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The Journal
of
Theological Studies

OCTOBER, 1900

THE 'GOSPEL OF PETER': ITS EARLY HISTORY AND CHARACTER CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF THE RECOGNITION IN THE CHURCH OF THE CANONICAL GOSPELS.

THE publication by M. Bouriant in the autumn of 1892 of the fragment found at Akhmim of the lost *Gospel of Peter* was followed, in our own and other countries, by a shower of articles, lectures, editions, treatises, dealing with it, which, beginning in the last months of that year, continued throughout 1893, and gradually diminished in intensity and ceased in 1894.

The task of reviewing again a subject which has been much discussed, which has lost all its freshness, and where there is no new information to offer, is an uninviting one, both for writer and readers. Nevertheless there are many cases in which it is clearly necessary that it should, at some time or other, be performed, and this seems to be one. For the controversy has been left in an unsatisfactory state. Not only have the conclusions in respect to the origin of the document and its place in early Christian literature arrived at by critics of note been widely different, but even those who have in part adopted the same conclusions do not appear to attach the same amount of significance to them. Questions have been raised upon which the student of the history of the Canon more particularly must seek for a decision, while it

is permissible to hope that more agreement may be attained than has yet been the case upon the issues involved, the canons of criticism to be applied, and the bearing of the various portions of the evidence.

I

Let us, before we turn to the *Gospel of Peter* itself, endeavour to learn what we can as to the extent to which it was read, and the manner in which it was regarded, in the second century. Upon this the amount of its importance as an illustration of Christian life and thought generally must chiefly depend. The Church can properly be made responsible for the work only on the ground of the reception she accorded to it. For let it be granted that its internal characteristics do not justify the supposition that it was written by a professed heretic, or primarily for the use of a heretical sect. It does not follow, as some seem disposed to assume, that it reflects the spirit of the Church at large, or of any considerable portion of it. There have been individuals of eccentric views among the members of the Church in every age. And aberrations from the prevailing beliefs and tone of feeling were especially possible when few definitions had been made, and rigorous discipline in regard to matters of faith had not been established. Not only so: there were also outlying regions where faith and practice differed more or less from those of the greater part of the Church; the writer of our fragment may have lived in one of these. And even though he may in a sense have written for the bulk of his fellow Christians, desiring to commend himself to them, yet if he miscalculated in his endeavour to adapt himself to the taste and judgement of his public, he would not be the only author who has done so¹.

Further, this question of the actual indications of the use of the work is a comparatively simple one. In deciding it we can only

¹ 'L'évangile de Pierre doit donc émaner de la grande église,' says A. Lods (*L'Évangile et l'Apocalypse de Pierre*, 1893, p. 74). Such a phrase is objectionable on account of its vagueness. Authorship is necessarily the work of an individual, or at most of a few individuals, and we can form a definite idea of it as such. Use, approval by a number of individuals, or by a society, are also definite ideas. But what exactly is implied in 'emanation' from a large and widely dispersed society? The looseness of the conception—so far as it can be called a conception—makes it unfit for the purposes of science.

have to deal with a limited number of definite facts. On the other hand, the task of appreciating the relation between the intellectual and spiritual temper of our fragment, and that of the Church during successive decades of the first two-thirds or so of the second century, must necessarily be one of great delicacy and difficulty, owing to the peculiar obscurity and uncertainty of this portion of history as a whole. Obviously then it must be wisest to enter first upon that part of the inquiry concerning the recently discovered fragment, where there is the best hope of obtaining some firm foothold.

In this connexion the question of its use by Justin Martyr as one of his *Apostolic Memoirs* is crucial. Those critics who attribute the widest significance to the discovery of the fragment seem more or less clearly to perceive this¹. Failing Justin's evidence there would be none worth mentioning that it ever enjoyed much repute in the Church at large, or had a wide circulation. The earliest signs of its existence would be found in an obscure and isolated congregation, and among a body of heretical Christians, at the end of the second century². It would then seem to be an eccentric phenomenon and not illustrative, either by reason of the circumstances of its production, or of the reception accorded to it in the Church, of any general tendencies.

Far higher importance must clearly belong to it, if the alleged reference to and quotations from it by Justin are established; but the precise consequences need careful consideration. It is well known that Justin's presentation of the Gospel history contains some incidents and touches which he must have derived from a source or sources other than the Four Gospels. He may possibly have drawn this apocryphal matter in some instances from current oral teaching³, but he probably also took some of it at least from written compositions of the nature of Gospel histories. Now, supposing that he did know and use such writings, how

¹ See Harnack, *Bruchstücke d. Evang. u. d. Apok. Petrus*, 1893, p. 37 'In ein ganz neues Licht tritt unser Evangelium, wenn es sich erweisen lässt, dass Justin es gekannt hat.' Comp. also v. Soden in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 1893, pp. 52-3, and Lods, p. 46.

² Euseb. *H. E.* vi 12.

³ To infer from his words in *Apol.* i 33 'who recorded all the things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ'—as some do—that he owed *nothing* to oral tradition or teaching is, surely, to press them unreasonably.

did he regard them? Did he, or did he not, include them among those *Apostolic Memoirs* of which he speaks? And, if he did, was there any sense of difference in his mind, and in that of the Church, to whose assemblies the *Memoirs* were read¹, between different members of the class of writings so employed? These different alternatives may need to be borne in mind as all possible in the case of writings of whose character, contents, and pretensions we are ignorant. It is clearly conceivable that, owing to their limited range, or the absence of any distinct assertion of Apostolic authorship, or other special circumstances, it may have been comparatively easy, not only to take some particulars from them, but even to attribute to them a certain measure of Apostolic authority, without seriously compromising the superior claims of other more important and better attested records.

But the question assumes a simpler shape in the case of the work actually before us. All the critics who find traces of acquaintance with it in Justin believe that in *Dial.* 106 he specially refers to it under the title of *Memoirs of Peter*, and appear to rely on this passage as an important item in the case². It is, therefore, not worth while specially to consider whether he may not have taken a few incidents and expressions from the work, much as some writers of the third century appear to have done, without attributing to it any special authority³. Now, further, if the *Gospel of Peter* was admitted at all to the number of the *Apostolic Memoirs*, it can hardly have held a relatively inferior position among them, claiming as it does by its very form to be a narrative by the foremost Apostle. Indeed there might seem to be better reason for Harnack's supposition⁴ that this document suggested the very name *Memoirs*, which was extended to the rest, thus furnishing, so to speak, the type of the

¹ *Apol.* i 67.

² See the writers referred to above, p. 3 n. 1. Among writers of more conservative temper, Mr. Headlam, *Guardian* for Dec. 7, 1892, and Dr. Sanday, *Inspiration*, p. 305, may be mentioned.

³ Zahn regards this as 'possible'; it is not negatived by the considerations of a more general kind drawn from the history of the Canon of the Gospels, which weigh with him in rejecting the idea that the *Gospel of Peter* could have been reckoned among the *Apostolic Memoirs*. Yet he holds even such a use—which in no way implied that the writing was regarded as authoritative—as highly improbable (*Ev. ang. d. Petrus*, pp. 67-8).

⁴ p. 40, n. 2. Also Headlam's and Sanday's, see refs. n. 2 above.

whole class of writings. It should be remembered, also, that the *Memoirs*, of which Justin speaks, are said by him to have been read publicly in the Church, and that the Church customs present to his mind would be those of Rome, where he was at the time of writing, and of Ephesus, where he had before taught. Thus the conclusion with which we are confronted is that the *Gospel of Peter* once held a place of honour, comparable to that assigned to the Four Gospels, perhaps even higher than some of them, in some of the chief Churches of Christendom, which were in constant communication with most parts of the Christian world¹.

Now such a view must, if accepted, react seriously upon our estimate of the value of the testimony to the special authority of the Four Gospels furnished by Justin, and upon our view of the history of their reception in the Church. It is far from my intention to maintain that in Justin's age, or for Justin himself and the portions of the Church with which he was familiar, the position of the Gospels was the same as at the close of the century. They came to be marked off from all other accounts of the life and death and resurrection of the Lord by degrees, more and more, throughout the Church generally. But the only explanation that can be given of this fact is that there was an essential continuity in the Church's belief about them, at the heart of it, in spite of all developments,—a tradition in their favour, such as did not exist in the case of other writings, and which served to single them out as the truly authentic embodiments of the teaching of the Apostles. Naturally the tradition was not equally strong in all parts of the Church, and in some there seems to have been a different tradition which led to some other work being similarly prized instead of them. This may be easily accounted for by the circumstances of the evangelization of particular districts, and their isolation owing to difference of language or remoteness of locality. In

¹ Dr. Sanday appears to seek an escape from this conclusion when he writes in the same context, 'But we must not make the mistake, which is too often made, of taking a single writer as representative of the whole body of the Church. Justin was a philosopher who came over to the Church with literary habits already formed' (p. 305 f.). There are cases in which this distinction would be important; but it can hardly be considered warranted in the present one, in view of Justin's statement that the *Apostolic Memoirs*, of which he speaks, were read in the Christian assemblies.

time, and perhaps with a measure of reluctance, these places yielded to the dominant conviction of the Church at large. But Justin, the most instructed and eminent Christian teacher of his time, who had come from Western Syria, and lived and taught in Ephesus and in Rome, represents (we may fairly say) the main stream of Christian tradition, if there was such a thing. If our confidence in its persistence and essential soundness be seriously impaired, little can be left of the nature of external guarantees of the Gospels, while the difficulty of understanding the early history of the Canon would be immeasurably increased. And it would seem that it must be impaired, if another writing manifestly inferior in character to and later in time than the Four Gospels—as the majority of critics of all schools will allow the *Gospel of Peter* to have been—could be definitely classed with them.

It is not from any love of pushing things to extremes and forcing men to take sides that I urge this. It is no new experience to me that facts, which may seem to threaten to destroy the possibility of a view of Christian history which is in harmony with the Faith of the Church, may on fuller consideration appear only to render certain modifications necessary, while all that is essential is left intact. But there are occasions when even the student who is most alive to the danger of applying logic where after all the premises may be too narrow, must after due reflexion feel that it would be cowardice not to state clearly to himself and to others what seems to be the wide bearing of a controversy about a particular point, and when the progress of knowledge depends upon this being done. It is from a conviction of this kind that I dwell on the consequences that would seem to hang on the decision arrived at in respect to the use of the *Gospel of Peter* by Justin, while I bespeak for the subject the most thorough examination.

1. It will be convenient to discuss first the right interpretation of the passage in *Dial.* 106, to which reference has already been made. The words are as follows:—καὶ τὸ εἰπεῖν μετωνομακεῖν αὐτὸν Πέτρον ἓνα τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ γεγράφθαι ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασι αὐτοῦ γεγενημένον καὶ τοῦτο, μετὰ τοῦ καὶ ἄλλους δύο ἀδελφούς, υἱοῦς Ζεβεδαίου ὄντας, μετωνομακεῖν ὀνόματι τοῦ Βοανεργῆς, ὃ ἐστὶν υἱὸς βρονηῆς, σημαντικὸν ἦν &c. *And the fact that it is said that He renamed one of the apostles Peter, and that it has been recorded*

in his Memoirs that this happened, as also that He renamed two other brethren, sons of Zebedee, by the name of Boanerges, which is Sons of Thunder, indicates, &c. These facts are stated together exactly in this way in Mark iii 16, 17; the second of them only in that Gospel. Difficulty, however, has been felt in supposing that Justin could have described Mark's work as Peter's *Memoirs*. Some have suggested (see Otto's note *in loc.*) that the *αἰροῦ* refers not to Peter but to Jesus. This, though equally possible grammatically, is quite unsupported by Justin's usage. Again, the conjecture has been made (as by Otto himself) that for *αἰροῦ* we should read *αἰρωῦ*, in spite of the want of all MS evidence for it, so that the reference to the Gospel according to Mark would only be as a work included among those sources to which Justin is wont to refer elsewhere in like general terms. On the other hand, Credner had already, when the *Gospel of Peter* was a more shadowy form than it has now become to us, understood Justin to be alluding to it¹. When, therefore, the fragment which we now possess was discovered, and was observed to contain parallelisms with Justin, it was natural that this should have been held to be the explanation of the passage before us, although the recovered portion did not extend to that part of the history in which the incidents in question may have been mentioned. If, however, we enter into the habits of thought of Justin and of the Christians of his time, there will seem to be nothing surprising in the idea that he should have intended to designate the Gospel according to St. Mark by the language under consideration. It is certain that among the works which he habitually called *Memoirs of the Apostles*, he reckoned some which he did not suppose to have been actually composed by them but by disciples of theirs². In principle he does nothing different if he attributes Mark's Gospel specifically to Peter. Moreover, it must be allowed to be in the highest degree probable that the tradition which we derive from Justin's contemporary Papias, to the effect that Mark did but write down in his Gospel what he had learned from Peter, was known to Justin. It can hardly be doubted that if he had been asked what Apostolic testimony more particularly was given in this Gospel, he would have specified that of Peter.

¹ *Gesch. d. N. T. Kanon*, p. 17.

² *Dial.* 103.

And if ever there was an occasion when it was natural to appeal to the record as Peter's, it was this one, where a fact in his personal history had been recalled. The more carefully we consider the point, the more natural does it seem that an allusion to St. Mark's Gospel on the part of Justin might well have taken the form in question. It is a characteristic of his that he is not wont to bring forward names which would carry no weight with Gentile and Jewish readers. He desires to give them guarantees, the value of which they will admit, for the truth of the facts which he claims were fulfilments of prophecy, or were otherwise important for his purpose. Thus in addressing Romans he twice names 'the Acts' of their own governor Pilate, and he also refers them to the register of Quirinus; whereas, on the contrary, it is his common practice to designate the professedly Christian sources of information collectively as proceeding from Apostles, in other words, from the men who were the most competent and responsible witnesses. With a similar feeling, if (as in the present instance, which is the only exception to the above rule) he had reason to specify an individual, he would be likely to substitute the name of the better for that of the less known man, and of the real authority for that of the mere reporter.

As generations passed the need of dwelling upon the Apostolic character of the Gospels was less felt. Their authority as sacred writings was fully established. Moreover, men like St. Mark and St. Luke had grown in the estimation of the Church, partly owing to the very fact of the connexion of their names with Gospels, partly because even these men, the younger contemporaries of the Apostles, seemed more clearly to be separated from the men of all after-times. To this has been added that we now take a more rigorous view of the rights and responsibilities of authorship than men did of old. This difference of mental attitude accounts for that which appears to us strange in Justin's mode of expression, regarded as a reference to St. Mark's Gospel. The expedients suggested for avoiding a precise reference to a particular work, as well as the supposition that a work actually bearing Peter's name must be intended, are in point of fact quite unnecessary. Modern criticism with the best intentions as to the introduction of historical method has often shown a very un-historical spirit. Perhaps it would be fair to say that it is by

slow and painful effort becoming more genuinely historical. The minds of critics, as of other people, are often more or less under the dominion of 'idols,' as Lord Bacon would have called them—prepossessions derived from their own modes of thought and circumstances—from which they can only gradually disembarass themselves. The treatment which Justin's writings have received has afforded remarkable illustrations of this. Allegations have been made as to the effect of the evidence supplied by them, which have been found to be without foundation when the persons whom he addressed, and his aim, his manner generally, and the conditions under which he wrote, had been more fully and fairly appreciated. In the present case we seem to have another instance of the same kind. We may at least say, on the ground of the considerations which have already come before us, that unless the signs of knowledge of the *Gospel of Peter* in other passages of Justin's works are such as to create a strong presumption that he has that writing, rather than St. Mark, in mind when he speaks of his (i. e. Peter's) *Memoirs*, we need not suppose it.

But we may go further than this. We are justified in assuming that Justin did associate our Second Gospel with Peter's teaching, and that he would (in some sense at all events) have looked upon it as Peter's *Memoirs*. Now this creates a real obstacle in the way of his having accepted another Gospel, differing from St. Mark in many respects in its representations, as also Peter's narrative. The direct evidence that he indeed used Peter's Gospel, accepting it as his, must then be clear in order to outweigh this objection. We proceed to consider that which is adduced.

2. All who are in any measure acquainted with the literature of the subject are aware that Harnack is the writer who has most fully set forth the parallelisms which may be thought to lead to the conclusion that Justin used the *Gospel of Peter*, and that they have been examined and found insufficient more particularly by Zahn and Dr. Swete. In what I have to say I shall in great part only be drawing attention to what has been urged already by the last two writers. But owing to the importance of the question it seems well to go over the ground again with some thoroughness.

The resemblances to be examined are the following :—(a) the part assigned to 'the Jews' and to Herod (for references see below); (b) the incident of Jesus being placed on a judgement-seat and called upon to give judgement (*Apol.* i 35, and Peter iii); (c) the use of the peculiar word *λαχμός* in regard to the partition of the garments (*Dial.* 97, Peter iv); (d) the reference to the drawing of the nails when Christ was taken down from the Cross (*Dial.* 108, Peter vi); (e) the conduct of the disciples at and after the Crucifixion.

(a) It is an interesting fact that Justin lays stress on the responsibility of the Jews, and of Herod 'their king,' for the death of Jesus; and this is a prominent feature of the Gospel of Peter. With the opening passage of the recovered fragment, in which the Jews, Herod, 'the judges' of Jesus, and Pilate appear, Harnack compares the following words of Justin from *Apol.* i 40 *μηνύει τὴν γεγενημένην Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως Ἰουδαίων καὶ αὐτῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ Πιλάτου τοῦ ὑμετέρου παρ' αὐτοῖς γενομένου ἐπιτρόπου σὺν τοῖς αὐτοῦ στρατιώταις κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέλευσις*; and he proceeds to make the comment (p. 38) 'eine solche *συνέλευσις* kennen die kanonischen Evv. nicht.' The different actors in the tragedy may be brought somewhat closer together in 'Peter' than in any place in our Gospels. But there is a far closer parallel between Justin and Acts iv 27, a passage which from its application of prophecy could not have failed to attract him. The *συνήχθησαν* both in the psalm cited and in the interpretation is specially to be noted; to it Justin's word *συνέλευσις* evidently points. *Dial.* 104 should also be compared where, after quoting from Psalm cxi (cxii) 17—*ἐκύκλωσάν με κύνες πολλοί, συναγωγὴ πονηρευομένων περιέσχον με*—Justin writes *συνήχθησαν οἱ ἀγωνιζόμενοι ἐπὶ τῷ καταδικάσασθαι αὐτόν*.

That such a natural explanation as this should be wholly passed over, as it is by Harnack, is assuredly very one-sided criticism. It is to be noted, also, that Justin, like the Acts, enumerates Pilate with the Jews, &c., as all uniting in the attack upon Jesus, whereas the aim of the *Gospel of Peter*, both in the opening passage of the fragment and throughout, is to exonerate Pilate. That Justin has been influenced here by the language of the Acts is rendered the more probable by the fact that he has other parallels with the Acts in passages concerning the

death and resurrection of Christ. Compare *Dial.* 16 with Acts vii 52, and *Dial.* 51 with Acts x 41. The former of these is also one in which the crime of the death of Jesus is fastened upon the Jewish people.

It may seem, perhaps, somewhat more remarkable that Justin speaks of Jesus as *crucified by the Jews* (*Apol.* i 35 *σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀντιλεγόντων αὐτῷ καὶ φασκόντων μὴ εἶναι αὐτὸν Χριστόν*; and *Dial.* 85 *σταυρωθέντος ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου ὑπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ ἡμῶν*). In the context of the former of the two passages just cited, it is implied that the Jews too dragged Jesus to a judgment-seat, and called upon Him to judge them. This incident will again come before us in the sequel. Apart from this statement there is nothing in Justin's language regarding the guilt of the Jews, as the real authors of Christ's death, which the narratives of our Gospels do not justify. The sense in which he attributed the deed to the Jews is clearly implied in the latter part of the sentence at the first place referred to.

The *Gospel of Peter*, on the contrary, departs widely from the Gospels in its representation of the share which the Jews had in the deed, and in doing so betrays gross ignorance of the actual historical relations of Herod and the rulers of Jerusalem, and the position of both under the Roman government. The Jews and Herod refuse to wash their hands as Pilate does. Again, Herod gives the order for the execution of Jesus. Pilate, being asked by Joseph of Arimathaea before the crucifixion that he may have the body of Jesus, passes on the request to Herod. Jesus is definitely handed over to the people of Israel to be crucified (chaps. i ii iii).

(δ) οἱ δὲ λαβόντες τὸν κύριον ὤθουν αὐτὸν τρέχοντες, καὶ ἔλεγον Σύρωμεν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἔξουσίαν αὐτοῦ ἐσχηκότες. καὶ πορφύραν αὐτὸν περιέβαλλον καὶ ἐκάθισαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ καθέδραν κρίσεως, λέγοντες Δικαίως κρῖνε, βασιλεῦ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ (*Gospel of Peter* ch. iii).

With this passage we are to compare *καὶ γὰρ, ὡς εἶπεν ὁ προφήτης, διασύροντες αὐτὸν ἐκάθισαν ἐπὶ βήματος καὶ εἶπον Κρῖνον ἡμῖν* (*Apol.* i 35).

The relation of this trait in the mockery of Jesus is the most striking coincidence between Justin and the *Gospel of Peter*. It is not, however, easy to understand the actual differences which were introduced by Justin, on the assumption that he was

dependent upon 'Peter' for the supposed fact¹. With 'Peter' before him, Justin would not have been likely to omit *δικαίως* from the words addressed to Jesus and to have overlooked the *δικαίαν* (as he does) in the original of the passage in Isaiah which he cites, for the prophecy and fulfilment would thus have been brought into closer agreement. It may be added also that *βήματος* has the appearance of being more original than *καθέδραν κρίσεως*. But it is indeed quite unnecessary to suppose that either writer copied from the other. Both may have borrowed from a work that is lost to us. Again, there can be little doubt that some touches were introduced into, or preserved in, the tradition of the Gospel history after our Gospels were composed. After being repeated for a time by preachers and teachers, and in the converse of Christians with one another, they may have passed independently into different writings. Some of these touches may not even have had a single origin, being such as might well have occurred to more than one mind, and have been added to the narrative in all good faith. This would be likely in regard to the slighter ones, especially when they served to make the correspondence with prophecy clearer. But it may have been so even in the case of this one, substantive incident though it is.

(c) With *τεθεικότες τὰ ἐνδύματα ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ διεμερίσαντο, καὶ λαχμὸν ἔβαλον ἐπ' αὐτοῖς* (*Gospel of Peter*, ch. iv) we are to compare *οἱ σταυρώσαντες αὐτὸν ἐμέρισαν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ ἑαυτοῖς, λαχμὸν βάλλοντες ἕκαστος κατὰ τὴν τοῦ κλήρου ἐπιβολὴν ὃ ἐκλέξασθαι ἐβεβούλητο* (*Dial.* 97)².

It should first be observed that the employment of the word *λαχμός* is the only difference from the Synoptic Gospels which Justin shares with 'Peter.' He has none of the other peculiarities which we note in the latter, neither the placing of the clothes in front of Jesus, nor *ἐνδύματα* for *ἱμάτια*, nor the conjunction and

¹ Compare Zahn, p. 43.

² I cannot follow Dr. Swete (p. xxxiv) in comparing Justin and 'Peter' primarily with St. John. It is with the Synoptic Gospels that they should be chiefly compared. They do not, as St. John seems to do, connect the casting of lots only with the *χιτών*, but neither do the Synoptics. The use of *λαχμός* may or may not have originated in a reminiscence of *λάχουμεν* in John xix 24, but the representation of the incident in the passages of the *Gospel of Peter* and Justin before us, and interpretation of the psalm that is implied, is the same as in the first three Gospels. So it is in *Apol.* i 35 and *Dial.* 104, where *λαχμός* is not used.

finite verb for the participial construction in the second clause. Again, while 'Peter,' with our Gospels, uses the compound διαμερίζεσθαι, Justin has ἐμέρισαν.

I pass to the consideration of λαχμός. It will be convenient if I quote the passage of Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* xiii § 26), which has also to be taken account of in the discussion:—οἱ στρατιῶται διεμερίσαντο τὸ περιβόλαιον εἰς τέσσαρα σχισθέν, ὃ δὲ χιτῶν οὐκ ἐσχίσθη, εἰς οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔτι σχισθεὶς ἐχρησίμευσε, καὶ λαχμός περὶ τούτου γίνεται τοῖς στρατιώταις. καὶ τὸ μὲν μερίζονται, περὶ τούτου δὲ λαγγάνουσι. ἄρα καὶ τούτο γέγραπται; . . . διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτιά μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμὸν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον. κλῆρος δὲ ἦν ὁ λαχμός.

Dr. Swete has suggested that there may have been a version of Ps. xxi (xxii) 18, in which the phrase ἔβαλον λαχμὸν occurred, and that this was known to our three Christian writers. But this explanation does not seem possible, because both Justin and Cyril quote the verse in the ordinary form of the LXX, and are at pains to indicate that the phrase containing λαχμός, and the language of the Psalmist, mean the same. Το λαχμὸν βάλλοντες ἕκαστος Justin adds κατὰ τὴν τοῦ κλήρου ἐπιβολήν, while Cyril makes the comment κλῆρος δὲ ἦν ὁ λαχμός.

Evidently something attracts them to introduce the word, in spite of its not being found in the prophecy. And it may seem that their doing so is well accounted for by supposing them both to have taken it from the *Gospel of Peter*. But it is very doubtful whether Cyril, at least, though he may have been acquainted with the *Gospel of Peter*, would have gone out of his way, as it were, in order to use an expression occurring in it; for the work had no authority in his eyes, and he expressly exhorts his readers in these very lectures to read the canonical writings only¹. Moreover, in his case the similarity to the passage of that work now in question is even more strictly confined than in Justin's, to the use of this single word. And this word he does not use in the same manner. It is with him a verbal noun. The expression a 'casting of lots takes place on the part of the soldiers' is strictly equivalent to λαγγάνουσι, which he uses in the next sentence. In this, and in the whole passage, he has St. John's narrative before him.

It may be granted that, if Justin knew the *Gospel of Peter*,

¹ *Cat.* iv § 33.

it would explain his employment of the same expression in the present instance. But after all is it very reasonable to be satisfied with asking why Justin and Cyril used the word, and not also to ask why the author of the *Gospel of Peter* used it? If we carry our inquisitiveness thus far, we may light upon an explanation which will render it unnecessary to suppose dependence of either of these writers upon another. Dr. Swete's theory has at least the merit of attempting to account for all three, even if (as we have seen) it does not appear to be tenable. In point of fact there is good reason for thinking that, though the word *λαχμός* is rare in literature, it was not uncommon in the colloquial Greek of the period. We may even imagine it to have been specially suitable for describing the manner in which soldiers or executioners divided their spoils.

All the instances of the occurrence of the word that I have anywhere seen are included among those given in *Stephani Thesaurus* (ed. Hase) *sub voce*. They bear out the suggestion which I have made that the word was not an uncommon one in late Greek. It is used to explain less familiar expressions. Thus Eustathius, in his commentary on the *Odyssey*, pp. 1521, 48, explains *λαχεῖν* as meaning *διὰ συνήθους λαχμοῦ κτήσασθαι*. Again, in the scholion to Plato, *Legg.* i, p. 630 E, we have *κλήρος* explained thus:—*κλήρος ἐστὶ κτημάτων οὐσία τις ἢ λαχμὸς ἢ μέτρον τι γῆς*; and in that on Lycophron, 1349 *ἐν κληροῖς θεῶν* is explained by *ἐν τοῖς τῶν θεῶν λαχμοῖς*. In the *ὑπομνηστικόν* of Josephus (a work of uncertain date) ap. Fabricius *Pseudepigr. V. T.*, ch. 144, *On Methods of Divination among the Greeks*, we read of the following kinds *ἢ διὰ κλήρων, ἢ διὰ ἀστραγάλων, ἢ διὰ πεμπύρων, ἢ διὰ λαχμῶν*, implying that *λαχμός* has a precise meaning. Stephens, at the opening of the article where these references are given, observes that the scholiasts explain *λαχμός* as 'poetic'; and he refers to a scholion on *λαχῶν* in Theocr. viii 30. The words, as they are punctuated in Reiske's edition, and as, no doubt, Stephens understood them, are *καὶ κληρωθεῖς· ἀφ' οὗ λαχμὸς ὁ κλήρος, ποιητικῶς*. But if the scholiast meant this, he blundered; for *λαχμός* is manifestly not *poetic*; it is not used in the Greek poets. Doubtless, however, there should be a colon, not a comma, after *κλήρος*, making *ἀφ' οὗ . . . κλήρος* a parenthesis. The note is then good sense, for the use of *λαχῶν ἰς* 'poetic.'

Probably then because it was a familiar word, and perhaps from seeming peculiarly appropriate, it became current in descriptions of the partition of Christ's garments, and so was used alike in the *Gospel of Peter*, and in Justin and Cyril. Dr. Swete, indeed, implies that the word *λαχμός* was one which needed explanation. I cannot find any sign that this was the feeling of any one of the writers. Of Cyril Dr. Swete writes, 'he clings to the phrase, even though he finds it necessary to explain what it means (*κλήρος δὲ ἦν ὁ λαχμός*).' Certainly if these words of Cyril are taken by themselves *κλήρος* must be intended to interpret *ὁ λαχμός*. But it is otherwise when we consider them in their context. Their force seems there to be 'now *κλήρος* (in the psalm just quoted) was (i.e. signified) *ὁ λαχμός* (the casting of lots referred to above).' They are well rendered in the Latin version, in Reischl and Rupp's edition:—*sors autem sortitio illa militum fuit*. In reality the Greek Father uses *λαχμός* by way of paraphrase on the Scriptural word *κλήρος*. And similarly in Justin *κλήρος* is brought in by a rather forced periphrasis in order to recall the verse of the psalm. Thus the usage of these words by both Cyril and Justin accords with that of the scholiasts¹.

(d) In *Gospel of Peter* ch. vi we read *τότε ἀπέσπασαν τοὺς ἤλους ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ κυρίου*; while Justin has the word *ἀφηλωθείς* (*Dial.* 108). The nails used in the crucifixion are spoken of only in our Fourth Gospel, and there in connexion with the appearance to Thomas. It was natural, however, for a devout imagination to dwell upon them. Justin connects them with the fulfilment of Ps. xxi (xxii) 17, when dealing with the act itself of crucifixion, and he marks the piercing of Christ's hands as well as His feet. It is a natural sequel to this that when he comes to the taking down from the Cross, he should speak of the body as being 'unnailed.' 'Peter' does not mention the nails at the earlier point, and he does not refer to the feet at all.

The word *ἀφηλωθείς* occurs in a passage in which Justin turns that fear, which the Jews express at Matthew xxvii 64, into the form of an explanation given by them afterwards of Christ's alleged resurrection. In 'Peter' also there is a parallel to that passage

¹ See p. 14 above. *κλήρος* was in common use for a plot of land (e.g. see references in indices in Parts i and ii of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, published by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt), but may well have lost in common speech its earlier meaning.

of Matthew somewhat later (viii) than the words concerning the drawing of the nails. There are clear indications that Justin's and 'Peter's' language were founded independently on Matthew¹. Nevertheless, Harnack appears to hold that there is equally good reason for thinking that Justin may have been following 'Peter' on the ground both of ἀφηλωθείς, already considered, and of the fact that both differ from Matthew in using μνήμα in place of μνημεῖον. But this trifling coincidence can have no weight, in view more especially of the fact that the other Gospels frequently use μνήμα².

(e) *The Gospel of Peter* dwells much on the forlorn condition of the disciples after the crucifixion. To a certain extent Justin does the same. But Justin keeps on the whole fairly near to the four Gospels. He speaks of the disciples as having been scattered after, or when, Jesus was crucified, and having after His resurrection been persuaded that He had foretold to them all that had come to pass, upon which they repented of having deserted Him (*Apol.* i 50, *Dial.* 53 and 106). This is roughly in agreement with Mark xiv 27; Matt. xxvi 31; Mark xiv 50; Matt. xxvi 56; Luke xxiv 6, 7; John ii 22. In the *Gospel of Peter*, on the other hand (ch. vii), we read that Peter with his companions hid themselves, and sat fasting and weeping because they were sought for by the Jews as malefactors and men desirous of burning the temple, a motive not hinted at in Justin or in our Gospels.

The case for dependence thus turns out to be exceedingly slender, if it can be said to exist at all. As regards the first point the true similarity is between Justin and the Acts. As to the second, though Justin and our fragment contain the same incident which is not in our Gospels, the actual differences between Justin and the *Gospel of Peter* are of a kind to make his having known that work unlikely. As to the third, the

¹ Note on the one hand in Justin λέγοντες ἐγγέρθαι αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν, and in 'Peter' ὁ λαός.

² If, as would seem to be the case, Harnack's remark that 'Matthew alone can come in question' (p. 39 (5)) is meant to exclude such an explanation as this, it must be pronounced arbitrary in the extreme. The supposition that Justin should, while following in the main the record of one Evangelist, be influenced to some extent in his phraseology by the recollection of others, will seem strange to no one who considers his manner.

recurrence of the same word would probably, to say the least, seem far less remarkable than it has been thought to be, if we were more familiar with the ordinary vocabulary of the age of the writers. The remaining two points, though I have included them for the sake of completeness, have not been pressed by any one. It is, moreover, clear from these instances collectively, and especially from the first, third, and fifth, that if Justin did use the *Gospel of Peter*, he must have controlled it somewhat rigorously by our Gospels. But when this is recognised, it will seem less probable that he should thus have modified those traits which we have been considering, than that he should have obtained them in a less advanced stage of legendary formation than that which they have reached in the *Gospel of Peter* ¹.

It should be remembered, also, that the variations from and additions to our Gospels in the fragment of the *Gospel of Peter* are very numerous, so that many opportunities would be offered for Justin to show some distinct knowledge of it, if he used it as one of his authorities.

3. The conclusions at which we have arrived are confirmed when we pass on to note the remarkable contrast, both as to details and spirit, between Justin and the *Gospel of Peter* in respect to those expressions in which the author of the latter work most distinctly reveals his attitude to the subject of Christ's sufferings. It will be remembered that according to him Jesus was silent *when He was crucified* (ch. iv), and again that His last words were, 'My power, My power, thou hast left Me.'

Now let us turn to Justin. He speaks in beautiful and eloquent language, and in a manner perfectly consonant with the Four Gospels, of our Lord's silence *before Pilate* (*Dial.* 102). He quotes two of the sayings on the Cross given in our Gospels (*Dial.* 99 and 105), and with reference to the former ('O God, O God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?') he remarks that Christ thereby shows *ὅτι ἀληθῶς παθητὸς ἄνθρωπος γεγένηται* ². He had indeed a far truer faith in the reality of our Lord's sufferings, and perception of their significance, than many in later generations, even in our own, who have supposed themselves to be perfectly

¹ On this see more below pp. 22, 23.

² Cf. also the striking expression (*Dial.* 98) *ὅτι ἀληθῶς γέγονεν ἄνθρωπος ἀντιληπτικῶς παθῶν*.

orthodox. For some other passages on this subject see *Dial.* 100, 103, 113.

One who had so clear a grasp of the truth of our Lord's humanity, and who had moreover written a work against the heretics of his time¹, who were Gnostics and all in different ways and degrees Docetic, could hardly have failed to mark a tendency at least to Docetism in the *Gospel of Peter*. But however this may be, such divergences from that work as have been pointed out are inconsistent with his having regarded it as an authority.

4. The argument is clinched by the absence of all traces that the work was known in the Church of Rome during the half century or more following the death of Justin. Yet if Justin regarded it as authentic, others at Rome most likely did so. Indeed Justin himself alludes to the reading of the *Memoirs* in the Christian assemblies. If the *Gospel of Peter* was ever thus honoured in the Church of Rome, it was suffered to sink out of sight again without leaving a ripple upon the surface of the water. The Muratorian Canon does not even pay it the compliment of pronouncing it spurious, or of doubtful character. Irenaeus, too, somewhat earlier gives no sign of being acquainted with it, in spite of his familiarity with the faith and practice of the Church of Rome. We may add that it would be strange even that the Bishop of Antioch at the end of the second century should not have known it till it was brought before him in the manner it was, if it had been esteemed by Justin.

When entering upon this long discussion, we observed that it was one of great importance for the history of the Canon. We have considered the particular point on its own merits, and have come to a conclusion consistent with an intelligible view of the facts as a whole regarding the position of the Four Gospels in the Church. The soundness both of the decision of the special question and of the general theory cannot but be mutually confirmed by this agreement.

II

We are now in a position to judge how far we may rightly draw inferences in regard to the history of Christian thought generally in the second century, from the particular phenomenon

¹ He refers to it *Apol.* i 26 end.

before us. This *Gospel*, which was necessarily the product of an individual mind, does not seem to have approved itself to any considerable body of Christians. The presumption, therefore, is that the author's position was more or less peculiar. Nevertheless, even idiosyncrasies are in a measure governed by general conditions. Those possible in one age are not possible in another. It may, then, still be worth while to consider whether the *Gospel of Peter* helps us to gain a fuller insight into the history of the period within which the time of its composition must fall. The *terminus ad quem*, we have seen, cannot be fixed earlier than by the fact that it must have come into existence some few years before Serapion had to deal with it. The *terminus a quo*, as well as any more precise conjecture as to the date, within the possible limits that may seem reasonable, can only be arrived at by a consideration of its internal characteristics in the light of general probabilities.

1. The feature of the work to which it will be convenient for more than one reason to pay attention first, and more particularly because it is closely connected with the question of its reception, is that it is *pseudepigraphic*. This will be universally admitted, but the consequences have hardly been enough considered. By the nature of the case pseudepigraphic works must have been to a singular degree dependent upon chance to make it possible for them to be taken for what they professed to be. The real author of any such work had to keep himself altogether out of sight, and its entry upon circulation had to be surrounded with a certain mystery, in order that the strangeness of its appearance at a more or less considerable interval after the putative author's death might be concealed. In view of the difficulties which attended the publication of any writing of this class, we are the less surprised that the *Gospel of Peter* did not prove a great success.

The pseudepigraphic form of our fragment does not enable us to assign its date more exactly than the earliest certain allusion to it has already done. But we shall perhaps be justified in saying that this form would not agree so well with a time later than the third quarter of the second century as it would either with that one or one somewhat earlier still. After two or three generations since the Apostolic age had elapsed, the idea of putting forward any work in the name of one of its eminent

persons must have seemed increasingly bold, and the prospects of success in doing so more and more dubious. It is true that those Apocryphal Gospels professing to be by Apostles and their contemporaries which alone we possessed before the discovery of that of Peter, are some, and perhaps all, of them in their present shape of a later period. But it is not improbable that they may be based on works which made the same claims, and which were composed in the middle part of the second century.

2. The doctrinal character of the book has already been touched upon. I have suggested only that one strongly opposed to Docetism would have noticed elements in the work which would have made him slow to recognize it as proceeding from an Apostle. It does not seem to me that the views of the writer were of a decidedly Docetic type. He is affected to some extent by 'the offence of the Cross.' He enlarges by preference on signs of Christ's Godlike might, and avoids attributing to Him mental anguish or anything that might be mistaken for moral weakness. And expressions which he is thus led to use are such as would lend themselves to a Docetic interpretation. But this is all that can be said. He uses, indeed, the word ἀνελήφθη in connexion with the death of Christ (ch. v), and this, added to the form in which he gives the last cry upon the Cross, has been held to show that he supposed the higher nature of Christ to have then finally abandoned the body and to have at once entered upon His heavenly reign. But his language in the sequel concerning the resurrection of Christ, after He had 'preached to those asleep,' is inconsistent with this. Dr. Zahn has attempted to harmonize it therewith, but he constructs for our author a somewhat elaborate Christological doctrine, the evidence for which is wanting¹. It is more reasonable to believe that his ideas were somewhat vague, and that in employing the word ἀνελήφθη he had not any distinctly Docetic intention.

Dr. Swete takes up a somewhat different position in regard to the Docetism of the work. He speaks of the skill with which the author veiled it, owing to the purpose which he had in view².

¹ Pp. xxxvi, xxxvii.

² Dr. Swete, who sees in the *Gospel of Peter* a more distinctly Docetic aim than I am able to discover, nevertheless writes, 'The teaching of the fragment with regard to the Lord's death and resurrection, while open to suspicion, is not absolutely inconsistent with Catholic language. Origen, as the notes will show, has

I doubt whether the impression left by the fragment on the minds of most readers is one which renders the possession of such skill on the part of the writer probable. Moreover, this explanation involves the admission that the heretical tendency is not very marked. It was doubtless more possible for opinions such as those of our author to be held within the Church during the first sixty years or so of the second century than afterwards, but we are not to conclude that they were shared by any considerable portion of the Church.

3. We must next touch upon the subject of the relation of the *Gospel of Peter* to our Gospels and to tradition. This has been treated in so much detail by previous writers that it will not be necessary to examine it at length. Yet it will be well to gather for ourselves the conclusions that seem most probable in regard to the various issues that have been raised.

On the ground of the combined similarities to and differences from the Four Gospels in our fragment, it has been held that the author drew, not from them, but from their sources, oral or written. There is force in the contention that the *Gospel of Peter* rests upon an earlier form of the ending of St. Mark than our present one¹. But with this exception, it may be said at once, the suggestion that the writer had documents which were the sources of the Four Gospels before him, receives no support from the comparison in detail between it and our Gospels, or from any results that have been obtained from the study of the problem of the origin of the Gospels. On the contrary, the fact that some peculiarities of each of the four reappear in 'Peter' makes the notion highly improbable. For it involves the hypothesis, not only that documents or traditions which the four evangelists separately used still survived independently after they had been embodied in their Gospels, but that the writer of the *Gospel of Peter* had had opportunities of becoming acquainted with all these alike².

The incidents, then, and turns of phrase which the *Gospel of Peter* has in common with the Four Gospels may most reasonably be held to have been derived directly or indirectly from apparently used or adopted ἀνελήμφοθι in reference to the death of the Lord' (p. xxviii).

¹ Cf. Harnack, p. 33.

² Cf. Sanday, *Inspiration*, pp. 311, 312.

them. But in order to adjust properly our view of its relation to them, and to gain a clearer conception of its genesis, we must take into account the position of oral tradition also, or (to speak more generally) of the oral teaching of the Gospel history, and its character, in the writer's time.

The act of writing down tradition naturally did not at once cause the older mode of its delivery to fall wholly out of esteem and to be completely disused. True reminiscences, which were not included in our Gospels, may well have survived for a time in this way, and they may or might have been preserved in works of the nature of evangelic histories, or in the quotations or allusions of other early writers. In point of fact, little has reached us by such means which can claim to be regarded in this light, and the *Gospel of Peter* does not contribute to the amount. Rather it must be said that in so far as it is derived from oral tradition current in the time of the writer, it bears witness, in proportion to the earliness of its date, to the rapidity with which the character of oral tradition had deteriorated. For not only are its additions to the narrative all more or less evidently the work of fancy, and some of them even childish, but it is marked by gross misconceptions of unquestionable historical circumstances. The very existence of written Gospels, which doubtless comprised most, at all events, of that which was of value in the oral tradition at the time when they were composed, must have acted unfavourably upon the continuance of that tradition orally in a pure form, inasmuch as it would no longer be felt to be necessary in the same way as before to make definite efforts to secure this.

I have distinguished above between oral tradition and oral teaching. It should be remembered that owing to the difficulty of multiplying and spreading copies of the written Gospels, even those who had themselves read them may often have had occasion to repeat the Gospel history orally; and there must thus have been scope for it to assume a certain variety of form in the process of narration during a certain interval of time, such as did not exist afterwards. It was thus that scope was afforded for the influence of Old Testament language in moulding the relation of incidents into a shape which brought out more clearly the fulfilment of prophecy: thus again that, under the stress of the

actual hostilities between Jews and Christians, and with the desire of commending the faith to Gentiles, touches were introduced into the account of the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus which tended to emphasize the guilt of the Jews and to exonerate the Roman governor. So also, even the mere misremembering of that which had been learned from the Four Gospels, as well as the effort after full and picturesque description for which the freedom of oral teaching gave opportunity, may have started traditions which came to be more or less widely regarded as independent and genuine. The *Gospel of Peter* helps to bring before us the fact that such traditions were in circulation. It does so all the more because we have seen reason to believe that the writer and Justin give independently of one another those more or less similar statements and forms of expression in which they alike differ from the Canonical Gospels. But we cannot suppose that our author draws from current teaching only in the instances where such parallelisms can be pointed out. It is probable that there must be others which do not happen to have been thus revealed to us. We are not justified in attributing a large amount of invention to a single writer; it was a work in which many collaborated.

4. We have yet, before we attempt a summary of results, to compare the *Gospel of Peter* with those Apocryphal Gospels which have long been known to us. It has been declared by some critics to have nothing to do with these. And it is true, and a significant point, that they make a larger use of, and are somewhat more careful not to contradict, the Canonical Gospels, than our fragment. Nevertheless, as has been already suggested, these later Apocryphal Gospels may have grown out of earlier ones through amplification and revision, and thus in their origin may be of the same age. If the *Gospel of Peter* throws some light, as it seems to do, upon the history of these works, this is not an unimportant point. But even if they belong altogether to a later generation, they may well illustrate, with a difference, similar habits of thought, and they at least show how even when the Four Gospels had beyond all doubt attained unique authority, other accounts of the life of Christ might exist by their side, and obtain a certain measure of credence.

The greater freedom from the constraint which the authority

of the Canonical Gospels imposed, to be observed in our fragment, is a mark of an earlier age. At the same time the discrepancies from the Gospels occurring in it may be put down to want of reflexion. Even in the later Apocryphal Gospels such occur. The *Acta Pilati* (or *Gospel of Nicodemus*) is specially convenient for comparison, because it is concerned with the same part of the history. In this work, Form A (see Tischendorf's edition), ch. vi, there is a manifest confusion between the miracle related in Mark ii 1 and parallels, and that in John v. Again, in ch. x, it is said that the Crown of Thorns was placed on Christ's head when they came to Golgotha. Form B does not on these points differ from the Gospels; but on the other hand (see ch. x, ver. 3) it states that they crucified Him at the sixth hour, in direct contradiction to Mark xv 25. A consideration of the same work makes it clear that mere omissions of what is contained in the Gospels are not evidence of want of familiarity or reverence. For of the words on the Cross it (in Form A) gives only the three in St. Luke. Further, both forms (ch. xiii, xiv), like the *Gospel of Peter*, lay stress on Christ's promise to the twelve to meet them in Galilee, and refer to no appearance to them, or to any of their number, except one there¹.

More than one reason can be given for the incompleteness of the narrative in the *Gospel of Peter*. It was not the author's aim to make a Diatessaron², but to write an independent work. Therefore he naturally gave more prominence—as the writers of later Apocryphal Gospels also did—to additional matter, and chose different language. Incompleteness is also specially to be expected in writers, such as our author probably was, of no great amount of literary training; for the aim at exhaustiveness introduces some of the chief difficulties of literary composition. Besides this, the general tendency of antiquity was towards the production of short books. The cost of copying counselled brevity.

We may now bring this discussion to a close. Neither the contents of the *Gospel of Peter*, nor the reception which it met with in the Church, favour the idea that it belongs to the same

¹ Form B makes the curious mistake of placing the Mount of Olives in Galilee.

² Harnack, p. 36, rightly remarks, 'unser Evangelium kein Diatessaron ist.'

class of writings as the Canonical Gospels, even as the last and least trustworthy member of that class. Nor was that reception one which must, in view of the character of this work, lessen the value of the Church's testimony to them. On the other hand, its composition was not inspired by a distinctly heretical purpose, such as might naturally have been associated with a conscious defiance of their authority. The conditions required for its production seem rather to be that the organization of the Church was as yet somewhat loose, and the authority of the Four Gospels, though it may well have been real, still undefined, and not equally extended everywhere.

The writer, though he knew the Four Gospels, yielded to the desire which has been felt in different generations, as for example by writers of lives of Christ in our own, to tell the story afresh. He might consider himself the more justified in doing so because he had often heard it orally given, and had delivered it himself, in a form in which matter derived from the Gospels had been more or less transformed, and other elements had been introduced through the working of fancy under the influence of circumstances and tendencies of the time. How much was due to his own fancy even in the moment of writing, as well as previously, how much to the fancy of others, which during a longer or shorter period of activity had created legend, we cannot say with precision. He himself probably did not clearly distinguish between these sources. All was not his own invention; of that we may be tolerably sure.

He looked upon that which he had heard as not less true than that which he had read. Some of the traditions—that is, of the incidents or sayings that passed for such—which he wished to commit to writing, may have already been connected with the name of Simon Peter; but in any case it seemed not unnatural to put accounts supposed to be faithful into the mouth of the chief witness.

V. H. STANTON.