

*SECOND PETER AND THE APOCALYPSE OF
PETER.*

THE discovery of the "Apocalypse" has introduced a new element into the 2 Peter controversy. Similarities of language suggest that either the two works proceed from the same hand, or the writer of the Epistle borrowed from the Apocalypse, or the author of the Apocalypse is indebted to the Epistle. The last supposition is alone consonant with the genuineness of 2 Peter.

The external evidence for the Apocalypse is as follows. Clemens Alexandrinus commented on it and made quotations of which four are preserved. Methodius of Olympus in Lycia (c. 300 A.D.) quotes it as a divinely inspired writing. Eusebius (iii. 3) mentions it in a list of works attributed to Peter but not received by Catholics or used by ecclesiastical writers, and subsequently places it formally among the "spurious." Macarius Magnes, at the beginning of the 5th century, has two fragments in his Apocritica, and refers to its repudiation without undertaking a defence. Sozomen in the same century mentions its public reading in certain churches in Palestine as a curiosity, and writes "the so-called Apocalypse of Peter, which was stamped as entirely spurious by the ancients." It is among the disputed books in the list of Nicephorus and in the Codex Claromontanus, but *ἀντιλεγόμενα* had gradually become equivalent to "rejected."¹ If mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment, it is as a disputed book not accepted at Rome, and there is no express reference to the book by a Western author. In Egypt, the silence of Origen, who mentions the "Preaching" and knew the claims of the Epistle, the absence of a translation into a Coptic dialect, the omission in the time of Athanasius from even the *ἀναγιγνωσκόμενα*, seem

¹ Zahn *Hist. of New Testament*, ii. pp. 812, 813.

corroborative of the decision of Sozomen. The 8th century copyist could only find a fragment.

Zahn has given excellent reasons for regarding the work as confined to the East; critics condemned and the Church dropped it. Against 2 Peter the worst evidence is doubt, but doubt is itself evidence, and merely means that there were too many reasons in favour of the Epistle to affirm its spuriousness. None such intervened to save the Apocalypse.

In the absence of express testimony to the widespread use of the Apocalypse, Mr. Montagu Rhodes James has endeavoured to show the literary obligation to the work of such books as Hippolytus' *Concerning the Universe*, Acts of Thomas, Apocalypse of Paul, Vision of Saturus, Vision of Josaphat in the History of Barlaam and Josaphat, Second Book of the Sibylline Oracles, etc. Certainly if this Apocalypse was the *fons et origo* of so much widely spread literature, it must have been an extremely well-known book all over the Christian world at a very early date. Yet the *direct* evidence of its use is unaccountably inadequate to explain such popularity as a vade mecum for "Infernal geographers."

Josaphat, "arriving at a plain of vast extent," (*μεγίστην πεδιάδα*) is said to be due to *μέγιστον χῶρον* of Apoc. 5, where the similarity consists in the use of an adjective whose omission would be as remarkable as its insertion. The idea of a great plain is as old as Homer (Od. iv. 563), and is familiar from Vergil's "*æris in campis latis*" (vi. 887). "Sweet-smelling flowers" is referred to a corresponding mention of flowers in Apoc. 5, where the verbal correspondence is the not very hopeful use of *ἄνθος* by each writer. But infernal horticulture had already occupied the attention of Vergil; cf. "*amoena virecta*," borrowed by Prudentius and used by him of Paradise; also "in graminis palæstris," "*inter odoratum lauri nemus*," "*manibus*

date lilia plenis, purpureos spargam flores." Cf. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 154 f., ὄψει τε φῶς κάλλιστον ὥσπερ ἐνθαδε καὶ ἀνθρώπων. Also of plants and fruits the common use of φυτά is not startling. As to the breeze blowing through the trees, we are more reminded of Vergil's "virgulta sonantia silvis," and a breeze is always expected since Homer *Od.* iv. 567. As regards the city the idea was old enough. Vergil had used a city as a place of punishment. St. John had used it as the abode of the blessed, and this latter is certainly the origin of the passage in Josaphat's vision with the gold, precious stones, bright light, songs, etc., where the "righteous are to shine forth as the sun."

Since the earliest times the invisible world has had a marvellous attraction for all classes. Every literature has its Inferno. Homer, Vergil, Dante, and Milton have each supplied his country with something ἐκτὸς τούτου τοῦ κοσμοῦ. Particularly is this true of ancient literature. By the time Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Aristophanes, Plato, Vergil, and hosts of others had contributed their descriptions of the other world, there existed among the Greeks and Romans a well-defined stereotyped picture of Elysium and Tartarus. A common stock of materials was to hand whereon all artists might draw. In Elysium there would be brilliant light, flowers, foliage, fragrance and inhabitants to match; in Tartarus, darkness, fire, squalor and mud, stock crimes, stock punishments. These would appear in some shape or other in every such piece of literature, so that in process of time a writer would not be directly indebted to another for his description.

The advent of Christianity, so far from allaying, served to stimulate this curiosity about the unknown, and was the cause of the appearance of much literature on a subject which otherwise might have become exhausted. But not merely was this curiosity quickened; into the old stock were new ideas introduced and a new literature collected.

The chance observations of our Lord, the imagery of St. John's Apocalypse, the Jewish conceptions of those who first promulgated the new doctrines, had to find a place in and produce a modification of the classical stock. But the storehouse of materials, both new and old, was common property, and from the use made thereof, however similar, no literary obligation could be inferred. Thus in the vision "fruits most pleasant to the eye and desirable to touch," the "leaves of the tree," and "fruit," mark the importation of the scenery of Genesis ii. and Revelation xxii. 2. The music of Elysium becomes the music of Revelation—a song "never heard by mortal ears" (cf. Rev. xiv. 3). The voice and the failure to describe are commonplaces traceable perhaps to "Eye hath not seen, etc.," or the classic requisition of a hundred tongues.

This classical stock, supplemented by New Testament and Jewish literature, prevents surprise at the appearance of flowers and perfume in several descriptions of Paradise, and at the common use of *ἄνθος* for flowers, *δίκαιοι* for just or even, *ὑπέρλαμπρὸς* for exceeding brightness (Aristoph. *Nub.* 571). We expect the usual conductor in these regions, and, after St. John, we expect him to be an angel. As to the various places of torment, darkness was part of the old stock, and the "outer darkness" of the New Testament would ensure its continuance. "*Phlegethon rapidus flammis torrentibus*" deprived of its name will survive through the "lake of fire" (Apoc. 8, Sibyl., "fiery stream"). The quagmire is a regular property in the Phædo (*πελὸς βορβορώδης*), the Frogs, *Æneid*, etc. (cf. *squalor, loca senta situ*, the stock *ἀρχμήρος*, Hell is murky). The tormentors Tisiphone and her sister Furies are now replaced by angels (*κολάζοντες ἄγγελοι*), and the explanatory voice is retained as in "*Discite justitiam moniti, etc.*," itself borrowed from Pindar (*Pyth.* 2, 39 f.). Very often, as in the Acts of Thomas, we recognise Charon. Ixion's wheel

became a fixture, while the punishment became extended and varied, "radiisque rotarum districti pendent," reappearing in the Acts of Thomas. No Christian description of hell would fail to use any hint dropped by our Lord, as in "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," suggested, no doubt, by Isaiah lxvi. 24, and which was a stock Jewish description as is seen by Sir. vii. 17, *ἐκδίκησις ἀσεβοῦς πῦρ καὶ σκώληξ*: and Judith xxi. 17, *Κύριος Παντοκράτωρ ἐκδικήσει αὐτοὺς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως δοῦναι πῦρ καὶ σκώληκας εἰς σάρκας αὐτῶν καὶ καύσονται ἐν αἰσθήσει ἕως αἰῶνος*.

As regards the crimes punished, each age has its stock faults against which satirists and moralists inveigh. There was every conceivable form of immorality; that selfish rapacity which worshipped "pecunia regina" and disregarded the widow and the orphan, exaction of high interest, infanticide, the false witness of "delatores" from which the Christians must have suffered much.¹

After abstracting from this literature similarities due to the similarity of subject and to the floating ideas about Hades which had by this time crystallized, the remainder may well be ascribed to indirect rather than direct acquaintance with any one archetype. The idea of the sin determining the nature of the punishment is more likely due directly to Clemens Alexandrinus, whose works were certainly known. But the punishment of Tantalus, according to one legend, shows a still greater antiquity for the idea. Clearer still is Wisdom xi. 15, 16, which our author seems to have read—"Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished." *δι' ὧν τις ἁμαρτάνει, διὰ τούτων κολάζεται*. Even *τημελοῦχος* in Acts of Paul may be due to Clement, who uses it twice in his double quotation and may have used it oftener, for he has the noun *τημελούχημα*.

¹ Cf. Ep. Barn. 19, 20; Did. 2, 5; Hermas, *Ἐντολή*, Ep. Diog. 5. Cf. addition of idolatry in 1 Peter iv. 3 with Apoc. 18.

Indeed Clement the commentator of the Apocalypse is a more probable "common source" than the Apocalypse itself, and this is more in keeping with the external express evidence.

1 Peter has 543 words, 2 Peter 399, and the Fragment 303. 1 and 2 Peter have 153 in common; 1 Peter and the Fragment have 100. Again 1 Timothy has 537 words, and Titus 399; they have 161 in common. This shows a somewhat greater relative closeness, *on the score of words*, between 1 Peter and 2 Peter than between 1 Peter and the Fragment; also it shows almost as great a resemblance between the two Petrine Epistles as between the two Pastorals.

Consider next the *ἄπαξ εἰρήμενα*, or words found in no New Testament author in the case of the Fragment, and in no other New Testament author in the case of the Epistles. Of 543 words in 1 Peter 63 are such, of 399 in 2 Peter there are 57, and of 303 in the Fragment there are 45. True the proportion between the two last is closer than between the two first, but this is neutralized by the still greater variability in the Pastoral Epistles, where in 1 Timothy of 537 words there are 74, *ἀπ. εἰρ.*, in 2 Timothy of 449 there are 49, in Titus of 399 only 29, roughly 13, 10, and 7 per cent. respectively.

An examination of these hapax eiremena transports us from neutral territory. Peculiar, striking words is characteristic of both Epistles. Of such as occur in no other writers (except ecclesiastical) there are nine in 1 Peter, five in 2 Peter, one in this Apocalypse—*ἀναπαφλάζω* perhaps common in the vernacular as the simple verb is in Aristoph. *Frogs*, 423. Including the fragments one more is gained, *τημελοῦχος*. The character of these non-New Testament words attracts more attention. 27 in 1 Peter are not found in a classical author, 24 in 2 Peter, 2 in the Fragment. In 1 Peter 33 are in the LXX., in 2 Peter 24,

in the Fragment 25, but as these last are also classical words it cannot be shown that the LXX. version had any influence on the language of the Apocalypse. Of all non-New Testament words in *every known portion* of the Apocalypse there are but three (*τημελουχος, αναπαφλάζω, v. supra, ναρδόσταχυς* found in Galen) which are not to be found in every age and class of Greek literature, while of those in 2 Peter, 24 are not found in the classical period and many of those called classical are very rare. From the bold rough language of the Apostle we pass in this Apocalypse to the vernacular of the city, of which *τηγανίζω* of Posidippus of the New Comedy and *τόκοι τόκων* of the money lenders are types.

Such is the difference of atmosphere, spiritual and verbal, such the inferiority of tone and character, such the lack of usefulness and "necessary doctrine," such the compliance with the spirit of the age, with its love for infernos of the crudest type and its morbid curiosity to pry into what the Apostle was content to describe as a "new heaven and a new earth," that no more than in the ancient Church is surprise to be caused by the discovery of certain phrases resembling others in 2 Peter. On the contrary, they may be regarded as mere decoys for those with whom the author intended his work to pass as St. Peter's.

Mr. M. R. James has made a collection of these resemblances. A microscopic study of any piece of literature will cause us to fancy resemblances where they do not always exist. We shall consider them in order.

Πολλοὶ ἐξ αὐτῶν ἔσονται ψευδοπροφήται—no doubt from Mark xiii. 22, where they are used by the same speaker and preface an apocalypse, and, together with "behold, I have told you all things beforehand," would justify ascribing the discourse following to Christ. At the same time they recalled 2 Peter ii. 1, and did double duty. *Ψευδιδάσκαλος*, peculiar to 2 Peter, is not used.

Καὶ δόγματα τῆς ἀπωλείας διδάξουσιν. The last words, derived from St. Mark, recalled 2 Peter ii. 1, and with it also *οὔτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἵρεσεις ἀπωλείας*, which fell in exactly with the requirements of the passage. If intentionally copied, both would lend verisimilitude to the claim of genuineness.

Δοκιμάζοντας τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς—a fortuitous connection with *ψυχὴν δικαίαν ἐβάσανιζεν*, where the idea is that of vexing, annoying, while here it is of trying, testing, proving, recalling (1 Pet. i. 7) *λυπηθέντες ἐν π. π. ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμ. τ. πίστεως . . . διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου κ.τ.λ.* The trial in 1 Peter is also with a view to the revelation of Jesus Christ, as also in 2 Thessalonians i. 7-9, which two passages may have suggested the proving of the souls and the concomitant punishment of the wicked (2 Thess. i. 8), whence *ὁ θεὸς κρινεῖ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀνομίας* may have no designed connection with *οἷς τὸ κρίμα ἔκπαλαι οὐκ ἄργει*, in which bold expression there is nothing to suggest identity of authorship with the first.

Τὸ ὄρος—this is compared with 2 Peter i. 18, *σὺν αὐτῷ ὄντες ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει*; but Christ's being on a mountain was a common event. Perhaps, however, the key to the matter lies here. Mr. James ascribes the Apocalyptic discourse to the post-resurrection period. Was not the scene described in sec. 3 suggested by the Transfiguration with its apparition of two men? It was on a mountain when, as here, Jesus had gone to pray (Luke ix. 28). The author of the Apocalypse, seeing the reference to the Transfiguration in 2 Peter, and seeing it used evidentially, pieced his Revelation into that time on the Mount when events might have occurred of which St. Peter would be the most fitting narrator. "Twelve" disciples is equally inaccurate after the Resurrection; twelve had become in the second century a stereotyped number for the original band, whence the same error in the "Gospel." Indeed, "twelve" is more

likely when the number existed, though only three were present. Mr. James' reasons are: (1) the Apostle's request implies they had received a commission to preach, and (2) "Let us go to the mountain to pray" coming after the discourse implies a date other than that of St. Matthew xxiv. But the disciples had received a commission before the Transfiguration, and the author is probably "reading in" the Peter as subsequently known. It was natural to make the Transfiguration an answer to Peter's request and take advantage of the authentic narrative. So it was not Matthew xxiv., nor an invented occasion, but St. Luke ix. Sec. 1 shows such a patchwork of Scripture, and the whole such a scrap-album of popular infernos, that the writer may be acquitted of originality even in the time of the supposed event. It is an apocryphal insertion, like the Song of the Three Children suggested by a passage in the Petrine work.

Τῶν ἐξεληθόντων ἀπὸ τοῦ κόσμου is compared with *μετὰ τὴν ἐμὴν ἔξοδον*, and may be explained by the previous reference to the Transfiguration immediately following in 2 Peter. But if we can build nothing on Irenæus' use of *ἔξοδος* when actually referring to the same event—Peter's death—there is less reason for detecting a reference to *ἔξοδος* in *ἐξέρχομαι*. Had it never occurred in 2 Peter, *ἐξέρχομαι* would still have been used, and might as well be traced to St. Paul's *ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελεθῆναι*.

Ποταποὶ εἰσι τὴν μορφὴν is compared with *ποταποὺς δεῖ ὑπάρχειν ὑμᾶς*, but, as in the cases of *ψευδοπροφηταί*, *ἀπωλεία* and *ὄρος*, it is a mere verbal resemblance which might as well be used to establish a connection with St. Mark xiii. 1, where *ποταπός* is twice used, as in the Apocalypse, of an external condition, and not, as in 2 Peter, of an internal moral state.

Τόπον ἀύχμηρόν is set beside 2 Peter i. 19, *ἐν ἀύχμηρῷ τόπῳ*. Perhaps this is from the Epistle as exactly suiting the case, or perhaps it was as necessary a term as "squali-

dus" in describing the place of torment. The single use of *ἀύχμηρός* in the New Testament is no more index to its rarity than is the case with *νή*, *μήτιγε*, *μηδέποτε*, *τοιόσδε*, *ὄς*, each only found in one epistle. *Αύχμηρός* is found in Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Xenophon, etc., with whose vocabulary the writer of this Apocalypse seems better acquainted than does the writer of 2 Peter.

Οἱ βλασφημοῦντες τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης is most probably taken from *δι' οὓς ἡ ὁδὸς τῆς ἀληθείας βλασφημηθήσεται* (2 Pet. ii. 2), because it was necessary in the enumeration of classes of persons undergoing punishment for those to appear to whose condemnation 2 Peter ii. is devoted. Without this the work might not have passed as Petrine.

Κολαζόμενοι is used by both writers, but is scarcely a "coincidence," for the word is inevitable in such a work, especially coming after *ἦν τόπος κολάσεως*.

Βόρβορος and *ἐκυλίοντο*, occurring at some distance from each other (secs. 8 and 13), appear to Mr. James connected with *εἰς κυλισμὸν βορβόρου* (2 Pet. ii. 22). Of course the quotation in 2 Peter was equally open to every one; but the detached position of the words, and their perfectly literal application do not seem to point to the writer having had the proverb in his mind. *Βόρβορος*, like *ἀύχμηρός* was a necessity in an Inferno. Rolling in filthy rags was a sign of utter abandonment, since Priam; *κυλίω* occurs in Mark ix. 20, the Transfiguration chapter. The proverb is used by Epictetus (Dissert. iv. 11, 29).

With the exception of adultery the references to impurity in 2 Peter are very vague and general, whereas the Apocalypse goes into very unsavoury details with no resemblance to St. Peter in tone or language beyond *μοιχεία* and *μιάσμα*, which latter word, though occurring in no other New Testament book, was very common and inevitable in an Inferno. There must be a resemblance in all references to the crimes of the age.

Ἀμελήσαντες τῆς ἐντολῆς τοῦ θεοῦ. This class of offenders, like οἱ βλασφημοῦντες, may have been inserted because mentioned in 2 Peter, and ὁδὸς τῆς δικαιοσύνης may have suggested them (*vide* 2 Pet. ii. 21). Yet ἐντολή or ἐντολή Θεοῦ was the regular word for God's commands or the moral precepts enjoined by Christianity, and is frequent in the Johannine writings (cf. 1 Cor. vii. 19; 1 Tim. vi. 14; Polycarp, Phil. 5, etc.). It has as much connection with Mark vii. 8, ἀφέντες τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ, where alone the combination occurs in the New Testament (cf. ἀφέντες τὴν ὁδόν, Apoc. 20).

In fragment 2 there is an undoubted reference to Isaiah xxxiv. 4, either directly or through 2 Peter, and belongs to the cases of employment of the Epistle mentioned above.

The connection between Clement of Alexandria's remark on the nature of the punishments, ἐκ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν γεννᾶσθαι τὰς κολάσεις) φησιν and the apparently proverbial ᾧ γὰρ τις ἥττηται, τοῦτω δεδούλωται is scarcely established. Clement says the Apocalypse represents the nature of the punishment as determined by the nature of the sin. 2 Peter ii. 19 says that a man is in real moral bondage to the sin which he fosters, the idea of punishment not being present to the writer's mind, however much it may be inherent, since bondage to a sin is a punishment, but not the external punishment meant in the Apocalypse.

The result of this investigation appears to be that while certain resemblances exist, they are less than have been represented. Between the two works there is a radical difference in style, tone, language and morale, showing a completely different source; while upon the spurious work have been stitched pieces of another garment easily betraying their adventitious source. The difference in testimony, internal as to character and external as to history, forces upon us the conviction that the author of the Apocalypse sought Petrine authority for his production by a

parade of "coincidences" with the second Epistle, testifying thereby to the earlier existence and at least partial acceptance of the latter.

As St. Peter's reference to the Transfiguration as an evidence supplied the idea and perhaps the time for the revelation, so did the mention of the spirits in prison and the destruction of the world by fire, showing St. Peter to be in possession of peculiar information, lend further reason for attributing the Apocalypse to that Apostle. Also we see a realization of the promised punishments in 2 Peter ii. 1, 9, 10, 12.

A forger composing the Epistle after the Apocalypse would not have omitted all reference to such a revelation vouchsafed to him alone. It may be said that neither does St. John, but St. John's Revelation was genuine, and was separated by a long interval from the Gospel. A forger must show some connection on the surface. Besides, St. John's vision occurred in a period lying outside that covered by the Gospel. St. Paul mentions his vision to inspire confidence; it is unlikely the writer of 2 Peter would have omitted *his* when to inspire confidence he mentions the Transfiguration. 2 Peter claims identity of authorship with 1 Peter; it is strange that it should be so ignorant of a far more wonderful production claiming to come from the same pen. The explanation is, that the author of the Epistle wrote when this Apocalypse was not yet in existence; he had written no such work nor had had any such vision.

Thus the early date of the Apocalypse provides an earlier date for Second Peter.

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