Intropuction.]| THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS. (cu. xy.   
   
 it was written by him whose name it bears. When this is received,   
 all question of canonicity is at rest. In that case, the name of the   
 Apostle is ample guarantee. And so with our Epistle, those who think   
 they can prove it to be the work of St. Paul, are no longer troubled   
 about its canonicity. This is secured, in shewing it to be of apostolic   
 origin.   
 26. And so it ever was in the early Church. Apostolicity and   
 Canonicity were bound together. And in the case of those historical   
 books which were not written by apostles themselves, there was ever an   
 effort to connect their writers, St. Mark with St. Peter, St. Luke with   
 St. Paul, so that at least apostolic sanction might not be wanting to   
 them. What then must be our course with regard to a book, of which   
 we believe neither that it was written by an Apostle, nor that it had   
 apostolic sanction ?   
 27. This question must necessarily lead to an answer not partaking   
 of that rigid demonstrative character which some reasoners require for   
 all inferences regarding the authority of Scripture. Our conclusion   
 must be matter of moral evidence, and of degree: must be cumulative,   
 —made up of elements which are not, taken by themselves, decisive,   
 but which, taken together, are sufficient to convince the reasonable   
 mind. ,   
 28, First, we have reason to believe that our Epistle was written by   
 one who lived and worked in close union with the Apostle Paul : of   
 whom that Apostle says that he “planted, and Apollos watered, and   
 God gave the increase :” of whom it is elsewhere in holy writ declared,   
 that he was “an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures:” that he   
 “helped much them which had believed through grace:” that he   
 “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing“by the Scrip-   
 tures that Jesus was Christ.”   
 29. Secondly, having, as we believe, from his pen such an Epistle,   
 we find it largely quoted by one who was himself a companion of the   
 Apostles,—and almost without question appealed to as Scripture by   
 another primitive Christian writer: and both these testimonies belong   
 to that very early age of the Church, when controversies about canoni-   
 city had not yet begun.   
 30. Thirdly, in the subsequent history of the Church, we find the   
 reception of the Epistle into the Canon becoming ever more and more   
 a matter of common consent: mainly, no doubt, in connexion with the   
 hypothesis of its Pauline authorship, but, as we have shewn above, not   
 in all cases in that connexion.   
 31. Fourthly, we cannot refuse the conviction, that the contents of   
 the Epistle itself are such, as powerfully to come in aid of these other   
 considerations, Unavailing as such a conviction would be of itself, as   
 has been previously noticed, yet it is no small confirmation of the   
 206