

which appear to be immediately connected in the narrative, happened at times and places considerably remote. One would think, on reading the close of Luke's testimony, that Jesus ascended to heaven the evening of the same day on which he arose from the grave, but the same historian tells us elsewhere, that he did not ascend till nearly six weeks afterwards. We shall leave those hints to the reader, and conclude with a few remarks on the *whole plan* of these historians.

Their plan, and its execution, are alike simple, beautiful, and supernatural. Viewing their narratives as a whole, and taking them together, they furnish a combination of evidence, sublime and majestic as the heavens, and as irrefragable as that which assigns to the Almighty the mechanism of the universe. The shafts of the conceited sceptic, aimed at these impregnable bulwarks of our faith, fall at his own feet, harmless as the school-boy's arrows aimed at the extinction of the sun.

With what skill, simplicity, and beauty, is the nativity of this long-expected child introduced. His birth appears, for a time, to engross the undivided attention of all the pure and high intelligences in heaven and earth. God's heavenly messengers are ever on the wing with some important errand, relative to the care, safety, and management of this well-beloved Son. The eastern magi and the shepherds of Bethlehem, alike admonished from the skies, are found hasting to the cottage; alike importunate in their inquiries, and equally devout in presenting their acknowledgments at the feet of this wonderful stranger. Both Herod and his nobles are troubled at the tidings of his birth, and alike apprehensive of a revolution in Judea, fatal to their ambitious expectations. The wakeful thoughts and the night visions of those honoured females, the relatives and acquaintances of the favourite virgin, are all engrossed in scenes in which this high-born infant is exhibited as full of grace and truth. The prophets and prophetesses in Jerusalem and Judea, in all their interviews, think and speak of nothing else. Some oracle concerning him, or some expression from his infant lips, are the only subjects that fill their hearts, to the exclusion of all and every thing besides.

Thus they introduce him. Through all the meanderings of the seed of Abraham for forty-two generations they trace his ancestry, to the exact accomplishment of every syllable announced to the father of the faithful, or repeated to any of his illustrious descendants. Next they present the last of Israel's prophets, who came to consummate the Jewish line, as so much engrossed in preparing his way as to neglect ordinary attention to food and raiment, the chief concern of almost all the human race. They open the heaven of all the ancient Prophets, and pour upon his head a continued stream of prophetic light, illuminating by its reflection, every step of his journey from the cradle to the cross; from the manger to the sepulchre of a rich nobleman, a senator of the commonwealth of Israel.

But here they do not stop. They narrate other attestations given of him still more illustrious. While John the Immerser, the favour of God to Israel, is loudly proclaiming, to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, Jesus, as the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world, and putting an end to sin-offerings;—soon as Jesus emerges from the Jordan, soon as he is born of water, the voice of his Father is heard. He bows