§1] AUTHORSHIP AND CANONICITY. [ixtropuction.   
   
 fixed general tradition in tho earliest times. Gradually, tho force and   
 convenience of an illustrious name being attached to the Epistle boro   
 down the doubts originally resting on its authorship, and the Paulino   
 origin becamo overy where acquiesced in. Nothing could bo moro   
 different from tho history of the doubts about the authorship of tho   
 Apocalypse. Here we have a fixed and thoroughly authenticated primi-   
 tive tradition. It comes from men only removed by one step from the   
 Apostle John himself. There is absolutely no objective evidence whatever   
 in favour of any other author. The doubts first originate in considera-   
 tions purely subjective.   
 77. These are divisible into two classes, anti-millennial and critical.   
 Tt was convenient to depreciate the book, on controversial grounds. It   
 was found advisable not to read it in the churches, and to forbid it to   
 the young scholar. And, as matter of fact, thus it was that the doubts   
 about the authorship sprung up. If it countenanced error, if it was   
 not in the canon, if it was not fit to be read, then it could not be the   
 work of the Evangelist and Apostle.   
 78. Again, to the same result contributed the critieal grounds so   
 ably urged by Dionysius of Alexandria, and observed upon above, par.   
 50. I have there remarked, not only how absolutely shadowy and   
 nothing-worth is Dionysius’s “fancy” that John the Presbyter wrote   
 the book, but how this very expression is most valuable, as denoting the   
 entire absence of all objective tradition to that effect in the middle of   
 the third century.   
 79. Thus the doubts grew up, and in certain parts of the church   
 prevailed: the whole process being exactly the converse of that which   
 we traced in our Introduction to the Hebrews.   
 80. And, as far as the force of ancient testimony goes, I submit that   
 our inference also must be a contrary one. The authorship of the book   
 by the Apostle John, as matter of primitive tradition, rests on firm and   
 irrefragable ground. Three other authors are suggested: one, Cerin-   
 thus, by the avowed enemies of the Apocalypse, an assertion which   
 has never found any favour: the second, John the Presbyter, whose   
 existenee seems indeed vouched for by the passage of Papias, but of   
 whom we know nothing whatever, nor have we one particle of evidence   
 to connect him with the authorship of the Apocalypse: and the third,   
 John Mark the Evangelist, who is equally unknown to ancient tradition   
 as its author.   
 81. As far then as purely external evidence goes, I submit that our   
 judgment can only be in one direction: viz. that the Apocalypse was   
 written by the Apostle John, the Son of Zebedee.   
 82. It will now be for us to see how far internal critical considera-   
 tions substantiate or impugn the tradition of the primitive church.   
 83, And in so doing, it will be well for us at once to deal with certain   
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