time when his Gospel was composed. Some critics think
that its original language was Hebrew; others, Greek;
while a third class decide in favour of a Hebrew and Greek
original. The reasons on which these several opinions
are founded are detailed in the author's larger Introduc-
tion, and do not admit of abridgment: the most pro-
bable is that, which determines that Matthew wrote a
Hebrew Gospel for the Hebrew Christians, about the
year 37, and afterwards a Greek Gospel about the year
61. The present Greek Gospel has every internal mark
of being an original writing: and the disappearance of
the Hebrew Gospel is sufficiently accounted for, not only
by the prevalence of the Greek language, but also by the
fact that it was so corrupted by the Ebionites (a sect con-
temporary with St. John), as to lose all its authority in
the church. The authenticity of his Gospel was never
doubted.

The voice of antiquity accords in testifying that
St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Judæa for the Jewish
nation, while the church consisted wholly of the cir-
cumcision, that is, of Jewish and Samaritan believers,
but principally Jewish; and, that he wrote it primarily
for their use, with a view to confirm those who believed,
and to convert those who believed not, we have, besides
historical facts, very strong presumptions from the book
itself. Every circumstance is carefully pointed out
which might conciliate the faith of that nation; and
every unnecessary expression is avoided, that might in
any way tend to obstruct it. The Gospel of St. Matthew
consists of four parts; viz.

Part I. treats on the Infancy of Jesus Christ. (ch. i. ii.)

Part II. records the Discourses and Actions of John
the Baptist and of Jesus Christ, preparatory to our
Saviour's commencing his public ministry. (ch. iii. iv.
1—11.)

Part III. relates the Discourses and Actions of Christ
in Galilee, by which he demonstrated that he was the Messiah. (ch. iv. 12.—xx. 16.)

Part IV. contains the Transactions relative to the passion and resurrection of Christ. (ch. xx. 17.—xxviii.)

Section III. — On the Gospel by Saint Mark.

This evangelist, whose Hebrew name was John, was nephew to Barnabas (Col. iv. 10.), and the son of Mary, a pious woman of Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and first Christians often assembled. (Acts xii. 12.) He is supposed to have adopted the surname of Mark when he left Judæa to preach the Gospel in foreign countries. The consent of antiquity attests that he wrote his Gospel in Greek, under the inspection of the apostle Peter, at Rome, and between the year 60 and 63. It may be divided into three parts; viz.

Part I. The Transactions from the Baptism of Christ to his entering on the more public part of his Ministry. (ch. i. 1—13.)

Part II. The Discourses and Actions of Jesus Christ to his going up to Jerusalem to the fourth and last Passover. (ch. i. 14.—x.)

Part III. The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. (ch. xi—xiv.)


Saint Luke was descended from Gentile parents, and in his youth had embraced Judaism, from which he was converted to Christianity. He was for the most part the companion of the apostle Paul; and as no antient writer has mentioned his suffering martyrdom, it is probable that he died a natural death. The genuineness and authenticity of his Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles
were never doubted. The Gospel appears to have been written about the year 63 or 64: it was written for Gentile Christians, and the events which he has recorded are classed, after the manner of some antient profane writers, instead of being disposed in chronological order, as St. Matthew has related them. The Gospel of St. Luke may be divided into five classes or sections; viz.

Class I. contains the narrative of the birth of Christ, together with all the circumstances that preceded, attended, and followed it. (ch. i. ii. 1—40.)

Class II. comprises the particulars relative to our Saviour's infancy and youth. (ch. ii. 41—52.)

Class III. includes the preaching of John, and the baptism of Jesus Christ, whose genealogy is annexed. (ch. iii.)

Class IV. comprehends the discourses, miracles, and actions of Jesus Christ, during the whole of his ministry. (ch. iv.—ix. 50.) This appears evident; for, after St. Luke had related his temptation in the wilderness (ch. iv. 1—13.), he immediately adds, that Christ returned to Galilee (11.), and mentions Nazareth (16.), Capernaum (31.), and the lake of Gennesareth (v. 1.); and then he proceeds as far as ix. 50. to relate our Saviour's transactions in Galilee.

Class V. begins with chap. ix. 51., and contains an account of our Saviour's last journey to Jerusalem. Consequently, this class comprises every thing relative to his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. (ix. 51—62. x—xxiv.)

Section V. — On the Gospel by Saint John.

Saint John, the evangelist and apostle, was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman of the town of Bethsaida, on the sea of Galilee, and the younger brother of James the elder. His mother's name was Salome. He was eminently the object of our Lord's regard and confidence;
and was, on various occasions, admitted to free and intimate intercourse with him, so that he was characterised as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." (John xiii. 23.) Hence we find him present at several scenes, to which most of the other disciples were not admitted. He died a natural death about the year 100. He wrote his Gospel in Greek, most probably about the year 97: it has been universally received as genuine: indeed, besides the uninterrupted testimony of Christian antiquity, the circumstance of its details prove that his book was written by an eye-witness of the transactions it records.

The general design of Saint John, in common with the rest of the evangelists, is, as he himself assures us, to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life through his name. (xx. 31.) But, besides this, we are informed by antient writers, that there were two especial motives that induced Saint John to compose his Gospel. One was, to supply those important events in our Saviour's life which had been omitted by the other evangelists; the other motive was, that he might refute the heresies of Cerinthus and the Nicolaitans, who had attempted to corrupt the Christian doctrine. Of the Nicolaitans nothing certain is known: but, concerning the tenets of the Cerinthians, the following particulars (taken from the author's larger Introduction) are necessary to be known in order to understand the design of the evangelist in composing his Gospel.

Cerinthus was by birth a Jew, who lived at the close of the first century: having studied literature and philosophy at Alexandria, he attempted at length to form a new and singular system of doctrine and discipline, by a monstrous combination of the doctrines of Jesus Christ with the opinions and errors of the Jews and Gnostics. From the latter he borrowed their Pleroma or fulness, their Eons or spirits, their Demiurgus or creator of the visible world, &c. and so modified and tempered these fictions as to give them an air of Judaism, which must
have considerably favoured the progress of his heresy. He taught, that the most high God was utterly unknown before the appearance of Christ, and dwelt in a remote heaven called Πλερȳμα (Plerōma) with the chief spirits or αἰῶνes—That this supreme God first generated an only begotten son, Μονογενῆ (Monogenēs), who again begat the word, Ὄγος (Logos), which was inferior to the first-born—That Christ was a still lower αἰῶn, though far superior to some others—That there were two higher αἰῶnes distinct from Christ; one called ΖΩΗ (Zōē), or Life, and the other ΦΩΣ (Phōs), or the light—That from the αἰῶnes again proceeded inferior orders of spirits, and particularly one Demiurgus, who created this visible world out of eternal matter—That this Demiurgus was ignorant of the supreme God, and much lower than the αἰῶnes, which were wholly invisible—That he was, however, the peculiar God and protector of the Israelites, and sent Moses to them, whose laws were to be of perpetual obligation—That Jesus was a mere man, of the most illustrious sanctity and justice, the real son of Joseph and Mary—That the αἰῶn Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove when he was baptised, revealed to him the unknown Father, and empowered him to work miracles—That the αἰῶn Light entered John the Baptist in the same manner, and therefore that John was in some respects preferable to Christ—That Jesus, after his union with Christ, opposed himself with vigour to the God of the Jews, at whose instigation he was seized and crucified by the Hebrew chiefs, and that when Jesus was taken captive and came to suffer, Christ ascended up on high, so that the man Jesus alone was subjected to the pains of an ignominious death—That Christ will one day return upon earth, and renewing his former union with the man Jesus, will reign in Palestine a thousand years, during which his disciples will enjoy the most exquisite sensual delights.
Bearing these dogmas in mind, we shall find that Saint John's Gospel is divided into three parts; viz.

Part I. contains doctrines laid down in opposition to those of Cerinthus. (John i. 1—18.)

Part II. delivers the proofs of those doctrines in an historical manner. (i. 19. xx. 29.)

Part III. is a conclusion or appendix, giving an account of the person of the writer, and of his design in writing his Gospel. (xx. 30, 31. xxi.)


The Book of the Acts of the Apostles forms the fifth and last of the historical books of the New Testament, and connects the Gospels with the Epistles; being an useful postscript to the former, and a proper introduction to the latter. That Saint Luke was the author of the Acts of the Apostles, is evident, both from the introduction, and from the unanimous testimonies of the early Christians. The Gospel and the Book of the Acts of the Apostles are both inscribed to Theophilus; and in the very first verse of the Acts there is a reference made to his Gospel, which he calls "the former Treatise." On this account Dr. Benson and some other critics have conjectured that Saint Luke wrote the Gospels and Acts in one book, and divided it into two parts. From the frequent use of the first person plural, it is clear that he was present at most of the transactions he relates. To the genuineness and authenticity of this book, which was written about the year 63, all the Christian Fathers bear unanimous testimony.

The Acts of the Apostles may be divided into three principal parts; viz.

Part I. contains the Rise and Progress of the mother church at Jerusalem from the time of our Saviour's ascension to the first Jewish persecution. (ch. i.—viii.)
PART II. comprises the Dispersion of the Disciples —
the propagation of Christianity among the Samaritans —
the conversion of St. Paul, and the foundation of a
Christian church at Antioch. (ch. viii. 5.—xii.)

PART III. describes the Conversion of the more remote
Gentiles, by Barnabas and Paul, and, after their separa-
tion, by Paul and his associates, among whom was Luke
himself during the latter part of Paul's labours. (ch. xiii
—xxviii.)

The Acts of the Apostles afford abundant evidence of
the truth and divine original of the Christian religion:
for we learn from this book, that the Gospel was not
indebted for its success to deceit or fraud; but it was
wholly the result of the mighty power of God, and of
the excellence and efficacy of the saving truths which
it contains. The general and particular doctrines, com-
prised in the Acts of the Apostles, are perfectly in
unison with the glorious truths revealed in the Gospels,
and illustrated in the apostolic Epistles; and are admir-
able suited to the state of the persons, whether Jews or
Gentiles, to whom they were addressed. And the evi-
dences which the apostles gave of their doctrine, in their
appeals to prophecies and miracles, and the various gifts
of the Spirit, were so numerous and so strong, and at the
same time so wisely adapted to every class of persons,
that the truth of the religion which they attest cannot
be reasonably disputed.

In perusing this very interesting portion of sacred
history, it will be desirable constantly to refer to the
accompanying map of the Travels of the Apostles, par-
ticularly those of Saint Paul.
CHAPTER II.

ON THE EPISTOLARY OR DOCTRINAL WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,
PARTICULARLY THOSE OF SAINT PAUL.

SECTION I. — A Brief Account of the Apostle Paul. — Nature of the
Epistolarv Writings of the New Testament.

I. A Brief Account of Saint Paul.

Saul, also called Paul, (by which name this illustrious apostle was generally known after his preaching among the Gentiles, especially among the Greeks and Romans,) was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, a descendant of the patriarch Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, and a native of Tarsus, then the chief city of Cilicia. By birth he was a citizen of Rome, a distinguished honour and privilege, which had been conferred on some of his ancestors for services rendered to the commonwealth during the wars. His father was a Pharisee, and he himself was educated in the most rigid principles of that sect; but he was also early initiated into Greek literature at Tarsus: and his parents completed his education by having him taught the art of tent-making, in conformity with the custom of the Jews at that time. It appears from Acts xxiii. 16—22. and Rom. xvi. 7. 11. 21. that his sister's son and some others of his relations were Christians, and had embraced the Gospel before his conversion: but Saul himself was an inveterate enemy of the Christian name and faith, until his conversion in A.D. 35, on the road to Damascus, whither he was going with letters of commission from the high-priest and elders, or sanhedrin, to the synagogue of the Jews at Damascus, empowering him to bring to Jerusalem any Christians, whether men or women, whom he might find there.

Shortly after his baptism, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him, Saul went into Arabia (Gal. i. 17.) ; and during his residence in that country he was fully in-
structured, as we may reasonably think, by divine revelation, and by diligent study of the Old Testament, in the doctrines and duties of the Gospel. Three years after his conversion, he returned to Damascus, A.D. 38 (Gal. i. 18.), and boldly preached the Gospel to the Jews, who rejecting his testimony, as an apostate, conspired to kill him; but the plot being communicated to Saul, he escaped from Damascus privately by night, and went up to Jerusalem for the first time since his conversion. After some hesitation on the part of the Christians in that city, he was acknowledged to be a disciple. He remained at Jerusalem only fifteen days, during which his boldness in preaching the Gospel so irritated the Hellenistic Jews, that they conspired against him; "which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea Philippi, and sent him forth to Tarsus." (Acts ix. 28—30.)

From that time (A.D. 39) to the year 58, the apostle preached the Gospel in various parts of Asia Minor and in Greece with great energy and success; but, being rescued from a tumultuous assembly of Jews who would have put him to death at Jerusalem (Acts xxii. 23.), he was sent to Cæsarea by the tribune Lysias, who directed the Jewish council to accuse him before Felix the Roman procurator. By this officer he was detained in prison two years; and, his cause being heard before Festus the successor of Felix, the apostle appealed to the imperial tribunal, and was sent to Rome. (Acts xxiv—xxvii.) A.D. 60. Here he was confined two years, from A.D. 61 to 63. As Saint Luke has not continued Saint Paul's history beyond his first imprisonment at Rome, we have no authentic record of his subsequent travels and labours from the spring of A.D. 63, when he was released, to the time of his martyrdom. This is said to have taken place by decapitation, June 29. A.D. 66, at Aquæ Salviae, three miles from Rome. Fourteen epistles are extant bearing the name of this distinguished
“apostle of Jesus Christ,” whose life and labours have justly been considered as an irrefragable proof of the truth of the Christian revelation.


The Epistles, or letters addressed to various Christian communities, and also to individuals, by the apostles Paul, James, Peter, and John, form the second principal division of the New Testament. These writings abundantly confirm all the material facts related in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. The particulars of our Saviour’s life and death are often referred to in them, as grounded upon the undoubted testimony of eye-witnesses, and as being the foundation of the Christian religion. The speedy propagation of the Christian faith, recorded in the Acts, is confirmed beyond all contradiction by innumerable passages in the Epistles, written to the churches already planted; and the miraculous gifts, with which the apostles were endued, are often appealed to in the same writings, as an undeniable evidence of their divine mission.

Though all the essential doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion were unquestionably taught by our Saviour himself, and are contained in the Gospels, yet it is evident to any person who attentively studies the Epistles, that they are to be considered as commentaries on the doctrines of the Gospel, addressed to particular Christian societies or persons, in order to explain and apply those doctrines more fully, to confute some growing errors, to compose differences and schisms, to reform abuses and corruptions, to excite the Christians to holiness, and to encourage them against persecutions. And since these Epistles were written (as we have already shown) under divine inspiration, and have uniformly been received by the Christian church as the productions of inspired writers, it consequently follows, notwithstanding some writers have insinuated that they are not
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

of equal authority with the Gospels, while others would reject them altogether;) that what the apostles have delivered in these Epistles, as necessary to be believed or done by Christians, must be as necessary to be believed and practised, in order to salvation, as the doctrines and precepts delivered by Jesus Christ himself, and recorded in the Gospels; because, in writing these Epistles, the sacred penmen were the servants, apostles, ambassadors, and ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, and their doctrines and precepts are the will, the mind, the truth, and the commandments of God himself. On account of the fuller displays of evangelical truth contained in this portion of the sacred volume, the Epistles have by some divines been termed the doctrinal books of the New Testament.

The Epistles contained in the New Testament are twenty-one in number, and are generally divided into two classes; viz. the fourteen Epistles of Saint Paul, and the seven Catholic or general Epistles, written by the apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude: the reason of this appellation will be found in Chapter III. Sect. I. pp. 442, 443. infra.

The general plan on which the Epistles are written, is, first, to discuss and decide the controversy, or to refute the erroneous notions, which had arisen in the church, or among the persons to whom they are addressed, and which was the occasion of their being written; and, secondly, to recommend the observance of those duties which would be necessary, and of absolute importance to the Christian church in every age, consideration being chiefly given to those particular graces or virtues of the Christian character, which the disputes that occasioned the Epistles might tempt them to neglect.

The observations on the doctrinal interpretation of Scripture, in pp. 203—206., will be found useful in studying the Epistles. A Table of the times, when they
were most probably composed, will be found in the Appendix, No. II.

SECTION II. — On the Epistle to the Romans.

The Epistle to the Romans, though seventh in order of time, is placed first of all the apostolical letters, either from the pre-eminence of Rome, as being the mistress of the world, or because it is the longest and most comprehensive of all Saint Paul's Epistles. Various years have been assigned for its date: but the most probable is that, which refers this Epistle to the end of 57, or the beginning of 58; at which time Saint Paul was at Corinth.

Christianity is generally supposed to have been first planted at Rome by some of those "strangers of Rome, Jews, and proselytes," (Acts ii. 10.) who heard Peter preach, and were converted at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

The occasion of writing this Epistle may be easily collected from the Epistle itself. It appears that Saint Paul, who had been made acquainted with all the circumstances of the Christians at Rome by Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. xvi. 3.), and by other Jews who had been expelled from Rome by the decree of Claudius (Acts xviii. 2.), was very desirous of seeing them, that he might impart some spiritual gift; but, being prevented from visiting them, as he had proposed, in his journey into Spain, he availed himself of the opportunity that presented itself to him by the departure of Phœbe to Rome, to send them an Epistle. Finding, however, that the church was composed partly of Heathens who had embraced the Gospel, and partly of Jews, who, with many remaining prejudices, believed in Jesus as the Messiah; and finding also that many contentions arose from the Gentile converts claiming equal privileges with the Hebrew Christians (which claims the latter absolutely
refused to admit unless the Gentile converts were circumcised), he wrote this Epistle to compose these differences, and to strengthen the faith of the Roman Christians against the insinuations of false teachers; being apprehensive lest his involuntary absence from Rome should be turned by the latter to the prejudice of the Gospel.

This Epistle consists of four parts; viz.

Part I. The Introduction. (ch. i. 1—13.)

Part II. contains the Doctrinal Part of the Epistle concerning justification. (i. 16—32. ii—xi.)

The apostle's design in this portion of his epistle is, to show that all men are obnoxious to divine condemnation,—not only the Gentiles who violated the law of nature, but also the Jews who transgressed the law which had been given to them by God: consequently, that no one is righteous in the sight of God through the works of the law, whether that of nature or the law of Moses, and that no one can obtain remission of sins or eternal salvation; but that the only way by which these blessings can be obtained, is faith in Jesus Christ, which way God has prepared not merely for the Jews, but also for the whole human race.

Part III. comprises the Hortatory or Practical Part of the Epistle (ch. xii—xv. 1—14.), in which the apostle exhorts Christian believers to dedicate themselves to God, and how they should demean themselves to one another.

Part IV. The Conclusion, in which Saint Paul excuses himself, partly for his boldness in thus writing to the Romans (xv. 14—21.), and partly for not having hitherto come to them (22.), but promises to visit them, recommending himself to their prayers (23—33.); and sends various salutations to the brethren at Rome. (xvi.)

In perusing this Epistle, it will be desirable to read, at least, the eleven first chapters, at once, uninterrupted; as every sentence, especially in the argumentative part, bears an intimate relation to, and is dependent upon, the whole discourse, and cannot be understood unless we comprehend the scope of the whole. Further,
in order to enter fully into its spirit, we must enter into
the spirit of a Jew in those times, and endeavour to
realise in our own minds his utter aversion from the
Gentiles, his valuing and exalting himself upon his re-
lation to God and to Abraham, and also upon his law,
pompous worship, circumcision, &c. as if the Jews were
the only people in the world who had any right to the
favour of God.

Section III. — On the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

This Epistle was written, not at Philippi, as the Greek
subscription imports, but from Ephesus, as is evident
from xvi. 8., and about the year 57: its genuineness was
never disputed.

Christianity was first planted at Corinth by St. Paul
himself, who resided here a year and six months, be-
tween the years 51 and 53. The church consisted
partly of Jews, and partly of Gentiles, but chiefly of
the latter; whence the apostle had to combat, sometimes
with Jewish superstition, and sometimes with Heathen
licentiousness. On Saint Paul's departure from Corinth,
he was succeeded by Apollos, "an eloquent man, and
mighty in the Scriptures," who preached the Gospel
with great success. (Acts xviii. 24—28.) Aquila and
Sosthenes were also eminent teachers in this church.
(xviii. 3.; 1 Cor. i. 1.) But, shortly after Saint Paul
quitted this church, its peace was disturbed by the in-
trusion of false teachers, who made great pretensions to
cloquence, wisdom, and knowledge of their Christian
liberty, and thus undermined his influence, and the
credit of his ministry. Hence two parties were formed,
one of which contended strenuously for the observance
of Jewish ceremonies, while the other, misinterpreting
the true nature of Christian liberty, indulged in excesses
which were contrary to the design and spirit of the
Gospel. One party boasted that they were the followers of Paul; and another, that they were the followers of Apollos. To correct these and other abuses, and also to answer some queries which the Christians at Corinth had proposed to the Apostle, was the design of this Epistle, which divides itself into three parts; viz.

Part I. The Introduction (ch. i. 1—9.), in which Saint Paul expressions his satisfaction at all the good he knew of them, particularly at their having received the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of the Gospel.

Part II. contains the Treatise or Discussion of various particulars, adapted to the state of the Corinthian church; which may be commodiously arranged into two sections.

1st. contains a reproof of the corruptions, abuses, and factions, which disgraced the church. (i. 10. vi. 1—20.)

2nd. contains an answer to the questions which the Corinthian church had proposed to the apostle. (vii—xv.)

Part III. contains the conclusion, comprising directions relative to the contributions for the saints at Jerusalem, promises that the apostle would shortly visit them, and salutations to various members of the church at Corinth. (xvi.)

Section IV. — On the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

This Epistle was written from Macedonia, most probably from Philippi, and within a year after the preceding Epistle, that is, early in the year 58: its genuineness was never doubted. Compelled to vindicate his apostolic character, Saint Paul here furnishes us with many interesting details respecting his personal history and sufferings for the name and faith of Christ. He commends the faithful members of the church at Corinth, for their obedience to his injunctions contained in his former Epistle, and particularly for excommunicating an inces-
tuous person; and excites them to finish their contributions for their poor brethren in Judæa.

This Epistle consists of three parts; viz.

**Part I. The Introduction.** (ch. i. 1, 2.)

**Part II. St. Paul's Apologetic Discourse, in which,**

1. He justifies himself from the imputations of the false teacher and his adherents, by showing his sincerity and integrity in the discharge of his ministry; and that he acted not from worldly interest, but from true love for them, and a tender concern for their spiritual welfare. (i. 5—24. ii—vii.)

2. He exhorts them to a liberal contribution for their poor brethren in Judæa. (viii. ix.)

3. He resumes his apology; justifying himself from the charges and insinuations of the false teacher and his followers; in order to detach the Corinthians from them, and to re-establish himself and his authority. (x—xiii. 10.)

**Part III. The Conclusion.** (xiii. 14—15.)

**Section V. — On the Epistle to the Galatians.**

The Epistle to the Galatians, among whom Christianity had been planted by Saint Paul himself, was most probably written from Corinth about the latter end of the year 52 or early in 53. The apostle's design in writing it was, first, to assert his apostolical character and authority, and the doctrine which he taught, in opposition to the erroneous tenets of a judaising teacher; and, secondly, to confirm the Galatian churches in the faith of Christ, especially with respect to the important point of justification by faith alone; to expose the errors which had been disseminated among them, by demonstrating to them the true nature and use of the moral and ceremonial law; and to revive those principles of Christianity which he had taught when he first preached the Gospel to them.

This Epistle is written with great energy and force of
language, and affords a fine specimen of Saint Paul's skill in conducting an argument. It consists of three parts; viz.

**Part I. The Introduction. (ch. i. 1—5.)**

**Part II. The Treatise or Discussion of the subjects which had occasioned this Epistle:** in which the apostle first vindicates his doctrine and authority (ch. ii. 6—24. ii.) ; and then disputes against the advocates for circumcision (iii.—v. 9.) and gives the Galatian Christians various instructions for their conduct. (v. 10—26. vi. 1—10.)

**Part III. The Conclusion, which is a summary of the topics discussed in this Epistle, terminates with an apostolic benediction. (vi. 11—18.)**

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**Section VI. On the Epistle to the Ephesians.**

Ephesus was the metropolis of the proconsular Asia, distinguished for the magnificent temple of Diana, there erected, as well as for the accomplishments, luxury, and lasciviousness of its inhabitants. Christianity was first planted here, about A. D. 54, by Saint Paul ; who wrote this Epistle (the genuineness of which is undisputed) about the year 61, during the early part of his imprisonment at Rome. In this animated epistle he shows the grand design of the Gospel, and exhorts his converts against those evil practices and customs to which they had been addicted when Heathens (ch. i.—iii.), and which, as believers in Christ, they had renounced. He then urges them to walk in a manner becoming their profession, in the faithful discharge both of the general and common duties of religion, and of the special duties of particular relations (iv. v. 1—9.), and encourages them to war the spiritual warfare, and concludes with his apostolic benediction. (vi. 10—24.)
SECTION VII.—On the Epistle to the Philippians.

This Epistle was written to the Philippians towards the close of St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, about the end of the year 62, or early in 63: its genuineness was never questioned. Its scope is to confirm them in the faith of the Gospel (ch. i. 1—20.), and to encourage them to walk in a manner becoming their holy profession. (i. 21—30. ii.) He then cautions them against those judaizing teachers who preached Christ through envy and strife (iii. iv. 1.); and concludes with various exhortations, at the same time testifying his gratitude to them for their Christian bounty to him during his imprisonment. (iv. 2—23.)

SECTION VIII.—On the Epistle to the Colossians.

This Epistle bears so close a resemblance to that addressed to the Ephesians, that they ought to be read together, in order to be fully understood. It is not known by whom Christianity was first planted at Colosse: from internal evidence we are enabled to refer its date to the year 62. No doubt was ever entertained respecting its genuineness.

The scope of the Epistle to the Colossians is, first, to show, in opposition to the errors of some judaizing teachers, that all hope of man's redemption is founded on Christ our Redeemer, in whom alone all complete fulness, perfections, and sufficiency, are centered; (ch. i. ii. 1—7.); secondly, to caution the Colossians against the insinuations of judaizing teachers, and also against philosophical speculations and deceits, and human traditions, as inconsistent with Christ and his fulness for our salvation (ii. 8—23.); and to excite the Colossians, by the most persuasive arguments, to a temper and conduct worthy of their sacred character. (iii. iv. 1—6.) The
Epistle concludes with matters chiefly of a private nature, except the directions for reading it in the church of Laodicea, as well as that of Colossæ. (iv. 7—18.)

The Epistle from Laodicea, mentioned in ch. iv. 16., which some have supposed to have been an epistle to the church at Laodicea, was most probably the Epistle to the Ephesians; Laodicea being within the circuit of the Ephesian church.

SECTION IX. — On the First Epistle to the Thessalonians.

Thessalonica was a large and populous city and seaport of Macedonia, the capital of one of the four districts into which the Romans divided that country after its conquest by Paulus Aemilius. Besides being the seat of the proconsul of Macedonia, Thessalonica was commodiously situated for commerce, which was carried on by its inhabitants to a considerable extent; the Jews were very numerous here. Christianity was first planted here by St. Paul, A. D. 50. The first Epistle to the Thessalonians was the earliest of all that apostle's writings; its date is referred to the year 52, and its genuineness has never been questioned.

St. Paul, having heard a favourable report of the steadfastness of the Thessalonians in the faith of Christ, wrote this Epistle to confirm them in that faith, and to animate them to a holy conversation, becoming the dignity of their high and holy calling. This Epistle consists of five parts; viz.

PART I. The Inscription. (i. 1.)

PART II. celebrates the grace of God towards the Thessalonians, and reminds them of the manner in which the Gospel was preached to them. (i. 2—10. ii. 1—16.) In

PART III. The Apostle declares his desire to see them, together with his affectionate solicitude for them, and his prayer for them. (ii. 17—20. iii.) In
PART IV. He exhorts them to grow in holiness (iv. 1—8.), and in brotherly love, with industry. (9—12.)

PART V. contains exhortations against immoderate sorrow for their brethren who had departed in the faith; together with admonitions concerning the coming of Christ to judgment. (iv. 13—18. v. 1—11.)

The Epistle concludes with various practical advices and instructions. (v. 12—28.)

SECTION X.—On the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

This Epistle was evidently written soon after the first (A. D. 52); its scope principally is, to rectify a mistake of the Thessalonians, who, from misunderstanding a passage in his former letter, imagined that the day of judgment was at hand. This Epistle consists of five parts; viz.

PART I. The Inscription. (i. 1, 2.)

PART II. St Paul's Thanksgiving and Prayer for them. (i. 3—12.)

PART III. The Rectification of their Mistake, and the Doctrine concerning the man of sin. (ii.)

PART IV. Various Advices relative to Christian virtues, particularly,

i. To Prayer, with a prayer for the Thessalonians. (iv. 1—5.)

ii. To correct the disorderly. (iv. 6—16.)

PART V. The Conclusion. (iv. 17, 18.)

SECTION XI.—On the First Epistle to Timothy.

Timothy, to whom this Epistle was addressed, was a native of Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor. His father was a Greek, but his mother was a Jewess (Acts xvi. 1.), and, as well as his grandmother Loïs, a person of excellent character. (2 Tim. i. 5.) The pious care they took of his education soon appeared to have the desired success; for we are assured by St. Paul,
that, from his childhood, Timothy was well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) It is generally supposed that he was converted to the Christian faith during the first visit made by Paul and Barnabas to Lystra. (Acts xiv.) From the time of his conversion, Timothy made such proficiency in the knowledge of the Gospel, and was so remarkable for the sanctity of his manners, as well as for his zeal in the cause of Christ, that he attracted the esteem of all the brethren in those parts. Accordingly, when the apostle came from Antioch in Syria to Lystra the second time, they commended Timothy so highly to him, that St. Paul selected him to be the companion of his travels, having previously circumcised him (Acts xvi. 1--3.), and ordained him in a solemn manner by imposition of hands (1 Tim. iv. 14, 2 Tim. i. 6.), though at that time he probably was not more than twenty years of age. (1 Tim. iv. 12.) From this period frequent mention is made of Timothy, as the attendant of St. Paul in his various journeys, assisting him in each the Gospel, and in conveying his instructions to the churches.

The date of this Epistle has been much disputed, some writers placing it so early as the year 56, and others so late as the year 64. The latter is considered the most probable. This Epistle has always been acknowledged to be the undisputed production of St. Paul.

Timothy having been left at Ephesus, to regulate the affairs of the church in that city, St. Paul wrote this Epistle chiefly to instruct him in the choice of proper officers in the church, as well as in the exercise of a regular ministry. Another and very important part of the apostle’s design was to caution this young evangelist against the influence of those false teachers, who, by their subtle distinctions and endless controversies, had corrupted the purity and simplicity of the Gospel; to press upon him, in all his preaching, a constant regard to the interests of practical religion; and to animate him to
the greatest diligence, fidelity, and zeal, in the discharge of his office. The Epistle, therefore, consists of three parts; viz.

**Part I.** The Introduction. (ch. i. 1, 2.)

**Part II.** Instructions to Timothy how to behave in the administration of the church at Ephesus. (ii.—vi. 19.)

**Part III.** The Conclusion. (vi. 20, 21.)

Section XII. — On the Second Epistle to Timothy.

This Epistle was written during Saint Paul's second imprisonment, and not long before his martyrdom, most probably in the month of July or August, A.D. 65.

The immediate design of Saint Paul, in writing this Epistle to Timothy, was to apprise him of the circumstances that had befallen him during his second imprisonment at Rome, and to request him to come to him before the ensuing winter. But, being uncertain whether he should live so long, he gave him in this letter a variety of advices, charges, and encouragements, for the faithful discharge of his ministerial functions, with the solemnity and affection of a dying parent; in order that, if he should be put to death before Timothy's arrival, the loss might in some measure be compensated to him by the instructions contained in this admirable Epistle. With this view he exhorts him to stir up the gift which had been conferred upon him (2 Tim. i. 2—5.); not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of Paul's sufferings (6—16.); to hold fast the form of sound words, and to guard inviolably that good deposit of Gospel doctrine (i. 13, 14.) which he was to commit to faithful men who should be able to teach others (ii. 1, 2.); to endure with fortitude persecutions for the sake of the Gospel (ii. 3—13.); to suppress and avoid logomachies (14. 23.); to approve himself a faithful minister of the word (15—22.); and to forewarn him of the perils of the last days, in consequence of wicked hy-
pocritical seducers and enemies of the truth, who even then were beginning to rise in the church. These Saint Paul admonishes Timothy to flee, giving him various cautions against them. (iii.)

This Epistle affords a beautiful instance of the consolations which the Gospel imparts to all that truly believe it. "Imagine," says a learned commentator of the 18th century (Dr. Benson): — "Imagine a pious father, under sentence of death for his piety and benevolence to mankind, writing to a dutiful and affectionate son, that he might see and embrace him again before he left the world; particularly that he might leave with him his dying commands, and charge him to live and suffer as he had done; — and you will have the frame of the apostle's mind, during the writing of this whole Epistle." (Pref. to 2 Tim. p. 517.)

Section XIII. — On the Epistle to Titus.

Titus was a Greek, and one of St. Paul's early converts, who attended him and Barnabas to the first council at Jerusalem, A. D. 49, and afterwards on his ensuing circuit. (Tit. i. 4. Gal. ii. 1—3. Acts xv. 2.) Subsequently, he was confidentially employed by the apostle on various occasions; and, as appears from this Epistle, was specially appointed by him to regulate the Christian churches in that island. Whether Titus ever quitted Crete, we know not; neither have we any certain information concerning the time, place, or manner of his death; but, according to antient ecclesiastical tradition, he lived to the age of ninety-four years, and died and was buried in that island.

This Epistle, the genuineness of which was never questioned, is supposed to have been written after Saint Paul's liberation from his first imprisonment, A. D. 64. Titus having been left in Crete to settle the churches

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in the several cities of that island according to the apostolical plan, Saint Paul wrote this Epistle to him, that he might discharge his ministry among the Cretans with the greater success, and to give him particular instructions concerning his behaviour towards the judaising teachers, who endeavoured to pervert the faith and disturb the peace of the Christian church. The Epistle, therefore, consists of three parts.

Part I. The Inscription. (ch. i. 1—4.)

Part II. Instructions to Titus. 1. Concerning the ordination of elders, that is, of bishops and deacons. (i. 5—16.) — 2. To accommodate his exhortations to the respective ages, sexes, and circumstances of those whom he was commissioned to instruct; and, to give the greater weight to his instructions, he admonishes him to be an example of what he taught. (ii.) — 3. To inculcate obedience to the civil magistrate, in opposition to the Jews and judaising teachers, who, being averse from all civil governors, except such as were of their own nation, were apt to imbue Gentile Christians with a like seditious spirit, as if it were an indignity for the people of God to obey an idolatrous magistrate; and also to enforce gentleness to all men. (iii. 1—7.) — 4. To enforce good works, avoid foolish questions, and to shun heretics. (iii. 8—11.)

Part III. An invitation to Titus, to come to the apostle at Nicopolis, together with various directions. (iii. 12—15.)

Section XIV. — On the Epistle to Philemon.

Philemon was an inhabitant of Colossæ, most probably a converted Gentile, and it should seem, an opulent and benevolent Christian. As it is evident from the Epistle itself that Saint Paul was under confinement when he wrote it, and as he expresses (verse 22.) his expectation
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of being shortly released, it is probable that it was written during his first imprisonment at Rome, towards the end of A. D. 62, or early in 63; and was sent, together with the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus. Though some, formerly, questioned the genuineness of this Epistle, the attestations it has received from the earliest antiquity are deemed sufficient to establish that point. The design of this short but beautiful and persuasive letter is, to recommend Onesimus, formerly the runaway slave of Philemon (but now a Christian convert), to his master, and induce him to receive him again into his house. Whether Philemon pardoned or punished Onesimus, we have no information.

Section XV. — On the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Hebrews, to whom this Epistle is addressed, were Jewish Christians resident in Palestine: and, though considerable difference of opinion exists concerning its author, yet the similarity of its style and expressions to that of St. Paul's other Epistles proves that it was written by him in Greek, and not in Hebrew, as some eminent critics have supposed. The absence of his name is accounted for by the consideration that he withheld it lest he should give umbrage to the Jews. This Epistle was written from Rome, not long before he left Italy; viz. at the end of A. D. 62, or early in 63.

The occasion of writing this Epistle will be sufficiently apparent from an attentive review of its contents. The Jews did every thing in their power to withdraw their brethren, who had been converted, from the Christian faith: to specious arguments drawn from the excellency of the Jewish religion, they added others more cogent, namely, persecution and menaces. The object of the apostle, therefore, in writing this letter, is to show the
deity of Jesus Christ, and the excellency of his Gospel, when compared with the institutions of Moses; to prevent the Hebrews or Jewish converts from relapsing into those rites and ceremonies which were now abolished; and to point out their total insufficiency, as means of reconciliation and atonement. The reasonings are interspersed with numerous solemn and affectionate warnings and exhortations, addressed to different descriptions of persons. At length St. Paul shows the nature, efficacy, and triumph of faith, by which all the saints in former ages had been accepted by God, and enabled to obey, suffer, and perform exploits, in defence of their holy religion; from which he takes occasion to exhort the Hebrew Christians to steadfastness and perseverance in the true faith.

The Epistle to the Hebrews consists of three parts; viz.

Part I. demonstrates the deity of Christ, by the explicit declarations of Scripture concerning his superiority to angels, to Moses, to Aaron, and the whole Jewish priesthood, and the typical nature of the Mosaic ritual. (ch. i.—x. 18.)

Part II. comprehends the Application of the preceding arguments and proofs, (x. 19—39. to xiii. 1—19.) in which the Hebrews are exhorted to steadfastness in the faith of Christ, and are encouraged by the examples of believers in former ages. (ch. x. 19—39. to xiii. 1—19.)

Part III. The conclusion, containing a prayer for the Hebrews, and apostolical salutations. (ch. xiii. 20—25.)

Chapter III.

On the Catholic Epistles.

Section I. — On the Genuineness and Authenticity of the Catholic Epistles.

The Epistles of Saint Paul are followed in the canon of the New Testament by Seven Epistles, bearing the
names of the apostles James, Peter, Jude, and John. For many centuries, these Epistles have been termed Catholic or General Epistles, because they are not addressed to the believers of some particular city or country, or to individuals, as Saint Paul's Epistles were, but to Christians in general, or to Christians of several countries.

Although the authenticity of the Epistle of James, the second of Peter, the Epistle of Jude, and the second and third Epistles of John, was questioned by some antient fathers, as well as by some modern writers, yet we have every reason to believe that they are the genuine and authentic productions of the inspired writers whose names they bear. The claims to authenticity of these disputed Epistles are briefly noticed in the following sections. Indeed, the antient Christians had such good opportunities for examining this subject, they exercised so much caution in guarding against imposition, and so well founded was their judgment concerning the books of the New Testament, that no writing which they pronounced genuine has yet been proved spurious; nor have we at this day the least reason to believe any book to be genuine which they rejected.

Section II. — On the General Epistle of James.

James, the author of this Epistle, was the son of Alpheus or Cleophas; and is by St. Paul termed the "Brother" or near relation of our Lord (Gal. i. 18, 19.), and is also generally termed "the Less," partly to distinguish him from the other James, and probably also because he was lower in stature. That he was an apostle is evident from various passages in the New Testament, though it does not appear when his designation to this office took place. He was honoured by Jesus Christ with a separate interview soon after his resurrection. (1 Cor. xv. 7.)

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distinguished as one of the apostles of the circumcision (Acts i. 13.); and soon after the death of Stephen, A.D. 34, he seems to have been appointed president or bishop of the Christian church at Jerusalem, to have dwelt in that city, and to have presided at the council of the apostles, which was convened there A.D. 49. On account of his distinguished piety and sanctity, he was surnamed "the Just." He is said to have been stoned to death by the Jews, A.D. 62; and most learned men agree in placing his Epistle in the year 61. Though its authenticity has been doubted by some critics, we have every reason to believe it genuine, because it is cited by two of the apostolic fathers (those who immediately succeeded the apostles of Jesus Christ), and by several succeeding writers. But the most decisive proof of its canonical authority is, that the Epistle of Saint James is inserted in the Syriac version of the New Testament, executed at the close of the first or early in the second century, in which the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation are omitted.

The persons to whom this Epistle is addressed were Hebrew Christians, who were in danger of falling into the sins which abounded among the Jews of that time. The apostle, therefore, cautions them against those sins, and comforts them under the persecutions to which they were exposed; and in the course of his Epistle he takes occasion in chap. ii. 14—26. to rectify the notions of the Hebrew Christians concerning the doctrine of justification by faith. For as they were not to be justified by the law, but by the method proposed in the Gospel, and that method was said to be by faith, without the works of the law; they, some of them, weakly, and others, perhaps, wilfully, perverted that discovery; and were for understanding, by faith, a bare assent to the truth of the Gospel, without that living, fruitful, and evangelical faith,
which "worketh by love," and is required of all that would be saved.

The Epistle of Saint James divides itself into three parts, exclusive of the Introduction (ch. i. 1.); viz.

**PART I.** contains Exhortations to patience, humility, and suitable dispositions for receiving the word of God aright. (ch. i. 2—27.)

**PART II.** censures and condemns various sinful practices and erroneous notions; and here their mistaken notions of justification by faith without works are corrected and illustrated by the examples of Abraham and Rahab. (ii.—v. 1—6.)

**PART III.** comprises various Exhortations and Cautions. (v. 7—20.)

This Epistle deserves to be studied with great attention; as the instructions which it contains are highly useful and important to Christians in every age.

**SECTION III. — On the First General Epistle of Peter.**

Simon, surnamed Cephas or Peter, which appellation signifies a stone or rock, was the son of Jonas or Jonah, and was born at Bethsaida, on the coast of the sea of Galilee. He had a brother, called Andrew, and they jointly pursued the occupation of fishermen on that lake. These two brothers were hearers of John the Baptist; from whose express testimony, and their own personal conversation with Jesus Christ, they were fully convinced that he was the Messiah (John i. 35—42.); and from this time it is probable that they had frequent intercourse with our Saviour, and were witnesses of some of the miracles wrought by him, particularly that performed at Cana in Galilee. (John ii. 1, 2.) Both Peter and Andrew seem to have followed their trade, until Jesus Christ called them to "follow him," and promised to make them both "fishers of men." (Matt. iv. 18, 19. Mark i. 17.)
Luke v. 10.) From this time they became his companions, and when he completed the number of his apostles, they were included among them. Peter, in particular, was honoured with his Master's intimacy, together with James and John: he is frequently mentioned in the Gospels, and in the former part of the Acts of the Apostles. We know nothing of his personal history after the apostolic council related in Acts xv., which is the last place where he is mentioned by Luke, until, many years afterwards, ecclesiastical history informs us that he received the crown of martyrdom at Rome, A.D. 65, during the Neronian persecution; being crucified with his head downwards. The genuineness and authenticity of his first Epistle were never disputed: it was addressed to the same persecuted Hebrew Christians to whom Saint James and Saint Paul respectively wrote their letters. Its design is partly to support them under their afflictions and trials, and also to instruct them how to behave under persecution: and, as their character and conduct were liable to be aspersed and misrepresented by their enemies, they are exhorted to lead a holy life, that they might stop the mouths of their enemies, put their calumniators to shame, and win others over to their religion, by their holy and Christian conversation.

The Epistle may be conveniently divided into four sections, exclusive of the introduction and conclusion.

The Introduction. (ch. i. 1. 2.)

Section I. contains an exhortation to the Jewish Christians to persevere steadfastly in the faith, and to maintain a holy conversation, amid all their sufferings and persecutions. (i. 3—25. ii. 1—10.)

Section II. comprises exhortations, 1. To a holy conversation in general. (ii. 11, 12.) 2. To a particular discharge of their several duties, as dutiful subjects to their sovereign (13—15.), who at this time was the ferocious Nero; as servants to their masters (16—25.); and as husbands to their wives. (iii. 1—13.)
Section III. contains an exhortation to patience, submission, and to holiness of life, enforced by considering the example of Christ (iii. 14—18.), and various other examples and affecting considerations. (iii. 19—22. iv. 1—19.)

Section IV. Directions to the ministers of the churches, and to the people, how to behave towards each other. (v. 1—11.)

The Conclusion. (v. 12—14.)

Section IV. — On the Second General Epistle of Peter.

Though some doubts have been entertained respecting the authenticity of this Epistle, which has been received as the genuine production of Saint Peter ever since the fourth century, except by the Syrian church, in which it is read as an excellent book, though not of canonical authority; yet we have the most satisfactory evidence of its genuineness and authenticity. It is cited or alluded to by three apostolic fathers, and by another writer of the second century; and though no writer in the third century appears to have cited it, yet ever since the fourth century it has been recognised as a genuine and canonical epistle. It was also addressed to Hebrew Christians under persecution, and a short time before the apostle’s martyrdom, most probably early in the year 65. This Epistle consists of three parts; viz.

Part I. The Introduction. (ch. i. 1, 2.)

Part II. Having stated the Blessings to which God had called them, the apostle exhorts the Christians, who had received these precious gifts, to endeavour to improve in the most substantial graces and virtues. (i. 3—21. ii.) He then guards them against scoffers and impostors, who, he foretells, would ridicule their expectation of Christ’s coming. (iii. 1—14.)

Part III. The Conclusion, in which the apostle de-
clares the agreement of his doctrine with that of Saint Paul (iii. 15, 16.) and repeats the sum of the Epistle. (iii. 17, 18.)

SECTION V. — On the First General Epistle of Saint John.

The canonical authority of this Epistle, which appears to have been written A. D. 68 or 69, was never questioned: independently of historical or external testimony, we have the strongest internal evidence that this Epistle was written by the apostle John, in the very close analogy of its sentiments and expressions to those of his Gospel. Artless simplicity and benevolence, blended with singular modesty and candour, together with a wonderful sublimity of sentiment, are the characteristics of this Epistle, which is justly considered a catholic epistle; it being written for the use of Christians of every denomination and of every country, and designed to guard them against erroneous and licentious tenets, and to animate them to communion with God and a holy life. This Epistle consists of six sections, besides the conclusion, which is a recapitulation of the whole.

SECT. 1. asserts the true divinity and humanity of Christ, in opposition to the false teachers, and urges the union of faith and holiness of life as absolutely necessary to enable Christians to enjoy communion with God. (ch. i. 1—7.)

SECT. 2. shows that all have sinned, and explains the doctrine of Christ's propitiation. (i. 8—10. ii. 1, 2.) Whence the apostle takes occasion to illustrate the marks of true faith, viz. Obeying his commandments, and sincere love of the brethren: and shows that the love of the world is inconsistent with the love of God. (ii. 5—17.)

SECT. 3. asserts Jesus to be the same person with Christ, in opposition to the false teachers who denied it. (ii. 18—29.)

SECT. 4. On the privileges of true believers, and their consequent happiness and duties, and the marks by which they are known to be "the sons of God." (iii.)
Sect. 5. contains criteria by which to distinguish Antichrist and false Christians, with an exhortation to brotherly love. (iv.)

Sect. 6. shows the connexion between faith in Christ, the being born of God, love to God and his children, obedience to his commandments, and victory over the world; and that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, able to save us, and to hear the prayers we make for ourselves and others. (v. 1—16.)

The conclusion, which is a summary of the preceding treatise, shows that a sinful life is inconsistent with true Christianity; asserts the divinity of Christ; and cautions believers against idolatry. (v. 17—21.)

The preceding is an outline of this admirable Epistle; which, being designed to promote right principles of doctrine and practical piety in conduct, abounds, more than any book of the New Testament, with criteria by which Christians may soberly examine themselves whether they be in the faith. (2 Cor. xiii. 5.)

Considerable discussion has taken place respecting the genuineness of the clause in 1 John v. 7, 8. concerning the *Heavenly Witnesses*; the importance of which passage to the doctrine of the Trinity has caused it to be quoted on the one hand, as decisive of a Trinity of Divine Persons in one Deity; while, on the other hand, it has been as strenuously controverted, — not to say rejected as spurious, — by those who impugn or deny that fundamental doctrine of Holy Writ. The seventh and eighth verses of the fifth Chapter of Saint John's First General Epistle stand thus in the received Greek Text of the New Testament.

"Οτι τρεις εισιν οἱ μαρτυροντες [εν τω ουρανω ο Πατηρ, ο Λογος, και το Αγιον Πνευμα· και ουτοι τρεις ειν εισιν· Και τρεις εισιν οἱ μαρτυροντες εν τη γη] το πνευμα, και το άγιο, και το αιμα· και οι τρεις εις το εν εισιν·"

In the authorised English Translation, these verses are as follow:

"For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one. And there are
three that bear witness in earth," the spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one."

The disputed passage is included between the brackets.

The decision of the question respecting its genuineness depends partly upon Greek Manuscripts, partly upon Antient Versions, and partly upon the Quotations of it, which occur in the writings of the Antient Fathers of the Christian Church. These various testimonies are considered at length in the fourth Volume of the Author's larger "Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," from which the following summary is abridged: —

I. Evidence AGAINST the Genuineness of the disputed Clause.

Against the clause in question, it is urged that

1. It is not to be found in a single Greek manuscript, written before the sixteenth century.

2. It is wanting in the earliest and best editions of the Greek Testament.

It is found, indeed, in the Greek text of the Complutensian Polyglott, printed in 1514-15-17, though not published until 1522: but that polyglott, however valuable in other respects, is in this case of no authority beyond that of any common Greek Testament, any further than it is supported by antient MSS. Although the editors of the Complutensian Greek Testament profess to have followed the best and most antient manuscripts of the Vatican; yet it is most certain that they did not consult the celebrated Codex Vaticanus, which is reputed to be one of the most antient — if not the most antient — manuscript extant (for that manuscript has not the disputed clause), and they have not only departed from its readings in many places, but have also varied from the order of things in point of time and place. The most eminent critics are unanimously of opinion that the MSS. used by the Complutensian editors were neither antient nor valuable: for they scarcely ever agree with the most antient copies or fathers, except in conjunction with modern copies, and they almost always agree with the modern copies where these differ from the more antient. Because the Complutensian editors admitted the disputed passage into their text of the New Testament, it has been supposed that they found it in their
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MSS.; but there is every reason to conclude that they inserted it upon
the authority of the Latin Vulgate Version.

3. It is contained in the manuscripts of no other antient
version besides the Latin; and

4. Not all the manuscripts, even of the Latin version,
contain this clause.

It is wanting in upwards of forty of the oldest Latin manuscripts,
and in other MSS. it is found only in the margin, evidently inserted by
a later hand; and even in those manuscripts which do contain it, this
passage is variously placed, sometimes before and sometimes after the
earthly witnesses.

5. The Greek Fathers, or early Ecclesiastical Writers,
have never quoted the clause, even in those places where we
should most expect it.

6. The Protestant Reformers either rejected it, or at
least marked it as doubtful.

II. Evidence FOR the Genuineness OF THE DISPUTED
Clause.

(1.) External Evidence.

In behalf of the clause in question, it is contended,
that

1. It is found in the Latin version which was current in
Africa before the Latin Vulgate version was made, and also
in most manuscripts of the Vulgate version.

But the authority of these manuscripts is, justly to be suspected, on
account of the many alterations and corruptions which the Vulgate
version has undergone.

2. It is found in the Confession of Faith, and Liturgies
of the Greek Church.

3. It is found in the Primitive Liturgy of the Latin
Church.

When the schism, which commenced between those churches in the
fourth century, and which has been irreconcilable ever since the ninth
century, is considered, this circumstance, it has been urged, forms a
strong and conclusive argument in favour of the genuineness of the
disputed clause. For such is the enmity between these two commu-
nions, that the Greek church would never have adopted the clause merely on the authority of the Latin, if she had not sufficient authority for it in her own original Greek manuscripts. But it is most probable that this clause was interpolated from the Liturgy of the Latin church into that of the Greek church by some of the Greek clergy, who were devoted partisans of the Romish church, in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, at which time the majority of the common people, from the ignorance then generally prevailing throughout Europe, were incapable of detecting the imposition.

4. It is cited by numerous Latin fathers, especially by the Catholic bishops of Africa, in their confession of faith, by Cyprian, and by Tertullian.

The contrary is maintained by the antagonists of the disputed clause; and the authorities of Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, and the African bishops, which have principally been relied on, are inapplicable to prove the point for which they have been adduced.

(2.) Internal Evidence.

1. The connexion of the disputed clause requires its insertion, inasmuch as the sense is not perfect without it.

This argument is rebutted by the fact that the context admits of an exposition, which makes the sense complete without the disputed clause.

2. The grammatical structure of the original Greek requires the insertion of the seventh verse, and consequently that it should be received as genuine.

Otherwise the latter part of the eighth verse, the authenticity of which was never questioned, (as indeed it cannot be, being found in every known manuscript that is extant,) must likewise be rejected.

3. The doctrine of the Greek article, which is found in both verses, is such, that both must be retained, or both must be rejected.

4. The mode of thinking and diction is peculiar to St. John.

To this it is replied, that there is no such identical expression in the whole Bible, besides 1 John v. 7.

5. The omission of this clause may be satisfactorily accounted for. Thus,

(1.) There may have been two editions of this Epistle, in the first of
which the disputed clause was omitted, though it is retained in the second.

(2.) The great scarcity of ancient Greek copies, caused by the persecutions of the Christians by the Roman emperors, would leave the rest open to the negligence of copyists, or to the frauds of false teachers.

(3.) The negligence of transcribers is a cause of other omissions.

The seventh verse begins and ends in the same manner as the eighth, and therefore the transcribers might easily have overlooked the seventh verse, and consequently have omitted it by mere accident.

(4.) The Arians might have designedly expunged it, as being mimical to their doctrine.

(5.) The orthodox themselves might have designedly withdrawn it out of regard to the mystery of the Trinity.

(6.) Several of the early fathers may have designedly omitted to quote the clause in question, from considering it as a proof of the unity of the testimony of the heavenly witnesses to the Messiahship of Christ; and not of the unity of their nature, and consequently not relevant to the controversies in which those writers were engaged.

(7.) The silence of several of the earlier Greek fathers is no proof at all that their copies of the Greek Testament wanted the clause in question; since in their controversies they have omitted to quote other texts relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, with which other parts of their writings show that they must have been well acquainted. Besides, the silence of several of the fathers is more than compensated by the total silence of all the heretics or false teachers, at least from the days of Praxels (in the second century); who never charged the orthodox fathers with being guilty of interpolation.

Such are the principal arguments which have been adduced on the very important question under discussion. Upon a review of all the preceding considerations, the disputed clause (we think) must be abandoned as spurious; nor can anything less than the positive authority of unsuspected manuscripts justify the admission of so important a passage into the sacred canon. Much stress, it is true, has been laid upon some points in the internal evidence, particularly on the supposed grammatical arguments (Nos. 2. and 3.), and the reasons assigned for the omission of this clause. But some of these reasons have been shown to be destitute of the support alleged in their behalf; and the remainder are
wholly hypothetical, and unsustained by any satisfactory evidence. "Internal evidence," indeed, (as Bishop Marsh forcibly argues,) "may show that a passage is spurious, though external evidence is in its favour; for instance, if it contain allusions to things which did not exist in the time of the reputed author. But no internal evidence can prove a passage to be genuine, when external evidence is decidedly against it. A spurious passage may be fitted to the context as well as a genuine passage. No arguments, therefore, from internal evidence, however ingenious they may appear, can outweigh the mass of external evidence which applies to the case in question." (Lectures on Divinity, part vi. p. 27.)

But, although the disputed clause is confessedly spurious, its absence neither does nor can diminish the weight of irresistible evidence, which other undisputed passages of holy writ afford to the doctrine of the Trinity.* "The proofs of our Lord's true and proper Godhead remain unshaken—deduced from the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah's person in the Old Testament—from the ascription to him of the attributes, the works, and the homage, which are peculiar to the Deity—and from those numerous and important relations, which he is affirmed in Scripture to sustain towards his holy and universal church, and towards each of its true members." (Eclectic Review, vol. v. part i. p. 249.)

* On this subject the reader is referred to a small volume by the author of this work, entitled, The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity briefly stated and defended, &c. (Second edition, 12mo., London, 1826.) In the appendix to that volume he has exhibited the very strong collateral testimony, furnished to the scriptural evidence of this doctrine, by the actual profession of faith in, and worship of, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, as well as of God the Father, by the Christian church in every age; together with other documents illustrative of this important truth of divine revelation, derived from ecclesiastical history and the writings of the fathers of the three first centuries of the Christian era.
Section VI. — On the Second and Third Epistles of Saint John.

Although some doubts were, in the fourth century, entertained respecting the canonical authority of these Epistles, yet that point has long been considered as determined by the fact, that these Epistles have been cited by Christian writers of the third century, as well as by many in the ages immediately following. The similarity of style also attests that they are the productions of the same author as the first epistle of Saint John, who probably wrote them about A.D. 68 or 69.

The second epistle is addressed to an eminent Christian matron, the Lady Electa, whom the apostle commends for her virtuous and religious education of her children; and who is exhorted to abide in the doctrine of Christ, to persevere in the truth, and carefully to avoid the delusions of false teachers. But chiefly the apostle beseeches this Christian matron to practise the great and indissoluble commandment of Christian love and charity.

The third epistle of Saint John is addressed to a converted Gentile, a respectable member of some Christian church, called Gaius or Caius: most probably Gaius of Corinth (1 Cor. i. 14.), whom Saint Paul calls his "host and the host of the whole church." (Rom. xvi. 23.) The scope of this Epistle is to commend his steadfastness in the faith, and his general hospitality, especially to the ministers of Christ; to caution him against the ambitious and turbulent practices of Diotrephes, and to recommend Demetrius to his friendship; referring what he further had to say to a personal interview.

Section VII. — On the General Epistle of Jude.

Jude or Judas, who was surnamed Thaddeus and Lebbeus, and was also called the brother of our Lord (Matt. xiii. 55.), was the son of Alpheus, brother of James the
Less, and one of the twelve apostles. We are not informed when or how he was called to the apostleship; and there is scarcely any mention of him in the New Testament, except in the different catalogues of the twelve apostles. Although the Epistle, which bears his name, was rejected in the early ages of Christianity by some persons, we have satisfactory evidences of its authenticity: for it is found in all the antient catalogues of the sacred writings of the New Testament; it is asserted to be genuine by Christian fathers of the third and following centuries; and, independently of this external evidence, the genuineness of the Epistle of Saint Jude is confirmed by the subjects discussed in it, which are in every respect worthy of an apostle of Jesus Christ. There is great similarity between this Epistle and the second chapter of Saint Peter's second Epistle. Jude addressed his letter to all who had embraced the Gospel: its design is to guard them against the false teachers who had begun to insinuate themselves into the Christian church; and to contend with the utmost earnestness and zeal for the true faith, against the dangerous tenets which they disseminated, resolving the whole of Christianity into a speculative belief and outward profession of the Gospel. And having thus cancelled the obligations of morality and personal holiness, they taught their disciples to live in all manner of licentiousness, and at the same time flattered them with the hope of divine favour, and of obtaining eternal life. The vile characters of these seducers are further shown, and their sentence is denounced; and the Epistle concludes with warnings, admonitions, and counsels to believers, how to persevere in faith and godliness themselves, and to rescue others from the snares of the false teachers.
Chapter IV.

On the Revelation of St. John the Divine.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that the authenticity of this book was very generally, if not universally, acknowledged during the two first centuries, and yet in the third century it began to be questioned. This seems to have been occasioned by some absurd notions concerning the Millenium, which a few well-meaning but fanciful expositors grounded on this book; which notions their opponents injudiciously and presumptuously endeavoured to discredit, by denying the authority of the book itself. So little, however, has this portion of holy writ suffered from the ordeal of criticism to which it has in consequence been subjected, that (as Sir Isaac Newton has long since remarked) there is no other book of the New Testament so strongly attested, or commented upon so early, as the Apocalypse, or Revelation of St. John: for, besides the strong internal evidence afforded by the similarity of its style to that of the apostle's other writings, we have an unbroken series of external or historical testimony, from the apostolic age, downwards. The revelations contained in this book were made to St. John during his exile in the Isle of Patmos, towards the end of Domitian's reign, though the book containing them could not have been published until after his release on the emperor's death in the year 96, and after his return to Ephesus. The year 96 or 97 may, therefore, be considered as its true date. The scope of this book is twofold: first, generally to make known to the apostle "the things which are" (i. 19.), that is, the then present state of the Christian churches in Asia: and, secondly and principally, to reveal to him "the things which shall be hereafter," or the constitution and fates of the Christian church, through its several periods of propagation, corruption, and amendment, from its beginning to its con-
summation in glory. The Apocalypse, therefore, consists of two principal divisions or parts; viz.

After the title of the book (ch. i. 1—3.),

Part I. contains the "things which are—" that is, the then present state of the church; it includes the Epistles to the seven Asiatic Churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. (i. 9—20. ii. iii.) These churches, in the Lydiaian or Proconsular Asia, are supposed to have been planted by the apostle Paul and his assistants during their ministry. They lie nearly in an amphitheatre, and are addressed according to their geographical positions, as may be seen on reference to our Map of the Travels of the Apostles. These seven Epistles contain excellent precepts and exhortations, commendations and reproofs, promises and threatenings, which are calculated to afford instruction to the Universal Church of Christ at all times.

Part II. contains a Prophecy of "the things which shall be hereafter," or the future state of the church through succeeding ages, from the time when the apostle beheld the apocalyptic visions to the grand consummation of all things. (ch. iv—xxii.)

Although many parts of the Apocalypse are necessarily obscure to us, because they contain predictions of events still future, yet enough is sufficiently clear to convey to us the most important religious instruction. The Revelation of St. John is to us precisely what the prophecies of the Old Testament were to the Jews, nor is it in any degree more inexplicable. "No prophecies in the Revelation can be more clouded with obscurity, than that a child should be born of a pure virgin—that a mortal should not see corruption—that a person despised and numbered among malefactors should be established for ever on the throne of David. Yet still the pious Jew preserved his faith entire amidst all these wonderful, and, in appearance, contradictory intimations. He looked into the holy books in which they were contained
with reverence, and with an eye of patient expectation
'waited for the consolation of Israel.' We, in the same
manner, look up to these prophecies of the Apocalypse,
for the full consummation of the great scheme of the
Gospel; when Christianity shall finally prevail over all
the corruptions of the world, and be universally esta-
blished in its utmost purity.”