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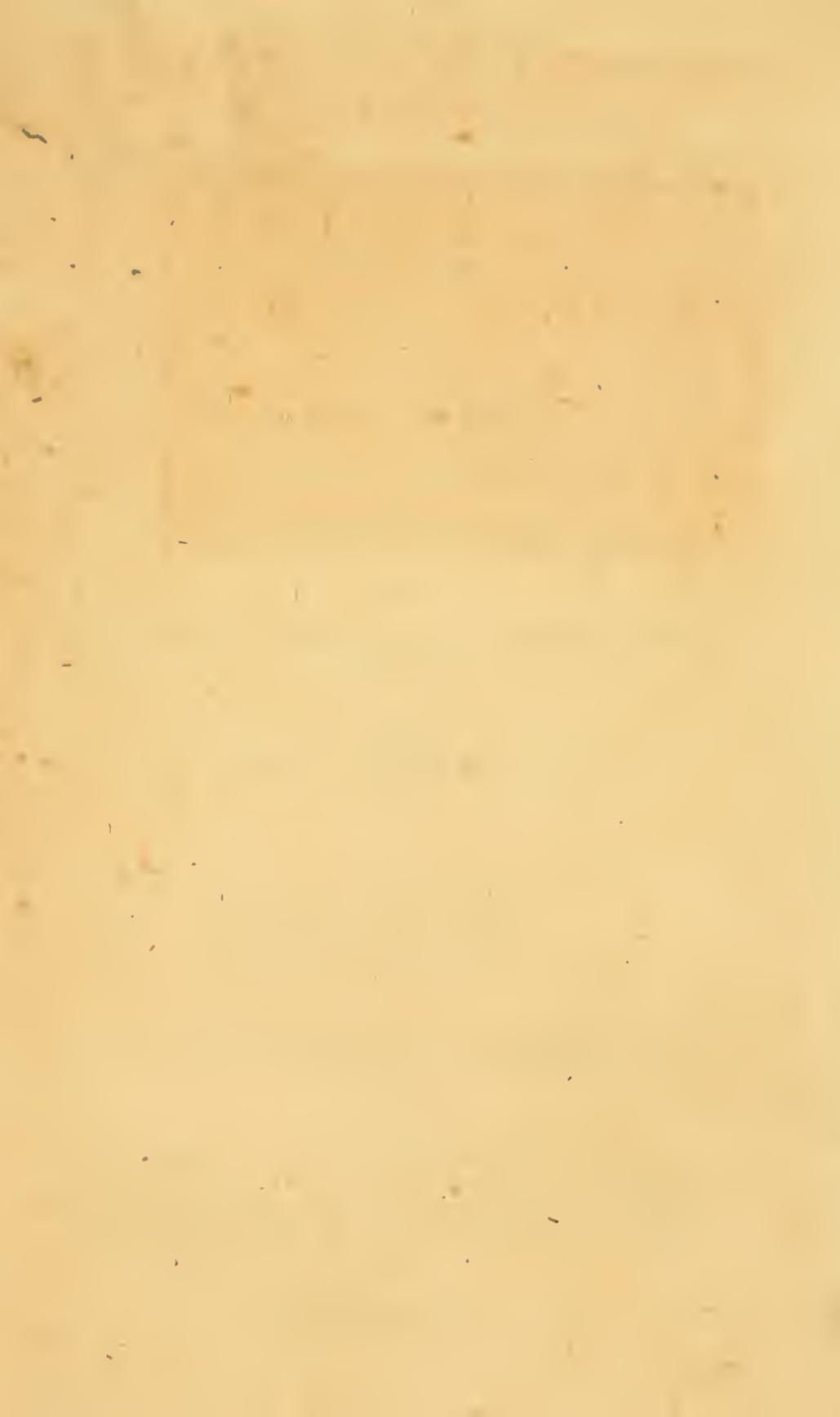
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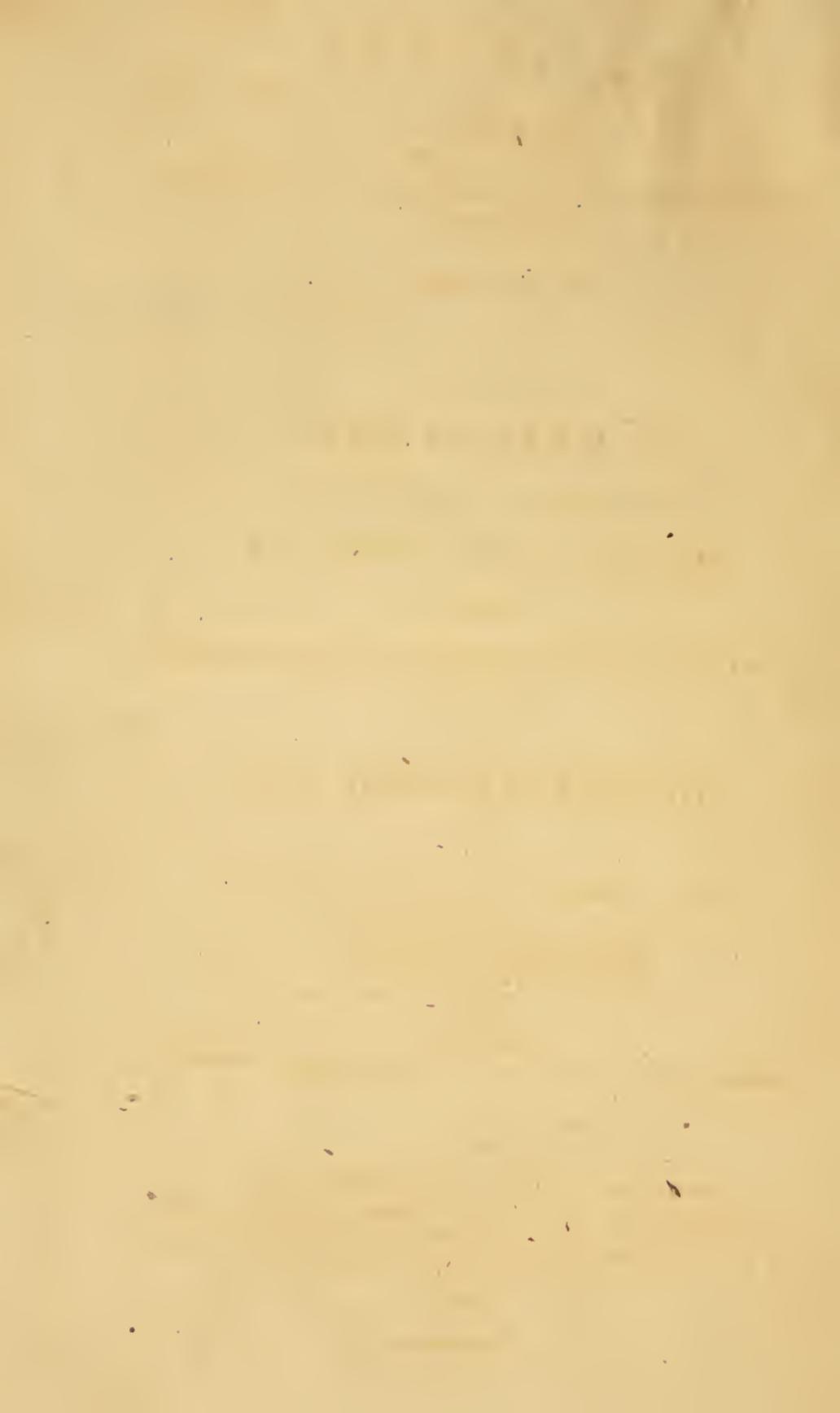
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AN ANSWER

TO A PRINTED PAPER ENTITLED

“MANIFESTO OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE
SOCIETY;”

The Third Edition.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

A REJOINDER

TO A PAMPHLET BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

THE REV. ROBERT TAYLOR, A.B.

ENTITLED

“SYNTAGMA OF THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN
RELIGION.”

BY JOHN PYE SMITH, D.D.

“Faith is an act of Reason.”—BAXTER'S LIFE OF FAITH; Pt. ii. ch. i.

“The Christian Faith,
Unlike the timorous creeds of pagan priests,
Is frank, stands forth to view, inviting all
To prove, examine, search, investigate;
And gave herself a light to see her by.”

POLLOK'S COURSE OF TIME; Book IV..

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ANSWER TO A PAPER

ENTITLED

“MANIFESTO OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.”



IT is scarcely possible to imagine a more flagrant instance of the utterance of audacious falsehood, than is in the case before us. In most instances of even extreme and deplorable error, it is apparent that ignorance, inattention, a refusal to go to the proper sources of information, or some other prejudice, lies at the root; and that, therefore, blameable as such a state of mind cannot but be, it is possible to entertain some hope that the person who is its subject may be sincere in the declarations which he makes. But when a man comes forward with a parade of learning and authority, and with an ostentatious reference to the titles of books, to chapters, pages, and passages marked as quotations; and when, after all, the fact is that this display is fallacious, that the books and passages referred to say no such thing as is imputed to them, but indeed the very contrary, and that the professed quotations are grossly falsified; what conclusion can the most lenient mind arrive at, but that the person so acting is a dishonest man, a false witness, a wilful deceiver?

The case thus supposed is realized, in a very awful manner, in a paper lately circulated in London, intitled, “Manifesto of the Christian Evidence Society.”

The unhappy writer of that paper affirms certain Propositions, and subjoins what he wishes to be accepted as proof of them. These we shall examine in detail.

“PROP. I. That the Scriptures of the New Testament were not written by the persons whose names they bear.

“PROOFS. Because it cannot be shewn, by *any* evidence, that they were written by the persons whose names they bear; and because it can be shewn, by evidence both *external* and *internal*, that they were written by *other* persons. By *evidence external*: in the formal acts and edicts of Christian Emperors, Bishops, and Councils, issued from time to time, for the general alteration, or total renovation, of these Scriptures, according to their own caprice. [NOTE. Such were those of the Emperors Constantine and Theodosius, and this of the Emperor Anastasius: ‘When Messala was Consul (that is, in the year of

Christ 506) at Constantinople, by order of the Emperor Anastasius, the Holy Gospels, as being written by illiterate Evangelists, are censured and corrected.' *Victor Tununensis*, an African Bishop, quoted by Lardner, Vol. III. p. 67. See also an account of a general alteration of these Scriptures, 'to accommodate them to the faith of the orthodox,' by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, as recorded by Beausobre, *Histoire de Manichée*, Vol. I. p. 343.] And in the admissions of the most learned critics and divines, as to the alterations which these Scriptures have from time to time undergone. [NOTE. (1st.) 'There were, in the MSS. of the N. T. one hundred and thirty thousand various readings.' Unitar. New Version, p. 22. (2d.) 'The manuscripts from which the received text was taken, were stolen by the librarian, and sold to a sky-rocket maker, in the year 1749.' Herbert Marsh, Bishop of Peterborough, Vol. II. p. 441. (3d.) For the Book of Revelation there was no original Greek at all, but 'Erasmus wrote it himself in Switzerland, in the year 1516.' Bishop Marsh, Vol. I. p. 320.] By *evidence internal*: in the immoral, vicious, and wicked tendency of many passages therein remaining; and by the insertion of others, whose only drift is to enhance the power of kings and priests. [NOTE. See Rom. iii. 7; 1 John ii. 10; Heb. xii. 29; Rom. xiii; 1 Pet. ii. 13; Luke xiv. 26; &c.]

"PROP. II. That they [the Scriptures of the New Testament] did not appear in the times to which they refer, is demonstrable. By evidence external, in the express admissions of Ecclesiastical historians, of their utter inability to shew *when*, or *where*, or *by whom* this collection of writings was first made. [See Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.*—Jones on the Canon, &c., *passim*.] And in the admissions of the most learned critics, as to the infinitely suspicious origination of the present Received Text. ['The Received Text rests upon the authority of no more than twenty or thirty manuscripts, most of which are of little note.' Unitar. Vers. Introd. p. 10. 'It was completed by the Elzevir edition of 1624.' *ib.* Mark well! the retaining therein and circulating as the word of God, with consent or connivance of all parties, several passages known and admitted by all to be forgeries and lies. 1 John v. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16. Excellent morality this!!]"

It is no small trial of patience to an upright mind to see printed and circulated these most shameful misrepresentations, these unblushing falsehoods, uttered with a front of such dogmatical assurance. But we shall reply to them all in order.

SECTION I.

ON THE GENERAL EVIDENCE OF THE GENUINENESS OF
THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES.

Our summary reply to the assertion with which this writer sets out, is this. We have the *most satisfactory* evidence that the Books of the New Testament WERE written at the time which they intimate, and by the persons to whom they are attributed.* Several of them do not “bear” any name in the beginning or body of *the composition itself*: but for these, as well as the others, the evidence of genuineness is very satisfactory. The intelligent reader scarcely needs to be told that the *titles*, at the head of each book, were prefixed, not by the authors, but by the early transcribers. That circumstance, however, in itself involves a proof of the general belief and notoriety that those books were the genuine productions of the writers whose names were familiarly attached to them. There are well-known heathen books, some belonging nearly to the period of the New Testament, and others to times long before; and no rational man doubts that they were the real productions of the persons to whom they are attributed. But what is our evidence of this? How do we know the genuineness of the works of Thucydides, Xenophon, and Demosthenes, among the Greeks; or of Cicero, Cæsar, and Livy, among the Romans? I answer, by the only evidence applicable to such cases, and with which the common sense of mankind is universally satisfied; PUBLIC NOTORIETY, transmitted to the successive generations of men by their predecessors, up to the epoch in each case referred to, and this transmitted knowledge often attested by the allusions or quotations of subsequent authors. Thus the whole of literary history is continued down to our own days. Upon such evidence as this it is, that we regard the books composing the New Testament as genuine and authentic. They stand upon the ground of Public Notoriety, reaching back to the times to which they belong: they have been referred to, quoted, and commented upon, by a succession of authors from those times downwards: and they were translated, at very early periods, into the principal languages of the civilized world. The challenge may be fearlessly made, to produce any writings approaching to the same professed antiquity, whose genuineness is supported by evidence equally abundant and unexceptionable.

The assertions so pompously blazoned as “Evidence External” are a mass partly of shameful misrepresentations and partly of downright falsehoods. We must take them one by one.

* The particulars of this evidence are too extensive to be detailed here, and they are accessible in the works of numerous and well known authors, from Grotius down to Lardner, Porteus, and Paley.

SECTION II.

PRETENCE OF ACTS AND EDICTS FOR THE ALTERATION
OF THE SCRIPTURES.

This writer speaks, with the utmost confidence, of "Acts and Edicts for the general alteration or total renovation of these Scriptures." It is scarcely possible to imagine a grosser untruth than this assertion. Nothing of the kind is to be found in history. With respect to Constantine and Theodosius, the writer of the Manifesto has dishonourably omitted any mention of the year when it is pretended that such an Act occurred, or of the book in which any record of it may be found. Let him point them out, and we will impartially examine them. In the mean time, if the reader chooses to refer to the *Life of Constantine* by his intimate friend Eusebius, (book iv. chap. 36, 37,) he will find some clear and positive evidence upon the care and diligence which were exercised in making copies of the Scriptures. If any kind of alterations had been made, or even thought of, by the Emperor or the persons in civil or ecclesiastical authority, some allusion to them could hardly have failed to occur in that passage.

SECTION III.

ON THE ALLEGATION OF AN ALTERATION OF THE
GOSPELS IN THE REIGN OF ANASTASIUS.

The passage from Victor,* an obscure author who wrote a Chronicle of about twelve pages, of which this sentence is an article, is indeed fairly transcribed from Dr. LARDNER'S translation of it, in his great and never answered work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*. But mark the honesty of this Manifesto-writer. He copies the passage which makes for his purpose, and which he would, in all reasonable probability, never have known of, had not that Christian Advocate furnished him with it: but he says not a syllable of the evidence, which was before him in the very same page, of the total falsehood of the statement, as it is professed to be understood by some modern infidels.

The facts of the case are these. Anastasius I. ascended the throne of the Eastern Empire in the year 491, and reigned twenty-eight years. During the greater part of his reign he was exceedingly unpopular, and was involved in the most distressing tumults and sanguinary civil wars. His enemies, both on political and on religious accounts, were very numerous, active, and powerful. On the supposition that he, or any other

* "Messalâ V. C. consule, Constantinopoli jubente imperatore sancta evangelia, tanquam ab idiotis evangelistis composita, reprehenduntur et emendantur."

person, had attempted an alteration of the received text of the Gospels, or any part of the Scriptures whatever, the following considerations present themselves.

1. Anastasius would have brought upon himself the outcry of censure and indignation, from all parties and classes of men professing Christianity. Those parties were considerable in both numbers and influence, and they were full of jealousy and vigilance towards each other. If the partizans, on any one side, had been dishonest and daring enough to make alterations in the public copies of the sacred books, or any parts of them, they would have been immediately detected by their opponents, and ignominy would have followed the exposure. A circumstance quite in point occurred to this very Emperor. He directed what he looked upon as an amendment to be made, by the omission of only a little clause of four words, in an anthem which was used in public worship. The innovation was resisted with so much violence by the people of Constantinople, that many lives were lost, Anastasius was obliged to take refuge on board a ship, and it was with extreme difficulty and the most humiliating concessions that he escaped dethronement. Who can believe that he could have succeeded in an enterprise, infinitely more hazardous, and which all parties would have regarded as most criminal, that of altering the text of the Holy Gospels?

2. It is fair and proper to inquire by what conceivable means any mortal could have made such an attempt. The art of printing not being invented till nearly a thousand years after, books were at that time multiplied only by hand-writing. Anastasius might, therefore, have employed transcribers to write a certain number of copies of the Four Gospels, with his alterations; and then he might have given them away, or sold them, or ordered them to be read in the churches. But how could he prevail upon all persons and families, all communities, sects, and parties, to destroy their own old copies, and sit down quietly with adulterated ones? Was it possible that the man, who could not obtain the alteration of a hymn in his own metropolis, would be able to effect this astonishing enterprise, not only there, but through every other city and every province? The original language of the New Testament was the vernacular speech of the country. We know, from abundant historical evidence, that copies of the Gospels and the other parts of the New Testament existed in great abundance and in wide diffusion. Imagine the most peremptory orders to have them all delivered up, the most rigorous execution of those orders, and the severest punishments on refusal: all history and all experience prove the perfect impossibility of the most powerful and despotic government ever succeeding in any similar measure. The tyranny of all such attempts makes men indignant; and, when the effectual concealment of a thing so small as a few rolls or leaves of parchment was so very easy, they

would not tamely part with a valuable possession, in many cases a family inheritance, or the property of a society. Could an unpopular sovereign, with a discontented people, and tottering on a precarious throne, ever have been foolish enough to venture upon such a thing? Let us even admit the incredible supposition that he could have succeeded, in this act of domiciliary plunder and oppression, over his own subjects: they formed only a small part of the Christian world. Nearly the whole of Europe, and the entire north coast of Africa (which was then filled with Christian communities), belonged to other governments, which were, probably without exception, hostile to Anastasius. The people of those countries possessed their copies of the New Testament, both in private hands and as the property of communities, and that in the original as well as in various translations. Would they have tamely yielded their dearest possession to be burned and destroyed, at the bidding of an enemy, a foreign tyrant, a man held in universal execration?—Let your own good sense, my countrymen, give the answer.

3. There had lived, from the first century down to the time of Anastasius, numerous writers, in both Greek and Latin, the two great languages at that time of the civilized world, who quote very copiously from the New Testament. Of these authors many are now extant; and so ample are their citations that, by merely extracting and arranging them, all the principal parts of the apostolic writings might be made out. This fact has always presented an insuperable barrier against every attempt to make alterations in the sacred books.

4. The historian Evagrius, who was born soon after the death of Anastasius, and who writes much at length concerning the events of his reign, gives not the most distant hint of any charge of this nature upon the character of that Emperor. Other authors, also, who lived in the very times, and who are not sparing in representing his vices and tyranny, are silent as to any accusation on this head. It is, therefore, to the last degree, inconsistent with the rules of historical credibility, that such an action, which, had it really occurred, must not only have been of public notoriety, but would have provoked universal opposition, should be received upon the single statement of an African writer, so obscure as to be almost unknown, who lived far from the scene of action, and who might so easily be the subject of misunderstanding or misinformation.

5. A probable reason can be assigned for the origin of the whole story, and the mistakes of Victor. Dr. RICHARD BENTLEY, the glory of English scholars, has adduced a passage from Liberatus, another ancient but little-known author, affirming that Anastasius accused Macedonius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, to whom he was a mortal enemy, of having made alterations in some copies of the Gospels which he had given out to be transcribed. Also Peter Wesseling, a Dutch critic and historical antiquary of great eminence, has shewn that, in

the reign and among the subjects of Anastasius, there was a warm dispute concerning the reading of a clause in the Gospel of Matthew, chap. xxvii. 49; which, either way, was of no real importance. If the accusation brought against Macedonius were well founded, it would follow, as a natural consequence, that the Emperor would order the alterations (whether they were unintentional mistakes or changes made designedly) to be corrected in the copies referred to. If the accusation were a false one, it might still be widely circulated. On either supposition, a magnified and distorted rumour might easily come to Victor of Tunna (or Tenna, or Tonnona; for so obscure is the place that its name cannot be determined); "the true fact," says Bentley, "being no more than this, that Anastasius ordered the copies to be amended (*tanquam ab idiotis librariis conscripta*) *as written by ignorant scribes*: the story grew in the telling, when it was got as far as Africa, on purpose to blacken him, that he ordered the *originals* to be amended (*tanquam ab idiotis evangelistis composita*) *as made by ignorant evangelists.*" *Dr. Bentley's Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, p. 125; *Wesselingii Diatribe*, &c. p. 146, *Utrecht, 1738.*

SECTION IV.

ON THE ASSERTION THAT ARCHBISHOP LANFRANC EFFECTED AN ALTERATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

M. de Beausobre was a French Protestant of distinguished learning and profound research into ecclesiastical antiquity, and whose writings were in a very great measure devoted to the elucidation of the evidence, and the enforcement of the authority, of the Christian Scriptures. How would he, as well as Dr. Lardner, have revolted, with indignation and horror, from a writer who can so dishonestly make use of their names for purposes the very opposite of those conclusions which they have invincibly demonstrated! The passage in Beausobre contains no such thing as "an account of a general alteration of the Scriptures," a thing utterly impracticable for Lanfranc or any other person, unless he could have got into his possession all the copies in the world. The paragraph is a citation from a small book by Richard Simon, a French Roman Catholic Priest;* and its evident meaning is, that Lanfranc directed a

* Nous lisons, dans la Vie de Lanfranc, moine Bénédictin, et ensuite Archevêque de Cantorberi, qui a été publiée par les Bénédictins de la Congrégation de S. Maur, avec les Ouvrages de cet Archevêque, qu'ayant trouvé les livres de l'Écriture beaucoup corrompus par ceux qui les avoient copiés, il s'étoit appliqué à les corriger, aussi bien que les livres des Saints Pères, selon la foi orthodoxe." *Simon, Dissert. contre Arnaud*, p. 51. "We read, in the Life of Lanfranc, a Benedictine Monk, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, published by the Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Maur, along with the Works of that Archbishop, that, having found the books of the Scriptures much corrupted by those who had transcribed them, he had applied himself to the correcting of them, as also the books of the holy Fathers, according to the orthodox faith."

revisal and correction to be made of certain copies that were in his possession, or to which his agents could have access, under the supposition of their having been corrupted by the copyists. There are several questions connected with this statement, which ought to be fairly investigated before we can form any decided opinion in the case. The Italian priest, Lanfranc, though a man of good personal character, was the instrument of William the Conqueror in rivetting the chains of ecclesiastical slavery on the English nation; which he bowed to a servility of subjection to the Pope much greater than had before existed among our ancestors. It is, first of all, reasonable to ask, What evidence have we of the truth of the fact asserted? The documents of history, for that period and some centuries after, are very obscure. In the time of Simon and the learned Benedictines of St. Maur, very great and numerous errors with respect to the persons and transactions of those dark ages, were commonly received; and those errors have been dissipated only very lately by the laudable and laborious researches of Mr. Sharon Turner, Mr. Hallam, and other eminent men of the present day.* It is highly probable that the facts of the case are fallaciously represented. But, even admitting the truth of the statement, what does it amount to? That a foreign Archbishop of Canterbury, whom a ruthless tyrant had set up, and who was ardently zealous in enforcing the spiritual despotism of the See of Rome, found fault with certain copies of the Scriptures and of other ancient Christian writings, as having been incorrectly written or even designedly altered, and therefore had them corrected according to his own notions of what was the genuine reading! These copies were probably some which had been confiscated or plundered from the deposed English clergy. It is likely enough that it would be an object with the new government to represent these as "corrupted" copies, only to cast reproach upon their owners or the persons who had transcribed them. It is possible, however, that they really might be incorrect books, written by ignorant or careless copyists. Every printer and bookseller perfectly well knows, and many readers of books know to their vexation, that, even in the present day, when the art of printing renders accuracy so much more easy to be attained, many editions of good books are sent out shamefully incorrect. As for the reference to "the orthodox faith," by which Lanfranc and his historians understood the assumed infallible dictates of the Church of Rome, it is not at all improbable that it was brought in for the purpose of running down the Anglo-Saxon Church and the old English Clergy. But, had any real corruptions been chargeable upon them, or had Lanfranc's party made alterations of the smallest importance, it is morally impossible but that the facts would have been placed in a clear light, and the evidence of them

* In their well known and valuable works on the English History, and the affairs of the Middle Ages generally.

would have come down to posterity. It is worthy of observation that Lanfranc, whose Commentaries upon several books of Scripture are extant, is remarked by Dr. Cave (*Historia Literaria*, Vol. II. p. 148,) to have been addicted to the making of arbitrary alterations in the text, which he conceived to be amendments. But his authority could never procure the reception of his alterations by the Christian world: they remain in his own writings, and are disowned by all others. And similar has always been, and ever must be, the fate of any other rash critic, however favourably he may think of his own speculations.

Let us grant, however, contrary to all evidence and probability, the very utmost that can be made of the statement; it could only affect a few Latin copies of some parts of the Bible, and possibly, but not probably, a still fewer number of Anglo-Saxon Gospels. The numerous manuscripts scattered throughout France, Spain, Italy, and other parts of Continental Europe, could not be affected by it. Above all, the copies of the Greek ORIGINAL of the New Testament, which were nearly, without exception, at that time, confined to the countries under the Eastern Empire, were far out of the reach of Saxons or Normans, or of any other persons in the West of Europe. The Hebrew original, also, of the Old Testament had become, long before the feudal times, unknown (we might almost say *totally*) to the nations called Christian; but it was preserved by the Jews, with a reverence and care in transcription so wonderfully exact as to extend not only to the words and the sentences, but to every letter, stroke, and point, with a minuteness the most anxious and even superstitious. Hence no class of ancient manuscripts have so few errors of transcription (usually called *Various Readings*) as the Hebrew Bibles.

I now appeal to any man of sense, whether it is not most unfair and absurd to represent this obscure and dubious circumstance, and which is at most of no real importance, as in the smallest degree impugning the genuineness of the Scriptures, or of any other ancient writings which might have been so treated, as in fact many have been.

SECTION V.

ON THE NATURE OF VARIOUS READINGS, AND THE INFERENCES TO BE DRAWN FROM THEM.

The pretended reference to the "Unitarian New Version," is another instance of most disgraceful ignorance, or shameless perversion. This will be manifest from the perusal of the whole passage in the Introduction to that Version of the New Testament: but, before I transcribe it, I must request the attention of those readers who have not been conversant in such matters, to a few explanatory remarks.

Previously to the invention of the inestimable art of printing, about the year 1440, books could be multiplied only by the tedious and laborious process of taking copies in hand-writing. The method of publishing, in the classical ages, consisted in an author's having his work read among his friends, and sometimes in large assemblies of people; and, if it met with general approbation, persons were permitted or procured to write out copies for distribution or sale. From each of these, other transcripts were made; and so on, from one generation of men to another. In this way have been preserved the works of Homer, Herodotus, Hippocrates, Euclid, and an illustrious host of Greek writers besides, the eldest of whom belongs to the ninth century at least before the Christian era; and those of Cicero, Cæsar, Virgil, Tacitus, and the rest of the Roman classics. Now, whoever has any experience of the toil and liableness to mistake which attend the transcribing of even a short pamphlet, will easily understand the difficulties necessarily accruing, when this was the only way of multiplying the hundreds and thousands of books that existed in the world; when persons fond of knowledge were obliged to spend a large part of their lives in copying books which they had borrowed (often by pledging their most valuable possessions as a security for the loan), unless they were immensely rich so as to hire transcribers; when a moderate library was, in pecuniary value, worth a barony or a duchy; and when the possessors of these costly treasures had not the means, nor perhaps were expert in the method, of comparing two or more copies together, in order to ascertain the correctness of each. In the transcribers themselves, many of whom got their livelihood by this labour, obvious causes must have been in continual operation to produce variations from the original copy; generally in a manner involuntary and purely accidental, but sometimes from design. Haste, carelessness, wandering of the attention, weak eye-sight, bad light and feeble lamps, difficulty of making out the handwriting of the copy before him, and sometimes the idea of correcting a hastily-supposed mistake in that copy; were among the numerous circumstances which were likely to betray a transcriber into errors in letters, syllables, and words. These differences would be detected, when two or more copies were carefully compared: they were called by the very proper term, **VARIOUS READINGS**; they became, in due time, an object of anxious study; and the art, acquired by long practice united with extensive learning and solid judgment, of determining *the True Reading* out of several variations, in a manner impartial and satisfactory, formed a most important branch in the Art of **CRITICISM**.

From this collection of circumstances the following facts naturally and necessarily ensued.

1. That, of those books which were the most frequently copied, in all periods of time and in different countries, the number of **Various Readings** is *the greatest*; and yet the settle-

ment of the true or genuine Reading in each instance is *the easiest*, on account of the multitude of copies, each one being a kind of check upon the others. For example; the writings of Terence, those of Horace, and some of Cicero's, are in the best-evidenced state of purity, because the number of old manuscript copies, and consequently of Various Readings, is greater than in the case of most of the other ancient authors.

2. That, on the other hand, when very few manuscripts of a work are known to exist, the Variations are indeed few; but obscurities and difficulties attach to the text which Criticism cannot remove, except, in some instances, by the adventurous hand of *Conjecture*. This is the case with the writings that have come down to us of Paterculus, Hesychius, and some others.

3. That, if, in addition to manuscript copies of any ancient work, quotations from it are found in other writings of great antiquity, and ancient translations of it exist in any other language, these two are new sources of evidence, and may be, in some respects, equal and even superior to that of manuscripts. Thus the late Mr. PORSON very happily, in several instances, confirmed or corrected the Greek text of Euripides by adducing translations of passages from Latin authors who lived two or three hundred years later.

4. That, in proportion to the multitude of Various Readings, their individual importance becomes less and less; for they are found to refer almost entirely to very little matters, many of which could not be made apparent in a translation, and, of the rest, very few produce any alteration in the meaning of a sentence, still less in the purport of a whole paragraph. The reason of this is, that the greater multiplicity of copies, though it occasions a greater number of trifling mistakes, furnishes at the same time a strong barrier against such as would affect the meaning, and especially such as might proceed from design.

Now let any man of sense apply these facts to the history and state of the text of our Holy Scriptures. They travelled down almost fourteen centuries, in the form of written books, before they were taken up by the art of Printing. But no ancient books have enjoyed equal means of safe preservation; because no ancient books were so early and widely spread abroad among different nations, none have been so constantly and publicly read, none have been so multiplied by transcripts, none have been translated into so many languages at very early periods, from the third century to the ninth, none have been so often quoted and commented upon by both Greek and Latin authors, from the very age of their composition through all following time; and of no ancient books have the Various Readings been sought for with so much labour and anxiety, and published with so much minute care; even to a degree which would be censured as needless and trifling, if exercised upon

any classic author. The consequence is, that of no ancient books whatsoever do we possess a text so critically correct, so satisfactorily perfect, as that which exists in the best editions of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

Judge then for yourselves, my worthy countrymen, what must be the ignorance or the dishonesty of the man who wishes to make you believe that the multitude of Various Readings, *the very circumstance* which is, in so high a degree, *a guarantee* for the integrity of the sacred text, forms an objection to its genuineness!

I now cite the passage, fairly and fully, from the Introduction to the Unitarian Improved Version, which the writer of the Manifesto has falsely pretended to quote, and the tendency and application of which he has so grossly perverted.

“The number of Various Readings collected by Dr. Mill is computed at thirty thousand. And it is reasonable to believe that, since the publication of his celebrated edition [in 1707] a hundred thousand at least have been added to the list, by the indefatigable industry of those learned critics who have succeeded to his labours, and by the great extension of the field of their operations, in consequence of the additional number of manuscripts and versions which have been since discovered and collated.

“These Various Readings, though very numerous, do not in any degree affect the general credit and integrity of the text: the general uniformity of which, in so many copies, scattered through almost all countries in the known world, and in so great a variety of languages, is truly astonishing, and demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures were held, and the great care which was taken in transcribing them. Of the hundred and fifty thousand Various Readings which have been discovered by the sagacity and diligence of collators, not one tenth, nor one hundredth part, make any perceptible, or at least any material, variation in the sense. This will appear credible, if we consider that every the minutest deviation from the received text has been carefully noted; so that the insertion or omission of an article, the substitution of a word for its equivalent, the transposition of a word or two in a sentence, and even variations in orthography, have been added to the catalogue of Various Readings.

“In those variations which in some measure affect the sense, the True Reading often shines forth with a lustre of evidence which is perfectly satisfactory to the judicious inquirer. In other cases, where the true reading cannot be exactly ascertained, it is of little or no consequence which of the readings is adopted; for instance, whether we read *Paul the servant*, or *Paul the prisoner, of Jesus Christ*. (Philemon, ver. 1.) Also, where the Various Readings are of considerable importance, consisting, for example, in omission or addition of sentences or

paragraphs,* the authenticity of the rest of the book remains wholly unaffected, whatever decision may be passed upon the passages in question. Thus the genuineness of the Gospel of John continues unimpeached, whatever may become of the account of the pool of Bethesda, or of the narrative of the woman taken in adultery.

“The Various Readings which affect the doctrines of Christianity are very few: yet some of these are of great importance, viz. Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 John v. 7. Of those passages which can be justly regarded as wilful interpolations, the number is very small indeed: and of these, the last-mentioned text, 1 John v. 7, is by far the most notorious, and most universally acknowledged and reprobated.†

“Upon the whole, we may remark, that the number and antiquity of the manuscripts which contain the whole or different parts of the New Testament, the variety of Ancient Versions, and the multitude of quotations from these sacred books in the early Christian writers from the second century downwards, constitute a body of evidence in favour of the genuineness and authenticity of the Christian Scriptures far beyond that of any other book of equal antiquity.” *Impr. Vers. of the New Test. Introd.* pp. xxii. xxiii.

Before quitting this subject of the Various Readings, I must remark, that the well-informed Christian is so far from deprecating the study of them, or wishing to hide the fact of their existence with regard to the Scriptures as well as all other ancient books, that he would rejoice in the further discovery of good and ancient manuscripts or versions, though they might add hundreds or even thousands to the list: for he knows that they could only have the effect of still more establishing the text of the best editions, or of putting an end to the few difficulties which still exist.

I also beg the reader's attention to a passage from the prince of classical critics, Richard Bentley. “The result of the whole is, that either, *à posteriori*, ALL ancient books, as well as the sacred, must now be laid aside as ‘uncertain and precarious’” [the terms used by Collins, on whom he is animadverting]; “or else, say, *à priori*, that all the transcripts of *sacred* books should have been privileged against the common fate, and exempted from all slips and errors whatever. Which of these our writer and his new sect will close with, I cannot foresee. There is in each of them such a gust of the paradox and the perverse, that they equally suit with a modern Free-thinker's palate; and, therefore, I shall bestow a short reflection on both.

“If all the old authors are abandoned by him, there is one compendious answer to this ‘Discourse of Free-thinking.’ For what becomes of his boasted passages out of Cicero, Plutarch,

* Of which there are scarcely half a dozen in the whole New Testament, and still fewer in the Old Testament.

† See Note A.

and his long list of ancient Free-thinkers, if the text of each is *precarious*? Those passages, as they came from the authors' hands, *might be* for superstition, which are now cited against it. Thus our writer will be found *felo de se*; unless the coroner, to save his effects, favours him with *his own* titles of fool and madman.

“But I have too much value for the ancients, to play booty about their works and monuments, for the sake of a short answer to ‘a fool according to his folly.’ All those passages, and all the rest of their remains, are sufficiently pure and genuine to make us sure of the writers’ design. If a corrupt line or dubious reading chances to intervene, it does not darken the whole context, nor make an author’s opinion or his purpose precarious. Terence, for instance, has as many variations as any book whatever, in proportion to its bulk: and yet, with all its interpolations, omissions, additions, or glosses, (choose *the worst* of them on purpose,) you cannot deface the contrivance and plot of one play; no, not of one single scene; but its sense, design, and subserviency to the last issue and conclusion, shall be visible and plain through all the mist of Various Lections. And so it is with the SACRED TEXT. Make your thirty thousand as many more, if numbers of copies can ever reach that sum. All the better to a knowing and serious reader, who is thereby more richly furnished to select what he sees genuine. But even put them into the hands of a knave or a fool: and yet, with the most sinistrous and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same.

“And this has already prevented the last shift and objection, that Sacred Books, at least books imposed upon the world as divine laws and revelations, should have been exempted from the injuries of time, and secured from the least change. For what need of that perpetual miracle, if, with all the present changes, the whole Scripture is perfect, and sufficient to all the great ends and purposes of its first writing? What a scheme would these men make! What worthy rules would they prescribe to Providence! That, in millions of copies, transcribed in so many ages and nations, all the notaries and writers, who made it their trade and livelihood, should be infallible and impeccable! That their pens should spontaneously write true, or be supernaturally guided; though the scribes were nodding or dreaming! Would not this exceed all the miracles of both Old and New Testament? And, pray, to what great use or design? To give satisfaction to a few obstinate and untractable wretches; to those who are not convinced by ‘Moses and the prophets,’ but want ‘one from the dead’ to come and convert them! Such men mistake the methods of Providence, and the very fundamentals of religion, which draws its votaries by ‘the cords of a man,’ by rational, ingenuous, and moral motives; not by conviction mathematical, not by new evidence miraculous, to

silence every doubt and whim that impiety and folly can suggest. And yet all this would have no effect upon such spirits and dispositions. If they now believe not CHRIST and his apostles, 'neither would they believe' if their own schemes were complied with." *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, pp. 111—114.

SECTION VI.

ON THE STORY OF THE ROCKET-MAKER.

"The manuscripts from which the received text was taken, were stolen by the librarian, and sold to a sky-rocket maker, in the year 1749." If we had not already seen such disgusting instances of the falsehood and audacity of this Manifesto-writer, one could scarcely have thought it possible that any man would make and publish such base misrepresentations, and hold them forth too as quotations from eminent authors. The facts which he has thus dishonestly garbled are briefly as follows.

The first printed edition of the whole New Testament in its original language was at Alcala de Henares in Spain, under the direction of Cardinal Ximenes, in 1513 or 1514. The editors gave no information as to what manuscripts they derived their text from, except an acknowledgment for the loan of some by the reigning Pope, Leo X. The terms of this acknowledgment are such as imply that they had no manuscripts besides those thus borrowed, and which must undoubtedly have been returned to Rome as soon as they were done with. Neither is there any historical evidence that those editors had any other Greek manuscripts, except the assertions of one of them, Lopez de Stunica, in a subsequent controversy which he carried on with Erasmus. He repeatedly refers to one manuscript, containing only the Epistles: but no one knows what has become of it, and consequently its age and other characteristics cannot be ascertained. Learned men, however, have *conjectured* that the editors must have had some other manuscripts besides those lent by the Pope, and this nondescript one which rests upon the authority of Stunica; and they have further *conjectured* that such manuscripts, *if they ever existed*, were deposited in the library of the University of Alcala. If, however, these two conjectures were well-founded, it is very certain, from a critical examination of this edition, (called the *Complutensian*, from Complutum, the ancient name of Alcala,) that none of them were manuscripts of great antiquity or extraordinary value; and it is also probable that they were exceedingly few. The low state of literature in Spain, the terrors of the Inquisition, and the influence of a bigoted despotism, prevented any proper endeavours to find out these or any other manuscripts of the Greek Testament, till the year 1784, when the mortifying discovery was made, which I will relate in the words of the late Professor John David Michaelis, of Gottingen; premising that

it is the very passage which the Manifesto-writer refers to, but in a way which shews either extreme ignorance or wilful dishonesty.

“It was natural for every friend to criticism to wish that the manuscripts used in this edition, which might be supposed to have been preserved at Alcala, should be collated anew. But the inconceivable ignorance and stupidity of a librarian at Alcala, about the year 1749, has rendered it impossible that these wishes should ever be gratified. Professor Moldenhauer, who was in Spain in 1784, went to Alcala for the very purpose of discovering those manuscripts: and, being able to find none, he suspected that they were designedly kept secret from him, though contrary to the generous treatment which he had at other times experienced in that country. At last he discovered that a very illiterate librarian, about thirty-five years before, who wanted room for some new books, sold the ancient vellum manuscripts to one Toryo, who dealt in fire-works, as materials for making rockets. O, that I had it in my power to immortalize both librarian and rocket-maker! This prodigy of barbarism I would not venture to relate, till Professor Tychsel, who accompanied Moldenhauer, had given me fresh assurances of its truth. I will not lay it to the charge of the Spanish nation in general, in which there are men of real learning; but the author of this inexcusable act was the greatest barbarian of the present century, and happy only in being unknown.”

Professor Tychsel's account is the following: “As the University of Alcala has a very considerable library, and has existed many centuries, it was reasonable to suppose that it contained many manuscripts. Gomez declares that they cost 4000 gold pistoles, and that among them were seven of the Hebrew Bible. In this library it is highly probable that the Greek manuscripts were deposited, which were used for the Complutensian edition, and of which the German literati have so long wished to have some intelligence. But all these manuscripts were sold in a lump, about thirty-five years ago, to a rocket-maker of the name of Toryo, and were put down in the librarian's account (*‘como membranas inutiles’*) as *useless parchments*. Martinez, a man of learning and particularly skilled in the Greek language, heard of it soon after they were sold, and hastened to save these treasures from destruction: but it was too late, for they were already destroyed, except a few scattered leaves which are now preserved in the library. That the number of manuscripts was very considerable, appears from the following circumstance. One Rodan assured Bayer that he had seen the receipt which was given to the purchaser, from which it appeared that the money was paid at two different payments.”

The two preceding quotations are taken from Dr. Marsh's (the present Bishop of Peterborough) Translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, Vol. II. p. 441, ed. 1793: and it is no small relief to add the learned Bishop's own obser-

vation on the purpose for which the manuscripts were so villainously purloined. "This very circumstance may console us for their loss; for, as rockets are not made of vellum, it is a certain proof that the manuscripts were written on paper, and therefore of no great antiquity. It is true that our author calls them vellum manuscripts, on account of the words 'como membranas inutiles' quoted in his note. But the word *como* makes this expression too indeterminate to lead to any certain conclusion." *Ib.* p. 844. Yet it may not be unreasonable to apprehend that the rocket-maker might buy the whole lot, both paper and vellum, as the wretched librarian's object was to get rid of them; and that the vellum or parchment might be cut up for children's drums and battledores, as it is not unlikely that the firework-maker kept a toy-shop. But what must we think of the state of a country and a university, in which it was possible for a librarian to commit such a deed?—I beg to add, that the reasoning of Professor Tychsel does not prove the manuscripts to have been very numerous; for, in a poor and small town, as Alcala now is, and in a country so impoverished by tyrannical folly and superstition as Spain has been for three hundred years, it is exceedingly probable that the firework-maker might not be able to pay even the value of twenty shillings in any other way than by instalments. And, after all, how likely it is that there was not a single fragment of the New Testament in the whole parcel so shamefully destroyed!

Now, I appeal to the ingenuous reader, and ask, how dishonourable, base, and wicked must be that man's soul, who can, from this transaction, tell the public that "the manuscripts from which the received text" of the New Testament were taken, were thus made away with? If he really believed what he wrote, how miserably incompetent is he to take in hand such a subject; and how dishonest to pretend to an acquaintance with it! If he did know better, how much more aggravated is his fraudulent wickedness!—Every child in these studies knows that in the public literary repositories of Europe, there are numerous manuscripts of the whole or parts of the Holy Scriptures, of all ages, from the time of the invention of printing back to about the fifth century. Those of the Greek New Testament alone, either in the whole or in the ancient customary divisions, amount to nearly FIVE HUNDRED: and (to say nothing of other ancient Versions, Syriac, Æthiopic, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, &c.) the manuscripts of the Latin Version called the Vulgate, made at the close of the fourth century, must far exceed that number. And besides all these, as was before mentioned, we have innumerable quotations from the New Testament, in the works of Christian writers, reaching back to the very age of the apostles.

SECTION VII.

THE APOCALYPSE ASCRIBED TO ERASMUS.

“For the book of Revelation there was no original Greek at all, but ‘Erasmus wrote it himself in Switzerland, in the year 1516.’ Bishop Marsh, Vol. I. p. 320.” After what we have already seen, the reader will not be surprised at being assured that this also is a gross falsehood, and that the pretended reference to the learned Bishop, as to its intention and bearing, is another impudent forgery. The facts which are thus misrepresented are as follows.

Though the edition of Alcalá was printed in 1513 or 1514, the publication of it was kept back, by the influence of the papal court and other causes, for about eight years. In the mean time, a learned and excellent printer at Basle, Jerome Frobenius, determined to confer upon the world the benefit of a complete printed Greek Testament. He engaged the celebrated Erasmus to conduct it through the press; and it was published in 1516. But, though these distinguished men had incomparably more learning and industry than the Spanish editors, they could not command the resources of kings and cardinals. They had only, so far as can now be ascertained, five or six Greek manuscripts, no single one of which contained the whole of the New Testament: but, in general, what was wanting in one copy was supplied by another. Yet from none of them could *the last five verses* in the last chapter of the book of Revelation be furnished. No man can wonder at leaves and large portions being torn away and destroyed from ancient manuscripts: the wonder is, that so many and so much have been preserved, through the barbarous and ignorant middle ages. In this difficulty, Erasmus translated the five verses into Greek, from the ancient Latin Vulgate, which was abundantly enough known to the learned, and had been often printed before that time. Afterwards, when the Alcalá edition became accessible, and more complete manuscripts of the Revelation were brought to light, it was found that, though Erasmus had not hit the very words of the original throughout, (it would have been a miracle if he had done so,) he had *faithfully* expressed *the sense and meaning* of every sentence and every word.

SECTION VIII.

THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE TEXT, IN THE COMMON EDITIONS OF THE GREEK TESTAMENT.

From the facts already stated, the impartial reader will be at no loss to judge concerning what this dishonourable Manifesto-writer chooses to call “the infinitely suspicious origination of the present Received Text.” His parade of referring to the

Introduction to the Unitarian Improved Version, is in the same spirit of deception. If, instead of presenting to those who are credulous enough to trust him, two garbled parts of sentences, he had been at all willing to support justice and truth, he would have quoted from the same page the following declaration: "The books of the New Testament having been more highly valued, more generally circulated, more attentively studied, more accurately transcribed, and more frequently cited than the works of any other ancient author; the Text is consequently less corrupted, and the means of correcting and restoring it are far more abundant, than of any other work of equal antiquity." *Introd. to Impr. Vers.* p. x. The *Received Text*, as it is generally called, (that is, the text which has been commonly published by one printer's copying from the work of another, and of which the well-known basis is a beautiful pocket edition printed by the Elzevirs, at Leyden, in 1624,) was not indeed formed with all the means and aids for perfection which were desirable; and for a very good reason: they were not then attainable. The principles and rules of editorial criticism were not then thoroughly understood; and many of the materials, which have brought it to its present maturity, were not discovered. But two great facts demand attention, and they are sufficient for the perfect confutation of this unprincipled slanderer and deceiver.

1. The same kind of imperfection attached to the text of Homer, the Greek Tragedians, Herodotus, and every other author of antiquity. Their first editions, and many subsequent ones, were published from very imperfect collations of manuscripts: and it has not been till very recently that editions existed, in which a student could felicitate himself that he was reading a text in the closest accordance with the original production as it came from the hand of the ancient author. The very same is the case with the Holy Scriptures. The invaluable services which Bentley, Hemsterhuys, Wesseling, Brunck, Wyttenbach, Reiske, Heyne, Porson, Blomfield, and others have performed for the Greek and Roman classics, have been done for the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, by Capell, Kennicott, De Rossi, and Jahn; and for the Greek text of the New Testament, by Mill, Wetstein, Griesbach, Middleton, Knapp, and Vater. The scholars of the present day sit down to the reading of their Homer and Virgil, their Æschylus and Horace, with an illumination and a delight exceeding that of their fathers; and so likewise do they enjoy the superior advantages provided for them in the critical study and interpretation of their Bibles.

2. But let me not be misunderstood. The difference between the widest extremes, between even the worst and the best editions that have ever been published of either a classic or any book of the Bible, is by no means so great as those persons may imagine who are not conversant with these subjects. Every thing great and essential, all facts, doctrines, precepts, promises,

and threatenings, shine forth with the broad light of truth, almost, if not quite, as clearly in the most careless and blundering copies as in the most correct. The great author quoted before describes justly the character of the most successful collections and comparisons of Various Readings, in saying that they “without question render the text more beautiful, just, and exact, though of no consequence to the main of religion; nay, perhaps wholly synonymous in the view of common readers, and quite insensible in any modern version.” In another place, he says, “The real text of the sacred writers—is competently exact, indeed, even in the worst manuscript now extant: nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them; choose as awkwardly as you can, choose the worst by design, out of the whole lump of readings. But the lesser matters of diction, and (among several synonymous expressions) the very words of the writer, must be found out by the same industry and sagacity that is used in other books.” *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, pp. 106, 101. See also the citations above, p. 25.

SECTION IX.

THE CHARGE OF AN IMMORAL TENDENCY BROUGHT AGAINST THE SCRIPTURES.

This man pretends also to reject the Scriptures from what he calls

“*Evidence internal*, in the immoral, wicked, and vicious tendency of many passages therein remaining, and by the insertion of others whose only drift is to enhance the power of kings and priests. See Rom iii. 7; 2 John 10; Heb. xii. 29, xiii. 17; Rom. xiii.; 1 Pet. ii. 13; Luke xiv. 26; &c. &c. Innumerable texts therein contained, betraying a comparatively *modern* character, referring to circumstances which did not exist till *later* ages, and quoting *other* scriptures which had previously formed the faith of the first Christian churches, but which, without any assignable reason or alleged authority, have since been rejected—See 2 John 9; 1 Tim. iii. 3; James v. 14; Matt. xviii. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 7, 32; 1 Pet. iv. 6.”

Here is indeed the highest pitch of daring! Here is the first-born of calumny! Christianity condemned for having a wicked tendency! A man whose paper demonstrates that he defies all truth and justice, affecting to be offended with the Scriptures as favouring immorality!—But, my intelligent countrymen, you are not to be thus cheated and insulted. Open your eyes: read, examine, judge for yourselves. Study the passages to which he refers in their respective connexion, and in their relation to the other parts of the New Testament; and you will own that they form no exception to the SPOTLESS PURITY, the HOLY BEAUTY, which animates the whole of those divine compositions. That there are difficulties in the Bible, every Christian well knows and readily acknowledges: but they are no more and no greater than must reasonably be expected in works of such

antiquity, and referring to customs, opinions, and idioms of language so widely different from those of modern times and European countries. Analogous difficulties occur, according to their respective subjects, in all very ancient writings, Latin or Greek, Arabic, Persian, or Sanscrit. The rational method of resolving them is by acquiring the information necessary to go to the bottom of each instance; and those who cannot do so, possess, in an enlightened Protestant country, the inestimable advantage of consulting learned and judicious commentators. With respect to the passages enumerated by this writer, a man must have little understanding indeed whose careful examination cannot dissipate whatever of difficulty is pretended. For example; Romans iii. 7, is the language of an objector, whom the apostle supposes as arguing against the Christian doctrine, and whom he proceeds to refute. 2 John 10, forbids the aiding and encouraging of corrupt and wicked teachers, but it does not forbid any acts of humanity or civility towards them as our fellow-creatures. To persecution, in every form and degree, the whole spirit of the gospel is entirely opposed. Heb. xii. 29, is figurative language, borrowed from the sublime diction of the Old Testament, and expressing in the most impressive manner the rectitude and justice of the Unchangeable Deity. With regard to the word *hate*, in Luke xiv. 26, every school-boy who has but a tincture of the knowledge of ancient forms of language, is aware that it denotes no malevolent disposition, but only that holy heroism of virtue which enables a man to relinquish his dearest interests and enjoyments upon earth, and even his own life, if he cannot retain them without infringing upon the obligations of truth and conscience. It was finely illustrated in the conduct of the Bavarian martyr, who, when urged to save his life by recanting his principles, and the endearments of his family were pressed upon his feelings, exclaimed, "My wife and children! My dear wife and children! I love them more than all Bavaria; but, for the sake of Christ I know them not."

Of the other passages, which are falsely said to "betray a comparatively modern character," the greater part present no difficulty to an intelligent and reflecting reader: of the rest a rational solution may be found by referring to any good commentator, such as Whitby, Doddridge, Scott, D'Oyley and Mant, Clarke, Williams's Cottage Bible, and others who have employed their knowledge of antiquity for the elucidation of the difficulties which cannot but occasionally occur in these, as in other, ancient writings. If there were no such passages, one great argument in favour of the genuineness of the Scriptures would be wanting: namely, their unaffected comporting with the facts, usages, and idioms of the place and period to which they refer; particularly such facts, usages, and other circumstances as do not lie upon the surface of history, but require considerable learning and research to find them out.

On this part of the subject, I request your serious attention

to the avowal of a very celebrated foreigner, who was unhappily an infidel, and whose immoralities accorded with his principles ; but who had not extinguished in his bosom every spark of truth and justice. By the term “the Gospel,” according to the idiom of his country, he intends the whole narrative of the actions and discourses of Jesus, as comprised in the writings of the Four Evangelists.

“The Gospel, that divine book, the only one necessary to a Christian, and the most useful of all to the man who may not be one, only requires reflection upon it, to impress the mind with love for its Author and resolution to fulfil his precepts. Virtue never spoke in gentler terms : the profoundest wisdom was never uttered with greater energy or more simplicity. It is impossible to rise from the reading of it, without a feeling of moral improvement. Look at the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp : how little they are, compared with this !—Shall we say that the history of the gospel is a pure fiction ? This is not the style of fiction ; and the history of Socrates, which nobody doubts, rests upon less evidence than that of Jesus Christ. And after all, this is but shifting the difficulty ; not answering it. The supposition, that several persons had united to fabricate this book, is more inconceivable than that one person should have supplied the subject of it. The spirit which it breathes, the morality which it inculcates, could never have been the invention of Jewish authors : and the gospel possesses characters of truth so striking, so perfectly inimitable, that the inventor would be a more astonishing object than the hero.” *J. J. Rousseau*, in his *Works*, Vol. XXXVI. pp. 36, 39, ed. Paris, 1788—1793.*

SECTION X.

ON THE ANCIENT FORGERIES UNDER THE NAME OF GOSPEL HISTORIES.

The Manifesto-writer, with his usual despite of truth and knowledge, speaks of “the true and genuine Gospels of the

* “L'évangile, ce divin livre, le seul nécessaire à un chrétien, et le plus utile de tous à quiconque ne le serait pas, n'a besoin que d'être médité pour porter dans l'âme l'amour de son auteur et la volonté d'accomplir ses préceptes. Jamais la vertu n'a parlé un si doux langage ; jamais la plus profonde sagesse ne s'est exprimée avec tant d'énergie et de simplicité. On n'en quitte point la lecture sans se sentir meilleur qu'auparavant. Voyez les livres des philosophes avec toute leur pompe : qu'ils sont petits auprès de celui-la !—Disons nous que l'histoire de l'évangile est inventée à plaisir ? Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on invente ; et les faits de Socrate, dont personne ne doute, sont moins attestés que ceux de Jesus Christ. Au fond, c'est reculer la difficulté sans la détruire. Il seroit plus inconcevable que plusieurs hommes d'accord eussent fabriqué ce livre, qu'il ne l'est qu'un seul en ait fourni le sujet. Jamais les auteurs Juifs n'eussent trouvé ni ce ton ni cette morale ; et l'évangile a des caractères de vérité si frappans, si parfaitement inimitables, que l'inventeur en seroit plus étonnant que le héros.”

most primitive Christians," and which, he says, "have been rejected, without any assignable reason or alleged authority."

Upon this subject I repeat my former alternative: either this man has picked up *some* knowledge of what he writes about, and then he is one of the most unprincipled and impudent liars that ever opened a mouth or set pen to paper; or he is quite uninformed on this subject, and, on that supposition, his dishonesty is not the less gross.

It is well enough known that, in the early ages of Christianity, many silly and fraudulent persons composed fictitious narratives of the life and actions of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and gave them out as the writings of Peter, Nicodemus, Thomas, Barnabas, and even Judas Iscariot. By far the larger part of these spurious compositions have long ago dropped into deserved oblivion. That they ever existed, is known only from the records of the early Christian writers usually called the Fathers; and they were always rejected by the general body of Christians. A few of them are still extant. These were industriously collected, and published in Greek and Latin, by a most distinguished scholar and zealous Christian, John Albert Fabricius, at Hamburg, in 1703, accompanied by sufficient proofs of their base origin. They were also translated into English, and most satisfactorily illustrated, by a learned dissenting minister, Mr. Jeremiah Jones. His work was published in 1726, after the author's lamented death at the age of thirty-one; again at the Clarendon Press, in 1798, in three volumes; a third time also at the Clarendon, in the present year, 1827. The title is, "A New and Full Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament; wherein all the Ancient Testimonies concerning this Argument are produced; the several Apocryphal Books, which have been thought Canonical by any Writers, collected, with an English Translation of each of them; together with a particular proof that none of them were ever admitted into the Canon; and a full Answer to those who have endeavoured to recommend them as such." This valuable work supplies such a refutation of any shallow pretences of authority on behalf of those spurious productions, as were sufficient to put all question about them at rest for ever. These translations were reprinted in London, in 1820, without the least acknowledgment of their being taken from Mr. Jones's volumes, omitting his remarks and arguments which proved their contemptible and spurious character, and with equally dishonest artifice endeavouring to represent them as entitled to the same credit as the Four ancient, tried, and well-proved Authentic Gospels! An exposure of this shameful transaction is well worthy of being read, in the Quarterly Review, Vol. XXV. pp. 348—368, and Vol. XXX. pp. 472—481.*

* In his Syntagma, p. 71, Mr. Taylor says that I have "fathered" him with this "disingenuousness." Let the reader judge whether such an inference could be honestly drawn from my words. I did not mention the editor's name,

SECTION XI.

PROOFS OF THE REAL EXISTENCE OF JESUS AND THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

This writer proceeds to what he calls his Third and Fourth Propositions.

“PROP. III. That the persons of whom they [the Scriptures of the New Testament] treat, never existed: Because demoniacs, devils, ghosts, angels, hobgoblins [see Acts xix. 15], persons who had once been dead, who could walk on water, ride in the air, &c., such as Satan and Jesus Christ, are the persons of whom these Scriptures treat: and that such persons never existed is demonstrable; 1st. From the utter incongruity of such figments with the established laws of sound reason. 2dly. From the total absence of all historical reference to their existence. And 3dly. From innumerable passages of these Scriptures themselves, which fully admit the merely visionary hypostasis of their fabulous hero. [See Luke ix. 29; Mark ix. 2; Luke xxiv. 31; 1 John v. 6; and innumerable other passages, in perfect accordance with the true and genuine gospels of the most primitive Christians, which taught that he was ninety-eight miles tall and twenty-four miles broad, that he was not crucified at all, that he was never born at all, that by faith only are we saved, &c. &c., all equally indicative that Christianity had no evidence at all, but was a matter of mere conceit, fancy, or superstition, from first to last.]

“PROP. IV. That the events which they relate never happened, is demonstrable (further than as a consequence of the preceding proposition) from the fact that some, many, or all of these events had been previously related of the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, and more especially of the Indian idol Chrishna, whose religion, with less alteration than time and translations have made in the Jewish Scriptures, may be traced in every dogma and every ceremony of the evangelical mythology.”

This mass of impudence and misrepresentation, so aggravated that language has no name strong enough to designate it, has been already, in a great measure, answered. Upon the rest I offer the following brief remarks.

1. That the miraculous facts recorded in the gospel history, and which this miserable scribbler so shamefully misrepresents, did REALLY OCCUR, and that the OCCASIONS of their being wrought were WORTHY of such an interposition of Divine Omnipotence, has been shewn, with an abundance of evidence, by numerous and well-known authors, to whom access is easy.*

because, I trust, that he regrets the action. Mr. T. shews how deeply read he is in literary history, by adding, that the editor referred to “might have availed himself of Archbishop Wake’s Translation.” That excellent prelate published a translation of the ancient authors, called “The Apostolic Fathers;” and this the vaunting writer confounds with the Apocryphal pieces under consideration!

* I did not think it necessary, in the former editions, to mention any names of authors: but as Mr. Taylor, in his Syntagma, makes a mighty vaunting of this omission, I shall specify a few. Grotius, Leland, Paley, and Chalmers, in their works on the general evidence of Christianity; the Second Part of Baxter’s Saints’ Everlasting Rest, and his Reasons of the Christian Religion; Ditton, Sherlock, West, and Michaelis, on the Resurrection of Jesus; Douglas’s Criterion of Miracles. To this list many other impartial and judicious treatises might be added, but surely these are enough. I must,

Within the narrow limits of these pages, it is impossible to do justice to the argument: and surely it may be expected that every person, who feels the infinite importance of the subject, will take the little pains necessary to obtain the requisite information.

2. It is a perfect insult to common sense, that this man pretends to adduce Scripture-evidence, that the Blessed Jesus never existed! The passages which he has pointed out only demonstrate the unspeakable folly and wickedness of his mind. A mere child, who can read the New Testament, might easily confute his absurd conclusion.

3. What he calls "the true and genuine gospels of the most primitive Christians" are spurious writings, which have been proved by ample evidence to have been forged in the second century or later. Mosheim, in his *Vindication of Primitive Christianity, against Toland*; and Jones, in his work *on the Canon*, have placed this subject in a very clear light. Further notice is taken of it in the following Rejoinder.

4. It is not an extravagant assertion that if the New Testament, and all other Christian writings, could be blotted out of existence, we have, in the unquestionably authentic writings of ancient Heathens and Jews, decided enemies to the Christian religion, documents sufficient to establish ALL THE PRIMARY FACTS on which that religion rests: namely, the life and death of Jesus at the precise period which the Gospels assert, the extensive propagation of his religion at the time and in the countries which are stated in the New Testament, its reception by immense multitudes of persons who had the complete means of ascertaining whether the sensible facts on which it was founded had actually taken place or not, the moral excellence of their characters, and the sacrifices of property, liberty, earthly happiness, and life itself, by which they proved the sincerity of their belief in those, *not opinions and ideas*, but BROAD FACTS of which men's eyes and ears were the witnesses. From the

however, mention one work, which is by no means known as its merits deserve, having been published in a remote country town: this is "*A Refutation of every Argument brought against the Truth of Christianity and Revealed Religion, by Thomas Paine, in the First Part of his Work called the Age of Reason. By W. Grisenthwaite. Wells in Norfolk, 1822.*" From this interesting volume I beg to present two extracts.

"I was, for many years, a Deist; a Deist, as many are, from principle. Religion appeared to me to be a fraud, contrived to govern man; and, as it is most admirably adapted to that end, I jumped at the conclusion without enquiry. I neither demanded proofs, nor sought for objections. I am now a sincere believer in the truths of Revealed Religion. My former creed was the offspring of ignorance; my present, of conviction." Pref. p. vi. "Too many, I fear, have surrendered their judgments into the hands of Mr. Paine. I once did so, and fancied myself secure. I then wanted, what I have now undertaken to supply, a *confutation of EVERY passage* in that publication which impugns the authenticity of the Christian Religion. Whilst one bulwark remains, the region of infidelity is unsubdued. Thither will the ignorant, the wanton, and the profligate take refuge; and boast that what is not destroyed is invulnerable." p. 4.

same sources, also, we deduce the fullest evidence that the earliest enemies to Christianity, with power, money, learning, influence, and every other advantage *except truth*, on their side, never attempted to deny the existence of Jesus, or the leading circumstances of his history; and they even admitted the reality of his miracles. I now request you, my countrymen, to exercise your own reflections upon the testimony of the Roman historian Tacitus, so highly celebrated for his love of civil liberty and his philosophical sagacity; and upon that of Pliny, the Proprætor of Bithynia, the confidential friend of the Emperor Trajan. Both these illustrious men lived in the very time of the apostles, when Christianity was beginning to attract the attention of the Roman government: but, swayed by the prejudices of Heathenism and the pride of their rank, they evidently treated the new religion with contempt, regarding it as a modification of Jewish superstition, and taking no sufficient pains to obtain correct information concerning its doctrines and its practical influence.

After describing the conflagration which, in the tenth year of Nero (A. D. 64), destroyed a large part of the city of Rome, the historian says: "But no human efforts, not the liberal donations made to the sufferers by the Emperor, nor the ceremonies performed to propitiate the gods, could suppress the public opinion that the fire had been produced by his orders. To get rid, therefore, of this report, Nero laid the charge upon a set of people, commonly called Christians, who were objects of general dislike on account of their offences; and upon them he inflicted the most dreadful tortures. Their name was derived from CHRIST, who was put to death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, in the reign of Tiberius. But though, by that measure, the pernicious superstition was checked for a little time, it soon broke out again; and it spread, not only over Judæa, where the mischief had its origin, but also into the city of Rome itself, the common resort and haunt from all quarters of whatever is upstart and base. Those, therefore, who confessed were first apprehended; and afterwards, upon their information, a vast multitude. Yet they were convicted, not so much of the crime of setting the city on fire, as of hatred to the human race. Mockery was added to their dying sufferings: some, being sewed up in the skins of wild beasts, were destroyed by the teeth of dogs: others were crucified; others were rolled in pitch and set on fire, to serve as lamps for the amusements of the night. Nero gave his gardens for this show, and he presented the people with games in the amphitheatre [by exposing the Christians to savage animals, and other murderous exhibitions], in which he mixed with the mob, sometimes driving his chariot and sometimes sitting in it. Hence, notwithstanding the guilt of the Christians and their desert of the severest punishment, compassion was excited in their favour, as persons who were destroyed, not from any motive

of public benefit, but to gratify the cruelty of one man." TACITUS'S *Annals*, book xv. sect. 44.* As for the "offences" and the "hatred of mankind" which he charges upon these primitive Christians, it is well known that they consisted in nothing but their inflexible refusal to flatter the vices of the Emperors and the nobles, or to join in the established idolatry and the reigning licentiousness of the Roman people.

"CAIUS PLINY to the Emperor TRAJAN, with salutations. I make it a constant practice, my Sovereign, to apply to you in all cases of doubt: for who can better direct me when I hesitate, or inform me when I am ignorant? I have never been present at the trials of the Christians: I am therefore unacquainted with both the reasons and the extent upon which it has been the practice either to punish them or to have them sought for. I have hesitated not a little on these points: whether any difference should be made with respect to age, or whether those who are never so young and delicate should be treated precisely as the elder and more robust: whether a prisoner should be set at liberty if he renounced Christianity, or whether the fact of having been once a Christian should be punished without mercy, though the party have abandoned it: whether the object of punishment is the mere name, though connected with no charge of criminal acts; or whether it is the assumption of such acts as inseparable from the name. In the mean time, I have adopted the following course of proceeding with respect to those who have been brought before me as Christians. I have first asked them whether they were Christians: if they acknowledged it, I put the same question a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment: if they still persevered, I ordered them to be led off instantly to execution: for, be the thing which they confessed whatever it might, I had no doubt that their stiffness and inflexible obstinacy certainly ought to be punished. Some, who were guilty of this folly, I have registered to be sent prisoners to Rome, they being citizens. In the course

* "Sed non ope humanâ, non largitionibus principis, aut Deûm placamentis, decedebat infamia, quin jussum incendium crederetur. Ergò abolendo rumori Nero subdidit reos, et quesitissimis pœnis adfecit, quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus *Christianos* appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus CHRISTUS, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio adfectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpebat, non modò per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quò cuncta undique atrociam, aut pudendam, confluunt celebranturque. Igitur primò correpti qui fatebantur; deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde in crimine incendiî, quàm odio humani generis, convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis conteeti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat, et Circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigæ permixtus plebi, vel curriculo insistens. Unde quamquam adversùs fontes et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tamquam non utilitate publicâ, sed in sævitiam unius absumerentur."

of these proceedings, the charges being multiplied, as commonly happens, several kinds of the offence turned up. An anonymous paper was conveyed to me, containing the names of many persons: but these, on being brought before me, denied that they were or ever had been Christians; and, at my direction, they invoked the gods and paid the accustomed adoration with incense and libations to your statue, which for this purpose I ordered to be brought in along with the images of the gods: which acts it is understood that those who are Christians in reality, can never be induced to perform: I therefore, thought that these persons were entitled to be set at liberty. Others whose names were in the information, said that they were Christians, but afterwards denied it: and some, acknowledging that they had been, declared that they had relinquished the profession, some above three years ago, some a longer time, and several more than twenty years. All these paid the accustomed divine honours both to your statue and to the images of the gods: and they also reviled Christ. They moreover declared that the whole of what was laid to their charge, whether it were a crime or a mere error, consisted in this; that they made it a practice, on a stated day, to meet together before day-light, to sing hymns with responses to Christ as a god, and to bind themselves by a solemn institution, not to any wrong act, but that they would not commit any thefts, or robberies, or acts of unchastity, that they would never break their word, that they would never violate a trust; that, when these observances were finished, they separated, and afterwards came together again to a common and innocent repast; but that they had given over this last practice after my edict, in which, according to your orders, I forbade social meetings. Upon these declarations, I thought it requisite to get at the entire truth by putting to the torture two women who were called deaconesses: but I discovered nothing beyond an austere and excessive superstition. Upon the whole, therefore, I determined to adjourn the trials, in order to consult you: for the case appears to me to demand my so doing, particularly on account of the great number of the persons who are brought into peril. Many, of all ages, of every rank in life, and of both sexes, are and will be thus endangered; for the contagion of this superstition has spread, not only in the towns, but through the villages and country-places. At the same time it seems that the evil is capable of being stopped, and matters set right again. It is now sufficiently proved that the temples, which were almost desolate, begin again to be frequented; that animals for sacrifice are occasionally sold, whereas before a single buyer was very rarely found. From the whole, it is reasonable to conclude, what a number of persons might be recovered, if encouragement were given to recantation."

The Emperor's reply. "TRAJAN to PLINY, with salutations. You have done exactly as you ought, my dear friend,

in adjourning the trials of those who have been brought before you as Christians. No invariable rule can be laid down for every case. Let them not be searched for. If they be brought up and convicted, let them be punished. Yet, if any one shall deny that he is a Christian, and substantiate his declaration by the proper act, that is, paying due honours to our gods, let him be set at liberty, though he may have been before suspected. But anonymous informations, for any offence whatsoever, must not be allowed; for they are of most pernicious example, and quite unsuitable for our times." *PLINY'S Epistles*, book x. ep. 97 & 98.*

* "Solenne est mihi, domine, omnia de quibus dubito, ad te referre: quis enim potest melius vel cunctationem meam regere, vel ignorantiam iustruere? Cognitionibus de Christianis interfui nunquam: ideo nescio quid et quatenus aut puniri soleat, aut quæri. Nec mediocriter hæsitavi, sitne aliquod discrimen ætatum, an quamlibet teneri nihil a robustioribus differant: deturne pœnitentiæ venia, an ei qui omnino Christianus fuit, desisse non prosit: nomen ipsum, etiamsi flagitiis careat, an flagitia cohærentia nomini puniantur. Interim, in iis qui ad me tanquam Christiani deferebantur, hunc sum sequutus modum. Interrogavi ipsos, an essent Christiani: confitentes iterum ac tertio interrogavi, supplicio minatus: perseverantes duci jussi. Neque enim dubitabam, qualecunque esset quod faterentur, pervicaciam certè, et inflexibilem obstinationem debere puniri. Fuerunt alii similis amentia: quos, quia cives Romani erant, annotavi in urbem remittendos. Mox ipso tractu, ut fieri solet, diffundente se crimine, plures species inciderunt. Propositus est libellus, sine auctore, multorum nomina continens, qui negarent se esse Christianos, aut fuisse; quum, præeunte me, deos appellarent, et imagini tuæ, quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum afferri, thure ac vino supplicarent; præterea maledicerent Christo: quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt reverà Christiani. Ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, esse se Christianos dixerunt, et mox negaverunt: fuisse quidem, sed desisse, quidam antè triennium, quidam antè plures annos, non nemo etiam antè viginti quoque. Omnes et imaginem tuam, deorumque simulacra venerati sunt; ii et Christo maledixerunt. Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris, quòd essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem; seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent: quibus peractis morem sibi discendendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen, et innoxium: quod ipsum facere desisse post edictum meum, quo secundum mandata tua hætærias esse vetueram. Quo magis necessarium credidi, ex duabus ancillis, quæ ministræ dicebantur, quid esset veri et per tormenta quærere. Sed nihil aliud inveni, quàm superstitionem pravam et immodicam. Ideoque, dilatâ cognitione, ad consulendum te decurri. Visa est enim mihi res digna consultatione, maximè propter periclitantium numerum. Multi enim omnis ætatis, omnis ordinis, utriusque sexûs etiam, vocantur in periculum, et vocabuntur. Neque enim civitates tantùm, sed vicos etiam atque agros superstitionis istius contagio pervagata est; quæ videtur sisti et corrigi posse. Certè satis constat, prope jam desolata templa cœpisse celebrari, et sacra solennia diu intermissa repeti: passimque vœnire victimas, quarum adhuc rarissimus emptor inveniebatur. Ex quo facile est opinari, quæ turba hominum emendari possit, si sit pœnitentiæ locus."

"Actum quem debuisti, mi Secunde, in excutiendis censis eorum qui Christiani ad te delati fuerant, secutus es. Neque enim in universum aliquid, quod quasi certam formam habeat constitui potest. Conquirendi non sunt: si defendantur et arguantur, puniendi sunt: ita tamen ut qui negaverit se Christianum esse, idque re ipsâ manifestum fecerit, id est, supplicando diis nostris, quamvis suspectus in præteritum fuerit, veniam ex pœnitentiâ impetret. Sine auctore verò propositi libelli, nullo crimine, locum habere debent. Nam et pessimi exempli, nec nostri seculi est."

These memorials of antiquity will furnish to the reader ample matter for useful reflection. I beg to suggest two objects. First; What violations of reason, humanity, and justice, were practised towards the innocent Christians, by these philosophical, elegant, and self-complacent Romans! Secondly; What a commanding testimony to the integrity of the early Christians, and consequently to the validity of their declarations, arises from the depositions of those who renounced Christianity under the dread of torture or death! If any of them could have divulged a secret injurious to the cause which they had renounced, would they not have done so? Did not the strongest motives urge them to it? Are not deserters and apostates from any cause, always most eager to justify themselves, by raising some reproach against the party which they have left?

There is also another body of evidence, of a kind similar to this. We have remaining some writings, of skilful, learned, inveterate, and powerful adversaries to Christianity, who lived near enough to the times, and who possessed every motive to urge them and every means to enable them, had it been possible, to deny the genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, or the existence of the persons concerning whom those Scriptures treat. These were Celsus in the second century, Porphyry and Hierocles in the third, and the Emperor Julian in the fourth. All these speak of Jesus and his apostles as persons who were as well known to have existed as any other men of a prior period; they refer, and often by name, to the writers of the Four Gospels and to other authors of the New Testament; they mention many of the facts in the history of our Lord, without venturing to dispute them; they even allow not a few of his miracles, and their only way of endeavouring to escape the natural conclusion from them is, by disparaging their magnitude and by ascribing the performance of them to magical arts.

To those who are so weak as to allow themselves to be persuaded that there is any historical uncertainty whether Jesus and his original disciples ever lived, I submit another obvious and undeniable fact. The Jews, as a separate community, marked with unequalled peculiarities, have existed before the face of all nations, from the time of their dispersion, not forty years after the affirmed crucifixion of Jesus, down to the present day: and they, with only individual exceptions, obstinately persist in rejecting Jesus as a Teacher or a Saviour. But do they say that such a person never existed? It would be an immense advantage to their cause, if they *could* say so: it would redeem them from the heaviest opprobrium, and it would place them in a new and honourable situation in the eyes of the world. Yet they unanimously maintain, because they know it impossible to resist the evidence of the fact, that *Jesus did live* at the time which we assign, that their national ruin took place soon after, and that the followers of Jesus, from that time down-

wards, have attributed the unexampled calamities of the Jewish nation to their having rejected him. And, more than this; an anonymous Jewish book,* written in the middle ages for the very purpose of heaping the foulest infamy upon Jesus and his followers, expressly admits that he healed the sick, raised the dead, and wrought other works above the power of man: but it pretends to account for those miracles by saying that he effected them by the arts of magic.

Here, then, is a body of evidence, derived from different and unconnected sources, but all from persons most unfriendly to the cause of Christianity, but which is far more than sufficient to prove that “the PERSONS of whom the Scriptures of the New Testament treat, REALLY DID EXIST,” and that “the EVENTS which they relate,” REALLY DID TAKE PLACE.

SECTION XII.

ON THE ALLEGATION THAT THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES ARE DERIVED FROM THE IDOLATROUS FICTIONS OF GREECE AND INDIA.

If any thing could surprise us, from a man who seems determined to post himself as *the most false of all* that have ever disgraced the use of language, it would be his assertion that “some, many, or all of these events, had been previously related of the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, and more especially of the Indian idol CHRISNA, whose religion, with less alteration than time and translations have made in the Jewish Scriptures, may be traced in every dogma and every ceremony of the Evangelical Mythology.” With regard to the crowd of false deities which were objects of the ancient Greek and Roman idolatry, the numerous and well-known school-books entitled Pantheons, Mythological Dictionaries, and the like, by their statements of the opinions and relations which had been taught by priests and poets, supply a plain and ample refutation of this impudent falsehood. If any can receive it, they must be incapable of reasoning, and immoveable by evidence; or, more awfully still, they must have sacrificed both reason and conscience to the darkest depravity of soul.

The mythological stories of the Hindoos concerning their god Krishna or Krishnu (for the Manifesto-writer has altered the spelling of the word, apparently with the base design of giving it a closer resemblance to the sacred name of our Divine Lord) are extremely numerous, and, as usual, most absurd and monstrous. Some portions of them are such as led Sir William Jones into the supposition that the fabulous statements in the spurious gospels had been circulated among the Hindoo Brahi-

* *Toldoth Jesu*; pp. 7, 8, 11, 18, 19, 22: ed. Wagenseil. Altdorf, 1681.

mins, and that their wildest parts were grafted on the fable of Kesava, whose story bears some resemblance to that of the Grecian Apollo. From some few and distant resemblances, in the midst of a chaos of acts and qualities the most opposite, it would be highly unreasonable to draw the conclusion that there was any real conformity in history or character; still less could any man in his senses believe the identity affirmed by this outrageous and insulting writer. Krishna is described by the Hindoos as an incarnation of Vishnu. Among many extravagant stories, his principal exploits are those of licentiousness and destruction; he had several wives and sixteen thousand concubines; he destroyed his own numerous progeny; and he was at last killed by an arrow. Ample details of these silly and disgusting narratives may be read in *Sir William Jones's Works*, 8vo. ed. Vol. III. pp. 374—395; *Moor's Hindu Pantheon*; *Rees's Cyclopædia*, and, as the most authentic of all, *Ward's View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*, Vol. I. pp. 193—202.

Now, my countrymen and friends, I have laid before you, in as brief a statement as I have been able, facts and evidence. It is your part to exercise your judgment upon them. If you have been in danger of giving credit to the assertions of the boastful Manifesto, of being seduced by its artfulness or subdued by its effrontery, you have in your hands the means of detecting the imposture. The dreadful and unblushing falsehoods, the outrages on truth and reason, the perfect disregard of argumentative equity, which are thus dealt out to the credulous by its pitiable writer, you cannot but perceive. You must be aware of his true character. You cannot submit your understanding and your moral sense to his unprincipled rant, without being conscious that you are sacrificing your reason, violating your duty, and making yourselves willing dupes. Do not crouch to be so cheated and insulted. Think for yourselves, seriously, uprightly, and DEVOUTLY; for the greatness of the occasion demands your prayers to the SUPREME AUTHOR OF TRUTH. Examine fully, reason fairly, and conclude honestly. The subject is of importance beyond the power of words to express. No wise man will think that it can be disposed of by a jest, a sarcasm, or a shameless lie. You have an infinite interest at stake. Suffer no man to deceive you; and beware that you deceive not yourselves.

J. P. S.

London, Jan. 8, 1827.

NOTE A.

REFERRED TO AT PAGE 13.



Some further information upon these particulars may be desired by those readers who are not conversant in subjects of criticism. In the Hebrew text of the OLD TESTAMENT, from which all the Protestant Versions have been made, there are no passages which can, with a shadow of reason, be regarded as interpolations; except a few little clauses in the Historical Books, which would be termed, in a modern publication, *Geographical and Genealogical Notes*, originally written in the margin, and afterwards inadvertently taken into the text. There are also mistakes of numbers, in many places; arising from this circumstance, that, in the most ancient manuscripts, numbers were expressed, not in figures nor in words at length, but by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, some of which are extremely like each other; and the same letters stand for units, tens, hundreds, and thousands, by altering a little stroke above or below them. Hence errors were almost unavoidable, in the lapse of so many ages. But they are, in general, capable of being corrected by the help of a little arithmetic and common sense; and it is plain that errata of this kind have no effect whatever on the religious design of the Bible.

Notwithstanding the great number of Various Readings in the NEW TESTAMENT, those which produce any material difference in the sense are extremely few indeed; as any one, without a knowledge of the original, may be convinced by running his eye along the under margin of the Unitarian Improved Version. Of interpolations (by which term writers of criticism mean unauthorized additions) the four following are all of the smallest consequence that occur in the Received Text of the New Testament: and it would be assuming too much, to call any of them *wilful* interpolations. The probability is, that they were at first brought into the text, with honest intentions, but from mistaken sources of information.

Matt. vi. 14. "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen." This sentence is wanting in the best authorities, though the less in point of number. It is believed to have got insertion, in or after the fourth century, from the custom of annexing it, as a doxology, in public prayer. No fact, doctrine, or duty of religion is affected by either its presence or its absence.

John v. 4. "Waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel went down, at a certain season, into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." This passage is absent from the best authorities. It probably derived its origin from Jewish tradition, was then written by some person, as a remark, in the margin of his copy, and finally was added to the text by a transcriber from that copy, who mistook it for a clause of the original.

John vii. 53 to viii. 11. The critical judgment concerning this large portion is extremely difficult. Weighty authorities are on each side of the question, but the detail of them could not be given intelligibly in a little room. Its authenticity was either denied or greatly doubted by Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Leclerc, Wetstein, Semler, Morus, Griesbach, and others; but maintained by Hammond, Mill, Whitby, Lardner, Doddridge, Michaelis, and Dr. Stäudlin in

two able dissertations published at Gottingen in 1806. The writer of this note conceives the preponderance of evidence to be in favour of the passage, and that the suggestion of Augustine (who lived in the fourth century) probably assigns the true cause of its omission in some copies; namely, a very needless apprehension that our Lord might be thought too lenient in his treatment of the accused person.

1 John v. 7, 8,—“in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear record on earth”—. The evidence in favour of the genuineness of these words is so inferior to that on the opposite side, that the majority of persons who have gone through the whole case, (which is no trifling labour,) are satisfied of their spuriousness. The probability is, that the passage was originally a marginal comment on “the Spirit, the water, and the blood;” and was introduced by the ignorance or the predilection of transcribers, into the text of the Vulgate Latin Version. There is no authority for it whatsoever in any manuscripts of the Greek original, except one, which is too modern to be of much value. This and the two following compose the three passages to which the author of the Introduction to the Improved Version attributes “great importance.” But it should be recollected, that critical disquisition upon the authenticity of any document ought to be carried on with the most rigorous impartiality, and without either favour or disfavour to particular doctrines which the document might affect; that many who have denied the doctrines of the Trinity and the Divine Nature of the Saviour, have admitted the common reading of these three texts; and that many other persons, who reject the passage in 1 John v. and approve of the proposed emendations of the other two, are fully convinced of the truth of those doctrines, because they believe the general tenor of Scripture, and the declaration of particular passages, both numerous and forcible, to be decidedly in their favour.

Acts xx. 28. In one clause of this verse there are six varieties of reading.

1. “Church of God.” A small number of Greek manuscripts: the modern text of the Vulgate, but it is contested with regard to the most ancient copies: the Syriac of Philoxenus, made in the beginning of the sixth century, but it has *Lord* in the margin: Epiphanius and Ambrose, in the fourth century, and some of the later fathers.

2. “Church of Christ.” No existing manuscripts: but this reading is found in the Peshito Syriac, which certainly existed in the fourth century, and may not improbably be ascribed to the third or even the second: thence it was apparently derived by an Arabic version not higher than the seventh century: it appears also, but not perfectly free from ambiguity, in citations occurring in the works of Origen, Athanasius, Basil, and Theodoret.

3. “Church of the Lord.” All the manuscripts which are the most ancient, the most valuable, and derived from different sources: the Coptic, Armenian, and old Latin Versions: many of the Greek and Latin fathers.

4. “Church of the Lord and God.” One manuscript of the ninth century, and forty-six more, amounting to the majority in mere number, but none of them are very ancient: the Slavonic Version, made in the ninth century: none of the fathers.

5. “Church of God and the Lord.” One manuscript, and that very recent.

6. “Church of the Lord God.” One manuscript of the twelfth century: an Arabic Version, not probably earlier than the thirteenth century.

After a laborious consideration of the numerous branches of evidence, which are here but briefly pointed out, it appears to my humble opinion that the third reading, “Church of THE LORD,” is shewn, by preponderance of proofs, to be the genuine text.

1 Tim. iii 16. The question is, whether the true reading be “God was manifested in the flesh,” or “Who was manifested in the flesh.” The evidence on each side is too long and intricate to be here detailed. The difficulty is very great, either way. To the writer of this pamphlet it appears that impartial criticism most favours the latter reading. If the English reader should wonder

how two words, which to his eye and ear seem so different from each other, could ever come to be confounded, he may not dislike to be informed that, as they appear in the most ancient Greek manuscripts, they are so much alike that, under various conceivable and very probable circumstances, OC *who*, might easily be mistaken for ΘC *God*. The difference lies only in two small strokes; and those strokes might shew through the parchment from the writing on the other side, or the writing at that part might be accidentally faint, or the parchment thin or discoloured. After a careful consideration of the words, the connexion, the apparent train of thought, and the characteristic style of the apostle Paul, I am led to think that the following arrangement (of which the principal idea is derived from Dr. Cramer, of Kiel, in Holstein) and paraphrastic translation most faithfully represent the sense of the original.

“These precepts I write unto thee (hoping to come to thee very soon; but if I should be longer than I expect), that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the Living God (—the pillar and foundation of the truth, and confessedly great is this mystery of religion!—) who was manifested in human nature, was attested by divine proofs, was beheld by angels, was proclaimed among the nations, was believed upon through the world, was received back to heaven in majestic glory.”

I now renew my appeal to any man of common sense and honesty. What must he think of the head and heart of the Manifesto-writer, who, in reference to two of these passages, could pen the following words: “*Mark well!* the retaining therein [the Received Text] and circulating as the *Word of God*, with consent or connivance of *all* parties, several passages known and admitted by *all* to be *forgeries* and *lies*: 1 John v. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Excellent morality* this!!” Whether folly or knavery abounds the most in the composition of this unhappy man’s character, I presume not to say; but it would not be easy to find a more enormous instance of either. Is it for him to talk of *morality*, who is conscious to himself that he is constantly contriving and publishing the basest falsehoods? Christian pity would adopt for him the generous prayer of the SAVIOUR whom he reviles. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!”—But alas! miserable man! too well *he knows* what he does. It is not ignorance, it is not error, that prompts his horrid course.

REJOINDER

TO

MR. TAYLOR'S REPLY TO THE PRECEDING PAGES.

THE author of the paper which occasioned the preceding tract, Mr. Robert Taylor, formerly a clergyman of the Church of England, has published a pamphlet, intitled, "Syntagma of the Evidences of the Christian Religion: being a Vindication of the Manifesto of the Christian Evidence Society, against the Assaults of the Christian Instruction Society, through their Deputy, J. P. S. commonly reported to be Dr. John Pye Smith, of Homerton:" 117 pages in octavo. This writer shews himself to be possessed of considerable ability and adroitness in the management of his cause, extensive but desultory and superficial reading, and some shallow learning, enough to answer his purpose of vain ostentation, and of deceiving the ignorant or credulous: but, if we expect ingenuousness, candour, and an honest regard to truth, we shall be grievously disappointed. Controversy is a painful and revolting employment, when our antagonists are held by no bonds of honour or veracity. This is the case here. Mr. Taylor is stung to the quick, at the unmasking of his pretensions and the exposure of his real character. He has, therefore, recourse to two methods of proceeding, which form the basis of his production; the first, to represent me as a violent, intolerant, abusive, enraged man; and the other, to repeat and aggravate his former misrepresentations and falsehoods, adding the strongest asseverations of their truth, and casting upon me the charge of being the liar and wilful deceiver.

This does not surprise me; and I shall be happy if it have the effect of leading any to investigate the subject for themselves, fairly and fully. Let no one believe in either Mr. Taylor or me; but let every man go to the fountain-heads of intelligence, so far as he can, by consulting the books quoted, and by such other modes of *thorough* examination as the different questions may require.

If I could have complimented Mr. Taylor, as a gentleman of good sense, learning, and probity, who had the misfortune to differ from other worthy persons upon some points of speculative opinion, probably he would have been well contented, and he might even have repaid me with correspondent flattery. But I cannot do so. I must call things by their right names. Falsehood and effrontery are his chosen weapons for the defence of

his revolting impiety: and I should be like him, I should merit the rancour which he breathes against me, if I could retract the charges of deceptive and fraudulent arguing which I have brought against him, and with which *I again impugn him before the tribunal of all honest men.* I now, therefore, *solemnly repeat* those charges; and again, before GOD and man, I declare him to be *the most false and unprincipled* writer that it has ever been my misfortune to meet with! Let him say of me, that I have written in “a style that no gentleman could have used, and no scholar would have needed:” (p. 65.) I am unmoved. Of his good word I am not ambitious. I would abhor to be called a *gentleman* or a *scholar*, upon his terms. No: I am a plain-speaking man of the people. Let me be numbered with them, with honest and truth-telling Englishmen! Let me never stoop to see a man use the basest and most dishonourable artifices, under the name of *reason*, and be so cowardly as not to call those tricks by their right name!

That he has been prosecuted and punished by the civil power, I exceedingly disapprove and lament; though he is pleased to represent me as ready to be a persecutor, if my “voice or wish could affect the legislation of England.” (*Syn-tagma*, p. 83.) I believe that the Author of Christianity has warranted no coercive or vindictive measures, at the hand of man, for its support. The religion of Jesus rests upon sound reason and honest conviction; and all employment, in its defence, of temporal allurements, or infliction of civil penalties, appears to me inconsistent with its essential principles, and entirely contrary to the word and will of HIM whom I rejoice to acknowledge as my Saviour and Lord. Lest my adversary should say that these sentiments are taken up for the occasion, I not only appeal to all who have known my whole life, but I ask the reader’s attention to an extract from a Discourse which I published more than five years ago.

“Here may I pause, to give utterance to deep and bitter lamentation, that the propagation and defence of divine truth has not been always carried on in the spirit of its legitimate discovery! Gloomy ages past have shewn us kings and emperors, popes, bishops, and presbyters, councils and synods, dictating what they called religion, and enforcing their often ignorant and profane decisions, as the standards of unhesitating belief. Reason is shocked, and the hearts of humanity is broken, in looking back upon the miseries which those impious usurpations have inflicted on mankind. Infatuated oppressors! Could they not understand that there is no connexion between the threatenings of human power, confiscations, tortures, and executions, and the proof of propositions which respect the thoughts and inward feelings of men, their accountableness to God, and their condition in the eternal world? Could they not discern that such means were equally applicable, and far more congenial, to the aid of imposture, than to the support of benignant and

lovely truth? Could they not see that error and impiety, when persecuted, have their evil varnished over, and stand forth as objects of pity and tenderness? Alas, alas! That even in our age and country, the truths of Heaven should be vindicated—no, not *vindicated*,—outraged, degraded, insulted;—by means abhorrent from the character and the word of CHRIST, the genius of the gospel, and even the dictates of common sense! That the doctrine whose OWN energies will vanquish the world, should be held forth as crying for help to indictments and condemnations, fines and dungeons! Measures which go near to place the martyr's crown on the loathsome hydra of infidelity!"*

If the reader will take the advice above given, if he will search, examine, and compare, with a sincere mind, I have no anxiety for the result; for I am sure that result will be an enlightened conviction that Christianity is the work, not of men, but of GOD; that it is the actual revelation of his wisdom and goodness; that it bears all the characters of truth and excellency; and that it is the grand instrument of Divine Mercy for conferring the greatest benefits, intellectual and moral, personal and social, temporal and ETERNAL, upon the human race.

It is in full correspondence with the deceptive character of Mr. Taylor and his writings, that he calls this pamphlet of his a "Syntagma," that is a *Collection*, "of the Evidences of the Christian Religion." Why does he thus stamp a falsehood upon the forehead of his book? Is it not plain that his object is to mislead and deceive? Would an honest man, would a sincere friend of mankind, would any faithful inquirer after truth, would any one that loved and practised virtue, thus hang out false colours to ensnare the ignorant or unwary?

I shall now follow him through his desultory course of misrepresentation in respect of facts, and fraudulence in his use, or more justly speaking, misuse of reasoning.

Upon my first Section, "ON THE GENERAL EVIDENCE OF THE GENUINENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES," Mr. T. pours out a stream of quibbling sophistry, with artful perversion of citations, and loud vauntings of victory. All the reply that I need to make is this. The *Public Notoriety*, to which I have appealed, was that which grew out of the very nature of the case; and it was such as presented circumstances so peculiar, as at once to render impossible the successful intrusion of forged writings, and to secure the recognition of those which were genuine. For the proof of this assertion, I refer to

* "Sermon on the Means of obtaining Satisfaction with Regard to the Truth of Religious Sentiments;" published in November, 1822.

I regret that the limits of these sheets forbid my introducing striking quotations, avowing these sentiments, from Dr. Doddridge's "Sermon on the Absurdity and Iniquity of Persecution for Conscience' Sake, in all its Kinds and Degrees," and from my valued friends, Dr. Winter, Dr. Wardlaw, and Mr. Joseph Fletcher, in the "Lectures on some of the Principal Evidences of Revelation," by an Association of the London Dissenting Ministers; 1827. pp. 334—336.

the details and minute siftings in *Lardner's* great work, *The Genuineness and Credibility of the Gospel History*; or to the abstracts of the evidence in *Doddridge's Lectures* or *Paley's Evidences*; or to the discussions in the *Introduction to the New Testament* of Michaelis, Jahn, Hug, or Mr. Hartwell Horne; or to the *Horæ Paulinæ* of Dr. Paley; or to a recent work constructed upon the same impregnable principle of argument, *The Veracity of the Gospels and Acts, argued from undesigned Coincidences*; by the Rev. J. J. Blunt. I must also say that, if my reader has a soul that can appreciate the value of learning without pedantry, knowledge united with penetrating judgment, a fine taste, and a faculty of reasoning at once profound and luminous and original, he will thank me for directing his attention to two works, which are also of recent publication, by Mr. Isaac Taylor; *The History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times*; and *The Process of Historical Proof, exemplified and explained*. Did the economical limits of this pamphlet admit of copious extracts, I should gladly enrich it by citing many passages; but I must deny myself the giving that pleasure to my readers, and venture to insert only two or three paragraphs.

—“As an historical question, Christianity is distinguished from others of a like nature by nothing, unless it be the multiplicity and the force of the evidence it presents. To ask, therefore, for proof of the facts recorded in the Gospels, and to leave the events of the same times unquestioned and unexamined, is an impertinence which the advocates of Christianity should never submit to, much less encourage, by a tacit acknowledgment that the evidence in the one case needs some sort of candour, or of easiness, or of willingness to be persuaded, which is not asked by the other. The Gospels demand a *Verdict according to the Evidence*, in a firmer tone than any other ancient histories that can be put to the bar of common sense. From those who are convinced of its truth, Christianity does indeed ask the surrender of assent to whatever it reveals of the mysteries of the unseen world; but, to its impugnors, it speaks only of things obvious and palpable as the objects and occupations of common life; and, in relation to matters so simple, it demands what cannot be withheld, *the same assent which we yield to the same proof in all other cases*. If evidence differing not at all from that which is accepted in similar cases, and which, in amount and validity, would be thought ten times more than enough, if the books in question related to merely political events, is not to be admitted; if a verdict is to be returned openly affronting every principle by which the course of human affairs is regulated, and the judgments of men directed, the true occasion of so great a violence should be placed in the light. And no other account of the strange anomaly can be given than this, namely, that the supposition of the resurrection of the dead, which is the centre fact affirmed in these books, and which must bear all the burden of

the argument, offers a greater outrage to reason than the rejection of *the clearest and fullest evidence that history has ever accumulated*. Unless then it be thought by us ‘a thing incredible that God should raise the dead,’ there remains not even a pretext for questioning the authenticity of the Gospels and Epistles, the proof of which, in every separate part of it, **FAR EXCELS that of the best authenticated historical record of antiquity.**” *History of Transmission*, p. 236—238.

—“Even this hasty review of the series of the Christian Evidences is sufficient to prove that it comprises *every species of written testimony which history knows of*. And we have seen that this body of evidence is especially abundant in that very kind of composition, which ranks highest among the means of ascertaining the truth of remote facts. And, if the light of testimony shines thus clearly and fully, within the enclosure of the Christian history, so likewise is there a broad day-light of evidence on all sides of this series of events. Few persons, perhaps, give due attention to the relative position of the Christian history, which stands upon the very point of intersection where three distinct lines of history meet; namely, the Jewish, the Grecian, and the Roman. These three bodies of ancient literature, alone, have descended, by an uninterrupted channel of transmission, to modern times; and these three, by a most extraordinary combination of circumstances, were brought together to elucidate *the Origination of Christianity*. If upon the broad field of history there rests the common light of day, upon that spot where a new religion was given to man there shines the intensity of a concentrated brightness. Well might the first teachers make the challenge, ‘We are not of the night, but of the day!’ Well might the FOUNDER himself, in bringing his doctrine to the earth, affirm, “He that doeth truth *cometh to the light*.”—*Historical Proof*, p. 290.

In Section II. I challenged Mr. T. to point out an instance of any “ACT OR EDICT FOR THE GENERAL ALTERATION OR TOTAL RENOVATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.” He replies, by a strong statement of the cruelty and tyranny of Constantine, and of the partiality and courtly flatteries of Eusebius; and by blustering and vapouring, as if he were actually about to bring some instance or evidence of what he had alleged, and he ends without adducing any! He affirms that “the proofs are so abundant, that their abundance only stands in the way of enumeration.” Surely then he could have given us, at least, one instance! But he has adduced none, he has referred to none.

He quotes a sentence from Mosheim’s justly indignant reprobation of the disregard to veracity which, with innumerable other corruptions, attached to the characters of some Christian bishops and teachers, in the fourth century. But, fully admitting this disgraceful charge, I not only deny the inference which Mr. T.

draws from it, but conceive that the direct contrary is the fair conclusion. For, in the great controversies of that age, particularly the Arian, that noxious principle must have strongly pre-disposed the partizans on each side to have tampered with the scriptures, by omitting, inserting, or altering, as might suit their immediate purpose; *if they could have done so*. But their mutual animosity and jealous vigilance put it out of the power of any party to corrupt those sacred writings, to which all made their appeal as the standard of truth.

Mr. T. also quotes another passage of the same learned and impartial author:—“The proofs of the supreme power of the emperors in religious matters, appear so incontestable in this controversy, that it is amazing it should ever have been called in question.”* And upon this he grounds the assertion:—“Of the power of the Roman emperors, and of all Christian kings, princes, and governors, to alter the text of scripture to any extent they pleased; the proofs are so abundant, that their abundance only stood in the way of enumeration.” (p. 24.)

But if Mr. T. had stated *the truth* concerning the subject upon which Mosheim is treating, and had cited the whole passage, of which he has given a garbled representation, the reader would have seen its perfect irrelevance to the matter in hand; and that, in fact, it contains a striking proof of the inability of the most powerful emperor to effect any such purposes as he ascribes to them. A contest had arisen, A. D. 311., between two parties, the one affirming and the other denying the validity of a popular election, by which Cæcilian had been made bishop of Carthage. After long litigation, the complaining party appealed to the Emperor Constantine. He referred to the bishop of Rome and three Gaulish bishops, the examination and decision of the cause. With their determination, however, the appellants were still dissatisfied. In condescension to their reiterated complaints, Constantine convened a numerous council of Italian, Gaulish, Spanish, and German bishops, at Arles: and they determined as the former authorities had done. Upon this, the dissidents, who, from the name of one of their principal leaders, had acquired the denomination of Donatists, again appealed to the judgment of the Emperor. With remarkable patience he assented to their desire; and held a tribunal at Milan, in 316, where, after both the parties had finished their pleadings, he delivered a confirmation of the previous judgment. Then the Donatists broke out into violent outrages; and, in both their speeches and their writings, they accused Constantine of injustice, and loaded him with irritating reproaches. By these provocations, his lenity was exhausted, and he inflicted severe punishments upon many of the leaders in the affair. After Mosheim has recited these circumstances, he adds; “On this account great commotions and tumults were raised in Africa; for the party of

* P. 24, quoted from Mosheim's *Ecc. Hist.*

the Donatists was both numerous and very powerful: and in vain did the Emperor endeavour, by sending a special commission, to allay these violent movements of the people." It is upon the section relating these affairs, that the Note occurs, the first sentence of which Mr. T. has copied from Maclaine's not very accurate translation. I here adduce the whole: "Nothing can be clearer, in this whole dispute, than the evidences of the Emperor's supreme power in matters relating to religion. At that time certainly, no person thought of a supreme judge of the whole church, appointed by Christ himself. The assemblies convened at Rome and Arles, are commonly called *councils*: but whoever impartially considers the affair will perceive, that they were not *councils* properly speaking, but only meetings of persons deputed by the Emperor to judge in the case; or, what in the present day we should call *commissioners*."*

Now I entreat the reader to observe three things.

1. That this dispute had nothing to do with any doctrines of religion, still less with any question about the text or authority of the scriptures; but that it referred solely to matters of fact and law, and which were to be determined by an appeal to the legal tribunals.

2. That, though the suit seems to have been no very difficult one, yet, so little did the power of the Emperor avail, that he could not even save himself from public reproach and insult, though he had acted with such exemplary fairness and moderation.

3. That, from this fact, we may form an opinion what formidable agitations, and even open rebellion, would have been raised throughout the Roman empire, if Constantine, or any of his successors, had attempted the smallest corruption of those writings which all sects and parties called Christians, however opposed to each other on various grounds of opinion, agreed to hold in the highest reverence.

4. That the chief object of the historian, in the note which he appends, is to give his readers the intimation, how unfounded in the precedents of antiquity are the claims which, in after ages, the Popes of Rome set up, of being the supreme judges in causes of ecclesiastical law.

Here then is an instance, (and it is but one out of many,) from which the reader may judge of the integrity and trust-worthiness of Mr. Taylor. This developement has been occasioned by three

* I do not derive my materials, as Mr. Taylor (who falsely charges me with consulting an English translation of Eusebius) takes his, from Maclaine's English version of Mosheim; but faithfully from the historian's own original. "Tam clara sunt in totâ hâc controversiâ supremæ potestatis imperatoriæ, in causis ad religionem pertinentibus, signa, ut clariora fieri nequeant. Certe, his temporibus nemo cogitabat de supremo totius ecclesiæ judice ab ipso Christo constituto. Conventus Romanus et Arelatensis *concilia* vulgò nominantur: sed qui rem æquis considerare oculis volet, intelliget eos propriè non esse *concilia*, sed consilia delegatorum ab imperatore judicum, sive *commissariorum*, ut nos hodie loquimur." *Mosheim Hist. Ecc.* Sec. IV. p. ii. cap. v. § iv. nota.

or four of his lines: to what tedious length, then, should I be compelled to carry quotations and explanations, if I were to undertake the toil of exposing and rectifying his unremitting mis-statements?

In a similar way he declaims, with his usual violence, through eight large pages, upon the alleged "Alteration of the Gospels in the Reign of Anastasius," which, in Section III., I had disentangled from his former misrepresentation: but he brings no evidence in the least degree affecting the facts and arguments which I had adduced, and which totally destroy his conclusions.

Mr. T. has, however, given us some striking illustrations of the extent of his information and the profoundness of his learning. It might have been presumed that any collegian, or a mere school-boy, who had but touched his lips with classical literature, would have known that BENTLEY is, by universal consent, revered as the patriarch and almost the founder of the purest criticism: but, in Mr. T.'s ideas, that wondrous scholar, that man of mighty mind, is a "crony," and to be treated with contempt! (p. 31.) It might also have been thought, that no person of the most ordinary acquaintance with English literature, could be a stranger to the principal authors of our own time, who have explored the fountains of our national history with signal assiduity and success;* yet these eminent historians and antiquaries are represented by the writer of the Syntagma, as "the preachers, it may be, in some canting gospel-shop,"—"no better than Methodist parsons, and owe all their eminence to their conformity to the opinions of Dr. John Pye Smith, or to the exhibition of their 'human faces divine' in the Evangelical Magazine." (pp. 31. 36.)

Further to answer his purpose of misleading the unwary and betraying the credulous, Mr. T. (p. 31.) puts together two distant passages from Bishop Marsh's *Michaelis*, as if they referred to the same time and to a connected series of facts: while the former of them refers to a tyrannous act of the Portuguese Archbishop of Goa, in A. D. 1599; and the other to the inscription which, according to a very general custom, the *transcriber* of an ancient copy of the Peshito Syriac Version of the New Testament, annexed to the manuscript, giving his own name and the date of finishing his work. The former fact Mr. T. represents as if it attached to "*The Syriac Version of the N. T.*" generally, either to all the copies of it, or to its original constitution: whereas it refers only to those, probably very few, copies which the Roman Catholic prelate could get into his power, little more than 200 years ago, in a small district of Hindostan. The appa-

* Sharon Turner, Esq. the author of the "History of the Anglo Saxons," 3 vols.; the "History of England during the Middle Ages," 5 vols; and the "History of the Reign of Henry VIII." And Henry Hutton, Esq, the author of the "History of Europe during the Middle Ages," 3 vols; and the "Constitutional History of England," 2 vols. See the Edinburgh Review, Sept. 1828.

rent design of the latter citation is, to induce the reader to believe it to be a memorial, not of the copying of a single manuscript, but of the *original authorship* of the Four Gospels!

As a short way of shewing the bad faith and the flagrant defiance of justice in argument, with which Mr. T. puffs off himself by garbled quotations from the distinguished author just mentioned, Sir John David Michaelis, the late celebrated Professor of Philosophy in the University of Göttingen; I shall adduce a few passages from that free inquirer and independent thinker.

“Credulous as the Christians have been in later ages, and even so early as the third century, no less severe were they in their inquiries, and guarded against deception at the introduction of Christianity.” *Michaelis’s Introd. to N. T. transl. by Bishop Marsh*, vol. i. p. 8.

After adducing a series of objections which, upon the principles and in the manner of those who reject Christianity, might be adduced against the genuineness of Cæsar’s Commentaries, he goes on to say: “Objections like these to the authenticity of Cæsar would be answered by every critic in classical literature, not with a serious reply, but with a smile of contempt. Yet, weak and trivial as these arguments may appear, they are stronger than such as can with justice be applied to the writings of the New Testament.”—“The adversaries of the Christian religion have advanced all that zeal, penetration, and learning can afford, to prove the New Testament spurious; without being able to produce a solid argument in its disfavour.” *ib. p. 26, 27.*

“It appears, from what has hitherto been said, that there is not the smallest reason to doubt of the authenticity of these writings, and that they are as certainly genuine as the most indisputable works of the Greeks and Romans. One might suppose that this were sufficiently satisfactory, for every man who had not an uncommon inclination to scepticism.—But,—not satisfied with refuting the arguments in its disfavour, we seek likewise the positive grounds of its authenticity. These—may be arranged under the three following heads. (1.) The impossibility of a forgery, arising from the nature of the thing itself. (2.) The ancient Christian, Jewish, and Heathen testimonies in its favour. (3.) Its own internal evidence.” p. 30. Michaelis investigates each of these topics.

“The evidence to be derived from the heretical writers of the first centuries, is still more important, in proving the New Testament to be genuine, than even that of the orthodox fathers. It was the practice of the former, not only to falsify or wrongly explain particular passages, but to erase such as were not to be reconciled with their own private tenets. Now this very circumstance is a positive proof, that they considered the New Testament, with exception to these single passages, to be a genuine work of the apostles. They might deny an apostle to be an infallible teacher, and banish therefore his writings from the sacred

canon; but they no where contend that the apostle is not the author. This confession, from the mouth of an adversary, is the clearest evidence that can be given: and, as it was made in a period, and under circumstances when, had objections been possible, they would infallibly have been produced, it serves as an irresistible argument that the New Testament is a genuine work of the apostles." p. 35.

"The Jewish and Heathen testimonies to the authenticity of the New Testament, are equally important with those which have been last mentioned; and Lardner has made a very large collection of them in a book written for this purpose. Very early Heathen writers can be produced; who considered it as a work of the apostles and evangelists; and Chrysostom remarks very justly (in his sixth Homily on the first Ep. to the Corinthians) that Celsus and Porphyry, two enemies of the Christian religion, are powerful witnesses for the antiquity of the New Testament; since they could not have argued against the tenets of the Gospel, had it not existed in that early period." p. 39.

"Whoever undertakes to forge a set of writings, and ascribe them to persons who lived in a former period, exposes himself to the utmost danger of a discordancy with the history and manners of the age to which his accounts are referred: and this danger increases, in proportion as they relate to points not mentioned in general history, but to such as belong only to a single city, sect, religion, or school. And, of all books that ever were written, there is none, if the New Testament be a forgery, so liable to detection. The scene of action is not confined to a single country, but is displayed in the greatest cities of the Roman empire. Allusions are made to the various manners and principles of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews; which are carried so far, with respect to this last nation, as to extend even to the trifles and follies of their schools. A Greek or Roman Christian who lived in the second or third century, though as well versed in the writings of the ancients as Eustathius or Asconius, would have been still wanting in Jewish literature: and a Jewish convert in those ages, even the most learned Rabbi, would have been equally deficient in the knowledge of Greece and Rome. If then the New Testament, thus exposed to detection had it been an imposture, is found, after the severest researches, to harmonize with the history, the manners, and the opinions of the first century; and since, the more minutely we inquire, the more perfect we find the coincidence; we must conclude that it was beyond the reach of human abilities to effectuate so wonderful a deception." p. 49.

Michaelis then goes on to adduce examples for the illustration and proof of the preceding statements; and he concludes this branch of his argument with these words: "Whoever attentively reads the New Testament, will continually find examples of this nature," [supposing him to be possessed of the requisite knowledge of antiquity and history:] "and it is sufficient, in answer to the question, *Is the New Testament ancient and genuine?* to

reply, *Compare it with the history of the times, and you cannot doubt of its authenticity.*" p. 54.

Upon Section IV. THE ASSERTIONS RESPECTING LANFRANC, and Section V. ON VARIOUS READINGS, Mr. Taylor writhes, and evades, and pours out the most desperate assertions, with a contempt of veracity which may well excite astonishment and pity, that a human being can be found capable of such moral degradation. The dishonesty which I had charged him with (in affirming "a general alteration of these Scriptures 'to accommodate them to the faith of the orthodox,' by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, as recorded by Beausobre;") he retorts upon me; (p. 56,) and to prove that, not himself, but I am the fraudulent man who perverts the sense of authors, he cites, but without translating it, this passage of the learned Frenchman: "If the heretics take away a word from the sacred text, or add one to it, they are sacrilegious violators of the sanctity of Scripture; but if the Catholics do it, it is called retouching the first copies, amending them to make them more intelligible."

I rejoin, that this passage does not, in the smallest degree militate against my positions, and that all which I wrote is *perfectly true*, viz. that the passage in Beausobre contains no such thing as "an account of a general alteration of the Scriptures." Neither this passage, nor its connexion, nor any other passage in the two volumes of Beausobre, *contains, admits, implies, or authorizes any such thing as the Manifesto-writer asserts.* In the connexion, M. de Beausobre is exposing the fraud of certain Jesuits in making pretended allegations of Scripture. He cites the accusation of Pope Leo I. against the Manichæans, of corrupting the Scriptures; and he maintains that they were innocent, but that the party calling itself Catholic and Orthodox had really been guilty of the very crime which it charged upon others. In proof of this, he adduces.

(1.) A passage of Epiphanius, who lived in the 4th century, blaming some of his own party for attempting to suppress the *ἐκλαυσε* (*he wept*) in Luke xix. 41; because they thought it beneath the dignity of Jesus.

(2.) The assertion of Ambrose, that the clause, *οὐδὲ ὁ Υἱὸς* (*nor the Son*), in Mark xiii. 32, was absent from ancient Greek manuscripts: an assertion at variance with all evidence.

(3.) The absence of Mark xvi. 9—20, from the Vatican manuscript; and the declaration of some of the Fathers, that those clauses were wanting in numerous manuscripts in their time.

(4.) That the Emperor Anastasius I. banished the Patriarch Macedonius, for attempting to intrude the reading $\overline{\Theta\text{C}}$ *God*, instead of *OC who*, in 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(5.) The proposal to substitute the Genealogy in Matt. i. in the text of Luke iii. for the sake of avoiding the difficulties arising from their discrepancy; which is supposed to have been by somebody purposely attempted, at a very early period, because we find, in

the Manuscript called Beza's, preserved at Cambridge, seven verses of Luke's Genealogy altered into a conformity with Matthew's.

Now upon these statements I beg to remark :—

[1.] They involve not the smallest charge or suspicion upon the general body of Christians, of having ever attempted to alter the text of the Scriptures. That the *unknown* persons whom Epiphanius calls *orthodox*, were only individuals possessing no efficient influence, is manifest from the fact that no manuscript or other authority exhibits a various reading of the word.

[2.] They shew the impossibility of any designed corruption obtaining acceptance with the general body of Christians. Great as was the authority of Ambrose in the Western Church, and desirous as many weak-minded men undoubtedly were to wrest out of the hands of the Arians a text which was supposed to be so advantageous to them, not a single manuscript or version, or even citation, has been warped by the attempt.

The same inference follows from the two remarkable circumstances mentioned of the Vatican and the Cambridge Manuscripts. However high their estimation has been, they have had no influence where there was reason to apprehend that they had suffered a dishonourable alteration.

It is, therefore, with justice that M. de Beausobre annexes this remark: "In vain may infidels wish to avail themselves of these alterations: for, though they prove the temerity of some mistaken zealots, the restoration of the passage is an authentic testimony to the fidelity of the Christian Church. It had no share in the fraud, and it corrected it as soon as it was discovered." *Histoire de Manichéé*, &c. vol. i. p. 342.

With respect to Section VI. on the COMPLUTENSIAN POLY-GLOTT, and the manuscripts from which it was published, Mr. T. continues his former course of evasion and perversion. The following phrases occur in the Introduction to the Unitarian Improved Version;—"Robert Stephens, published a splendid edition of the New Testament in Greek, in which he availed himself of the Complutensian Polyglott;"—"The received text stands upon the authority of the unknown editor of the Elzevir edition, who copied the text of Robert Stephens, introducing a few variations from that of Beza." These expressions Mr. T. represents as if they conveyed the idea that the *Received Text* (that is, what is printed in the common editjions,) of the Greek New Testament was derived *solely* from the Complutensian edition;—as if the world had been ignorant even that the New Testament, or at least the Greek original of it, existed, till it was printed at Alcalá;—or as if there had been no other manuscripts from which Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, and others, successively published the Greek Testament, comparing them, of course, with the Complutensian;—or as if those manuscripts, (though a few have been lost) and many which have been discovered since, were not still in existence, repeatedly collated, and preserved in well known places with the greatest care. I do not say that he

actually affirms these positions ; he does, indeed in a note, (p. 47.) imply the contrary : but the bearing and evident design of his representations is to produce these, or some equivalent impressions upon the mind of his readers. Without this, his whole argument would have no correspondent object ; and that this was his intention is evinced by the terms in his Manifesto, “ The infinitely suspicious origination of the present Received Text.”

Now, if the reader does not happen to be acquainted with Bibliography, let me request him to converse upon the following positions, with any intelligent printer or bookseller.—That the *first* editions of the most ancient books were generally, indeed as a matter of necessity, printed from few, and those often inaccurate, manuscripts :—that, in subsequent times, better and more ancient manuscripts were usually brought to light :—that the editors of new editions “ availed themselves” of all those discoveries of manuscripts, in order to correct mistakes, and restore the text of the author to a state of accuracy :—that, in doing so, they commonly took a copy of an earlier and less perfect edition, and on its lines and margin made their corrections, with a pen :—and that thus the best editions that ever the world has seen, might be said to *rest upon the basis* of others which were very faulty and defective. In this way all the most excellent editions of the classical authors have been gradually, slowly, and laboriously brought to perfection.—Where, then, would be the justice of representing such a progression as this, as if it threw a shade of “ suspicion” upon the authenticity of the work ? Is not the rational conclusion, the very contrary ?

Mr. T. quotes the Bishop of Peterborough’s third edition of his translation of Michaelis, to shew that the learned Bishop has changed his opinion, and now believes the manuscripts from which the Complutensian text was taken, to have been more ancient and valuable than, agreeably to the general opinion, he had before supposed. This is, however, a matter which does not at all affect our argument. Undoubtedly, for reasons of critical curiosity and satisfaction, we should be gratified by knowing the character and history of the Alcala manuscripts ; yet there is the highest moral certainty that this knowledge would do nothing more than confirm what is already well enough known. In fact, the matter is established : for there is good reason to believe that the learned Germans, Moldenhauer and Tychsen, were the subjects of an imposition practised upon them by some people in the Spanish university, who were not disposed to permit their manuscript treasures to be scrutinized by Protestants. A gentleman with whom I have the honour of acquaintance, well known as a friend of rational freedom and a sufferer in its cause, and whose extraordinary talents as a linguist and a poet have eminently enriched our literature, John Bowring, Esq., has spent much time in Spain, and was the intimate friend of the most enlightened, learned, and patriotic men in that country, during its enjoyment of the blessing, (of which it has been so basely and

cruelly robbed!) of a constitutional government. He had the opportunity of carefully examining the manuscripts at Alcala; he has published reasons amounting to a demonstration that *no sale or destruction of manuscripts ever took place*; by his personal examination he found THE SAME Scripture manuscripts which had been described as being in the library, by Alvaro Gomez, who died in 1580; and he adds, "That the manuscripts referred to are *modern and valueless*, there can be no longer any question."* To Mr. Bowring I am also indebted for the information (which, had it been known to Michaelis, or to his learned translator, would have been to them most welcome intelligence, and would have saved them a world of trouble,) that Gomez, in his *Life of Cardinal Ximenes*, states that "*Leo X. lent to Ximenes those [Greek manuscripts which] he required, from the Vatican; which were returned as soon as the Polyglott was completed.*"

But, though all this is interesting as a matter of literary history, the reader may well ask, What has Mr. Taylor to do with it? What benefit does he imagine, or pretend, that his infidel cause derives from the editorship of Cardinal Ximenes, or those whom he employed?—Truly nothing. But observe, reader, his dishonest artifice. His original design was to make men believe that the Text of the Christian Scriptures rested on no solid basis of genuineness: to support this position, he affirmed that "the manuscripts from which the Received Text was taken, were stolen by the librarian and sold to a sky-rocket maker, in the year 1749:" and it is indubitably manifest that his object was to betray those who might be so unfortunate as to trust him, into the idea that *all* the original authority from which the printed text of the Greek Testament is derived, lay in the Complutensian edition. When, therefore, I had exposed the false and fraudulent character of this argument, he adroitly lays hold of the circumstance that the Bishop of Peterborough has adopted a better opinion of the antiquity or goodness of the manuscripts which had been *supposed* to be used by the Spanish editors: upon this he launches out into a ridiculous boast of his own superior accuracy; and then he artfully glides into a repetition of his former sophistry, with the assumption that all his assertions remain still unshaken. With such a double dealer, it is useless to reason on his own account: but let the good sense of any honest man determine between us.

In Section VII. I have brought the charge of FALSEHOOD and FORGERY against Mr. T. and he now endeavours to excuse himself by saying that his Manifesto was intended to be merely "an *Index*,—abbreviating its terms,—which would be supplied

* Mr. Bowring's Letters, in the Monthly Repository, April 1821, p. 203, of Vol. xvi. and Aug. 1827, p. 572, of Vol. I. New Series.

the moment the authority referred to was consulted." (p. 48, 49.)
I rejoin :

1. The Manifesto does not call itself an Index ; it has no appearance of being an Index ; and the passage which I copied from it is a complete sentence, without the smallest intimation that there is any "ellipsis to be filled up" or supplement to be made by the reader.

2. Mr. T. must have been perfectly aware, that the few references which he had given, wear the aspect of being authorities substantiating his assertions, and not that of text-books in which the subject of inquiry was to be further treated ; and that very few of his readers and hearers would possess either the disposition or the means to consult the authors of whose name he makes a fraudulent parade : and he also knows further that, if they were so to hunt down his references, and examine the passages with their own eyes, they would discover the unprincipled deception which he has practised upon them.

3. Can any man be found who will believe that the first of the following clauses is only an elliptical, or Index-style, form of the second ; which is what Mr. T. *now* says was intended by him to be expressed ?

"For the book of Revelation there was no original Greek at all, but Erasmus," &c.

"FOR THE MOST ESSENTIAL PASSAGE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION, there was no original Greek at all."—

4. If, contrary to all common sense, we were to admit this *ex post facto* evasion, I further charge him with a sophistical intention in bringing in the phrase "the most essential passage." His intention evidently is to lead his reader into the belief, that Erasmus "audaciously interpolated" *this particular passage*, on account of the judicial threatening in verse 18 ; whereas the plain fact, which any man of ordinary reflection might suppose, was that these few sentences, being on the *last* and *outside* leaf of the manuscripts, had been obliterated or torn away by the injuries of time.

It is evidently with a similar injurious design, that this artful writer declaims about a reading in 2 Pet. ii. 2. "which," he says, "Erasmus has foisted in, which no one has been able to discover in any manuscript whatsoever. That word happens to be one of the most frightful significancy of the whole evangelical canonade, the war-whoop of the Gospel, *απωλειας*." (p. 50.) What would a candid reader imagine, could have provoked this assault ? In the editions of Erasmus and the majority of the common editions since, the clause is read thus, "And many shall follow their *pernicious ways*," *απωλειας*, a word denoting *ruin* or *destruction*, and here put in the plural number to denote the different kinds of ruinous conduct which men may pursue : *and this reading is found* in two manuscripts of about the twelfth century, collated by Professor Alter of Vienna, and a few more,

as Griesbach informs us. We have, therefore, no reason at all to impute Erasmus's adoption of this reading, to any other than an upright motive: though the decisive preponderance of manuscript and other authority, ascertained long after the death of Erasmus, is in favour of the reading *ἀσελείαις*, *impurities, immodest practices.*

Upon what I have advanced in Section VIII. exposing his false statements and deceptive arguings relative to the RECEIVED TEXT of the New Testament, Mr. Taylor raves in his own way of hardihood and affectation. Against my charge of such unfair quotation as is, in design and effect, equal to absolute falsification, he sets up this defence, that he "quoted what served his own purpose!"—He ought to have added, *with a perfect disregard to the truth of facts and to the known meaning of the writers.* As for his long parade of what he calls "Admissions of the most learned Critics," by which he pretends to justify his previous false allegations, I will not engage in the miserable labour of slaying the slain. I say, once for all, that his assertions, *in relation to the conclusions and inferences which he wishes to establish,* are ALL DECEPTIVE: and I appeal to the verdict of any upright man who will take the trouble of going to the fountain heads, and examining the authors fairly and completely.

In Section IX. this unhappy man reiterates his blasphemous imputations of an "IMMORAL, VICIOUS, AND WICKED TENDENCY OF MANY PASSAGES" in the Scriptures. To all this ribaldry, and much of the same nature scattered throughout the 117 pages of his pamphlet, it would be useless to attempt any reply, for those who will not examine for themselves, or who can submit to follow the dictates of such a man as Mr. Taylor. I only ask a fair and honest investigation; I only beg the inquirer to conduct his researches as becomes a rational being;—and I have no fear, but that he will sufficiently detect the perverse interpretations and dishonourable sophistry which are attempted to be palmed upon the ignorant and credulous.

My casual mention of the Bavarian, whose noble integrity would not allow him to purchase life by falsehood, throws Mr. T. into a paroxysm of fury, which defies description, but which I will not disgust the reader by copying. But it may well be asked, What can have provoked this burst of violence? Surely, in the estimation of even a Deist, an honest man deserves respect; a man who will not descend to the meanness of hypocrisy, though it be to redeem his own body from the flames. If his principles be thought erroneous and his faith a delusion, his integrity must command admiration and esteem. But it is not so with Mr. Taylor. His rage is unbridled; and he asperses the noble-minded man as a *foul monster, a rebel against nature, a wretch, a fiend!* There is a reason for this, which ought not to

sink into oblivion. In the *Times Newspaper* of Dec. 11, 1818, Mr. Taylor published a Latin advertisement, stating in the most solemn terms his extreme grief and penitence that he had uttered *certain horrid and mad effusions* ["*infanda quædam deliramenta effutiebatur,*"] and imploring the charitable forgiveness of all Christians. Some years afterwards, when he had made himself still more notorious as a blaspheming infidel, the same newspaper revived the recollection of the preceding fact. Upon this, Mr. T. inserted a letter in the *Times*, acknowledging the truth of the statement, and not blushing to affirm that the whole was done to appease the distressed feelings of his pious mother: and this avowal of deceit and hypocrisy he made without the least expression of regret or shame! Very shortly after, another letter appeared in the *Times*, purporting to be from Mr. Taylor's own brother, contradicting his assertion, and declaring that he had made that solemn recantation of infidelity in the hope of obtaining a curacy! Mr. T. then closed the correspondence by saying that the communication just mentioned was not from his brother, but was a forgery. But who can give credit to such a witness; a man who, by his own unblushing confession, was guilty of the most deliberate insincerity and hypocrisy, in an act, implying an appeal to the Deity, an act the most solemn and awful of which a human being is capable?—Reader, are you now surprised at his fury, when he saw *himself in contrast* with an HONEST man? Are you surprised at the perversions, concealments, misrepresentations, and daring falsifications which characterize his discourses and writings? Can you repose a moment's confidence in *such* a person, with all his art and plausibility, though to his most earnest asseverations he add protestations and oaths?

This poor man vaunts himself as possessing great skill in criticism; and he thinks, or professes to think, that he has discovered "upwards of a hundred and eighty" denominations, titles, or descriptions of books, which he maintains to have been the original materials, out of which the *Histories* and *Epistles* which compose the larger part of the *New Testament* were compiled.

Of his scholarship, and his ability to form a judgment on questions of this nature, he has supplied us with some marvelous specimens. I shall adduce a few examples.

To shew what he calls "the modernism of some of the passages in the *Epistles*," he adduces 2 Cor. iii. 6. where the common translation has improperly rendered *καυῆς διαθήκης*, "of the *New Testament*." Here this sapient scholar imagines that he has detected the usual title of the collected *Christian Scriptures*; and, since that title was not given to the collection till about a century after the alleged composition of its component parts, he concludes that this is an anachronism, utterly irreconcilable with "any supposable circumstances or condition of a *first preacher* of the gospel, ere yet any part of the *New Testa-*

ment was put into letter." (p. 63.) Now the proper meaning of the word *διαθήκη* is *covenant, agreement, appointment, or constitution*. In the heathen Greek authors it sometimes denotes a *testament* or *will*; but it never occurs in that sense in the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, made before the Christian era, and usually called the Septuagint; nor in any part of the Christian Scriptures, as many able critics believe. The only passages which have been thought to require that sense are Gal. iii. 15. and Heb. ix. 16, 17. But that, in both those places, the proper and usual sense of the word, namely *covenant*, should be retained, is, in my opinion, capable of being satisfactorily evinced.* Hence, the just translation of 2 Cor. iii. 6. is this; "Who hath also qualified us to be dispensers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter slayeth, but the spirit maketh alive." By "the new covenant" the apostle clearly means the *dispensation* or *declaration* of the gospel, the glad tidings of heavenly mercy to mankind, properly called a *covenant* because it promises the blessings of pardon, holiness, and happiness, to those only who truly repent, rely upon the Saviour, and obey his moral authority. It is also called "the spirit, which maketh alive," because of the pure, intellectual, and moral nature of its blessings: and it is thus placed in contrast with "the old covenant" contained in the Mosaic Law, and which is described as "the letter which slayeth," because it required an external obedience to many precepts of a ceremonial and burdensome kind, because it threatened the most awful punishments, (see Deut. xxvii. Ezek. xviii. xxxiii. Heb. x. 28.) and because it made no direct provision of grace and mercy. This is evident to any one who will study the connexion.

Upon another passage, Mr. Taylor says, "*Stewards of the*

* See Mr. Ewing's excellent Greek Lexicon, upon the word.—As Mr. Taylor makes a parade of his acquaintance with the Bishop of Peterborough's English Translation of *Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament*, I shall here give a close version of Michaelis's German *Translation and Paraphrases* upon these two passages.

Gal. iii. 15. *Translation*: "The contract of a man, when completed, no person invalidates, or adds new conditions to it." *Paraphrase*: "When men have made and publicly ratified a covenant, neither of the two parties can unsettle the covenant, or annex to it new conditions."

Heb. ix. 16, 17. *Translation*: "For where a covenant is, there the death of the sacrifice, with which the covenant is made, must follow: for it is only by means of death that a covenant becomes firm, and it is not legally valid so long as the covenant-sacrifice is yet alive." *Paraphrase*: "For, where a covenant is made, it is requisite, according to the customs of the nations, that the covenant-sacrifice suffer death. Only by the corpses of animals, and their bodies deprived of life, does a covenant become legally valid: but, so long as the mediating sacrifice of consecration is not slain, it is not yet valid, and either of the two parties who make the covenant, may change his mind and retract."

Annotation: "I translate *διαθήκη* *covenant*; for it is the allusion of the discourse, that, in ancient times, solemn covenants were made by the blood of animal sacrifices."

mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1.) is the title which Paul arrogates to himself and his colleagues in imposture; the very identical and unaltered title of the Pagan Hierophants, privy counsellors of God!" p. 72. With regard to the latter part of this assertion, I cannot discover the smallest evidence that this phrase of the apostle, or any one resembling it, was ever given to the heathen priests or hierophants. Yet, if it had been, no blame would have been involved: for it is the *sense* of a term or clause that we are to consider, and the sense here is clearly the reverse of any pretence to privileged secrecy, or any other artful contrivance. In every place of the New Testament, in which the word *mystery* occurs, it has a meaning perfectly opposite to that which belonged to the heathen mysteries. They were secret communications, made in the deep recesses of caverns and interior cells of temples, accompanied with terrifying ceremonies; and the initiated person was bound by the most dreadful oaths never to divulge them. Paul and his colleagues had no secrets of either doctrine or action. Their whole system of religion was open to universal examination. They "walked not in craftiness, nor handled the word of God deceitfully; but, by the MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH, commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They never use the term *mystery* in any other sense than to denote a fact or doctrine, which had been before unknown or imperfectly apprehended, but which was now disclosed or explained. The word translated *steward* signifies an agent for a superior, an administrator of domestic or other business; and the sense of the passage under consideration, as given by the best German scholars in Biblical Criticism, is this; "Let no person attribute to us a higher authority or rank than that of faithful servants, acting under the commands of Christ our only Master and Lord, for the purpose of communicating those truths which men could never have known, had not God condescended to reveal them." (Deduced from Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Schleusner, and Pott.) I have taken this interpretation from German critics, because Mr. T. affects to have a peculiar regard for that description of writers; of whom, however, it is evident that he knows very little.

In the same spirit of defiance to rational evidence, he adverts to many other passages, putting upon them a construction which tramples upon all the principles of critical interpretation; and then triumphing in his own wrong. Some of these he avowedly derives from the late Mr. Evanson's "Dissonance of the Four generally received Evangelists;" though they had been answered by Dr. Priestley in his "Letters to a Young Man, Part II.," not to urge that their assumptions had been sufficiently precluded by many previous writers. One of his artifices is to take figurative terms *literally*, in violation of all reason and common sense; that he may put a meaning ridiculous or palpably false upon selected passages. In opposition to his distortions, I shall merely hint at the principle of just interpretation, in the chief of

the passages which he has abused; appealing to the reader's impartial judgment upon the reasonableness and evidence of their application: for the limits of this pamphlet do not allow me to enter into the full explications.

Matt. xi. 12. The distinguished German critics Schleusner and Kühnöl have shewn, from Hesychius, Philo, Josephus, and other authors, that *βιάζεσθαι* and *ἀρπάζειν* are used in the sense of *earnestly desiring and seeking*: so that the literal sense is, "From the time that John explained the nature of the gospel dispensation and invited men to accept its blessings, this declaration of truth and grace is eagerly received, and vast multitudes are, as it were, pressing forwards to the enjoyment of these benefits."

Matt. xvi. 18. The word *church* (*ἐκκλησία*) denotes the whole class or body of persons who should, in any period of time, believe and obey the religion that should be taught by the Messiah: a sense of the word which, so far from indicating an origin later than the epoch to which we ascribe the writing of the gospels, was employed by the Greek translators (the Septuagint) of the Old Testament, long before the Christian era. See Psalm xxii. (LXX. xxi.) 22.

Matt. xviii. 17. Here the same word occurs in its more simple and usual meaning, an *assembly*, a *company* of persons who could meet in one place for conversation and deliberation. This acceptation also was familiar to the Grecian Jews long before the time of Christ. It is found in the Septuagint: Deut. xviii. 16. xxiii. 1. 1 Sam. xix. 20.

Matt. xix. 12. The misunderstanding of this text was a part of the errors of the Encratites: but it is absurd to suppose that they or their errors produced the text. The sense and design of the passage is well expressed in Dr. Priestley's Paraphrase: "What you propose in order to avoid the inconveniencies attending the married state, when there happens not to be a thorough good liking between the parties, (namely, not to marry at all,) is more than can be expected of all persons, though it is so with respect to some. For some have little or no inclination to marriage, and therefore may be said, in a figurative sense, to be eunuchs from their mother's womb; as others are actually eunuchs by the wanton cruelty of men; while others, like myself, will devote themselves to a single life, in order to be free from worldly encumbrances, and to devote themselves more entirely to the service of religion; which, though not generally advisable, may be expedient in time of persecution. In this case, let every person act as he shall find himself able to do, and as he shall judge to be best upon the whole."

Luke ii. 1. iii. 1. The historical accuracy of these dates has been shewn by many critical and chronological writers, among whom Dr. Lardner is preeminent.

John xiv. 2. Because in the Byzantine Greek, *μονή* was applied to a *monastery*, this brilliant critic would have us con-

clude that the Gospel of John, which here uses that word in its proper sense of *mansion* or *abode*, was written in a lower age, after the monastic life was foisted in among degenerate Christians. Now *μονή* occurs in its proper meaning, in Polybius and in 1 Maccabees, vii. 38; both authors of the second century before the Christian era: why then might it not have been used by a genuine writer eighty or ninety years after that era? By the same clever sort of reasoning it might be maintained, that the works attributed to Thucydides, Xenophon, and Demosthenes, were written by monks in the middle ages; because we find, in those works, *leaders* and *presidents* called *ηγούμενοι*, and that word was used, in the lower Greek, to designate the *priors* or *abbots* of monasteries.

He is pleased also to say that, in Matt. vi. 7. *μὴ βαττολογήσητε* should have been translated “*Don't speak like Battus*—Battus being a talkative and foolish poet, as modern as you please.” That the verb *βαττολογεῖν*, which signifies *to use lavish and unsuitable expressions*, was formed in allusion to some person named Battus, is sufficiently probable. Suidas mentions a poet of that name, distinguished for dull and tedious verses, full of repetitions: but it is utterly unknown at what time he lived, nor have we the least reason for imagining that he did not live before the age to which we attribute the composition of the Gospel of Matthew. On the contrary, it is extremely probable that Ovid (who died almost twenty years before the crucifixion of Christ) alludes to him, when he introduces a Battus, as a man in the habit of *repeating his words* for a perfidious purpose (*Metamorphoses*, lib. ii. v. 702.) There was also a Battus whose history is given by Herodotus, describing him as remarkable for *drawling and stammering*. (*Melpomene*, cap. 153—158.) The expressive word in question might possibly have been derived from this person. At all events, there is not the shadow of reason for imagining that this word did not exist in, and even before, the first century of the Christian era.

Further to prop up what this pretender calls “the modernism” of the New Testament, he is pleased to say, “Our English version egregiously protestantizes, whereby the really monkish character of the original is concealed from vulgar suspicion. One of the ten reasons which Chillingworth gives for turning Papist, was ‘Because the Protestant cause is now, and hath been from the beginning, maintained with gross falsifications and calumnies; whereof the prime controversy-writers are notoriously and in a high degree guilty.’” (p. 63.) Now I will not impute to Mr. T. the ability to contradict this, from his own knowledge. I believe him to be perfectly innocent of any critical acquaintance with the early Protestant Versions of Luther, Tyndale, le Fèvre d’Etaples, Olivetan, and others; and that as little knows he of the grossly unfair character (so striking a contrast in this respect to the Protestant translations) of the Roman Catholic Rheinish Version. But I cannot acquit

him of deliberate fraud in another respect. With Chillingworth's great work before his eyes, he selects one of the sophisms which that eminent man enumerates, as having once *imposed upon* himself; and passes by the author's own answer, which is given in the immediate sequel. It is also important to be observed, that the sophism is not speaking of the Scriptures particularly, or alluding to any "falsifications" in citing or translating them; except so far as they may be supposed to be included in a general accusation of dealing untruly in the quoting or representing of written documents. The charge, whether it be just or unjust, refers to citations from all and every sort of authors; not the sacred writers merely or chiefly, but the fathers, the scholastic divines, the canon jurists, and, above all, the controversial men of the sixteenth century. To this general allegation Mr. Chillingworth returns the general answer; "*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra*. Papists are more guilty of this fault than Protestants. Even this very author, in this very pamphlet, hath not so many leaves as *falsifications and calumnies*." *Chillingworth on the Religion of Protestants*; Pref. p. 23, ed. 1638.

Mr. T. affirms that "the general ignorance of the Four Evangelists, not merely of the geography and statistics of Judea, but even of its language, their egregious blunders, which no writers who had lived in that age could be conceived to have made, prove that they were not only no such persons as those who have been willing to be deceived have taken them to be; but that they were not Jews, had never been in Palestine, and neither lived in or at any time near to the times to which their narratives seem to refer. The ablest German divines have yielded thus much." p. 63.

These confident statements proceed either from extreme ignorance or from a much worse principle. The worst of the "German divines" (allowing that term to mean the Antisupernaturalist Biblical Critics) would reject these assertions with indignation and abhorrence. Even Paulus, Wegscheider, Eckermann, and others, who endeavour to explain the miraculous phænomena upon natural principles, and Eichhorn, who is too nearly allied to them, maintain the authenticity of the Gospels, the integrity of their authors, the real occurrence of at least the principal facts, the supremely excellent character of Jesus and his apostles, and the claims of Christianity upon the obedient reception of mankind, as an institution derived *mediately* from God for the most holy and benevolent purposes. I know not a single German writer upon these subjects, who is held in the least estimation by his learned countrymen, of whom what Mr. Taylor asserts is in any degree true; excepting it be Dr. Bretschneider of Gotha, with regard to *only* the Gospel of John; and of him I shall speak presently. Perhaps Mr. T. has imagined that the numerous hypotheses which have been advanced, upon the *literary origin or materials of composition*

of the First Three Gospels, imply a rejection of those Gospels, or some of them, from the estimation of genuineness, authenticity, and credibility. But he does not at all understand the subject. That there were some previous materials, containing narratives and discourses of Jesus, which have been severally embodied by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is demonstrable from internal evidence, and is plainly recognized in Luke's Preface. This subject is familiar to biblical scholars; and (I may be forgiven for saying, considering the insults of Mr. T.) it has been, during more than twenty-five years, largely explained in the Biblical Lectures read in the Protestant Dissenting College at Homerton. But all the varieties of hypothesis that have been invented, (whether assuming a single primitive document, or several; whether regarding those documents as Syro-Chaldaic, or as Greek; as merely oral or as written; and whatever theory of complication be adopted;) bring out *the same general result*: namely, that *the matter* of those original fragments IS COMPRISED in the fuller and more perfect narratives of our three Evangelists;—that those documents, therefore, ceased to be circulated, being *superseded by incorporation* with the larger histories;—that these three larger histories *were composed by the persons whose names they bear*;—and that, as the Apostles and those other primitive teachers who had been personal disciples of Jesus, were gradually removed by death, so that oral statements from the eye-witnesses became less and less attainable, *these written relations, together with the Apostolic Epistles, were received by Christians, throughout Judæa and other countries, as the accredited and faithful depositories of the apostolic testimony.*

I then repeat my declaration that the statements which Mr. T. is retailing, from whatever dealer in deception he may have borrowed them, are opposed and refuted, with triumphant demonstration, by the greatest biblical scholars of Germany, who have written on the authenticity of the Gospels; such as Michaelis, Döderlein, Morus, Less, Storr, Töllner, Griesbach, Stäudlin, Rosenmüller, Ziegler, Süsskind, Kühnöl, Winer, Hug,* Stroth, Olshausen, Hahn, Gieseler, and Schleiermacher.†

Mr. Taylor has, however, for once, said truly, that Bretschneider, “modestly attempts to shew that the author of that Gospel [St. John's] was no party or cotemporary of the events

* His valuable *Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, is now accessible to the English reader, in the translation by the Rev. D. G. Wait. An excellent abridgment of it, in French, was published at Geneva, in 1823, by M. Cellerier, jun., and this may be easily obtained in London.

† The English reader may have ample proof of this, by the perusal of his *Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, with a large and interesting *Introduction by the Translator*, who is believed to be the Rev. Connop Thirlwall: London, 1825. The learned translator observes, that “the modern hypotheses” concerning the original materials of the First Three Gospels, do “not affect their credibility, or in the highest and largest sense of the word, their inspiration.” p. xxi.

to which it relates, and neither a Jew, nor at any time an inhabitant of Palestine." p. 63.

Dr. Bretschneider, of Gotha, published, in 1820, a volume intitled, "Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli Indole et Origine:" *Conjectures upon the Character and Origin of the Gospel and the Epistles, attributed to the Apostle John.* In 1822, was published an *Historical and Critical Dissertation, vindicating the Authenticity of the Gospel of John against the Doubts of the Very Rev. Dr. Bretschneider, by Charles William Stein, Doctor in Philosophy.* Upon this book Mr. Taylor says, "I have not quoted this work [Bretschneider's], however, without having duly weighed the answer to it, in the same language, by the learned STEIN of Brandenburg, i. e. *Authentia Evangelii Johannis Vindicata.* Stein's principal argument for the genuineness of this Gospel, seems to be the *experience* of a certain pious soldier, alias, a Christian blood-hound, who found it particularly comfortable to his soul in the field of battle. Socrates must be silent when Xantippe RAVES." p. 63.

Thus the momentary semblance of candour ends in this man's characteristic practice of misrepresentation. That the reader may judge of this matter, I shall give, in the concisest terms that I can make intelligible, an outline of the contents of Dr. Stein's Treatise.

An Historical View is given of the Opinions which have prevailed, at different periods, concerning the Gospel attributed to John; beginning with the earliest times, and brought down to our own days. In this part of the work, Dr. Stein states the grounds of doubt or denial which have been advanced by the objectors; from the earliest of them, the Alogi of the third century, to those modern writers, of whom Bretschneider brings up the rear. He then examines at length, and with an exact logical distribution, the external evidence for the genuineness of the book, and shews the superficial and inequitable mode in which Bretschneider has treated that branch of the argument. Next, he discusses that gentleman's difficulties and objections, derived from imputed internal evidences of suppositiousness. In this part of his work, Stein first investigates the indications of mental character and moral disposition, in the writer of this Gospel, as they may be inferred from it by applying the doctrine of association, and other principles of moral philosophy. He then, by a diligent sifting of facts and allusions, endeavours to ascertain what were the external circumstances of the writer; and shews that they indicate a Jewish person, contemporary with the events. He investigates the characters of difference which subsist between this Gospel and the other three; tracing the causes of those diversities; shewing that they lie, not in facts or doctrines, but in manner and expression; and tracing, by a particular induction, the causes of the writer's peculiar manner, as apparent in both his Gospel and his Epistles, with

some reference also to the book of Revelation. Finally, he brings under examination Dr. Bretschneider's conjecture, that this Fourth Gospel was written, by some person unknown, in the second century; and he shews that it is destitute of probable reasons, contrary to well evidenced facts, and at variance with the known laws of the human mind.

Thus Dr. Stein has constructed his argumentation upon the rational grounds of a philological, historical, and philosophical inquiry. With what conscience, then, or with what face, can Mr. Taylor say that he has "duly weighed the answer,—by the learned Stein of Brandenburg;" and that "Stein's principal argument seems to be the experience of a certain soldier?" His putting the designation, "of Brandenburg," is a proof of the carelessness with which he has dipped into the book: for, though it is *printed* at Brandenburg, both the title and the conclusion of the preface inform the reader that the author resided at Niemeck, near Wittenberg, in Upper Saxony. Mr. T.'s assertion of what "seems to be" the "principal argument," is equally a violation of truth. The anecdote which, in a manner so insulting, he refers to, occurs in a note on page 4, where Dr. Stein is urging the necessity of genuine piety, to qualify the acutest intellect to enter into the spirit of such a writing as this Gospel, and to judge of those internal characters of mind and feeling which belong to the proof of its genuineness. The note thus states the fact. "A soldier, when wounded and at the point of death, requested his comrade to read to him the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel; and he derived peculiar consolation from the words of Christ, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.' Was not this unlettered man excellently qualified to shew us the true meaning of those words?" What truth or honour can be expected of a man, who, with the book before his eyes, conceals the fact that it is a *critical* and *historical* disquisition, full of real arguments, which at least deserved respectful mention; and represents a little incidental appendage as the "principal argument;" when, in fact, it is not introduced as an argument at all? And what right has he to call the dying soldier, a "blood-hound?" A man of whom he knows nothing; and who was probably one of the brave Prussians who fell for their country and for Europe in 1813 and 1814.

Bretschneider got himself no credit, either as a scholar or as a reasoner, by his ill-judged, though decorously proposed, doubts upon the authenticity of the Gospel attributed to John. That authenticity is among the most solidly established facts of critical history. The greatest philological divines of Germany, among whom are the principal of those called Rationalists, Antisupernaturalists, and Neologists, have written, both before and since Dr. Bretschneider's publication, in the most decisive manner confirming this position: and none of any eminence have taken the opposite side. Upon this question, as well as

upon the general inquiry respecting the genuineness and authority of all the Gospels, a German work of peculiar value is *Dr. Olshausen's Genuineness of the Four Canonical Gospels, proved from the History of the First Two Centuries*.* This able author, who is distinguished for his profound and accurate knowledge of Ecclesiastical Antiquity, not only proves, by abundant and luminous positive evidence, the genuineness of the Gospel ascribed to John, but he demonstrates various errors of Dr. Bretschneider in the very position of his data, and shews that those data, in the principal point, necessarily lead to the opposite conclusion. (p. 305—308.)

So much, then, for Mr. Taylor's assertion that "the ablest German divines have yielded" what his truth-contemning flippancy pours out. He subjoins the observation, "The Germans seem far to have outrun us, in the march of general scepticism." (p. 63.) No doubt this appears to him a very pleasant march, the emulation highly flattering and exciting, - and the termination of the course (for it must terminate somewhere, and soon) a "consummation devoutly to be wished:"—the total extinction of truth, honesty, and honour; the exploding of history, science, and every branch of liberal knowledge; the denial of all certainty, to reward the noblest researches of the human mind; the abandonment of private virtue and social morality; the ruin of all that renders the condition of man a blessing, that lightens his sorrows, or makes his comforts pure and happy; the disbelief of responsibility, of a future state, and of every sentiment above mean selfishness and brutal sensuality; the degeneracy of mankind into the ignorance and wretchedness of savage life; ATHEISM, *despair, and fathomless misery!*—This is the end of your "march of general scepticism!"

But, of "the Germans" and their "scepticism" it is clear that Mr. Taylor knows little enough; I will therefore present him with a few paragraphs, from a recent publication by the gentleman whom he so highly admires, Dr. Bretschneider; premising, however, my opinion that, if that learned man were by a rare chance to be apprized of Mr. T.'s compliments, he would reject them with no slight emotions of indignation and contempt.

"Even a superficial acquaintance with the history of theology, since the middle of the past century, discloses four very different directions which the investigations concerning Christianity have taken.

* "Die Echtheit der Vier Canonischen Evangelien, aus der Geschichte der zwey ersten Jahrhunderte erwiesen: ein Versuch von Hermann Olshausen, ausserordentl. Prof. [und Dr.] der Theol. a. d. Univ. zu Königsberg." 1823. The very acute and learned translator of Schleiermacher calls this volume "elaborate and instructive;" and, after stating some of its satisfactory results, he adds, "The industry, accuracy, and soundness of judgment displayed in this work, render it a most valuable companion in all researches connected with the early history of the Gospels and the Canon." *Introd* p. li. Probably Mr. Taylor may need to be informed, that both Schleiermacher and his translator are among the last men in the world to believe without evidence or to commend without reason.

“ In the first place, there were some who esteemed revelation altogether as nothing but superstition, Jesus as either a well-meaning enthusiast or a deceiver, and Christianity as a mass of errors; and who, therefore, thought that they were doing something meritorious in labouring to undermine and destroy it. These were the followers of the English and French freethinkers; but *only a small number were found in Germany, and among them no theologians*. Of this number we may reckon the naturalist Wünsch (the author of *Horus*,) and the lawyer Paalzow.

“ A second class consists of those who have sought to advance natural religion at the expense of Christianity. They believed, indeed, in Christ as an historical person, but admitted in Christianity no divine operation whatsoever, and therefore thought that they could explain the life of Jesus and the origin of Christianity in a way altogether natural. Accordingly, they made the Life of Jesus into a romance, considered him as a member of secret societies, and treated the Holy Scriptures as merely human books, which had been accidentally preserved, and which contain no word of God. The principal of these were, one Charles Frederic Bahrdt, who was indeed at first a theologian, but was soon removed from his office, and two others who were laymen, Reimarus, author of the Wolfenbüttel Fragments, and Venturini, who wrote the History of the Great Prophet of Nazareth. Probably, also, Brennecke may be reckoned of this number.

“ A third and very different class is formed by those whom we commonly call Rationalists. They wholly acknowledge, in Christianity, a divine and beneficent institution established for the salvation of the world; they regard in Jesus, a messenger of divine providence; and they believe that in the Holy Scriptures is contained a true and everlasting word of God, therein to be preserved and extended, for the benefit of mankind. In this, however, they do not admit a supernatural and miraculous operation of God; they place the design of Christianity in its introducing into the world, confirming, and extending, the religion to which Reason is capable of attaining; and they distinguish, in Christianity, between what is essential and what is unessential, what is local and temporary, and what is of universal application. To this class belong, of philosophers, Steinbart, Kant, and Krug; and, of theologians, W. A. Teller, Löffler, Thiess, Henke; and, of those now living, J. E. C. Schmidt, De Wette, Paulus, Wegscheider, Röhr.” *Bretschneider's Apologie der neuern Theologie des evangelischen Deutschlands*; p. 45—47. Halle, 1826.

It is unnecessary to translate the paragraph which relates to the fourth class, which is described to consist of those who are believers in Christianity as an immediate revelation, resting upon both external evidences from miraculous attestation, and internal from its own divine characters, proved and interpreted by the right use of reason, “ containing nothing that is *contrary* to reason, but much that rises *above* reason:” (*ib.* p. 48.) and to this class Bretschneider declares himself to belong.

Dr. Wegscheider, mentioned above, is a most distinguished

leader of the Antisupernaturalists, and is one of the Professors of Theology in the University of Halle, where there are other Professors in the same faculty, who teach the doctrines of supernatural revelation. From his principal work I select two paragraphs, the former of which I recommend to the consideration of any whose minds may have been impressed by Mr. Taylor's unscrupulous assertions against the authenticity and credibility of the Christian Scriptures; and the latter may be useful, both as furnishing a succinct statement of the Antisupernaturalist theory, and as an evidence that its eminent and learned advocates, greatly in error as I am convinced that they are, would reject with abhorrence any claim of affinity from Mr. Taylor and his sect.

“At the commencement of Christianity, the religion of Christians, since they were in the expectation of the second coming of Christ as an event very near at hand, was animated and sustained more by hearing than by reading. Hence the Apostolic Fathers, holding the Septuagint version of the Old Testament as their sole [written] authority, when they refer to Christ, relate his discourses and actions as having been handed down to them by word of mouth only, and not in the very same words as those which occur in the canonical Gospels. At last, in the second century, probably after the publication of an Aramaic,” [i. e. in the vernacular language of Judæa,] “copy of the book written by Matthew, and when many narratives of the Life of Jesus Christ had been circulated among the churches, the number of Gospels considered worthy of credit was reduced to four: and not long after, many Epistles of the Apostles, but not received with an equal consent and acknowledgment of authority, together with the Acts of the Apostles, were” [with the Four Gospels] “combined into one body. After which, according to the testimony of the Fathers and the councils of Laodiceæ and Carthage, in the third and fourth centuries, the Canon of the New Testament, as it now exists, was decisively adjusted and established, more by the direction of chance and custom than by the universal suffrage of churches and divines. Upon the whole, it is justly maintained from the history of the Canon of the New Testament, that not an internal but an external authority of its single parts, as finally sanctioned by our Reformers” [in the sixteenth] “century, may be deduced and established. It is, however, indubitable [*nihilominus dubitari nequit*] that in the Canon of the New Testament, the documents of the Christian religion, and of the divine truth which it establishes, documents both of the highest antiquity and most deserving of credit [*et antiquissima et fide dignissima*], are truly contained.” *Wegscheideri Institutiones Theologiæ Christianæ Dogmaticæ*; p. 127. Halle, 1824.

“— From a diligent examination of the preceding arguments, it undeniably follows that the Revelation, from which the Jewish and Christian religions are derived, is properly represented as *natural* and *mediate*: by which I mean, that their founders were raised up and assisted by a peculiar or observable operation of Divine Providence, in order to the communication to mankind of

a more improved and beneficial [*meliozem et salubriorem*] form of religion, and its maintenance and extension by the institution of public worship and religious association. It was the established opinion and the current style of expression, among the earliest tribes of men, that extraordinary mental talents (especially if accompanied with a kind of holy fervour of soul,) and illustrious actions, and remarkable events in men's lives or modes of death, should be attributed simply and at once to the immediate agency of the Deity; at the same time that they attempted not any profound or philosophical description of this Divine Influence. Hence the founders of religion conceived that they spoke and acted by a peculiar command from God, and that, of course, they had enjoyed the distinction of a very intimate communion with God. But, in this, we believe them to have been utterly free from any deceptive intention or principle; and that they had a just right to claim the name and authority of Divine Teachers and Messengers; since the things which they promulgated were really *Divine Oracles*, that is, those things were both worthy of God, and were derived, though by a natural chain of causes, from God, the Supreme Author of all truth and of all true religion. The inspiration of the sacred writers may be conceived to have consisted in this; that, devoutly ascribing good affections of the mind in general, and especially their religious doctrines, to the will and influence of God, they committed those doctrines and declarations to writing. These writings, though immediately intended to be read only by the persons of their own time, were composed in such a manner as to be, down to the present time, the proper source of Christian knowledge and doctrine; which it is our duty to understand in accommodation to the knowledge of our more cultivated age. Upon these grounds, in the communication of religious instruction, we ought to employ the greatest attention and diligence, to extricate the Christian religion from those artificial theories and perplexing and insignificant questions, which have been brought forwards in modern times, upon the subjects of Revelation and Inspiration; to shew that the Holy Scriptures have, in a general sense, derived their origin from God; to evince that the matter contained in them is truly divine; to make daily progress in the right understanding of them; and to urge it upon man, and to apply it to the practical purposes of life, as the religion which has come from God. But the narrations contained in the sacred books, relative to the various modes of revelation, are not to be pressed to a strictly literal interpretation; but they are to be referred to the basis of general ideas; or to those allegorical, decorated, and figurative ways of thinking, concerning God and the manifestation of divine influence, which were common in the primitive ages, but are not suitable to a more advanced state of society: and, finally, those representations are to be explained by the more plain and clear expressions of the Holy Scripture itself." *Ibidem*, pp. 153, 154.

Thus ingeniously does this able writer lay down the general principles of the Antisupernaturalist or Neological theory; which

its partizans, somewhat arrogantly and unfairly, denominate Rationalism. To me it appears very clear, that the *primary facts*, which it admits, are incompatible with its subsequent conceptions; and that a truly rational and consistent admission of those facts renders *necessary* a belief in miracles and prophecy, as the origin and credentials of revelation; and in the doctrines of grace, redemption, and a divine sanctifying influence, as the most essential and practical truths of that revelation.

After this exhibition of ignorance, or something worse, it can give no surprise to find Mr. Taylor, upon Section X. spinning again his web of misrepresentation and sophistry, and putting those authentic and primitive fragments (consisting of detached discourses and anecdotes of Jesus, recorded by eye-witnesses,) which were probably all incorporated into the more comprehensive narratives of the three former Evangelists, upon a level with the spurious compositions of later periods.

Of those spurious compositions Mr. Jones, in his learned, fair, and impartial work on *The Canonical Authority of the New Testament*, has, with most laborious and minute industry, collected both all that remain, and the titles or descriptions of those which are lost. He shews that one and the same book was often known by different denominations, as it was not then customary for authors to prefix titles to their writings;—that several of those books were compilations, out of the accredited books which form our present New Testament, but with various unauthorized and inconsistent additions;—that others of them appear to have been written with good intentions, for the preservation of traditional narratives which had come to the writers; but, having no apostolical authority, they were not accepted by the general body of Christians;—that those books or parts of books, pretending to be apostolical, which are now extant, are demonstrably the *works of impostors who lived since the time* of the New Testament writers;—that the assertion of Mr. Toland (which now this Mr. Robert Taylor is endeavouring to palm upon the world) “that the present books of the canon, and others, are indifferently and promiscuously cited and appealed to, in the most ancient records of the Christian religion,”—is absolutely false.

It is manifestly impossible, in these few pages, to give even a sketch of the evidence by which those positions, and many others connected with them, are established. Such inquirers as are willing to pursue the investigation, cannot dispense with the careful study of Mr. Jones’s three volumes, and Dr. Lardner’s *History of the Apostles and Evangelists*, with the first three volumes (old edition) of his *Credibility of the Gospel History*. I shall extract only the following paragraph; declaring my conviction that it is applicable to Mr. Taylor, with equal justice as to the person of whom it immediately speaks:

“Did Mr. Toland and his friends, in these their vile attacks

upon so excellent and divine a constitution, not quibble and juggle and prevaricate, as they upon all occasions do, in their citations out of the old records of Christianity, (a crime which they are ever forward to charge upon others who are much more clear of it,) I should excuse myself and the reader from the trouble of any remarks upon them, leaving them to their **SLAVISH INFIDELITY**. But, when I observe a person ransacking and mustering together all the silly trumpery of the ancient heretics, grossly misrepresenting the books he cites, only with design to satisfy a bigotted humour against the Christian Religion, *I am obliged, by my regards to the profession I make of the name of JESUS, to lay open such vile imposture.*" *Jones on the Canon*, vol. i. p. 196.

It is no discredit to the apostolic writings, that weak and dishonourable men, who had their own selfish ends to answer, attempted imitations of them, and used such artifices as they could to gain credit to their inventions: on the contrary, it is a circumstance which enhances the honour and aids the security of our Scriptures, for two reasons; first, the existence of counterfeits is an evidence of both the *reality* and the *value* of that which is true and genuine; and secondly, this fact excited the general body of the earliest Christians to be so much the more careful in separating true from false compositions. Indeed, the forgery of books, under the names of great men, was anciently a very common practice. Suetonius complains of such supposititious writings, both prose and verse, circulated as the productions of Horace; though he lived less than a hundred years after the poet's death. Several Orations and Epistles were given to the world as Cicero's, and their spuriousness remained long without detection: and forged works were published under the names of Orpheus, Hermes, Zoroaster, and many other revered names.

On this subject I only subjoin a remark from M. de Beau-sobre, an author whom Mr. T. affects to hold in respect. "If, after these considerations, unbelieving minds are still determined to insist upon their argument; if they pretend that the apocryphal pieces destroy the authority of the New Testament; they must say, that there are no *facts* certain, because many false ones have been put forth; that there are no true *histories*, because there are fabulous ones; that there is no good *money*, because counterfeit coin exists. But, as there are sure rules for distinguishing pretended facts from true ones, and as the fraudulence of the one class does not destroy the authenticity of the other; they cannot, I think, avoid acknowledging that the greater part of the books composing the New Testament are distinguished from supposititious ones by sure marks of discrimination.—There is only one objection that occurs to my mind, which I shall finish this Dissertation by resolving. It is, that the western church, for instance, has put into the number of canonical books, some doubtful books, though it could have no

more proofs of their authenticity than the early Fathers had, who, being nearer to the apostolic times, were in a better capacity to judge, than those who came after them, concerning the origin and authors of those books. I refer to the Revelation, the second Epistle of Peter, that of James, that of Jude, the second and third of John, [and that to the Hebrews.] I will not here repeat what has been advanced in defence of the authority of those writings. —I content myself with making a single observation, which adds to the honour and certainty of our Gospels: it is, that the primitive church was more scrupulous with respect to the admission of books into the canon, than the church in the times succeeding. I add that, if persons of a sceptical turn choose to exclude those books which I have just pointed out, though we shall not acquiesce in their so doing, yet we cannot essentially condemn their scruples, since they have the testimony of antiquity in their favour." *Histoire de Manichée, &c.* vol. i. p. 462, 464.

As if to shew mankind to what an extreme of folly a man may be conducted by infidel impiety, Mr. Taylor has actually collected a long list of passages in the New Testament, in which *the Doctrine of Christianity* is spoken of under various denominations and descriptions (such as *gospel, word, testimony, law, mystery, preaching, message, ministry, &c.* with different adjuncts, according to the propriety of the case;) and these he represents as "*apparent titles of holy books, referred to in the New Testament itself,—now irrecoverably lost,—certainly of higher antiquity and better evidence than any which the New Testament contains.*" p. 70.—Let common sense and common honesty judge, between this man and the Bible!

Pursuing his endless perversions of fact and evidence, with a view to decoy persons into the belief that the Scriptures of the New Testament are not genuine and authentic, Mr. T. quotes, (in his usual partial and garbled manner, so as to draw from it a meaning contrary to its proper sense,) a passage from the ecclesiastical historian, Dr. Mosheim; (p. 32.) and he exults in it with evident delight;—"Mosheim's frightful admission stands still before us, in all the horrors of the inferences with which it teems." (p. 68.) I shall give the passage at *full length*, marking by Italic letters those parts which Mr. T. has taken care to omit:

"*Among the teachers of the Christians who served the church by their writings, the highest rank is rightfully due to the Apostles and those of their disciples, whom God inspired to record the history of Christ and his Apostles. Their writings, comprized in a single volume, are in the hands of all Christians. With regard to the origination and communication to the world of these divine books, and the arguments by which their authority from God and their uncorrupted completeness are evinced, my readers can consult those learned authors who have professedly examined these topics. As to the time in*

which the books of the New Covenant were collected into one body, and the persons who made the collection [*hujus negotii auctoribus*], the opinions, or rather conjectures, of the learned are extremely various: for the question is surrounded by difficulties very great, and in the present day scarcely possible to be completely removed. *But it is sufficient for us to know that, before the year 150, most of the books of which the New Testament consists were read and received as the divine rule of faith and conduct, by all classes of Christians wherever dispersed through the world. Hence it followed that, either while some of the Apostles were actually surviving, or at least during the lifetime of those who had been instructed by them and succeeded them, those books were carefully separated from other human writings. We are assured by Eusebius that the four books called the Gospels were brought into one collection during the life of St. John, and that he gave his attestation, as an inspired apostle, to the three former Gospels: and there is reason to suppose that the other books of the New Testament were compacted together about the same time. Several reasons required such a collection to be made at an early period; and particularly this, that, not long after the Saviour's ascension, various accounts of his life and doctrines, full of delusive and fabulous representations, were composed by persons, perhaps not absolutely wicked, but superstitious, weak-minded, and infected with the notion that deception to serve the cause of religion was allowable. Afterwards writings appeared, purporting to be by the holy Apostles of Christ, but which were the forgeries of impostors. These absurd productions would have made the most injurious confusion, and would have rendered the whole history and religion of Christ uncertain, unless those who presided over the Christian communities had taken care speedily to separate the books which were really inspired and written by Apostles, from the mass of others, and to have them brought into one volume.**

Let the reader observe that all Mr. Taylor's vapouring and insulting, about this passage, proceeds upon the weakest ground imaginable; namely, the assuming that the credibility of the New Testament is invalidated by our ignorance of the *time when* and the *persons by whom* the books containing the original history and doctrines of Christianity, were *joined together* so as to form one collection. Who does not see that this is a question only of curiosity, and of no real importance? Is any person sceptical of the genuineness and authenticity of Cicero's Orations, or the poems of Horace, because we do not know who first bound together the scattered pieces, so as to make their respective collections? In all such cases, it is obvious that the putting together of the component parts, would naturally be done by the

* *Moshemii Inst. Hist. Eccl.* Helmstadt, 1764, p. 45. I prefer deriving my quotations from the author's own work, to using Maclaine's translation, which is by no means a just representation of the spirit and manner of the original.

possessors of those parts, and those who sought to possess them : every man would desire to have his collection as complete as possible, one person would assist another, and those who occupied themselves in making copies of books would take pains to make their transcripts complete. It is not at all probable that any particular person, or any constituted body of persons, ever formally made the collection of our sacred books; but it is every way probable and morally certain, that it was formed in the natural and easy way just mentioned. The sanguinary persecutions, which oppressed the first Christians, would undoubtedly prevent their books from being transcribed and sold in public by the ordinary copyists and booksellers; in the way that other Greek and Latin works regularly were, both in Rome and in inferior cities, as we know from Horace, Martial, and Quintilian. The Christians would be reduced to the necessity of multiplying copies, by borrowing and transcribing among themselves, as secretly as they could; just as our forefathers, four hundred years ago, by their private industry, multiplied and circulated very abundantly the Treatises of Wycliffe, and his Translation of the Bible.

But the great object in which we are interested, is the *divine origin and authority of the books* TAKEN SINGLY: and this is not at all affected by the manner of their having been combined into one volume, a mere circumstance of conveniency.

I must here, however, notwithstanding my contracted limits, introduce a very brief statement (partly translated and partly abridged) of the RESULTS accruing from the learned and extensive investigations of Dr. Olshausen (*Versuch über die Echtheit der IV. Ev.*) mentioned in a former page. It is impossible to give even a sketch of the proofs and discussions from which these Results are drawn, as they form the substance of a large volume.

“ 1. *The Gospels were in general use, in countries and regions the most distant from each other.* They were written singly, not in one city or region, but each in a different place, and respectively at the remotest points of the Christian world, Palestine and Rome, Ephesus and Alexandria. The universal extension of these writings, originating in places so far distant from each other, is combined with the universal and unexceptionable belief of their genuineness. Without a universal acknowledgment of their apostolical authority, they might have been spread through some provinces and countries, but not through the whole church: here or there the progress would have been stopped, according as persons in this or that place stood in an immediate connexion with the pretended author, and could know with certainty that he had written no such work.

“ 2. *The traces of the use of our Gospels go back to a time in which immediate disciples of the authors not only might, but actually must, have been surviving.*—The magnitude of the Christian communities, and the widely extended personal acquaintance of the first teachers of Christianity, who travelled

through all countries to diffuse their doctrine, almost compel us to admit that, amongst the many thousands who became Christians through the preaching of Peter, Paul, Matthew, and the others, a very considerable number must have lived to the times in which, as history testifies, the Gospels were already and universally received.

“3. *The fact, that no objection was ever made, in that early period, to the genuineness of our Gospels.*—It would have been absolutely impossible that, among the numerous accounts which exist concerning the history and use of the Gospels, all knowledge of contradiction or opposition should have been utterly lost, if such contradiction or opposition had been raised against them.—It is true that an argument *à silentio* is not, of itself, very cogent: but, under certain peculiar circumstances, it may acquire importance; and such circumstances appear to me to exist in the present case. Among so many accounts of the Gospels, both by friends and by enemies, it is in fact incredible that oppositions to the Gospels should have occurred, and yet have remained concealed from the knowledge of subsequent times. A silence so perfect and entire, in a matter the very nature of which involved notoriety, proves that it never could have existed.

“4. A still more weighty fact is *the universal reception of the Gospels, by heretics and those who were enemies to the universal church.*—All sects, even those the most opposed to each other, were united in the use of our Gospels. Ebionites and Valentinians, Marcionites and Basilidians, members of the Catholic Church and Gnostics or Judaizers, all appealed with the strongest earnestness to our Gospels; each sought to found its own doctrines upon them.—What could have united parties who were in the extremes of opposition to each other, in the reception of the same writings, but the *universally acknowledged and undoubted* truth, that those writings were either written or approved and confirmed by the Apostles of Jesus Christ?—

“5. But the circumstance in the highest degree worthy of observation is, that we no where meet with *any one* of the Gospels *by itself*, but *always the Four in collection*. Of Clements Romanus, Barnabas, and Ignatius we are obliged to leave it undecided, whether they made use of the Gospels or not; we have no certain ground of determination either way. But *all other Christian writers had the COLLECTION OF THE GOSPELS*. Of no one can it be shewn, that he had only this or only that.—This universal diffusion of the *Gospel-Collection* is, beyond a doubt, the most important point in the history of the Gospels, in respect both of their INTEGRITY and their GENUINENESS.—This universal spread of the *Gospel-Collection*, which we clearly find in the former half of the second century, compels us to admit the *early formation* of that collection. But was it *possible* to form such a collection, unless the *genuine-*

ness of each of the Gospels composing that collection had been previously an established fact?"—

After examining various hypotheses, upon the mode of this early formation of the collection consisting of the Four Gospels and no others, Dr. Olshausen proceeds.

—"Thus manifestly there remains only one way for explaining the *origin* of the Collection: but that is so natural, and so perfectly in conformity with the situation and circumstances of the primitive church, that it is scarcely possible to hesitate in admitting it to be the only just conception of the fact. It was unquestionably *neither in any one place nor at any one time* that the Gospel-Collection originated; but *in numerous places and about the same time*.—A little attentive consideration of the circumstances of the primitive church, will shew that it was next to impossible to have been in any other way.

"It is well known, how close was the bond of union between the most remote Christian communities, and how actively they maintained intercourse with each other by epistles and other writings, intended to strengthen their faith and promote their edification. The epistles of the Apostle Paul, those of Polycarp and Ignatius, those of the churches in Lyons and Smyrna, are sufficient evidence of this. This brotherly union, which held in one circle of connexion all the original churches, was the sole cause that writings composed in one region, were speedily extended into the remotest countries. This constant and lively interchange, and the prompt desire of the Christians to impart to their brethren what they had found conducive to their own strengthening and encouragement, excited them to send in all directions whatever profitable writings they possessed. Thus naturally the primitive Christians imparted the Gospels, each to others; what was current in their own respective circles. The Asiatics communicated their Gospel of John, the Christians of Palestine that of Matthew, the Romans that of Luke, and those of Alexandria or Antioch that of Mark; so that the Four Evangelists were combined into one collection, about the same time in all countries. No person, no church, no council, made the Collection: it made itself, in the simplest and most natural manner.—The ancient churches collected what existed for them to collect. Had there been more than four genuine apostolic Gospels, they would have rejected not one of them; but there were only these Four, and they were universally in the east and the west, in the north and the south." pp. 427—439.

In Section XI. Mr. Taylor pursues his own course of deceptive flippancy. He intitles it "PROOFS THAT NO SUCH PERSON AS JESUS CHRIST EVER EXISTED, AND OF THE IMPOSTURE OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY." But he has not *attempted* to bring *proofs*, or even the wretched semblance and mockery of reasoning which he accustoms himself to call proof. The argumentative injustice of the nine pages, which he ranges

under this title, will be sufficiently evident to any person who will compare my section with his remarks. I ask no favour; only common justice in the exercise of common sense.

He has, however, for a moment, the appearance of a triumph. From some cause, which I cannot now ascertain, I had made a mistake, by attaching his reference marked (*d*) to the passage in the Manifesto in which he denies the existence of Jesus Christ. My fault or error lay in overlooking that this letter of reference belonged only to his *Second* Proposition. Consequently my observation upon it is superseded: and I return my thanks to Mr. Taylor for pointing it out, and beg his pardon for the strong expressions of censure which, upon this mistaken ground, I had applied to him. The sentence is accordingly expunged, in this edition. The passages of Mosheim and Jones, to which the reference (*d*) belongs, are those which have been brought before the reader's attention under the preceding Section. Upon them Mr. T. subjoins, "If these admissions shall not be found, to the full scope and utmost sense, spirit, letter, effect, and intention, just as I have purported to refer to them,—then is Doctor John Pye Smith a scholar, whose learning is respectable, and a gentleman whose word may be depended on; and I, a guilty forger." (p. 77.) Now to this curious position, I reply that, however the "letter" of the passages adverted may seem to speak the "sense" which Mr. T. wishes to put upon them, in consequence of his taking parts of paragraphs and separating them from their connexion (a process by which all the certainty of language may be destroyed,) yet the REAL *meaning*, "*effect, and intention*" of those passages, as they stand in the writings of their authors, is *the reverse* of the sense and spirit, effect and intention, which Mr. T. represents; namely, that our inability to assign persons, time, and place for an act, which we do not believe ever was done in a formal manner, but which found its own level, so to speak, in the natural and unforced course of things, authorizes an inference unfavourable to the truth, genuineness, and authority of the New Testament writings. The passages from Mosheim have been already laid before the reader; and of the *true* sense and intention of those from Jones, (which are too long to be transcribed here) a correct judgment may be formed from the quotations given in a former page, and that which I here subjoin.* To

* "It would certainly evidence a very great ignorance in ecclesiastical history' in any person, to pretend to assign the particular time when the present collection, or Canon, of the books of the New Testament, was made: for, though we have all imaginable reason to conclude this certainly done long before the Council of Laodicea, yet the histories of those times are so defective, that we have no positive account of that matter. The Canon was, indeed, gradually enlarged; as the books were wrote at different times, and in places at a very great distance from each other: and so, a considerable time was necessarily requisite, both for the spreading the books and certifying their genuineness and authority. It is impossible, in the nat: things, but some churches mus

this delinquency I do not, however, attach the name of "forgery;" but I solemnly charge it with being a *great* and evidently *wilful misrepresentation*.

Mr. T. lavishes his admiration upon Tacitus and Pliny, the former as "one of the most philosophical lovers of truth, most diligent investigators, most faithful historians;" and the latter as "the most candid, the most liberal, the most learned, the most virtuous, the most able inquirer that could be conceived to have existed in all the world." (p. 79.) He can see nothing to be blamed in their shamelessly avowed injustice, in their condemnation of that which they confessedly did not understand, and in Pliny's sending to tortures and death, without the smallest hesitation or relenting, persons on whom not the semblance of any crime was charged, and whom he accuses of nothing but truth and honesty. Such avowed iniquity, such judicial murders, are no objections to Mr. T.'s commendations.

What Mr. Taylor puts forth as replies to my Section XII. he spreads over twenty-four large and close pages, in his characteristic manner. Ribaldry and the most daring falsehood seem to be the very element of life to this pitiable creature.

When I referred to the common compendiums of the Grecian and Roman mythology, it was evident that I meant merely this; that the narratives which they supply are so palpably different from those of the evangelical history, that any one who would take the trouble of a comparison, would perceive the monstrous audacity of falsehood in the man who could say or write that "some, many, or all of these events, had been previously related of the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome." He affects

receive the books long after others; as they lay at a greater distance from the places where they were written, or had less convenience of communication with them. Besides, Christianity for a long time laboured under the disadvantages of continual persecution; no general councils could be convened, and so no public notification of universal agreement in this matter. But, notwithstanding all these things, it is yet discoverable that, as soon as can be supposed after the writing of the books, the Christians in all countries remarkably agreed in receiving them as canonical: for the proof of which I observe, (1.) That, in the few genuine writings of the first ages now extant, *the same books* are cited as scripture:—(2.) That several of the first writers of Christianity have left us, in their works, *catalogues of the sacred books of the New Testament*, which, though made in countries at a vast distance from each other, do very little differ.—So great was the pains and care of those early Christians, to be well assured what were the genuine writings of the apostles, and to distinguish them from all the pretended revelations of designing men, and the forgeries they published under sacred titles.—It is next to impossible, either that so great a number of men should agree in a cheat, or be imposed upon by a cheat.—There are some particular circumstances which will make the inference more clear, as to the Christian books, than others; such as the prodigious *esteem* the books at first were received with, the *constant use* that was made of them in their religious assemblies, the *translations* made of them very early into other languages. These, I say, and many other such circumstances, there are, which all concur to make an imposture in this case almost impossible." Vol. I. p. 36—39.

to rebut this remark by observing, that those school-books were published before his Manifesto, and therefore could not possibly contain a refutation of it! He also charges the authors of such books, since they have been generally *clergymen*, with dishonest dealing, in detailing the traditions and fables from the original Greek and Latin writers: as if there had not been in the world thousands of men, besides the clergy, who were and are accurately conversant with the poets and mythologists and philosophers of classical antiquity!

He labours hard to make out his blasphemously imputed identity between the Hindoo Krishna and our blessed Redeemer. I had taken a transient notice of his unauthorized spelling of that word, making it *Chrishna*; and the apparent design of the alteration. Will it be believed that, in his usual insulting manner, he affirms again and again that "the spelling of the name in the *Asiatic Researches*, by Sir William Jones,—will be found to be, not *Krishna* nor *Krishnu*, but as it is exhibited in the Manifesto, **CHRISHNA!**" (p. 87.) And, to betray the credulous into a belief of his veracity, he makes a parade of citing the volume and the pages with anxious minuteness!

Again, therefore, I charge this man with wilful, deliberate, and repeated *falsehood*,—and I affirm that, in the original Calcutta edition of the *Asiatic Researches*, and in both the quarto and the octavo editions of the *Works of Sir William Jones*, the orthography is uniformly *not* **CHRISHNA**, but **CRISHNA**;—that, in the splendid *Hindu Pantheon* by Mr. Moor, it is **KRISHNA**;—that, in *Rees's Cyclopædia* (article *Krishna*,) no other mode of spelling is adopted, but, at the close of the long article, this sentence occurs; "The name of Krishna is variously written in European languages: Crishna, Cristna, Krustna, Kishna, Kistnah, Quixena, Kishen, &c., and is differently pronounced in different provinces of India;"—that Mr. Ward,* who had resided many years in India, and had diligently cultivated both the Sanscrit and the modern literature of the natives, writes it **KRISHNÛ**;—and that never have I met with the form *Chrishna* but from the hand of the learned and honest Mr. Taylor.

This circumstance of orthography would not, however, have been worth notice, but for the sake of exposing the falsehood and malevolence connected with it. Had the conformity been even closer than this writer has represented it to be, no argument could have been rested upon it alone. In most languages, there are words perfectly identical with some in other languages, in letters or in pronunciation, or in both; but which have not the smallest affinity in either meaning or derivation. And I cannot suppose that even Mr. Taylor is so ignorant, as not to know that the *proper name* of the founder of Christianity was not **CHRIST** but **JESUS**. The former (*Χριστός*) is the Greek

* In his *View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos*; published at Serampore, near Calcutta, in 1818.

translation of the Hebrew MESSIAH; which is not a proper name, but only an appellative, describing the office and authority of our Lord and Saviour.

Mr. T. takes long pains, and puts forth his utmost strength of art and deception, to vamp up a resemblance of facts between the real history of Jesus and the miserable fables about the Hindoo idol. By his never-failing resource of unprincipled management and misrepresentation, he works out a display which may answer his purpose, with those who will not take the trouble of reading, searching, and thinking for themselves. It would be absurd and insufferably tedious to detail the blasphemous and disgusting paragraphs. The only reply which I make to them is a request to the reader to compare them fully and fairly, with the Christian Gospels on the one hand, and the Dissertation of Sir William Jones, or the corresponding articles in the Hindu Pantheon, on the other. I ask only this, and that Justice may hold the scale. The same request, modified according to the sources of evidence in each case, I deem a sufficient answer to Mr. Taylor's allegations, that the history of Jesus is only a borrowed form of the mythological stories concerning the Egyptian hieroglyphic for a deficient harvest, the Phœnician Adonis, the Prometheus of the Greeks, or the goddess Eostre, which, I beg to inform him, was not a "Druidical type" but a Saxon idol. The instances of alleged conformity which he exhibits, with his characteristic ribaldry and profaneness, are made up by the help of exaggerating, arbitrary adapting, and misrepresenting. On such principles, it would require only a prolific fancy, some scraps of desultory reading, and a resolution to disregard all truth and sacrifice every consideration of integrity and honour, to enable a man to turn into ridicule all history, and every part of serious and useful literature. Any materials would thus suffice for the making of any structure.

In the same manner, let the sincere inquirer examine the ridiculous stories (p. 102,) which Mr. T. has borrowed from *Jones on the Canon*, the most delirious dreams of the old forgers; but which, he would persuade the world, are "the true and genuine Gospels of the most primitive Christians:" and let equitable attention be paid to the solid learning and plain arguments of Mr. Jones, in proof of the base origin and fictitious character of those productions. In a former page, some extracts from that work were given. It is impossible, in these narrow bounds, to go farther into particulars: but it is not too much to expect that any one, who is not satisfied with what has been here adduced, should obtain Jones and Lardner, and examine the matter thoroughly for himself.

Mr. T. proposes twenty-one questions (pp. 102—106.) each intended to suggest some conclusion adverse to the historical existence of Jesus, or to some other principle of Christian truth. To each and every one of them I answer; first, that they *assume*

premises which are either wholly or partially false, so that, in every instance, the intimated conclusion does not follow: and secondly, that, if premises *proved to be true* by their appropriate evidence, be substituted for Mr. T.'s false assumptions, conclusions then invincibly follow in direct opposition to his. For what purpose, but to blind and mislead, does he introduce a passage from Gibbon (erroneously referred to, and which, after considerable pains, I cannot find,) and another from Bishop Pearson, stating the oft refuted opinion of the Docetæ; but so put and managed by Mr. T. that an uninformed reader is led to suppose that opinion to have been the known, public, indisputable, and original state of facts? This incessant use of trick and misrepresentation, marks not only a bad cause, but that the advocate is conscious of its badness.

Yet, lest Mr. T. should say that I am unwilling to meet his questions, though the limits of this pamphlet will not permit such enlargements and explications as I should wish, I will annex such a notice of each of them as may indicate to the intelligent reader, *the point* upon which Mr. T. has employed his misrepresentation, and on which my argument would turn for refuting it. I must request the reader to read the passages of the New Testament referred to; as the examination of them is necessary to the understanding of each article.

1. On Mark i. 1. The genuineness of the Gospel of Mark stands upon critical grounds so peculiarly strong, that it has not been contested by even the most cavilling objectors. There is ancient and satisfactory evidence that he drew up his work, availing himself of the faithful documents which I have before adverted to, under the personal directions of the Apostle Peter. His purpose was to give a history of our Lord's public conduct and teaching. Surely he, as well as the Apostle John, had a right to select that department of the narrative which he judged most suitable to the design which he had in view: and it is no objection to either of them, or to their writings, that it was not a part of their design to include the birth and early life of Jesus. The first sentence in this Gospel plainly signifies that the facts, upon the immediate relation of which, the author was entering, were those which constituted "The beginning of the announcement of the happy intelligence concerning Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God:" for so the words are precisely translated.

2. On Matt. xxvii. 32. Mark xv. 21. and Luke xxiii. 26. There was a natural and very good reason, for introducing the mention of Simon the Cyrenæan. Jesus, having been obliged to carry the cross on which he was to be crucified, fainted and fell down under the cruel load. Simon, who was accidentally passing by, and who was probably known to be attached to Jesus, was seized and compelled by force to carry the cross. The word (*ἀγγαρεύειν*) used by Matthew and Mark, denotes, says Suidas, "a pub. and compulsory service,—such as carry-

ing burdens or any other kind of aid." There was a further interest in this casual fact, as Simon was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," persons whom we have reason to believe to have been well known among the first Christians; and it is probable that the one of them was the Alexander mentioned in Acts xix. 33. and the other, the Rufus, introduced as a resident at Rome, in Rom. xvi. 13.

3. and 4. The assertion that "the plain and grammatical construction of the text," in any one of the Evangelists, purports that Simon was crucified as the substitute of Jesus; I leave to the judgment of any one who can read either the Greek Testament or the common translation. What must be the condition of the man's understanding, or of his moral feelings, who can say and write so outrageous a falsehood!

5. On Acts xv. 36—41. The dissension of Paul and Barnabas was not "a bitter quarrel;" it did not prevent their subsequent cordiality and co-operation; and, so far from shewing that they did not "preach the same story," it implies the strongest proof that they did, that they had no fears for their cause, and that they knew it to be a cause which required not close combination and mutual aid for its support, which rested upon no collusion, which feared no disclosures. As Mr. Taylor pretends some respect for "the ablest German divines," I will give him a passage from one of them, in reference to this query of his.

"The opinion is most probable, which has been maintained by Grotius, Witsius, Bengel, Heumann, and others, that Mark shrunk from labours and dangers. That this was the reason of his separation is not obscurely intimated by the words, "and he went not with them to the work;" and from the meaning of the verb ἀφίστημι (in ver. 38, rendered "departed from," but a quite different verb, ἀποχωρίζεσθαι, is rendered in the same way in ver. 39.) which is used even to denote *apostacy*, for example, Luke viii. 13. and 1 Tim. iv. 1. But now, that Mark regretted his former inconstancy, Barnabas, his near relative (see Col. iv. 10.) and a very gentle and kindly disposed man (see Acts ix. 27.) wished again to take him as their companion on this journey; but Paul, who respected no man's person (Gal. ii. 11.), thinking that character should be considered rather than relationship, and being diffident of Mark's constancy, would not agree that he should accompany them. Yet this rigour on the part of Paul was a benefit both to Mark and to the cause of Christianity: for, by this admonition, Mark became for the future more courageous, and the Christian religion was taught at the same time in different places, and so became more extensively propagated. Nor, by this dissension, was the bond of friendship broken between Paul and Barnabas; as appears from 1 Cor. ix. 6; and Paul afterwards received Mark to his cordial friendship; see Col. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 11.

Philemon 23." *Kuinöl Comm. in Libros N. T. Hist.* vol. iv. p. 527.

6. On 1 Cor. i. 23. It is by no means here implied, that there were any preachers of Christianity who taught a "Christ not crucified." The sense most plainly is, that *the enemies* of Christianity, both the bigotted Jews and the proud Greeks, made it an objection to the Christian religion that Jesus, its founder, had suffered the death of crucifixion; a fact which contradicted their prejudiced ideas and worldly expectations. In this fact, however, the apostles gloried, knowing its real importance and value. See Gal. vi. 14. Phil. iii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 19. ii. 24. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. iv. 10.

7. On 2 Cor. xi. 13. and Phil. iii. 2. The persons whose conduct Paul here condemns were not "the other apostles," but were corrupters of Christianity. The epithet "dogs," did not sound so harshly and rudely in the ears of men at that time, as it does now in ours. It was commonly given by the Jews to the heathen nations: and among the Greeks it was so far from being considered as necessarily an insulting appellation, that the philosopher Diogenes took it as his own designation (*ὁ κύων*), to express the bluntness of manners in which he prided himself: and his disciples deemed it no dishonour to be called *Cynics* or the *doggish*. The metaphorical use of the epithet by the apostle, also in Matt. vii. 6. and Rev. xxii. 15. is clearly to describe a bad moral character, contentious, reviling, ferocious, and selfish.

8. On Phil. i. 15, 16. It is not of the other apostles that Paul writes thus, but of persons who, though unfriendly to him, and little to be depended upon as firm and cordial Christians, yet taught some of the primary doctrines of Christianity, so that the cause of truth and goodness, the confutation of heathen notions, and the notification of the Messiahship of Jesus, would, upon the whole, be promoted. What a demonstration of the sincerity of Paul, and of his nobly disinterested and generous spirit; overlooking the unjust and distressing treatment of his own person, and exulting in the progress of the cause of truth and holiness, though by the means of persons ungrateful and unkind to himself.

9. On 1 Cor. xvi. 22. The persons referred to were manifestly the enemies of Christ and of all piety and goodness: and Paul does not "curse them with the most bitter execrations." On the contrary, he refers them to the judgment of HIM who cannot err and will not do wrong; declaring, at the same time, that they ought not to be continued in membership with the Christian community. Such an exclusion from membership is no injury to a man who has already in practice proved himself disaffected and alienated; it involves (in its proper scriptural sense, and according to its primitive practice,) no temporal inflictions nor privation of civil rights; and in fact the apostle

was willing to have endured it himself, if such a generous self-devoting might but have been the means of subduing the obstinacy of his countrymen, and converting them to the faith and obedience of Christ: see Rom. ix. 3. This is the meaning of *anathema*, a word which has been very improperly translated *accursed*. The Syriac words added, signify "The Lord cometh:" and the entire meaning is plainly this: "If any person prove himself, by his wicked conduct, to be an enemy to the doctrine and authority of Christ, let him not remain in communion with the church, which ought to consist of none but the sincere and upright: but let not human vengeance visit in causes purely religious; leave them to Him whose judgment cannot err: THE LORD COMETH."

10. On Gal. v. 12. The verb here used (*ἀποκόψονται*) is in the form which denotes an action performed by a person upon himself; so that the sense is, "I earnestly wish that those who disturb you, the corrupt and seductive teachers who have done you so much harm, would *cut themselves off* from the communion of the Christian church, and so appear in their own real character."

11, 12. In the Epistles, there are many allusions and references to the HISTORY of Jesus, as a well known and undeniable body of facts. For examples, see Rom. i. 3, 4. v. 6. vi. 4, &c. viii. 3. ix. 5. xv. 3. 1 Cor. ix. 1. xi. 23, &c. xv. 3—8. Gal. iii. 13. Phil. ii. 5—8. 1 Thess. ii. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 21—24. 2 Pet. ii. 16—18.

13. On Acts vii. 52. These words could be understood as referring to no person but Jesus the Messiah: and it is evident that Stephen was interrupted by his precipitate murderers, and not allowed to continue his speech to the points at which he was aiming.

14, 15. I deny the assumption that Jesus is described in the New Testament, by "the language only of mystery, trope, allegory, and fiction;" and I appeal to every honest reader of the Apostolic Epistles, whether Jesus is not every where mentioned as a real and personal being. There are various acceptations of the term "Son of God," received by different parties of Christians; but none of them are inconsistent with the spirituality and other infinite perfections of the Deity. *Κληρονόμος*, translated *heir* in Heb. i. 3. signifies also *possessor* in the general sense.

16. It is one of the *gross falsehoods*, so characteristic of this unhappy man, that "the earliest fathers," or any of them, "represented Jesus as a visionary hypostasis, that had no real existence."

The passages cited from Justin's First Apology are made to appear to great disadvantage, by the coarseness of the translation (for which Mr. T. is not answerable, since he quotes from Reeves's Translation,) and by the omission of many intermediate sentences and paragraphs, which would have made

the whole appear less injudicious. Justin's object was to convince the Greeks and Romans that they had no reason for censuring the history of Jesus, since they attributed, to one or other of their fabulous deities, actions which bore some resemblance. It is a mere *argumentum ad homines*; and, for its purpose, I do not see that it is unreasonable or irrelevant. But Mr. T. omits the paragraph, though immediately before his eyes, being included between two parts of his citations (§ 29.) in which Justin protests against the absurdity and the immoral tendency of those heathen fables, and contrasts them with the holy and virtuous influence of Christianity; and another, immediately following his last citation, in which he declares the fulfilment of prophecy in Christ's becoming man. Could Mr. T. fail to see other places, in which Justin speaks so abundantly of the personal history of Jesus? For example: "—our Teacher,—born for this purpose, Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, the Procurator of Judæa in the times of Tiberius Cæsar;" (§ 16.) and innumerable other passages of the same plain and historical character.

The same abandoned defiance of truth appears in another page, where Mr. T. writes, "A regular succession of the most learned and intelligent of the Christian Fathers, from and in the apostolic age, steadily maintained that Christ never had any real existence as a man; that he was merely a phantom, or hobgoblin, and that all the business of his crucifixion and miracles took place only in a vision." (p. 114). Really, it is a severe trial of patience, to read or hear such atrocious insults upon all truth, honour, and integrity! Let this man say next, that the ocean does not flow round Great Britain, or that the sun never shines upon it: and this proposition will be quite as true, as that which I have transcribed. He writes about the Docetæ, and the Ebionites.—Poor creature!—And he would have his dupes believe that his "regular succession" consisted of "Docetian Fathers!" When the fact is, that ALL the extant Christian Fathers, from the earliest to the latest, without a single dissentient voice, maintained the real existence of Jesus Christ; and, notwithstanding minor differences, held essentially the same doctrines concerning his person and the designs of his mission. Of Docetæ, not a single writer, if indeed there ever were any, is known to exist. We are informed of them and their doctrine, only by the writings of those who refuted them, and who, in fact, represented the general body of Christians.

17. Believing a pre-existent and truly divine nature in Jesus Christ, we do not the less believe "his real existence as a man."

18. On 1st John iv. 2, 3. The usual meaning of the term "the flesh," in the apostolic writings, particularly those of Paul and John, is *the nature of man as subject to sorrow, pain, and death*. Hence to *come in the flesh* signifies to be a par-

ticipant of human nature. The evident sense, therefore, of this passage is; “Every religious teacher who acknowledgeth Jesus to be the Christ [i. e. the Messiah] come in human nature, is authorized and approved by God.”

19. The sacrament called the Lord’s Supper is no “cannibal ceremony,” as this man insultingly calls it: but it is the most simple, innocent, and artless observance that could well have been devised; eating bread and drinking wine, as a grateful commemoration of the grand facts in the Christian system. John vi. 51—58. has not, in the opinion of the most judicious commentators, any reference to this commemorative institution; but is a declaration, in figurative yet very intelligible terms, of the necessity of our believing and relying upon the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, as a DIVINE PROPITIATION, or the method appointed by infinite wisdom and benevolence for our obtaining the greatest blessings.

20. Christianity is not concerned to defend the foolish and monstrous hyperbole of Tertullian. Such language, and the principle of abdicating human reason which it involves, are totally contrary to the doctrines and the spirit of the New Testament. Yet, after all, let justice be done to this ardent but honest writer. He is discussing the objection to Christianity (a very formidable one in the earliest times) that its Founder had been crucified, dead, and buried, and that the resurrection to immortal life of a person so contemptible, is utterly incredible. He repels this objection by a diffuse, extravagant, and extremely injudicious use of what rhetoricians call *epitrope*, or the argument from concession. The opponent represented the Christian doctrine of salvation by Him that was crucified, as stupid, silly, ridiculous, and impossible. Well then, rejoins the Christian advocate, let it be so; I am willing to be deemed foolish, and even hardened against shame; I readily take up this reproach, and I even glory in being despised. “That which is [deemed] unworthy of God, is to my benefit. Salvation is mine, if I am not ashamed of my Lord. He hath said, *Whosoever is ashamed of me, of him also will I be ashamed.* I find no grounds of being thus ashamed [of him] except those which, by my contemning them as a reason for blushing, prove me shameless to my good, and to my happiness a fool. The Son of God was born [in human nature]: I am not ashamed of it, for the very reason that [in the estimation of the adversary] it is a thing to be ashamed of. The Son of God also died; this is entirely credible, even for those very reasons [of such an infinite condescension in the Deity as the Gentile philosophers deemed incredible] for which it is [reckoned] absurd. And, after being buried, he rose again: it is certain, even because [in their estimation] it is impossible. But how could those things have taken place in him, if he had not been a real person; if he had not really a body which could be nailed to a cross, which could die, which could be buried and could

rise again? Even this flesh, through which blood is poured, whose structure is built on bones, interwoven with nerves, intertwined with veins, capable of birth and death, doubtless then human, being born of a human person.”* This appears to me to be the real sense of this extraordinary passage; a passage which has been brought forwards as a butt of ridicule, times without number, by persons who never had the candour to examine it. The reader who understands the genius of the Latin language, and who has paid a moderate attention to the peculiarly harsh, abrupt, and often paradoxical style of Tertullian, will bear witness that the clauses which I have supplied in brackets are not more than necessary to convey the just meaning of the original.

21. Neither has Christianity any thing to do with the fiction of the “real and corporal presence” of the body and blood of Christ, in or with the bread and wine; whether this notion be combined or not with the antichristian absurdity of transubstantiation.

From 2 Tim. ii. 8. Mr. T. affects to conclude “that there were some other Gospels in being at that time, which told the story in a different way.” (p. 114.) In other parts also of his pamphlet, (particularly p. 71.) he employs a similar ignorance or perverseness in treating the term *Gospel*, as if its proper meaning were a Narrative of the Actions and Discourses of Jesus. Any tolerably instructed child might tell him that the original and usual meaning of the word is *the glad tidings, the doctrine of Christianity*; while the other acceptance, that of a *descriptive title* to one of the historical relations, was a remoter meaning, of which there is no example in the writings of the New Testament, but which came into use in a subsequent period. I will give him the annotation of a distinguished German Rationalist, Dr. Heinrichs of Burgdorf in Hanover, upon the passage which he makes the ground of cavil; “That which is in other passages denominated *the gospel of God, or of the Lord, or of Christ*, the apostles sometimes call *our gospel*, (1 Thess. i. 5.) or *my gospel* [see also Rom. ii. 16.] but each phrase signifying the same thing, namely, *the genuine doctrine concerning Jesus the Messiah, which we the apostles announce to you*. It is that which stands opposed to the ‘other gospel,’ in Gal. i. 6.” An impartial examination of the New Testament

* “Quodcumque Deo indignum est, mihi expedit. Salvus sum, si non confundar de Domino meo. Qui me, inquit, confusus fuerit, confundar et ego ejus. Alias non invenio materias confusionis, quæ me, per contemptum ruboris, probent bene impudentem et feliciter stultum. Natus est Dei filius: non pudet, quia pudendum est. Et mortuus est Dei filius: prorsus credibile est, quia ineptum est. Et sepultus, resurrexit: certum est, quia impossibile. Sed hæc, quomodo in illo vera erunt, si ipse non fuit verus; si non verè habuit in se quod figeretur, quod moreretur, quod sepeliretur et resuscitaretur? Carnem scilicet hanc, sanguine suffusam, ossibus substructam, nervis intextam, venis implexam, quæ nasci et mori novit, humanam sine dubio ut natam de homine.” *Tertullian, de Carne Christi*; cap. v.

will shew that Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, and the other apostles, all taught *the same* system of religion, in both faith and obedience; *the same* gospel: and it is equally manifest that the "*other* gospel" adverted to was taught not by the apostles of Christ, but by pretenders and enemies.

At p. 115, Mr. T. shews his ignorance, or something much worse, in translating *παῖς* (Acts iv. 27, 30.) by "boy;" only for the sake of throwing a scurrilous insult upon the name of Jesus. Had he but a moderate share of the learning to which he pretends, he would know that this word is far from bearing any degrading or ludicrous sense, and that it is used by classical authors, as well as in the sacred writings, to denote *a son*, with the associated idea of peculiar parental tenderness.

At the close of a blasphemous prayer (p. 108.) he introduces the words of the Apostle Paul (Rom. iii. 7.) as if our religion implied approbation of *telling lies for the glory of God*. Now let a sincere and upright reader of the New Testament say, whether its whole spirit, principles, and injunctions do not, in the most perfect manner, contradict such an interpretation as this! Let him also examine rigorously this passage: and he will perceive that from ver. 1st, to the 9th, is a *dialogism*, or the introduction of an adversary, whose interrogations and objections are stated as in his own person, and are then answered by the apostle. I offer the following as a faithful translation of the passage, though a little paraphrastic, which the difference of idioms renders necessary.

Obj. "What then is the advantage of the Jew? Or, what the benefit of the circumcision?"

Reply. "Much, in every respect: but principally in that the oracles of God have been intrusted [to the Jewish nation.]"

Obj. "Yet still; since some have acted unfaithfully, does not their unfaithfulness abolish the credibility of God?"

Reply. "Far be the thought! But let God be acknowledged sincere, if even every man should be proved false: as it is written, [&c. see Psalm li. 5.]

Obj. "But, what shall we say if our disobedience set in an advantageous position the justice of God? Would not God be unjust in inflicting punishment [upon us?]"

"(I am speaking as probably some men would do.)"

Reply. "Far be the thought! In that case how could God judge the world?"

Obj. "Yet, if, by my violation of faithfulness, the sincerity of God has been displayed in a more glorious manner, why am I still condemned as an offender? And why should not the maxim be admitted.

Paraphrasis interjected by the apostle in his own person.

"(as we are calumniated, and some affirm that we say,)"

"that we may do bad actions, that good results may come [of them?]"

Reply. "Whose condemnation is [peculiarly] just!"

Obj. "How then? Have we the preference [over the sinful heathen world?]"

Reply. "In no respect."

A similar abandonment of every thing like truth or honour, appears in Mr. T.'s pretended translation (p. 114.) of John xii. 28. turning "glorify" into *clarify*, because the old Latin Version has used the verb *clarificare*; though, in writing this and similar abusive representations, he could not but know that he was *infamously cheating* those who might rely upon him. It is impossible that he could be ignorant that the original word (*δοξάζειν*) is properly translated by *glorify*; and that *clarificare*, though not a word of the purest Latinity, signifies nothing but *to make or display as illustrious*, and has not the most distant affinity in meaning with the English words on which he so malignantly dwells.

Many of the early Christian writers, called the Fathers, were extremely injudicious and worse than injudicious. By the help of Dr. Conyers Middleton and some other authors, Mr. T. has collected a few of the most extravagant and offensive passages; and a very easy thing it is to hold them up to ridicule and contempt. But a man of upright mind would acknowledge that their sins and weaknesses are not, without the most manifest injustice, to be charged upon Christianity: and a more extensive acquaintance with their writings would convince any candid reader, that they have numerous excellencies, and that even the most harsh and paradoxical of them all, Tertullian, has many grand and noble pages, solid in reason, and eloquent in expression, which ought to be set against occasional extravagance.

In order to represent Augustine as a wilful deceiver (a character of which Mr. T. has so abundant an experimental consciousness) he adduces a passage in which that father is made to say that, in Æthiopia, he "*saw* many men and women without heads, who had two great eyes in their breasts; and, in countries still more southerly,—a people who had but one eye in their foreheads." (p. 33.) The reference which he gives for this citation is so vague that, after throwing away much valuable time in the search, I have been unable to find it. This mode of giving inaccurate or defective references is very common with Mr. Taylor. It is likely enough that Augustine, in common with other people of his time, and for many centuries after, believed in the existence of Acephali, Blemmyes, and other monsters. Such was the current belief of the Romans, ages before Augustine; as appears from the *classical* authors, Pliny the elder and Pomponius Mela: and it continued down to the revival of letters, as is seen in the voyages and travels of Sir John Mandeville. Very probably these stories originated in imperfect glimpses, obtained by ignorant and terrified persons, of troops of various tribes, wandering inhabitants of the interior regions of Africa, whose tents, clothing, defences from the sun, and armour, particularly moustrous helmets, supplied the mate-

rials to timorous credulity and vague rumour. It is possible that Augustine might himself have transiently seen some of those occupants of the unexplored districts, wearing their skin and hair helmets, of such forms as would give them, especially if riding on horses or camels, the appearance which he is represented as describing. But Mr. T. may have misunderstood the passage which he gives as a quotation from him. This appears not improbable from a place in which Augustine recapitulates several of the current opinions on the existence of such tribes of monstrous men; and, after reciting them in a way which *most plainly shews* that he had no actual knowledge of such men, and that he distrusted the stories about them, he adds, "But we are not bound to believe that there are all these kinds of men, which report thus describes."*

With the intention of giving a colour to his most vile and base abuse of the Lord's Supper as a "cannibal ceremony," (p. 106.) Mr. T. has picked up a sentence of disgusting metaphors, from Cyprian, in the margin of *Bishop Jeremy Taylor's Rule of Holy Living*, chap. iv. § 10. par. 10. The good bishop has referred to the passage so vaguely, as to be of no assistance, and I have searched in vain for it in the editions of Fell and Baluze. But, however weak the judgment and bad the taste which could delight in such extravagances of rhetoric, none but a man of dishonest and wicked heart could pervert it to the purpose which Mr. T. has aimed at. Nothing can be plainer to an upright reader than this, that both the African Father and the Irish Bishop intended nothing more than to represent the religious benefits arising to the true believer and worthy communicant, from a devout meditating upon the sufferings of our blessed Redeemer. O what must be the horrid condition of that human mind, which can turn such a topic into insult and ribaldry!

As a further example of truth and accuracy, let us look at a passage of Mr. Taylor, relative to another of the Fathers; "Would Mr. Beard only turn to the 27th chapter of Origen's Answer to Celsus, he would find that Origen has described the crucifixion as a scene in a *tragedy*,—to his 7th chapter, he would find that he acknowledged that the name IESUS was only a sacred spell,—in chapter 10th, that Christianity would never bear examining." (p. 115.) Now let it be observed that here is a mode of reference not very likely to lead to a successful "turning to" the passages in this large Greek volume. The work consists of Eight long Books. In the most generally attainable edition, (that by Spencer, Cambridge, 1677,) each Book is printed in one continued flow of uniform lines, without any break or subdivision whatsoever. How can the possessor of this edition know in which of the Eight Books he must search? And no edition is divided into *Chapters*. The best edition, that of Delarue (Paris, 1733.) has each Book distri-

* "Sed omnia genera hominum quæ dicunt esse, esse credere non est necesse." *De Civ. Dei*, lib. xvi, cap. 8.

buted into a great number of *Sections*; no one having fewer than *sixty-five*, some considerably more, and making a total of 622. However, I have carefully examined the 7th and the 27th *Sections*, in each of the *Eight Books*; *without finding a single paragraph, sentence, or word, containing the positions which this man alleges*; while there is what I might call an infinity of matter, in every part of the *Eight Books*, declaring the reverse of those allegations.

I have also taken pains to discover passages in any other parts of Origen's great work, which might resemble, or give a colour for, the representations of Mr. Taylor.

To his first assertion, that "Origen has described the crucifixion of Jesus as a scene in a tragedy," I can find nothing that wears the slightest resemblance; but passages occur without number, in which he maintains, and by various evidence establishes, the real facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus, in opposition to all notions of fiction, allegorical meaning, visionary appearance, or collusive management. In Book II. Section 56, (in Spencer's edition, p. 95.) he *contrasts* the death and resurrection of Jesus, *as certain facts*, with "the heroic histories of those who were said to have descended into the invisible world and to have returned thence; such as Orpheus, Protesilaus, Hercules, and Theseus." I know not whether to suppose it possible, that Mr. T. may have stumbled upon this passage, and from it have caught up the hint of his representation; for, false as the allegation would be, erected upon such a basis, it would really have more shadow of truth than belongs to many of his pretended conformities and identities.

Though there is nothing that justifies, or even palliates, the second assertion, that Origen "acknowledged that the name JESUS was only a sacred spell;" yet there are five passages from which a *disingenuous* mind might draw the statement, though it would be evidently most unjust. I therefore translate them all, and commit them, without any comment, to the reader's reflection.

"I know not what could have excited Celsus to say, that Christians affect to exercise power by means of certain dæmons and by charms; obscurely referring, as I suppose, to what is said of persons singing enchantments to dæmons, and so expelling them. It is clearly manifest that what he advances is a calumnious accusation. For they" [the Christians] "do not affect to have power by charms, but by the name of Jesus, united with the declaration of the narratives concerning him. These things thus spoken have many times made dæmons to depart from men; and this especially when they who speak them do it sincerely, from an honest and faithful disposition. Such power has the name of Jesus against dæmons, so as sometimes to accomplish the purpose even when uttered by bad men; which indeed Jesus himself declared, when he said, Many shall say unto me in that day, In thy name we have cast out

dæmons, and have done mighty works." Book I. Section 6. In Spencer's ed. p. 7.

"We declare, therefore, that the whole world of mankind possesses the work of Jesus, wherever dwell the churches of God through Jesus, consisting of those who have turned from their sins, however numberless. And even now the name of Jesus removes disordered impressions from the mind, and dæmons and bodily distempers. It also works internally so as to produce an admirable meekness, and propriety of manners, and philanthropy, and kindness, and tenderness, in persons who, not putting on the appearance" [of being Christians] "from worldly motives or to gain human advantages, but who have received sincerely the doctrine concerning God and Christ, and the judgment to come." Book I. Section 67. Spencer, p. 53.

"But, when we relate the actions of Jesus, we adduce no mean reason why they should have taken place, even the purpose of God to establish, by means of Jesus, the doctrine which should bring salvation to men; which was further established upon the apostles as the foundations of the thus firmly laid edifice of Christianity, and which is making its progress through the subsequent times, in which are accomplished not a few healings of diseases in the name of Jesus, and some other manifestations which are not to be disregarded." Book III. Section 28. Spencer, p. 127.

After describing some Egyptian impostures, he goes on to say; "How very far from these, were the miracles of Jesus! For it was not a few juggling impostors, combining to curry favour with some king who had given them such commands, or some governor who had so enjoined them, who thought fit to make him up into a god; but it was the Creator of all things himself, according to his" [Jesus's] "miraculously persuasive power in delivering his doctrines, who displayed him as worthy of honour, not only to the persons who were well disposed towards him, but also to dæmons and other invisible powers; who, down to the present time, manifest that they are either afraid of the name of Jesus as their superior, or reverentially admit him to be their lawful sovereign. For, unless this appointment had been conferred upon him from God, the dæmons would not, in submission to the simple announcement of his name, have departed from those who had been the objects of their cruelty." Book III. Section 30. Spencer, p. 133.

With respect to his third assertion, there is a passage which may have furnished the pretext for it, in Book I. Section 10; (Spencer, p. 9.) but still the representation which he gives is not the less, in purport and effect, a *perfect falsehood*. The passage is a part of an argument, pursued through Sections 9, 10, and 11, brought as a reply to the objection of Celsus to the Christian Religion, that "some of them," [the Christians,] "are unwilling either to give or to receive a reason for what they believe; and that they use the expressions, *Do not examine, but*

believe ; and, *thy faith will save thee*. He also charges them with saying, *The wisdom which is in this life is bad, but the folly [i. e. in this life] is good.*" To these words of the shrewd heathen, Origen replies thus: " If it were possible for all men to relinquish the business of life, and enjoy leisure (*φιλοσοφείν*) to pursue abstract studies, no person ought to pursue any course but that. For in Christianity (without speaking assumingly) there is not a less examination of the things believed" [than in other branches of knowledge.]—" But, since this is impracticable, partly because of the necessary engagements of life, and partly because of the want of capacity in persons, so that very few can rise to the processes of reasoning ; what better method can be found for conferring benefit upon the generality of mankind, than that which has been given by Jesus to the nations?"—He then appeals to the fact that, by simply believing the Christian doctrine on the punishments of sin and the rewards of good actions, multitudes had been brought to forsake their vices and to lead virtuous lives: and he argues that a doctrine which has such excellent practical effects could not have had any other than a divine origin. Then we come to the 10th Section, of which the commencement is as follows ; " With regard, therefore, to this boasted objection concerning our faith, we have to say, that, taking into account the usefulness of this to the generality, we acknowledge that we do indeed teach those persons who cannot relinquish all their affairs and pursue (*ἐξετάσει λόγου*) a course of argumentative investigation, that they should (*πιστεύειν καὶ ἀλόγως*) believe even without such a process of argument." He proceeds to vindicate this way of relying upon the credible knowledge and fidelity of others, by saying that the very persons who adduce the objection do the same thing themselves, with respect to their own intellectual pursuits: that a young man who begins the study of philosophy, does not, in the first instance, wait to hear the arguments of all philosophers and sects, the refutation of some and the confirmation of others ; but, upon some general ground of preference, arising from the known character and moral effect of each sect, he chooses to which he shall attach himself ; and so becomes, at the outset, a Stoic, or a Platonic, or a Peripatetic, or an Epicuræan, or a disciple of any other sect of philosophers. He further observes, that men act upon this principle of probable expectation in forming their domestic establishments, in making voyages, in agriculture ; all human affairs indeed being (*πίστεως ἡρηγμένων*) "suspended upon faith." From these premises he argues, that it is most proper and rational to repose confidence in the supreme God, and in him who teaches that God only is to be worshipped.

Thus I have laid before the reader a translation of those paragraphs to which this accusation attaches, and have faithfully epitomized the rest. I am not defending Origen's positions; their propriety or impropriety is not our present consideration. My sole object is, by bringing the truth to light, to demonstrate

the style of unprincipled misrepresentation which Mr. T. perpetually employs. The impartial reader will observe another fact, of no small importance when one is dragged into a controversy with a person who is held by no bonds of truth and integrity: that such a man possesses this advantage over any rational and honest opponent, that he can utter in a single line the bold falsehood, or the more disguised but equally immoral misrepresentation; but the respondent party, in order to place the truth in a fair and just point of view, is doomed to the necessity of tediously minute explanations, which some may not have the patience to read, or will not take the pains to understand.

He borrows from Dr. Lardner a passage of Irenæus; adding, "Thus translated from the Latin of the Greek by Lardner;— I have collated the original text, which Lardner seems to have wanted for this passage." (p. 109.) Empty pedantry and mean falsehood! The "original text," the Greek, of Irenæus *is not extant* for this and a very large part besides of his works; and these portions remain to us *only* in a very ancient Latin translation.

The purport of the passage in Irenæus is, an argument in favour of the genuineness of our Four commonly received Gospels, from the circumstance that they were severally received by one or other of the sects of erroneous Christians, called Heretics. Hence, Mr. T. argues that, because Irenæus lived so near the time of the apostles, those Gospels could not have been Christian compositions, but must have been "really PAGAN in their origin:" and he endeavours to fortify this conclusion, by appealing to the authority of the Sibylline Verses, insinuating that those Verses were recited to Tarquinius Priscus, the Roman king, seven hundred years before Christ. Hence, he brings out his grand conclusion, to account at once for the antiquity and yet the spuriousness of the Christian Scriptures; affirming, "It is absolutely certain that the Pagans were in possession of the whole Gospel story many ages before its Jewish origin was pretended." (p. 117.) To this I reply:

1. That the *positive evidence* of every part of the case, much of which has been briefly indicated in these pages, and the full statements are easily accessible in well-known works on the respective subjects, DEMONSTRATES the *authenticity, credibility, and certainty* of the Four received Gospels, and the *truth* of the Christian System built upon them.

2. The position, that the Heathen mythology is fundamentally and substantially the same as the system of Christianity, is not only utterly devoid of evidence, but is so plainly contrary to the clearest facts of the case, that it may well appear useless to argue with any man who can affirm it. To any person who can read Hesiod, Apollodorus, or Ovid, or who has been delighted with the nobler productions of the Grecian and the Roman muse, and who will also seriously peruse the Christian Scriptures, I MAKE MY SOLEMN APPEAL. The materials

of the investigation lie upon the surface. They are readily enough accessible to a mere English reader. On the one hand are the monstrous fables of heathen antiquity; the polytheism, the gods stained with every vice, the cruelty, the licentiousness, the falsehoods avowed and gloried in: and on the other, the facts and doctrines, the precepts and spirit of Bible Christianity! To the man who does not see, or will not acknowledge the perfect and irreconcilable contradiction of these two, it is in vain for me to address a single word. I must leave him to the judgment of REASON and CONSCIENCE and the righteous GOD.

Mr. T. attempts to bolster up his ridiculous falsehoods, by adducing the story of Prometheus, having formed the first man and woman, offending the gods, and being chained to a rock (which he dishonestly calls "Prometheus in the agonies of *crucifixion*," as possessing "innumerable coincidences with the Christian tragedy." (p. 98.) That there are two or three points of general resemblance, is readily admitted; but these are such resemblances as are very often found, in comparing the lives and actions of different individuals among mankind: for example, Plutarch's parallel characters, and the principal events in the lives of Pisistratus, Cæsar, Cromwell, and Buonaparte. But every thing else is so contradictory and uncongenial, in the character and history of the fabled Prometheus and of JESUS the CHRIST, that to imagine their identity appears to me utterly impossible; *except for the slaves of one principle*, which unhappily exists in our world, the CREDULITY of an *infidel*.

In the same dishonest manner, Mr. T. quotes half a sentence from Cicero, (concealing, if indeed he knew, the place, but it is in the *De Naturâ Deorum*, lib. iii. cap. 16.) affirming that in it "he ridicules the doctrine of transubstantiation." (p. 111.) The design of this assertion is to support his vain absurdity, that Christianity, a part of which he pleases to reckon that Popish notion, existed in the superstitions of Greece and Rome. Quite as true and correct would it be to affirm, that Cicero spoke an oration against the American war, or that he wrote a Dialogue on British parliamentary eloquence.

3. The Sibylline Verses, from which Mr. T. quotes a line, and calls it a "Pagan hexameter," he well knows to be no genuine heathen production, but to have been the forgeries of some able but fraudulent person, in the second century after Christ. The apparent intention of that forgery was to promote the interests of Christianity: but such means of aiming at a good end are in direct opposition to both the spirit and the express precepts of our religion. Mr. T. does not fail often to pour out his virulence against the Christian religion, on account of those *pious frauds*, as they have been called, but which should rather be marked by the strongest terms of reprobation, as exceedingly wicked in their whole character, and infinitely insulting and offensive to the Author of Christianity. Mr. T. exults over the folly and bad principle of those Christian Fathers, who committed, or ap-

proved, or connived at, such detestable measures: though he, of all men, ought sensitively to shrink from censuring false and fraudulent dealing, in assertions and arguments. He perhaps fancies that he wounds the religion of Jesus and his apostles: but let him know that his weapons fall infinitely below their mark, and recoil on his own wretched cause.

I now close the ungracious toil of reviewing Mr. Taylor's disreputable pages, so filled with falsehood in statement and sophistry in argument. Amidst the mass of his misrepresentations, and obliged as I am to keep within narrow limits, many particulars have been passed by. But I have brought forward enough to satisfy any candid inquirer, as to the value of his pretensions and the character of his declamations. Whatever he may further say, or write, or publish, I shall sacrifice no more time and trouble in noticing.

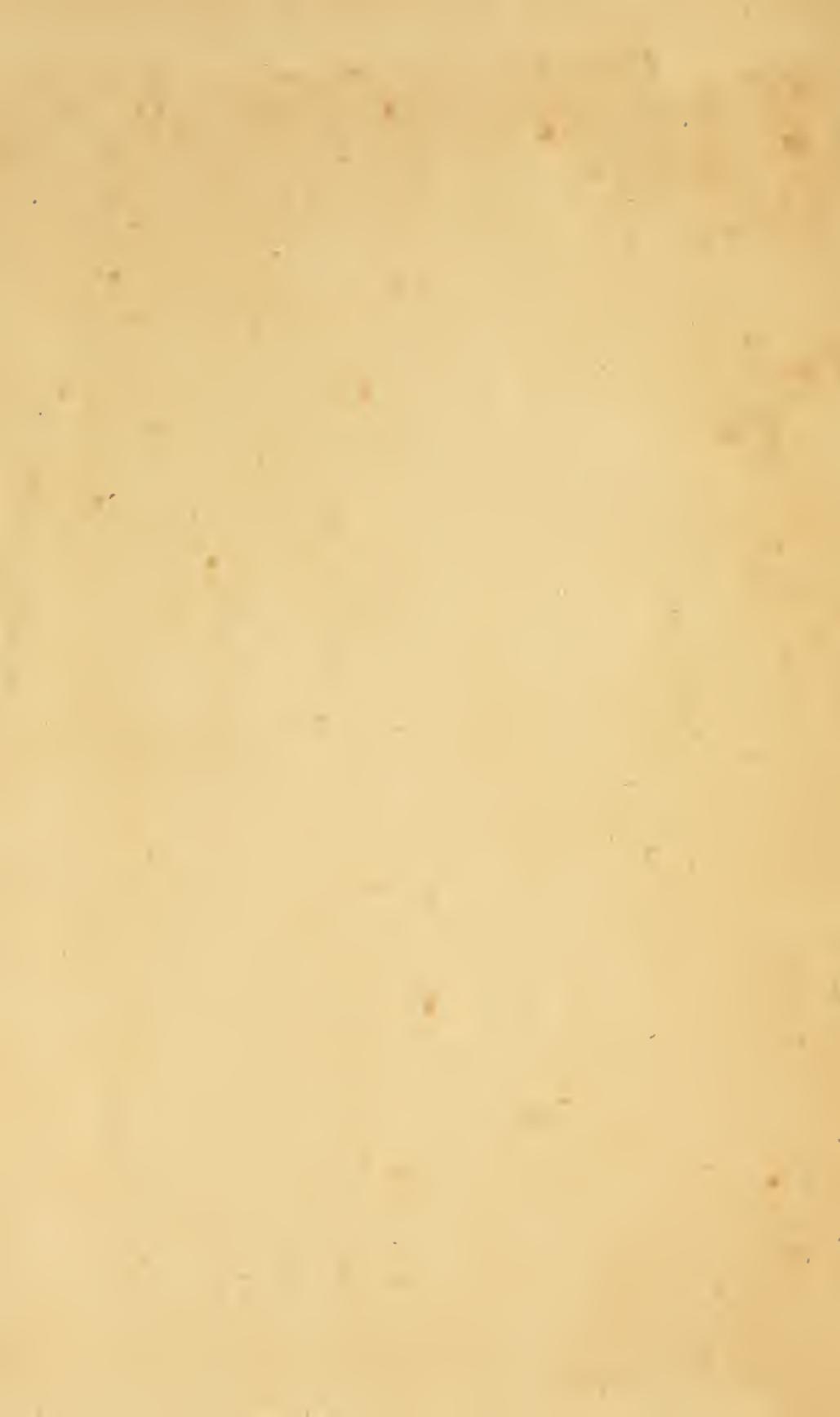
But, if there be any whose wish to escape from the obligations of religion, and to stifle the cries of a violated conscience, incline them to lend a willing ear to the disingenuous statements and irrational scoffs which this unhappy deluder has scattered abroad; I beg their attention to a single consideration.

You cannot say, that you have demonstrated Christianity to be a scheme of fiction and imposture. You must admit that, after all, it may turn out to be the System of Truth, and the Authoritative Declaration of the Supreme Being. You cannot be sure that there is not a future state, or that it will not be a state of righteous retribution. The awful experiment you must soon make; and it will be irretrievable.

It cannot be denied that many Deists, in the near prospect of death and the eternal world, have silently indicated, or have in loud agonies proclaimed, a total change in their opinions. In the utterance of their dreadful feelings, they have paid homage to the Truth which before they had scorned. Now, let me ask you, Did you ever know or hear of a man regretting on his death-bed that he had been a Christian; recanting his faith, repenting of his obedience, and lamenting that he had not joined the band of infidels, applauded their gaudy orators, and eagerly drank in their bold blasphemies?

THE END.







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