

ARTICLE II.

THE CANONICITY OF SECOND PETER.

The question which we propose is a purely historical one. The Canon of the New Testament is a definite collection of books; 2 Peter is found to occupy a place in it. The question is, Was it always there, or has it been foisted unrighteously into a place to which it has no claim? This is a historical question, and is to be settled on appropriate historical evidence. It is a question, however, of vast dogmatic interest. Perhaps it may be said that the settlement of it means the settlement of the Canon. It is admitted on all hands that the evidence for the canonicity of 2 Peter is less cogent than that for any other New Testament book,—not, perhaps, less in amount (2 John and Philemon have less), but less proportionately to its length and importance. If the evidence for 2 Peter can be shown to be sufficient and convincing, therefore, the greater evidence capable of being adduced for the other books will be readily seen to be of overwhelming power. It is thus of especial importance that we examine with particular care the testimony for it, both that we may hold correct opinions as to its own authority, and that we may obtain a practical standard by which to estimate the strength of the evidence for the other books.

It is essential to the canonicity of a New Testament book that it should have been given to the Church by the apostles as of divine authority. But we cannot at this day hear the apostolic voice in its authorisation. Beyond what witness one apostolic book was to bear to another—as Paul in 1 Tim. v. 18 authenticates Luke—and what witness an apostolic book may bear to itself, we cannot appeal at this day to immediate apostolic authorisation. In the case of 2 Peter the first of these testimonies fails, and the second is not of itself and by itself sufficient to satisfy doubt, but only when connected with some external presumption that the Epistle may be what it asserts. We have no resource, then, but to seek to resolve the question of its apostolic gift to the church indirectly. To do this we must make two queries: Is

the letter old enough to have been written by an apostle? Has the Church from its beginning held it as a part of the authoritative rule of faith? If these two questions are answered in the affirmative, the presumption is overwhelming that the Church thus from the apostolic age held it to be divine only because it had received it from the apostles as divine. If the internal evidence is found to corroborate this, and no adequate rebutting evidence is produced, the position of the Epistle in the Canon will be seen to be so secure that it will amount to self-stultification to oppose it.

I. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY DATE OF II. PETER.

It is admitted on all hands that the veritable 2 Peter which we now have, was, at the opening of the third century, in the hands of ORIGEN. This, indeed, is reiteratedly plain. He not only quotes its words, but he quotes them as Peter's,¹ and as Scripture,² he distinguishes it from 1 Peter³ and combines it as equally Peter's with the first Epistle;⁴ he clearly and distinctly names both together.⁵ Although, therefore, he mentions the fact that there were some doubts abroad with reference to the Epistle's genuineness, the way in which Origen speaks of the letter and uses it clearly indicates this fact—that it was generally received at this time as Peter's and Scripture. Now, it is not possible to believe that a book so dealt with by Origen was manufactured or first became widely known in his own day. We would *a priori* expect his older contemporary and preceptor, CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, to have also known it. We are consequently not surprised to find that this was the fact. Eusebius⁶ tells us that "Clement, in his 'Out-

¹Comm. in Ep. Ro. (Migne, IV., 1179): "*Et Petrus in epistola sua dicit* (2 P. i. 2)."

²In Numer. Iiom. (II., 676) : "*Et ut ait quodam in loco scriptura* (2 P. ii. 16)."

³Comm. in Matt., T. 15 (III., 1333): "Απο τε τῆς πρώτης ἐπιστολῆς (1 P. 1, 8).

⁴Add to ² above: "*Et iterum alibi* (1, P. iv. 10)."

⁵Eus. II. E., VI., 25: "Peter left behind one Epistle that is ὁμολογούμενην ἔστω δὲ καὶ δεύτεραν· ἀμαβάλλεται γαρ. So also in *Lib. Jesu*, Nov. Hom., 8 (Migne II., 857).

⁶H. E., VI., 14.

lines,' has given, to speak generally, concise explanations of all the Canonical Scriptures without omitting the disputed books—I mean the Epistle of Jude, and the other catholic Epistles; as well as the Epistle of Barnabas and the so-called Revelation of Peter." This testimony is supported by Cassiodorus¹ and Photius.² It may, therefore, be accepted as indubitable and the conclusion drawn confidently that Clement had our 2 Peter probably (or, rather, according to Eusebius, certainly) among the Scriptures, and that he even wrote a commentary on it.

The mass of modern critics would have us believe that this is as far as we can go, and that Clement marks the earliest trace of our Epistle. So Credner and Hilgenfeld expressly, while Bleek and Reuss would go farther and throw doubt even on Clement's testimony, and even such men as Alford and Westcott are in uncertainty. Hence Credner can assign its origin, at the earliest, to the beginning of the second century, and Hilgenfeld, at the earliest, to its middle; while Bleek wavers between the two opinions, although inclining to the former. That the later date, as assigned by Hilgenfeld and the majority of his school, is untenable, however, is abundantly evident from the data already before us. The basis of the opinion is simply the asserted silence of earlier writers; but the precariousness of the argument from silence may be learned from Clement of Alexandria himself. He possessed the letter and wrote a commentary on it—the proof of this is irrefragable; and yet no mention of it, no evidence of his knowledge of it at all secure,³ can be found in any of his extant

¹*Institutio Divinarum Scripturarum, præf.* (Cf. c. 8., which must be explained by *præf.*)

²Bibl. Cod., 109. He calls the Hypotyposes (or "Outlines") of Clement: Expositions τοῦ θεοῦ Παυλοῦ ἐπιστολῶν καὶ τῶν καθολικῶν καὶ τοῦ ἐκκλησιαστικοῦ. All sorts of conjectures have been hazarded to explain this last term; plainly it includes the Epistle of Barnabas and Revelation of Peter given in Eusebius's statement. May it be simply a scribe's error for τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν, meaning "the ecclesiastical books" in Rufinus's sense?

³The passage often adduced: *Cohort ad Gentes*, p. 66, ed. Sylb., would be a most probable reference, except that it occurs also in Clement of Rome, whence Clement of Alexandria, who used freely the works of his namesake, may have obtained it. See below (the passage adduced from Clement Ro. XXXV., 5).

writings. This should teach us a lesson as to the value of the argument from silence. On the other hand, it is impossible to square the mere fact that Clement has written a commentary on Second Peter—a book bearing the name of Peter and hence either considered genuine by him, or else a malicious forgery—with the assertion that it was first published during Clement’s own life-time. We may go still farther. The usage of the book by Origen is of such a character as, taken in connection with the fact of Clement’s commenting on it, to exhibit it as a part of Clement’s Canon of Scripture. The farther evidence in the case points to the same conclusion. But Clement’s Canon was not a private collection, but the same that was held by the whole Church; and the mere fact that the book formed a part of the Church Canon of the later part of the second century throws a strong probability on the supposition that it had always been part of it, and hence was as old as the apostolic age. To feel this we have only to listen to Clement’s professions. He declares that he had travelled far and sat under many teachers of many names, and he holds only those books which he had found everywhere clung to as those which had come down from the apostles. If we had no further evidence than Clement’s, therefore, a probability of the apostolical origin of 2 Peter would already exist, such as would require some weighty evidence to overturn. The burden of proof would certainly rest on those who denied its canonicity.

The question still remains, however, whether the assertion is true that there is no earlier evidence than Clement’s for 2 Peter. Reuss hints that “Apologists” have gone so far in seeking older witnesses as, in reality, to refer any trace of Christianity in the second century to this Epistle, as if “that century could have obtained Christianity from no other source than 2 Peter.” How far this sarcasm is deserved may be best determined by examining the parallels actually adduced by “Apologists.”

We begin, then, with IRENÆUS, an older contemporary of Clement’s. In the third book (chapter 1) of his great work against Heresies, we meet with the first seeming allusion. Peter (2 Peter i. 15) had spoken of something that he intended to have done $\mu\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\ \tau\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\eta\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\xi\omicron\delta\omicron\nu$. Irenæus, speaking of *Peter* and

Paul, remarks on what happened μετὰ δὲ τὴν τουτῶν ἔξοδον. Now this is a very unusual expression, and in Irenæus' mouth it has been repeatedly misunderstood. Does it not seem to have been suggested by Peter's words? Reading further, we come in the fourth book (chapter xxxvi. 4) to another passage in which he adduces Noah, then Sodom and Gomorrah, and Lot, to show that God will punish the wicked and save the holy. Our minds go immediately to 2 Peter ii. 4-7, whence the framing of this passage seems to have been derived. Already a presumption for Irenæus's use of our epistle is raised. This is lifted to an exceedingly high degree when we read his fifth book (chapter xxviii. 3) and read that the world shall last a thousand years for every day consumed in its creation—ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα Κυρίου ὡς χίλια ἔτη—a passage which irresistibly suggests 2 P. iii. 8. There the creation of the world had been discoursed upon (v. 5), and its destruction (v. 6 and 7); ὅτι μία ἡμέρα παρὰ Κυρίῳ ὡς χίλια ἔτη. We are told, indeed, that the resemblance is due not to dependence of one upon the other, but a mutual dependence on Ps. xc. 4. But Ps. xc. 4 reads: ὅτι χίλια ἔτη ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς σου ὡς ἡ ἡμέρα ἢ ἐχθὲς ἥτις διήλθε, which presents a very diverse, not to say directly opposite thought. The passage in 2 Peter depends on this Psalm and the next clause to that quoted above becomes a quotation from the Psalm. But Irenæus's statement follows, not the Psalm nor Peter's quotation from the Psalm, but Peter's *inference* from the Psalm, and that almost verbally; and it seems morally certain that it must have come, directly or indirectly, from 2 Peter. The argument is strengthened by the fact that in V. 23, 2, Irenæus repeats the same statement, and as coming from a respected source. It seems clear that we are justified in modestly asserting that the probability that Irenæus possessed 2 Peter amounts to a moral certainty.

It is, indeed, replied that a phrase which occurs in IV. 9, 2, where Irenæus quotes 1 Peter with the formula: "*Peteus ait in epistola sua,*" excludes any knowledge on the part of the writer of a 2 Peter also. We may waive any question of the genuineness of the words, and answer simply that this may be a very convincing argument against Irenæus's care and scholarly accuracy in

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distinguishing the special epistle he meant, but it cannot disprove his knowledge of an epistle which he has elsewhere quoted. It may be astounding to the critics, and yet it is true, that just such a loose method of quoting was most common in Irenæus's day. Irenæus certainly knew 2 John—he quotes it explicitly and by name (I. 16, 3, and 111. 16, 8)—and yet he quotes 1 John (III. 16, 5 and 8) just as he quotes 1 Peter (*in epistola sua, ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ.*) Shall we say that this excludes the knowledge of 2 John? Then again, Cyprian quotes 1 Peter after the same fashion, and yet his correspondent, Firmilian, has no difficulty in quoting 2 Peter in a letter to him. Did these two old hob-nobbing bishops possess distinct and different canons? Still again, at the seventh Council of Carthage, at which Cyprian was present, one bishop is found quoting 1 John as “his epistle,” and immediately afterwards Aurelius is represented as quoting 2 John after the same fashion: “*Johannes apostolus in epistola sua poscit, dicens,*” (2 John x. 11), so that it appears that not only 1 John but 2 John also, and both together at the same time and place, could be cited in these obnoxious words. Other evidence of the same kind is abundant; but we need only adduce further a clinching fact from Origen, who is able to quote both 1 Peter and 2 Peter with the same formula, as may be seen by referring to the first quotation given from him at the beginning of this paper. The fact is, these ancient brethren were very much like us moderns, and used very free and general forms of speech. Certainly no argument from Irenæus's use of the phrase can be drawn to weaken the evidence for his knowledge of 2 Peter.

Going a few years further back into the second century, we find a passage in the writings of THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH which bears all the appearance of being a reminiscence from 2 Peter. We do not refer to *Ad Autolyicum*, II. 9, which is usually quoted as parallel to 2 Peter i. 21, but to the following passage from *Ad Autolyc.*, II. 13: “The *διάταξις* of God, therefore—this is *his word*, φαίνων ὡσπερ λύχνος ἐν οἰκῆματι συνεχομένῳ ἐφώτισεν τὴν ὑπ' οὐρανόν.” The resemblance of this to 2 Peter i. 19 is too, great to be overlooked, and cannot be wholly vitiated by an appeal to 4 Esdras xii. 42 (*tu enim nobis superasti ex omnibus prophetis—sicut*

lucerna in loco obscuro). We may at least claim that we have here a probable reference.

In some writings of a still older contemporary of Irenæus', MELITO OF SARDIS, preserved to us in a Syriac translation, we meet with a striking passage which seems to show dependence on 2 Peter iii. 5-7 and 10-12. In the translation of Dr. Westcott¹ it runs as follows: "There was a flood of waters. . . . So also shall it be at the last time; there shall be a flood of fire, and the earth shall be burnt up together with its mountains, and men shall be burnt up together with their idols which they have made and the graven images which they have worshipped; and the sea together with its isles shall be burnt up; and the just shall be delivered from the fury like their fellows in the ark from the waters of the deluge." Perhaps it is within the bounds of moderation to hold that this *probably* is a reminiscence of 2 Peter.

During the period which stretches back between Melito and A. D. 120, we find parallels between 2 Peter and three writers: Hermas, Justin, and Pseudo-Clement. That from 2 Clement, however, is scarcely worth pleading (2 Clem. xvi. 3, and 2 P. iii. 7); at best this may possibly depend on that. Those from HERMAS are much more striking and are certainly sufficient to raise a very strong presumption that Hermas had 2 Peter. They are three: Vis. iv. 3, 4, "Ye who have escaped from this world," Compare 2 Peter ii. 20; Vis. iii. 7, 1, "abandoned the true way." Compare 2 Peter ii. 15 (ii. 2); and much more important, Simil. vi. 4, last part: τῆς τρυφῆς καὶ τὰ ἀπατῆς ὁ χρόνος ὥρα ἐστὶ μία· τῆς δὲ βασάνου ὥραι τριάκοντα ἡμερῶν δύναμις ἔχουσαι. Ἐάν οὖν μίαν ἡμέραν τις τρυφήσῃ καὶ ἀπατηθῇ. Compare 2 Peter ii. 13: τῆν ἐν ἡμέρα τρύφην. . . . ἐν τρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν. Much stronger still are those urged from JUSTIN. In Dial. c. 81, we read: Συνήκαμεν καὶ τὸ εἰρήμειον ὅτι Ἡμέρα Κυρίου ὡς χίλια ἔτη, εἰς τοῦτο συνάγειν, which, like the parallel passage in Irenæus, must be assigned to 2 Peter iii. 8 as its source. Again in Dial. c. 82, we read: "In the same manner also as there were ψευδοπροφήται among the holy prophets that were with you, so also among us now are also many, ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, of whom our Lord forewarned us." But where can this forewarning be found?

¹*On the Canon*, 3d Ed., p. 202, note 2.

Does it exist anywhere but in 2 Pet. ii. 1 (*cf.* i. 21): “But there were ψευδοπροφήται among the people, as also among you shall be ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, who shall subintroduce damnable, heresies”? It is exceedingly difficult to see how there can be any reasonable doubt but that these passages are drawn from 2 Peter. And if so, it is noticeable that Justin refers to 2 Peter with respect, as Scripture, as, practically, the words of the Lord—in a word, as an authoritative book giving the Lord’s teaching. All that was said above about the value of Clement’s testimony may, therefore, be transferred now to Justin’s, with this difference, that the period now before us is the years before A. D. 147, instead of after 195. It will not be surprising, therefore, if we find testimonies for 2 Peter in the next earlier age.

From this next age—called the sub-apostolic, because the next succeeding to that in which the Apostles lived—and stretching from the apostolic age to A. D. 120, parallels have been adduced with 2 Peter from the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs, Polycarp, Barnabas, and Clement of Rome. That from Polycarp (iii. 2, with 2 P. iii. 15, 16,) may be passed over as only possibly derived from 2 Peter. Those from the TEST. XII. PATT. are more striking and render it probable that the author had and used 2 Peter. They are such as the very rare phrase μiasμοῖς [Oxford MS.—μιάσμασι] τῆς γῆς in Benj. 8, *cf.* 2 P. ii. 20—a phrase found in 2 Peter only in the New Testament and in the Test. xii. Pant., only in its age; the rare phrase τοῦ πλάττειν λόγους in Reuben 3, which seems to have been suggested by 2 P. ii. 3; the use of τήρειν in Reuben 5, just as it is used in 2 P. ii. 9, and some peculiarities of vocabulary common to the two writings; all of which combined raise a probability of some force of dependence on 2 Peter.¹

The parallel with BARNABAS seems decisive as to the earlier existence of 2 Peter; and it is difficult to see how assent can be withheld from the statement, that we have here a plain reference to 2 Peter. We read in Barn. xv. 4: ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα παρ’ αὐτῷ χίλια ἔτη, αὐτος δὲ μοι μαρτυρεῖ λέγων· Ἴδὸν σήμερον ἡμέρα ἔσται ὡς χίλια ἔτη. It

¹These points are fully stated in PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, January, 1880, p. 65.

is to be observed that the closeness of Barnabas to 2 P. iii. 8, is greater than was the case in the like parallel in either Irenæus or Justin. What was said there is therefore *a fortiori* strong here. Nor can the difference of context in Barnabas be urged against his dependence on 2 Peter;¹ this is too characteristic of Barnabas elsewhere to be of any importance here.

The case with the parallels in CLEMENT OF ROME is not quite so plain. We have, first, Noah and Lot adduced in vii. 5, and xi. 1, similarly to what is done in 2 Peter ii. 5-9. And then we have two passages: ix. 2, "Let us fix our eyes on them that ministered perfectly τῆ μεγαλοπρεπεῖ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ, compared with 2 P. i. 17; and xxxv. 5, τῆ ὁδῶ τῆς ἀληθείας, compared with 2 P. ii. 2—the strength of which rests in this fact: that in each case a very rare and peculiar phrase occurs, peculiar in the New Testament to 2 Peter, and in the sub-apostolic age to Clement. Certainly this is

¹There is a great deal of error abroad as to what and how much is needful to prove literary dependence. We need greatly a full, well-thought-out essay on the general question of literary dependence—its proofs, marks, and signs. Dr. Sandal in his "Gospels in the Second century," has made a fair beginning as to the question, With how much looseness may a second century father be allowed to quote and his quotation be recognised? But all is not done yet that is essential. Something is wrong or insufficient in the general understanding of this subject when men will universally and immediately recognise this passage as exhibiting dependence on Matthew—"All this preliminary ferment, then, [speaking of the brood of American poets in the second quarter of the nineteenth century] was in some way needful. The experiments of many who thought themselves called, enabled the few who were chosen to find motives and occasions for work of real import."—(*Mr. Stedman in Scribner for October, 1881 p. 821*), and yet at the same time will doubt or deny any dependence on the same passage in the following—Ὡς γέγραπται, πολλοὶ κλητοὶ, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ εὐρεθῶμεν—(*Ep. of Barnabas, iv. 14*), or doubt or deny a dependence on 2 Peter in the passages in the text. Is Mr. Stedman's *context* a voucher for his borrowing from Matthew? Or is there something in being a nineteenth century writer, and in English, which renders it more probable that he should quote from the New Testament, than if he were a second century writer and a Greek? Certainly something is wrong with the critics. *Or is it that Mr. Stedman's passage does not help the "Apologists," while Barnabas's does?* We are ashamed to even think such a thing.

enough to raise some probability that as early as 97 A. D., Clement had and borrowed a peculiar phraseology from 2 Peter.

Now, it must have been already observed that these parallels do not turn, as Reuss sneers, on Christian commonplaces, but that they contain marked peculiarities of phraseology and thought. Some of them seem insoluble save by—all of them easiest soluble by—the assumption of dependence on 2 Peter. If we had, earlier than Clement of Alexandria, only the probable references of Theophilus, Melito, Hermas, Test. xii. Patt., and Clement of Rome, the only rational course would be to ascribe 2 Peter to the first century and to the apostolic period. The presumption of its early date thus raised would be convincingly strong. Yet this is but the weaker half of our evidence. To a moral certainty 2 Peter was used by Irenæus (A. D. 175), Justin Martyr (c. 147), and Barnabas (c. 106). One probable quotation from the early second century would have so supported the inference flowing from the testimony of Clement of Alexandria and Origen as to render the first century origin of the book the only probable hypothesis. Instead of that we have fifteen or sixteen quotations. The two earliest of the post-apostolic writers both furnish references: the one such as almost demonstrates his use of the book, the other such as raises his use of it to a high degree of probability. There are no earlier witnesses to call. How can we fail to see that to a moral certainty 2 Peter came from the first century, and may very well, therefore, have sprung from the bosom of the apostolical circle?

II. EXTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY ACCEPTANCE OF THE EPISTLE AS CANONICAL.

In seeking to discover the attitude of the early Church toward 2 Peter, too much cannot possibly be made of the fact that this Epistle was finally accepted as genuinely Peter's and part of the Canon by the whole Church. On the theory of its ungenueness (which implies uncanonicity) this is exceedingly difficult to account for. And this agreement as to its canonicity extends back certainly to the *fourth century*, in which, with the exception of

one branch of the Church only, 2 Peter was universally accepted as part of the Canon. The Byzantine, Alexandrian, and Western branches of the Church had at this time all accepted and were all holding confidently to this Epistle as of divine authority. The Syriac Church alone had omitted it from her canon. Not only is it found in those great monuments of the New Testament text as it existed in the fourth century, without a word or sign to distinguish it from the other books,¹ codices B and X; but it is witnessed to as existing in the Church Canon by the great writers of the day—by Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Epiphanius, by Athanasius, by Augustine, Rufinus, Jerome, Philastrius, by the third Council of Carthage, by the [Canons of Laodicea], Adamantius, Synopsis Athanasii, the Decreta of Damasus, Gelasius, and Hormisdas, the apostolical canons, and so on, down to our own time. Now, it has been well said that such a general support yielded to a book in the fourth century is an antecedent proof of the truth of its claims, so that with regard to it the question is not, What further proof have we for its canonicity? but rather, What proof have we which will justify us in putting it out of the Canon, authenticated as the Canon of the fourth century, as a whole, is?² Beyond all controversy this is a true position. That a book held so firm a position in the fourth century Canon is presumptive proof that it belonged of right in it; and this presumption is valid to determine our faith and rational assent unless it be set aside by cogent reasons. The question, therefore, is *not*, Independently of this presumption, what sufficient grounds have we for placing 2 Peter in the Canon? *but*, What sufficient grounds have we for putting it out of the Canon, where it seems so firmly instated?

Three facts have been and may be pleaded as such grounds: (1) The absence of the book from the Syriac Canon. (2) The doubts expressed concerning it by fourth century and earlier writers; and (3) The small amount of very early evidence for the existence of the book. Some remarks on each of these assertions will be proper.

¹In B the marginal marks of division are lacking.

²Westcott on the Canon, p. 319.

(1) It is to be admitted that 2 Peter was absent from the Syrian Canon current in the late fourth century, and after. Chrysostom accepts only three catholic epistles; Amphilochius of Iconium, in his catalogue, while mentioning that some accepted seven, mentions also that some accepted only three. Junilius himself accepts only two, though he admits that *quamplurimi* in his day accepted seven. Even as late a writer as Ebed Jesu (14th century) confines the catholic epistles to only three. Still further the Peshito version, as it comes down to us, in all its copies of any weight of evidence, omits the same four catholic epistles (together with the Apocalypse) which all these writers omit. And the loose and manifestly exaggerated remarks of Leontius of Byzantium¹ are doubtless to be understood as classing Theodore of Mopsuestia with this Syriac school. It is clear, therefore, that from the fourth century the Syriac Church omitted 2 Peter from her Canon. On the other hand, however, it is remarked that, even if this truly represented the original Syriac Canon, it would be the testimony of only one corner of the Church and could not overbear the testimony of the whole of the rest; but in truth it is more than doubtful whether the early Syriac Church rejected these epistles. Chrysostom is the earliest witness to the shorter form of the Syriac Canon, while earlier than his time that Canon seems to have included all of our New Testament books. Thus *Ephraem Syrus*, of the preceding generation, confessedly possessed all seven catholic epistles and the Revelation in an older Syriac translation of ecclesiastical authority.² He is our earliest witness to the Peshito. The original Peshito is therefore admitted by such critics as Thiersch, Lücke, and even Hilgenfeld, to have doubtless contained the omitted books, while the form in which it was possessed by Chrysostom represents the result of a

¹*Contra Nestor. et Eutyech. lit. III.* (Galland. *Biblio. XII.*, 686 seq.) Compare also the wild statements of Kosmas' Indicopleustes.

²See Hilgenfeld's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 111, 112, 122, and the authorities there quoted. Ephraem's use of 2 Peter may be noted in *Opp. Syr.*, T. II., p. 342. *Græc.*, T. II., p. 387.

critical Antiochene revision of the fourth century.¹ This conclusion, sound in itself and in its own right, is yet still farther borne out by two further considerations: The later Syriac Church was not agreed as to the number of the catholic epistles—the school of Nisibis (represented by Junilius) accepting only two; and this diversity can be best accounted for by the supposition that the objection proceeded on critical grounds, and critical grounds were for each individual to determine also how much was to be rejected. And the earlier Syrian writers certainly possessed and esteemed the rejected books. Thus Theophilus of Antioch (168-180) had 2 Peter and Revelation,² Malchion had Jude,³ and Pamphilus had Revelation,⁴ (which he assigned to John,) and seemingly also the whole seven of the catholic epistles.⁵ The testimony of the early Syrian Church, therefore, is for our completed Canon; and the omission of 2 Peter from the later fourth century Syrian Canon resolves itself simply into another case of fourth century critical doubts.

(2) The doubts expressed by certain of the fourth century writers constitute the most serious objection to the force of the fourth century evidence for the genuineness of the epistle. Reported by Eusebius at Constantinople and Didymus at Alexandria,—acted on, as we have seen, by the Syrian Church,—repeated by Jerome in Italy,—the air seems heavy with them. Nor were they of late origin. Early in the third century, Origen, in one brief statement, lets us see that they existed even then. It is necessary, therefore, that we should give them detailed attention.

¹It has been customary to say that Ephraem witnesses to a Greek, not the Syrian Canon (so Westcott). But it is clear that his Canon all existed in Syriac, and it is doubtful how far his knowledge even of the Greek language extended. See Smith and Wace's *Dict. of Christ. Biog.* II., 142 and 143, for a just estimate of his Greek learning.

²Eus. H. E., IV., 24.

³Eus. H. E., VII., 30.

⁴Pamph. *Apol.*, VII.

⁵Westcott, p. 362.

In his catalogue of New Testament books,¹ which, as a formal passage, must take precedence of all others, Eusebius arranges 2 Peter among the Antilegomena or disputed books. This, however, does not imply more than that it had not passed thus far without having been disputed, and, therefore, adds nothing to our knowledge. He moreover distinctly states that it was among those that had been “recognised by most,” and betrays the fact that his own opinion as to its genuineness was favorable. In brief, therefore, his testimony is that the book is genuine and was held to be such by the Church, although it had been disputed by unnamed individuals on unmentioned grounds.² It cannot be said, therefore, that he raises doubts as to the genuineness of 2 Peter; he simply recognises and records the doubts that had already been raised. Born probably and brought up certainly at Cæsarea, he had been from his earliest childhood in contact with the Syrian Church, and could not but be deeply affected by their critical opinions. He had the writings of Origen in his hands, and quotes the passage in which he communicates the fact that there were doubters of 2 Peter’s genuineness in his day. There is no reason to believe that what he says of the position of 2 Peter has anything further than this at its base; he had promised to tell us whatever was said by earlier writers about the Antilegomena; and he tells us only of Origen’s remarks against 2 Peter. We may with considerable confidence, therefore, affirm with respect to Eusebius, that he witnesses to the canonical position of

¹II. E., III., 25.

²Canon Westcott has shown (p. 388, *seq.*) that this formal statement must explain the other looser statements of Eusebius. Elsewhere (III., 3,) he declares that the book current under the name of 2 Peter had not been handed down (*παρειλήφμεν*) as *ἐνδιάθετον*, —“still, since it appeared useful to many, it had been diligently read *with the OTHER Scriptures.*” And later, he says somewhat unguardedly and inconsistently: “I recognise only one Epistle [of Peter] as genuine and acknowledged by the ancient presbyters;” though doubtless he meant the whole predicate here to be taken as one single thought, which would void the inconsistency. However difficult it may be to us to harmonise all this perfectly, it is clear that the passage given in the text, as being the only formal statement, must be the one followed.

2 Peter in the Church of his day,—that his own opinion was favorable to its genuineness,—that while he recognises the fact that it had been disputed, he yet tells us nothing of the grounds on which it had been disputed, and does not imply that he had knowledge of a greater or more wide-spread doubt than we have the items of. In other words, his remarks add nothing to the evidence against the epistle, but do add to the argument for the genuineness of the epistle. The shadows of the doubts whose complete selves could not shake his faith, need not shake ours.

The state of the case with reference to the doubts expressed by Didymus of Alexandria is much the same. He wrote a commentary on this epistle—which is itself a significant fact—at the close of which we find a sentence which in the Latin translation (which has alone come down to us) appears to read as follows: “It ought not, then, to be unknown that the epistle is accounted spurious [*falsatam*, probably a rendering of *νοθεύεται*], which although it is in public use, is nevertheless not in the Canon.”¹ Like the statement of Eusebius, this only recites a fact without giving the grounds on which it is based. But, unlike the case of Eusebius, the fact here stated, if taken strictly, is demonstrably false, and Didymus’ personal opinion seems to be involved in the statement. If the original Greek stated, as the slovenly Latin seems to imply, that in Didymus’ day 2 Peter was not generally considered canonical, then Didymus has simply misinformed his readers. For, after the middle of the fourth century, when he flourished (born 309 or 314) it is confessed on all sides that 2 Peter was in the Church Canon. It is difficult to believe, however, that the Latin accurately represents the original Greek. Didymus uses 2 Peter most fully as Petrine and Scripture, in his work on the Trinity,² and this proves either that he himself

¹Migne, XXXIX., p. 1,774.

²In *De Trinitate*, he calls it a catholic epistle (Ed. Mingarell, p. 234), ascribes it distinctly to Peter (pp. 21, 28, 99, 151, 234), and cites it just like the other Scriptures (pp. 90, 115). Moreover, he cites 1 Peter under that name, thus implying in 2 Peter, (99, 182, 276, 340). It is worth while to note further that he seems to use 2 Peter as genuine, also in the *Enarratio in Ep. Judæ*, in defiance of his (seeming) adverse statement at the end of the *Enarratio* in 2 Peter. It may, perhaps, be worth noting further that the *Enarrationes* were a youthful work.

held it to be genuine, or that he was so accustomed to see it used and to use it as genuine that his critical opinion to the contrary was apt to be forgotten in practice,—that is, that it was generally considered genuine, and had been so considered through a long past. In all probability, Didymus simply repeats his master Origen; and at all events his own use of 2 Peter in his work on the Trinity sucks the poison out of his adverse statement. At the worst, it can only represent the personal opinion of Didymus supported by an anonymous minority, and therefore cannot stand against the faith of the mass of the Church.

Jerome, at last, informs us of the grounds of the early doubts. “Peter wrote,” he tells us,¹ “two epistles which are called catholic; the second of which is denied by very many (*plerisque*) to be his *on account of dissonance of style with the first.*” Jerome is not himself a doubter. His notice is valuable only because it assures us that the doubters of the early Church based their objections on purely *internal*, not *historical* considerations. From this hint we can understand the whole history. This explains why it is that these objections first appear at Alexandria, and why it is that they bore their fruit away in Syria. The Alexandrian school was notable above all others for internal criticism. It was in it that the style of Hebrews and Revelation was first discussed and inferences drawn from the discussion. If this was the source of objection to 2 Peter, it is not strange that objections are first heard of there. The Antiochene school, on the other hand, was the legitimate heir of Alexandrian speculation, and was the first to drive in many matters the critical hints of its predecessor to a practical end. It is not strange, that this same course was followed in this matter also. Jerome thus unties the whole knot for us, and in doing so voids these early objections of their terror. Let there have been many or few affected by them, (and Jerome's “*very many*” doubtless refers to the numbers involved in the rejection by the Syrian Church,) they are, as founded on internal considerations, of no value to us. We appeal to the fathers not for internal but for external arguments; and we can,

¹De Vir. Ill., c. 1.

when all the external testimony is in, examine opinions as to style at our leisure.

Origen, finally, was the earliest writer who mentions doubts as to our epistle; and his words are not unambiguous: "Peter . . . has left behind one epistle which is ὁμολογουμένην; perhaps also a second, for it is disputed."¹ Perhaps no more colorless words could have been chosen. Origen's own opinion cannot be gathered from them, and must remain in doubt. When this statement is taken in connexion with Origen's own practice in regard to the epistle,² it is plain, (1,) that some in Origen's day disputed the genuineness of this epistle, and yet, (2,) it was the usual if not universal habit to think and speak of it as Scripture and Peter's. It is clear from this that it was individuals who doubted, but the Church that received, and that the Church had received it through a long past.

Taking a general review of the early doubts expressed, we are justified in saying that, except the later Syrians, it is difficult to put our finger exactly on the doubters. Didymus possibly, Origen possibly, were among them; but most probably they were not. They are an anonymous body. And they are a minority and a hopelessly small one; in Jerome's day they are very many—before that, plainly few. The grounds of their doubt were purely internal, perhaps solely questions of style. It is plain, therefore, that they are by no means of sufficient importance to rebut the presumption already raised for the genuineness and canonicity of the epistle. The testimony of the Church, as the Church, rings clear and strong above all doubt in favor of the letter.

(3.) While it may be confessed that the evidence for the existence of 2 Peter drawn from writers earlier than Origen, is not as copious as could be desired, it has already been shown that it exists in abundant quantity to prove the letter to be as old as the apostolic times. Further evidence might make this proof more overwhelming, but could not alter its import. It is only where one shuts his eyes to this array of passages and refuses to consider really its meaning and strength, that he can allow himself to

¹Eus. H. E., VI., 25.

²See p. 46 above.

speak of an insufficiency of early references to that book.. The amount of evidence for it seems small, and is in danger of appearing insufficient, only when it is viewed in comparison with the remarkable mass which God has preserved for the chief books of the New Testament. When compared with what is thought—and justly so—amply sufficient to authenticate any other early writing, it looms up before us great and invincible. 2 Peter is to a moral certainty quoted by two writers, and most probably by three or four more, within the first century after its composition; and long before the next century has rolled away, it is fully witnessed to as occupying an assured position in a Canon held all-holy, and thoroughly witnessed to as a whole. Now, Herodotus is quoted but once in the century which followed its composition, but once in the next, not at all in the next, only twice in the next, and not until its fifth century is anything like as fully witnessed to as 2 Peter is in its second. Again, Thucydides is not distinctly quoted, until quite two centuries after its composition; while Tacitus is first cited by Tertullian.¹ Yet no one thinks of disputing the genuineness of Herodotus, Thucydides, or Tacitus. Clement of Alexandria's testimony alone puts 2 Peter on a par with Tacitus; Origen's testimony alone would put it on a better basis than Thucydides stands securely on. Save for the contrast between the testimony for it, and that amazing abundance which stands for the greater New Testament books, it would be simply astonishing how any one could speak of insufficient witness; and that contrast is due not to insufficiency of evidence for 2 Peter, but to astounding over-sufficiency of evidence for the other books.

Thus no one of these lines of argument, nor all together, are able to raise any cogent rebutting evidence against the presumption from the attitude of the fourth century in favor of the book. A strong presumption still remains untouched, that this book thus accepted by the great writers and the Church in general, in that century, was always in the Canon—not to be set aside save on cogent grounds. And, resting on this presumption, we might here rest the case, asking simply for reasons why this book should

¹*Cf.* for these facts Rawlinson's *Hist. Evidences*, p. 376 (American edition).

be ignominiously cast out of the Canon of the fourth century. This question clamors in vain for an answer. Yet the fourth century evidence is not all that can be adduced, and it will be instructive to go farther. We have seen incidentally that the notices of Origen prove that the book was a part of the Church Canon of the early years of the third century. And corroborative witness is at hand. Firmilian, in Asia Minor (†270), quotes it as an authoritative letter of Peter “the blessed apostle,” when writing to Cyprian in North Africa; whence it is hard not to conclude that he could naturally count on Cyprian esteeming it just as he did—in other words, that at this period 2 Peter was part of the Canon of the universal Church. That it was part of the North African Canon of the third century is certain from the fact that it is included in the Claromontanian Stichometry.¹ In Italy, Hippolytus at the same time seems to quote it.² It cannot be denied, therefore, that it was a part of the Church Canon of the early third century; and the evidence goes further and proves that it was *naturally* in the Canon at this time—that the men of the early third century did not *put* it in, but *found* it in the Canon. It was, therefore, in the Canon of the later years of the second century. And indeed this is independently proved. Not only was it known to several authors of the time, but it was commented on by Clement of Alexandria, and has a place in both the Egyptian versions and in the early form of the Peshito, all of which date from the second century.³ No stronger evidence of its canonical authority at the time could be asked. We must shift our question back two centuries then, and ask, What reason exists to degrade 2 Peter from the Canon of the late second century? Known all over the Church at this period and securely fixed in the Canon, we find it quoted here and there, back to the

¹See the proof that this represents the African Canon of the third century in Credner's *Einleitung*, p. 175, and Hilgenfeld's, p. 107.

²*De Antichristo*, c. 2.

³This is the old opinion as to the Peshito; and Dr. Lightfoot has rendered it the most probable date for the others. See also the opinion of Dr. Schaff and of Drs. Westcott and Hort in their new edition of the New Testament.

very earliest Christian writers; nay, Justin Martyr, before 147, quotes it in such a way as to prove that he esteemed it authoritative. What evidence is there which will compel us to revise the decision of the late second century and put the letter out of its Canon? Absolutely nothing is hazarded in asserting that its position in the Canon of this period peremptorily authenticates it as divine. Even were there no trace of it earlier, this would be enough; how much more so, with the traces we have of its earlier possession and estimation! One has but to catch the grounds on which this age held its canon, to be convinced of this. Irenæus tells us that he holds only to what has been handed down from the elders, the companions of the apostles; Clement appeals as boldly to tradition as his only dependence. Now, the teachers of these men were these very companions of the apostles. Polycarp was Irenæus's teacher, and he was the pupil of John. Clement had studied under many masters of the previous generation in all parts of the Church. The one *sine qua non* with all the writers of this age, for the reception of a book as canonical, was that it should come to them from these fathers as having come to them from the bosom of the apostolical circle. That a book was a recognised part of the New Testament of this period, therefore, authenticates it as having come from the elders who could bear personal witness to its apostolicity. So that the witness of the age of Irenæus alone, if fairly wide-spread, is amply sufficient to authenticate any New Testament book. 2 Peter has that witness. And it has more than that: it is independently witnessed to as coming from the apostolic times (Barnabas, Clement of Rome, etc.), and as being esteemed authoritative (Justin). Surely the presumption of its canonicity amounts to a moral certainty.

III. THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE IN FAVOR OF ITS GENUINENESS.

But what witness does the letter bear to itself? The Church has from the beginning held it to be an authoritative letter from Peter; that it is its own witness in this direction. It bears on the forefront the name of Peter, and this is the first thing we note in asking after internal evidence: the letter asserts itself to be by

Peter (i. 1, 14, 16). It is, therefore, either Peter's, or else a base and designing forgery. It cannot be held to be an innocent production which by some mistake has found its way into the Canon; it is either genuinely Peter's, or else it is an embodied lie. Now this raises a very strong presumption in favor of its genuineness. For it is apparent on any reading of it that a very "holy and apostolic spirit breathes through this letter." Not a false note is struck throughout the whole of it. "We feel," says Froumüller with as much truth as eloquence, "that the author stands in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ; that he loves truth above all things (i. 12; i. 3); that he is thoroughly in earnest about Christianity (i. 5); that he fears the judgments of eternity (ii. 1); that he believes in God's justice (ii. 9); that he despises cunningly-devised fables and speaks from a sure, and personal autoptic knowledge (i. 16)." The Epistle's claim to be by Peter is thus reinforced by every mark of honesty in its form and matter.

We note next that what it tells us about its author is in striking harmony with its assertion that he was Peter. Not only does the double name Symeon Peter (with its Hebraic sound) fit, and the character of the writer reflect itself as the impulsive, quick, outspoken Peter of the Evangelists, but there are some minute points of coincidence brought out which certainly identify him. Thus, only three of the disciples witnessed our Lord's transfiguration. The author of this Epistle was one of them (i. 16-18). Can this natural reference to his own experience be the trick of a forger? That seems scarcely credible on the face of it, but it is rendered quite impossible by some minute signs in the context which prove that that scene had burnt itself into the writer's heart. His mind is full of it; it is retransacting itself before his very eyes as he writes; its smallest details are in his mouth as he speaks. We remember that it was Peter who said, "Lord, let us make here three *tabernacles*," and in verse 13 we see a reminiscence of this creeping out: "As long as I am in this *tabernacle*." Immediately after that wonderful scene the Lord had spoken of his ἔξοδος; and in verse 15 we find a reminiscence of this: "after my exodus." No forger could have introduced these reminiscences. Clearly, as the writer approaches the mention of the scene, his mind and

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heart are full of it, and he naturally lets fall these minute reminiscences. The author of this letter seems certainly to have witnessed the transfiguration. Again, only seven of the disciples at most, most likely only two (xxi. 20), possibly only one, heard our Lord's prediction recorded in John xxi. 18. The author of this Epistle is one to whom Jesus had predicted a violent death (i. 14), and this must refer to this prediction. The author of this Epistle was again, therefore, Peter; who could have placed this reminiscence here but Peter

Still again, the writer of this Epistle is the same as the Peter of the Acts. The style of the Epistle is the same as that of the speeches of Peter recorded in the Acts, as is proved by a long series of parallels capable of being adduced between the two,¹ the greater number of which turn on the usage of peculiar (*i. e.*, rare) words or phrases, and therefore present evidence of great convincingness.

Once again, the author of this Epistle was the writer of 1 Peter. In the face of all that has been urged as to the difference of style between the two, we still insist on this. The same character underlies both writings; both are the outflow of an ardent, impulsive, yet chastened heart. The writers of both bear the same relation to Paul and are anxious equally to express approval and recommendation of his teaching; the one quotes his words to a remarkable extent, and has evidently, as one object of his writing, to commend his doctrine (1 Peter v. 12 *et passim*); the other expressly declares its position on this point (2 Peter iii. 2). The writers of both are apt to draw their language from previous sources, not mechanically, but so as to show adoption by, and transmission through, a mind which has grasped at once all that has been said, has felt it through and through, and been so affected by it that it naturally repeats it in its own striking fashion. Thus 1 Peter depends on Romans and Ephesians; thus 2 Peter depends on Jude. The writers of both exhibit a tendency to adduce the *mysteries* of the truth in illustration of their arguments; thus compare I Peter iii. 19, iv. 6, iii. 6, 21, on the one hand, and

¹Alford adduces, *e. g.*: I. 1==Acts 1. 17; 1.3, 6, 7 ==Acts iii. 12; I. 21==Acts ii. 23; II. 8==Acts ii. 29; II. 8==Acts ii. 23; II. 9==Acts x. 2, 7; II. 9==Acts iv. 21; III. 2==Acts v. 32; III. 10==Acts ii. 20, etc.

on the other such passages as 2 Peter iii. 5, 10. That the *same* mysteries are not dwelt on by both does not void the argument, which turns on a quality of mind, the tendency found in both writers to bring forward incidentally the deep things of the kingdom. Still further, the doctrinal teaching of both writers, although adduced for different purposes and therefore expressed in different forms, is precisely the same, not only in ground principles but in modes of presentation, as even Schwegler feels forced to admit.¹ Even minute points of teaching, exhibiting favorite tenets, pass over from one Epistle to the other; this is true of the view as to prophecy (*cf.* 1 Peter i. 10-12 and 2 Peter i. 19-21, iii. 2), of the views of the new birth *through the divine word* (*cf.* 1 Peter i. 22, ii. 2, and 2 Peter i. 4); of the teaching given as to submission to worldly rulers (1 Peter ii. 13, and 2 Peter ii. 10); of the dread expressed of false teachers, etc. The likeness extends even to the use of special words such as κριμα (1 Peter iv. 17 and 2 Peter ii. 3); ἄρετη (1 Peter ii. 9 and 2 Peter i. 3), etc. So that working one farther step we may say that the two Epistles exhibit striking resemblances of style, resemblances much more striking and far-reaching than the differences so freely adduced by many critics. These resemblances are seen not only in peculiar phrases, such as the form of salutation, "Grace and peace *be multiplied*," found in these two Epistles and nowhere else; but also in the recurrence in both of rare combinations, such as ἀμώμου καὶ ἀσπίλου, 1 Peter i. 19, repeated 2 Peter ii. 13 and iii. 14 and nowhere else, and also the common possession of a very peculiar vocabulary such as is represented by the occurrence in both of ἐποπτεύσαντες (1 Peter ii. 12, 2 Peter i. 16), ἰσότιμος (1 Peter i. 7, 19, 2 Peter i. 1, 4), reinforced by the like community in such as φιλαδελφία (1 Peter i. 22, 2 Peter i. 7); χορηγεῖν (1 Peter iv. 11, 2 Peter i. 5, 11); ἀποθεις (1 Peter iii. 21, 2 Peter i. 14); ἄρετη (1 Peter ii. 9, 2 Peter i. 3); ἀναστροφή (1 Peter i. 15, 2 Peter ii. 12); ἀλήθεια in a peculiar sense (1 Peter i. 22, 2 Peter i. 12); κομίεσθαι (1 Peter i. 9, 2 Peter ii. 13), etc.;² all of which are rare words in the New Testament. In the face of such considerations as these,

¹Nachapost. Zeitalter, I. 512, *seq.*

²See Plumptre's Christ and Christendom, p. 345.

it would certainly require very cogent rebutting evidence to convince us that 2 Peter did not come from the same hand which gave us 1 Peter.

Before leaving this general subject, however, we must present two other internal considerations which cannot be passed over, and which possess considerable weight as evidence:

(1). The relation of our Epistle to the Gospel of Mark must be considered. All antiquity tells us that Mark's Gospel bears a special relation to Peter. Now compare 2 Peter ii. 1 and Mark xiii. 22; 2 Peter iii. 17 and Mark xiii. 23; 2 Peter iii. 10 and Mark xiii. 36; 2 Peter iii. 4 and Mark xiii. 19. These are certainly striking parallels; and if 2 Peter preceded Mark in time we may say they are conclusive that Peter wrote this Epistle. Yet there is a still more striking connexion between the two which seems to have all the force of a complex undesigned coincidence. All antiquity tells us that Mark wrote down what Peter orally taught of the Lord's life and teaching; and internal criticism of Mark's Gospel corroborates this external testimony. In 1 Peter v. 13, we find Mark on intimate terms with Peter (*cf.* also for an earlier period, Acts xv. 12). Now in 2 Peter i. 15 the author promises his readers that he will see to it that they shall be in a position after his death to have him teaching always in remembrance, and in this he has especial reference to the *facts* of Christ's life, witnessed to by him, as is proved by the purpose which he expresses for so arranging, namely, that they may know that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but facts autoptically witnessed. Surely this seems to promise a Gospel. And we have this series: 1 Peter testifies to Mark's intimacy with Peter; 2 Peter promises a Petrine Gospel; antiquity tells us that Mark was but Peter's mouth-piece. Who could have invented that middle term and so delicately inserted all into 2 Peter? 2 Peter thus appears a link in a natural chain which is complete with it and incomplete without it. All three of these sources from which the links are drawn are therefore genuine.¹

(2). 2 Peter witnesses to its own date. Whoever wrote it, it belongs to a time when Peter was living, and consequently he

¹*Cf.* Plumptre, *loc. cit.*

might well have written it. We need do nothing more than consider the teaching and character of the false teachers condemned in it to prove this. They occupy a place intermediate between those condemned by Paul and those condemned by John. This has been clearly shown by Thiersch and repeatedly exhibited since, as for example, by Froumüller and Guerike; so that we may content ourselves with simply mentioning it here.¹

Conclusive independently or not, for the Pertain authorship of this Epistle, the internal evidence, considered as corroborative to the external testimonies already adduced, is certainly conclusive and ought to compel assent.

IV. THE REBUTTING EVIDENCE.

The evidence thus presented in favor of the canonicity of 2 Peter would seem to be almost overwhelming. It certainly raises a presumption of immense force in its favor, such as cannot be overturned except by equally cogent rebutting evidence. Yet, of late years, many have been found able to resist its force, such as Schmidt, Eichhorn, De Wette, Richter, Schott, Neander, Credner, Mayerhoff, Magnus, Andemars, Reuss, Daumas, Bleek, Huther, and the whole Tübingen school, from Schwegler to Hilgenfeld. It is necessary to ask, On what rebutting evidence do these writers rely? Hilgenfeld, indeed, hardly deigns to assign a reason for his action, but sets amide the Epistle summarily as, 1, presupposing the unguine 1 Peter as well as Jude; 2, as plainly belonging to the later Gnostic period (250†); and, 3, as having insufficient external support. But most of the other writers named are less high-handed—Credner, especially, entering fully into the argument; and from them we may obtain some

¹Another rather remarkable coincidence in the use of language may be adduced here, as having some bearing on the genuineness of 2 Peter. At a time when every word and act was permanently burning itself in on Peter's heart, our Lord had said to him: "Strengthen (στηρίζω) the brethren." Now it is noticeable that there are reminiscences of this word in both 1 and 2 Peter: of 1 Peter v. 10; 2 Peter i. 12 ; iii. 17. Does not this look as if he who had received that command, had written this Epistle? The word is not rare enough to found any secure inference upon; but its use in 2 Peter may count as one small item of evidence.

idea of the rebutting evidence on which they rely. It may be briefly stated as follows:

(1) There was a known tendency in the early Church to forge Peter's name.

(2) The external support of 2 Peter is insufficient.

(3) It has plainly borrowed largely from Jude, which is judged unworthy of an apostle by some, and by others is held a proof that 2 Peter belongs to the second century, on the ground of the assumed unguineness of Jude.

(4) The author exhibits too great a desire to make himself out to be Peter.

(5) Yet betrays the later time in which he wrote by many minute anachronisms.

(6) The style of the Epistle is divergent from that of 1 Peter, and the differences amount at times to inconsistencies, such as the assumption that its readers (which are assumed to be the same as 1 Peter's) were personally taught by Peter (i. 15; iii. 2).

The first of these points might raise a suspicion against an unsupported claim to Petrine authorship, but only a *suspicion*, which would, moreover, give way before any evidence. The second has already been disproved. The third, again, is clearly invalid. One inspired writer frequently quotes the words of another, which is but the Spirit's authentication of himself; and the genuineness of Jude rests on a stronger array of proof than that of Second Peter, while the argument can be pleaded only on the assumption of the spuriousness of Jude. The other three arguments, (4), (5), and (6), are purely internal and subjective—depend for their force on the mental attitude and state of the critic, and cannot rebut the array of external and internal evidences for the Epistle, even if allowed just as urged. Think of really allowing more weight to these three opinions than to all that has been adduced—external and internal—in favor of the Epistle! Still, it will be instructive for us to note the details that are urged under these heads.

The fourth argument is strongly urged alike by Credner, Neander, and Reuss. But wherein is this great anxiety seen? In i. 1, iii. 1, 2, 15, say some; in the adduction of Christ's pro-

phesy, in i. 14, "in an unsuitable manner," and the unapostolic appeal to the transfiguration, in i. 17, as a proof of apostleship, say others. But how these natural passages can be alleged to prove forgery, it requires a very advanced critic to see. They are not *lugged in*, but *fallen into*. Who can see (except Neander) how the prophecy of Christ that Peter should die a violent death, is introduced "in an unsuitable manner"? It is barely alluded to, and that obscurely: is that the way with forgers, who introduce such allusions for a purpose? The transfiguration is not adduced to prove the apostleship of the writer, but to prove the truth of the teaching which the readers had received as to the divinity of Christ by an autoptic testimony. The other passages can be paralleled from 2 Corinthians, which is allowed to be genuine; and could not fail if 2 Peter be a *second* letter of the *Apostle Peter's*. How then can this be urged against this authorship? The items adduced under the fifth head are equally unsatisfactory, and conclusive as to nothing but the hypercriticism of their adducers. (4) and (5) are moreover mutually destructive; such a consummate forger as (4) requires could not have fallen into such easy traps as (5) adduces—the fault must be the critic's, not the author's. The points actually adduced are the mixing of the presents and futures in ii. 12-15, 17-22; Gnostic traces; references to myths (i. 16); the blending of Petrinism and Paulinism (iii. 15, 16); the use of the term "Holy Mount" (i. 18), which is said to be a designation which could only have supplanted the proper name of the mountain at a comparatively late date; the mode of citing St. Paul's epistles as Scripture, which they are not esteemed to be at first; the evidences of disappointed hopes as to the speedy second coming of Christ, and the peculiar adduction of apostolic testimony in iii. 2. The basis of most of these is pure assumption. The so-called Gnostic tendencies opposed belong clearly to an earlier age than those opposed by John, while Irenæus is our witness to the contemporaneity of John and Cerinthus, who, he tells us, held the advanced doctrines controverted in John. The discovery of a blending of Petrinism and Paulinism, and a consequent betrayal of a reconciling purpose, grows simply out of a Tübingen dream; what happens if it be true that Peter and Paul were never opposed

to one another? The "Holy Mount" is not introduced as a name, but as a descriptive designation of a well-known spot. Who says St. Paul's epistles were not esteemed Scripture at the beginning? and who will undertake to prove it? Paul so quotes Luke in Timothy; why not Peter Paul? Shall we bend our theories to fit the facts, or the facts to fit the theories? The peculiarity of iii. 2 depends only on a false reading, and disappears on the restoration of the true ancient text. Why presents and futures are mixed in the repetitions from the earlier Jude, the careful exegete will not need to ask. And who shall say how soon fanatics in the early Church needed correcting as to our Lord's second coming? Evidence such as this certainly rebuts itself rather than the opposing considerations.

The latter half of the sixth head will need no reply, as it turns on a misinterpretation of plain passages. 2 Peter iii. 2, can be pleaded here only before corrected in its reading; when we read ὑμῶν, with the best authorities, the opposite is implied; i. 15 only implies that there were close relations between the readers and Peter, such as might have been indicated by the first Epistle; the "we" of i. 16 includes all preachers of the gospel, some of whom had preached to these Christians. Much more stress is, however, usually laid on the simple argument from diversity of style. But how the details adduced can bear any weight, it is exceedingly difficult to see. Credner has probably presented this argument as strongly as it admits of—certainly more strongly than any one else as yet. The list of the "most remarkable differences," which he urges, is as follows:¹ 2 Peter's common use of κύριος for Christ, which 1 Peter never does, except i. 13 (borrowed from Ephesians), while on the other hand 2 Peter always so uses it, except in passages derived from Jude or the Old Testament; 2 Peter's frequent application of the term σωτήρ to Jesus, which 1 Peter never does; 2 Peter's application to Christ of what 1 Peter applies to God, and its seldom mention of God; the failure in 2 Peter of the common words ἀποκάλυψις, ἀποκαλύπτω, when speaking of the second advent, which are common in 1 Peter, while ἡμέρα is the common

¹See his *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 1836, p. 660, *seq.*

term in this connexion in 2 Peter; the Hebraistic or pleonastic use of the preposition ἐν in 2 Peter, a usage not found at all in 1 Peter; the failure in 2 Peter of the common 1 Peter usage of an unessential ὡς; the substitution for the titles by which the Christian teaching is called in 1 Peter, viz., ἐλπις, χάρις, πίστις, ἀληθεια, λόγος, εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, etc., of quite distinct designations in 2 Peter, such as Χριστοῦ δύναμις καὶ παρουσία (i. 16), “the way of righteousness” (ii. 21), the “holy commandment” (ii. 21), the “commandment of the Apostles” (iii. 2), etc.; the failure in 2 Peter of the common and frequent quotation of the Old Testament as found in 1 Peter; and finally, broadly, the diffuse, heavy, languid style of 2 Peter, as distinguished from the easier, synthetic, irregular, fresh style of 1 Peter.

Are these worth the stating, except as an interesting inquiry as to the special peculiarities of two writings from the same hand? Will they bear any weight, considered as rebutting evidence against sufficient testimony? Reuss speaks wise, even if obvious, words when he says:¹ “On the theological and linguistic differences between the two Epistles, which the later criticism has so emphasised, we lay no stress. The two Epistles are too short, have to do with wholly different circumstances; and especially there are no direct contradictions to be found. Only if the Epistle is on other grounds proved to be ungenueine, can this also be brought into account.” In other words, the argument from style is not valid against the genuineness of the Epistle. We say, Amen! What, then, are we to do with this long list of Credner’s? Only note the following points: 1. The list of differences is nothing like as striking as the list of resemblances; so that the problem is *not* to find a theory which will account for the differences alone, *but* to find a theory which will account for the coexistence of differences with still more striking resemblances. Diversity of authorship will not do this. 2. The differences are mere contradictions, and usually not uniform, but only *prevailing* differences—some parallels being found in the other Epistle. 3. Credner fails to take account of the very distinct occasions, objects, spirits, on,

¹Geschichte, etc., Neue Testament, § 270-2.

for, and in which the two letters were written. These determine the style of speech in this case, and will account for most if not all of the differences adduced. The fact that 2 Peter is specifically a letter of reproof and warning, will account for its general tone as different from 1 Peter (a letter of exhortation and comfort); the character of the errors opposed will account for the fact that it dwells on the majesty and lordship of Christ, his saving power, his authority and love, and substitutes him for God in most passages. This goes like a destroying brand straight through Credner's list. 4. Still further, Credner forgets that it is characteristic of Peter to rest on and write out of a previous document. The fact that Paul lay at the root of 1 Peter, and Jude at the root of 2 Peter, will account for much divergence in style; still the community of authorship of both accounts for their resemblances. The theory of diversity of authorship will thus not account for the phenomenon; we have unity in diversity to account for, and must assume unity of authorship in the account we render.

The state of the argument, then, really is this: a mountain mass of presumption in favor of the genuineness and canonicity of 2 Peter, to be raised and overturned only by a very strong lever of rebutting evidence; a pitiable show of rebutting evidence offered as lever. It is doubtless true that we can move the world if the proper lever and fulcrum be given. But if the lever is a common quarryman's tool and the fulcrum thin air! Then, woe only to the man who wields it. What can such rebutting evidence as we have here, really injure, except its own cause?

V. THE HISTORY OF THE EPISTLE.

We are surely in a condition now to assert that the canonicity of the letter is secure. We pause only to add briefly its history. Sent forth by Peter soon after the middle of the first century (say in A. D. 67), it soon found its way, as an authoritative part of the Canon of faith, over the whole Christian world. Already with the beginning of uninspired Christian literature, it is found everywhere. Clement has it in 97 at Rome; Barnabas in 106 at Alexandria; at the same time the Jewish Christian author of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, was reading it at Pella.

Throughout the second century the Church enjoyed the peaceful possession of it; and before the close of that age was demanding and receiving commentaries upon it. In the meantime the acute school of internal criticism at Alexandria was scrutinising its peculiarities, and by the beginning of the third century some were found able to magnify them into inconsistencies with 1 Peter. On these internal grounds some were now led to question its genuineness and consequently its canonicity; but no one was yet bold enough to excise it from the Canon. The fourth century found a critical school in Syria, daring above all precedent; and here at last, but only here, the subjective judgment of minute one-sided scholarship won the victory over the external evidences for the Epistle. The common sense of the Church at large, however, refused to be thus led, and preserved it from the heresy; and soon, as the value of the subjective criticism was better understood, the doubts that had been raised died away, and the Epistle's place in the Canon became once more undoubted. So matters stood until the Reformation. Then once more individual doubts revived, while once more the Church stood firm. Erasmus, Cajetan, Luther, even Calvin, spoke doubtfully of its genuineness and consequent canonicity; but even such names could not lead the Church astray. That storm was also weathered, and once more the waters seemed quiet. Once more, in these modern times, we see the attack begun; but once more we witness the same phenomena as of old repeated—*individuals* doubt, the *Church* stands firm. In the whole history of the Church, the Syrian Church alone among the Churches has ever, as a body, doubted the Epistle. From the beginning, the Church as a Church has always held it without fear and without dubiety. With the evidence as it is, so it ought to be. We think we hazard nothing in adding, so it will ever be.

BENJ. B. WARFIELD.

