

drawn without perspective, but as paintings true to nature and coloured to life, having depth as well as breadth and background as well as foreground. Schleiermacher and Ewald, Bauer and Strauss and Renan, Kuenen and Wellhausen, have not given us the truth, but they have helped to take away the veil from our eyes, so that we might the more easily see it for ourselves. With all the aberrations of criticism, no honest lover of Scripture would blot out the past century of its work, even if he could. But to proceed.

I believe it to be one of the certain conclusions of criticism that those books of the Bible which contain clear statements as to their authorship, were in every case written by the persons to whom they are distinctly credited. The first place to which we naturally go in order to get information about the origin and aim of any literary work is the book itself, and unless it be fiction or satire, so that the writer has an object in concealing his identity, we expect a book to tell the truth about itself, whatever value it may have otherwise. In so far then as the books of Scripture do make such statements about themselves there would seem to be no good reason why they should not be taken without serious question ; all the more when it is borne in mind that very many of them are of an official or semi-official character and, therefore, likely at once to challenge close scrutiny by contemporaries. It is hard to conceive, for example, how any one could successfully palm off on the Church, as a letter from Paul, something he never wrote, at least while any of his own time were still alive. It would at once provoke enquiry ; enquiry could hardly fail to lead to detection and rejection. At any later time the difficulty would be increased rather than diminished, unless it can be supposed that the whole body of the Church had some sinister design in common with the forger.

As against this it is not enough to point to the frequent use of pseudonyms in all literature and to the special practice among orientals of adopting as pseudonyms the names of well known persons of historical eminence, even though that practice does seem to have been more affected in religious compositions than in any other ; for the only clear cases of this are among apocryphal books never received as canonical. And one of the obvious reasons for their exclusion from the canon would seem to have been just this very fact that they were pseudonymous. Many critics seem to proceed upon the assumption that there was no such thing as intelligent criticism in the Church previous to the present century. But this is utterly