§ v1. ] CANONICITY. [intropuction.   
   
 which Erasmus takes, when he says that the “primary Author” is   
 the Iloly Spirit, and so puts by as indifferent the question of the   
 secondary author: thus in both cases resting the decision entircly on the   
 character of the contents of the book itself.   
 23, But this would manifestly be a wrong method of proceeding.   
 We do not thus in the case of other writings, whose unexceptionable   
 evangelic character is universally acknowledged. To say nothing of   
 later productions, no one ever reasoned thus respecting the Epistle of   
 Barnabas, or that of Clement to the Corinthians, or any of the quasi-   
 apostolic writings. None of the ancients ever dealt so before Jerome,   
 nor did Jerome himself in other passages. More than intrinsic excel-   
 lence and orthodoxy is wanting, to win for a book a place in the New Test.   
 canon. Indeed any reasoning must be not only in itself insufficient,   
 but logically unsound, which makes the authority of a book which is to   
 set us our standard of doctrine, the result of a judgment of our own   
 respecting the doctrine inculeated in it. Such judgment can be only   
 subsidiary to the enquiry, not the primary line of its argument, which   
 must of necessity be of an objective character.   
 24, And when we come to proofs of this latter kind, it may well be   
 asked, which of them we are to accept as sufficient. It is clear, we   
 cannot appeal to tradition alone. We must combine with such an   
 appeal, the exercise of our own judgment on tradition. When, for   
 example, the Chureh of England takes, in her sixth article, the ground   
 of pure tradition, and says, “In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do   
 understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of   
 whose authority was never any doubt in the Church,” she would by   
 implication, if consistent with herself, exclude from the Canon at the   
 least the Apotalypse, which was for some centuries not received by the   
 Eastern and for the most part by the Greek church, and our Epistle,   
 which was for some centuries not received by the whole Latin church.   
 Nay, she would go even further than this : for even to the present day   
 the Syrian church excludes the Apocalypse, the Epistles of St. Jude,   
 2and 3 John, and 2 Peter, from the Canon. It is fortunate that our   
 Chureh did not leave this definition to be worked out for itself, but,   
 giving a detailed list of Old Test. books, has appended to it this far more   
 definite sentence: “All the books of the New Testament, as they are   
 commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical :” thus   
 adopting the list of New Test. books in common usage in the Western   
 Church at the time, about whieh there could be no difference.   
 25. If then tradition pure and simple will not suffice for our guide,   
 how are we to combine our judgment with it, so as to arrive at a satis-   
 factory conclusion? It is manifest, that the question of origin comes   
 in here as most important. If the genuineness of a book be in dispute,   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
   
 as e.g. that of 2 Peter, it suffices to make it reasonably probable that   
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