

kingdom of God were not speculative men. They did not reason that the soul was immortal from its nature—this was not the kind of immortality in which they were interested—though for all that appears the idea that any human person should become extinct or be annihilated never occurred to them. They did not lay stress in a reflective, objective way on man's instinctive hopes of immortality, though perhaps they may be observed giving these instinctive desires expression. They could not with the patient eye of inductive observation gather up what we call analogies to the passage of beings from a lower to a higher state, such as we may conceive death to be. They did not reason; they felt, they knew. Their consciousness or intuition of God—it was not faith and it was not reason—was immovable, *inébranlable*, something that amidst the shaking of all things could not be shaken (Rom. viii. 38).

A. B. DAVIDSON.

THE "ELDERS" OF PAPIAS.

PAPIAS says (Eus., *H. E.*, iii. 39. 3, 4) that he learned certain things from "the *Elders*," and that when any one came who had been "a follower of (*παρηκολουθηκώς*) the *Elders*," he used to "enquire into the words of the *Elders*." The question is, does Papias mean, by "*Elders*," (1) the Apostles, or (2) Elders appointed by the Apostles? If the generation of Apostles was born, say, about A.D. 1 (Jesus being born B.C. 4), the generation of Elders appointed by them in the several churches might be supposed to be born A.D. 30, or earlier (see below): and thus, if Papias was born A.D. 60 or A.D. 70 (as Lightf. suggests, *Sup. Rel.*, p. 150), by the time he reached thirty or twenty years of age, *i.e.* A.D. 90, all the Apostles, with the exception of

John, would probably be dead, and the Elders who had received their doctrine, would be at least sixty years of age. I say, "at least," because, in the first appointment of converts as Elders, the Apostles would naturally select men of authority and standing in the Church, sometimes not much younger than themselves, so that, by the time Papias was thirty or twenty, many of the first-appointed Elders would be above sixty, and most would have died. This is, of course, quite a rough calculation, liable to exceptions more especially in proconsular Asia, where some of the Elders appointed by the aged Apostle St. John might have been born after A.D. 30: still it will serve as a starting-point for an attempt to decide between the two above-mentioned interpretations.

(1) In favour of the interpretation "Apostles" there are two important arguments: (a) Papias says, "When any one came who had been a follower of the Elders, I used to enquire into the *words* of the *Elders*, what *said Andrew?* or what *said Peter?* . . ." and this looks as though no others could be meant by "Elders" except "Andrew, Peter, etc.," *i.e.*, the Apostles; (b) Eusebius, a careful critic, assumes that "Elders" means "Apostles," and substitutes the latter word for the former in paraphrasing the words of Papias.

(2) In favour of the interpretation "Elders appointed by the Apostles," there are the following arguments: (a) no other instance is alleged in which the name "Elders" is given to "Apostles"; (b) the title of "*the Elders*," given at first officially to those appointed by the Apostles, would naturally adhere to them for some time after most of the first generation of them had passed away—it being felt that the depositaries of the Traditions of the Church were 1st, "the Apostles"; 2nd, "the Elders"; 3rd, "the followers" of the latter; (c) Irenæus, in the fifth book of his *Refutation*, almost certainly (Lightf., *S. R.*, p. 202) "bor-

rowed from the exegetical work of Papias," probably quoting, in some places, *the very words of the latter*. Now here, while continuously discussing one and the same subject, Irenæus writes as follows: (v. 5. 1) "the Elders, *the disciples of the Apostles*, say," (v. 30. 1) "as those testify *who have seen John face to face*," (v. 33. 3) "as the Elders have recorded *who have seen John the disciple of the Lord*, that they had heard from him, how that the Lord taught . . .," (v. 33. 4) "Now these things not only¹ does *Papias* attest in writing . . . but he has added (more), saying, 'These things are credible to them that have faith,'" (v. 36. 1) "as *the Elders* say," (v. 36. 2) "*the Elders, the disciples of the Apostles*, say." Commenting on these quotations, Lightfoot says (*S. R.*, p. 197), "it is not clear whether these elders are the authorities whom Papias quotes, or the class to whom Papias himself belongs, and whom therefore he represents. Since Irenæus regards Papias as a direct hearer of St. John, this latter alternative is quite tenable, though perhaps not as probable as the other." We may add, against the "latter alternative," that, as to "the class to whom Papias belongs," we have no evidence that they attested his doctrine, or that he represented theirs; but as to his "authorities," we have his own evidence to show that they were the most ancient that he could procure, those of the generation preceding himself, and as much further back as he could go. Since therefore Irenæus is almost certainly quoting from Papias, and since Papias professed to gather much of his information from "Elders," it is natural to suppose that in the phrases "the Elders say," "the Elders, *the disciples of the Apostles*, say," we have the

¹ "Hæc autem et Papias . . . testimonium perhibet (ταῦτα δὲ καὶ Παπίας . . . ἐπιμαρτυρεῖ) et adjectit": the precise meaning of *καὶ* is not quite certain. If some other author had just been quoted, the meaning might be "Papias, too": but if, as is probable, Papias has been quoted, *καὶ* might mean "both," "not only."

exact phrases of Papias himself, and that by "Elders" he meant the "*disciples of the Apostles*," *i.e.*, the generation of Fathers of the Church intervening between the Apostles and Papias; (*d*) Papias says that he learnt and committed to memory, or recorded (*ἐμνημόνευσα*), certain things "from (*παρὰ*) the Elders." Now if, as Eusebius thinks, "Elders" means "Apostles," these words would naturally indicate that he learned certain things directly from the Apostles, *e.g.* Andrew, Peter, Philip, etc.; but Eusebius denies this direct hearing. Presumably Eusebius considered that *παρὰ* meant "(indirectly) from," and was to be explained in the light of what follows, so that he interpreted the passage thus: "I learned from the Apostles . . . or rather, I learned from their followers." But Papias does not say "or rather." What he says is, "I learned from the Elders. . . . But if also (*εἰ δὲ καὶ*) any of their followers came, I used to enquire." This being the case, the correctness of Eusebius' inference is very doubtful;¹ (*e*) if such expressions as "the Elders, the disciples of the Apostles, say," "the Elders have recorded, who have seen John, the disciple of the Lord," etc., were used by Papias, the mistake of Irenæus in supposing that Papias was a "hearer of John" is easily explicable as an inference from them: he took them to mean that Papias was speaking in the name of these "Elders," and was himself one of them, and hence he argued that Papias must have seen John and must have been a companion of Polycarp.

In attempting to decide between these two views it will

¹ Eusebius is conscientious, accurate, and (as compared with most early ecclesiastical writers) singularly free from exaggeration. But he is not free from errors of interpretation. For example, he infers from St. Luke's preface that the Evangelist had "diligently received instruction from the rest of the Apostles (as well as St. Paul)," (*H.E.*, iii. 4. 6, τοῖς λοιποῖς δὲ οὐ παρέργως τῶν ἀποστόλων ἀμιληκῶς): and he immediately reveals the source of his error. He regarded *πᾶσι* in the Preface as masculine (*ib.*) οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται . . . οἷς καὶ φησιν ἐπάνωθεν ἅπασιν παρηκολουθηκέναι.

probably be felt that, though *a priori* probability and external evidence favour the latter, yet the expression "I enquired into the words of the Elders, what said Andrew, etc.," affords almost irresistible evidence for the former. But it may be explained as follows. All tradition in the Jewish Church was supposed to come, in some sense, through "Elders" (comp. Mark vii. 3, 5, M. xv. 2, "holding the tradition of the Elders"): every one must "receive it" from some preceding authority. Moses (Taylor, *Pirque*, p. 25) "received the Thorah from Sinai and delivered it to Jehoshua, and Jehoshua to the Elders, and the Elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue." Thus St. Paul "received" from the Lord a tradition, which he (1 *Cor.* xi. 23) delivered to the Corinthians; and 1 *Tim.* iv. 6, 2 *Tim.* iii. 10 represent Timothy as having "followed (*παρηκολούθηκας*)" the teaching of St. Paul. Similarly the "Elders" appointed by the other Apostles would have "followed" their several doctrines. Now, in the special circumstances of the early Church, when fictitious documents were already current, assigned to this or that disciple of the Lord, it was surely natural that, when an investigator met anyone who had "followed," *i.e.* received traditions from, Elders appointed by an Apostle the question should be, not "What said your Elders?" but "What said the Apostle who ordained your Elders?" For example, if Papias met a pupil of Timothy, *i.e.*, one who had "followed" his doctrine, the natural question would be, not "What said Timothy?" but "What said Paul?" And in the same way, if he met either an Elder appointed by John the Apostle, or a pupil of such an Elder, in *either* case, the natural question would be, "What said John?" If this or any other solution of this one phrase of Papias can be accepted, the latter view, *viz.*, that "Elders" means the Elders of the generation preceding Papias, will be found to harmonize with facts far better

than the former. It is stated by Clem. Alex. (*Pott.*, p. 959) that St. John appointed "bishops" in many districts of Asia, and "the bishop" in a certain district is immediately afterwards called "Elder." In the Muratorian fragment the "Bishops" (*i.e.* "Elders") are represented as conferring with St. John and his fellow-disciples before the composition of the Fourth Gospel. Thus the "Elders" or "Bishops" in Asia would seem to have been at an early period a recognized class, and Papias might naturally assume that, when he used the term, no one could misunderstand it.

The date of Papias' birth has been mentioned above as (Lightf.) A.D. 60 or 70. In fixing this, however, Lightfoot implies that he is influenced by the statement of Irenæus that Papias was a companion of Polycarp. But it could easily be shown that Irenæus' evidence on matters of detail is frequently not to be trusted;¹ and this particular statement is tainted by proximity to another, which Eusebius rejects, *viz.*, that Papias was a hearer of John. Both are probably erroneous inferences. Irenæus may have read in the *Exposition* of Papias, "Those who saw John, say, etc., etc." From this he might infer that Papias, speaking thus confidently in the name of those who "saw John," must have himself seen John and must have been a companion of Polycarp. But had Papias quoted a single saying of Polycarp's in his *Exposition*, Eusebius could hardly have

¹ This could be proved by a collection of his very numerous mistakes. And a comparison of the remarks made by Eusebius about other ecclesiastical writers with his general silence when quoting Irenæus would indicate that, although he could not venture to call the latter (as he calls Papias) "a man of very limited intelligence," he nevertheless cannot forgive his literalism. It is manifest that he rejects the views of Irenæus as to the Apocalypse and its authorship. But, besides this, a close examination of Eus., *H.E.*, v. 7—where he gives a summary of Irenæus' "testimonies," beginning with a significant *ἔτι δὲ* (v. 7, 1) "that, as he says"—would lead to the same conclusion. It is true that he (*H.E.*, v. 20. 3) admired his high standard of the carefulness needful in copying MSS.; but this is quite consistent with a low opinion of his judgment and of his accuracy when not actually copying.

failed to mention it (in accordance with his custom). Again, in giving so early a date, Lightfoot has assumed that Papias was (*S. R.*, pp. 149, 153) "acquainted with the daughters of Philip." But the words of Eusebius do not state that he was acquainted with them, but simply that he had "received (*παρειληφέναι*)" a "narrative (*διήγησιν*)¹ composed, or related, by (*ὑπὸ*) them." If he had known them so as to receive a "tradition (*παράδοσιν*)" "from (*παρὰ*)" them, the sentence would naturally have taken the latter form. And if indeed Eusebius has used these distinctive terms in their precise meaning, they have an important bearing on the date of Papias: for he was (*S. R.*, p. 153) "apparently a native of Hierapolis," where Philip and his daughters lived, and yet he has nothing to tell as coming from Philip; and even as regards Philip's daughters, he only sets down (if the above-mentioned rendering is correct) a narrative made by them but apparently received by Papias from others (*διήγησιν παρειληφέναι θαυμασίαν ὑπὸ τῶν τοῦ Φιλίππου θυγατέρων*). If these daughters died (as Lightf. suggests) about A.D. 100 or 110, and yet Papias, living in the same city, was not old enough to receive a tradition from them, this would point to a date of 80-90 A.D., or even later, for his birth. And such a date suits better with the general drift of facts or probabilities. If, as compared with Polycarp, "the pupil of Apostles," Papias, who could boast no such pupilage, was a mere youth, we can understand the marked difference made by Eusebius in introducing the two: (*H. E.*, iii. 36, 1, 2) "Most illustrious among these in Asia was Polycarp, scholar of the Apostles, entrusted with the bishopric of the Church in Smyrna by those who were eye-witnesses and ministers of

¹ In iii. 39. 14 Eusebius distinguishes between *διηγήσεις* and *παραδόσεις*. Compare Luke i. 1, 2, where *παρέδοσαν* appears to mean oral tradition, and *διήγησιν* written narrative. Does Eusebius mean that the daughters of Philip related the story in writing, and that a version of it was orally transmitted to Papias by some one not mentioned?

the Lord; during whose time there came into note (ἐγ-
 νωρίζετο) Papias—himself too bishop of the community
 in Hierapolis¹—and Ignatius, famous among thousands to
 this day, the second to receive the bishopric of Antioch in
 succession to Peter."² Thus, too, we can understand why
 Eusebius places Papias after Quadratus and the daughters
 of Philip. If we adopt Lightfoot's early date of A.D. 60-70,
 we are confronted with the perplexing question, How was
 it possible that an inquirer after apostolic truth, of mature
 age, and living within the sphere of Johannine influence,
 took no steps (if we may trust Eusebius) to obtain informa-
 tion from the last of the Apostles, who lived past A.D. 98?

¹ The following words ἀνὴρ . . . εἰδήμων are omitted by many MSS.,
 and are probably an interpolation.

² Lightf. says (S.R., p. 150) "The notices affecting his (Papias') relation to
 Polycarp suggest that he was rather the older man of the two. At all events
 Eusebius discusses him immediately after Ignatius and Quadratus and Clement,
i.e. in connection with the fathers who flourished in the reign of Trajan or
 before; while the notice of Polycarp is deferred till a much later point in the
 history, where it occurs in close proximity with Justin Martyr." But this does
 not give a full view of the facts. Eusebius *first* (iii. 36) *makes mention of Poly-*
carp as being the Bishop in whose time Papias and Ignatius flourished: then he
 describes in detail the Epistles of Ignatius and Polycarp, dropping Papias:
 then he mentions (iii. 37) Quadratus as contemporary with the daughters of
 Philip and endowed with the spirit of prophecy. Then (*ib.*) he says that he
 can only find space for the mention of those bishops or evangelists in the first
 succession of the Apostles who have left extant memorials of the apostolic tra-
 dition. Then (iii. 38) he goes back to Clement of Rome in order to protest
 against the spurious works attributed to that author. Lastly, *after the words*
(ib.) "Now I have (already) mentioned the works of Ignatius and Polycarp," he
 begins (iii. 39) "Of Papias five books are extant." Thus he appears from the
 first to place Papias *after Polycarp* "the scholar of the Apostles," and he con-
 firms this subsequently by denying that Papias received instruction from the
 Apostles. His reason for placing (iv. 14, 15) Polycarp's visit to Rome and
 martyrdom (along with which he repeats a mention of his Epistle to the Philip-
 pians) some pages lower down, is that these events happened much later in
 the life of that aged saint, and they come more conveniently there along with
 accounts of the deaths of other martyrs who suffered at the same time, *e.g.*
 (iv. 16) Justin Martyr and (iv. 17) the martyrs mentioned by the latter. On
 the whole, the impression left upon us by Eusebius is that Papias was a com-
 paratively young and unknown compiler who was born after Polycarp and
 died before him, while Polycarp's life covered so long a period and was of such
 great distinction that he receives two mentions, of which the first determines
 his chronological order and the second sums up the reasons for his eminence.

But once admit that Papias was not born till A.D. 80-90, and that difficulty vanishes: the aged Apostle died when Papias was little more than a youth of eighteen, or a boy of eight: the "Elders" from whom he obtained information were the disciples of the Apostles, and most of them had already passed away, so that he was forced to depend largely upon the information of their "followers."

No doubt this late date of Papias is inconsistent with the supposition that he obtained direct information from "Aristion and John the Elder, *the disciples of the Lord.*" But there is reason for thinking that the italicised words are spurious and could not have been known to Eusebius.¹ In the next place, even if the words are genuine, it is by

¹ See EXPOSITOR, series iv. vol. iii. p. 245, where Dr. Taylor states that Rufinus omits τοῦ κυρίου and that the Armenian version omits οἱ τοῦ κ. μαθηταί. Several Greek MSS. omit οἱ. The text can hardly be right. For (1) why repeat the phrase "Andrew, etc., disciples of the Lord, and Aristion, etc., disciples of the Lord"? Why not say that all were disciples? (2) Eusebius supposes Aristion and John the Elder to have been living when Papias made his investigations; but the supposition that personal "disciples of the Lord" were living at so late a date (Lightf., S.R., p. 150, n.) "would involve a chronological difficulty." The character of Eusebius justifies us in supposing that he would have been alive to this "chronological difficulty"; and as he takes no notice of it, the inference is that he did not have the words in his text and did not believe Aristion and John the Elder to be "disciples of the Lord." (3) Eusebius is arguing that Papias derived his information not from the Apostles but from their "followers." Now if, in two cases, Papias derived his information from "personal disciples of the Lord," was he not bound to qualify his statement? "Personal disciples of the Lord" could not be called "followers" of any Apostle, and their evidence, if not Apostolic, at all events approximated to that of Apostles. Thus, what Eusebius says, as well as what he does not say, indicates that the words "disciples of the Lord" were absent from his extract, and that they are an interpolation or corruption.

Corruption is more probable than interpolation. The phrase (1) "Apostles and (2) disciples of Apostles" is twice used by Irenæus (iii. 12. 13; 15. 3) to indicate continuity of tradition, and is a natural one for any author. Here, however, instead of "Apostles," Papias has used the word "disciples of the Lord." Hence, the first clause being "disciples of the Lord," the second would become "disciples of the disciples of the Lord." The latter (οἱ τῶν τοῦ κυρίου [μαθητῶν] μαθηταί) whether μαθητῶν were expressed or implied in the original, might naturally be misunderstood. Some might suppress it as unintelligible (as the Armenian version has done). Others might simplify it by omitting τῶν (as in our modern text).

no means certain that Eusebius was justified in supposing that Aristion and John the Elder were still living when Papias was making his inquiries—an inference drawn by Eusebius (it would seem) from the mere change of tense by Papias from "said" to "say" (a change probably introduced (Lightf., *S.R.*, p. 150, n.) "for the sake of variety"). If indeed Aristion and John the Elder were "disciples of the Lord," the probability is that from these, as well as from the Apostles, Papias derived his information, not directly, but indirectly through their "followers."

Reviewing the evidence, we are led to something like the following outline of conclusions. Papias, a native of Hierapolis, born A.D. 80-90, of (Lightf., *S.R.*, p. 153) Pagan origin, found himself perplexed by the inadequacy or obscurity of the authoritative writings containing the commandments of the Faith. He does not, so far as we know, use the word "Gospel." But he found current the "Commandments" (Eus., *H.E.*, iii. 39. 3) "given from the Lord to the Faith," presumably through the Apostles, and probably extant in writing in a form similar to the *Didaché* known by us as "The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles through the Twelve Apostles." Besides these, there were notes of the teaching of the Apostle Peter, taken down by his "interpreter" Mark, concerning what Jesus had said or done, but not a regular or orderly treatise. There was also a compilation by the Apostle Matthew in Hebrew of what Papias calls "the Logia." This condensed expression he gives us more fully in the title of his own book *The Exposition of (the) Logia connected with the Lord*,¹ apparently

¹ Λογιῶν κυριακῶν: the adj. gives a wider meaning ("connected with the Lord") than the genit. κυρίου ("of the Lord"). Lightf. renders the adj. "Dominical." Λόγια probably differs from εὐαγγέλιον in referring rather more distinctly to the words of Christ.

Polycarp (*Phil.* 7) mentions heretics who "tamper with τὰ λόγια τοῦ κυρίου" so as to deny resurrection and judgment. This points to Christ's words rather than to H's acts, and so do Justin's quotations of the *Logia* in *Tryph.* § 17. The two extracts from Papias about the Gospels mention first (Eus., *H.E.*, iii.

meaning by *Logia* an account of the life of Christ compiled with special reference to His preaching and prophesying. But this, instead of being "interpreted" (as Peter's teaching had been) by a single "interpreter," had been "interpreted" "as each man could"; whence we infer that the "interpretations" were numerous, various, and non-authoritative, so that it became of great importance to ascertain "what Matthew said." There were also probably current, but not recognized as authoritative, the disputed Epistle of James, and various writings about the acts, or teaching, or revelations, of Andrew, Peter, Philip, James, and John.¹ If a gospel was also coming into circulation under the name of John, there might be additional reasons for seeking such traditions of this Apostle as might throw light upon it. Lastly, there were the voluminous writings of heretics who used the term "gospel" to indicate their gnostic theories—elaborated, for example, by Basilides in twenty-four books. Hence it had become a matter of the highest importance—for the purpose both of understanding the Didaché and the

39. 15, 16) Mark, then Matthew. In the former he mentions τῶν κυριακῶν λογ(ι)ῶν, in the latter τὰ λόγια. This rather favours the view that Eusebius places the extracts in the order in which he found them in Papias, *i.e.* Mark before Matthew, and that Papias first uses the full title "the oracles (or words) of the Lord," and then repeats it in an abbreviated form as "the oracles." Iren., *Pref.*, has τὰ λόγια κυρίου (can the omission of the article τοῦ denote that he includes O.T.?) and (*ib.* i. 8, 1) κυριακῶν λογίων and τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ followed by instances taken from the Gospels, St. Paul's Epistles, and the O.T. The phrase "Scriptura Dominica," or κυριακαὶ γραφαὶ is used, presumably about the whole of N.T., by Irenæus v. 20. 2, and Dionysius of Corinth (*Eus.*, *H.E.*, iv. 23, 12).

¹ See *Eus.*, *H.E.*, iii. 25, where "the so-called Epistle of James" is described as "disputed," and Gospels or Acts are mentioned as current (though the date of origin is not stated) in the names of Peter, Thomas, Andrew and John. About Philip, resident in Papias' native city, it was most natural that traditions should be current, accessible to Papias, and stimulating him to inquiry (but Eusebius does not mention the apocryphal Acts of Philip). As regards Aristion and John the Elder, there are the disputed second and third Epistles of St. John written in the name of the latter, and there is some slight evidence that the appendix to Mark may have proceeded from the former.

Logia, and also of rejecting spurious gospels and heretical speculations—to ascertain “what Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other disciple of the Lord said.” To Papias, bred in Hierapolis under the influence of John’s “bishops” or “Elders,” it seemed that the best way of going back to the teaching of the Apostles, and, through that, to the teaching of Christ, was to ascertain the Apostolic teaching from these “bishops” or “Elders” directly or indirectly. In the last book of the *Refutation*, which, as I have shown, repeatedly quotes from Papias and sometimes probably uses his words, Irenæus says, after describing the errors of heretics, (v. 20. 1) “Now all these are of much later date than the *bishops* to whom the Apostles committed the Churches . . . (v. 20. 2) Those, therefore, who desert the preaching of the Church call in question the knowledge of the holy *Elders*.” These words so completely represent the attitude of Papias that they might have been taken *verbatim* out of his *Exposition*. He accepts the simple teaching of Christ as preserved in the Church, but is appalled at the number of “the books (*βιβλία*),” whether apocryphal or heretical, with which that teaching appeared likely to be inundated. At the same time he feels that the anecdotes about what Christ said or did, recorded by the “interpreter of Peter,” and the more systematic compilation of the Logia in Hebrew by Matthew, not as yet authoritatively “interpreted,” left room for new “interpretations” (Euseb., *H. E.*, iii. 39. 3, *ἐρμηνείαις*), as well as expositions, of the Logia. These, therefore, he attempts to set forth; and in order to do it, he resorts, where he can, to the traditions of the few “bishops” or “Elders” who could tell him at first hand what the Apostles said, but, where he cannot, to the successors who had “followed their teaching,” and who could give him the same information at second hand.¹ Being

¹ Comp. the language of Clement Rom. (c. A.D. 95). He speaks (§ 44)

probably (S.R., p. 153) not of Jewish origin, not resident in any maritime city, and (so far as we can judge from his own words¹ and from the absence of any mention of journeys to Rome, such as are mentioned in the case of Polycarp, Irenæus, and Ignatius) not given to travel, he may naturally have misunderstood as literal (as Eusebius says he did, and as appears from Iren. v. 33. 4) many oriental expressions that were intended as metaphors. He appears to have been younger than Polycarp, yet to have died before Polycarp; this, at least, is probable from Eusebius' insertion of his account of Papias before one part, and after another part, of his account of Polycarp. Compared with Polycarp, he had no claim to speak for antiquity or in the name of the apostolic Elders; but the accident of his comparatively early death caused Irenæus and others to regard him as more ancient than he really was; and his *Exposition*—constantly quoting the Elders or Bishops of Asia, made posterity regard him first as their spokesman and then as one of their number: and so he went down to the readers of Irenæus as "the companion of Polycarp," and by inference, a "hearer of John." The latter error appears to have been confirmed by the fact that Papias recorded several traditions from "John the Elder," whom, in the opinion of Eusebius, many confounded with John the Apostle; and the confusion was all the more easy because

of "those who were appointed by them," *i.e.* by the Apostles, "or, in the next succession (*ἢ μετὰ τὸ*) by other men of note," and he describes the blessedness of "those Elders who have gone before." But if by A.D. 95 many of the Elders appointed by the Apostles had passed away, it would seem likely that by A.D. 110-5 almost all would have departed. This was probably the case when Papias made his investigations. It is possible that one or two Elders appointed by St. John toward the end of his long life were still living; but, if so, they must have been quite exceptional. It must be remembered that a man 90 or 100 years old may be unfit for active work before the end, and even during the last 10 or 15 years of his life; and this view is confirmed as regards John by the well-known tradition of Jerome concerning his last public teaching.

¹ Eus., *H.E.*, iii. 39, 4, "if any one came." He makes no mention of traveling to seek information.

two of the three Epistles attributed to John the Apostle are written in the name of "John the Elder," while "John the Apostle" is hardly ever so called by any writer in the second century, being almost always named "John the Disciple of the Lord."

EDWIN A. ABBOTT.

THE OLD TESTAMENT QUESTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

WE are accustomed to speak of the Old Testament question as peculiarly a question of our own day; but it is not always realised that the earliest age of the Church had likewise *its* Old Testament question—one as serious and difficult for it as ours can possibly be to us. So far from being novel, the Old Testament question is, indeed, one of the very oldest in the history of the Christian Church,—was, in an important sense, *the* burning question of the second century. We have scarcely left the bounds of the apostolic age before we find the Church plunged into its prolonged conflicts with Ebionitism and Gnosticism, and both of these forms of error—Gnosticism especially—raised the Old Testament problems in their most acute shape. The question, as was natural, was then a theological rather than a literary or critical one; bore upon the substance of the Old Testament revelation rather than on the books which contained it; and the solutions proposed of difficulties were palpably of a kind which the modern mind could not accept. But even here the distinction is not absolute but relative. The newer criticism also has its historical and theological side, and is dependent to a larger extent than is sometimes acknowledged on theories and speculations as to the nature and laws of the religious development in Israel; while the older theorists did not wholly forego criticism, but