A CRITICAL HISTORY
of the TEXT of the
New Testament,
Wherein is established
The Truth of those ACTS on which CHRISTIANITY is founded.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.
The Verity of the New Testament defended in general against the ancient Hereticks. Reflections upon the Principle made use of by the Fathers to establish the Authority of these Books.

Jesus Christ having professed that he came not into the World merely to destroy the Old Law, but rather to accomplish it, it seemed not to him necessary to publish his Doctrines in Writing. He was content to prove his Mission by his Miracles, and to support his Reformation upon the Books of the Old Testament which were received by all the Jews, to whom the Messias had been promised. So that we do not find him to have given order
to his Disciples to put any thing into Writing. He only commands them to Preach his Gospel to all the Nations of the Earth; Go ye, says he to them, into all the world, and preach the Gospel. The Books of the New Testament are of their Original from this preaching. This it was that caused Tertullian to say, (a) That the Apostles, to whom Jesus Christ had given this Command to preach the Gospel, were the Authors thereof. Upon the whole matter, the Gospels had not been put in Writing but at the request of those People who were willing to preserve the memory of that which the Apostles had preached to them. S. Paul compiled the greater part of his Epistles for the Instruction of Churches which were already erected. That History which we call the Acts of the Apostles was published to an other end, but to show to the Fainthearted the Progress of the Christian Religion upon its first advance into the World; and the Christians not having at that time any State separate from that of the Jews, and being sedentary and afflicting at all their Ceremonies in the Temple and in the Synagogues, they had no Parousia appointed to record any thing of importance which passed among them. And this is the reason that we have not here, as in the Old Testament, any publick Writers who had the Charge of collecting the Acts of their State. This, during the Primitive times of Christianity, gave a preference to several Heretics to ascribe to the truth of those Apostolical Books which to them seemed to want some publick Authentication. S. Ignatius, in one of his Epistles, complains, (b) That he understood there were some men who said they could not believe the Gospel, except they could find it written in the Acts. The holy Martyr answers them, That it was written, that the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and a Faith in him, were instead of a most authentic Ark. It was then difficult to disillusion the Books which had been composed by the Apostles, or by their Disciples, from those which had been forged by false Apostles or by some Sectaries. Every one bore in his hand either the Name of the Apostles in general, or of some single one of their number; and since there were no publick Ark, to which recourse might be had for the deciding and clearing of matters of this nature, the Heretics took occasion from thence.

(a) Confessio in prima Evangeliiinum infirmamini Apostoli acuere labor, quibus et numero Evangelii promulgandae ab ipso Domini fr. inempitum. Terr. e. a. de Marcell. e. 2.
(b) Thalam. opus apertum, to lege ab iis episcopis falsis, in quo ecclesiae inmedia, Ignat.Ep. ad Filip. 10.
to publish a great number of false Acts of which hardly any thing is left to Deponent except the Titles of them and a few Fragments.

These Sectaries boasted that they taught the Doctrine of the Apostles or at least of their Disciples. Balaam, who was one of the most ancient Hierarchies, avowed that he had for his Master, (c) Clement, one of St. Peter's Interpreters. Valentin affirmed with the same boldness, that he had been instructed in Religion by Theodotus, (d) who was one of St. Paul's familiar Associate. But whereas they did not agree amongst themselves, and on the contrary the Doctrine of the Apostles was perfectly uniform in the Churches that they had planted; the Fathers made use of this Uniformity of Doctrine to confirm and establish the truth of the Apologetical Writings. Clement alexandrinus and St. Basilides and Valentin, that there was but one true ancient Church, that was before all Hierarchies. From thence he brings an unquestionable proof of the infamy of the Doctrine of these Sectaries, who dares not be bold as to give the Name of "the Doctrine of the Apostles" to their own Inventions: he represents to them, that

(c) The Doctrines of the Apostles were one, as well as their Tradition. The Primitive Christians argued against the Heterodox of those times, from Tradition, and from the Confirming of that Belief that was manifest in all the Churches founded by the Apostles; as may be seen at large in the Works of St. Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and St. Augustine, and in a word, of all the Fathers that have defended the Writings of the Apostles against the Heterodox. Wherefore any Sectary opposed the declared Gospel, they immediately convinced him of the forgery of those Acts that he produced, by the truth and that were kept in the Apostolical Churches, and were indeed of Adventum. (f) If any one, like St. Epiphanius, should go about to counterfeit the Edicts or Ordinances of Emperors, the Church would be soon laid open, by producing the true Copies taken from the Archives of the Court; In like manner, adds he, wise Sectaries, composed by Heterodox may be detected; their juridictions may be easily discovered by


producing the true Gospel, that are kept in the Churches as it was in theible.

This manner of defending the Truth of the Apostolical Writings against the ancient Sectaries, which proved so effectually convincing, that the Gnostics were obliged to support their Novelties, to fly to I know not what secret Traditions that was known to none but themselves. They were so intolerant as to prefer themselves before the Apostles and Disciples of Jesus Christ, affecting them as not having preached the Parity of the Gospel with sincerity, because, say they, they have retained many Ceremonies of the old Law. They thought by this means, that they might be able with Authority to reform the Writings of the Apostles. (g) There is no way (faith St. Irenaeus) of convincing this sort of People, neither by the Testimony of the Scriptures generally received in the Churches planted by the Apostles, nor by authentic Traditions, because they imagine themselves to be above all this. They were professedly, that they alone were in possession of the truth of Religion that contained hidden Mysteries: St. Irenaeus & uncontaminatet & sincer abscindam sive mysteriosum. And since they had joined Philosophy with Christianity, they intended also to accommodate the one to the other. They argued on matters of fact after a pure metaphysical manner; and being filled with an infinite number of Prejudices and Notions taken from the Principles of their Philosophy, they re-formed the Doctrine of the Apostles; and even that of Jesus Christ on this foundation, under pretence of bringing Religion to a greater Perfection. They pretended that the Apostles had preached the Gospel before they had a perfect knowledge of the Truth, and that therefore they were at liberty to correct them: ante predicantium, quae perfectum haberent cognitionem. This was that which caused them to take the ambitious Title of Learned and Knowing Men, or Gnostics, as if none but they were endowed with the true knowledge of Religion. They vainly boasted also that they had reformed the Apostles: Gnostices amendantes & sive Apostolaram. S. Irenaeus sharply reproves their rashness in bragging that they had made perfect that which was gross and obscure in the Gospel published by the Apostles.

It hath been necessary to make all these Reflections on the an-

\( \text{(g) Cum autem ad eam stetam traditionem qua \textit{ Sic } \textit{ ob Apostolos, quis \textit{ sic } \textit{ incepsisset \textit{ Presbyterorum } \textit{ in Ecclesiam collectum, \textit{ praecepissent } \textit{ nos, adhibuisse \textit{ traditiones veteres, ut non foliam \textit{ Presbyteri, sed eis \textit{ Apostolos exstantes sum-} \textit{ princerunt foedere \textit{ veteribus. } \textit{ Thucydides, } \textit{ hoc autem adhibisse coicin-} \textit{ turer, in quae \textit{ iudicia Salutaris veritatis, litter. } \textit{ lib. } \textit{ 3, aediles Hera. c. } \textit{ 2.} \textit{ cl.}} \)} \)
cient Sect of the Gnosticks, because they have applied themselves more than any others in those primitive times of the Christian Religion, to the enduring of false Acts under the Names of the Apostles, or other specious Tales. These are a sort of Philosophers that ought not to pass but for half Christians, who have altered the Traditions that the Disciples of Jesus Christ had left to the Churches. And therefore no regard ought to be had to all the Books that they have produced under what Name soever, since they have professed that they understand Religion better than the Apostles themselves, and (6) have been so bold as to publish new Gospels, to which they have given the Title of The Gospel of Truth, although the Gospels do not agree with those of the Apostles. This done is sufficient to make it appear, that the Gospels of the Gnosticks were false Acts, that cannot be opposed to the Apostolical Writings that have been acknowledged by the primitive Churches.

It were an easy matter to answer Celsus by this same Principle; who herefore objected to the Christians, that they changed their Gospel every day, adding thereto, and diminishing what they thought fit, that they might be able by this means to retract that which they had formerly alleged. Origen judiciously answers this Philosopher, who was a great Enemy to the Christian Religion, that he unhappily confounded the ancient Sects with the true Faithful: He protests, that he knows not in the least, that the Gospel hath been corrupted by others than the Gnosticks or Marcions: (1) This is not a Crime (faith he) that ought to be imputed to the Gospel, but to them that have dared to corrupt it. He brings an Example of the Sophists, whose false Doctrines cannot be attributed to true Philosophy. (6) It is the same thing (faith this great Man) with respect to the Sects that have introduced Novelties into the Doctrine of Jesus Christ; which cannot be charged on true Christianity. It is certain, that in all times, and in all places there hath been a perfect Conformity between the different Copies of these Books; the Diversities that are found


(1) Tit 2: 12; 1 Thess 3: 8, que ad Iesus Christum, et ab omnibus secessisse, uti lib. 2 c. 330

therein, and shall be remarked in the sequel of this Work, are
not of so great moment, as that we may lay with S. Paul, that
the Christians have changed their Gospels, to the end that they
might suit them to their own opinions. This cannot be un
derstood but of the ancient Books, who having no certain
Rules for their Belief, reform'd them according to their capri
cious humor. This is that for which the Orthodox Christians
herefore contumeliously called the Modernists, who corrupted the Sacred
Books under a pretence of correcting them; and whereas several
chosen them that had taken this liberty, all their Copies differed one
from another; there were of them under the Names of A
epistolas, Theodotus, Hermogenes and Apollonius, that did not in the
least agree together.

I will lay nothing here concerning the Gospel of the Mercuri
nites whereof Origen makes mention, because I design to treat of
it in another place; I shall only add, that if we compare the
Gospels and the other Books of the New Testament with the
Litteralists that we have under the Names of several Apostles, to
whom the most part of the Eastern Christians do attribute them,
we shall be convinced that the Gospels are only of the Apostles.
For all the Churches have preferred them in their ancient Par
ties; whereas every particular Nation hath added to their Litera
tics; and hath taken the liberty often to revise them. The reason
that hath been always had to the Writings of the New Testament,
without inferring any considerable Additions therein, is an evi
dence proof, that all People have looked upon them as Divine
Books, which it is not lawful for any to alter. On the contrary
they have been persuaded, that the Literalists, also they bear the
Names of the Apostles, or of some Disciples of Jesus Christ, were
not originally written by the Apostles, but attributed. And there
fore it hath been left free to the Churches to add to them, or
to diminish from them, according as occasion requires.

The Principles that have been maintained above in discourse
of the Gospels, may serve to confute the Modernists, who like
wise acknowledge nothing Divine in the Scriptures, but that which
pleased them, or rather was agreeable to their Fancies. This
cauld S. Paul to say, addressing himself to S. Paul, who was
one of the chief of the Party. (1) You are then the Rule of Truth,
whoever is against you is your own. He clearly demonstrates to
them, that they were only upheld with false pretexts, when they

(1) De exa prel. c. xvi. cap. 6. Paul. c. 5. re"
received the Writings of the Apostles against the Authority of all the Churches of the World, and at the first time received the Apocryphal Books that had no Authority: If any one (continues the Father) should dispute you, you should make use of your own words, that no which you allege on your belief is false; and on the contrary that which is against you is true, (m) what would you do? How could you defend the truth of those Acts that you produce? How could you prove their Antiquity, not having any Writers in Texts by which all Nations might be confirmed? From whence he concludes (n) that it is absolutely necessary on this occasion to have recourse to the Authority of those Churches that were established ever since the primitive times of the Christian Religion, and to the consent of Nations that have received the Books of the New Testament from the Apostles.

He oberserves further, and more close to the purpose; that if it were only disputed concerning the various Copies, since they are but few in number, it would be sufficient to consult the Copies of different Countries; and if they did not agree in this point, the greater number should be preferred before the lesser, or the most ancient before the later. These precautions, as he observes, were preferred preferenter. But the Menonists, who judged nor of the Truth of these Books but with relation to their own Ideas, refused to submit to this Authority; they confessed only their reason in matters of Fact, wherein all Difference ought to be given to Authority; therefore when any passage was urged to them that, according to their Opinion, they boldly affirmed that that part had been corrupted, or that the Book wherein it was found had been corrupted by some Imposter, under the name of the Apostles. But, for example, who attacked thus after having diligently perused the Books of Moses, he could not find therein any Prophecy that had any regard to Jesus Christ, takes this method in answering the Texts of the New Testament. Whereupon mention is made of these Prophecies, Jesus Christ (n) in speaking of himself, after the whole of one,经主 agrees to that, that after a finesse examination of this passage, (o) his reason obliged it.

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(m) Hei-nesque? duct is concursus queque. 
(n) Hei-nesque queque. 
(o) Hei-nesque queque. 
(p) Hei-nesque queque. 
(q) Hei-nesque queque.
him to conclude, either that it was false, or that Jesus Christ had not spoken the truth; and since it would be no less than impious blasphemy to say that God could lie, it would be more advisable to attribute the falsification to the Writers themselves. When it was demanded of this Socrates why he did not receive the Old Law and the Prophets whom Jesus Christ himself had authorized in the New Testament, by his words, I am not come to destroy Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them: he objected against the Testimony of S. Matthew, because he is the only Evangelist that hath related this. It is supposed (such he) that this Discourse was delivered in the Sermon that Jesus Christ made on the Mountain. In the mean time S. John (p) who was then present, speaks not a word thereof; and yet they would have S. Matthew, who laud nothing, to mention it. He pretends that this hath been written by some other person, and not by S. Matthew. After this manner the Menaboeaus who facilitated all to their Reason, and almost nothing to Authority, entirely destroyed the Books of the New Testament, receiving them no farther than they were conformable to their Prejudices: they had formed to themselves a certain Idea of Christianity, after which they regulated the Writings of the Apostles. They would have it thar all that which could not be adjusted to the Idea had been inferred in their Books by later Writers who were half Jews: Papists fact, (p) Tef España: la così, hepìsuun naxer miudß idemun. Augd. Aug. ext. (q) De quiparem certam est cujus est, si terea quia Appulsurus dixit & see Ecclesìa ubi dixit Appulsurus propugnatus, & pos quæsas generas earum commensurà &cæcum. nitam Appulsurum fœ tæsmonon de &c. &c; nec certam ssegriff unio quæd haw Ecclesìa convivus hæc pamento prædicto Appulsurum fiæsmonon non muli effigies haud p. Appulsur exsqffìtianum: Augib. Aug. ext. that
that dispute therewith, and that carry the name of Writers who have lived a long time after the Apostles. He charges them (c) with making Fables and Apocryphal Works to pass for Apocryphal Writings: and hath given the same time the falsity of these Acts, because they have not any testimony of the Doctors of the Church that were then living. He urgeth Paulus to prove what he hath alleged, by Books that are Canonical, and generally received in all the Churches: Non ex quibusque literis, sed Ecclesiasticis, Commune, Catholice. This Holy Doctor calls this way of arguing of the Manual an Error. 

Moreover, infantes & demumens, who not being able to accommodate the Writings of the Apostles to the Idea that they had formed to themselves of the Christian Religion, or under colour of certain contradictions in the Scriptures, which they could not resolve (d) would needs have it believed that those Books were composed after the Apostles themselves, by uncertain Authors, who had made bold to borrow the Names of these Apostles to gain Credit and Authority to their Works.

To convince them the more easily of their folly, he cites before their eyes the Books (e) of Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, Varro and Cicero, and of several other Writers, that are believed to be the Authors of those Works that we have under their Names, because they have been attributed to them in the time wherein they lived, and they have been always attributed successively from Age to Age. Now there is nothing more contrary to reason, than not to grant the same privilege to the Church, and not to acknowledge that the Church has so wisely kept the Writings of the Apostles, whole Doctrines the Church has preserved by the means of the Succession of Bishops.

We have enlarged a little on these Reflections of S. Augustine, and of the other Fathers that preceded him, because they have chiefly assisted in the Truth of the Books of the New Testament, without having recourse to what particular Spirit, which is an in

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(c) LXX. 8. i 1. 

(d) Non igitur Paulus, sed rure, etc. 

(e) Euphras. Manicheon.
We cannot imagine any thing more
opposite to good reason, than these Words of the Confection of Faith
of those that formerly took the Name of the Reformed of the
Churches of France; who acknowledge those books (in speaking of the
whole Scriptures) to be Canonical, not so much by the common agree-
ment and consent of the Church, as by the testimony and inward perfec-
tion of the Holy Ghost. The Fathers nevertheless have always con-
cluded the ancient Hereticks who refused to acknowledge these books
as Canonical, by the common agreement and consent of the Church.
It would have been a pleasant way of reasoning, if every one of these
primitive times of Christianity, would have acknowledged for
divine books, only those that his private Spirit should dictate to
him to be such. This hath appeared to be so great an extrava-
gance to those of that Persecution, who in the Low Countries are
called Remonstrants, that they look upon the Calvanists that follow this
Principle, as People that have renounced common sense. Simon
Ephorus, who was one of the Champions of this Party, after
having handled this question with a very great deal of facility, concludes
that it is a very ill sort of argumentation, to admit besides the testi-
mony of the Church, another inward testimony of the Holy Ghost,
to know whether certain books have a divine Authority stamped upon
them. Hinc patria (tahis this Procedure) insistis eis, qui vel praece vel
vitra testimonium Eclesiae requiris. I am not sufficient in
authoritatem divinam habere
and as they hold that divine effect, & authority therein
requires the
Remonstrants.

Remonstrants.

Remonstr. And it is sufficient according to the Remonstrants, that we
have there upon the testimony of the primitive Church, that
certainly knew that those books were written by the Apostles, or
approved by them, and that this testimony is come down to us by a
confused Tradition. This Spirit that is diffused through the whole
Church, ought without doubt to be preferred to a private Spirit, that
can only serve to make a division therein. — This is what Grotius hath
judiciously observed: Spiritus illius praevimus (faith this Critic) Spiritu
Eclesiae divinam.

It would be to no purpose for the Calvinists to object to the Remon-
strants, that their Opinion is taken out of the Writings of Secundus;
because an evident truth ought not to be rejected, under pretence
that it may be found in the Books of Secundus. This Heretic hath
proved in his Treatise Of the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, and in

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another Work intitled Sacred Letters, the Truth of the Sacred Books, and principally of some of the New Testament, by the very same Reason, and after the same manner that S. Irenæus, Tertullian and S. Athenæus have done. (x) Let them read (faith Simon) Socrates, he that which Socrates hath written on this matter in his Ecclesiastical History, and they will find therein a perpetual content of all the Churches of the World, since those Books were written, to the name of this Author. He infils very much in these two Treatises on the Tetrarchies of the ancient Fathers. Will any one say for this, that this is a sectarian Method, because Socrates hath made use of it after the most Learned Ecclesiastical Writings? Would to God that this Enemy of the Traditions of the Catholic Church had always followed this Principle! he would not have introduced so many Innovations into Religion. Neither can he avoid an Objection that may be made even by those of his own Party: that according to his Principle, he ought necessarily to acknowledge a Tradition after the same manner as it is maintained in the Church of Rome. We cannot (might they say to him) receive the Gospel of S. Matthew, and reject that which hath been published under the Name of S. Thomas, without establishing a Tradition at the same time, because it is impossible to prove this by any Tetrarchies of the Scriptures.

Socrates. To answer this Objection without departing from his Principle, lays down (y) a certain Medium between the Scriptures and Traditions; which Medium consists, according to his opinion, in written Histories, in other Tetrarchies and in Rationemorunus, from whence it is proved without making application to any Authority of the Church, that the Gospel of S. Matthew contains the true History of Jesus Christ, and that on the contrary, that which carries the name of S. Thomas is a Sapphisticus Book. Epiphanius and

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(y) Est quidem medium inter Sacramentorum et traditionum. Non est ab eis removendo, sed quidem quidem, quod maxime habebat, atque epistemiam Christianorum, ex quo facilius est quod se ascenderet homines Mariæ Evangelium prae- rece de Evangeliis historiis. Thomas non habebat, neque hic immersus in tres luctuosae bibliorum genere. See Epist. 4. of Christopher Ockford.
the other Remonstrants do also make use of this Answer, that they may not be obliged to acknowledge the Traditions of the Church. But this Medium which they suppose to be between the Scriptures and Tradition, is a real Tradition, which differs in nothing from that which S. Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, S. Augustin and several other Fathers have established, when they intended to convince the ancient Henricans of the Truth of the Apostolical Books. Their falsehoods, and these other Acts whose Simon makes mention, are taken from the Churches, or from Ecclesiastical Writers; and this is that which composes Tradition. He ought to agree to it himself, since he avows it in his Treatise of the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, that since the times of the Apostles to those of Eusebius, none have doubted in the Church, that the Books of the New Testament were not composed by those, whose Names they bear. For it is certain that many Heretics that were out of the Church, have not only doubted thereof, but have absolutely rejected them. That which hath deceived Simon and the other Sectaries, is a false notion that they have conceived of the Authority of the Church; they imagine that the Judges by her own Authority only, and not upon good Acts and Records, that the Books that compose the Old and New Testament are Divine and Canonical.

CHAP. 11.

Concerning the Titles that are at the Head of the Gospels and other Books of the New Testament: Whether these Titles were made by the Authors of these Books, or whether they were first added?

We have no solid proof in Antiquity, to make it appear to us, that the Names that are set at the Head of every Gospel, were thereunto prefixed by those who are the Authors of them: S. John Chrysostom affirms it expressly of the contrary in one of his Homilies; (1) Mosel. (2) The Gospel of the Father of God, that he set before us, as it were, a Timeline of the Missions, the Jeopardy, the Anoint, the Glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Privilege and Virtues of our Saviour and Messiah. This is the name which we assign the Gospels, as marvelously to declare the mighty things God hath wrought in the generation of his Grace, John Chrys. Hom. I. in Scripture. So Rom.

Name.