goſpel in their own language, whilſt Peter and Paul were preaching the goſpel at Rome and founding the church there.”

To the teſtimony of theſe writers it may be objected, that, except Irenæus, they all lived in the third and fourth centuries, and conſequently their evidence is of little importance. But there is ſuch unanimity in the teſtimony, that it muſt have been derived from ſome authentic ſource. And is it fair to queſtion the veraci­ty of reſpectable men merely becauſe we knew not from what writings they received their information? Many books which were then extant are now loſt; and how do we know but theſe might have contained ſufficient evidence? Irenæus at leaſt had the beſt opportu­nities of information, having been well acquainted in his youth with Polycarp, the diſciple of John; no objec­tion can therefore be made to his evidence. But we can quote an authority ſtill nearer the times of the apoſtles. Papias biſhop of Hierapolis, in Cæſarea, who flouriſhed about A. D. 116, affirms that Matthew wrote his goſpel in the Hebrew tongue, which every one in­terpreted as he was able @@§. Papias was the companion of Polycarp, and beſides muſt have been acquainted with many perſons who lived in the time of the apoſtles. The fact therefore is fully eſtabliſhed, that Matthew, the apoſtle of our Saviour, was the author of that goſ­pel which is placed firſt in our editions of the New Teſtament.

The next ſubject of inquiry reſpects the language in which it was written. This we are aſſured by Papias, by Irenæus, and Origen, was the Hebrew; but the truth of this fact has been diſputed by Eraſmus, Whitby, and others. Whitby urges the improbability that Providence would have ſuffered the original of this goſpel to be loSt, and nothing to remain but a tranſlation. This is an argument of no force againſt written teſtimony; indeed we are always in danger of drawing falſe concluſions when we argue from our own opinions of the conduct of Providence. *For His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.* But though we are forced to acknowledge that the goſpel according to Matthew which we poſſeſs is a tranſlation, it is evidently a cloſe one; and the very circumſtance that it has ſuperſeded the original, is a clear proof that it was thought equally valuable by the ancient Chriſti­ans. It is neceſſary to remark, that the language in which the goſpel according to Matthew was original­ly compoſed, and which is called Hebrew by Papias, Irenæus, and Origen, is not the ſame with the Hebrew of the Old Teſtament: it was what Jerome very pro­perly terms Syro-Chaldaic, having an affinity to both languages, but much more to the Chaldean than to the Syrian.

The time when this goſpel was compoſed has not been preciſely aſcertained by the learned. Irenæus ſays that “Matthew publiſhed his goſpel when Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome.” Now Paul arrived at Rome A. I). 60 or 61, and it is very probable ſuffered martyrdom in A. D. 65. This may be juſtly concluded from comparing the relation of Tacitus with that of Oroſius, a writer of the fifth century@@. Oroſius having given an account of Nero’s perſecution of the Chriſtians, and of the death of the two apoſtles in it, adds, that it was followed by a peſtilence in the city, and other diſaſters. And Tacitus relates that a peſtilence prevaileD in the city, and violent ſtorms took place in Italy, in the year of Chriſt 65. Matthew’s goſpel was therefore written between the year 60 and 65.

That this hiſtory was primarily intended for the uſe of the Jews, we have, beſides hIſtorical evidence, very ſtrong preſumptions from the book itſelf. @@Every cirumſtance is carefully pointed out which might conciliate the faith of that nation; every unneceſſary expreſſion is avoided, which might in any way ſerve to obſtruct it. To come to particulars, there was no ſentiment relating to the Meſſiah with which the Jews were more ſtrongly poſſeſſed, than that he muſt be of the race of Abraham, and of the family of David. Matthew, therefore, with great propriety, begins his narrative with the genealogy of Jeſus. That he ſhould be born at Bethlehem in Judea, is another circumſtance in which the learned among the Jews were univerſally agreed. His birth in that city, with ſome very memorable circumſtances that attended it, this hiſtorian has alſo taken the firſt op­portunity to mention. Thoſe paſſages in the prophets, or other ſacred books, which either foretel any thing that ſhould happen to him, or admit an alluſive appella­tion, or were in that age generally underſtood to be applicable to events which reſpect the Meſſiah, are never paſſed over in ſilence by this Evangeliſt. The fulfil­ment of prophecy was always to the Jews, who were convinced of the inſpiration of their ſacred writings, ſtrong evidence. Accordingly none of the Evangeliſts has been more careful than Matthew, that nothing of this kind ſhould be overlooked.

That which chiefly diſtinguiſhes Matthew's writings from thoſe of the other Evangeliſts, is the minute and diſtinct manner in which he has related many of our Lord’s diſcourſes and moral inſtructions. Of theſe his ſermon on the mount, his charge to the apoſtles, his illuſtrations of the nature of his kingdom, and his pro­phecy on mount Olivet, are examples. He has alſo wonderfully united ſimplicity and energy in relating the replies of his maſter to the cavils of his adverſaries. Being early called to the apoſtleſhip, he was an eye and ear witneſs of moſt of the things which he relates. And there are circumltances which incline Dr Campbell to think that Matthew has approached as near the preciſe order of time in which the events happened as any of the Evangeliſts.

Concerning the life of the apoſtle Matthew we have nothing to add, as the principal circumſtances in his life have already been mentioned. See MattHEW.

The Goſpel according to Matthew is cited ſeven times in the epiſtle of Barnabas, twice in the firſt epiſtle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, eight times in the Shepherd of Hernias, ſix times in Polycarp’s ſmall epiſtle to the Philippians, and ſeven times in the ſmaller epiſtles of Ignatius. Theſe citations may be ſeen at full length in *Jones's New and Full Method oſ settling the Canon,* with the parallel paſſages in the goſpel according to Matthew.

That Mark was the author of the goſpel which bears his name, and that it was the ſecond in the order of time, is proved by the unanimous teſtimony of the an­cient Chriſtians. Many authorities are therefore un­neceſſary; we ſhall only mention thoſe of Papias and Irenæus. Euſebius has preſerved the following paſſage of Papias@@: “This is what was related by the elder (that is, John, not the apoſtle, but a diſciple of Jeſus); Mark

@@@[m]§ Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. III. cap. 39.

@@@[mu] Lardner's Hist. of the Apostles.

@@@[mu] Dr. Campbell's Preface to Matthew's Gospel.

@@@[mu] Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 39.