§1] ITS AUTHORSHIP. [intRopucTION.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 CHAPTER XV.   
   
 THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.   
   
 SECTION I.   
 ITS AUTHORSHIP.   
   
   
   
 1, Tue most proper motto to prefix to this section would be that   
 saying of Origen,   
 “Tf then any church professes this Epistle as being Paul’s, let it   
 have credit for the circumstance : for not in vain have the ancients   
 handed it down as Paul’s ; but who wrote! the Epistle, God alone   
 knows the truth.”   
 2. For these latter words represent the state of our knowledge at   
 this day. There is a certain amount of evidence, both external, from   
 tradition, and internal, from approximation in some points to his   
 acknowledged Epistles, which points to St. Paul as its author. But   
 when we come to examine the former of these, it will be seen that   
 the tradition gives way beneath us in regard of authenticity and trust-   
 worthiness ; and as we scarch into the latter, the points of similavity are   
 overborne by a far greater number of indications of divergence, and   
 of incompatibility, both in style and matter, with the hypothesis of the   
 Pauline authorship.   
 3. There is one circumstance which, though this is the most notable   
 instance of it, is not unfamiliar to the unbiassed conductor of enquiries   
 into the difficulties of Holy Scripture ; viz. that, im modern times at   
 least, most has been taken for granted by those who knew least about   
 the matter, and the strongest assertions always made by men who have   
 never searched into, or have been unable to appreciate, the evidence.   
 Genuine research has led, in almost every instance, to a modified holding,   
 or to an entire rejection, of the Pauline hypothesis.   
 4. It will be my purpose, in the following paragraphs, to deal (follow-   
 ing the steps of many who have gone before me, and more especially of   
 Bleck) with the various hypotheses in order, as to both their external   
 and internal evidence. It will be impossible in citing the external   
 evidence, to keep these hypotheses entirely distinet : that which is cited   
 as against one wil! frequently be for another which is not under treat-   
 ment, and must oc referred back to on reaching that onc.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 1 On the sense of the word wrote, see below, par. 21 and note.   
 Vor, Il. Parr 11.—135 k