

*DR. ABBOTT ON THE SECOND EPISTLE  
OF ST. PETER.*

WHATEVER conclusions may be ultimately adopted respecting the authenticity of the "Second Epistle of St. Peter," there can be no question that the considerations laid before the readers of the EXPOSITOR by Dr. Abbott<sup>1</sup> must receive the closest attention. In his first paper he announces an important discovery which can never henceforth be entirely overlooked. In the two following papers, which, though full of interest, are much less important than the first, he criticises the Epistle with the utmost freedom, and passes upon it a verdict which can only be called contemptuous. The readers of the EXPOSITOR will naturally expect some remarks upon these papers. I anxiously looked for some learned and discriminating estimate of them, which may I hope yet be forthcoming. Meanwhile, and provisionally, I am requested by the Editor to add what I can, as a small contribution to the discussion of the subject.

The importance of the issue which has been raised by Dr. Abbott cannot be denied. If his views can be substantiated, they mean nothing less than this, that the Church has admitted into her Canon of holy and inspired Scripture a book deliberately pseudonymous. If any one desires to see the way in which the issue presents itself in the abstract to the minds of many learned Churchmen, let him turn to the introduction to this Epistle in the Bishop of Lincoln's Commentary. "Let us remember," says the Bishop, "that this Epistle claims to have been written by

<sup>1</sup> January, February, March, 1882.

St. Peter. *If this Epistle was not written by the Apostle, it is a shameless forgery.*" And again, "There is scarcely a single writing of all antiquity, sacred or profane, which must not be given up as spurious, if the Second Epistle of St. Peter be not received as a genuine writing of the Apostle, and as a part of Holy Writ." Many of the defenders of the Epistle have freely used such language. If the Epistle be not genuine, they say, "Christ's promise to his Church has failed, and the Holy Spirit has not been given to guide her into all truth;" and "the Church must then have been imposed upon by what must in that case be regarded as *a satanic device*." They talk of the author, if he were pseudonymous, as "an impostor" and "a forger"; of his motives as shewing "intentional fraud" and "cunning fabrication"; of his work as that of "a deceiver fathering his Epistle upon St. Peter with an evil intention."<sup>1</sup> Let me say at once that such language seems to me to be both erroneous and full of danger. It seriously imperils causes far more important than that which it is employed to defend. Critical questions can only be decided on grounds of serious criticism. Traditional dogmas, terrified deprecations, angry anathemas, cannot have, and ought not to have, any weight in deciding questions which can only be determined by quite other considerations. Mr. Plummer, in Bishop Ellicott's Commentary, has excellently said on this subject, that "it is inexpedient to encumber the discussion by an attempted *reductio ad horribile* of one of the alternatives. A court must not concern itself with the consequences of finding a prisoner guilty." Nothing would be more unwise for the Church of the nineteenth century than to abnegate the duty of fearless and independent enquiry, and to take its stand on the imperfect and undeveloped criticism of the fourth century. Nothing is less reverent than the notion that the

<sup>1</sup> See Frommüller, Introd. Lange's Bibelwerk<sup>1</sup>.

Holy Spirit was so much more present in "the Fathers" than in ourselves, that we must prejudge and condemn the accumulating masses of modern learning. It would be unfaithfulness on our part to give a blind deference to the very fallible conclusions of men neither abler nor wiser than the great scholars of to-day. The members of the Council of Laodicea were far less advantageously situated than we are as regards many of the means for arriving at a just conclusion in nice questions of authenticity and evidence. Nothing, again, is more full of danger than to stake the acceptance of the essential truths of Christianity on questions of very minor importance. In the examination of such questions it may at any time happen that the fresh evidence becomes too strong to be resisted. The belief of past centuries on some points of criticism may turn out to be an error which can no longer be held by any honest and unbiassed mind; but no such discoveries can ever touch a single fundamental article of the faith of Christ. I do not accept the conclusion of many critics, that a belief in the authenticity of this Epistle is a demonstrable error. Some strong arguments can still be urged in its favour. It must, however, be admitted that Dr. Abbott has adduced facts which are all but absolutely new, and of which he has been, so far as we know, the first scholar in nineteen centuries to observe the true importance.

I. What he has proved in his first paper beyond all shadow of doubt is that Josephus and the author of this Epistle *could not have written independently of each other*. I must confess that it would be impossible for me to feel respect for the judgment of any critic who asserted that the resemblances between the two writers were purely fortuitous.

I was one of those to whom Dr. Abbott was kind enough some months ago to submit a preliminary sketch of the

evidence so convincingly stated in his paper of last January. He has put on record some of the answers which he received from those to whom he wrote. Let us glance at them :

a. "One expressed a doubt *whether the method was safe.*"

I cannot quite understand this way of meeting the evidence. I can only suppose that the scholar who returned this answer was in reality unable or unwilling to give his full attention to the enquiry. The method may be very unsafe indeed if it builds conclusions on one or two isolated words scattered up and down the voluminous works of different authors. But Dr. Abbott has adduced the very different evidence of groups of words—words in some instances not only unusual but startling—words which are in some instances *hapax legomena*—occurring together in much the same sequence and connexion in passages of brief compass. I venture to say that you might submit this evidence either to any twelve of the most eminent scholars and literary men in England, or again to any twelve men selected at haphazard who had enough general education to understand the question, and that both juries would, without any hesitation, give an unanimous verdict that such resemblances, however to be accounted for, *could not be accidental*. Were this question unconnected with theology, I am sure that no critic could set aside the facts adduced, without being charged with a total absence of the critical faculty.

β. "Another urged that the Epistle might be a translation from the Aramaic, and that it was the *translator* and not the *author* who borrowed from Josephus." As to this answer, I must confess that I look on the hypothesis of "Aramaic originals," where there is no trace of them, and not even a tradition that they ever existed, with a good deal of suspicion. The thesis has indeed been recently maintained by Mr. King, but to me it seems quite untenable,

and that on two grounds. The first is, that the Epistle is addressed quite as much to Gentiles as to Jews. Now the Jews of the Dispersion were very probably acquainted with Aramaic, but most certainly the Gentiles were not. The second is, that though the Greek of the Epistle is sufficiently strange, yet the main peculiarities belong essentially to the *thoughts* as well as to the style, and it would be not too much to say that, unless the "translator" tampered to an indefinite extent with the original before him, the resemblances of the original author to Josephus are as certain as those of his imaginary translator. Could the translator have introduced *de suo* the alliterations (*e.g.*, ii. 16) and the *autanaclises* (*e.g.* ii. 12, see *infra*), as well as the peculiar repetitions which mark the style?

γ. My own answer to Dr. Abbott, when he sent me a very brief lithographed sketch of his evidence was, that I regarded it as "decisively proved that either the author has borrowed from Josephus, or Josephus from the author."

I fully admit that there are difficulties about the latter hypothesis. Those difficulties do not lie in the mere supposition that Josephus may have seen this Epistle. It may indeed be said that he shews (so far as I am aware) no decisive proofs of familiarity with any other book of the New Testament. Dr. Abbott, for instance, has found that the unquestionably genuine First Epistle of St. Peter does not contain any traces of similarity to the writings of Josephus. Still there is no impossibility in the supposition that an isolated Christian tract may have fallen under his notice, and that he may have availed himself of some of its thoughts and expressions. Books have strange destinies. There is no knowing where they may not penetrate; what strange results they may not produce; into what entirely unexpected hands they may not fall. Josephus, whom I regard as radically untrustworthy where he had any advantage to gain by suggesting a falsehood or by suppressing

a truth, must certainly have known a great deal more about Christians and Christianity than he has chosen to record. He was a friend of Aliturus, the Jewish pantomimist, who was one of the favourites in the court of Nero. In his youth he had hung about the boudoir of Poppæa, who in all probability was a Jewish proselytess. As one who, it is to be feared, may not have been without his share in calling unfavourable attention to the Christians in Rome, and so in the instigation of Nero to his horrible persecution of the Christians; as one who may not possibly have crossed the mind of St. John as a person possessing some of the characteristics of his False Prophet in the Apocalypse; as one who in old age had attended in the antechambers of the persecutor Domitian; he was a person who may have read, and even have sought for, any Christian writing which any unhappy *traditor* may have been tempted to place at his disposal. Further than this, he has, in his Antiquities (xviii. 3, § 3), directly referred to Christ and Christians in a passage, which is indeed interpolated, but probably has a genuine basis; he has also recorded the preaching of John the Baptist, and the martyrdom of James, the Lord's brother. Josephus had much to do with Jerusalem, and as this Epistle must, if genuine, have found its way to Jerusalem, he may have met a copy there. Besides all this, he was a personal friend and intimate of Agrippa II., and Agrippa, as we know from the Acts of the Apostles, had heard the defence of St. Paul, and felt a strong interest in the controversy between Judaism and Christianity.

If this were all, I should see little or no difficulty in believing that the "plagiarist"—if such a word were applicable—was the Jewish historian, not the Christian writer. I feel it right, however, to say that this hypothesis involves a very serious difficulty of another kind. It is this. The expressions which are common to the two writers are

not specially remarkable in Josephus, but *are* specially remarkable in the Epistle. In some instances they are unique, having no parallel in a single other passage of the New Testament or the Septuagint. Further than this, when we are reading the passages in Josephus we can see why the words were used. There is nothing in them which we can regard as startling or abnormal. In the Epistle, on the other hand, the same thoughts and expressions sometimes cause us a shock of surprise.

I will give one remarkable instance of this. In 2 Peter i. 3, we read in our Authorised Version the expression, "through the knowledge of Him *that hath called us to glory and Virtue.*" Now the only thing remarkable about this clause would be the fact that it contains the word "Virtue" which is all but unknown to the New Testament. The plural *aretai* does indeed occur in 1 Peter ii. 9, "that ye should shew forth *the praises (aretas)* of Him that hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." Here the margin of the Authorised Version gives us "*virtues*" for "praises." It is doubtful whether *aretai* could ever mean "praises" in classical Greek, nor does it mean "virtues." But "praises" was chosen by our translators because *aretai* is used in the LXX. (Isa. xlii. 8, xliii. 21) as the representative of the Hebrew תְּהִלֹּת, and is interchangeable with δόξα "glory." Hence the "excellencies" of the Revised Version is a better word. But *arete* in the singular occurs three times in this Second Epistle (i. 3, 5) in the sense of "Virtue," and it is found only once in the rest of the New Testament, viz., in Philippians iv. 8, where it occurs in an appeal *a majori ad minus*. The reason of this exclusion of so remarkable a word from the New Testament is that "virtue" was the ideal of Paganism, whereas Christians set before themselves the much loftier ideal of "*holiness.*" How strange, then, is the true translation of 2 Peter i. 3, which cannot by any possibility be, as in the

Authorised Version, "who hath called us to glory and virtue," but as in the Revised—(one of the thousands of positive and indefensible errors which the Revised Version has silently corrected). "Who called us BY HIS OWN GLORY AND VIRTUE" (*ιδία δόξη και ἀρετή*). To attribute "virtue" to God may well have been startling to any transcriber and any reader, and that is probably the reason why in B and other MSS. the reading has been altered. But *ιδιος* is a characteristic word of this author (in whom it occurs no less than seven times), and *ιδία δόξη και ἀρετή* is found in  $\aleph$  A C. Now it might have been said that the author is only influenced by a reminiscence of 1 Peter ii. 9, or that he uses *arete* as the LXX. use it in rendering Habakkuk iii. 3, where it is only an equivalent of the Hebrew  $\text{כְּדָבָר}$  or "glory." But when we find "virtue," in the strictest and most normal sense of the word *attributed to God in a passage of Josephus (Antt., Proem.)* together with four or five other very peculiar expressions which (so far as the rest of the New Testament is concerned) are peculiar to this Epistle, it is very difficult to resist the conclusion that the writer is borrowing from Josephus, in whom the expression at once explains itself. For if Josephus attributes "virtue" to God, he only does so because he is contrasting the ideal of God as revealed by Moses with the flagrant *vices* attributed to their deities by the Pagan mythologists. In this Epistle the employment of so rare a word, in so startling a connexion, requires to be accounted for by giving to the word some unusual sense; in Josephus, where it occurs among other expressions common to both passages, it is found in a sense perfectly natural.

Nothing seems to come more easily to a modern theologian than a cautious reticence; nothing is easier than the common fashion of proving oneself a "safe man" by steering "through the channel of no meaning between the Scylla and Charybdis of Yes and No." But serious readers



have a right to claim an honest expression of opinion ; and if I am asked the final impression left on my mind by such facts as these, I say that Dr. Abbott's discoveries add very appreciably to the difficulty in accepting the genuineness of the Epistle. Every item of dubious or unexplained phenomena must tell with something of cumulative force against a writing which is, on the one hand, by far the most weakly-authenticated of all those which have been finally admitted into the Canon of the New Testament, and which, on the other hand, presents the maximum of internal difficulties and sources of perplexity. Considerations which I have not space in this paper to explain prevent me from regarding it as certain that the letter is spurious. I still think that St. Peter may have lent his name and the weight of his authority to thoughts expressed in the language of another. Suspension of judgment is called for by these counter-considerations. Meanwhile I await with anxiety the opinion of others. The Fathers of the first three centuries felt no certainty about the Epistle, and many of them do not allude to it. After the revival of learning, Erasmus, Luther, Cardinal Cajetan, Grotius, Scaliger, Salmasius, all doubted its genuineness. In modern times it has been rejected not only by Eichhorn, De Wette, Baur, Schwegler, Hilgenfeld, Mayerhoff, Bleek, Schott, Davidson, Meissner, Reuss, Renan, and many others, but even by Neander, Weiss, and Huther ; while Bunsen, Bertholdt, Ullmann, and even Lange, hold that, though genuine, it has been largely interpolated. Not one of these writers was aware of the new arguments adduced by Dr. Abbott. Those arguments must be thoroughly sifted and carefully examined before we can duly appreciate their significance. It is to be hoped that modern divines will not be tempted to a conspiracy of silence respecting them, and will not adopt the ostrich-policy of hiding their heads in the sands. It is possible that the new arguments may

be refuted, or that the edge of them may be turned by counter-considerations. If so, we shall listen to all that can be urged against them with earnest and respectful attention.

I agree, then, with Dr. Abbott in thinking that he has placed in a light never yet observed by any ancient or modern scholar the resemblances to Josephus which up to this time have only partially been noticed. But I do not agree with him in thinking that his arguments are absolutely decisive against the authenticity of the letter. I still think it *possible* that Josephus may have been the borrower, though I have furnished one reason among many why it is difficult to believe that he was not the originator of these particular sequences of thought and expression. It is as yet too early to come to any final conclusion on the new facts which have thus been brought to light.

II. But when Dr. Abbott proceeds to the direct criticism of the Epistle, I am compelled in great measure to part company from him. Without entering into any questions of canonicity and inspiration, even if we judge the Epistle as he judges it on its own intrinsic merits, apart from all associations of reverence, he seems to me to adopt a tone of unwarrantable disparagement. Let us briefly glance at one or two points in his two remaining papers.

1. He begins by endeavouring to prove that the writer "copied" the Epistle of St. Jude.

I entirely agree with him as to the *priority* of St. Jude's Epistle. Although the other view is still maintained, it is I think an easy matter so to state the evidence on the subject as to make it impossible for any student who approaches the question with a trained literary sense to feel any remaining doubt that the "plagiarist"—if that word be at all applicable—is the author of the "Second Epistle of St. Peter" and not St. Jude. I further agree with Dr. Abbott in thinking that they cannot both be modified from

some common original, because they are interwoven with an idiosyncrasy of tone and expression which could not have existed in any document that professes to be ancient. But I entirely dissent from the view that the Second Epistle contains "an unintelligent copy" of St. Jude's burning denunciation.

Let me pause to observe that such words as "forger," "plagiarist," and "copy" involve more or less of an anachronism. They connote conceptions which in the first and second centuries had little or no existence. The views of the ancients and of the moderns, the views of Semites and Aryans, differed very materially on the subject of literary methods. The term "forger" involves an accent of moral reprehension and indignant disdain which no Jew and no early Christian would dream of attaching to pseudonymous literature. If an Alexandrian Jew, or an early Christian, wished to attract attention to his views, he felt no hesitation in putting them forth under the authority of a distinguished name. Very frequently, indeed, this use of the name was not intended to deceive. If a writer thought that he was truly representing the views of some great predecessor, he felt no scruple in adopting his name. The author of "The Wisdom of Solomon," for instance, can never have dreamt of deceiving his readers into the notion that they were reading the words of the ancient Hebrew king. Writings attributed to St. Peter, St. John, and St. James were widely current in the early Church, and for the most part they deceived no one. We cannot even be sure that they were ever intended to do so. If we adopt the word *falsarius*, and strip it almost entirely of moral blame, we shall more nearly approach the facts of the case than when we use the word "forger" to describe the authors of the pseudonymous literature of Jewish and Jewish-Christian communities in the early days of the Christian Church. It is true that the writer of

this Epistle assumes the name of St. Peter and writes in the character of St. Peter; but, in doing this, he is only carrying out the pseudonymous method. That method of course required a certain amount of literary verisimilitude. It may be doubted whether any deception was intended in such cases.

Similarly with the words "copy" and "plagiarist." In the days when books were few in number and restricted in circulation, they often produced so deep an impression that readers who had passed the words and thoughts of others through the crucible of their own individuality never hesitated to adopt such words both consciously and unconsciously as their own. The remark applies with special force to early Christian literature. Even in the New Testament we can see that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had been deeply influenced by the words, thoughts, and quotations of St. Paul; that St. James was familiar with the Book of Proverbs, with the sapiential literature of the Jews in general, and with the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus in particular; that St. Peter, in his first Epistle, had read and profited by the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians. The writings of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Hegesippus abound in current and common phraseology; the pages of Clemens Romanus are often little more than a cento of phrases from the New Testament. We see exactly the same phenomena in the later Hebrew Prophets. In many instances their language is not original. It abounds in reminiscences of the phrases and metaphors which had been first used by their most eminent predecessors. There is no affectation of originality; there is not the least attempt to gain literary credit by adopting the eloquent turns and profound thoughts of others. The motives which actuated these writers were wholly alien from such small considerations. The term "plagiarism" is inapplicable because its connotations are entirely modern.

2. The "copying" therefore of St. Jude by the Second Epistle does not involve a shadow of blame, and so far am I from regarding it as "unintelligent," that it seems to me to shew great calmness and wisdom. I doubt whether St. Peter would have thought it in the smallest degree derogatory to his position to make use of the words and thoughts of a brother Christian if they had made a very powerful impression on his imagination; and if he thus used the Epistle of St. Jude, it seems to me that he has used it in a manner entirely worthy of his Apostolic dignity.

Let us take the broadest features first, before we descend to details.

*a.* St. Jude speaks of the strange event known as the Fall of the Angels. Our notions respecting that event are derived to a very large extent from apocryphal fancies which have been glorified by the splendid imagination of Milton. They scarcely find the shadow of any sanction from Scripture. The Rabbis attributed the Fall of the Angels to sensual sins with mortal women. Various apocryphal books—and especially the Book of Enoch—dwell at length on this wild tradition. It was precariously derived from Genesis vi. 2, and it must be obvious to any reader that such a notion is surrounded with difficulties, and that the consideration of it tends to no practical edification. It has proved attractive to sensual poets like Moore and Byron, but lies outside the range of ordinary moral reflections. St. Peter—if it be he—shews his practical wisdom by removing it altogether.

*β.* St. Jude speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah as "undergoing a judgment of æonian fire." The expression was a peculiar one, and perhaps opened the way to misconception. "St. Peter" confines himself to the more intelligible remark, that God reduced those cities to ashes and condemned them with an overthrow.

γ. St. Jude in two passages (Verses 8, 23) alludes to a peculiar form of ceremonial pollution which would be familiar to readers of the Levitic law. "St. Peter," perhaps disliking a needless particularity, perhaps supposing that the allusions would not be obvious to his Gentile readers, shews his wisdom by the modification which omits them both.

δ. St. Jude makes a direct quotation from the apocryphal Book of Enoch—a book entirely without authority, and in many respects objectionable. Perhaps, to the readers whom he is addressing, it may have had the force of an *argumentum ad hominem*. "St. Peter" entirely omits a quotation of which Gentiles would not have understood the purely literary character, and which proved to be a stumbling-block to many readers in the early Church.

ε. St. Jude directly refers to a most extraordinary Jewish Hagadah about a dispute between the Archangel Michael and the devil respecting the body of Moses. We are told by an ancient Father that the allusion came out of an apocryphal book called the "Ascension of Moses." It was an allusion, which—unless it was understood to be purely literary and legendary—suggested endless difficulties, and was not only unauthorized by Scripture but seemed to conflict with it. "St. Peter" omits the allusion altogether. He does not even use the word "archangel"—a word of rare occurrence and uncertain significance in Holy Writ.

Now let it be admitted that St. Jude's Epistle is more passionate, more forcible, than the Second Chapter of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, that there is more lightning in it, and therefore more literary splendour—on the other hand "St. Peter" is more guarded, more dignified, more exclusively authoritative, less likely to excite offence and cavil. How can such a copy be called "unintelligent"?

III. Let us now glance more in detail at one or two

passages which Dr. Abbott suggests for special animadversion.

1. He contrasts 2 Peter ii. 10, 11 very unfavourably with Jude 8, 9. Undoubtedly the reference in St. Jude is unmistakable, but since (as we have seen) "St. Peter" did not choose, even by way of literary allusion, to refer to the Rabbinic legend about the dispute between Michael and Satan, what does he say? "Daring, self-willed, they [these false teachers] tremble not to rail at glories [*i.e.*, at glorious beings], whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord." No reasonable reader can doubt that "*them*" refers to the "*glories*" or "glorious beings." The supposed ambiguity of the passage has only been created, as in thousands of other instances, by exegetes who do not care to accept the simple sense. It means that the false teachers shewed neither dread nor hesitation in railing against Beings of high estate, whereas Angels do not bring a railing accusation against such beings even when they stand in God's sight. Who are the beings alluded to in the last clause? Clearly Fallen Angels, for good Angels, unlike the majority of Christians, do not seem to indulge in the constant practice of "bringing railing accusations" against each other. But, it will be objected, *Fallen* Angels cannot be called "*glories*." The answer is that, according to the idea of Satan in Job, he is not—

"Less than Archangel ruined, and *excess*  
Of glory obscured";

and the obvious reference of the writer (as proved by the words "before the Lord") is to the calm words of the Angel of the Lord when (in Zech. iii.) he stood before the Lord with Satan to resist him. So far, then, from being "unintelligent," the "copy" in this instance shews consummate skill. It points the same great lesson, while, by

a skilful modification of the phrase, it diverts the reader's attention from the dubious Hagadah of an apocryphal treatise to one of the glorious visions in the widespread work of a genuine Prophet.

2. The next passage criticised is "Spots (*spiloi*) and blemishes, luxuriating in their own deceits (*apatais*) while they banquet with you." We will assume that this is the correct, as it is the most probable and on the whole best authenticated, reading. The corresponding passage in St. Jude is, "These are the sunken reefs (*spilades*) in your love-feasts (*agapais*), banqueting with you fearlessly." I have little doubt that St. Jude's *spilades* means "sunken reefs" (*αἱ ὑφαλοὶ πέτραι*, *Etym. Magn.*), for the sense of "stains," which it has in an Orphic poem of the fourth century, is hardly a sufficient authority. Why should it be said that "St. Peter's" words are absurd? The false teachers are "spots and blemishes" on the Christian community, and while they banquet with their brethren, whether at the *Agapæ* or elsewhere, they are really wantoning in their own hypocrisies. "St. Peter" may have wished to avoid the confusion of metaphors in St. Jude's "rocks"; and he may have purposely suppressed all reference to the *Agapæ* and Love-feasts of which the name and purport were, from very early ages, so grievously misunderstood. Where is the "chaos"? It is even possible that "St. Peter" was writing without St. Jude's Epistle before him, and that, only vaguely remembering the words, he shews the not unfamiliar phenomenon of an imagination influenced by the *Wortklang*—his memory has been magnetised by the sounds of the words rather than by the words themselves.

3. Then St. Peter says, "These are waterless springs, and mists driven by a hurricane, for whom the mirk of darkness has been reserved." St. Jude had written, "These are waterless clouds, swept hither and thither by winds . . .



wandering stars for which the mirk of darkness has been reserved for ever." Here the *reason* of St. Peter's modification is evident. There is no such thing as a "waterless cloud"; even a cloud which is driven away without shedding its rain cannot be accurately called a waterless cloud. "St. Peter" substitutes a more scientific expression, while he keeps the fine metaphor of the gust-driven mist. Why he rejected the "wandering stars" is not so clear. He might have disliked the apparent reference to the Book of Enoch. He might have thought that the expression "wandering stars" was ambiguous. Or again, writing only from memory, he may not have recalled the exact expression, while our Lord's own metaphor (Matt. viii. 12, etc.) enabled him to say directly of the false teachers that for these "the mirk of darkness" has (without any metaphor) been reserved. Where is the "chaos"? where the "carelessness"? where the "confusion"?

4. I take a fourth instance. St. Jude (Verse 10) writes "These rail about such matters as they know not, and such things as they understand naturally, like the irrational animals, in these they corrupt (or destroy) themselves." "St. Peter" (ii. 12) writes, "But these as mere irrational animals, having been born for capture and destruction, railing in things which they know not, in their own corruption shall be utterly destroyed." I will say nothing here, though something might be said, of the reason why the writer partly changes St. Jude's presents into futures; but in other respects the two passages differ as follows. St. Jude says, "that these bad men talk blasphemously about things of which they know nothing, and corrupt such natural knowledge as they possess in common with the beasts." "St. Peter" expands the description of the irrational animals by saying, in accordance with the prevalent Jewish notion, that their destined end is to be caught and killed;—and describing the sin of the teachers

exactly as St. Jude does—"blasphemy about things of which they know nothing"—he says that "they shall perish in their own corruption." But he says something more than this, and makes a point which Dr. Abbott misses. The words which he uses (*φθορά, φθείρω*) have *two* meanings—namely "destruction" and "corruption"—the first physical, the second moral. The writer, availing himself of both meanings by a fine use of the figure known as *autanaclisis*, indicates the deep truth that moral corruption and physical ruin are not only correlated, but are in their essence and in their issue identical things. St. Jude's language is the more keenly epigrammatic; but the writer who has adopted it infuses into his expressions a far deeper truth. Here I see *difference*; I do not see any trace of *inferiority*, but rather the reverse.

IV. It would take me too long to follow Dr. Abbott through all his strictures, but I part company from him still more decidedly in his third paper, able and interesting as it is. He complains of the writer's tautology; of his fondness for fine words; and of his misapprehensions as to the proper form and meaning of words. He compares him to a Hindoo trying to write fine language in English, and making most ludicrous blunders in the endeavour to do so. Now even if we admitted these charges, I do not see that they would tell against the wisdom and intellect of the writer. Every writer has his idiosyncrasy. There is scarcely a single great writer from Heraclitus to Carlyle, and from Æschylus to Mr. Browning, whose style has not been a subject for stinging remarks. Really great writers stand above these criticisms. They create the taste which is at last compelled to appreciate them. St. Peter's "tautologies" may be due to his Hebraic training. But they are not found in Semitic writers only. Many writers—Æschylus no less than St. Paul—sometimes shew that they are haunted by a particular word. It is true that this

writer shews a partiality for expressions of poetic and almost lyrical boldness. It is possible that he has used unauthorised forms. What does this matter if he has great and essential truths to tell us! Personally I am quite convinced that the actual *language* of this Epistle cannot have proceeded from the author of the First. But St. Peter may have used "different interpreters," as St. Jerome tells us that he did. The "interpreter" employed in the second Epistle was probably one who (like Dr. Abbott's Hindoo writer) had learned a foreign language from books rather than from daily usage. There is nothing discreditable to him in the fact that expressions of extraordinary force and words of remarkable picturesqueness cling to his memory. Such words are *ταρταρώσας, δελεάζουσι, ροιζηδόν*. Kossuth had learnt English only from the Bible and from Shakspeare, and the language of his extremely eloquent speeches shewed much the same peculiarities. But I cannot see that they are in any way derogatory to the power and greatness of an author so circumstanced.

And as regards *this* part of his enquiry I venture to think that Dr. Abbott's method must yield uncertain results. The Greek language had boundless resources, and it is quite possible that *we* may regard a word as unclassical which really was current and was sanctioned by good authors no longer extant. It would be a great deal easier to condemn Shakspeare for the use of unauthorised, pedantic, and inadmissible expressions than it is to condemn the writer of this Epistle. Byron used English words ("ruth" for instance, and "kibe") in absolutely mistaken senses, though he was writing in his own language; and he was guilty of such solecisms as "there let him *lay*" or "and the idols are *broke*," and many more. If it would be unfair to hold up Byron to utter scorn for such slips, it is much more unfair to charge a Jew writing in Greek with ignorant pedantry, even if (which I cannot regard as certain) he has

used mistaken forms of words in *kulismos* (supposing that to be the right reading) and *paraphronia*, and given mistaken meanings (which is less demonstrable) to such words as *kausoumena* and *exerama*; and got hold of untenable phrases (which I must regard as still more doubtful) in *μνημὴν ποιῆσθαι*. But even supposing that passage after passage exhibits “a cluster of solecisms,” and that, in addition to writing bad Greek, the author is guilty of a “fondness for out of the way words”—what then? The Apocalypse contains the worst Greek in the whole New Testament. Some of the solecisms in that book are perfectly startling. It also abounds in strange words and stranger conceptions:—and yet it is, in some respects, one of the grandest writings in the Sacred Volume.

I feel a strong conviction that a good case might be made out for some of the expressions which Dr. Abbott ridicules. If I do not attempt to make out such a case, it is because I do not see how an imperfect acquaintance with Greek is any discredit to the author, or any injury to the value of his essential message. I think that Dr. Abbott presses his point much too far by putting the worst construction on the phraseology. For instance, he offers the following as an adequate translation of phrases in i. 5, 9, 11, 15.

“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.”

I submit that by adopting a certain style of rendering one might make almost any passage sound a little ridiculous. Why should Dr. Abbott use the words “*as an appendage*”? Why may we not render the phrase just as literally by “adding,”—literally, “introducing besides”? Then in i. 9, why must *μωπάζων* mean short-sighted? No writer

in his senses could ever write "*blind, short-sighted.*" Such an anticlimax would strike even a child as silly. Perhaps the writer intended to use the word in the sense of "wilfully closing his eyes;" and the derivation of the word may be held to justify such a sense, and for all we know usage may also have justified it. But if, with the Authorised Version and the margin of the Revised Version, we adopt the sense in which the word is used by Aristotle (Probl. xxxi. 16), there is nothing ridiculous in the rendering, "*blind, not seeing afar off;*" or "*blind, seeing only what is near.*" The febleness of thought is only in the particular form adopted by Dr. Abbott in his rendering. There is no bathos, no febleness of thought, but rather wisdom and insight in a phrase which suggests such a meaning as "*blind to the far off heavenly things, able only to see the near earthly things.*" Then in i. 12, if *μελλήσω* can only mean "I shall be destined" (which perhaps might be combated) is it by any means certain that it is the right reading? If it cannot mean, as in our Revised Version, "I shall be ready," can we be sure that the author did not write *οὐκ ἀμελήσω* "I will not be negligent." Lastly *μνημὴν ποιείσθαι* normally means "to make mention," and there is no reason to alter that meaning here. If so, then instead of the grotesque rendering of Dr. Abbott, we have :

"Adding all zeal, furnish, etc. . . . For he in whom these things are lacking is blind, seeing only what is near. . . . Wherefore I shall not neglect to remind you always about these things . . . that ye may be able to *make mention* of them (to others)."

The phraseology may be stiff and unusual, but are there any adequate grounds for pouring scorn upon the essential thoughts?

Dr. Abbott is very severe on the form in which the writer quotes Proverbs xxvi. 11. He seems to interpret

everything *in deteriorem partem*. First he follows Drs. Westcott and Hort in accepting the reading *kulismos*, not *kulisma*; but since *kulisma* is found in  $\aleph$  A K L as well as in Theophylact and Œcumenias, it may be the true reading and gives a perfectly good sense—"wallowing place," *volutabrum*. But even if BC be correct in reading *kulismos*, why need it be rendered by the grotesque word "*wallowance*"? Certainly there is no valid excuse for rendering *exerama* "evacuation." Aquila used *ἐξήρασεν* for "vomited" in Leviticus xviii. 28. Both verb and substantive seem to have had this plain sense. No doubt such a rendering as, "A dog having returned to his own *evacuation*, and the sow, having bathed, to her *wallowance*" sounds very affected and absurd; but I see no proof at all that it should not be rendered, "A dog turning to his own vomit," and "the sow, that had washed, to a wallowing-place of mire."

In conclusion, does it not strike Dr. Abbott that he has proved a good deal *too much*? The Epistle was read, was honoured, was adopted into the canon, by men to whom Greek was still a living language, by men keenly alive to solecisms and absurdities, by men who, like Basil and Chrysostom were mighty masters and orators in the Greek language. Even those who, like Origen and Gregory of Nazianzus, were dubious about the Epistle never dream of treating its style, manner, and contents in the *de haut en bas* style. Dr. Abbott calls it "a pedantical and ignoble collection of plagiarisms". Pseudonymous it may possibly be; but its "pedantic" aspect is probably due to the fact that the writer had only a literary and imperfect acquaintance with Greek, and "ignoble" it most certainly is not. How can an Epistle be called "ignoble" which has the high twofold object of warning and exhortation; which urges Christians to the full knowledge of Christ; which introduces so striking an appeal to the "word of prophecy

as a surer proof than even the Transfiguration; which modifies so calmly and wisely the burning material presented by St. Jude; which throws so broad a light on the difficulty felt by the early Christians as to the delay of the Lord's coming; which frankly acknowledges the dangerous misuse of St. Paul's writings, while it vindicates their inspired greatness; which always seems unwilling to dwell on acts of judgment without furnishing simultaneous instances of mercy; and which finds so noble an appeal upon the longsuffering of God? What is there "ignoble" here? Would thousands of Christians have gained spiritual help and comfort from a treatise so despicable as Dr. Abbott's criticism presents to us? That it stands on an inferior level of grandeur and usefulness to the First Epistle, or to any of the Epistles of St. Paul or St. John, we may admit; but, on the other hand, can Dr. Abbott name any single writer of the second century who was capable of having written even one of the chapters? Can he seriously affirm that it is not far superior to anything in the remains of Clement of Rome, or Ignatius, or Polycarp, or Hermas, or Justin Martyr, or even of the author of the Epistle to Diognetus? To me it seems impossible to read it without recognizing in it an accent of inspiration, and without seeing a "grace of superintendence" at work in the decision by which, in the Councils in the fourth century, it was finally allowed to take its place among the Canonical Books of Holy Scripture.

F. W. FARRAR.

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