apostles of Christ. As for the widow of Naim's son: He may have died soon after, or he may have been a very useful person, or he might not be qualified for public service. We know nothing of these matters, nor was any body obliged to inform us of them.

[11] Quin & illud inter traditiones reperimus triginta tum annos natum fuisse Lazarum, cum a morte excitatus est; atque idem illo postea triginta aliis annis vixit. In Haeres. lxvi. §. 34. Note 15. of Mr. W's fifth disc. p. 16.

§. III.

Answer to Mr. W's third objection.

Our author says: p. 19. By way of objection to the letter of these three miracles, Let us consider the condition of the persons raised from the dead.--Where then was his wisdom and prudence to chuse these three persons above others to that honour? p. 20. I answer, that Jesus did not ordinarily choose the subjects of his miracles, but heal'd those chiefly who earnestly implored his mercy, or who pressed on him to be healed, or importunately desired it of him by others, when they could not possibly come to him themselves. It was great wisdom and prudence in him not ordinarily to choose persons, or to do a miracle without being first earnestly sought to for it. If he had acted otherwise, it would have been made use of as an exception against the truth and reality of the miracle, and the extent of his power. Indeed the widow of Naim's son was in some sense chosen but since he was publickly carried forth to burial, and the meeting of the corpse was perfectly casual, this choice is unexceptionable.

Jairus's daughter was an insignificant girl of twelve years old.--The widow of Naim's son too was but a youth, and whether older than the girl above is doubtful, p. 21.

Never the worse at all, on any account whatever, The power of raising a girl is as great as that of raising a woman; and a boy of twelve years old, as a man of forty. The suspicion of cheat and fraud is less; the benignity of Jesus is greater, in that he disdained not the meaner objects.

But that an insignificant boy and girl (forfooth!) and the obscure Lazarus, are preferr'd by Jesus to such publick and more deserving

persons is unaccountable, p. 25.

The obscurity of Lazarus is no objection at all, as appears from what has been already said concerning the two others. The more inconsiderable Lazarus was, the benignity of Jesus is the greater. But they were none of them preferred to others. Were there any other dead persons proposed to Jesus to be raised, whom he refused to concern himself with, though he raised these? None at all. If by preferring is meant choosing out of the number of those, who died in Judea during our Saviour's ministry; it has been answered already. Jesus could not ordinarily choose an object, without being defined. It might have had an appearance of ostentation, and enemies would have said of fraud and deceit.

Jesus raised the dead, and wrought other miracles, say our divines often, not only to manifest his own power and glory, but his love to mankind. For which reason his miracles are useful and beneficial, as well as stupendous and supernatural acts.--On this topick our divines are very copious, as if no more useful and wonderful works could be done, than what he did, p. 23. Instead of a boy and a girl, and even of Lazarus, who were all of no consequence to the publick, either before or since, I should think Jesus ought to have raised a useful magistrate, &c. p. 24.

Divines say very truly, that most of our Saviour's miracles were acts of beneficence to those on whom they were performed, and were in this respect suitable to the goodness and excellence of his doctrine, and to the goodness and meekness of disposition, that appeared in all the other parts of his life. But the main design of a miracle is not the profit of him, who is the subject of it, nor of others his friends or relations, who are interested in him. The great use of a miracle is to attest the divine mission of him who works it, and to give authority to

the message or doctrine which he brings. And for this purpose the raising a poor day-labourer is as useful, as raising a prince; and opening the eyes of a blind beggar by the way side, as curing a powerful magistrate, or a wealthy merchant.

It is not the intention of divines to strain the notion of our Saviour's beneficence toward all the miserable objects that were in Judea, as if he had been obliged to act to the utmost of his power for the temporal advantage of men at that time. Mr. W. acknowledges as much. That Jesus ought to have raised all that died, wherever he came, during the time of his ministry, none, I presume, can hold, p. 20.

That a miracle may be of use to confirm the character of a prophet, and the truth of his doctrine, it is necessary not only that it be done, but that it be known to be done by him, or the divine power concurring with him. Jesus, when at Jerusalem, might have healed a sick person in Galilee, without the person himself, or any other knowing who cured him. But this, tho' an act of goodness, would not have made known our Saviour's character. Let us give an instance. Jesus might have immediately healed the daughter of Jairus (as he did the centurion's servant, Matth. viii.) upon Jairus's coming to him, and desiring him to come and lay his hands on her. And this would have been perhaps an act of greater goodness to her, than to raise her after she was dead. But then we had not had the proof of his power and divine character, and of the truth of his doctrine, which we now have from the miracle of raising her from the dead,. Nay he might have healed her, before her case came to be so desperate as to oblige her father to come to him for help. This would have been a still greater act of goodness to her and her friends, if we measure goodness and beneficence purely with a regard to the temporal ease and advantage of men.

The spiritual interests of men are more considerable than their bodily,

temporal interests. The spiritual interests of many are to be preferred to the temporal interests of a few other. Tho' therefore it might have been many ways more for the temporal advantage of Lazarus and his family, for Jesus to have cured that sickness of which he died, when his sisters first sent to him; yet it was infinitely greater benignity, with regard to the spiritual interests of mankind (of all the sincere and inquisitive, the children of wisdom at that time, and among them, of Lazarus and his sisters, and also of all such persons in future times) not to interpose at first, but to come up to Bethanie, and there raise Lazarus from the dead, after he had been buried four days.

I will proceed to one thing more, without observing intermediate steps or gradations. Our blessed Saviour might have healed all the persons he cured during his ministry, and also many others, without their coming to him, or without their so much as thinking of him, and without any one else knowing that those cures were wrought by him: But then neither the men of that age, nor we, had had the proof we now have from his works, of the certainty of a future life, and of the other parts of Christ's doctrine, so admirably suited to raise men from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, and to turn them from satan to God: We had also lost that, eminent and undeniable proof they now afford us of our Lord's great charmer: We had not been assured, as we now are, of that unspeakable instance of the love of God, in sending his Son into the world for our salvation.

How far Jesus may have extended his goodness even to the bodies of men, during his abode here on earth, beyond all those miraculous instances of his power for attesting his character, we cannot tell. But it was necessary that the exercise of his goodness in the way of working miracles for the proof of his mission and doctrine should be chiefly confined to those who were disposed to ask help of him; whether they

were poor or wealthy, mean and obscure, or rich, learned and honourable: and that the exercise of his goodness should be also regulated in a great measure by the nature of their desires. This way his miraculous works are free from ostentation, and are unexceptionable.

But yet, when he had an opportunity of doing good, without incurring the suspicion of ostentation or concert, he readily manifested his compassion and benignity to the distressed; as he did in particular to the widow of Naim, whose son he raised to life when he was carried out to be interred.

And herein indeed appear wisdom and goodness, that those acts of beneficence perform'd by him on the bodies of men, and those perhaps chiefly poor and mean persons, such mostly having come to him, tho' some wealthy and honourable (all however who came to him, none having been refused, and some who never sought to him) have been made to subserve the great design of almighty God in saving mankind; and give credit to that doctrine, which is of such admirable use and tendency to cure the minds of men of all evil habits and dispositions: To cure, I say, the minds of men, not of one country or age, but of all the world in all time. This is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and the goodness of God.

I should think, says Mr. W. p. 24. Jesus ought to have raised an useful magistrate, whose life had been a common blessing; an industrious merchant, whose death was a public loss.

The design of Christ in coming into the world was not barely to promote the temporal advantage of men, but for an infinitely higher end, For which reason, I should think, he should cure and raise those, whose cure or restoration would most serve this end. These are they only, who might be cured without suspicion of cheat or fraud; which are chiefly

such as voluntarily came to him, or whom he casually met with; whether magistrates or subjects, wealthy or poor.

Soon after he says, p. 25: Such instances of his power would have demonstrated him to be a most benign as well as a mighty Agent; and none in interest or prejudice could have opened their mouths against him, especially if the persons raised from the dead were selected upon the recommendation of this or that city.

Ridiculous! should Jesus have gone to the magistrates and people of some town or city, and tell them: If they had lately lost any useful magistrate or worthy citizen, whom they wished to have restored again to life, and would be pleased to recommend such person to him, he would raise him up? I think no minister or messenger of God, endowed with the power of working miracles, would be guilty of such meanness. And if no such persons came to Jesus, it was not his fault. However there were some such, and they were not refused, but were as readily gratified as any other. Thus in the case of the centurion, whose servant was sick and ready to die, we are assured, that when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, and when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this, Luke vii. 2, 3. And one of the persons raised to life by Jesus was the daughter of a ruler of a synagogue. And if any others had been recommended in a like manner by rulers or elders, there is no reason to doubt but they would have been received.

But certainly it was by no means needful, that the miracles of Jesus, of any kind, should be generally perform'd on magistrates and wealthy men, or at their recommendation. This method might have serv'd indeed to stop mens mouths, but not to convince them: There is an observation of Origen in his answer to Cellus, which is much more judicious than any thing said by our author upon this subject. "It is not, says Origen

[12] , a number of impostors met together, who in compliance with the orders of a king or emperour have decreed, that he [Jesus] should be made a God; but the creator of the world himself, &c." It is much more for the honour of Jesus, for the credit of his miracles and religion, and for the satisfaction of men in all times, that his miracles and doctrine obtained belief and esteem without the power and authority of magistrates, by the force of their own internal excellence and evidence.

But now I am speaking, says Mr. W. of the fitness and unfitness of deceased persons, to have this grand miracle wrought on them; it comes into my head to ask, Why Jesus raised not John the Baptist to life again? A person of greater merits, and more worthy of the favour of Jesus, and of this miracle, could not be.--This is a very reasonable question, p. 25. A very silly one, most people will think. John the Baptist had performed his work and finished his course. If he had been soon raised to life again, the value and merit of his testimony given to Jesus had been much weaken'd. If it had been related in the history of Jesus that John the Baptist had been raised again to life by him; Mr. W. might have said, It gave ground .for suspicion of collusion between the Principal and the forerunner.

[12] Hou gar sunelthontes goetes, charin tinontes basilei tini keleuonti, e hegemoni prostasonti, pepoiukenai edoxan a8uton einai theon. all' k. l. Contr. Cels. 1. 3. p. 133. edit. Cantab.

§. IV.

Answer to Mr. W's fourth objection.

Mr. W. asserts, p. 26. That none of these raised persons had been long enough dead to amputate all doubt of Jesus's miraculous power in their resurrection. They have been long enough dead, to assure us of a miracle, if they are raised, who have been so long dead, that their nearest and most affectionate friends bury them, or carry them out to be buried: as have they also, who have on them such evident tokens of their being expired, that their friends despair any longer for help from those, on whose assistance they before depended, so long as there were any signs of life. The former is the case of the widow of Naim's son, and of Lazarus; the latter, of Jairus's daughter. When Jairus came to Christ, his daughter was expiring, for he says in Matthew, My daughter is even now dead; in Mark, lieth at the point of death. Still he had hopes of help from Jesus, for he says: But come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. But before Jesus got to the house, she expired, and all hopes were gone. And there came (says St. Mark) from the ruler of the synagogue's house, certain which said, Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the Master any farther? Chap. v. 25. This is good reason to suppose she was really dead. These messengers doubtless were dispatched away to Jairus, to acquaint him with the death of his daughter, by those persons that attended her during her sickness, and were convinced of her being expired.

Mr. W. says a good deal more about the time these persons ought to have been dead. Speaking of Jairus's daughter, he says: p. 27. Supposing she was really dead, yet for the sake of an indisputable miracle in her resurrection, it must be granted, that she ought to have been much

longer, some days if not weeks, dead and buried. And of the event at Naim he says, p. 29: All that I have to say here, is, that if Jesus had a mind to raise the son of this widow, in testimony of his divine power, he should have suffer'd him to have been buried two or three weeks first.

Mr. W's first proposition here appears to me very strange, That supposing she was really dead, yet for the sake of an indisputable miracle--she ought to have been dead much longer. If she was really dead, (as she certainly was) and was restored again to life, it is with all men of sense and reason an indisputable miracle.

As for the time which Mr. W. requires, that a person must be some days if not weeks dead and buried; buried two or three weeks first: This is not needful. If we could not be certainly assured of the death of persons, by evident tokens appearing in their bodies, in less time than Mr. W. prescribes here, we should not be justified in committing to the grave any man in less time, Much less could we endure to bury our dearest friends and relations under two or three weeks or more after they seem to have expired. We cannot justify burying men, but on a well grounded supposal that they are really dead. We cannot justify the laying out of mens bodies, as we do very soon after visible tokens of death, if those tokens were not sufficient.

And since they buried their deceased friends much sooner in those warm countries than we do here, this must doubtless have been, because dead bodies became also much sooner offensive there, than in our cold climate. This circumstance strengthens my argument: For how can we imagine that persons should, by burying their deceased friends so early, put them absolutely, and entirely beyond any manner of possibility of reviving, unless they might well and safely depend upon some certain, experienced, and uncontestable proofs and evidences of

their being already deprived of any remaining life.

There may have been mistakes made some times, though but very rarely; and even those accidents have chiefly happen'd in cases of sudden death. Where any dangerous distemper precedes, the possibility of mistake is very small, and can seldom happen. This was the case, we know, of Jairus's daughter, and of Lazarus: And this confirms us still more in the belief, that their friends were not mistaken in the perswasion of their death; upon which perswasion the one had been buried, and for the other the public mourners were come to make lamentations. And as for the young man at Naim; though we do not know how he died, whether suddenly, or of a gradual illness, we may rely upon the fondness of a mother, a widow too, that she would not have carried forth to burial her only son without knowing he was become a dead corpse.

It is so natural and even unavoidable for men that argue against plain truth to contradict themselves; that it is hardly worth while to take any notice of Mr. W's self-contradictions. I shall only just observe, that this story of Lazarus's resurrection, which before was represented by him as the miracle of miracles, superlatively great, and monstrously huge, as if nothing greater and more prodigious could be devised or thought of, is here pretended not to be big enough to assure us it was any miracle at all. For he says, p. 31. It is plain, that Lazarus was not so long dead and buried, as that there is no room to doubt of the miracle of his resurrection.

Mr. W. says, p. 28, 29. And where there is a possibility of fraud, it is nonsense, and mere credulity to talk of a real, certain and stupendous miracle, especially where the jugler and pretended worker of miracles has been detected in some of his other tricks. Perhaps there are few or no cases where there is an absolute impossibility of fraud.

It is sufficient that fraud be improbable, unlikely, and next to impossible. In such a case (which is ours) it is not nonsense, and mere credulity, but the highest reason to admit the truth of a relation; and to assert a real, certain, and great, or if you choose, stupendous miracle. A fraud is as easy to happen in a person who has been dead and buried many weeks, as in one publicly carried out to burial.

Herein however I readily agree with Mr. W that it is mere credulity to talk of such a thing, where a juggler has been detected in any other tricks. But where was he who is said to have raised the widow's son at Naim detected of any tricks? When Mr. W. has detected such a thing in any one case, I will allow it in this also. But till then, as this story is credibly related, I shall continue to pay a regard to it.

Our author has several other things under this observation; but as they do not properly belong to this, of the length of time these persons are said to have been dead, but rather to his sixth observation, of the circumstances of the narrations, I shall take no notice of them here; I have already spoke to some things here, which might have been let alone till we come to that observation.

§. V.

Answer to Mr. W's fifth objection.

5. The consideration that none of these raised persons did or could, after the return to their bodies, tell any tales of their separate existence; otherwise the Evangelists had not been silent in this main point, &c. p. 32.

None of these persons, Mr. W. says, told any tales of their separate existence. So I suppose with him. As for the two first: How should they? being only, as Mr. W. says, an insignificant boy and girl, of twelve years of age, or thereabouts. Or if they did, the Evangelists were wiser than to take any notice of their tales. As for Lazarus, I would suppose he was a wiser man than to indulge a vain inclination of amusing people with idle stories of no life. Besides, I presume he had been a follower of Jesus before he died. And when he had been raised from the grave, it is likely he was yet farther confirmed by that wonderful work wrought upon himself in the belief that Jesus was the Messiah: And that instead of pretending to be wise above what Jesus taught, he would exhort men, and especially his neighbours, to attend him, and hear him, who had the words of eternal life.

The Evangelists have recorded no tales told by any of these three raised persons. I much admire this objection. I am very glad they have not mention'd any such things. Jesus himself, who was from above, who was in the bosom of the Father, has not deliver'd any profound unintelligible theory of the separate state of existence. The great apostle Paul, who was an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead, Gal. i. 1. who had been caught up into the third heaven, and into paradise; who

had abundance of revelations; has not attempted any such thing: but declares that the things he heard were unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 2-7. He treats with the utmost contempt every thing that has a shew of wisdom without real advantage: exhorts his dear son Timothy, to refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise himself rather unto godliness, 1 Tim. iv. 7. to shun profane and vain babblings; 2 Tim. ii. 16. and requires him to charge men before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, v. 14.

Jesus and his apostles have made known the certainty of a resurrection of the just and unjust; a general judgment, wherein men shall be judged in righteousness; when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. What they say of the different recompences of good and bad is great and awful, sufficient to affect the minds of all; but they have not entered into a detail of needless particulars, above the capacities of men in the present state. Religion is the concern of all. That is the most perfect religion, which is suited to all. This is the Christian doctrine, which, as it was preached to the poor, and to every creature under heaven, is wonderfully suited to all capacities.

To the immortal honour then of the Evangelists be it said; that when they wrote the history of the preaching and miracles of Jesus, who knew all things, they have not recorded dreams and visions, or abstruse theories of a separate state, for the amusement of mankind, but important, certain truths, taught by Jesus, for their edification.

Was any person, in this age, to be raised to life, that had been any time dead; the first thing that his friends and acquaintance would enquire of him, would be to know where his soul had been, in what company, &c. p. 32. Not impossible: Vulgar minds might shew such

weakness even now. And the greatest minds, while in an uncertainty about another life, might have acted in this manner. Thus some of the greatest men of antiquity, justly admired by all the world, have actually told dreams, or accounts of departed men, and doubtless with a good intention. But he who has the sun needs not the light of a candle. The Evangelists, keeping close to their master, are vastly superior to the greatest men that were before them.

Our author is pleased to trifle so much, as to put questions about the place where the souls of these persons had been, between their death and their being raised up again; and particularly the soul of Lazarus. But the thoughts, that any of Jesus's friends should go to hell, will not be born with.--And if Lazarus's soul had been in paradise, it was hardly a good work in Jesus to recall it,--to the troubles and miseries of this wicked world, p. 34. Suppose Lazarus's soul to have been asleep, or in paradise, or in heaven itself, it might be a very good work in Jesus to recall it into this world for a time. It was much for the spiritual benefit of many, who might be induced by the great miracle of raising him to life, to believe in Jesus, and receive his doctrine, which, when heartily embrac'd is fruitful, of the greatest benefits. Nor could the soul of any good man be unwilling to return for a time to the troubles and miseries of this wicked world, how grievous soever, in order to serve the great design of saving his fellow creatures; for which end Jesus his Saviour descended from the height of glory he had with the Father, took flesh, and underwent the troubles and sorrows of this mortal life. And it might issue in the end to the advantage of Lazarus himself: as no man can doubt, who believes a future judgment, and that Jesus will preside therein, which is the doctrine of the New Testament.

§. VI.

Answer to Mr. W's sixth objection.

6. and lastly, Let us consider the intrinsick absurdities, and incredibilities of the several stories of these three miracles, p. 36.--As to Jairus's daughter, and her resurrection from the dead, St. Hilary [13] hints, that there was no such person as Jairus;--and he gives this reason, and a good reason it is, why he thought so, because it is elsewhere intimated in the gospel that none of the rulers of the synagogues confessedly believ'd on Jesus, John vii. 48. and xii. 42. St. John's words in the last quoted text are these: Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. This text is no ways to our author's purpose. The rulers here mention'd by St. John probably were the members of their great council at Jerusalem, or of the lesser councils in some other cities: But Jairus [14] was the ruler of a synagogue. But supposing Jairus to have been one of that same sort of rulers which St. John speaks of, here is no inconsistency. Jairus might believe in Jesus and come to him to heal his daughter, and yet not publickly confess him to be the Christ.

But why did Jesus say, this girl was but in a sleep? p. 36. Mr. W. had before affirmed this: Jesus. himself says, she was but asleep. And it is true that our Lord, when he came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels.--He said unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth. But by this our Lord did not intend to deny that she was expired, but to assure them in a modest way, that she would be raised up as it were out of sleep. That this is our Saviour's meaning, is most

evident from his use of these same expressions in St. John concerning Lazarus. See John xi. 4, &c. Lazarus's sisters sent to Jesus to inform him that their brother was sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, [to his disciples] This sickness is not unto death, that is, to his final death, to a killing death. (So the words must be understood, because, according to St. John, Lazarus did actually expire and die of that sickness.) But for the glory of God. Afterwards St. John says: These things said he, and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death.--Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. Where in formal express terms St. John assures us, that by sleep our Lord meant death. No critical reader will doubt, that this is the meaning of Christ's words, which he spoke of Jairus's daughter. Nor will any lover of virtue endure to be robbed of so singular an instance of such charming virtues as humility and modesty. Instead of these modest expressions, Give place, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth: had Jesus been a juggler and impostor, as is pretended; or had this history been a forgery, we had had some such silly boasting speech as this: Ay! The young woman is really dead, and your lamentations are well grounded: but let me only look upon her, and say a few words over her, and depend upon it, you will see her alive again, and as well as ever.

If he was going to work a miracle in her resuscitation, he should not have call'd death, SLEEP; but if others had been of a contrary opinion, he should first have convinc'd them of the certainty of her death, p. 36, 37. That is, Jesus should have spent time, and taken pains to convince them of what they were convinced of before, and were so positive in, that when they understood him to say the maid was not

expired, but only sleeping in a natural sleep, they laugh'd him to scorn.

It follows in our author: And why did he charge the parents of the girl, not to speak of the miracle? There might be many reasons for this, and those founded not upon the falshood or uncertainty of the miracle, but on the certainty and greatness of it. This prohibition then was partly owing to the humility and modesty of Jesus, who, instead of ordering men to proclaim his works, often desir'd them to be silent about them. It was partly owing to prudence, that he might have opportunity, during the short time his ministry was to last, for teaching men the will of God, and for instructing his disciples; that he might avoid the suspicion of setting up for a ruler and governour, or attempting any disturbance; which suspicion might have arose in mens minds, if the concourse of men to him had been too numerous.

These prohibitions therefore may be understood also to be only temporal, or for the present. Thus our Saviour forbid his disciples to speak of the transfiguration on the mount, until the Son of man be risen from the dead, Matth. xvii. 9. It was not long before he was to be taken out of this world: And then they on whom he wrought any miracles might speak freely of them, without giving any occasion to suspect his designing a temporal kingdom, to the prejudice of the civil government then in being.

Besides, though the parents of this maid were to be silent of this miracle, here were many others that might speak of it. All her friends, who knew she was dead, were witnesses of her resurrection, when they saw her alive again.

And rather than suspect any bad design in this prohibition, which is so contrary to the whole character of Jesus; I would conceive that he might have some regard to the character of Jairus, as a ruler of the

synagogue; and since he was an honest man, who had entertain'd a faith in Jesus for working so great a miracle, he by this advice of silence dispensed with his speaking publickly of the miracle, which might have been much to his prejudice, and was not at present absolutely necessary. This I am sure is more consonant to the meekness and goodness of Jesus, upon many other occasions, than any suspicion of fraud or imposture.

And why,--did he turn the people out of the house, before he would raise her! p. 37. Why, perhaps, partly for the reasons of silence just mentioned. If many had been actually present at the raising her up, they might have been more excited to spread abroad the miracle, and thereby make too great a concourse; which might have given umbrage, and been a handle to his enemies to charge him with innovations in the state. Another reason is this; that no more might thrust into the room where the young woman lay dead, than those he took with him; that there might be no disturbance in the house; that the persons, he took along with him, might have no interruption of any kind; that they might be sedate, and composed, and attend only to the work he was about to perform before them;: and that they might have a near, clear, distinct and full view of it; and that they might afterwards, (his disciples especially) report it to others, upon the fullest assurance and conviction.

There were the parents of the young woman, and three of our Saviour's disciples, which are witnesses enough of any action; and being with our Lord six in number might be as many as could have in the room where she lay a clear sight without interrupting each other. Five close witnesses, at full ease, are better than forty witnesses in a crowd and confusion. This action of our Blessed Lord in clearing the house of hired musicians and other people is no exception in the lest to this

miracle.

There is still a reflexion of Mr. W's relating to this miracle to be consider'd, which he places under one of his former observations; which I pass'd by then, only that it might be consider'd here in its proper place. And it is not, says he, p. 27. impossible, but the passionate screams of the feminine by-standers might fright her into fits, that bore the appearance of death; otherwise, why did Jesus turn these inordinate weepers out of the house, before he, could bring her to her senses again? If Mr. W. by the feminine by-standers means any persons different from the minstrels and the people making a noise [15] , which Jesus saw, when he came into the house; and, would insinuate, that these persons by passionate screams might fright her into fits; this is mere fiction, and contrary to the history of this event. This young woman was near expiring when her father left her, and when he came to Jesus he says she was then at the point of death. This supposition of the father must have been owing to the nature of her case, which he had seen before he left her, and not to any passionate screams which he could know nothing of. Besides, Who make passionate screams when people are well, and in no danger? And if made, when persons are desperate, would rather be of service than otherwise. These screams then to fright her into fits and an appearance of death are mere fiction and an invention of the author against this history.

If by passionate screams Mr. W. intends the lamentation of the minstrels and other people making a noise, whom Jesus found in the house: I should have thought Mr. W. might know very well, that it was not possible they should hurt the young woman; unless they could fright her after she was dead. If her friends had not known she was dead, they would not have suffer'd these musicians to enter their house, and make lamentations, and put them to charge without any occasion. The music of

these minstrels is alone is sufficient proof she was dead. But there had before come some from Jairus's house, which said, Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the Master any farther? Mark v. 35.

I think I have now consider'd all the objections against the history of raising Jairus's daughter.

As for the story of the widow of Naim's son, says Mr. W. p. 37, 38. excepting what is before observ'd of the shortness of the time, in which he lay dead, and of the unfitness of his person to be raised--I have here no more fault to find in the letter of it. These objections I have spoke to already. But under one of them Mr. W. plac'd some objections to the circumstances of this story, which I will now consider. He then says, p. 28: And who knows but Jesus, upon some information or other, might suspect this youth to be in a lethargick state, and had a mind to try, if by chafeing, &c. he could not do what successfully he did, bring him to his senses again: Or might not a piece of fraud be concerted between Jesus, a subtil youth, and his mother and others; and all the formalities of a death and burial contrived, that Jesus; whose fame for a worker of miracles was to be raised, might here have an opportunity to make a shew of a grand one. The mourning of the widow, who had her tears at command, and Jesus's casual meeting of the corpse upon the road, looks like contrivance to put the better face upon the matter. God forbid, that I should suspect there was any fraud of this kind here, but of the possibility of it, none can doubt.

To all this I answer: That the character of Jesus, and his doctrine prevents all suspicion of so vile a thing as that of contrivance. His doctrine is as holy and excellent, to say no more, as that which the best men ever taught. He is in his whole behaviour innocent, meek, and undesigning. It is not possible, that such a person should form or

countenance a contrivance to deceive and impose upon men.

If he had entertain'd a thought of contrivance, yet it was not possible he should succeed therein. How was it possible, that a piece of fraud might be here concerted between Jesus, a subtil youth, and his mother, and others; and all the formalities of a death and burial contrived?

Such a scene could not be acted, without a great many persons being in the intrigue, (as is apparent from the objection itself) who must have known the fraud. Jesus, who had so many enemies, and those men of power, was the most unlikely of any to succeed herein. Besides, when men form contrivances, they are not of such public open. scenes as this was, but are attended with some circumstances of secrecy. When was there ever such a contrivance as this scene is? so public, so open?

Jesus entring into a city, many of his disciples with him, and much other people; a public funeral, in day time, attended with much people of the city!

Moreover, none could be under any temptations to enter into a contrivance with him. For Jesus was poor, and subsisted on the voluntary .contributions of his friends; and therefore could give no bribes. Men must be some way or other tempted to such an action, because they thereby would incur the censure of the civil magistrate, and expose themselves to some very heavy punishment. If you say here, that Jesus did at last suffer death, and therefore he must certainly have been convicted of some such fault as this: I answer, that it appears from the history of his condemnation, that he was innocent; that there was no crime prov'd against him; and that Pilate himself saw clearly, that it was only out of envy and malice that the chief priests and Pharisses accused him. But not to insist now on this: There were no persons punish'd, or taken up, as accomplices with Jesus; not his disciples, nor any other persons whatever; which is a demonstration,

that no imposture was proved upon Jesus, nor suspected concerning him. As to what is urg'd in the first place: Who knows but Jesus, upon some information or other, might suspect this youth to be in a lethargick state, and had a mind to try, if by chafeing, &c. he could not do what successfully he did, bring him to his senses again: This likewise contains an intimation of a fraud, which, as I said, is absolutely inconsistent with Jesus's character. It also supposes vile and selfish people to be in a combination or correspondence with him, which is entirely inconsistent with the mean and poor circumstances of our Blessed Lord in this world. Lastly, all the circumstances of the relation, the tears of the mother, (who was the most likely of any to know whether her son was in a Lethargie or not) the great number of the people at this funeral; the great company with Jesus (who, if the meeting of the corpse was not casual, must have known it) our Lord's coming up to the bier and touching it, without asking beforehand any questions, concur together to induce us to believe, that it was a real miracle. To which might be added, that the company present were fully convinc'd, it was neither a contrivance, nor a cure perform'd by a successfull and fortunate chafeing, but a great and awful miracle: For there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, that a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people, Mark v. 16.

We may now proceed to the story of Lazarus which the author calls long, and says, is brimfull of absurdities. He will single out only three or four of them at present, reserving the rest for another opportunity, when the whole story of this miracle will appear to be such a contexture of folly and fraud in its contrivance, execution and relation, as is not to be equall'd in all romantick history. p. 38.

Let us however examine the three or four pretended absurdities. First

then, says Mr. W. Observe that Jesus is said to have wept and groaned for the death of Lazarus.--Patience and resignation unto God upon the death of our dearest friends and relations is what all philosophers have rightly taught; and Jesus, one would think, should have been the most heroical example of these graces.--A stoical apathy had better become him than such childish and effeminate grief. p. 38.

It does not appear from St. John, that Jesus did weep and groan for the death of Lazarus. He says indeed that Jesus wept: Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him. But it does not follow, that in this they judg'd right, any more than in some other reflexions. pass'd on Jesus at other times; which though the Evangelists knew to be false, they do not concern themselves to refute them. But supposing, he did out of love for Lazarus weep for his death; there is nothing in this inconsistent with patience and resignation to God [16] . Nor is there any thing therein weak and effeminate. The ancients, who by many are thought best to have understood human nature, did not think tears unmanful, or disgraceful to a man of true fortitude; as might be amply shewn, if needful. For my own part, I never loved stoical principles or dispositions; and I believe Jesus had as tender sentiments as any man. Supposing then the death of Lazarus, and the affection Jesus had for him to have been, the cause of these tears, I see no absurdity in them. But there were other things before Jesus of an affecting kind, which might have drawn forth 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 state: or he might be affected with the excess of sorrow, which the sisters of Lazarus and other persons then present seem to have shewed on this occasion.

As for the groans of Jesus; they were not owing to the death of Lazarus, but to somewhat else, as is very plain from the account; which

is this: Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. Here are two just grounds of grief and concern, namely, the excess of sorrow and mourning of Mary and her friends for the loss of Lazarus; and secondly, the tokens which she and the rest gave of want of faith in his power to raise him up after his death. For Mary says to him; If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Which implies her doubting his power to raise him up. Which was a great fault in her, considering the proofs he had before given of his power; considering all the appearances from heaven in his favour, and all the other evidences that had been given that he was the Christ. It was also just matter of concern, that the faith of the people with her was so far from answering the proofs he had given of his power.

The occasion of his last groaning was thus: And some of them said, Could not this Man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. Here also was another sign of want of faith in his power to raise dead Lazarus; which shewed, they did not fully believe him to be the Christ, though he had given more than sufficient proofs of it [17]. It is also highly probable, that our Blessed Lord was now touch'd with the thought of their continued future unbelief, and the miseries it would bring upon them. As they had not admitted a full conviction of his character from the works they had already seen him do, so he foresaw they would not be convinc'd neither by the great work he was now going to do in raising Lazarus to life, but would after all persist in their obstinate malice and unbelief. And supposing Jesus to have really done those things which we are told of

him in the gospels, I think no one can deny, but that the hardness of heart which was in that people was matter of just grief to any wise and good man.

Secondly, Observe, says the author, p. 40. that John says it was with a loud voice, that Jesus call'd Lazarus forth out of his grave.--Was dead Lazarus deafer than Jairus's daughter, or the widow's son? &c.

It is necessary, when a miracle is wrought for the proof of the character or divine mission of any person, that it appear to be done by him, and not to be a casual thing. It has been common therefore for all the prophets and extraordinary messengers of God to make use of some external action at the same time that they perform'd a miracle, though that external action was in itself of no real virtue. When the red sea was to be opened to give a passage for the children of Israel, God said to Moses: Lift up thy rod, and stretch thine hand over the sea, and divide it, Exod. xiv. 16. And when they had passed through, God said unto Moses, stretch out thine hand, over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, ver. 26. The stretching the hand did not divide the sea, but the divine power that accompanied that action.

Nevertheless the action was of great use, to convince the people, that the dividing or returning of the waters, which immediately followed thereupon, was not a casual natural event, but that God was with Moses, their leader. The same thing may be said of any other external actions, made use of by Moses, or. other ancient prophets. Jesus in like manner, when he intended a miracle, sometimes laid his hands on the person to be cured; or else said, Be thou clean, Be thou healed, or used some such other words; that the people might be assured, that the cure was wrought by him, and might believe that God had sent him. For this reason, when he raised Jairus's daughter, he took her by the hand, and said unto her, Damsel arise. And when he raised the widow's son at

Naim, he said; young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And when he raised Lazarus, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. There is no absurdity in the loudness of the voice. It well became so solemn and awful an event. When he raised Jairus's daughter, there was no occasion for a loud voice; the being raised to life in the Chamber, where she lay, where there were no more than five persons present. But at Lazarus's grave a loud voice was not at all improper, when there was by a great multitude of people, that all might know Lazarus was raised to life by Jesus. Whether Jesus spoke with a loud voice, when he raised the widow of Naim's son, is not related, and we are under no obligation to conjecture. I think, Jesus might speak in what voice he pleased, upon such great occasions as these. There can be no cavils formed, but what are at first sight unreasonable.

Thirdly, Because that a miracle should be well guarded against all suspicion of fraud, I was thinking to make it an absurdity, that the napkin, before Jesus raised Lazarus, was not taken from his face, that the spectators might behold his mortified looks, and the miraculous change of his countenance from death unto life, p. 41. This wise objection is repeated again in the Jew's letter. But however this was, They [the spectators] could not but take notice of the napkin about his face all the while; which Jesus, to prevent all suspicion of cheat, should have first ordered to be taken off; that his mortified countenance might be viewed, before the miraculous change of it to life was wrought, p. 51, 52.

The napkin over Lazarus's face is one proof, that he was supposed by his friends to be dead, when they buried him. Do not all civiliz'd people out of decency cover the face of a corps with a napkin, or some such other thing, as well as the other parts of it? If any one had been sent into the sepulchre by Jesus, before he commanded Lazarus forth, it

might have given ground of suspicion, that the person had been order'd in to see whether Lazarus was alive, and capable to come out of himself, and concur with the command pronounced to come forth. Or it might have been pretended, that he went in to daub his face with some juices that might make him look like a mortified corps. Any meddling with the body beforehand might have caused some suspicion, but now there was none at all. And the napkin is a circumstance, I am very glad St. John did not forget. It very much corroborates other proofs of Lazarus's real death.

Fourthly and Observe St. John says, ver. 45. that many of the Jews, who had seen the things that Jesus did here, believed on him; and some of them, ver. 46. who did not believe, went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done in this pretended miracle, and how the business was transacted, p. 41.

It is true, that some went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. But it does not follow, that they were persons, who did not believe. They did not indeed believe Jesus to be the Christ, as many other Jews did hereupon; but they believed the miracle, and knew it, and went and told the Pharisees. of it. That these persons told the Pharisees of a miracle done by Jesus, is evident from the speeches of the Pharisees upon occasion of the report brought them, v. 47, Then gathered the chief priefis and the Pharisees a council, and said, what do we? for this Man doth many miracles.

Mr. W. goes on, p. 42: Whereupon the chief priests and Pharisees were so far incensed as, ver. 53, from that day forth they took council together to put him to death; and Ch. xii. 10. consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death. Jesus therefore (and his disciples and Lazarus fled for it, for they) ver. 54, walk'd no more openly among the Jews, but went thence into a country near to the wilderness (a

convenient hiding place) and there continued with his disciples; otherwise in all probability they had been all sacrificed.

I must take leave to observe, that it is nowhere said, that Lazarus absconded or fled for it. Nor is there any account of the Pharisees having at this time any design against Lazarus. Afterwards, when Jesus came again to Bethanie, we find that Lazarus was then at home. And many of the Jews came thither, not for Jesus sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus to death. Because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus, John xii. 9, 10, 11. Lazarus therefore did not abscond, but was at Bethanie; and the miracle wrought on him was so certain, that many for that reason believ'd on Jesus. And the reason, why the Pharisees consulted that they might put Lazarus to death, was not because any imposture was detected, but because the miracle was too clear to be denied, and induced great numbers of the Jews, even followers of the Pharisees, to go away from them, and believe in Jesus.

But this retirement of Jesus with his disciples into a country near the wilderness is judged so mighty an objection, that it is repeated again in the Jew's letter. Why did Jesus and his disciples, with Lazarus, run away and abscond upon it?--is there not here a plain sign of guilt and fraud? Men that have God's cause, truth and power on their side, never want courage and resolution to stand to it, p. 44.

The judgments of men are surely very unfair and unequal. When any of the first Christians are observ'd to have been too forward in exposing themselves, they are represented as a company of mad men, and hot headed enthusiasts. Jesus now for avoiding a danger is taxed with want of courage and resolution; nay his retirement for only a very short time is term'd, a plain sign of guilt and fraud. Thus the desire of

-serving a present low purpose prevails over all the regards of justice and equity. "So hard is it, (as Socrates, [18] observed) tho' you are free from all fault to escape unfair judges". But wisdom is justified of her children.

It might be sufficient here to remind men of Christ's returning in a short time to Bethanie again, and appearing publickly at Jerusalem, and teaching in the temple. But let us at present observe only this history of his raising Lazarus from the grave. When Jesus heard of the sickness of Lazarus, he was in the country beyond Jordan, John x. 40. and when he proposed to his disciples to go unto Judea again; they, remembering the attempts of, the Jews against him, endeavour all they can to divert him from the journey. His: disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again Chap. xi. 8.

Jesus then argues with them, that they need not apprehend any danger to him as yet. These things said he, and after that saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep, ver. 11. They from thence take occasion to argue again, that then their journey to Bethame was not needful: Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. After that he tells them, that Lazarus was dead, and declares his resolution to go to Bethanie: Nevertheless let us go unto him. Whereupon Thomas filled with a kind of indignation [19] that Jesus should have no more concern for himself nor them, than to expose them all to certain death, but at the same time sensible of his duty to follow him, says to his fellow disciples; Let us also go that we may die with him, ver. 16.

So that our Blessed Lord, when he was in a place of safety, resolv'd to come to Bethanie near Jerusalem for the sake of Lazarus: and herein shewed great courage and resolution. And what is there, I pray, blameable in his retiring again to some distance from Jerusalem, when

he had performed the business for which he came into its neighbourhood?

[13] In loc. Mat.

[14] Vid. Grot. in Matt. ix. 18.

[15] Matth. ix. 23.

[16] See Dr. Harris's Remarks on the case of Lazarus, p. 75.

[17] There are other places also, in which our Lord is said have been angry or grieved: the cause or occasion of which grief or anger appears plainly to be the same with that here assigned by me of his groaning, Mark iii. 5. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;--see Mark viii. 12.

[18] Chalepon de kai anamartetos ti poiesantas me agnomone ..eite peituchein. Apud Xenophon. Memor. I. 2.

[19] Or perhaps, there was no indignation in his mind; but only a warm affection, which disposed him to go with Jesus, and to call upon the other disciples to do so likewise, whatever the danger was.

CHAP. II.

Answer to the Jewish Rabby's Letter.

WE Are now come to the letter of Mr. W's Jewish Rabby, whom Mr. W. calls his friend, and says his letter consists of calm and sedate reasoning, p. 55. I on the other hand can see no reason in it. But the reader than not need to rely upon my judgment. Therefore I will transcribe some parts of it, and then make some remarks. The argument of the letter is, that the story of Lazarus's being raised is an imposture; or else the Jews could not have been so wicked, as to be on that account provoked against Jesus and Lazarus.

If there had been an indisputable miracle wrought in Lazarus's resurrection, why were the chief priests and Pharisees so incensed upon it, as to take council to put Jesus and Lazarus to death for it? p. 43.

The reason is very evident; because that by reason of it many of the Jews went away, deserted the proud Pharisses, and believed on Jesus, John xii. 10.

If, says he, historians can parallel this story of the malignity of the Jews towards Jesus and Lazarus upon such a real miracle with thing [things] equally barbarous and inhuman in any other sect and nation; we will acknowledge the truth of it against our own nation: or if such inhumanity, abstractly considered, be at all agreeable to the conceptions any one can form of human nature, in the most uncivilized and brutish people, we will allow our ancestors in this case, to have been that people.--And he promises to make it out as foolish and wicked an imposture as ever was contrived and transacted in the world that it is no wonder the people by an unanimous voice, call'd for the releasement of Barabbas, a robber and murderer before Jesus, p. 46, 53,

54.

The demand made of a parallel of the malignity of the Jews against Jesus, upon such a real miracle, is very idle, because there never was such a public miracle done by any other for so pure a doctrine. But if this Jew or any one else will produce an instance of such a miracle done by any one, who also taught the same spiritual heavenly doctrine that Jesus did, and nothing else; and who converted and taught as publickly as Jesus did; and spoke the truth to all without fear or favour: And I will shew he had an ignominious death, or else wondrous escapes and deliverances by manifest interpositions of Divine providence.

But though an instance of equal malignity cannot be shewn, because there is no other character equal to our Saviour's in innocence of life and greatness of works; yet the Jewish nation will afford an instance, which I am very sorry is so near parallel. Moses was the greatest prophet, and meekest man, they ever had among them, except Jesus, and they often murmured against him. And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me.

[20] When they should have gone to have taken possession of the land of Canaan, All the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. [21] --All the congregation bade stone them with stones, that is, Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, or at lest these two, the only persons that stood by Moses and his brother.

This people were to a man obliged to Moses, who had brought them up out of a state of servitude. Nor had they any just ground of complaint against him, whilst in the wilderness, for God says: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, [22] The blessings Moses proposed were far more agreeable to carnal minds (such as the Jews and most other mens are) than those promised by Jesus. He

engag'd to raise them to a state of independence in a land flowing with milk and honey, The time set for this event according to Divine promise was now come. And he had perform'd many great miracles before them, and yet they rebell'd continually against God and this his servant. Nor did any of all this congregation, except Caleb and Joshua, believe God, as Moses [23] tells them expressly. They are called by the Psalmist a stubborn and rebellious generation. [24] --They believed not for all his wondrous works [25] . Not that they disbelieved the works themselves: They knew them, but though they saw the works of God, they were not obedient.

Thou knowest, says Aaron to Moses, that this people is set upon mischief [26] . As they were then, so they continued to be; and slew the prophets which God sent to them. They are upon record in their own writings as the most obstinate of all people [27] . They are said to have chang'd God's judgments into wickedness more than the nations [28] . One would think these, and many other such things, were recorded on purpose to prevent such an objection as we have now before us; or to help us to answer it, if any should be so unreasonable as to make it. Why should it be thought strange that this people, who would have stoned Moses, and who slew many other prophets, should also conspire against Jesus; especially considering that they abounded now as much as ever with all kinds of the worst wickedness, except idolatry; if we may credit Josephus, and other writers of this nation; and were now disappointed in their fondest expectations of worldly power and splendour. I will transcribe here an answer of Origen to a like objection of Celsus, proposed in the person of a Jew. "Well then, Sirs, how will you (says [29] Origen) answer such questions as these, if put to you by us? Which are in your opinion the greater miracles? those which were wrought in Egypt, and in the wilderness, or those which we

say were wrought among you by Jesus? If in your opinion those are greater than these later: Is it not hence apparent, that according to your custom, you may despise the less, who disbeliev'd the greater? Since you think those ascribed to Jesus lesser than those former. But if those which are related of Jesus are equal to those written by Moses: Is it any thing strange, that the same people should be equally unbelieving upon both occasions? For the beginning of the law was by Moses: and in that are recorded the transgressions of the unbelievers and sinners among you. And the beginning of the second law and covenant is allowed to have been given unto us by Jesus. And by your unbelief in Jesus you make it appear, that ye are the children of those who did not believe the divine appearances in the wilderness."

Any man may perceive, that a prophet is the most unpopular of all characters. For he is to cry aloud and spare not; to lift up his voice like a trumpet, [30] and shew men of all ranks their transgressions and their sins. Moses at first supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them [31] . But when he endeavoured only to reconcile two of them, and said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? what a smart reply did he meet with ? Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian [32] ? These were his apprehensions then; but when he was forty years older, and knew the world better, and God appeared to him and told him, he would send him to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt: After divers fine excuses, which are not accepted of, he in a modest way positively refuses to go, And he said, O Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send [33] . Nor does he yield, till the anger of the Lord is kindled against him. So hazardous and difficult was this office, that God some times promises a prophet, as a special favour and

a most necessary qualification, together with a commission, boldness of countenance to execute it. As an adamant harder than flint, says God to Ezekiel, have I made thy forehead: Fear them not, neither be dismayed [34] . And Jeremiah he made a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land [35] .

It is a very unjust way of judging: Such an one suffered, or was hated and opposed; therefore he was a wicked man, or an impostor. If we will pass a judgment on men, we should. examine their conduit, as well as the treatment they meet with: otherwise we are in danger of being unjust to the memory of some of the bell men that ever were. Solomon says, A just man falleth [into trouble] seven times, and riseth up again [36] . And his father David: Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all [37] . Many were the afflictions of our Blessed Saviour, but he was delivered out of them all, if ever man was; having been soon raised up from the grave, and seated at the right hand of God.

Solomon says again: An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way, is abomination to the wicked [38] . Which last observation is confirmed by divers heathen writers, of good knowledge in human nature: "That a man can no sooner be an enemy to all vice, and walk in the way of virtue, but he becomes the object of hatred [39] ". Socrates, who had been pronounced by the oracle of Apollo the Wisest man, and who has since had almost universally the character of the best man among the Greeks [40] , was put to death by his countrymen the Athenians, a people more renowned for civility and good humour than the Jews. He was always apprehensive of suffering, and sensible of the danger he incurred by opposing the evil practises of men. He goes so far as to tell the Athenians: [41] "It is impossible for any man to be safe among them, or any where else, who honestly and

courageously opposes vice and injustice." He says also that he had chosen a private life as best suited to answer his design; and that if he had been in the magistracy, and taken the course he had done of instructing and admonishing all people, he had not lived so long. And Cicero [42] observed in his time, that philosophy, which proposed to cure the minds of men, was suspected and hated by the most, as a dangerous thing. Some sovereign princes have lost their lives in attempts of reformation. Many indeed are the instances of the unjust judgments of the most. A peaceable prince, who protests the estates, the commerce, the persons and consciences of his subjects, is barely beloved: A conquerour is adored; though he needlessly hazards the lives of his own subjects, and violates toward his neighbours all the laws of nations, and all the laws of honour and humanity.

But I am ashamed to give this argument its full force. I little expected to have ever seen this objection seriously produced against the miracles, or any other branch of the history of the New Testament, and called calm and sedate reasoning, p. 55. An apologist for christianity might have brought it forth and stated it, to adorn his triumph, after a confutation of other more plausible objections but for any seriously to mention the enmity of the Jews against Jesus as an objection against him, can be owing to nothing in my opinion, but strange ignorance or prejudice, or a most contemptuous opinion of all the reason and observation of mankind.

Let us examine another passage in the Jew's letter. Such a manifest miracle, let it be wrought for what end and purpose, we can possibly imagine, would strike men with awe and reverence, and none could hate and persecute the Author of the miracle; least he who could raise the dead, should exert his power against themselves, and either wound or smite them dead with it. For which reason, the resurrection of Lazarus,

on the certain knowledge of our ancestors was all fraud, or they would have revered and adored the power of him that did it, p. 48, And more such stuff has this Jew again and again to this same purpose. I must therefore remind him of some examples in the books of the Old Testament. In 1 Kings xvii. is the history of Elijah's raising the widow's son. In the next chapter he works a great miracle at the altar, and after that obtaineth rain. Nevertheless it is said, Ch. xix. 1, 2. And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, and solemnly swears she would destroy him, saying, so let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time. Whereupon Elijah absconds, and in a prayer to God, he says: They seek his life to take it away. In the xxii. chapter is mention of another prophet of the Lord, by name Micajah, of whom Ahab says to Jehosaphat in plain terms: I hate him. Ahaziah, another king of Israel, fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber, and was sick, 2 Kings i. Nevertheless, in this condition, (such stubbornness is there in the heart of man!) he sends officers, one after another, to Elijah, requiring him to come to him. Elisha also, successor of Elijah, raised a person to life and wrought divers other miracles, 2 Kings iv. Notwithstanding this, Jehoram, another king of Israel, says: Ch. vi.. 31. God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

One story more to our purpose out of the Jewish writings [43] , but wherein a foreigner is concern'd. The king of Syria is at war with Israel. Elisha informs the king of Israel of all his enemy's steps. The king of Syria is amazed, and complains to his servants that they discover his secrets: Will ye not shew me, which of us is for the king

of Israel? and one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but Elisha the prophet, that is in Israel; telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber. This king of Syria believ'd what his servant said, otherwise he had not concern'd himself about Elisha. But it follows there: And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him,--Behold he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host, and they came by night, and compassed him about. So that it is plain, miracles do not always fill wicked men with such awe and reverence, but that they can still hate and persecute, and break forth into rage against the authors of them.

This Jew says, p. 49: That it is certain, according to christian commentators, that some of them did not believe the miracle. Again he says, p. 51: It is plain from the story in John, that there was a dispute among the by-standers at Lazarus's resurrection, whether it was a real miracle or not. I presume to say: This is a false account. It is not plain, that there was any dispute among the by-standers, whether it was a real miracle. It is plain those people, who went to the Pharisses, told them of a real miracle. And the Pharisses, when met in council, say: What do we? for this Man doth many miracles.

Nor do I know, that any christian commentators [44] say, that some of them did not believe the miracle. They did not believe in Jesus indeed, but they knew the miracle. Many of the Jews that came to Mary, says St. John, believed on him. But some of them, (which were present, who did not believe in Jesus notwithstanding the miracle) went their ways to the Pharisees. This is the sense of the place. So the Jews in the wilderness did not believe God, but no Jew sure will say, they disputed whether the things done by Moses were miraculous.

Perhaps, says this Jew, they discovered some fragments of the food,

that for four days in the cave, he had subsisted on. There is no ground here for a perhaps. How should a man take any food, who was bound hand and foot with grave clothes? and whose face was bound about with the so often mention'd napkin?

As it is plain, (says the Jew again) from the story in John, that there was a dispute among the by-standers at Lazarus's resurrection, whether it was a real miracle; so it is the opinion of us Jews, which is of the nature of a tradition, that the chief priests and civil magistrates of Bethany, for the better determination of the dispute--required that Jesus should repeat the miracle upon another person, there lately dead and buried. But Jesus declining this test of his power, the whole multitude--questioned the resurrection of Lazarus --And this was one reason of that vehement and universal outcry and demand at Jesus's tryal, for his crucifixion, p. 50, 52.

There is no reason to believe, that this is the opinion of the Jews; but supposing it to be so; it is groundless. And here a present opinion is advanced into a tradition. This tradition is set up against authentic history, writ by witnesses and other well informed persons, who lived near the event. Is that a good cause, that needs such a defence? Will any man of sense and reason engage, in any other case, in so desperate a cause?

There are innumerable proofs in the Evangelists not only that the raising of Lazarus was a real miracle, but also that the Pharisees knew it to be so. Their not putting Lazarus or any other person to death, as an accomplice with Jesus, is demonstration that this and the other miracles of Jesus were known to be real, and not impostures. It is apparent from the trial of Jesus, that the truth of his miracles could not be called in question. If they had, the Evangelists, who have recorded so many charges against Jesus, and so many spiteful,

scurrilous reproaches on him, would not have omitted this.

[20] Exod. xvii. 4.

[21] Numb. xiv. 2-10.

[22] Exod. xix. 4.

[23] Deut. ix. 23, 24.

[24] Psal. lxxviii. 8.

[25] ver. 32.

[26] Exod. xxxii. 22.

[27] Ezek. iii. 5, 5.

[28] Ch. v. 6.

[29] To, ti boulesthe, o houtoi, pros tas peuseis hemhon autkeimesthai; poias dun8ameis meizous, hoson epi humetera hupolepses einai humin phainon... hai en Aigupto kai te eremo e ha ephamen hemeis pepoiekenai ton les..n par umin; ei men de ek..nai zous t..ton kath' umas eisi; pos ouk autothen d..ikiutai, hoti kata to ethos ton to8is meizosin apistesanton osti kai to ton hettonon kataphronein; touto gar upolambanetai peri hon legomen peri lesou; ei de isai legontai peri tou lesou tais anagegramenous hupo Mouseos, ti xenon apentese lao kat' amphoteras tas argos ton progmaton apistounti; arche men gar nomothetias, epi Mouseos en, en he ta hamartemata ton apiston kai ton amar9tanonton humon anagegraptai. arche de nomothesias kai diathekes deuterias kata ton lesoun hemhin gegonenai homologeitai. kai martoreite di hon to lesou apisteite, hoti huioi este en te eremo apistesanton tais theiais epiphaneiais. Origen. contr. Ce1s. l. 2. p. 206, 207.

[30] Isaiah lviii. 1.

[31] Acts vii. 25.

[32] Exod. ii. 13, 14.

[33] Exod. iv 13.

[34] Ezek. iii. 9.

[35] Jerem. i. 18.

[36] Prov. xxiv. 16.

[37] Psal. xxxiv. 9.

[38] Prov. xxix. 27.

[39] Si quis vitiorum omnium inimicus rectum iter vitae coepit insistere, primum propter morum differentiam odium habet. Quis enim potest probare diversa? Petron. Arbiter, laudat. a Grot. ad Matth. x. 22. Kai gar kai misountai, elenchontes auton tas amathias. Lucian. Contemplant. V. 1. p. 357. edit. Amst.

[40] Kai ton aeiston ton Ellenon labon upothesin [Aeistophanes]. andra tois te allois theois philon, kai de kai malista to Apolloni. Ælian. Var. Hist. I. 2. c. 13.

[41] Eugar iste ho Athenaioi, ei ego palai epecheiresa prattein ta politika pragmata, palai an apolein.--kai moi me achthesthe legonti t' alethe. ou gar ostin hostis anthropon sothesetai, oute humin oute allo uudeni plethes gnesios enantioumenos, kai diakoluon polla adika kai paranoma en te poles gigresthai. Plat Apolog. Socrat. p. 31. E.

[42] Animi autem medicina nec tam desiderata sit,--nec tam multis grata et probata, pluribus etiam suspecta invisita. Tusc. Q. I. 3. init.

[43] 2 Kings vi. 11, 12, 13.

[44] Grot. ad ver. 46. Impios hos fuisse necesse est: quod genus hominum ne conspectâ quidem mortuorum resurrectione respiscere solet. Luc. xvi. 31. Omnia enim potius, etiam absurdissima, comminiseuntur quam sua commoda aut hominum gratiam (quam istos venatos apparet) amittant. Et ad ver. 47. Multa signa facit. Adeo excaecati erant invidiâ animi, ut quod argumentum esse debuerat, quo ipsi crederent, eo in ipsius perniciem: incitatrentur.

§. I.

That these three miracles are well circumstanced.

I AM now to shew, that the histories of these three miracles are well circumstanced, and have in them the marks and tokens of credibility.

But I have here very little to say. Scarce any thing can be added to the perspicuity of the Evangelists several relations.

I shall however make two or three general observations, and then go over the particulars of the relation of each miracle.

The general observations are these.

There are in these relations proper circumstances of time and place, and the names and characters of persons. Of the miracle on Jairus's daughter, the time and place are sufficiently specified by St. Mark and St. Luke. It was soon after his crossing the sea of Galilee, after Jesus had cured the men possessed with devils in the country of the Gergesenes, Mark v. 21. And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea. And behold there cometh one of the rulers, &c. Luke viii. 40. And it came to pass, that when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him. And behold there came a man, &c.

The character of the person on whom the miracle was perform'd is particularly described. She is the daughter of a ruler of a synagogue, whose name was Jairus. Matthew says, Ch. ix. 18. There came a certain ruler. Mark, Behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name. Luke: Behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was the ruler of the synagogue. And by Mark, she is said to have been of the age of twelve years.

Of the next miracle, related by Luke only, it is said to have been done

the day after the cure of the centurion's servant at Capernaum. The place is the city of Naim, the person is the only son of a widow there. Luke vii. 11, 12. And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Naim.--Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

Of the last miracle related by St. John only, the person on whom it is said to have been done is, Lazarus, of the town of Bethanie, nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off, brother of Mary and Martha; friend of Jesus and his disciples; and on occasion of the death of Lazarus, Jesus came up from beyond Jordan to Bethanie, and then retired into a city called Ephraim. Moreover it appears to have been done not long before our Saviour's death.

This specifying of time, place and names or characters of persons, is an argument of a real story and not a fiction: for, if it had been a fiction, it might have been easily discovered.

2. These miracles were done at the usual place of the residence of those persons, on whom they were performed; a much greater security; in this case, against cheat and imposture, than if they had been done on travellers, who were strangers in the places, where such things are acted on them.

3. They were all very, public miracles, as is apparent from the relation. It may be difficult to say, where there was the greatest concourse; but I am inclined to think, that the company at Lazarus's resurrection was the fewest; and also, that the company which attended Jesus to the house of Jairus was the greatest concourse of the three.

There were not indeed so many present at speaking the word, when his daughter was restored to life. Nor could the young woman's corpse be brought out of her chamber, and placed before the house, in order to

raise her there before all the people, without ostentation; which is entirely unbecoming the character of Jesus: But all the numerous company then attending our Lord had full evidence of her death, and of her restoration to life; as has been shewn in part already, and may farther appear presently,

§. II.

We will now go over the particulars of the relation of each miracle, from which it will appear, that these persons had been dead, and were raised to life by Jesus.

Jairus, ruler of a synagogue, came to Jesus and worshipped him; or as Mark, and Luke, fell down at his feet, saying, My daughter is even now dead, or, at the point of death, but come and lay thy hand upon her and she shall live.

It is not reasonable to suppose, that a ruler of a synagogue would come to Jesus, and ask him to heal his daughter in so earnest a manner, and with such signs of high esteem and respect, and that before great numbers of people, unless his daughter's case was desperate, and past all hopes of remedy in an ordinary way. It was dishonourable to pay any respect to Jesus. There were few or none of Jairus's character who publickly owned. him for the Christ. His application to him must be very offensive to his brethren. And therefore we may be assured, he had no prospect of help for his daughter any other way but this.

Moreover, the manner, in which he comes to Jesus, shews an uncommon concern and earnestness. While Jesus is speaking in public, he comes and falls down at his feet, and besought him greatly--I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her.

The expressions he uses concerning his daughter represent her to be in the utmost extremity; so that she must be near expiring when he left her.

Upon his earnest entreaty Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples, Matth. and much people followed him and thronged him, Mark. and from St. Luke it appears, that a multitude thronged and pressed

him. From all the three Evangelists, who relate this matter, it is plain, that when Jairus came to Jesus, much people was round about him. The request of Jairus, so noted a person, to come and heal his daughter, would also doubtless increase the number of people that were before gathered together about him. It was impossible for Jesus surrounded by so great a crowd to go in great hast to Jairus's house. Moreover all these three Evangelists are agreed, that as Jesus was going along, there came behind him a woman who had an infirmity of twelve years standing, who touched the hem of his garment and was made whole. St. Matthew assures us also, that Jesus had then some discourse with this woman: St. Mark and St. Luke, that Jesus perceiving virtue to have gone out of him, stood still, looked round him, asked who touched him. The disciples then express their wonder that he should ask such a question. The woman tells her case at length before him and all the people; and Jesus bids her go away in peace, This affair took up considerable time; and Jairus's daughter lay dying when he left her, she may be supposed to be worse by this time, if not quite dead. And accordingly, we are assured by Mark and Luke, that while he yet spake with this woman, there came one or more persons from Jairus's house, . Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the Master any further? This person came from Jairus's house, and very probably had been dispatched away by some of those who attended on the young woman. Would any of his servants or friends come with such a melancholy story to Jairus, that his daughter had died while he was abroad, if they had not known for certain, that she was dead?

By all there things we know, that Jairus's daughter died of sickness that made gradual advances; not of a sudden fit, or fright, or any thing like it. She lay dying, when Jairus left the house. Some persons come to him, and tell him, that she was dead, and disswade him from

troubling the Master any farther; whereas, if she had only had something like a fit, it had been most unreasonable to dissuade Jairus from troubling Jesus any farther.

Let us go on: When Jesus came into the ruler's house, he saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, Matth: he seeth the tumult and them that wept greatly, Mark: And all wept and bewailed her, Luke. Here were friends and public hired musicians, weeping and bewailing the young woman. They knew therefore that she was dead; she had been dead some time, or else these minstrels had not begun their lamentations.

Jesus says: Give place, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth.

Whereupon, say all the three Evangelists, they laughed him to scorn. So sure were these persons that she was dead, and not in a sleep; as they understood Jesus to say.

Jesus puts forth out of the house these public mourners, and other strangers. When the disciples and all the people saw these minstrels come out, they had farther evidence hereby of the death of the young woman.

Jesus having removed all strangers, that the house might be quiet, enters into the room where the young woman lay, taking with him the parents, the father and mother, of the maiden, and three of his own disciples; a sufficient number of persons to attest any fact; yet not so many, but that they might all have a clear and distinct view of the thing: the properest persons of any to be admitted; the father and the mother, as best knowing the young woman's case, the most unwilling of any to admit a deceit, and to take another person, a stranger who had not died instead of their own daughter; three of his own disciples, who were to be witnesses of his works, and who could not have been persuaded to undertake the difficult work of preaching the gospel after their Master's removal without good proof of his divine mission; who

might also assure the other disciples of this thing from their own sight.

These five persons Jesus took along with him; and now the three disciples saw the dead corps of the young woman, whom her parents and friends knew to be dead before.

And he took her by the hand, and said, maid arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway, and walked. Upon Jesus's taking hold of her hand, and bidding her arise, she immediately arose. It was therefore evidently the effect of that power that accompanied his word. She also walked, so that life and strength were at once conveyed. He also commanded to give her meat. And then all who ministred food to her, and saw her eat, were witnesses of her perfect recovery.

They who were present were convinced it was a miracle. Her parents were astonished, says St. Mark; And they were astonished with a great astonishment, says St. Luke, meaning, it is likely, the three disciples as well as the parents. Lastly, St. Matthew says, The fame hereof went abroad into all that land. So that whether the parents, and the three disciples present, were silent, according to Christ's direction, or not, the thing was known; many were perswaded of the miracle, and spoke of it. And indeed, the circumstances of her death were so public, that all who saw her alive again, though they were not in the room at the time she was raised, must know the miracle.

The three disciples present at this transaction were afterwards the most forward and couragious of any in declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, in the midst of dangers; whereas they must have been the most backward of all men in giving him this character, if they had perceived this affair to be any thing but a real miracle.

The next story is that of the widow of Naim's son. Jesus [45] went into a city called Naim, and many of his disciples went with him, that is,

of his followers, beside the twelve, and much other people. Now when he came nigh unto the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out. This meeting of the corpse must have been casual, without any concerted design between Jesus and any people of Naim. For our Lord's life, during the course of his ministry, was very public. This event happened in a very noted part of it. He had but the day before cured the centurion's servant at Capernaum. At this instant there were many of his disciples and other people with him. There could not have been any agreement transacted between him and any at Naim so privately but it must have been known.

The dead man carried out was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. As sure as persons do not carry men forth to burial till they are dead, so sure are we that this was a dead corpse. The person was not one who had no friends to take care of him. He was the only son of a widow, therefore her only support, her husband being dead.

There were much people of the city with her, her neighbours. Could she have concerted a fraud for carrying out her only child, if he had been alive! It is observable, that there were much people of the city with her, which, is no unusual thing at the funeral of a person who leaves behind him so fond a relation as a widow-mother. But had here been any fraud, it is very unlikely that she should have carried out her son with much company of that place. She would have contrived some pretense to excuse their company at this time. Or rather, she would have said nothing of the matter to any one, but carried him out privately to burial as dead, without any previous notice. This, much people of the city with the mother ruins all objections that can be raised.

If it be said: It might be the contrivance of the young man, a subtle youth, without the knowledge of his mother: I answer, that is

impossible. If he had been abroad a strange country, he might have contrived such a thing with his comrades: But it is impossible, he should transact such a matter in his mother's house without her knowledge. Would a widow let her only son be carried to burial out of her own house, without knowing whether he was dead or not!

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. Jesus, before he had seen the corpse, without asking any questions, knowing the power he had of raising the dead to life, bid her forbear weeping; thereby intimating in a modest way, that she should soon see her son, whose death was the cause of her sorrow, restored to life.

And he came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother.

Presently upon the voice of Jesus, commanding him to arise, he sat up, and began to speak. The tokens of life, strength and vigour, appeared immediately upon the command of Jesus. His life was manifestly known hereby to be the effect of the power accompanying the word of Jesus.

This was reckoned a miracle by the numerous company present, before whom it was publickly done; and they reported it to others, for it follows: And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, that a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people: And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

We will now take a view of the last story of this kind. .Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha.--Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest, is sick, Hereby we learn, that Lazarus did not die suddenly; that he was not taken off by a fit, but by a sickness which

made gradual advances. His sisters send to Jesus, He whom thou lovest, is sick; supposing that out of his affection for Lazarus, he would come to Bethany; and hoping also that he might possibly get thither before he was dead. That Lazarus was dangerously sick, is evident not only from the substance of the message, but from their sending a messenger so far, and also from their not coming, either of them, to Christ. It is also hence apparent, that there could be no fraud and contrivance. The matter is not secretly transacted between Lazarus, his sisters, and Jesus, but here is a messenger employed. Moreover; if they had had any thought of such a great design ia hand, as making a pretence of raising up Lazarus, though not dead, some one of these sisters would have come herself. Nothing but real sickness could have kept the sisters at home, and from coming to Jesus. The thought of making a pretence so great a miracle as raising a dead man to life would certainly have obliged one of the nearest relations to come in person to him, who was to do so mighty a work.

Jesus staid some time in the place where he was, after the receiving a message of Lazarus's sickness. He receives no more messages; a sign there was no longer any need of his coming, and that Lazarus was recovered; or else that he was in such a state, that his friends had no longer hopes of any benefit from Jesus.

But at length Jesus resolves to go into Judea, and sets out with his disciples for Bethanie, though it was nigh to Jerusalem , where the Jews had lately sought his life: A sure sign of the consciousness of his innocence and integrity. Had it been thought necessary to concert a pretended miracle between Jesus and these persons; Lazarus inight have come to the country beyond Jordan, and a death and resurrection might have been contrived there. None would have chosen Bethanie for the scene of a pretended miracle at this time; so near the fiercest

enemies, so near the great council of the Jews. If a miracle had been contrived at Bethanie, it would not have been upon an inhabitant of the place, a well known person, but some stranger purposely arrived there by accident, but who should have no occasion to come thither again.

What reward! what sum of money could be sufficient to induce a well-known person, inhabitant of Bethanie, so near Jerusalem, to enter into a combination with Jesus, to be the person, on whom an imposture of this kind should be acted?

Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.--And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Hence it is evident, that Lazarus's death and burial were public things.

Moreover, these sisters did not go to Jesus: Martha does not go, till she hears Jesus is near the house; and Mary stays still at home; all arguments of true sorrow, and that there was no contrivance.

Then saith Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. How natural expressions of sorrow and concern? Did this person, who spoke these words, know her brother was alive still, and only feigned to be dead? Impossible. But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. More words, that demonstrate, they were not in any concerted design of feigning a miracle. After some more discourse between her and Jesus, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying the Master is come and calleth for thee.

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her; saying, she goeth

unto the grave, to weep there. Mary's grief was real, in the opinion of all these persons; who might, one would think, have known it to be counterfeit, if it was so.

Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. She had no more thought of seeing her brother raised presently by Jesus, than her sister Martha had,

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. Here are in this joint weeping of Mary and her friends the tokens of a deep sorrow, arising from the death of Lazarus, and a despair of ever seeing him again, before the resurrection at the last day. Their grief so far exceeded the bounds it ought to have done, when Jesus, who had already given such demonstrations of his power, was with them, that he groaned in spirit and was troubled.

Ver 34. And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus himself first makes the proposal of going toward the sepulchre by asking the question; where they had laid him. There appear no where any intimations that they had hopes of seeing Lazarus alive again.

They go toward the sepulchre, ver. 38. Jesus--cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord by this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days. Need I here remark, that these are the words of one, who knew her brother was dead? She expresses herein such a want of all hopes of seeing her brother alive again, that Jesus reproves her, and says: Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God.

Now with what deliberation and with what solemnity of address to the

Father, does Jesus proceed to this great work, that the minds of all the company might be attentive, and observe?

Ver. 41, 42, 43. Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

There is no occasion for remarks here: He who was dead came out with burial clothes upon him, with all the tokens of a corpse buried by his friends; so bound, that in a natural course he was not able to move; and he was ordered to be unloosed by others, not being able to help himself; that all might see the tokens of life, strength and vigour, by the actions of walking.

Is there any reason to doubt after this view of this relation, whether this was a real miracle; and whether they who were present must not be sure it was so, and report it as such, as John has done?

But we will proceed a little farther. All present are represented as perswaded of it. For many of the Jews, which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him: that is, believed him to be the Messias. But some of them, being wicked malicious men, went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. And the Pharisses considering the greatness of this work, and that such things as these would tend to bring all men, great numbers of people to believe on him, from that day forth, took counsel together to put him to death, ver. 53.

That this thing was no imposture, but a teal miracle, appears finally

from hence; that not long after this, by which time the Pharisses might have enquired into the matter, and got evidence of the imposture, if any could be had Jesus comes publickly to Jerusalem, enters into the temple, teaches there boldly from day to day, spends several days at Jerusalem, and in the neighbourhood, at Bethanie itself the place of this action; and lives all this time in the most public open manner, at the near approach of one of the Jewish principal festivals, when there was a general resort thither from all parts. He celebrates moreover this great feast with his disciples in Jerusalem. And supper being over, he goes into a garden, an usual place of retirement with his disciples: Whither the officers of the high priest come to apprehend him, to whom he voluntarily surrenders himself. Whereupon he is examined and tried before the council, and before Pilate, but not one imposture of any kind is proved or charged upon him.

§. III.

I might conclude here, but I am willing to add a few observations on the propriety and beauty of our Lord's action, and of the Evangelists relations.

St. Matthew informs us, that when the ruler came to Jesus, he was discoursing to the people. While [46] Jesus spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler to him--saying, My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thy hand upon her,--And Jesus arose and followed him. Jesus is always ready, never unwilling or unprepared for the performance of any good work: but immediately hearkens to the call, and proceeds without delay from good and useful discourse to great and useful works.

Not only the disciples, but those also that were hearing him go along with him: And much [47] people followed him, and thronged him. As he is going, a woman in the crowd, who had a long and grievous infirmity, secretly touches him and is healed. Jesus, perceiving that virtue had gone out of him, instead of omitting the notice hereof, and hasting along to Jairus's house, lest the case should become too desperate and beyond his reach; but knowing that all things were in his power, stops, turns him about, and asks, Who touched me?

How sedate in his temper! He is not exalted with the thought of the honour done him by a ruler of a synagogue, who had earnestly besought him to heal his daughter. He is not in any haste to proceed to his house, lest the opportunity of shewing his power in the family of a ruler in Israel should be lost. But stands still, enquires who touched him; hears the poor woman tell her case, and confirms her cure, by bidding her, go in peace.

Jesus was now going to Jairus's house, whose daughter was by this time dead. And there was no way left for him to help this ruler; and perform his request, of laying his hand on his daughter, that she might live, without raising her up from the dead. As he is going to this surprising awful action of giving life to the dead, virtue issues forth from him, through his garment, and heals a long and obstinate disease. How great is Jesus here! how transporting the idea the mind forms of him!

When he came to the ruler's house, [48] and saw the minstrels and others making a noise, he said unto them: Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. What modesty! What humility! They laughed him to scorn; supposing him to speak of natural sleep. Yet he corrects not their mistake. Nothing can draw out from him any word, that has the appearance of boast or vanity.

I shall by and by give a like instance of modesty in St. John's history of the miracle of Lazarus. He who reads such passages as these in these Evangelists, the one originally of so sordid an employment as that of a publican, the other an illiterate fisherman, may be assured, they did not invent, but that they drew some real character: there not being, I believe, another such example of modesty to be found in any author ancient or modern; how well soever skilled in historical facts, or however renowned for greatness of genius and fruitfulness of fancy. The humble modesty is equal to the miracle. Such things as these do they write, in the coolest terms; the plainest manner. They subjoin not a fulsome, or any other set encomium. They have not added a passionate exclamation, or so much as a hint of special observation. But the attentive reader, when he pauses and reflects, finds his heart glowing with an ardent affection and zeal for him of whom they write. Nor can he help being transported with the thought of the unparalleled unaffected honesty and simplicity of the Evangelists.

But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. How simple! and yet how truly great is this narration of St. Matthew!

I cannot leave this story, till I have observed the wondrous propriety of our Lord's action throughout the whole of this affair; which was so public, so diversified with incidents, and so various in its circumstances. So soon as Jairus comes to him, he goes along with him in order to perform the useful work he had desired of him. As he is going, a woman is healed by a secret touch of his garment. He asks, Who touched me? The disciples tell him, .that was a strange question. Still our Lord insists upon it, that some body had touched him. He then looks round him, but points out no person: is only silent, the woman comes, and trembling reveals the whole matter. And what a lustre has this delay of Jesus in the way to Jairus's house thrown upon his character! what a discovery has it made of his knowledge and power! When he hears it reported to the father, that the damsel was dead, he bids him not fear, but believe. When he comes to the house, he directs all things with the highest propriety, by clearing the house of strangers, that it might be quiet; taking in with him, into the room where the young woman lay, the properest persons that could be chosen out of his disciples, and out of the whole multitude that was there.

In the history of raising the young man at Naim it is said: And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier (and they that bare him stood still) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, arise.

On ordinary occasions Jesus could not work a miracle without being first sought to, lest thereby a suspicion should have arisen, that he had chosen objects within his power. But here, the meeting of the corpse being perfectly casual, he had an opportunity of shewing both

his power and his goodness, without being sought to. And he wisely and graciously lays hold of it, as soon as it offers. How glorious is Jesus here! Travelling with his disciples he meets a dead man, carried forth to burial. And he on the sudden, without any previous notice of the case, without any prior preparation, raises the dead man to life.

And he delivered him to his mother. The highest propriety! He was moved by compassion to perform this work, and he delivers the raised person to her, to whom his life was the greatest comfort. Not to say farther, that she would best know, whether it was her son or another, that was restored to her: and that instead of making a show, and calling upon the multitude to admire the action; he barely delivers the young man to his mother, as if he had only performed an ordinary piece of kindness.

In the history of raising Lazarus there are these things very observable. Jesus had declared to his disciples a design of going to Bethanie. Before he sets out from the place where he then was, he says to them: Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Here we have again a like example of humble modesty; with that I observed before in the account of Jairus's daughter. These low soft terms does he use concerning death, and raising to life: the one he terms sleep, the other awaking him out of it; as appears from what follows. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Jesus was obliged to let them understand what he meant. Then said he unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there (to the intent you may believe) nevertheless let us go. When Jesus spoke in the low and ambiguous term of sleep, he added: But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. But having now said plainly, that Lazarus was dead, he does not say: But I go to raise him to life; only intimates in general, that

there would be some new proof given them to confirm their faith; studiously avoiding every thing, that had any appearance of boasting.

The modesty there is rather greater than in the former case. There Jesus had to do with a mixed multitude of strangers. Here he is talking with his own disciples. Yet he forbears to say beforehand in plain terms, that he should raise Lazarus to life.

Herein also is adorable the wisdom, the goodness, the condescension of Jesus, that he who could have healed sick Lazarus, or raised him when dead, without opening his lips, or rising from his seat, went from the place of his retirement beyond Jordan into Judea, where they had lately sought his life: because his raising up Lazarus at Bethanie, the place where he had died, and was well known, in all those circumstances, and before so many persons, as he afterwards did, would be a means of convincing men of the truth of his mission, and of drawing men of that and future ages to the belief of his doctrine, which is so suited to prepare them for eternal life.

There is likewise somewhat very remarkable in the manner of performing this miracle. The great works which our Lord did are in themselves a proof, that he was espoused by God. He accordingly made frequent and public appeals to his works, as certain proofs and evidences, that God was with him. But he did not ordinarily, at the time of doing these works, formally and expressly address himself to God. But now being about to perform in the sight of mortal men so extraordinary and affecting a thing, as the raising up from the grave a man that had been buried four days, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, and adores the Father in an act of praise and thanksgiving; acknowledging the power of doing the works he had already done, and of that he was then going to perform, to have been given him by the Father. Then took they away the stone from the place, where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up his

eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. That is, the works I do declare that thou art with me; but that the people may have the fuller assurance that thou concurrest with me, and that the words I speak are not mine but thine; before I do this great and awful work in their sight, I publickly praise and thank thee. In this way (of an immediate appeal to God) the fullest proof possible was given, that his authority was from the Father, and all objections were answered. See John xiv. 8-11. xvi. 28-30.

Other things might be observed here, but I shall take notice of but one particular more. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. Sure the majesty of the voice well became the work. Herein is some resemblance of that loud command, at the sound of which shall be broken all the bars of hell and the grave, and their doors fly open, and the dead of all orders and of all times shall awake and come forth; some to honour, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. There is a peculiar propriety and decence in this loud and majestic voice, as it had been immediately preceded by a humble and thankful acknowledgement of the Father, who is over all.

F I N I S.

[46] Matth. ix. 18.

[47] Mark v. 24.

[48] Matth. ix. 28.

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