

**ADDITIONS MADE IN THE  
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OF NORTON'S EVIDENCES OF THE  
GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPELS**

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**ANDREWS NORTON**

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OF

*Andrews*

**NORTON'S EVIDENCES**

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

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For the use of those who own the first edition of the volume mentioned on the title-page, I have here given all the important additions made in the second. A. N.

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## NOTE\*

### *On some Opinions and Arguments of Eichhorn, and other German Theologians.*

My object in this work is, not to show in detail the errors of any particular hypothesis, or of any particular writer; but to exhibit the evidence of the proposition, that the Gospels, as we now possess them, are the works of those to whom they have been ascribed. But in order to maintain this proposition satisfactorily, it is necessary to take notice of the assertions and arguments which have been brought against it. Thus I have adverted in what precedes, and shall continue to do so occasionally in what follows, to the positions involved in the hypothesis of Eichhorn, respecting the time when the Gospels first became known and were generally received by Christians, the circumstances that produced their reception, and their previous history.

But if one had no other purpose than to overthrow that hypothesis, it might seem sufficient for him to say, that it is contradicted and set aside by Eichhorn himself. This will appear from what follows.

In the second edition of the first volume of his Introduction to the New Testament, he gives an additional section (p. 684, seqq.) on "The Reception of the Four Gospels for Use in the Church." He begins this section with representations similar to those which have been already quoted

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\* Inserted between the First and Second Parts of the work, after p. 108 of the first edition.

from him.\* Referring to the end of the second century, he states, that "This age"—he does not here say "the Church"—"labored zealously and simultaneously to represent Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as the only authentic biographers of Christ, as if this had not been done before; and an earnest effort was now first made to suppress the other gospels, which in earlier times had been abundantly in use." According to him, these labors and efforts soon attained success. In the time of Origen, "our four Gospels had manifestly triumphed over those before in use, in all the principal divisions of the Christian world; though, from the want of any account of the conflict, we are unable to explain how their success was obtained."

All this is sufficiently in accordance with what he had said before. But after a single sentence, in which he merely quotes Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Irenæus as vouchers for the general reception and extensive spread of the Gospels, he thus proceeds:—

"The period immediately before the controversies respecting the heresy of the Montanists, and the time of keeping Easter (which commenced shortly after the middle of the second century), that is to say, the interval between the years 150 and 175, appears to be the fittest that can be assigned for the silent introduction of this unanimity of opinion respecting those gospels which merited a preference above others; provided any cause can be pointed out, which might facilitate such a decision. And such a cause existed. The other gospels either did not bear the name of any author, or the individual names of their authors were not specified. On the contrary, our four Gospels were ascribed, two of them to Apostles, Matthew and John, and two to

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\* See before, pp. 11, 12, of the first edition.

apostolic men, worthy of all credit. Who, therefore, would not prefer these to all others? This circumstance, and the simplicity of their contents, recommended them generally; and so forcibly and distinctly, that, without any consultation or agreement, men were led to give them the preference. In the peaceable times of the Church, before a spirit of contradiction had been excited by polemical bitterness, they were thus silently, and in effect generally, preferred. Afterwards, distinguished writers of the Church, each in his own way, defended the choice which had already been made."

It is obvious that this last passage is wholly irreconcilable with what immediately precedes it, and with the statements previously made by Eichhorn as fundamental positions in his hypothesis. In the section just quoted from, he first gives us to understand, that in the time of Origen, that is, in the first half of the third century, our present Gospels had manifestly triumphed over those before in use; but not without a conflict. He had previously said,\* that there are no traces of our present Gospels before the end of the second and the beginning of the third century. About that time, according to him, "the Church," or "the age," first labored to procure their general reception, and to suppress those before in use.

But in the passage last quoted he supposes, that "the interval between the years 150 and 175 is the fittest that can be assigned for the silent introduction of a unanimity of opinion" concerning the four Gospels. All notion of any conflict between them and other gospels is put aside. They were received "silently," "without any consultation or agreement," "in peaceable times, before a spirit of controversy had been excited." The Church did not labor to

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\* See before, p. 11.