THE EVIDENCE
FOR THE
AUTHENTICITY AND DIVINE INSPIRATION
OF THE
APOCALYPSE,
STATED;
AND
VINDICATED
FROM THE
OBSERVATIONS OF THE LATE PROFESSOR
F. D. MICHAELIS;
IN
LETTERS
ADDRESS TO
THE REV. HERBERT MARSH, B.D. F.R.S.
FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

θι μη δι λως ταξιν γ' εστι οικαν αινως,
Ει μη τις ΔΑΝΑΩΝ κεν 'Εκδοπος αυς ειςιν.—Iliad. H. 97.

How great the shame! when ev'ry age shall know
That not a Briton met this noble foe!—Pope.

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CONTENTS.

LETTER I.

THE reasons assigned for writing these Letters, and why they are addressed to Mr. Marsh 1

LETTER II.

The method pursued in this inquiry - - - - 4

LETTER III.

The time when the Apocalypse was written; being a question to be determined, previous to the main subject of inquiry - - - - 7

LETTER IV.

The external evidence arising from the testimony of Irenaeus, and of other Fathers of the Church who preceded him; of Ignatius, of Hermas, of Polycarp, of the Writer of the Epistle relating Polycarp's Martyrdom, and of Papias - - - - - 20

LETTER V.

The testimony of Justin Martyr, of Athenagoras, of the Churches in Gaul, of Melito, of Theophilus, of Apollonius, of Clemens of Alexandria, of Tertullian; a Biographical Chart, representing the times of these writers 32

LETTER VI.

The evidence against the Apocalypse during its first century; the rejection of it by Marcion, and by the Alogi; their objections so far as relate to external evidence examined 39

LETTER VII.

The testimonies of Hippolitus and Origen; the objections of Caius, and of Dionysius of Alexandria, and of others before him. Animadversions
madoversions on the conclusions of Michaelis respecting this evidence ........................................ 43

LETTER VIII.
The testimonies of Gregory of Neocaesarea; of Dionysius of Alexandria; his private opinion; of other writers in this century; of Eusebius, and of the Fathers in his time, and after him; of the reception of the Apocalypse at the period of the Reformation ........................................ 50

LETTER IX.
The internal evidence respecting the Apocalypse; from the completion of its prophecies; from its correspondence in point of doctrine and of imagery with other books of the New Testament: objections of Michaelis answered. True character of the beauty and sublimity discovered in this book; argument thence derived; comparison of the Apocalypse with other books of the same age pretending to divine original; of Hermas; of the Second Book of Esdras. Objection arising from the obscurity of the book answered ........................................ 63

LETTER X.
Internal evidence respecting the question, whether or not the Apocalypse was written by St. John. Dr. Lardner’s opinion. Opinions of others. Arguments of Dionysius of Alexandria, under five heads, and answers thereto, and to the objections of Michaelis. Inquiry whether John the Evangelist and John the Divine were understood by the Ancients to be the same person. Proof, from a passage in the Apocalypse, that it was written by Saint John.——Conclusion ........................................ 75
LETTER I.

Rev. Sir,

March 19, 1802.

Letters from an unknown and anonymous writer seem to need apology; for such have too frequently been abused to unworthy and malicious purposes. It shall, therefore, be the purport of my first letter to assign the causes, which have induced me to take this liberty of addressing you.

I am one of those many, who have experienced much advantage and satisfaction from your Translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament. In the notes and dissertation with which you have accompanied a part of the text, it is difficult to say, whether a greater share of learning, of judgment, or of ingenuity, has been displayed: and you have corrected the mistakes of your author with such wisdom and temper, as to give an additional value to his excellent work.

But we have to lament, that the progress of these notes has been interrupted; and that a considerable part of the text of Michaelis has lately been published, without this valuable commentary.
If your annotations had been extended to that part of your author's work, which treats of the Apocalypse; the observations, which I am now to lay before you, would have been rendered unnecessary. For I persuade myself, that if your learned labours had accompanied your author, in his chapter on the Apocalypse, many of the opinions, which he has there advanced, would have received considerable correction.

The literary world will still look to you with expectation for the sequel of your notes; and, I trust, you will not disappoint their wishes. Some time, however, may probably elapse, before they are favoured with this useful work. And to me, who am a Clergyman of the Church of England, (which, with the generality of Christian Churches, has admitted the Apocalypse into its sacred canon) to me it seems desirable, that the misconceptions of the great Michaelis, on this important subject, should be met by some earlier, though it be not a perfect, answer.

I am as fully sensible of my own insufficiency to supply this answer completely, as of your qualifications to do it with superior effect. But as a hasty and imperfect building will serve usefully for a temporary habitation, until a more solid, and convenient, and elegant structure can be raised, so this effort of mine may be of temporary use, and give some satisfaction to the minds of those who reverence the Apocalypse, until a more able critic shall find leisure to present the public with a more perfect work.

Such as it is, I am desirous that it should pass into your hands. You may take it to pieces, and, examining the materials of which it is composed, and rejecting those which are unsound, convert the remaining parts to such purposes as may best serve the cause of truth, which is the main object of this publication. My work will probably perish with other fugitive pieces of the day. But if you should find in it any observations worthy to be preserved, any
any arguments of sufficient weight to accompany the text, and to counteract the opinions of your author, they may be useful so long as this canonical book may stand in need of such support. I have done what I have been able to do, in a limited compass of time, with the assistance of such languages as I happened to possess, and of the books which, in a retired situation, I could command. You are qualified to pursue your author, where he is beyond the limits of my pursuit, in German, and the higher branches of Oriental literature; assisted by public libraries, and by the communications of the learned of all nations.

Whether any, or what answers have been made to Michaelis on this subject by the German writers, or what degree of influence his opinions have obtained upon the Continent, I confess myself ignorant. But for the use and information of our students in divinity, who are now reading those opinions in your translation, it seems desirable, that the grounds on which they stand should be examined, and that they should be admitted only so far as they are true.

It is my object to engage an author of your ability in a work of this kind, and at the same time to suggest to his consideration, observations which have occurred to me; some of which, I trust, may be made subservient to correct those notions, which have a tendency to exclude from the canon of Sacred Scripture, one of its most important and well-attested books.

Such, Sir, are my reasons for writing these letters, and for addressing them to the annotator and corrector of Michaelis; from whom the literary world will expect an opinion on this important subject. But as these letters are designed also for the use, (the temporary use at least) of other biblical inquirers, who are not gifted with your discernment, nor possessed of your information; you will permit me to dwell upon and explain such matters, as, were I to write to you alone, would need no discussion. In short,
short, as in the following letters, I hope I shall not forget that I am addressing you, so, I trust, you will be pleased to remember, that I am also to render such information, as I am able to afford, intelligible to readers of inferior attainments.

I am, Rev. Sir,

With sincere respect,

&c. &c.

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LETTER II.

In the following letters, I propose to review the evidence which has been adduced, for the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Apocalypse; to add thereto some few collections of my own; and occasionally to make remarks on those observations of Michaelis*, which tend to invalidate it.

This evidence divides itself into external and internal. The external is, that which is derived from credible witnesses, from the early writers, and Fathers of the Church. The internal is, that which results from a perusal of the book.

Michaelis appears to me an unfair reporter of the external evidence for the Apocalypse. He seems to have approached it with a prejudice against it, a prejudice occasioned by the opinion which he had previously formed of its internal evidence. For, it appears from passages in the first, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth sections of his chapter on the Apocalypse, that he considered the prophecies of this book, as still remaining dark and unexplained. He professes that he does not understand them; he de-

* In the last chapter of his Introduction to the New Testament.
clares himself dissatisfied with the attempts of other writers to shew their meaning and completion; and he esteems the contradictions of these interpreters to be more unfavourable to the pretensions of the Apocalypse, than even those ancient testimonies, that external evidence, to which he attributes no preponderance in its favour. Now, as they who appear to themselves to have discovered, in the completion of the Apocalyptic prophecies, certain proof of its divine origin, (for a series of prophecy, punctually fulfilled, must be divine,) will be disposed to examine the external evidence with a prepossession in its favour; so he, who, by examining the internal evidence, has formed an opinion unfavourable to its pretensions, will enter upon the study of its external evidence with that kind of prejudice, which I think visible in the writings of this able and learned man.

By this observation, I do not mean to detract from the good faith and candour of Michaelis, which I find frequently, and, indeed, generally displayed, even in this part of his work. But a prepossession of this kind is apt to lead a man unwarily into partial views. I have myself experienced both these prejudices with respect to the Apocalypse, and I know the involuntary influence of each. There was a time, when I considered the prophecies of the Apocalypse as dark and inexplicable, and its claim to divine authority as rendered very suspicious, by the discordant and unsatisfactory explanations of them. So that, applying myself to the examination of the external evidence of the book, I felt myself inclined to object to it, and to diminish its influence. But, in the progress of my studies, I experienced a contrary bias. A more diligent examination of the prophecies of the Apocalypse, and an application of them to ecclesiastical history, occasioned me to form another conclusion respecting its internal evidence. I began to see that the objection to the Apocalypse, derived from its obscurity, was unfounded;
unfounded; and I then reviewed its external evidence, with, perhaps, a prepossession in its favour.

But, in our examination of the external evidence, we ought, so far as human infirmity may permit, to be free from any such partiality; and to forget, for a season, our previous conceptions of the weight of its evidence internal. The two evidences, external and internal, should be kept apart; they should not be suffered to incorporate; each should be considered with reference to itself only: After which separate examination, they may usefully and properly be brought together, and be allowed their due influence upon each other.

Such appears to me the method of proceeding in this inquiry, so as to arrive at a fair and just conclusion. This method, has, however, not been usually pursued. The writers, who have presented us with the two kinds of evidence, have not kept them apart. When they treat, for instance, of the external evidence of Dionysius of Alexandria; when they state how far it appears, from his writings, that he considered the Apocalypse as a sacred book, delivered down to his time as such from the early Fathers of the Church; they moreover produce, and under the same head, the criticisms of this writer on the style and manner of the book; which consideration belongs to the subject of internal evidence.

In the following pages, it will be my endeavour to keep these two evidences apart, until they have been separately considered, and may safely be suffered to unite. This method, so far as it can be followed, will tend to prevent the operation of prejudice, and to facilitate the production of truth.

I shall proceed, first, to the consideration of the External Evidence, which is found to establish, or invalidate, the divine authority of the Apocalypse.
LETTER III.

THE External Evidence, for the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Apocalypse, is to be collected from the testimonies of those ancient writers, who, living at the time nearest to its publication, appear, by their quotations or allusions, to have received this book as Sacred Scripture. This was the test by which the primitive church was accustomed to determine the claims of all books, pretending to divine authority. All such writings were rejected, as appeared not to have been quoted and received by the orthodox writers of the preceding ages. But to enable us to judge of the force of this evidence, as affecting any particular book, it is necessary to ascertain the time when the book was written. For, if it shall appear to have been written and published in the early period of the apostolic age, we may expect to find such testimonies concerning it from apostles, or from apostolical men. If, on the contrary, it can be proved to have been published only in the later times of that age, we shall not be intitled to expect this earlier notice of it.

Before, therefore, we proceed to examine the testimony of the writers by whom the Apocalypse is mentioned, we must ascertain the time in which it was published. For if it were not published before the year 96 or 97 (as some critics aver) little or no notice could be taken of it by the writers of the first century; and, in such case, a writer in the second century, particularly in the former part of it, be-

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 3.
† Apostolical men, in the acceptation of the Fathers, were those who had been instructed by apostles; and the apostolic age is that, which extends from before the middle of the first century, when the apostles began to write, to the close of that century, when St. John, the last surviving apostle, died.—Irenæus et Clem. Alexand. apud Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 23.
comes an evidence of great importance, which importance would be much diminished, by the supposition, that the book had been written in the earliest part of the apostolic age, that is, almost a whole century before the time of that author.

This previous inquiry is the more necessary, since, according to Michaelis, no less than six different opinions have been advanced, concerning the time when the Apocalypse was written; only one of which can be true.

In examining these opinions, I shall endeavour to be concise. I shall freely use the arguments of Michaelis, where I can see reason to agree with him; but, where I am obliged to differ from him, it will be necessary to take a larger compass.

I. The earliest date assigned to the Apocalypse is in the reign of the Emperor Claudius. This opinion rests on external evidence only, and on a very weak one, the single testimony of Epiphanius, a credulous and inaccurate writer*, who lived about three hundred years later than St. John the Apostle, to whom he ascribes it.

This external evidence, weak of itself, is not only unsupported, but contradicted, by every argument which can be derived from internal evidence†. For, first, it appears from the evidence of the book (chap. 1st. 2d. 3d.) that it was written at a time when the Asiatic Christians had been suffering persecution, even unto death; John himself, the writer, was in banishment "for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus, in the Isle of Patmos," when he

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* See his character, as given by Dupin and by Jortin.—Rem. Eccl. Hist. iv. 115.

† The reader may, perhaps, begin to think, that I am already transgressing the rule, so lately proposed, to prevent the intermixture of internal with external evidence. That rule shall be scrupulously observed, when we proceed to examine the evidences for the authenticity of the book. But we are now engaged in a previous question, which must be determined before we can judge of the main object of inquiry. And in determining the several steps of this previous question, it is necessary to adduce both kinds of evidence. Still they shall be kept apart, and each come in its order.
saw the visions*. But no traces of such persecution can be discovered in the times of Claudius. Nero, says the unanimous voice of history, was the first Emperor who persecuted the Christians, and enacted laws against them†. Claudius, indeed, commanded the Jews to quit Rome, but this command could not affect the Jews in Asia, much less the Christians there.

2dly. There is no appearance or probability that the seven churches, or communities of Christians, addressed by their Saviour in the Apocalypse, had existence so early as in the reign of Claudius; much less that they were in that established and flourishing state, which is described or inferred in this his address to them. For Claudius died in the year 54, which was some years before the Apostle Paul is supposed, by the best critics, to have written his Epistle to the Ephesians, and his First to Timothy. But, from these Epistles we collect, that the Church of Ephesus was then in an infantine and unsettled state. Bishops were then first appointed there by St. Paul’s order‡. But, at the time when the Apocalypse was written, Ephesus, and her Sister Churches, appear to have been in a settled, and even flourishing state, which could only be the work of time. There is, in the address of our Lord to them, a reference to their former conduct. Ephesus is represented to have forsaken her former love, or charity; Sardis as having acquired a name, or reputation, which she had also forfeited: Laodicea as become lukewarm, or indifferent. Now, changes of this kind, in a whole body of Christians, must be gradual, and the pro-

* Hence St. John is called a Martyr, by Polycrates—Apud Euseb. E. H. lib. iii. c. 81.
‡ See this proved at large by Michaelis, in his Observations on the 1st Epistle to Timothy.
duction of time *. Colosse and Hierapolis were Churches of note in St. Paul's time †; but they are not mentioned in the Apocalypse, although they were situated in the same region of proconsular Asia, to which it was addressed. They were probably become of less importance. All these changes required a lapse of time; and we necessarily infer, that such had taken place between the publication of St. Paul's Epistles, and of the Apocalypse. Add to this, that some expressions, which we meet with in the Apocalypse, are such as seem not to have been used in the early period of Apostolic times. Sunday is called the Lord's Day ‡; and we find the same expression used by Ignatius §, and other writers of later date. In the early books of Scripture, it is called the first day of the week, or the Sabbath, &c. but never the Lord's Day.

This opinion, therefore, that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of Claudius, cannot be received. The single testimony of an inaccurate writer of the fourth century, cannot be opposed to such external evidence as we shall produce in examining the remaining opinions; more particularly when so strongly refuted by internal evidence ||.

II. By the second opinion, the Apocalypse is supposed to have been written in the reign of Nero. 1. Let us examine the external evidence by which it is supported; namely, a Subscription to the Syriac version of the Apocalypse, which mentions that Revelation, as given to "John the Evangelist, in the Island of Patmos, whither he was banished by the

* See more on this subject, in Vitringa, in Apoc. I. 2. and L'Enfant and Beaufobre's Preface to the Apoc.; also, Lardner's Supplement to the Cred. Gosp. Hist. ch. xxii: where passages from these books are quoted.
† Acts iv. 13.
‡ Rev. i. 10.
§ Epist. ad Magnes. Sect. 9.
|| This first opinion would have deserved little notice, if it had not been maintained by the celebrated Grotius, whose arguments, and the able refutation of them by D. Blondel, may be seen, abstracted by Lardner. Supplement, ch. ix. Sect. 3.

Emperor
Emperor Nero.” Lardner has observed of this subscription, that it is not only without a name, but without a date. But Michaelis has shewn it to be probable, that the version to which it is attached was made in the sixth century; and he intimates, that this subscription might perhaps have been annexed to the more ancient Syriac version. It might perhaps, also, have been added, in more modern times. For of what authority are some of the titles and subscriptions to other books of the New Testament, even those which are admitted to be printed with the Greek text? They are anonymous, and without date, and, in some cases, are known to give false information. What credit, then, can be due to this Syriac subscription, whose highest claim to authority is, that the version to which it is attached, was written in the sixth century? If we could admit the evidence, it would indeed be useful, for it would immediately determine the main object of our inquiry. It would determine “the Revelation to have been made by God to John the Evangelist;” which being determined, no more doubt could remain concerning its authenticity, and divine inspiration. But such external evidence is insufficient to determine any thing; it is by no means equal even to that of Epiphanius, which, as standing alone, and at such a distance of time from the fact, Michaelis has, with great propriety, refused to admit.

2. This opinion, like the first, has no internal evidence, derived from the Apocalypse, in its favour. All that can be said is, that internal evidence is not so decidedly against it, as against the former opinion. The Christians at Rome, and, it may be, in the Roman provinces, were persecuted in the reign of Nero. But there is no evidence, that the Christians in Asia suffered at this time. And the arguments, used so successfully by Michaelis and others, to shew that the Apocalypse was not written in the reign of Claudius, will extend, in some degree, to that of Nero. From the time of Claudius to the end of Nero’s reign, we count only fourteen years. The date of the First Epistle to Timothy is placed, by
by Michaelis, about ten years before Nero's death; by Fabricius, Mill, and the other able critics, much later. The Epistle to the Ephesians has certainly a later date. So that, it may still be doubted, whether the changes which appear to have taken place in the Churches of Lesser Asia, between the date of these Epistles and that of the Apocalypse, could well be brought about in so short a period of time, as must be allotted to them, if we suppose the Apocalypse to be written in the times of Nero. But suppose this argument not to be insisted upon, to what will the concession amount? The question, in favour of the Apocalypse, being written in Nero's reign, will gain no internal evidence positively in its favour. It will rest on the external evidence above stated, the insufficiency of which must be apparent.

III. A third opinion, as it is called, has been produced by those writers, who having explained some of the Apocalyptical Prophecies, as fulfilled in the Jewish wars, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, are interested to make it appear, that these Prophecies were written before the commencement of those wars. But to assert the Apocalypse to have been written before the Jewish wars, is the same thing as to attribute the writing of it during the reign of Nero; for these wars began in the twelfth year of that Emperor*. The question, therefore, seems decided by the evidence already examined. But since the examination of this third opinion, by Michaelis, has produced another evidence, and other arguments, it will be proper to notice them.

1. A certain degree of external evidence is attempted to be derived from Arethas, who, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, has attempted to explain some of its Prophecies, as fulfilled in the Jewish wars; and he has certainly affirmed, "that destruction was not yet come upon the Jews, by the arms of the Romans, when he (the writer of the Apocalypse) received these Prophecies." The earliest date assigned to the commentary of Arethas, is in

* Josephus, de Bell. Ju. lib. ii. c. xiv. 4.
the sixth century; but there seems internal evidence in the work, which will prove it of later date. The empire of the Saracens is mentioned in it, as succeeding in Babylon to that of the Persians. But the Saracens were not possessed of Babylon till near the middle of the seventh century. A writer of so late a date will be entitled to little belief in this question, particularly if his evidence go no farther than to discover an opinion of his own, without proof in support of it. But, it is said, there is reason to believe, that the opinion is more ancient than the period here referred to; for Andreas Cæsariensis, who wrote about the year 500, though he does not adopt the opinion, mentions it as the opinion of some others. And Michaelis, who favours this third opinion, is disposed to believe it derived from Hippolitus, or Irenæus. But he has produced no evidence of the fact. It is merely a conjecture, resting on this unsure foundation; "Arethas must have received this opinion from some author, who explained the Apocalypse before the times of Andreas Cæsariensis, and who could this be, but Hippolitus, or Irenæus?" Hippolitus would have been a valuable evidence, if any proof could be adduced of his having held such opinion. The testimony of Irenæus would be yet more decisive, could it be procured. This, then, is the desideratum; and accordingly we shall find, that attempts have been made to press Irenæus into this service. With what success, will be seen in our examination of the fourth opinion.

IV. For, under the fourth opinion, we must produce the words of Irenæus, which have always been understood by all the ancients, and by all the modern critics, until these days, to assert plainly and undoubtedly, that the visions of the Apocalypse were seen "toward the close of Domitian's reign." If these words had been supposed by ancient writers to be capable of any other meaning, or of such meaning as hath lately been attributed to them, the tradition of the Church would not have been so uniform.
form. For, as Michaelis observes, "almost all the " ecclesiastical writers, who have spoken of the time when the Apocalypse was written, have followed this account," namely, that it was written "toward the close of the reign of Domitian." We have already produced all the evidence that has any tendency to contradict this general testimony of the Church, and we have seen to what little it amounts. It is very far from sufficient for the purposes of those, who, wishing to apply certain Prophecies of the Apocalypse to the times of Nero and his early successors, are driven to the attempt of establishing this necessary postulatum, that "it was written before the times in which (they say) these Prophecies were fulfilled." This is the true reason, (as Michaelis allows,*) why they have recourse to the testimony of Irenæus; the importance of which, to the determination of this question, may be collected by the ardent desire of these writers to make his evidence support their sentiments; but will more fully appear, by considering his character and connections, and the time in which he lived.

Irenæus was born, according to his own account, (as his words have generally been understood) in the age immediately succeeding that, in which the Visions of the Apocalypse were seen. He was a Greek by birth, as his name and language import, and probably an Asiatic Greek, for he was an Auditor of Polycarp †, Bishop of Smyrna, one of the seven Churches, and who had been the Auditor of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, the latter of whom Irenæus constantly affirms to be the writer of the Apocalypse ‡. And accordingly, when Irenæus speaks upon such subjects as concern the external evidences of the Church, he appeals for a confirmation of the truth of what he has advanced to Polycarp, and to

* P. 524, 525.
others, who, he says, had seen the Apostle John. He appeals also to the Asiatic Churches, in which he appears to have been educated*. When removed from Asia into Gaul, where, upon the martyrdom of Pothinus, he became Bishop of Lyons, he kept up a correspondence with the brethren of the Asiatic Churches, from whom he would receive the most genuine information then to be obtained concerning the Apocalypse. He was, in his own character, the most learned, pious, prudent, and venerable Prelate of the age he lived in †. He wrote largely in defence of the truth; and it has been a prevailing opinion in the Church, that he sealed his testimony with his blood.

Here then is a witness, far surpassing, in authority and credibility, any that has hitherto been produced. Accordingly, his evidence, and no other, has been received by the writers nearest to his time, and, with the very few exceptions which we have now produced, by the universal Church. And, until these days, there has not been the least doubt of the import of his evidence; no one has seen occasion to interpret his words, otherwise than according to their obvious and received meaning—“that the Visions of the Apocalypse were seen in the times of Domitian ‡. But, since a novel interpretation of these words has now been attempted, in order to press them into the service of a preconceived opinion, it will be necessary to produce them.

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† It was principally by the wisdom, authority, and moderation of Irenæus, that the furious Victor, Bishop of Rome, was kept in order, and induced, τα τὸν εἰρήνην θέλοντο, to cultivate peace, when a Schism was about to take place between the Eastern and Western Churches, occasioned by the Dispute concerning the Time of keeping Easter.—Euseb. H. E. lib. 5. 24.
‡ In a passage of Michaelis, in another part of this Work, he considers the testimony of Irenæus, so far as relates to St. John’s writings, as of the highest authority. “Irenæus,” says he, “is not only the most ancient writer on this subject, but was a disciple of Polycarp, who was personally acquainted with St. John. Consequently Irenæus had the very best information on this subject.”—Intro. vol. iii. ch. vii.
Irenæus, speaking of the Mystical name, ascribed to Anti-christ in the xiiiith Chapter of the Apocalypse, and of the difficulty of its interpretation, adds, εἰ δὲ εἴδε ἀναφευγόντο εν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ κυριεύσαι τοῦ ὄνομα τᾶς, δι’ εἰκόνα αὐν ἔρρεθι τε καὶ τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν εἰρηκότος. Οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου εὐράθη, ἀλα σχῆδον εἰ τῷ ἡμελέρας γένεσι, πρὸς το τέλος τῆς Δομετίανου αρχῆς: which is thus literally translated—"but if it had been proper, that this name should be openly proclaimed in this present time, it would have been told even by him who saw the Revelation. For it was not seen a long time ago, but almost in our own age (or generation) toward the end of Domitian's reign."

These words are plain and unequivocal; no variety of interpretation of them arose during sixteen hundred years, in which they were read by the Church: And, indeed, the only doubt concerning them now is, "what it is that Irenæus affirms to have been seen in Domitian's reign?" What does the verb seen refer to, and agree with? What is the nominative case understood to the verb eurathè? Now, I will venture to affirm, that no Greek scholar, unbiased by any favourite opinion, can possibly suppose that the verb eurathè, "was seen," can be referred to any other nominative than Ἔν την ἀποκάλυψιν, "The Revelation."—But it is not a matter, wherein a critical knowledge of the Greek tongue is required to enable us to decide. Plain common sense is to supply what is wanting. And no person, possessed of that valuable qualification, can read this passage translated literally into any language, without perceiving that the thing represented to be seen in the latter clause, must be the same as was said to have been seen in the former. The same verb, used so nearly with a relative, must refer to the same noun. Otherwise, there is no dependence on common language: and we must, in all our writings, be driven to use the repetitions in vogue with the Lawyers; and Irenæus, if he were to write in modern times, must be instructed to say, after the word "Revelation," not "It was seen," but the "Aforesaid Revelation" was seen. But
But if the discovery of these modern critics had rested upon any solid or probable foundation, they would be agreed among themselves, not only in rejecting Ἀποκάλυψις as the nominative, to which the verb is to be referred, but in ascertaining the noun which is to supply its place. They are agreed so far as to perceive the necessity of rejecting the common and obvious interpretation, (because, this being admitted, their explications of the Prophecies cannot stand;) but they contend, among one other, about the method of supplying the new interpretation. And, indeed, every proposition, made by them, for supplying a new nominative to εὐραθη, is full of difficulty and absurdity. Michaelis seems to pass this sentence upon all of them but one, which refers εὐραθη to ἄναμα, and which, to me, appears as forced and improbable as any of the rest. What was seen? answer, the name was seen! If Irenæus had intended this meaning, he would not have written εὐραθη but ἕκκασθη. Michaelis has suggested this; and it is a sufficient answer. Yet this able critic is still inclined to favour this application of the verb, referring to ὄνομα to Titan. But this is to break all bounds of grammatical connection. And, to suppose, as this forced construction requires, that Irenæus understood the Emperor Domitian to be Titan and Anti-christ, is to make Irenæus contradict himself; who plainly tells us *, that he understood not this Prophecy; and that, in his opinion, “it is better to wait the completion of it, than to guess at names, which may seem to fit the mystical figures 666.” Irenæus, therefore, considered the Prophecy as not having been fulfilled in the times before him; nor is there any colour of proof for supposing, that he considered Domitian as a type of Anti-christ, or that there had been any partial completion of the Prophecy. Besides, the context of Irenæus, if examined, will admit none of these novel and forced interpretations. It evidently requires the old and obvious

obvious one. The object of Irenæus is to dissuade his readers from a difficult and presumptuous attempt to settle who is Anti-christ, by applying, in the manner he had shewn, the Greek figures 666. And his argument is to this effect; "The mystery was not intended to be cleared up in our times: For if it had, it would have been told by him who saw the vision." This implies, that the vision had lately been seen. But, to complete the argument, and to support the last clause of it, which was not perfectly clear, Irenæus adds— "for it was seen at no great distance from our own times."

In short, all these new interpretations are inconsistent and absurd, and have no support but what is derived from the Latin translation of Irenæus, which is allowed to be very imperfect; and if it had been of greater authority, could only disclose to us the translator's opinion of the meaning of the passage. But, since we possess the original Greek, we must have recourse to the text as it stands there; of which the learned in the present age are at least as good judges as this translator, who, if by using the words "visum est," intended to refer the verb to any other nominative than "Revelatio," has contradicted all the learned students of Irenæus, from the earliest ages to the time of these innovators.

Of the observations of Knittel, to which Michaelis refers us for information on this subject, I can say nothing, not having seen them. I have already been too diffuse on the subject. But the authority of Michaelis is deservedly great: and, it is necessary to shew at large, why an opinion, to which he inclines, ought not to be adopted. I collect, moreover, that Michaelis had observed no evidence, either external or internal*, of sufficient weight to oblige him to fix the date of the Apocalypse in the days of Nero, or before those of Domitian. Otherwise,

* The German Critics, who have endeavoured to point out the accomplishment of the Apocalyptical Prophecies in the Jewish wars, and times preceding Domitian, have met with insuperable difficulties, as may be sufficiently seen in Michaelis's account, p. 513—518.
he would not, in another passage, have been inclined to pronounce it "a spurious production, introduced probably into the world after the death of Saint John*.

The words of Irenæus, of this competent and unexceptionable witness, are, therefore, to be taken in that obvious sense, which has been affixed to them by all the writers before our own times. And, thus taken, they determine the time when the Apocalyptic Visions were seen, and consequently published, namely, "toward the end of Domitian's reign." This is confirmed by the evidence of all the ancient writers, who are agreed (except in the few and unimportant instances which have now been produced to the contrary) that St. John's banishment to Patmos, where he saw the Visions, is of this date. Lampe has asserted, and Lardner confirms the truth of the assertion, "that all antiquity is abundantly agreed, that Domitian was the author of John's banishment †."

Internal evidence, likewise, supports this conclusion. For, in the three first chapters of the Apocalypse, the Churches of Asia are described as being in that advanced and flourishing state of society and discipline, reasonably to be expected; and to have undergone those changes in their faith and morals, which might have taken place, in the time intervening between the publication of Saint Paul's Epistles, and the concluding years of Domitian.

Domitian's death is said to have happened in September, A.D. 96. The Christian exiles were then restored; and Saint John had permission to return to Ephesus. But the Emperor's death, and the permission to return, could not be known in Asia immedi-

* P. 487.
† See Hegesippus apud Euseb. lib. iii. c. 20. 29. Tertullian, Apol. c. v. Hierom. tom. x. p. 100. and other authorities adduced by Lardner, Supplement, ch. ix. sec. 5. who, with his usual judgment and candor, has most satisfactorily determined this question; and also that the Apocalypse was not written till the end of Domitian's reign.
ately. Some time must intervene, before Saint John could be at liberty, so as either to write the Apocalypse at Ephesus, or to send it by messengers (now probably for the first time admitted to approach him) from Patmos*. We shall, therefore, place the date of the Apocalypse, as Mill, Lardner, and other critics have placed it, in the years 96 or 97: probably, (for reasons now assigned,) at the beginning of the latter. It could not be circulated through the Seven Churches sooner.

V.—VI. I shall pass over the fifth and sixth opinions, mentioned by Michaelis, because he does but barely notice them himself. And I trust there is less reason to refute them, after this review of the evidence, by which the fourth opinion is established.

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LETTER IV.

HAVING ascertained the time in which the Apocalypse was written, we may proceed to review the external evidence, which affects its authority. For we shall now be enabled to appreciate such testimony, by considering its approximation to the time when the book was published.

In the examination of this evidence, Michaelis has chosen to begin with that of Eusebius. But Eusebius wrote at an interval of more than two hundred years from the time when the Apocalypse appeared. In his days, doubts had arisen concerning the authenticity of the book, doubts which had no foundation on any external evidence, but which had been suggested by some writers before him, from their consideration of its internal marks and character. The subject appears to have been in debate among

* There seems internal evidence in chap. i. 9. that the Apocalypse was written after the writer had left Patmos, he says, εγώ υπήρξαν καὶ οメント. I was in the island.
the Christian critics in these times. Eusebius was in doubt where to place the Apocalypse; whether among the undoubted books of the inspired Canon, or among those which were not accounted of apostolical authority. He promises farther information when the debate should be concluded: but we do not appear to have received it*

I will begin, then, where we have more decided and authentic information, from Irenæus, whose competency to decide on this question we have so lately considered. There are many testimonies which, in point of time, are antecedent to this of Irenæus, but none so comprehensive, so positive and direct. We shall review these with more advantage, after the consideration of this important evidence.

Irenæus, the Auditor of Polycarp, and of other apostolical men, who had conversed with St. John, had the means of satisfying himself concerning the authenticity of the Apocalypse; and he appears to have been desirous of procuring the most authentic information. From the zeal which he shews to discover the true reading of a passage in the Apocalypse, appealing to ancient and authentic copies, and to the testimony of apostolical men, we may justly conclude that he took equal pains, and the same judicious methods, to assure himself who was the writer of the book†. But Irenæus, in many passages, ascribes this book to “John the Evangelist, the disciple of the Lord, that John who leaned on his Lord's breast at the last supper‡.” There are twenty-two chapters in the book of Revelation, and Irenæus quotes from thirteen of them, producing more than twenty-four passages from it, some of considerable length. The candid and judicious Lardner, after an examination of this evidence, says, “his” (Irenæus's) “testimony for this book is so strong and full, that considering the age of Irenæus,

* Euseb. H. E. bib. iii. c. 25.
† Irenæus, lib. v. c. 18. Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 18.
‡ Bren. lib. iv. 37. 50. 27.
he seems to put it beyond all question, that it is the work of John the Apostle and Evangelist.

The testimony of Irenæus may be supposed to extend from about thirty or forty years after the date of the Apocalypse, to about eighty years after the same period, viz. the year of our Lord 178, when he is believed to have published the books which contain his testimony. But during this period of eighty years, other writers appear to have quoted, and acknowledged the Apocalypse. We will now, therefore, take a retrospect of their quotations and allusions, which will give additional weight to the testimony of Irenæus; while, from a recollection of his evidence, theirs also will derive support.

Ignatius is mentioned by Michaelis as the most ancient evidence that can be produced, respecting the authenticity of the Apocalypse. He lived in the apostolical times, and died by a glorious martyrdom, in the year 107, as some writers state, though others have placed this event a few years later. He is commonly supposed to have made no mention of the Apocalypse; and this his silence amounts, in the opinion of Michaelis, to a rejection of the book. If Ignatius, says he, had seen and acknowledged the Apocalypse as the work of John the Apostle, he would probably, when he wrote his Epistles to the Christian communities at Ephesus, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, have reminded them of the praises, which, according to Rev. ii. 1—7. 8—11. iii. 7—12. their Bishops had received from Christ, more particularly when he addressed the Church of Ephesus; because, in his Epistle to that Church, he particularly reminds them of the praises bestowed on them by St. Paul.

The connection of idea and train of thought, expected from Ignatius upon this occasion, is indeed natural, but it is not necessary; so that the want of it will not amount to a proof that Ignatius had never seen, or that he rejected, the Apocalypse. Ignatius was not a Bishop of any of the Seven Churches to which it was addressed, nor any of the Churches in

Asia, properly so called, but of Antioch in Syria; and his familiarity with so obscure and mystical a book would depend much upon his own turn of mind, and bent of study. We know that many eminent divines of our own times have been very little conversant with the Apocalypse; and we know that many of those, who are conversant with the book, are little inclined to quote it in their sermons and popular addresses, for they appeal to those books of scripture with which they suppose their auditors most acquainted.

Besides, we are to take into our account, the peculiar circumstances under which this Father of the Church wrote his Epistles, which are the only remains of his works. He was a prisoner, upon travel, guarded by a band of soldiers, whom, for their ferocity, he compares to leopards*, and by them hurried forward in his passage from Antioch to Rome, there to be devoured by wild beasts. In such circumstances, he would write only at uncertain seasons, with frequent interruption; his train of thoughts necessarily broken: and his quotations depending probably on memory alone, would be inaccurate. From these causes it has happened, that, in his hasty Epistles, the references of Ignatius to sacred Scripture, may be styled allusions, rather than quotations; and to many of the sacred books, he appears not to allude at all. The Epistle to the Ephesians is the only book expressly named by him. Of the Gospels he only quotes, or plainly alludes to, those of St. Matthew and St. John. And it will appear dubious, to those who examine the quotations and allusions of this Father*, whether the Acts of the Apostles, or any of the Epistles, are either indubitably quoted, or alluded to by him, except that to the Romans, the First to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and the Second to Timothy. But shall we affirm, that Ignatius rejected two of the Gospels, and fourteen of the other books of sacred

* Ad Romanos, Sect. V.
Scripture, because no clear and evident allusion to them can be found in these his hasty Epistles? No one will make this affirmation. The authenticity and divine inspiration of these scriptural books are supported by other and sufficient evidence; and the conclusion which Michaelis invites us to draw, from the silence of Ignatius respecting the Apocalypse, must appear rash and unfounded. We can neither conclude, because Ignatius has not mentioned the Apocalypse, nor alluded to it, that therefore it was unknown to him: nor that, if it was known to him, he did not believe it genuine; nor yet, that his silence concerning it amounts to a rejection of it." This answer may be applied, and I trust effectually, in case it shall be concluded, that Ignatius "has passed over the Apocalypse "in silence." But there are some passages in his Epistles, which may perhaps be admitted to allude to the Apocalypse. It may be thought, that if Ignatius had not seen the Apocalypse, he would not have used certain expressions, which he has employed in these passages. I shall present them at length, because they have never yet been produced.


Εν υπομηνη Ιησου Χρισου. Εν υπομηνη Ιησου Χρισου.

The text of the Apocalypse is here taken from the approved edition of Griesbach; and it is a confirmation to be added to his supports of this text, that it was thus read by Ignatius. This expression, though the idea be quite scriptural, is to be found, I believe, in no other passage of the New Testament, but in this of the Apocalypse only.

Rev. xxii. 2. Ignat. ad Ephes. Sect. 3.

Την ποιην την ἀγιαν ἀπο τς Θεος

Ητοιμασμενην ὡς νυκτιν

Κεκοσμημενην τω αψηρ αυλις.

Διος γας παλαρος

Ητοιμασμενοι εις οικοδομην

Κεκοσμημενοι ενιολαις Ιησου Χριστου.

Here
Here the use of the word Κενοσιμηνηνοι, following so immediately after the words ητοιμασμενοι and Θεου, and with such connection of thought and of imagery, gives good reason to suppose, that Ignatius had seen this passage of the Apocalypse. Ignatius appears to me to comment on St. John, referring this passage to the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the same images are used, and by a comparison with which it is best explained. A better illustration cannot be given of Κενοσιμηνην τω ανδρι αυτη, than in these parallel words of Ignatius, Κενοσιμηνην ενολαις Ιησου Χριστου. The one is the mystical expression; the other its meaning, when disrobed of its figurative dress.

Rev. xxi. 3. Ignat. ad Ephes. sect. 15.

Και αυτοι λαοι, αυτοι εσοναι και ίμα παεν αυτου ναιοι (fors laoi και αυτος)

Αυτοι μετ' Αυτοι, Θεος αυτοι. Η εν ημιν, Θεος ημων.

Both these passages seem to have reference to ii. Cor. v. 16. και εσομαι αυτων δ Θεος, και αυτοι εσοναι μοι λαος, which is taken from Lev. xxvi. 12. και εσομαι μοι Θεος, και μεις εσοθε μοι λαος, or from Jer. xxxii. 33. και εσομαι αυτοις εις Θεον, και αυτοι εσοναι μοι εις λαον. or Jer. xxxii. 38. και εσοναι μοι εις λαον, και εγω εσομαι αυτοις εις Θεον. or from Ezek. xxxvii. 23. και εσοναι μοι εις λαον, και εγω νυνις εσομαι αυτοις εις Θεον.

I have produced all these passages, to shew in what degree Ignatius can be supposed to quote from, or allude to each. The expression, in the first part of the sentence, may be taken from any, or all of them, as well as from this passage in the Apocalypse. But the peculiar turn and form of the latter clause is only to be found here. And I think it probable, that Ignatius would not have relinquished the form observed in the other quotations for this mode of expression, which is very peculiar, if he had not seen and remembered it in the Apocalypse. They are, indeed, the very same words; only with that alteration which was necessary to fit them to the circumstances, that is,
to the application which Ignatius makes of them to himself, and his readers.

I submit the consideration of these passages to you, Sir, and to the learned reader. You may, perhaps, determine, that Ignatius has not "passed over the Apocalypse in silence."

The next writer, from whom Michaelis expects evidence respecting the Apocalypse, is the old Syriac translator. He has taken considerable pains to shew, that the first Syriac translation is of great antiquity*. But, whoever has read your notes, Sir, upon this part of Michaelis's works, must be convinced that there is no sufficient evidence to shew, that the Syriac version was made before the fourth century, because the first quotation from it is by Ephrem, who lived in that period †. In this case, it cannot be admitted as an evidence, belonging to this early class.

HERMAS, or the author bearing that name, or the Shepherd, is not mentioned by Michaelis. But Lardner has produced some passages from this book, by which he was inclined to think, that Hermes "had seen and imitated the Apocalypse." I have examined these passages attentively, but can see no such particular expressions, (such as we have observed in Ignatius) as will lead me to conclude that Hermes had seen this book. There are, indeed, images and descriptions, which bear some affinity to those of the Apocalypse; but the sources, from which these were probably derived, may be shewn in other parts of Sacred Scripture. There appears to me nothing either in the imagery or expression of Hermes, which will prove that he copied after the Apocalypse. But the time, in which Hermes wrote, is supposed, by Lardner and others, upon probable grounds, to have been before the conclusion of the first century; some name the year 75, others 92, (Tillemont); but, as this book was written at Rome, it is not probable that the author could, in any part of that century,

* Introd. vol. I. part I.
† Marsh's Notes to Michaelis's Introd. vol. II. ch. vii. sect. 6.

have
have obtained a sight of the Apocalypse, which, as we have observed, began to be circulated in Asia, only about the year 97. If Hermas had seen the Apocalypse, it is to be expected that his narration would have been strongly and unquestionably tinged with the imagery, and appropriate expressions of this sublime book.* If, then, Hermas wrote before he saw the Apocalypse, his silence is no evidence against its authenticity; but it is an additional proof, to be classed with those of the preceding letter, that the Apocalypse was not published till late in Domitian's reign.

Polycarp has not been cited as an evidence in the question before us. He is reported, by Irenæus, to have written many Epistles. But only one of these is come down to us. And this is so replete with practical exhortations, that there is little reason to expect from it any quotations from this mystical book. We have, however, another reason to conclude, that Polycarp admitted the Apocalypse, because it was so admitted by Irenæus, his Auditor, who appeals to him and the Asiatic Churches, where Polycarp presided, for the truth of his doctrines. This apostolical and excellent man suffered martyrdom, about the middle of the second century; that is, about sixty years after the Apocalypse had been published. An account of this event is given in a genuine and interesting Epistle written from the Church of Smyrna, over which Polycarp had presided, and in which city he suffered. In this Epistle, part of which is reported by Eusebius †, there seem to be some allusions to the Apocalypse, which have escaped observation. And if the Apocalypse was received by the Church of Smyrna at Polycarp's death, there can be no doubt but it was received by him, their Bishop and Instructor.

* This seems to be the case in the apochryphal Esdras. Compare 2 Esdras, ii. 42—47, with Rev. vii. 9. Also, vi. 17. 31. 54. V. 4. vii. 57. 58. ix. 38. x. 37. xi. 5. 22.
† H. E. lib. iv. c. 15.
In Rev. I. 15.
The feet of the Son of Man are described

The body of the suffering Martyr is represented,

That the writer did not use the word χαλκολιθανος, may be accounted for, by his having in view, at the same time, another passage of Scripture, 1 Peter, i. 7, where the Apostle compares the suffering Christians to "Gold tried by the fire;" but why did he, after having used the word Gold, omit the δια πυρος δομιλης γιμνης of St. Peter, to substitute καυμην πυρωμενος? why? but because he was led to it by this passage of the Apocalypse?

The pious and sublime prayer of Polycarp, at the awful moment when the fire was about to be lighted under him, begins with these words, Κυριε, ο Θεος, ο παντοκρατωρ. They are not only remarkable for the change of case, from the vocative to the nominative, which is observable in the Apocalypse; but they are the identical words in the prayer of the Elders, Rev. xi. 17. Κυριε, ο Θεος, ο παντοκρατωρ.

From these instances, perhaps, some confirmation is derived, that Polycarp, and his disciples of the Church of Smyrna, received the Apocalypse.

Papias belongs likewise to the apostolical age, and is said to have been an Auditor of St. John *. This Father is asserted by Andreas, Bishop of Caesarea, who wrote in the fifth century, to have given his testimony to the Apocalypse †; and is classed by this writer in the list of those who are well known to have testified in its favor; with Irenæus, Methodius, and Hippolitus. What writings of Papias had descended to the time of Andreas, we do not know; but to us there have come down only a few very short fragments by Eusebius ‡: In these we have no mention

† Proleg. ad Apoc. ‡ H. E. lib. iii. 39.
of the Apocalypse. They treat of other subjects; of the Gospels chiefly. And to two only, of the four Gospels, has Papias given evidence. Yet no one has doubted, for this reason, whether Papias received the other two. Yet, as the subject on which Papias was then treating, was the Gospel, it is stronger evidence against St. John's Gospel, that he did not mention that Gospel, than that he omitted to mention his Apocalypse. The same is the case with the quotation of Papias, from the Epistles of the New Testament. It is said by Eusebius, that Papias quoted from the First of Peter and the First of John, and no other of the Epistles are mentioned as quoted by him. Yet no notion has thence been entertained by the learned, that he rejected the other Epistles of the Sacred Canon. "He confirms these which he has mentioned," says Lardner*, "without prejudicing the rest."

Upon the same footing stands his silence concerning the Apocalypse. And this silence, in these short fragments of his works, would be no evidence against it, even if we had no testimony that he received it as holy writ. But such testimony we have, from Andreas of Caesarea†. Michaelis collects, from some expressions of Eusebius‡, that Papias had no where cleared up the important question, "whether

† Michaelis is willing to suppose (p. 466) that Andreas had no proof of what he asserts, and that he concluded Papias to be an evidence in favour of the Apocalypse, merely because Papias was a Millenarian. This is, at the most, a conjecture, for the support of which, he refers us to what is afterwards said by him of Andreas, when he comes to speak of Gregory of Nazianzum. When we turn to that passage (page 490), which is designed to invalidate the testimony of Andreas by this argument, "that he who had falsely represented Gregory, as an evidence for the Apocalypse, may be supposed to have done the same concerning Papias;" we find that, even by the admission of Michaelis, Gregory has quoted the Apocalypse in two passages of his writings. Which quotations will be found (when we come to examine Gregory's evidence) more than sufficient to counterbalance the circumstance of the Apocalypse not being mentioned in his Metrical Catalogue. Michaelis, at last, leaves the question undecided. And so the testimony of Andreas remains unconvinced of being false.
‡ P. 464.
John the Presbyter, who also lived at Ephesus, was the writer of the Apocalypse. But how could our author expect such determination from Papias, when it appears that, in his times, the question was never agitated? Eusebius himself, in the fourth century, first started it. Dionysius of Alexandria, in the century preceding, had mentioned some other John, as perhaps, the author of the book; but even he does not mention John the Presbyter. Nor is there any evidence that it was ascribed to any other than to John the Apostle, by any orthodox writer of the Church, during the first century of its appearance in the world. The Alogi, a sect of Heretics, ascribed it to Cerinthus; but no one, before the third century, (as far as we know) assigned to it any other than John the Evangelist. That Papias, therefore, never entered into the merits of this question, is of no disservice to the Apocalypse. On the contrary, that little is said by him, and by the ancient Fathers, concerning the writer of the Apocalypse, shews, that no doubts arose, in the early times, concerning the person who wrote it. All, who have spoken upon the question, have asserted John the Evangelist to be its author; and they were not contradicted.

But that the Apocalypse was unknown to Papias, our author attempts also to prove from another passage of Eusebius; who, having mentioned that Papias had reported some doctrines and parables of our Saviour, not contained in the Gospels, but learnt by oral tradition; and among these some things that are fabulous, classes among the latter his Millennial doctrine, “That, after the resurrection of the dead, Christ will reign in person a thousand years on earth.” “I suppose,” adds Eusebius, “that he acquired this notion from his inquiring into the saying of the Apostles, and his not understanding what they had delivered figurately.” From this passage it is inferred, that Papias was ignorant of the Apocalypse; “for why,” it is said, “should he have recourse to oral tra-
dition for the support of these principles, when the 20th chapter of Revelation would, literally interpreted, have much better suited his purpose?" But this mode of proving is somewhat like that which we have examined, which was found to rest only on a conjecture of Eusebius. For this rests only on a supposition of the same writer, equally unfounded. "I suppose," says Eusebius, that he acquired his millenary notions from oral tradition:" but there is no other ground for this supposition, than that Papias had appeared to acquire some other information, and some other fabulous notions, by this method. But, if the 20th chapter of the Apocalypse, verses 4, 5, 6, literally interpreted, would, according to the confession of Michaelis, "have much better suited his purpose," why may we not, with equal reason suppose, that he found it did suit his purpose? Certainly we can shew, in this chapter, a passage, which, literally taken, would be a ground work for Papias's millenary doctrines; but neither Eusebius, nor Michaelis, were able to prove any such oral tradition received by Papias, upon which he could found his notions of Christ's millenary reign on earth. But Eusebius may be wrong in his supposition, because he is evidently so in another, which is contained in the same passage. He supposes Irenæus to have founded his Millenarian notions on the tradition and authority of Papias. But Irenæus happens to have told us otherwise. For, in his fifth book against the heretics, chapters xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxvi, he rests this doctrine, partly indeed upon the tradition of the Elders, but chiefly on the promises of Scripture, which he quotes abundantly, producing also this passage of the Apocalypse—"In the Apocalypse, and the Apocalypse alone," (says our author, speaking of the Millenarian system,) "is this doctrine discoverable, if we take all the expressions used in the xxth chapter in a strictly literal sense; and this is the chapter on which all the Millenarians of modern ages have principally grounded their opinions." And why, then, not Papias?
To me, there appear to arise two powerful arguments in favour of the antiquity and divine origin of the Apocalypse, to be derived from a consideration of the times of Papias. 1. The Millenary doctrines appear, then, first to have taken that form, agreeable to the xxth chapter of the Apocalypse, which, literally interpreted, would supply those notions. 2. If the Apocalypse had been written after the times of Papias, after the times when he had broached these doctrines, and had not been a work of divine origin, the ingenious author, who will be supposed, from this passage, to have favoured the Millenarian tenets, would not have contented himself with that short description of the terrestrial reign of Christ, which is contained in three verses of his xxth chapter. He would have enlarged on a topic so flattering to the Christians, in the manner afterwards used by Papias, or his followers, and not have left the description, restricted to that brevity and obscurity, which bespeak a work composed before these notions had generally prevailed.

I may have detained you too long with the evidence of Papias: but it seemed to me to require a particular examination, because Michaelis, when he sums up the evidence for and against the Apocalypse, still takes it for granted, that Papias knew nothing of this book; and considers this circumstance as sufficient to balance against the express testimonies of the learned Origen, a determined Anti-millennarian, in its favour.

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LETTER V.

I shall now present you with the testimony of a writer, who was contemporary with all those whom we have reviewed*. If any thing shall have

* It is probable that Justin Martyr was born in the first century, and before the Apocalypse was written, and that he suffered martyrdom about the middle of the second century. See Cave, Fabricius, Tillemon, Lardner.
appeared defective in any of their testimonies, that objection cannot be made here. The testimony which Justin Martyr affords us is full, positive, and direct. He received the Apocalypse as the production of "John, one of the Apostles of Christ." He expressly names this John as the writer of it. He appears also, from the testimony of Jerome, to have interpreted some parts of this mystical book; although no work of this kind has come down to us.

Some writers have supposed, from the words of Jerome, that Justin published a commentary on the Apocalypse; but there seems not sufficient foundation for this opinion, since such a work is mentioned by no early writer of the Church. But it has, on the contrary, been too hastily concluded, that Justin wrote no other interpretation of the Apocalypse, than that which is to be found in the single passage of his Dialogue with Trypho, already referred to. But Jerome would not be justified, in calling him an interpreter of the Apocalypse, from this passage only, which contains a reference to Rev. xx. but no interpretation. It is probable, therefore, that, in some other work, now lost, he had occasionally attempted an interpretation of some parts of it, in the manner of Irenæus. If this may be admitted as probable; the testimony of Justin, which is sufficiently clear and direct, becomes also more extensive.

Athenagoras, who was contemporary with Polycarp and Justin Martyr, is admitted by Michaelis, from the allusion produced by Lardner, to have been acquainted with the Apocalypse.

Michaelis has passed over in silence the evidence to be found in that valuable remnant of ecclesiastical

* Dial. cum Tryphon, lib. vi. c. 20.
‡ Scripsit (Johannes) Apocalypsin, quam interpretantur Justinus Martyr et Irenæus.
§ Some account of Justin's works, which are now lost, may be seen in Grabe's Spicileg. vol. ii. p. 166.

D antiquity.
antiquity, The Epistle from the Gallic Churches, which relates the sufferings of their Martyrs about the year 177, 80 years after the publication of the Apocalypse.

We are obliged to Eusebius for preserving a considerable part of this letter, in which Lardner has remarked this passage, Ἀποκάλυψις τῷ Αρνίῳ ἐπὶ τῶν ἔσορων. They are the very words of the Apocalypse, ch. xiv. 4. and so peculiar in idea and expression, as evidently to be derived from no other origin.

I shall state more at large another passage, observed, but not admitted, by Lardner, because it may be useful to make some remarks upon it.

Rev. xxii. 11. Epistle.


Dan. xii. 10.

Καὶ ἀναμνήστων ἀναμνήστων.

From this view of comparison we may perceive, that although the writer referred to this passage of Daniel, in the second he adverted to the Apocalypse. The whole form and colouring of the passage are indeed taken from it; which sufficiently appear from the peculiar use of the word ἐτι: and δικαιοθήθω, though expunged by Greisbach, is a reading of considerable authority, and, from this quotation, appears to have stood in the ancient MSS. used by the Gallic Church.

I shall add to these quotations one that has not, to my knowledge, been observed before.

* It must be remarked, that, although this Epistle was written eighty years after the Apocalypse was published, the writer, who quotes from it, is an evidence of an earlier date. For the person chosen by the Church to write for them, would probably be no young man, but one of their venerable Fathers. Irenæus has been supposed to be the writer, but there is no proof of it.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. v. c. 1.
In Rev. i. 5. iii. 14. In the Epistle,
Our Lord Jesus Christ is called
The Martyrs give place to Jesus Christ.

After the perusal of these quotations, we can entertain no doubt, but that the writer of these Epistles, and the Churches of Gaul, who employed him to write in their name, received the Apocalypse as divine Scripture. And their testimony is of the more importance in this inquiry, because these Churches appear to have received their instructions in religion, and consequently their canon of sacred Scripture, from the Churches in Asia. Their connection with these Churches, at the time when this Epistle was written, is sufficiently apparent, from its being addressed: "to the Churches of Asia and Phrygia." And there appears to have been another Epistle from the Martyrs themselves of these Churches, with the same address, but upon another ecclesiastical subject, written at the same time. These were not letters from individuals to individuals, but from entire societies to other ecclesiastical communities. The Gallic Churches give account to the Asiatic Churches, as colonies to their mother country. We may collect also from names, casually mentioned in this Epistle, that the Gallic Churches had among them Asiatic Greeks, men of the first rank and character, then teaching in Gaul, Attalus of Pergamus, (one of the Seven Churches,) and Alexander, a Phrygian. Pothinus appears to be a great name; but, whether this venerable Bishop were of Asia or not, his age, which was more than 90, when he suffered martyrdom, shews him to have been born at least ten years before the Apocalypse was published; and the strict connection subsisting between the Church over which he presided, and the Asiatic Churches, would enable him to know all that could be known of the authenticity of the Apocalypse; but it appears, from the evidences...
evidences now produced, that his Church believed it to be a book of divine authority. We may add too, that they believed the Asiatic Churches to have received this book into their canon, otherwise they would not have quoted from it in a letter addressed to them. Irenæus, likewise, the auditor of Polyearp, was a Presbyter of the Church at Lyons at this time, and succeeded Pothinus in the Bishoprick; and we have already made ourselves acquainted with his creed, respecting this book.

There is, upon the whole, therefore, strong reasons for concluding, that these Gallic Churches held the same canon of Scripture, as the Asiatic; and consequently, that the Asiatic Churches, to whom the Apocalypse appears to have been addressed, received it as divine Scripture, and with Irenæus, as the work of John the Apostle.

Melito, after some doubt and hesitation, is at last admitted by Michaelis, as a witness in favour of the Apocalypse; he is stated to have flourished about the year 170*, and probably might be living at the time the Gallic Epistle was received by the Asiatic Churches; of one of which, (of Sardis, one of the Seven,) he was Bishop. He was a Bishop of the highest reputation in the Christian world, according to the testimonies of Polycrates†, of Tertullian‡, of Eusebius§. He wrote upon the Apocalypse||, and was esteemed, says Tertullian, a Prophet, by many Christians; probably because he had interpreted and applied the divine Prophecies of this book, with some apparent success. His works are unfortunately lost.

Theophilus, who was Bishop of Antioch about 90 years after the publication of the Apocalypse, appears to have written upon, and to have quoted from it, as if from divine authority, in his treatise against Hermogenes¶. This treatise is not extant;

* Cave, Hist. Lit. † Euseb. V. 24.
¶ Euseb. H. E. lib. iv. 94.
but Lardner has produced one passage, from another work of his still remaining, in which he calls the Devil, “Satan, the Serpent, and the Dragon;” which seems to be taken from Rev. xii. 9*. Michaelis admits Theophilus among those who undoubtedly received the Apocalypse†.

**APOLLONIUS** is not mentioned by our author. But Eusebius, who speaks of him as a learned man, represents him also as supporting the Apocalypse, by testimonies taken from it‡. He suffered martyrdom about the year 186§, and is a valuable addition to our evidence.

**CLEMENS OF ALEXANDRIA** is admitted by Michaelis as an undoubted evidence for the Apocalypse∥. He has frequently quoted from it, and referred to it, as the work of an Apostle. He was a learned, inquisitive, and well-informed writer, and having flourished within the first century after the publication of the Apocalypse, is an important evidence in its favour.

**TERTULLIAN** wrote about the same time with Clement; but his long life extended farther into the next century. Michaelis allows his evidence for the Apocalypse as undoubted: and it is certainly valuable. He is the most ancient of the Latin Fathers, whose works have descended to our times. He quotes, or refers to, the Apocalypse, in above seventy passages of his writings; and he appeals to it expressly as the work of the Apostle John. He defends the authenticity of the book against the heretic Marcion and his followers, by appealing to its external evidence. He appeals to the Asiatic Churches, and assures us, that “though Marcion rejects it, yet the succession of Bishops, traced to its origin, will establish John to be its author¶. In particular, it

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* Lardner, Cred. Art. Theophilus. † P. 467.
† Euseb. H. E. lib. v. c. 18. 21.
may be noted, that Tertullian has quoted Rev. i. 6. "Quia sacerdotes nos et Deo et patri fecit," as a passage common in the mouths of the Laity of his time*. This frequent and popular appeal to the Apocalypse, shews it to be a book much read, and generally received, in the African Churches of the second century.

We are now returned again to the times of Irenæus, whose single testimony appeared to have such deserved influence in settling the question before us†. But the retrospect, which we have been able to take of the writers who preceded him, has added great weight to the evidence. For testimonies have been drawn abundantly from every generation of writers, through the first century after the Apocalypse was published. They have been produced from all parts of the Christian world: from Asia, where it made its first appearance; from Syria; from Italy, and from Gaul, in Europe; from the Churches of Africa, where it seems to have had an universal reception, and a more than ordinary circulation.

I have here added a sketch, drawn after the manner of Priestley's Biographical chart, and of Playfair's Chronology; by which the Reader may see, in one view, the writers, whose testimonies we have hitherto collected. He will hereby be enabled to estimate the force of that numerous, unbroken, concurring chain of evidence, which we have laid before him. Besides those writers already reviewed, he will see also, in the chart, the name of Hippolitus and Origen, who belong more strictly to the next century; because, in that century, they chiefly wrote and flourished. But they lived also in this century. They are important testimonies in favour of the Apocalypse. They carry on the evidence by

* Tertull. de Monog. cap. 12.
† In a passage of Michaelis, ch. xxvi. sect. 8. on the Epistle of Saint James, we collect the names of the ancient authors, whose testimony he esteems most decisive to the books of the New Testament. These are Irenæus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen; by all of whom we shall find the Apocalypse admitted to be the work of St. John.
A Biographical Chart of Writers in the early Christian Church, who appear to have afforded Evidence in favor of the Apocalypse.

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<td>Papias</td>
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<td>Justin Martyr</td>
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The dotted line marks the year 97, when the Apocalypse was published. The lines under each name show the year when the writer lived, to be measured upon the scale below. When the birth or death of a Writer is uncertain, that uncertain year is circled or a.
a strong and regular concatenation to the middle of the third century after Christ; after which time, we can expect little or no accession of external evidence, concerning any inspired book.

The testimonies of Hippolitus, and of Origen, will be exhibited in a succeeding letter.

LETTER VI.

HAVING laid before you the external evidence in favour of the Apocalypse, during the first century from its publication, it will be useful to pause, before we produce subsequent witnesses, and to give an opportunity of examining any testimonies of the same period, which have denied its authenticity and divine inspiration. The examination of this evidence is a business which will soon be dispatched. For, wonderful as it may appear, there is not one writer of the pure Primitive Church, no Father, no Ecclesiastical Author, who seems to have questioned its authenticity. Yet there was ground then for the same objections, which afterwards induced some persons to reject it, in the third and fourth centuries. The Fathers, before the times of Caius and of Dionysius, could discover that the Apocalypse was obscure; that it was to them no revelation; that the Greek of it appeared different from that of Saint John's Gospel; but, notwithstanding all these circumstances, which they were well qualified to discover, they received it with pious acquiescence, as divine Scripture; communicated by the beloved Apostle, and they delivered it as such to the succeeding century.

Now, to what can we attribute this, but to the powerful operation of that external evidence by which it was then supported? The writers of the first part of this century had the opportunity of hearing from
from apostolical men, from "those who had seen the face of John," as Irenæus expresses it, to what author they ascribed the Apocalypse. In the latter part of the century the tradition was still warm, depending upon the living testimony of those who had seen apostolical men; and an inquisitive author could satisfy himself, from the narration of others, upon what grounds of external evidence the book had been so universally received. It had been produced publicly into the world. It was to be found, not in the archives of one insignificant Church, but of the seven flourishing Churches of Asia, "This thing was not done in a corner." From the mode of its publication, it challenged observation and defied detection. And we may suppose, that as none of the early fathers objected to the evidence, all were satisfied. They received and transmitted to others those prophecies, which they themselves could not understand. Under these circumstances, we may be more surprized that so many of the ancient fathers have quoted from the Apocalypse, than that some (and they are but few) have passed it over in silence.

But although none of the orthodox writers of the Church seem to have questioned the authenticity of the Apocalypse, during the first century of its appearing, we have evidence that certain heretics rejected it. Of this number was Marcion *. But we know also that this daring Gnostic rejected or mutilated other books of sacred Scripture, which he could not otherwise make subservient to his wicked purposes†.

The rejection of the Apocalypse by Marcion is favourable to its pretensions. It is a proof that the book was in existence, and received by the Church, in those early times in which he flourished ‡; and that the doctrines contained in it, were such as opposed his impious tenets.

* Tertullian adv. Marcion, lib. iv. cap. 5.
‡ Marcion came to Rome in the year 127. Cave, Hist. Lit.
The Apocalypse was rejected also by a sect, who obtained the name of Alogi; but they rejected also the Gospel of Saint John; and for the same reasons; which, with these rash people, were not founded on any exceptions to the external evidence of these divine books, but on their dislike to the word Logos, which, as used in this gospel and revelation, they would not consider as of divine authority*; but this, and their assigning of the Apocalypse, together with the Gospel of St. John, to Cerinthus as its author, how weak soever the grounds on which they stand, are not to be refuted here; because they rest, not on external, but internal evidence†. Among these their objections indeed to the Apocalypse, there is one which our author has remarked to be of an historical kind; which must, therefore, be considered under the head of external evidence.

The fourth epistle in the Apocalypse is addressed to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira, but the Alogi, with a view to convict the Apocalypse of falsehood, declared that there existed no Church at Thyatira. The words, as delivered by Epiphanius, are observed to be ambiguous, and may denote, either that there was no Christian community at Thyatira in the time of St. John, or none at the time when these Alogi made their objections‡. If we ascribe to them the latter sense, the argument, as our author justly observes, is of no importance. For if there was no Church at Thyatira in the middle, or toward the close of the second century, still there might have been at the close of the first.

But let us meet the objection in its strongest force. Let us suppose it to be unequivocally declared, by the testimony of these Alogi, that there was no Church at Thyatira at the time of Saint John; at the time when he is affirmed to have addressed this epistle to them. Now these Alogi, who,

* Epiphan. Haer. 51.
† Michaelis has fully exposed and refuted this strange notion of the Alogi, p. 464.
‡ Καὶ ηῇ ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ Κερινθοῦς.
when we come to examine their **internal** evidence against the Apocalypse, will be found to support their cause by the most weak and absurd arguments *. Eye-witnesses they could not be, because they did not live in those times: and we can entertain but an unfavourable opinion of their fair and candid appreciation of the evidence of others, when they rejected powerful external evidence, by which Saint John's Gospel was supported, so soon after its publication, only because some **passages** of that Gospel seemed to oppose their favourite tenets. But admit, for the sake of argument, the fact which they wished to establish. Admit, for a moment, that not Saint John, but Cerinthus was the writer of the Apocalypse. But Cerinthus was contemporary with Saint John; and Cerinthus lived in Ephesus, and amidst the seven Churches †: and can we suppose it possible, that Cerinthus, so circumstanced, should address an epistle to a society of Christians in that very region where he lived, when in fact no such society existed? Nothing can be more absurd than the supposition. To carry the argument a little further, the forger of the Apocalypse (if it could be proved a forgery) must have written, says Michaelis, before the times of Justin Martyr, before the year 120 ‡; that is, very near to the time when the ancients believed the Apocalypse, if genuine, to have been written. A fabricator so circumscribed cannot be supposed to be capable of so gross a mistake; and if such a mistake had been made, we should have heard of it from other, and earlier, objectors than these Alogi; and Cerinthus, or any other supposed fabricator of the Apocalypse, must be supposed to have known, better than they, what Churches existed in Asia Proper, in the reign of Domitian. Persons who make use of such absurd arguments,

* They rejected the Gospel of Saint John, and attributed it to the heretic Cerinthus, merely because they disliked the word Logos as applied by St. John to Christ, and so are not very credible witnesses.
† Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 28.
‡ P. 466.
arguments, and no other, deserve little attention. I may have bestowed upon them too much; but it seemed necessary to examine, in all its appearances, the only external evidence which seems to have been alleged against the Apocalypse, in the first century after its publication.

LETTER VII.

I NOW proceed to consider the external testimony which is obtained from Hippolitus and Origen, two great names in the ancient Christian world, and both highly favourable to the divine authority of the Apocalypse. They have already had their place in my Biographical Chart, for reasons which have been already assigned. But I have kept apart the examination of their evidence, because I wished my readers to consider separately “the cloud of witnesses,” who supported the authenticity of the Apocalypse during its first century, in the times before any objection was made to it, by any of those members of the Church who preserved the pure faith, and the pure canon of Scripture.

In the times of Hippolitus and of Origen, a notion seems first to have been adopted in the true Church (derived perhaps originally from the heretics), that the Apocalypse was not, what it pretended to be, the production of an Apostle.

Dionysius of Alexandria, who wrote about the middle of the third century, says, “some, before our times*, have utterly rejected this book;” and he has been thought by some writers to intend Caius, an ecclesiastical man at Rome†, who certainly ascribed some Apocalypse, and not impro-

* Τίμιον στήνος. Euseb. lib. vii, c. 25.
† So Eusebius calls him H. E. lib. ii. c. 25.
bably our Apocalypse (though this matter has been much doubted) to the heretic Cerinthus*. But whatever may be determined concerning the opinions of Caius, it seems clear, that before Dionysius wrote, that is, in the former part of the third century, some persons in the Christian Church had begun to doubt the authenticity of the Apocalypse; to deny it to be the production of Saint John, or of any apostolical, or even pious man; and to ascribe it, as the Alogi had done before them, to Cerinthus†.

But it does not appear that they alleged any external evidence in support of these extraordinary opinions. They rested them on the basis of internal evidence only. "The Apocalypse," said they, "is obscure, unintelligible, and inconsistent, and improperly intitled a revelation. It authorises notions of an impure, terrestrial millennium, unworthy of an apostle of Christ. But Cerinthus adopted such notions, and to propagate them more successfully, he wrote the Apocalypse, and prefixed to it the honourable name of John."

All the arguments here used, excepting the affirmation, that Cerinthus is the author, (which has no proof whatever to support it †), will be observed to rest on internal evidence, and, therefore, belong not to this present inquiry. In a future Letter they will be examined. But I mention them in this place, because they prevailed in the times of Hippolitus and Origen, whose testimony is now to be adduced. These two learned men had the opportunity of knowing, and considering all the arguments, which these novel objectors had alleged against the authenticity of the Apocalypse. We shall see what influence such arguments had on the minds of these able divines.

* Michaelis has chosen to place these objectors in the second century, but on no solid ground of evidence; for the first objector, of whom we have any account, is Caius, and the earliest time assigned to him is A.D. 210. Cave, Hist. Lit. Art. Caius.
‡ See this affirmation perfectly refuted by our author, p. 469.
Hippolitus flourished early in the third century*, and probably lived and taught during a considerable part of the second: for he was an instructor of Origen, who was set over the Catechetical school in Alexandria, in the year 202. He had been the disciple of Irenaeus; but probably was a Greek by birth, for he wrote in Greek, and not improbably in the eastern parts of the Christian world, where his writings were long held in the highest esteem†. He is in all respects as credible a witness, as the times in which he lived could produce. He received the Apocalypse as the work of Saint John, the apostle and disciple of the Lord‡. Michaelis admits his evidence, and attributes, to his influence and exertions, much support of the Apocalypse||. He could produce no new external evidence in its favour, but he probably appealed to, and arranged that evidence which had gone before, and endeavoured to take away, in some measure, a popular objection to the book, by explaining parts of it, and thus rendering it less obscure§. His studies qualified him for this office; for, as Michaelis observes, he commented on other prophecies. His genuine works, except a few fragments, appear not to have come down to us, but they were read both in Greek, and in Syriac translation, for many ages. And it appears, by the evidence of Jerome and Ebedjesa, that one, if not two of his books were written in defence of the Apocalypse. Michaelis is inclined upon probable grounds, to believe that he left two works on this subject, one in answer to Caius, the other against the Alogi||. He says nothing which

* One work of his is shewn to have 222 for its date. See Lardner, Art. Hippolitus.
† P. 479.
‡ See the testimonies as collected by Lardner, who says, that "the testimony of Hippolitus is so clear in this respect, that no question can be made about it." Cred. G H. Art. Hippolitus.
∥ P. 478.
§ What remains of Hippolitus in this kind, is to be seen in the Commentary of Andreas' Cæsariensis on the Apocalypse, who professes to have followed him. † P. 479.
tends to invalidate the evidence of Hippolitus in favour of the Apocalypse, but much to confirm it.

Origen was born in the year 184 or 185, and lived to his 70th year. Of all the ancient Fathers, he is generally acknowledged to have been the most acute, the most diligent, the most learned. And he applied these superior qualifications to the study of the holy Scriptures. He studied them critically, with all that investigation of their evidences, and of the genuineness of the books and of the text, which is now become a voluminous part of theological studies. He was in a great degree the Father of biblical learning. Such a man could not be ignorant of the objections urged by Caius and others, against the authenticity of the Apocalypse. He was inclined to allow all the weight of their popular argument against it, which was, that it encouraged the Millennials: for Origen was a decided Anti-millennialist. He appears likewise to have felt the full force of another of their objections. He acknowledged, and was distressed by the dark veil which appeared to him to "envelope the unspeakable mysteries of the Apocalypse." But these objections, whatever influence they might have in the mind of Origen, did not induce him to reject the book. He received it readily and explicitly. He quotes it frequently as "the work of the Apostle John, of the author of the Gospel of John, of the Son of Zebedee, of him who leaned on the bosom of Jesus." But to what shall we ascribe this decided conclusion of Origen, so hostile to his own prepossessions? to what but to the irresistible weight of external evidence, which obliged him to acknowledge the Apocalypse as the undoubted production of John the Apostle? No one, who has taken into consideration the weight of this evidence, (even as it now appears to us) and the superior qualifications of

* See a fragment of Origen, preserved in his works, and quoted by Lardner, Art. Origen.
of this learned and inquisitive Father to judge it; can ascribe the testimony, which we derive from Origen, to any other cause. And every candid person must be surprized and sorry at the cavilling questions advanced by Michaelis*, by which he endeavours to represent the well-considered and respectable evidence of Origen, as depending solely on the authority of his master Hippolitus: or, (which is still more extraordinary) to be the result of that duplicity, which our author attributes (unjustly, as we shall endeavour to prove) to Dionysius†.

But from other passages it appears, that Michaelis felt the force of Origen's testimony respecting the Apocalypse. In these he acknowledges it to be "greatly in it's favour;" and so it will remain; for, the counterpoise to it, which he has proposed, arising from the silence of Papias, has been shewn to have very little weight.§

I shall now request my readers to review the biographical chart presented to them at page 38. They will there observe, that by the addition, which is made to the writers of the second century, by the testimonies of Hippolytus and Origen, the evidence is carried down 150 years from the first publication of the Apocalypse. This evidence is abundant, (surprisingly so, considering the mysterious nature of the book); it is constant and uninterrupted||. At no time does it depend upon any single

* P. 480.
† Nothing can be more express and positive than the testimony of Origen, even in his last work, his book against Celsus, when he had probably seen the objections of Dionysius. For Dionysius wrote probably before the rage of persecution came on in 250, which pursued him almost to his death, in 264. But Origen wrote his last work in 252, the year before he died; but whether or not Origen lived to see this book of Dionysius, he was doubtless acquainted with the arguments which it contains, respecting the authenticity of the Apocalypse, for they had then been many years current in the world.
§ In Letter iv.
|| It may be observed, that although many writers give their testimony, yet a very few witnesses may be selected, who can be supposed
single testimony: many writers testify at the same period; and these witnesses are nearly all the great names of ecclesiastical antiquity*. To their evidence, which is for the most part positive and express, no contradictory testimony of an external kind has been opposed. No one has alleged against the Apocalypse such arguments as these. "It is not preserved in the archives as the Seven Asiatic Churches. The oldest persons in those cities have no knowledge of its having been sent thither: no one ever saw it during the life of John. It was introduced in such and such a year, but was contradicted as soon as it appeared †." 

Upon supposed to have delivered down the evidence in succession, during the first one hundred and fifty years of the Apocalypse. For instance, these three, Polycarp, Irenæus, Origen, or Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen. A long tradition has more credibility attached to it, when it has passed but through few hands.

* Every writer quoted by Lardner in the first volume, part ii. of his credibility of the Gospel History, except two or three, of whom short fragments only remain, is to be found in our list, and this volume contains all the writers who gave testimony to any of the sacred Scriptures, during almost the whole of the first century after the Apocalypse was published. Sir Isaac Newton asserts truly, that "no other book of the New Testament is so strongly attested, or commented upon, as this." Sir Isaac Newton on Daniel and the Apocalypse, part ii. c. 1. p. 219.

† These arguments are candidly and judiciously suggested by Michaelis, and he allows considerable weight to them, (p. 484.) But, in a note subjoined, he endeavours to invalidate them by observing,

1. That "only a few extracts from the writings of the ancient adversaries of the Apocalypse are now extant, the writings themselves being lost."

2. That "the ancient advocates for the Apocalypse have likewise not alleged any historical arguments in its defence."

To these objections we will answer shortly:

"If the learned professor had allowed any weight to this kind of argument, when he reviewed the evidence of Ignatius and Papias, he could not have pronounced their silence "as a decisive argument," against the Apocalypse. But there is a difference in the five cases, a difference which is in favour of the Apocalypse. The short writings, or extracts now extant, may easily be supposed not to contain all, or perhaps any, of the testimonies which they bore to this book, which, from its mysterious contents, they cannot be expected often to have quoted. And if such testimonies were lost, they..."
Upon the whole, the candid examiner cannot but perceive, that the external evidence for the authenticity and divine inspiration of the Apocalypse is of preponderating weight; and that Michaelis is by no means justifiable in representing it, when placed in the scale against the contrary evidence, as suspended in equipoise. It is a complete answer to the assertions of his third section*, to affirm, (and we now see that we can truly affirm it,) that the authenticity of the book was never doubted by the Church, during the first century after it was published.

they would not be renewed by subsequent authors, from whom all that we should have to expect would be such a general testimony as Andreas Caesariensis gives of Papius, namely, that Papias bore evidence to the Apocalypse. But if in any of the writings of the ancient adversaries of the book, any such arguments, as these suggested by Michaelis, had been inserted, they could not have sunk into oblivion. A book asserted to be divine, yet having, at the same time, such internal evidence against it, as Dionysius has produced, would be ever regarded with a jealous eye; and if the Alogi, or Caius, or Dionysius, (and these are all the adversaries of whom we hear), had recorded any such allegation against the Apocalypse, it would have been repeated and re-echoed by its adversaries through all the ages of the Church. But if there were any foundation for such allegations, Polycarp and Melito, bishops of the Seven Churches, would not have suffered the Apocalypse to pass in their days to Irenæus, as a work received by those Churches from Saint John.

2. On the second objection we may observe, that where there was no contradiction, there certainly needed no proof. The silent admission of the Apocalypse, by the early fathers, makes greatly in its favour. No controversy shews no doubt; and how stands the evidence in the case of other acknowledged books of the sacred canon? Are we expected to prove that all the epistles of Saint Paul were deposited in the archives of the respective Churches to which they were written? Far otherwise: no such proof is made, no such is reasonably expected. We shew that the epistles were undoubtedly received by the early writers of the Church; this is proof sufficient; and we have this proof abundantly for the authenticity of the Apocalypse.

* P. 486.
LETTER VIII.

WITH my last letter I might have fairly closed all that need be said, to defend the authenticity of the Apocalypse, by external evidence. For what addition of historical testimony can we require? What original documents are we likely to procure? or what weight of contradictory external evidence can we expect to encounter, in the times beyond those we have examined, a century and a half having elapsed from the publication of the book? Who, in these after-ages, can give us information, which will bear comparison with that which we have already received? or whom of the succeeding Fathers can we esteem equal judges with Hippolitus and Origen, whether it be of the evidence already produced, or of the questions agitated in their times, concerning the authenticity of the Apocalypse?

Yet I shall pursue the subject, because it has been pursued further by our author. It is, at least, curious, to know the sentiments of later writers on the external evidence; though the same diligence and accuracy in examining them may not be required.

Gregory of Neocaesarea, surnamed Thaumaturgus, not mentioned by Michaelis, is supposed to have referred, in his Panygerical Oration, to Rev. iii. 7. if not to Isa. xxii. 22. I have not the opportunity of examining the passage at present. The information I derive from Lardner*, who observes, that Gregory, having been the pupil of Origen, and much attached to that great man, probably received the same Canon of Scripture.

Dionysius, of Alexandria, was another pupil of Origen, and, like Gregory, a man of great eminence. He received the Apocalypse as a divine pro-

 prophecy, which he represents to be dark indeed and enigmatical, above his comprehension, yet certainly divine; and he says he could not dare to think otherwise of it, since many of the brethren held it in the highest esteem*. He appeals to it, likewise, as containing a divine prophecy, which he believes to have been fulfilled in his own times, in the character and conduct of the persecuting Emperor Valerian†. At the same time it was the opinion of Dionysius, that the Apocalypse, though divine, was not written by the Apostle John, but by some other John, an holy and inspired man. But where are the grounds of this opinion? are they historical? does he allege in their support any external evidence? any tradition of the Church? No such thing. He gives his opinion as a conjecture formed upon the internal evidence of the book, on certain peculiarities of style and manner, which appeared to him discordant from those of Saint John in his Gospel and Epistles.

These arguments of Dionysius will be properly considered, when we examine into the internal evidence, by which the book is supported or attacked. It is our present business to report only the external evidence of Dionysius. And the amount of this is, that the Apocalypse was generally received in his time as a sacred prophecy, and by such men as he revered and wished not to oppose: that some persons had rejected it, and ascribed it to Cerinthus, that he himself believed it to be a book of sacred authority, doubting, at the same time, whether it were properly referred to the Apostle John.

It is the opinion of Michaelis, and Lardner has afforded some occasion for it, that, although Dionysius professed in such strong terms his reception of the Apocalypse, as a divine book of Prophecy, yet he did not esteem it such in his heart. Dionysius has certainly affirmed such to be his belief in plain and strong terms, and his practice was agree-

* Euseb. H. E. lib. vii. c. 25.
† Euseb. H. E. lib. vii. c. 10.

able
able to his professions. We have seen that he went so far, as to explain the prediction of it as actually fulfilled. Now, if general proofs were wanting of the sincerity and plain Christian honesty of Dionysius's character, this particular fact, that he appealed to the Apocalypse, as containing a prophecy which he believed to be fulfilled, would place beyond all doubt, that he believed that book to be inspired. But Dionysius was confessedly a man of an open, artless probity; and Lardner celebrates him as such, adding, in his account of him, that he had at the same time, (which is the usual accompaniment of such a character,) an honest and excessive warmth. But the conduct which Michaelis attributes to him on this occasion is, that of a sly, captious, and false disputant. Certainly, neither the general character, nor conduct of Dionysius, nor the facts which have now appeared before us, can warrant such a conclusion.*

* Michaelis has defended his opinion, by arguments which appear to me unequal to the defence of it. He says, that Dionysius has assigned reasons for his not venturing to reject the Apocalypse, which are wholly devoid of importance. They did not appear such to Dionysius, nor will they, I think, to the generality of Christian readers. 1. "He did not reject it, because many of the brethren held it in the highest esteem." Now, surely, this is a reason which must be allowed to have considerable weight on the mind of a modest and sensible man. The pupils of Irenæus, of Tertullian, of Hippolytus, and of Origen, were still living. They had been taught by their masters, and by the general tradition of the Church, to consider the Apocalypse as a book of divine authority: and resisting the new-fashioned notions, derived from the Alogi or Caius, they ascribed it to Cerinthus, 3 δια τρισομιας, zealously. Dionysius was modest, and had a due deference to the opinions of such men, and he censures obliquely those who, in his time as in ours, delighted to run counter to the received opinions of the Church.

2. The other reason, which Dionysius assigns for not rejecting the Apocalypse, and which our author deems also weak and unimportant, is in answer to those who rejected it; because it was difficult to be understood. But Dionysius answers, that "He, for his part, does not reject what he does not understand: that, not being able to understand the Apocalypse, he supposes it to contain a sublimier sense than his faculties can reach; and to become, therefore,
This Father of the Church appears to me to have thought, that he was doing no injury to the Apocalypse, by assigning to it another author, instead of St. John, "some holy and heavenly inspired man." So far, at least, he might fairly think, that he was defending the book, by taking away the foundation of those objections to it, which arose from the dissimilarity of its style from that of St. John's. And perhaps he might reason, that as the Apocalypse is not evangelical history, it may not necessarily require the evidence of an eye-witness; that as it is not a book revealing doctrines and rules of conduct, it may not be necessarily confined to the pen of an Apostle: but that some other holy Martyr, some apostolical man (for the time of its date implied so much) might, like Daniel, or other Prophets of the Old Testament, be selected by the Spirit, to convey these Visions to the Church. I do not give this as a sound and authorized conclusion, but as such an

the object of his faith, rather than of his understanding; and that his wonder and admiration are in proportion to his ignorance."

Now, this argument, which may be accounted weak, and, (from such a man as Dionysius) insulting, supposing him not to believe the divine inspiration of the book, will be found to carry with it a considerable force and efficacy, if we suppose him to believe it. Try it, by an application of it to other difficult parts of Scripture, to the unfulfilled Prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, or Daniel. Shall we reject these, and deny their divine inspiration, because we do not understand them? Far otherwise. They have been delivered to us by our Christian ancestors, as of sacred authority: they are strongly supported by external evidence. We must wait the time of their completion with pious awe and patience. We may not be able to understand them. We may wonder, but we cannot reject. Would the Jews, who lived before our Saviour's time, have been justified in rejecting the dark and ænigmatical, and, to appearance, contradictory prophecies, which represented him as a triumphal king and conqueror, despised and rejected of men, &c. merely because they did not understand them? This argument of Dionysius is not, therefore, "wholly devoid of importance." It was that which influenced all the Fathers of the Church; who, although they understood not the Apocalypse, received it on its external evidence with pious veneration, and delivered it to succeeding times. And it is our duty to follow their example, modestly and diligently to interpret what we can, and to deliver the remainder to be studied and fulfilled in future ages.
one as may have satisfied the mind of Dionysius, who certainly found a great stumbling-block in the style and manner of the Apocalypse, and yet appears by his profession, and by his practice, to have received it as an inspired book.

I have extended my observations, I fear, to an unwarranted length in this attempt, to reconcile the opinions of Dionysius. But I was moved to it by a desire to do justice to a character which stands deservedly high in Ecclesiastical History; to exculpate an eminent Christian Father, from the charge of setting an example, under which the late Mr. Gibbon might have sheltered his artful, disingenuous, and insulting attack upon the Christian religion. I shall return to my subject; first remarking on the external evidence collected from Dionysius, that whatever notion may obtain of his private opinions, it is at least clear, from his testimony, that the Apocalypse was generally received in his time, and in high estimation with those Christians whom Dionysius himself revered.

"After the age of Dionysius," says our author *, "the number of ecclesiastical writers, who quote the Apocalypse as a divine work, especially the members of the Latin Church, begins to increase. But as they are of less importance than the more ancient writers, and I have little or nothing to remark on their quotations, I shall content myself with barely mentioning their names, and referring to Lardner, by whom their quotations are collected †."

Little more, indeed, can be done: to the weight of evidence already produced not much can now be added; nor can it be deemed to diminish from it, if some writers of account in later times, influenced perhaps by the arguments advanced by Dionysius and by others, concerning the internal, have been backward to admit the external evidence for the Apocalypse.

* P. 484.

This
This book was received, as of sacred authority, in the times of Dionysius, by Cyprian, and by the African Churches; by the Presbyters and others of the Church of Rome, who corresponded with Cyprian; by divers Latin authors whose history is abstracted by Lardner; by the anonymous author of a work against the Novatians; by the Novatians themselves; by Commodian; by Victorinus, who wrote a commentary upon it; by the author of the poem against the Marcionites; by Methodius, who also commented upon it; by the Manichæans; by the later Arnobius; by the Donatists; and by Lactantius.

All these evidences in favour of the Apocalypse are admitted by Michaelis, who expresses no doubt concerning any of them, excepting the Manichæans, whose evidence, in another passage, he seems to allow *

We now come to the testimony of Eusebius, which may deserve a more particular attention. To this valuable collector of Ecclesiastical History (which would otherwise have perished), we are indebted for many important testimonies of ancient authors in favour of the Apocalypse, which have already been produced. And by him we have been informed of all the objections which were made to it, by Caius and Dionysius, which seem to have had a considerable influence upon the learned Christians of Eusebius's age, and to have occasioned some debate among them, whether they should receive the Apocalypse into their catalogue of undoubted, genuine books of Holy Writ, or place it among those of less authority. Eusebius represents the matter as in debate, and not determined, at the time he wrote his Ecclesiastical History. He promises further information when the matter shall be determined by the testimony of the ancients; but it does not appear that he ever gave it.

We may be enabled to form some notion of the nature of this debate concerning the Apocalypse, by attending

* P. 521.
attending to what Eusebius has delivered upon the subject. He has distributed into four classes all the books pretending to a place in the sacred canon of the New Testament*.

1. The Ομολογιανθεται, Ανεμφατεκαι, books universally read, and admitted to be genuine.

2. Αντιδεγαφεται, Όμος Γυμνιμοι Τοις Πολιοις, books objected to by some, yet acknowledged by the many, by the greater part of the Church.

3. Νυμοι, spurious, or apochryphal books, whose authenticity, or divine inspiration, was denied by the Church, but which might be usefully read, as containing pious thoughts, and no bad doctrine.

4. Books published by heretics, which no Father of the Church has deigned to support with his external evidence, and which have no support of internal evidence, being discordant from the apostolical writings, both as to matter and manner.

Eusebius places the Apocalypse in the first, and also in the third class; but as it cannot belong to both, so in placing it in each of these classes, he adds, ει και οθεν, "if it should so seem proper." It was to stand in one of these classes, when the question concerning its merits should be determined. Hence may be inferred, that the question was then so far settled in the mind of Eusebius, that it must belong either to the first or third class, and by no means to the second or fourth. It was not then esteemed, with the books of the fourth class, a forgery of the heretics; it was not the work of Cerinthus. From this silly notion of it, first started by the Alogi, it was now fairly delivered. The quotations of the early Fathers, as well as internal evidence arising from the book, which is contradictory to the tenets of Cerinthuse, and affords support to no heresy, had saved it from this class.

Nor was it to be placed in the second class; with the Epistles of James, Jude, &c. books, which a considerable part of the Christian world had not re-

* H. E. lib. iii. c. 25.
ceived, though they were mostly acknowledged to be of divine authority. This determination, excluding the Apocalypse from the second class, seems to import, that the Apocalypse, until the times of Eusebius, was very generally received by the Church. The doubts concerning it had arisen only in the minds of a few learned critics, who, from an examination of the style and other internal marks, were induced to contend that it was not the work of Saint John. If it should be determined to be John's work, it was then to be referred to the same class with his Gospel and first Epistle. If it were found not to be written by that Apostle, it was yet allowed to be the work of some other pious apostolical John, and then, as it could not be placed in the first class with the writings of the Apostles, it was to be consigned to the same class with the writings of apostolical men; with the Epistle of Barnabas, with Hermas, and others which the ancient Church considered as written by the persons whose names they bear; and which were read by Christians, as we read the apochryphal books of the Old Testament, for the pious matter contained in them, but not looked up to as of divine authority.

It appears then that, in the times of Eusebius, the Apocalypse had a place among the genuine undoubted books of sacred Scripture. There he first places it; but as some learned or ingenious critics had produced arguments, which, if allowed by the Church, would degrade it from this exalted situation, he prepares for it likewise another place, in which it would stand, if these arguments should prevail. The place prepared for it shews that the attempt of its adversaries did not go so far as to prove it a forgery, or an impious book, but the work of a pious and eminent Christian, if not of an Apostle*. Yet all the inquiries, set on foot by these doubters,

* The attempt, in modern times, is to have it esteemed a forgery, "a spurious production, introduced probably into the world after the death of Saint John," p. 487; but how totally unsupported by external evidence, is this notion!
seem not to have brought the matter to a conclusion. They who made objections to the style and manner of the Apocalypse, appear not to have succeeded in their attempt to degrade it, by the production of any external and historical proofs. Eusebius produces only a conjecture, "perhaps John the Presbyter was its author," but what weight could be allowed to such a conjecture, unsupported by any historical evidence, and not given to the world till above two hundred years after the Apocalypse was written. Eusebius, indeed, seems to lay little stress upon it, for he adds immediately afterwards, "If it be not insisted upon to be the former John," that is, John the Apostle.

Upon the whole, we are not to be surprized that in Eusebius's time the claims of the Apocalypse to its exalted situation in the sacred canon, should meet with some opposition. Two hundred years had now elapsed since it had been published to the world; many of the authentic documents which supported its authenticity, had probably perished in the Dioclesian persecution*. The prophecies, which it contained, were still dark and apparently unfulfilled†; the style and manner of it had been pointed out to be unlike that of Saint John. The criticisms of the great Dionysius had influence with many; yet no one, however desirous, from these and other concurring causes, of invalidating the authority of the book, appears able to produce any external evidence which might suit the purpose.

It was received, after the times of Eusebius, by the Latin Churches, almost without exception. Jerome, the most learned and diligent inquirer of that very century, pronounced positively in its favour, and was followed universally by the Fathers.

* See the devastation made at that time in the records of the Church, as described by Eusebius, H. E. lib. viii. cap. 2.
† Epiphanius mentions the Alologi, as rejecting the Apocalypse, among other reasons, diα τα την αποκαλυπτικην ευαγιαν και συνονησιν επηρεαζην (Her. 51,) and he seems, in some measure, to admit the reasonableness of their excuse.
of the Western Churches: and from him we learn the grounds upon which he received the Apocalypse; "the authority of the ancients," that is, external evidence: and he tells us, at the same time, that he does not follow "the fashion of his times, that fashion by which some of the Greek Churches were induced to reject the Apocalypse."

This fashion of the times, seems to have consisted in a daring contempt of the testimonies of the ancient Church, and a ready acquiescence in those arguments which were drawn from internal evidence, to invalidate the Apocalypse. Yet, notwithstanding this fashion, which appears to have had considerable prevalence in the Greek Church, and perhaps to have influenced the minds of those eminent men, Cyril of Jerusalem, and John Chrysostom, (neither of whom appear as evidences for the Apocalypse,) many of great name in the Greek Church appear still to have received it; and, in the fourth century, it is supported by testimonies in this Church from Athanasius, Basil, Epiphanius, Gregory of Nyssa, and, probably also, Gregory of Nazianzum.†

Yet

† These two Gregories are both claimed by Michaelis as evidences against the Apocalypse. He says, "Gregory of Nyssa places the Apocalypse among the apocryphal writings;" but he omits to tell us, that, in the very same passage, this Father quotes Rev. iii.15, as the work "of John the Evangelist." Hieron. in apocryphorum aspis. tomus ii. ordinatus leguntur *.
If the Apocalypse were apochryphal in the opinion of Gregory, he could not attribute it to John the Evangelist, but he calls it apochryphal, because it was now accounted such by many of the Greek Church. There are books of the Old Testament which are called apochryphal by our Church; yet some of these have been deemed divinely inspired by our own writers. If such a writer should quote from such a book, for instance, from the Second book of Esdras, and introduce his quotation after the manner of Gregory; "I have heard the Prophet Ezra, in the Apocrypha, say," we should conclude that he esteemed the Second of Esdras as the work of Ezra the Scribe, and an inspired writer in the Old Testament,

* In suam Ordinat. t. ii. p. 144.
Yet it will easily be conceded, that many of the Greek Church, for some centuries after Eusebius, and probably upon the authority of those, who, in his time, determined from internal evidence, that the Apocalypse was not to be referred to his first class of sacred books, rejected the Apocalypse.

Of the Syrian Churches we have no satisfactory information, how early or to what extent they received the Apocalypse: in the fourth century it appears by the testimony of Ephrem that it was received the work of a divine Prophet. Somewhat of this kind, I believe, happened in our own times.

The testimony of Gregory of Nazianzum has been accounted doubtful, and is considered as such by our author. The evidence, which places this Father against the claims of the Apocalypse, is solely this, that it is not to be seen in his catalogue of canonical books. On the contrary we collect from the representation of Andreas Caesariensis, and of Arethas, in their respective commentaries on the Apocalypse, that Gregory received it; and Lardner has produced two passages from his works, in which it is clearly quoted, as of Divine Authority. Surely the weight of evidence preponderates on this side. And I have some suspicion that the Apocalypse had a place originally in Gregory’s Catalogue, but that it was erased from it by the zeal of some Greek Christians, who rejected the Apocalypse. In this Catalogue we read these glowing words, describing Saint John,

\[\text{καὶ ἀληθῶς ὥσπερ Θεομονήθης,\}\]

which may be literally translated, “The great Herald, or Messenger, who went to learn in heaven; but where or when, is it ever said that the Evangelist, Saint John, ascended to heaven, to be divinely instructed, and to be the Messenger and Herald of divine information? no where but in the Apocalypse, where he is called by the heavenly voice, \text{αὐξανά οὖν, Rev. iv. 1.\} The zeal of a transcriber may have carried him to omit the passage, in which Nazianzen mentions the Apocalypse, but this expression remains as it was written, and seems to indicate strongly that such a passage once existed, and that Gregory received the Apocalypse as the work of John the Evangelist.

* It has commonly been urged, as a testimony against the Apocalypse, that it was rejected by the Council of Laodicea in 363. But Michaelis professes himself satisfied that the Catalogue of Sacred Writings, annexed to the canons of that Council, have been clearly shewn to be a forgery, p. 489.


† \text{Φοίλαω, has peculiarly this sense.} Discendi causa adeo, frequento.
ceived by them, and probably much sooner, since the works of Hippolitus, that renowned champion for the book, were much read, and in high request among those Christians who used the Syriac language*.

It is useless to pursue the history of the Apocalypse, through the dark ages of monkery and Gothic ignorance. No external evidence is to be expected from such times. At length the light of the Reformation reproduced learning, and a free and critical inquiry into the testimony of the ancients, and into the internal evidence of the book. And what was the result of such inquiry? the Apocalypse is generally, and, I believe, almost universally received as canonical Scripture. Luther, and some of the first Reformers, had their doubts about it; but these soon subsided, or were over-ruled by the more profound and accurate examination of other learned men. And although the Articles of the Lutheran Church are represented by Michaelis to leave the question open, yet he tells us, at the same time, "that the greater part of the Lutheran Divines refer the Apocalypse without doubt or scruple to the class of canonical writings of the New Testament†."

The Church of England was blessed with the privilege of settling her articles and her canon of Scripture at a later period; at a time when the testimonies of the ancients concerning the books of Scripture, were more accurately ascertained, and when the first crude notions of the honest Reformers had been matured into safe opinions, by the progress of time and of truth‡. But the Church of

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* P. 479.
† P. 501.
‡ This is a remarkable instance of good coming out of evil. The advantage arose from the subjugated state in which this Church was holden, at the beginning of the Reformation, by the tyrannical hand of Henry the Eighth. This kept back the settlement of our ecclesiastical opinions, till they were more maturely considered, and better understood.
England had no hesitation to place the book of Apocalypse in her sacred canon; and, I doubt not, her sons will continue to supply her with numerous and irrefragable reasons for retaining it.

And here, Sir, I close what, in a short time, and under many disadvantages, I have been able to collect of the external evidence for the Apocalypse.

We have seen its rise, as of a pure fountain, from the secret rock of the apostolical Church. We have traced it through the first century of its passage, flowing from one fair field to another, identified through them all, and everywhere the same. As it proceeded lower, we have seen attempts to obscure its sacred origin, to arrest or divert its course, to lose it in the sands of antiquity, or bury it in the rubbish of the dark ages. We have seen these attempts repeated in our own times, and by a dextrous adversary*. But it has at length arrived to us, qualis ab incessu, such as it flowed forth at first. By clearing the passage we discover more of this sacred water than we could expect, and amply sufficient for our purpose.

In short, so far as the question concerning the Apocalypse is to be determined by external evidence, we may indubitably pronounce, that the book is to be received as Divine Scripture, communicated to the Church by John the Apostle and Evangelist.

* Και με ἀλήθη βρέχει στιχώς σώματα, ἑπτατεκάτα
Η το τῆλειαν ὄραμαν ὁπαν και τινῆς ορισίας
Ἄλλ' ἐδ' ἐν διπλάνῳ βρέχει, μάλα της μεταγιω.
Iliad. O. 615.

LETTER
LETTER IX.

We now proceed to the *internal* evidence: In the examination of which, we no longer rely on *external* witnesses: We search the work itself; we try its *internal* marks and character; and determine, by the judgment thence arising, whether it be of divine authority. The inquiry will be two-fold. 1st. whether, from the internal form and character of the Apocalypse, it appears to be a book of divine inspiration. 2dly, whether it appears to have been written by the Apostle John.

I. If all, or indeed most Christians, were agreed upon the same interpretation of the Apocalyptic Prophecies, this question might be determined by a short and summary proceeding. It would only be necessary to ask—Have these Prophecies been fulfilled? for, if it be answered in the affirmative, the consequence immediately follows; the Prophet was inspired, and his book is divine.

This criterion may, in some future time, when the Apocalyptical Prophecies have been more successfully studied, produce sufficient evidence to the point in question. But it cannot be applied at present, so as to produce a general conviction*. We must argue from points in which there is a more general agreement. Omitting, therefore, for the present, the important question (which it would take a very large compass to discuss) whether the Prophecies have been generally fulfilled or not, we may consider the book independent of this evidence. We may compare the doctrines which it exhibits, the pictures and images which it presents, with those con-

* Every one, who, from a study of the Apocalypse, is convinced that any of its prophecies is clearly fulfilled, has this testimony in his own breast, but he cannot use it with effect to convince another (who agrees not with him in the interpretation), of the divine origin of the book.
tained in other acknowledged books of divine Scripture.

To do justice to this topic, would require a regular commentary on the whole book; a particular induction of passages, by a comparison of which, with other texts of Scripture, their agreement or dissimilarity would appear, and arguments be derived, to determine, whether it came from the same source. This proceeding would be too extensive and voluminous for the sketch I now offer; but, as I am not altogether unpractised in these researches, I feel myself justified in making this general assertion, that, upon comparing the Apocalypse with the acknowledged books of divine Scripture, I have almost universally found the very same notions, images, representations, and divine lights, as in other sacred Scriptures; yet not delivered in such a manner, as to be apparently copied from other inspired writers, but from some original prototype, the same which these other writers also seem to have copied. There is, in short, between the writer of the Apocalypse, and his predecessors in the sacred office of prophet, that concordia discors, that agreement in matter, but difference in manner, which is observed in painters, who delineate and colour in different stations, from the same original object; and this will be allowed to be a strong internal evidence of the divine original of the Apocalypse. I should feel myself obliged to treat more at large this subject, if much had been advanced, by the adversaries of the Apocalypse, to deny this fact. The ancient objection made by some before Dionysius, that “the Apocalypse is unworthy of any sacred writer,” is not now persisted in, and deserves not a particular refutation; it will indeed be refuted in every step as we proceed.

Michaelis has allowed that the internal structure of the Apocalypse is noble and sublime, that “the imitation of the ancient prophets is, for the most part more beautiful and more magnificent than the original.”
original*; more short, more abounding in picturesque beauties†." Whilst I agree with our author in this decision, I would point out the cause of it. It is not to be accounted for from the genius of the writer, (for there is in him no aim at eloquence) he drew simply, nay, with rude outlines, from the heavenly objects before him; they were frequently the same objects from which other sacred penmen had coloured; but they were presented to the writer of the Apocalypse in a more noble attitude and appearance, by his Divine Conductor.

The Doctrines of Christianity are by no means a principal subject of the Apocalypse; but if we advert to the doctrines delivered in this book, we shall find the same congruity with other apostolical writings. No doctrines are herein taught, which are in the least at variance with any divine revelation of the New Testament. Michaelis entirely acquires the Apocalypse of the general and unfounded charge of Luther, that "Christ is not taught in it ‡;" but I am sorry to observe that he afterwards qualifies this just concession, by asserting that "the tone and eternal Godhead of Christ are certainly not taught so clearly in the Apocalypse as in St. John's Gospel." Could he expect so clear an exposition from a prophecy, which respects chiefly future events, as from a Gospel which the ancients have described as written principally, with the view of setting forth the divine nature of Christ? But this divine nature is also set forth in the Apocalypse; and as clearly as the nature of the book, and as symbols, can express it. He is described as sitting on the throne of his Father's glory, "in the midst" of that throne, far beyond the cherubim, far above all principalities and powers; and all the heavenly inhabitants are described as falling prostrate before him, as to their God §. And all this is exhibited in a book which denies worship to angels $. But lest symbols should

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* P. 533, 534. † P. 543. ‡ P. 538. § Ch. xxii. 8. $ not
not carry sufficient expression with them, words unequivocal are added. He is called (and nowhere else in Scripture, but in St. John's writings), "the Word of God*," which, notwithstanding all that our author has advanced to lower the meaning of the expression, can be only understood in the same sense, with the same words of the Gospel, to which indeed it evidently refers. The Primitive Christians understood it in this sense; and because it could be understood in no other, the Alogi rejected the Apocalypse, for the same reason that they rejected the Gospel of St. John†. Our Lord is also described in the Apocalypse, as the "alpha and omega, the first and the last," which expression, notwithstanding any attempts to lower its signification, will be understood by orthodox Christians to mean that divine nature, which from "the beginning was with God," the original Creator and final Judge of the world.

With the same view of supporting his argument, Michaelis has represented the dignity of Christ as lessened in the Apocalypse, because he happens to be mentioned after the Seven Spirits, which our author supposes to represent seven angels. But this cannot be, because the Seven Spirits stand before the throne, but Christ has his seat upon it and in the midst of it. And, indeed, reasons may be assigned why Christ is mentioned after the Seven Spirits. They are represented standing before the throne, ere he enters to take his seat. They composed a part of the heavenly scenery, and are so necessarily connected with the throne, and with Him that sate thereon, that the mention of the one brings the mention of the other. But our Lord was not seen till afterwards. And if he be mentioned last, it is only to dwell the longer upon his divine glories, which occupy four verses in this description, whereas the Seven Spirits are only named in it.

There is one passage in the Apocalypse, which, by having been literally and improperly interpreted, has

* Ch. xix. 13.  † Epiphanius, Hœr. 51.
given offence to pious Christians in all ages of the Church, as introducing doctrines inconsistent with the Gospel purity. This is the description contained in a part of the twentieth chapter, where the servants of Christ are seen raised from the dead, to reign with him a thousand years. But this is no doctrine, it is a prophecy, delivered in a figurative style, and yet unfulfilled. Such a prophecy no judicious person will attempt to explain, otherwise than in very general terms: much less will he draw from it any doctrine contradictory to, or inconsistent with, the known word of God. The prophecy, we trust, will, in its due time, be fulfilled, and the truth of God will be gloriously manifested in it. In the mean time it must be received as the word of God, though we understand it not. The extravagant notions of the Chiliasts are, therefore, no just imputation on the Apocalypse; which must not be accused of containing unscriptural doctrines, in passages which cannot yet be understood. Other places of the Apocalypse, which are objected to by our author in his section on "The Doctrine delivered in the Apocalypse," will be found to contain no doctrine, but figurative representations of future events, which he appears to have misconceived.

We may, therefore, truly assert of the Apocalypse, that fairly understood, it contains nothing, which, either in point of doctrine, or in relation of events, past or to come, will be found to contradict any previous divine revelation. It accords with the divine councils already revealed. It expands and reveals them more completely. We see the gradual flow of sacred prophecy (according to the true tenor of it, acknowledged by divines), first a fountain, then a rill, then, by the union of other divine streams, increasing in its course, till, at length, by the accession of the prophetical waters of the New Testament, and, above all, by the acquisition of the apocalyptical succours, it becomes a noble river, enriching and adorning the Christian land.

Michaelis
Michaelis speaks in high terms of the beautifully sublime, the affecting and animating manner in which the Apocalypse is written. But in what does this extraordinary grandeur and pathos consist? Not in the language, as he seems to imagine; for the evidence which he brings to confirm this notion, goes directly to contradict it. "The Apocalypse," says he, "is beautiful and sublime, &c. not only in the original, but in every, even the worst translation of it." But is this the description of a beauty and sublimity arising from language? Will such stand the test of a bad translation? Far otherwise. Beauty, which consists in language only, is seen to vanish with the language in which it was written, and in translation is very seldom preserved. But there is another kind of beauty, another kind of sublimity, which even a bad translation may convey: and excellence, which stands this trial, is found to consist, not in language, but in the ideas and imagery. These, in the Apocalypse, are so grand, so simple, so truly sublime, that, even rudely represented in any language, they cannot fail to elevate, to delight, or alarm the soul. This prophetical book can boast, indeed, no beauty of diction, so far as respects mere language. The words and expressions are rough, inharmonious, ill-chosen, and, on this very account, there is no book that will lose less by being translated. But this pure and simple sublimity, which is independent of the dress of human art, and to be found perhaps only in the sacred Scriptures, whence was it derived to this book? which, on this account, must be pronounced to be either an heavenly production, like the other divine writings, or such an imitation, such a forgery, as the Christian authors of that time were not likely, were not able to produce. For there has been observed to be a very unequal gradation and descent, in point of pure simple eloquence, just sentiment, and unsullied doctrine, from the Apostles, to the first Fathers of the Church.

* P. 533.
Church. And this circumstance has been applied, as an agreement, to shew, that the books of the New Testament are of a superior origin, and could not be fabricated by those Fathers, or in those times*. The same argument may be applied to the origin of the Apocalypse, and with more force and effect, since it appears to have been published in the very times of these first Fathers. "Whence," we may ask, almost in the words of Scripture, "whence hath this book these things? What wisdom is this which is given unto it †?

In the word of God there is a grandeur and majesty independent of the accidents of language, consisting in the greatness and sublimity of the things revealed. Men of genius may catch some sparks of this heavenly fire, they may imitate it, and with considerable success. But no one is found so confident in this kind of strength, as to neglect the arts of composition. Mahomet was a man of superior genius; in writing his pretended revelation, he borrowed much from the Sacred Scriptures, he attempted often, in imitation of them, to be simply sublime; but he did not trust to this only, he endeavoured to adorn his work with all the imposing charms of human eloquence, and of cultivated language; and he appealed to the perfection of his composition, as a proof of its divine original. Such an appeal would have little served his cause in a critical and enlightened age, which would expect far other internal proofs of divinity than what result from elegant diction. The learned of such an age would reject a prophet appealing to a proof which has never been admitted with respect to former revelations; a prophet, who both in doctrine, and in the relation of events, past and future, is seen to contradict, or add strange extravagant conceits to the credible and well-attested revelations of former times ‡.

* By Le Clerc and by Jortin, Eccl. Hist.
† Mark vi. 2.
‡ In the Koran, which admits the heavenly origin and divine mission of Jesus Christ, he is represented as returning to the earth, marrying,
There is nothing of this kind in the Apocalypse. Compare it with forged prophecies: many such have been written; some calculated to deceive, others only to amuse. These works, if they are at all striking, as appearing to have been fulfilled, we commonly find to have been written after the events foretold, and to have a retrospective date which does not belong to them *. But no one can shew that the Apocalypse contains prophecies, which were fulfilled before they were written.

We have accounts, in ecclesiastical history, of several apocalypses or revelations, besides this of Saint John, of St. Peter, of St. Paul, of St. Thomas, of St. Stephen †. Will these bear any comparison with the Apocalypse of St. John? Let our author speak of them; he knew perfectly all that remains of them, and was well acquainted with what the ancients have delivered concerning those that have perished. "The spurious productions of those ages (of the first and second century), which were sent into the world under the name of Apostles, are, for the most part, very unhappy imitations, and discover evident marks that they were not written by the persons, to whom they are ascribed ‡." *

Fragments of these may be seen in Grabe's Spicilegia, vol. I. and may be compared with the simple and scriptural dignity of our Apocalypse. The Fathers of the first centuries compared them at length, and rejected all, but this acknowledged work of St. John; and this they guarded with so sedulous a care, as to preserve it free from interpolations; while the genuine productions of apostolical men, of Ignatius, Polycarp, &c. are known to have suffered from the contact of profane pens.

marrying, begetting children, and embracing the Mahometan doctrines; and this is said plainly and without figure or mystery; and the reasons are plain why it is so said.

Two works of ecclesiastical writers of the first century, still preserved, and in some degree venerated, by our Church or its members, may be compared with the Apocalypse. They are the rivals which come nearest to it; they are proximi—longo intervallo. I mean the Visions of Hermas, and of the apochryphal Esdras. The former contains the relation of some dreams, which the writer may have possibly believed to be real inspiration, or may have invented as useful allegory. The imagery of this book is borrowed from Scripture, but in a servile style of imitation, which indicates no sight or communication of any original vision. There is nothing which makes "our hearts burn within us," as we read. The preceptive and doctrinal parts of this book are simple and moral, and were, therefore, used in the ancient Church to initiate youth into religion*. But although such an use of the book could not fail to spread a prejudice in its favour, it does not appear to have been received by the ancients as a divine work, at least it was so received by very few †.

The second book of apochryphal Esdras, though preserved by our Church among those which may be read "for instruction, but not to establish doctrine‡," is convicted, nevertheless, of evident forgery. The author has assumed a name and age to which he had no title, and his prophecies, which appear fulfilled, were evidently written after the events foretold. He has otherwise a superior dignity to Hermas, and imitates more successfully the sacred prophets. He has made great use of the prophecies of the Apocalypse||. But a particular comparison of the passages in each writer would involve

* Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 3.
† See Leland's Cred. Gosp. Art. Hermas, and also vol. viii. 98. xii. 168, where he speaks with much information and learned inquiry, concerning the apochryphal books of the New Testament.
‡ Articles of Religion, art. vi.
|| See Mr. Gray's learned and judicious account of this book. Gray's Key to the New Testament.
us in too long a disquisition. I mention these books that the reader may compare them at his leisure.

By the preceding observations we may appear fully to have answered the objection to the Apocalypse, which first proceeded from the Allogi, and was afterwards taken up by some of the Church, that not Saint John, or any Apostle, but that Cærinthus, or some false fabricator, was the author of the work *.

I pass on to the consideration of an objection against the Apocalypse, which is also connected with its internal evidence; preferred against it in very early times, and often been repeated even to this day, the obscurity of the book. This was the grand stumbling-block with the ancient Fathers; and it continued to be such with our author, who frequently repeats it †.

To this general charge of obscurity, a general answer has been given. How can you expect a series of prophecies, extending from the apostolical age to the consummation of all things, to be otherwise than obscure? It is the nature of such prophecy to give but an imperfect light ‡, even in the case of prophecies fulfilled, because the language in which they are delivered is symbolical, which, though governed by certain rules §, and therefore attainable by the judicious among the learned, is nevertheless very liable to misconstruction, in rash and unskilful hands. But prophecies, yet unfulfilled, are necessarily involved in deeper darkness, because the event is wanting to compare with the prediction, which of itself is designedly obscure: "For God gave such predictions not to gratify men's curiosity by enabling them to foreknow things; but that after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event, and his own providence,

* Michaelis has shewn, from internal evidence, that Cærinthus could not be its author, p. 469.
† P. 459, 502, 503, 511.
‡ 2 Pet. i. 19. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.
§ See this explained in Bishop Louth's Preflections, p. 69, 70, and in Bishop Hurd's Sermons on Prophecy.
providence, not that of the interpreter, be then manifested thereby to the world *.

This same objection of obscurity will operate as forcibly against many of the prophecies of the Old and of the New Testament, as against those of the Apocalypse; particularly the predictions which appertain to the latter days. The book of Daniel, which has our Saviour's seal to it †, must be rejected with the Apocalypse, if it be a sufficient objection to it, that it is yet in many places obscure.

But with respect to the Apocalypse, our author has helped us to some specious arguments, to shew that the difficulties of the book have not yet been fairly encountered; that the men, who have attempted to explain it, have not been possessed of the necessary requisites of acquired learning ‡. To those who entertain this opinion, that "the prophecies of the Apocalypse have not been satisfactorily interpreted," this should be a sufficient answer; for by such persons a hope may be yet entertained that, as the failure in expounding the Apocalypse is to be accounted for, by the want of proper qualifications in the expounders, this defect may in time be obviated. An ænigma cannot be pronounced inscrutable, because the unskilful and unlearned only have tried in vain to discover it. But the greater part of learned Christians who have applied themselves to the study of the Apocalypse, are not in the situation of Michaelis: they see evidence by which they are persuaded that a part of the prophecies have received their completion. But if that were not the case, if no such conviction were obtained, surely they would not be justified in rejecting a book so authenticated as divine, merely because they do not understand it. If such had been the hasty and rash proceedings of the Primitive Fathers of the Church, we should not at this time have possessed this book. But it has

* Sir Isaac Newton on Prophecy.
† Mat. xxiv. 15.
‡ P. 505—511.

pleased
pleased Providence to preserve it to us, and, if we cannot yet understand it, it is our duty to deliver it to the studies of posterity.

We cannot know what ages of Christianity are yet to come; in what manner the predictions of the book may yet be fulfilled; nor what portion of the Divine Spirit, or of human knowledge, may be yet granted to explain it. The prophecies, now dark, may, to future generations, become "a shining light," and the apocalyptical predictions rendered clear by their completion, serve as an impregnable bulwark of Christian faith, during the later ages of the militant Church. Difficulties are found in the abstruser parts of every kind of speculative knowledge. Every study has its dark recesses, not hitherto penetrable by human wit or industry. These apocalyptical prophecies are the deeper speculations in the study of divinity. And are we to be surprised, that man meets with difficulties here, man whose bold, prying insolence, is checked in the paths of every science, by the incomprehensible greatness of the works of God!

We may, therefore, conclude, that no just cause has been assigned to induce us to reject the Apocalypse; but that many good reasons, arising from internal evidence, and concurring with the forcible arguments drawn from the testimonies of the ancients, require us to receive it as a book of divine inspiration:—But whether as the work of John the Apostle and Evangelist, will be the subject of inquiry in the next letter.
LETTER X.

THE next, and, I believe, the only object remaining to be considered is, whether, if we admit the Apocalypse to be an inspired book, we are also to receive it as the writing of John, the Apostle and Evangelist.

We have already seen it expressly declared to be such, by unexceptionable witnesses, who lived in or near to the times when it was first received by the Seven Churches; and who had the means of information, and were interested to know from whom the Churches received it: such were Justin Martyr, Ireneæus the disciple of Polycarp, Tertullian, Origen, and others who preceded John. This external evidence appeared of such preponderating weight to the candid and judicious Lardner, (who entertained no prejudice in favour of the Apocalypse, which he appears to have little studied or understood*) as to have drawn from him this conclusion, twice repeated; "It may be questioned, whether the exceptions founded on the difference of style, and such like things, or any other criticisms whatever, can be sufficient to create a doubt concerning the author of this book, which was owned for a writing of John, the Apostle and Evangelist, before the times of Dionysius and Caius, and, so far as we know, before the most early of those who disputed its genuineness†.

But it is a part of our proposed plan to consider these exceptions and criticisms. They arose in the third century, and are detailed in the writings of Dionysius of Alexandria; and the objections are by him placed in so strong a light, that little has been


added
added to them by subsequent critics. The answers that I have seen to them are those given by Mill in his Prolegomena to the New Testament; by Bishop Gibson in his Pastoral Letters; by Blackwall in his Sacred Classics; which, with those of other writers, have been abridged and presented to the public, with useful additions, by Lardner, in his Credibility of the Gospel History*. I shall state the objections of Dionysius, as reduced by Lardner, to five heads†. I shall subjoin to them, in a short compass, such answers as appear to me to have been satisfactorily produced, or I shall substitute others; and I shall note occasionally those objections of Michaelis, which have not yet been answered.

I. “The Evangelist John has not named himself, neither in his Gospel, nor his catholic Epistle; but the writer of the Revelation nameth himself more than once.”

This argument appears to me to stand on very weak and untenable foundations; yet Michaelis has thought proper to repeat it‡. But is it possible for us to know, at this distance of time, with no historical information on the subject, what particular or private reasons, then existing, influenced an apostolic writer, either to disclose or conceal his name? Thus far the answer is general: but let us enter more particularly into the charge. 1. “The Apostle who put his name to the Apocalypse, has omitted to do so to the Gospel.” But was it usual for the Evangelists to put their names to their Gospels? Is any other Gospel published with the name of its author? Not one. It was not the apostolic practice; yet John, of all the Evangelists, approaches nearest to a disclosure of his name; he discloses by various circumlocutions, that he, the Apostle John, wrote that Gospel; and this we know, from what he has delivered to us by such circumlocution, as clearly.

* Art. Dionysius of Alexandria.
† Part II. vol. iv. p. 730.
‡ P. 534.
as if he had expressly written his name *. 2. "But though this answer may serve the purpose respecting St. John's Gospel, can we defend by it the same omission in his Epistles?" An epistle, indeed, generally requires the name of its author to be inserted in it, and for that reason, among others, the name of John is inserted in the Apocalypse, which is written in the form of an epistle. Yet there may be exceptions to this general rule; and we see such evidently in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is written without a name. But the omission, if such, in the Epistles of St. John, need not be sheltered under this precedent. We may otherwise account satisfactorily for their being published without his name.

The two last Epistles are short letters, familiarly addressed to individuals †, and the writer calls himself, not by the name of John, but by the appellation of the Elder, by which he was probably as well known, in the familiar conference which he held with these his correspondents, as if he had written John. He was, indeed, at the time he wrote these Epistles, the Elder of the Christian Church, far advanced in years, having survived all his apostolic brethren. Such an appellation, at least, in a private letter to an individual, amounts to the same as the writer's name.

But what shall we say to the omission of the name in the First Epistle? Our author shall assist us to clear up this difficulty. He pronounces this writing of St. John to be "a treatise rather than an Epistle," and, therefore, says he, it has neither the name of the writer in the beginning, nor the usual salutations at the end ‡. Therefore in all these writings of our Apostle, the insertion of his name appears to have been unnecessary; in the Gospel, because such had not been the practice of the other Evangelists;

† See Michaelis, Introd. ch. xxxii. sect. iii.
in the treatise, because in that likewise it would have been *informal*; in the two familiar Epistles, because another well-known appellation supplied its place. But in the Apocalypse, which is written in the epistolary form, not to any individual, but to seven Christian communities, and is commanded, by him who gave the Revelation, to be written and addressed to them *, the Apostle could not do otherwise than prefix his name. And when he had prefixed it, we cannot deem it surprising, that he should repeat it, in passages where he relates to them the wonderful sights which he had seen. For such a repetition conveys this sentiment; “Be not incredulous, I John, whom you can trust, whom you know how to believe, I John, saw these things.” This same Apostle had before given them warning not to believe every pretence to inspiration, but “to try the spirits whether they are of God †.” It was necessary, therefore, when he sent them this Revelation to assure them that in receiving it they would not be deceived. He assures them, therefore, that he himself, the only surviving Apostle, the president of the Churches, whom they well knew by the name of John, had seen these visions. There was, therefore, no vain egotism in this repetition, as hath been vainly imagined, it was necessary, and to us of these later times it is a proof, that some person, of considerable weight and influence with the Churches, was the author of the Apocalypse, but his name was John; and who could this be, but John the Apostle and Evangelist?

II. The second objection is, that “though the writer of the Revelation calls himself John, he has not shewn us, that he is the Apostle of that name.” Michaelis expects that he should at least have made himself known by some such circumlocution as he had used in the Gospel, “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

* Ch. i. v. 11.
† 1 John iv. 1.
In answer to this, it will be sufficient to shew, that such addition to the name of John was totally needless. He wrote to the Seven Churches, and from Patmos, in which island he expresses that he is suffering tribulation for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ." All the Churches knew that he was then suffering banishment in that island, and they knew the cause of it, "for the word of God; an Epistle, containing the history of an heavenly vision, seen by John in the island of Patmos, required no other addition. What John would write John alone, without other explanation, excepting the great John, John the Apostle and president of all the Churches? A private person would have described himself by the addition of his father's name, according to the custom of the ancients. A Bishop or Presbyter would have added the name of his church; but John, the Apostle, needed no such distinguishing mark or appellation. A fabricator of an Epistle, containing a revelation in St. John's name, would have added his titles of "Apostle of Jesus Christ," &c. or would have introduced some circumlocution in imitation of the Gospel; but, from the expression, as it now stands, we derive a much stronger assurance that it is no fabrication*.

III. The third objection is, "That the Revelation does not mention the catholic Epistle, nor the catholic Epistle the Revelation."

* St. Paul, in the opening of his Epistles, has used generally, not always, the term "Apostle;" but with him it was more necessary than with St. John, who was confessedly such, having been numbered with the Twelve. St. Paul's right to the apostleship, having been more privately established, had been doubted by some, which leads him to say, "Am not I an Apostle," &c. (1 Cor. ix. 1.) and, therefore, he generally asserts himself, in his Epistles, to be an Apostle. Saint John had no need to use the term; his authority as an Apostle was undoubted: he, therefore, calls himself by an humbler title, "A brother and companion in tribulation:" so St. James, although an Apostle, mentions himself only as "A servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Jam. i. 1.
This objection Lardner has pronounced to be "of little moment." Michaelis seems to have been of the same opinion, for he has not noted it; if the reader think it deserving of an answer, he is referred to Lardner *

IV. Fourthly, it is objected, "That there is a great agreement in sentiment, expression, and manner, between Saint John's Gospel and Epistle; but the Revelation is quite different in all these respects, without any resemblance or similitude."

Michaelis repeats this objection †, and then asks the question, whether it is possible that the author of the one and of the other could be the same person?

Two methods have been taken to avoid the force of this objection, which has been derived from comparing the imagery, sentiments, and style and manner of narration in these separate works, all attributed to Saint John.

1st. It has been asserted that a prophetic work of St. John, such as the Apocalypse, cannot be expected to have resemblance to his Gospels and Epistles.

2dly. The fact has been denied; it has been asserted that this dissimilarity does not exist; that there is in the Apocalypse a strong resemblance of sentiment and character, to the other productions of St. John.

I do not find that either of these points have been so clearly proved as to give satisfaction to the learned. May I be allowed to suggest another method of answer?

In perusing the Apocalypse I remark that the sentiments, the notions, the images presented in the book, are, in very few passages, those of the writer, (such I mean as had been digested in, and arose out of his own mind), but of that Holy Spirit, or of those heavenly inhabitants, who expressed them to him by


symbols,
symbols, or declared them by speech. The pen of John merely narrates, and frequently in the very words of an heavenly minister. "That which he sees and hears," he writes as he is commanded; (ch. i. 19.) but they are not his own ideas from which he writes: He relates simply and plainly, with little or no comment of his own, the heavenly visions which he has seen. And even in those parts of the book where we should most reasonably expect to meet with the proper sentiments of the writer, we perceive him teeming, (as, indeed, was natural), with his newly-acquired images. He uses such at the very outset of his work; even in the Epistolary Address, which is full of images exhibited to him in the visions. The same are again seen at the close of the book. And, indeed, it is difficult to find many passages wherein the writer has recourse to his own sentiments, his own previous store of imagery.

The whole of the second and third chapter, and a great part of the first, are delivered in our Lord's own words, they, therefore, contain his sentiments, his doctrines, not those of the writer, who is commanded to write down the very words of the great Visiter of the Church. We have, indeed, other words of our Lord, related by St. John in the Gospel, with which it may be thought that these words in the Apocalypse may be properly compared. Yet they do not seem to admit this comparison; because the character and office which our Lord is seen to assume in the Apocalypse, is different from that which he bore in the Gospel. He is now no longer the Son of Man, upon earth, the condescending instructor of his disciples, but the glorified King of Heaven, the Omniscient Visiter of the Churches, the Omnipotent Judge of mankind. And in the remaining parts of the book what does the writer present to us? Not his own ideas and conceptions; but "the things which shall be hereafter," the symbols and figurative resemblances of future events shewn to him in heaven; and when he uses explanatory speech, it is in the words of his heavenly conductors. One
of the few passages in which the author of the Apocalypse seems to have written from his own previous conceptions is, perhaps, ch. i. verse 7. The sentiments and images which he employs, before he arrives at this passage, may all be traced to an apocalyptical source; they are borrowed from the sublime visions which he had lately seen. His mind was filled with them, and even his salutation to the brethren abounds with them. But here he seems to speak from the former Christian imagery laid up in his mind. And, so speaking, it is remarkable that he is led to quote from Zech. xii. 10. and in the very manner which has been observed, by Michaelis and other critics, to be peculiar to Saint John. Michaelis has noted the peculiar circumstances which afford this quotation, and he has allowed to it considerable weight*: but he was not aware that this is one of very few passages which can fairly and properly be compared with the former writings of Saint John, so as to deduce evidence whether that Apostle were the author. In almost every part of the book, it will be apparent to an accurate observer, that the writer draws not his sentiments and imagery from his own stores, but from the new and surprising scenes which he had been permitted to behold in heaven.

But although, from the causes now assigned, we may think it improper to look for any nice resemblance in sentiments and ideas, between the Apocalypse and other writings of Saint John; yet some similarity, in the mode and character of narration, may, perhaps, be reasonably expected. And this kind of similarity will be acknowledged in the plain unadorned simplicity, with which the Apocalypse, and all other productions of St. John, appear to be written. There is, at the same time, a difference, which seems to consist chiefly in that which Jortin has pointed out†; that "the Apocalypse, like the Septuagint, follows the Hebrew phraseology, using

* See his note, p. 555.
† Disc. on Christian Rel.
copulatives continually *, whereas the Gospel instead of ο�, uses de, or ev, or is written «ωνδεηνς."

Such is, indeed, the principal difference of style to be observed in comparing the Gospel with the Apocalypse; but the attentive reader may perceive some passages in the Gospel, where the copulative ο� is used almost as profusely as in the Apocalypse. They are those passages wherein the mind of the writer appears charged with sublime and surprizing ideas, following upon each other in a rapid succession. He then pours them forth, one after another, coupled only by the conjunction ον. The same may be observed of the other Evangelists, and more frequently than of St. John; when these sacred writers relate wonderful events, following in quick succession, they make continual repetition of the copulative ον. But it will be sufficient to produce instances from St. John. In the fifth chapter of this Evangelist he describes the situation of a poor diseased cripple, who had been waiting for a cure from the waters of Bethesda, during thirty-eight years; the circumstances are related calmly, and without any peculiar use of the copulative ον, till we come to verse ninth; when Jesus having pronounced the cure, the surprizing events immediately follow in rapid succession, and this copulative is incessantly employed. Και ευθεως εγενετο όγις ο Ανθρωπος, και ηρε του κρατελαιν ανιν, και περιπατει. Thus also at the raising of Lazarus, all proceeds calmly, and without the copulatives, until the great event; but this is narrated, (ver. 44), with ον, ον, ον.† This copulative style then appears to be used by the Evangelists, and even by St. John, to express events wonderful and surprizing, and rapidly following each other. But the Apocalypse contains a continual succession of such events; the copulative language is, therefore, continually used, and yet may be the language of St. John.

* Και ωτιϊν ; Ὁφρ ον, &c.
† Other instances may be seen in ch. i. 8—14—20. ii. 13—16. xiii. 21. xix. 1, 2, 3, 18. xx. 11, 14.

But
But whether these observations may be allowed to have weight or not, there are many reasons which should deter us from making any hasty conclusion, from comparison of style and manner, that the Apocalypse was not written by the writer of the Gospel. The history of its first publication is unknown to us; it may have been written originally in Hebrew, and then the Greek translation would naturally retain much colouring of the Hebrew style; or, the language in which our Lord and his angels addressed Saint John in the visions might be Hebrew*, and then his Greek being a direct translation, may be expected to preserve the Eastern idiom, for he would probably translate closely †. In short, many circumstances may have happened to occasion a difference of style, of which we are now wholly ignorant. But of this at least we are well assured, that a considerable lapse of time had taken place, between the writing of the Gospel and of the Apocalypse. A period of about thirty years had intervened. Such a circumstance is well known to make a considerable difference in the style of the same writer; Michaelis allows it, and has forcibly expressed it, (p. 352, 536.) But he alleges, and with good reason, if we take it as a general observation, that when there is this change in the style of an author, we naturally look for the bold, sublime, and, perhaps, incorrect style, in his youth, and the gentler and more finished manner in his later years. And hence he collects that the Apocalypse, displaying bold imagery, with much fire of composition, an oriental form of speech, and an incorrect manner, might, indeed, be written by St. John some years before he wrote his Gospel; but that he could not be the author of it late in life, and many years after he resided among the Greeks at Ephesus. The argument is specious; but, I trust, the edge of it has

* Our Lord, appearing to St. Paul, addressed him in the Hebrew tongue, (Acts xxvi. 14.) probably the Syro-Chaldaic Hebrew then in use with the Jews.

† To preserve (as he is ordered) the words delivered to him.
been already taken off, by a consideration of the causes which will account for the sublime imagery and animated manner of writing in the Apocalypse, where it differs from the calmer style of St. John. But I will suggest another cause, which, as it appears to me, would not fail to produce a more warm and turbid style of writing in the Apocalypse than in the Gospel, supposing them to be written by the same pen.

The Gospel appears to have been written by St. John, after an interval of about thirty years from the events which he relates. At such a distance of time the mind is enabled to look back with calm composure, and to represent, with dignified serenity, transactions which could not be narrated soon after they had happened, without warm and passionate expressions. It seems to be owing partly to this cause that the Evangelist is seen to relate in a cool tenor of style, in the Gospel, those sufferings of his beloved Lord which he had witnessed, and which if related by him immediately after the events had taken place, could not have been told otherwise than with commotion and indignation. But the Apocalypse was written by its author immediately after he had seen the vision; the impressions on his mind had no time to cool; his expressions kept pace with his feelings, and his style became more vivid and glowing. The same clear rivulet which has been seen to flow calmly in its former course, becomes turbid and furious, when it meets with rocks, or, by other causes, is accelerated in its descent.*

Many other causes, unknown to us, might operate to produce some variety in the style of St. John. He might use an amanuensis, or corrector of his language, at one time, and not at another†.

* P. 594.
† A notion prevailed in the Ancient Church, that the Apostles had used Amanuenses or Interpreters, and Jerome accounted for the apparent difference of style between the first and second Epistles of St.
But no difference of style will justify us in denying St. John to be the author of the Apocalypse. The Fathers of the Church, who first received this work, probably knew the causes of this apparent dissimilarity. They were satisfied, and, in truth, this difference of style between the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse, nearly considered, is far from being so much in its disfavour, as, at first view, we are apt to imagine. For it is such a style as St. John may have written, from circumstances considered; but it is not such a style as an impostor, an imitator of St. John would have written. Such an one would have gone to the model of the Gospel and Epistles for his exemplar, and it is in vain for us to dissent from them.

This observation may serve to introduce the fifth objection, which is stated by Lardner from Dionysius, and repeated by Michaelis*, "That the Gospel of St. John is elegant Greek, but that the Apocalypse abounds with barbarisms and solecisms." For the same general answer may still be given, even if we admit the fact alleged. Various causes may have operated to produce this difference, many of them unknown to us, but known, perhaps, to the ancients of the second century, who seem not to have objected to the Apocalypse, this dissimilarity. More than an hundred years had elapsed from the first reception of the book by the Church, before any such objections appear to have been advanced against it.

But the attention of modern critics has tended greatly to lessen the force of this objection. For such irregularities, in point of Grammar, as are objected against the Apocalypse, have been found also in the Septuagint† and in other of the writers of the New Testament; and the Gospels and Epistles

St. Peter, by his having used different interpreters, tom. IV. p. 183. The Apostle John may have used an interpreter, or at least a corrector of his Greek, in one of his works, and not in another.

* P. 529, 530.
† See page 530.
of Saint John are now so far from being accounted that perfect Greek, which Dionysius represents them to be, that Blackwall, who in his sacred classics has attempted to vindicate the Scriptures from the charge of being written in an impure and barbarous style, has found himself obliged to defend the Gospel and Epistles of this Apostle in more than forty passages, in some of which only he has succeeded.

But such vindication of the Holy Scriptures is unnecessary; they must be allowed to speak a language of their own, "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom*. They use, for the most part, an Asiatic Greek, plentifully mixed with Hebraisms. A pure Attic language would by no means give them greater credibility; for in these days we should not admit the appeal of Mahomet, and conclude them divine, because elegantly composed.

Many of the expressions, which, upon this ground, have been objected to in the Apocalypse, have been shewn to convey the sublime meaning of the sacred inditer more forcibly and effectually, than a more exact and grammatical Greek †. Of this character is απο δ ων, και δ ηὺ, και δ ερχομενος ‡, which cannot be so corrected into grammar as to express, with equal force, that sublime attribute of God, by which he fills eternity.

The instances of irregularity, in point of grammar, produced from the Apocalypse by Bengel, and repeated by our author ‖, are all of one kind, and of a kind which is found in the Septuagint, and in Greek translated from the Hebrew. In these instances, the original (or nominative) case, is used immediately after a word, which having been expressed in one of the oblique cases, seems to re-

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* 1 Cor. ii. 4.
† This is observed by our author, (Introd. vol. i. part 1. chap. iv. sect. 3.) who says "The very faults of grammar in the Apocalypse are so happily placed as to produce an agreeable effect."
‡ Ch. i. 4.
‖ P. 529.
quire in purer Greek, the continuation of the same oblique case*. This might well happen, either if the text were translated from St. John’s Hebrew, or if St. John had translated into Greek the Hebrew words of Jesus and of the angels†.

The instances produced by Michaelis are taken chiefly from ancient MS. of the Apocalypse, and are not to be seen in the common editions. And our author surmises that these violations of grammar were probably yet more abundant in former times, having undergone the correction of transcribers. But if this supposition can be allowed, it may also be allowed, that other books of the New Testament have probably undergone this kind of correction. And why not the Gospel and Epistles of Saint John, even before the Apocalypse was written?

But although we may not be able to shew the Apocalypse to be written in exactly the same Greek, as the Gospel and Epistles of St. John; yet, I trust, we must be convinced that this circumstance is very far from being entitled to any decisive influence in favour of the opinion that it was not written by that Apostle, to whom the united voice of antiquity has ascribed it. Of all the arguments which have been advanced to support this opinion, there is none, which it will not be presumptuous to oppose to such authority.

Having now advanced what I deem necessary to say in answer to these objections of Dionysius, repeated by Michaelis, I shall add a few words con-

* Instance ch. i. 5. ἐνε ἐν ἐν — ἐν ἐν, which may be rendered strictly grammatical by supplying ὅ ὅ, is understood: and this ellipsis is so common in our English language, (and, I believe, in most modern ones), that the places objected to, pass in literal translation without any apparent offence to grammar. The offence then is not against universal grammar, but against the particular idiom of the Greeks, and yet not against the idiom of the Oriental Greeks. See the observations of our author on the language of the New Testament, with the judicious remarks of his translator. Introduct. vol. i. ch. iv.

† As suggested in p. 155.
cerning an objection of later date, to which our author seems inclined to give his sanction, though he has not formally avowed it. He distinguishes between John the Evangelist and John the Divine, as if he believed them to be two separate persons; and the latter to be the author, or the reputed author of the Apocalypse. But the title, prefixed to the Apocalypse, in which it is called "the Revelation of John the Divine," does not properly belong to the book. It is not to be found in the most ancient and authentic MSS, and is therefore rejected by Griesbach in his edition. The true title of the book is seen in the first verses of it: it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," not of John. But as it was communicated to the Church by St. John, and as other Revelations were afterwards written in imitation of this, and ascribed to other Apostles, so by degrees this Revelation was distinguished in the Church by the name of John. The Apocalypse of John was the title by which it was known in the times of Dionysius*. In the following century, when many contests had arisen concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Orthodox had found their firm support in the writings of this Apostle, (who alone of the sacred writers had described the Son of God as Θεω λόγος†) they began to apply the title of Theologus, a title expressive both of John's Doctrine‡, and of his eminent knowledge in divine subjects, to this great Apostle. Athanasius calls St. John ὁ Θεολόγος ἀυτοῦ.

† The Word of God.
‡ See the word Θεολογία, as used in Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 24. and applied to the beginning of St. John's Gospel. The Christians are described as worshipping Christ, with reference to this name τον Χριστον ἰματις Θεολογίας. Euseb. H. E. lib. v. c. 28. And the Alogi, as we have seen, received that appellation, from denying the Doctrine of St. John, τον αυ την όνομα Θεω (Θεω) λόγον. Εἰρηφ. Ἑφρ. 54.
§ Cont. Gent. as quoted by Lardner.
In the decrees of the Council held at Ephesus, in 431, that city is mentioned as the burial place of John the Theologus, which agrees with the account of the Antients, that John the Evangelist was buried there*. Andreas Cesariensis, commenting on Rev. xvii. quotes the Evangelist John by the title of Theologus†; and, although the same title was applied by Andreas and others, to Gregory Nazianzen, and to other able defenders of the Theologic Doctrine, yet John the Evangelist was ὁ Θεολόγος ματ' ἐξοχώς, the Divine, and no other John, appears to have had this title. So we may be assured, that, at whatever time this title was prefixed to the Apocalypse, he who prefixed it, intended by it John the Evangelist; who was well known, and celebrated in the fourth and succeeding centuries, by this appellation.

Having thus afforded some answer to the objections urged from internal evidence against the authenticity of the Apocalypse, I shall conclude with adding a positive evidence in favour of the notion generally received, that it was written by St. John.

In chap. i. 13, he who is ordered to write the book, beholds in the vision "one like unto the Son of Man." Now, who but an eye-witness of our Lord's person upon earth, could pronounce, from the likeness, that it was he? Saint John had lived familiarly with Jesus during his abode upon earth; and had seen him likewise in his glorified appearances; at his transfiguration, and after his resurrection. No other John had enjoyed this privilege. No other eye-witness of our Lord's person appears to have been living in this late period of the Apostolical age, when the visions of the Apocalypse were seen.

We may, therefore, I trust, fairly conclude, that to the impregnable force of external evidence,

* Euseb. H. E. lib. iii. c. 1.
† Καὶ τοῦ Θεολόγου.

which
which has been seen to protect the divine claims of the Apocalypse, a considerable acquisition of internal evidence may be added; or, at least, that this avenue, by which its overthrow has been so often attempted, is not so unguarded as its adversaries imagine.

But the grand bulwark of its internal evidence has not yet been sufficiently explored. The diligence of future inquirers will, I trust, evince to the world, from a direct proof of the actual accomplishment of the Apocalyptical prophecies, that the work is from God.

In the mean time, we may trust for its protection, to those forces stationed in the outworks, which it has been our present object to review. This review, Sir, as I had reason to forewarn you, is far from being so complete as I could wish. Neither the time I can bestow upon it, nor the materials in my possession, nor the ability at my command, enable

* We are now qualified to examine the authenticity of the Apocalypse by the rules given by our author, (Introduct. vol. i. part i. ch. 11. sect. 2. p. 27,) for determining whether a Scripture book be spurious. 1. Were doubts entertained, from the first appearance of the Apocalypse in the world, whether it proceeded from Saint John?—Answer. No such doubts appear upon record, during one hundred years after its publication. 2. Did the friends of the author deny it to be his?—Answer. No such denial from Polycarp, Papias, &c. they confirm it to be his. 3. Did a long series of years elapse after the death of St. John, in which the book remained unknown, and in which it must unavoidably have been mentioned, and quoted, had it really existed?—Answer. No such period did elapse: Michaelis himself has allowed, that this book, if forged, was written before the year 120, which is within twenty-three years of its publication; but we have seen it quoted and acknowledged by Ignatius, Papias, &c. long before that period had elapsed. 4. Is the style of the Apocalypse different from that of the other writings of St. John?—Answer. It cannot be denied but there is some difference, but it is a difference which admits of a reasonable explanation. 5. Are events recorded, which happened later than the time of the pretended author?—Answer. No. 6. Are opinions advanced in the Apocalypse, which contradict those of St. John in his other writings?—Answer. No. 7. We may add, "are events predicted which are known to have happened before the real time when the Prophecies foretelling them were written?"—Answer. No.
me to present it to you as a disquisition worthy of
the subject.

Such as it is, it may perhaps be allowed to serve
as a temporary prop to the authority of the Apoca-
lypse, until, by the hand of some able architect, a
firm and elegant colonade shall be raised for its sup-
port.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

with sincere respect,

&c. &c. &c.

FINIS.