edifices of the nations which they ſubdued; and of all the Roman generals, none was more unlikely to demoliſh ſo ancient and auguſt a building as Titus Veſpaſian.

So important then is the queſtion, Whether the books of the New Teſtament be genuine? that the arguments which prove their authenticity, prove alſo the truth of the Chriſtian religion. Let us now conſider the evi­dence which proves the authenticity of the New Teſtament.

We receive the books of the New Teſtament as the genuine works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul, for the ſame reaſon that we receive the writings of Xenophon, of Polybius, of Plutarch, of Caeſar, and of Livy. We have the uninterrupted teſtimony of all ages, and we have no reaſon to ſuſpect impoſition. This argument is much ſtronger when applied to the books of the New Teſtament than when applied to any other writings; for they were addreſſed to large ſocieties, were often read in their preſence, and acknow­ledged by them to be the writings of the apoſtles.— Whereas, the moſt eminent profane writings which ſtill remain were addreſſed only to individuals, or to no perſons at all: and we have no authority to affirm that they were read in public; on the contrary, we know that a liberal education was uncommon; books were ſcarce, and the knowledge of them was confined to a few individuals in every nation.

The New Teſtament was read over three quarters of the world, while profane writers were limited to one nation or to one country. An uninterrupted ſucceſſion of writers from the apoſtolic ages to the preſent time quote the ſacred writings, or make alluſions to them: and theſe quotations and alluſions are made not only by friends but by enemies. This cannot be aſſerted of even the beſt claſſic authors. And it is highly probable, that the tranſlations of the New Teſtament were made ſo early as the ſecond century; and in a century or two after, they became very numerous. After this period, it was impoſſible to forge new writings, or to corrupt the ſacred text, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that men of dif­ferent nations, of different ſentiments and different lan­guages, and often exceedingly hoſtile to one another, ſhould all agree in one forgery. This argument is ſo ftrong, that if we deny the authenticity of the New Teſtament, we may with a thouſand times more pro­priety reject all the other writings in the world: we may even throw aſide human teſtimony itſelf. But as this ſubject is, of great importance, we ſhall conſider it at more length; and to enable our readers to judge with the greater accuracy, we ſhall ſtate, from the valuable work of Michaelis, as tranſlated by the judicious and learned Mr Marfh, the reaſons which may induce a cri­tic to ſuſpect a work to be ſpurious.

I. When doubts have been made from its firſt appear­ance in the world, whether it proceeded from the au­thor to whom it is aſcribed. 2. When the immediate friends of the pretended author, who were able to de­cide upon the ſubject, have denied it to be his production. 3. When a long ſeries of years has elapſed af­ter his death, in which the book was unknown, and in which it muſt unavoidably have been mentioned and quoted, had it really exiſted. 4. When the ſtyle is dif­ferent from that of his other writings, or, in caſe no other remain, different from that which might reaſonably be expected. 5. When events are recorded which happen later than the time of the pretended author. 6. When opinions are advanced which con­tradict thoſe he is known to maintain in his other writings. Though this latter argument alone leads to no poſitive concluſion, ſince every man is liable to change his opinion, or through forgetfulneſs to vary in the circumſtances of the ſame relation, of which Joſephus, in his Antiquities and War of the Jews, af­fords a ſtriking example.

I. But it cannot be ſhown that any one doubted of its authenticity in the period in which it firſt appeared. 2. No ancient accounts are on record whence we may conclude it to be ſpurious. 3. No conſiderable period elapſed after the death of the apoſtles, in which the New Teſtament was unknown; but, on the contrary, it is mentioned by their very contemporaries, and the ac­counts of it in the ſecond century are ſtill more nume­rous. 4. No argument can be brought in its disfavour from the nature of the ſtyle, it being exactly ſuch as might be expected from the apoſtles, not Attic but Jewiſh Greek. 5. No facts are recorded which hap­pened after their death. 6. No doctrines are main­tained which contradict the known tenets of the au­thors, ſince, beſide the New Teſtament, no writings of the apoſtles exiſt. But, to the honour of the New Te­ſtament be it ſpoken, it contains numerous contradic­tions to the tenets and doctrines of the fathers in the ſe­cond and third century, whoſe morality was different from that of the goſpel, which recommends fortitude and ſubmiſſion to unavoidable evils, but not that enthuſiaſtic ardour for martyrdom for which thoſe centuries are diſtinguiſhed; it alludes to ceremonies which in the fol­lowing ages were either in diſuſe or totally unknown; all which circumſtances infallibly demonſtrate that the New Teſtament is not a production of either of thoſe centuries.

We ſhall now conſider the poſitive evidence for the authenticity of the New Teſtament. Theſe may be **ar­**ranged 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 teſtimony in its favour. 3. Its own internal evidence.

**I.** The impoſſibility of a forgery ariſing from the na­ture of the thing itſelf is evident. It is impoſſible to eſtabliſh forged writings as authentic in any place where there are perlons ſtrongly inclined and well qualified to detect the fraud. Now the Jews were the moſt violent enemies of Ghriſtianity. They put the founder of it to death; they perſecuted his diſciples with implacable fury; and they were anxious to ſtifle the new religion in its birth. If the writings of the New Teſtament had been forged, would not the Jews have detected the impoſture? Is there a ſingle inſtance on record where a few individuals have impoſed a hiſtory upon the world againſt the teſtimony of a whole nation? Would the inhabitants of Paleſtine have received the goſpels, if they had not had ſufficient evidence that Jeſus Chriſt really appeared among them, and performed the mira­cles aſcribed to him? Or would the churches of Rome or of Corinth have acknowledged the epiſtles addreſſed to them as the genuine works of Paul, if Paul had never preached among them? We might as well think to prove, that the hiſtory of the Reformation is the in-