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STUDIES IN THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER. By E. Iliff Robson, B.D. (University Press). 2s. 6d. net.

Readers of this book must not expect to find a solution of the numerous problems with which the student of 2 Peter is faced. Mr. Robson's book is, as the title suggests, a delineation of the line along which he believes that the solution lies.

It may not be amiss to outline the conclusion at which he aims. Documents, bearing the apostolic imprimatur, were written or collected for the use of Christian instructors. In all probability such documents were originally circulated privately, and would be of use to apologists when attacks on the Faith began. The author of "Jude" is the first to use them. An epistle based on a "prophetic" document is hurriedly written to denounce false teachers. About 180 A.D. a writer in Alexandria, frightened by the appearance of a different form of a false belief, publishes the "discourse" used by "Jude" together with a fragment of moral teaching and a narrative. He welds these together, closes the Epistle, and afterwards incorporates in a "second letter" an Apocalyptic document which came to light after the Epistle had been sealed. The use of recognized formulae of citation shows that he is quite candid in disowning any originality for the production.

"Publication suggests publication." Why not a Pseudo-Petrine literature? So there arises the author of the "Apocalypse" using freely, but with discrimination, his materials as found in 2 Peter. The writers of the "Preaching," the "Gospel," and the "Acts" follow suit.

The book is confessedly a first venture, but it is compiled with a thoroughness and care which mark the author as a painstaking student. His reasoning is logical and, we may add, persuasive. In the building up of the argument he leaves nothing to chance. His notes on the differences of style and vocabulary, which distinguish the editorial hand from the originals, are carefully set forth and minutely examined. The linguistic argument is one that is often overdone, but we confess to a feeling that the array of parallels and illustrations which the author marshals has driven in the outposts of our prejudice. A further study of the book is necessary before we can say that he has captured the citadel.

We welcome these "Studies" for the freedom with which the subject is treated: they contain much of interest for the student of the Petrine literature. In conclusion we may say that Mr. Robson's grasp on the skirts of apostolic authorship for the Epistle, strike us as being somewhat nerveless. The "foundation documents" may or may not have come from St. Peter, but of this we are not sure—that St. Peter would have allowed to go forth in his name any writing in which the transfiguration has taken the place of the resurrection as the guarantee of the truth of the Gospel.

C. C. DUGGAN.