A book is *genuine* when it really is what it professes to be, as the composition of a particular individual, or as produced under particular circumstances, and at a certain place and time ; as opposed to a book which appears under a *forged* title. A book is *credible* when the statements it contains are physically true ; as opposed to a book the contents of which are *false* or *fictitious.* Both these qualitics may meet in the same work, or they may exist separately in separate works. Thus the book of Genesis may be the composition of Moses, and yet be fabulous ; or it may be true in all its statements, and yet not be the work of Moses ; or it may be, as it is generally believed to be, both the production of Moses and true, both genuine and credible.

The genuineness and credibility of the sacred books form matter of separate investigation and proof. At the same time, they are so connected, that the proof of the one paves the way for the proof of the other ; for, in the case of such works, it is highly improbable that truth would be issued under a forged name, or that such men as Moses, Samuel, or the Evangelists, would or could issue fictitious narra­tives as true. It is not, however, matter of indifference which of them we establish first. Before we can set our­selves to prove their credibility, we must be in circumstan­ces to show their genuineness ; for unless we can do this, a preliminary difficulty will lie in the way of the former, from the suspicion that these books appear with a falsehood, or at least what has not been shown to be a truth, upon their front; a work of supposititious authorship being always *prima facie* less credible than one which is the genuine pro­duction of the writer to whom it is ascribed.

The proof of the genuineness of the Sacred Scriptures rests upon the following considerations :

1. There is no antecedent impossibility that they should be genuine. It cannot be showm that it was impossible for Moses to have written the Pentateuch, Isaiah and the other prophets their prophecies, the Evangelists their gospels, the Apostles their epistles, or for the books which are anony­mous to have been composed under the circumstances which they profess ; nor that, being composed, it was impossible for them to have been preserved and handed down from gene­ration to generation.

2. Circumstances were favourable to the preservation of these books, supposing them written. The Old Testament books professedly form the national literature, as well as the sacred documents of the Jews, and would naturally be carefully preserved by them. The New Testament books constitute the religious archives and statute-books of the Christian church, and would from their first publication be sacredly conserved by those for whom they were so deeply interesting.

3. It is matter of undeniable history, that both Jews and Christians did possess certain sacred books, which they re­garded with the utmost reverence, and preserved with the greatest care. The only question, then, is, Are the books which we possess the same as those thus reverenced and preserved ? And, *first,* with respect to those of the Old Testament.

i. These are the books which were recognised in the early church as the sacred books of the Jews. This is placed beyond doubt by the early versions of Scripture, and. by the catalogues of Athanasius, Epiphanius, Jerome, Ori­gen, and Melito bishop of Sardis. Lardner, Works, vol. iv. p. 290, 8vo ed.

ii. The books of the Old Testament which we possess must have been extant *at the commencement* of the Chris­tian era. This is evident from the allusions to them, and the quotations from them, in the New Testament, but es­pecially from the testimony of Philo, an Egyptian Jew, who at the latest was contemporary with the apostles, and also of Josephus, himself a priest of the Jews, and consequently ac­curately informed, on all matters relating to their sacred

books, and who lived in the latter part of the first century of the Christian era. Philo gives no formal catalogue, but quotes from or refers to nearly all the books of the Old Testament, while no other is mentioned by him as of ac­credited authority. Josephus, besides frequent quotations and allusions, gives (C*ont. Apion,* lib. i. c. 8) a catalogue of the sacred books of his nation, assigning five to Moses, thirteen to the prophets, and four to the writers of hymns and moral maxims. This, if we regard Judges and Ruth as one book, and add the Lamentations to the Prophecies of Jeremiah, which there is good reason to believe was the case in the days of Josephus, gives exactly the number of the books now extant.

Scbmidtii *Historia Antiqua et Vindicatio Canonis Sacri Veteris et Novi* *Testamenti,* pp, 129—189, Lips. 1775 ; Ejusdem *Ennarratio sen­tentia Flav. Josepki de libris Vet. Test.* Wittenberg, 1787 ; Hornemannï, *Obss. ad illustrationem Doctrina de Canone Vet. Test, ex Philone,* Hauniæ, 1778 ; Henderson’s Lectures on Inspiration, p. 468, Lond. 1836.

iii. These books must have been written *long before* the Christian era. This is plain from the fact of targums or explanations of them into the Syro-Chaldaic dialect, which was the language of the people, having been made for a long course of years antecedent to the times of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel, by whom they were collected in the form now extant, and who lived probably near the days of our Lord; from the allusions to the sacred books of his nation already quoted from the prologue to the work of Jesus the son of Sirach, which was composed about 230 years b. c.; and from the existence of the Septuagint version, which was at least commenced 280 years b. c.

iv. Under such circumstances, the forgery of these books was morally impossible. If such a thing took place, it must have been during the 140 years which elapsed be­tween the death of Malachi, the last of the prophets, and the execution of the Septuagint version. But, first, it is inconceivable that, in so short a period, and in an age when literature was not a trade, a set of men (for the agency of only one man is out of the question) should have appeared in the land of Judæa, all endowed with genius sufficient to share in the composition of such works, and all infected with the spirit of literary dishonesty, so as to act the part of forgers. Secondly, even supposing such a piece of de­ception attempted, it is inconceivable how it should have succeeded, as, by the holders of this hypothesis, it must be allowed to have done. As the whole nation of the Jews acknowledged these books, we must suppose, either that they were all imposed upon in the matter, or that they all agreed to impose upon the rest of the world. But no in­genuity can suffice to persuade a nation that they have for ages possessed sacred books, when they know they have not ; and a national agreement to sanction a forgery and tell the world a lie, is a hypothesis too extravagant to be for a moment entertained. Thirdly, the opinions expressed in these books, the doctrines taught, and the duties enjoin­ed, are so averse from those most cherished by the Jews at the time the supposed forgery must have taken place, and the facts recorded are so little flattering, upon the whole, to the pride of the nation, that it is quite incredible, either that any should have been found to write them, or that, being written, they should have been received by the people with any other feelings than those of execration and abhorrence. The respect in which they were held can be accounted for only on the principle, that it was rendered to the *venerable antiquity* and *indisputable authority* with which they were invested.

v. The force of this conclusion is heightened by the cir­cumstance, that while all testimony is in favour of the ge­nuineness of these books, not one witness can be produced whose evidence is incompatible with this.

vi. When we apply to the contents of these books such