kon up in all the principal churches the ſucceſſion of biſhops to their firſt inſtitution. His teſtimony to the four goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles is expreſs and poſitive. “We have not received,” ſays Irenæus, “the knowledge of the way of our ſalvation by any others than thoſe by whom the goſpel has been brought to us. Which goſpel they firſt preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after that our Lord roſe from the dead, and they (the apoſtles) were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghoſt coming down upon them, they received a perfect knowledge of all things. They then went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the bleſſing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the goſpel of God. Matthew then, among the Jews, wrote a goſpel in their own lan­guage, while Peter and Paul were preaching the goſpel at Rome, and founding a church there. And after their exit, Mark alſo, the diſciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the goſpel preached by him (Paul). Afterwards John, the diſciple of the Lord, who alſo leaned upon his breaſt, likewiſe publiſhed a goſpel while he dwelt at Epheſus in Alia.” Irenæus then relates how Matthew begins his goſpel, how Mark begins and ends his, and gives the ſuppoſed reaſons for doing ſo. He enumerates at length all the paſſages of Chriſt’s hiſtory in Luke, which are not found in any of the other evangeliſts. He ſtates the particu­lar deſign with which St John compoſed his goſpel, and accounts for the doctrinal declarations which precede the narrative. If any modern divine ſhould write a book upon the genuineneſs of the goſpels, he could not aſſert it more expreſsly, or ſtate their original more diſtinctly, than Irenæus hath done within little more than 100 years after they were publiſhed.

Reſpecting the book of the Acts of the Apoſtles, and its author, the teſtimony of Irenæus is no leſs explicit. Referring to the account of St Paul’s converſion and vocation, in the ninth chapter of that book, “Nor can they (ſays he, meaning the parties with whom he ar­gues ſhow) that he is not to be credited, who has related to us the truth with the greateſt exactneſs.” Tn ano­ther place, he has actually collected the ſeveral texts, in which the writer of the hiſtory is repreſented as accom­panying St Paul, which led him to exhibit a ſummary of almoſt the whole of the laſt twelve chapters of the book.

According to Lardner, Irenæus quotes twelve of Paul’s epiſtles, naming their author; alſo the firſt epiſtle of Peter, the two firſt epiſtles ol John, and the Revelation. The epiſtles of Paul which he omits are thoſe addreſſed to Philemon and the Hebrews. Euſebius ſays, that he quotes the epiſtle to the Hebrews, though he does not aſcribe it to Paul. The work, how­ever, is loſt.

A. D. 172, Tatian, who is ſpoken of by Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Euſebius, and Jerome, compo­ſed a harmony of the four goſpels, which he called *Diateſſaron* of the four. This title, as well as the work, is remarkable, becauſe it ſhows that then as well as now there were four, and only four, goſpels in ge­neral uſe among Chriſtians.

A. D. 170, the churches of Lyons and Vienne in France ſent an account of the ſufferings of their martyrs to the churches of Aſia and Phrygia, which has been preſerved entire by Euſebius. And what carries in ſome meaſure the teſtimony of theſe churches to a higher age is, that they had now for their biſhop Pothinus, who was 90 years old, and whoſe early life conſequently muſt have immediately followed the times of the apoſtles. In this epiſtle are exact references to the goſpels of Luke and John, and to the Acts of the Apoſtles. The form of reference is the fame as in all the preceding articles. That from St John is in theſe words: “Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by the Lord, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice@@\*.”

Diſtinct references are alſo made to other books, viz. Acts, Romans, Epheſians, Philippians, 1. Timothy, l Peter, 1 John, Revelation.

A. D. 140, Juſtin Martyr compoſed ſeveral books, which are mentioned by his diſciple Tatian, by Tertullian, Methodius, Euſebius, Jerome, Epiphanius, and Photius. In his writings between 20 and 30 quota­tions from the goſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles are rec­koned up, which are clear, diſtinct, and copious; if each verſe be counted ſeparately, a much greater num­ber; if each expreſſion, ſtill more. Jones, in his book on the Canon of the New Teſtament, ventures to affirm that he cites the books of which it conſiſts, particularly the four goſpels, above 200 times.

We meet with quotations of three of the goſpels within the compaſs of half a page; “and in other words, he ſays, Depart from me into outer darkneſs, which the Father hath prepared for Satan and his An­gels,” (which is from Matthew xxv. 41.) “And again he ſaid in other words, I give unto you power to tread upon ſerpents and ſcorpions, and venomous beaſts, and upon all the power of the enemy.” (This from Luke X. 19.) “And, before he was crucified, he ſaid,

The ſon of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be re­jected of the Scribes and Phariſees, and be crucified, and riſe again the third day; (this from Mark viii. 31)

All the references in Juſtin are made without men­tioning the author; which proves that theſe books were perfectly well known, and that there were no other accounts of Chriſt then extant, or, at leaſt, no others ſo received and credited as to make it neceſſary to add any marks of diſtinction. But although Juſtin men­tions not the authors names, he calls the books *Me­moirs compoſed by the Apostles; Memoirs compoſed by the Apοstles and their Companions*; which deſcriptions, the latter eſpecially, exactly ſuit the titles which the Go­ſpels and Acts of the Apoſtles now bear.

He informs us, in his firſt apology, that *the memoirs oſ the Aρostles;* or the writings of the prophets, are read according as the time allows; and, when the reader has ended, the preſident makes a diſcourſe, exhorting to the imitation of ſuch excellent things.

A few ſhort obſervations will ſhow the value of this teſtimony. 1. The Memoirs of the Apoſtles, Juſtin in another place expreſsly tells us are what are called *goſpels.* And that they were the goſpels which we now uſe is made certain by Juſtin’s numerous quotations of them, and his ſilence about any others. 2. He deſcribes the general uſage of the Chriſtian church. 3. He does not ſpeak of it as recent or newly inllituted, but in the terms in which men ſpeak of eſtabliſhed cuſtoms.

@@@[m]\* John xvi. 2.