

profoundly the paralyzing effect upon the moral forces of Christianity which our divisions inevitably produce, and we recognise, with the fullest conviction, that it is the duty of all Christians who desire in this respect the fulfilment of the Divine purpose to give themselves to penitence and prayer—to penitence, because we have all, in various ways, as bodies and as individuals, contributed to produce and perpetuate differences; and to prayer because what we all alike need is that God should open our minds and hearts to receive without prejudice the gradual revelation of His will as to the ways by which we are to be drawn together.

Our Whit Sunday could not be more appropriately spent than in waiting upon God on the lines of this appeal. The answer seems far away at present, but it may well be nearer than we dream.



Author and "Writer"—Thoughts on a Problem of New Testament Authorship.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

I AM myself a stay-at-home as regards Christian labour; my nearly thirty-nine years of ministry have been spent altogether in this country. But I have two brothers and many younger relatives engaged in missionary service in China. Of my brothers, one is the veteran Archdeacon at Ningpo; the other, after prolonged previous service, has been for now twenty-five years Bishop in charge of our Church missions in Mid-China—that is to say, upon the coast and far into the Hinterland midway along the Chinese seaboard. In many and various respects I have been thus, for now very many years, brought into contact with Chinese missionary work in a close and personal way. Amongst other things, my brothers' methods of communication with their scattered missions, and the ways in which the ever-present problem of the language is dealt with—that language which in its *literary* form makes, I should suppose, one of the most trying difficulties in missionary enterprise anywhere, so recondite are the rules of style, so elaborate the vocabulary—have been constantly kept before my mind.

I remember once talking over with a younger relative from China the work and function of the person who is commonly, though not very happily, called the missionary's "teacher"—that is to say, the native scholar, the skilled expert in classical Chinese, whom not only at first, but often to the very end of a long life, the missionary keeps beside him to emend and verify his writing. I dislike the term "teacher," which seems out of place when the work demanded is not so much instructional as supplementary, and is done for a man who may himself have long acquired a genuine mastery of the language and its literature, but who knows, however, that no accuracy and verbal tact can be too great in the composition, for instance, of "epistles" to distant stations, meant to deal with difficult questions. But the term matters little. Let us call him, as some missionaries do, the "writer." His business is to be his Western employer's walking guarantee for accurate and suitable Chinese when he writes his more deliberate missives to his people.

I asked my nephew how precisely such a "writer" would work, for I was still ignorant of particulars. Would he, like a composition-master at school with a promising classical pupil, "look over" the missionary's letter, and correct a word here and emend a turn of expression there, leaving the bulk of the work untouched? No, I was told; the "writer" would do a more *complete* piece of work than this. The missionary, perhaps the Bishop, would write down the substance of his message carefully and fully in his own Chinese. Then the "writer," after reading this over, and talking it over, would draft the material afresh into the correct classical phraseology, making it in this respect all his own. His production, of course, would be carefully read by the competent eyes of the missionary, and would finally be *passed* (probably with some necessary revisions) as his own authentic message to the converts and the pastors far away.

The "writer" would necessarily have a style of his own, showing the nuances due to his personal literary taste and tact.

And, of course, if one such helper should die (the Bishop in Mid-China did thus lose his long-valued "writer" a few months ago), or if he should resign, another scholar would have to take his place, and the same missionary, with the same mind, would very likely be sending out his next (and equally authentic) message in a style more or less different—a different dress, though covering the same wearer. The original matter would be the missionary's altogether, as before. The expression of that matter would all have passed under his eye as before, and would all have received his final approval as the true interpretation of his own thought sent to the Church direct from him; but it would show a more or less altered style.

It occurred to me, on thinking over this account of the preparation of "epistles" in China to-day, that the process described might throw light on one interesting and somewhat perplexing phenomenon of Scripture, the difference in style between the two Epistles of St. Peter. Say what we will by way of minimizing that difference, the two letters do curiously vary in both vocabulary and phrasing, even if we put aside (for our purpose of comparison) the bulk of that second chapter of the Second Epistle, which looks so much as if the writer were incorporating matter from elsewhere—matter incorporated also with variations by St. Jude. The Greek of the First Epistle is of its sort pure and beautiful. The Greek of the Second Epistle is often singularly laboured in construction, and its vocabulary presents many instances of the use of out-of-the-way words where we should expect a much more current and familiar diction. Dr. E. A. Abbott has—not very wisely, I must think, and not very reverently—compared the style to "Baboo-English." I deeply resent the comparison, as to its spirit; but there is just enough of the *vraisemblable* in it to convey to the general reader an *impression* of the peculiar type of the phraseology, and to illustrate the marked difference in the styles of the two Epistles.

I may refer for a masterly and detailed discussion of the genuineness of 2 Peter to Dr. Salmon's "Introduction to the

New Testament," Lecture XXV. As everywhere in that remarkable book—a timely book for reading just now, when destructive (and most subjective) criticism of the New Testament is rife again amongst us—the combination of massive knowledge, cogent reasoning, and (in proper places) truest Irish humour, makes the perusal of the lecture equally informing and delightful.

Now, is it not at least possible that St. Peter, in his epistolary labour as an Apostle, used a "writer"? I take it as almost certain that he did so. The Pentecostal gift must not be minimized. But its precise relation to the common workings of the sanctified mind is at least an obscure question, and I for one cannot think it likely that this relation was such as to make it needless for an inspired Apostle, sending a deliberate message to the missionary Churches, to take care about his diction, and to get help for the purpose.

I am well aware that it is an arguable question whether the Lord and the Apostles habitually talked Aramaic or Greek, and I have not forgotten Dr. Alexander Roberts' able argument, published thirty years ago in his "Studies in the Gospels," in favour of their habitual use of Greek. But I cannot but think that the broad probabilities are for Aramaic. And in any case I find it hard to believe that "the pilot of the Galilean lake" would *write* Greek with great ease at any time of his life.

Well, then, would he not use a "writer"? And would not the style of that "writer" be the style which we find stamped upon the actual phrasing of St. Peter's letters? If so, then the First Epistle might have passed through the hands of one "writer," a master of composition, and the Second Epistle might have had to be prepared with the help of one who could only use a comparatively "prentice hand."

Both Epistles would thus be equally St. Peter's. Both would rightly claim to be trusted absolutely as his message from the Lord. Yet they would show broad differences of style, differences, on this theory, easy to explain.

The suggestion may be carried further. The frequently

exquisite elegance of the Greek of St. James must be noted by every reader of the Greek of his Epistle. Yet St. James was the "son," in some sense, of the carpenter's cottage at Nazareth. But the literary beauty of his Greek is no serious literary difficulty if we assume, as we surely may, that he too had the expert aid of a "writer," probably his convert and intimate friend.

May I venture to go a step further still? The mental versatility of St. Paul was wellnigh unlimited, and he certainly needed, ordinarily, for his Greek no "writer" in the sense in which his Galilean brethren may so well have done. But even he may have felt that, for a peculiar purpose, in quarters where he wished his personality to lie in the background, he would do well to use some such aid. Might he not, in such a case, write down his matter and argument in his own style first, and then give it to a friend, perhaps to a St. Luke, to mould it and phrase it *de novo* in his own way? The Apostle would then revise the composition, and then at length *pass* it for issue to the Churches. Is it impossible that such was the *genesis* of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Here, in a sort of work akin to that of the "writer," may lie the solution of that great problem of its literary history, the problem of its *style*, which made Origen say (with reference precisely to the diction, if I remember right), *τίς ὁ γράψας τὴν ἐπιστολήν, Θεὸς οἶδεν.*

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Barnabas.¹

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF DERRY AND RAPHOE.

"FOR he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts xi. 24). This "good man" was Barnabas. We know a good deal about him. He has an important place in the early history of the Church. But there is not in the

¹ A sermon preached in the Cathedral Church, Londonderry, November 12, 1905.