serent languages were amazed, is what we ſhould naturally ſuppoſe ; but that a ſingle individual among them remained unconvinced, is astoniſhing : for the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost is one of the most palpable miracles that was ever wrought. It is likewiſe one of the beſt authen­ticated miracles ; for the book entitled *the Acts of the Apoſ­tles* was written not more than 30 years after the event took place (ſee Scripture, n⁰ 168.) ; and it is not con­ceivable that, within ſo ſhort a period, St Luke, or any man of common ſenſe, would have appealed for the truth of what he recorded to ſo many inveterate enemies of the Chriſtian name, had he not been aware that the miracu­lous gift of tongues was a fact: incontrovertible. We all know how deſirous the Jewiſh rulers were to stop the progreſs of the faith, by whatever means, whether of fraud or force ; but it this miracle was not really performed, they had now an opportunity of doing it effectually by means to which truth and honour would give their approbation. Thouſands muſt have been alive in the city of Jeruſalem who were men and women at the time when the apoſtles were said to have been thus ſuddenly inſpired with the tongues of the Parthians, Medes, and Elanites, &c. ; and as theſe foreigners were themſelves either Jews by deſcent, or at leaſt proſelytes to the Jewiſh religion, ſurely the chief- prieſts would have found multitudes ready, both at home and abroad, to contradict this confident appeal of St Luke’s, if contradiction had been poſſible. We read however of no objection whatever being made to this miracle. Some of the audience, indeed, when the apoſtles addressed people of ſo many nations in all their respective languages, not underſtanding what was ſaid, and taking it for jargon which had no meaning, concluded, not unnaturally, that the ſpeakers were full of new wine, and mocked them for being drunk ſo early in the day ; but this is a circumſtance which, ſo far from rendering the miracle doubtful, adds much to the credit of the hiſtorian, as it would hardly have occur­red to the writer of a narrative wholly falſe, and would certainly not have been mentioned, had he known that the apoſtles really attempted to impoſe upon the multitude un­meaning founds for foreign languages.

As it is thus certain that the apoſtles were miraculouſly furniſhed with the gift of tongues, ſo the elegance and propriety of that miracle to atteſt the real deſcent of the Spirit of truth, who was to teach them all things, and en­due them with power from on high to convert the nations, can never be enough admired by the pious Chriſtian ; for words being the vehicle of knowledge, an ability to ſpeak the different languages of the earth was abſolutely neceſ­ſary to enable thoſe who had been originally fiſhermen to go into all the world and preach the goſpel to every crea­ture. Yet there have been writers@@\*, who, though unable to call in queſtion the reality of the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecoſt, have contended, that it was a gift “ not laſting, but inſtantaneous and tranſitory ; not beſtowed upon them for the constant work of the miniſtry, but as an occaſional sign only, that the perſon endowed with it was a choſen miniſter of the goſpel ; which ſign, according to them, ceaſed and totally vaniſhed as ſoon as it had ſerved that particular purpoſe.” The chief argument upon which this opinion is attempted to be built, is drawn from the ſcripture Greek, which is said to be “ utterly rude and barbarous, and abounding with every fault which can poſsibly deform a language ; whereas we ſhould naturally ex­pect to find an inſpired language pure, clear, noble, and affecting, even beyond the force of common ſpeech ; ſince nothing can come from God but what is perfect in its kind. In ſhort, we ſhould expect, says the objecter, the purity of Plato and the eloquence of Cicero@@\*."

In reply to this objection, it has been well observed @@\*, that it ſuppoſes what is called the purity, elegance, and ſublimity, of language, to be ſomething natural and essential to human ſpeech, and inherent in the conſtitution of things. “ But the matter is far otherwiſe. Theſe qualities are accidental and arbitrary, and depend on cuſtom and faſhion; modes of humanity as various as the differing climes of the earth ; and as inconſtant as the tempers, genius, and circumſtances, of its inhabitants. For what is *purity,* but the uſe of ſuch terms and their combinations as the caprice of a writer or ſpeaker of authority hath preferred to their equals ? what is *elegance,* but ſuch a turn of idiom as a faſhionable fancy hath brought into credit ? and what is *ſublimity,* but the application of ſuch images as arbitrary and caſual connections, rather than their own native grandeur, have dignified and ennobled ? The conſequence of this is, that the mode of compoſition which is a model of perfection to one nation or people, has always appeared either extravagant or mean to another. Asiatic and Indian eloquence was eſteemed hyperbolical and unnatural by the Greeks and Romans, and is ſo eſteemed by us ; whilſt the Greek and Roman eloquence in its turn appeared cold and inſipid to the warm inhabitants of the eaſt ; and ours would appear perhaps ſtill colder. But the New Teſtament wars deſigned for the rule of life to all mankind. Such a rule required inſpiration ; and inſpiration, ſay the objecters, implies the moſt perfect eloquence. What human model them was the Holy Ghoſt to follow ? for a human model it muſt have been, becauſe there was no other ; and if there had, no other would have anſwered the purpoſe, which was tea make a due impreſſion on the mind and affections. Should the eaſtern eloquence have been employed ? But it would have been too ſwelling and animated for the west. Should the weſtern ? This would have been too ſtill and inactive for the eaſt. Or ſuppoſe us only solicitous for what we beſt underſtand ; which ſpecies of this latter genus ſhould the ſacred writers have preferred ? The dissolute ſoftneſs off the Asiatic Greeks, or the dry conciſeneſs of the Spartans? The flowing exuberances of Attic eloquence, or the graver ſeverity of the Roman ?

“But are there not some general principles of eloquence in common to all the ſpecies ? There are. Why then ſhould not theſe have been employed to credit the apoſtolic inſpira­tion ? Because the end even of theſe (replies our author) is to miſlead reaſon, and inflame the paſſions ; which beingabhorrent to the truth and purity of our holy religion, were very fitly rejected by the inſpired penman. Beſides, it might eaſily be known to have been the purpoſe of Provi­dence, though ſuch purpoſe had not been expreſsly decla­red, that the goſpel ſhould bear all poſſible marks of its divine original, as well in the courſe of its progreſs as in the circumſtances of its promulgation. To this end, the human instruments of its conveyance were mean and illite­rate, and choſen from among the loweſt of the people, that when the world ſaw itſelf converted by the foolishness *of preaching,* as the only learned apoſtle thinks fit to call it, unbelievers might have no pretence to aſcribe its ſucceſs to the parts, or ſtations, or authority, of the preachers. Now had the language inſpired into theſe illiterate men been the eloquence of Plato or Tully, Providence would have appeared to counteract its own meaſures, and to defeat the purpoſe beſt calculated to advance its glory. But God is wise, though man is a fool. The courſe of Providence was uniform and constant : It not only choſe the weakeſt inſtruments, but carefully kept out of their hands that powerful weapon of words which their adverſaries might so eaſily have wreſted to the diſhonour of the goſpel. Common ſenſe tells us, that the ſtyle oſ an univerſal law ſhould re­-

@@@[m]\* Dr Middleton and Lord Shaftesbury.

@@@[m]\* Middleton's Essay on the Gift of Tongues.

@@@[m]\* Warburton's Doctrine of Grace.