

SIMON PETER
in Scripture and Memory

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Abbreviations

GENERAL

//	parallel	LXX	Septuagint, Greek translation of the Old Testament
ca.	<i>circa</i> , around	MS(S)	manuscript(s)
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare	NB	<i>nota bene</i> , note carefully
chap(s).	chapter(s)	NT	New Testament
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistles</i> (various authors)	OT	Old Testament
esp.	especially	pars.	Synoptic parallels
ET	English Translation	Q	Gospels sayings source
frag.	fragment	v(v).	verse(s)
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Histories</i> (various authors)	<i>v.l.</i>	<i>varia lectio</i> , variant reading
lit.	literally		

OLD TESTAMENT

Gen.	Genesis	1–2 Sam.	1–2 Samuel
Exod.	Exodus	1–2 Kings	1–2 Kings
Lev.	Leviticus	1–2 Chron.	1–2 Chronicles
Num.	Numbers	Ezra	Ezra
Deut.	Deuteronomy	Neh.	Nehemiah
Josh.	Joshua	Esth.	Esther
Judg.	Judges	Job	Job
Ruth	Ruth	P(s).	Psalm(s)

Prov.	Proverbs	Amos	Amos
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes	Obad.	Obadiah
Song	Song of Songs	Jon.	Jonah
Isa.	Isaiah	Mic.	Micah
Jer.	Jeremiah	Nah.	Nahum
Lam.	Lamentations	Hab.	Habakkuk
Ezek.	Ezekiel	Zeph.	Zephaniah
Dan.	Daniel	Hag.	Haggai
Hosea	Hosea	Zech.	Zechariah
Joel	Joel	Mal.	Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Matt.	Matthew	1–2 Thess.	1–2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1–2 Tim.	1–2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philem.	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb.	Hebrews
Rom.	Romans	James	James
1–2 Cor.	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet.	1–2 Peter
Gal.	Galatians	1–3 John	1–3 John
Eph.	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil.	Philippians	Rev.	Revelation
Col.	Colossians		

OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

1–4 Macc.	1–4 Maccabees	Sir.	Sirach
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OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

<i>Ascen. Isa.</i>	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i>	<i>Par. Jer.</i>	<i>Paraleipomena Jeremiou</i>
<i>2–4 Bar.</i>	<i>2–4 Baruch</i>	<i>T. Levi</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
<i>1–3 En.</i>	<i>1–3 Enoch</i>	<i>T. Sol.</i>	<i>Testament of Solomon</i>
<i>Odes Sol.</i>	<i>Odes of Solomon</i>	<i>T. Zeb.</i>	<i>Testament of Zebulun</i>

QUMRAN/DEAD SEA SCROLLS

CD	<i>Damascus Document</i>	4QOrd ^a	<i>Court of the Twelve</i>
1QH	<i>Thanksgiving Hymn</i>	11QtgJob	<i>Targum of Job</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>		
1QSa	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i> (Appendix a to 1QS)		

RABBINIC LITERATURE

<i>b.</i>	Babylonian Talmud	<i>Qidd.</i>	<i>Qiddušin</i>
<i>Ber.</i>	<i>Berakot</i>	<i>Šabb.</i>	<i>Šabbat</i>
<i>Giṭ.</i>	<i>Giṭṭin</i>	<i>y.</i>	Jerusalem/Palestinian Talmud
<i>Pesiq. Rab</i> <i>Kab.</i>	<i>Pesiqta de Rab Kahana</i>	<i>Yebam.</i>	<i>Yebamot</i>

APOSTOLIC FATHERS

<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>1 Clement</i>	<i>Ign. Rom.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Romans</i>
<i>Did.</i>	<i>Didache</i>	<i>Ign. Smyrn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Smyrnaeans</i>
<i>Herm. Vis.</i>	<i>Shepherd of Hermas,</i> <i>Vision(s)</i>	<i>Ign. Tars.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Tarsians</i>
<i>Ign. Eph.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Ephesians</i>	<i>Ign. Trall.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Trallians</i>
<i>Ign. Magn.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Magnesians</i>	<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	<i>Martyrdom of Polycarp</i>
<i>Ign. Phld.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To the Philadelphians</i>	<i>Pol. Phil.</i>	Polycarp, <i>To the Philippians</i>
<i>Ign. Pol.</i>	Ignatius, <i>To Polycarp</i>		

NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

<i>Apoc. Pet.</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>	<i>Ps.-Clem.</i>	<i>Pseudo-Clementine</i>
<i>Apos. Con.</i>	<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>	<i>Hom.</i>	<i>Homilies</i>
<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i>	<i>Ps.-Clem.</i>	<i>Pseudo-Clementine</i>
<i>Ps.-Clem. EP</i>	<i>Pseudo-Clementine</i> <i>Epistula Petri</i>	<i>Rec.</i>	<i>Recognitions</i>

GREEK AND LATIN AUTHORS

Ambrose of Milan

Exp. Luc. *Expositio evangelii
secundum Lucam*

Augustine

Conf. *Confessions*
Grat. Chr. *De gratia Christi et de
peccato originali*

Clement of Alexandria

Strom. *Stromateis*

Cyprian

Unit. eccl. *De catholicae ecclesiae
unitate*

Cyril of Jerusalem

Procat. *Procatechesis*

Epiphanius

Pan. *Panarion*

Eusebius

Eccl. Hist. *Ecclesiastical History*

Gregory of Nazianzus

Or. *Orations*

Hippolytus

Haer. *Refutatio omnium
haeresium*

Horace

Sat. *Satires*

Irenaeus

Haer. *Adversus haereses*

Jerome

Pelag. *Against the Pelagians*
Vir. ill. *De viris illustribus*

John Chrysostom

Hom. Act. *Homiliae in Acta
apostolorum*
Hom. Jo. *Homiliae in Joannem*
Hom. Matt. *Homiliae in Matthaeum*

John Malalas

Chron. *Chronographia*

Josephus

Ant. *Jewish Antiquities*
J.W. *Jewish War*

Justin Martyr

1 Apol. *First Apology*
2 Apol. *Second Apology*
Dial. *Dialogue with Trypho*

Origen

Cels. *Contra Celsum*
Comm. Jo. *Commentary on John*
Comm. Matt. *Commentary on
Matthew*
Hom. Num. *Homilies on Numbers*

Pausanias

Descr. *Description of Greece*

Pliny the Elder

Nat. Hist. *Natural History*

Ptolemy

Geogr. *Geography*

Sozomen		<i>Pud.</i>	<i>De pudicitia</i>
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>	<i>Scorp.</i>	<i>Scorpiace</i>
Tacitus		Theophilus of Antioch	
<i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i>	<i>Autol.</i>	<i>Ad Autolyicum</i>
Tertullian			
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>		
<i>Praescr.</i>	<i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>		

MODERN EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

- ANF* *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 10 vols. New York, 1885–96
- FGH* *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Edited by F. Jacoby. Leiden, 1954–64
- NPNF* *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*. Edited by P. Schaff and H. Wace. 2nd series. 28 vols. New York, 1886–1900
- PG* *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca*. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–86

Introduction

Who was Saint Peter? For several centuries the neglected stepchild of critical (overwhelmingly Protestant) biblical scholarship, Simon Peter has for the last two decades enjoyed a remarkable literary renaissance. A growing number of studies by both Protestants and Catholics have pointed the way to a less polarized, more constructively engaged understanding of Peter's role in the first generation of the Jesus movement. In a sense, the impulse set by Oscar Cullmann over half a century ago has borne impressive fruit, even if after considerable delay.¹ At the time, it was highly controversial for a Protestant scholar to argue for the essential historicity of Matt. 16:17–19 and on that basis for Jesus's commissioning of Peter (though not any successors!) as a pivotal figure for early Christianity, as “the rock, the foundation for all churches of all times” (Cullmann 1953, 238). Now it is almost unremarkable to suggest that the new focus on Peter helps correct several centuries of neglect and distortion, as Martin Hengel notes that “the historical and theological importance of the fisherman from Bethsaida has been generally underestimated within both evangelical and Catholic exegetical circles” (Hengel 2010, ix).

The present book is the second of two that have arisen out of over a decade of work on the apostle Peter; the first one, *The Remembered Peter*, saw the light of day in 2010 (Bockmuehl 2010a).² But the project on which I thought I was embarking in 1999 was certainly very different from the one that I here bring to a conclusion. What I had conceived of originally as an integral, single work, perhaps

1. Cullmann 1952 (ET, Cullmann 1953); cf. the 2nd English edition, Cullmann 1962, most recently reissued as Cullmann 2011.

2. One or two responses to *The Remembered Peter* have helped to clarify certain points for the present volume, while reviewers impatient with a lack of overarching conclusions (“historical” and otherwise) in that more technical earlier volume may find a few more of those here. Despite some inevitable disagreements on matters of interpretative detail, I have been particularly grateful for the attentively probing and appreciative critique offered by John G. Cook (2011).

even a *magnum opus*, slowly became a volume of specialized studies that would need a follow-up, which is the present work. In this book, I draw extensively on the research of the first volume but synthesize it in less technical form, providing a narrative of exegetical engagement with the NT Peter and his reception in the second century. Some of what I originally set out to produce was overtaken in due course by the increasing interest in Simon Peter. A “new Cullmann” is certainly not as necessary today as it may still have seemed in the late 1990s.

It is my hope that the two volumes may prove complementary, with the present one serviceable especially to students at graduate or senior undergraduate levels, and perhaps to their teachers and pastors. Intended as an orientation for a wider audience than was the previous volume, this book will more often serve as a discussion starter on particular questions than as a definitive answer. Readers looking for more detail may wish to consult not only that earlier volume but also the companion website that I hope may prove useful for the study of both books.³

Much of what appears here has benefited significantly from student-level road testing in various academic and ecclesial settings. It would be impossible to mention all to whom I owe a debt of gratitude, but among these settings have been summer schools of the vacation term in biblical studies at St. Anne’s College (Oxford, 2004) and Regent College (Vancouver, Canada, 2008), as well as a series of plenary lectures at the 2010 Australasian Christian Conference for the Academy and the Church in Brisbane. Others include the College of St. George at Windsor Castle; Westerly Road Church in Princeton, New Jersey; St. Andrew’s Church in Histon; and St. Nicholas’ Church in Cuddington. The needs and interests, vital pointers, and questions of these supportive audiences have contributed considerably to both the form and substance of the present work. In addition, I am most grateful for institutional support through a British Academy Research Readership, sabbatical terms granted by the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and two memorable periods of residence at Princeton’s wonderfully hospitable Center of Theological Inquiry (2000 and 2005). In the final stages, the completion of this work was also aided by two small research grants from Keble College and Oxford University’s John Fell Fund, which made possible the help of my doctoral students Benjamin Edsall and Nicholas Moore, to whom (along with my colleague David Lincicum) I am most grateful for vital editorial assistance and numerous suggestions for improvement.

Given the genesis of this book, I have sought to avoid foreign-language references in the text and to keep footnoted documentation economic rather than exhaustive. Fellow scholars seeking more technical discussion or fuller documentation may often find *The Remembered Peter* a useful initial point of reference.

Methodologically, I see the important but elusive NT figure of Peter as a kind of test case for both the potential promise and the limits of an approach that seeks to attend more carefully to the way Christianity’s originating figures left a

3. <http://simonpeter.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.

footprint in living memory. A few years ago, I attempted to analyze and assess the late modern crisis and potential futures of NT study, suggesting that, at a time of fragmenting conversations and evaporating confidence in previously mainstream biblical criticism, there could be genuine merit in seeking a renewed common conversation around themes of the texts' implied readers and readings, as well as on their early effective history (Bockmuehl 2006).

In the end, whether the proof extols the pudding is a question on which readers will judge for themselves. Attention to implied readings and footprints in memory may not yield enhanced confidence about historical-critical methods and their assured results, but it does, I believe, encourage an understanding that history's Simon Peter, like history's Jesus of Nazareth, is from the start always already embedded in communal memory and interpretation of one kind or another. This apostle, in other words, is always *somebody's* Peter, whether friend or opponent—rather than a neutrally or objectively recoverable figure. And from the earliest days, that somebody turns out to be, above all, the ecclesial community in all its remarkable diversity of practice, belief, and understanding.

A profile of Peter has often served as a symbolic linchpin for biblical scholarship, especially in the Protestant Academy of the last two centuries. The question of Peter's opposition to Paul, iconically conceived in some early Christian (as well as early historical-critical) reflection, was more directly addressed in my first volume on this topic (Bockmuehl 2010a, 94–113, cf. 61–70). Readers of either volume will note the extent to which the nineteenth-century German scholar F. C. Baur's critical legacy continues to loom large in many key debating points regarding the nature of early Christianity: conflict versus consensus, legalism versus the “law-free” gospel, Jewish Christian particularism (of a supposedly narrow and introspective type) versus Pauline progressive Christian universalism, Protestantism versus Catholicism as the true heir of the apostolic gospel, and so forth. “Paulinism,” Baur once wrote, “made the principle of Christian universalism an integral element of the general Christian consciousness,” thereby permanently securing for itself and for the church the progressivist “power to step forward again and again with all its original keenness and decision, whenever hierarchical Catholicism should again overgrow evangelical Christianity, and offend the original Christian consciousness in its most vital element” (Baur 1878, 1:113).⁴

The course I plot here does differ in important ways from that classical portrait of the Protestant Paul, however formative it was and perhaps remains in some quarters. Readers will, I trust, find here no ham-fisted attack on the ghost of Baur's radical hyper-Paulinism as it is supposedly found in contemporary biblical or philosophical scholarship. Nor will this be a piece of countervailing apologetic in the service of “conservative” agendas—whether biblicist, Roman Catholic, or any other sort. Instead, I wish to suggest that nineteenth-century polarities such as progress-through-conflict or structure-versus-freedom may give

4. I owe this reference to David Lincicum.

way to more nuanced accounts of unity and diversity in our understanding of the emergence of Christianity. Once one considers that point, the otherwise nebulous figure of Simon Peter assumes an unexpectedly vital role close to the epicenter of Christian origins. Precisely in its bewildering diversity, early Christian memory of Peter, in my view, underscores the strength of insight in James Dunn's intuition that "*Peter was probably in fact and effect the bridge-man (pontifex maximus!) who did more than any other to hold together the diversity of first-century Christianity*" (Dunn 2002, 577 [italics original]; 1977, 385–86). My reading of Peter similarly links Petrine *fact* and *effect*, though it additionally allows itself to entertain the thought that the latter sometimes offers useful historical guidance in understanding the former.

1



Simon Peter . . . in Living Memory?

It is one of the inscrutable ironies of Christianity’s humble beginnings that we know so little about Jesus of Nazareth’s leading disciple—the one identified in the Gospel of Matthew as the “rock” on whom Jesus would build his church, listed in later Christian tradition as Rome’s first bishop, and one of its two apostolic martyrs at the hands of Emperor Nero. But who was this man, and what happened to him?

Any conventional quest for a “historical Peter” runs into the ground rather swiftly. There are of course a variety of relevant early Christian sources, both from the first century and from the second; a basic inventory is not in principle difficult to compile.¹ Yet they remain remarkably vague or silent about many of the things we would like to know about this apostle’s origin, character, missionary career, and death. Why would these sources show such a lack of interest in the fate of such a prominent apostle? This can only leave the modern reader frustrated and mystified. The historical Peter himself left virtually nothing in writing, and even less of archaeological interest—whether in his native Galilee, in Jerusalem or Caesarea, in Antioch or Corinth. Only Rome may be a partial exception, though here too we soon find reasons aplenty to ask probing questions.

1. See <http://simonpeter.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.

Among the numerous extant writings in his name, there are of course two short and remarkably different letters of uncertain date and origin in the NT. Beyond that, we have a bewildering range of apocryphal sources, styled as written by or about him, dating from the second through (at least) the sixth century.

The authenticity of these documents remains contested among scholars of diverse critical presuppositions. On perusing the scholarly secondary literature, it seems hard to dispel the impression that the vast majority of leading specialists on both sides of the Atlantic now regard neither of the NT's two Petrine letters as coming from Peter's own pen. As for the Gospel of Mark, almost universally accepted as the earliest of the canonical Gospels, it too is widely held to have no demonstrable or even plausible link with Simon Peter—despite persistent claims to the contrary in antiquity. For the past century, a steady stream of scholars have continued to deny the possibility that Peter himself had any historical link with Rome at all.²

Some consider Peter's relative obscurity in the early sources as an accurate reflection of a historical figure of only marginal importance for the formation of earliest Christianity. After all, the NT seems to suggest that the apostle Paul had far greater reach as a traveling missionary, let alone as the author of at least a number of authentically transmitted letters.

These are certainly significant and worthwhile cautions. Nevertheless, to underrate Peter's significance has the effect of rendering key historical quandaries about the origins of Christianity more or less unanswerable. Where were the continuities of either personality or ideological substance that allowed the Jesus movement to survive the death of its founder and early dispersal of its leadership from its heartland in Galilee and Jerusalem? Christianity, of course, did fragment and scatter, but without losing its asserted or perceived cohesion. A century after Pentecost, the widely scattered Christian communities were highly diverse in belief and practice, a fact that is also reflected in the increasing acceptance around this time of not one but four authoritative Gospel accounts. Given the history of radical disruption, opposition, and change, one may marvel that Christianity survived this long at all. But one of the features that most consistently characterizes and grounds that phenomenon is the recourse to Simon Peter, rather more than to Paul, as an anchor figure or key reference point for the literature and traditions of virtually all these diverse groups—including, for example, all four canonical and several noncanonical Gospels.

In this connection, as well, it is surely significant that Peter is, after Jesus, the most frequently mentioned individual both in the Gospels and in the NT as a whole.

2. Scholars in this category include Deschner 1986; Drews and Zindler 1997; Erbes 1901; Goulder 2004; Guignebert 1909; Heussi 1936 and 1955; Lapham 2003; Robinson 1945; Smaltz 1952; Zwierlein 2009. Contrast most recently Barnes (2010, 6–9, 40, and *passim*), who accepts Peter's execution in Rome by being burned alive rather than by crucifixion and thinks his body was probably not recovered. Paul was, in Barnes's view, executed in Spain. The state of the question is ably surveyed by Dassmann 2011.

As even Paul affirms, Peter is the first of the Twelve to witness the resurrection and a paradigmatic “pillar” apostle.³ Peter appears in the Gospels without fail as the spokesman of the apostles and as the first named in every list of disciples. Acts makes him the first preacher of the gospel to both Jews and gentiles. This is the case even though his image clearly differs in subtle but significant ways between the Gospels: Mark sees and hears Jesus through Peter’s eyes and ears; for Matthew, Peter is the messianic congregation’s bedrock and gatekeeper; for Luke, the pioneering convert, evangelist, and strengthener of believers; for John, the spokesman and shepherd of Jesus’s flock. Though at times brutally candid about Peter’s flaws, the NT authors depict no other individual whose personal or ecclesiological stature approaches that of Simon Peter. If one takes the cumulative effect of these insights seriously, it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that in key respects Peter’s role evokes the apostolic leader *par excellence*.⁴ Even where this profile is associated with positions of controversy or dispute, a good many of the great historical and theological puzzles of Christian origins remain unintelligible without an adequate understanding of Simon Peter in his relationships with both the Jewish and the gentile missions. Especially in Protestant NT scholarship, Peter has long been, as Martin Hengel liked to put it, quite simply the *underestimated* disciple.⁵ For anyone seeking to understand why the church continued to develop and grow beyond the lifetime of its founder, it is worth noting the early Christian affirmation that Jesus entrusted his message and memory not to the whim of anonymous tradition but to named apostolic witnesses who went on to encourage his flock—and to take his gospel to the world. For almost all early Christian writers of whatever persuasion, the first and chief among these witnesses is Simon Peter.

Why History Is Always More Than Archaeology

But can we really say anything historically meaningful about Peter if we have no significant written sources extant from his lifetime? All we receive from the first century is a small handful of contested references in Paul’s letters, the four Gospels,

3. Whether Peter is either historically or even biblically the first witness of the resurrection remains contested (contrast, e.g., Brock 2003 with Kessler 1998). For Matthew, the first witness is Mary Magdalene along with another Mary (Matt. 28:9); for Mark, it is uncertain (Peter and the disciples are implied in Mark 16:7, Mary Magdalene only in the longer ending at 16:9); for Luke, it is Cleopas and another disciple (Luke 24:13–35); for John, it is Mary Magdalene (John 20:14); for Paul, it is Peter (1 Cor. 15:5). For Paul’s view of Peter as a paradigm, pillar, and foundation, see, e.g., 1 Cor. 9:5; Gal. 2:9; cf. Eph. 2:20.

4. Cf. similarly Hengel 2010, 28–36, who warns against prioritizing the diverse “images” of Peter in individual NT books over against the remarkable internal consistencies ranging from Matthew and Mark, 1 Corinthians and Galatians, to 1 Peter and second-century Petrine apocrypha.

5. So the English title of Hengel 2006 (ET, Hengel 2010).

a truncated account in Acts that ends on something of a whimper (12:17–18; 15:6–11, 14), and a couple of very different “Petrine” NT letters that strike many as inauthentic. If we limit our quest to history reconstructed from NT evidence alone, we will be rather like the bewildered prison guards of Acts 12:18, left to wonder “what became of Peter”—and unable to account for his unlikely escape from obscurity to prominence.

To think about how we might address this problem, consider for a moment what it is we are looking for when we study any person—especially a dead person. The Greek historian Herodotus famously attributes to the Athenian lawmaker Solon the view that one should call no man happy until he dies (*Hist.* 1.32). But while that appears in Herodotus as advice for a philosophy of the good life, there is also a sense in which it is true for historiography: the dead are the only people we can have any confidence of knowing in the round, better than through snapshots of a moving target. In the case of someone still alive, our knowledge is only ever partial, and unless we have a long personal history with them, we rarely get more than a freeze-frame. Did contemporaries ever know the “real” historical Caesar or Caligula, Cromwell or Churchill? But there is the rub of our problem: even if you could take a video camera back to the lifetime of a historical figure, you might discover additional facts, but it is far from clear that you would gain the measure of the real person.

For much of its history, modern biblical scholarship conceived of its work in largely archaeological terms, shoveling away the mounds of piety, dogma, and ritual to discover, concealed somewhere underneath, the “real thing,” the pristine first-century facts. To get at the truth we need the earliest sources, and the earliest layers of the earliest sources; the later our material, the more corrupted it is. This was the classic conception of OT and NT study at the beginning of the twentieth century: the real Bible lies buried beneath the strata of centuries of tradition and interpretation, and it is historical criticism’s task to recover it.⁶ But for all the well-intentioned concern for dispassionate objectivity, it also began to dawn on thoughtful scholars during the last century that the more we keep deconstructing our sources, the taller our speculations become—and the more we are in danger of finding in them mainly ourselves and our view of the world. Most famously, this discovery was originally the upshot of the nineteenth century’s so-called Quest of the Historical Jesus, which Albert Schweitzer found wanting because the Jesus it uncovered was nothing but a liberal Protestant drawn in its own image⁷—wholly moralizing rather than thoroughly and irretrievably eschatological (Schweitzer 2000).

More recently, scholars have shown a willingness to recognize that the so-called New and Third Quests for the historical Jesus have been in many ways equally

6. So, e.g., Briggs 1899, 531, discussed in Kugel 2007, 42–45; similarly Jowett 1861, on which see Bockmuehl 2009, 130–31.

7. Cf. the famous characterization of that quest as resembling Narcissus of Greek mythology, mesmerized by “a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well” (Tyrrell 1909, 44).

elusive, with an ever-broadening range of contradictory Jesuses. Paula Fredriksen (2000, xiii–xiv), among others, has commented on the bewildering fact that

in recent scholarship, Jesus has been imagined and presented as a type of first-century shaman figure; as a Cynic-sort of wandering wise man; as a visionary radical and social reformer preaching egalitarian ethics to the destitute; as a Galilean regionalist alienated from the elitism of Judean religious conventions (like Temple and Torah); as a champion of national liberation and, on the contrary, as its opponent and critic—on and on. All these figures are presented with rigorous academic argument and methodology; all are defended with appeals to the ancient data. Debate continues at a roiling pitch, and consensus—even on issues so basic as what constitutes evidence and how to construe it—seems a distant hope.

Reactions to these insights about the elusiveness of early Christian history have been diffuse, perplexing, and contradictory. In response, some would merrily redouble their efforts to construe NT scholarship as “the task of removing from an original painting the work of later hands”—as one recently deceased, influential Oxford don liked to put it, apparently without a hint of irony or self-doubt.⁸ To others, not unreasonably, this seems a desperate case of whistling in the dark. At the other end of the spectrum, some of a more postmodern inclination have advocated giving up any pretense that we can or should prioritize primary over secondary literature, of ancient sources over their past or present interpreters. Some would now say that historiography, and the historians *themselves*, can be the only proper subject of the study of history. In the end, we are told, history is nothing but texts about texts, and we should desist from misguided and dangerous delusions about “truth.”

These are significant and sobering admonitions. The leading American scholar Dale Allison, for his part, has been prompted by what he calls “the enduring discord of the experts” to articulate the provocative suggestion that since history remains irretrievably outside our grasp, our irreconcilable reconstructions must inevitably exist in an uneasy coincidence of opposites with the affirmations of faith (Allison 2009, 8–14). Yet if this is so for Jesus, how much more must it be the case for far more tenuously attested figures like Simon Peter?

But in the experienced world of love and suffering, we do not have the luxury of disregarding questions of truth and justice, regardless of our political or religious posture. As the historians of twentieth-century totalitarianism have amply shown, the past cannot simply be reduced to a set of conflicting vested opinions about the past. Historians may of course offer diverse accounts, but they cannot collapse these into the past itself. All history that matters—of genocide, for instance, or of liberation from oppression—is necessarily perspectival, offering a point of view, a way of stringing together and only thus of beginning to

8. Cited with apparent approval in Anonymous 2009, an obituary of the don, J. C. Fenton, that includes the equally quaint advice that Fenton’s 1963 Penguin paperback remains, half a century later, the best (non-specialist) introduction to Matthew.

make sense of the mass of brute facts. On the other hand, such history is never merely “discourse” or “narrative.”⁹ Cutting-edge critics of the late twentieth century frequently generated readings of texts understood primarily as the construal of subtexts, suspicions, and subversions—and especially of discourses of power. Too frequently, however, this potentially fine-tuned archaeological tool was wildly misappropriated, and so, ironically, some scholars (sometimes the very same critics) moved from overconfidence in their stratigraphy of the past to the opposite extreme of bulldozing their archaeological tell in the name of ideological advocacy of one kind or another. Needless to say, understanding of the past was, in such exercises, not aided but crushed and brutalized. Workable historical optics require of us both criticism and self-criticism. Without this, we degrade the past achievements and sufferings of real individuals in favor of what our successors will soon enough expose as ideologically ephemeral, unself-critical twitterings.

Understanding What Happened from What Happened Next

But is there any alternative? Is it not painfully obvious now that all historical knowledge is inevitably relative and perspectival, that both sources and interpreters are necessarily shaped by their own cultural and personal agendas, and that therefore an important part of all interpretation must be to *deconstruct* our sources for their ideological and power interests? We should not deny the force of that question. And yet the Western philosophical and Judeo-Christian theological traditions are at one in affirming the overarching importance of truth and of a world in space and time that is, in important respects, both ordered and intelligible. This in turn supports the conviction that the quest to understand the past, though inescapably difficult and fraught, is neither pointless nor impossible.

One idea that has become enormously influential in recent years is the value of studying the *impact* and *aftermath* of historical persons, texts, and events, either for their own sake or, somewhat less commonly, as a potential clue to the original meanings. This is sometimes called “effective history” or, using the German term, *Wirkungsgeschichte* (history of effects), typically associated with the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (e.g., Gadamer 2004, 299–306). It is a way of recognizing the perspectival nature of historical events and our knowledge of them, in part by acknowledging the causes and effects that link events and texts to their aftermath (and ultimately to us).

In NT scholarship, a pioneer in this recently burgeoning field is the Swiss scholar Ulrich Luz, as seen especially in his great commentary on Matthew (Luz 2001–7). He has compiled a marvelous wealth of evidence illustrating the subsequent textual, artistic, and cultural effects of the text; but perhaps the most

9. A point well underscored by Evans 1997, 103–28, esp. 109, 124; also 239.

important achievement is his reflection on the nature of reception history and what it can contribute to biblical interpretation. Many other scholars have followed in recent years.

Luz memorably compares the biblical interpreter and historian to an environmental scientist analyzing the water of a great river while seated in a small boat that is itself carried and driven along by that same river.¹⁰ This analogy, I believe, captures something important about the context of historical scholarship today.¹¹ More specifically, it also adumbrates the fact that the NT authors and actors themselves were part of a living process of memory and tradition, about which we might fairly expect to gain valuable understanding by sampling the river a little way—a generation or two—*downstream* of the founding events.

To be sure, that image is not without epistemological and theological weaknesses, on which I have commented more fully elsewhere (Bockmuehl 2006). It is, on the one hand, quite vulnerable to the challenge of a radical relativization: can such analysis really tell us *anything* worth knowing? Theology, on the other hand, poses the rather different epistemological challenge that this particular river may well scrutinize the scientist much more effectively than could ever be the case vice versa (cf. Heb. 4:12). Edwyn Hoskyns rightly warned that interpreting the Bible is a bit like the scientist staring down a microscope only to find, rather alarmingly, that instead of the lifeless piece of tissue he expected, there is God peering back at him and declaring him to be a sinner (quoted in Barrett 1995, 57)!

That testing of the river is, to be sure, an untidy exercise. We should not expect assured results or unambiguous eyewitness evidence, let alone proof of the historical reliability of the Gospels. The contributory streams of tradition, testimony, or memory, like those of rivers, cannot be dissected or picked apart. Memory's DNA has no Y chromosome that permits reliable tracking through the generations. And it is certainly right to be cautious about a sort of evidential positivism when dealing with claims of memory or of eyewitness testimony.

But neither is serious historical study of the early church helped by inherited critical prejudice that rules out of bounds the very questions of memory and reception. Polluting the source does have an appreciable effect downstream; yet conversely, the salmon that enter the sea were indeed spawned at the river's headwaters. These processes remain in principle open to careful investigation. Similarly, a series of recent studies has offered excellent historical grounds for supposing that both collective and *personal* memory played an important role in early Christian narrative and traditioning processes.¹² Even if the historical conclusions drawn may have been optimistic at times,¹³ research in the field of memory and "eyewitness" testimony is rightly drawing attention away from the sorts of anonymous

10. Luz 1985–2002, 1:79 [ET p. 96]. See also Luz 1994, 23–38, and the earlier study in Luz 1985.

11. See my further remarks in Bockmuehl 2006, 163–67.

12. See, e.g., Bauckham 2006; 2007; Byrskog 2000; Dunn 2003b (also McKnight and Mournet 2010); a number of cognate questions were also previously discussed by Schröter 1997.

13. A criticism sometimes raised by reviewers of Bauckham; note also Allison 2010.

or indeed freely inventive processes once imagined by form critics. Instead, we are being alerted to the remarkably persistent interest, through a wide range of early Christian literature, in the Jesus tradition's concrete connections to the memory, indeed the eyewitness testimony, of specific and often named apostolic individuals.¹⁴

What encourages our attempt to attend to such association of living memory with particular individuals is that the first and second centuries do offer plentiful evidence of the early Christians *themselves* employing and appealing to such categories—not least when discussing specific apostolic figures. We shall discuss some of that evidence later in this chapter.

To understand history in the round, then, we will do well to attend to the historical aftermath, enhancing our understanding of what happened in the light of what happened next. A key part of that aftermath, perhaps the most crucial part, is that which takes place while there are still people alive who claim a firsthand memory either of the events and people concerned or of those who personally knew them.

There is an irony in the fact that we may not properly know who someone is until they are dead, and at that point we may benefit enormously from the memory of those—quite possibly friend and foe alike—who did know that person. As we shall see, it is during this liminal and patchily documented period that Christians of diverse stripes still quite explicitly appealed to certain key figures who embodied a “living memory” of the apostolic era. The survival of such memory, or at least of apparently uncontested claims to such memory, can be shown in rare but specific pivotal cases to extend up to a century and a half beyond the apostolic generation.

Contemporary observers often turn out to be pretty poor witnesses to the history of their own times. What they perceive as successes may well turn out in retrospect to be little short of disastrous; people they damned as failures can end up celebrated for far-sighted courage and wisdom—and vice versa. It may seem a platitudinous truism to say that only the past can be known as history; and yet the same in important respects applies to people: we learn to understand a person really only from the end rather than from the beginning or the middle. For readers familiar with the events of World War II, the changing fortunes of events like the 1938 Munich conference and of leaders like Chamberlain and Churchill constitute a salutary reminder never to mistake the verdict of journalism for the understanding of history.

In seeking to understand key players in the drama of Christian origins, therefore, we may not always be best served if we imagine contemporary written sources to be the best points of access. The quality of historical insight is not always proportionate to proximity of our sources to the events and persons they describe. Although a privilege when we can get them, the voices of ancient contemporaries are no less myopic about their own times than we are about ours: proximity typically precludes perspective.

14. See Dunn 2003a; 2003b; 2005a; 2005b; also the critical engagement with Dunn's work in Bockmuehl 2010b.

Conversely, the experienced and remembered effects of a person's words and actions are often as valuable a clue to their meaning as a knowledge of the original causes and circumstances. At the same time, it must be right to limit the extent to which we travel down the road of consequences, or we will lose sight completely of the original story.

In the case of early Christianity, that remembered aftermath invites access for a limited period to a number of identifiable individuals and communities who could—and did—relate memories of people and events of the apostolic generation. Not only did they claim this themselves, but their younger contemporaries affirmed it, and even their enemies apparently did not contest it. To give such living memory a cautious, critical welcome may help us make sense of the way the apostle Peter's ambiguous historical origins generated such an astonishingly important footprint in subsequent Christian history.

The importance of memory in the second century for the early Christians' own understanding of the apostolic tradition is strikingly voiced by Clement of Alexandria, who speaks of the gospel not as a story but as a true account passed on and guarded in memory (in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.23.5). To be sure, this hardly counts as a straightforward assertion, let alone as evidence for controlled transmission of eyewitness memory. We do well to read such statements both critically and *dialectically*: all memory is, at least to some extent, a reflection on itself and on its own ideological commitments.

Certainly this is true for Petrine memory, which scholarship has long since shown to be notoriously complex and often contradictory (see, e.g., Grappe 1995). On the other hand, scholars of oral history and social memory have also uncovered countervailing evidence that memory tied to particular objects, landmarks, or individuals may retain a certain sticky or persistent quality that is a function of its attachment to specific instances of what the French scholar Pierre Nora has more generally dubbed “landmarks of memory [*lieux de mémoire*]” (1984; ET, 1996). There is no question that memory, even of the eyewitness sort, is remarkably malleable and subject to distortion when it comes to the witness's own experiences and encounters. But on the other hand, where it is tied to momentous or life-changing objects, persons, or places, these can become “pegs” for the memory of events and persons,¹⁵ especially when these pegs concern aspects of formative importance to an emerging consensus position. People may have exceptionally vivid and detailed memories of the day they met the queen or the pope, of what they were doing when President Kennedy was killed, or when they first heard of the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. At the same time, such individual memories also typically come to be calibrated in relation to an emerging communal consensus—either reactively or, more often, in convergence with it.

15. See esp. van Houts 1999, 93–120.

Memory of this sort is of course highly episodic, lumpy, and often somewhat formulaic—characteristics to which even eyewitnesses are hardly immune. And it can often be generative of meaning, rather than merely retentive.¹⁶ Nevertheless, in many cases, the formation of consensus around a social memory is a contested and haphazard process, which occurs over the period of a generation or two after the death of an important figure, a period when what is remembered of an event or a life remains open, to some extent, to re-evaluation, correction, confirmation, and, of course, harmonization. In this book, we will see clear cases of this phenomenon applied to the memory of apostolic figures like Simon Peter. This certainly requires us to beware of exaggerating the historical value of memory; but on the other hand, we should not be misled into the opposite error of underrating memory's importance just because it is contested and tenuous. A student of mine once suggested to me that there remains even today an intriguing and complex connection between phenomena like the 1960s Bob Dylan “of history” and his iconically remembered cultural persona “of faith”: each is in its own way deeply historical, contradictory, and conflicted—and yet each also remains in important ways intangible and unintelligible without the other.¹⁷

One obvious objection to this way of reading the texts is to regard such theorized concern for memory as the importation of an anachronistic modern affectation to the context of late antiquity. It is most intriguing, however, that Christians in the second century do care passionately about their living and organically rooted link to the apostolic persons and events at the origin of their faith. What is more, this passion for a living connection is attested by no means only among traditionalist or sectarian groups but across the whole theological spectrum. The proto-Orthodox concern to derive the authority of Mark the evangelist from his service to Peter is echoed in living memory as late as Irenaeus of Lyons, who claimed in his youth to have heard Polycarp, one of the last to have been an eyewitness and personal acquaintance of the apostles. Conversely, however, even the Valentinian Gnostics claimed that their master, Valentinus, had been instructed by Theudas, a hearer disciple of Paul, while the followers of Basilides traced his pedigree through Basilides's teacher, Glaucias, who was said, like Mark, to have been Peter's expositor (*hermeneutēs*).¹⁸

While Greco-Roman sources are not unaware of this issue of memory, explicit appeal to it is made among Jewish and Christian accounts of the lives of great

16. Cf. also Allison 2010, 2 (in relation to Jesus, memory is “reconstructive as well as reproductive”).

17. I am grateful to my student James Harland for this point, amply illustrated in reviews like Ferguson 2009.

18. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.17. Winrich Löhr (1996, 26–29) has shown that Clement's knowledge of Basilides, a fellow Alexandrian of an earlier generation, is generally trustworthy. This particular tradition too is historically at least conceivable, although Hippolytus's report of an alternative claim that Basilides received secret dominical revelations from Matthias (Hippolytus, *Haer.* 7.20.1) seems rather less so. For a useful recent assessment of the complex problem of Hippolytus's identity, see Volp 2009.

teachers and their pupils, including on the Christian side singular figures like Peter, Paul, James, and John, as well as the wider family of Jesus and their descendants.¹⁹ For obvious reasons, such figures were highly plausible “landmarks of memory” in Nora’s more wide-ranging sense of “place.”²⁰ So also, Richard Bauckham has shown that the gospel traditions are by no means anonymous collections of the sort once imagined by twentieth-century form criticism, or even, arguably, in the construal of early Christian “memory” favored by more recent writers like James Dunn and his students.²¹

Remembrance of the person and the work of Jesus was an explicit imperative at the heart of even the earliest Christian act of worship: “do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24–25). In the Gospel of John, apostolic remembrance of the Lord is said to be the work of the “reminding” Paraclete (John 14:26). The disciples’ faith in Jesus draws on memory of him (2:17, 22; 12:16; 15:20; 16:4). Above all, perhaps, the Fourth Gospel repeatedly calls to mind the Beloved Disciple as the one whose eyewitness testimony guarantees the truth of the narrative (19:35; 21:24; cf. 1 John 1:1–4).

So the memory of Jesus is clearly an important topic for the NT. But the recollection of the apostles, too, soon becomes a topic of explicit reflection. Especially in later NT books, readers are frequently urged to call to mind the apostles, initially in their absence but also, and increasingly, after their death. As a matter of fact, the claims of living apostolic memory continued, surprisingly, for many decades—an observation that runs against ingrained assumptions of much conventional historical-critical scholarship of early Christianity. As we will see in the next chapter (see “2 Peter” under “The Petrine Letters”), a particularly striking example of this concern occurs in 2 Peter, composed perhaps not long after the year AD 100.

Three additional brief illustrations may help give definition and color to this idea of a living memory of the apostolic generation. First, Papias (ca. AD 60–130) was a bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor whose lifetime overlapped with that of Polycarp. Although best known for his influential but much-debated comments about the origins of the Gospels, in the same context he expresses a specific preference for living oral apostolic tradition over merely written sources like the Gospels. Interpretations of his position have sometimes assumed either a vote for uncontrolled proliferation of oral tradition or else a crudely apologetic desire to

19. See, e.g., Bauckham 1990; Lambers-Petry 2003, with reference to Julius Africanus, Hegesippus, and others.

20. Cf. further Mendels 2004, who would include Eusebius as a “site of memory” in Nora’s extended sense. Note also Eliav 2004 in relation to the tradition of the tomb of James and, *mutatis mutandis*, Valdez del Alamo and Pendergast 2000 on the medieval function of tombs as fixing communal memory.

21. I have developed this query about the otherwise excellent work of Dunn (2003b; 2005b) in Bockmuehl 2010b. Cf. also Mournet 2005.

press the Gospels' apostolic authority. Recent scholarship, however, has tended to confirm that Papias is in fact mildly *critical* of the canonical inscription of the Gospels: while doubtless acceptable and authoritative, they are nevertheless written texts at one remove from the living apostolic voice that is still present in his own exposition of the gospel, as one who stands in direct contact with the apostolic generation.

This claim of a living connection with Christianity's founding voices is what primarily concerns us here. In his famous statement of this position, Papias clearly underlines the importance of that personal memory of the apostles in understanding the Christian tradition:

And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. . . . If ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I used to inquire into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, had said [*eipen*], and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, are saying [*legousin*]. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as that which comes from a living and surviving voice. (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.39.3–4)

I am concerned here not so much about establishing historical facticity but rather about the explicit mention of Simon Peter in connection with an indigenous tradition from Asia Minor affirming a living chain of apostolic memory. Papias's somewhat naïve and uncritical affirmation of this "living voice" over against written documents was, in due course, relativized by the need for a finite and written canon. What matters here, though, is that Papias represents an important point of reference for the role of living memory and its appropriation in the second century.

A generation later, Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100–160) on numerous occasions refers to the Gospels as "memoirs" of the apostles, both in the two apologies addressing pagans and in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, set in Ephesus as early as 135.²² It is unclear how much personal memory that phrase implies for these sources. It may also echo a biographical commonplace well known, for example, ever since Xenophon (ca. 430–355 BC) published his "Reminiscences" (*Apomnēmoneumata*) of Socrates: those earlier "memoirs" are cast in the form of conversations whose function is to be "convincing," even where, at times, they may not be strictly "authentic" (cf. Tuplin 1996, 1630).²³ Nevertheless, Justin's conception of these memoirs does seem, like Xenophon's, to imply more than a stereotyped convention of reverence for a great sage. For Justin, the Gospels in some sense reflect genuine apostolic recollections of Jesus derived from the testimony of eyewitnesses and

22. Examples include *Dial.* 100.4; 101.3; 102.5; 103.6, 8; 104.1; 105.1, 5, 6; 106.1, 3h, 4; 107.1; cf. *1 Apol.* 33.5; 66.3; 67.3. For a recent discussion of Justin's notion of memoirs, see Luhumbu Shodu 2008, 59–107.

23. According to Eusebius (*Eccl. Hist.* 2.23.3), Hegesippus, another second-century Christian writer, similarly titled his five-volume church history "Memoirs" (*Hypomnēmata*).

their disciples. Even more to the point for a scenario set in the mid-130s, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin identifies Mark's Gospel in particular as representing specifically the memoirs of Peter (*Dial.* 106.3)—a point we shall discuss more fully in due course. My point here is the modest one of Justin's concern for memoirs, not for any particular claim of historicity.²⁴

We turn, finally, to Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. AD 130–200), who recalls his childhood memories at the feet of his teacher, Polycarp, in Smyrna. He writes as follows to his estranged friend Florinus, a formerly “catholic” priest who has become a Valentinian:

I remember the events of those days more clearly than those which happened recently, since what we learn as children grows up with the soul and becomes one with it. As a result, I can speak even of the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and disputed, how he came in and went out, the character of his life, his physical appearance, the discourses he gave to the people, how he used to report his conversations with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he remembered their words and what he had heard from them about the Lord, and about their miracles and their teaching, and how Polycarp had received them from the eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, and reported everything in agreement with the Scriptures. By the mercy of God given to me, even then I listened eagerly to these things, and made notes of them not on paper but in my heart; and by the grace of God I always truly meditate on them. So I can bear witness before God that if that blessed and apostolic presbyter had heard anything of this kind [i.e., the Valentinian teaching] he would have cried out, and shut his ears, and said according to his custom, “O good God, for what a time have you preserved me that I should endure this?” He would have fled from the very place where he was sitting or standing, when he heard such words. (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 5.20.7)

As in his better-known treatise against the heretics, Irenaeus here insists on a harmony of Scripture and its interpretation that is in keeping with a tradition inherited from the apostles. Far from a euphemistic label for the imposition of an ecclesiastical construct, that tradition genuinely represents, for Irenaeus, a quite specific chain of personal memory reaching back to the apostles. Nor is this simply a device of apologetic convenience. Writing in another context, Irenaeus notes in passing that Clement of Rome's personal connection with the apostles, which Irenaeus believed to be factual, lends *gravitas* to his interpretation of their writings (*Haer.* 3.3.3): “He was one who saw the apostles themselves and conferred with them, and who still had their proclamation ringing in his ears and their tradition before his eyes.” Peter is not mentioned by name, but the principle is clear.

We can only speculate how Irenaeus's friend might have responded, given the Valentinians' remarkably progressive-sounding conviction that the apostles were

24. Curiously, despite his appeal to apostolic memory, Justin makes more expansive claims about Simon Magus's activities in Rome than about Simon Peter's.

children of a very different time and culture whose moral and doctrinal views required reinterpretation and reconfiguration in the light of superior contemporary knowledge and experience.²⁵ On the other hand, it is interesting that some followers of Basilides cited Glaucias's connection with Peter, while students of Valentinus believed their master to be the student of Paul's disciple Theudas. This suggests their concession of the merit and significance of an apostolic chain of tradition, at least (though perhaps not only) for polemical reasons.²⁶

Conclusion: The Remembered Apostle

Our introductory chapter has been concerned with the problem of how we might understand Simon Peter in the face of his seeming historical elusiveness. We have seen that early Christians of diverse convictions continued for over a century to show a much greater concern for living personal memory of the apostolic generation than would traditionally be allowed in a reconstruction of early Christian history along standard critical canons. This concern can be shown not only to have existed but also to have become the subject of specific appeals in negotiating disputed interpretations of the Christian gospel.

We may safely conclude that the early church recognized well into the second century a select group of what we might call sub-apostolic bearers of memory, who were widely regarded as—and in some cases perhaps were in fact—living links between the leaders of the apostolic generation and the churches that followed them. Second-century assertions of this sort exist for a number of apostolic and sub-apostolic figures, including Simon Peter and his students, both in circles that came to be identified as orthodox and among those that were eventually known as Gnostic or heretical.

It is worth acknowledging here that such early Christian stress on individual and collective memory may appear to some readers suspect and naïve when interpreted from a hermeneutic of suspicion, trained as we are to attend to contemporary cultural concerns about power and vested interests. Such are, of course, important critical caveats. Yet we must recognize too that even these very concerns of ours cannot exist without the context of living personal and communal memory to sustain them.

Absent such a store of sustaining common memory, our political and theological agendas collapse into absurdity—as, for example, David Keck (1996) has

25. They “[maintained] that the apostles preached the gospel still somewhat under the influence of Jewish opinions, but that they themselves are purer [in doctrine], and more intelligent, than the apostles” (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.12.12 [ANF 1:309]; cf. 1.13.6 on the disciples of Marcus Magus; also 3.5.1–2). Irenaeus famously mocks such Valentinian *aggiornamento* as resembling one who takes apart a mosaic image of the emperor in order to reassemble it in the likeness of a dog (*Haer.* 1.8.1).

26. On this point, see Pearson 2005, 4, citing Löhr 1996.

movingly illustrated in relation to Alzheimer's, "the theological disease."²⁷ This consideration also warns against identifying memory too closely with the self, as much of Western thought has tended to do.²⁸ A hint at the theological key to memory may lie in Clement of Rome's assurance that the faithful are irreducibly "engraved upon God's memory" (*1 Clem.* 45.8). This suggests that the one who "will wipe away every tear from their eyes" (Rev. 7:17; 21:4) is not thwarted by an impediment like Alzheimer's disease: in Christ, its victims retain their home, their memory, and their hope of heaven. For Christian as for Jewish faith, the gift of memory resides in the communion of those whom God remembers.

For a limited period, then, we may expect that the second-century images of Peter will have remained susceptible and also vulnerable to precisely such an appeal to the living memory of founding figures and events—for all their bewildering diversity and ideological diffusion. That fact, if we can corroborate it below, will serve to illustrate early Christianity's astonishingly diverse, yet interestingly constrained, variations on the Peter of Christian memory.

Why, finally, should any of this matter, or what is it intended to contribute? Here it may help to articulate a point that readers of my previous work will perhaps already suspect. At one level, this work offers simply a fresh perspective on Peter. In a fuller sense, however, my aim is to present an accessible test case of the twin principles of attending to the text's implied readers and early effective history, which in *Seeing the Word* (Bockmuehl 2006) I proposed as possible ways to rekindle a common conversation about the object of the NT in an otherwise intensely balkanized discipline. Whether this proves a productive way forward will be for others to judge, but it is my hope that the present work may be an aid to such reflection.

27. In Keck 1996, see esp. chap. 3 (pp. 75–96): *liturgy* is "the central vehicle of our faithful remembering of God" (p. 96).

28. Cf. Augustine: "Great is the power of memory, an awe-inspiring mystery, my God, a power of profound and infinite multiplicity. . . . So great is the power of memory, so great is the force of life in a human being whose life is mortal" (*Conf.* 10.17.26 [ET, Chadwick 1998]; cf. 10.8.15). (NB: for Augustine, memory is significant not simply for the human "self" but also as a vestige of the Trinity.)