vention of hiſtorians; and that no revolution happened in Great Britain during the laſt century.

2. The second kind of evidence which we produce to prove the authenticity of the New Teſtament, is the teſtimony of ancient writers, Chriſtians, Jews, and Hea­thens.

In reviewing the evidence of teſtimony, it will not be expected that we ſhould begin at the preſent age, and trace backwards the authors who have written on this ſubject to the ſirſt ages of Chriſtianity. This in­deed, though a laborious taſk, could be performed in the moſt complete manner; the whole ſeries of authors, numerous in every age, who have quoted from the books of the New Teſtament, written commentaries upon them, tranſlated them into different languages, or who have drawn up a list of them, could be exhibited ſo as to form ſuch a perfect body of evidence, that we imagine even a jury of deiſts would find it impoſſible, upon a de­liberate and candid examination, to reject or diſbelieve it. We do not, however, ſuppoſe that ſcepticiſm has yet arrived at ſo great a height as to render ſuch a tedi­ous and circumſtantial evidence neceſſary. Paſſing over the intermediate ſpace, therefore, we ſhall aſcend at once to the fourth century, when the evidence for the authenticity of the New Teſtament was fully eſtabliſhed, and trace it back from that period to the age of the apoſtles. We hope that this method of ſtating the evidence will appear more natural, and will afford more ſatisfaction, than that which has been uſually adopted.

It is ſurely more natural, when we inveſtigate the truth of any fact which depends on a ſeries of teſtimo­ny, to begin with thoſe witneſſes who lived neareſt the preſent age, and whoſe characters are beſt eſtabliſhed. In this way we ſhall learn from themſelves the founda­tion of their belief, and the characters of thoſe from whom they derived it; and thus we aſcend till we ar­rive at its origin. This mode of inveſtigation will give more ſatisfaction to the deiſt than the uſual way; and we believe no Chriſtian, who is confident of the goodneſs of his cauſe, will be unwilling to grant any proper conceſſions. The deiſt will thus have an oppor­tunity of examining, ſeparately, what he will conſider as the weakeſt parts of the evidence, thoſe which are exhibited by the earlieſt Chriſtian writers, conſiſting of expreſſions, and not quotations, taken from the New Teſtament. The Chriſtian, on the other hand, ought to wiſh, that theſe apparently weak parts of the evi­dence were diſtinctly examined, for they will afford an irrefragable proof that the New Teſtament was not for­ged: and ſhould the deiſt reject the evidence of thoſe early writers, it will be incumbent on him to account for the origin of the Chriſtian religion, which he will find more difficult than to admit the common hypotheſis.

In the fourth century we could produce the teſtimonies of numerous witneſſes to prove that the books of the New Teſtament exiſted at that time; but it will be ſufficient to mention their names, the time in which they wrote, and the ſubſtance of their evidence. This we ſhall preſent in a conciſe form in the following table, which is taken from Jones’s New and Full Method of eſtabliſhing the canon of the New Teſtament,

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *The Names of the Writers* | *The times in which they lived.* | *The variation or agree­ment of their cata­logues with ours now received.* | *The books in which these catalogues are.* |
| I.  Athanaſius biſhop of Alexandria∙. | A. C. 315. | The ſame perfect­ly with ours now received. | *Fragment. Epist. Testal. tom.* 2. & *in Synops. tom 1.* |
| II.  Cyril biſhop of Jeruſalem. | 340. | The ſame with ours, only the Revelation is omitted. | *Catech. IV. § ult.* p. 101. |
| III.  The biſhops aſſembled in the council of Laodicea. | 364. | The Revelation  is omitted. | *Canon. LIX.*  *N. B..* The Ca­nons of this coun­cil were not long afterwards recei­ved into the body of the canons of the universal church. |
| IV.  Epiphanius biſhop of Sa­lamis in Cy­prus. | 370. | The ſame with ours now re­ceived. | *Haereſ. 76. cont. Anom.* p. 399. |
| V.  Gregory Nazianzen bi­ſhop of Conſtantinople. | 375∙ | Omits the Reve­lation. | *Carm. de veris & genuin.*  Scriptur. |
| VI.  Philaſtrius biſhop of Brixia in Venice. | 380. | The ſame with ours now received; ex­cept that he men­tions only 13 of St Paul's epiſtles (omitting very pro­bably the Epiſtle to the Hebrews), and leaves out the Revelations. | *Lib. de Haereſ. Numb.* 87. |
| VII.  Jerome. | 382. | The ſame with ours;  except that he ſpeaks dubiouſly of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews; tho’ in other parts of his writings he receives it as canonical. | *Ep. ad Paulin.*  83. *Tract. 6.* p. 2. Alſo commonly prefixed to the Latin vulgar. |
| VIII. Ruffin preſbyter of Aquilegium. | 390. | It perfectly agrees with ours. | *Expoſ. in Symb. Λpo*ſt*ol. §* 36. *int.Ep.Hieron. Par.* I. *Trac.* 3. p. 110. & *inter Op. Cypr.* |
| IX.  Auſtin bi­ſhop of Hip­po in Africa. | 394. | It perfectly agrees with ours. | p. 575. De *Doctrin.*  *Christ,* 1. 2. c. 8. *Tom. Op.* 3. p. 25. |
| X.  The XLIV biſhops aſ­ſembled in the third council of Carthage. | St Au­ſtin was preſent at it. | It perfectly agrees with ours. | *Vid. Canon.*  *XLVII. &*  *cap. ult.* |