

In the two epistles on the other hand the description of the writer is too vague for us to build almost any conclusion on it. He speaks of himself simply as "the elder." They are virtually anonymous, and their Johannine origin rests on the testimony of the second century supported by the similarity of the style to John's other writings. In spite of some apparent hesitation in the early Church as to their recognition the evidence in favour of the traditional view is quite strong enough to warrant its acceptance.

Among Old Testament books I have placed the book of Nehemiah in this category, though it opens with the declaration that these are "the words of Nehemiah the Son of Hachaliah." This is not strictly speaking ambiguous, nor is there any good reason to question its accuracy. But in view of the marked change in the style when the story of Nehemiah's own work is completed it seems simpler to suppose that it applies only to that portion of the narrative, and that Ezra or some other writer incorporated in his work this memoir by Nehemiah, giving him full credit therefor in this form. Of course it might be explained also on the supposition that Nehemiah incorporated an original narrative by Ezra. But the other view is more in accordance with the position of Ezra as the scribe of the restoration period, while Nehemiah was rather its statesman. The question is one of little importance, however, as on either view the work would still be a contemporary one.

The case of Ecclesiastes is not so easily disposed of, but the difficulty is not quite so serious as it is sometimes made to appear. It represents itself as "the words of the Preacher, Son of David, King in Jerusalem." Knowing that Solomon had literary tastes one naturally thinks of him as the person obviously intended; and as it seemed to be supported by the correspondence between the experiences therein related and the known facts of Solomon's life, it is not surprising that he should have been commonly accepted both in ancient and modern times as the writer. Modern criticism, however, asserts that it is post-exilic from its style and language. The critics may yet prove to be wrong as they have been wrong before, but the question can hardly be closed as is sometimes done by an *ad captandum* appeal to the heading. The traditional interpretation of it, natural enough in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, is not required by anything in the book itself, nor is it the only interpretation. The work has neither historical nor prophetic character that would be enhanced in value by an early date or