

CHAP. V.—*Tested by the rule of antiquity, the catholic Gospels are found to be true, including the real St. Luke's, of which Marcion's is only a mutilated edition. The heretic's weakness and inconsistency in ignoring the other Gospels.*

On the whole, then, if that is evidently more true which is earlier, if that is earlier which is from the very beginning, if that is from the beginning which has the apostles for its authors, then it will certainly be quite as evident, that that comes down from the apostles, which has been kept as a sacred deposit¹ in the churches of the apostles. Let us see what milk the Corinthians drank from Paul; to what rule [of faith] the Galatians were brought for correction; what the Philippians, the Thessalonians, the Ephesians read [out of it]; what utterance also the Romans give, so very near² [to the apostles], to whom Peter and Paul conjointly³ bequeathed the gospel even sealed with their own blood. We have also [St.] John's foster churches.⁴ For although Marcion rejects his Apocalypse, the order of the bishops [thereof], when traced up to their origin, will yet rest on John as their author. In the same manner is recognised the excellent source⁵ of the other churches. I say, therefore, that in them (and not simply such of them as were founded by apostles, but in all those which are united with them in the fellowship of the mystery [of the gospel of Christ]⁶) that Gospel of Luke which we are defending with all our might has stood its ground from its very first publication; whereas Marcion's Gospel is not known to most people, and to none whatever is it known without being at the same time⁷ condemned. It too, of course,⁸ has its churches, but specially its own—

¹ Sacrosanctum. ["Inviolable;" see Westcott, *On the Canon*, p. 384, and compare T.'s treatise, *De Præscript. Hæret.* c. 36.]

² De proximo. [Mr. Westcott renders this, "who are nearest to us." See *in loco*.]

³ et . . . et.

⁴ Alumnas ecclesias. [He seems to allude to the seven churches of the Apocalypse.]

⁵ Generositas. ⁶ De societate sacramenti. ⁷ Eadem. ⁸ Plane.

as late as they are spurious; and should you want to know their original,¹ you will more easily discover apostasy in it than apostolicity, with Marcion forsooth as their founder, or some one of Marcion's swarm.² Even wasps make combs;³ so also these Marcionites make churches. The same authority of the apostolic churches will afford evidence⁴ to the other Gospels also, which we possess equally through their means,⁵ and according to their usage—I mean the Gospels of John and Matthew—whilst that which Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's,⁶ whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form⁷ of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul.⁸ And it may well seem⁹ that the works which disciples publish belong to their masters. Well, then, Marcion ought to be called to a strict account¹⁰ concerning these [other Gospels] also, for having omitted them, and insisted in preference¹¹ on Luke; as if they, too, had not had free course in the churches, as well as Luke's Gospel, from the beginning. Nay, it is even more credible that they¹² existed from the very beginning; for, being the work of apostles, they were prior, and coeval in origin with¹³ the churches themselves. But how comes it to pass, if the apostles published nothing, that their disciples were more forward in such a work; for they could not have been disciples, without any instruction from their masters? If, then, it be evident that these [Gospels] also were current in the churches, why did not Marcion touch them—either to amend them if they were adulterated, or to acknowledge them if they were uncorrupt? For it is but natural¹⁴ that they who were perverting the gospel, should be more solicitous about the perversion of those things whose authority they knew to be more gene-

¹ Censum.² Examine.³ Favos. [See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xi. 21.]⁴ Patrocina-bitur.⁵ Proinde per illas.⁶ [See Hieronymus, *Catal. Scriptt. Eccles.* c. 8.]⁷ Digestum.⁸ [See above, chap. 2.]⁹ Capit videri.¹⁰ Flagitandus.¹¹ Potius institerit.¹² [The Gospels of the apostles John and Matthew, and perhaps Mark's also, as being St. Peter's.]¹³ Dedicata cum.¹⁴ Competit.

rally received. Even the false apostles [were so called] on this very account, because they imitated the apostles by means of their falsification. In *as* far, then, as he might have amended what there was to amend, if found corrupt, in *so* far did he firmly imply¹ that all that was free from corruption which he did not think required amendment. In short,² he simply amended what he thought was corrupt; though, indeed, not even this justly, because it was not really corrupt. For if the [Gospels] of the apostles³ have come down to us in their integrity, whilst Luke's, which is received amongst us,⁴ so far accords with their rule as to be on a par with them in permanency of reception in the churches, it clearly follows that Luke's Gospel also has come down to us in like integrity until the sacrilegious treatment of Marcion. In short, when Marcion laid hands on it, it then became diverse and hostile to the Gospels of the apostles. I will therefore advise his followers, that they either change these Gospels, however late to do so, into a conformity with their own, whereby they may seem to be in agreement with the apostolic writings (for they are daily retouching their work, as daily they are convicted by us); or else that they blush for their master, who stands self-condemned⁵ either way—when now⁶ he hands on the truth of the gospel conscience smitten, or then⁶ subverts it by shameless tampering. Such are the summary arguments which we use, when we take up arms⁷ against heretics for the faith⁸ of the gospel, maintaining both that order of periods, which rules that a late date is the mark of forgers,⁹ and that authority of churches which lends support to the tradition of the apostles; because truth must needs precede the forgery, and proceed straight from those by whom it has been handed on.

¹ Confirmavit.² Denique.³ Apostolica [i.e. evangelia].⁴ [That is, the canonical Gospel of St. Luke, as distinct from Marcion's corruption of it.]⁵ Traducto.⁶ Nunc—nunc.⁷ Expedimur.⁸ Fide [“integrity”].⁹ Posteritati falsariorum præscribentem.