of the Lord; one the ſon of the Creator, and another the Chriſt, from the ſuperceleſtial abodes who deſcended upon Jeſus, the ſon of the Creator, but remained impaſſible, and afterwards fled back into his own ple­roma or fulneſs.” As Irenæus is the moſt ancient au­thor who has written upon this ſubject, many appeals have been made to his authority. The authority of Irenæus is certainly respectable, and we have often re­ferred to his teſtimony with confidence; but we think it neceſſary to make a diſtinction between receiving his teſtimony to a matter of fact, and implicitly adopting his opinion. He does not tell us, that he derived his information from any preceding writer, or indeed from any perſon at all. Nay, he ſeems to have believed that John wrote againſt theſe hereſies by a prophetic ſpirit; for he ſays in another place, chap. xx. 30. “As John the diſciple of our Lord aſſures us, laying, But theſe are written, that ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name; *foreseeing theſe blaſphemous notions that divide the Lord, ſo far as it is in their power.”*

Indeed it ſeems very improbable that an apoſtle ſhould write a hiſtory of our Lord on purpoſe to con­fute the wild opinions of Cerinthus or any other here­tic. Had John conſidered ſuch a confutation neceſſary, it is more likely that he would introduce it into an epiſtle than blend it with the actions of his vene­rable Maſter. But were the opinion of Irenæus well- founded, we ſhould ſurely diſcover ſome traces of it in the goſpel of John; yet except in the introduction, there is nothing that can with the leaſt ſhadow of pro­bability be applied to the opinions of Cerinthus; and few, we preſume, will affirm, that the goſpel of John was compoſed merely for the ſake of the firſt eighteen" verſes.

The intention of John in writing his goſpel was far more extenſive and important than to refute the opi­nions of a few men who were to ſink into oblivion in the courſe of a few centuries. It was evidently (according to the opinion of Clemens of Alexandria) to ſupply the omiſſions of the other evangeliſts: It was to exhibit the evidences of the Chriſtian religion in a diſtinct and perſpicuous manner: It was, as he himſelf in the concluſion of his goſpel aſſures us, to convince his readers, *that Jeſus is the Messiah, the Son oſ God, and that be­lieving they might have life through his name @@\*.* Now it will appear to any perſon who reads this goſpel with attention, that he has executed his plan with aſtoniſhing ability, and has given the moſt circumſtantial and ſatisfactory evidence that Jeſus was the Meſſiah the Son of God. After declaring the pre-exiſtence of Jeſus, he proceeds to deliver the teſtimony of John the Baptiſt, and ſelects ſome of the greateſt miracles of Jeſus to prove his divine million. In the fifth chapter he preſents us with a difcourſe which our Saviour deliver­ed in the temple in the preſence of the Jews, wherein he ſtates in a very diſtinct manner the proofs of his miſſion from, 1. The teſtimony of John; 2. His own miracles; 3. The declaration of the Father at his baptiſm;

**4. The Jewri**ſ**h Scriptures. Indeed the concluſion that** Jeſus was the Meſſiah the Son of God, naturally ariſes from almoſt every miracle which our Saviour is ſaid to have performed and from every diſcourſe that he de­livered. This declaration is very often made by our Saviour himſelf; particularly to the woman of Sama­ria, to Nicodemus, and to the bhnd man whom he had cured.

It muſt be evident to every reader, that John ſtudiouſly paſſes over thoſe paſſages in our Lord’s hiſtory and teaching which had been treated at large by the other evangeliſts, or if he mentions them at all he men­tions them ſlightly. This confirms the teſtimony of ancient writers, that the firſt three goſpels were writ­ten and publiſhed before John compoſed his goſpel. Except the relation of our Saviour’s trial, death, and reſurrection, almoſt every thing which occurs in this book is new.@@ The account of our Saviour’s nativity, of his baptiſm, and of his temptation in the wilderneſs, is omitted; nor is any notice taken of the calling of the twelve apoſtles, or of their miſſion during our Sa­viour’s life. It is remarkable, too, that not one pa­rable is mentioned, nor any of the predictions relating to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. All the miracles re­corded by the other evangeliſts are paſſed over, except the miraculous ſupply of proviſion, by which five thouſand were fed: and it is probable that this miracle was related for the ſake of the diſcourſe to which it gave birth. The other miracles which are mentioned are few in number, but in general they are minutely de­tailed. They conſiſt of theſe: the turning of water into wine at Cana; the cure oſ the diſeaſed man at the pool of Betheſda; the cure of the man that had been blind from his birth; the reſtoring of Lazarus to life; and the healing of the ſervant’s ear which Peter had cut off. But valuable would this goſpel be, though it had only recorded the conſolation of Jeſus to his diſciples previous to his departure; which exhibits a moſt admirable view of our Saviour’s character, of his care and tender regard for his diſciples. Having opened every ſource of comfort to their deſponding minds; exhorted them to mutual love, and to the obedience of his Father’s precepts; having warned them of the im­pending dangers and ſorrows—our Saviour concludes with a prayer, in the true ſpirit of piety and benevo­lence; ardent without enthuſiaſm, ſober and rational without lukewarmneſs.

The time in which this goſpel was written has not been fixed with any preciſion. Irenæus informs us, that it was written at Epheſus, but leaves us to conjecture wſhether it was written before or after John’s return from Patmos. He was baniſhed to Patmos by Domi­tian, who reigned 15 years, and according to the beſt computation died A. D. 96. The persecution which occaſioned the exile of John commenced in the 14th year of Domitian’s reign. If John wrote his goſpel after his return to Epheſus, which is affirmed by Epiphanius to have been the caſe, we may fix the date of it about the year 97 @@(f).

This goſpel is evidently the production of an illite-

@@@(F) It has been argued ſrom a paſſage in this goſpel, that it muſt have been written before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. In ſpeaking of the pool of Bethſaida, John uſes the preſent tenſe; His words are, “There *is* **at**

**@@@[m]\* John xv. 31.**

**@@@[mu] Dr. Campbell's Preface to John's Gospel.**