

"In the third century we have a whole host of authors, quoting, illustrating and commenting upon the books of Scripture, which increase to a still greater number in the fourth century, before the close of which catalogues of the entire number of those books, corresponding exactly to our own, were published, translations made of them, harmonies, discourses, commentaries, and histories published, controversies handled, and decrees of councils issued concerning them. Nor did the work stay, but continued onwards from age to age, till the whole world was in a manner filled with its fruits. So that we have here a mighty flood of evidence to attest the genuine origin and continued purity of Scripture, great even at the outset, and constantly swelling, as it proceeds, with the researches and inquiries of every succeeding age. It is not that we have a scattered reference or two in a variety of independent and successive writers to the books of scripture (which is more however than can be said of many of our most esteemed classics,) but that there is an entire body of literature of vast extent, all growing out of these books as its common root, and directed toward their elucidation as their common end—a literature which received its contributions from every region of the civilized world, and overspread all lands with its multifarious productions. There is nothing in the whole history of ancient learning that can once be compared to this; and, in the face of such overwhelming proof, to doubt the genuineness of the books of Scripture, were not only to resist the soundest conclusions of history, but to deny the sufficiency of all historical evidence, and regard whatever is past as impossible to be ascertained."

Our author is still more brief on the second part of his subject—the authenticity of the scriptures. He shews how this results from the fact that they are genuine writings. Indeed the argument may be stated in a few sentences. In respect to the New Testament, it is in substance as follows:—

Histories of Jesus Christ, embracing his birth, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension, and the manifestation of a divine power on his disciples were published in the Greek language at Jerusalem and other places, in not less than five separate treatises, together with more than twenty other writings of an epistolary kind, explaining the facts and events in the history of Jesus Christ, and the views of the Divine character and government, and the duties and interest of men connected with these; and all these writings were published shortly after the death of Jesus Christ, and at a time when, as was professed in them, a miraculous power was possessed by his followers. And yet, neither Jew, nor Greek, nor Roman, even attempted to disprove the facts set forth in those writings; though the most powerful motives that can actuate individuals and communities, must have inclined them, and though multitudes of them must have been well able to do so, had the alleged facts been fabrications. The very silence, then, of the contemporary Jewish and heathen writers, becomes a proof of the authenticity of the New Testament. But these writers give more than a negative testimony on this subject. They directly

confirm the christian records, inasmuch as that they abundantly shew, that the great facts set forth in these records were matters of common report and belief in their day.

We think that Mr. Fairbairn has been unduly apprehensive of tiring the patience of his hearers and readers. His lecture is little more than a third part the length of that of his predecessor. The arguments which he has illustrated do not sufficiently respect the peculiar construction of the Bible. It is *one* Book in respect to God's authorship; but it is a *collection* of many separate books, in respect to man's authorship. And it is to this that the inquiry into its genuineness and authenticity refers. These books vary in proportional size from one to sixty pages; and are not less than sixty-six in number—those of the Old Testament being thirty-nine, and those of the New Testament, twenty-seven. The authors of the latter are nine, and of the former, it may be presumed that they are as numerous as the books that compose it: for though it is probable that several other books besides the portion called the Pentateuch had one author, it is yet evident that different authors have been employed on other portions—such as the book of Psalms and Proverbs. Then how diversified were the writers of the Bible as to their station and employments in life! We find amongst them kings, rulers, courtiers, scholars, peasants, priests, prophets, apostles. How diversified, too, the subjects of the Bible!—history, laws, discourses or sermons, as we call them, prophecies, poems of various kinds, from the song to the dramatic composition, moral and prudential maxims, biography, epistles. And how vast the period over which this succession of writers extends! According to the common computation, upwards of 1600 years elapsed between the age of Job and the banishment of John to the isle of Patmos. In respect to these things, the Bible is altogether *unique*, and it presents numberless features by which the truth of its claims to be regarded as a record of revelation may be determined. The question as to its genuineness and authenticity does not respect a single work like the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, but a numerous collection of writings which are in some respects as diverse from each other as are the Epistles of Cicero from the poems of Homer. Each of these writings may be made, and has often been made, the subject of a distinct scrutiny as to its genuineness and authenticity; and if infidelity had reason and truth on its side, the fraud or the delusion which, according to its supposition, presided over the composition of the Bible, would long ere now have been exposed to the wonder and the condemnation of the world.