
THE BIBLE AND
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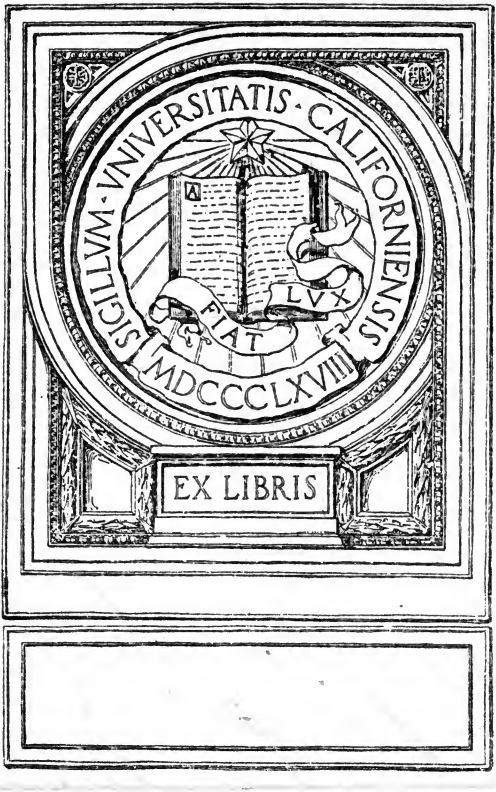
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THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM

THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM

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BY WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

PREFACE

THIS little book has been written in the faith that the better understanding of the nature and history of the Bible which has been attained in the last century and a half is a gift of God to the Church, a gift which provides the Christian with clearer light and a firmer assurance for his own spiritual life, and furnishes him with new weapons for his warfare with sin and unbelief.

INTRODUCTION

BIBLICAL CRITICISM

By W. H. BENNETT, M.A., D D., Litt.D

"Criticism," as the technical name of a science applied to the Bible, should be carefully distinguished in some respects from the word "criticism" in its other uses. Of course in all its uses, "criticism" means forming or expressing a judgment. Human nature being what it is, the judgment is generally assumed to be adverse, so that for many people "criticism" is synonymous with "finding fault." But "Biblical Criticism" does not in the least mean "finding fault with the Bible."

Again, "criticism" often means forming or expressing a judgment as to merits or demerits; the word is thus used in such phrases as "Art Criticism," "Dramatic Criticism," and also in "Literary Criticism" in common usage. But this is not its meaning in the phrase we are considering; "Biblical Criticism" does not mean "sitting in judgment on the Bible," as regards merit or demerit.

"Biblical Criticism" in its widest sense consists of forming and expressing judgments on such matters as the books to be included in the Bible, the exact contents of such books, their date, authorship, and manner of composition, the character of their contents, whether prose or verse, whether history, parable, symbolic narrative, or apocalypse. We may say a word or two as to the various branches of criticism.

The first point to decide about the *Bible* is the books to be included in it, or the *Canon*.

Then we have to determine the *Text*, *i.e.* the exact contents and wording of each book. The books come to us in a number of manuscripts of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek

works, in manuscript translations of those works, and in quotations from them. These various authorities differ considerably in detail; we have to weigh the conflicting evidence and decide between alternative readings. This is the *Lower* or *Textual Criticism*.

Next we come to the *Higher Criticism*.

"Higher" here does not mean "superior," or belonging to the superior person; it is a technical term, as in "Higher Algebra." "Higher Criticism" forms and expresses judgments as to the date, authorship, and mode of composition of a book. When Mr. Spurgeon expressed such judgments he was a "Higher Critic." This branch is sometimes called "literary criticism," but is quite different from the criticism of the merits of a novel or a poem. "Higher Criticism" is often used in a very elastic sense. For one thing, it is used popularly to denote the views of most modern scholars, as distinguished from the traditional views formerly held and still adhered to by some persons on dogmatic grounds. Again, "Higher Criticism" is often used to include the two remaining branches dealing with the character of a work, and its historical value. Thus we use criticism to determine whether a work is a collection of scientific formulæ, a history, a poem, and so forth.

Finally we have *Historical Criticism*, which examines the data provided by the various books of the Bible, and attempts to construct from them a history of Israel and its religion.

THE BIBLE AND CRITICISM

PART I

THE OLD TESTAMENT

By W. H. BENNETT, M.A., D.D., Litt.D.

CHAPTER I

HIGHER CRITICISM, PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL RESULTS

The public interest in criticism has been mainly fixed on Higher Criticism.[1] This term is often used in a loose way to include any departure from those traditional views which are sometimes popularly supposed to be orthodox. Yet most of the outstanding features of the modern views of the Old Testament which have specially attracted attention are concerned with the date, authorship, and manner of composition of certain books.

First as to the nature and history of the traditional views. They are views which, until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, were usually taken for granted in popular preaching, teaching, and text-books. In very wide circles they are still taken for granted; the presuppositions of popular religion can only be changed very slowly. These views generally assume that if a personal name of a man is connected with a book the whole of that book in the form in which we now have it was written by that man.[2] To take the controversies which have

[1] *Cf.* above, p. viii.

[2] It was apparently assumed that women were incapable of writing an inspired book; *Ruth* and *Esther* were not ascribed to these women. An exception was made of Deborah and the Song of Deborah.

attracted most attention: it was supposed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; David the Psalms; Solomon the whole of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Canticles*; Isaiah the whole of *Isaiah*; and Daniel, *Daniel*. There were, however, many varieties of these views. As a rule those who were in any degree thoughtful and well-informed admitted that Moses did not write Deut. xxxiv. 5–12, and that the very principle they were applying prevented their ascribing to David the psalms which were not connected with his name. They also saw that the principle could not be applied to the books of Samuel.

Moreover, the traditional views in some form or another were supposed to rest on an authority which could not be called in question. All criticism was regarded as superfluous and impertinent. There seems to have been an impression that these views had been communicated by a definite and explicit revelation, or that they had been established beyond all doubt after a careful examination of full, express, and convincing evidence by Jewish and Christian scholars in the centuries before and after the beginning of the Christian Era. There is no foundation for either opinion.

There is no express evidence as to how the traditional views arose. All that we know is that we find the titles in the earliest extant manuscripts, which, however, were not written till from three to eight centuries *after* Christ, and that we find these titles in use in the New Testament and other literature of the same period. We have no express statements as to when or by whom or in what sense these titles were first connected with the books, or as to how far the books have been modified since that time. We gather that towards the beginning of the Christian Era and somewhat earlier, the titles were commonly used as if they meant that the persons named wrote the books. Much later we find express statements to that effect. This absence of explicit early testimony has led to the supposition that the books appeared originally in the form in which we now have them, with the names of Moses, Isaiah, &c., connected with them as authors of the whole books, and that information to that effect was handed down by continuous tradition for some hundreds of years until we find the first traces of the tradition in the literature.

In the case of many of the books this supposed tradition has never been properly investigated till modern times. Hence we speak of these views as traditional. We first meet with them as a tradition; they continued to be a mere tradition until they were either verified or disproved by modern criticism.

It is easy to see how they arose. Sometimes one book is substantially the work of the person after whom it is called—its eponym, so to speak—as in the case of *Amos;* sometimes a large proportion of the book is the work of the eponym, as in the case of *Isaiah;* sometimes the book is largely occupied with the sayings or doings of the eponym, *e.g. Samuel.* In other cases the book is written in the name of the eponym, *e.g. Ecclesiastes.* Once the name and the book had become associated, the usage would give rise to the popular impression, in all possible cases, that the person named was the actual author of the book, and the impression would persist, however the book was supplemented or otherwise altered. Scholars would absorb the popular impression as part of the training of their childhood, and would take the traditional views for granted so long as nothing occurred to compel discussion.

So much for the traditional views and their history. Higher Criticism is commonly thought of as a denial of some of these views, more especially as regards the books mentioned above. Many people have been so startled and absorbed by this denial that they have not realised that criticism has provided a positive reconstruction of the history of the composition of the books of the Old Testament. Higher Criticism as it is generally understood might be roughly summed up in a few lines. This summary would run somewhat as follows:

Moses did not write the Pentateuch; David did not write the Psalms; Solomon did not write *Proverbs, Canticles,* or *Ecclesiastes;* the Book of Isaiah was not wholly written by Isaiah, chapters xl.–lxvi. being written by a "Second Isaiah"; Daniel did not write *Daniel;* the "Second Isaiah" and the books once ascribed to Moses, David, Solomon, and Daniel were composed long after the times when those worthies lived.

Such a statement would fairly represent in a simple and crude form the leading changes which modern criticism has

made in the views as to date, authorship, and composition.[1] A fuller and more correct statement, but still a statement which is only a brief, imperfect, and approximate sketch, is given in the following chapter. Any attempt to give an exact and exhaustive account of the results of Higher Criticism would occupy many times the space available in this small volume, and the reader is referred to the works mentioned in the Bibliography.

But to return to our general statement; the changes set forth in it are wide and sweeping, and are often misunderstood and therefore misrepresented by popular exponents of traditional views. For instance, we hear a good deal about forgery; but it is not necessarily part of the modern views that these works were forged in the names of ancient worthies with intent to deceive. The explanation of the ascription of these books to Moses and others is threefold. Much of this literature was originally anonymous, and was ascribed to ancient worthies by unfounded but perfectly honest conjecture. Other works were written in the name of some ancient worthy simply as a matter of literary form; *e.g. Ecclesiastes* in the name of Solomon; this method is familiar amongst all peoples with an advanced literature. Thirdly, certain portions of the Pentateuch are connected with the name of Moses as being the outcome, application, or interpretation of laws which had been ascribed to him by tradition; just as we speak of many things as Christian, or even the will, or the mind of Christ, which are not found in the Gospels.

But the findings of the Higher Criticism are startling to those who hear them for the first time, however carefully and impartially they may be stated. These findings have been familiar to scholars for more than half a century, but in spite of the growth of education, probably a majority are still allowed to grow up under the impression that the traditional views of the Old Testament are the only possible views, the only views

[1] The clause, "David did not write the Psalms," is the way in which that point is often stated popularly. Of course a mere glance at the Psalter shows that it is not claimed that David wrote all the Psalms. A more accurate statement would be, "Few, if any, of the Psalms with Davidic titles were written by David."

consistent with loyalty to Christianity; and that these views are only challenged by the enemies of the faith. After this unfortunate education a man may be confronted by the critical position in its entirety, he may realise its wholesale repudiation of traditional views, and get some idea of the conclusive evidence by which its main positions are supported. Unless he obtains careful guidance at such a crisis, the results are often disastrous; they are the fruit of the mistakes of his early training.

It would often help the student of the Bible if he would consider that though these changes seem to him a sudden, overwhelming revolution, because they burst upon him all at once, yet in reality they have accumulated gradually; they are the result of a long process; they are due to the patient and devout study of generations of Christian scholars; and have long proved themselves helpful and inspiring to multitudes of Christian ministers and other devout believers.

In criticism, as in other matters, the truth has prevailed partly through the persecution of its apostles. The general public first became aware of the modern views on the Pentateuch through the controversies concerning Bishop Colenso of Natal. The first part of his *Pentateuch and Book of Joshua critically Examined* was published in 1862; this work made important contributions to the criticism of the Pentateuch. Further, his denial of the Mosaic authorship and the historicity of certain portions of the Pentateuch exposed him to fierce attacks, and his right to continue a bishop of the Church of England was more or less successfully challenged.

The older generation of those now living will remember the immense stimulus which the public interest in the critical study of the Old Testament received from the controversy roused by W. Robertson Smith's expositions of the modern view in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and his expulsion from his professional chair at Aberdeen. But the history of modern criticism goes far back before Colenso; indeed modern criticism is only the successor and heir of a process which is almost as old as the earliest documents of the Old Testament. These ancient Scriptures only reached the form in which they were known to our Lord and His Apostles, and later on the differing

forms in which they are current in the various churches of Christendom, through repeated applications of the various forms of criticism described in the previous chapter. Again and again scribes and editors have had to decide between the different wordings of the same passage which they found in earlier manuscripts and editions. The titles and headings ascribing psalms or prophecies to David, Isaiah, and others, are the relics of the Higher Criticism of Biblical scholars during many centuries before and after the coming of Christ. Their criticism may not always have been sound, but it was as "high" as that of Wellhausen.

Dr. Duff in his *History of Old Testament Criticism* has pointed out that much of the Old Testament is the result of a long process of a still more drastic criticism. Many of the books have reached their present form through a series of revisions in which each successive editor handled the work of his predecessors with the utmost freedom. For instance, the earliest extant edition [1] of the law connected with Moses was freely expanded and modified to form the code which we find in the central chapters of *Deuteronomy;* and again, many of the ordinances in the second code were set aside in favour of others by the later edition of the Mosaic law known as the Priestly Code. At the same time the reasons for observing the Sabbath and other laws are altered. Again we find that the form of the narratives was often changed; *Chronicles*, for instance, differs widely from *Kings*, both in its general view of the history and in numerous details. Thus it appears that the inspired writers did not hold that the inspiration of their predecessors guaranteed the absolute and final accuracy of their statements on law, history, and religion, whether as to wording or substance.

Speaking generally, in the great crises of the history of Revealed Religion, when the Church was full of vitality, Jewish and Christian scholars handled the views of their predecessors with great freedom, revising them in the light of fuller knowledge and a deeper understanding of the truth. But usually after each crisis there came a dead, scholastic period, when sacred learning ceased to be living and original; the position reached at the close of the crisis was supposed to be

[1] See below, pp. 23 ff.

absolute and final, an orthodox tradition whose authority barred all progress, and remained a hindrance to further advance even when the creative energies of the Divine Spirit once more troubled the stagnant waters.

Thus Christ Himself and the New Testament writers criticise the teaching of the Old Testament in the most drastic fashion. "It was said by them of old time, but I say unto you."

The great fathers of the early Church, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, were much occupied with Higher Criticism, such questions as the authorship of the *Wisdom of Solomon* or the canonicity of *Esther*.

The Renascence and the Reformation quickened the interest of scholars in all branches of Biblical criticism. For instance, Luther deals with the Higher Criticism of the Apocrypha. He also had more than doubts about *Esther*, which he coupled with *II. Maccabees* thus: "I am so hostile to this book and to Esther, that I would that they had not remained extant; for they judaize too much and have much heathen naughtiness." [1] For the most part, however, the great Reformers were too much occupied with other matters to attempt any thorough independent investigation of the Higher Criticism of the canonical books of the Old Testament; they simply handed on the accepted views of the Middle Ages.

The great movement of modern criticism had its effective beginning about the middle of the eighteenth century, and has continued without break or check ever since; before dealing with this, however, we must say a word or two about the forerunners of this movement in regard to the books specially concerned in the controversies of the last century and a half.

First, however, we must again emphasize the fact that modern criticism is the natural and legitimate development of the work of Jewish Rabbis, Christian Fathers, and the Protestant and Romanist divines of the Renascence and the Reformation. Modern criticism may revise views once accepted through lack of knowledge and the defective methods of the primitive science of criticism, but none the less it owes an immense debt to the scholars of past centuries; it is carrying

[1] Quoted in Bleek's *Introduction to the O.T.*, Eng. tr. 1875, i. 449.

on their work with a like devotion to truth and to Christian faith.

We turn, therefore, to the earlier suggestions of the modern views as to the Pentateuch, *Isaiah*, the Davidic Psalms, and *Daniel*.

The Fourth Book of Ezra, an apocalyptic work of the first century A.D., told how the law had been burnt and Ezra was inspired to dictate to five companions the contents of the twenty-four books (presumably of the Old Testament)[1] and seventy others. This story represents an opinion that the Old Testament as we have it rests on the authority of Ezra, as editor and publisher, so to speak, rather than that of the original writers. Other traces are found of this idea. Moreover, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was occasionally discussed in the early centuries of the Christian Era, rather, however, on doctrinal grounds than on the lines of sound criticism. In the fifth century A.D., Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus did something to prepare the way for the modern criticism of the Psalter. Theodore rejected the authority of the titles, so far as they connected psalms with definite events in the history of David. A number of psalms refer to the Maccabean period according to both Fathers.[2] In the third century the Neo-Platonist, Porphyry, in his attack on the Christian Church, ascribed *Daniel* to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In the early Middle Ages, the view that the Pentateuch as a whole was not the work of Moses was frequently hinted at by Ibn Ezra (1088–1167), one of the great Rabbis who did so much for the interpretation of the Old Testament. Ibn Ezra also indicates pretty clearly that he was inclined to ascribe Isaiah xl.–lxvi. to the period of the Exile.

We turn next to the Reformation, and to the period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Luther held that it did not matter whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not.[3] The Mosaic authorship was questioned by Carlstadt, Hobbes, and

[1] The Minor Prophets count as one book, and there are other combinations.

[2] Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*, pp. 33, 207, 455.

[3] Briggs, *Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 247.

others and denied by Spinoza. Luther rejected the Solomonic authorship of *Ecclesiastes*. Calvin seems to have recognised the exilic date of Isaiah xl.–lxvi.[1] He acknowledged the existence of Maccabean psalms. These are only a few names amongst many; from the outset of the Reformation onward, the preparation for the work of modern criticism, or indeed the beginnings of that criticism, made steady progress.

When we come to the modern period, the great scholars who have contributed to the establishment of sound views of the Old Testament are legion; we can only mention one or two in addition to those already referred to. The keynote of the criticism of the Pentateuch was struck by Astruc of Montpellier in 1753 in his *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroit, que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse.* Observing that some sections of *Genesis* used Yahweh and others Elohim, Astruc made use of this alternation of Divine names to determine the documents from which the book had been compiled. Starting with this idea, and supplementing it with other sound critical principles, a numerous succession of scholars carried on the work till the modern theory was substantially completed and established by Kuenen and Wellhausen about 1870–80. The composition of Isaiah xl.–lxvi. after the Captivity, and of *Daniel* in the late Greek period, were practically established by about the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The reader will naturally ask why scholars have so largely rejected traditional views. The answer is that it is almost entirely through internal evidence, through a careful examination of the books themselves; the modern view is the Scriptural view, it is derived from the evidence which the Bible itself supplies as to its own nature, origin, and history. Much of the evidence is cumulative, and is discovered by the study of countless details. But we may briefly indicate some leading features.

The critic notes the historical standpoint from which a book or a section of a book is written, the political, social, and religious conditions which the writer assumes as existing in his own time. A book whose contents imply the existence

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, xl.–lxvi., pp. 14 f.

of certain conditions at the time when it was written, virtually claims to have been composed in the period when those conditions prevailed.[1] Such a claim is far more real and conclusive than any title; which may be a mere conjecture of a late editor. Thus sections of the Pentateuch assume that those addressed are an agricultural people living in Canaan; clearly therefore in their present form they were composed after the conquest of Canaan. By the application of such tests [2] the traditional views have been in some cases, *e.g. Amos*, confirmed, in others altered in the way we have indicated.

Another important principle is the necessity of considering the question of *integrity*. We often unconsciously assume that because a book, say *Isaiah*, comes to us as a single work, with one heading,[3] that therefore it was composed at one time by a single author, *i.e.* that it has what is technically called *integrity*. A moment's thought will show that this is not necessarily true. An author may embody extracts from earlier works; an editor may supplement his author by notes and appendices. It is well known that such practices were common in ancient literature and in the Old Testament. It was not customary to distinguish quotations or notes from the original text or to indicate their sources. Hence if certain sections of the Pentateuch seem to be Mosaic, it by no means follows that Moses wrote the whole book. We must therefore be prepared to investigate separately the date and authorship of separate sections.

Another principle has already been alluded to more than once, namely, that headings, titles, subscriptions, statements as to date and authorship, even in the body of an Old Testament book in its present form, are by no means conclusive and unquestionable evidence, because they were in all probability not part of the original work, nor is there any certainty that they were first added to the books by persons who had real information on the subject; they may be mere conjectures.

[1] Unless, of course, it is an entirely successful piece of historical fiction.

[2] *Cf.* p. 36.

[3] This is not strictly true of *Isaiah*; *cf.* p. 33.

The free application of these principles, and the public exposition of the consequent changes in views, were only possible after the Reformation had cast off the dead weight of Church authority, which crushed any criticism of the current usages and opinions of the Church. The relief from this incubus only came gradually, and is still partial, so that criticism only did its work amongst scholars in the course of the nineteenth century, and its general acceptance is still hindered by popular prejudice.

We started with a rough statement of the leading results of Higher Criticism, as they impress the popular mind at first hearing. We may conclude by a more positive summary of these results, thus:—The Pentateuch and the longer historical books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Kings*, *Chronicles* (including *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*), are the result of series of successive editings and revisions, in the course of which more or less verbatim extracts from earlier works have been embodied in these books. The earliest sources go back to the time of the Judges. Several of the prophetical and other books are similarly compiled; they are collections made after the Exile and based on earlier collections. This class includes *Isaiah*, *Micah*, *Psalms*, and *Proverbs;* while *Daniel*, *Canticles*. and *Ecclesiastes* are late post-exilic works.[1]

CHAPTER II

HIGHER CRITICISM, RESULTS AS TO INDIVIDUAL BOOKS

(A) Narrative Books

THE title used for this class of books is substantially correct, but it does not apply to all their contents. These books include not only narratives, but also laws (especially in the Pentateuch), lyrics, and sermons.

[1] For a more detailed statement see next section.

These books may be divided into four groups:

(*a*) *Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings.*
(*b*) *Chronicles.*
(*c*) *Ezra and Nehemiah.*
(*d*) *Ruth, Jonah, Esther, and Dan. i., iii., v., vi.*

All these books are anonymous; they make no statement as to when or by whom they were written. The use made of them in the New Testament, and other similar considerations, makes it practically certain that all these books were completed before the beginning of the Christian Era, and probably before 100 B.C. Otherwise there is no external evidence worth speaking of concerning their date and authorship. We have no express statement by any early authority that any one of these books in its present form was written by So-and-so at such a date. The earliest extant statements were written centuries after the time of the authors to whom they ascribe the books; they do not seem to rest upon any real information, but to be mere guesses. Books are ascribed either to the persons who were most prominent in them, *e.g.* the Book of Joshua to Joshua, or to those who seemed most likely to have known about the events described. When these guesses or theories had once been made they were copied by one writer after another, so that they are found in a long series of Jewish and Christian authors; and this has been dignified by the name of a "continuous and unanimous tradition."

A very good example of these traditional statements is a "baraitha" or early tradition found in the Babylonian Talmud.[1] Though this Talmud was not compiled till about A.D. 500, the "baraitha" is as old as about A.D. 200, and probably represents the opinions of the Rabbis in the time of Christ; it runs thus:

"But who wrote the books of the Bible? Moses wrote his own book, and the section about Balaam and Job. Joshua wrote his own book and (the last) eight verses of the Pentateuch. Samuel wrote his own book and the books of Judges and Ruth. David wrote the book of Psalms by the ten venerable elders, Adam the first man, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Haman, Jeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Jeremiah

[1] *Baba Bathra*, f. 14b.

wrote his own book, the books of Kings, and Lamentations. Hezekiah and his friends wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes. The men of the great Synagogue wrote Ezekiel, the Twelve (Minor Prophets), Daniel, and Esther. Ezra wrote his own book and continued the genealogies of the books of Chronicles down to his own times. . . . But who completed them (the books of Chronicles)? Nehemiah ben Hachaliah."

This passage can have no weight as evidence for the authorship of the books of the Old Testament. Note only one point. "His own book" clearly means "the book which bears his name"; accordingly, Samuel is credited with the authorship of the books of Samuel,[1] but these books contain the account of the death and burial of Samuel, and of the events of a long period after his death.

Similarly, references in the New Testament and elsewhere to books as "Moses," &c., or as written or spoken by "Moses" or "David," amount to little more than the use of these names as convenient titles, or at the most to the otiose acceptance of a current view. Such references do not imply a deliberate, considered judgment. A modern preacher may quote *Henry VI.* as Shakespeare without in any way staking his reputation as a scholar or a religious teacher on the accuracy of such a statement.

Hence, if we wish to determine how much earlier than 100 B.C. any of these books were written we must have recourse to internal evidence. One obvious principle is that a book in its present form must have been written some time after the last event recorded in it. Thus the death and burial of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel are recorded in the Pentateuch and in the books of Joshua and Samuel respectively. Clearly, therefore, these Israelite leaders were not the authors of the books which bear their names; and the persons who compiled these books did not intend it to be understood that these leaders had written them.

But the question when the books were completed in their present form is only one of the problems of Old Testament criticism. Careful examination shows that all the longer historical books have been compiled from older documents. The various editors pieced together verbatim extracts from these

[1] These were originally one book, "Samuel."

sources, making various changes and additions. Thus the narrative books preserve material older by centuries than the dates at which these books were completed. This method of compilation is not peculiar to the Old Testament; the Gospels of St. Luke and St. Matthew are similarly compiled from St. Mark and other sources, and numerous harmonies of the four gospels have been made by piecing together verbatim extracts from the original gospels.

The use of this method is obvious in *Chronicles*, which is largely made up of verbatim extracts from *Samuel* and *Kings*.

We may state briefly the general results of criticism with regard to the historical books.

(*a*) *Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.*—The composition of these books is best understood in the light of the history of the law and institutions of Israel. Let us state a few of the main points of this history. The Pentateuch includes three chief codes of law, *the Book of the Covenant*, Exodus xx. 22–xxiii. 19; *Deuteronomy;*[1] and the *Priestly Code.*[2] The Deuteronomic Code can be identified with the Code found and canonised by Josiah;[3] the Book of the Covenant is clearly earlier and more primitive; the Priestly Code a later development. The various narratives in these books can be shown to agree in language, style, ideas, and historical standpoint with one or other of these codes.

Hence the general history of all these books may be stated very roughly thus; the present books are the conclusion of a literary process, which had four chief stages:

(i.) A period during which laws and narratives existed as oral tradition or in primitive poems and documents which, as a rule, are no longer extant, or at any rate cannot now be identified.

Exceptions to the rule are the Song of Deborah, Judges v., and the Lament of David over Saul and Jonathan, 2 Samuel i. 19–27, which are substantially contemporary with the events they describe.

[1] Strictly the *Kernel of Deuteronomy*, Deut. xii.–xxvi.

[2] *i.e.* the legal portions of that document; *i.e.* the laws in Exod. xxv.–xxxi., xxxv.–xl.; Leviticus; Num. i.–x., xvii.–xix., xxv.–xxxi., xxxiii.–xxxvi., &c.

[3] 2 Kings xxii. f.

(ii.) Early collections of laws and narratives made before the publication of *Deuteronomy* in 621: we may call these the *pre-Deuteronomic* editions of the Law and the History.

(iii.) The *Deuteronomic* editions of the Law and the History, *i.e.* Deut. xii.–xxvi. and the editions of the History made under the influence of *Deuteronomy*. These new editions took the place of the *pre-Deuteronomic* editions, which they supplemented and for the most part included.

(iv.) The *Priestly* editions of the Law and the History, *i.e.* the Priestly Code and the editions of the History made under its influence. These editions of the History supplemented and included the Deuteronomic editions.

This general statement may be further illustrated by some details as to the several books of this group.

The *Pentateuch* and *Joshua* originally formed a single work, composed thus:[1]

(i.) At some time in the early Monarchy, say between 900 and 750 B.C., two independent collections were made of the laws and of the narratives concerning the history of Israel up to the death of Joshua. These collections are known as the Jehovistic Document, so called because it uses the Divine Name Jehovah in *Genesis*, and denoted by the symbol J, and the Elohistic Document, so called because it uses the Divine Name Elohim in Genesis, and denoted by the symbol E.

In several instances the same narrative occurs in both documents in different forms.

Towards the close of the Monarchy, about 650 B.C., these two documents were combined so as to form a single work, thus

$$J + E = JE.$$

Where the same narrative was found in both, the compiler sometimes inserted both versions as separate narratives, *e.g.* the two accounts of the expulsion of Hagar, Gen. xvi. 4–8, J; xxi. 8–21, E. Sometimes, however, the compiler pieced together sentences and clauses from the two narratives so as to form a single connected story, *e.g.* the story of Joseph. JE included the Book of the Covenant.

[1] The following account is greatly simplified as compared with a full statement of the critical position.

(ii.) A second edition of the Law, based upon the Book of the Covenant, was made, also about 650 B.C. This second edition is Deut. xii.–xxvi.; possibly other portions of *Deuteronomy* were also included. This document is denoted by D. Somewhat later, probably during the Exile, D was enlarged and combined with JE, the editor adding various notes, &c., thus:

$$JE + D = JED.$$

The laws in D are partly repeated or modified from those in E, so that JED includes many laws twice over.

(iii.) After the Exile, about 500 B.C., a third edition of the Law and History was compiled in Babylonia. This is the Priestly Code.[1] It included a revised version of the history from the Creation onward, and numerous laws, very largely concerned with ritual, with the priesthood and their vestments, the tabernacle and its furniture, and the division of the land. Even the narratives of this document are really legal material, case-law, or precedents. Thus the Priestly account of the Creation, Gen. i. 1–ii. 4*a*, is really an account of the institution of the Law of the Sabbath.

This document is called P; it is partly based on the documents already mentioned, partly on custom and tradition; it also includes a code, the Law of Holiness, H, which was compiled during the Exile or shortly before or after.

Many of the narratives in P are modified versions of narratives in JE.

Some time after the Exile, perhaps about 400 B.C., the Priestly Code was combined with JED, the result being our Hexateuch, *i.e.* the Pentateuch + Joshua, thus:

$$JED + P = Hexateuch.$$

Here again the editor sometimes placed parallel accounts of the same event side by side as separate narratives, *e.g.* the two Creation stories, Gen. i.–ii. 4*a*, P, and Gen. ii. 4*b*–25, J. Sometimes he pieced them together into a single narrative; thus the story of the Flood is a mosaic of sections from P and J.

Later on the Hexateuch was divided into the Pentateuch

[1] See p. 22.

and Joshua, and finally the Pentateuch was divided into the present five books.

There is no absolute proof that any part of the Pentateuch comes to us from Moses, but it is quite possible that some sections may be based on material which either originated with him or received his sanction.

The remaining books of this group are the result of a similar process of composition.

Judges includes a number of ancient stories, current during, or before, the Early Monarchy. Some of these were current in alternative versions; thus we have one account of the defeat of Sisera in the Song of Deborah, chap. v., and another in chap. iv. The story of Gideon is pieced together from two separate narratives, chaps. vi.–viii. The Deuteronomic edition of this book was made during the Exile; it added the chronology, the statements about the alternate apostasy and repentance of the Israelites, and some other material. The book was completed in its present form by Priestly editors after the Exile.

Samuel, again, is based on a number of early narratives, and has passed through Deuteronomic and Priestly editions.

Similarly, *Kings* was compiled by Deuteronomic editors from earlier documents; these editors provided the chronology, the statements as to the characters of the kings, and other material. A few other additions and modifications were made after the Exile by the Priestly editors who gave the book its present form.

There is no evidence as to the names of these various compilers and editors. The interest taken by some documents in Solomon's Temple and other sanctuaries suggests that these works may have been written by priests; and it is quite probable that other documents may have been written by members of the guilds of prophets.

History is represented in the Apocrypha by *1 and 2 Maccabees*, which give an account of the successful revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. *1 Maccabees* is excellent history, *2 Maccabees* is of less value.

Our second group consists of a single work:

(*b*) *Chronicles.*—Originally Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah formed a single work, containing a history of Israel and its

ancestors from the Creation to the time of Nehemiah. But it is convenient to follow the present division of the books and treat *Chronicles* separately.

Chronicles is a more complete revision of the history from the standpoint of the Priestly Code. The author assumes that the provisions of the Priestly Code and the other institutions of his own time had been in operation from the time of David onward. He reproduces verbatim much of the earlier literature, but makes many changes and additions in order that he may tell the story in terms of the circumstances and practices of his own time. His marked interest in the Levites and the Temple choirs suggests that he was a Levitical chorister or musician. The book was probably compiled about 250 B.C.

We have just mentioned the relation of our next group to *Chronicles;* it consists of:

(*c*) *Ezra and Nehemiah.*—There is a good deal of controversy as to the accounts of the Return and the Rebuilding of the Temple; according to some, they have little historical value; but this view is only held by a minority. The account of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah is largely given in verbatim extracts from memoirs by these two Jewish leaders.

The Apocryphal book known as *1 Esdras* (E.V.) or *3 Esdras* (Vulgate) or the *Greek Esdras* is the Greek edition of our Ezra, including sections of Chronicles and Nehemiah with other additions.

2 Esdras (E.V) or *4 Esdras* (Vulgate) is an Apocalyptic work.

(*d*) *Ruth, Jonah, Esther,* and *Dan.* i., iii., v., vi. are usually regarded as "moralising tales," which have more or less foundation in fact, but are not historical in the sense in which the early narratives in *Samuel* and *Kings* are historical. They are of the same character as *Judith* and *Tobit, Bel and the Dragon,* and *Susannah* in the Apocrypha.

Ruth may be pre-exilic, but is more often dated in or after the Exile. Its purpose has been variously explained as simply to tell an interesting story; to illustrate the genealogy of David; to preserve a discription of an instance of the custom of marrying the widow of a kinsman; or finally to protest against prohibition by Ezra and Nehemiah of marriages with foreigners.

Although *Jonah* is included amongst the "Prophets" in the Jewish Canon, it is quite different in character from the other prophetical books; it is simply a narrative.

The hero, Jonah ben Amittai, is mentioned in *2 Kings* xiv. 25 as ministering in Israel in the time of Jeroboam II. The work is post-exilic, 500–400 B.C. or later, and is a protest against the exclusive spirit dominant amongst the Jews of the period after the Exile.

Esther was composed about 300–150 B.C., to explain the origin of the Jewish Feast of Purim. It is suggested that it is an adaptation of a Babylonian myth, Mordecai and Esther being the god Marduk and the goddess Ishtar reduced to the dimensions of human beings. The Greek version of this book contains many additions, which form part of the Apocrypha.

It will be convenient to deal with the narrative sections of *Daniel* in discussing the book as a whole.[1]

(B) The Prophetical Books[2]

These books are mostly provided with titles which make statements with regard to their date and authorship.

There are, to begin with, the bare names "Isaiah," "Jeremiah," &c., used as headings; but such titles in themselves are not necessarily assertions that the book was written by the persons named, any more than the titles "Samuel," "Ruth," "Kings," &c.[3] But we have more explicit statements than these mere names.

Sometimes we have a phrase or sentence indicating that what follows is the message or teaching of a certain prophet. Thus *Obadiah* begins "The vision of Obadiah." Similar introductory formulæ are found at the beginning of *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Joel*, and *Malachi*.[4] As the information thus given

[1] Chapter II., p. 45.

[2] *Daniel* and *Jonah* are not really prophetical books; *Jonah* has already been dealt with above; *Daniel* will be dealt with in Chapter II., p. 45.

[3] *Cf.* p. 21.

[4] *Cf.* p. 39.

is limited to the name of the author and the character of his work, we are left to determine the dates by internal evidence.

In other cases the introductory formula specifies generally the period of the prophet's ministry. Thus at the beginning of *Isaiah* we find:

"The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

Hosea and *Micah* are also ascribed by their introductory formulæ to the same or about the same period. *Zephaniah* is ascribed to the reign of Josiah.

In other cases the introductory formulæ specify the exact date at which the prophet began his ministry; Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of Josiah; Ezekiel in the thirteenth year (possibly of the prophet's life), in the fourth month, on the fifth day; Amos, in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, two years before the earthquake; Haggai, in the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month; Zechariah, in the eighth month, in the second year of Darius.

There is no evidence to show that these introductory formulæ were prefixed by the prophets themselves; or that the books to which they were prefixed contained all that is found in our present books. In several of the books similar formulæ occur within the books, each formula clearly referring to a single section.

It is probable that the very detailed dates in Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah, and some of those in Jeremiah, come from the prophets or their contemporaries; the other headings are probably the work of editors. Nevertheless in all cases there is reason to believe that the statements of these introductory formulæ are correct as regards substantial portions of the books to which they are prefixed.

Thus the names attached to the prophetical books denote real persons,[1] who lived at the times specified in the titles, and were the authors of much of the material contained in the books. Of these prophets, several—namely Joel, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Malachi—are mere

[1] For Malachi, see p. 39.

names; we know nothing about them except that they wrote certain passages.

In the case of the rest, the books give some account of the prophets whose names they bear; and there are references to Isaiah and Jeremiah in the historical books. The narrative portions of the prophetical books are mostly good material for history.

As regards the prophetical books the work of criticism has been threefold:

(i.) To determine how much of each book belongs to the prophet whose name it bears.

(ii.) Where it appears that portions of the book are not the work of that prophet, to determine whether they are the work of one author or of more than one.

(iii.) To determine the date at which each prophet wrote, or to which each section belongs.

To begin with (iii.), where the introductory formulæ specify dates or periods for a prophet, these may usually be accepted; and so far our task is simple. In many other cases the internal evidence gives certain and definite results. But there is often considerable uncertainty in distributing the contents of a book between different writers and periods.

For our special purpose we may arrange the books in three classes:—

(*a*) Books which have come to us substantially in their original form: *Ezekiel*, *Haggai*.

(*b*) Books where the original work has been supplemented by various notes and other additions: *Hosea*, *Amos*, *Nahum*, *Zephaniah*, *Jeremiah*, *Obadiah*, *Malachi*, *Joel*.

(*c*) Books which are collections of material by different authors, the book receiving its name from the author whose work stands first in the collection: *Isaiah*, *Micah*, *Habakkuk*, *Zechariah*.

To begin with:

(*a*) Doubtless there are a number of small alterations which have crept into *Ezekiel* and *Haggai* in the course of copying and recopying; but these works have suffered hardly any appreciable change as far as substance and teaching are concerned. For all practical purposes we can take *Ezekiel* and *Haggai* as

the work of the prophets of the beginning of the Exile and of the Return respectively.

Passing to our second class:

(*b*) In these works there is a substantial substratum which comes from the prophet whose name has been attached to the book; but this substratum has been supplemented in two ways. First, various short notes, glosses, or interpolations have been added by later writers; there has been what we may call *annotation*. Secondly, compositions by other unknown authors have been added to the books; these are mostly short. Thus *Hosea* and *Amos* are substantially the work of prophets who ministered shortly before the Fall of Samaria. The extent to which they have been annotated is much disputed.[1]

In the case of *Nahum* it is widely held that Nahum's oracle on the Fall of Nineveh, composed somewhere about 600 B.C., has been variously supplemented, more especially by prefixing to the oracle a post-exilic psalm which now forms the bulk of the first chapter.

Zephaniah, again, is mainly an oracle uttered by that prophet in the reign of Josiah concerning the judgment of Yahweh on Judah and other nations. This also is believed by many to have been annotated, more especially by the addition at the end of a prophecy of restoration.

Jeremiah presents many difficult problems, as to which there is great diversity of opinion; some scholars would place the book in our third class.

We may notice, to begin with, the general character of the book; it is not merely a collection of prophecies; much of the book is made up of narratives concerning Jeremiah and contemporary history. Such a book would be called nowadays the "Life, Times, and Sermons of Jeremiah," and the title-page would probably add, "Edited with notes and other explanatory and illustrative matter by ——, together with some anonymous poems referring to the period of Jeremiah." Such title-pages, however, were not in fashion in those days.

Some of the narratives are in the first person, and probably come to us from the prophet himself; some are identical with

[1] On *Amos* and *Hosea*, *cf.* also p. 34.

sections of *Kings*, and have been inserted from that book.[1] We know nothing of the origin of the other narratives; many of them are often ascribed to Baruch, Jeremiah's disciple and secretary. This is a probable theory, but the evidence in its favour does not amount to anything like proof. In saying that such a theory is probable, we obviously imply that these narratives as a whole may be accepted as substantially historical.

As regards the prophecies included in the book, there is no doubt there are many verses and paragraphs which are not the work of Jeremiah scattered up and down these prophecies. There are also some longer additions. Allowing for these latter, the majority of scholars would agree that the prophecies as they stand give us a substantially correct impression of the teaching of Jeremiah, during a ministry which included the close of the Jewish monarchy and the beginning of the Exile. They faithfully represent his zeal for the pure worship of Yahweh and for social righteousness, his repeated predictions of the coming ruin of his country, and his hopes for her future restoration. Of the longer additions just referred to, the most important is chapters l., li., the prophecies of the ruin of Babylonia. These are certainly not Jeremiah's, but were probably composed during the Exile and supplemented later.

Some distinguished scholars, however, attribute much less of the book to Jeremiah. The passages in dispute involve the teaching of the prophet in two important respects.

In the first place, as to foreign nations. Nearly all[2] the longer prophetical books include a group of oracles on Foreign Nations; such a section is found in Jer. xlvi.–li. We have already pointed out that chapters l. and li. are not by Jeremiah; some scholars also hold that the whole or the bulk of chapters xlvi.–xlix. are later additions.

Secondly, our book of Jeremiah contains a series of Prophecies of Restoration, chapters xxx.–xxxiii., including the great passage on the New Covenant,[3] in which we read, "I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will

[1] Jer. lii. 1–27, 31–34 = 2 Kings xxiv. 18–xxv. 21, xxv. 27–30.
[2] Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, also Zephaniah and Joel.
[3] Chap. xxxi. 31–34.

I write it . . . they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." These chapters also are sometimes held to be later additions.

The former, the more prevalent view, is the more probable; but however we may decide on these disputed points, some of the most valuable features of the book are beyond controversy, especially the account of the career and experiences of Jeremiah and the revelation of his inner spiritual life. We know more of Jeremiah than we do of any other Old Testament character except perhaps David; and some of his utterances provide us with a wonderful description of the wrestling of his soul with God; so that the book contains one of the earliest and most classical examples of individual religion.

The *Book of Obadiah*, short as it is, seems to have had a complicated history; an ancient oracle on Edom seems to have been applied to the Fall of Jerusalem, 586 B.C., and variously supplemented at different times.

The *Book of Malachi* may really be anonymous. *Malachi* is the Hebrew for "my angel" or "my messenger." The editor who supplied the heading given in i. 1, finding no name associated with the book, may have supplied Malachi from iii. 1, as a description of the author. Haggai is also called[1] "the messenger of Yahweh."

The book comes to us in its original form without any appreciable alteration, unless, as some suppose, the concluding verses as to the Return of Elijah are a later addition.

Malachi affords us a vivid picture of the laxity of morals and of religious observance in the middle of the Persian period, about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Joel is mainly occupied with the "Day of Jehovah," the discipline, penitence, and restoration of Israel, and the divine judgment on the nations. Most scholars regard Joel as a late post-exilic writer who borrowed freely from his predecessors. Some scholars hold that the book comes to us almost exactly as it was written, but according to others it has been considerably annotated.

[1] Hag. i. 13.

(*c*) The history of the composition of our third group—*Isaiah*, *Micah*, *Habakkuk*, and *Zechariah*—is more complicated. These books are not merely expanded and annotated editions of a single author, each of them is a collection of works by different authors, and the name of the author whose work stands first in the collection is used as a title for the whole. There are also expansions and annotations.

We may begin with *Isaiah*, the longest and most important of these collections.

A glance at the book shows that it falls into three main divisions.

(i.) Isaiah i.–xxxv.—A collection of prophetic utterances, including a few brief narratives concerning Isaiah. At the beginning and up to xx. 2, there are at intervals titles[1] ascribing various sections to Isaiah. Most of the sections of this division show a keen interest in the circumstances, persons, and events of 740–701 B.C., in Judah and Israel, Egypt and Assyria; in Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah; in Pekah, King of Israel; in Rezin, King of Damascus; in Sennacherib, King of Assyria; in the attack made by Pekah and Rezin on Ahaz; in the Assyrian invasions of Palestine; and in the intrigues of Egypt with the Palestinian states.

(ii.) Isaiah xxxvi.–xxxix.—A series of narratives chiefly dealing with the invasion of Sennacherib and the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

(iii.) Isaiah xl.–xlvi.—A series of prophetic utterances, showing a keen interest in the circumstances, persons, and events of the close of the Exile, and the period after the Exile; in Babylon and the Chaldæans; in the ruined Temple and wasted land of Judah; in the captive Jews and their prospects of deliverance; in Cyrus and his conquests.

We may deal first with the Narrative Section, Isaiah xxxvi.–xxxix. The bulk of this is identical with portions of *Kings*,[2] from which it was borrowed by an editor to serve as an Historical Appendix to i.–xxxv., just as Jer. lii. was added at the close of *Jeremiah*.

[1] Viz., i. 1, ii. 1, vii. 3, xiii. 1, xx. 2.
[2] *Cf.* 2 Kings xviii. 13–xx. 19.

We turn next to the first division of the book, Isaiah i.–xxxv. The presence within these chapters of various headings, together with other considerations, show that they are a compilation from earlier and shorter collections. The greater part of these chapters consist of prophecies by Isaiah and narratives concerning him; these prophecies and narratives are in three groups—they form the bulk of i. 1–xi. 9, xiv. 24–xxiii. 18, xxviii. 1–xxxii. 20. Here again there are expansions and annotations,[1] the extent of which is matter of controversy.

In the sections written by or about Isaiah the historical, social, and religious standpoint is that of 740–701 B.C., or, roughly speaking, the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Isaiah deals freely and forcibly with the domestic and international politics, the social problems, and the religion of his times. In common with the other prophets of the eighth century, Amos, Hosea, and Micah, he protested against the social corruption and the superstition of the times. In earlier days the Israelite farmers had mostly owned their own lands, but in the eighth century a period of material prosperity tended to promote the formation of large estates by the expulsion of the farmers from their holdings; and against this tendency the prophets protested. These prophets also insisted that character and conduct were far more important than external religious observances; that sacrifices, sabbaths, and other ritual matters were worthless apart from justice and benevolence.

Isaiah laid stress on the "holiness," *i.e.* the unique deity and the "glory" or majesty of Yahweh; his watchword was "the Holy One of Israel." Probably some, at any rate, of the descriptions of the Messianic King and the Messianic Era[2] are the work of Isaiah; though according to some they are post-exilic.

It was largely due to Isaiah's influence that Hezekiah refused to surrender Jerusalem to Sennacherib; a refusal which was justified by the catastrophe which shortly after befel the Assyrian army.

The concluding division, Isaiah xl.–lxvi. is often called the

[1] The most important is the post-exilic Oracle on Babylon, xxi. 1–10.

[2] Viz. ix. 2–7, xi. 1–9.

Second Isaiah. The arrangement of the book[1] shows that xl.–lxvi. once existed as a separate work, and was not connected with Isaiah i.–xxxv., or considered as the work of Isaiah, when the first division of the book was compiled or when the Historical Appendix, xxxvi.–xxxix. was added to it. Further, there was not prefixed to this separate work, *Second Isaiah*, or included in it, any heading or headings ascribing it to Isaiah. At one time this work seems to have been associated with Jeremiah; Ezra i. 1 f. quotes Isaiah xliv. 28 as from Jeremiah. These various items of external evidence not only afford no support for the authorship of xl.–lxvi. by Isaiah, but are quite incompatible with any such theory. Moreover, these chapters differ markedly in style, vocabulary, and ideas from those portions of i.–xxxv. which are the work of Isaiah.

The *Second Isaiah* again falls into three divisions, the bulk of xl.–lv.,[2] the Servant Passages,[3] and lvi.–lxvi.

The contents of the bulk of xl.–lv., sometimes called the *Deutero-Isaiah*, show that they were compiled towards the close of the Exile; they are occupied with the controversy between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the gods of Babylon, and with the promise of deliverance from captivity. They do not predict Cyrus, and the circumstances of this period, but treat them as contemporary.

The *Servant Passages* are a series of poems concerning the missionary work, the martyrdom, and the resurrection of the Servant of Yahweh. It is doubtful whether they were composed by the author of *Second Isaiah*, or whether they are independent poems, exilic or post-exilic, and owe their present position to an editor. The Servant is probably Israel, his death being the Exile and his resurrection the Return. Some, however, regard the Servant as either a historical personage, possibly Jeremiah, or an ideal figure, *i.e.* the Messiah. The Christian Church recognises that Christ fulfilled the ideals set forth in these poems.

The concluding chapters, Isaiah lvi.–lxvi., are sometimes called the *Trito-Isaiah*. They are a collection of passages

[1] *Cf.* above, p. 33.
[2] Viz. xl.–lv. less the Servant Passages.
[3] Viz. xlii. 1–4, xlix. 1–6, l. 4–9, lii. 13–liii. 12.

composed after the Exile, and are largely occupied with the misfortunes and misconduct of the Jews, probably about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah or somewhat earlier; they are thus parallel to *Malachi*.

It will have been seen that our Book of Isaiah is the result of a long process of editing. The process begins with the sayings and doings of Isaiah; these were formed into three or four collections. Then, some time after the Exile, an editor or editors united these collections, adding various notes, and preserving a number of short anonymous poems and prophecies by inserting them between, or at the close of these collections, thus forming Isaiah i.–xxxv.; this work was completed by the addition of the Historical Appendix, xxxvi.–xxxix.

During this period, a parallel process was going on. First towards the close of the Exile, that is long before the completion of i.–xxxix., the *Deutero-Isaiah* was written, the Servant Passages being perhaps added later. After the Exile the various sections of lvi.–lxvi. were written, and ultimately appended to xl.–lv., thus constituting the important anonymous work, Isaiah xl.–lxvi., often called the *Second Isaiah*. Later still this was attached to Isaiah i.–xxxix., probably by accident.[1] This process was probably complete, and our Book of Isaiah existed substantially in its present form, by about 200 B.C. *Ecclesiasticus*, 180 B.C., quotes part of *Second Isaiah* as an utterance of Isaiah.

The *Ascension of Isaiah* is a late apocalyptic work, including the account of the martyrdom of Isaiah by being sawn asunder; parts of it may be older than the beginning of the Christian Era.

The history of the *Book of Micah* is obscure and doubtful. Chapters i.–iii., apart from some slight additions, are the work of a contemporary of Isaiah, and closely resemble in spirit and teaching the utterances of Amos and Hosea and Isaiah. It is possible that the remaining chapters also include passages which were the work of Micah. The section vi. 1–viii. 6 may have been composed by the prophet, late in life, in the reign of Manasseh. Some would even hold that practically the

[1] See below, p. 38.

whole book comes from Micah; it is more probable that it includes works by different authors, belonging to different periods.

Habakkuk includes chapters i. and ii., the deliverance of Judah and the punishment of its wicked oppressor, together with a psalm, chap. iii. The former section may be a compilation from two documents, one pre-exilic, the other exilic; the psalm is probably a separate work. It is not certain which section or sections were the work of Habakkuk.

The *Book of Zechariah* falls into two parts, i.–viii., ix.–xiv.

The first part, chapters i.–viii., is the work of Zechariah, a prophet who was associated with Haggai in stirring up the Jews to rebuild the Temple, 520–518 B.C. His utterances deal with the political and religious circumstances of his time. They are largely in the form of a series of visions.

The second part, chapters ix.–xiv., is anonymous; it consists of pictures of the punishment of the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel in Messianic times. It is generally divided between two authors, ix.–xi. with xiii. 7–9, being a separate work from xi. 1–xiii. 6 with xiv. It is dated about 300–250 B.C.

We may conclude this chapter by a general sketch of the literary history of the prophetic literature as it appears in the light of modern criticism.

This literature had its origin in the preaching of the various prophets; the earlier prophets were in the first instance preachers and not authors; they exercised a ministry of public speaking. It is possible that they made notes in preparation for their work. As most of their utterances are in poetical form, it seems probable that they composed these poems and then recited them in public.

Later on leaflets and pamphlets, as we should say, were circulated containing individual utterances or small collections. Gradually editors made collections, each of which embodied all the available work of a single prophet. We should gather that by the time these larger collections were made, information as to the authorship of particular prophecies had often become meagre. A curious feature as to the literature of ancient Israel is the lack of interest in questions of authorship;

writers were not careful to see that their names were attached to their work, and people generally were indifferent as to who the writers were. Some of the most important books of the Old Testament are entirely anonymous, *e.g.* the narrative books and *Job*.

When the prophetical books were being edited it seems that many anonymous leaflets and pamphlets were in circulation. In order to preserve this material it was included in the collections which were being made.[1] In many instances there may have been no idea of ascribing it to the prophets after whom the collections were named. Sometimes an anonymous passage was written as a kind of appendix at the end; some passages may have been written to fill up gaps at the bottom of pages or a blank space at the end of the parchment on which the manuscript was written. Sometimes the anonymous passages would be attached to prophecies which they seemed to resemble in style or subject-matter.

The distribution of this anonymous material between the various books cannot have been left to chance and independent action. Contemporary editors must have arranged some sort of division, and later editors must have examined earlier works so as to avoid including the same passage in more than one collection. On the whole the editing has been very successful in this respect; only in a very few instances[2] is the same passage found in more than one of the prophetical books.

Our books are the result of some such process. Later on the larger works were formed into a group arranged probably at one time in order of length—Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah i.–xxxix., and finally as a separate book, the anonymous Isaiah xl.–lxvi. This last, having no heading, came to be written consecutively with the previous chapters, and thus attributed to Isaiah. The insertion of *Daniel* among the prophets has been adopted from the Septuagint.

The shorter prophetical books, including *Jonah*, formed a collection which was often treated by the Jews as a single

[1] Some of our books, however, have not been thus supplemented; see p. 29.

[2] *E.g.* Isaiah ii. 2–4 = Micah iv. 1–3; Jeremiah xlix. 7–16 is largely identical with Obadiah 1–9.

book, "The Twelve."[1] The anonymous works Zech. ix.–xiv. and *Malachi* were placed at the end of this group. *Malachi*[2] being provided with a title, though "Malachi" was originally a description and not a name, preserved a separate existence; but Zech. ix.–xiv., having no title, came to be written consecutively with Zech. i.–viii. and attributed to Zechariah.

(C) Lyric Poems

The term "Poetical Books" is often applied to *Job*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes* as well as to *Psalms* and *Canticles* because all five books are poetical in form. We treat the former group separately in the chapter on "Wisdom literature." We include in this chapter *Lamentations* as well as *Psalms* and *Canticles;* it comes better under this heading than under any other.

The poetry in the Old Testament is by no means limited to these books. The narrative works include many poems, and most of the contents of the prophetical books are in poetical form.

Like the Pentateuch and the Book of Isaiah, the Psalter is a collection of material composed by various authors in different periods. But each section is a separate poem complete in itself, and retains this character, having its own number and in most cases its own title.

The Psalter was finally divided into five books,[3] each concluding with a doxology. The fivefold character of this division is probably an imitation of the Pentateuch. The Psalter, like the Book of Isaiah, was based on earlier collections, and the existing books partly correspond to some of these earlier collections. Thus probably each of the following—I.; II.; lxxiii.–lxxxiii.; lxxxiv.–lxxxix.; IV. and V.—once had a separate existence in one form or another, or was compiled as a supplement to our earlier collection.

The Psalter was probably completed by about 100 B.C., and the various collections that can still be recognised were made between this date and the return from the Exile.

[1] *Cf.* p. 21. [2] *Cf.* p. 32.

[3] I., Psalms i.–xli.; II., xlii.–lxxii.; III., lxxiii.–lxxxix.; IV., xc.–cvi.; V., cvii.–cl.

It is difficult to come to any certain or precise conclusion as to the date and authorship of individual psalms; many have titles which include one or more personal names. Many others have no titles or there are no personal names in the titles. We have already seen that the use of a personal name as a title of a document, or the presence of such a name in a title, is not equivalent to an authoritative statement that the document was composed by the person in question. We have no information as to the history and original meaning of the titles in the Psalter. Some of them are clearly late conjectures. A comparison of the titles in the Hebrew, and in the Septuagint and other versions, with the references to the Psalter in the New Testament and elsewhere, shows that there was a growing tendency to use "David" as a title for the whole Psalter and to ascribe anonymous psalms to David. In other cases the titles of individual psalms seem to have been originally titles of collections. There were collections with the titles "David," "Asaph," "Sons of Korah"; and when these collections were included in a larger work, the title of the collection was written at the head of each psalm taken from it. In few cases, if any, can a psalm be ascribed with certainty or even much probability to the person whose name occurs in its title, or, indeed, to any known name. The great bulk of the psalms were composed during the period from the beginning of the Exile till the time of the Maccabees.

It is matter of controversy whether any psalms are Davidic or even pre-exilic. We know, however, that religious lyrics were composed before the Exile, and it seems reasonable to suppose that some of them are preserved in our Psalter. Further, it is quite possible that it includes material composed by David. But hymns, from their frequent use in public services and for devotional purposes, are constantly abridged, supplemented, and otherwise altered to adapt them to the tastes, ideas, or needs of successive generations. We know that such editing of older documents was common amongst the Jews. It is therefore probable that any pre-exilic material present in the Psalter has been thoroughly revised; some of our psalms may be based upon or adapted from such material. Psalm xviii. and Psalm xxiv. 7–10 are often ascribed to David.

Dr. Driver writes,[1] with regard to psalms[2] which Ewald had ascribed to David, "On the whole, a *non liquet* must be our verdict: it is possible that Ewald's list of Davidic Psalms is too large, but it is not clear that none of the psalms contained in it are of David's composition. The question, however, whether any of the psalms are David's, possesses in reality little but an antiquarian interest." Dr. Briggs writes,[3] "Ps. xviii. in its original form was probably Davidic, and possibly Pss. vii., lx."[4] On the other hand, Dr. Cheyne writes,[5] "That the song of triumph in 2 Sam. xxii. (= Ps. xviii.), and the 'last words of David' in xxiii. 1–7 (both highly religious compositions) are Davidic, is not, on grounds of criticism, tenable. Nor can any of the psalms in the Psalter be ascribed with any probability to David."

A collection of eighteen psalms was made about 70–30 B.C., and received the title, "Psalms of Solomon." The apocryphal "Song of the Three Children" is a psalm. The Septuagint Psalter has an additional psalm, not in the Hebrew, which it ascribes to David. Other books of the Apocrypha, the later Jewish literature, and the New Testament include psalms.

We may deal next with a book which has various titles, *Song of Songs* in the Hebrew[6] and R.V., and *Song of Solomon* in the A.V.; it is also often spoken of as *Canticles*. This was originally a purely secular work, a cycle of love-songs, or a drama in which Solomon, the Shunamite, and others are characters; but it was included in the Bible on the understanding that it was to be read as a religious allegory dealing with the relation of Yahweh and Israel, according to the Jews, but the relations of Christ and His Church according to Christians. The book begins with a heading, "The Song of Songs which is Solomon's," but is generally regarded as post-exilic, though some scholars assign it to the Northern Kingdom after the division of the two kingdoms.

[1] *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 8th edition, 1909, p. 380.

[2] Psalms iii., iv., vii., viii., xi., xv., xviii., xix. 1–6, xxiv., xxix., xxxii., ci., lx. 6–9, lxviii. 13–18, cxliv. 12–14.

[3] *The International Critical Commentary*, *Psalms* i.–lxiv.

[4] Verses 1–4.

[5] *Encyclopædia Biblica*, i. 1035.

[6] *Shir hash-Shirim.*

Lamentations contains five dirges on the Fall of Jerusalem; these were composed, perhaps by more than one author, during or soon after the Exile. The first four are alphabetic acrostics. There is nothing in the Hebrew to connect this book with Jeremiah; and internal evidence does not show that he was the author of any part of it. In the Hebrew Bible it does not follow *Jeremiah*, but is one of the "Five Rolls," which belong to the Hagiographa, the third and latest division of the Hebrew canon. The ascription to Jeremiah is found in the Septuagint and in Rabbinical literature;[1] and the title used in the English Versions, "Lamentations of Jeremiah," originated with the Septuagint.

(D) The Wisdom Literature

The title "Wisdom Literature" includes certain books which are clearly marked off from the rest of the Old Testament by certain common characteristics; which, however, cannot easily be stated in a few words. One external feature is that most of them[2] include a description of "Wisdom." They are largely occupied with the practical conduct of life, the dominant note of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus* being that "Honesty is the best policy." This involves the theological dogma that Divine justice is invariably and exactly manifested in material circumstances and happenings, health and disease, wealth and poverty, premature death and long life, honour and disgrace. *Job* is a formal discussion and emphatic repudiation of this doctrine; while the ground is cut from under it by *Ecclesiastes*, which asserts that material advantages are "Vanity of Vanity." The features which these books have in common, and their relation to each other, together with other considerations, seem to indicate that they are all post-exilic.

A few words may be said about each of the books by itself.

Job was at one time supposed to be one of the oldest or even the oldest book in the Bible, written by Moses[3] or even by a predecessor of Moses. Such views were suggested by the absence of any obvious reference to the Law or to the history

[1] *Cf.* p. 21.

[2] *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiasticus*, and *Wisdom*.

[3] *Cf.* p. 21.

of Israel. But a careful examination indicates a late date, towards the close of the Monarchy at the earliest, and more probably some time after the Return.

The book is anonymous, and we have no evidence as to the name of its author or authors. It has long been recognised, even by conservative scholars, that it is not a historical record of facts and utterances.

There is much controversy as to the process of composition of *Job*. Some still maintain that it is substantially the work of a single author; but it is more generally held that the original work has been supplemented by later additions.

The kernel of the book is the discussion between Job and the Three Friends, chapters iii.–xxxi. The speeches of Elihu, chapters xxxii.–xxxvii., are most often regarded as an addition intended to reinforce the arguments of the Friends in favour of the view that a man's fortunes corresponded to his character and conduct, a view which Job had shown to be untenable. These chapters would be inserted by some one who held the traditional view and wished to correct the effect made by the book in its original form.

The argument concludes with a series of speeches by *Shaddai* or "the Almighty." These speeches do not attempt to solve the problem under discussion; they virtually admit that the moral government of the world is an inscrutable mystery. An ignorant and helpless creature like Man must expect to find mysteries in the dealings of Providence, and should accept them in submissive faith. It is sometimes supposed that these speeches or part of them are later additions.

This discussion is set in a framework of narrative, the Prologue and Epilogue; here again some suppose that these, or at any rate the Epilogue, did not belong to the original book. The transactions in the Prologue between God and Satan are ignored in the discussion, and the happy ending of the Epilogue is incongruous with Job's arguments. But it is more likely that the narrative was part of the original book; the lack of consistency may be explained thus. The story of Job was familiar and popular, so that the author of our book did not venture to alter its stereotyped traditional form, though it did not altogether suit his purpose.

Proverbs includes a few poems of some length, but it is mostly made up of the "proverbs" from which it derives its name, for the most part couplets, in which the same idea or one of two similar ideas is set forth in each of the two lines, after the method of Hebrew poetry known as *parallelism*. It has a general heading, i. 1, "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel," and also includes special headings ascribing portions to Solomon, to "the Wise Men," to Agur, and to Lemuel, also a statement apparently referring to chapters xxv.–xxix, "These also are the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out."[1] The history of this book is similar to that of the Psalter; it is based upon earlier collections. Opinion inclines to the view that the collections[2] which can be traced in our present book, and also the bulk of the material, is post-exilic, but it is quite possible that a proportion of the proverbs and perhaps some of the collections are pre-exilic; and that some of the proverbs may come from Solomon. The book was completed somewhere between 400–250 B.C.

The apocryphal *Ecclesiasticus* or the *Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira*, c. 180 B.C., is a longer and inferior work of the same nature as *Proverbs*.

Ecclesiastes also has a heading, "The words of Qoheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," *i.e.* clearly Solomon.[3] What Qoheleth means and why the term is applied to Solomon are unsolved problems. One theory is that of the English Version, which renders the word by "the Preacher" or "the great orator." *Qahal* is Hebrew for "assembly" or "ecclesia," hence "Ecclesiastes." But the putting of the book into the mouth of Solomon is simply literary form; there is no serious attempt to maintain the character throughout. The book is remarkable for its cynical pessimism, which is very imperfectly disguised by the additions of an orthodox editor. It is usually dated about 200 B.C.

The apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*, after spoken of as *Wisdom*, is occupied with the subject from which it is named. It has, of course, no connection with Solomon, but was composed probably some time in the first century B.C.

[1] Prov. x. 1, xxii. 17, xxiv. 23, xxv. 1, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1
[2] In spite of xxv. 1.
[3] *Cf.* i. 12.

(E) The Book of Daniel

The Book of Daniel stands alone amongst the books of the Old Testament as a representative of the apocalyptic literature. The formula of the apocalypse proper is as follows: the apocalypse is couched in the form of a series of predictions, but on examination it appears that these fall into two classes. The first set of predictions is really history couched in figurative language, and reaching to the time when the book was written; then follows a description of the Last Things, the Day of Judgment, or the Advent of the Messiah. The apocalypse is put into the mouth of some conspicuous leader or prophet. Thus this book is put into the mouth of Daniel, and contains visions describing periods of history ending with the struggles of the Jews against the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, 175–164 B.C. Its date is about 168–164 B.C.

The Apocrypha and the New Testament also include an apocalypse apiece, *4 Ezra* and *Revelation;* but during the period 200 B.C. to A.D. 100 large numbers of apocalypses were composed, including those written in the names of Enoch, Baruch, Moses, and the Twelve Patriarchs.

The apocalypses often include narratives and didactic material in addition to predictions. Thus *Daniel* contains various stories about Daniel and his companions, which may be classed with the stories of Ruth and Jonah.[1]

The Septuagint *Daniel* also contains the *Prayer of Azariah*, the *Song of the Three Children*, *Susanna*, and *Bel and the Dragon*. These are given as separate books in our Apocrypha.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL CRITICISM

THE results sketched in the previous chapter necessarily modify our views of the history of Israel and its religion. Our conception of the successive stages of Revelation is seriously

[1] *Cf.* p. 26.

altered when we transfer *Leviticus* from Moses, who may possibly be dated about 1300 B.C., to, say, Ezra about 450 B.C. Again, one of the influences which induced men to ascribe the Old Testament narratives to Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and so forth, was a desire to believe that these narratives were written immediately after the events by the persons who seemed most likely to be well informed and otherwise well qualified to write authoritative records. If these narratives had been so written their value as historical evidence would have been in some ways much greater than it can be according to the modern view. There are, however, gains which compensate for this apparent loss. We have seen that most of the narrative books preserve verbatim extracts from older sources, so that much of our material rests on the authority not only of the editor of the book in its present form but also on that of much more ancient witnesses. *Kings*, for instance, was not compiled in its present form till after the Exile, but the account of the accession of Solomon is probably contemporary.

But, of course, the most important change in this matter is not critical but doctrinal. According to the crude, popular distortion of the idea of inspiration still often held and taught, every narrative in the Old Testament is to be taken in its literal sense as an exactly accurate account of real events and persons. If that were guaranteed by inspiration, it would not matter who wrote any inspired book. The modern view of the history of Israel is partly due to the application of the principle that inspiration is concerned with spiritual edification, and does not affect historical or scientific accuracy. Hence a narrative is not regarded as an exact, scientific record merely because it is in the Bible; the extent of its accuracy is decided by the ordinary methods of historical study.

Thus, certain books and portions of books would be regarded as what might be called symbolic narratives, belonging to the same class as parables or allegories, whose value, like that of our Lord's Parables, lies in their religious teaching and not in their historical accuracy. It has long been recognised even by the most conservative scholars[1] that *Job* belongs to this class; and modern scholars would add the narratives in *Genesis* up to and

[1] *E.g.* Keil, following certain Rabbis and early Christian scholars.

including the story of the Tower of Babel, *Ruth*, *Esther*, *Jonah* and the narratives in *Daniel*.

There is much controversy as to where actual history begins. According to some, Abraham and other patriarchs are historical personages; according to others, the patriarchal narratives really deal with tribes and not persons. Probably Moses and the Exodus are historical, though this is not unquestioned. At any rate, the facts of an Israelite conquest of Canaan and a series of struggles such as those described in *Judges* are historical. From the time of Saul onwards the main lines of the narratives in *Samuel*, *Kings*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah* are generally regarded as historical. Our information is specially full and certain for some critical periods, *e.g.* the reign of David; the period from about 750 B.C. to the Fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., *i.e.* the times of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the contemporary prophets; and the period of Ezra and Nehemiah. For the periods of the later Monarchy and the Exile we are able to interpret, confirm, correct, and supplement the Israelite literature by the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian records. These records illustrate earlier periods, but furnish little explicit, definite information about Israel in those periods.

Only a word or two can be said as to the effects of criticism upon the history of the religion of Israel. One result is that the analysis of the books shows that inspiration has been more widely diffused and more continuously bestowed. Works which were attributed to a few great names, Moses, David, Solomon, Isaiah, are distributed between a host of inspired writers spreading over many centuries.

It follows from this that the growth of the religion was slower, more gradual, and more continuous than was once supposed. Once Israel was thought to have entered Canaan with a complete Pentateuch, and that work was thought of as a basis and a starting-point for the more spiritual teaching of the prophets. Now we see the Law and the Prophets developing side by side, sometimes in alliance, sometimes in conflict. The Law is only complete and dominant when prophecy has spent its force. Once it was supposed that the theology of the Old Testament, especially the explicit exposi-

tion of monotheism, was practically complete in *Deuteronomy*,[1] in Davidic Psalms,[2] in prophetic utterances of Isaiah;[3] now we know that this stage was not reached till the Exile and later.

Statements are often made in apologetic works that the discoveries in Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and elsewhere are inconsistent with the results of criticism. These statements have no real foundation in fact, and are due to strong dogmatic bias. The majority of Egyptologists, Assyriologists, &c., are in substantial accord with modern views.

CHAPTER IV

TEXT, CANON, APOCRYPHA

We need say little with regard to the *Lower* or *Textual Criticism*. Much work has been done in this matter, and it is recognised that in very numerous instances the ancient authorities are at variance as to the wording of a sentence, the exact contents of a paragraph, and even larger matters. There are two chief authorities for the text of the Old Testament.

There is the Hebrew Massoretic Text,[4] which was made by Jewish scholars of the period A.D. 400–600. The oldest extant manuscripts of this text were written, *i.e.* copied from older manuscripts not now extant, in the ninth century of the Christian Era. When once this text was constituted, it was embodied apparently in a standard manuscript, and the most elaborate precautions were taken to secure that when it was reproduced it should be copied with rigid accuracy. These precautions were on the whole successful, so that the various manuscripts of the Massoretic Text usually only differ in trivial details, mostly matters of spelling.

[1] Deut. vi. 4. [2] Psalm cxxxix. [3] Isaiah xl.–lv.

[4] So called because it is the work of the Massoretic editors, or students of the *Massoreth*, "the tradition as to the proper way of reading and writing" the Old Testament.

There is the Greek version known as the Septuagint. This translation was made at different times between 250 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian Era. The oldest extant manuscripts of this text were written about A.D. 300–350.[1] The New Testament writers most often quote the Old according to the Septuagint, but in many cases they follow the Massoretic Text, and sometimes they differ from both.

At one time it was quite usual to regard the Massoretic Text as possessing special inspired authority; thus with very few exceptions the Authorised Version scrupulously follows this text. But scholars nowadays recognise no such claim; the text must obviously be determined by considering all available evidence.

In spite of the numerous cases in which our authorities are at variance, it is roughly correct to say that recent textual criticism has not brought about any startling changes.

The many controversies and uncertainties do not appreciably affect the general view of the history of Israel and its religion, or the moral, devotional, and spiritual value of the Old Testament. As far as these are concerned the work of recent criticism has shown that neither the Massoretic Text nor that of the Septuagint differs materially or substantially from that of the Old Testament as it was known to Christ and His Apostles, or even from the text of the final revisions of the books made by the post-exilic authors and editors.

There is still less to be said as to the *Canon*. This is practically a matter of the general usage of the churches and not of criticism. The Christian Church has always been, and still is, divided as to the Canon; the Roman Church accepting the Apocrypha,[2] which Protestants reject. Recent discussion has not altered this; no book has been added to or omitted from either the Protestant or the Romanist Old Testament.

[1] There are other Greek versions and versions in other languages, but they are less important.

[2] 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Holy Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The attitude of the Greek Church to the Apocrypha is a little ambiguous.

But recent studies have emphasized the fact that, in addition to the canonical books and the Apocrypha, a mass of somewhat similar literature was current in the period before and after the beginning of the Christian Era and was practically treated as canonical in some quarters, though later on it was formally excluded from the Old Testament. These books are often spoken of as the *Pseudepigrapha*.

Some very brief accounts of the more important of these books is given in connection with the classes of Old Testament literature to which they belong. See footnote to previous page and Index.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the Text of the Old Testament is practically unchanged as far as regards matters of life and faith, and the general history of Israel and its religion; and that the Canon remains the same. In other words the Old Testament consists of the same books, and these books have substantially the same contents. The Old Testament in itself remains what it was before the work of modern criticism. It still possesses whatever moral and spiritual power it had through the intrinsic value of its contents; it is still commended to the world by the Church as an essential portion of the Sacred Scriptures.

Traditional views as to date, authorship, and mode of composition have been seriously modified; but there is no reason why these changes should lessen the appeal which the Old Testament makes to the conscience, the will, and the emotions.

We have also learnt that many of the narratives can no longer be regarded as historical or scientific records, but must rather be classed with our Lord's parables; but that surely does not detract from their religious value.

On the other hand, Christian faith owes many important gains to the criticism of the Old Testament.

In the first place, criticism has placed our views on a firm basis. So far as the older position merely rested on ecclesiasti-

cal tradition and authority, it offered no security to the intelligent inquirer; he was left defenceless to the most superficial objections of the sceptic, and often succumbed to them. Modern criticism rests its case on conclusive evidence and arguments both where it confirms the older position and where it corrects it.

Again, the discovery that the Pentateuch and other narrative books have been compiled largely by combining extracts from older works, removes a host of difficulties at a stroke. These books teem with discrepancies. Older apologetics devoted much painful labour to explaining away these discrepancies by elaborate, artificial, improbable adjustments of the conflicting statements, the chief result being to discredit Christian apologetics. It is now seen that these discrepancies simply arise from the fact that the editors preserved inconsistent narratives without removing their divergencies. Thus, as we are now aware that, according to an enlightened theology, inspiration does not guarantee detailed historical accuracy, these discrepancies cease to be difficulties.

Again, modern criticism assures us that we may accept without hesitation the main lines of the Biblical statements as to the history of the periods which are most important in the development of the faith.[1] Moreover, the critical account of the composition of the books affords a sure basis for the history of the religion of Israel.

[1] Page 47.

PART II

THE NEW TESTAMENT

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CHAPTER I

TEXTUAL AND HISTORICAL CRITICISM

During the course of the last generation the discussion of Old Testament problems, raised in England especially by the works of Colenso and Wellhausen, and the famous "heresy" case of Robertson Smith, diverted attention for the time being from questions concerning the New Testament. But in the present day the most significant fact in connection with Biblical studies is the turning of the searchlight of critical inquiry on to the Christian Scriptures, especially the gospels, in which the Church has recognised the very citadel of the faith. This movement in the campaign may be traced to two causes. In the first place it is now generally recognised among scholars that in the case of the Old Testament the principal business of criticism and reconstruction has already been accomplished. No doubt there are still many outstanding problems of Hebrew literature that perplex the inquirer, nor can it be said that absolute unanimity has been obtained even with regard to the fundamental facts and principles. But then absolute unanimity and a final, unquestioned settlement is never to be expected in any region of human investigation where the data are not all clear and unmistakable. Meanwhile, however, the very general acceptance of the main critical position has greatly relieved the situation, and left us free for other subjects. Then, in the second place, it was inevitable that the scientific methods which had been applied to the Old Testament with such fruitful results should be brought to bear on the New Testament also. This is what we have been witnessing as going on with ever-increasing minuteness of examination and courage of decision during recent years.

So now it is the turn for the New Testament, and already we are asked, What results have been obtained in this field? Of course we must remember that New Testament criticism is not really a new thing. It was pressed with much insistence, even before the end of the eighteenth century, and the middle of the nineteenth century saw it carried to extravagant issues at the hands of the Tübingen school. Then came a conservative reaction, seen in Germany in Neander, Ritschl, Bernard Weiss and others, and later with some modification and much width of view in Professor Harnack, and in England in the writings of Lightfoot, Hort, and Dr. Sanday who holds a position with regard to the New Testament something like that of Dr. Driver in Old Testament studies. More recently still a younger generation has returned to the methods of disintegrating criticism; but side by side with this there has been a vigorous reconstructive movement of which Professor Harnack is the most conspicuous leader, while Blass and Zahn represent conservative tendencies.

The two branches of criticism, the Lower as well as the Higher, have both made vigorous progress during the last hundred years.

To begin with the Lower Criticism, the study of the original text of the New Testament. A clever printer, by putting the term "*Textus Receptus*" on the title-page of his edition of the Greek Testament, did much to secure a measure of fixity, if not of sanctity, for his form of the text. This was virtually a re-issue of Stephens' text, which had been in the main that on which our Authorised Version of the New Testament had been founded, and which had closely followed Erasmus, who was the first to publish a printed copy of the New Testament. Now Erasmus only had two Greek manuscripts to work on, and the oldest of these had been written in the tenth century of the Christian era. Neither of them was perfect. But Erasmus' publisher was so eager to have the edition pushed on in order to be out before the rival production, Cardinal Ximenes' polyglot, that Erasmus retranslated out of his Latin version the passages necessary to fill up the lacunæ. The last page was missing. Accordingly the last verses of the book of the Revelation in the *Textus Receptus* consist of Erasmus' Greek translated back out of the Vulgate.

In the present day there are known to be about 3000

manuscript New Testaments and Lectionaries, of which some 100 are of the old type known as "Uncial," among them the Sinaitic and the Vatican, both of the fourth century, and the Alexandrian of the fifth. Here, then, is an immense mass of material from which to correct the text. To it is to be added the testimony of versions, and also that of patristic quotations. Thus we have Syriac and Latin versions of the second century, more amply preserved in the former than in the latter. The patristic quotations are more precarious as authorities on account of a very common habit of verbal laxity with regard to them. Still, they have their place. These three sources — ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations — furnish the materials with which the textual critic works.

For a time there was a strong tendency to rely mainly on the most ancient manuscripts. Tischendorf published the Greek Testament with an elaborate critical apparatus, in the form of notes giving the variant readings and their several authorities. His own text leaned heavily on the Sinaitic manuscript which he had himself discovered in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. The text of Westcott and Hort has been very widely used in England. This too relies mainly on the more ancient manuscripts, but with references to a very important classification of the manuscripts generally, and the several types they represent, together with the versions and patristic quotations. The classification has brought out three main types—(1) the Alexandrian, represented by the two oldest manuscripts, the Vatican and the Sinaitic; (2) the Western—an unfortunate title—seen especially in the Codex Bezæ, and in the old Latin and Syriac versions; and (3) the Syrian, representing a compromise and a settlement of the text perhaps made at Antioch, on the basis of which most of the later manuscripts were founded. Westcott and Hort believed that they could make out a fourth type of text which they called the "neutral." But this was very close to the Alexandrian, and the title has been thought by more recent scholars to be rather question-begging.

There is now less readiness to accept Westcott and Hort's conclusions as final than was once the case. They are seen to rely much too exclusively on the one or two oldest manuscripts. It is well known that many corruptions came in long before

these manuscripts were written, some of the worst of them as early as the second century. Origen, writing before A.D. 250, had occasion to study difficult questions of textual criticism. Plainly, then, it is not enough to go back merely to our oldest manuscripts, since they are to be dated a century later than his time. Then there has been more respect for the "Western" text shown in recent criticism. Professor Blass even suggests that, in the case of the *Acts* of the Apostles, both texts are original, one having been issued in Rome and the other in the East by St. Luke himself, as two editions of the work. On the other hand, however, there are so many curious additions to the generally accepted text in the "Western" type which look like the marginal notes of copyists, that most scholars regard it as secondary and not so pure as the texts that omit them. While this text cannot be preferred to the Alexandrian, and while the Syrian text, the text of almost all the later manuscripts and versions, must be regarded as a sort of compromise later than both, and while, therefore, on the whole the most ancient manuscripts still hold the field as of predominant importance, it is now felt that more weight must be given to the testimony of the various witnesses than was allowed by Westcott and Hort. Dr. Weymouth's *Resultant Greek Testament* is a useful attempt to combine the verdicts of several textual critics; this has been done more thoroughly by Prof. Nestle; and now that the latest form of Prof. Nestle's Greek Testament has been issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society we may take this as giving us as nearly as possible the original text of the New Testament books as far as scholars have been able to recover it. When we compare this with the *Textus Receptus*, we find that all the alterations taken together, striking and important as some of them are in themselves, do not materially alter the contents of the New Testament. Both narrative and teaching remain substantially intact. Thus from the point of view of textual criticism the most searching scholarship has gone to confirm the correctness of our copies of the New Testament books as genuine reproductions of the original works in all that is vital and essential, and even in most of the minor details.

It was Eichhorn at the end of the eighteenth century who called this process of textual criticism the "Lower Criticism,"

and who gave the title "Higher Criticism" to the examination and analysis of the contents of the several books of Scripture for indications of their characteristics, historical relationships, and origins. Since the former term is now seldom used it might be well to drop the latter also, because this is liable to absurd misunderstandings. So we find people irritated at the very mention of it, as though it implied a supercilious assumption of superiority on the part of the scholars who practised the method. The "Higher Critic" is rebuked for his arrogance when the poor man may be as modest as he is sincere in simply trying to apply a certain method of literary study to the books he is dealing with.

This is the criticism the results of which now call to be appraised. In trying to gather up those results we must not expect to meet with unanimity or finality of judgment. It will be much if we are able to discover what questions are now fairly settled, what are still under dispute with different views of them still contending for acceptance, and, if possible in these cases, in what direction the greater probability seems to lie.

Two general characteristics of the more recent criticism may be noticed at this point, as they will appear again and again while we are surveying the field of inquiry.

The first is the greater importance now given to the witness of the books to themselves, in contrast to the older method of making more of external testimony to their authenticity and genuineness.

The second is the effort that is being made by means of this very process to get behind the books to their sources in earlier documents, traditions, floating sayings, and the intellectual conditions of their authors; to realise the atmosphere in which they were produced; and to discover the influences under which they attained their present form, when they show signs of growth or modification.

CHAPTER II

THE WRITINGS OF ST. PAUL

With the doubtful exception of the Epistle of James—which will be considered in the next chapter—the letters of Paul

must be taken as the earliest writings of the New Testament. The gospels have precedence in our Bible, partly because of their inherent importance, partly also because they narrate the foundation facts of the faith. In the order of history the events recorded in those books come first; the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ which they describe are presupposed in all the apostolic literature. If we were discussing the development of ideas in the early Church we should have to begin with our Lord's teachings, and this subject would also send us back to the gospels for our materials. A fifth book, the *Acts of the Apostles*, goes naturally with the four gospels as the second volume of Luke's work and as completing the historical element. This of course is written later than the epistles, since it follows Luke's gospel. In dealing with the books as books (that is to say, in considering the construction of the New Testament itself—not its subject-matter—which is our present concern), all these five works come later than Paul's epistles. It is not impossible that Matthew's collection of the sayings of Jesus, with some connective narrative, and perhaps other notes of the sayings and doings of our Lord, had been written earlier. The Apostle's rare references to utterances by Christ, and his account of the Lord's Supper, may well have been drawn from documentary sources. But if so, those sources have been lost, or more probably absorbed in our gospels. The gospels themselves appeared later. While the actual witnesses were living people did not think of writing down the story of Jesus. They preferred to give it by word of mouth. It was in the next generation, when the personal testimony was getting thinned off by death, that this precious testimony was gathered up by wise men, for whose industry and forethought we cannot be too thankful, and so preserved in literature.

We have thirteen letters attributed to Paul. If we followed the titles in our Bibles we should add a fourteenth, the Epistle to the Hebrews. But the titles are late additions, not parts of the original compositions, and unlike all the other letters, this epistle does not claim, anywhere in its contents, to come from the great Apostle. We shall see that it has been erroneously ascribed to him, as is now universally admitted.

All these thirteen epistles have been subjected to searching criticism. There is a Dutch school of critics that rejects them

all, and it has a few allies in some other quarters. The fact that an article by Marti advocating this negative conclusion has been admitted into the *Encylopœdia Biblica*, has given it a significance in the eyes of English readers altogether out of proportion to the position it has really attained in the world of scholarship. With the exception of a handful of extreme men, scholars of all shades of critical opinion are opposed to the notion. Indeed, the general trend of recent criticism has moved in the opposite direction. Baur, in the middle of the last century, rejected all but four of the Pauline writings, accepting as genuine only *Romans*, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, and *Galatians*. Since then the claims of four more—viz. *Philippians*, *1 Thessalonians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*—have been amply vindicated. This leaves *2 Thessalonians*, *Ephesians*, and the three Pastoral epistles still under dispute.

Coming to look at the situation more closely, we see that these thirteen letters fall into four groups, which arrange themselves as follows:

(1) *1 and 2 Thessalonians*
(2) *1 and 2 Corinthians*
Galatians
Romans
(3) *Colossians*
Philemon
Ephesians
Philippians
(4) *1 and 2 Timothy*
Titus

This arrangement seems to imply the genuineness of all the epistles. But even if that is not admitted, similarities of style, thought, and historical allusions favour the maintenance of the same grouping for the sake of literary study and theological classification.

These groups are chronologically arranged. The Apostle did not spread his literary activity evenly over the whole course of his ministry. He was not an author continuously engaged in writing, like Anthony Trollope, who tells us that the very day after he had finished one novel he began another. Paul wrote laboriously, and only when it was necessary. In fact

he scarcely wrote anything with his own hand. He dictated his letters as they were required, and that did not seem to him to be very often. There were long intervals of epistolary silence. He had been engaged for about eighteen years in active missionary labour before he wrote the first of his letters —at all events before he wrote the first that we possess or know anything about. Then, after writing two short letters (some say only one) he did not trouble his scribe—as far as we know—for another four years. A burst of inspired writing, provoked by serious troubles in Achaia and Asia Minor, now followed, and the result was his four greatest epistles, the very core and kernel of apostolic theology. This outburst was succeeded by another interval of four years, after which we have four (some say only three) letters written from prison in Rome, then comes yet another interval of perhaps two or three years, followed by the two letters to Timothy and one to Titus, if these can be accepted as genuine.

The relative dates of the four groups may now be considered as quite fixed and certain. But there is some question as to the absolute chronology. According to the reckoning which has prevailed until recent years, the first group is dated in A.D. 53, the second in A.D. 57–58, the third in A.D. 62, 63, and the fourth in A.D. 65. Now we have proposals for earlier dates, Professor Harnack going back to A.D. 48, or even 47, for the first group, and pushing the rest back accordingly. Others incline to some intermediate periods. At most there is a difference of only six years between the various estimates. This is remarkable, considering that we are discussing the dates of letters admittedly nearly two thousand years old.

Let us look now at each of these four groups.

We begin with the first group, comprising the two letters to the newly founded Church at Thessalonica. The first of these letters is now almost universally admitted to be genuine. Rejected by Baur, it was accepted by his successor Hilgenfeld, and it has since been defended by scholars of various schools, among whom may be named Davidson, Pfleiderer, Holtzmann, Harnack, Jülicher, Bacon, Moffatt, as well as the conservative scholar Zahn. Some have thought the letter to contain evidences of too late development for its early date. But it

should be noticed that Paul was no novice at this time. He was nearing the end of the second decade of his apostolate. He had already come through his great contest with those Jewish Christians who would have confined Christianity within the narrow limits of Judaism, and he had secured freedom for a world-wide gospel. It may seem remarkable that the Church at Thessalonica should have developed to the extent indicated by this letter, in less than a twelvemonth from the introduction of Christianity to the city. It is on considerations of this sort that Marti founds his principal objections to all the Pauline epistles. These objections reject a rate of progress that we should not think normal to-day. But if we can throw ourselves back in imagination to the apostolic age, and realise in some degree the wonderful enthusiasm, the keen vitality, the vigour, the *élan* of the new movement, we shall see that any such comparison is beside the mark. It was an era of phenomenally rapid growth.

Our attention has been called of late to the great importance of apocalyptic ideas in the early Church. It is now seen that we must give them a much larger and more prominent place in our conception of primitive Christianity than has generally been allowed hitherto. The Christians of those days, it would seem, lived on the tiptoe of expectation. They looked for the return of their Lord to earth in clouds of glory, and confidently expected this wonder during their own lifetime. There can be no doubt that Paul cherished this anticipation. He did not think he would have to die. He expected (and his followers shared his expectation) that Christ would soon appear, and then that he and they would be first caught up to meet their Lord in the air, and subsequently live on earth a deathless life in the triumph of the kingdom of God together with the blessed dead restored to life by a glorious resurrection from their graves. It was not to be a mere revival of present conditions at their best. Paul rejected the grossly materialistic notions of popular Judaism, and gave no encouragement for their revival as we meet with them in the second century under the name of "Chiliasm." The resurrection body was to be a spiritual body—not of flesh and blood, and the kingdom of God was not to consist in eating and drinking; still, it was to be on earth and that speedily. In *2 Corinthians* and from the time

of that letter onward we meet with a change. It has been suggested that the danger of the riot at Ephesus, which had occurred just before the Apostle wrote that letter—when, as he put it graphically, he "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus"—made him think that after all he might have to die. In writing to the Philippians later still, he definitely contemplates the possibility of death. But he continued to cherish the hope of the speedy coming of Christ—the *Parousia*, that is "the presence"—to the last.

Now both the Thessalonian epistles are principally concerned with this expectation. Evidently the Apostle's preaching on the subject had made a great impression at Thessalonica. Subsequently troubles had arisen directly connected with it.

When Paul had moved on in a southerly direction from Thessalonica, after founding and establishing a church in that important Macedonian city, he had left his travelling companions, Timothy and Silas, to complete his work there, and then to follow him. His stay at Athens was too short for them to meet him in that city, and he had passed on to Corinth before they came up with him. Learning that they brought disconcerting news, the Apostle would have hastened back to set things right. But he found that impossible. "Satan hindered," he says, referring either to some illness, or more probably to the magistrates' order that had banished him from Macedonia. So he did the next best thing; he wrote a letter, as far as we know his first letter to a church, never dreaming at the time that this was to be the beginning of a new volume of Scripture, a "New Testament," nor that scholars and critics would be scanning every word and wrangling over the minutest phrases. Had he suspected any such subsequent proceedings it is likely enough that he would have shrunk from putting pen to paper, and would have dealt with the situation by means of a verbal message. Happily he had no suspicion, and so all unconsciously he began his invaluable contributions to Christian instruction and edification for all subsequent ages. The trouble at Thessalonica arose from the fact that some of the new converts had died. Are these unfortunate people to miss the glory of the *Parousia?* Paul writes to say that they will not miss it—that on the contrary, they will be raised from the dead, and then will have prece-

dence over the living. What an old-world atmosphere we have here, how redolent of the hopes and fears of the most primitive Christian times! Such a question as is here discussed, if it arose at all, must have come up very early, with the first deaths in the Church.

Although the genuineness of *2 Thessalonians* is not allowed by Schmiedel, Holtzmann, Pfleiderer, and many other critics, it is not left only to the more conservative theologians to defend it. Thus Professor Bacon argues definitely in favour of the Pauline authorship of the epistle, and Dr. Moffatt, while considering that the historical situation, the "singular eschatology," and the style have roused suspicion, shows how well it fits into the situation if viewed as written by Paul a short time after the first epistle. The trouble about the *Parousia* had taken a new form, which was very natural under the circumstances. People were neglecting their work in the feverish expectation of the great wonder. The Apostle has to warn them that it will not come about yet. Certain things, mysteriously connected with "the man of sin"—perhaps a fragment of some lost Jewish apocalyptic imagery, but here apparently used to represent the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem —must happen first. Meanwhile the busybodies are to learn to "work with quietness" and "eat their own bread." "If any will not work, neither let him eat."

The second group consists of the great doctrinal epistles. Except among a few extremists serious criticism does not say anything against their genuineness. They speak for their own historicity, and they are amply supported by external testimony. Forming, as has been said, "the great quadrilateral of Christianity," they give us the substance of the Christian facts and truths, which might be seen resting on them alone even if all the rest of the New Testament were abandoned. But important as they are in this way, they do not call for special consideration in the present connection, *i.e.* in relation to criticism, for the simple reason that criticism has had very little to say about them except to justify their claims as genuine writings of the Apostle Paul.

These four epistles—*1 and 2 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, and *Romans*—were written in the midst of the Apostle's contest with the anti-Liberal Judaisers. This is seen especially in *Galatians*,

where Paul vindicates the freedom of Gentile Christians from the law, and maintains the essential character of the gospel as being a religion of faith and spirituality. *1 Corinthians* was written from Ephesus in reply to a letter from Corinth in which the Church of that city asked the Apostle's advice about celibacy and marriage, the eating of food that had been offered as a sacrifice to idols, the use of spiritual gifts, and the collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem. Before proceeding to answer these four questions—with which he deals seriatim later on—Paul expostulates with his correspondents, and admonishes them sternly with regard to some grave abuses concerning which their letter was discreetly silent, but of which he had got information from some members of the Corinthian Church.

2 Corinthians is probably an amalgam of two distinct epistles. It opens with affectionate, consolatory, and commendatory words, and this tone is continued to the end of chapter ix. Then the Apostle suddenly changes his style, and launches out into vigorous self-defence and grievous reproaches. We must reverse the order of the two sections, and take chapter x. to the end as part of an epistle written amid painful, strained relations with the church addressed, and chapters i. to ix. as a subsequent letter of full reconciliation, after the earlier letter had done its work.

Criticism has nothing fresh of importance about *Romans*, the greatest of Paul's writings, pronounced by Renan to be the most important theological treatise ever written. Under the influence of Lightfoot, some still regard chapter xvi. as an integral portion of the epistle; others take it to be a commendatory letter to Ephesus to introduce Phœbe, who was going to that city from Cenchræa.

There is some question whether the Galatian letter should come just before the Roman, as Lightfoot argued, or earlier in the Apostle's career. Its close resemblance to *Romans* seems to point to their conjunction. Lastly, with regard to this epistle it should be added that Sir William Ramsay's geographical researches have strongly confirmed the view of Renan, Mommsen and others, as against Lightfoot, namely, that the Galatia of this epistle is South Galatia, and that the churches addressed are those of Paul's first missionary journey, Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra.

In the third group, as has been pointed out, the Epistle to the Colossians is now generally accepted, and with it the companion letter to Philemon. It is difficult to think of that beautiful little private note as other than an evidently genuine composition. Doubt as to the Ephesian epistle is largely based on its resemblance to *Colossians*, of which some critics regard it as a weak imitation. But if Paul, not being a literary man by profession and composing laboriously, had occasion to write two letters near together he might well repeat himself in the second. A comparison of the Roman and Galatian epistles may supply an analogy. Yet they are both genuine. The question of weakness is a matter of taste, or rather of perception. Not a few Bible readers have come to regard this Epistle to the Ephesians as one of the most inspired and inspiring books of Scripture. If, as seems possible, we should judge it to be a circular letter written, not to meet an emergency, but to promote the general edification of the churches of the Lycus Valley, the absence of the vehement style and the personal note, so characteristic of Paul's earlier letters, may be perhaps accounted for.

The greatest doubt is felt as to the last group, consisting of the Pastoral epistles—*1 and 2 Timothy* and *Titus*—and that for several reasons. They are not in our oldest New Testament Canon—the Canon of Marcion. It is difficult to find a place for them in the life story of Paul. The language and style are remarkably un-Pauline. The church order presupposed is later than that known to prevail in the Apostle's lifetime. But if, as Sir William Ramsay argues, Paul would almost certainly have been acquitted on his appeal to Cæsar, time for later developments and movements might be found, and so many of these difficulties disappear. Still, while elsewhere Paul argues against those who differ from him, here he denounces them and in an *ex cathedrâ* manner orders them to be put down. This looks more like somebody else writing in the Apostle's name. On the other hand there are little personal matters—the "cloak left at Troas," "the books," "especially the parchments"—that point to a genuine correspondence. So also the affectionate expressions that appear in the course of the letters, so like the warm-hearted apostle addressing his friends. Harnack agrees with those who recognise genuine fragments of

Paul's writings in these letters. Possibly we may go a step further, and say that the Apostle sanctioned the letters, but did not directly dictate them, as in the case of his earlier epistles.

CHAPTER III

HEBREWS AND THE GENERAL EPISTLES

It has been pointed out already that, while our Bibles still have the name of Paul attached to the title of the Epistle to the Hebrews, this is now universally admitted to be a mistake. The book makes no claim to come from the Apostle, as is the case with all Paul's acknowledged epistles, every one of which opens with his name—"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ," "Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ," and so on, in every case, with slight variations of terminology. Then the style is quite different from that of the Apostle. Paul writes vigorously, but ruggedly, as though his thoughts were struggling for utterance, with the result that we sometimes find it difficult to trace the grammatical structure of his sentences. But this epistle is a good example of the literary Hellenistic dialect, with rhetorical forms and high-sounding phrases, all skilfully knit together in an orderly composition. Language and thought have close affinities to the Alexandrian school, especially to the *Book of Wisdom* and the writings of Philo. In its ideas this epistle follows Paul to a great extent, but with marked differences. The Divine Sonship of Christ, His atoning sacrifice, and the importance of faith which are here prominent, are characteristically Pauline; so also is the rejection of the Jewish religious system, or rather its supersession by Christianity. But here differences appear. While Paul as a Pharisee is concerned with the moral law and its requirements, and therefore anxious about justification, the author of *Hebrews* is thinking of the ceremonial law, with the priestly and sacrificial functions at the tabernacle, and his aim is sanctification, the cleansing of the worshipper so that he may draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. In *Hebrews*, and in this epistle only, we have the idea of the priesthood of Christ. Then the operation

of faith, so eloquently exemplified in the eleventh chapter, is there seen as the inspiration of energy, heroism, and martyrdom, rather than as the condition of justification. All these differences—while they involve no contradiction, no opposition to Paul—indicate quite a different theological atmosphere from that in which the Apostle's mind lived. When we turn to the ancient Church writers we find them divided and uncertain as to the authorship of the epistle. Tertullian, the first to attach any name to it, writing about A.D. 200, takes for granted that Barnabas was its author, apparently never having met with any doubt on the subject; but Origen, with a much wider range of scholarship, writing in the next generation, after carefully examining the question gives it up in despair, saying that as to who wrote it God only knows. Various names have been suggested—Barnabas again, Apollos, Luke, and the author of the *Book of Wisdom*, and now as the latest conjecture, Priscilla and Aquila — especially the former. This is a suggestion of Professor Harnack's, which Dr. Rendel Harris and others favour. It has been pointed out that the name of Priscilla appears before that of her husband more frequently than in the usual order. They were teachers of the Alexandrian convert Apollos and associated with Paul. If the epistle were written by a woman this fact might explain its anonymity.

Whoever may have been the author of this work, we must assign it to early times. It was known to Clement of Rome, who wrote soon after A.D. 90. There is good reason to suppose that it is at least twenty years older than this fact would require, because it makes no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Seeing that the main argument of the epistle is concerned with the supersession of the Levitical system of priests and sacrifices by the coming of Christ and His work, if the temple had been destroyed and the sacrifices brought to an end, as happened when Titus stormed Jerusalem, this catastrophe to the old system could not fail to have been noticed, because the author must have regarded it as a providential act in entire agreement with the contention of his argument. Many think that we have a reference to the Neronian persecution in the tenth chapter. But the writer's language is too mild. His readers had not "resisted

unto blood"; the simple statement that they had been made a "gazing-stock" cannot be meant to point to exposure in the amphitheatre, where the wild beasts were let loose on the Christians, nor to the horrors of the illumination of Nero's garden, where they were smeared with pitch and burnt as torches.

We cannot fix the destination of this epistle with any assurance. It could not have been sent to the Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem, because, whereas the parent church in that city was poor and in receipt of aid from other churches, the Christians here addressed are commended for their bounty. It may have been sent to some Jewish-Christian community in Palestine or Syria. But there is a growing disposition to look upon Rome as its destination. If that is correct, perhaps a brotherhood of Jewish Christians rather than the whole church at Rome, which was mainly Gentile, would be the recipient of the letter. Wrede thought that it was not a letter at all in its original form, but a theological treatise, and that some editor subsequently gave it an epistolary form in order to pass it on as an epistle of Paul's. But if so, why did not this editor complete his work by adding a piece at the beginning also, with the usual form of the commencement of a letter? Still, though probably sent as a letter to some one body of Christians, this epistle is more carefully elaborated than is the case with any other New Testament book. Criticism has in no way affected its inherent worth as a grand exposition of the priesthood of Christ and of the New Covenant in which that central truth is enshrined.

The General Epistle of James is in the singular condition among the critics of being regarded as either the earliest written or nearly the latest book in the New Testament. No intermediate place can be found for it. The chief reason is its treatment of faith in relation to justification. This is not really in antagonism to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, as Baur saw clearly enough, so that he rejected the idea of authorship by James of Jerusalem for the very reason that the epistle was too Pauline. Nevertheless, verbally and in form, some of its arguments do appear on the surface to contradict what Paul was saying. Certainly no friend of Paul would have written like this in the midst of the anxious controversy

with the Judaising party that the Apostle maintained so vehemently in his letter to the Galatians. On the other hand, no member of that party could write in the manner of the author of this epistle, who, while commending the law of liberty and contending for works as the signs of a living faith, has no word to say about circumcision, sabbath-keeping, ablutions, and the other ceremonies of Judaism, but on the contrary declares that the true ritual of religion is for one to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. If the epistle were written before the controversy with the Judaisers this difficulty would not arise.

Professor Mayor, the author of the best English commentary on the Epistle of James, argues for its authorship by the brother of our Lord. There is much in the condition of Christian life implied by the author that points to an early date. He refers to elders; but he does not mention the bishop, and the anointing of a sick person by the elders strikes us as quite primitive. When it is objected that the corruptions of the Church point to a later time we may think of Corinth. The stern admonition of the rich seems out of keeping with our ideas of the brotherly relations of the early Christians. Might it be that a synagogue of Jews had adopted Christianity by a vote of the majority, although many of its members still remained unconverted and alien to the spirit of the gospel? In that case we should have quite a mixed congregation to be addressed in the letter.

Spitta has argued in a very elaborate discussion of the subject that this epistle is really a Jewish work, and not Christian at all. He points out that Jesus Christ is only mentioned by name in two places. These references he takes to be insertions by an editor who wanted to introduce the composition into Christian circles, and adapt it to Christian uses. The death and resurrection of Christ are not mentioned in the epistle, nor is there any reference to our Lord's saving or atoning work, nor indeed to any specifically Christian doctrine. Spitta has been able to match nearly every phrase in this epistle with a corresponding phrase in some Jewish work. Nevertheless his ingenious theory has met with little favour. The spirit of the book is not rabbinical, whatever we may say

about its phraseology. Taken as a whole, it comes much nearer to the Sermon on the Mount—which indeed, in phrases and sentences, has many Jewish parallels—than to a Jewish writing. Indeed it contains more echoes of the teachings of Jesus than any other New Testament book, except the gospels which expressly record those teachings. Von Soden takes an intermediate position, holding that some sections of the epistle which are peculiarly Jewish in character may have a Jewish origin. Knowing how common was the custom for an author to appropriate, embody, and work over materials that he had found in an earlier writer, we may well allow Von Soden's conjecture to help us out of some of the difficulties of the epistle. On the other hand, Professor Harnack holds that the work is a collection of extracts from several Christian homilies, made some time well down in the second century of our era, and his view is accepted by Professor Bacon. The name "James" is common enough, and the author makes no claim to be more than "a servant of God and of Jesus Christ." It cannot be said that the question is settled. But the preponderance of opinion is for a late date. It has been well said that if we are led to the conclusion that the production of our Scriptures was spread over a longer time and divided among a greater number of writers than was formerly supposed, this should not be a disquieting result, for it would show that the divine gift of inspiration was more freely and continuously given than we had imagined.

The two epistles that bear the name of Peter have both been subjected to a severe critical handling, but with very different results. *1 Peter* is one of the best attested books of the New Testament. It was known to several writers of the sub-apostolic age. Inherently it has much in its favour. It must impress us as one of the greatest, most truly inspired apostolic writings. The authors of the two principal English commentaries on this book, Dr. Bigg and Dr. Hort, ascribe it to the Apostle. Professor Harnack has recently rather favoured this view as conceivable, and so have Professors Peake, Bacon, and Moffatt, though with hesitation. But it is not so assuredly adopted by many scholars. Altogether, therefore, we must admit serious difficulties in the way of accepting Peter as the author. These are of three kinds—linguistic, doctrinal, and historical.

It is difficult to think of the provincial fisherman having the ability to produce this eloquent Greek composition, and a middle course has been proposed in ascribing the actual writing of the epistle to Silvanus, by whom its author expressly says it is being sent. This allows of all degrees of association, from dictation to an amanuensis to the mere use of the Apostle's name, with or without his authority. Many scholars incline to some form of this theory.

The doctrinal difficulty is found in the close resemblance of the epistle to writings and teachings of the Apostle Paul. It seems to contain distant allusions to some of the Pauline epistles, especially *Romans* and *Ephesians*. Harnack considers that it must have been written by a disciple of Paul, and could even have been written by Paul himself. Now we know that the contention of Baur, that there was direct antagonism between Paul and Peter, has been abandoned as erroneous. It would seem that Peter was of a yielding, receptive disposition; and possibly, in his later years, he came much under the influence of the more powerful mind of Paul. But it is easier to think that Silvanus, who had been one of Paul's travelling companions, had been thus influenced by that great Apostle. The doctrinal position is not exactly that of Paul. Thus, while the divinity of Christ and the sacrifice on the cross are distinctly set forth, there is no reference to justification by faith, nor to the antagonism of law and gospel, which meant so much for the Apostle to the Gentiles. On the other hand, while with Paul prophecy is the greatest of the gifts of the Spirit for Christians, another kind of prophecy is important in this epistle, namely Old Testament prophecy in anticipation of Christ. The disposition to appeal to Messianic prophecy is also seen in Peter's speeches in *Acts;* and there are other resemblances between those speeches and the epistle.

Then we have the historical difficulties. We find it hard to understand how Peter could be supervising the churches of Asia Minor to which the letter is addressed, and that without making any reference to the labours of Paul among them. For those churches were at some of that Apostle's chief centres of work. Assuredly the epistle was not written during the time of Paul's travels. Then did Peter survive the Neronian persecution and did he work as a missionary in these regions

at a subsequent period? Sir William Ramsay thinks that the letter points to this conclusion, and he holds that the situation implied is just that of the Flavian emperors. Some have thought that it points to the later persecution under Domitian. But Dr. Moffatt has shown that the only persecution referred to is spasmodic and sporadic—such as might have been met with in Asia Minor after the time of Nero and before that of Domitian.

In all these matters the situation is much eased if we assign a considerable share in the composition of the letter to Silvanus. Von Soden thinks that Silvanus is the sole author, writing some years after the Apostle's death. Now it is to be observed that a mass of pseudonymous writing has been ascribed to Peter—the Second Epistle as we shall see directly, a gospel, an apocalypse, teachings and preachings, etc. This would be but one more work to add to the pseudo-Petrine library. On the other hand this epistle is incomparably greater than all those books; it is on quite a higher plane. Besides, if Peter had left one great work that would serve as a sort of nucleus for the later literature, he would be known as an author of fame. Then, if the historical reasons for a late date are not to be pressed—and we have seen that they need not be pressed—we must think it unlikely that Silvanus would write so distinctly in the name of Peter unless the Apostle had a hand in the work. All the other so-called Petrine literature dates from the second century. The writer's friendly attitude towards the Government and the general tone and spirit of the letter point to an earlier period—certainly before Trajan, probably before Domitian—that is to say, to the possible lifetime of Peter.

Dr. McGiffert has suggested Barnabas as the author. But Barnabas has not so good a claim as Silas. The letter comes from Babylon, which could scarcely be old Babylon by the Euphrates, where the Jewish colony at this time was in a depressed state, nor the Babylon in Egypt, near Cairo, claimed for it by the Copts, since we have no reason to think that Peter was ever there, although the founding of the church at Alexandria is ascribed to Mark, who, as Papias, writing in the second century, informs us, was the interpreter and companion of Peter. More probably Babylon is a cryptic name for Rome here, as in the Apocalypse.

The case of *2 Peter* is entirely different. No church writer of the early period refers to this epistle. It is absent from our oldest Catholic New Testament Canon—the "Fragment of Muratori"—which may be dated about A.D. 170. In referring to a collection of Paul's epistles and treating them as "Scripture" side by side with the Old Testament, the writer certainly reveals quite a late date; no such reference would have been possible in apostolic times. Then the language, style, and thought differ entirely from what we have in *1 Peter*. That epistle is written in quite good Greek of the colloquial kind used at the time. But this is crabbed and awkward. A beginner might write in this way and improve later. But the reverse would be impossible. Yet we cannot change the order of the epistles, because *2 Peter* actually refers to *1 Peter* and describes itself as "the second epistle" (2 Peter iii. 1). A further objection to the idea of ascribing the epistle to the Apostle Peter is found in the fact that it has absorbed the greater part of the Epistle of Jude without acknowledgment. The case is not to be put the other way, as a careful comparison of the passages will show. The Epistle of Jude is complete in itself, and it will afford clarifying explanations of allusions in *2 Peter*. The reverse is not the case. We cannot explain *Jude* by *2 Peter*. Now it is not at all probable that Peter would make this use of another Apostle's work, and that Apostle a much less prominent personage than himself.

It does not much help us to have Zahn's suggestion that *2 Peter* was written by the Apostle himself—not, like *1 Peter*, by the aid of Silvanus—and earlier than *1 Peter*, the other epistle referred to in *2 Peter* having been lost. The defenders of the genuineness of the epistle are very few. It is not necessary to point to the decided verdict of the more advanced critics; quite moderate scholars, who by comparison might be deemed conservative, concur in the judgment that this work cannot have come from the hand of Peter, and must have been written some way down in the second century.

This is not to condemn it as unprofitable or uninspired. As we have seen before, the extension of the time and *personelle* of the authorship of the New Testament leaves the reader free to recognise the Divine Spirit's work as covering a larger area

than had been supposed. The recognition of pseudonymity as a legitimate form of literature in the times when so many works of this character appeared forbids us to use the ugly word "forgery," which used to be often on the lips of the older writers in dealing with these critical questions, nor does it exclude an honest purpose or a high religious value in the books concerned.

The Epistle of Jude describes its author as "a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James." This can scarcely be Jude the Apostle, since the writer makes no claim to be one of the Twelve and refers in the third person to "the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is more probable that he was a brother of James, the head of the church of Jerusalem. There is a suggestion that he might be "Judas called Barsabas," classed in *Acts* (xv. 22) with "the chief men among the brethren." Apparent references to Gnostic heresies have led critics to put the letter later—as late as the second century. But there was Gnosticism in the first century. The reference to this, however, and the way the Apostles are referred to, indicate the latter part of this century.

This does not forbid us to think of Jude the brother of the Jerusalem James in his old age. The very obscurity of this man points to genuineness. There was no motive for pseudonymity here.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

We now come to the most important subject of Biblical criticism, and, at the present moment, the most urgent. The gospels are of primary importance, since in them we find the fundamental facts on which the faith of Christendom is based, and the searchlight of critical inquiry is now being concentrated on them more penetratingly than at any previous period of Church history. Origen found them attacked by Celsus in the third century, and only a little later Porphyry discovered some of the sharpest weapons that Voltaire subsequently used. But that was in the pre-scientific age, and the criticism was

prejudiced by unbelief and antagonism. To-day we see the instruments of scientific inquiry perfected by Niebuhr, Mommsen, and other leading investigators in the field of secular history, brought into use in Biblical criticism. In both cases the attempt is to find the sources of the documents under examination; and in the latter as much as in the former it should be allowed that the aim is to arrive at truth without any consciously unfriendly bias, even when the results may seem to be of a negative or destructive character. Therefore the Christian believer must be careful not to attack the critic as an enemy of religion, or his blows may recoil on his own head if it should appear that a more Christian spirit is manifested on the other side.

The investigation is still in progress, and, although certain clear results have appeared already, it must be perceived that as yet we have more materials presented to us than can be immediately digested. Sir John Hawkins' *Horæ Synopticæ*, published several years ago, is still a quarry out of which students derive materials for their inquiries, and *Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, edited by Dr. Sanday, is a book that gives us the results of years of later research and seminar discussion, but in a form that provokes further inquiry. Harnack, Wellhausen, Loisy, quite recently Wendland, and indeed a host of explorers in this fertile field have both brought to light facts, and also suggested theories worthy of consideration. In a brief survey such as this only a few general features can be noticed.

The title "synoptic" is now fully confirmed and more significant than ever. It marks the common view taken by the first three evangelists in distinction from the quite distinctive treatment of his subject by the fourth. More than that, it is now an established conclusion that the similarities of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* are not accidental, nor are they merely due to the fact that we have in them the testimony of three honest witnesses to the same events. Plainly there is a literary connection between them; there are verbal identities, identities of phrase, not merely in reported sayings of Christ, but in descriptive passages. These identities being in the Greek, indicate some literary association in that language. If this were all we might come to the simple conclusion that

one gospel was based on another, and that this was the whole explanation of their resemblances. But, while there are some passages that admit of this view, there are others that go clean contrary to it, passages in which the gospels markedly diverge from one another. We might compare the case to that of two railways, sometimes running side by side and using the same stations, and at other parts of their routes deflecting and separating, to join and run parallel again later on, and so for their whole course. It is this peculiarity that has given rise to the synoptic problem. It has raised the question, How shall we account for the resemblances, even verbal identities, found in these three gospels, side by side with the divergences, even in some cases the seeming contradictions?

One position which we may regard as quite established is the priority of *Mark* to the other synoptic gospels, together also with its peculiar relation to both of them as constituting the base of their narratives. There is a common synoptic tradition running through all three. This is evident to every intelligent reader, and it has been often observed. But now we may be quite sure that there is more than tradition, that there is literary relationship of the most intimate kind, the relationship of parentage between *Mark* and *Matthew*, and also between that gospel and *Luke*. The general conclusion of scholarship is that both the author of our *Matthew* and also *Luke* made use of *Mark* in the first place. Here was the outline of the facts of the life of Christ ready to hand. The ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, His early Galilean ministry centred in Capernaum, retirement to the north, a crisis at Cæsarea Philippi when Peter made his great confession of Christ, a ministry no longer centred in Capernaum but carried on in various parts of the country, often in less publicity than before, the journey to Jerusalem, the last week and the crucifixion treated with quite exceptional fulness of detail, followed by the burial, and then the empty tomb—these items of the Galilean tradition are taken over from *Mark*. So also are the detailed accounts of many incidents, miracles, and other scenes.

Now turning to *Matthew* we see at once that its main difference from *Mark* consists in the large amount of teaching that it introduces which we had not met with in our second

gospel. We may explain what has happened in a general way thus. The author of our first gospel took *Mark* and split it at five places, inserting in each of the gaps a block of teaching—the Sermon on the Mount; a group of parables; a charge to the Apostles; denunciation of Pharisees; and teachings about the great Day of Judgment. In addition Matthew prefaces his gospel with the story of the birth of Jesus; he also adds an account of the resurrection.

Thus the question arises, Can we trace the sources of these additions to *Mark* which we find in *Matthew?* It would seem that there must have been some collection of the sayings of Christ which the author of our gospel reproduced in this way. Similarities between some of the sayings of Jesus in *Luke* and *Matthew* confirm this impression, and point to the conclusion that both these evangelists used this collection. Now according to Eusebius, Papias, the Bishop of Hierapolis early in the second century, wrote an exposition of the "Oracles of the Lord," in which he states that "Matthew composed the Oracles (*Logia*) in the Hebrew tongue." Hence it has been a widely accepted opinion that Matthew's Oracles, or *Logia*, consisted of a collection of the sayings of Jesus. But it will not do to assume this as certain. Some suppose that Papias' expression, "Oracles of the Lord," refers to a collection of Messianic prophecies. In order to avoid any begging of the question scholars now refer to the collection of sayings used by Matthew and probably in part by Luke under the sign "Q" (German *quelle*, source), although there is still a strong disposition to attribute Q to Matthew. Various attempts have been made to extract Q from the gospels—the most striking being that of Professor Harnack. But if anybody will consider how difficult it would have been to have extracted *Mark* from *Matthew* and *Luke* if our second gospel had been lost he will see how hazardous is the corresponding attempt in the case of Q. Possibly Q existed in two or three forms. If first written in Hebrew, as Papias says of the *Logia*—or rather in Aramaic, the popular language of Palestine at the time—it must have been translated into Greek before it was used by our evangelists; that is evidenced by the verbal identities of the reproduction of it in some instances by more than one evangelist. A further probability with reference to Q must

be noted. It seems clear that Mark knew Q and used it, though very sparingly. Therefore we must conclude that Q was earlier than *Mark*—was, as far as we know, the earliest written record of anything concerning the life and teaching of Christ. This is what we might have expected. The teachings would be written down to be preserved and handed on before a connected narrative of our Lord's doings was composed. The story of these doings might well have been left to oral tradition so long as the witnesses of it were alive.

It is now generally agreed that Q contained a certain amount of connecting matter and probably one miracle story, that of the cure of the centurion's servant. Professor Harnack considers that it ended short of the account of our Lord's sufferings, death, and resurrection; from which he draws the inference that its author—whom he inclines to accept as Matthew—did not include those events in his gospel message. Surely that is a very precarious inference. The Oracles might only have been designed to give the teaching ministry of Christ for its own sake, without pretending therefore to contain the whole of Christianity. We know too little about the lost book to be able to indulge in inferences of this character with safety.

In this way we account for the bulk of our *Matthew*. It is *Mark* plus Q. There remain the opening and closing passages to be accounted for. We do not know what were the author's sources for his birth and his resurrection stories. Were the latter based on *Mark?* It is now quite settled that the last verses in our copies of *Mark* (from xvi. 10 to the end) were added by some later hand. Yet the book could not have ended with the concluding words of verse 9. Therefore the last page or pages have been lost. The great differences between Luke's account of the risen Christ and Matthew's account indicate that Luke did not know the account in our first gospel. But he knew and used *Mark;* both the first and the third evangelists had *Mark*. Then it does not seem probable that either of them derived their resurrection narratives from that evangelist. In other words, it would seem that there were three separate sources for the synoptic accounts of the resurrection. If we add John and Paul (in 1 Corinthians xv.) we have five in all.

We must conclude that our Gospel of Matthew was not written by Matthew the publican, and this for two reasons. First, because Matthew, being an Apostle and eye-witness, would not have gone to Mark, who wrote at second-hand, for the greater part of his narrative; and second, because Papias tells us that Matthew wrote Oracles in Hebrew, while our gospel is certainly not a translation from a Hebrew original, as scholars are now agreed. But if Matthew composed Q, we can account for the name of our first gospel, for it is the additions from Q to *Mark* that constitute the main part of the new material in it.

When we turn to *Luke* we see some very similar features. *Mark* again is used extensively. Between them the author of *Matthew* and the evangelist Luke absorb nearly the whole of *Mark*. Then in addition Luke seems to have made use of Q, but to a much smaller extent. Until recently many scholars thought that Q was the chief source of the sayings of Jesus in the third gospel as well as in the first. This view, however, implied that one or other, if not both of these evangelists, took great liberties in their treatment of what they should have regarded as the most sacred document in the world. The remarkable differences between the Beatitudes in *Matthew* and in *Luke*, between the Parable of the Talents and the Parable of the Pounds, the two Parables of Feasts, and the two versions of the Lord's Prayer, not to mention many other cases, are too great for this theory. Plainly Luke had a second collection of the teaching of Jesus which he used freely, more freely than Q, while the author of *Matthew* probably confined himself to Q for the teachings. There is reason to suppose that more than one enthusiastic disciple of Christ would attempt to preserve his Master's teachings in writing. In his preface Luke refers to many attempts to write the life of Christ.

Another peculiarity of *Luke* is seen in the large insertion of narrative as well as teaching matter that begins at ix. 51. The teaching could not have been taken from Q, if Matthew wrote Q, because the publican would surely not have omitted the story of the Prodigal Son and all the teaching of the chapter in which that greatest of the parables is found, if he had found these things in his document. The preface indicates that Luke, who was probably the best educated of the synoptic

writers, collected his materials from various sources. Among these sources must be that of the birth and infancy stories and also that of the resurrection incidents which he connects with Jerusalem, while according to *Matthew*, and probably *Mark* also, Christ appeared to His apostles in Galilee.

Professor Burkitt has some other scholars with him in the opinion that Luke's peculiar source for the teachings of Christ was Q, and that our first gospel used some other source. But if so, and if, as Professor Burkitt holds, probably Matthew was the author of Q, how came Matthew's name to be attached to our first gospel?

Recent scholarship has gone strongly to confirm the uniform tradition of antiquity that Luke, the physician, Paul's travelling attendant, was the author of our third gospel. Linguistically it seems proved that the writer of the portions of *Acts* in which the first person plural appears—the "We" portions —also wrote the whole book. It is beyond question that the author of *Acts*, who refers to the gospel as his "former treatise," was also the author of our third gospel.

Professor Harnack argues for a very early date for *Acts*, as early as the close of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. If he is right the gospel of Luke must come earlier, *Mark* earlier still, and Q even more early. It cannot be said that Professor Harnack's view is as yet widely adopted. But it has many points in its favour.

Sir William Ramsay's researches and Professor Harnack's critical studies have gone far to raise the reputation of Luke as a sound historical writer, and to give validity to that author's account of the travels of Paul. Not long ago we were told that only a small group of Paul's epistles could be relied on for authentic information about the great Apostle. We have seen that a number of genuine epistles has been considerably increased; now we learn that *Acts*, once discarded as a historical source, may be trusted.

There are greater difficulties with the earlier chapters in *Acts*. Here Luke was not an eye-witness or companion of the persons referred to, as he was when writing about Paul. For this part of his work he seems to have had at least two sources, either oral or written—a Peter source, and a Philip source. Manifestly we are less near the fountain-head with

this first part of *Acts*. But the speeches of Peter have an archaic flavour; they contain none of Paul's characteristic teachings, though they must have been well known to Luke. Their primitive theology is an evidence of their genuineness.

In concluding this survey of the early historical part of the New Testament we must return to *Mark*. Papias informs us that Mark was the interpreter and companion of Peter, from whose preachings he derived his materials. Later Church writers repeat the statement in various forms. But it is pointed out that Mark's gospel does not read like sermon notes. Further, Papias says that Mark wrote "not in order"; but our second gospel is written in some measure of chronological order. That, however, cannot be the case in all its details, for we find groupings of subjects, such as a succession of grounds of offence in the eyes of the religious leaders, all brought together. Mark may have got facts from Peter's preaching without merely giving notes of Peter's sermons. His arrangement may well have been on other lines.

The latest criticism has endeavoured to push its investigations further back, to the sources of *Mark*, and to the personal element in the several evangelists. This is seen in Professor Bacon's work on *Mark*, in Loisy's elaborate work on the synoptic gospels, and more recently in Dr. Paul Wendland's book on primitive Christian literature. Much of this writing would plunge the historical narrative into a perfect chaos if its conclusions were adopted. Bacon and Loisy see legend and metaphor treated as history, Wendland takes a similar view; in particular, he points out that traditions of detached sayings and incidents are carried down without any chronological arrangement. So he supposes that Mark first formed his own framework and then fitted his materials into it. To accept that view would be to lose all idea of a consecutive life of Christ. Nobody could write a life of Christ. The materials for its development would not exist.

On the other hand, even if we went as far as this in analytic criticism, the main purpose of the evangelists would stand. For this was not to compose a biography, but to paint a portrait. Their aim was to make the real Jesus known, not merely to give a string of events, and the loss of chronological order, fatal to a biography, would leave the portrait fairly distinct.

But good reasons for not coming to this conclusion have been pointed out. The order of the development of the Christ idea in *Mark*—first the prophetic preaching of Jesus, then various surmises about His person and mission, next Peter's great confession at Cæsarea Philippi followed by our Lord's command to keep it quiet, the subsequent retreat and comparative seclusion, and the open admission by Jesus Himself in the carefully-planned triumphal entry into Jerusalem —all these things in their regular order indicate a distinct progression and development, and yet they do not stand out on the surface, as in the clearly-marked sections of a work consciously designed to produce an impression. Mark is too naïve and objective a writer to be credited with the subtlety that such a scheme would involve. His story follows this course because it follows a tradition he has received. That points to a genuine historicity not only in the events, but also in the order of them. The same may be said of three other obscurely hinted and yet unmistakable developments—the development of opposition on the part of the Jewish authorities, the development of our Lord's announcement of His own approaching death, and the development of the picture of coming judgment.

With regard to the last item we have our attention called to "The Little Apocalypse" in chapter xiii. This is thought by some to embody a fragment of some Jewish apocalypse. Dr. Sharman maintains that throughout the gospels Christ's teaching about "the last things" have been worked over under the influence of the eschatological notions that exercised a predominating influence among the Christians of apostolic days. On the other hand Johann Weiss and Schweitzer, with not a few associated scholars, appear to give an exaggerated importance to the apocalyptic elements of the teachings of Christ, taking them as the key for the interpretation of everything else. While considering this to be an extravagant position, we may thank this school for calling our attention to a phase in our Lord's teaching that has been too much neglected hitherto. If Christ did not base all on a catastrophic conception of the future, He did make much of the more essential elements of the apocalyptic scheme, viz. the great idea of God's concern with the world and in particular with His faithful people, God's purpose to enter more fully into the

scheme of things to set them right, the Kingdom of God coming from heaven, judgment on all things evil, and the final triumph of the good. Here the very idea of gospel which has given their titles to the four primitive portraits of Christ finds its consummation, and vindicates a superhuman source of optimism.

CHAPTER V

THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

THERE remains to be considered the group of writings associated with the name of the Apostle John. This presents some of the most difficult problems of criticism. But it must be admitted that during recent years the atmosphere has cleared to some extent with regard to some aspects of these problems.

We have five books—the gospel, three epistles, and the Revelation—comprised under the heading "Johannine writings." The questions of the authorship of these several compositions are in a measure mutually self-involved.

It was among these writings that the Higher Criticism first appeared in circles of Biblical study. Dionysius, the successor of Origen as teacher of the catechetical school in Alexandria, and also the bishop of the church in that city in the third century of the Christian era, pointed out the remarkable differences in style between the fourth gospel and the Revelation. These led him to the conclusion that they were not written by the same author. He had no doubt that the gospel was the work of the Apostle John. Accordingly he thought that the Apocalypse must have been composed by some other John, and he referred to two monuments or tombs in Ephesus bearing the name of John. Papias, writing early in the second century, had referred to a certain "John the Elder" among personal disciples of Christ, clearly distinguishing him from the Apostle John.

Dionysius' critical views were not accepted by his contemporaries, nor by the scholars of subsequent centuries, till the re-awakening of criticism at the end of the eighteenth century revived interest in their subject-matter and in the method that this pioneer of literary criticism in its application to Scripture had opened out.

Dionysius' arguments have weight in the present day. But the whole Johannine problem has spread out and ramified, and immense research and thinking have been bestowed upon it. To sum up conclusions in such a discussion, especially while the discussion is going on, is really an impracticable task. The following points, however, may be noted.

In the first place, the great weight of the primitive testimony to the antiquity of the fourth gospel and to the name of the Apostle John as that of its author cannot be disputed. The late date in the second half of the second century, assigned it by Baur, is seen to be impossible. There is strong reason for putting it back near the end of the first century. On the other hand, much has been made of one piece of evidence as disconcerting to the upholders of apostolic authorship. This is found in a fragment attributed to Papias, according to which both James and John were "slain by the Jews." From this it has been inferred that the Apostles James and John suffered martyrdom together. If so John could not have been the author of the gospel, which at earliest could only have been written very late in the apostolic age, and then, according to all the evidence, in Ephesus or its neighbourhood. But it has been pointed out that the fragment attributed to Papias may not be genuine; that Papias may have been in error—perhaps comfusing the murder of John the Baptist with the fate of the Apostle; and that the martyrdom of both brothers by the Jews may not have taken place at the same time—John perhaps having been killed much later than James and possibly in Asia Minor, where a little later Jews took the lead in the martyrdom of Polycarp. Anyhow, the evidence for the residence of John at Ephesus down to extreme old age is so ancient, definite, and unanimous —apart from this fragment, to the contents of which no reference is made by any contemporary writer known to us—that this cannot be fairly set aside on so precarious a ground.

It is with the internal characteristics of the book, however, that criticism has had most to do. Now here, too, the positive evidence remains virtually unshaken. This has been arranged in concentric circles, gathering in the identification of the author closer and closer, by showing that he was (1) a Jew, (2) a Jew familiar with Palestine, (3) a contemporary, (4) one

of the inner circle of disciples. Further, the lofty spiritual character of the book, the most sublime of all the books of the Bible, and therefore the most sublime work in the world's literature, has not been affected by a hundred years and more of drastic criticism, and this bespeaks an adequate authorship. Schleiermacher, who struck the keynote of nineteenth century theology, in contrast with the arid rationalism of the eighteenth century, centred his Christian teaching in the fourth gospel. Both Ewald and Renan based their lives of Christ mainly on it. Wendt and Beyschlagg have shown that the teaching of Jesus contained in this book is essentially in harmony with that of the synoptics. Dr. Drummond in an elaborate study of the gospel argued for its apostolic authorship.

On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the difficulties are serious. It is hard to think that a fisherman from the lake shore in Galilee could have written the prologue with its references to the *Logos*, though not impossible if John had spent many years in Asia Minor. Graver questions rise in the region of history, and if the historicity of the gospel is doubted, the apostolic authorship must share the dubiety. Here we are brought to the vexed question of the differences between the fourth gospel and its predecessors. Some of these have been shown to have been less than was once supposed. For instance, it was pointed out that, while the synoptics locate our Lord's ministry in Galilee, according to John it is largely carried on at Jerusalem. But it has been replied that the synoptics contain hints of visits to Jerusalem. On one point the superior historicity of the fourth gospel has been vindicated. There is now a growing tendency to admit that this gospel must be right with its date of the Crucifixion as on the day preceding the Jews' passover meal, and that the synoptic writers were in error when they thought that the Jewish passover took place on the previous evening.

While many critics reject the Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel altogether, and repudiate its historicity, and some still defend it in its integrity, there is an intermediate position, allowing that the actual writer was an Ephesian scholar, but holding that this man was in close touch with the Apostle John, who is taken to be "the disciple whom Jesus loved" of the book. Professor Harnack is inclined to accept

John the Elder as the author, and Professor Moffatt says that "Unless John the Presbyter is brought in . . . the author of John i.–xx. and the editor who revised it and added the appendix are both unknown."

Every thoughtful reader must have been struck with the peculiarity of the style of the fourth gospel and the difference between this style and that of the synoptics. Now we find this peculiar Johannine style running through the sayings of Christ, the sayings of John the Baptist, and the author's comments. So identical is this style that there are cases—as in the third chapter—where we cannot determine at what point the quoted speech ends and the evangelist's reflections begin. Then, in turning to the epistles of John, we find the same peculiar style there also. The inference is inevitable. This is a Johannine style, the author's style. Following the idea thus engendered, we notice that, whereas in the synoptics John the Baptist is never seen going beyond his Jewish standpoint as the forerunner, never found uttering a specific Christian truth, in the fourth gospel he gives us advanced teaching —about the Lamb of God and the sin of the world, &c. Further we observe that in *John* there is no progressive declaration of truth about Christ, at first hidden, then gradually revealed, which, we saw, was so striking a feature of *Mark*. The most open declarations of Messiahship are made at the very first. Again, while in the synoptics the dominant theme is the Kingdom of God, in *John* it is the person of Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says to His disciples, "Ye are the light of the world"; in *John* He says, "I am the light of the world." There is no contradiction here. Both sayings may be true. It may be said that Christians shine by containing and revealing Christ who is the essential light. Nevertheless, all this means quite a different attitude of mind and manner of procedure in public teaching.

The only possible conclusion to be derived from these considerations is that the author of the fourth gospel—the Apostle John, John the Elder, some unknown Ephesian Christian using materials supplied by the Apostle, whoever he was—worked up his materials in his own mind and reproduced them in his own way. If Jesus had been a lawgiver, the value of any report or whose utterances depended on verbal accuracy,

the fourth gospel would not be so valuable to us as the synoptics. But if He came as the founder of the Kingdom of God and the Saviour of the world—and so the New Testament generally represents the situation—this question is not of primary importance. We may state the case thus. While Mark endeavours to give us a photograph of Christ, John paints a portrait, in his own style, which we might compare to Whistler's remarkable portrait of his mother—impressionist, but all the more true for this reason, because what so rare a soul as the author of the fourth gospel saw in Jesus Christ and reproduced in his own way is much more important, and in the deepest sense more true as a revelation of Christ, than the most accurate reporter's notes without his insight would have been.

Like the fourth gospel, the first epistle of John is anonymous. But it was certainly ascribed to the Apostle as early as the second century by Papias and Irenæus, and it seems to have been known to Ignatius quite early in that century. It has generally been held that its author was the writer of the fourth gospel. Some leading scholars have denied this. But the resemblance in style—that unique Johannine style—are too close to allow the identification of authorship to be rejected on such grounds as have been relied on by its opponents, and we may fairly conclude that criticism leaves it as a sort of introductory letter going with the gospel.

There are scholars who assign the first epistle to the author of the gospel, but deny this of the second and third epistles. If John the Elder is to be considered the author of the gospel it will be more easy to assign these two epistles to him because the writer of them appears with that designation. Be that as it may, we have here also the remarkable "Johannine style." Quite evidently the gospel and the epistles belong to the same group of writings.

When we turn to the Book of the Revelation we find ourselves in a very different atmosphere. Here Dionysius's acute criticism, ancient as it is, still holds good. The spirit and tone, the literary style, even the very grammar are quite different from what we meet with in the other Johannine writings. It is true that there are also certain resemblances. We have a very exalted conception of Christ as the "Alpha

and Omega." He is even called "the Word," and "the Lamb" frequently (though not the same Greek term that is used in the gospel). There are indications of the same Ephesian atmosphere. But this does not outweigh the importance of the difference. If the *Apocalypse* were written early, before the destruction of Jerusalem, perhaps during the persecution instigated by Nero, and the gospel some twenty or thirty years later, it might be supposed that in the interval John had lived in Ephesus and imbibed something of the thought and culture of that literary and commercial centre. Accordingly for some time it was generally agreed among defenders of the apostolic authorship of the two books that this was the order of their production. But it has since been shown that the *Revelation* contains indications of the later date which was assigned to it by the most ancient tradition, according to which it was written during the reign of Domitian, when John was banished to Patmos.

More recently a new light has been thrown on the problem of the *Apocalypse* which has entirely altered its aspect. It has long been suspected that there were Jewish elements in it. The Old Testament at all events furnishes much of its material. In Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and various prophets we have pictures, images, predictions, and other elements, that have been taken over by the author of this book and worked into the gorgeous fabric of his great composition. But the question has been raised as to whether we may not have much more than this, as to whether there may not be a Jewish Apocalypse at the back of this Christian Apocalypse, absorbed by its author, utilised in his own way, and adapted to Christian ideas. More than that was brought forward by Gunkel in his original work, *Creation and Chaos*. Here we have some of the most mysterious imagery in the *Revelation* and also in various parts of the Old Testament traced back to ancient Babylonian mythology. In particular the extraordinary picture of the woman with her child in flight from the Dragon to the wilderness is attributed to that source. Bousset accepted this position in his commentary on our Apocalypse. It is not supposed that the author was consciously adopting anything out of the pagan myths of Babylon. The idea is that in the Babylonian mythology we have a primitive stratum which affected

first Jewish thought and fancy, and subsequently the ideas and language of the Christian writer through that medium. This is not to deny the essential Christianity of the book as it stands. But it goes far to account for its bewildering imagery, which in many cases we now see we cannot explain simply because the key is lost in a cloud of far off Babylonian myths.

From yet another quarter light has been thrown on the difficult literary problem of the *Revelation*. This book stands alone in the New Testament, in a class by itself, although we have apocalyptic passages of somewhat similar character in our Lord's discourse about the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming judgment, in *2 Thessalonians*, and in some other more or less fragmentary phrases treating of the same subject. But now we know that our Apocalypse is by no means the solitary specimen of its species. It still stands alone in its lofty inspiration and moral grandeur. But it was preceded and it has been followed by other Apocalypses, both Jewish and Christian. Thus it is seen to belong to a whole school of apocalyptic literature. The first volume of this class is the *Book of Daniel*. Then we have such works as the *Book of Enoch*, the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, the *Book of Jubilees*, the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* — all Jewish — and also the *Apocalypse of Peter* and other Christian Apocalypses, apocryphal in character, but of the first or second centuries. All of these books have much in common in their cryptic style and their wild, often grotesque, imagery. Most of them were written in times of trouble to encourage the faithful with the assurance of God's interference to judge, condemn, and overthrow the cruel oppressor and to bring in a new age of peace and happiness.

Lastly, it seems to be proved that the book has undergone revision, or perhaps we should regard it as a growth, not all of one date.

Chapter xi., referring to "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified," seems to indicate that Jerusalem was standing at the time, and on the verge of the horrors of the siege, perhaps actually undergoing them. Other parts describing the sufferings and martyrdom of Christians carry us on to Domitian's reign, the

period assigned to the book in the most ancient traditions. Then some passages of the book are intensely Jewish in spirit, *e.g.* the close of ii. 20 referring to "things offered to idols," the "hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (vii. 4). But other parts indicate the large gospel of a Christian missionary, as in the "great multitude . . . of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues" (vii. 9), and again "the nations of them which are saved" (xxi. 24).

Putting all this together, we come to the conclusion that the book in its present form dates from the latest decades of the first century, and is due in this form to the inspired revision and completion of a Christian of the more liberal school, working over an earlier edition by a more Jewish Christian, who in turn had used materials of still more ancient apocalyptic literature. There is no clear agreement among scholars as to whether the John who appears here was the Apostle or some other Christian, bearing the same name, probably in that case John the Elder. He calls himself a "prophet," and he refers to the Apostles in a way that does not include himself among them. If we may conclude that the Apostle John did at least furnish the traditions for the gospel that now bears his name, it is easier to think that such a very different composition as the *Apocalypse* came from John the Elder than to assign both works to one and the same author.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

THE foregoing brief survey of the origin and characteristics of the several books of the New Testament requires to be supplemented with a statement of the collection of them in one volume and the treatment of this as a second portion of Scripture, not merely as an addendum to the ancient Jewish Scriptures, but as held by Christians to be the highest and best part of the one Bible that for them now contains the two Testaments—the Old Testament and the New Testament.

There is no reason to believe that any of the writers of these

books ever dreamed that they were contributing to this process. The reference in *2 Peter* to Paul's epistles as "Scripture" is one of the reasons for concluding that this book could not have been written till far down in the second century. Nowhere else in the New Testament is the term applied to any but Old Testament writing. The first use of it for any Christian writing occurs in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, which we must date in the second century, and there it is used for some sayings of Christ, not apparently for a New Testament book. With Irenæus, about A.D. 185, we first find New Testament passages cited as of Scriptural authority.

This does not mean that great weight was not given to the New Testament books much earlier. But they were not put on a level with the Old at first, nor for some time. The process was largely determined by use in public worship. In the middle of the second century Justin Martyr tells us of two lessons, as in the synagogue, not law and prophets, but gospels and prophets. The three synoptic gospels were the earliest books to be promoted to this place of honour. But before this Marcion was using one gospel—a mutilated *Luke*—and ten epistles of Paul. Unless this heretic actually began the larger New Testament Canon, epistles as well as gospel—and that is not probable—the epistles must have been collected earlier in the Church. But we have no account of the process. Professor Harnack thinks that the bishops of Asia Minor met and drew up a list of Christian authoritative books as a defence against heretics. There is no direct evidence for this conclusion; but it would account for the great step implied in Irenæus's use of the New Testament books. We have an anonymous list called "the Canon of Muratori" dating from the latter part of the second century. The third century shows the New Testament books severally in use in the Church. But there is no authoritative settlement of the Canon. Two local councils—at Carthage (A.D. 393) and at Laodicea (*c.* A.D. 363) settle the Canon for their own churches. The great authority of Athanasius and Augustine follow later to confirm it.

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