

The Lecturo of Mr. Fairbairn contains a rapid and able sketch of the arguments for the genuineness of the Holy Scriptures; and he deduces their authenticity from their genuineness. Some of our readers may require to be informed that these terms are applied to the Holy Scriptures, and also to other writings, in a somewhat technical meaning. We quote Mr. Fairbairn's explanation of them.

"To prevent all ambiguity, what we mean by their being genuine is, that they are true and veritable productions—not forged or falsified documents, but written substantially as they now appear, at the time and by the persons they profess to be; and by their being authentic, we mean that the affirmations they make and the facts they record are not feigned but real; and that they are to be depended on as sound and competent sources of information,—so that the inquiry before us divides itself into two distinct parts. In the first of which we are to prove that the books of Scripture, to use the words of another, "were written in the age to which they are usually assigned, and by the authors to whom they are commonly attributed, and that in the course of their transmission to us, they have suffered no material corruption;" and in the second, that the authors of those books "wrote what they believed to be true, and possessed authentic information on the subjects of which they wrote." \*

To prove that the books of Scripture were written in the age to which they are usually assigned, and by the authors to whom they are commonly attributed; and that in the course of their transmission to us, they have suffered no material corruption, the Lecturer states and illustrates the following arguments:—First, that the Scriptures bear internal marks of genuineness—their language, style and allusions being entirely proper and consistent, and such as could not be counterfeited.

2. "There is such an immense number of manuscript copies of the sacred writings, and some of these of such high antiquity, as to afford an abundant proof of their genuineness."

3. "There are versions made into various languages, and which have been handed down to us along with the original Scriptures."

4. "The character and circumstances of those by whom the Scriptures have been transmitted to us afford a security against counterfeits and corruptions, inasmuch as that they have been in such a state of rivalry or hostility to each other as forbade any collusion. So it was with the Jews and Samaritans; and amongst the former, with the rival sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

5. The fifth and last proof is, "the references and allusions made to the Scriptures by authors, who lived near and subsequent to the time of their publication, the quotations expressly made from them by these authors, and the works written upon them."

We quote a part of Mr. Fairbairn's illustration of this last topic as a fair specimen both of the argument and of his mode of treating it.

"But to come to the New Testament Scriptures, which, if received as genuine and authentic, may be said to carry along with them the genuineness and authenticity of those of the Old Testament—to these there is a two fold series of references, both of the most complete and satisfactory kind. There are first the testimonies of heathen authors; not merely the passing allusions of such authors as Tacitus and Suetonius, to the facts of gospel history, referred to by them incidentally in their histories of Roman transactions, but the testimonies of such men as Celsus, who wrote a book against Christianity, only about 100 years after the gospels and most of the books of the New Testament were written, who there refers to these gospels and acknowledges them to have been written by the first disciples of Jesus—makes such quotations from them and particularizes so minutely the facts recorded in them, as to put it beyond a doubt that the gospels then in use were the very same with those we now possess; and Porphyry, who in the third century endeavoured to do what Celsus had attempted in the second—like him also in the course of his work against Christianity, of which a few fragments only remain, referring familiarly to the names and quoting the very words of the Evangelists as we still have them, and in the next century, the emperor Julian, who in like manner notices, in the surviving fragments of his work, our present gospels and the Acts of the Apostles as writings well known and of authority with the Christians. These confessions, from the pens of acute and learned adversaries, are of the highest importance in determining the genuineness of a portion, at least, of the New Testament Scriptures; proving as they incontestably do, that the same gospels, which are current now in the Christian church, were current then; and that no doubt even then was entertained or could be thrown upon their soundness and integrity as genuine productions."

"The other series of testimonies consists of the writings of Christian authors, in which are to be found innumerable references to the books of Scripture, and from which may be drawn an unbroken chain of evidence from the apostles downwards, in support of their genuineness. We are able to produce, of this class, the epistles of Barnabas and Clement, both of them the fellow-labourers of the apostle Paul, in which they once and again refer to the gospels as acknowledged Scripture, and quote from them in the very words which we still find in them; the epistles of Ignatius, who flourished while some of the apostles were still living, and the epistle of Polycarp, who had been taught by the apostles and conversed with many who had seen Christ; in the former of which are various quotations from the gospels, while in the latter, short as it is, there occur no fewer than forty clear allusions to the gospels and the epistles of Paul; the writings of Justin Martyr, who was converted to Christianity before the middle of the second century, which are filled with references to most of the books of the New Testament; then, to omit others of inferior note, we have, still in the second century, the five books of Irenæus against heresies, in which all the historical books and fourteen of the epistles are expressly named and referred to as authorities; and the voluminous works of Tertullian, of which it has been said by a most competent witness, that they contain "perhaps more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than are to be found of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages."<sup>†</sup>

\* Taylor on the transmission of Ancient Works, p. 6. with slight alterations.

† Lardner's Credibility, vol. i. of its edition, or ii. of Eve.