intropuction.] THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREW [ou xv.   
   
 would probably be the Alexandrian, by what we have already seen of   
 the testimonies of Pantwnus and Clement. The words “let it have   
 credit for the circumstance” must be taken as meaning, “I have no   
 wish to deprive it of this its peculiar advantage:” and the ground,   
 “for not in vain have the ancients handed it down as Paul's,” must be   
 his own conviction, that the thoughts of the Epistle proeceded originally   
 from the Apostle. Who “the ancients” were, it is impossible for us to   
 say. Possibly, if we confine our vicw to one chureh, no more than   
 Pantenus, and Clement, and their disciples. One thing is very plain;   
 that they cannot have been men whose tradition satisfied Origen him-   
 self, or he would not have spoken as he has. Be they who they might,   
 one thing is plain; that their tradition is spoken of by him as not in   
 vain, not as resting on external matter of fact, but as finding justifica-   
 tion in the internal eharaeter of the Epistle ; and that it did not   
 extend to the fact of St.Paul having written the Epistle, but only to its   
 being, in some sense, his.   
 21, Thirdly, that the authorship of the Epistle was regarded by Origen   
 as utterly unknown. Thus only can we interpret the words, “but who   
 wrote the Epistle, God only knows the truth.” For that it is in vain to   
 attempt to understand the word wrote of the mere scribe, in the sense   
 of Rom. xvi. 22, is shewn by its use in the same sentence, “ Luke who   
 wrote the Gospel and the Acts.”   
 22. This passage further testifies respecting external tradition, as it   
 had come down to Origen himself. He speaks of “the account which   
 has come down to us :” clearly meaning these words of historical tradi-   
 tion, and thereby by implication excluding from that category tho   
 tradition of the Pauline authorship. And this historieal tradition gaye   
 two views: one, that Clement of Rome was the Writer ; the other, that   
 +St. Luke was the Writer.   
 23, And this last cireumstauee is of importance, as being our only   
 clue out of a difficulty which Bleck has felt, but has not attempted to   
 remove. We find ourselves otherwise in this ambiguity with regard to   
 the origin of one or the other hypothesis, If the Pauline authorship   
 was the original historical tradition, the diffieulties presented by the   
 Epistle itself were sure to have called it in doubt, and suggested the   
 other: if on the other hand the name of any disciple of St. Paul was   
 delivered down by historical tradition as the writer, the apostolicity and   
 Pauline charaeter of the thoughts, coupled with the desire to find a   
 great name for an anonymous Epistle, was sure to have produced, and   
 when produced would casily find acceptance for. the idea that St. Paul   
 was the author. But the fact that Origen speaks of “the account   
 which has come down to us,” not as for, but as against the Pauline   
 hypothesis, seems to shew that the former of these alternatives was   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 really the ease.   
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