

*THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.*

III. WAS THE AUTHOR ST. PETER?

HAVING attempted to prove that the Author of the Second Epistle of St. Peter had read and used the works of Philo and Josephus, the Epistle of St. Jude and the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians—and we have his own avowal that he had read “all epistles” (iii. 16) known by him to have proceeded from St. Paul—we proceed to examine his style when he writes in his own person.

Its most noticeable feature is tautology; by which, however, we do not mean the mere repetition of the same word or phrase to express the same thing. Euclid is not tautological, although he repeats “straight lines,” “angles,” and “triangles,” a dozen times in a page; but a writer who should twice on the same page describe the dead as “swept into the interminable azure of the past,” would be decidedly tautological. For a thought of this impassioned kind ought not to occur twice to a speaker or writer in precisely the same way, unless he is extremely insusceptible of those slight variations of emotion which furnish a natural variety to passionate speech. To repeat a phrase like “the interminable azure of the past” would be in as bad taste as to repeat an epigram or witticism. Tautology, in this sense, is a common fault in barren writers, and still more in barren speakers, of their native tongue, who feel obliged to go on writing or speaking though they have nothing more to say, and who consequently fall back upon the repetition of what they have already said; but it is also characteristic of a “fine writer,” composing in a language not his own, who, owing to the paucity of his vocabulary, is glad to make the most of the handsome phrases which he has accumulated, and having found a new bright patch must needs insert it twice or thrice

before he can bring himself to let it go. Of this "true tautology" few better specimens will be found than the following product from the pen of a native of India, assaying the "fine style" in English composition. The passage will be found in a number of the *Madras Mail*, dated shortly after Lord Hobart's death, and it is entitled "A native estimate of Lord Hobart." :—

"The not uncommon (*a, 1*) *hand of death* has distilled with febrile wings from amongst a *débris* of bereaved relatives, friends, and submissive subjects into (*b, 1*) *the interminable azure of the past*, an unexceptionably finished politician and philanthropist of the highest specific gravity, who, only a few days ago, represented our Most Gracious Majesty the Queen in this Presidency.

"The (*a, 2*) *hand of destiny* has willed that he should be carried into the infinite (*b, 2*) *azure of the past*, when the (*c, 1*) *incipient buds* and (*d, 1*) *symptoms* of his fostered love and hope for the (*e, 1*) *Oriental* element were observed to be gradually blossoming. The (*e, 2*) *Oriental mind* was just in the (*c, 2*) *incipient* stage of appreciating his noble mental and moral qualities, and consequently can only confine itself to a prediction of what his indefatigable zeal would have achieved for it, had he remained within the category of the 'survival of the fittest.'

"Under the auspices of his (*f, 1*) *limited reign*, the (*e, 3*) *Oriental mind* has been relieved of the traditional incubi, to wit, the entire concentration and bestowal of favour upon the favoured race in the struggle for life. The picture of his elaborate peroration at the Presidency College prior to his (*g, 1*) *demise*, shewed the due development of his undeniable partiality, and his broad and liberal views regarding the education of the subordinate races. The (*h, 1*) *native mind* is perfectly satisfied that had he lived, he would have reduced these theoretical sentiments to practice; but, as ill luck would have it, we will have to look to his future successor for the due execution of the same.

"It is futile for the (*h, 2*) *native mind* to ventilate anything relative to Lord Hobart's refined culture and unobtrusive character, as a versatile *littérateur* in public, and his amiable and self-denying philanthropy in private life, which will leave their (*i, 1*) *indelible* traces behind. Suffice to say that his (*f, 2*) *limited reign* and spasmodic (*g, 2*) *demise* has completely clouded the promising sun-

shine of (e, 4) *Oriental* bliss. His sudden loss is sincerely bemoaned by the native community in general, and the Mahomedans in particular, who can humbly offer the exclusive consolation to his bereaved lady by asserting that the (d, 2) *symptoms* of (e, 5) *Oriental* love he kept in the back-ground and incidentally ejaculated in their favour, will for ever leave an (i, 2) *indelible* mark of respect for his loved name, and which will remain a home word, saturating the dwellings of the (h, 3) *native* community, from the lowest hearth to the highly organized home!"

In order to appreciate the resemblance between this Indian-English and the style of the Second Epistle, we must bear in mind that some of the words employed by the Author of the latter, are very rare in Greek literature; and others, though good classical Greek in themselves, are rare or non-existent in the New Testament. Although, therefore, these words are capable of being rendered into very simple English, yet their use, and still more their repetition, in this epistle would induce a Greek reader to form about it the same judgment that we naturally form about the "Native Estimate"; there is no style, no naturalness in either, nothing but a barbarous medley of words. For example, in the following extract, the word *δελεάζειν* to *set baits to catch*, is only once elsewhere used in the New Testament, the phrase *μισθον ἀδικίας*, *wages of iniquity* is also but once used, namely, in the Acts (i. 18), in a speech of St. Peter, whence it has been probably borrowed by our Author; moreover the words *ἀστήρικτοι*, *unconfirmed*; *ἐξακολουθεῖν*, *follow after*; *ἠτῆσθαι*, *to be defeated*; *φθέγγομαι*, *I utter a sound*; *ἔλεγξις*, *a refutation*; *ἀποφύγειν*, *to flee away from*; and *παρανομία*, *law-breaking*, are not used at all in the New Testament; and the word *παραφρονία* (of which Wahl produces no other instance in Greek literature) is probably bad Greek for *παραφροσύνη*, as bad as the Indian-English quoted below, "sickish-ness" for "sickness." Keeping these considerations in

mind we shall perceive in the following extract from the Epistle (2 Peter ii. 14-20), the same artificial repetition of fine words which met us in the "Native Estimate," although the difficulty of representing the grandiloquence and verbosity of the Greek in an English translation somewhat diminishes the effect of the iteration:—

"(a, 1) *Setting baits to catch souls* (b, 1) *unconfirmed*" (rep. iii. 16), "having a heart practised of" (a rare and pedantic use of the gen.), "greediness, and children of curse, having left the straight way, they went astray *having followed after*" (used twice above, i. 16, ii. 2, not in New Testament) "the way of Balaam the son of Bosor who loved *the wages of iniquity*" (rep. from ii. 13) "but had the *refutation* of his own<sup>1</sup> *law-breaking*; a dumb beast of burden with the voice of a man (c, 1) *uttering a sound*, hindered the *maddishness* of the prophet. . . . For (c, 2) *uttering sounds* of swelling things<sup>2</sup> of vanity, in the lusts of the flesh by wanton acts they (a, 2) *set baits to catch* those who are *in the least*<sup>3</sup> (d, 1) *fleeing away from* those who are spending their life in error; promising them freedom, being themselves slaves of corruption—for one is enslaved by that by which one is defeated. For if (d, 2) *having fled away from* the pollutions of the world by the *recognition*" (rep. above i. 2, 3, 8, but the word is common in St. Paul's Epistles) "of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but afterwards having been entangled in these things they are (e, 2) *defeated*, their last state is worse than the first."

The whole Epistle abounds with iteration of this kind, mostly repeating words unknown or rare in the New Testament, such as *δαροῦμαι*, *θεῖος*, *ταχινός*, etc.; but one more specimen must suffice (iii. 10-12):—

<sup>1</sup> The word *ἴδιος*, *private*, ought not to be used where there is no antithesis between what is one's own and another's; but the author is so fond of the abuse of this word that even in quoting Proverbs xxvi. 11 he substitutes *ἴδιαν* for the LXX. *ἐαυτοῦ* (ii. 22; comp. iii. 3, 16, 17).

<sup>2</sup> The use of *ὑπέρογκα*, without the article, yet followed by a genitive, is bad Greek; and the bad English is intended to point to that defect.

<sup>3</sup> The word *ὀλίγως* is rare, and mostly used in the phrase *οὐκ ὀλίγως*, *in no slight degree*, like our "not in the least." It probably means here "to some small extent."

“But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief wherein the heavens *with a whirr*<sup>1</sup> shall pass away and (a, 1) *elements*<sup>2</sup> (b, 1) *in fever heat* (c, 1) *shall be dissolved*, and earth and things wrought thereon shall be burned up. These things being thus (c, 2) *to be dissolved*, what manner of men should we be in holy *livings*<sup>3</sup> and *pieties*,<sup>3</sup> *having expectation of*” (rep. twice iii. 13, 14) “and *accelerating*<sup>3</sup> the presence of the *day of God*” (not elsewhere in New Testament), “whereby *heavens*<sup>2</sup> being inflamed (c, 3) *shall be dissolved* and (a, 3) *elements*<sup>2</sup> (b, 2) *in fever heat* are to be melted.”

In this last passage the Greek is bad; but the thought is obviously more to blame than the Greek. A writer of any simplicity and force, after describing the “day of the Lord,” and the impending destruction of the elements, would naturally pass to his conclusion: “These things being thus to be dissolved, what manner of men ought we to be expecting and accelerating that Day?” But the Author cannot resist the temptation of repeating, almost verbatim, his description of the Day, the “dissolution” of the heavens, and the “fever heat” of the elements. This is a perfect specimen of that inane repetition into which a shallow writer sometimes falls when he feels that he has not said what he should have said, and writes on without knowing what more he wants to say.

We pass next to another peculiarity of our Author—his love of words uncommon and, in some cases, not known to exist in Greek literature. It may seem at first sight that this predilection stamps him as a native Greek; for who but a native would venture to coin words of his own, or even to use such rare words as might expose the writer to the charge of being unintelligible? But

<sup>1</sup> This rare word is explained by Hesychius as *σφόδρα ἤχητικόν* “extremely noisy.”

<sup>2</sup> The omission of the article before *στοιχεῖα* and before the *Nominative* of *οὐρανοί* is unique in New Testament; even if the second *οὐρανοί* is intended to be a quotation of the first, the omission of the article is extremely harsh.

<sup>3</sup> The plural of these words is not found elsewhere in the New Testament; nor is *σπεύδεν* found elsewhere in the sense “accelerate.”

this is not so. A foreigner writing in the "fine style" is quite capable of the crime of pedantry in the highest degree; and although it may be rare for a European to coin words in a language which he has picked up orally, the following extract from a Bengalee author will shew that innovations of this sort are very natural for one who has acquired a language in great measure by reading, and who is fond of airing the varied treasures of his vocabulary. The extract, taken from a life of Mr. Justice Onocool Chunder Mookerjee, will be found in the *Indian Observer*, 27th Dec. 1873:—

"He had one and uniform way of speaking. He made no *gairish* of words. He was an eloquent speaker, but he made no raree show of it. Never he counterchanged strong words with the pleaders of the other party. His temper was never *incalescent* or hazy. He well understood the interest of his client and never ceased to tussle for it till he was flushed with success.

"Having first expounded before the Court the anatomy of his case, he then launched out in the relative position of his client with that of the other, pointing out the *quiproquo*, or bolstering up the decision of the Lower Court with his sapience and legal acumen, and *cognoscence*, waiting with quietude to see which side the Court takes in favourable consideration, knuckling to the arguments of the Court, and then *inducing* it gradually to his favour. Justice Mookerjee very well understood the *boot*<sup>1</sup> of his client, for which he would carry a logomachy, as if his wheel of fortune depended upon it, and even more than that. He was seen sometimes to argue a case continually for many a day, which more than amply repaid the remuneration given to him. For this reason he was the only wished-for pleader, or magnet, for the last five years of his stay in the native Bar of the High Court. On *multitudinous*<sup>2</sup> occasions, when the hope and affiance of the clients of Justice Mookerjee *toto celo suspended* on his pleading, and he was absent from court on

<sup>1</sup> The writer probably borrowed this word from Shakespeare, where it is used for "profit"; but no Elizabethan author would use the word thus in the present context.

<sup>2</sup> Compare for this word (but not for the spelling) *Macbeth*, II. ii. 62.

account of some *sickishness*, he even on such a day came and pleaded their causes, when they importuned him to do so."

Exactly parallel to "gairish," "cognoscence" and "sickishness" are (as we shall now attempt to shew) the words *κυλισμόν* (ii. 22), *ἑξέραμα* (*ib.*), *παραφρονία* (ii. 16), *ταρταρώσας* (ii. 2), *καυσούμενα* (iii. 10). Moreover the idiomatic blunders, "induce to his favour," and "their hope suspended *toto cælo* on his pleading," may be fairly matched with the corresponding blunders, *μνήμην ποιείσθαι* (i. 15), *σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες* (i. 5), the omission of the article (ii. 8, so Westcott and Hort; iii. 10 and 12), and the use of *ὄγδος* (ii. 5). As for the misuse of *βλέμμα* (ii. 8), it can be matched with none of the errors in the above extract, and to do it justice we must go to another passage of the Bengalee writer in which he describes Mr. Justice Mookerjee as "remaining *sotto voce* till half-past four in the evening."

The difficulty which always attends the attempt to prove a negative is even greater than usual when the negation denies the existence of a word. But the labours of multitudes of scholars who have ransacked the literature of Greece to illustrate the vocabulary of the New Testament will go far to help us; and if it should be urged that one or two words, supposed to be non-existent in Greek, may hereafter be proved to exist in some hitherto undiscovered author, or may be found passed over in some neglected corner of an author already known, the reply will be scarcely less forcible than before, that an author who, in a letter scarcely longer than those we are in the habit of sending by the penny post, inserts even two or three words so rare that they have not yet been met with in Greek literature, is very little less guilty of pedantry than if the words had been actually non-existent. Let it be added here that all these pedantical words

quoted above are in passages where the Author deviates from Jude, and appears to be writing in his own character. While he is imitating Jude, or Philo, or Josephus, or Clemens Romanus, or the Acts of the Apostles, he is comparatively simple; but in the brief intervals where he is imitating no one, he reveals his true nature and shines forth, not as one of the Apostles of Christ who had received from their Master the precept, "Be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak," but as a collector and stitcher of antiquarian word-scrap.

One passage of the Epistle more especially enables us to discern the Author's fondness for out-of-the-way words, because it exhibits him in the act of substituting (in a quotation) an uncommon for a common expression. We shewed above that he alters Jude's "clouds" into the rarer "mists," and Jude's "winds" into "blast." But these changes are not so significant as his improvement on Proverbs xxvi. 11, "as the dog when it approaches to its own vomit." For the word "vomit," he substitutes the word ἐξέραμα ("hardly to be found elsewhere," Alford, but found by Wahl in *Dioscorid.*, vi. 19), a technical term of medicine derived from ἐξεράω "to evacuate by purge or vomit," so that the passage may be rendered "The dog having returned to its own *evacuation*." Further he supplements this quotation by a reference to a sow returning to its wallowing; and here he introduces a word (κυλισμόν) which is not recognized by Liddell and Scott, and the rarity of which was such a stumbling block to the scribes that some MSS. alter it into κύλισμα<sup>1</sup>; but κυλισμόν is retained by the best MSS. and by Westcott and Hort. It may be rendered "wallowance." He also uses about the sow a word generally restricted to human beings, "having

<sup>1</sup> Wahl gives no other instance of κυλισμός; but it occurs in the version of Proverbs ii. 18 by Theodotion, which, having been written in the earlier part of the second century after Christ, may very well have been known to the Author.



washed herself or bathed." The whole passage will then run thus:—"The dog having returned to his own *evacuation*, and the sow, *having bathed*, to her *wallowance*."

Wahl gives no other instance of *παραφρονία* (ii. 16), which may be rendered "maddishness" (like "sickishness" in the Bengalee extract); and for the word *καυσούμενα* (iii. 10) "in fever-heat," no authority is quoted earlier than Dioscorides, who flourished about 60 A.D., and whose works would not probably have been well known for some years after that date.<sup>1</sup> Another word, not known to occur elsewhere in Greek literature, is *ταρταρώσας* (ii. 4). Even in its noun form, the heathen term "Tartarus" is not found in the Old or New Testament, and is as alien to both as the expression "divine nature" (i. 4); but the verb formed from this noun is not only stamped with heathen associations, but is also almost as uncouth as it would be in English to speak of "belling" some one, instead of "sending him to hell." In the same context occurs the curious word *σειροῖς*. Both Varro and Curtius recognize the word (see Alberti's *Hesychius*, sub. v. *σειροῖς*) as meaning "corn pits," in which sense it is employed by Euripides and Demosthenes (*Curtius*, vii. 4, "*siros* vocabant barbari quos ita sollerter abscondunt ut nisi qui defoderunt, invenire non possint. In iis conditæ fruges erant"; and Varro says they were in use in Thrace and Cappadocia); and though Hesychius himself (sub. v. *σιροῖς*) recognizes a secondary meaning, "prison," and tells us that the Laconians had a word *σιπία* which meant "safe-keeping," yet it would seem that the word would (to a well-educated Greek) convey rather the meaning of "store-pit." Consequently we are led to the following rendering of ii. 4: "If God spared

<sup>1</sup> It is remarkable that two words so rare as *καυσούμενα* and *ἐξέραμα* should occur in this Epistle and in no other author (so far as has been ascertained) earlier than Dioscorides, and that a third word, *κυλισμόν*, should not be found earlier than the second century after Christ.

not angels when they sinned, but, having *helled* them, delivered them to *store-pits* of darkness."

Again, our Author uses the word *βλέμμα* (ii. 8) for "the sense of sight." But in ordinary Greek, both in Demosthenes and Aristotle, and even in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (p. 132, ed. Sinker) the word means "glance," "look," "expression of the eyes." Also in the same passage the article (which, we have seen, was irregularly omitted before *στοιχεῖα* and *οὐράνοι*, in ii. 7) is omitted before *δίκαιος*. The omission naturally caused a difficulty to the scribes, some of whom have inserted it; but it is rejected by Westcott and Hort. Yet the word "just" is obviously intended here for a pronominal epithet; nor has any one (as far as I know) attempted to justify the Author's grammar by rendering it adverbially "dwelling justly." We are therefore driven to the conclusion that it is an error, "just one" being written for "the just one." Lastly, in ii. 5, the author has placed "eighth *before* instead of *after* Noah, in a manner for which no authority has been alleged from Greek writers, and it is probably as irregular as to say in English "eighth Noah" for "Noah, the eighth," or for "Noah with seven others." Collecting the errors of this passage, we have, "He preserved *eighth Noah* . . . and delivered just Lot; for *just one*, dwelling among them, *by the expression of his eyes* and by hearing, vexed his just soul." This cluster of solecisms is surely not much less striking, even to an English ear, than the errors of the Bengalee fine writer quoted above.

Next, as regards idioms, the Author uses (i. 15) *μνήμην ποιῆσθαι* for "entertain recollection"; but it is used to mean "make mention," and it is not known ever to be used in the Author's sense (*Thuc.* ii. 54 is ambiguous). Still more objectionable is (i. 5) *σπουδῆν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες*. Josephus, it is true, and Diodorus Siculus, use *σπουδῆν*

εἰσφέρειν, and rightly enough, for “contribute zeal”; but the sonorous extra syllable added by our Author makes nonsense of the phrase, by converting it into “contribute all zeal in an indirect manner”; or, “as a secondary or subsequent consideration.” Why should our Author here go so perversely and superfluously astray? Was it because the longer word was the more grandiose? Partly; but there was another reason. In the parallel passage of St. Jude, close to the words “all zeal,” comes a compound verb with *this same combination of prepositions*, παρεῖσ-εδύσαν; and it is the sound of this verb which probably induced our copyist to insert a παρεῖσ—where it has no meaning. Lastly, in i. 12, the author uses μελλήσω (supposing that the reading of Westcott and Hort is correct) for “I shall be sure.” Now with the second person this meaning is possible (as in Matt. xxiv. 6, “You will be sure to hear of wars”); but in the first person it is probably unknown, in this sense. Add as a specimen of bathos (i. 9): “he is blind, *short-sighted.*”<sup>1</sup>

Summing up, and endeavouring to represent in English the errors mentioned in this paragraph we have the following:—“Take care to *introduce as an appendage* all zeal. . . . He that lacketh these things is *blind* (and in fact) *short-sighted*. Wherefore I *shall be destined* to put you in remembrance of these things that ye may be able to *make the recollection* of them.”

Let it be clearly understood that we do not ground our objections to the genuineness of the Epistle on its bad Greek. The Apocalypse violates Greek syntax more glaringly; the Gospels contain more copious Hebraisms; but verbal and grammatical errors are not inconsistent with

<sup>1</sup> The attempt to shew that μωπάξω means “wilfully to shut one’s eyes,” is not justified by Hesychius, and it is contrary to the express definition of μωπάξω by Aristotle. Even were it proved that some obscure author had thus misused the word, that would only shew that our Author had a companion in his ignorance of Greek.

apostolic authorship. It is by vulgar pomposity, verbose pedantry, and barren plagiarism that this document is distinguishable from every other book of the New Testament.

It remains briefly to vindicate the Author of the First Epistle of St. Peter from having written the Second; and here we must touch on the theory that the differences in style between the two Epistles may arise from the fact that the Second Epistle was a translation, or that, as St. Jerome says, the Author "used different interpreters." Now a translator or interpreter might undoubtedly tinge with pedantry a simple and natural Aramaic original by inserting uncommon words, and he might also commit idiomatic blunders for which the original would not be responsible; but there are in this Epistle *faults of thought* for which no mere translator can be held responsible. For example, such tautology as we have indicated above, could not have been inserted in the course of a translation. Again (on the supposition that the Aramaic writer did not copy others) the translator of the Aramaic Epistle would find it impossible to copy (as our Author has copied) Jude, Josephus, Philo, and probably Clement. Imagine an English translator of the Second Epistle ordered to write a translation of it which should contain large extracts from the Epistle of St. James, and groups of words, and a thought or two, from Clarendon, Bishop Butler, and Burke; and we shall form some conception of the difficulty involved in the supposition that the patchwork style of the Second Epistle may be a mere fault of the Greek translator, for which the original Aramaic may not have been responsible. Besides, it may be shewn from other considerations that no "difference of interpreters" could account for the difference between the two Epistles. Besides the presence or absence of tautology, there are other differences of style which no translator can obscure. For example, one author states his propositions as subject to conditions and is fond of "if";

another prefers to press on without "if's"; one likes comparisons and abounds in "as" or "like," he will tell you the motives, the results, the causes of the actions of which he writes, and consequently you will find his pages sprinkled with "in order that," "so that" "because"; the other confines himself to simple statement. Now although considerable allowance must be made for difference of subject and tone, which may greatly alter the style of the same author at different times, yet the two Epistles diverge so widely in the use of those particles *which imply difference of thought*, that this divergence, in itself, is almost sufficient to prove difference of authorship.<sup>1</sup> Another divergence (which cannot possibly be attributed to the translator) is that, whereas the First Epistle quotes the Old Testament freely, the Second never quotes from it as such, the only quasi-quotation being the reference to "the proverb" (ii. 22).

On other internal differences between the thought of the two Epistles it is not possible now to dwell; and an attempt might possibly be made to explain these by the different circumstances under which the two were written. Yet undoubtedly, when the author of the Second Epistle writes (iii. 1), "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you, *and in them*" (the "both" of our Version is implied, but not expressed) "*I stir up your sincere mind,*" etc., it is difficult to suppose that this language (if genuine) could have been used by a writer referring to a letter written very long before, and under circumstances very different from the present. One would have supposed that he would rather have written "and in this, as in my former letter,"

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. uses *ei* fifteen times, 2 Pet. twice; or if the numbers be calculated in proportion to the length of the Epistles, *ei* in 1 Pet. occurs 10½ times to 2 in 2 Pet. The proportions of (a) *ὡς*, (b) *ὡς*, (c) *ἀλλὰ*, (d) *ὅτι*, (e) *διότι*, (f) *οὖν*, (g) *ὥστε*, (h) *μὲν*, (i) the Relative Pronoun used demonstratively, (k) *εἰς* (often denoting purpose) are severally (a) 20 : 10, (b) 9½ : 1, (c) 11½ : 6, (d) 8½ : 0, (e) 2½ : 0, (f) 4½ : 1, (g) 1½ : 0, (h) 4½ : 0, (i) 20 : 6 or 7.

or at all events that he would not have spoken of the long distant production as still identical in time with the present, "I stir up." Yet what an interval appears to have elapsed! In the times of the former letter the "fiery trial" of persecution is rife; in the times of the latter, it has so completely disappeared that there is not even any expression of thankfulness for deliverance from it. In the former, the danger is from without; the latter speaks only of dangers from within, and is wholly devoted to warnings against heretical teachers. In the former, the day of the Lord is dawning, Christ is ready to be revealed, and "the end of all things is at hand"; but the latter, although it warns its readers to "look for" and to "hasten" the day of the Lord, evidently contemplates it as remote: "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" so that the writer evidently regards the "last days" as not yet arrived, and even when they have arrived, still there shall come, not "the day of the Lord," but only "mockers," mocking at its delay.

For these reasons of internal evidence enumerated in this and the preceding articles, for the radical difference not only of words and idioms, but also of thought—the difference which distinguishes a simple and original writer from a pedantical phrase-compiler who bungles and blurrs even where he is copying, and, when he is not copying, writes as though he had selected from a glossary the rarest words in the Greek language—for the essential ignobility of style, no less than for the evidence that the writer has been imitating works of so late a date as to be incompatible with the theory of Apostolic authorship, we claim that the memory of St. Peter ought to be formally delivered from the suspicion of having composed this unworthy production. There remain in reserve other points of internal evidence with which our readers are familiar; the patron-

ising mention of "our beloved brother Paul" side by side with the mention of St. Paul's Epistles as a part of "Scripture;" and the description of the Transfiguration on "the Holy Mount," justly characterized by Canon Westcott as "artificial." On these we have not touched; but, when combined with the former class of evidence, they present a combination so strong that it seems to us inconceivable that any unprejudiced Greek scholar should reject it; and when this cumulative evidence is further combined with the negative external evidence which proves (Westcott) that the Eastern and Western canon originally agreed in rejecting this document, and that while the First Epistle is quoted from the earliest times, there is no trace of the existence of the Second till toward the end of the second century after Christ, then we cannot but feel that we have a claim to a verdict from others beside Greek scholars, a verdict which may fairly be delivered by every reader of the English Bible who is competent to sit on a jury and to weigh evidence; and the verdict should be that the Galilean fisherman, whose faith was the Rock on which the Church was founded, is "not guilty" of writing the pedantical and ignoble collection of plagiarisms, commonly attributed to him as his "Second Epistle."

It was rejected in the earliest days by the silence of the Fathers and in later times by the express condemnation of Origen and Eusebius; and though the judgment of Jerome foisted it on the mediæval canon, it was again questioned or rejected at the Reformation by Erasmus, Calvin, Grotius, and Scaliger; in modern times by Neander, De Wette, and many others; and in our days and country it is at least so far rejected by our ablest theologian, that Bishop Lightfoot declines to use it "for polemical purposes." But the time seems now to have come for a more general condemnation. The only reason for not using the Epistle "for polemical purposes" is (it is to be presumed) because it cannot be for

these purposes used by us with any effect. Our antagonists would retort, if we were to use it for these purposes, that we were quoting from a forged document; and we could not disprove their assertion, nor even shew that probabilities were against them. But if the document is probably a forgery "for polemical purposes," does it become anything else but a forgery "for spiritual purposes," or for any other purpose whatever? Let the reader remember that this forgery—supposing it to be a forgery—is not of the nature of a Psalm attributed to David, or Proverbs attributed to Solomon, by some anonymous author in whose work the element of devotion or of wisdom might remain nearly the same, whoever the author might be. This letter, on the contrary, is forged in order to prove, on the authority of the Apostle St. Peter, facts that could not be proved without his authority; instead of being a simple expression of piety, it utters in St. Peter's name prophecies that the Apostle never uttered, records his attestation to miraculous events in language which he never authorized, and introduces him as the patronising friend of St. Paul in a character which we have no reason to believe that he would have accepted. In such a forgery as this, what is there that should prepare us *a priori* for any other conclusion than that to which we have been led by a detailed examination of its subject matter, viz. that it is a compilation altogether below the level of the First Epistle of St. Peter, and wholly unworthy of being considered, in any sense, inspired?

EDWIN A. ABBOTT.

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