**honeſt men; they believed** them themſelves, **and they** never imagined that others would ſuſpect their truth.

It is a conſideration of great importance, in review­ing the evidence which has been now ſtated, that the witneſſes lived in different countries; Clemens flouriſh**ed** at Rome, Polycarp at Smyrna, Juſtin Martyr in Sy­ria, Irenæus in France, Tertullian at Carthage, Origen **at** Alexandria, and Euſebius at Cæſarea. This proves that the books of the New Teſtament were equally well known in diſtant countries by men who had no intercourſe with one another.

The ſame thing is proved by teſtimonies if poſſible leſs exceptionable. The ancient heretics, whoſe opi­nions were ſometimes groſſer and more impious than thoſe which any modern ſectary has ventured to broach, and whoſe zeal in the propagation of them equalled that of the moſt flaming enthuſiaſt of the laſt century, never called in queſtion the authenticity of the books of the New Teſtament. When they met with any paſſage in the goſpels or epiſtles which they could not reconcile to their own heretical notions, they either eraſed it, or denied that the author was inſpired; but they nowhere contend that the book in which it flood was not, writ­ten by the apoſtle or evangeliſt whoſe name it bore. Euſebius relates, that the Ebionites rejected all the epiſtles of Paul, and called him an apoſtate, becauſe he departed from the Levitical law; and they adopted as their rule of faith the goſpel of St Matthew, though in­deed they greatly corrupted it. This proves therefore that the goſpel according to Matthew was then pub­liſhed, and that St Paul’s epiſtles were then known.

Of the heretics who eraſed or altered paſſages to make the Scriptures agree with their doctrines, we may produce Marcion as an inſtance, who lived in the be­ginning of the 2d century. He lived in an age when he could have eaſily diſcovered if the writings oſ the New Teſtament had been forged; and as he was much incenſed againſt the orthodox party, if ſuch a forgery had been committed, unqueſtionably he would not have failed to make the diſcovery, as it would have afforded the moſt ample means of revenge and triumph, and en­abled him to eſtabliſh his own opinions with leſs diffi­culty. But his whole conduct ſhows clearly, that he believed the writings of the New Teſtament to be au­thentic. He ſaid that the goſpel according to St Mat­thew, the epiſtle to the Hebrews, with thoſe of St Pe­ter and St James, as well as the Old Teſtament in ge­neral, were writings not for Chriſtians but for Jews. He publiſhed a new edition of the goſpel according to Luke, and the firſt ten epiſtles of Paul; in which it has been affirmed by Epiphanius, that he altered every paſ­ſage that contradicted his own opinions: but as many oſ theſe alterations are what modern critics call *various readings,* though we receive the teſtimony of Epiphanius, we muſt not rely upon his opinion @@(X). Hence it is evident that the books of the New Teſtament above-mentioned did then exiſt, and were acknowledged to be the works oſ the authors whoſe names they bear.

Dr Lardner, in his General Review, ſums up this head of evidence in the following words: “Noetus, Paul of Samoſata, Sabellius, Marcellus, Photinus, the Novatians, Donatiſts, Manicheans @@(Y), Priſcillianiſts,

beſide Artemon, the Audians, the Arians, and divers others, all received moſt or all the ſame books of the New Teſtament which the Catholics received; and agreed in a like reſpect for them as writ by apoſtles or their diſciples and companions.”

Celſus and Porphyry, both enemies of the Chriſtian religion, are powerful witneſſes for the antiquity of the New Teſtament. Celſus, who lived towards the end of the ſecond century, not only mentions by name, but quotes paſſages from the books of the New Teſtament: and that the books to which he refers were no other than our preſent goſpels, is evident from the alluſions to various paſſages ſtill found in them. Celſus takes notice of the genealogies, which fixes two of theſe goſ­pels; of the precepts, Reſiſt not him that injures you, and, If a man ſtrike thee on the one cheek, offer to him the other alſo; of the woes denounced by Chriſt; of his predictions; of his ſaying that it is impoſſible to ſerve two maſters; of the purple robe, the crown of thorns, and the reed wſhich was put into the hand of Jeſus; of the blood that flowed from his body upon the croſs, a circumſtance wſhich is recorded only by John; and (what is instar *omnium* for the purpoſe for which we produce it) of the difference in the accounts given of the reſurrection by the evangeliſts, ſome men­tioning two angels at the ſepulchre, others only one.

It is extremely material to remark, that Celſus not only perpetually referred to the accounts of Chriſt con­tained in the four goſpels, but that he referred to no other accounts; that he sounded none of his objections to Chriſtianity upon any thing delivered in ſpurious goſpels.

The teſtimony of Porphyry is ſtill more important than that of Celſus. He was born in the year 213, of Tyrian origin. Unfortunately for the preſent age, ſays Michaelis, the miſtaken zeal of the Chriſtian em­perors has baniſhed his writings from the world; and every real friend of our religion would gladly give the works of one of the pious fathers to reſcue thoſe of Porphyry from the flames. But Mr Marſh, the learn­ed and judicious tranſlator of Michaelis, relates, that, according to the accounts of Iſaac Voſſius, a manuscript of the works of Porphyry is preſerved in the Medicean library at Florence, but kept ſo ſecret that no one is permitted to fee it. It is universally allowed, that Porphyry is the moſt ſenſible, as well as the moſt ſevere, adverſary of the Chriſtian religion that antiqui­ty can produce. He was verſed not only in hiſtory, but alſo in philoſophy and politics. His acquaintance with the Chriſtians was not confined to a ſingle coun­try; for he had converſed with them in Tyre, in Si­cily, and in Rome. Enabled by his birth to ſtudy the Syriac as well as the Greek authors, he was of all the adverſaries to the Chriſtian religion the beſt qualified to inquire into the authenticity of the ſacred writings. He poſſeſſed therefore every advantage which natural abilities or a ſcientific education could afford to diſcover wſhether the New Teſtament was a genuine work of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, or whether it was impoſed up­on the world after the deceaſe of its pretended authors. But no trace of this ſuſpicion is anywhere to be found in his writings. In the fragments wſhich ſtill remain,

@@@(x) Dr Loeffer has written a learned diſſertation to prove that Marcion did not corrupt the ſacred writings.

@@@(Y) This muſt be with an exception, however, of Fauſtus, who lived ſo late as the year 384.