§1.] ITS AUTHORSHIP. {inrropuctioy.   
   
   
 Lange’s estimation is that some imitator wrote it, as St. John’s, it may   
 be a century after his time.   
 21. To this Liicke replies that Lange is in fourfold error. For 1,   
 it is not true that the Epistle contains no individual and personal   
 notices. ‘These it is true are rather hinted at and implied than brought   
 to the surface : a characteristic, not only of a catholic epistle as dis-   
 tinguished from one locally addressed, but also of the style of St. John   
 as distinguished from that of St. Paul. As to the fact, the Writer   
 designates himself by implication as an apostle, and seems to allude to   
 his Gospel in ch. i. 1—4: in ch. ii, 1, 18, he implies an intimate rela-   
 tion between himself and his readers : in eh. ii. 12—14, he distinguishes   
 his readers according to their ages : in ch, ii. 18, 19, iv. 1—3, the false   
 teachers are pointed at in a way which shews that both Writer and   
 readers knew more about them: and the warning, ch. v. 21, has a   
 Joeal character, and reminds the readers of something well known to   
 them.   
 22. Secondly, it is entirely denied, as above remarked, that there is   
 the slightest trace of slavish imitation. The Epistle is in no respect   
 the work of an imitator of the Gospel. Such a person would have   
 elaborated every point of similarity, and omitted no notice of the per-   
 sonal and local circumstances of the Apostle: would have probably   
 misunderstood and exaggerated St. John’s peculiarities of style and   
 thonght. All such attempts to put off one man’s writing for that   
 of another carry in them the elements of failure as against a searching   
 criticism. But how different is all we find in this Epistle. By how   
 wide a gap is it separated from the writings of Ignatius, Clement,   
 Barnabas, Polyearp. Apparently close as it is upon them in point of   
 time, what a totally different spirit breathes in it. This Epistle   
 written after them, written among them, would be indeed the rarest of   
 exceptional cases—an unimaginable anachronism, a veritable “ hysteron   
 proteron.”   
 23. Thirdly : it is certainly the strangest criticism, to speak of the   
 weakness of old age in the Epistle. If this could be identified as really   
 being so, it would be the strongest proof of authenticity. For it is   
 altogether inconceivable, that an imitator could have had the power   
 or the purpose to write as John might have written in his old age.   
 But where are the traces of this second childishness ? We are told, in   
 the repetitions, in the want of order, in the uniformity. Certainly   
 there is an appearance of tautology in the style: more perhaps than in   
 the Gospel. Erasmus, in the dedication of his paraphrase of St. John’s   
 Gospel, characterizes the style of the Gospel as a “kind of speech   
 so interwoven as it were with points of connexion mutually cohering,   
 consisting sometimes of contraries, sometimes of things like, sometimes   
 of the same things again repeated,—that each member of the argument   
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