

ion of my argument, that I wished to weaken the evidences for their antiquity.*

I attended divine service on Sunday. Their Liturgy is that which was formerly used in the Churches of the Patriarch of Antioch. During the prayers, there were intervals of silence: the priest praying in a low voice, and every man praying for himself. These silent intervals add much to the solemnity and appearance of devotion. They use incense in the Churches; it grows in the woods around them, and contributes much, they say, to health, and to the warmth and comfort of the Church, during the cold and rainy season of the year. At the conclusion of the service, a ceremony takes place which pleased me much. The Priest (or Bishop, if he be present) comes forward, and all the people pass by him as they go out, receiving his benediction individually. If any man has been guilty of any immorality, he does not receive the blessing; and this, in their primitive and patriarchal state, is accounted a severe punishment. Instruction

* "You concede," said the Syrian, "that our Saviour spoke in our language; how do you know it?" From Syriac expressions in the Greek Gospels, it appears that he spoke Syriac when he walked by the way (Ephphatha), and when he sat in the house (Talitha Cumi), and when he was upon the cross (Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani). The Syrians were pleased when they heard that we had got their language in our English books. The priest observed that these last were not the exact words, but 'Ail, Ail, lamono sabachthani.' I answered, that the word must have been very like *Eli*, for one said 'He calleth *Elias*.' "True," said he, "but yet it was more likely to be *Ail, Ail* (pronounced *Il* or *Eel*) for *Hil* or *Hila*, is Syriac for Vinegar; and one thought he wanted Vinegar, and filled immediately a sponge with it. But our Saviour did not want the medicated drink, as they supposed. But," added he, "if the parables and discourses of our Lord were in Syriac, and the people of Jerusalem commonly used it, is it not marvellous that his Disciples did not record his parables in the Syriac Language; but that they should have recourse to the Greek?" I observed that the Gospel was for the world, and the Greek was then the universal language, and that Providence selected it. "It is very probable," said he, "that the Gospels were translated immediately afterwards into Greek, as into other languages; but surely there must have been a Syriac original. The poor people of Jerusalem could not read Greek. Had they no record in their hands, of Christ's parables which they had heard, and of his sublime discourses recorded by St. John, after his ascension?" I acknowledge that it was believed by some of the learned that the Gospel of St. Matthew was written originally in Syriac. "So you admit St. Matthew? You may as well admit St. John. Or was one Gospel enough for the inhabitants of Jerusalem?" I contended that there were many Greek and Roman words in their own Syriac Gospels. "True," said he, "Roman words for Roman things." They wished however to see some of these words. The discussion afterwards, particularly in reference to the Gospel of St. Luke, was more in my favour.