

A
COURSE OF LECTURES.

PART V.

A
COURSE OF LECTURES,
CONTAINING
A DESCRIPTION AND SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT
OF THE
SEVERAL BRANCHES OF DIVINITY :
ACCOMPANIED WITH
AN ACCOUNT BOTH OF THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORS,
AND OF THE PROGRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN MADE AT
DIFFERENT PERIODS,
IN
Theological Learning.

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PART V.
On the Authenticity of the New Testament.

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LECTURE XXIII.

THE system of Theology adopted in these Lectures consists of seven branches ; namely, the Criticism of the Bible, the Interpretation of the Bible, the Authenticity and Credibility of the Bible, the Divine Authority of the Bible, the Inspiration of the Bible, the Doctrines of the Bible, and the History of those Doctrines with Ecclesiastical History in general.

The two first Branches, having been already considered, we now enter on the third Branch, which relates to the Authenticity and Credibility of the Bible. And it is hardly possible, that these important questions should be examined at a period more seasonable than the present, when every effort has been made to shake the fabric of Christianity to its very basis. If it could be proved, that the Bible were not authentic, the foundation itself would be destroyed, on which we build our faith in this life, and our hopes of

everlasting happiness in the life to come. If, for instance, it were true, that the Holy Gospels were not written by the Evangelists to whom they are ascribed, or that the Epistles, which we believe to be St. Paul's, were the fabrications of an impostor, who assumed the name of the Apostle, though it would still be an unfair conclusion, that Christianity itself was a fraud (since we cannot argue from the doubtfulness of a record to the falsity of the things recorded), we should yet be destitute of *positive* proof, and unable to afford the evidence required, that our religion was given by divine revelation. It is a matter therefore of the highest importance to establish the authenticity of the sacred writings. And this importance will appear still more conspicuous, when we have shewn, how closely the proof of their authenticity is connected with the proof of their divine authority, or with the evidences for our Holy Religion.

But before we enter on this proof, it is necessary to give a *definition* of the term 'Authentic.' For as the term is used by different writers in different senses, it is impossible that any one should argue with perspicuity on this subject, unless he previously explains what he *himself* understands by it. Some writers use the term 'authentic' in so extensive a sense, as to make it include both

the question of authorship, and the question of fidelity and truth. In this acceptation of the term, a book, though genuine if written by the person to whom it is ascribed, is not authentic, unless the accounts, which it contains are worthy of credit. With this distinction between the terms 'authentic' and 'genuine,' great caution is necessary to prevent confusion in the conduct of the argument. For with this distinction the proof of genuineness is one thing, the proof of authenticity is another. And though we may *often* argue from the former to the latter, we cannot *always* do it. There are many books, both ancient and modern, of which no doubt is entertained in regard to the authorship, but of which doubts may be entertained in regard to the question, whether the authors have related what is worthy of credit. But it too frequently happens, that writers who thus distinguish authenticity from genuineness, overlook the distinction in their mode of reasoning: and the very circumstance, that other writers have used the terms as synonymous, has led them more easily to the conclusion, that when they have conducted the proof of genuineness, they have furnished also a proof of authenticity, even in *their* sense of the term. It is true, that when the question relates to the sacred writings, a proof of the former affords a sure foundation, on

which we may establish the truth of the latter. But the inference is not immediate, unless we take for *granted*, what it is our previous duty to *prove*. Another inconvenience arising from such an application of the terms 'genuine' and 'authentic,' is, that, though they are thus *distinguished*, they do not each for itself denote a separate quality, but are so far alike, that the latter *includes* the former, while it includes also an additional quality.

These inconveniences will be avoided, by using the term 'authentic' in the confined sense, in which many English, and most foreign writers use it; and by expressing the quality, otherwise *included* in the term 'authentic,' by a term, which applies to that quality only. In this manner all ambiguity will be avoided, and the argument may be conducted with precision. Instead therefore of employing the terms 'genuineness' and 'authenticity', I employ the terms 'authenticity' and 'credibility'; the former to denote, that a book was written by the author, to whom it is ascribed, the latter to denote, that the contents of the book are justly entitled to our assent.

There is one more point, on which the use and application of these terms requires explanation.

If the term 'authenticity' is taken in a sense, which distinguishes it from that of credibility, why, it may be asked, have both of these subjects been referred to the same branch of Divinity? The answer is, that though they are distinct in *themselves*, and each of them requires a separate proof, they are so connected, when the question relates to the sacred writings, that they may justly be considered as parts of the same division, and forming together only one branch of Divinity.

The first inquiry must of course be directed to the *authenticity* of the sacred writings : for till this point has been determined, we cannot enter on the inquiry about their *credibility*. If they were forgeries, the ground on which we assent to them, would not exist. We must likewise separate the proof of authenticity in reference to the Old Testament, from the proof of authenticity in reference to the New: for the evidence and the arguments, which are applicable to the former, are different from the evidence and the arguments, which are applicable to the latter. The Old Testament, from the priority of its composition, would on that account take precedence of the New. But there are other reasons, which in the present instance make it advisable to *depart* from the order of time. For not only is the authenticity of the

New Testament a matter of *primary* importance to every Christian, but the proof of it may be conducted independently of the Old Testament, whereas the authenticity of the Old Testament derives at least a part of its support from the authenticity of the New. The authenticity therefore of the New Testament shall be the subject of our investigation at the present season.

In the conduct of this inquiry we must always bear in mind, that we are concerned with a question, which is purely *historical*. The inquiry is, whether the books of the New Testament were written in the first century, and by the authors, to whom they are ascribed, or whether (as many have asserted) those books are the fabrications of a later age, and destitute of claim to the authorship assigned to them. This question must be examined on the same principles, and in the same manner, as we would examine the claims of any other ancient writings. To those, who question the fact, that the Epistles ascribed to St. Paul were written by that Apostle, we must apply the same kind of reasoning, which we would apply to those, who might choose to doubt whether Cicero or Pliny were the authors of the Epistles ascribed to them. That the Epistles of St. Paul were written by inspiration, which those of Cicero

and Pliny were not, makes no difference in the inquiry, which is *now* before us. We must prove their authenticity, before we can prove their inspiration. Their authenticity is the ground-work, on which alone we can rest our arguments for inspiration: till the former question is determined, the latter cannot be entertained. If the Epistles, ascribed to St. Paul, were forgeries in his name, all claim to inspiration would at once be destroyed. Though it is certain therefore, as will be shewn hereafter, that St. Paul was divinely inspired, we should argue in a circle, if while the question was pending, whether the Epistles *ascribed* to St. Paul, were written by him or not, we took for granted that they were written by inspiration, and *thence* inferred that they were authentic. We must be careful in our defences of Christianity to admit no proposition as a link in the chain of our reasoning, if that proposition is itself dependent on the proposition, which we are endeavouring to maintain. We must remember, that such defences are conducted, not merely for the purpose of confirming the faith of those who have never doubted, but for the purpose of confuting unbelievers. If therefore we at any time betray a flaw in our reasoning, if we are ever guilty of a *petitio principii*, if we attempt to prove premises by inferences, as well as inferences by premises,

our adversaries will not fail to detect our want of precision, and will argue from the weakness of the defence to the instability of the thing defended. Thus the cause of Christianity may be injured by the endeavours, which are made for its support.

On the other hand, if, when the question relates to authenticity, we consider the sacred writers in the same light, in which we should consider any other writers, we not only lose nothing in the strength of our arguments, but in the end are considerable gainers. If we treat them in the first instance merely as human writers, we do not therefore abandon their claim to be considered as divine. We merely *defer* the use which we would make of it, and defer it for the purpose of rendering the future use of it more secure.

That the proof of authenticity, conducted on these principles, will produce all the advantages, which we can desire to obtain, may be shewn by a single example. In the second chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the author of it writes as follows (ver. 4.), "My speech and my
" preaching was not with the enticing words of
" man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit

“and of power.” And in what *manner* he afforded this demonstration of the spirit and of power, appears from what he further says to the Corinthians in the twelfth chapter of the same Epistle. He there describes the diversities of gifts, which the Holy Spirit had conferred on the Church of Corinth. ‘There are diversities of gifts (says the author of this Epistle) but the same Spirit.’—‘To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles.’—Now, whatever attempts may be made to explain the other qualities imparted to the Corinthians by ascribing them to the *ordinary* operations of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to explain in that manner the power of working miracles. The laws of nature cannot be suspended, as they must be at the working of a miracle, without the *special* interference of that Being, who gave those laws, and who alone can controul them. Now let us suppose, for the sake of argument, though the proof of it is yet to come, that this Epistle was written by St. Paul; and let the supposition be made merely as we would make it of an Epistle ascribed to Cicero or to Pliny, without any

reference to its inspiration. This simple fact, which is assumed, not as a *petitio principii*, but merely to see what will follow from it when it is proved, immediately suggests the following question. Is it *possible*, that St. Paul should have written to the Corinthians in the manner and in the words, which have been just quoted, if, during his residence among them, he had neither given proofs of his own power of working miracles, nor imparted, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, that power to others. An impostor may boast in one place of the wonders which he has done in another : and, if the places are distant, he may possibly escape detection. But that the *same* persons should be reminded of miracles performed among them, if no miracles had been wrought, is too much either for knavery to attempt, or for credulity to admit. If then the Corinthians, among whom St. Paul, at his first visit, resided more than eighteen months (Acts xviii.) had never witnessed either miracles performed by the Apostle himself, or supernatural gifts imparted to others, and yet after his departure to Ephesus, had received an Epistle, as coming from St. Paul, and referring to miracles, which they knew had never been performed, they could not have *believed* that the Epistle was written by St. Paul, and they would have *rejected* it as an attempt to

impose on them. But they did *not* reject this Epistle: they accepted and held it in honour. They accepted and held in honour a second Epistle from the same author, in which he likewise claims divine authority (ch. x. 8.): they received with veneration St. Paul himself, a second, and a third time. They admitted therefore the *miracles* to which St. Paul alluded, by admitting the Epistle, which *contained* the reference.

Having thus shewn the *importance* of our present inquiry, I will next consider the *kind of evidence* to be produced, and the mode, in which such evidence should be *arranged*. As we are now concerned with an historical question, for which historical evidence can be produced, the production of that historical evidence is the *first* thing, we should undertake. In cases, where we have *no* records, as evidence for historical facts, their existence must be established by the process of induction, or by shewing that certain effects, which are acknowledged, could not have been produced but by the operation of certain assigned causes. And such indirect proof may be strong enough for the purpose. But where historical evidence *can* be alleged, it is always adviseable to begin with it. Now the historical evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament is no other than the

external evidence, consisting of the testimony of ancient writers, and the existence of certain early translations. The internal evidence, which is drawn from the *contents* of the books, will then properly follow in confirmation of the external evidence. It is true, that this order is frequently inverted, and that the internal evidence is first produced as a preparation for the reception of the external. But where external evidence is so decisive as in the present case, and where no preparation is *wanted* for its reception, we should place it in the foremost rank.

In the disposition of the several parts, of which external evidence consists, I have ventured to depart from the *general* practice: and for this departure it is necessary, that I should offer a particular explanation and apology. In quoting ecclesiastical writers, as evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament, it has been usual to begin with the Apostolic Fathers, or the Fathers, who were contemporary with the Apostles; and thence to proceed to the Fathers of the second, third, fourth, and as many following centuries, as appeared expedient for the purpose. But there is a disadvantage attending this chronological arrangement, inasmuch as it exposes the proof of authenticity to various objections at the

very outset. Barnabas and Hermas do *not* afford the testimony for which they are quoted. Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp were certainly acquainted with *some* books of the New Testament; but they have been alleged as evidence for other books, where the quotations produced for that purpose are really insufficient. We cannot indeed *expect* to find in their writings such ample testimony to the books of the New Testament, as we find in the works of later writers. And it is not so much their silence, that is injurious to the proof, because that silence may be easily explained: it is the desire of making them say more, than the circumstances, under which they wrote, could allow them to say.

The silence of the Apostolic Fathers in regard to many, or even most of the books, which compose the New Testament, may be explained in such a manner, as to obviate the inference, that such books did not exist in the first century, because the Apostolic Fathers have not quoted from them. In the first place, the collection of all those various books, which compose the New Testament, and the formation of them into a single work, was an operation, which required a much longer period, than is commonly supposed. The four Gospels, though ultimately

designed for general use, were written in such different and distant places, that many years must have elapsed before the possessors of one Gospel became generally possessed of the other three. The Epistles of St. Paul were addressed to various communities scattered throughout Asia, Greece, and Italy : and it could not have been the work of a few years to collect all these Epistles into a single volume. But beside the difficulties arising from the distance between the places where the originals were preserved, the multiplication of copies, even when the books were once collected, was much less practicable, than it has been since rendered by the art of printing. The purchase of manuscripts was attended with expence : and the primitive Christians were in general poor. Under all these circumstances it was not to be *expected*, that copies of all the various books, which compose the New Testament, should have been already in the hands of the Apostolic Fathers. And there is an additional consideration, which will account for their silence, even in regard to books, which they probably *did* possess. The most voluminous writers are commonly in possession of many books, which they never quote, because it is both unnecessary and unusual to quote a work, unless the subject, on which the author is writing, affords *occasion* for it. We

cannot therefore conclude, that because a writer of the first century has not quoted a particular book of the New Testament, the book was wholly unknown to him. Still less can we argue from his silence, that the book did not *exist*, when he wrote. And the objections to the authenticity of the New Testament, which have been drawn from the silence of the Apostolic Fathers, are certainly devoid of foundation.

But then it must be admitted on the other hand, that their *positive* evidence applies only to a *small* portion of a work, where positive evidence is wanted for the authenticity of the whole. If we *begin* therefore our proof of authenticity with quotations from the Apostolic Fathers, we subject ourselves to difficulties, which are less easily overcome at the commencement, than they are at the close of our researches. The production either of dubious, or of scanty evidence, before it is known that unquestionable and ample evidence may be afforded, not only exposes us to the attacks of our adversaries before we are prepared for our defence, but is apt to injure the cause even with the well-disposed, by exciting prejudices which would not otherwise be entertained. The difference between ancient and modern times is too easily overlooked. As we are enabled at present to

multiply copies of books without limit, and no one who *now* writes on a subject of Divinity can be destitute of a Bible entire in all its parts, we are exposed to the danger of forgetting that the same facility did not exist in the early ages of Christianity. But if this difference is overlooked, the inference may be drawn, that at least the *Fathers* of the Church must have possessed whatever books of the New Testament existed in their days. And since Ignatius and Polycarp, if not the other Apostolic Fathers, unquestionably wrote at a period, when all the books of the New Testament must have been written, if written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, the next inference is, that the books, which they have *not* quoted were the fabrications of a later age. Such are the consequences of making the works of the Apostolic Fathers a prominent feature in the proof of authenticity.

But there is another reason for not beginning with their works, which is no less cogent, than the preceding. When we appeal to one set of writings, for the purpose of establishing the authenticity of another, we should take especial care, that the writings to which we make our *first* appeal, should themselves be free from all suspicion. But the writings ascribed to the


Apostolic Fathers, and especially the Epistles, which bear the name of Ignatius, have descended to us in a very questionable shape. And, though we should probably go too far, if we asserted, as some critics have done, that they are *entirely* spurious, this at least is certain, that if they came originally from the hands of those Fathers, their writings have been so interpolated with passages, which from the nature of the subjects could not have existed in the first century, as to cast a shade over that which may probably be genuine. At the same time it must be admitted, that if those writings have been only interpolated, the interpolations appear to have been made for a different purpose, than that of obtaining evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament. The passages therefore, which have reference to books of the New Testament, are on that account *less* liable to suspicion. But still they are not *exempt* from it. And even if every doubt were removed, even if it were certain, that *all* the passages were genuine, which have been quoted from the Apostolic Fathers, as evidence for the New Testament, they would still fail of producing the effect intended. For most of them are really of that description, that the authors might have written them, though they had never seen the book, or books, to which they are supposed to allude. If then we make

their writings the *foundation* of our proof, we expose ourselves to the charge of building on a foundation of sand. Of this weakness our adversaries have taken advantage: and nothing has so contributed to impair the proof, that the New Testament is authentic, as the importance, which has been falsely attached to the works of the Apostolic Fathers.

For these reasons I propose to invert the order, which has been hitherto observed in conducting the proof of authenticity. I propose to begin with the Fathers of the fourth century, and to *ascend*, through the third and the second, to the first century. Writers of the fifth and following centuries may be omitted as unnecessary for our present purpose. But among the writers of the fourth century, there are some, and especially Eusebius and Jerom, whose testimony is of great importance. The nearer we approach to the age of the Apostles, of so much the greater value will be the evidence produced, when such evidence is clear and decisive. And we shall find in the progress of our inquiry, that we can ascend with such decisive evidence to an age so *near* to the apostolic age, that where the chain of evidence will cease, its place can be supplied by argument; by argument which will incontestably prove, that

there was only one short period, in which a forgery was *possible*, and, that if during that period a forgery had been attempted, it could not have escaped detection.

Such is the kind of proof, which I propose to offer, as the external evidence for the New Testament, and to which I shall proceed in the following Lecture.



LECTURE XXIV.

AGREEABLY to the plan proposed in the preceding Lecture for the arrangement of the evidence in favour of the New Testament, I begin with the ✓ testimony of Jerom, who was born about the middle of the fourth century, and was ordained Presbyter at Antioch in the year 378. It is well known that Jerom was the most learned of the Latin Fathers: and he was peculiarly qualified, not only by his profound erudition, but by his extensive researches, his various travels, and his long residence in Palestine, to investigate the authenticity of the several books, which compose the New Testament. Of these books he has given a catalogue in his Epistle to Paulinus, on the study of the Holy Scriptures*. He begins his catalogue (which is nearly at the close of the Epistle) with the four Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The Acts of the Apostles he mentions as another

* Tom. IV. Part II. col. 568. ed. Martianay.

work of St. Luke, whose praise is in the Gospel. He says that St. Paul wrote Epistles to seven Churches: these seven Churches are such as we find in the titles of the Epistles of St. Paul contained in our present copies of the New Testament. Of the Epistle to the Hebrews he observes, that most persons (namely in the Latin Church) did not consider it as an Epistle of St. Paul: but we shall presently see that his own opinion was different. He further states, that St. Paul wrote to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The seven Catholic Epistles he ascribes to James, Peter, John, and Jude, and expressly says, that they were Apostles. And he concludes his catalogue with the remark, that the Revelation of John has as many mysteries as words.

This Catalogue accords with the books, which we receive at present, with the exception of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The rejection of this Epistle is a fact, which Jerom has not attempted to conceal: and therefore as he confidently speaks of all the other books of the New Testament, his testimony is so much the more in their favour. As we are now concerned with a statement of facts, it would be foreign to our present purpose to inquire into the causes, which induced the Latin Church to reject the Epistle to the He-

brews. But whatever those causes may have been, they did not warrant the rejection of it, in the estimation of Jerom himself. For in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers, or, as it is frequently called, his Treatise of illustrious men, and in the article relating to St. Paul, Jerom expressly asserts that St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. And in his Epistle to Dardanus *, alluding to the then-prevailing custom in the Latin Church to reject the Epistle to the Hebrews, he adds, "But we receive it;" and he assigns this powerful reason, which it is necessary to give in his own words, '*nequaquam hujus temporis consuetudinem, sed veterum scriptorum auctoritatem sequentes.*'— To his Catalogue of the books of the New Testament may be added his revision of the Latin Version, which revision contained the same books as we have at present.

From Jerom in the Latin Church we may ascend to Gregory of Nazianzum in the Greek Church, who was born about the time of holding the celebrated council of Nicæa. He has given a catalogue, which is entitled, 'Of the genuine books of inspired Scripture,' and contained in his thirty-third poem †. In this Catalogue he

* Tom. II. col. 608.

† Greg. Nazianz. Op. Tom. II. p. 98. Ed. Paris. 1630.

enumerates the four Gospels, which he ascribes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the Acts of the Apostles; fourteen Epistles of St. Paul, including therefore the Epistle to the Hebrews; seven Catholic Epistles, namely, one Epistle of James, two Epistles of Peter, three Epistles of John, and one Epistle of Jude. These are the books, which according to Gregory's Catalogue constituted the New Testament. The only book, which is not contained in it, is the book of Revelation. But this omission may rather be ascribed to the deference, which Gregory of Nazianzum considered as due to the Greek Church, of which he was a leading member, than to any doubts, which he himself entertained respecting its authenticity. For as the Latin Church in the fourth century did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Greek Church in the fourth century did not receive the book of Revelation. But Gregory himself appears to have considered it as a work of authority: for in his thirty-second Oration he quotes a passage from it, with the remark "as John teaches me in his Apocalypse." *

Epiphanius, who was Gregory's contemporary, has given a complete catalogue of the books of

* Tom. i. p. 516.

the New Testament. It is contained in the first section of his third Book against heresies : and the order is as follows : * the four holy Gospels : fourteen Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul ; the Acts of the Apostles ; the catholic Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude ; and the Revelation of John. To all these books Epiphanius applies the appellation of divine scriptures ; and his catalogue includes all the books, which constitute the present canon of the New Testament.

Athanasius, who was appointed Bishop of Alexandria in the year 326, and therefore must have been born before the end of the third century, has in his Festal Epistle given a Catalogue of the books of the New Testament in the following order †. The four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John : then the Acts of the Apostles, and the seven Epistles of the Apostles, called catholic, of James one, of Peter two, of John three, of Jude one. Beside these there are fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, the first to the Romans, then two to the Corinthians ; then that to the Gala-

* Tom. II. p. 941. ed. Petavii.

† Tom. I. Part II. p. 96. ed. Benedict. There is no reason to entertain any doubt about the Festal Epistle, whatever there may be about the Synopsis. See the *Admonitio* of the Benedictine editors at p. 958.

tians, the next to the Ephesians, then to the Philippians, then to the Colossians, after them the Epistles to the Thessalonians, and the Epistle to the Hebrews; then two to Timothy, to Titus one, the last to Philemon; and again the Revelation of John. "These (adds Athanasius) are the "fountains of salvation, that he who thirsts may "be satisfied with the oracles contained in them. "In these alone the doctrine of religion is "taught." This catalogue not only contains all the books of the New Testament, which we receive at present, but describes them so particularly, that no question can arise in regard to any one of them.

We now ascend to the testimony of Eusebius, who was born at Cæsarea in Palestine about the year 270, and was afterwards Bishop of that city. In the twenty-fifth Chapter of the third Book of his Ecclesiastical History, he states the result of his inquiries about the several books of the New Testament. And this statement is so much the more important, as we learn from it, in what manner the several books of the New Testament were received, not merely at the time when Eusebius wrote, but as far back, as the researches of Eusebius would carry him. His object was to ascertain what books of the New Testament had been universally received, and

what books had ever been called in question. This object is announced in the title of the Chapter, which is, 'Of the Scriptures universally acknowledged, and those which are not so.' And it appears from the observations which he has made in the course of this chapter, that he adopted the true mode of discovering what he wished to know. It appears that he examined the most ancient records of Christianity to which he had access ; and the most ancient records of Christianity to which ✓ *Eusebius* had access, must have extended to the age of the Apostles. The books of the New Testament, which according to *Eusebius* had been universally received, and which he places therefore in the first class, were the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John. Here it must be observed, that *Eusebius* is stating an historical fact. After all the inquiries, which he had instituted about the books of the New Testament, he found, that the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John had been universally received. There is one difficulty attending his statement of the Epistles of St. Paul. He speaks of those Epistles *generally*, whence it might be inferred, that he meant to include the Epistle to the Hebrews. But as we know that doubts *were* en-

tertained respecting this Epistle, as Eusebius himself acknowledges in the third chapter of the same book, and since in his twenty-fifth chapter he is stating matters of fact, not matters of opinion, the general expression, used by Eusebius cannot be so construed, as to include the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The books which Eusebius refers to the second class, or the class of books *not* universally received, are the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Jude. And here we must again remember that Eusebius is not expressing any doubt on his part, whether these books are entitled to a place in the sacred canon. He is again stating an historical fact: he is stating that these books had been received by many, but not by all. And the article, which he uses on this occasion, shews, that they had been received by *the* many, that is, by the great majority. We must further recollect, that in searching ecclesiastical writers, as Eusebius did, for testimony to the books of the New Testament, every quotation from a book of the New Testament, found in their writings, afforded *positive* proof, that the book then existed, and was known to them; whereas their *silence* in regard to a book

of the New Testament was mere *negative* evidence, which, as appears from the remarks, that were made on the Apostolic Fathers, is no real proof, that such a book was *unknown* to them, and still less that such a book did not then *exist*. The circumstance therefore, that the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Jude had not been *universally* received, when Eusebius instituted his inquiries, affords much less reason to suspect their authenticity, than might otherwise be supposed.

On the book of Revelation, the only book which remains to be considered in the catalogue of Eusebius, he has expressed himself with so much ambiguity, that it is difficult to determine what he really meant. In his representation of that book he has departed from the plan, which he adopted in regard to the other books of the New Testament: and by mixing opinion with fact has given a very confused account. As it appears from his own statement that this book had been received by some, but not by others, he ought consistently to have placed it in the second class. But he annexes it to the first class, with an expression of doubt, which shews that it could not belong to a class, on which *no* doubt existed. And

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to make the inconsistency still greater, he afterwards places it among a set of books decidedly spurious, with another expression of doubt, which shews that it would be equally improper, to rank it among *such* books. Whether Eusebius was intentionally ambiguous on the subject of a book, which even then had excited much controversy, or whether he was accidentally inconsistent, there can be no doubt respecting the class, to which according to the arrangement of Eusebius, the book itself should be referred. And its authenticity must hereafter be established, with that of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and of the books, which Eusebius himself has placed in the second class.

From Eusebius let us ascend to Origen, who was born in the year 184, within a hundred years therefore of the time, when St. John, and probably other Apostles were still living. He was educated under Clement of Alexandria; and he was not only the most profound scholar, but the most acute critic, among all the Fathers of the Greek Church. But we have been unfortunately deprived of much important testimony, which his writings, if they had descended entire to the present age, would have afforded to the authenticity of the New Testament. The works of Origen, which

are now extant, bear but a small proportion to those, which he composed : and even of the books which have been preserved, there are several, which exist only in the Latin translation, made by Rufinus at the end of the fourth century. This is the more to be lamented, as it has exposed the testimony of Origen to doubts, which otherwise would not have been entertained.

The testimony of Origen to the books of the New Testament must now be collected, partly from the occasional notice which he has taken of them in his Homilies, partly from the extracts made by Eusebius from writings of Origen then extant, and partly from the quotations which Origen himself has made from the New Testament. In his • thirteenth Homily on the book of Genesis, having occasion to refer to the New Testament, he observes,* that Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude, were the authors of the books of which the New Testament is composed. And these are the authors to whom the books of the New Testament are *now* ascribed. In his seventh Homily on the book of Joshua, where he again introduces the several writers of the New Testament he is more explicit.† He

* Tom. II. p. 95, ed. Delarue.

† Ibid. p. 412.

mentions Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, as the authors of the four Gospels: and Luke as author also of the Acts of the Apostles. To Paul he ascribes fourteen Epistles; to James and Jude, each one Epistle: to Peter two. And he adds, that John spake both in his Epistles, and in the book of Revelation. If then in the general expression, the Epistles of St. John, we include the third, as well as the second, we have from Origen a complete catalogue of the books of the New Testament, such as we receive at present. But unfortunately his Homilies on the book of Joshua exist only in the Latin translation of Rufinus: whence a suspicion has been entertained that Rufinus *added* to the catalogue, and that it contained fewer books, as it came from the pen of Origen. But the suspicion appears to be ill founded. For if Rufinus had made *alterations* in Origen's catalogue, he would have made them in conformity with the canon of his own Church. Otherwise no motive is assignable for a corruption of his author's text. But if Rufinus had altered the catalogue of Origen so as to make it suit the canon of the Latin Church, it would not have ascribed fourteen, as it really does, but only thirteen epistles to St. Paul.

Another source of information respecting Ori-

gen's testimony to the books of the New Testament is a collection of passages, extracted by Eusebius from then-existing works of Origen, and put together in the twenty-fifth chapter of the sixth book of his Ecclesiastical History. These passages were quoted by Eusebius, partly from Origen's Commentary on St. Matthew, partly from his Commentary on St. John, and partly from his Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the Extract from his Commentary on St. Matthew, Origen speaks of the four Gospels and ascribes them to Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. In the Extract from his Commentary on St. John, Origen having occasion to mention the Epistles, speaks generally of the Epistles ascribed to St. Paul, without making any exception; he mentions two Epistles of St. Peter, and three Epistles of St. John, but with the remarks, that some persons doubted whether the second epistle of St. Peter, and the second and third of St. John were authentic. In the same extract he ascribes the book of Revelation to St. John the Apostle. In the extract from his Homily on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Origen examines the question, whether St. Paul was the author of that Epistle, or not. He observes, that the Greek style of that Epistle is not the style of St. Paul: but he allows that the sentiments, though not the language, are those of

the Apostle. And he adds, "If therefore any church receives this Epistle as Paul's, it is to be *commended* on that account: for it is not without reason, that the ancients have handed it down as Paul's." Origen's opinion on this Epistle, which is rather ambiguously expressed, may perhaps be illustrated by a passage in the writings of his master, Clement of Alexandria, which is preserved by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History*. In this passage Clement asserts, that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul; but that it was written by St. Paul in Hebrew, and that the Greek epistle is a translation of it by St. Luke. That it was written by St. Paul in Hebrew, is asserted also by Jerom in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers under the article *Paulus*; and he adds that this is the reason why the Greek text differs from the style of St. Paul.

Let us now recapitulate the testimony of Origen to the books of the New Testament, as contained in the passages already quoted. If we may rely on the Catalogue, which is given in his seventh Homily on Joshua, all the books of the New Testament, which we receive at present were received by Origen. And there

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. VI. c. 14.

is less reason to suspect the fidelity of that catalogue, as it is not contradicted by any thing, which occurs in the extracts made by Eusebius. If in those extracts Origen denies that the Greek *words* in the Epistle to the Hebrews proceeded from the pen of St. Paul, he admits that its *doctrines* are those of the Apostle: and we need only consult the indexes to Origen's works, to see that he has quoted the Epistle to the Hebrews, as scripture authority, from the beginning to the end.—He further admits in those extracts, that the second Epistle of St. Peter, and the second and third of St. John, were not universally received, as did also Eusebius in the work which contains those extracts. But Origen does not say, that he rejected them himself. On the contrary, he has several quotations from the second Epistle of St. Peter. And if no quotations from the second and third Epistles of St. John, are to be found in what now remains of the works of Origen, no conclusion can be drawn unfavourable to those Epistles, which are not only extremely short, but are unlikely in themselves to afford much *matter* for quotation. Lastly, it must be observed of these extracts, that no mention is made in them, either of the Acts of the Apostles, or of the Epistle of St. James, or of the Epistle of St. Jude. But from this silence no inference whatever can be drawn. The first of those extracts relates only to the four Gospels;

the third only to the Epistle to the Hebrews ; and the books, which are named in the second extract, are named rather incidentally, than with a view of completing the catalogue of the books of the New Testament. The omission therefore of any single book is no argument against it. Of the Acts of the Apostles the authenticity was never doubted : and Origen has numerous quotations from it. He has many quotations also from the Epistle of St. James. And he has quoted the Epistle of St. Jude. — I have been thus minute in regard to the testimony of Origen, because it is not only of great importance, but has been much disputed. And I think we may conclude from all that has been said, that the Scriptures of the New Testament which we receive at present, were received also by Origen, at the beginning of the third century.

From Origen we may ascend to Tertullian, the most ancient of the Latin Fathers. He was born about the middle of the second century, little more therefore than fifty years after the death of St. John. Tertullian has no where given a professed catalogue of the books of the New Testament : and therefore his testimony must be collected, partly from detached passages, and partly from his various quotations. The four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles he has named and quoted so

frequently, as the works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, that it is unnecessary to refer to particular places. On the Epistles of St. Paul he expresses no doubt, except on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which Tertullian ascribes to Barnabas.* There are some books of the New Testament on which Tertullian is silent, namely the Epistle to Philemon, the second Epistle of St. Peter, with the second and third of St. John. Whether he has quoted the Epistle of St. James is a subject of dispute. But, if an author does not profess to give a complete catalogue of the books of the New Testament, his mere silence in regard to any book is no argument against it.

Let us now return to the Greek Church, and examine the testimony of Clement, the preceptor of Origen. The works of Clement, which are enumerated by Eusebius and Jerom, have most of them been destroyed: but, even those which remain afford abundant testimony to the scriptures of the New Testament. They contain numerous quotations from our four Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles. The Epistle to the Hebrews he expressly ascribed to St. Paul, as appears from what has been already stated: and among the works of

* De Pudicitia cap. xx. p. 582, ed. Rigaltii.

Clement, which are *now* extant, we still find many quotations from that Epistle. Indeed there is only *one* Epistle of St. Paul, from which we do *not* find quotations in the works of Clement ; and that is, the Epistle to Philemon. But as this Epistle was quoted by Origen, the circumstance of its not being quoted by Clement can reasonably be ascribed to no other cause, than that none of the subjects, of which he was treating, *required* a quotation from it. Of the Catholic Epistles he has quoted the Epistle of St. James, the first Epistle of St. Peter, the first Epistle of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Jude. And the book of Revelation he has quoted frequently. It has been said indeed that Clement has nowhere quoted the Epistle of St. James. But this is a mistake. He has quoted it, as well as Origen, as appears from the extracts produced by Griesbach in the second volume of his *Symbolæ Criticæ*. That volume contains all the quotations from the Greek Testament, which are contained in the remaining Greek works of Clement and Origen : and they are of peculiar importance, in reference, as well to the integrity, as to the authenticity of the New Testament. They shew, that the Greek manuscripts, which were used by Clement and Origen, no otherwise differed from the Greek manuscripts which have descended to the present age, than as different

copies of the same work unavoidably vary in their readings.

As Clement of Alexandria has borne such ample testimony to the authenticity of the New Testament, we must not forget its peculiar importance. Though the precise year of his birth is unknown, we may conclude from various circumstances that he was not born later, than the middle of the second century. He was born therefore at a time, when persons must have been still living, who remembered at least some of the Apostles, especially the Apostle St. John. He was sufficiently near therefore to the Apostolic age, to be enabled to ascertain the question, whether the books, ascribed to the Apostles and Evangelists, were justly ascribed to them, or not. According to an account recorded by Epiphanius,* he was born at Athens: and according to other ancient writers, he travelled through Italy, Greece, Palestine, and other parts of Asia, before he became Presbyter of the Church at Alexandria.† He visited therefore the countries, that contained the Christian communities, to which St. Paul, not an hundred years before the birth of Clement, had

* Hæres. xxxii. 6. Tom. I. p. 213. ed. Paris, 1622.

† See the authorities quoted in Fabricii Bib. Gr. Vol. VII. p. 120. ed. Harles.

addressed his various Epistles. The countries, which he visited, must likewise have included the places, where the four Gospels were written. He had therefore ample means of ascertaining the truth in regard to the authenticity of the books, which compose the New Testament, and it was not the character of Clement of Alexandria to take things upon trust, or to believe without good evidence. Independently of what is related by Eusebius and Jerom, his works sufficiently shew, that he was educated in the philosophy of the Greeks, and that he would not have taken the New Testament for his guide, but on the clearest conviction of its authenticity and truth.

The last writer, whose testimony shall be produced at present, is Irenæus, who was Bishop of Lyons, about the middle of the second century. Both his name and his language shew that he was by birth a Greek: and though the year of his birth is not exactly known, it is probable from various circumstances that he was born before the end of the first century. But the testimony of Irenæus derives its greatest importance from the fact, that he was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John*. In

* Hieronymus de V. I. s. v. *Irenæus*.

the works of Irenæus, which have descended to the present age, we no where find a professed catalogue of the books of the New Testament; and his testimony must be collected from his various quotations, and a few detached remarks. In the first chapter of his third book against Heresies, there is a passage, in which he expressly ascribes the four Gospels to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This testimony will not be invalidated by any mistake, which Irenæus, may have made respecting the circumstances, under which he supposed, that St. Matthew's Gospel was written. He says namely, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel among the Jews, when St. Paul and St. Peter were founding the Church at Rome. Though Irenæus was probably misinformed in regard to this particular *circumstance*, his testimony to the *main fact*, that our Gospels were written by the persons, to whom they are ascribed, is not therefore to be rejected. Still less is it to be rejected on account of any fanciful *reason*, which he has elsewhere assigned, of there being four and *only* four authentic Gospels. Testimony to a fact is not destroyed by an opinion, however absurd, which the witness considers as the cause of its happening. The testimony therefore of Irenæus to the authenticity of our four Gospels may be safely admitted. And his quotations from

them are so numerous, that they occupy more than twelve folio columns in the index of scripture passages annexed to the Benedictine edition. In the fourteenth Chapter of his third Book he expressly ascribes the Acts of the Apostles to St. Luke the companion of St. Paul: and his quotations from that book are very numerous. Of the Epistles of St. Paul, he has largely quoted from those to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. He has quoted likewise from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus: and all these Epistles he has repeatedly ascribed to St. Paul. But he has none from the Epistle to Philemon, at which we need not be surprised, as that Epistle contains no points of doctrine, and could afford therefore no *matter* for quotation in writings, which were all controversial. On the question, whether the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St Paul, Irenæus is *silent*. But we must not attach to his silence more importance, than it deserves. Irenæus, though born a Greek, was transplanted to the *Latin* Church, which then *rejected* the Epistle to the Hebrews. If therefore, he had quoted it as authority in *controversial* writings, he would have afforded his adversaries this ready answer, that he produced as authority what was not allowed by his own Church. And since he has no where

asserted, that St. Paul was *not* the author of that Epistle, his mere silence argues rather the *custom* of the Latin Church, (as it is termed by Jerom) than the opinion of Irenæus himself. Of the ✓ Catholic Epistles Irenæus has quoted (according to the index in the Benedictine edition) from the Epistle of St. James, both Epistles of St. Peter, and the first and second of St. John. That he has never quoted the third Epistle of St. John is no argument whatever against it. As it contains no doctrine, a quotation from it in the works of Irenæus was not to be expected. His silence on the Epistle of St. Jude has been considered by some writers as an argument, either that the Epistle was unknown to him, or that he did not consider it as a book of authority. But his silence admits of another solution, and one which is not improbable, namely, that the particular controversies, in which he was engaged, did not *require* a quotation from that Epistle. And this solution leaves its authenticity unimpaired. On the book of Revelation his testimony is clear and positive. He has not only quoted it in numerous instances, but has expressly ascribed it to St. John the Apostle*. And Irenæus from his acquaintance with Polycarp the disciple of

* Adv. Hæres. Lib. IV. c. 20. §. 11. Lib. V. c. 26. init.

St. John, had the means of obtaining *certain* information on this subject.

Lastly, we may observe on the quotations of Irenæus, that they bear ample testimony, as well to the integrity, as to the authenticity of the New Testament. For those quotations are so numerous, and many of them so long, as to afford undoubted evidence, that the books of the New Testament, which were known to the disciple of Polycarp, are the *same* books, which have descended to the present age.

Here then we will conclude the catalogue of our authorities for the authenticity of the New Testament. In the next Lecture shall be given the *result* of the inquiries, which have been instituted in the present.

LECTURE XXV.

IT appears from the preceding Lecture, that all the books of the New Testament, which we receive at present, were received in the fourth century, as the works of the authors to whom they are ascribed. They were received as such by Jerom the most learned of the Latin Fathers: and if the testimony of Jerom required support from a contemporary in the Latin Church, we might add the Catalogue which Augustine has given in his treatise of Christian Doctrine,* and in which he distinctly enumerates every book, which is now contained in the New Testament. Among the Greek Fathers of the fourth century, we have seen, that Athanasius and Epiphanius have likewise given complete Catalogues of the books of the New Testament: and if the Catalogue, which is given by Gregory of Nazianzum, contains not the book of Revelation, the omission

* Tom. III. P. i. p. 23, ed. Benedict.

may be rather considered as an act of deference to the Greek Church, which then rejected the book of Revelation, than as expressive of the opinion entertained by Gregory himself.

When we ascend from the fourth to the third century, we find Origen the most learned of the Greek Fathers, who, as appears from the preceding Lecture, received all the books of the New Testament, which constitute our present canon. When we further ascend from the third to the second century, we find Irenæus in the West, and Clement of Alexandria in the East, bearing ample testimony to the books of the New Testament. The Epistle to Philemon, the second Epistle of St. Peter, with the second and third of St. John, are the *only* books of the New Testament, from which we do not find quotations in the works of Clement, though the works which now remain bear only a small proportion to those, which he composed. But the Epistle to Philemon, and the second and third of St. John are so short, and so little adapted to doctrinal discussion, that Clement could hardly have had *occasion* to quote them. Nor can we conclude that the second Epistle of St. Peter did not then exist, because the remaining works of Clement contain no quotation from it. We have the *positive* testimony therefore of Clement of

Alexandria to the whole of the New Testament, with the exception of four short Epistles, which all together contain little more than a hundred of our modern verses: and even of these, we have no reason to suppose that Clement rejected them. The positive testimony of Irenæus is no less important. And though he cannot be produced, with Clement of Alexandria, as evidence for the Epistle to the Hebrews, he cannot, for the reasons already assigned, be produced as evidence against it. We may rest therefore satisfied with the testimony of Clement on the Epistle to the Hebrews, though it was long rejected by the Latin Church. And on the book, which was long rejected by the Greek Church, the Revelation of St. John, we have the testimony, both of Clement and of Irenæus.

The evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament has thus been carried upwards, as high as the age, which succeeded the age of the Apostles. And if no evidence has yet been produced from the writings of those, who were contemporary with the Apostles, we have had the evidence of those, who knew their disciples, the evidence therefore of those, who could hardly be mistaken in regard to the question, whether the books of the New Testament

were written by the authors, assigned to them, or not. And if such evidence had been produced in favour of a classic author, there is no scholar, who would not be fully satisfied with the proof.

But another view may be taken of the subject, in which it will appear, that from the evidence already produced we may obtain a result, which is still *more* decisive. This result is obtained by reasoning from the statement of Eusebius, with respect to the books, which were *universally* received. These books were, the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John. That all these books had been universally received, is a fact, attested by Eusebius, and confirmed by the writers, who preceded him. Now if the historical books of the New Testament were universally received, they must have been received as authentic in the very places, where they were composed, and by the persons, to whom they were first delivered. And whatever apostolic epistles were universally received, they must have been received as authentic by the very persons, or communities, to whom they were immediately addressed.

Let us first apply the argument to the Epistles of St. Paul, which are of two kinds, Epistles to whole communities, and Epistles addressed to individuals. Of the former kind are the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians. These Epistles having been universally acknowledged as Epistles of St. Paul, they must have been acknowledged as such by those particular communities, to whom they were respectively addressed. Let us inquire then, whether these Epistles *could* have been so acknowledged, if they had *not* been written by St. Paul. No forgery in the name of St. Paul could have been successfully attempted during the life of the Apostle: for his long and continued intercourse with the several communities, to whom those Epistles are addressed, would unquestionably have led to a detection of the fraud. If therefore these Epistles were forgeries, they must have been fabricated after the *death* of St. Paul. Having ascertained the point of time, *after* which they must have been forged, if they really were forged, let us next consider the point of time *before* which the forgery must have taken place, if there was forgery at all. Whether written by an Apostle, or not, their *existence* in the middle

of the second century, is a fact, which it is *impossible* to deny. For all these Epistles are repeatedly quoted by Irenæus in one part of the Roman Empire, and by Clement of Alexandria in another. And no doubt can be entertained in regard to *their* quotations, whatever be the doubts attending those of the Apostolic Fathers. The portion of time therefore, in which a forgery was *possible*, was confined to so small a compass, as to render it *impracticable*. If a work is fabricated by one writer in the name of another, there is no chance of succeeding with the imposition, unless a considerable period has elapsed, between the time of the fabricator, and the time of the person, to whom he *ascribes* his fabrication. If this person lived at so remote a time, that no external evidence can be obtained in confutation of the fraud, an ingenious impostor may excite a belief, that a work, which is really his own, is the work of a writer, who lived in a former age. But between the death of St. Paul, and the middle of the second century, when these Epistles, whether authentic or not, are known to have *existed*, the interval was so short, that no forgery could have escaped detection. In whatever portion of this interval such a forgery is supposed to have been committed, the supposition is equally absurd.

That the absurdity of such a supposition may be rendered apparent, we must argue on some particular Epistle. Let us take therefore, as an example the Epistle to the Romans, and consider the absurdities, to which the supposition of a forgery will lead. If we suppose, that the Epistle to the Romans was forged during the *former* half of the period, which has been proved to be the *limiting* period, it was forged at a time, when many persons must have been still living, who were members of the Christian community at Rome, when St. Paul himself was there. And these persons must surely have known, whether they had ever received from St. Paul an Epistle, or not. Unless therefore an impostor could have made them believe, that they had received an Epistle from St. Paul, which they knew they had *not* received, it was impossible that a forgery could *then* be attended with success. Let us now suppose it to have been fabricated during the *latter* half of the limiting period, which is the most advantageous supposition, that can be made in behalf of a forgery. At that time perhaps no one was living, who remembered St. Paul at Rome: and so far many obstacles were removed, which, on the former supposition, were in the way of a forgery. But other obstacles existed, which were still suffi-

cient to counteract it. If no one was then living, who remembered St. Paul at Rome, the *next* generation could not have been extinct, or the children of those who remembered St. Paul. And is it credible, that *they* should have admitted an Epistle addressed to their fathers, as coming from St. Paul, an Epistle containing salutations to more than twenty of their fathers by name, if they had never heard from their fathers, that such an Epistle had been received from St. Paul? And this must have been the case, if the Epistle to the Romans was first brought to light in the second century. Whatever be the time therefore assigned for a forgery, the supposition of it is attended with equal absurdities : and hence we must draw the only inference, which remains, that the Epistle to the Romans is authentic.

The same kind of reasoning, which has been used on the Epistle to the Romans, applies also to the Epistles, which were written to the Corinthians, the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians. A fraud on those communities was impracticable, for the same reasons that a fraud was impracticable on the Christian community at Rome.

On the Epistles addressed to Timothy, Titus,

and Philemon, which according to Eusebius, were likewise universally acknowledged, we cannot argue precisely in the same manner, as on the other Epistles. An Epistle addressed to an individual may *in general* be more easily forged, than one, which is addressed to a whole community. But then we must remember, that Timothy and Titus were men in public stations ; that they were identified with the communities, over whom they presided ; and that those communities would not have acknowledged the Epistles addressed to Timothy and Titus, as Epistles written by St. Paul, if neither they nor their fathers had ever learnt that St. Paul had written those Epistles. The authenticity of the Epistle to Philemon cannot be confirmed in the same manner. It is altogether a *private* Epistle. But this Epistle does not *require* an additional proof. For it is of that description, that there could exist no possible *motive* to a forgery.

The authenticity of the two Catholic Epistles, which were universally received, namely the first Epistle of St. Peter, and the first Epistle of St. John, may be confirmed in the same manner, as that of St. Paul's Epistles. If they were universally received, they must have been received as authentic by the persons, or communities for

which they were immediately intended, and to whom they were first delivered. Otherwise their reception could not have been universal. They were received therefore by the persons, who must have known, whether those Epistles were written, by St. Peter and St. John, or not.

Let us now apply the argument to the historical books of the New Testament, which were likewise universally received. These books having been received by every Christian community as the undoubted works of the authors, to whom they are ascribed, they must have been received as such in the places, where they were written, and consequently by persons, who had ample means of knowing, whether those books were written, or not, by the persons, to whom they are ascribed. It does not indeed appear from the books themselves in *what* places they were written: and though we may form a very probable opinion, we have no absolute certainty. But in whatever places they were written, they must have been allowed in those place to have been the works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. If they had not been so allowed, some doubts at least of their authenticity must have come to the knowledge of Eusebius, and he would not have expressed himself so confidently, as he did. Some

doubts also of their authenticity must have come to the knowledge of Irenæus and Tertullian in the West, or of Clement and Origen in the East. But those writers confirm the testimony of Eusebius in regard to the fact, that the authenticity of those books was never doubted.

We may argue then in the same manner in regard to the historical books, as we did on the Epistles of St. Paul. The evidence of their *existence* has been already carried as high as the middle of the second century. And this evidence does not consist in a vague report about Gospels *in general*, or in quotations, unaccompanied with the *name* of the Evangelist, and supposed only from their *resemblance* to have been borrowed from the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Whatever doubts may be entertained in regard to the quotations relating to the History of our Saviour, which are found in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, or in the works of Justin Martyr, it is impossible to entertain a doubt respecting those, which were made by Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria. For they have expressly and repeatedly declared, that they quote from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John : and their quotations are so numerous, as to afford abundant proof, that the Gospels, from

which *they* quoted, not only bore the same *titles*, but were the same in *substance*, as the Gospels, which we have at present. And if their quotations prove, in the first instance, nothing more than the *existence* of our four Gospels in the middle of the second century, and a *belief* in their authenticity on the part of those early writers, (in which however they could hardly have been mistaken) yet as this belief was common to *all* Christians, to the Christians therefore who dwelt in the places where those Gospels were written, the supposition of a forgery must be attended with the same absurdities, which have been shewn to attend a similar supposition respecting the Epistles of St. Paul.

If our four Gospels were forgeries, the fabrication could have taken place at no other period, than during the first half of the second century. It is well known that St. John lived nearly to the end of the first century: and no one, till after his death, could have had any chance of imposing on the world a fictitious Gospel, written in his name, or even in the name of the other Evangelists. Since then the supposition of a forgery *after* the middle of the second century is *precluded* by the proof of previous existence, we must unavoidably come to one of these two con-

clusions ; either that our four Gospels are authentic, or that they were forged in the former half of the second century. But during all this period many persons must have been still living, who had been acquainted with St. John, if not with the other Evangelists. Many persons therefore must have been still living, both at Ephesus and elsewhere, who certainly knew, whether St. John had written a Gospel, or not. And if he did *not* write the Gospel ascribed to him, as the supposition of a forgery implies, is it credible that the Christian community at Ephesus, or the Christian communities in other places where St. John had intercourse, would have acknowledged a Gospel, first brought to light in the second century and pretended to have been written by St. John in the first, when neither they, nor their fathers, had ever heard that St. John had *written* a Gospel? Whatever credulity our adversaries may have ascribed to the primitive Christians, it is impossible they should have been ensnared by an imposition like this. But the primitive Christians were not so credulous, as our adversaries have represented them. If they *had* been thus credulous, we should never have heard of doubts entertained about *any* book of the New Testament. Indeed we cannot have a stronger proof of the care and caution, with which the claims to

authenticity were examined in the early ages of the Church, than the doubts, which we know were entertained in regard to *some* books of the New Testament.

The mode of reasoning, which has been applied to the Gospel of St. John, may be applied to the three other Gospels, and to the Acts of the Apostles. If those books were forgeries, they must also have been forged in the former half of the second century ; at a time therefore, when it was *known*, whether Matthew, Mark, and Luke had written such books or not : and consequently at a time, when books *falsely* ascribed to them would not have been universally received as *their* works.

We have such a confirmation therefore of authenticity, in regard to the books, which constitute the first class of Eusebius, as we should vainly attempt to give of any profane author. And the *external* evidence for the authenticity of those books may now be considered as complete.

Let us proceed then to the books, which belong to the second class, and see what additional proof, from external evidence, may be obtained in their behalf. These books are the Epistle to

the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, the Epistle of St. Jude, and the book of Revelation. The authenticity of *these* books cannot be confirmed in the same *manner* with the authenticity of the books, which were *universally* received; because the arguments, which have been applied to the latter, are not applicable to the former. But other arguments may be applied, which if they produce not the *same* effect, are still sufficient to command our assent.

The first of them, the Epistle to the Hebrews, though rejected during the four first centuries by the Latin Church, was in that very period received by the Greek Church: and it was acknowledged as an Epistle of St. Paul by Clement of Alexandria, whose testimony has been already quoted. The testimony of Clement is confirmed by that of Pantænus, who was the preceptor of Clement, and who likewise declares that the Epistle was written by St. Paul*. It receives additional confirmation from the Canon of the Syrian Church, as exhibited in the old Syriac version. Though *some* of the books which constitute the second class, were not admitted into

* Clement himself appeals to Pantænus, under the title *μακάριος πρεσβύτερος*. Eusebii Hist. Eccles. Lib. VI. c. 14.

the Syrian canon, it received the Epistle to the Hebrews; this Epistle is placed in the old Syriac version with the rest of St. Paul's Epistles; and it is so placed, not merely in our modern editions, but in *manuscripts* of that version. Now when the question relates to the authenticity of an Epistle, originally composed in an oriental dialect, and addressed to Jews residing in the East, as the language of the Epistle implies, the decision of the Syrian Church is of the highest possible moment. The Syrian Church decided in its favour, and by that decision our own Church may, in the present instance, very safely abide. And we may abide by it with so much the greater safety, as the reason alleged for its rejection was removed both by Jerom and by Clement of Alexandria. The cause of its rejection, as assigned by Jerom in his Catalogue of Ecclesiastical writers *, was the difference of its Greek style from that of other Epistles, ascribed to St. Paul. But if St. Paul wrote it in Hebrew, and the Greek is a translation, the objection to its authenticity is at once removed.

The next book of the New Testament on which doubts have been entertained, is the Epistle

* Under the Article *Paulus*. Tom. II. col. 826. ed. Vallarsi.

of St. James. And here again the authority of the Syrian Church, which has decided in its favour, is of the greatest possible moment. Whether the Epistle be ascribed to James the son of Zebedee, or to James the son of Alphaeus, both of whom were Apostles, we must conclude, that it was written, if not in Palestine itself, at least in some neighbouring country. The question therefore, whether this Epistle might be justly ascribed to James an Apostle, could not be more easily decided, than by the Church of Syria, which bordered on Palestine. But the Epistle of St. James has always made a part of the Syrian canon; and the Syrian canon has so much the greater weight in the present instance, as it received only three out of the seven Catholic Epistles, and the Epistle of St. James was one of them. Nor must we forget, that in the place, where Eusebius acknowledges, that this Epistle was not universally received, he declares that it was received by the great majority. We must remember also, that before an Epistle written in Palestine could be generally known in the *Greek* Church, a longer period was necessary, than was wanted for the general diffusion of Epistles, which had been written to communities, that made a *part* of that Church. The lateness therefore of its general reception, in comparison with the Epistles to the

Corinthians, and other Grecian communities, is so far from being an argument *against* this Epistle, that it is precisely what under all circumstances there was reason to expect. And if the author of it assumes no higher title, than that of *servant* of Jesus Christ, this title is no argument, that the author was not an Apostle. For St. Paul himself takes the title of *servant* of Jesus Christ, both in his Epistle to the Romans and in his Epistle to the Philippians.

For the second Epistle of St. Peter we cannot produce the same high authority, as was produced for the Epistle of St. James. The second Epistle of St. Peter, with the second and third of St. John, and the Epistle of St. Jude, are the four Catholic Epistles, which are *not* contained in the old Syriac version. But the omission of them may probably be ascribed to the early age, in which the Syrian Canon was formed. And, if that Canon was formed before those Epistles were known to the Syrian Church, the *omission* of them cannot be construed into a *rejection* of them. Now the lateness of the time, when *this* Epistle was written, is apparent from the Epistle itself. We may infer not only from particular passages, but from its general tenor, that the author then foresaw his death approaching. If therefore this

short Epistle became universally known at a later period, than the *first* Epistle ascribed to St. Peter, we must not thence conclude that the *first only* is authentic. If the second is not contained in the *old* Syriac version, it is contained in the *Philoxenian* version, and is quoted as an Epistle of St. Peter by Ephrem the most ancient of the Syrian Fathers.* And its resemblance to the first Epistle, both in matter and in manner, is really such, that if the first Epistle was written by St. Peter, which no one ever doubted, we must conclude the same also of the second Epistle.

On the second and third Epistles of St. John, it is unnecessary to make many remarks. Both of these very short Epistles were addressed to individuals, one of whom is unknown even by name, and of the other, it is unknown who he was. The *general* diffusion of these Epistles therefore in the early ages of Christianity would have been contrary to all expectation. And even when they were *known*, they could afford but little matter for quotation. The *silence* therefore of the early writers, which Eusebius consulted,

* In his Greek works, vol. II. p. 387, (printed at Rome in 1743) he quotes 2 Pet. iii. 10, and ascribes it to St. Peter, whom he calls ὁ μακάριος Πέτρος, ὁ κορυφαῖος τῶν Ἀποστόλων.

though it induced him, to place them among books, which were not universally received, hardly bears on the question of their authenticity. And since they resemble both in matter and in manner the *first* Epistle of St. John, which was universally acknowledged, there can be no reason for rejecting either the second or the third.

The Epistle of St. Jude, the last of the Epistles in the second class of Eusebius, was also an Epistle, which from its shortness was likely to attract less general attention, and hence to become universally known, at a later period, than many other books. But when it *was* known, it was received as the work of the author, to whom it is ascribed. And it is quoted as such, both by Clement of Alexandria, and by Origen *.

Lastly, of the book of Revelation the authenticity may be confirmed by arguments, which cannot easily be rejected. For it is not only quoted, and quoted frequently, both by Clement of Alexandria and by Origen: it is quoted also in numerous instances by Irenæus: and by Irenæus, whose testimony is decisive on this subject,

* See the second volume of Griesbach's *Symbolæ Criticæ*.

✓ it is expressly ascribed to John the Apostle. The testimony of Irenæus, if it *wanted* confirmation, would receive an accession of strength from the testimony of Justin Martyr, who was born in Palestine about the end of the first century. In the second part of his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Justin Martyr referring to the book of Revelation, says expressly, that it was written by "John, one of the Apostles of Christ." * And this testimony of Justin Martyr to the book of Revelation is so much the more remarkable, as it is the *only* book in the whole New Testament, of which Justin Martyr has ever named the author. For though his *silence* about the authors of the other books cannot affect the *positive* evidence of the writers already quoted, the circumstance, that he has *not* been silent, in regard to the question, whether the book of Revelation was written by St. John the Apostle, acquires additional importance from his silence on other occasions.

The external evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament is now complete: and the proof has been conducted, without the aid, either of the Apostolic Fathers, or of any other writers,

* p. 315, ed. Thirlby.

whose testimony can in any way be questioned. But though we have sufficient proof, independently of the Apostolic Fathers, there is no reason for our rejecting them altogether as useless. When the passages in their writings, which are supposed only from their *resemblance* to have been borrowed from corresponding passages in the Gospels, or other books, are brought forward, as usual, in the first instance, we are then indeed lost in uncertainty, whether *such* passages were borrowed from the New Testament, or not. But when we have *already* proved, that such books of the New Testament, as they are supposed to have quoted, were then in *existence*, and therefore *might* have been quoted by them, it becomes much more credible, that those books really *were* quoted by them. It is true, that, if the validity of a witness must be previously established by means, which prove of *themselves* what the *witness* is intended to prove, the importance of his evidence is thereby diminished. But in the present case we are not so much concerned with the obtaining of *more* evidence, which is quite unnecessary, as with shewing, that the testimony of the Apostolic Fathers, as far as it goes, is *consistent* with the evidence already produced. But there are *some* books of the New Testament, which the Apostolic Fathers, if their writings are genuine, have mentioned by *name*.

Clement of Rome, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians quotes a passage from *St. Paul's* first Epistle to the Corinthians, and calls it an 'Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle.' * Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, refers them to the Epistle, which *they* had received from St. Paul, whom he calls 'Paul the holy, the martyr.' † And in like manner Polycarp, in his Epistle to the Philip-
pians, ‡ reminds them of the Epistle, which *they* had received from St. Paul, whom he calls 'the blessed and renowned Paul.' These are references, such as we might *expect* from the Apostolic Fathers in their respective Epistles : and we may be satisfied, if they have afforded as much evidence, as under all circumstances might be reasonably expected.

Another very ancient writer, who was certainly born in the first century, is Papias, who though his testimony is confined to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, the former of which he says was written in Hebrew, must not be omitted. This testimony is recorded in a fragment of the works of Papias, which Eusebius has preserved in his Ecclesiastical History.§

* Patres Apostolici. ed. Cotelierii, Tom. I. p. 173.

† Ibid. Tom. II. p. 15.

‡ Ibid. ib. p. 185.

§ Lib. iii. cap. 39.


There is one more writer, whom it has been usual to quote as evidence, for our four Greek Gospels, namely Justin Martyr. I have already quoted him as evidence for the book of Revelation, because his testimony on *that* book is clear and decisive. But I cannot consistently quote him as evidence for our four Greek Gospels, because the quotations, which he is *supposed* to have made from them, are involved in difficulties, which I have fully stated elsewhere, and which it is unnecessary to repeat. Nor is the loss of *one* witness to the authenticity of the Gospels a matter of any importance, when their authenticity has been already established beyond the possibility of doubt. Indeed the loss is more than compensated by the advantage, which is obtained in regard to the integrity of the Gospels; which integrity would materially suffer, if it were true, that Justin Martyr, instead of quoting from a Hebrew Gospel, like others, who were born in Palestine at the same period with himself, had derived his quotations from our Greek Gospels.

To the testimonies of Christian writers it has been usual also to add the testimonies of Jewish and heathen writers. But their testimony, as well as the testimony of ancient heretics, shall be reserved for the proof of credibility.

The external evidence for the authenticity of the New Testament requires no further illustration. In the next Lecture, therefore, which will be the last of the present series, I shall proceed to the internal evidence, which affords much matter of interesting and curious inquiry.

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LECTURE XXVI.

WHEN external evidence has been produced for the authenticity of a work, the first question to be asked in regard to the internal evidence, is whether it *agrees* with the external. The internal evidence for the authenticity of any book, is deduced from the book itself. If the book contains nothing inconsistent with the notion, that it was written by the author to whom it is ascribed, or, in other words, if the contents of the book are such, that it *might* have been written by him, then the proof from external evidence, that it *was* written by him, not only remains unimpaired, but receives additional support from its agreement with the internal. If indeed the evidence, deduced from the contents of a work, goes no further, than to shew that it *might* have been written by the author assigned to it, it is internal evidence of the lowest kind ; it can only be applied in aid of the external evidence, and cannot establish the authenticity of a work by itself. But even *such*

internal evidence is of great importance. For, if instead of finding from the contents of a work that it *might* have proceeded from the author assigned to it, we discovered any thing *inconsistent* with his known situation and character, the credit, which had been given to the external evidence, may not only be weakened, but be destroyed. And we may be compelled to admit, that however specious the external evidence may appear, there must be *somewhere* a defect, either in the statement of facts, or in the reasoning which is founded on them. If a book contains within itself undeniable marks of a different age, or a different country, from that to which it is said to belong, or if it evidently betrays an author of a different description from him who is said to have written it, we must conclude, that they, who have said so, have been led into error. Since then internal evidence, if it is *at variance* with the external, may be strong enough to counteract it, an *agreement* between them is of great importance, even if the internal evidence goes no further than to shew, that the book in question *might* have been written by the author, to whom external evidence ascribes it. It is true, that where external evidence is so strong, as it is in favour of the New Testament, a discovery of any thing in the books themselves, which might oppose that evidence, would be con-

trary to all expectation. And we should have so much the more reason to be surprised at such a discovery, as it would be a discovery, which had eluded the vigilance of Origen and Jerom.

In fact, the more closely we examine the several books, which compose the New Testament, the more we must be convinced, that both their matter and their language accord with the known situations and characters of the respective authors. Spurious compositions betray themselves, by allusions to persons and things, which did not *exist* at the period assigned for the composition ; by a display of knowledge, which the pretended author could not have possessed ; by the delivery of opinions, which he could not have entertained ; by peculiarities of language, which accord not with his country or his character ; by the introduction of customs and manners, which were foreign to the age in which he lived ; or by some *other* discordance, into which every impostor is likely to fall, from the difficulty of uniformly recollecting the difference between his *own* situation, and the situation of the person, to whom he *ascribes* his work. If therefore the books of the New Testament had *not* been the works of the Apostles and Evangelists, *some* incongruity would have been discovered between those books and the pretended

authors of them. But every thing, which we find in the New Testament is precisely what we might *expect* to find, from persons so circumstanced as the Apostles and Evangelists. Whether we consider the New Testament in reference to matters of geography, or in reference to states and governments, or in reference to prevailing customs, we every where find representations, which accord with the geography, the policy, and the customs of the first century. The facts, which are recorded, and the sentiments, which are delivered, harmonize with the country, the age, and the character of the several writers. The language also is exactly the *kind* of language which such persons would have used. In short every thing throughout the New Testament, is in unison with the belief, that the several books of it were written by the authors, to whom they are ascribed. Now it has been shewn already, that the external evidence in the present case is so strong, as to require nothing more from internal evidence, than a bare *agreement* with it. And since the internal evidence sufficiently shews, that the several books of the New Testament, *might* have been written by the authors, to whom they are ascribed, the external evidence incontestably proves that they *were* so.

Here then we might rest contented with the proof, which has been already given. But since internal evidence *may* go further, than that of a mere auxiliary to the external, and every thing, which relates to the authenticity of the New Testament deserves our serious attention, let us consider *how* far internal evidence may be carried on the present occasion. Let us inquire, whether a proof may be obtained from the New Testament itself, independently of external evidence, not only that it *might* have been written by the persons to whom the several books are ascribed, but that those books *could not* have been written by any other persons, than persons so circumstanced as the Apostles and Evangelists.

Let us begin with the historical books of the New Testament, and consider, in the first place, the knowledge which they display of the several relations, which the *Jews*, in the time of our Saviour, bore, as well to *each other*, as to *foreign* nations. The various changes, both in their civil and in their religious state, from the reign of Herod the Great to the Procuratorship of Festus, with the jarring opinions of the different Jewish sects, are so introduced in the historical books of the New Testament, as could be expected only from writers, to whom the civil and religious

state of the Jewish nation was familiar. The divisions and subdivisions made by the Romans in the governments of Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, the subjection of Judæa to a Roman Procurator on the banishment of Archelaus, its temporary administration by Herod Agrippa, and its subsequent return to the Procuratorship, are facts not formally recorded in the historical books, but occasionally introduced, and so introduced, as would be done by no writer, who had lived in a different country, or in a different age. From the intimate knowledge thus displayed by the persons who wrote the historical books of the New Testament, we must conclude, that they were conversant with Palestine, and contemporary with the facts, which they record. The knowledge, which they display, relates frequently to matters so minute, to matters of such little apparent interest, beyond the narrow limits of Judæa, that a writer of any other country, or of any other age could hardly have possessed it. And the difficulty of obtaining it in any subsequent age was further increased by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subversion of the Jewish state; a subversion so complete, as to have obliterated among the Jews themselves all remembrance of minute relations and transactions, which preceded that event. The history of our Saviour

which is recorded in the Gospels, and the transactions at Jerusalem, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, must have been recorded therefore at a time, when the Jewish state was still in being. Nor is it merely a knowledge of things relating to Judæa, that we find displayed in the New Testament. Whether they relate to Jerusalem, or relate to Ephesus, or to Corinth, or to Athens, or to Rome, we find representations, that accord with the places, which are the scenes of action. That an impostor therefore in the second century should have united this knowledge of foreign countries with that minute knowledge of Judæa, as it existed in the first century, is quite incredible.

But for the sake of argument, let us suppose that the thing was possible, and consider the conclusion, to which the supposition will lead. If the historical books of the New Testament were fabricated by an impostor, or by impostors, who had all the knowledge necessary to make those books agree with the circumstances, under which they were said to be written, and they were accordingly *made* to agree, in order to *conceal* the fraud, the fraud would still betray itself, and betray itself through the means, which were employed to conceal it.

In compositions, which are not intended to deceive, but are honest representations of what the writers know or believe, an agreement with dates; whether of time or of place, and in general an accordance with things that are co-existent, will be of such a description, as to betray no appearance of *design*. And for this reason will such agreement be without design, because there is no fraud to be concealed. Indeed they who have had opportunities of searching for internal marks of authenticity, whether in books, or in written letters, will have observed examples of coincidence in dates, of which the writers themselves were evidently not *aware*. And the authenticity of their writings is thus established by means, which had escaped their own notice. But if an impostor undertakes to fabricate a work in the name of another, and in order to give colour to the forgery contrives an artificial coincidence with times, or places, or co-existent transactions, such coincidence being *itself* a fabrication, contrived for a particular purpose, the contrivance will always be apparent. The object of an impostor is to obtain the *semblance* of authenticity; and *that* object would be defeated, if the coincidence were not easily *perceived*. Far different is the situation of a writer, who has no *need* of contrivance, who has no imposition

to *conceal*, who honestly writes in his own name, and assumes not a character, which does not belong to him. Conscious of his own integrity he has no motive to obtain a *semblance* of authenticity, when he knows it to be *real*. His agreement therefore with dates, whether of time or of place, his accordance with things or persons co-existent with what he himself describes, will every where appear to be incidental and undesigned. It will appear as the consistency of truth, not as the consistency of art. Though every minute examination will confirm the *accuracy* of the agreement, the agreement will not be glaring. On the contrary, it will often happen, that such coincidences not only lie concealed from the view of common observers, but require a combination of various and sometimes unconnected facts, before it is possible to perceive them. And as such coincidences must be free from all suspicion of design, the stronger is their evidence for authenticity, when they *are* discovered.

Now if we examine the historical books of the New Testament, we shall find many coincidences of this description ; coincidences, which are not apparent, but which, as soon as they are

discovered, are found to be perfectly exact. It will be sufficient to give two or three examples.

In the third chapter of St. Luke's Gospel * it is related, that while John the Baptist was preaching in the country about Jordan, there came to him certain *soldiers*, who as appears from the expression used by St. Luke, † were not merely soldiers by profession, but soldiers in *actual service*. Now the *Roman* soldiers, who were then stationed in Judæa, do not appear to have been at *that* time engaged in any war: and though it might be reasonably inferred, that St. Luke would not have used an expression that did not accord with the actual state of things, the accordance is not apparent from his own narrative. He further relates in the same chapter, ‡ that Herod the Tetrarch being reproved by John the Baptist for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils, which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison. But what connexion there was between Herod and the soldiers just before mentioned, does not appear. Nor does it appear what connexion there was between those soldiers and the place of John's imprisonment;

* Ver. 14.

† Στρατενόμενοι, not στρατιώται.

‡ Ver. 19, 20.

though we may infer that the place of his imprisonment was somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Jordan, because the order for his imprisonment was given while John was preaching there. Again, in the sixth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, where St. Mark also mentions the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and assigns the same reason for it, which St. Luke did, we find an expression applied to the person, whom Herod subsequently dispatched with the order, that John the Baptist should be beheaded, which expression is used for persons, who are in *military* service.* Now it does not at all appear from the narrative of St. Mark, why a *military* person was employed on this occasion. The order for the death of John the Baptist was given by Herod at an *entertainment*, an entertainment, at which Herodias was present with her daughter. The entertainment was given on Herod's birth-day ;† and, as described by St. Mark, it has simply the appearance of an entertainment given at a royal court. Though we must conclude therefore, that St. Mark, as well as Luke, had reasons for employing the particular expressions, which they did on this occasion, those reasons are not apparent. But we shall discover those reasons, if we consult

* Σπεκουλάτωρ, ver. 27. On this word see Schleusner's Lexicon.

† Mark vi. 21.

the account, which Josephus has given of the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist. It is given in the eighteenth book, and the fifth chapter of his Jewish Antiquities. From this account it appears, that Herod the Tetrarch was then actually engaged in a war with Aretas, a king of Arabia Petræa, whose daughter had been married to Herod, but who returned to her father, in consequence of Herod's ill treatment. Aretas therefore determined to invade the territory of Herod: and Herod marched to meet him. Now the army of Herod in marching from Galilee to the confines of Arabia Petræa, must have passed through the country, where John was baptizing: and accordingly we find in the account of Josephus, that the place of John's imprisonment was Machærus, a fortress on the eastern side of the Jordan. It further appears from the same account, that this fortress was on the borders of the country subject to Aretas; and this circumstance again explains the march of Herod's army into the neighbourhood of the Jordan. Here then we find a very remarkable coincidence between the expressions used by the Evangelists, and the actual state of things. The soldiers, who came to John while he was preaching in the country about the Jordan, were soldiers of Herod the Tetrarch, soldiers then in actual service: and St. Luke has accordingly

employed an expression which *denotes* such actual service. Now, if this Gospel, instead of being written by St. Luke, had been fabricated in a later age, the fabricator would hardly have *known*, that the soldiers who came to John the Baptist, were soldiers in actual service, though the knowledge of it was familiar to a *contemporary* author. On the other hand, if (what is certainly *possible*) he had learnt the fact from the Antiquities of Josephus, and used a suitable expression to give his work the *colour* of authenticity, he would have taken care to make the coincidence *apparent*, or his object would not have been attained. But the coincidence, though perfect when discovered, is *not* apparent. It resulted from knowledge, which was *familiar* to the author ; and he had no *inducement* to make a display of it, *because* it was familiar to him. A coincidence so perfect, and at the same time so concealed, was never discovered in a spurious production.—The expression used by St. Mark leads to the same conclusion. The person dispatched by Herod with the order, that John the Baptist should be beheaded, was a person employed in military service, because Herod was at the head of his army, then marching against Aretas. And St. Mark has accordingly used an expression, in speaking of that person, which *denotes* a military character. The coincidence is very remark-

able, though it does not appear on the face of the narrative. And it does *not* appear on the face of the narrative, because it is the coincidence of *truth*, not the coincidence of *design*. Further, on comparing the account of Josephus with that of St. Mark, we perceive why *Herodias* was present at an entertainment, which (as appears from the preceding statement) must have been given, while Herod was engaged in war. Herodias was the *cause* of the war. It was on her account, that the daughter of Aretas, the wife of Herod, was compelled by ill-treatment to take refuge with her father. And as the war, which Aretas had undertaken, was undertaken to obtain redress for his daughter, Herodias had a peculiar interest in accompanying Herod, even when he was marching to battle. No spurious productions could bear so rigid a test, as that which has been here applied to the narratives of St. Mark and Luke.

Let us now take an example from the Acts of the Apostles. At the beginning of the twenty-seventh chapter, the author relates, that when St. Paul was sent from Cæsarea to Rome, he was with the other prisoners committed to the care of Julius, an officer of the Augustan Cohort, that is a Roman Cohort, which had the honour of bearing the name of the Emperor. Now it appears from

the account, which Josephus has given in his second Book on the Jewish War,* that when Felix was Procurator of Judæa, the Roman garrison at Cæsarea was *chiefly* composed of soldiers who were natives of *Syria*. But it also appears, as well from the same book,† as from the twentieth book of his Antiquities,‡ that a small body of *Roman* soldiers was stationed there at the same time, and that this body of Roman soldiers was dignified with the title of ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ or Augustan, the same Greek word being employed by Josephus, as by the author of the Acts of the Apostles. This select body of Roman soldiers had been employed by Cumanus, who immediately preceded Felix in the Procuratorship of Judea, for the purpose of quelling an insurrection.§ And when Festus, who succeeded Felix, had occasion to send prisoners from Cæsarea to Rome, he would of course entrust them to the care of an officer belonging to this select corps. Even *here* then we have a coincidence, which is worthy of notice; a coincidence, which we should never have discovered, without consulting the writings of Josephus. But, that

* Bell. Jud. lib. 2. cap. xiii. §. 7. Tom. II. p. 178. ed. Havercamp.

† Cap. xii. §. 5. p. 174.

‡ Antiq. Jud. lib. 20. cap. vi. Tom. I. p. 967. ed. Havercamp.

§ Ib. ib.

which is *most* worthy of notice, is the circumstance, that this select body of soldiers bore the title of Augustan. This title was known of course to St. Luke, who accompanied St. Paul from Cæsarea to Rome. But, that, in the time of the Emperor Nero, the garrison of Cæsarea, which consisted chiefly of Syrian soldiers, contained also a small body of Roman soldiers, and that they were dignified by the epithet Augustan, are circumstances so minute, that no impostor of a later age would have known them. And they prove incontestably, that the Acts of the Apostles could have been written only by a person in the situation of St. Luke.

I will add only one more example of coincidence, which is so much the more remarkable, because though it is in all respects complete, it lies at the same time so concealed, as to have excited the suspicion of an error, which suspicion has been finally removed by the discovery of a Greek coin. In the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the author, describing the transactions of St. Paul in Cyprus, gives to Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor of that island, a Greek title, which was applied only to those governors of provinces, who were invested with

proconsular dignity,* And on the supposition, that Cyprus was not a province of this description, it has been inferred, and inferred even by Grotius, that the title given to Sergius Paulus in the Acts of the Apostles, was a title which did not properly belong to him. A passage indeed has been quoted from Dion Cassius, who in the fifty-fourth book of his Roman History, † speaking of the governors of Cyprus and some other Roman provinces, applies to them the same title which is applied to Sergius Paulus in the Acts of the Apostles. But as Dion Cassius is speaking of several Roman provinces at the same time, one of which was certainly governed by a Proconsul, it has been supposed, that for the sake of brevity, he used one term for all of them, whether it applied to all of them or not. That Cyprus however ought not to be excepted, and that the title which he employed as well as St. Luke really *did* belong to the Roman governors of Cyprus, appears from the inscription on a Greek coin, belonging to Cyprus itself, and struck in the very age, in which Sergius Paulus was governor of that island. It was struck in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, whose head and name are on the face of it: and in the reign of Claudius Cæsar St. Paul visited Cyprus. It was a coin belonging to the

* This title is ἀνθύπατος.

† Page 523, ed. Hanovix 1606.

people of that island, as appears from the word **KYPIQN** on the reverse. And though not struck, while **Sergius Paulus** himself was governor, it was struck, as appears from the inscription on the reverse, in the time of **Proclus**, who was *next* to **Sergius Paulus** in the government of that island. And on this coin the same title **ANΘYHATOE** is given to **Proclus**, which is given by **St. Luke** to **Sergius Paulus**. An engraving of this coin may be seen in the plate, which belongs to the 106th page of **Havercamp's** edition of the **Thesaurus Morellianus**. And the coincidence, which it shews, is of that description, that it is sufficient of itself to establish the authenticity of the work in which the coincidence is found.

Nor is it merely in the historical books of the New Testament, that we find coincidences, which argue the authenticity of the books, in which they are discovered. In the **Epistles of St. Paul** we find perpetual allusions to places, persons, events, and circumstances, which may likewise be traced in the **Acts of the Apostles**. Now if those **Epistles** had been forgeries in the name of **St. Paul**, the impostor would either have confined himself to doctrines, avoiding altogether such allusions, as, if found to be incorrect, might lead to a detection : or if he possessed the **Acts of the Apostles**, and in

fabricating the Epistles was thus *enabled* to make the allusions in the latter correspond with the transactions in the former, the coincidence between the allusions and the transactions would have been every where rendered apparent. But the allusions in the Epistles of St. Paul, though always found to be exact, as soon as they are discovered, are in general so little apparent that various combinations are necessary, before we can see the coincidence. Those Epistles therefore possess the true internal marks of authenticity. It is unnecessary to give examples from the Epistles of St. Paul, because they have been numerously given, and satisfactorily explained in that excellent work the *Horæ Paulinæ*.

Let us now consider the internal evidence afforded by the *peculiar language* of the Greek Testament. It is written in a dialect, which was never used by persons born and educated in any part of Greece. It is such a dialect, as would be used by persons, who were *educated* in a country, where Chaldee or Syriac was spoken as the vernacular tongue, but who acquired also a knowledge of Greek, by frequent intercourse with strangers. Now this was precisely the situation of the Apostles and Evangelists : and we find accordingly, that their Greek is perpetually mixed with oriental

idioms. It is no objection to this argument, that Josephus, the Jewish historian, has written in Greek of a *different* description. A man of *refined* education *may* obtain the power of writing in a foreign language with as much correctness, as the natives themselves. But the writers of the Greek Testament were men in *humble* stations, who never *sought* to obtain an exemption from the dialect, they had once acquired. They were concerned with facts, and with doctrines : and if these were *correctly stated*, the purity of their diction appeared to them a matter of no importance. It is true, that one of them was a man of erudition, and moreover born at Tarsus. But if St. Paul was *born* at Tarsus, he was *educated* at Jerusalem : and his erudition was the erudition of a Jewish, not of a Grecian school.

The language therefore of the Greek Testament is precisely such as we might *expect* from the persons, to whom the several parts of it are ascribed. But we may go still further, and assert, not only that that the language of the Greek Testament *accords* with the situation of the persons, to whom it is ascribed, but that it *could not* have been used by any person, or persons, who were in a different situation from that of the Apostles and Evangelists. It was necessary to

have lived in the first century, and to have been educated in Judæa, or in Galilee, or in some adjacent country, to be *enabled* to write such a compound language as that of the Greek Testament. Unless some oriental dialect had been *familiar* to the persons, who wrote the several books of the New Testament, they would not have been *able* to write that particular kind of Greek, by which those books are distinguished from every classic author. Nor would this kind of language have appeared in the several books of the New Testament, even though the writers had lived in Judæa, unless they had lived also in the same age with the Apostles and Evangelists. Judæa itself could not have produced in the *second* century the compositions, which we find in the New Testament. The destruction of Jerusalem and the total subversion of the Jewish state, introduced new forms and new relations, as well in language, as in policy. The language therefore of a fabrication attempted in the second century would have borne a different character from that of writings composed in the same country *before* the destruction of Jerusalem. And even if the dialect of a former age could have been successfully *imitated*, no inhabitant of Judæa in the second century would have made the attempt. The *Jews*, who remained in that country, will

hardly be suspected of such a fabrication. And the only *Christians* who remained there in the second century were the Nazarenes and the Ebionites. But the Nazarenes and the Ebionites used only *one* Gospel, and that Gospel was in Hebrew. They will hardly be suspected therefore of having forged Greek Gospels. Nor can they be suspected of having forged Greek Epistles, especially as the Epistles of St. Paul were *rejected* by the Ebionites, not indeed as spurious, but as containing doctrines at variance with their peculiar tenets. But if *Judea* could not have produced in the second century such writings as we find in the New Testament, no *other* country could have produced them. For the Christians of the second century, who lived where Greek was the vernacular language, though their dialect might differ from the dialect of Athens, never used a dialect, in which oriental phraseology was so mingled with Greek words, as we find in the New Testament. The language therefore clearly shews, that it could not have been written in any other age, than in the first century, nor by any other persons, than by persons in the situation of the Apostles and Evangelists.

We must not indeed forget, that two books of the New Testament were originally written in

Hebrew, namely, the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistle to the Hebrews. But if the arguments, which have been used in regard to language, do not apply to them *immediately*, those arguments apply to them *indirectly*, and with no inconsiderable force. If those arguments shew that the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and that Gospel is a translation, it follows *a fortiori*, that the *original* was written before that period. And if those arguments further shew, that the Greek Gospel of St. Matthew was written by a person similarly situated with St. Matthew, we must conclude, either that the translation was made by St. Matthew himself (and there are instances of the same author writing the same work in two different languages) or that the translator was so *connected* with the author, as to give to the translation the value of an original. The Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew was retained by the Hebrew Christians of Palestine, and still existed though with various interpolations, in the fourth century. But the Greek Gospel was necessarily adopted by the Greek Christians: it was so adopted from the earliest ages: and it is no less the Gospel of St. Matthew, than the Gospel, which St. Matthew wrote in Hebrew. Similar remarks

apply to the Epistle, which was written by St. Paul to the Hebrews.

Let us now consider the language of the Greek Testament in another relation than that of *dialect*. Let us consider it in reference to the *style* or the *manner* of writing, which is different in different books. In the historical books of the New Testament we find the simplicity of writers, who were more intent upon things, than upon words : we find men of plain education, honestly relating what they knew, without attempting to adorn their narratives by any elegance or grace of diction. And this is precisely the kind of writing, which we should expect from the persons, to whom those books are ascribed. In the Epistles of St. Paul we find a totally different manner ; but again it is precisely such as we should *expect* from St. Paul. His arguments, though irresistible, are frequently devoid of method : in the *strength* of the reasoning the regularity of the *form* is overlooked. Though occasional reference is made to Greek *poets*, we trace in none of his Epistles the characters of Greek *philosophy*. The erudition there displayed is the erudition of a learned Jew ; the argumentation there displayed, is the argumentation of a Jewish convert to

Christianity confuting his brethren on their own ground. Who is there, that does not recognise in this description the Apostle, who was born at Tarsus, but educated at the feet of Gamaliel?

If we further compare the language of the New Testament with the temper and disposition of the writers, to whom the several books of it are ascribed, we shall again find a correspondence, which implies, that those books are *justly* ascribed to them. The character of the disciple, whom Jesus loved, is every where impressed on the writings of St. John. Widely different is the character impressed on the writings of St. Paul: but it is equally accordant with the character of the writer. Gentleness and kindness were characteristic of St. John: and these qualities characterize his writings. Zeal and animation marked every where the *conduct* of St. Paul: and these are the qualities, which are every where discernible in the *writings* ascribed to him.

It is now unnecessary to allege any further arguments, to prove the authenticity of the New Testament. The *internal* marks of authenticity, which have been described in the progress of this Lecture, are so numerous, so various, and some of them so extraordinary, that they never *could*

have been discovered in spurious productions. And if to this *internal* evidence we add the weight of that *external* evidence, which was given in the two preceding Lectures, we have such an accumulation of proof, as establishes the authenticity of the New Testament, beyond the possibility of doubt.





A
COURSE OF LECTURES,
CONTAINING
A DESCRIPTION AND SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT
OF THE
SEVERAL BRANCHES OF DIVINITY:
ACCOMPANIED WITH
AN ACCOUNT BOTH OF THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORS,
AND OF THE PROGRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN MADE AT
DIFFERENT PERIODS,
IN
Theological Learning.

BY
HERBERT MARSH, D. D. F. R. S. & F. A. S.
LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH,
AND MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

PART VI.
On the Credibility of the New Testament.

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LECTURE XXVII.

THE Authenticity of the New Testament having been established in the Lectures, which I gave on a former occasion, I now enter on a subject of equal importance, the Credibility of the New Testament. The two subjects, though closely connected, are in themselves distinct. The question of authorship is one thing: the question of truth is another. As a history may be true, though the author is unknown, so the authorship may be certain, and yet the history be doubtful. From the fact, that a book, ascribed to an ancient author, is *justly* ascribed to him, we cannot argue to the truth of its contents without intermediate links in the chain of our reasoning. And, though the process, by which we go from the first to the second, is in some cases easier, than in others, it is in all cases necessary to establish the latter by a separate and independent proof.

The meaning of the term 'authentic', as used in these Lectures, has been already explained.

on a former occasion, and may be easily inferred from the observations, which have just been made. But to remove all danger of mistake, in regard to a word which is variously used, I will again explain the different applications of it, and again assign the reason for preferring that sense, which is here ascribed to it. While some writers use the term 'authentic' as synonymous with 'genuine', there are other writers, who distinguish the terms, by using the epithet 'genuine' for books written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, and applying the term 'authentic' in those cases only, where such books are likewise entitled to credit. When the term 'authentic' is used in this latter sense, it would be tautology to speak of authenticity *and* credibility : for authenticity then *includes* credibility. We must then speak of books, as being genuine and credible ; which comes to the same thing, as if we called them authentic and credible, when the terms in question are used as synonymous. Now every author, when a word is used in different senses, may adopt that, which he himself prefers, provided he gives a previous definition, and throughout the course of his reasoning *adheres* to that definition. But experience has shewn, that when the term authentic is professedly used in the *compound* sense of 'genuine and credible', men sometimes

forget this definition in the progress of their argument. When a book has been proved to be genuine, and therefore authentic in the sense of those who use the terms as synonymous, the argument may be pursued by others, who use the term 'authentic' in its compound sense. Hence the error may arise, that a book, which had been proved to be only genuine, is considered as a book, which had been proved to be both genuine and credible.

But no such confusion can arise if the term authentic is used in its plain and simple sense, as denoting nothing more, than that the book, to which we apply this epithet, was written by the person to whom it is ascribed. For this reason it is so used in these Lectures. In so using it, we are exempt from the danger of including more in the term, than the argument will allow. In every stage of our reasoning we shall be aware, that when the proof of Authenticity is ended, Credibility still remains to be proved.

In arguing on the books of the New Testament, the transition from Authenticity to Credibility, appears at first sight to be much easier, than when we argue about other books. In

regard to common books, however satisfactory the proof of authorship may be, there still may be room to doubt, whether the author is entitled to credit. But such doubts are excluded, when we know that the author was divinely inspired. Since then the Apostles and Evangelists wrote under the influence of divine inspiration, it seems to follow as a thing of course, that the writings ascribed to them are worthy of credit, as soon as we have shewn, that those writings are *justly* ascribed to them. Indeed the argument might be rendered still easier : we might with equal reason omit the proof of authenticity altogether. We might *begin* with the proposition, that the New Testament was divinely inspired : and then we should come *at once* to the conclusion of its credibility, without even moving the question, by whom the several books of it were written.

But this mode of reasoning, though it recommends itself by its great convenience, and has therefore not unfrequently been adopted, is attended with the same defect, as an attempt to prove a proposition in geometry by means of another proposition, which is itself dependent on the proposition to which we apply it. That all Scripture was written by inspiration is perfectly true. But we must *prove* the fact, before we

can *appeal* to it. And that proof can be obtained by no other means, than by arguments drawn from the New Testament itself ; arguments therefore which imply, that the New Testament is true. If therefore while we are *conducting* the proof, that the New Testament is true, we argue from a proposition, which is *dependent* on that truth, we prove premises by inferences as well as inferences by premises. That is, we prove nothing whatever.

The Credibility therefore of the New Testament must be established independently of its inspiration, or it cannot be established at all. But established it *may* be, and established on principles, superior to every objection.

The arguments for the Credibility of the New Testament may be referred to two general heads. We may argue from the character and situation of the writers to the credibility of their writings : or we may argue from the contents of the writings themselves. Now independently of divine inspiration, the character and situation of the persons, who wrote the several books of the New Testament afford a strong presumption that their record is true. And this presumption will be raised to positive proof, when we have considered the argu-

ments in detail. Equally convincing shall we find the arguments, which are drawn from the writings themselves; whether we compare the several parts of each single book, or compare one book with another, or compare the whole with other works of acknowledged credit. For the sake of perspicuity we must arrange the various arguments under their respective heads. And those, which are deduced from the character and situation of the writers, are entitled to our first consideration.

But before we can *apply* those arguments to the New Testament, it will be necessary to institute an inquiry, on the result of which the propriety of such application must entirely depend. When, for instance, we argue from the character and situation of St. John to the Credibility of his writings, we argue on the presumption, that the Gospel and the Epistles which we *now* possess as the works of St. John, are the *same* works with those, which were written by the Apostle. But ancient writings, which have descended to us in manuscript, must have been exposed to the danger of alterations, as well designed as accidental, to interpolations as well as to omissions. And such alterations *may* have been, unless we can prove the contrary, committed to an extent, that the original work, under the hands of tran-

scribers, has gradually assumed a totally new form. Now it is evident, that when we argue from the character of a writer to the credibility of his writings, the argument can apply only to what was written by himself. And if the interpolations or alterations have been numerous, they may prevent the application of the argument altogether. That we may be enabled therefore to apply the argument to the books of the New Testament, we must previously shew, that the books, which we now possess, as works of Apostles and Evangelists, are the *same* books, as those which were composed by Apostles and Evangelists. In other words, to the proof of the Authenticity of the New Testament we must add the proof of its Integrity.

But in the conduct of this proof we must not be expected to give more, than the nature of the subject admits. When the term 'Integrity' is applied to the New Testament, we must not understand it in so strict a sense, as if this Integrity could not be established, without a proof, that we have at present copies of the Greek Testament, which are in *every word* the same with the autographs of the sacred writers. We must not confound the notion of *integrity* with the notion of a *perfect text*. We may establish the

former, though we may fail in establishing the latter.

No one, who is acquainted with the criticism of the Greek Testament, will contend, that among the Greek manuscripts, which we now possess, there is *any one* which contains either the Gospels or the Epistles precisely in the *same words*, from the beginning to the end, which were used by the writers themselves. In the multiplicity of readings only *one* can be the genuine reading; and this genuine reading may be contained, sometimes in one copy, sometimes in another. We must collect therefore from *all*, and by the rules of criticism determine, which among the various readings has the strongest claim. But in this critical employment there will always be room for diversity of opinion: and from the imperfection of human judgement, we shall never attain an unerring result. Our endeavours therefore to form a copy of the Greek Testament, in which there shall be *no* deviation from the autographs of the sacred writers, in other words, our endeavours to form a *perfect text* of the Greek Testament can never be entirely successful. We may approximate, and we *have* approximated as nearly to a perfect text, as under all circumstances can be justly expected. But something will ever

be wanting to render the coincidence complete between the autographs and the best of copies, which we can form at present.

Widely different is the conclusion to which we shall come, when we argue for the general *Integrity* of the New Testament; namely, when the term is used in that sense, in which alone it is necessary to use it, for the purpose of establishing the *Credibility* of the New Testament. If the *facts* originally recorded, and the *doctrines* originally delivered in the New Testament, are the same in the existing copies, we have all the integrity which is wanted to make the New Testament the basis of our faith and morals. Though the criticism therefore of the Greek Testament is on various accounts a matter of high importance, and has accordingly been treated as a primary branch of theology, we must not suffer the imperfections, to which all human exertions are exposed, to influence our reasoning upon subjects, to which those imperfections do not apply. That Integrity, which is necessary to establish Credibility, does not depend on a variation of words, if there is no variation in the sense. It will be sufficient therefore, if we can prove, that the New Testament has descended to us, *upon the whole*, in the same state, in which it was originally

written; and that we may justly confide in every thing which relates to facts and to doctrines. The remaining part of this Lecture therefore shall be employed in the proof of such Integrity.

In the first place we may observe, that a general corruption of the sacred text was in itself impracticable. If one party was inclined, either to omit what opposed their peculiar tenets, or to insert what might afford them additional support, there was always some other party, both ready and willing to detect the fraud. And even if they persevered in altering their *own* manuscripts, they had not the power of altering the manuscripts in the hands of their opponents. Though the corruption therefore might be partial, it could not become general. Nor must we forget that the books, which compose the Greek Testament, have been transcribed, beyond all comparison, more frequently than the works of any other Greek author. And it is evident that the difficulty of corrupting the Greek manuscripts must have increased with every increase in their number. Though it cannot be denied, therefore, that there is stronger temptation to alter a work, which relates to doctrines, than to alter a work, which relates to matters indifferent, the impedi-

ments to the alteration of the Greek manuscripts were still more powerful than the temptation. The Gospels, which were written in different places, and the Epistles, which were addressed to different communities, were multiplied in copies, dispersed in Palestine and Egypt, in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. Under such circumstances a general corruption of the Greek manuscripts was a thing impossible. For it could not have been effected without a union of sentiment, which never existed, nor without a general combination, which could not have been formed, before Christianity had received a civil establishment. But if such a combination had been practicable, it could not have been carried into effect, without becoming a matter of general notoriety. And ecclesiastical historians are *silent* on such a combination. The *silence* of history is indeed no argument against the truth of a fact established by induction, if the fact was such that it could not be generally known. But the silence of history is important in reference to a fact, which if it ever existed, *must* have been a subject of general notoriety. Whatever corruptions therefore may have taken place in the Greek manuscripts, those corruptions must have been confined to a few, and could not, by any possibility, have been extended to them all.

The impediments to a general corruption were further augmented by the ancient versions of the New Testament, which in general accord as to facts and doctrines with the Greek manuscripts. If therefore the *Greek* manuscripts could have been generally corrupted, it is quite incomprehensible how such corruptions could have been diffused among all the manuscripts of all the ancient versions, which were dispersed throughout the Roman empire; the Syriac, and Armenian in Asia, the Coptic, the Sahidic, and Ethiopic in Eastern Africa, to which we must add the ancient manuscripts of the Latin version, dispersed over Italy, Gaul, and Western Africa. Nor are the impediments already enumerated the sole impediments to a general corruption. It must have extended also to the quotations from the Greek Testament, which are contained in the voluminous writings of the Greek Fathers. The mutual and general check, therefore, which was afforded by the joint operation of manuscripts, fathers, and versions, must have preserved to us the New Testament in the same state, upon the whole, which was given to it by the writers themselves.

But there is another argument, in favour of the position, that the manuscripts of the Greek

Testament have descended to us without any material alteration, either in facts or in doctrines. The Greek manuscripts, which we now possess, were received, not through any channel, which came from the ancient heretics, but from the orthodox members of the ancient Greek Church. And this Church maintained the doctrine of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, and other leading articles of the Christian faith, in common with the Church to which we ourselves belong. And though the Greek Church could not guard against those accidental mistakes, which unavoidably arise from a multiplication of written copies, we have sufficient reason to believe, that the ancient Greek Church abstained, with the most scrupulous and conscientious exactness, from every wilful corruption of the sacred text. We cannot have a stronger proof of this assertion, than the conduct of the ancient Greek Church, in regard to the seventh verse in the fifth chapter of St. John's first Epistle. That verse, which is wanting in the most *ancient* manuscripts even of the *Latin* version, and was no more known to Augustin, than it was to Chrysostom, was gradually introduced into the Latin Vulgate by the Church of Rome. But it was never admitted by the ancient Greek Church. Not a single *Greek* manuscript was ever known to contain the

passage, till after the invention of printing : and that solitary manuscript, which *does* contain it, was certainly not written in Greece.¹ Now the conduct of the ancient Greek church, in regard to that memorable passage, shews its conscientious regard for the purity of the sacred text. And hence we may safely conclude, that the manuscripts of the New Testament, which we have received from that Church, have descended to us untainted by wilful corruptions, either in matters of fact, or in matters of doctrine.

I am aware indeed, that this argument, and not only *this* argument, but *every* argument for the Integrity of the New Testament, which has been used in this Lecture, must fall at once to the ground, if it be true, that the passage in question proceeded from the pen of St. John. If that passage existed in Greek manuscripts

¹ By Erasmus it was called Codex Britannicus, from the country where it was found, and where it was probably written. Having belonged to one Froy, a Franciscan Friar, it came many years afterwards into the hands of Dr. Montfort, whence it acquired the name of Codex Montfortianus. Of Dr. Montfort the MS. was purchased by Archbishop Usher, with whose other MSS. it was removed to Trinity College, Dublin, whence it is now called the Dublin MS.—The Codex Ravianus, which used to be quoted with the Codex Montfortianus, has been abandoned since the discovery, that it is a copy of a printed edition.

anterior to those which have descended to the present age, and was expunged by adversaries of the doctrine which it contains, the extinction of the passage must have been *universal*. It must have affected the manuscripts in the hands of the orthodox, no less than the manuscripts belonging to the heretics. It must have equally affected the manuscripts of the ancient versions. It must have equally affected the quotations of the Greek Fathers, who quote the sixth and eighth verses in *succession*, without the words which begin with ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ and end with ἐν τη γῇ.² Now if it was really possible, that such corruption could in spite of every impediment be thus generally extended, what becomes of all the arguments, which have been employed in this Lecture to prove the general Integrity of the New Testament? Those arguments are founded on the supposed impossibility of doing that, which *must*

² Bengelii Appar. Crit. p. 458, edd. 2^{da}. Wetstenii Libelli ad Crisin. N. T. ed. Semler, p. 91: and the Note of Matthäi to 1 John v. 7. When the Greek Fathers quote the words of the 8th verse with the words that precede it, they quote in the following manner. Οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, καὶ τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια· ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες, τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσι. In this passage there is consistency of reasoning: and certainly no insertion is wanted, to improve the text of St. John.

have been done, if the passage in question *originally* existed in Greek manuscripts.

If it be true in regard to that passage, that the ancient Greek manuscripts, which have descended to the present age, with the works of the ancient Greek Fathers, and the manuscripts of the ancient versions, the oldest of the Latin version not excepted, have descended to us in a mutilated state, there is an end to that security, which is derived from their mutual agreement, for the Integrity of the New Testament in all other places. And we are brought at length into this dilemma : either to relinquish a part, or abandon the whole.³

Whether the passage be genuine, or not, the doctrine of the Trinity stands, in either case, unshaken. For the sake therefore of the passage itself, I should think it unnecessary to make another remark on it. But if the defence of that passage requires the sacrifice of a principle, without which we cannot maintain the *general* Integrity of the New Testament, it then behoves us to

³ I am here speaking in reference to the common printed editions. For 1 John v. 7. is *no* part of the Greek Original, as represented by the Greek MSS. and the Greek Fathers.

inquire, whether the passage *deserves* to be maintained, and maintained at so great a price.

Though every Library in Europe has been searched for Greek manuscripts containing the Catholic Epistles, there is only *one* Greek manuscript in which the passage has been found: and this solitary manuscript, as will presently appear, has no pretension to be numbered among the *ancient* Greek manuscripts. As *all* other Greek manuscripts, which are now extant, are destitute of the passage, it is of less importance to know the precise number of those which have been quoted by *name*, especially as they do not constitute the whole number. They amount however to not less than ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO. The Greek Fathers have *never* quoted the passage, which they certainly would have done, if it had existed in *their* manuscripts. Now the manuscripts which were used by Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria, could not have been written later than the *second* century. The manuscripts used by Origen, could not have been written later than the *third* century. The manuscripts used by the Greek Fathers, who attended the Nicene Council, could not have been written later than the *fourth* century. In this manner we may prove that the Greek manuscripts in *every* century were destitute.

of the passage, till we come to the period when the oldest of our *existing* manuscripts were written. Further, the passage is wanting, not only in the manuscripts of all other ancient versions,⁴ beside the Latin : it is wanting also in the most ancient manuscripts of the Latin version itself. Latin manuscripts, which have not the passage in the text, are still preserved to the amount of more than fifty.⁵ Some of them indeed have the passage in the margin, added by a later hand ; but it is the reading of the *text*, which constitutes the reading of the *manuscript*. And as the oldest Latin manuscripts were destitute of the passage, so it was never *quoted* by the Latin Fathers during the four first centuries.⁶

4. I designedly use the expression '*manuscripts of all other ancient versions*': for it has been inserted in *printed* editions of the Syriac and Armenian Versions in opposition to the Syriac and Armenian *manuscripts*. See Preface to my Letters to Archdeacon Travis, Notes 8, 9, 10, 11.

5. Forty was the number of which I gave an account in the 13th Note of the Preface to my Letters to Archdeacon Travis, which were published in 1795. But it appears from Griesbach's last edition, published in 1806, that many more Latin MSS. have been discovered, which have not the passage in the text.

6. An exception has been claimed for Cyprian, who lived in the middle of the third century. Now there is really no pretext for saying that Cyprian *quoted* 1 John v. 7. The utmost that *can* be said is, that he *referred* to it: and it will presently appear, that even in *so* saying we should be mistaken. The words of Cyprian, in his Treatise De Unitate Ecclesiae,

on

At the *end* of the fourth century, the celebrated Latin Father Augustin, who wrote ten Treatises on the first Epistle of St. John, in all of which we seek in vain for the *seventh* verse of the fifth chapter, was induced in his controversy with Maximin to compose a gloss upon the eighth verse. Augustin gives it professedly as a gloss upon the words of the eighth verse, and shews by his own reasoning that the seventh verse did not then exist.⁷ The high cha-

on which so much stress has been laid, are as follows. Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus. Et iterum de Patre et Filio, et Spiritu sancto, scriptum est: Et hi tres unum sunt. The passage is so worded in Bishop Pearson's edition, Tom. I. p. 109. but *manuscripts* of Cyprian have *tres unum sunt*, without *hi*.—The first quotation which Cyprian has here made is, Ego et Pater unum sumus, which is taken from John x. 30. His second quotation is *hi tres unum sunt*, or as manuscripts have it, *tres unum sunt*. For the words 'de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est' are Cyprian's *own* words, and can in no sense be called a *quotation*. Since then the words which Cyprian has *quoted* from the place in question are not only words of the *eighth* verse, but are quoted by *Augustin* from the eighth verse, as will presently appear, the quotation of those words alone is no proof that they were taken from the seventh verse. But the final clause of the eighth verse relates to spiritus, aqua, et sanguis; whereas Cyprian declares, that the *tres unum sunt*, which *he* has quoted, was written de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu sancto. Could Cyprian have argued thus if he had quoted from the eighth verse? Undoubtedly he might, as will appear from the following Note.

7. Augustin in his Treatise Contra Maximinum Arianum, lib.

racter of Augustin in the Latin Church soon gave celebrity to his gloss ; and in a short time it was

lib. ii. cap. 22, (Tom. VIII. col. 725, ed. Benedict.) thus quotes the words of the eighth verse, 'Tres sunt testes, spiritus, et aqua, et sanguis ; et tres unum sunt.' He then makes various remarks on the words, spiritus, aqua, sanguis, and proceeds thus. Si vero ea, quæ his *significata* sunt velimus inquirere, non absurde occurrit ipsa Trinitas, quæ unus, solus, verus, summus est Deus, Pater et Filius, et Spiritus sanctus, de quibus verissime *dici potuit*, 'Tres sunt testes et tres unum sunt' : ut nomine spiritûs *significatum* accipiamus Deum Patrem—nomine autem sanguinis Filium—et nomine aquæ Spiritum sanctum. The gloss which Augustin here puts on the eighth verse, very clearly shews, that he knew nothing of the seventh verse, which appears also from the fact that he has never quoted that verse. Facundus, another African Bishop, to whom the seventh verse was still unknown, quotes the eighth verse at full length (lib. i. cap. 3, p. 14, ed. Sirmond.), and then gives the gloss which Augustin had made on it. For after the words spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hi tres unum sunt, he thus delivers what he supposes to be St. John's *meaning* : in spiritu *significans* Patrem,—in aqua vero Spiritum sanctum *significans*—in sanguine vero Filium *significans*. Let us now consider the *terms*, which are employed by Augustin and Facundus, when they state their interpretation of the eighth verse. Augustin having observed, that if we inquire into the *meaning* of spiritus, aqua et sanguis, the Trinity itself not unaptly occurs, as consisting of three persons, immediately adds, de quibus verissime *dici potuit*, 'Tres sunt testes, et tres unum sunt.' Facundus, instead of *dici potuit*, says plainly *dicat*. He says, that St. John in the eighth verse *speaks* of the Trinity. His own words are, Joannes Apostolus in Epistola sua de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto *sic dicat*. He then quotes the whole of the *eighth* verse, but not a syllable of the seventh. Now when Facundus says that St. John in the eighth verse *speaks* of the Trinity, he uses the same kind of language, which Cyprian had used, who in quoting tres unum sunt (which Augustin quotes from the

generally adopted. It appeared indeed under different forms ; but it was still the gloss of Augustin, though variously modified. The gloss having once obtained credit in the Latin Church, the possessors of Latin manuscripts began to note it in the margin, by the side of the eighth verse.

the eighth verse) says that it was *written* of the Trinity: de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu sancto, *scriptum est*. The *SCRIPTVM EST* of Cyprian is not at all stronger than the *DICIT* of Facundus. It can make no difference in this case, whether we say *scriptum est*, or *dictum est*. Yet Facundus was expressly commenting on the *eighth* verse. Consequently we are not warranted to conclude that Cyprian meant the seventh verse. And it is really incredible that the seventh verse should have existed and have been known to Cyprian, and yet have remained unknown (as it certainly did) to Augustin. But all doubts on this question have been long since removed by Facundus himself, in the very chapter where he quotes the eighth verse. In confirmation of the gloss upon that verse, he appeals to the authority of Cyprian, and says that Cyprian *understands* those words of the Trinity, namely. the words spiritus, aqua, et sanguis. Facundus having quoted spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hi tres unum sunt, a second time in the same chapter, and having observed that some men refused to understand these words of the Trinity, immediately adds, quod tamen Joannis Apostoli Testimonium B. Cyprianus, Carthaginensis antistes et martyr,—de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto dictum *intelligit*. Ait enim, ‘Dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre et Filio et Spiritu sancto scriptum est, Et hi tres unum sunt’. Here then Facundus declares, not only that Cyprian *understands* the eighth verse of the Trinity, but in support of his assertion appeals to that very passage in the works of Cyprian, which in modern times has been taken for a proof, that Cyprian was speaking of the seventh verse.

Hence the oldest of those Latin manuscripts, which have the passage in the margin, have it in a different hand from that of the text. In later manuscripts we find margin and text in the same hand; for transcribers did not venture immediately to move it into the *body* of the text, though in some manuscripts it is *interlined*, but interlined by a later hand. After the eighth century the insertion became general. For Latin manuscripts written *after* that period have generally, though not always, the passage in the body of the text. Further, when the seventh verse made its first appearance in the Latin manuscripts, it appeared in as many different forms, as there were forms to the gloss upon the eighth verse.⁸ And though it now *precedes* the eighth verse, it *followed* the eighth verse, at its first insertion, as a gloss would naturally follow the text, upon which it was made.⁹ It is not therefore matter of mere conjecture, that the seventh verse originated in a Latin gloss upon the eighth

8. The various forms, in which the seventh verse made its first appearance in the Latin MSS. may be seen on consulting the notes of Erasmus, Mill, and Sabatier to 1 John v. 7: Simon Hist. des Versions, chap. ix. and Porson's 6th Letter.

9. Bengelii Appar. Crit. p. 467. ed. 2^{da}. It is so placed also by Vigilius Tapsensis, who quotes thus. Tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in terra, aqua, sanguis, et caro; et tres in nobis sunt: et tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in cœlo Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus sanctus, et hi tres unum sunt.

verse: it is an historical fact, supported by evidence, which cannot be resisted.

But many centuries elapsed before the passage was exhibited in Greek. The first Greek writer who has given it, is Manuel Calecas, who lived as late as the *fourteenth* century. And we need not wonder at finding the passage in *his* works, as Calecas was a convert to the Church of Rome. In the fifteenth century the passage was quoted by Bryennius, who was likewise so attached to the Church of Rome, that he quoted *other* readings of the Vulgate which are not found in the Greek manuscripts.¹⁰

At length, in the sixteenth century a *Greek manuscript* of the New Testament appeared with 1 John v. 7. Its original appellation was Codex Britannicus: but it is now called the Dublin manuscript.¹¹ It made its first appearance about the year 1520: and that the manuscript had just been written, when it first appeared, is highly probable, because it appeared at a critical juncture, and its appearance answered a particular

10. See the above quoted Preface, p. 17.

11. That the Dublin MS. is the same with the Codex Britannicus is proved in my Notes to the second volume of Michaelis' Introduction, under the article Codex Montfortianus.

purpose.¹² But whether written for the occasion or not, it could not have been written *very long* before the sixteenth century. For this manuscript has the Latin Chapters, though the κεφαλαια of Eusebius are likewise noted. Now the *Latin* Chapters were foreign to the usage of the *Greek* Church, before the introduction of printed editions, in which the Latin Chapters were adopted, as well for the Greek as for the Latin Testament. Whatever Greek manuscripts therefore were written with Latin Chapters, were written in the *West* of Europe, where the Latin Chapters were in use. They were written by the Greeks, or by the descendants of those Greeks, who fled into the West of Europe, after the taking of

12. Erasmus had published two editions of the Greek Testament, one in 1516, the other in 1519, both of which were without the words, that begin with ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ and end with ἐν τῇ γῇ. This *omission* as it was called by those who paid more deference to the Latin translation than to the Greek original, exposed Erasmus to much censure, though in fact the complaint was for *non-addition*. Erasmus therefore very properly answered, addendi de meo quod Græcis deest, provinciam non suscepam. He promised however, that, though he could not insert in a Greek edition what he had never found in a Greek manuscript, he would insert the passage in his next edition, if in the mean time a Greek MS. could be discovered, which had the passage. In less than a year after that declaration, Erasmus was informed, that there was a Greek MS. in England, which contained the passage. At the same time a copy of the passage, as contained in that MS. was communicated to Erasmus: and Erasmus, as he had promised, inserted that copy in his next edition, which was published in 1522.

Constantinople, and who then began to divide their manuscripts according to the usage of the country, in which they fixed their abode.¹³ The Dublin manuscript therefore, if not written for the purpose to which it was applied in the third edition of Erasmus,¹⁴ could hardly have been written more than fifty years before. And how widely those critics have erred in their conjectures, who have supposed that it was written so early as the twelfth century, appears from the fact, that the Latin Chapters were not *invented* till the thirteenth century.¹⁵ But the influence of the Church of Rome in the composition of the Dublin manuscript, is most conspicuous in the *text* of that manuscript, which is a servile imitation of the Latin Vulgate.

13. There are three Greek manuscripts with the Latin Chapters in our University Library, marked Hh. 6. 12. Kk. 5. 35. and Ll. 2. 13. That which is marked Ll. 2. 13. and is evidently the oldest of the three, was written at Paris, by Jerom of Sparta, for the use and at the expence of a person called Bodet, as appears from the subscription to it. Now Jerom of Sparta died at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

14. The third edition of Erasmus has 1 John v. 7. *precisely* in the words of the Dublin MS.

15. They were invented by Hugo de S. Caro, who died in 1262. The precise year, in which he divided the text of the Latin Vulgate into its present Chapters is not known. But as it appears from the Preface to the Cologne edition of his works, that he composed his Concordance about the year 1248, and his division of the Vulgate into the present Chapters was connected with that Concordance, it could not have been done

It will be sufficient to mention how it follows the Vulgate at the place in question. It not only agrees with the Vulgate, in the insertion of the seventh verse: it follows the Vulgate also at the end of the sixth verse, having *χριστός*, where all other Greek manuscripts have *πνεῦμα*: and in the eighth verse it omits the final clause, which had *never* been omitted in the Greek manuscripts, and was not omitted even in the *Latin* manuscripts before the thirteenth century.¹⁶ Such is the character of that solitary manuscript, which is opposed to the united evidence of all former manuscripts, including the Codex Vaticanus, and the Codex Alexandrinus.

It has been already observed, that when the passage first appeared in Latin, it appeared under various forms, though it subsequently acquired the permanent form, which it now retains in the Latin Vulgate. It appeared also under various forms, when first exhibited in Greek. The Dublin manuscript gives it in one form: Calecas and Bryennius in other forms: the Greek translation of the Acta Concilii Lateranensis again in another form.¹⁷ And the differences are exactly such as might be expected in different Greek translations

16. Here there is an additional proof, respecting the age of the Dublin MS.

of the same Latin original. Nor had it acquired a settled form, when introduced in our printed editions. The Complutensian editors gave it in one form: Erasmus in another form: Robert Stephens again in another form. Such is the origin and progress of that celebrated passage, which men of learning and talent have taken for the genuine production of St. John.

It is true, that in the opinion of some critics internal evidence may be discovered in this passage, which they think sufficient to overturn the external evidence. Now internal evidence may shew, that a passage is *spurious*, though external evidence is in its favour; for instance, if it contains allusions to things which did not exist in the time of the reputed author. But no internal evidence can prove a passage to be *genuine*, when external evidence is decidedly against it. A spurious passage may be fitted to the context, as well as a genuine passage. No arguments therefore from internal evidence, however ingenious they may appear, can outweigh the mass of external evidence, which applies to the case in question.¹⁸

18. One of the arguments from internal evidence is, that *ἐν τῇ γῇ* in the eighth verse implies that something had preceded with *ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ*. But they who argue in this manner forget, that *ἐν τῇ γῇ* is wanting in the Greek MSS. as well as *ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ*. Also in the oldest Latin MSS. the eighth

The sacrifice therefore of that principle, by which we defend the *general* Integrity of the New Testament, is a sacrifice to which the passage is not entitled. That important principle therefore remains unshaken : and the general Integrity of the New Testament is liable to no objection. That principle has been rescued from the danger, to which many incautious friends of Christianity have exposed it, by endeavouring inadvertently to defend a part at the expence of the whole.


But if any thing were still wanted to shew the justness of the reasoning which has been adopted in this Lecture, we might appeal to actual experience. If the Greek manuscripts had undergone any material alterations, the facts and doctrines of the New Testament, as represented by the Greek Fathers, would not have accorded, as they do, with the present state of those manuscripts. And still less would those manuscripts accord as they do, with the words, which are quoted by Irenæus, and Clement of Alexandria, from Greek manuscripts, which could not have been written much later than the middle of the second century.

eighth verse is equally destitute of *in terra*, which was inserted for the very purpose of having something to correspond with *in cælo*, and shews how well the several parts of the interpolation have been fitted to each other.

It is true, that though the Greek manuscripts quoted by these ancient Fathers, could not have been written *much* later than the middle of the second century, they *may* have been of no earlier date. So far therefore, as we are enabled to institute an actual comparison, the proof of Integrity, which is founded on this comparison, carries us no higher, than the middle of the second century. Consequently, *this* proof, though very satisfactory as far as it goes, still leaves the Greek manuscripts exposed to the charge of corruption, in the interval which elapsed, between the age of the Apostles, and the middle of the second century. And this is precisely the period, which the adversaries of Christianity have assigned for their corruption. But here that important principle, which has been already defended, comes again to our assistance, and enables us to maintain the Integrity of the Greek manuscripts, where all other arguments would fail. Both the Gospels and the Epistles were originally delivered into the hands of those, who were *friends* of the Apostles and Evangelists. *Such* persons cannot be suspected of having wilfully corrupted the copies entrusted to their care. On the contrary, they must have been anxious to preserve those sacred records in their original purity. When transcripts had been multiplied, and some of them had fallen into the

hands of their adversaries, their anxiety to preserve the purity of those records, must have increased with every attempt to corrupt them. Let it be granted therefore that such attempts were made; and let us see, what must have been the consequence. The adversaries of the Christian faith, as it is taught in the Sacred Writings, may have endeavoured to rid themselves of passages, which opposed their peculiar tenets. And they *may* have had recourse to the desperate remedy of expunging such passages from their own manuscripts. But if they did so, they themselves must have known, that it *was* a desperate attempt. They could not imagine that the extinction of a passage in *their* manuscripts would operate as a sort of magic on the manuscripts possessed by their opponents. When Tertullian accused Marcion of having corrupted the text of St. Luke, can any one imagine that Tertullian was so absurd, as to introduce those corruptions into his *own* manuscripts? Since then we have received our manuscripts of the Greek Testament, not from the ancient heretics, but from the hands of the orthodox, our manuscripts of the Greek Testament must stand acquitted of the charge of having perpetuated corruptions introduced by adversaries of the orthodox faith.

Having thus vindicated the Integrity of the New Testament, I shall proceed in the next Lecture to the proof of its Credibility.



LECTURE XXVIII.

THE Integrity of the New Testament having been established in the last Lecture, we are now warranted to argue from the character of the writers to the Credibility of their writings. If we inquire into the character of the persons, who wrote the books of the New Testament, we shall find, that independently of their inspiration, which will be proved hereafter, when that branch of Theology can be *consistently* introduced, they possessed every qualification, which can be required of a writer, to make his writings *worthy* of credit. Let us begin with the historic books, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles : and in the first place let us consider the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John.

There are not *many* historians, who have themselves been witnesses of the events, on which they have written : and we are in general satisfied, if an historian does but faithfully repeat the information, which he has obtained from others.

Such histories are often written many centuries after the period of the events themselves ; yet if the materials of those histories are drawn from creditable sources, we do not withhold our assent to them. But St. Matthew and St. John were from the beginning both eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word. They not only saw and heard what was done and said by our Saviour : they themselves bore a part in the transactions which they have recorded.

It is true, that a writer may profess to record what he has seen and heard, profess to record even things in which he himself has borne a part, and yet that writer *may* produce a narrative, which is altogether fictitious. But though the thing is possible, we can in no case argue, that an apparently serious history is destitute of truth, unless we can shew, either that the writer had some *motive* to impose upon his readers, or that he himself was so weak and credulous as to be unable to distinguish truth from falsehood, or that the facts themselves are of that description, that no evidence can be sufficient to warrant our assent to them. The two first questions will be considered in the present Lecture, which relate to the character and situation of the sacred writers. And that the facts recorded, as well those which are

miraculous, as those which are of ordinary occurrence, are not incredible in themselves, will appear from the two next Lectures.

In the first place therefore let us ask, whether the Apostles *could* have any motive to deception in the propagation of the Christian Religion. The object of an impostor is always some advantage to *himself*. He deceives others, for the very purpose of turning their deception to his own account, whether the object which he contemplates, be the promotion of his profit, or of his power, or of his fame. But these are objects, which could not be contemplated by the Apostles. They sacrificed every earthly advantage to the cause, in which they were engaged. They forsook all, to follow their Lord and Master. It is true, that they fled from him, when he was conducted to the tribunal, which condemned him to death; whether influenced by personal fear, or by momentary doubts on the divine authority of a person, thus *apparently* abandoned by that Almighty Being, in whose name he had professed to act. But St. John, his beloved disciple, returned and followed him to the cross. Nor did the other Apostles, with the exception of the apostate Judas, withdraw themselves from the sacred cause. When Christ was risen from the dead, he again found the eleven gathered

together at Jerusalem, whither they returned after the ascension, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

The *sincerity* therefore of the Apostles rests on a foundation, which no argument can shake. Nor did they merely renounce all worldly *advantages*. They submitted to *persecutions*, such as no man would endure, except from a firm conviction, that he was propagating nothing but the truth. Nor were the sufferings, which they underwent, accidental or unforeseen. When the Founder of the new religion had suffered death upon the cross, his disciples could hardly expect to propagate that religion, without danger to themselves. Indeed they had been previously warned of the impending danger. If they have persecuted me (said our Saviour) they will also persecute you. Yet the Apostles persevered against all opposition, which was made both by Jews and by Gentiles. And they were prepared to sacrifice their lives, rather than abandon the cause, in which they were engaged.

In thus appealing to the sufferings, endured in the first instance by Christ himself, and then by his faithful disciples, I appeal to facts, which are not recorded in the New Testament alone.

That Christ himself suffered death under Pontius Pilate is recorded by Tacitus¹; and the same historian records the sufferings, which were endured by the early Christians. Similar testimony is given by his contemporary Suetonius². But it is almost unnecessary to produce *any* evidence for the persecution of the primitive Christians, when they were unavoidably exposed to it by the cause in which they were engaged. A religion directly opposed to the prejudices, both of the Jews and of the Gentiles, could not fail to draw on the early professors of it persecution, torture, and death. And the fortitude, with which they endured their sufferings, sufferings which nothing could have *induced*, or have *enabled* them to bear, but a firm conviction that they were suffering for the truth, is attested by the same Roman historians, who have recorded their persecutions. It is true, that even the Apostles did not all of them suffer martyrdom. Of the two Apostolic historians, St. Matthew and St. John, it is certain that St. John died a natural death, and it is uncertain whether the report of St. Matthew's martyrdom be true. But if men are *prepared* to suffer persecution even unto death, in attestation of the facts, which they record, and of the doctrines, which they maintain, their sincerity is suf-

1. Annal. XV. 44.

2. Claud. cap. 25. Nero, cap. 16.

ficiently proved, even though the punishment of death does not actually follow.

Having shewn that the Apostolic historians could have no motive to impose upon their readers, we may in the next place consider, whether it is credible, that they were deceived themselves. The facts, which they have recorded, and of which they themselves were witnesses, were of that description, that nothing more was wanted than the use of their senses to determine, whether such events really happened or not. It is true that even the external organs of sense *may* be so obscured by superstition or fanaticism, that men may fancy they have seen, or heard, what was presented to their imaginations by some artful contrivance. But when a writer records either the dreams of his own fancy, or the delusions which others have imposed on him, his fanaticism will always be *apparent*. Far different are the characters of St. Matthew and St. John. The simplicity, the sobriety, and the dignity, with which they relate their story, are qualities the reverse of those, which mark the fanatic. Nor did the Apostles exhibit in their *conduct* any signs of fanaticism. Their zeal was tempered with discretion; their firmness was attended with calmness; in their devotion to

the sacred cause they forgot not the rules of common prudence ; though prepared to sacrifice their lives, when the sacrifice was wanted, they courted not the death of the martyr from vanity or ostentation. Such men were no enthusiasts ; such men were no fanatics ; such men therefore are worthy of credit, when they relate what they themselves believe, when they relate what they profess to have seen and heard. Are they suspected of credulity, their own conduct will acquit them. They doubted especially the truth of the Resurrection, till they were convinced by the actual presence of Christ himself. On that occasion our Saviour *upbraided* them with their unbelief, because they believed not them, who had seen him after he was risen. But so much the more reason have *we* to believe in the testimony of the Apostles, to believe in the testimony of those, who withheld their *own* assent, till the fact was established by the evidence of their own senses.

From the *character* of the Apostolic historians, let us proceed to their *situation and circumstances*. St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in that very country, to which the history relates. And though we cannot now determine the precise year, when it was written, it was unques-

tionably written at a time when hundreds and thousands were still living in Judæa, who must have remembered the period, assigned for the ministry of Christ. Now a writer, who wishes to impose on his readers a fabulous story as a true one, can have no prospect of success, unless he withdraws his story from the scrutiny of his readers, either by remoteness of time, or by distance of place. It would be a desperate effort, if an historian attempted to make his readers believe, that certain events had happened in the very place where they lived, and at a time which they could well remember, unless those events had really happened at the time, and in the place assigned. To make such an attempt with a fabricated story could never enter into the mind of any man, however ignorant, or absurd. But this would have been precisely the situation of St. Matthew with respect to his original readers, if he had attempted to impose on them a fabulous story. We are reduced therefore to this dilemma. Either the history is true: or a fraud was committed, which was morally impossible. -

The Gospel of St. John, though not written in Judæa, and written later than the Gospel of St. Matthew, was still written under circumstances, which must have exposed it to detection,

if the narrative had been false. Whether, as is most probable, it was written at Ephesus, or at some other place of Asia Minor, it was written in a country, which abounded with Jews, who had synagogues in all the principal cities. And they were no less interested than their brethren of Judæa, in every thing which related to the history of that person, who was the founder of a religion, intended to supersede the religion of Moses. They must have been anxious to obtain the most correct information concerning that extraordinary person: and they had sufficient opportunities of obtaining such information, in the annual journies to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. And unless we suppose, that St. John deferred the writing of his Gospel to extreme old age, a supposition improbable in itself, and inconsistent with the character of his Gospel, there *might* have been, and probably *were* among his immediate readers, persons, who were present with him at the crucifixion. But whether personally present, or not, they had ample *means* of knowing, whether the narrative of St. John was entitled to credit. And that it *is* entitled to credit, the Jews themselves, as well unbelievers, as believers, have shewn by their own conduct. The Jews, who embraced Christianity in the Apostolic age, gave *positive* proof of their belief in the

Gospel history. And even they who rejected Christianity, have at least *indirectly* borne testimony in its favour. It nowhere appears that they regarded the Gospel history as a fable : it nowhere appears, that they rejected even the miracles, though they evaded the inference, that Jesus was a Teacher sent from God, by contending that those miracles were no proof of *divine* interposition, as the same things could be done by the agency of evil spirits. Now if they had been able to deny the facts themselves, their rejection of Christianity would have rested upon much firmer ground, than that on which they were contented to rest it. Nor does it appear, that the Jews ever made an attempt to invalidate the facts, when the Gospels had been written. The first Apostolic historian was not confuted by the Hebrew Jews : the other Apostolic historian was not confuted by the Greek Jews. If such a confutation had ever been written, it could not have been lost and forgotten. For though hundreds and thousands of ancient records have perished, either when the use of them was superseded by other writings, or when their value was unknown, or when forcible means were employed for their destruction ; none of these causes could have operated, in regard either to a Hebrew or to a Greek manuscript, containing a confutation of

the Gospel history by the Jews of the first century. Such a document must have been cherished by the Jews of all succeeding generations: the copies of it would have been so multiplied, as to have rendered the extinction of it by the Christians a matter impossible: and even if the attempt had been made, that attempt would have been recorded by the Jews, as an acknowledgement of weakness on the part of the Christians. We may conclude therefore, that though the Gospel of St. John was written under circumstances, which, had it contained deviations from the truth, must have led to a detection of them, no such detection was ever made. And as the Jews of Asia Minor, as well as the Jews of Judæa, must have been both able and willing to detect every falshood, which the Gospel of St. John might have contained, we may justly conclude, that there were no falshoods to be detected.

Whether we argue therefore from the character of the Apostolic historians, or argue from their situation and the circumstances under which they wrote, we find sufficient guarantee for the truth of their Gospels. They recorded what they themselves had seen and heard: they had no motive to deceive their readers: nor could they be deceived themselves. Their situation and circum-

stances afford us additional security ; and prove that their record is true, because it could not have been false, without detection and exposure.

Let us now proceed to the two Evangelists, who were *not* Apostles. St. Luke was eye-witness to a considerable part of the transactions, which he has recorded of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. But it does not appear, that either St. Luke or St. Mark were eye-witnesses of the facts, which they have recorded in their Gospels. Indeed we must conclude from the manner, in which St. Luke has expressed himself in the Preface to his Gospel, that his perfect understanding of the things, which he has related, was not the result of his own observation. And though it is not impossible, that St. Mark had been present at *some* of the transactions which he has recorded, there is no evidence, that he was. The twelve Apostles are the only persons, of whom we know, that they were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from the beginning.

But, if St. Mark and St. Luke did not write from their *own* knowledge, their sources of information were the best, which an historian can have, who derives his information from others. It is

evident, from St. Luke's Preface, that his knowledge of the facts, which he has recorded in his Gospel, was derived from information communicated by the Apostles. The same source of information must have been equally open to St. Mark : for one of the twelve Apostles was his friend and companion. The Credibility therefore of the Gospels, which were written by St. Mark and St. Luke, though it rests on a different foundation from the Credibility of the other two, still rests on a foundation which is perfectly secure.

In estimating the Credibility of their Gospels, there are two subjects of special enquiry. The first of them regards the *materials* of their Gospels : the second of them regards the mode, in which those materials were *employed*.

With respect to the materials, or the information itself, the first question, which occurs, is ; In what *manner* was that information conveyed ? Was it conveyed by the Apostles in *writing*, or was it conveyed in *verbal conversation* ? In one of these two ways the information *must* have been conveyed, for conveyed it certainly was : but in which of them, neither the Evangelists themselves, nor any other writer has declared to us. It is a case

therefore, in which we are left to argue from induction. History is silent in regard to any *written* document communicated by the Apostles to St. Mark and St. Luke: history is equally silent in regard to the fact, that the information was merely *verbal*. If the silence of history therefore is conclusive against the former, it is equally conclusive against the latter; and consequently proves, that the Apostles communicated to St. Mark and St. Luke no information *whatever*. The objection therefore involves an absurdity, and is consequently void of foundation. The notion, that a written document, if it ever existed, could not have been lost, is destitute of truth for this plain and obvious reason. When St. Mark and St. Luke had finished their Gospels, the *materials* which they had employed in the composition of them were no longer *wanted*. And if those materials were written in the native language of the Apostles, which we *must suppose* them to have been, St. Mark and St. Luke would have understood them, as appears from the Hebraisms of their Gospels, but those materials would have appeared as a foreign jargon, either at Ephesus, or at Corinth, or at Rome. There was no motive therefore to the preservation of such a document, when the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke were already written. The question

whether St. Mark and St. Luke had *written* information, or only *verbal* information, is a question, which as history is silent in regard to *both* parts of the alternative, must be decided by induction alone. And here we must be guided by the question, which of the two suppositions will best explain what it is *necessary* to explain. It would be foreign to the present Lecture to renew the discussions which have taken place upon this question. I will merely observe therefore, that the conclusion to which I came after an elaborate inquiry, is that which is best adapted to the Credibility of their Gospels. A communication in *writing* is unquestionably more secure than a communication by *words*.

But are St. Mark and St. Luke *independent* historians, if each of them employed a written document? Now it is really difficult to comprehend, how their independence, if destroyed by *written* information, could have been secured by *verbal* information. They were dependent in *either* case; in either case *equally* dependent. They can in *no* case be considered as independent historians, in *that* sense, in which St. Matthew and St. John were independent historians. They cannot be called independent *witnesses*, like St. Matthew and St. John: for St. Mark and St.

Luke have recorded the testimony of others. In reference to the events themselves, they were necessarily dependent on the Apostles. The only independence which we *can* ascribe to St. Mark and St. Luke, is independence in reference to each other. And this independence is in no respect affected by the supposition of a written document; according to that form, in which I have ever maintained it.

It is well known that the verbal harmony, of the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke with that of St. Matthew was formerly explained on the supposition, that the succeeding Evangelists copied from the preceding. This supposition, though formerly entertained by the most eminent Divines, either makes St. Luke dependent on St. Mark, if St. Mark's Gospel was first written, or St. Mark dependent on St. Luke, if St. Luke's Gospel was first written. To secure therefore that independence, which alone can be attributed to St. Mark and St. Luke, namely, independence with respect to each other, I ascribe that verbal harmony, not to the authors themselves, but to the Greek translator of St. Matthew's Hebrew Gospel. The verbal harmony which is observed in the Greek Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, lies chiefly in the Gospels of St.

Mark and St. Luke, when compared with that of St. Matthew. The Greek text of St. Matthew is found to accord with the Greek text of St. Mark, so frequently, so closely, and in such long continued periods, that such periods *could not* have been written without the intervention of *some* harmonizing cause. The verbal harmony between the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke is no less remarkable. But there is a circumstance attending that harmony, which had escaped the notice of preceding writers. By an analysis of the three first Gospels, I discovered, that the verbal harmony between the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke was of that peculiar kind, that the former did not harmonize with the latter alone, except in those portions of their Gospels, where St. Mark had no matter in common with St. Matthew. This observation suggested the thought, that such verbal harmony would have been occasioned, if the Greek translator of St. Matthew's Hebrew Gospel had recourse for assistance to the Gospel of St. Mark, where St. Mark had matter in common with St. Matthew, but that in those portions of St. Matthew's Gospel, where St. Luke *only* had matter in common with St. Matthew, the translator had recourse to St. Luke. It is true, that all this is mere supposition. But it must be tried like every other supposition,

by its ability, or its inability to explain existing effects. If the Greek translator of St. Matthew's Hebrew Gospel *did* act, as I *suppose* him to have acted, he would have produced the effects, which *were* produced. Conversely therefore we may argue from the real existence of the effects to the probable existence of the cause assigned. And if this conclusion be right, St. Mark and St. Luke are proved to be independent historians, as far as independence can be ascribed to them.³

Is their *veracity* impeached, the answer is that the 'Veracity of the Evangelists' has no possible

3. The writers, who have objected to my mode of explaining the verbal harmony of St. Mark and St. Luke with St. Matthew, have entirely *mistaken* the cause which I assigned. The only cause, which I assigned for that verbal harmony, is that which I have just explained. The supposition of a written document, communicated by the Apostles to St. Mark and St. Luke, as stated in my Dissertation on the three first Gospels, was made *solely* for the purpose of explaining the *matter*, which St. Mark and St. Luke have in common with St. Matthew. And throughout the whole of the Dissertation the supposed document was *never* applied to the explanation of verbal harmony. On the contrary, there is a chapter, in which I expressly shew, that the supposition of a written document will *not* account for the verbal harmony. It is therefore the more extraordinary, that so many writers should have represented me as explaining the verbal harmony by a cause, which I myself have shewn to be *inadequate* to that purpose. But it is not a singular case, that when *one* objector has made a mistake, others follow him, without reading the book, on which he animadvert.

connexion either with the materials of their Gospels, or with the mode in which those materials were conveyed. To estimate the *veracity* of an historian we must inquire, not how he *obtained* his materials, but how he *employed* them. And that St. Mark and St. Luke employed their materials faithfully will presently appear.

We have already seen, that St. Mark and St. Luke, though not *witnesses* to the transactions, which they have recorded, derived their information from those, who were. We have seen, that if the conclusion is right, in regard to a *written* communication, they received their information in that manner, which was the most *secure*. And we have further seen, that if the verbal harmony of their Gospels with that of St. Matthew, was owing to that cause, which has been shewn to be highly probable, they are historians, who wrote independently of each other.⁴


4. Another attempt having been made to explain the verbal harmony of the three first Gospels by a supposition, which also implies that St. Mark and St. Luke wrote independently of each other, it is proper that I should mention it, especially as it has met with approbation. According to this hypothesis the verbal harmony of the three first Gospels is explained in the following manner. The Apostles remembered the words,

The first of the two questions, respecting the Credibility of their Gospels has now received a satisfactory answer. The *materials* of which St. Mark and St. Luke composed their Gospels have been shewn to be of that description, that we can argue to the Credibility of their Gospels, as far as we can argue from materials, without con-

as well as the substance of our Saviour's Discourses: and in conversing with each other about the past events, a repetition of the same thing produced gradually a repetition of it in the same words. If then St. Matthew used the words, which he himself remembered, and St. Mark and St. Luke used the words, which were communicated to them by the Apostles, the verbal harmony might have been produced, which we now find. This is certainly the most favourable manner in which the hypothesis can be proposed. But in whatever form it be proposed, it is incapable of explaining *any* harmony in Greek Gospels, unless it is coupled with another supposition, which is contradicted by the Evangelists themselves. If Christ, in his intercourse with the Apostles, and the Apostles in their intercourse with each other, used the language in which they were educated, namely, the language of Galilee, it is clear that no repetition in *Syriac* could have produced a verbal harmony in *Greek*. Now it appears from the exclamation on the cross, and from many other expressions, recorded by the Evangelists, that the language of our Saviour was a dialect of the *Syriac*. And that the twelve Apostles, who were men of Galilee, used likewise the dialect of that country, which was somewhat different from the dialect of Jerusalem, though understood there, appears from the remarks which were made on the dialect of St. Peter. Since then it is evident that the hypothesis cannot explain *any* verbal harmony in Greek Gospels, it is unnecessary to shew (what might easily be done) that it would fail to account for the *peculiarities* of the verbal harmony.

sidering the mode of employing them. We must now therefore enter on the second question, which if likewise answered satisfactorily, will place the Credibility of their Gospels on the firmest foundation. But this question is so easily answered, that no long inquiry is necessary for that purpose. That St. Mark and St. Luke employed with *fidelity* the materials, which they obtained with *certainty*, is proved by the same arguments, from which we infer, that the Apostolic historians employed their materials with fidelity. The sincerity of the Evangelists, who were not Apostles, is proved in the same manner, as the sincerity of the Apostles themselves. St. Mark encountered the same dangers with St. Peter; St. Luke the same dangers with St. Paul. The arguments, which shew that St. Matthew and St. John were not liable to be deceived, apply also to St. Mark and St. Luke. If the Apostles were not deceived, neither could St. Mark and St. Luke be deceived: for their knowledge was derived from the Apostles. Lastly, their situation and the circumstances under which they wrote, are again guarantees for the truth of their Gospels; and for reasons similar to those, which have been already explained, in reference to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. John.

Having thus argued from the character and situation of the sacred historians to the Credibility of their writings, I shall proceed in the next Lecture to consider what additional evidence may be obtained from the writings themselves.



LECTURE XXIX.

IN estimating the Credibility of the facts, recorded in the New Testament, from a consideration of the facts themselves, we must distinguish those, which are miraculous from those, which are not so. For though the miracles recorded in the New Testament admit of satisfactory proof, the evidence, which is necessary to prove the reality of a miracle, must in all cases be stronger, than the evidence which would be merely sufficient to command our assent, in regard to facts of ordinary occurrence. The present Lecture therefore will relate to facts in general, without adverting to miracles in particular. And the Credibility of the miracles shall be distinctly considered in the next Lecture.

It is hardly necessary to produce an argument for the position, that the ordinary events recorded in the New Testament are not incredible in

themselves. They are, without exception, events which *might* have happened under the circumstances assigned. Most of them are such as might be *expected* to happen under the circumstances assigned. And many of them are such as, under those circumstances, could *hardly fail* to have happened.

Let us proceed therefore to institute the comparison, which was proposed in the last Lecture. Now there are three ways, in which this comparison may be conducted. We may compare the several parts of each single book: or we may compare one book with another: or we may compare the whole with other works of acknowledged credit.

If we estimate the Credibility of the Gospels by considering them singly, we shall find that each of them is consistent throughout; that each of them contains a plain and unaffected narrative, of which the several parts have a perfect agreement. In each of the Gospels the several parts contribute to one and the same object; nor do we any where find examples of incongruity or incoherence. So far therefore as we can judge from the contents of each single Gospel, we must pronounce them to be worthy of credit.

If we compare the Gospels with each other, we shall find, that they derive Credibility from their mutual support. The Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke are similar both in matter, and in manner. Indeed these three Gospels have *so* much matter in common, that when we have deducted what each of these three Evangelists has peculiar to himself, the matter which remains common to all three, constitutes one uniform Narrative of our Saviour's ministry, from his baptism to his death and resurrection. Hence originated the supposition, that such a Narrative once existed in a *separate* form; that it was a Narrative, to which the Apostles, as eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, had contributed *generally*; that the additions to it in St. Matthew's Gospel, were the additional suggestions of his own observation, while the additions to it in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, were additional suggestions from St. Peter and other Apostles. This is the mode, in which I have represented the supposition of such a written document.

It would be foreign to the present Lecture to repeat the arguments, which have been alleged in its favour. But as the supposition itself is connected with the Credibility of the Gospels,

and the object of the supposition has been greatly misunderstood, it is necessary to explain the *real* object. That the Narrative of our Saviour's ministry, which constitutes the common matter of our three first Gospels, had previously existed in a *separate* form, is a supposition which accounts not for any *verbal* harmony. The harmony, which it explains, is the harmony in the common *matter* of the three first Gospels. And there are some things of this description, which can be explained on *no other* supposition, unless we abandon the notion that St. Mark and St. Luke wrote independently of each other. It will be sufficient to mention a single case.

In that Narrative of our Saviour's ministry, which constitutes the common matter of the three first Gospels, the principal facts of that Narrative though *contained* in the three Gospels, are not contained in them according to the same *arrangement*. But St. Mark and St. Luke invariably *agree* in their arrangement, even in regard to facts, which are differently arranged by St. Matthew. Now this agreement on the part of St. Mark and St. Luke, even where St. Matthew has a different arrangement, must be explained, either on the supposition, that they drew their materials from a common document,

and uniformly adhered to the *order* of that document: or it must be explained on the supposition, that one copied from the other. But this latter supposition destroys *entirely* the notion, that St. Mark and St. Luke, were independent historians. Whether they had *written* information from the Apostles, or had only *verbal* information, they were dependent on the Apostles for their information, as much in the latter case, as in the former. Their independence therefore as historians can be only in reference to each other. But even *this* independence is taken from them, by the supposition that one *copied* from the other. Nor is this supposition objectionable on that ground alone. It has been shewn by *other* arguments, by arguments not easily confuted, that the succeeding Evangelists did *not* transcribe from the preceding. There is no other mode therefore of accounting for that harmony of *arrangement* in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, than the supposition of a written communication, and their *adherence* to the order of it.

Now a faithful adherence, on the part of St. Mark and St. Luke to a written communication from the Apostles, is an argument for the Credibility of their Gospels. And as St. Matthew

has recorded the same facts, though in a different order, there is additional apostolic authority for the truth of the facts themselves. And the facts, which St. Mark and St. Luke have in common with St. Matthew constitute the chief portion of their Gospels.

Let us now consider the matter which each of these three Gospels has peculiar to itself. The additions, which were made by St. Matthew rest generally on the same authority, with the matter which is common to all three. With the exception of the two first Chapters, they were all within the limits of his own experience. And he had sufficient opportunity of learning, from Joseph and Mary, who were the best possible witnesses, the truth of the circumstances, which attended the birth of our Saviour, the flight into Egypt, and the settlement at Nazareth. The matter which is peculiar to St. Luke's Gospel, rests again on the same authority as the other parts of his Gospel, with the exception of the two first Chapters. The appeal in his Preface to those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word from the beginning, embraces every transaction which is included in the ministry of Christ. And from the intercourse of St. Luke at Jerusalem, with those, who must have remembered

what related to Zacharias and Elizabeth, to the birth of John the Baptist, and the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, he had ample means of information respecting the events, which he has recorded in his two first Chapters. The matter, which St. Mark's Gospel has peculiar to itself, both might have been, and probably *was*, supplied by his intercourse with St. Peter. But the matter peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel consists in the notice of additional circumstances attending the principal facts. For there is hardly a principal fact recorded in the Gospel of St. Mark, which is not contained, either in the Gospel of St. Matthew, or in the Gospel of St. Luke.

The three first Gospels therefore corroborate each other, and the argument from the character of the writers to the Credibility of their writings is confirmed by a consideration of the facts themselves.

The Gospel of St. John has comparatively little matter in common with the other three : and the matter which it has in common is chiefly contained in the four last Chapters. St. John, the beloved disciple of our Saviour, who was on all occasions admitted to the most familiar intercourse, who was present at the crucifixion, and

who from that hour took Mary the mother of Jesus to his own home, appears to have more fully understood the *divine* nature of his Master, than either St. Matthew, St. Mark, or St. Luke. In the Gospel therefore of St. John the *divine* nature of our Saviour is explained more clearly, than in the three first Gospels. This knowledge of the divine nature St. John had undoubtedly obtained from our Saviour himself in that familiar intercourse, with which he was especially honoured. But there is no inconsistency between the accounts of St. John, and the accounts of the other Evangelists. The veracity of historians cannot be impeached by the mere circumstance that they have taken different views of the same subject. The most faithful biographers, if they write independently of each other, will give different representations of the same person, according to the views which they have respectively taken. But if they contradict not each other in regard to the matter which they have in common, and are consistent with themselves in the views, which they have respectively taken, their writings have all the marks of honesty and truth.

Before I conclude the comparison of our Gospels with each other, it is necessary to take

some general notice of the alleged contradictions, though it would be impossible in a single Lecture, to go through the various objections in detail. The examples, which have been alleged of supposed contradiction, relate to a variation in the *circumstances* attending the same principal facts. But objections of this kind though very specious, are not very solid. When the same fact is reported by different persons, the relation of the main fact is frequently, if not *commonly*, attended by some variation in the circumstances. Either circumstances are remembered by one reporter, which were not remembered by another: or if equally remembered they may not appear equally important: or one circumstance may be adapted to excite interest in one set of readers, while another circumstance is better adapted to excite interest in another set of readers. A variation therefore in the circumstances attendant on a principal fact can never amount to a contradiction, unless it can be shewn, that the different circumstances are of that description, that if one of them be true, the other must be false.

There are no two Evangelists, which have a closer agreement in the main facts, which are common to both, than St. Mark, and St. Luke.

Yet St. Mark in recording the same facts with St. Luke, has frequently recorded them with the addition of circumstances unnoticed by St. Luke. On the other hand, St. Luke has sometimes added a circumstance unnoticed by St. Mark. But if one historian has any where *more* than the other, he does not therefore *contradict* the other. If indeed St. Mark and St. Luke had each of them augmented their narrative of the same fact, with the addition not only of different but of *incompatible* circumstances, then indeed their accounts would vary in a manner, which would amount to a real contradiction. But the addition of such *incompatible* circumstances, by these Evangelists is not a matter which can be easily proved.

That portion of the Gospel History, in which the adversaries of Christianity have taken the greatest pains to discover contradictions, is the history of the Resurrection, which is recorded by all four Evangelists. But in the same proportion as ingenuity has been displayed in the attack on that important history, in that same proportion have the friends of Christianity displayed talent and learning in its defence. We have many excellent vindications of that important history: but there is none, which lies in a

shorter compass, and at the same time is more satisfactory, than Bishop Sherlock's Trial of the Witnesses.

And after all, if it were possible to produce *real* contradictions, they would not destroy the *general* truth of the Gospel history. Nor could the truth even of any *particular fact* be invalidated by such a variation in the circumstances. The inference might affect the circumstances; but not the fact itself. Indeed the Credibility of our Gospels is so *little* affected by the existing variations, that they operate as arguments in its favour. They shew that the Gospels contain no cunningly devised fable: they shew that the Evangelists did not concert among themselves a story for the deception of mankind. If such had been their design, they would have taken care to avoid even the *appearance* of a variation in their accounts. But when four historians write a history of the same person, and (whatever be the sources from which they draw their materials) write independently of *each other*, there is no guarantee, either for the veracity of the writers, or for the Credibility of their writings, which can exempt them, without the intervention of a miracle, from variations of that description, which we find in the four Gospels. Consequently such

variations cannot affect the *Credibility* of the Gospels.

Let us now proceed to the Acts of the Apostles. This book must obviously be compared with the Epistles of St. Paul. For it contains an account of the Christian Communities, to which those Epistles were addressed, and describes the intercourse of St. Paul with the persons, to whom he wrote. That St. Paul was the author of the Epistles ascribed to him, and that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles, has been already proved in the Lectures, which relate to the Authenticity of the New Testament. The present comparison is instituted for the purpose of shewing that the Acts of the Apostles contain a *true* history. Now the allusions in the Epistles of St. Paul to facts and circumstances recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, afford ample proof, that those facts and circumstances are true. If an *historian* may attempt to deceive his readers by fabulous accounts of things reported to have happened at a *distance*, the writer of an Epistle, to whomsoever it might be addressed, could not possibly make his readers believe, that things had been done among them, which never *had* been done. The allusions therefore in St. Paul's Epistles to facts and circumstances recorded in the

Acts of the Apostles, are unanswerable proofs, that those facts and circumstances are true. It would be absurd to suppose, that there was a collusion between the writer of the history and the writer of the Epistles, for the purpose of giving credit to the history. Such a collusion (as appears from the preceding argument) would have been impracticable. Besides, if those allusions had been made for the *purpose* of giving credit to the history, they would have been made more *pointedly*; they would have been made in such a manner, that every one might *perceive* the connexion between the narrative and the allusions. Otherwise their object, if made for such a purpose, would have been defeated. But the allusions in the Epistles of St. Paul, though always found to *accord* with the narrative, as soon as they are observed, are more frequently concealed, than apparent. They are not forced upon the notice of the reader, because the introduction of them resulted not from art or design. They are mere incidental allusions, suggested by the matter of the Epistles themselves. They contain no reference, direct or indirect, to any narrative, in which the reader might find the facts and circumstances recorded. When *such* allusions therefore are compared with the narrative, and are found to agree with it in every particular, we have indis-

putable proof, that the facts and circumstances are true.

The books of the New Testament having been compared with each other, we may now compare them with other works of acknowledged credit. There is no writer to whom we can more effectually appeal, than to the Jewish historian, Josephus. When we appeal to Josephus, in confirmation of facts recorded by the sacred historians, we appeal to a writer, who could have no *design* to corroborate their accounts. The subject matter of Josephus has no visible connexion with the subject matter of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The passages in the former, which illustrate passages in the latter, have not been collected without much industry and careful research. Nor are the examples of agreement confined to facts, which might be *generally* known. The conformity extends also to matters so minute, that unless those matters were true, such conformity could not have existed. If they had been *fabricated* by the Evangelists, either Josephus would not have known them, or he would not on their sole authority have recorded them. An agreement in writers, who are not only unconnected with each other, but who write for different purposes, and are even *opposed* to each other

in their religious opinions, is inexplicable on any other supposition, than that they agree in recording the truth. And since writers of this description cannot *often* have opportunities of adverting to the same things, we may fairly conclude from their agreement where such opportunities *are* offered, that the same accuracy exists also in other places, where we cannot apply a similar proof.

It is an argument unfair and unwarranted, when the adversaries of Christianity contend, that the *silence* of Josephus on any fact recorded in the Gospels is a reason for our disbelieving it. A fact may be known to one historian, and yet be unknown to another; or if known to him, it may not suit the purport of his history to record it. Indeed the views and motives of one historian may be so much at variance with the views and motives of another historian, that the one may feel an interest in *suppressing* what the other feels an interest in *recording*. Now this was precisely the situation of a writer who rejected Christianity, when compared with the situation of those, who were recording the acts of Christ and his Apostles.

The examples of agreement between Josephus

and the Evangelists, which have already been given in a former Lecture¹, to prove the Authenticity of the New Testament, may be equally well applied to the proof of its Credibility. The same undesigned coincidence, in regard to facts, not generally known, or incidentally mentioned, which prove that the writings are genuine, prove also that the writings are true.

Similar confirmation may be obtained from the testimonies of heathen authors. But as we have already an ample collection of such Testimonies², it will be sufficient to add one other example. In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, ver. 9, St. Luke speaks of a synagogue at Jerusalem, belonging to a class of persons, whom he calls *Λιβερτινοί*, a term which is evidently the same with the Latin *Libertini*. Now whatever meaning we affix to this word (for it is variously explained); whether we understand emancipated slaves, or the sons of emancipated slaves, they must have been the slaves, or the sons of slaves to *Roman* masters. Otherwise the Latin term *Libertini* would not apply to them.

1. Lecture XXVI.

2. See Lardner's Collection of Jewish and Heathen Testimonies to the Truth of the Christian Religion.

That among persons of this description there were many at *Rome*, who professed the Jewish religion, whether slaves of Jewish origin, or proselytes after manumission, is nothing very extraordinary. But that they should have been so numerous at *Jerusalem*, as to have a synagogue in that city, built for their particular use, appears at least to be more than might have been expected. Some commentators therefore have supposed that the term in question, instead of denoting emancipated Roman slaves, or the sons of such persons, was an adjective belonging to the name of some city or district; while others, on mere conjecture, have proposed to alter the term itself. But the whole difficulty is removed by a passage in the second book of the *Annals* of Tacitus³. From that passage it appears, that the persons whom Tacitus describes as being *libertini generis*, and infected, as he calls it, with the Jewish superstition, were so numerous at Rome in the time of Tiberius, that four thousand of them were sent to the island of Sardinia, and that all the rest of them were ordered, either to renounce their religion, or to depart from Italy before a day appointed. We can now therefore *account* for the number of *Libertini* in Judæa at the period, of which St.

3. *Annal.* II. 85. Tom. I. p. 129. ed. Brotier.

Luke was speaking, which was about fifteen years after their banishment from Italy.

The review which has been taken of the facts recorded in the New Testament, shall be concluded with some remarks, from which it will appear, that the actions, ascribed to our Saviour, are of that description, that they *could not* have been recorded, if they had not been true. Independently of the miracles performed by our Saviour, which shall be considered in the next Lecture, his general conduct as described by the Evangelists, is that of a person surpassing both in wisdom and in goodness the most perfect character, that was ever drawn by Roman or by Grecian eloquence. The character of our Saviour, as represented by the Evangelists, is not drawn in a *formal* manner, exhibiting at one view the various qualities, of which that character is composed. The character of our Saviour must be learnt by comparing the facts, recorded of him, with the situations, in which he was placed, and the circumstances, under which he acted. This comparison exhibits unshaken fortitude in the severest trials, calmness undisturbed by provocation, kindness returned for injury, and dignity maintained inviolate through every action of his life. Nor is the wisdom and the judgement dis-

played on every trying occasion less conspicuous in the character of our Saviour. At the same time we perceive the gradual unfolding of a scheme for the general welfare of mankind, a scheme uniform and consistent in all its parts, yet misunderstood *at first* by the Apostles themselves, as being opposed to the general prejudices of the Jews. Facts of *this* description could not have been *invented* by the Apostles. Plain and unlettered Jews, as the twelve Apostles were, though adequate to the office of recording what they had seen and heard, were incapable of fabricating a series of actions, which constitute the most exalted character, that ever existed upon earth. If the learning and the ingenuity of Plato or Xenophon might have enabled them to draw a picture of Socrates more excellent than the original itself, it was not in the power of unlettered Jews to give ideal perfection to a character, which was itself imperfect, and to sustain that ideal perfection, as in a dramatic representation, through a series of imaginary events. Indeed it is highly probable, that the Apostles and Evangelists were not *wholly aware* of that perfection, which they themselves have described. For that perfection is not contained in any formal panegyric, expressive of the writer's opinion and indicating that opinion to the reader. It is known

only by comparison and by inference. We are reduced therefore to this dilemma. Either the actions, which are ascribed to our Saviour, are *truly* ascribed to him ; or actions have been invented for a purpose, of which the inventors themselves were probably not aware, and applied to that purpose by means, which the inventors did not possess. And when we further consider, that the plan developed by those facts was in direct opposition to the notion of the Jews respecting a temporal Messiah, we must believe in what was wholly impossible, if we believe, that unlettered Jews could have *invented* them.

LECTURE XXX.

IN the whole extent of our theological inquiries, there is no question of such vital importance, as the question, whether the miracles, ascribed to our Saviour, are *justly* ascribed to him. If we had reason to believe, that they were merely *pretended* miracles ; if we had reason to believe, that they were mere delusions, which ignorance and credulity mistook for something supernatural, a main pillar of Christianity would be shaken to its very foundation. Our Saviour himself appeals to his miracles, as proofs of his divine mission. By the argument from miracles, combined with the argument from prophecy, he established the fact, that he was the promised Messiah. And these are the arguments on which we ourselves must rely, for our belief in the divine origin of the Christian religion. Prophecy fulfilled, and real miracles, *cannot* be ascribed to the mere agency of man. When a religion therefore is introduced by miracles, and prophecies are accomplished in it, *that* religion cannot be

the invention of man, *that* religion proceeded by revelation from God. But if no miracles were performed, and no prophecies were accomplished, the arguments which were founded on them, both by Christ and by his Apostles, would then rest on a mere imaginary foundation. It is true that *other* arguments have been used as evidences for Christianity, in addition to the two *great* arguments, which were employed by Christ and his Apostles. And those additional evidences are very useful, as auxiliaries to the *principal* arguments. But if we take away miracles and prophecy, the auxiliaries will become too feeble to stand by themselves. Miracles and prophecy alone can prove, that the *origin* of Christianity was *divine*.

The importance therefore of the inquiry, which we are now going to institute, is such, that it influences the question, whether our religion originated, as unbelievers assert, in mere human invention, or is a religion which came from God.

But before we enter on this inquiry, we must determine what is *meant* by a miracle. For without a clear *definition* of the term, our arguments on a subject of such intricacy and difficulty

can never be brought to a determinate conclusion. A miracle, as defined by Dr. Johnson, is something above human power. But as in the scale of creation there are Beings superior to man, though alike subordinate to God, we may rather define a miracle, as something which cannot be performed without the special interference of God himself. This definition of a miracle accords with the application of the term, as used by Christ and his Apostles. They argue from those miracles as proofs of a divine mission, which they would not be, if they were owing to the agency of Beings *inferior* to God. Nicodemus likewise understood the term in the same sense, when applied to the actions of our Saviour. ‘We know (said he) that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles, that thou doest, except *God* be with him.’

Another definition of a miracle is a suspension of the laws of nature. This definition accords with the preceding: for a suspension of the laws of nature is an act, which can be performed only by God himself. That Almighty Being, which created the world, and ordained the laws by which it is governed, can at his pleasure, either partially suspend, or even permanently alter them. But no *other* power can alter or suspend what is

ordained by the *almighty* power. A real miracle therefore is different, as well in *kind*, as in degree, from things which *appear* only wonderful or marvellous. If experiments can be made in natural philosophy, which seem marvellous to those, who know not the relation of the cause to the effect, they are no deviations from the laws of nature; on the contrary, they are produced by those laws. They are the work of man acting under those general rules, by which the almighty Creator directs and governs the world. But a miracle neither is, nor *can* be the work of man, unassisted by the special interference of God. For when a miracle is performed, an effect is produced, which is *contrary* to the laws of nature. This notion of a miracle is adopted also by Mr. Hume: and we shall presently see, that arguing even from the notion, which he himself adopts, we may fairly meet his objections to the *Credibility* of miracles. But we must previously examine some other objections.

We have already seen how justly Nicodemus argued from the miracles performed by our Saviour. But other Jews endeavoured to evade the inference, by contending that those miracles were owing to the agency of evil spirits. That such a notion was entertained by Jews in the first

century, is not surprising, as it accorded with then prevalent opinions. But that a controversy should have been conducted in modern times, respecting the question, whether the agency of evil spirits could account for those miracles, is what we should *not* have expected. Nor have we less reason to be surprised at the manner, in which this question has been answered even in the *negative*. It has been contended, that the miracles performed by our Saviour could not have been owing to the agency of *evil* spirits, because they were acts of *benevolence*. Undoubtedly the miracles of our Saviour were no less illustrations of divine *benevolence*, than they were illustrations of divine *power*. And it does not require much reasoning to shew the absurdity of ascribing acts of benevolence to Beings so constituted as to produce only evil. But if this were the *sole* reason, why the miracles of our Saviour could not be owing to the agency of evil spirits, the argument from miracles would be at once defeated. For if Beings inferior to God, though superior to man, were unable to effect those miracles, for no *other* reason, than because the *character* of those miracles accorded not with the character of those Beings, it would follow as a necessary consequence, that those miracles *might* have been performed by spirits of an *opposite* character.

The scripture teaches us, that there are good, as well as evil spirits: and with respect to *power*, we cannot suppose the former inferior to the latter. But if we admit that *any* power inferior to the *almighty* power could have produced the miracles which Jesus did, those miracles must cease to prove the *divine* origin of Christianity. The evasion therefore of the Jews must be met by an absolute and *general* denial. Though the miracles of our Saviour were illustrations of his benevolence, we must argue from them as illustrations of his *power*. It is the power which he displayed in the working of miracles, that argued his divine authority. And if those miracles, as illustrations of power, had not in themselves implied divine authority, they could not have done so, either by the attribute of benevolence, or by any other concomitant circumstances whatever.

But the consideration of the manner, in which the evasion of the Jews may be most effectually answered, is of less importance, than the *admission*, which that evasion implies. The very *attempt* to account for the miracles, whether right or wrong, implies at least the *existence* of them. We have therefore not only the testimony of the Apostles, whose sincerity is proved by their sacrifice of all earthly advantages; we have the testi-

mony of those, who were interested in *denying* the miracles. And if they had been *able* to deny those miracles, they would certainly have done it. The miracles performed by our Saviour, were not, like most of the *pretended* miracles, as well of ancient as of modern times, performed in secret, or in the presence only of a chosen few. They were performed in the presence of hundreds and of thousands: they were performed, as well in the presence of adversaries, as in the presence of friends. Such miracles come attested by very different evidence, from that which has been alleged in favour of those pretended miracles, recorded, either by profane historians, or by legendaries of the Church of Rome.

If indeed the objections of some modern philosophers were founded in truth, it would be useless to produce any evidence whatever. For according to those objections there is *no* evidence by which the truth of a miracle can be established. Before we proceed therefore with the evidence for the miracles recorded in the New Testament, it is necessary that we should inquire, whether a miracle is *capable* of proof.

It was a favourite maxim with the French Encyclopedists, and with those who adopted

their principles, that the notion of a miracle destroys *itself*. They contended that the notion of a miracle involved an absurdity, as consisting of parts which were irreconcilable. Now the notion of a miracle undoubtedly implies, that the world is governed by general laws, and that a miracle is an event which is *contrary* to those laws. But the government of the world by general laws, and a departure from those laws on particular occasions, are irreconcilable only on the two following suppositions; either that there is no God, or, that if there is a God, both himself and the Universe are bound in the chains of fatalism. Now the latter supposition is hardly different from the former. There is at least no practical difference, between the non-existence of a God, and the existence of a God, who possesses not the attributes of Deity. With those who can deny the being of a God, I know not how to argue. Where the human intellect is so perverted, that they who can perceive intelligence and design in a clock-work, which *represents* the movements of the heavenly bodies, are yet unable to perceive intelligence and design, when they ascend from the humble imitation to the great original, no arguments can avail. It is useless to argue with those, who deny that a contrivance implies a contriver; who can doubt

whether the eye was made for seeing, or the ear for hearing. Nor would I pretend to argue with those, who, if they admit that there is a God in *name*, deny him the attributes, which constitute a God in *reality*. If the wisdom displayed in the works of the Creation indicate a wise Creator, no ties of necessity could have shackled the exercise of his wisdom, no ties of necessity could have limited the exercise of his power. But if the same power, which made the laws of nature is able to suspend them, it cannot be true, that the notion of a miracle destroys itself.

A more powerful and a more seducing argument is the argument from *experience*, as explained by Mr. Hume, in his *Essay on Miracles*. He begins by asserting what is very true, that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature¹." He then proceeds in the following words. "As " a firm and unalterable *experience* has established " these laws, the proof against a miracle from the " very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from *experience* can possibly be imagined." In the next page he proceeds in the following words. "'Tis a miracle, that a dead man should come " to life, because that has never been observed in " any age or country. There must therefore be

" an uniform *experience* against every miraculous
 " event ; otherwise the event would not merit the
 " appellation. And as uniform *experience* amounts
 " to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof
 " from the nature of the fact, against the existence
 " of any miracle." In the second part of the same
 Essay, he compares the value of human testimony
 when opposed to general experience in regard
 to miracles. And to render the parallel more ob-
 vious, he founds the value of human testimony
 on *experience* also. "'Tis experience only" (says
 Mr. Hume²) " which gives authority to human
 " testimony : and 'tis the same experience which
 " assures us of the laws of nature. When there-
 " fore these two kinds of experience are contrary,
 " we have nothing to do, but to subtract the
 " one from the other." Since then experience is
against a miracle, whereas experience does not
 always decide for the veracity of a witness, the
 experience which operates against a miracle can
 never, in the opinion of Mr. Hume, be overcome
 by any testimony in its favour.

A learned Prelate, who has deservedly gained
 much reputation by his defence of the miracles,
 has met the objection of Mr. Hume by arguing
 against the parallel which he has drawn between

the two kinds of experience, and by combating the argument, that the connexion between human testimony, and the events testified, is founded on experience alone. This connexion Mr. Hume had endeavoured to establish in the former part of his Essay by the following argument³. "It
"being a general maxim, that no objects have
"any discoverable connexion together, and that
"all the inferences we can draw from one to
"another, are founded merely on our *experience*
"of their constant and regular conjunction, 'tis
"evident we ought not to make an exception to
"this maxim in favour of *human testimony*, whose
"connexion with any *events* seems, in itself, as
"little necessary as any other." Now it is certainly a very broad assertion, that *all* the inferences we can draw from one object to another are founded merely on the *experience* of their regular conjunction. And it may be fairly answered by the counter-assertion, that the relation of cause and effect *may* be established independently of experience. But if this relation may be established a priori, when we argue generally and abstractedly, yet when we consider the relation of a *particular* cause to a *particular* effect, our experience that the latter *does* follow the former,

3. Hume's Essays, Vol. II. p. 177. 2d ed. London, 1753.

affords a proof of that connexion, which perhaps is more satisfactory than any reasoning *a priori*.

I would meet therefore Mr. Hume's objection, not by denying the parallel, nor by resisting that part of his argument, which makes the value of *testimony* dependent on experience, but by resisting that part of the argument, which connects experience with *miracles*. And if there is a flaw in *this* part of his reasoning, the whole of it falls at once to the ground.

It appears from his own words, which have been already quoted, that he argues on the supposition of "*a firm and unalterable* experience" in regard to the laws of nature. He takes for granted therefore that those laws *are* unalterable, at the very time when the question is in agitation, whether they *were* altered in particular cases. The argument therefore postulates what it professes to prove. When we argue for the possibility of a *miracle*, we argue for the possibility of a *deviation* from the laws of nature; and we argue on the ground, that the same Almighty Being who made those laws must have the power of altering or suspending them. If therefore *while* we are contending for an alteration or suspension of those laws, with respect to the miracles ascribed

to our Saviour, we are told that those laws are unalterable, we are met by a mere *petitio principii*. In short the argument from experience, as applied to miracles, includes more than the nature of the argument admits. Though an event may be contrary to common experience, we must not set out with the supposition, that the rule admits of no exception. We must not confound general with *universal* experience, and thus include *beforehand* the very things for which an exception is claimed.

Indeed Mr. Hume himself appears to have been aware, that his reasoning on the subject of miracles was not altogether conclusive. In the second part of his Essay * he qualifies his inference by saying, "that no human testimony can
" have such a force as to prove a miracle, and
" make it a just foundation for any system of
" religion." And he adds a note, which begins with the following words. "I beg the limitations
" may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle
" can never be proved, so as to be the *foundation*
" of a system of Religion. For I own, that
" otherwise there may possibly be miracles, or
" violations of the usual course of nature, of such

4. Hume's Essays, Vol. II. p. 203. 2d ed. London, 1753.

"a kind as to *admit* of proof from human testimony."
"mony."

We see then, that Mr. Hume admits, after all, that a miracle *may* be proved by human testimony. He contends indeed for an exception, when the alleged miracles are made the foundation of a system of religion. Now the case, for which Mr. Hume thus claims an exception, is the very case, in which above all others we might *expect* the interposition of the Almighty, the very case therefore in which the existence of miracles would be most probable. The foundation of a new religion is a matter of such high importance, that there cannot be an object more *worthy* of that special interference, which is shewn by a suspension of the laws of nature. And it is the suspension of those laws, by which the special interference of the Almighty is made known to us. When we read of wonders in the ancient historians, or in the legends of the Church of Rome, or when we contemplate the miracles alleged to have been performed in the middle of the last century at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, on which Mr. Hume particularly dwells, we can discover no *motive* for the special interference of the Almighty by a suspension of his laws. They were not occasions worthy of such high inter-

ference, without which a miracle is a thing impossible. In all such cases therefore we may be certain, that *some* deception was practised, whether we are able to discover that deception, or not. But in the miracles ascribed to our Saviour and his Apostles, there was an object that *did* merit the divine interposition. The object was nothing less than the promulgation of a new religion, which was designed to regulate the faith and practice of the whole human race.

If it be objected, that the divine origin of Christianity is in this manner pre-supposed, in order to strengthen an argument by which it must be proved, the answer is, that I am not at present giving any proof whatever. I am merely arguing against that *exception* to the general principle, which Mr. Hume himself *admits*. And since even they who reject Christianity must allow that its *professed* object was the introduction of a religion which should influence the whole human race, this alone is sufficient to prevent the miracles, recorded in the New Testament, from being made an *exception* to the rule. In arguing against that exception nothing more is intended, than to claim for those miracles the benefit of a fair trial. The trial itself is the object of our next consideration.

It has been already admitted, that events of ordinary occurrence may be credited on testimony; which would be insufficient to command our assent to events of a different description. The argument from experience is *so* far valid, that in proportion as any alleged fact is a *deviation* from our experience, in that same proportion do we require additional evidence, before we believe it. An inhabitant of the torrid zone, who had never passed the limits of his own country, and therefore had never seen water except in a liquid state, would certainly not believe it, when told for the *first* time, that there were other countries, in which water at certain seasons of the year was converted into a solid mass, capable of sustaining the greatest weights. Such a conversion would to *him* appear miraculous, because it was contrary, both to his own experience, and to the experience of all those, with whom he had *previously* conversed. And he would be no more disposed to believe that water could be converted into a solid body, than to believe that it could be converted into wine. But his unbelief would gradually give way, as the testimony to the fact became stronger. If his intercourse with persons who had been in colder climates should increase, and they all concurred in asserting the same fact, the unbelief which had been founded

on the argument from experience, would finally yield to human testimony. In like manner a fact *may* be proved by human testimony, which is contrary to the experience, not of *one* country only, but of *all* countries.

It is contrary to the common experience of *all* countries, that a dead man should be restored to life. But a fact even of *this* description is still capable of being proved by human testimony. We must guard against that *fallacious* mode of stating the argument from experience, which includes in the *statement itself* the very thing for which we claim an exception. We must not say, that it is contrary to *universal* experience, that a dead man has been restored to life: nor must we say in the words of Mr. Hume, that such an event 'has *never* been observed in any age or country⁵.' In so stating the argument, we pre-judge the question. If we set out with the supposition, that such an event has *never* happened, the question whether it *did* happen in a particular instance cannot even be proposed. But if we say, that such an event is contrary to the *common* experience of all countries, we say as much as can or ought to be said, when the

question is in agitation, whether such an event has taken place or not. And as we have seen that the argument from the experience of *one* country, may be overcome by human testimony, so we shall find that human testimony *may* overcome the argument from the common experience of *all* countries.

Let us select for a trial the miracle performed by our Saviour in the restoration of Lazarus. This miracle is recorded in the eleventh Chapter of St. John's Gospel: and the circumstantial account not only of the transaction itself, but of every thing, which preceded and followed it, shews that St. John himself was eye-witness to the whole. In the first place, therefore, we have the testimony of a witness, whose character for veracity is unimpeachable. And the fact itself is of that description, that St. John could not have been deluded by any art or contrivance into a belief of the fact, if it had not really happened. From the report of Martha, the sister of Lazarus, it appeared that Lazarus had been dead four days, and already in that state, which is an unerring proof of real death. All suspicion therefore of any collusion is precluded. It cannot be pretended, that Lazarus was not dead, when placed in the tomb. When the

tomb was opened, his very *face* was bound about with a napkin. But if his sisters Martha and Mary had placed him in the tomb alive, to afford an opportunity for a pretended miracle, they would not have done that, which must have extinguished life, if life had remained. His burial was likewise a matter of notoriety: for persons were assembled in the house of Martha and Mary comforting them for the loss of their brother: and when Mary went out to meet our Saviour, they said, "She goeth unto "the grave to weep there." When our Saviour himself arrived at the grave, he was attended not only by the sisters of Lazarus, and by his own disciples, but by many Jews who were likewise witnesses to the miracle. It was an act therefore not performed in secret, or in the presence only of friends: it was done publicly, and was open to the scrutiny of those, who were not the followers of Jesus. Such persons cannot be considered as *prejudiced* witnesses: yet such was their conviction of the fact, that in consequence of this miracle they became *believers*. The miracle was moreover subjected to a *judicial* examination by the chief priests and pharisees assembled in *Council*. And what was the result of their examination. The result, as stated in the words of St. John was, "This man doeth

“many miracles: if we let him alone all men
“will believe on him.”

Surely then we have sufficient evidence for the truth of the miracle in question. Though it is contrary to common experience, that a man really dead should come to life, yet as human testimony *may* outweigh the argument which is founded on such experience, so in the present instance the testimony is so powerful that it *must* preponderate.

In like manner we may establish the truth of the other miracles ascribed to our Saviour. We have likewise satisfactory evidence for the miracles ascribed to the Apostles. And there is an additional argument for the miracles ascribed to St. Paul, in the appeal which he has made to the persons, in whose presence he performed them. But as this argument has been fully explained at the beginning of the Lectures, on the Authenticity of the New Testament, it need not now be repeated.

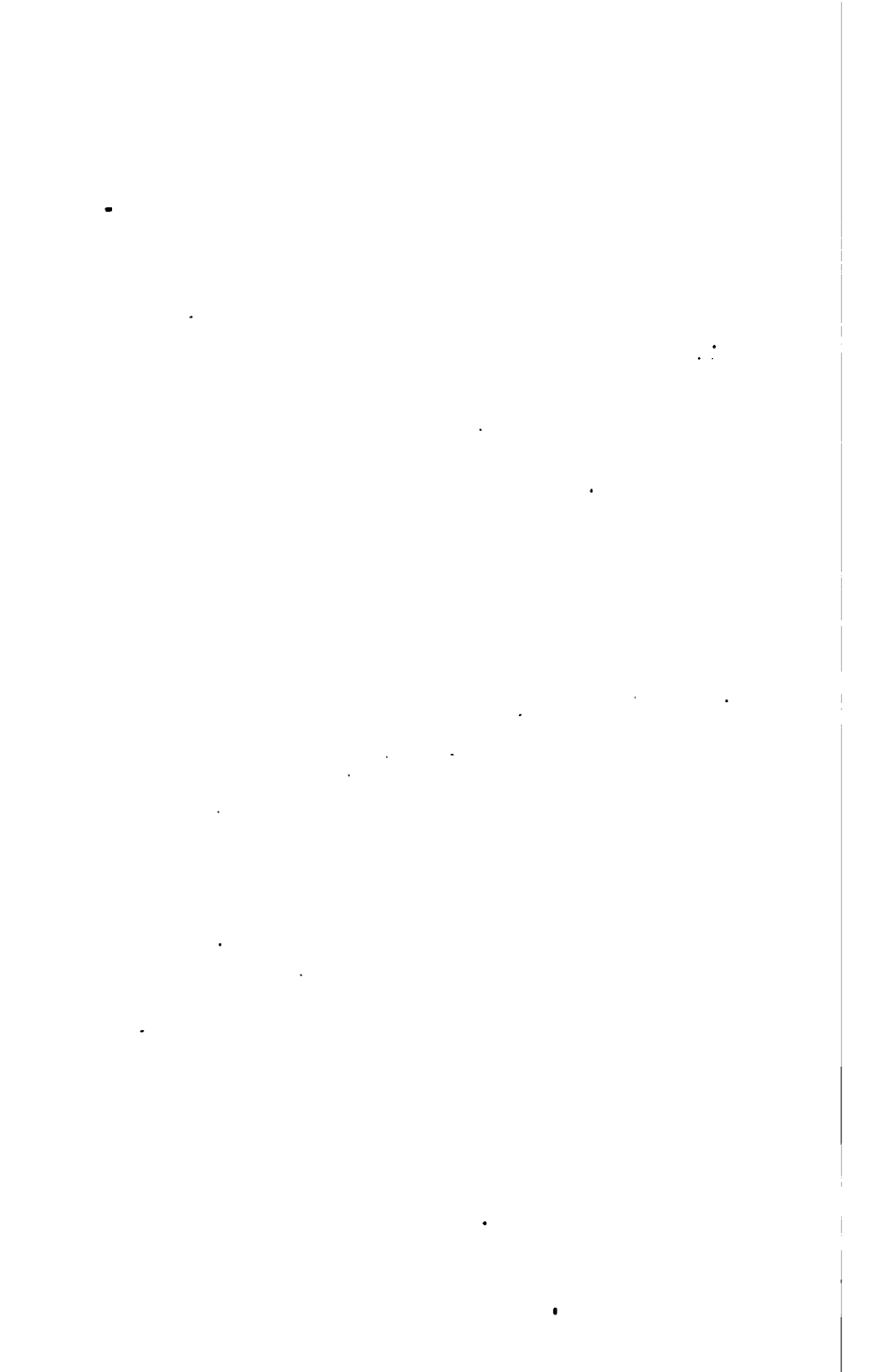
The facts recorded in the New Testament, as well those which are miraculous, as those, which are of ordinary occurrence, have now been shewn to be worthy of credit.

But beside the Credibility of *facts* we must consider the Credibility of *doctrines*. The latter question however lies within a narrow compass. When the Credibility of the facts has been established, the Credibility of the doctrines follows as a matter of course. As the miracles ascribed to our Saviour are justly ascribed to him, they prove his divine authority, and consequently that his doctrine was from God. In like manner since St. Paul and the other Apostles were gifted with the power of miracles, that power which God alone could have given them, is again a proof that their doctrine was from God. As the *facts* therefore recorded in the New Testament, are fully entitled to our assent, so the *doctrines* recorded in the New Testament, may be justly admitted as the basis of our faith and morals.

Here then I will conclude the series of Lectures on the Authenticity and Credibility of the New Testament: a series of regular and continued deduction, in which no proposition has been admitted without previous proof, in which no argument has been applied, that is dependent on the subject of application. I have complied therefore with the strictest demands, which can be made by those, who require a *reason* of the hope that is in us. And if these

Lectures, thus rigidly adhering to the laws of consistent demonstration, shall be the means of convincing one unbeliever, the labour bestowed on them will not have been bestowed in vain.





A
COURSE OF LECTURES,
CONTAINING
A DESCRIPTION AND SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT
OF THE
SEVERAL BRANCHES OF DIVINITY :
ACCOMPANIED WITH
AN ACCOUNT BOTH OF THE PRINCIPAL AUTHORS,
AND OF THE PROGRESS, WHICH HAS BEEN MADE AT
DIFFERENT PERIODS,
IN
Theological Learning.

BY
HERBERT MARSH, D.D. F.R.S. & F.A.S.

LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH,
AND MARGARET PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

PART VII.
On the Authority of the Old Testament.

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Our inquiries into the Integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures may be divided into two periods, the one extending from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, the other from the time of our Saviour to the present age. In the former period we may collect historical notices, concerning the care which was taken by the Jews for the preservation of the Hebrew Scriptures. In the latter period we must endeavour to repel the charge, which has been laid to the Jews, of having wilfully corrupted the Hebrew Scriptures; and further to shew that the utmost caution has been used to prevent accidental mistakes. The preservation of the Pentateuch or the Book of the Law, a matter of special importance to the Jews. Care taken in this respect by Moses himself. Remarks on the Temple-copy of the Law. Whether this copy was preserved, when the Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Preservation of THE LAW (whether the Temple-copy or not) during the Babylonish captivity, and production of it by Ezra, when the Temple was rebuilt. On the preservation of the other books, which were written before the Babylonish captivity. Collection made by Ezra and Nehemiah, of the books which were written before, during, and after the Babylonish captivity. The books so collected formed the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, and were preserved in the Temple till the destruction of it by Titus. The Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour, received his sanction, as they then existed.

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LECTURE XXXI.

THE authenticity and credibility of the New Testament having been established in the last eight Lectures, I now proceed to the authenticity and credibility of the Old Testament. It is true, that in this arrangement the order of *time* is inverted. But whatever rules may be observed in the position of historical facts, we are not restricted by similar rules, in our modes of *reasoning* on those facts. When we undertake to establish the authority of different records, the question, which of them shall be *first* submitted to examination may depend on circumstances unconnected with priority of composition : and that arrangement must always be preferred, which enables us to conduct our proofs in the most satisfactory manner. If then the authority of a later record can be established without a previous inquiry into the authority of a former record, and the authority of the later record will assist us in establishing the authority of

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the former record, the later record becomes of necessity the first object of inquiry.

Precisely in this relation do the Old and New Testaments stand with respect to each other. The records, which contain the Mosaic and Christian religions, must not be confounded with the religions themselves. The new Covenant was certainly founded on the old Covenant: the Mosaic dispensation was certainly a prelude to the Christian, yet the authority of the *record*, which conveys the Christian Covenant, may be examined without reference to the *record* which conveyed the former Covenant. And this rule has been strictly observed in all the Lectures relating to the authenticity and credibility of the New Testament. Though the new Covenant *itself* is founded on the old Covenant, the truth of the *record*, which conveys the new Covenant, was *not* founded on the truth of the record, which conveys the old Covenant. Both the authenticity and the credibility of the New Testament were established by arguments, which are wholly independent of the Old Testament. The external evidence for the *authenticity* of the New Testament was shewn to consist in the testimony of Greek and Latin writers to the fact, that the several books of the New Testament were written by the persons, to whom

they are ascribed. And, as this fact is an *historic* fact, a fact open to the observation of *man*, human testimony is competent proof. This external evidence was then confirmed by internal evidence, drawn from the New Testament, without any reference, direct or indirect, to the Old Testament. In like manner the *credibility* of the New Testament, as well in regard to the miracles, as to the facts of ordinary occurrence, was established without reference to the Old Testament. For it was established by arguments drawn partly from the character and situation of the Apostles and Evangelists, in other parts from the New Testament itself.

We may argue therefore from the authority of the New Testament to that of the Old Testament, without exposing ourselves to the charge of arguing from premises dependent on the inference to which we apply them. The *mode* of application will be explained in the next Lecture.

Another reason for beginning with the New Testament is, that the proofs of authenticity and credibility, in reference to the individual books, may be conducted more easily and more intelligibly, than the similar proofs in regard to the Old Testament. *Every* book of the New

Testament is ascribed to a particular author: and it was shewn that every book of the New Testament was justly so ascribed. A distinct inquiry was then instituted into the *credibility* of the New Testament, from which it appeared that the term was applicable, as well to the individual books, as to the books, when taken collectively.

In extending our inquiries from the New to the Old Testament consistency requires, that we should apply the same terms in the same sense. But we cannot say, that a book is authentic, or written by the author, to whom it is ascribed, when the author of that book is unknown. Nor will the difficulty be removed by *altering* the meaning of the term authentic. If we make a distinction between the terms 'authentic' and 'genuine,' and say that a book is genuine when written by the author to whom it is ascribed, but authentic only, when the author is entitled to credit: we transfer the difficulty from one term to another. The term 'authentic' being then taken in a *compound* sense, and made to include both the notion of genuine and the notion of credible, it is tautology to speak of authenticity *and* credibility: for authenticity then *includes* credibility. Instead of saying that

the books of the New Testament are authentic and credible, according to the definition, which has been hitherto observed in these Lectures, we must then say, that they are genuine and credible. But this substitution of terms will be of no avail, when we extend our inquiries to the Old Testament. Whether a book, written by the author to whom it is ascribed be called a genuine book, or be called an authentic book, the application of the term 'genuine' will be equally difficult with the application of the term 'authentic,' when we are concerned with a book, of which the author is unknown. Since then it is useless to alter the terms, when the difficulty remains the same, let us take a summary view of the books of the Old Testament, with reference to the terms 'authentic' and 'credible,' according to the sense, in which they have been applied to the New Testament.

The five books of Moses are both authentic and credible. The arguments for their authenticity have been already stated in a Discourse which I delivered from this pulpit more than thirty years ago¹. But a proof of authenticity is not equally applicable to *all* the historical

¹ The third edition was printed in 1806, and is entitled 'The Authenticity of the Five Books of Moses vindicated.'

books of the Old Testament. Whether the book of *Joshua* derived its name from Joshua as the author of it, or was so called because Joshua was the principal actor in it, has long been a subject of dispute. The truth probably lies between the two opposite opinions. The principal materials, of which the book is composed, were probably committed to writing by Joshua himself: and these materials were afterwards employed in the composition of the work, which bears his name. This supposition will at least remove many difficulties, which attend the opinion that the book in its present form was written at the time when the Israelites took possession of Canaan. To the book of *Judges* no author's name is prefixed: nor have we at present sufficient data, to form even a probable conjecture, who the author of it was. The variety of persons to whom it has been ascribed, sufficiently shews, that nothing is really known about the author. The book of *Ruth* was evidently so called, not from the author, but from the subject of the book. With respect to the books of *Samuel*, it is impossible that *both* of them should have been written by the prophet of that name: for the death of the prophet Samuel is described before the end of the first book. The two books of the *Kings* and the two books of the *Chronicles*,

were probably written after the return from the Babylonish Captivity: and it appears from the references, which they contain, that they were drawn from records, which existed before the Captivity. But whether the books of the Kings and the Chronicles were compiled by Ezra, or by some other person, is matter of mere conjecture. To the book, which bears the name of Ezra, as also to the book, which bears the name of Nehemiah, the term 'authentic' may be justly applied. For we have sufficient reason to believe, that Ezra and Nehemiah were the authors of the books, which bear their names. The author of the book of Esther is again unknown; its title being evidently derived from the person, whose history it records.

From the preceding review of the historical books in the Old Testament it appears that the term 'Authenticity' is inapplicable to the greater part of them. But the term 'Credibility' is applicable to them *all*. When the author is known (as for instance we know the author of the Pentateuch) we may argue, as we did in regard to the New Testament from the situation and character of the writer to the credibility of his writings. Hence we argue, and justly argue from the authenticity to the credibility of

the Pentateuch. The four last books contain events, which were contemporary with the author himself; events in which he bore the principal part. And he had ample means of knowing the truth of what he has recorded in the first book. The Jews themselves, from the commencement of their existence as a nation, have afforded one continued chain of evidence for the credibility as well as the authenticity of the Pentateuch. It is impossible, that they should have received from the very beginning a code of legislation as coming from the hands of Moses, and a narrative of events connected with that legislation, if the record, which contained those events and that legislation, had not been true.

. In like manner we may argue from the authenticity to the credibility of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Those writers were also contemporary with the events which they have described, and bore a principal part in them.

In the books, of which the authors are unknown, the arguments for credibility must rest on a different ground. But if we cannot argue from the *known* situation and character of the writer, we may have reason to believe, that the author, though we know not his name, wrote

under circumstances, which enabled him to acquire a perfect knowledge of the facts recorded. Now there is nothing which more displays the accuracy of an historian, or excites greater confidence in the truth of his narrative, than references to books of authority, as vouchers for his own history. And it is worthy of notice, that such references occur chiefly, though not solely in the books of the Kings and of the Chronicles, where we are most at a loss to discover the authors. In the two books of the Kings, we find references, at one time, to a book called the Acts of Solomon, at other times to a book called the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, at other times again to a book called the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. In the two books, which now bear the name of the Chronicles, we find references to the book of Nathan, to the book of Gad, to the book of Shemaiah and Iddo, to the book of Jehu, to the book of the Kings of Israel, and to the book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

Now the historic books of the Old Testament have been received as true by the Jews of every age: consequently by the Jews, who lived at the same time with the authors of those histories. But the Jews, who were contempo-

rary with the authors of those histories, must have known the character of those ancient records, to which the historians appealed. They must have known likewise, whether those historians employed with *fidelity* the records to which they appealed. But if those records had not been known to be *faithful* records, and the historians had not *faithfully employed* their materials, their histories would never have been received as true histories. Indeed the sacred historians could have had no motive to write, as they did, if their narratives were false. The picture, which they drew, both of the kingdom of Judah and of the kingdom of Israel, was not a picture, which could flatter the vanity of their countrymen. The actions ascribed both to the kings of Judah and to the kings of Israel are for the most part of that description, that nothing but a conviction of their truth could have induced a Jewish historian to record them.

The truth of the narratives, which relate to the *declension* of the Jewish state, appears also from their accordance with the prophetic writings, of the same period. But, as we are now taking only a general view of the subject, it would be foreign to the present Lecture to consider this argument in detail.

From the summary view, which has been taken of the historical books, let us proceed to a similar view of the prophetic books. They contain the writings of the four greater prophets : Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the writings of the twelve other prophets, which from the comparative shortness of their compositions, are called the twelve minor prophets. To all *these* books the term authenticity is applicable without exception. Each of these books is ascribed to a particular author : and we have reason to believe that they are justly so ascribed. But the *arguments* for the authenticity of each single book, even if contracted to the smallest possible compass, would greatly exceed the limits, which are now prescribed to us. And they are the less necessary at present, because it will be the object of the two following Lectures to establish *generally* the authority of the Old Testament, and to fix it on a basis, unconnected with the consideration of the *individual* books.

But it is necessary to make a few observations on the term Credibility as applicable to the prophetic writings. The truth of a prophecy, like the truth of a history, depends on the accordance of the writing with the events to which it relates ; though in the one case the writing

precedes, in the other case follows the events. And as a history may be true, though the author is unknown, so a prophecy may be true, even though it proceeded not from the author to whom it is commonly ascribed. The truth of a prophecy has indeed *no* dependence on the name of the person who delivered it. If a prophecy has been literally fulfilled, it is a *true* prophecy, whoever was the person, that first committed the prophecy to writing. When we speak of a prophecy in the Old or New Testament, we always mean the prediction of some event, which no man could have foreknown without *divine* assistance. By the aid of reason we may argue from existing causes to their probable effects: by the aid of history we may learn in what manner such causes have operated on former occasions: and we may argue from analogy, that a recurrence of the same causes will, under similar circumstances, produce similar effects. But such an insight into the probable consequences of existing causes, is very different from that foreknowledge of distant events, which is displayed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. The most important of those prophecies, the prophecies relating to the Messiah, not only related to a very distant event, but to an event unconnected with any causes, which were then operating.

It appears then, that two questions must be asked, in order to ascertain the truth of a prophecy. The first question is, Do the words of the alleged prophecy, according to their plain and literal meaning, relate to that distant event, to which they have been subsequently applied? The second question is, Was that prophecy delivered so long before the event predicted, as to place it beyond the reach of human foresight? If these two questions can be answered in the affirmative, we have a *true* prophecy. In other words, we have a *divine* prophecy. And this inference will be valid, whether the prophecy was written, or not, by the author to whom it is usually ascribed: whether it be an *original* part, in other words, whether it be an *authentic* part of the book, which contains it, or not.

The truth of this reasoning will best appear from an example. For this purpose let us take the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This chapter contains as literal a description of the sufferings, death, and burial of our Saviour, as if it were literal history. Yet it is unquestionably literal prophecy. And it would be literal prophecy, even if it were not written by the prophet Isaiah. It is a constituent part of the Septuagint Version, as well as of the Hebrew Bible: and therefore

must have existed in the Hebrew Bible at the time when that version was made. It is well known that this Greek version was begun, if not completed, in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt: and if the translation of the prophetical books was *not* made at the same time with that of the Pentateuch, it *cannot* have been deferred to a later period, than that of Ptolemy Philometor. For in *his* reign the Jews of Egypt, in imitation of the Jews of Palestine, adopted the practice (previously confined to the Pentateuch) of reading in the Synagogue Lessons from the Prophets. And this practice could not have been adopted by the Egyptian Jews, without a Greek translation. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah therefore, *must* have existed in the Hebrew Bible before the time of Ptolemy Philometor. It must have been written therefore at a time, and under circumstances, which placed a knowledge of the events predicted beyond the reach of human foresight. Consequently it is a *true* prophecy, a *divine* prophecy.

Having now taken a summary view both of the historical and of the prophetical books, in reference to authenticity and credibility, I will conclude with some remarks on the five re-

maining books of the Old Testament. These are the book of Job, the book of Psalms, the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song. These five books are placed together in our Bibles; and occupy the space between the historical and the prophetical writings. Four out of these five books, as will hereafter appear, constituted the third class of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to the description of Josephus. Later Jews referred all of them to the third class: and according to the description of Jerom¹, these five books, in the very order in which they now stand in our own Bibles, were then the first five books in the class of Hagiographa. But we are at present concerned with those books in reference only to the terms authenticity and credibility. The *antiquity* of the book of Job, as well as of the things recorded in it, can admit of no doubt. Indeed it is most probable, that it relates to events, which preceded the age of Moses. Nor is it impossible, that Moses himself was the author of it. But as this is only matter of opinion, we cannot apply to it the term authenticity. This however does not affect the *truth* of the book, whether we regard the whole of it as real history, or consider it, as a book in-

¹ See his Prologus Galeatus.

tended to convey religious instruction, founded only in part on real history. The book of Psalms contains a collection by different authors, some of whom as appears from the subjects, must have lived as late as the Babylonish captivity. But as the greatest part of them are ascribed to David, and justly so ascribed, they are strictly authentic. The same term applies to the book of Proverbs, which is entitled the Proverbs of Solomon the Son of David. It applies also to the book of Ecclesiastes, which is entitled "the words of the Preacher the son of David." And lastly it applies to the remaining book, which is entitled "the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

As a general statement is all that is here intended, and the present Lecture was meant only to explain the state of the question, the *arguments* in favour of the individual books cannot now be adduced. But in the two next Lectures, which will relate to the books of the Old Testament *collectively* taken, I shall endeavour to prove that they are, all of them, books of undoubted authority.

LECTURE XXXII.

THE several books, which constitute the Old Testament, were examined in the last Lecture, with reference to their Authenticity and Credibility. Such examination was necessary for a right understanding of the subjects, which we are now considering. It was necessary to ascertain how far those terms, which are applicable to *every* book of the New Testament, are applicable to the books of the Old Testament. The result of the examination was, that *both* of those terms are not applicable to *every* book of the Old Testament.

I propose therefore in the present Lecture to take a *different* view of those writings: and to consider them not individually, but collectively. For this purpose it will be necessary to adopt a term, which may be applied to them all. Such

a term is the term 'authority,' which may include both authenticity and credibility, where both terms are applicable, and denote credibility or truth, where the other term cannot be applied. In this *general* view of the Old Testament we shall be freed from various difficulties, which may attend the examination of single books. If then we can find a solid basis, on which the *whole* superstructure can be securely built, the authority of the Old Testament will be established at once.

Now the credibility of the New Testament, as proved in the preceding Lectures, is not confined to facts of ordinary occurrence. It extends also to the *miracles* recorded in the New Testament. But a miracle is nothing less than a suspension of the laws of nature: and those laws can be suspended by no other power, than that *almighty* power, by which those laws were ordained. Every miracle therefore performed by our Saviour was a proof of *divine* interposition: and the argument of Nicodemus was irresistible, when he said, "no man can do the miracles, which *thou* doest, except God be with him." The testimony of our Saviour therefore was more than the testimony of man: it was testimony, which carried with it *divine* authority.

The evidence produced from the Greek and Latin Fathers in favour of the New Testament, went no further, than to prove its authenticity. The fact, that a certain book was written by a certain author, being a fact, which lies open to the observation of man, may be established by the testimony of man. But such proofs of authenticity are distinct from the proofs of credibility. We may argue indeed, in many cases, from the former to the latter: we may in such cases make the former the basis, on which the latter is raised as a superstructure. In such cases we argue from the character and situation of the writer to the credibility of his writings. But we cannot thus argue upon *every* occasion; for the character and situation of a writer *may* be such, as to *destroy* the credit of his writings. The proof of credibility therefore must generally be conducted in a manner, which is distinct from the proof of authenticity. And these distinct proofs were given in regard to the New Testament.

But the testimony of our Saviour to a book of the Old Testament establishes its authority *at once*. The two *separate* processes of authenticity and credibility are then unnecessary. It is then immaterial, whether we know the name

of the author, or not. Whatever name he bore, his work has the stamp of authority: and this authority renders it worthy of credit, even if we are unable to discover in the work itself sufficient data for the establishment of its *own* credibility.

There are various ways in which our Saviour has borne testimony to the books of the Old Testament. The books of Moses he has quoted repeatedly, and quoted them, as the *work* of Moses. Next to the books of Moses he made the greatest use of the book of Psalms: and in quoting the 110th Psalm he expressly ascribed it to David¹. The books of Isaiah and of Daniel he both quoted and ascribed to Isaiah and Daniel. But the greater part of his quotations from the Old Testament were made without reference to the particular book, from which the passages were taken. This mode of quotation was agreeable to the practice of the Jews. The learned among the Jews in the time of our Saviour confined their studies almost wholly to the Old Testament, with which therefore they were so well acquainted, that a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures suggested of itself the place from which the passage was taken. It is true, that there are several books of the Old

¹ Matt. xxii. 43, 44.

Testament, which are neither named nor quoted in any part of the New Testament. But no conclusion injurious to those books can thence fairly be deduced. Though every book, which was actually quoted by our Saviour derives authority from that quotation, it would be unjust to argue, as if the books, which were *not* quoted, were books *devoid* of authority. We must consider the *purpose*, for which our Saviour appealed to the books of the Old Testament. The immediate object of every such quotation was to illustrate some fact, or some doctrine, to which the passage was applied. If therefore on such occasions we do not find *all* the books of the Old Testament applied in illustration, the obvious conclusion is, not that the books, which were omitted, had less authority, than those which were quoted, but that they were less *applicable* to the immediate object, than the books, which were *selected* for quotation.

If indeed our Saviour had intended to enumerate the books of the Old Testament, or to determine the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, the omission of any book in that catalogue or canon would have been fatal to the authority of the book omitted. But neither our Saviour nor his Apostles had any such intention. The

canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was already known: and that canon was sanctioned by our Saviour, though he quoted not from every part of it. There is no ground therefore for any distinction between the books, which were quoted, and the books, which were not quoted by our Saviour. Whenever he appealed to the Scriptures, that is, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament (for no book of the New Testament was then in existence) he appealed to the Hebrew Scriptures without distinction. When he commanded the Jews to 'search the Scriptures²,' he spake of those Scriptures *generally*. And after his resurrection he expounded to the Apostles "in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning himself³."

It appears then that *all* the Hebrew Scriptures, as they existed in the time of our Saviour received the sanction of his authority. If then the Hebrew Scriptures, as they existed in the time of our Saviour, contained the same books, which are *now* contained in our Hebrew Bibles, we have the sanction of our Saviour for *every* book of the Old Testament. I mean of course the *canonical* books of the Old Testament. For the writings, which we call apocryphal, were *never* a part of the Hebrew Canon.

² John v. 39.

³ Luke xxiv. 27.

To facilitate the proof, that the Hebrew Scriptures in the time of our Saviour contained the same books which are now contained in our Hebrew Bibles, we must previously consider the mode, in which the Jews have been accustomed to divide and arrange the writings of the Old Testament. These writings were formed into three classes. The first class contained the five books of Moses, and was denominated simply **THE LAW, OR THE LAW OF MOSES**. The second class was denominated **THE PROPHETS**, and included not only the books, which *we* designate by that name, but various *historical* books, as written by persons, to whom the Jews gave also the appellation of prophet. To the third class were referred the remaining books of the Old Testament. When this three-fold division was first made, it does not appear, that the third class, like the two former, was distinguished by any particular title: but the books of this class were *afterwards* called in Hebrew Chetubim, in Greek Hagio-grapha. The period, when these titles were first applied to the books of the third class is not exactly known: but that they were so applied in the fourth century, appears from the Talmud⁴,

⁴ In the Tract called *Bava Bathra*, where the books of the Old Testament are enumerated, the first class is called **תורה**, the

and from Jerom's Preface to the books of the Old Testament⁵.

The three-fold division itself existed long before the time of our Saviour. In the Second Prologue to the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach, which Prologue was written by the Greek translator in the time of Ptolemy Euergetes, the

the books of the second class are called כְּנִיאוֹת, and those of the third class כְּתוּבִים.

⁵ The words of Jerom are, Tertius Ordo 'Αγιόγραφα possidet. In Martianay's edition of Jerom's Works (tom. I. p. 318.) the Preface from which these words are quoted is called Præfatio Hieronymi Presbyteri de omnibus libris Veteris Testamenti. And Jerom himself in the latter part of the Preface (Ibid p. 322.) says of it, Hic Prologus Scripturarum quasi galeatum principium omnibus libris quos de Hebræo vertimas in Latinum convenire potest; ut scire valeamus, quicquid extra hos est, inter 'Απόκριφα esse ponendum. Since then it is in reality a Preface to *all* the books of the Old Testament, which Jerom translated from Hebrew into Latin, it should in strict propriety be placed at the beginning of his Latin translation of the Hebrew Bible. But having been placed in the manuscripts between the book of Ruth, and the first book of Samuel (though I know not for what reason) it is so placed in the printed editions. And from this position it has acquired the title of Præfatio in libros Samuel et Malachim, which it bears in the edition by Vallarsi, tom. IX. p. 454. But as this title, as well as that of Præfatio in librum Regum, is inconsistent with the *contents* of the Preface, and with the description which Jerom himself has given of it, I have retained the title adopted by Martianay, and called it Jerom's Preface to the books of the Old Testament. It is commonly known by the name of Prologus galeatus, in consequence of Jerom's calling it Prologus Scripturarum, quasi galeatum principium.

three-fold division of the Hebrew Scriptures is twice mentioned. In both places the first class is termed **THE LAW** : in both places the second class is termed **THE PROPHETS**. But the third class had then obtained no particular title. In the first place of that Prologue, the three classes are described as containing "The Law, The Prophets, and other books of our Fathers." In the second place of that Prologue, they are described as containing "The Law, The Prophets, and the rest of the Books."

Philo and Josephus, who have likewise a three-fold division of the Hebrew Scriptures, in which the first class contains **THE LAW**⁶, and the second class is termed **THE PROPHETS**⁷, have

⁶ Both Josephus and Philo use this term in the *plural*, saying the *laws* of Moses, instead of the *law* of Moses. But this makes no difference, as they evidently mean the same thing, which in Hebrew is expressed by **תורה**. Josephus indeed has *expressly* declared that he means the five books of Moses. His own words are, Πέντε μὲν ἐστὶ τὰ Μωϋσέως ἃ τοὺς τε Νόμους περιέχει, καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀνθρωπογονίας παράδοσιν. Contra Apion. lib. i. cap. 8. tom. II. p. 441. ed. Havercamp.

⁷ Philo uses the expression, Λόγια θεσπισθέντα διὰ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ, tom. II. p. 475. ed. Mangey.—Josephus uses the expression, Οἱ μετὰ Μωϋσῆν ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΙ, tom. II. p. 441. ed. Havercamp. or Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 10. (tom. I. p. 103. ed. Reading) where Eusebius has quoted from Josephus the whole passage relating to the Hebrew Scriptures. He has also

so far given a title to the third class, that they have *characterized* the books, of which it then consisted. Philo describes the third class, as containing Hymns, (that is, Psalms) and other books, by which knowledge and piety are promoted and perfected⁸. Josephus describes the third class as containing Hymns (or Psalms,) to God, and instructions of life for man⁹." The two descriptions are very similar: and we may conclude from these descriptions, that the book of Psalms then occupied the first place of the third class. Now it is worthy of notice, that the book of Psalms *still* occupies the first place of the third class, not only in printed editions of the Hebrew Bible, but generally in the Hebrew manuscripts.

Let us now consider in what manner our Saviour himself describes the Hebrew Scriptures. When he appeared to the Apostles after his resurrection, he said to them, "These are the words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with

also quoted the passage from Philo, Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. cap. 17. tom. I. p. 67. ed. Reading.

⁸ "Ὑμνους, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα οἷς ἐπιστήμη καὶ εὐσέβεια συναύξονται καὶ τελειοῦνται.

⁹ "Ὑμνους εἰς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήκας τοῦ βίου.

you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in **THE LAW OF MOSES**, and in **THE PROPHETS**, and in **THE PSALMS**, concerning me¹⁰." Here we have an exact description of the Hebrew Scriptures according to the Jewish division of them. The first class contained the books of Moses: the second class contained the books of the Prophets: the third class contained the books, of which the Psalms occupied the first place, and hence afforded a title in the time of our Saviour to the class itself. For as Josephus expressly declares, that the third class then contained four books¹¹, we may be assured that our Saviour understood by the appellation of **THE PSALMS**, when added to **THE LAW**, and **THE PROPHETS**, not merely that single book, but the class, of which that book was the head.

From the consideration of the three classes, let us proceed to the consideration of the several books of which the three classes were composed. According to Josephus, in the place where he has stated the three-fold division, the first class contained five books, the second class contained thirteen books, and the third class contained

¹⁰ Luke xxiv. 44.

¹¹ The words quoted in the 9th note are preceded by the words *Αἱ δὲ λοιπαὶ ΤΕΣΣΑΡΕΣ*.

four books¹². The whole number therefore, contained in the three classes was *twenty-two*. Likewise according to Jerom, in the Preface above quoted, the books which then constituted the Hebrew Bible, amounted to *twenty-two*¹³. Now the number of books in the Old Testament, according to *our* Bibles, amounts to thirty-nine, independently of the Apocrypha, which are no part of the Hebrew Canon.

But this difference arises merely from the mode, in which the Jews have been accustomed to combine and arrange the books of the Old Testament. This mode is fully explained by Jerom in the above quoted Preface. From this Preface, which is commonly known by the name of *Prologus galeatus*, it appears¹⁴, that the book of Ruth was made an appendage to the book of Judges: that the two books of Samuel were regarded as *one* book; as also the two books of the Kings, and the two books of the Chronicles:

¹² Josephi Opera, tom. II. p. 441. ed. Havercamp; or Eusebii Hist. Eccles. tom. I. p. 103. ed. Reading.


¹³ *Libri viginti duo: id est, Mosi quinque, Prophetarum octo, Hagiographarum novem.* tom. I. p. 319. ed. Martianay. The difference between Jerom and Josephus, in their *division* of the books belonging to the second and third classes will be considered hereafter.

¹⁴ Ibid.

that the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were again converted into one book ; that the Lamentations of Jeremiah were made an appendage to the prophecy of Jeremiah ; and lastly, that the twelve minor prophets were regarded as constituting only a single book. In this manner the number of books in the Old Testament, which according to our own arrangement amount to thirty-nine, was reduced by the Jews to twenty-two.

In these combinations and reductions it was evidently the object of the Jews to make the number of books in the Hebrew Bible, accord with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. But however fanciful the object of those reductions may have been, and whatever mystery the Jews may have subsequently imagined to lie concealed in the supposed undesigned coincidence, we are concerned only with the fact, that the reduction *was* made, and made in the manner above described. From that mode of reduction, it appears that the books which constituted the Hebrew Bible in the time of Josephus, and consequently in the time of our Saviour, agreed, as to their *real* number, with the books which *now* constitute the Hebrew Bible.

But from their agreement in *number* we cannot immediately argue to the *identity* of the books. Various links must be inserted in the chain of our reasoning, before we can conclude, that the Hebrew Scriptures in the time of our Saviour contained precisely the *same* books, which are now contained in our Hebrew Bibles. This proposition requires a separate proof; and this separate proof shall be the subject of the next Lecture.



LECTURE XXXIII.

THE fact, which it is proposed to establish in this Lecture, is a fact of the utmost importance to the authority of the Old Testament. Our present object is to prove, that the Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour, contained the same books, which are *now* contained in our Hebrew Bibles.

But before we enter on the proof, it is necessary to consider the *principle*, on which the proof must be conducted. That the Hebrew Scriptures in the first century contained such and such books, is an *historical fact*, for which in the first instance we may inquire after *historical evidence*. Now we have Jerom's catalogue of the books, which composed the Hebrew Bible in the fourth century: we have Origen's catalogue of those books, as they existed in

the third century, as also the catalogue of the Talmud; we have Melito's catalogue, written soon after the middle of the second century. But we have *no* catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures so ancient as the first century.

Josephus in the passage, where he divides the Hebrew Scriptures into three classes, containing together twenty-two books, has not mentioned those books by *name*, except the books of Moses, which constituted the first class, and the Psalms, which were placed at the head of the third class. Nor has he in any other part of his writings given a catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures. If we endeavour to collect evidence from the quotations, which are scattered in the works of Josephus, we shall again fail of attaining our object. For there are several books of the Old Testament which he has *never* quoted. At least no quotation has been hitherto discovered in his writings, either from the book of Job, or from the book of Proverbs, or from Ecclesiastes, or from Solomon's Song.

If we examine the works of Philo, who likewise wrote in the first century, we shall find the evidence still more defective. Philo has given no catalogue of the books, which then

constituted the Hebrew Scriptures, and there are not less than eight books of the Old Testament, from which he has never quoted. At least no quotation has been hitherto discovered in the works of Philo, from the books of Ruth, Nehemiah, the Chronicles, the book of Daniel, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song.

If we examine the quotations in the New Testament, for the purpose of ascertaining the books of the Old Testament, we shall again fail of obtaining sufficient evidence. For there are six books of the Old Testament, namely the books of Judges, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Solomon's Song, from which no quotations have been hitherto discovered in the New Testament. It is true, that no conclusion injurious to those books can be drawn from the circumstance, that they were not quoted. For the non-quotation of them may be explained on a supposition, which is very consistent with their existence in the Hebrew Scriptures. It has been already observed, that we may rather explain the non-quotation of those books on the supposition, that they furnished no matter adapted to the purpose, for which quotations were made from the other books of the Old Testament.

But this is not the question, with which we are *now* concerned. We are now concerned with the question, what *positive* evidence can be adduced for the existence of those books in the Hebrew Canon. It was shewn in the preceding Lecture, that the Hebrew Scriptures *in general* received the sanction of our Saviour. But we are now seeking for evidence to determine what those Scriptures in the time of our Saviour *really were*.

From the statement already made it appears, that no writer of the first century has either given a catalogue of those books, or enabled us to determine them by his quotations. If then the historical fact that the Hebrew Scriptures in the time of our Saviour contained the *same* books, which are now contained in our Hebrew Bibles, can be established by no other means, than by *direct* historical evidence, our endeavours to establish that fact must be fruitless. There is indeed one source of information, still open to us; namely the Septuagint version, which existed long *before* the first century. But the Septuagint version contains many books, which never did and never *could* make a part of the Hebrew Canon. We cannot therefore argue from the Septuagint to the books, which

received the sanction of our Saviour. We want a catalogue of those books, and of those books *only*. And as no such catalogue exists as ancient as the first century, the proof required is still wanting, if it depends on direct historical testimony.

But is it really true, though it has been confidently asserted, that no historical fact can be established, without direct historical evidence? Are there no facts in ancient history, which we firmly believe, though the facts are not on record? Is there no such thing as proof from *induction*? Indeed historical facts not only *may* be established by the aid of induction, but may be frequently established *more firmly* than they can by direct historical evidence. When we appeal to historical evidence, we depend on the accuracy and the veracity of the reporter, in both of which there is at least a possibility of error. But it not unfrequently happens, that, when a fact is established by induction, we not only prove it to be true, but prove, that it cannot be false.

Let us try therefore, whether we cannot establish by induction the important fact, that the books, which are now contained in our

Hebrew Bibles, and those books only, were the books, which received the sanction of our Saviour. It is this sanction on which we must depend for the *general* authority of the Old Testament. It is this sanction, and not the opinions, either of Greek or of Latin Fathers ; it is this sanction, and not the decree of any general Council, which must determine the canonical books of the Old Testament.

We may begin by assuming that the Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour were the *same* Hebrew Scriptures, which constituted the twenty-two books in the three classes of Josephus. No alteration *can* have been made in the interval, which elapsed, between the time when our Saviour appealed to the three classes of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the time when Josephus made a similar appeal. We have the testimony of Josephus himself, that a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures was preserved in the Temple¹. That copy, as long as the Temple existed, was sufficient guarantee against every alteration. Jose-

¹ Josephus in appealing to the copy of the Scriptures preserved in the Temple, uses these words : *Δηλοῦται διὰ τῶν ἀνακειμένων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γραμμάτων*. *Antiquit. Lib. V. Cap. 17. Tom. I. p. 273. ed. Havercamp.*

phus was born within a very few years after the death of our Saviour: he was born in the 37th year of the Christian era, born therefore three and thirty years before the destruction of the Temple by Titus. His mode of education must have afforded him frequent access to the Temple copy of the Scriptures, whether it be true, or not, that after the destruction of the Temple he obtained the copy itself. If therefore we can prove that the three classes of Josephus contained the same books, which are *now* contained in our Hebrew Bibles, we prove that the same books were contained also in the three classes of the Hebrew Scriptures to which our Saviour appealed.

For this purpose we must endeavour to connect the account of Josephus with the account, which Jerom has given of the Hebrew Scriptures in his *Prologus galeatus*. In this Preface or Prologue Jerom, like Josephus, divides the Hebrew Scriptures into three classes, which he calls **THE LAW, THE PROPHETS,** and **THE HAGIOGRAPHIA**. He has further *enumerated* the several books of which each class consisted: and it appears from this enumeration, that the books, which were *then* contained in the Hebrew Bible, were the same

books, which are *now* contained in it². If then we can connect the *catalogue* of the Hebrew Scriptures, which was given by Jerom, with the *account* of the Hebrew Scriptures, which was given by Josephus, we shall connect the Hebrew Scriptures, as they *now* exist, with the Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour.

In comparing the accounts of Josephus and Jerom, there is no difficulty in regard to the first class; for this class was *always* appropriated to the five books of Moses. Josephus indeed *expressly* declares, that these were the books which constituted his first class; and he has given the additional explanation, that they related, as well to the creation of man, as to the law³. And Jerom enumerates in his first class the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy⁴.

The only difficulty therefore, which attends the comparison of the two accounts, is that

² Hieronymi Op. Tom. I. p. 318. ed. Martianay.

³ Πέντε μὲν ἐστὶ τὰ Μωϋσείως, ἃ τοῦτε Νόμοι παρέρχου, καὶ τὴν τῆς ἀνθρωπογενίας παράδοσιν. Tom. II. p. 441. ed. Havercamp.

⁴ He adds, Hi sunt quinque libri Mosi, quem proprie Thora, id est Legem, appellant.

which relates to the two other classes. According to the account of Josephus, the second class contained *thirteen* books, and the third class contained *four* books⁵, whereas according to the account of Jerom, the second class contained *eight* books, and the third class contained *nine*⁶. But then it must be observed that if we take the two classes *together*, both writers agree as to the number. Both writers agree in stating the number to be *seventeen*. The only difference consists in the repartition of the books between the two classes. And as we know that the Jews have been gradually augmenting the number of books in the third class, by a proportionate diminution of the number in the second, we need not wonder if the third class, which in the first century contained only *four* books, contained *nine* at the end of the fourth century, and that the books of the second class had been proportionally reduced from thirteen to eight⁷. Notwithstanding

⁵ Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μωϋσείας τελευτῆς μέχρι τῆς Ἀρταξέρξου, τοῦ μετὰ Ξέρξην Πέρσων βασιλέως, οἱ μετὰ Μωϋσῆν προφῆται τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς πραχθέντα συνέγραψαν ἐν ΤΡΙΣΙ καὶ ΔΕΚΑ βιβλίοις. Αἱ δὲ λοιπαὶ ΤΕΣΣΑΡΕΣ ὕμνους εἰς τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ὑποθήκας τοῦ βίου περιέχουσι.

⁶ Prophetarum octo, Hagiographorum novem.

⁷ Later Jews have made an additional augmentation to the books of the third class, by detaching Ruth and the Lamentations from

therefore the inequality of the division, we may argue from the two classes *together* as safely as we could argue from each single class, if the division between them had remained *unaltered*.

Since then Josephus and Jerom agree, in making the *whole* number of books, which composed the Hebrew Scriptures, amount to twenty-two: since they further agree both as to the *number* of the books, and the books *themselves* which composed the first class: since they agree also as to the number of books, which composed the second and third classes together, we may fairly argue from Jerom's *catalogue* of the books contained in those classes, to the *particular* books, which composed the second and third classes of Josephus. But it appears from Jerom's catalogue, that his second and third classes contained all the books of the Hebrew Bible, except the five books of Moses, which belonged to the first class. We may safely infer therefore, that, as the first class of Josephus contained also the five books of

from the books to which they were previously annexed, and transferring them to the Hagiographa. This was done by *some* of the Jews even in the time of Jerom, as he relates in his Prologus galeatus. And they are *generally* so printed in our Hebrew Bibles.

Moses, his second and third classes, in like manner, contained the other books of the Hebrew Bible.

But if any doubt should remain on the accuracy of this conclusion, it may be corroborated by Josephus himself. In that passage of his treatise against Apion, to which reference has been so frequently made, Josephus, though he has not *enumerated* the seventeen books, which composed the two last classes, has given a *description* of those books: and this description exactly agrees with the inference deduced from the preceding comparison. Of the *thirteen* books, which composed the *second* class he says, that they were written in the interval, which elapsed, between the death of Moses and that of Artaxerxes Longimanus⁸. Of the *four* books,

⁸ According to the common printed text of Josephus, his words (Contra Apion. lib. I. 8.) are Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς Μωϋσέως τελευτῆς μέχρι τῆς Ἀρταξέρξου, τοῦ μετὰ Ξέρξην Πέρσων βασιλέως, ἀρχῆς, οἱ μετὰ Μωϋσῆν, κ.τ.λ. But in Note 5, I have quoted these words without ἀρχῆς, because it is wanting both in the copy given by Eusebius (Hist. Eccles. lib. III. c. 10.) and in most manuscripts of the works of Josephus. See Havercamp's Note. And it will presently appear, that ἀρχῆς does not accord with the context. Not the *reign* of Artaxerxes, and still less the *beginning* of his reign, but the *death* of Artaxerxes is the limit assigned by Josephus for the duration of that succession of prophets, by whom the thirteen books of the second class were written.

which composed the *third* class, he says, that they contained "Hymns to God, and instructions of life for man." All the *historical* books therefore of the Old Testament, except the five books of Moses, and all the *prophetical* books without exception must have belonged to his second class⁹. Now the historical books of the Old Testament, beside the books of Moses, amounted, after the Jewish mode of reckoning, to *seven*; namely Joshua, Judges with Ruth, Samuel in one book, the Kings in one book, the Chronicles in one book, and Ezra with Nehemiah in one book. The prophetical writings according to the same mode of reckoning, were composed of *five* books, namely, Isaiah, Jeremiah with the Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets in one book. If then we refer all the historical books of the Old Testament except the books of Moses, to the second class of Josephus, and refer to the same class all the prophetical writings, we shall have *twelve* out of the thirteen books, of

⁹ The *historical* books, which the Jews refer to the second class, or the class of the *Prophets*, are called in printed editions of the Hebrew Bible *Prophetæ priores*, or *Prophetæ anteriores*. It is true, that there are *some* historical books, which the Jews now refer to the third class. But it is evident, that in the time of Josephus, the third class contained *no* historical book.

which that class was then composed. We shall have, according to the Jewish reckoning, *seven* historical, and *five* prophetical books, the former, as well as the latter, being anciently referred by the Jews to the class of the PROPHETS. These twelve books *must* have belonged to the second class of Josephus: for they could neither belong to the first class, which was appropriated to the books of Moses, nor could they belong to the third class, which in the time of Josephus, as appears from his own description of it, was confined to books of a very different character.

If it be objected, that in thus referring the above-named historical books, and the above-named prophetical books, to the second class of Josephus, we take for granted the *existence* of those books in the Hebrew Canon at that period, the answer is, that we have already argued to the existence of those books from the comparison of Josephus with Jerom. We are now only shewing in what manner the description which Josephus has given of the two last classes *agrees* with the inference above deduced. But we may go still further, and shew from Josephus *himself*, that the twelve books in question were then a portion of the Hebrew

Scriptures. For *not one* of those twelve books is included among those, from which it appears that Josephus has never quoted.

To ascertain the *thirteenth* book of the second class, it is necessary to consider the books of the third class. It has been already shewn that the book of the Psalms was at the *head* of the third class, as it is to this very day in our Hebrew Bibles. The book of Proverbs, and the book of Ecclesiastes must likewise have belonged to the third class: for they literally contain, according to the words of Josephus, "instructions of life for man." Indeed the book of Proverbs, and the book of Ecclesiastes, as well as the book of Psalms, have been referred to the third class by the Jews of every age.

We have now only two books remaining, among all the books of the Old Testament, which have not been referred to one of the three classes; namely the book of Job and Solomon's Song. Since then it appears that one book is still wanted to complete the second class, and that only three out of the four have been determined of the third class, it necessarily follows, that one of these two books belonged to the second, the other to the third

class. Whether we can positively determine, to *which* of the two classes those books respectively belonged, is a matter of little importance. In the catalogue, which Jerom has given of the Hebrew Scriptures, the book of Job, and Solomon's Song are both of them referred to the third class. But Josephus must have intended to include *one* of them in the second class, which would otherwise be incomplete, while the third class would be redundant. It is most probable, that the book of Job was included by Josephus, in the second class, as an historical book; and that the Song of Solomon was included in his third class under the character of Hymns. But whether this opinion be correct or not, it makes no difference to the general argument. The seventeen books, which compose the second and third classes of Josephus, will in either case be the same with the seventeen books, which are enumerated in the second and third classes of Jerom.

That *later* Jews have referred to the third class various books, which are here referred to the second class of Josephus, affords no argument against the accuracy of our reasoning. The book of Daniel, for instance, was removed by the Jews in the fourth century from the

class of **THE PROPHETS** to the class of **Hagio-grapha**. But it is certain, that in the time of Josephus the book of Daniel occupied a place among **THE PROPHETS**. Josephus himself has determined the place, to which the book of Daniel belonged, not only by his description of the two last classes, but by an actual appeal to Daniel as a prophet. In the twelfth book of his **Jewish Antiquities**, he says, that “the Temple was destroyed according to the prophecy of Daniel, given four hundred and eight years before¹⁰. And when our Saviour quoted the book of Daniel he called it the book of Daniel the prophet¹¹. It still occupied a place among the prophets in the time of Origen, who lived in the third century. For Origen has given a catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures, arranged according to the order of the Jews in twenty-two books; and in this catalogue Daniel is placed between Jeremiah and Ezekiel¹².

The *historical* books of Ezra, Nehemiah,

¹⁰ Τὴν δ' ἐρήμωσιν τοῦ ναοῦ συνέβη γενέσθαι κατὰ τὴν Δανιήλου προφητείαν πρὸ τετρακοσίων καὶ ὀκτὼ γενομένην ἐτῶν. *Antiquit. lib. XII. cap. 7. §. 6.* Tom. I. p. 617. ed. Havercamp.

¹¹ *Matt. xxiv. 15.*

¹² Origen's Catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures is preserved by Eusebius. *Hist. Eccles. lib. VI. cap. 25.* Tom. I. p. 290. ed. Reading.

Esther, and the Chronicles have likewise been removed to the third class; yet they certainly belonged to the second class of Josephus. They were not only excluded from the third class by the *character* of the third class: but their position in the second class accords with the description, which Josephus has given of that class. He says, that the books belonging to the second class were written, in the interval, which elapsed, between the death of Moses, and that of Artaxerxes Longimanus, or as he himself expresses it, Artaxerxes, successor of Xerxes¹³. And he adds, that though books were written *after* that period, they were not so highly esteemed because the succession of prophets had then ceased¹⁴. While he excluded therefore the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, all of which were written *after* the time of Artaxerxes, he must have included the historical books, which belonged to the *Hebrew Canon*. Of these canonical books, the book of Esther is that which records the latest portion of biblical history. But even *this*

¹³ See Note 8.

¹⁴ Ἀπὸ δὲ Ἀρταξέρξου μέχρι τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνου γέγραπται μὲν ἕκαστα· πίστει δ' οὐχ' ὁμοίαις ἡξίωται τοῖς πρὸ αὐτῶν, διὰ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι τὴν τῶν Προφητῶν ἀκριβῆ διαδοχὴν. Tom. II. p. 441. ed. Havercamp.

book must have been included in the second class of Josephus; for according to Josephus himself, who has made copious extracts from it, the book of Esther must have been written *during* the reign of Artaxerxes, and before the expiration of the limit assigned to the composition of the books belonging to the second class¹⁵.

Whatever view therefore we take of the books, which belonged to the classes of Josephus, we come to the same conclusion. We may *justly* therefore infer, that the books, which constituted the Hebrew Scriptures in the time of Josephus, were precisely the books, which constituted the Hebrew Scriptures in the time

¹⁵ The history of Esther is given by Josephus, Antiquit. lib. XI. cap. 6. At the beginning of the Chapter he relates, that Xerxes was succeeded by a king, *ὃν Ἀρταξέρξην Ἕλληνες καλοῦσι*. He then relates the history of Esther, as it is related in the book of Esther, using only the name of Artaxerxes, instead of Ahasuerus. He concludes his history of Esther with the institution of the feast of Purim, and says, §. 13. *Ἐγραψε δὲ Μαρδοχαῖος τοῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀρταξέρξου βασιλείᾳ ζῶσιν Ἰουδαίοις ταῦται παραφυλάσσειν τὰς ἡμέρας, καὶ ἑορτὴν ἄγειν αὐτάς, καὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις παρουδῶναι*. Since then, according to Josephus the history of Esther took place during the reign of Artaxerxes, successor of Xerxes, and he asserts that no book written *after* the time of Artaxerxes was admitted into the Hebrew Canon, the book of Esther, without which his second class would be incomplete, must have been coeval with the history itself.

of Jerom. The two writers not only agreed as to the books, which belonged to the canon of the Old Testament: they agreed also as to the exclusion of the books, which did *not* belong to it. Josephus excludes them by saying, that they were written, when the succession of prophets had ceased¹⁶. And Jerom excludes them from his catalogue of the Hebrew Scriptures, by saying that he had given that catalogue for the purpose of shewing, that all books, *beside* those, are apocryphal¹⁷.

Since then the Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour were the same Hebrew Scriptures which were known to Josephus: since they contained the same books, which were enumerated by Jerom, and still constitute our Hebrew Bibles, the authority of the Old Testament according to the canon of our own Church, though not according to the canon of the Church of Rome, rests upon a basis, which cannot be shaken¹⁸.

¹⁶ See Note 14.


¹⁷ Hic Prologus Scripturarum, quasi galeatum principium, omnibus libris, quos de Hebræo vertimus in Latinum, convenire potest; ut scire valeamus quicquid *extra* hos est inter 'Απόκρυφα esse ponendum. Hieronymi Op. Tom. I. p. 322. ed. Martianay.

¹⁸ The Church of England receives as canonical those books of the Old Testament, which constitute the Hebrew Scriptures,

and

It remains only to shew, that ~~the~~ books themselves have descended to the present age without material alteration. In other words, it is still necessary to establish the *Integrity* of the Hebrew Bible : and this shall be the business of the next Lecture.

and those books *only*. Consequently it receives those books, and those books only, which received the sanction of our Saviour. But there is no such sanction for many of the books, which are received as canonical by the Church of Rome.



LECTURE XXXIV.

OUR inquiries into the Integrity of the Hebrew Scriptures, may be divided into two periods; the one extending from the time of Moses to that of our Saviour, the other extending from the time of our Saviour to the present age. In the former period we may collect such historical notices, as we can find, respecting the care, which was taken by the Jews for the preservation of their sacred writings. In the latter period we must endeavour to shew, that the charge of *wilful* corruption, which has been laid to the Jews, is devoid of foundation; that the utmost care has been taken to guard against *accidental* mistakes; and that the Hebrew Scriptures have descended to the present age with as few alterations as is possible in works of high antiquity.

The preservation of the Pentateuch was a matter of special importance to the Jews: it was their code of legislation, as well civil as religious; it was the book by which all their institutions were determined during their existence as a nation. In the thirty-first chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, we find an account of the care, which was taken in this respect by Moses himself. It is there related, that "Moses wrote this Law, and delivered it unto "the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the "ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto "all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven "years, in the solemnity of the year of release, "in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is "come to appear before the Lord thy God, "in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt "read this law before all Israel in their hearing¹."—"And it came to pass, when Moses "had made an end of writing the words of "this Law in a Book, until they were finished, "that Moses commanded the Levites, which "bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, "saying, Take this *Book of the Law*, and "put it in the side of the ark of the covenant

¹ Ver. 9—11.

"of the Lord your God²". Since then, the Book of the Law, as written by Moses, was entrusted to the Priests and the Levites, was deposited in the ark of the covenant, and read to the people every seventh year, sufficient care was taken for the uncorrupted preservation of it.

In the subsequent books of the Old Testament we find frequent references to the *Law of Moses*. In the eighth chapter of the book of Joshua the children of Israel were commanded to build an altar, "as it is written in the book of THE LAW OF MOSES³". But there is a more remarkable passage in the first chapter of Joshua, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, "that thou mayest observe to do all according to the Law, which Moses my servant "commanded thee. Turn not from it to the "right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest "prosper whithersoever thou goest. This Book "of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, "but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, "that thou mayest observe to do all that is "written therein⁴." In the books of the Kings, in the books of the Chronicles, in the book of

² Ver. 24—26.

³ Ver. 31.

⁴ Ver. 7, 8.

Ezra, in the book of Nehemiah, we find also references to the Law of Moses, as the code of legislation, by which the Jewish institutions were determined both before, and after the Babylonish captivity.

We have already seen, that the autograph of Moses was, by his own command entrusted to the Priests and the Levites, and deposited in the ark of the covenant. When the Temple of Solomon was built, which was about five hundred and fifty years after the death of Moses, the ark of the covenant was removed to "*the most holy place*" of the Temple⁵. But from the seventh chapter of the first book of Kings, where this removal is related, it appears, that "there was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb⁶." That the two tables of stone, containing the ten commandments were deposited in the ark of the covenant, appears from the tenth chapter of Deuteronomy⁷. But the two tables of stone were not *the book of the Law*, which Moses also commanded to be placed in the ark. The book of the Law therefore must have been placed in some other part of the

⁵ 1 Kings vii. 6.

⁶ Ibid. ver. 9.

⁷ Ver. 5.

Temple. That it was the custom of the Jews to preserve their sacred writings in the Temple, we know from the authority of Josephus⁸. And that in the time of Josiah, King of Judah, there was a copy of THE LAW in the Temple appears from what is related both in the second book of the Kings, and in the second book of the Chronicles⁹. "When they brought out the "money, that was brought into the house of "the Lord, Hilkiash the priest found a book of "the Law of the Lord given by Moses. And "Hilkiash answered and said to Shaphan the "Scribe, I have found the Book of the Law "in the house of the Lord." To understand these words we must recollect, that Manasseh and Amon, the two immediate predecessors of Josiah in the kingdom of Judah, were gross idolaters; and that Manasseh converted the Temple itself into a place of idol-worship. Manasseh reigned fifty and five years¹⁰: and such was his cruelty during this long reign, that he shed innocent blood, "till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other¹¹." The Temple therefore having been so long employed as a place of idolatry, the priests of Jehovah having

⁸ See Lect. xxxiii. note 1.

⁹ 2 Kings xxii. 8. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.

¹⁰ 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1.

¹¹ 2 Kings xxi. 16.

been killed or expelled to make room for the priests of Baal, and every thing sacred having been destroyed, which was not concealed from the idolaters, the discovery of the book of the Law, when the Temple was restored to its former worship, could not fail to excite surprise, whether it was the autograph of Moses, or only a faithful copy of it. That the Book of the Law was found in the Temple, was not *of itself* any cause of wonder. It was the discovery of the Temple-copy of the Law, at a time and under circumstances, which had left no hope of its preservation.

Whether the Temple-copy of the Law was rescued from destruction when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, it is difficult at present to determine. It appears from the second book of Chronicles¹², that the sacred vessels of the Temple were either destroyed or carried to Babylon. But neither in this place, nor in the second book of Kings, nor in the fifty-second chapter of Jeremiah, where the *vessels* of the Temple are minutely described, do we find any account of the Book of the Law. In that apocryphal work, which we call the second book

¹² Chap. xxxvi. 18, 19.

of Esdras, the unknown author, assuming to himself a character, which did not belong to him, thus addresses himself to God in the name of the Hebrew Ezra; "Thy Law is burnt, therefore no man knoweth the things concerning thee"¹³." If this account were correct, not only the Temple-copy of the Law, but all other copies of the Law must have been destroyed at the taking of Jerusalem. If after the Babylonish captivity, when Ezra was restoring the Temple-worship, *no* man knew the things of the Law, no copy of it could have been left. A thing so improbable in itself, and contradicted by better authority, can hardly be admitted on the evidence of an author, who wrote under a false name, whose book comparatively modern was never a part even of the Septuagint, and of which our English translation is nothing more than a translation from the *Latin*.

The authentic books of Ezra and Nehemiah afford us no reason to suppose, that the Law of Moses had been so destroyed, as is represented in that apocryphal book, called the second book of Esdras. From the eighth chapter of Nehemiah it is evident, that the Book of the Law

¹³ 2 Esdras xiv. 21.

(whether the Temple-copy or not) was preserved during the period of the Babylonish captivity. For when the worship of God was restored at Jerusalem, "they spake unto Ezra the Scribe, "to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which "the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra "the priest *brought* the Law before the congregation¹⁴." The prophet Daniel must also have had a copy of the Law, for he appealed to it, and quoted it¹⁵.

On the preservation of the other books, which were written before the Babylonish captivity, we have no historical evidence. But if we may argue from analogy, the sacred writings *in general* were preserved in the Temple. When Joshua made a covenant with the people, he wrote the "words in the book of the Law of "God¹⁶." And when Samuel had anointed Saul, "he told the people the *manner* of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord¹⁷." From these occasional notices we may infer, that when the Temple was built, it became the general depository of the sacred writings, which were thus preserved to the time of the Babylonish captivity.

¹⁴ Nehemiah viii. 1, 2.

¹⁶ Joshua xxiv. 25, 26.

¹⁵ Daniel ix. 13.

¹⁷ 1 Sam. x. 25.

When the Temple was rebuilt, we have equal reason to believe, that it became again the depository of the sacred writings: and we know that it was so in the time of Josephus. Ezra and Nehemiah, who lived in the reign of Artaxerxes, the period assigned by Josephus for the closing of the Hebrew Canon, are represented in the tradition of the Jews, as members of that Synagogue, which was known by the name of the Great Synagogue. And though it cannot be denied, that the accounts of the Jews concerning the Great Synagogue have a large admixture of fable, the *existence* of such a Synagogue for the purpose of collecting and arranging the Hebrew Scriptures can hardly be doubted. Whether the circumstances, ascribed to it, be true or not, the *fact itself* must have had some foundation, or the belief in it would not have so generally prevailed. The very titles, which are borne by Ezra in his own authentic work, accord with the belief, that he was engaged in the formation of the Hebrew Canon. He is not only called Ezra the Priest: he is also called Ezra the Scribe. In the seventh chapter of the Book of Ezra¹⁸, we find, that Artaxerxes the king gave a letter “unto Ezra

“ the priest, a Scribe of the Law of the God
 “ of Heaven.” The title of Scribe, or in Hebrew
 Soph¹⁹, was given to those, who were en-
 trusted, not merely with the copying, but with
 the *preservation* of the sacred writings. Even
 the high-priest Hil¹⁹kiah, when he found in the
 Temple the Book of the Law, delivered it to
 Shaphan the Scribe²⁰. That Nehemiah was also
 engaged in collecting the Hebrew Scriptures,
 and in the formation of a Temple-Library, is
 recorded in the second chapter of the second
 book of the Maccabees²¹; a book which though
 no part of the Hebrew Canon, has always been
 a part of the Septuagint, as far as our knowledge
 of it extends.

When the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures
 had been thus formed, it does not appear that
 any attempt was made to destroy or to injure
 it, till the time of Antiochus Epiphanes; when
 the books of the Law, which were found in
 the Temple, were cut in pieces and burnt with
 fire²². But the Temple-copy of the Law of
 Moses could not have been the *only* copy, which
 then existed. And it appears, that Judas Mac-
 cabeus “ gathered together all those things (which,

¹⁹ סופר.

²¹ Ver. 13.

²⁰ 2 Chron. xxxiv. 15.

²² 1 Macc. i. 56.

as appears from the context includes all those *writings*) which were lost by reason of the war²³." From that period to the time of our Saviour, the Hebrew Scriptures remained undisturbed in the Temple: and their preservation in the Temple till its destruction by Titus, appears from the accounts of Josephus which have been already quoted.

The preceding narrative has been given, for the purpose of shewing the care which was taken by the ancient Jews for the safety of the Hebrew Scriptures. But our inquiries into the integrity of the Hebrew Bible, during the period which has elapsed since the age of our Saviour, are still more important. The Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour, received his sanction as they *then* existed: and therefore must have been free from those corruptions, with which the Jews have been *subsequently* charged. Nor does it appear, that our Saviour, though he reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for many other abuses, has ever accused them of corrupting the sacred writings.

The question therefore, which we must now examine is, whether the Jews have corrupted

²³ 2 Macc. xi. 14, compared with ver. 13.

the Hebrew Scriptures *since* the time of our Saviour. The charge has been frequently made, as well in modern times, as in the early ages of the Church. But the known veneration of the Jews for the Hebrew Scriptures must induce us to receive such a charge with extreme caution. Josephus, in the place, where he describes the three classes of the Hebrew Scriptures, says, it appears from experience, with what veneration the Jews regard their sacred writings; and he concludes with saying, "Into all the Jews is "instilled from their very birth the belief, that "those writings are the precepts of God, to "which they are firmly attached, and for which, "if necessary, they are prepared to die²⁴." It is not very credible, that men should wilfully corrupt those very writings, to which they were so warmly, so devotedly attached. Though they ceased to exist, as a separate nation, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, their veneration for the Law of Moses continued without abatement. Even in their state of dispersion the Book of the Law has been the guide of their actions, as far as their circumstances would allow

²⁴ Πᾶσι σύμφυτον ἔστιν εὐθεὶς ἐκ τῆς πρώτης γενέσεως Ἰουδαίους τὸ νομίζειν αὐτὰ Θεοῦ δόγματα, καὶ ταῦτοσ ἐμμένειν, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, εἰ δέοι, θνήσκειν ἡδέως. Tom. II. p. 442. ed. Havercamp. See also what Philo says, tom. II. p. 139. ed. Mangey.

them to follow it. They could have had no motive therefore to corrupt the Law of Moses. Nor could they have had any motive to corrupt the *historical* books of the Old Testament. The places, in which they have been chiefly suspected, are prophecies relating to the Messiah. But if it were really true, that the Jews had formed a design of altering the prophecies of the Messiah, so as to render them inapplicable to the person of Jesus Christ, they would have acted in such a manner as to defeat their own purpose. For the prophecies, which relate most clearly to our Saviour, the prophecies which afford the least possible room for doubt, are precisely the prophecies, which have been left untouched: while the places, where doubts have been excited, in consequence of a difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, are for the most part places of little importance. And, what is still more extraordinary, there are passages in the Hebrew Bible, which merely in consequence of their difference from the Septuagint, the Jews have been suspected of corrupting, when it appears from a comparison of the Hebrew with the Greek, that the Hebrew reading is *less* favourable to the Jews than the Greek reading²⁵.

²⁵ Waltoni Prolegom. vii. 4.

In fact, the charge of corrupting the Hebrew Scriptures, though it has been repeated in modern times, had its *origin* in the ignorance of those, who introduced it. The Greek and Latin Fathers were for the most part unacquainted with Hebrew, though Origen and Jerom were illustrious exceptions. The Greek Fathers quoted from the Septuagint; the Latin Fathers from the Latin version, which was made from the Septuagint. They had no Latin translation from the Hebrew till the time of Jerom: and even *his* translation was not immediately adopted as the authorised version of the Latin church. Nor must we forget the state of the Septuagint itself, in the third century; the copies of which so differed from each other, as well as from the Hebrew Bible, that Origen undertook his celebrated work called the Hexapla, for the purpose of correcting the existing evils. Under these circumstances, when the ancient Fathers, in controversy with the Jews, quoted passages of Scripture from the Greek and Latin versions, it necessarily happened, that such quotations occasionally differed from the Hebrew. The revival of Hebrew learning by the establishment of the school at Tiberias, enabled the Jews to detect the differences, between the Hebrew original and the Septuagint version. They replied, therefore, that the quotations of their opponents were

incorrect, as differing from the Hebrew original. But their opponents, relying on the infallibility of the Greek version, retorted on the Jews, that the difference arose from their own *corruption of the Hebrew*. This is the origin of the charge, so frequently laid to them. And it is enough to *know* its origin to perceive its want of foundation.

But even if the Jews had been *inclined* to corrupt the Hebrew Scriptures, there were so many impediments in the way of such corruption, that they could not have carried it to any great extent. Charges of that description are more easily made, than proved. Men frequently argue, as if the omission of a passage in *one* manuscript would operate, as it were by magic, its extinction from *all the rest*. But it is really not an easy matter to expunge, without detection, from works of such general circulation, as the Hebrew Bible, and the Greek Testament. The checks on the corruption of the latter have been fully described on a former occasion: and similar checks have operated, to secure the integrity of the Hebrew Bible.

That *accidental* mistakes have been made in transcribing the Hebrew Scriptures, is nothing more, than what is common to the transcripts of

every work. And Hebrew manuscripts especially were liable to such mistakes, as well from the similarity in some of the Hebrew letters, as from other causes peculiar to the Hebrew language. But the guards and fences, which were erected by the Jews, to stop the progress of such mistakes, were proportionate to the causes, which tended to produce them. The operation of the Masora, in protecting the Hebrew manuscripts from error, has been explained on former occasions. It will be sufficient therefore at present to observe in general terms, that the rules, by which Hebrew transcribers are bound in the copying of the Scriptures, are so strict, that if they cannot secure a total exemption from error, they go as far, as can be expected from human efforts.

But we must not omit to notice a species of alteration in the Hebrew Scriptures, which can neither be ranked among wilful corruptions, nor among accidental mistakes. In the Pentateuch we sometimes find names of places, which names were not given to those places till *after* the time of Moses. For instance Hebron was, before the conquest of Palestine by Joshua, called Kirjath-arba, as is related in the book of Joshua itself²⁸.

²⁸ Joshua xiv. 15.

Yet in the book of Genesis it is called by the later name of Hebron²⁷. This name could not have been written by Moses, who lived before the time of its adoption. From this and similar examples it has been inferred, that the Pentateuch *itself* was written at a later period, than that which is commonly ascribed to it. And where we have no *other* arguments to determine the date of an ancient work, arguments like these will have considerable weight. But where we have convincing arguments on the other side, arguments which prove the authenticity of the work, we must conclude that the author himself used the *ancient* names; and that the later names were afterwards substituted, for the sake of perspicuity.

Other passages, which could not have proceeded from the hand of Moses, are of the following description, "These are the kings, that reigned over the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel"²⁸. These words were undoubtedly written after the establishment of monarchy in Israel, and therefore long after the time of Moses. But they do not prove, that the Pentateuch itself was not written by Moses. They only shew, that we

²⁷ Gen. xiii. 18.

²⁸ Gen. xxxvi. 31.


have here an *addition* to the text of Moses. Now such additions do not affect the general authenticity of the work, and are easily distinguished from what was written by Moses.

Additions of another kind are such as that, which is found in the thirty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. The thirty-third chapter, which contains the blessings pronounced by Moses on the tribes of Israel, has evident tokens of being the conclusion of the work, as finished by Moses himself. But as some account of his death appeared a necessary addition to it, the supplement was made, and probably by Joshua, whence it was engrafted on the book itself.

We may conclude with the general observation, that whatever additions have been made to the original text, either in this place, or any other place of the Hebrew Bible, those additions, which contain historical notices, must have been made, either before, or at the time when the canon was determined, and consequently would not have been admitted, unless they had been entitled to credit.

Let us now recapitulate in a few words what has been proved in the preceding Lectures.

It has been proved, that the Hebrew Scriptures, as they then existed, received the sanction of our Saviour. It has been proved, that the Hebrew Scriptures, which received the sanction of our Saviour, contained the same books, which are now contained in our Hebrew Bibles. And lastly it has been proved, that the books themselves have descended to the present age, not only free from wilful corruption, but as free from accidental mistakes, as can possibly be expected in works of high antiquity. We may rely therefore on the authority, and the integrity of the Hebrew Bible.



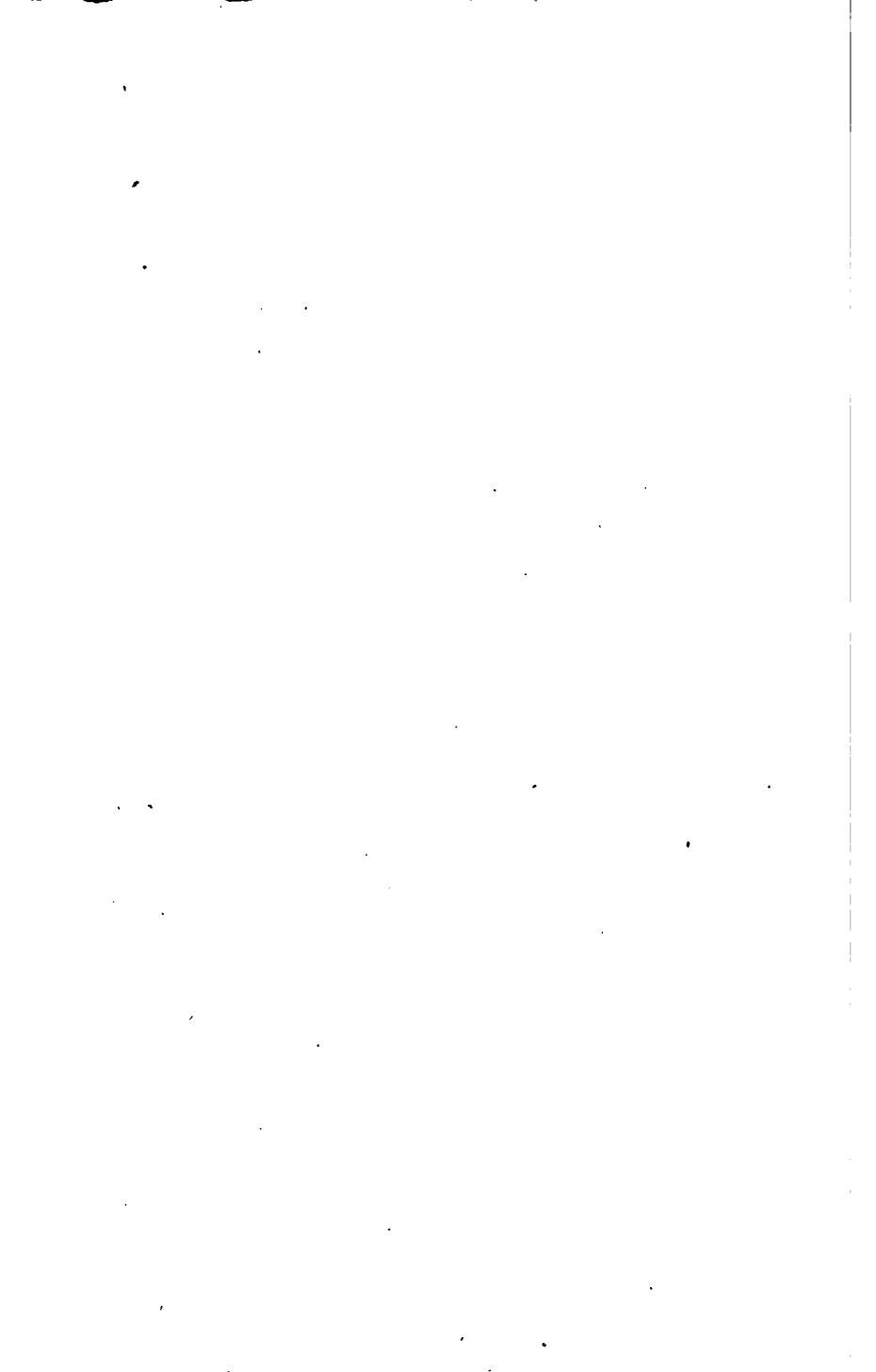
ERRATA.

P. 24. Note 5. l. 7. *vertimas* *read* *vertimus.*

38. — 13. *Hagiographarum* *read* *Hagiographorum.*

48. — 15. l. 10. *παρουδούναι* *read* *παραδούναι.*



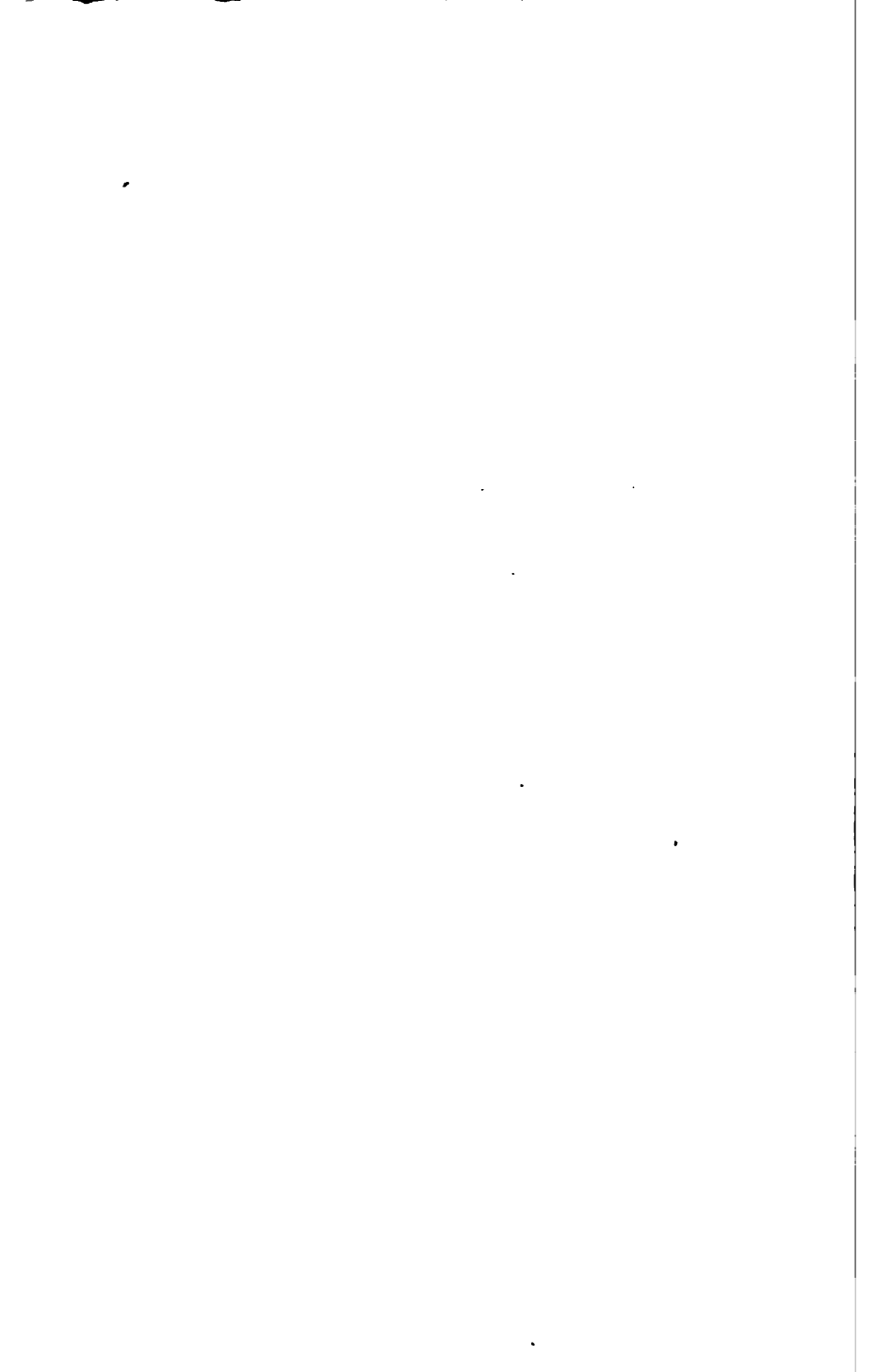




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