intropucTion.] THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. [en. xv.   
   
 I must own that, in spite of all which has been so ingeniously said by way   
 of explanation by the advocates of the Pauline authorship, the words   
 appear to me quite irreconcileable with that hypothesis.   
 131. To pass by the ancient explanations, which will hardly be   
 adopted in our own day?,—the most prevalent modern one has been,   
 that the Apostle here adopts the figure called condescension, by which a   
 writer or speaker identifies himself with his readers or hearers, even   
 though, as a matter of actual fact, that identification is not borne outstrictly.   
 Such “condescension” is most commonly found in hortatory passages,   
 but is not confined to them. A writer may, for the purpose of his   
 argument, and to carry persuasion, place himself on a level with his   
 readers in respect of matters of history, just as well as of moral con-   
 siderations. The real question for us is, whether this is a case in which   
 such a figure would be likely to be employed.   
 132. And to this the answer must be, it seems to me, unhesitatingly   
 in the negative. That an Apostle, who ever claimed to have reccived   
 the Gospel not from men but from the Lord Himself,—wwho was careful   
 to state that when he met the chief Apostles in council they added   
 nothing to him, should at all, and especially in writing (as the hypo-   
 thesis generally assumes) to the very church where the influence of   
 those other Apostles was at its highest, place himself ona level with   
 their disciples as to the reception of the Gospel from them,—is a sup-   
 position so wholly improbable, that I cannot explain its having been   
 held by so many men of discernment, except on the supposition that   
 their bias towards the Pauline authorship has blinded them to the well-   
 known character and habit of the Apostle.   
 133. And to reply to this, that he thus speaks of himself when his   
 apostolical authority is called in question, as it was in the Galatian   
 church, and partially also in the Corinthian, but does not so where no   
 such slight had been put upon his office, is simply to advance that which   
 is not the fact: for he does the same in an emphatic manner in Eph. iii.   
 2, 3, in which Epistle, to whomsoever addressed, there exist no traces of   
 any rivalship to his own authority being in his view.   
 134. Certain other passages have been adduced as bearing out the   
 idea of the figure of condescension here. But none of them, when fairly   
 considered, really does so. For to take them one by one:—   
 In Eph. ii. Col. i. 12, 18, Tit. iii. 3, there is no such figure, but the   
 Apostle is simply stating the matter of fret, and counts himself to have   
 been one of those spoken of.   
 In 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32, he is asserting that which is true of all Christians   
 equally ; himself, as liable to fall into sin and thus to need chastisement,   
 being included.   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 7 Sce them in the note on this par. in my Greck Test.   
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