

benefits arising from these difficulties are more than enough to counter-balance the disadvantages which spring from them, and that these benefits, so far as we can perceive, could not otherwise have been obtained? This is the point to which we shall now direct attention.

We remark then, that much important internal evidence both of the genuineness of the Scriptures and of their Divine authority is to be found in those very difficulties of which we have been speaking. This idea has been already glanced at, but it is deserving of a fuller illustration. Suppose that a letter were brought to me, and that the person who brought it said that it was from a friend from whom I had often received letters, I could not but feel surprise, and could not but cherish suspicion, if, though having my friend's signature appended to it, the letter was written in a hand-writing very different from my friend's ordinary hand; if I perceived several words mis-spelled and not a few grammatical mistakes, while I knew that my friend was a person of good education and correct taste. I would probably come to the conclusion either that my friend had employed an imperfectly educated amanuensis, or that he had practised a joke upon me, or that the letter was a forgery. If, on the other hand, the manner of writing, the style and forms of expression, the allusions and reflections, were such as my friend was accustomed to, I should probably without any hesitation receive the document as genuine, and act accordingly. Now the application of this to the Scriptures is easy. If a man says to me, How do you know that these books were written at the time at which they are said to have been written, and by the persons whose names they bear?—I at once say to him—"Examine the books themselves, and you will find in them the best evidence. You will find certain peculiarities of style; the writings of one man differing from those of another, and the writings of one age differing from those of another. You will find evidence that Luke and Paul were better educated men than Matthew and John, and that though the writers of the New Testament expressed their thoughts in Greek they were accustomed to think in Hebrew. You will find numberless allusions to the manners and customs of the countries and ages in which the books claim to have been written, and to the character and actions of persons who are known to have lived there and then." These circumstances give to the various parts of the Bible certain characteristic features which, if they do not fix the composition to a particular period or person, are a most valuable corroboration of other evidence. But these very circumstances, these very allusions and peculiarities of thought and diction present, as we have previously shown, a fertile source of difficulty to the student of the Scriptures. Without them the Bible might have been more easily read by men of every capacity, and in every country and age, but we should have wanted one of the most convincing parts of that internal evidence by which the genuineness of the Scriptures is established.

It is interesting and important also to remember that this proof of the