$1] ITS AUTHORSHIP. {intropuction.   
   
   
 to want clueidation. Jerome asserts, for example, that by all preceding   
 Greek writers the Epistle had been received as St. Paul's ; and yet immo-   
 diately after, he says that most of them think it to be Di rnabas’s or   
 Clement's’: and think it to be of no consequence (whose it is), seeing   
 that it is the production of an “ ecclesiastical author,” and is every day   
 read in the churches. Now thongh these expressions are not very per-   
 spicuons, it is not difficult to see what is meant by them. A general   
 conventional reception of the Epistle as St. Paul’s prevailed among the   
 Grecks. ‘Lo this their writers (without exception according to Jerome :   
 but that is a loose assertion, as the preceding pages will shew) con-   
 formed, still in most cases entertaining their own views as to Barnabas   
 or Clement haying written the Epistle, and thinking it of little moment,   
 sceing that confessedly it was the work of an “ccclesiastical author,”   
 and was stamped with the authority of publie reading in the churehes.   
 The expression “ecclesiastical author” seems to be in contrast to an   
 heretical one,   
 76. The evidence here however on one point is clear enough: and   
 shews that in Jerome’s day, i.e. in the beginning of the fifth century,   
 the custom of the Latins did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews   
 among the canonical Seriptures.   
 77. Jerome’s own view, as faras it can be gathered from this passage,   
 is, that while he wishes to look on the Epistle as decidedly canonical,   
 he does not venture to say who the author was, and believes the question   
 to be immaterial : for we cannot but suppose him, from the very form   
 of the clanse “and that it is of no import §c.,” to be giving to this   
 view his own approbation.   
 78. And consistent with this are many citations’ of the Epistle seat-   
 tered np and down among his works: as, e.g., where le speaks of   
 ‘whoever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews :”—of “ Paul, or some one   
 else who wrote the Epistle ;” and adduces the fact of Paul having   
 written to seven churches, “the eighth, to the Hebrews, being by most   
 excluded trom the number.”   
 79. And as Bleck has very satisfactorily shewn, no difference in time   
 can be established between these testimonies of his, which should prove   
 that he once doubted the Pauline authorship and was afterwards con-   
 vineed, or vice versa. For passages inconsistent with one another oceur   
 in one and the same work, e.g., in the Commentary on Isaiah, in which,   
 notwithstanding that he speaks uncertainly as above, yet he repeatedly   
 cites the Epistle as the work of St. Paul. And these Commentaries on   
 the prophets were among his later works.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 7 By no possible ingenuity ean these words be made to mean, as Dr. Davidson inter-   
 prets them, that “the Grecks ascribed the style and language of it to Barnabas or   
 Clement, though the ideas and sentiments were Paul’s.”   
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