

The Authority of the Sacred Canon,

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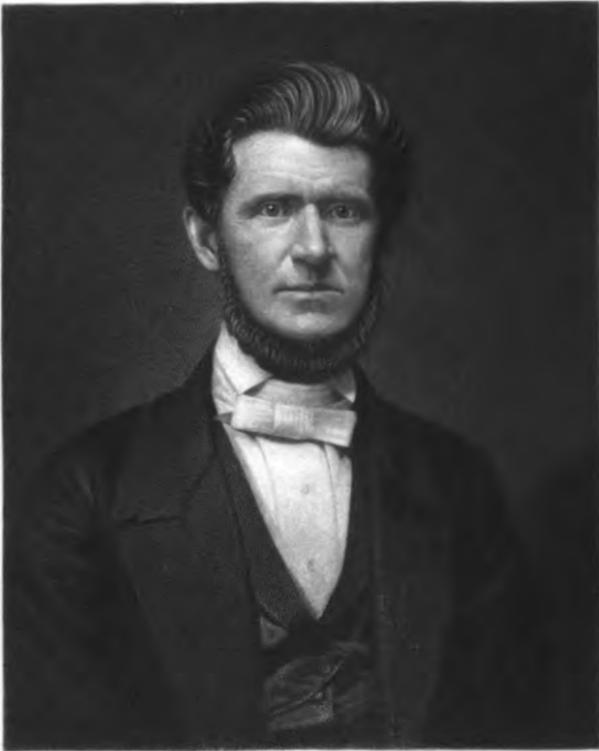
THE INTEGRITY OF THE SACRED TEXT

TWO LECTURES.

BY

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I.

RESPECTED AUDIENCE—

With hearty good-will and real pleasure, and yet not without feelings of sadness, I revisit the scenes of one of the most delightful periods of my life. It was here that I received my first lessons in science from venerated instructors, most of whom have gone to other fields; some of them—alas, how soon and suddenly!—to

“That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns.”

I came here a babe in Christ. The first five years of my new and better life were spent within these classic walls. Sacred hours, and sacred spots, and Christian friends, and youthful associates, are fondly remembered still. I would thank God that, through my brief life, the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places: but I have seen few better days than I have seen amid these scenes and friends of my youth.

Amongst these especially dear were those with whom, when as yet there was here no Ambassador of God, no Sanctuary, no Bible Society, no Sabbath-school,—I might almost say, no Sabbath,—in our lonely dormitory I often met, and spake, and prayed for better days to our beloved Alma Mater. The days came sooner than we had believed. God was with us. The little seed germinated and grew: and watered and fostered by his care, it became a tree with goodly branches and some precious fruit. I rejoice that it still lives and flourishes; and count it one of the most delightful privileges of my life, to return in my maturer, though scarcely realized manhood, and endeavor to contribute something towards helping this tree to strike deeper its roots, to spread wider its branches, and to bear more abundant and yet more precious fruit.

I am called to maintain before you *the authority of the Sacred Canon and the integrity of the Sacred Text*, as part of a

Course of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity. The subject is both copious and difficult, and might well have demanded me to enter immediately on its discussion. But I could not deny myself, and you, I trust, will excuse these brief introductory reminiscences. I proceed now to the duty assigned me.

I propose, then, so to present the history and authority of the Sacred Scriptures, and the history, preservation, and integrity of the text, as to show them to be the Word of God, and Christianity to be divine. In order to make the argument as short, and yet as comprehensive and conclusive as possible, I shall endeavor to maintain a series of propositions, which involve all that is essential to a just view of the subject.

I. My first proposition is, that *the Books of the New Testament are genuine*: that is, they were written, as they profess to have been written, by the Apostles and attendants on the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christianity at our day is a great *fact*, wide-spread over the world. We trace it back through every generation to the days of Augustus Cæsar, and find its origin in a crucified Jew. Tacitus and Suetonius, both reliable historians who flourished in little more than fifty years after the time, give unequivocal testimony on the subject. The former tells us, in his *Annals*,* that "Christus, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the procurator, Pontius Pilate: that he originated a religion† in Judea, which, though checked for a while, broke out again and spread through Judea, and soon extended to Rome: that his followers from him were called *Christians*, and were very numerous at Rome in the reign of Nero (some thirty years after his death): that here they were exceedingly hated as criminal, and yet were subjected by the emperor, in order to avert from himself the infamy of having commanded the city to be set on fire, and to gratify his own wanton cruelty rather than to promote the public welfare, to such grievous and numerous sufferings as to excite the commiseration of the people." The latter, in his life of Nero,‡ says, that "the Christians were punished,—a sort of men of a new and magical (or pernicious§) superstition." Upon the testimony of Tacitus, the infidel Gibbon remarks: "The most skeptical criticism is obliged to respect the truth of this extraordinary fact,|| and the integrity of this celebrated pas-

* Tacit. *Annal.* xv. 44.
§ Maleficæ.

† Superstitio. ‡ Sueton. *Nero.* xvi.
|| That is, the persecution of the Christians.

sage of Tacitus. The former is confirmed by the diligent and accurate Suetonius, who mentions the punishment which Nero inflicted on the Christians, 'a sect of men who had embraced a new and criminal superstition.' The latter may be proved by the consent of the most ancient manuscripts; by the inimitable character of the style of Tacitus; by his reputation, which guarded his text from the interpolations of pious fraud; and by the purport of his narration, which accused the first Christians of the most atrocious crimes, without insinuating that they possessed any miraculous or even magical powers above the rest of mankind." Pliny, the younger, who lived about the same time, while Governor of Pontus and Bithynia (A.D. 107), wrote a letter* to Trajan, the emperor, requesting advice as to the proper manner of proceeding against the Christians. From this letter we learn, that "they were now (some seventy years after Christ) very numerous in those regions, embracing every age and rank and sex, and pervading, not only the cities, but the lesser towns and the open country also: that they were brought before the civil tribunals, and tried for no crime but their Christianity, and punished for their obstinacy if they refused to abjure it: that it appeared from these investigations, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, and sing among themselves a hymn to Christ as God, and to eat a meal in common, but without any disorder; and to bind themselves by a solemn oath (sacramento), not to commit wickedness, but to abstain from theft, and robbery, and adultery, and falsehood, and unfaithfulness; while they steadfastly refused to invoke the gods, and to make supplication before the emperor's image: and that by their influence the temples had become almost forsaken, the sacred solemnities intermitted, and victims went begging for purchasers:"—all which, you cannot but observe, while, like the other passages, it proves the remarkable spread of Christianity and the cruel persecutions of the early Christians, throws not a little light on *the atrocious crimes* of which Gibbon speaks as charged by Tacitus upon them, and on the *pernicious* character which Suetonius ascribes to the *new superstition*.

Now it is every way probable that one who had successfully founded such a society, would, either by his own hands or the hands of his more intimate and chosen disciples, give out his doctrines and precepts in writing. It is every way probable that

* Plin. Ep. b. x. ep. 97

such writings would be highly valued by all his followers: and that as the sect multiplied and spread, copies of these writings would also be multiplied and spread; and that they would be carefully preserved, and constantly appealed to, as the standard of opinion and practice acknowledged by all of the new persuasion.

Our New Testament Canon contains no book that professes to have been written by Christ. It consists, as you know, of *five Historical Books, twenty-one Epistolary, and one Prophetical*. Of the Historical Books, *four*, called Gospels, are ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and contain brief histories of the birth, doctrines, works, death, and resurrection of Christ; and the *fifth*, called *the Acts*, and also ascribed to Luke, contains an account of Christ's ascension to heaven, of the early propagation of his principles, and organization of his church by his disciples amongst both Jews and Gentiles, and of the miraculous conversion and call, and subsequent labors of Paul till his imprisonment at Rome. Of the Epistles, *fourteen* are ascribed to Paul; and the remaining *seven*, called *Catholic*, are ascribed *one* to James, *two* to Peter, *three* to John, and *one* to Jude. These were all written on different occasions, to different churches and individuals, and contain further developments of the doctrines and precepts which Christ would have to govern his Church. The only Prophetical Book, *the Revelation*, is ascribed to John, the author of the Gospel and the three Epistles. Of these authors, all were Apostles of Christ, duly commissioned to go forth and teach, and do mighty works in his name, excepting two, Mark and Luke. These, according to the books themselves, and all ancient tradition, were attendants on the Apostles,—or, as the Fathers called them, *apostolical men*, who wrote with the knowledge and approbation of the Apostles.

While, then, none of the books profess to have been written by Christ, all of them are handed down to us as from the Apostles and apostolical men. From what I have already said, it must be admitted that there is no presumption against their genuineness; but the presumption is decidedly in their favor. It is obvious, from the very inspection of the books, that they were written at different times and places, to different churches and individuals, on various doctrinal and practical subjects, just as circumstances called for them. At first, therefore, of course, they were separate, and scattered over different countries, in the possession of the dif-

ferent churches and individuals to whom they were originally sent. The collection of them into one volume was a subsequent work,—upon which we may remark, in passing, the books were, in no degree, dependent for any authority to which they might be justly entitled. All churches, especially those which had been founded by the Apostles, and perhaps had received of their writings, such as those of Rome,* Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossæ, Galatia, and all private Christians, who could defray the expense, especially those who had been conversant with the Apostles, would exert themselves to obtain copies of all such writings as were either composed or sanctioned by them, as authoritative exponents of the principles of the great Founder of their faith. In this way, there would soon be found in the hands of different churches and private individuals more or less complete collections of the Sacred Books. Some of the books, we may suppose, would come more slowly into general circulation than others:—such, for example, as were very brief and *comparatively* unimportant; such as were sent to private persons, and therefore were less known; such as were very obscure, and therefore not so much read. And for this very reason that they had at first less circulation, were less known, and consequently less quoted,—as well as for other reasons,—we may suppose that they would afterwards be more or less doubted by churches and private persons, who desired to have only the genuine works of the Apostles and such as were endorsed by them. After due time, however, and after full inquiry, to which the interest that was felt in the books would naturally prompt, the general consent would become settled on the books which ought to be received as genuine: and thus the Canon of the Sacred Books would finally become fixed and acknowledged in the church.—What we have here hypothetically imagined, is abundantly confirmed by a careful examination of the books themselves, and by the statements of those who lived and wrote nearest to the times of the Apostles. The result, early attained, was, that the books which we now have were the genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants who wrote with their sanction.

These prefatory remarks will prepare the way for the evidence which I shall now exhibit of the genuineness of our New Testament Canon. I shall appeal to the same kind of testimony that

* The founders of the churches at Rome and Colossæ are not known. The former certainly, and probably the latter, enjoyed the ministrations of Paul.

we appeal to, in order to establish the genuineness of all other books that have come down to us from antiquity. I shall appeal not to the decisions of General Councils, or to any man, or any set of men, as invested with authority from heaven to declare what books proceeded from Apostles, and what from uninspired men : I expressly deny that there ever was any such council or other human tribunal, invested with authority from God to settle this question, otherwise than by the evidence which may be fairly adduced to prove the genuineness or the spuriousness of all other ancient books. I shall appeal to the marks of genuineness which are found in the books themselves, and to the testimony of those, whether friends or foes, who lived nearest to the times of the writers, and who, therefore, had the best opportunities of knowing what they wrote.

A. I adduce, then, first, *the internal testimony*. Examine the books themselves, and you find

1. The *language* and *style* such as altogether to favor their genuineness. The language clearly shows that they emanated from Jews who spoke Greek, while the difference in style proves beyond all doubt, that they proceeded from different authors.

After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the various dialects of the Greek became, as you know, mingled, and this mixed or common (*κοινή*) dialect, as it was called, was extensively diffused over the East. We have the most satisfactory testimony, especially from Josephus, that many cities in Palestine were, in large part, inhabited by Greeks. Jews too, who were born in foreign parts and spoke Greek, frequently visited the land and city and temple of their fathers. The Herods did no little to innovate Grecian customs ; and it would seem, that, while the Greek was the court-language of the Romans in the East, even the Jewish Rabbins were not unfavorable to its use. While, therefore, the Syro-Chaldaic, or Hebrew, as it is called in our New Testament, was the vernacular tongue of the Jews who resided in Palestine Greek was certainly very extensively spoken as the language of commerce. But the Greek thus learnt, from the intercourse of common life, not from books, and spoken by Jews residing in Palestine, must largely partake of the idiom of their native tongue. From the Roman dominion too over the country, and the extensive and easy intercourse that was then carried on with the East and the different parts of the Roman Empire, we would expect some traces of the Latin and other languages. Such precisely is

the language of the New Testament. It is the common Greek dialect current at the time, of which Attic was the base, largely colored by the Hebrew, or Syro-Chaldaic, which was vernacular to the writers, and exhibiting just such other foreign corruptions as we might expect to find in such writings.*

All acknowledge the diversity of style in the different books. Matthew's style is very different from that of Luke, John's from Paul's, James' from Peter's. The style, too, corresponds strikingly with the education, character, and habits of the several writers, as far as we know them. Matthew and Mark write in the plain, simple style of unpolished men, whose object is truth, not to varnish a tale: John in the simple, but smooth, flowing style of confidence and affection. Luke exhibits more of educational culture; while Paul shows the fire and energy of true genius and strong powers, melted and inspirited with the grace of the gospel. James is sententious and ornate, Peter earnest, and Jude vehement.

We have, therefore, in these books, precisely the peculiarities of language and all the diversities of style, which we should have expected from just such authors, living at that period, and in those countries. We discover also

2. Strong marks of genuineness in *the circumstantiality of the narratives, and the multitude of minute allusions to existing customs and relations*, which are found more or less in all the books.

I cannot here, without going into detail, which the occasion does not allow, do more than indicate the nature of the argument. I regret this the more, because it is only by such details that the full strength of the argument can be exhibited.† Suffice it, however, to say, that the writers show an easy and familiar acquaintance with the times, which proves them to be, as the authors of these books profess to have been, contemporaneous with the events. No man after them was sufficiently acquainted with the times to have wrought into his fictitious narrative such multiplied and accurate allusions and statements. They freely give dates, places, persons, circumstances; and refer to the social, civil, religious, political, geographical, and historical relations of the times, with a readiness and profusion which are possible only to contemporaneous authors. There is none of that generality and conflict with the existing relations of the time, as ascertained from other reliable sources, which so often serve to detect and

* See Winer, *Grammatik d. neutest. Sprachidioms*, §§ 1, 2, 3, 4.

† See this well done, Hug's Introduction to the N. T. (Fosdick's Translation) §§ 3, 4, 5.

demonstrate forgeries of later writers. Abounding as the allusions do on almost every page, all our researches into antiquity serve but to illustrate and confirm them.

Now I do not assert that the internal testimony alone could demonstrate the genuineness of all the books. But I do not hesitate to affirm that the books, as a whole, contain as strong internal marks of the age to which they belong, as the book of any other ancient author or authors whatever. We have no contemporary testimony to the history of Herodotus, still less to the works of Homer. But they have strong *internal* testimony, and there is no *external* testimony against them; and hence their antiquity, and the genuineness of the former at least, are now universally admitted. In the case of the book before us, the testimony is stronger and still more decisive. The language is the Greek, of a particular age and region, and all the minute circumstantial allusions are allusions to the relations and customs of times and countries, than which none others are better known to us in ancient history. What single forger of the second century,—and later it would be absurd to suppose,—could have written so many books in so many different styles, so peculiar in their matter, and abounding with so many minute references to the relations of a former period? What combination of men could have done it, and the thing not be known and duly noted in history? How is it that the men of that age allowed themselves to be thus amazingly imposed on? And if it be allowed that they were written in the period to which we refer them, why attribute them to other authors? Who so likely to write them as the followers of Christ? And amongst these, who so properly with the authority which these writers claim for themselves, as those who attended personally on his instructions and ministry, and were by him commissioned to go out and instruct others?

B. I proceed now to lay before you the *external evidence* of the genuineness of these books. Here again I have to regret that I cannot give you *more* and *fuller* quotations from ancient writers, both Christian and infidel, so that you might receive the just impression of the argument. My time allows me to do little more than present an abstract of the more important testimony.

1. I begin with the testimony of those who lived, wholly or in part, in the very age of the Apostles, and were more or less conversant with them, and, therefore, are commonly called *Apostolical Fathers*. These are *Barnabas*, of Cyprus, frequently men-

tioned in the New Testament as a co-laborer of Paul; *Clement*, who is also mentioned as a fellow-laborer of Paul, afterwards Bishop of Rome; *Hermas*, most probably the same who is saluted by Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans; *Ignatius*, Bishop of Antioch, in Syria, where he is said to have been ordained by Peter; *Polycarp*, a disciple of John, ordained by him Bishop of Smyrna, where he died a martyr; and *Papias*, the companion of Polycarp, and possibly conversant with the Apostle John.

Of these we have only a few writings and fragments preserved. *The Shepherd* of Hermas nearly equals all the rest; but, unfortunately, it is of such a character as allowed him to quote the New Testament but little. Yet in one and another of these we find nearly all the books in our New Testament Canon quoted or alluded to—although generally not by name. The laborious and cautious Dr. Lardner has carefully collected and weighed their statements; * from him I take these results:—In *Barnabas* the allusions are few, and not so clear. *Clement*, of Rome, expressly ascribes 1st Corinthians to Paul, and more or less clearly quotes or alludes to Matthew, Mark, Luke, Romans, 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 1st and 2d Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1st and 2d Peter. *Hermas* alludes to Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1st Corinthians, Ephesians, James, and Revelation. *Ignatius* expressly ascribes Ephesians to Paul, and makes plain allusions to the Gospels of Matthew and John, and probably Luke, to the Acts, Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1st Thessalonians, 2d Timothy, 1st Peter, 1st and 3d John. *Polycarp* plainly ascribes Philippians to Paul, and quotes Matthew, Luke, 1st Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1st and 2d Thessalonians; and makes undoubted references to Acts, Romans, 1st and 2d Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, 1st and 2d Timothy, 1st Peter, 1st John, and probably Hebrews, doubtful ones to Colossians and Jude. *Papias* bears express testimony to Matthew and Mark, quotes 1st Peter, and 1st John, probably refers to Acts, and received Revelation.

I am well aware that a more recent and skeptical criticism has discarded, or questioned, very many of these supposed quotations and allusions. But, after making every deduction that can reasonably be claimed, it remains, that in the brief writings and fragments of these few Apostolical Fathers which have descended

* See his works (Lond. ed.) vol. i. p. 283 seq. iii. p. 99 seq.

to us, we find nearly all the books of our New Testament quoted or alluded to:—not indeed, generally, so as to determine the authors; but so as to show that the books were in existence, and were known and read and appreciated by contemporaneous writers, and those to whom they wrote. Conversant as these writers were with the Apostles, they could not thus have received and used these books, unless they had believed that they were truly from them. Neither would it seem that they *thus* recognized any other books that are not in our Canon.

2. We descend a little later into the second century, and passing by others whose testimony would help us, we examine the writings of *Justin Martyr*, A.D. 140; of *Irenæus*, A.D. 178; of *Clement of Alexandria*, A.D. 194; and of *Tertullian*, A.D. 200. The first of these was a native of Palestine, a man of learning and a traveller. The second was a native of Asia, acquainted with Polycarp, and Bishop of Lyons in Gaul. The third was a learned president of the celebrated catechetical school at Alexandria, in Egypt. The fourth was a presbyter of Carthage, and a man of liberal learning.

Like the Apostolical Fathers who preceded them, none of these have given us catalogues of the Sacred Books. But they make so many statements respecting them and their authors, and so freely quote them and allude to them as sacred and authoritative Scriptures, that we might, with goodly satisfaction, make out the Canon of the New Testament from them alone. I am sorry that I have not time to quote them at length: but I am compelled to content myself with the statement of the substance and the most important points of their testimony. Justin tells us that the Memoirs or Records of the Apostles and their companions,—plainly meaning our four Gospels, which only he received,—were read and expounded in the assemblies of Christians for divine worship on the Sabbath day. Irenæus says expressly, that there were but four Gospels,—the very ones that we now have. In divers passages they both quote these, and many other of the Sacred Books. Clement, likewise testifies to the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: refers Acts to Luke; thirteen Epistles to Paul, omitting only Philemon: quotes of the Catholic Epistles all but James, 2 Peter, and 3 John: and ascribes Revelation to John, the Apostle. Tertullian, also, received but the four Gospels, of Matthew and John who, he says, were Apostles, and of Mark and Luke, who were apostolical men: refers Acts

to Luke; thirteen Epistles to Paul, including Philemon, but ascribing Hebrews to Barnabas: and quotes 1 Peter, 1 John, Jude, and Revelation, ascribing the last expressly to the Apostle John. "Visit," says he to those who would exercise a commendable curiosity in matters of their salvation,—“visit the apostolical churches, in which the very chairs of the Apostles still preside; in which their very authentic letters* are recited, sounding forth the voice and representing the face of each one. Is Achaia near you? you have Corinth. If you are not far from Macedonia, you have Philippi and Thessalonica. If you can go to Asia, you have Ephesus, &c.” Putting together their statements, and the statements of others coëval with them, we learn that the books of the New Testament were at this period current in two volumes, called *the Gospels* and *Apostles*; that there were four Gospels universally received, two of them from the Apostles Matthew and John, and two from Mark and Luke, who wrote respectively with the authority of Peter and Paul; that the Acts were written by Luke, and fourteen Epistles by Paul, though Hebrews was doubted by some; that of the seven Catholic Epistles all were known and quoted, excepting that we find no mention of James and 3 John; and that Revelation was received as the work of the Apostle John. I wish you particularly to note, that amongst the books thus early received as genuine, are several of those which we shall presently see were afterwards doubted. Thus Justin Martyr quotes 2 Peter; Irenæus quotes and Clement received 2 John; Justin, Irenæus, Clement and Tertullian, all received Revelation as John's. There were other books now in circulation, some of them written by good men, others falsely ascribed to Apostles: but whilst these were read and sometimes quoted, it does not appear that they were ever received as genuine works of the Apostles or apostolical men, without which they could not have been deemed sacred and canonical. I wish you further to note, that as none of the writers of this period furnish catalogues of the Sacred Books, but only quote them or allude to them as they had occasion to do so, it is manifest, that the omission to quote them or refer to them by no means proves that they did not know and receive them. The wonder rather is, that within one hundred years after the last of the Apostles, though no writer, as far as we know, saw fit to prepare a formal catalogue of the Sacred Books,—a fact which argues a very general

* *Ipsæ authenticæ literæ.*

consent in regard to them,—we yet have, in the remaining writings of only a few authors, the most satisfactory proof of the reception of nearly every one of them as genuine and authoritative. “In the remaining works of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian (though some works of each of them are lost), there are perhaps,” says Dr. Lardner,* “more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages.” He elsewhere† uses nearly the same language of the quotations in Tertullian alone.

For reasons which I have already suggested, it was natural that by this time doubts should be felt and expressed in regard to some of these books. The fact, too, that in some cases, books, which were admitted to be the works of uninspired men, were read in the churches as profitable books, while some, as Revelation, which were admitted to be the genuine works of inspired men, were not read on account of their obscurity or for other reasons, would help to induce doubts where before there had been none, and make it necessary for those who had the learning and the opportunity, to investigate the grounds on which the various books had been received into the churches, and the authority to which they were entitled. This was accordingly done: and there have descended to us some *thirteen* well-authenticated catalogues of the genuine and canonical books, prepared by leading men in the two following centuries.

3. To the substance of these *ancient Catalogues*‡ I now invite your attention.

The *first* is that of an anonymous author, discovered by Muratori, the famous Italian antiquarian, and by him referred to Caius, a Roman presbyter about A.D. 200. Of this we have only an obscure and barbarous Latin translation. It contains all the books except Hebrews, James, and probably 2d Peter and 3d John.

The *second* is that of Origen, a presbyter of Alexandria, who flourished A.D. 230, little more than one hundred years after the

* Works, vol. iii. pp. 106, 7. London Edn.

† Ib. vol. i. p. 435.

‡ For most of these Catalogues, besides the works of Lardner, see Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung z. Geschichte d. Neutest. Canons bis auf Hieronymus*, where they, as well as the other testimony adduced in this Lecture, are given in the original.

Apostle John. He was, by general consent, the most learned man of his age; thoroughly studied in Pagan and Christian philosophy and literature; a most voluminous writer, courted by the great, and honored and feared by his enemies. He devoted himself especially to the study of the Sacred Scriptures; and in two passages which Eusebius has preserved,* he has particularly enumerated the books which had been handed down, and were then received, as genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants. He mentions that some doubted the genuineness of 2d Peter, and 2d and 3d John; thinks that Paul dictated Hebrews to some unknown amanuensis, who wrote down the Apostle's thoughts in his own words; and omits James and Jude altogether. But he refers elsewhere in his works to these two Epistles as well known in the churches, though not universally received as genuine: and he would seem himself to have received them all, as he certainly did the remaining books of our Canon.

The *third* catalogue is that of Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, early in the 4th century (A.D. 315). He was a diligent student and a voluminous writer, and is especially famous for a valuable Church History which has descended to us, and to which probably we are more indebted than to any other uninspired book of ancient times. He made it a special subject of inquiry, what books had been received from the times of the Apostles as written by them or with their sanction, and frequently refers to it in his History. For greater distinctness he divides the books, which were in circulation, and more or less read by Christians and churches, into three classes:—1. Those which were universally received as genuine (*ὁμολογουμένα*). 2. Those of which some doubted, though the greater part admitted them (*ἀντιλεγόμενα*). 3. Those which were spurious, i. e. certainly not from the Apostles (*ὑβόα*). Of these last, some were good books, others absurd and impious. In the first class he enumerates all the books of our Canon, excepting James, 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation,—all which he puts in the second class, excepting Revelation, which he first places in the first class, and afterwards states that some rejected it.†

The *fourth* catalogue is that of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who flourished about the same time with Eusebius. He is distinguished in ecclesiastical history for the part which he took in the great Arian controversy. In a fragment of what is called

* Ecc. Hist. vi. 25

† Ecc. Hist. iii. 25. comp. iii. 3.

his Festal or Paschal Epistle, which the great majority of the learned world admit to be genuine, he gives a catalogue of the books which had been handed down and believed to be inspired, for the especial and expressed purpose of guarding his readers from being imposed upon by spurious writings. His catalogue coincides, as to the books and authors, entirely with our own.

The *fifth* catalogue is that of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem about the middle of the 4th century (A.D. 340); and the *sixth* is that of the Council of Laodicea, where some thirty or forty bishops of Lydia assembled, likewise in the fourth century, though the exact year cannot be determined.* These catalogues agree with our own, except that they omit Revelation.

The *seventh* is that of Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus (A.D. 368), who, Jerome says, was a man of five languages. His catalogue is the same as ours.

The *eighth* is that of Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantino-ple, in the latter half of the 4th century; and the *ninth* that of Philastrius, Bishop of Brescia, in Italy, about the same time. Gregory mentions Revelation as doubted; Philastrius omits it, and mentions only thirteen Epistles of Paul, omitting most probably that to the Hebrews, which had been questioned in the Western Church.

The *tenth* catalogue is that of Jerome, who flourished in the latter part of the 4th century, and was the most learned of the Latin Fathers. His life was especially devoted to literary labors on the Sacred Scriptures. Many of his works have descended to us. Amongst these, the most noted is the Roman Vulgate, or Latin translation of the Bible in common use in the Roman Catholic Church. No man in the ancient Church was better qualified to say what books had been received from the hands and times of the apostles. His catalogue agrees exactly with our present Canon. He mentions, indeed, that some disputed the authority of Hebrews, as others did that of Revelation; but says that he himself, *after the custom of the ancient writers*, received both. He also composed a catalogue of illustrious ecclesiastical writers who had preceded him, in which he gives short notices of the several writers of the New Testament, and ascribes to them the several books, as they are now ascribed in our Canon.

The *eleventh* catalogue is that of Rufinus, a presbyter of

* About A.D. 364.

Aquileia, in Italy, and contemporary with Jerome. Like most of the others, it professes to contain the books which had been handed down as coming from the Apostles, and agrees exactly with our Canon.

The *twelfth* catalogue is that of Augustine, the celebrated Bishop of Hippo, in Africa, and contemporary with Jerome and Rufinus. Inferior amongst the Latins only to Jerome in learning, he was, in the judgment of Lardner, not inferior to him in good sense. His catalogue agrees in all respects with our own.

The *thirteenth* is that of the third (alias the sixth) Council of Carthage, which met about A.D. 397, and was composed of forty-four African bishops, amongst whom was Augustine. The 47th Canon contains a list of the books of the New Testament, which accords entirely with ours.

To these I might add the catalogue of the unknown author of the works ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite; as also that contained in the Synopsis, falsely ascribed to Athanasius; and that in the so called, but misnamed, Apostolical Constitutions. These all, while their real authors and dates are uncertain, are ancient catalogues, though most probably subsequent to those that have been mentioned:—they all agree exactly with our Canon.

Such are the Catalogues which were prepared by learned and distinguished men, who flourished from one hundred to three hundred years after the last of the Apostles. They lived in different countries, at different times, and occupied high places in the Church. They were, therefore, fully competent to declare what books had been received before them, and were received in their own times, as genuine works of the Apostles. Most of them, let it be observed, profess to give the books which had been received from the beginning: and thus we have the testimony of the most distinguished writers of old, who were deeply interested and industriously careful to separate the genuine books from the spurious, and who withal had the best means of doing so—conclusively showing that the books which were received in the ages nearest to the Apostles as genuine, were the very same which we now receive into our Canon. They tell us, indeed, that a few of the books were doubted by some:—that James, 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation were not admitted by all; and that some doubted whether Paul was the author of Hebrews:—but let it be noted, that the leading of these witnesses carefully state that the *great majority* received them, as *they themselves did* after those who

had preceded them;—and as, I will add, the great majority of the learned have done down to the present day. The doubts which some entertained in relation to some of the books, show conclusively, that they were not received without examination. The great question, as appears from the statements of many of the writers, as well as from the actual results, was, what books were written by the Apostles, and with their sanction, for the guidance of the Church? And though some doubted in regard to some of the books, the great majority were agreed on the whole Canon as we now have it; and in this judgment the most learned and leading men of the times who investigated the subject and have given us the results of their inquiries, themselves concurred. Of the thirteen well-authenticated catalogues which they have furnished us,—to say nothing of the others,—seven agree exactly with our Canon; three omit only Revelation;* whilst of the remaining three, the authors of two are known to have received the books which they omit or note as doubted. Nor do these catalogues, let it be further noticed, contain any books that are not in our present Canon. We have, as far as their evidence goes, all the books that were ever received as genuine by those who lived nearest to the times of the Apostles. If, in any case, a writer of any note quotes other books as sacred or divine,—Origen says, in one place, of the Shepherd of Hermas, “I think it is divinely inspired,”†—it is generally sufficiently manifest from other passages of the same author, that he did not regard them as on an equality with the books of the Sacred Canon, and abundantly so from other writers, if not himself, that the general voice was against them. They were good to be read as the products of minds enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of God, but not binding, like the books of the Sacred Canon, in matters of faith and practice.

4. In further proof of the genuineness of our New Testament Canon, I appeal to the testimony of several *ancient versions*.

Among these I notice, first, the Old Syrian, commonly called the Peshito Version. This translation of the books of both the Old and New Testaments, was made for the Syrian churches, according to some in the third century, but according to the great majority of critics early in the second, and some distinguished

* Which, however, besides the authors of the Seven, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrianus, and Tertullian, all received, as did the majority then and before them.

† Divinitus inspirata.

authors have even regarded it as a product of the first. It is generally admitted to be a remarkably accurate version. It contains all the books of our present Canon, excepting 2d Peter, 2d and 3d John, Jude, and Revelation. A distinguished critic* contends, with some plausibility, that originally it may have contained all these, especially the last. However this may be, we are struck with the fact, that thus early after the age of the Apostles,—possibly within half a century,—notwithstanding the slow process of transcription, we have in circulation in the churches of Syria, a translation of so complete a collection of the sacred writings. Composed, as the books originally were, in different countries, by different persons, at different times, and addressed for the most part to different churches, and even private individuals, the wonder is, that so complete a collection was so soon made by the translator or translators of this version, and not that a few of the books should be wanting in it. We see proof here, as elsewhere in the early writers, and as we should have expected from the nature of the writings and from the claims of their authors, that the ascertaining of the genuine works of the Apostles and the obtaining of correct copies of them, was a matter of earnest and diligent solicitude with the early Christians and churches. And we observe here, as in the later writers and catalogues which I have adduced, that the books of which we might have expected that there would be less demand, or some delay in the circulation, and finally some hesitancy in the reception, are the very books which appear to have failed, when this early and excellent translation was made, to obtain general circulation and reception in Syria.

The second version which I mention is an old Latin version, commonly called the *Itala*. De Wette,† a skeptical German critic, says, its origin belongs to the earliest times of Christianity. Eichhorn‡ thinks that it was made before the middle of the second century. Augustine refers to it as the best of many Latin translations, of which both he and Jerome speak as circulating in the African and Western churches, at a very early period. Its text became much corrupted by transcription, and Jerome undertook to revise and correct it. Augustine complains equally with him of the corrupt state of its text, and urged upon him to make the revision: but we nowhere find in Jerome or Augustine, both of whom we have seen held to the Canon just as we have it, the

* Hug Introd. N. T. § 65.

† De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 48.

‡ Einleitung in d. A. T. ii. § 322.

slightest intimation that this ancient version was deficient in any of the books. Jerome himself subsequently, at the urgency of his friends, prepared a Latin translation of the entire Scriptures. The circulation of this was much opposed by Ruffinus and others, and even feared by Augustine: so that Jerome had to defend both himself and his version from the charges of his opponents. Yet we find no allusion to any such objection to the old Latin versions as being defective in the Canon, and to the completeness of his own as enhancing its relative value. We conclude, therefore, that the old Latin versions which were in circulation in the very first ages of Christianity, embraced all the books which were in the Canon of Jerome and Augustine, which we have seen was the same as ours.

To say nothing of other versions,—as the Coptic, the Sahidic, the Ethiopic, the Gothic, and the Armenian, I mention lastly the Latin version of Jerome himself, which soon obtained general circulation in the West, and, under the name of the Vulgate, which he had applied to the Itala, received finally the authoritative sanction of the Romish Church. Of this it must suffice to say, that it contains all the books of our New Testament Canon, and none others. And in dismissing thus briefly the testimony of the versions, I remark that the extent of their circulation shows how general was the admission, in the ages nearest to the times of the Apostles, that the books which they contained were the genuine works of the Apostles and their attendants.

5. But I have not yet done with the evidence for the genuineness of our New Testament Canon. We derive an important argument in its favor from the *early heretics* and the very *enemies of Christianity*. The Gnostic heretics, who troubled the Church in the very first periods, never questioned the genuineness of the books. They even admitted some to be genuine, the inspiration of which on account of their philosophical views they denied. The early infidels too,—Lucian (A.D. 170), Celsus (A.D. 176), Porphyry (A.D. 270), and Julian (A.D. 361),—all of them acute and educated men, never called in question the genuineness of the sacred books of the Christians. The charges which they bring against the Christians are derived from those books only: the facts and doctrines which they allege to be received by them are contained in the books of our present Canon:—thus clearly proving the identity of the ancient Canon and our own. We might indeed make out from their writings the great leading

facts, and not a few of the doctrines of the New Testament: but whilst they endeavor to explain or to confute them, they never question the genuineness of the books in which they are related. Had the early Christians received other books, such as have come down to us, these had furnished far better grounds of attack, and had certainly not been overlooked by such acute and vigilant adversaries. The fact that they did not thus make them the source of charges against the Christians, proves that they were never received by them as authoritatively expounding their religion.

Thus, my hearers, I think I have established my first proposition, that *the books of the New Testament are genuine*. For the great majority of them, the testimony, as we have seen, for the first four centuries after the age in which their authors lived, is uniform, and clear, and unquestionable. Amongst these, let it be remembered, that the four Gospels stand pre-eminent: the best and most learned of the early Fathers testify again and again that these four, and only these, were to be received as genuine. Respecting a few of the books some doubted: but the great majority, and amongst them those who examined most carefully and were best qualified to judge, received them as genuine. Other books indeed were sometimes read, and quoted, and highly valued by the early Christians:—in what period of the Church has this not been the case?—But they were never referred to by the contemporaries and immediate successors of the Apostles; they were not read in the churches; they were not admitted into the sacred volume; they do not appear in the catalogues; they were not noticed by the enemies of Christianity: they were not alleged by different parties as of authority in their controversies; they were not the subjects of comments, versions, harmonies, and homilies: * all which we have seen was more or less the case with the books of our Canon,—from which, therefore, these are and were properly excluded as of later origin.

These facts conclusively show that the books of our Canon were not received without investigation, and were only received upon satisfactory evidence of their genuineness. The disputed books were those of which, for the most part, we might have anticipated that doubts would arise,—upon grounds, however, of which we ourselves can judge, and which the great body of Christian writers in every age have deemed insufficient. After the middle of the 4th century the genuineness of the books, which some had previ-

* Paley's Evidences, c. ix. § xi.

ously questioned, was universally conceded ; and succeeding ages down to the present day have, with very partial exceptions, acknowledged them all,—and none others. A spirit of skepticism has, indeed, for more than half a century past, pervaded some of the churches on the Continent of Europe, and especially of Germany. The evidences of the genuineness of the Sacred Canon have been sifted anew. But whatever may be the conclusions of some minds more skeptical than conservative or sound, the only and certain result of this ordeal will, we believe, on most minds be to confirm the conclusions of the pious and learned in the 4th century, that whilst the evidence for the genuineness of the books is not in all cases equally strong, yet in no case is that evidence against, but decidedly in favor of each particular book, and therefore that all ought to be received.

I have said that the evidence of the genuineness of these books, is of the same kind as that on which we rely to prove the genuineness of all ancient books. In degree this evidence far exceeds that for the works of any classic author of antiquity. Even the Orations of Cicero or Demosthenes, the histories of Cæsar or Thucydides, the Satires of Horace or the Tragedies of Sophocles, are not sustained by equal testimony, external and internal. The truth is, that the spread of Christianity was unparalleled for rapidity: the demand for the books, which were regarded as expounding the will of its great Founder, was immediate and urgent: they were copied, studied, quoted, translated, commented on, and harmonies and homilies composed on them, in an unprecedented manner: and the consequence is an accumulation of evidence for their genuineness, equalled by that of no other ancient books whatever. We must, therefore, admit the genuineness of these, or assume the impossibility of proving the genuineness of any.

II. My second proposition is, that *the history contained in the New Testament is true history.*

Here again I rely upon the ordinary proofs of the truth of any history whatsoever. My assertion is that, tried by every proper test, the history contained in the New Testament is true history, or there is none true.

1. In the first place, *the matters related were public.*

They took place on the highways and in the cities and villages; on the thronged mountain-side, and the crowded plain, and the frequented sea-shore; in the synagogues and on the

streets ; in private houses, and public halls, and temple courts ; and in the presence of enemies, as well as of friends. Names, dates, places, and attendant circumstances are freely given. Almost everything, related as said and done, occurred in the presence of several, generally of many witnesses.

2. In the second place, *the witnesses were competent.*

They were eye-witnesses of what they relate, or they got their knowledge from those who were. Two of the Gospels, as we have seen, were written by Apostles who were personal attendants on our Saviour's ministry of which they give an account ; the other two and the Acts, by attendants on the ministry of the Apostles, from whom they could learn accurately all the facts, and under whose direction ancient writers constantly affirm that they wrote. Mark was most probably a native of Jerusalem, himself possibly personally conversant, or at least acquainted with those who were personally conversant with much of our Saviour's history, and certainly an attendant on the Apostles Paul and Peter. Luke was, according to the ancient testimony, a native of Antioch and a physician, and a companion of the Apostle Paul. They were all men of sound understanding. Their narratives alone prove this. They do not appear credulous, but slow to believe. We discover no heated enthusiasm or raving fanaticism, but the plain and sober narrative of what the witnesses saw and heard for themselves, or learned from those who did see and hear, and were qualified to tell. Men, who could *write* such narratives, would be admitted as competent witnesses of such facts before any unprejudiced tribunal in the country. They were incompetent indeed to *forge* such narratives, had Jesus Christ never actually lived, and taught, and acted, and died, and rose again : but knowing these matters as facts, they were abundantly competent to testify to them.

3. In the next place, *they were men of integrity.*

This appears, first, from their sacrifices and sufferings in the cause to which they bear testimony. They all gave up their secular callings, and followed Christ, who was hated by the Jews and despised by the Greeks, and whose service promised little worldly emolument, but much tribulation and persecution. They devoted their lives, with much hazard and toil, to publishing this testimony ; and some of them probably died on account of it.

Their integrity further appears from the minute details and manifold circumstantial allusions, with which their histories

abound. It is unnecessary for me, even if I had the time, to exhibit a view of these details and allusions. You know that they mention dates, places, persons, and attendant circumstances, with the utmost freedom, and that they make innumerable allusions and statements respecting the existing relations of every kind of the age in which they lived. Such is not the manner of deceivers generally. They carefully avoid such minute details, and such manifold allusions and statements respecting the times of which they write, because they know that these furnish the readiest means of detecting and exposing them. The writers before us show manifestly that they meant no deception, and felt no fear of exposure. The attempt has often been made to find them in contradiction with the times, but never successfully. On the contrary, the more accurate and minute our knowledge of those times, the more have all seeming difficulties of this character vanished.

Their integrity further appears from the remarkable agreement in their testimony, whilst yet there is abundant evidence of no collusion amongst them. The first three of the witnesses, who wrote earliest, are remarkably parallel in the accounts which they give of the life of Christ. The fourth, who wrote later, relates many things not contained in the others, as he also omits much which they related. The agreement is the more striking when we consider, how much Christ did in his brief but active life,* and how nearly the writers relate the same things in the same words. Some have hence supposed that there was manifest collusion amongst them to impose upon the world. But it is enough to answer, without referring to the different countries in which the ancients tell us that they wrote, that the variations are so numerous and the apparent discrepancies so great, that quite as many have been led to reject their testimony as palpably contradictory. The variations, however they may be harmonized, certainly do show that there was no collusion amongst the writers: the agreement, however it may be explained, proves the integrity of the testimony. The authors clearly wrote regardless of conformity or nonconformity to the statements of others. Any three intelligent witnesses, thus concurring in their testimony, and yet so varying as to preclude just suspicion of collusion, would be admitted before any fair tribunal in the country. Any three historians, thus differing, would never be

Comp. John xx. 30, 31 and xxi. 25.

suspected of collusion ; thus agreeing, would never be rejected as false. Their agreement must be accounted for on other grounds than the supposition of collusion : their differences must be solved by other assumptions than the falsity of the witnesses. Were I to give my own opinion in a case where many have theorized without facts to sustain them, I should say, that the variations occur precisely because the witnesses were independent, and it was so ordered in the providence of God that they might appear to be so ; and that the remarkable agreement in the selection of facts and discourses to be related, and often in the very words, is to be fully and satisfactorily accounted for only by ascribing it to that one and the same Spirit of God, which (as I shall presently endeavor briefly to prove) dwelt in and directed each one, so that at the mouth of two or three duly concurring witnesses, every word might be established.

4. Lastly, *the accounts were published in the same age in which the facts occurred.*

We have already seen that the writers were contemporaneous with the facts which they relate. Their narratives, therefore, must have been published by them while many of their own generation, and many who were cognizant of, if not actors in, the scenes mentioned, were yet alive. According to the ancient tradition these narratives were published, one in Palestine, another in Rome, another in Greece, another in Ephesus, and the fifth possibly at Rome also. From these places,—or wherever else they were published,—it is certain that they rapidly and early spread over the whole Roman empire. And yet we hear not one word of contradiction of their truth from any quarter whatever.

The remarks which I have made apply, in the main, not only to the histories contained in the Gospels and Acts, but also to the historical notices and statements which are contained in most of the other books of the New Testament. I repeat, therefore, that the history in the New Testament is true history, or there is none true. The facts related were public ; the narrators were competent, and men of integrity ; and the accounts were published soon after the matters related took place : they are contradicted by no contemporaneous testimony, but rather confirmed ; and furnish the only solution to the great fact of Christianity, which, all history shows, originated in that age, and has continued ever since. No history can afford better proofs of its truth. By whatever process we set aside this as untrue history, we may set aside all

history as untrue; and give to skepticism universal sway. We shall be allowed to believe that only which we have seen with our own eyes; and we can scarcely credit them, because by this skeptical criticism all others become unworthy of credit, and our own can scarcely be exceptions to so general a law.

Thus, my hearers, have I endeavored to maintain the genuineness of our New Testament Canon, and the credibility of the New Testament history. I have about as much to say on the propositions which yet remain. But I fear that I have already trespassed on your patience, and respectfully request of you another hearing.

II.

RESPECTED AUDITORS—

I THINK I have shown that the New Testament Canon is genuine, and that the New Testament history is true.

III. My third proposition is, *that Christ was divine, and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God.*

The proof of this proposition, like that of the preceding, involves much that must enter largely into other lectures of this course: and as I introduce it only to give completeness to my own argument, I shall despatch it, as I have done the other, with little more than a brief outline.

Christ claimed to be sent from God, and to be the Son of God: to do the works of God, and to have all power committed into his hands: to be one with the Father; to be entitled to the same honor as the Father; to so represent Him before men, that they who saw him saw the Father; and that as he came from the Father, so he would return to the Father, to enjoy with Him the glory which he had before the world began, and come again to judge the world at the last day. When he was about to leave the world, he still promised to be with his Apostles an all-sufficient help: to give them his Spirit which should guide them into all truth; should receive of the things of Christ and show them to them; and should teach them all things, and bring all things to

their remembrance, whatsoever he had commanded them: and finally, to enable them to do mighty works. Thus qualified, he commissioned them to go forth and proclaim him as the Saviour to the ends of the earth, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Apostles accordingly went forth, and boldly and clearly taught that Christ was indeed the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world: that though he had been crucified, he was now exalted to be Head over all things to the Church: that he was the Creator, the Upholder, the Lord of all: and that he would come again to judge the world. They claimed for themselves to be commissioned by him to teach in his name and to order his kingdom; and accordingly constantly spoke and wrote and acted as by authority from God.

So much appears plainly from the history contained in the New Testament. Christ claimed to be divine, and promised to inspire his Apostles: the Apostles taught that Christ was divine, and claimed themselves to be inspired. And how were these claims supported?—According to these histories,

First, *by miracles*, such as no man ever performed without the help and power of God. The blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk; the insane were restored, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, the sea was calmed,—all promptly and by a word. About such miracles there could be no deception. Most of them were frequently performed, and just as occasion called for them. The blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the insane, the sick, the dead, were all known before and after the healing and restoring power was applied; and deception was impossible. Now these miracles were wrought by Christ and his Apostles in proof of their respective claims. Christ expressly challenged belief on account of his works, and miraculous powers were the proper signs of an Apostle. Would God thus support impostors in such arrogant pretensions? They supported their claims,

Secondly, *by their prophecies*, some of which were speedily fulfilled, others are in process of fulfilment to this day. Thus Christ foretold that he should be put to death in Jerusalem; that he must there first suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes; that they would condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him; that the man who dipped his hands with him in the same dish, should betray him into their power; that the rest of his disciples would

forsake him that night, and one of them deny him thrice; that he should be crucified; that he would rise again the third day; that he would meet his disciples in Galilee; that after his ascension, the Holy Spirit should descend on them at Jerusalem; that miraculous powers should thenceforth be possessed and exercised by them; that Jerusalem should be besieged and taken, and the Temple utterly destroyed before all then living were dead; that the city should be trodden under foot of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; and that his gospel should universally spread, and his kingdom triumph over all opposition. Most of these were strikingly fulfilled before that generation passed away; others are in process of glorious accomplishment at the present day.—Of the Apostles few prophecies are recorded: but the Saviour promised that the Spirit, when He came, should show them things to come; and everywhere in the subsequent Scriptures, Acts as well as the Epistles, we find frequent reference to the gift of prophecy as one enjoyed even by some in the Church who were inferior to Apostles. Cases, however, are recorded in which the Apostles did foretell near events which came duly to pass, as well as remote ones, the *full* accomplishment of which remains to be seen.* The certain knowledge of future things is as much a direct gift of God as the power of miracles, and like it would not be bestowed on impostors of such daring pretensions.—In further proof of their claims I plead,

Thirdly, *their doctrines*, so unlike and superior to all the philosophy of the ancients, so becoming the character and promotive of the glory of God, so suited to the spiritual necessities of man. The doctrines of a Triune God, infinitely holy and infinitely perfect; of the creation of all things out of nothing; of the original perfection and subsequent fall of man; of his redemption by the obedience and death of Him who was at once the Son of God and the Son of Man; of the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit, by which alone man can attain again to the lost image of his Maker; of a providence that extends alike to the whole and every, even the minutest part of creation; of a future resurrection, and a universal judgment, and everlasting rewards of blessedness and woe:—these, and others connected with them, constitute a scheme of doctrines far above all the light of nature and all the philosophy of men, suited to all the

* See 2 Thess. ii. 1–12. 1 Tim. iv. 1–8. 2 Peter ii. throughout, and Revelation *passim*.

solemn exigencies of man's moral character and condition, and glorious to all the perfections of God;—from whom alone, therefore, they could have originated. In further proof of the justice of their claims I argue,

Fourthly, their *moral code*, which commends itself to the reason and conscience of every sound-minded man. Its essence is supreme love to God, and universal love towards our fellow-men; self-abasement of the sinner, and glory in the highest to the Creator and Redeemer, and Judge. Virtues are inculcated which the ancients never knew, or even regarded as vices; vices are condemned which they esteemed to be virtues. The great rule of life is the will of God; his glory and the creature's good, man's chief end. Such a code, bad men could not have originated, and would not have propagated at such sacrifices and hazard, if at all; good men would not have falsely ascribed them to God.

I say, therefore, that our Saviour was divine and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God. It was written by men, or at the dictation and with the approval of men, who gave abundant proof that they spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost: by men who had commission from Christ to establish and order his Church upon the foundation which he had laid, with the broad promise that he was with them to the end of the world, and that what they bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and what they loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. The New Testament, therefore, comes from them to us with the solemn *imprimatur* of God.

IV. My fourth proposition is, *that Christ and his Apostles endorsed the Jewish Canon, as it then existed, as Divine Scriptures: that this Canon was the same as our Old Testament: and consequently, that this also is complete and from God.*

The first part of this proposition, that *the Saviour and his Apostles endorsed the Jewish Canon as it then existed, as Divine Scriptures*, scarcely needs demonstration before this audience. Every reader of the New Testament knows how constantly they make their appeal to the Jewish Scriptures as authoritative and Divine. "I was daily with you," says Christ to those who came to apprehend him, "in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but *the Scriptures* must be fulfilled."* "Think not that I am come to destroy *the Law or the Prophets*: I am not come to de-

* Mark xiv. 49.

stroy but to fulfil."*—"These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in *the Law of Moses*, and in *the Prophets*, and in *the Psalms* concerning me."† In these and many like passages, the authority of the Scriptures received by the Jews is acknowledged and confirmed: and they are referred to, not only in a general way, *par excellence*, as Divine, but the several divisions of the books, according to the classification prevalent at the time, as we shall presently see, are distinctly mentioned. "All Scripture," says Paul,—*πασᾶ γραφῆ*, all the parts or books which compose the whole,—“is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”‡ “Prophesy,” says Peter, “came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”§ Here, in like manner, the Apostles endorse all *the Scriptures*, in current use among the Jews, as inspired of God, and consequently possessing Divine authority. So throughout the New Testament: the writers themselves constantly appeal, and they represent Christ as thus appealing to the current Jewish Scriptures as *the Word of God*. The common forms of quotation show the esteem in which they held them: “As it is written;” “Thus saith the Scriptures;” “Thus saith the Lord;” “As the Holy Ghost saith;” “He saith,” &c. While they thus freely appeal to the Jewish Scriptures, they never intimated that these Scriptures contained any which ought not to have been in them, nor that any which should have been in them had been taken away. They charge the Jewish teachers with perverting and setting them aside by their traditions, but never with adding to or taking from the Scriptures themselves. They, therefore, plainly endorse the Jewish Canon as authoritative and complete.

It only remains that I show the truth of the second part of my proposition, that *the Jewish Canon was the same as our Old Testament*, and we are ready for the conclusion, that *this also is complete and from God*.

We have then before us another plain historical inquiry,—What books composed the Jewish Canon at the time of our Saviour and his Apostles? And it devolves on me to prove that they were the very same which compose our present Old Testament Canon. That this was the fact, I argue

* Matt. v. 17.

† Luke xxiv. 44.

‡ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

§ 2 Peter i. 21.

1. First, *from the testimony of the New Testament itself.*

Here we find nearly all the books of our Old Testament quoted, or clearly alluded to;* and nothing quoted or alluded to as divine Scripture, which is not contained in it. The only plausible exceptions to this last statement are the mention of the names, Jannes and Jambres, in Paul's 2d Epistle to Timothy, as the names of those who withstood Moses; and of the prophecy of Enoch, and Michael's contest with Satan for the body of Moses, in the Epistle of Jude:—of all which it is enough to say, that it has never been proved that they were cited from any book at all, and that, if they were, it does not follow that the books were cited as divine and canonical. It is sufficient that the matters referred to were facts: and the citation from the books in which they were found, no more proves the canonical authority of these books, unless it can be shown that they belonged to the Jewish Canon at the time,—which no one will affirm,—than Paul's citations from certain writings of Aratus or Cleanthes, Menander, and Epimenides proves them to be of divine authority. An inspired writer may cite or refer to uninspired writings; the writers and compilers of the Old Testament not unfrequently did so:—but such bare citations or references, even when admitted to be such, can only prove the existence of the writings and their truthfulness in the particulars cited or referred to as true. They become proofs of the canonical authority of the writings only when they are cited or referred to as divine Scriptures; or when there is other sufficient proof, that they belonged to the Canon of Scriptures which the inspired writers endorsed as of divine authority. Such is not the character of the alleged citations or references. Even admitting that books were cited or referred to, there is nothing to indicate that they were regarded by the inspired writers as having divine authority; and there is abundant other proof that the Jewish Canon, which they endorsed, contained no such writings. On the other hand, the books of our Old Testament, which are quoted or referred to, are quoted or referred to as divine, in the way that I have already mentioned; or there is abundant other proof that they, as well as the books which are not quoted or referred to, were all contained in the Jewish Canon as endorsed by Christ and his Apostles.—I proceed with this testimony, and adduce,

* The books not cited, according to Eichhorn (Einleitung in d. A. T. § 37), are Judges, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.

2. Next, *the testimony of ancient Jewish writers.*

Amongst these Josephus stands pre-eminent. He was born soon after our Saviour's death,—about A.D. 37,—and flourished partly in the age of the Apostles. He was of priestly extraction, carefully educated in the religion and literature of his country; and, at a later period, devoted himself with great assiduity and success to the language and literature of the Greeks. He espoused the cause of his country when invaded by the Romans; but was early taken prisoner, and acted as interpreter for Vespasian and Titus until the conquest of Jerusalem, when he was carried to Rome, and permitted to dwell in the imperial palace. Here he wrote his History of the Jewish War, and his account of the Jewish Antiquities. No man of his age and country was better able to relate the customs and opinions and history of his own people. In his maturer life he wrote a treatise against Apion, an Alexandrian grammarian, who had violently assailed the Jewish nation. In this treatise,* defending the authenticity and credibility of the Jewish Scriptures, he writes as follows:—

“For we have not amongst us myriads of books, discordant and conflicting, but only twenty-two books, containing the history of all (past) time and justly believed to be divine. Of these five belong to Moses, which contain the laws and the tradition of the origin of mankind until his death: this period is little less than three thousand years. From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians after Xerxes, the Prophets who were after Moses recorded the events of their times in thirteen books. The four remaining books contain hymns to God, and rules of life for men. From Artaxerxes to our own time everything has been written; but it is not esteemed of equal credit with what preceded, because there has not been an exact succession of Prophets. And it is evident from fact, how we believe in our Scriptures: for through so long a period already elapsed, no one has dared to add anything, or to take from them, or to make alterations; but it is implanted in all Jews, from their very birth, to consider them oracles of God (*θεῶν δόγματα*), and to abide by them, and for them, if need be, cheerfully to die.”

In this important passage of Josephus, we notice, *first*, a division of the books which composed the Jewish Scriptures into three classes. We have already met with the same division in the New Testament: † “All things must be fulfilled which were written in

* B. i. § 8.

† Luke xxiv. 44.

the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms concerning me." We find it about the same time in Philo, a learned Jew of Alexandria (A.D. 41), who, speaking of the Essenes, a Jewish sect, says that there was in every house a sanctuary into which they introduced nothing but "the Laws, and the Oracles which were uttered by the prophets, and the Hymns and other writings by which knowledge and piety increase together and are perfected."* We find it still earlier (B.C. 130-230†) in the preface to the translation of the work entitled *The Wisdom of Sirach*, by his grandson. He several times distinctly mentions the Law, the Prophets, and the other books, which had been diligently studied by his grandfather before he undertook his own work. From all these it is evident, that long before the time of Christ, the Old Testament books constituted a well-known and received Canon amongst the Jews:—in other words, that the Canon of the Old Testament had long been closed, and the books arranged under three definite divisions. The third class would seem at first to have had no distinctive name: but as the other two were specifically and appropriately designated, this class, for the want of an appropriate name, was simply called for distinction's sake, 'the other Scriptures;'—in the time of Christ, 'Psalms,' or, 'Hymns and Practical Books,' from the place which the Psalms held in the division, or from the prevailing character of the books; and afterwards again, as we shall see, simply 'Scriptures,' or 'Holy Scriptures' ‡

We notice, *secondly*, that Josephus mentions the number, though not the names, of the books belonging to each class. Of the Law there were *five*, of the Prophets *thirteen*, and of the Hymns and Practical Books *four*: in all *twenty-two*. Had he given us a list of the books in each class, his testimony would have been complete in itself. But there is little difficulty in showing the identity of the Jewish Canon as thus described with our present Old Testament. *The five books of the Law* were certainly, according to universal consent ancient and modern, the five books of Moses,—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. By Prophets the Jews designated those who were inspired to declare the will of God; and holding firmly that such men wrote all the books of their Canon, *the thirteen books of the*

* De Vit. Contempl. § 3, where it seems plain from the following context that he refers to the received Sacred Scriptures.

† Hävernick places the grandfather n.c. 200-300. Einleitung in d. A. T. § 8.

‡ קהלים קדושים וספרים קדושים.

Prophets, combining them as we shall see was common in order to reduce the whole number to that of the letters of their alphabet, must in distinction from the others have been, 1. Joshua, 2. Judges with Ruth, 3. 1st and 2d Samuel 4. 1st and 2d Kings, 5. 1st and 2d Chronicles, 6. Ezra and Nehemiah, 7. Esther, 8. Job, 9. Isaiah, 10. Jeremiah and Lamentations, 11. Ezekiel, 12. Daniel, and 13. the twelve minor Prophets reckoned as one. *The four books of Hymns and Rules of Life* would be Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. The coincidence is so complete, that few have ever doubted that Josephus refers to the very books that compose our Old Testament Canon.

We notice, *thirdly*, that Josephus distinctly states that after the time of Artaxerxes, before which all these books had been written, Jewish affairs had been recorded in other books, which, he implies, were duly respected, but says expressly that they were not received on a par with the others, because there was no regular succession of Prophets or inspired men. These books can only be the Apocryphal books, of whose early existence and use, as books of more or less value, we have abundant proof, but whose want of inspired authority is here explicitly affirmed as the belief of the nation. For the remainder of this testimony I shall have use presently.

The conclusion to which we have come of the identity of the Jewish Canon, as described by Josephus, with our own Old Testament, is strongly confirmed by the fact that Philo, to whom I have already referred as a learned Alexandrian Jew, nearly contemporary with Christ, quotes or alludes to nearly all the books now in our Old Testament Canon as Divine Scriptures, while he never makes use of the Apocryphal books, certainly never quotes them as authority.*

3. My next proof of the identity of our Old Testament and the Jewish Canon endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles, is derived *from the early Christian writers*.

The first whom I adduce is Melito, Bishop of Sardis about A.D. 170, and renowned alike for his piety and his learning. In an Epistle† to Onesimus, his brother, after mentioning his brother's earnest desire and request to have an accurate statement of the ancient books, he says, that he (Melito) had journeyed to the East and to the region where the things were preached and done

* Eichhorn Einleitung in d. A. T. § 26. De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 176.

† Preserved by Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. b. iv. c. 26.

(i. e. Palestine), and having accurately ascertained the books of the Old Testament, he subjoined a list and sent it to him. This list is exactly the same as ours, only differing in the order and omitting the book of Esther. A distinguished critic* supposes that this, as well as the book of Nehemiah, was included under the name of Ezra: but inasmuch as the books, when summed up according to Melito's mode of counting them, amount on his list only to twenty-one, and the usual reckoning made twenty-two, it is more probable that Eusebius or his transcriber made an omission in copying off the catalogue,—a like omission to which all admit to have been made in transcribing the list of Origen, which I shall next adduce. I wish you, however, duly to consider this testimony of Melito, given under circumstances so favorable to accuracy on the subject.

Origen flourished, as you will remember, A.D. 230. Of his learning and standing in the early Church, I need not speak again. He spent his life in Egypt and Palestine, and was almost the only Father, besides Jerome, who understood the Hebrew language. His catalogue of the books of the Old Testament has been preserved by Eusebius.† He proposes to give them as the Hebrews had transmitted them, and prefaces his catalogue with the remark, that they were *twenty-two* in number according to the number of letters in their alphabet. He then gives the list of the books both by their Greek and Hebrew names, combining them, as he says, *after the manner of the Jews*, exactly as we have done in making out the testimony of Josephus,—thus showing the correctness of our count in exhibiting the testimony of that distinguished Jew, and the identity of the Jewish Canon as described by him with our own Old Testament. Origen's catalogue also agrees exactly with ours, except that he unites with Jeremiah and his Lamentations what he calls *the Epistle*, and omits the minor Prophets, thus making the number of books only *twenty-one*. What he means by *the Epistle*, critics are not agreed. It is generally conceded, however, that the Apocryphal Epistle of Jeremiah was never admitted by the Jews into their Canon: and it is, therefore, most probable that the Epistle, referred to by Origen, is one incorporated in the book as we now have it.‡ As to the twelve Minor Prophets, always counted as one book and written on one roll, it is, I may say, certain that the omission of them is a mistake of Eu-

* Eichhorn, Einleitung in d. A. T. § 52.

† Euseb. Ecc. Hist. b. vi. c. 25.

‡ See however Hävernicks, Einleitung in d. A. T. § 15. Eichhorn, ib. § 54.

sebius or a transcriber, not a defect in Origen's catalogue. They are necessary to make up the whole number *twenty-two*, stated in his prefatory remark: they are found in Ruffinus' translation of this same catalogue and in Hilary's Prologue to the Psalms, which, according to Jerome, was taken mostly from Origen:* they are included in Origen's celebrated work, the Hexapla: he also wrote a Commentary upon them, in twenty-five volumes, which were still extant in the time of Eusebius:† and he quotes them in his works that have come down to us, as of equal authority with the other books of the Old Testament. I will only add, that, at the end of his catalogue, he expressly excludes the books of the Maccabees. He sometimes quotes some of the Apocryphal books of the Old as well as of the New Testament, as sacred: but it is evident from his catalogues and statements found in his works, that, by such epithets, he did not mean to designate them as belonging to the Sacred Canon of Inspired Scriptures, but only as good books proceeding from men whose minds were renewed and enlightened by the Spirit of God.‡

I can only refer to the catalogues of Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the Council of Laodicea, Epiphanius, Gregory Nazianzen, and Amphilochius. They all agree with our Old Testament Canon, except that several of them, after Melito, omit the book of Esther, and, besides, mention Baruch and the Epistle, with Jeremiah, whose prophecies, as we have them, probably include all that these writers meant. All of them reduce the number of books to twenty-two, by combining them after the manner of the Jews so as to accord with the number of the letters in the Hebrew Alphabet; and several of them expressly exclude fewer or more of the Apocryphal books by name,—mentioning however, at the same time, that they were read in the Churches and by private Christians as profitable works, especially for Catechumens. Dismissing these with this brief notice,

I adduce next the more important testimony of Jerome, the most learned, as we have seen, of the Latin Fathers. He spent the latter and principal part of his life in Palestine, diligently prosecuting Biblical Literature; and besides his general attainments, he was well acquainted with Hebrew, and got most of his Hebrew learning from Jewish teachers. He was, therefore, peculiarly qualified to state accurately, the Canon of the Jewish Scriptures,

* Eichhorn, *Einleitung in d. A. T.* § 54.

† Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* b. vi. c. 36.

‡ Thornwell, *Arguments of Romanists, &c.* letter xv.

as received both by the Jews and by Christians. His works furnish us several Catalogues, all of which agree exactly with our Old Testament Canon. In his famous Prologus Galeatus,* he states that the Hebrews reckoned twenty-two volumes (or books) after the number of letters in their Alphabet. He then enumerates five books of the Law, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa, in all twenty-two:—thus preserving the same general division of the books into three classes, which we have seen was prevalent at and before the time of our Saviour, but arranging the books under the last two classes differently from Josephus, and possibly from the prevalent custom of earlier times,† and following the arrangement of the Jewish Rabbins. The arrangement of the books, however, does not at all affect the testimony for the purpose for which I adduce it. The evidence of Jerome remains incontestable, that the ancient Jewish Canon was identically the same as our present Old Testament Canon. “This prologue,” he continues, “I write as a preface to all the books to be translated by me from the Hebrew into Latin, that we may know that all the books which are not of this number are to be reckoned Apocryphal:”‡ and then especially mentions the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the book of Jesus, the Son of Sirach, commonly called *Ecclesiasticus* or *Wisdom of Sirach*, *Judith*, *Tobit*, and the *Shepherd*, as not in the Canon. In his preface to the books of Solomon, after mentioning the book of Jesus, the son of Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon, he says, that “as the Church read the books of Judith and Tobit and the Maccabees, but did not admit them among its Canonical Scriptures, so also it might read these two books for the edification of the people, but not for establishing the authority of the doctrines of the Church.” He translated, indeed, the books of Judith and Tobit at the desire of his friends; but in the preface to each he brands them as Apocryphal, and not received by the Jews. In the prologue to his translation

* The preface to his Latin translation of the books of Samuel and Kings,—the first that he made. “Hic prologus Scripturarum,” says he, “quasi *galeatum principium* omnibus libris quos de Hebræo vertimus in Latinum convenire potest, ut scire valeamus quicquid extra hos est inter Apocrypha esse ponendum.”

† See Stuart on the O. T. § 12. Comp. further Lardner, Works, vol. ii. pp. 543–547. Hengstenberg, Beiträge, i. pp. 23 seq. Hävernicks, Einleitung, i. § § 9, 11, 14. Eichhorn, Einleitung, i. § § 7, 8. Jerome also states that some enrolled Ruth and Lamentations among the Hagiographa, and thus, by counting them separately from Judges and Jeremiah respectively, made out *twenty-four* books. So we find them in the Talmud. No particular order of arrangement seems to have universally prevailed.

‡ See the original, note, * above.

of Jeremiah, he says, he does not translate the book of *Baruch*, because it was not in the Hebrew, nor received by the Hebrews : and, for the same reason, in the prologue to his Commentary on Jeremiah, he declines to explain it, as also the *Pseudepigraphal Epistle of Jeremiah*. In the preface to his translation of Daniel, he says that the Jews did not have in their (Hebrew) copies of the book *the Story of Susannah*, nor *the Song of the Three Children in the furnace*, nor *the Fables of Bel and the Dragon*, and that Christians were ridiculed for paying so much regard to them.

This testimony of Jerome is as satisfactory as we could desire. The Sacred Canon as received by the Jews in their Hebrew copies, consisted of the very books that make up our Old Testament Canon, and of no others. Other books indeed were read by Christians,—as Josephus says, without mentioning names, that some were by Jews ;—and it would appear from some of the catalogues to which I have referred, that some of them (*Baruch* and the *Epistle of Jeremiah*) were very possibly, from ignorance of the Hebrew language and inadvertence to the Jewish custom, admitted into the Canon of the Old Testament. But it is the unequivocal testimony of Jerome, than whom no one was more competent to speak in the case, that none of them were received by the Jews as canonical, and that Christians ought to use them, as generally the churches did use them, like other useful books, only for edification, and not for establishing doctrines.

The last testimony which I shall adduce from the early Christian writers is that of Ruffinus, the contemporary of Jerome, at first his friend but afterwards his enemy. His testimony is brief, but to the purpose. In his explication of the Apostles' Creed, he proposes to enumerate the books, for both the Old and New Testaments, which had been handed down by the Fathers as inspired by the Holy Spirit,—and proceeds : * “ Of the Old Testament, in the first place, are the five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. After these are Joshua, the son of Nun, and the Judges, together with Ruth. Next the four books of the kingdoms, which the Hebrews reckon two : the book of the Remains, which is called Chronicles : and two books of Ezra, which by them are reckoned one : and Esther. The Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel ; and besides, one book of the twelve Prophets. Job also, and the Psalms of David. Solomon has left three books to the churches, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

* Lardner's Works, vol. ii. p. 578.

tes, and the Song of Songs. With these they conclude the number of the books of the Old Testament." He then gives the New Testament precisely as ours, and continues: "These are the volumes which the Fathers have included in the Canon, and out of which they would have us prove the doctrines of our faith." He then adds, that there were other books which were not canonical, but had been called by his forefathers *ecclesiastical*;—mentions such both for the Old and New Testaments; and concludes: "All which they would have to be read in the churches, but not to be alleged by way of authority for proving articles of faith."

Such is the testimony of Ruffinus. "He was," says Dr. Lardner, "a learned man, well acquainted both with the Greek and the Latin writers of the Church, and had travelled. He was born in the western part of the empire: but he was also acquainted with the Christians in Egypt and Palestine, where he had resided a good while." I only add that he combines the books, as others before him had done, after the Jewish manner: and thus the Jewish Canon, as stated by him also, was evidently the same as our Old Testament. It deserves also to be noted that the books, in the order in which he mentions them, may be divided into three classes precisely corresponding with the division of Josephus: 1st, Five of the Law. 2d. Thirteen of the Prophets. 3d. Four of Hymns and Practical Books:—thus farther clearing and confirming the invaluable testimony of that distinguished author.

Thus, I think, it is clearly made out from the testimony of the early Christian writers who have given us catalogues, that the Jewish Canon as endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles was precisely the same as that of our Old Testament. It appears indeed that other books were read in the churches, and it is possible that some of them even found their way into some of the catalogues. But, even granting that the authors of these catalogues meant other compositions than those now in our Canon, and that, through ignorance of the Hebrew language and of the Jewish custom, they supposed them to belong to the Canon of authoritative Scriptures, the testimony is conclusive, that the books which the ancient Jews received as such, and which ancient Christians who were best informed received as such, were precisely those and only those, which we receive at the present day.

4. But I appeal for further proof of this identity to the ancient direct oriental versions of the Old Testament, and to the universal consent of the Jews of all ages.

"The Syriac Version, called the Peshito," says De Wette,* "seems to be one of the oldest translations of the Bible." Some think that the translation of the Old Testament was made before Christ; but the great majority of critics put it soon after. It adheres closely to the Hebrew text, and embraces all the books, and only the canonical books of our Old Testament.† This testimony from a neighboring country, so mixed up with Jewish affairs in the later periods of their commonwealth, is very important.

But we have also Chaldee Paraphrases or Targums, as they are commonly called, two of which are very ancient, and none of them later than the 9th century. They are generally supposed to have originated in the paraphrastic interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Rabbins, as they were read in the Jewish synagogues. That of Onkelos on the Law and that of Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Prophets, according to the Talmudic arrangement mentioned by Jerome, are generally referred to the age of Christ, though some place them before, others somewhat later. These and all the other Targums, embracing each only a portion of the books, but all together embracing all the books except Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel,—which for peculiar reasons‡ were omitted,—contain none other than the books of our Old Testament Canon.

Indeed all Jewish writers from Onkelos to the present time, the Talmudists, the Masorets, the Historians, the Grammarians, the Commentators,—all, with remarkable unanimity, agree in regard to the ancient Jewish Canon, and hold this to be the same as our Old Testament. Christians and Jews have always met here as on a common platform.

5. Finally, the *internal* testimony conspires with the *external*, now adduced, to show the identity of our Old Testament Canon with the authentic Jewish Scriptures endorsed by our Saviour and his Apostles.

* De Wette on the O. T. (Parker) § 64. Comp. Eichhorn, Einleitung, § 248.

† The Syriac Version of the Apocrypha does not belong to this Version. De Wette as above, § 64. Eichhorn, Einleitung, § 252. Hävernick, Einleitung, § 83.

‡ Hävernick says, "The reason of this lies no doubt in the scrupulosity of the later Jews, who believed that the Chaldee Version of the two books might afterwards easily be confounded with the original texts, and thus prove injurious to the pure preservation of the latter." Portions of both Ezra and Daniel are written in Chaldee, and Nehemiah was reckoned with Ezra. Kitto's Cyc. Bib. Lit. Art. 'Daniel, Book of.' Hävernick, Einleitung in d. A. T. i. § 82.

I can here only indicate the line of evidence which my time does not allow me to pursue.—We can trace through the volume the marks both of stability and of progress in the Hebrew language, precisely correspondent with what we should have expected from our knowledge of the history, habits, and circumstances of the nation. The circumstantial narrations and minute allusions, which pervade the volume, evince the intimate acquaintance of the writers with the relations of the times in which they lived and of which they wrote, and the utter absence alike of all disposition to deceive and of all fear of detection. The doctrines which are taught and the duties which are inculcated consist, as far as reason can judge, with the glory of God and the nature and relations of man; while they form, together with the revelations and institutions which are so peculiar to the volume, the long but requisite preface and introduction to the New Testament, which records their more perfect development and fulfilment. It matters not that we be able to determine the author of each particular book. It is enough that we know the names and ages and characters of the principal authors, and that we have the testimony of Christ and his Apostles, that they all proceeded from men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, constitute a part of the Revelation of God.

Thus, my hearers, have I endeavored to vindicate the claims of our Old and New Testaments, to be the Canon of Divine Truth. I could wish that my time had allowed the fuller presentation of some branches of the evidence, that you might receive its whole and just impression. But I trust that enough has been said to establish the conviction in your minds, that the volume before us comes to us with the marks of truth and the seal of God; and that he who refuses to read, and understand, and believe, must, if he will be consistent, consign all the past to barren skepticism; or deny that man is responsible for his faith, even where God has made known the truth: and, unless all history be a lie, may expect at the last to be confounded for his unbelief.

But I have yet to prove *the integrity of the text* of the sacred Scriptures.

V. My fifth and last proposition, then, is that *the text of the Old and New Testaments has not suffered materially in the transmission, or so as to invalidate, in the slightest degree, its divine and binding authority.*

I readily admit that the text has suffered some. I admit that no miraculous influence has preserved it from errors, which naturally creep into all writings that are frequently copied, however carefully. But I assert that, in the good providence of God, such has been the care and such have been the causes that have operated to preserve the text of the sacred Scriptures, that no such corruption has ever befallen it as at all to destroy its validity, or the binding authority of the truths which it contains. I affirm, that of no ancient writings whatever, is the integrity of the text so demonstrable and unimpeachable. History shows that the sacred Scriptures,—as we should have anticipated from their origin and nature,—have from the beginning been sought, and studied, and copied, and quoted, and compared, and translated, and commented, and discoursed on, as no other books have ever been: and thus we have, at once, the surest guarantee for the preservation of both the Canon and the Text.

I shall first prove the integrity of the text of the Old Testament, and then that of the New.

A. First, then, *the integrity of the text of the Old Testament.*

The proof of this lies in the circumstances which, at least, would seem to render wilful or accidental corruption of the text to any important extent impossible, and in the evidence that no such corruption has in fact ever taken place.

I argue then, *first*, that anterior to the time of Christ, the number of copies in circulation would greatly, if not effectually prevent the corruption of the text.

A copy of the Law and of the subsequent sacred writings was kept deposited in the Temple. This appears from numerous hints in the Scriptures, from the testimony of Josephus, from the custom of ancient nations generally, and from the probability of the thing in itself.* The king of the nation was required to keep a copy of the Law for his own guidance and observance. The priests and magistrates must necessarily have had copies to study, in order to perform aright their various functions. The Law was required to be read to the people every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. Parents were required to teach it to their children, by the wayside and by the fireside. It stands to reason that the pious portion of the people would desire, and, when it

* Comp. Deut. xxxi. Josh. xxiv. 26. 1 Saml. x. 25. Joseph. Ant. Jud. iii. 1. *ἄλλοι δὲ ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ ἀνακειμένη γραφή κ. τ. λ. and v. 1. δηλοῦται διὰ τῶν ἀνακειμένων ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ γραμμάτων.*

was possible to meet the expense, would actually possess copies of what they believed to be the Law and the Word of God. I know, indeed, that in the days of Josiah, after the long and wicked reign of his grandfather, Manasseh, and the shorter, but no less wicked reign of Amon, his father, the Law would seem to have lain in the Temple a neglected and almost forgotten book;* and in every generation, we may easily believe that the wicked and the unbelieving cared little for the Word of God. But there were never wanting those who feared God and trembled at his word. Even in the reign of wicked Ahab and Jezebel there were seven thousand such in Israel alone, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Amongst all these it is utterly incredible that there were not copies of the sacred Scriptures.

I argue, *secondly*, that after the separation of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (B.C. 975), the mutual jealousy between Israel and Judah, and later between the Jews and Samaritans, would serve to guard the sacred Scriptures.

Notwithstanding the idolatry of Israel, it is clear that they had Priests and Prophets and righteous men amongst them. Where these were, there were always fewer or more copies of the sacred Scriptures. Piety cannot subsist without them. The Samaritans, who succeeded the Israelites in Northern Palestine after they had been carried into captivity, had, as we know, copies of the Law which they cherished. The jealousy, which was strong between Israel and Judah, became still stronger between the Jews and the Samaritans, and was of a religious, as well as a political nature. It is obvious that this jealousy would operate powerfully to guard the portions of the Divine word which they received in common.

I argue, *thirdly*, that the existence of inspired Prophets in Israel and Judah till after the captivity, insured the sound preservation of the sacred text until the prophetic Spirit had departed from the nation.†

It is generally conceded—as it is uniform Jewish tradition, and the substance and position of the book in the sacred volume favors,—that Malachi was the last of the Prophets, about B.C. 400. Until this time there had been a regular succession of

* 2 Kings xxii. 8 seq.

† In the Pirka Aboth, one of the oldest books of the Talmud, and the tract Baba Bathra in the Babylonian Gemara, we find the Jewish tradition that, after Moses and the Elders, the sacred books were watched over by the Prophets.

Prophets, sometimes several at the same period, amongst the covenant people of God. Of many of these we have writings in our Canon: but we hear nothing from them of any effort to corrupt the Word of God. That the Prophets, who had so much zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and who so often came, not only with a word of consolation to the faithful, but with a burden of reproofs and judgments for the wicked and unbelieving, should have lifted no voice of denunciation against the impious corrupters of God's word, if such there had been, is utterly incredible. They often condemn the wicked and pretended Prophets who perverted the message and word of the Lord, and warn the people against them, and appeal to the Law and to the testimony: but we never hear the charge of corrupting the sacred Scriptures, either through remissness or design. I conclude, therefore, that the attempt was never made, and that had it been made, it could never have succeeded.

I argue, *fourthly*, for the integrity of the Old Testament text from the reverence which the Jews are known to have entertained for their sacred books.

Had we no testimony to the fact, we should yet, from the very nature of the case, believe that a people who professed to have Jehovah as their covenant-God, and who regarded their sacred Scriptures as his authoritative word, would never permit these to be wilfully or negligently corrupted so as to invalidate their authority. It would be a violent supposition that any nation, possessing such books, would allow them to be multiplied, or diminished, or changed, except by what was regarded as authority from heaven. But we have satisfactory testimony on the subject. We have already heard Josephus say, "It is evident from fact how we believe in our Scriptures: for through so long a period already elapsed, no one has dared to add anything, or to take from them, or to make alterations; but it is implanted in all Jews from their very birth to consider them oracles of God, and to abide by them, and for them, if need be, cheerfully to die."* The strength of the expressions of the historian finds justification only in the deep reverence which, we must believe, was entertained by the people for the sacred writings, however much they may have disregarded them in their practice.

But that down to this period—for Josephus, you remember, was contemporary with the Apostles,—the Old Testament Scriptures

* Cont. Apion. i. § 8.

had been transmitted in all due integrity, I argue, *fifthly* and conclusively, from the fact already proven, that Christ and his Apostles constantly appealed to them as authoritative, and consequently endorse them as valid. As the Prophets had done with the false teachers of their day, so Christ reproves the Pharisees and Scribes for setting aside the Word of God by their vain traditions; and the Apostles charge upon false Judaizing teachers in the Christian churches an improper use of the Old Testament institutions: but they never intimate that the Scriptures had been so corrupted, as at all to affect their integrity and Divine authority. On the contrary, they appeal to them, refer to them, and commend others for searching them as the Word of God, that they might prove their claims and the Divine authority for their procedure.

Sixthly. Since the time of Christ, the same scrupulous regard of the Jews for the sacred text has continued to ensure its preservation.

After the Babylonish captivity it had already become common, before the time of Christ, to read in their synagogues on the Sabbath day, and expound both the Law and the Prophets. Of these synagogues, we learn, from the Rabbins, that there were nearly five hundred in Jerusalem, previously to its capture by the Romans. They were also, and had been for some generations, and have continued to be, down to the present day, scattered in all the cities throughout the world, where there were Jews enough to keep them up. In all these the Law and the Prophets have continued to be read, in Manuscripts written with the utmost care, according to the most rigid rules prescribed by their Rabbins, the antiquity of which indeed it is now impossible to determine, but whose minute and punctilious exactness shows the exceeding care which this people have always taken of their sacred records.

Seventhly. This wide-spread circulation of copies, in the Jewish synagogues, added to those which were now extensively found in private hands all over the world, rendered it utterly impossible for any successful combination to be formed, had the disposition or purpose ever been entertained, to corrupt the text of the sacred Scriptures. How has it ever been possible for the Jews or others, from what we know of their history since the day they were scattered from their capital and country, to effect a corruption of the sacred text thus spread over all the world?

Eighthly. The difficulty,—I should rather say, the *impossibility*, has been greatly increased by the translations, commen-

taries, and quotations that were early made of the Old Testament. The Septuagint (Greek) Version had been made several hundred years before Christ, and was early and has continued to be widely circulated. The Syriac Version was extensively used in the Eastern churches. The Greek Versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, also had more or less circulation among both Jews and Christians. The Latin Versions anterior to Jerome, and finally his own, spread over the west, and at last, I may say, over the whole world. Origen and Jerome at least commented on the original Hebrew text, and their works were sought for and read. Commentaries were multiplied by others on the translations, and quotations both from the originals and the Versions were made by these distinguished Fathers and others, far too numerous to allow us for a moment even to dream that the original has been altered, and the translations, and commentaries, and quotations altered so as to conform with it.

Ninthly. From the fifth to the tenth century Jewish doctors, or Masorites as they are commonly called, labored on the text of the Old Testament. They added vowels to the original consonants so as to preserve the traditionary reading, as also accents or signs to mark the punctuation and tone, and to regulate the cantillation of the Scriptures. They numbered the books, the grand and sub-divisions, the verses, the words, the letters. They ascertained the middle sections and the middle versés; they counted how often each word and each letter occurred in each book and in the whole volume; and recorded the results. All this and much else they did, partly useful and partly trifling; but all helping,—though subsequent labors of like kind have not sustained all their enumerations,—to make it, if possible, still more impossible ever to corrupt the Scriptures in the future.

Tenthly. From the time of Christ to the present day, Christians and Jews have held the Old Testament Scriptures in equal veneration. Their common interest in these ancient and sacred records early excited their mutual vigilance and jealousy: and we may have the strongest assurance from the warm controversies that raged between them, from the very first, respecting Christ and his kingdom as the completion and perfection of the Law and the Prophets, that neither would have ever permitted the Scriptures, which both held to be sacred, and which were the only common standard of appeal amongst them, to be corrupted by the other.

Eleventhly. The Jews and the Samaritans had no dealings with each other. From the very origin of the latter, the former had always despised and hated them. From both these we have copies of the Pentateuch,—which were all that the Samaritans ever received. We compare them, and considering the time during which they have been separately transmitted, they remarkably agree. And it is reasonable to believe that the rest of the books, which only the Jews received, have been transmitted with equal care and accuracy.

Lastly. We have numerous manuscripts more or less ancient; the ancient paraphrases, versions, and quotations, have descended to us. We compare all these, and while we find such differences as we should have expected,—unless we had supposed a constant but needless miracle to be wrought,—we discover in fact a wonderful agreement. From these we derive our modern printed text: and we rely upon it, transmitted, and guarded, and corrected by these multiplied means, if not as containing in all cases the very words as they came from inspired men of old, yet at least as faithfully exhibiting the revealed will of God, and, with trifling exceptions, in the very words of the Holy Ghost.

So much, my hearers, for the integrity of the text of the Old Testament. By parallel, but shorter and stronger arguments, I prove,

B. The integrity of the text of the New Testament.

And *first*, the copies were early and far too generally diffused for corruption ever to have been possible.

Let it be remembered that the books of the New Testament were originally in the hands of those who, for the most part, if not without exception, had enjoyed amongst them the ministrations of the Apostles. As these admitted the authority and received the doctrines of the Apostles, they could not only judge of the general agreement of any writing with those doctrines and ministrations, but when such writings came to them duly certified, as the genuine writings of the Apostles always did,* they could have no motive to corrupt them, but would be prompted by every rational and pious consideration to preserve them. We have already seen that they were written in a language which was generally understood; and that, from the desire which naturally pervaded the churches to obtain copies of all the sacred writings, they were early and rapidly spread through the then

* Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 21. Gal. vi. 11. Col. iv. 18. 2 Thess. iii. 17

known world. Wherever Christianity had found a hold,—and infidelity itself is compelled to admit the unparalleled rapidity of its propagation,—there were more or less complete collections of the sacred books in the possession of the congregations, and often of private individuals. How then was it possible to alter them? What man, or what body of men, shall undertake to collect all these copies, and to induce the Christian world to consent to changes of their sacred books?—Books, which they believed to have been written by men duly approved as inspired of God, and revealing truths on which, amidst much persecution and often the sacrifice of everything in the present life, they reposed, with strong faith, all their glorious and cherished hopes for the life which is to come? The books continued to spread, as Christianity spread, more and more: and in every succeeding age it became still more impossible for evil-disposed men, had they been bold enough to attempt it, to effect any extensive corruption of the sacred text.

Secondly. We have seen that a Syriac and, probably, several Latin versions were early prepared,—the latter embracing all the books and widely circulating in the second century, the former embracing nearly all the books, possibly before the close of the first century, but according to the general opinion early in the second. These were soon succeeded by others which circulated in the South and East and North, but chiefly by that of Jerome in the fourth century, which extended South and West, and finally obtained an authority and a circulation in the Roman Church, which has never been accorded to any other translation. Commentaries upon the different books were early and greatly multiplied. Harmonies of the historical portions were composed; homilies were written and published; quotations abounded in almost every Christian writer, many of whose works have descended to us though the greater part have perished. How, I ask, was it possible for any man or set of men, proposing to alter the original Scriptures, to collect all these with the consent of the Christian world, and alter them so as to make them conform to the altered texts? The undertaking, of all the vain things that vain men have imagined, would have been the most egregiously monstrous,—the very idea is absurd!

Thirdly. Divisions and heresies sprang up in the churches even in the times of the Apostles. Whilst they lived, they themselves and such of their writings as were already in the possession

of the churches, constituted the standard of appeal in every controversy. When they were dead their writings remained the sole authoritative standard, to which all could appeal, and did appeal, with common consent. In succeeding ages the sects multiplied as the Church increased, until at last it was rent in twain,—which division remains to the present day. How could any of these various sects succeed in corrupting the Scriptures, without the speedy detection of the rest? And how could the consent of all be gotten to alter the only common and acknowledged platform of inspired truth?

Fourthly. History is silent as to any such general corruption. It brands with infamy a Marcion who, it says, rejected most and mangled the rest of the writings of the Apostles: but it says not a word of such a daring and preposterous attempt, as the corruption of all the copies of the sacred Scriptures. Could it have been done, and the Christian world not know it? Could it have been known, and the voice of the Christian Church not be raised against it? Could history have been silent here, and not be recreant to her duty? But she is silent;—but silent only because she had nothing to record. The story that she tells all along concerning the Scriptures, is, that they were circulated and used and loved in one form or another so greatly and so universally, that an attempt to corrupt or to destroy them must have created a disturbance and clamor in the Christian world, which would have handed down the names of those who attempted thus to rob the Church of her birthright and all souls of their chart and charter to heaven, as impious rebels against the God of grace, and conspirators with Satan to keep the world enveloped in darkness, and shrouded in the gloom of eternal death! But she knows and tells of no such impiety and madness,—and simply because there was none.

Fifthly. The great facts and doctrines, which were believed to be taught in the New Testament by the different sects in the ancient Church, are still believed to be taught in our New Testament, and are proved by the same texts. Some of these are the great facts and doctrines which the early infidels most violently assailed; and about which there was most controversy in the Church. The passages which contain them, therefore, are the very passages which there was most temptation to alter. But it is obvious that precisely these passages, from their very notoriety and importance to one or the other of the opposing parties, would

be most securely guarded against all corruption. The natural conclusion is, that the whole has been faithfully preserved.

Finally. We have old manuscripts of the New Testament that date back within a few centuries of the Apostles; and hundreds of others of more recent date, and from various countries: we have still, in whole or in part, the more important ancient versions,—the Syriac, the old Italian, the Coptic, the Sahidic, the Vulgate of Jerome, the Ethiopic, the Gothic, the Armenian and other versions. We have quotations in writers of every age and of every nation which Christianity penetrated, so numerous, that were manuscripts and versions all gone, we could easily make out from them alone the great facts and doctrines of Christianity held by believers in every generation: we have commentaries and harmonies and homilies:—I say, we have all these to compare with one another and with our received text; and the comparison shows an agreement amongst them, that demonstrates the correctness of all our other arguments, and undeniably proves the general integrity of our New Testament text.

I return then to the affirmation, that of no books so ancient has the text been so certainly and so well preserved, as that of the books which compose our Old and New Testaments. There are indeed here and there passages, and still oftener clauses, the integrity of which there may be some, perhaps good reason to suspect: and there are hundreds and thousands of minor variations brought to light by a careful comparison of manuscripts, versions, and quotations. But of these the great majority do not affect the sense in the least, and could not, therefore, be expressed in a good translation: and where they do, either a judicious criticism can determine the true reading, or it is unimportant to the Christian system, and generally to the passage itself, which of several readings, that may be about equally sustained, shall be adopted as original. The very means of multiplying the various readings, viz., the great number of documents to be compared, have always furnished so many effectual guards to prevent corruption of the text, and furnish now ample means for correcting it, where correction is needed. It is precisely those books, classic as well as sacred, of which we have fewest manuscripts and other documents, and consequently comparatively few various readings, that the text is most liable to suspicion. On the other hand, the text of those is most certain for which we have the greatest number of documents, especially manuscripts, to com-

pare, and consequently the greatest number of various readings actually occurring.

Thus has Providence, by natural means, and without a miracle, preserved the text of all the sacred Scriptures : and it is vain for skepticism longer to hope to find a cover for its unbelief under the flimsy pretext of its corruption, either accidental or designed. The worst text that could be published on the authority of any Manuscripts, would not alter a single phase of Christianity.

I have now, my hearers, endeavored to show

I. That the books of the New Testament are genuine.

II. That the history contained in the New Testament is true.

III. That, therefore, Christ was Divine and his Apostles inspired, and consequently our New Testament was from God.

IV. That our Old Testament Canon is the same as the ancient Jewish Canon which they used and endorsed ; and consequently that this also was from God.

V. That neither the text of the Old Testament, nor that of the New, has so suffered in the transmission as to invalidate, in the slightest degree, their Divine and binding authority.

If I have succeeded in making these propositions good, then are our sacred Scriptures the Word of God, and Christianity is Divine. The argument for the truth of Christianity derived from the history of her Sacred Books, let it be observed, is in no manner affected by the doubts of some, in ancient and modern times, respecting the genuineness of a few of the books. We may give up all that were anciently doubted, and all which any now can with any reason regard as doubtful, and the substance of Revelation remains the same. Not a single doctrine, or duty, or promise, or prophecy, or type, or important fact would fall from the System. On the basis of the books, which a sober criticism has always admitted to be entirely unquestionable, Christianity stands firm and complete. To demolish it infidelity must show, not that some of the books in the Sacred Canon have been and are doubted, but that all the books, each as well as all together, are forgeries : and it then devolves on her to write the history and explanation of Christianity as a great fact in the world, running back through successive generations to a definite period and a particular people, as well known to us as any other period and people in the past as also the history and explanation of Judaism, the great foreshadowing type, reaching far back into antiquity, confirmed by all ancient monuments, and ever steadfastly asserting its origin from

Let it be duly considered that the Old Testament was written by different men, during a period of about one thousand years; and the New Testament by different authors, living in the same age, some four hundred years after: and I think it will appear, that the progressive development of the Revelation through so long a period, and by the instrumentality of so many men in succession; the unity and harmony which, notwithstanding, runs through and binds together the whole; and the entire and peculiar correspondence between the Old Testament and the New, forming as they do, a completed system of types and realities, prophecies and fulfilments, promises and curses, doctrines and duties, at once elevated, sublime, pure, and true;—all together constitute an argument for the Divine origin of the Christian religion, as forcible and convincing, as it is unique, in its character. I challenge the production of a similar phenomenon from the whole range of literature ancient and modern, sacred and profane; and demand a satisfactory solution of this on any other hypothesis than that, which maintains that the authors of these books wrote by command of God, and as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I commend them, therefore, to you as the Law and the Testimony of God. As he gave them, so has he preserved them; and they come down to us freighted with his pure and precious and imperishable truths. Their entrance giveth light and liberty and life. They reclaim the vicious, they establish the righteous; they humble the proud, they exalt the meek; they break the oppressor, they loose the prisoner; they still the avenger, they strengthen the weak. They chasten mirth, they comfort grief; they enlighten life, they conquer death. They expose our iniquity, and provide a ransom; they reveal God's wrath and offer his grace. They proclaim our ruin, and publish a Saviour; they warn us of hell, and point us to heaven. "I testify," therefore, "unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and out of the things which are written in this book." Rev. xxii. 18, 19.