

BOOKS · OF · THE  
NEW · TESTAMENT ·

BY

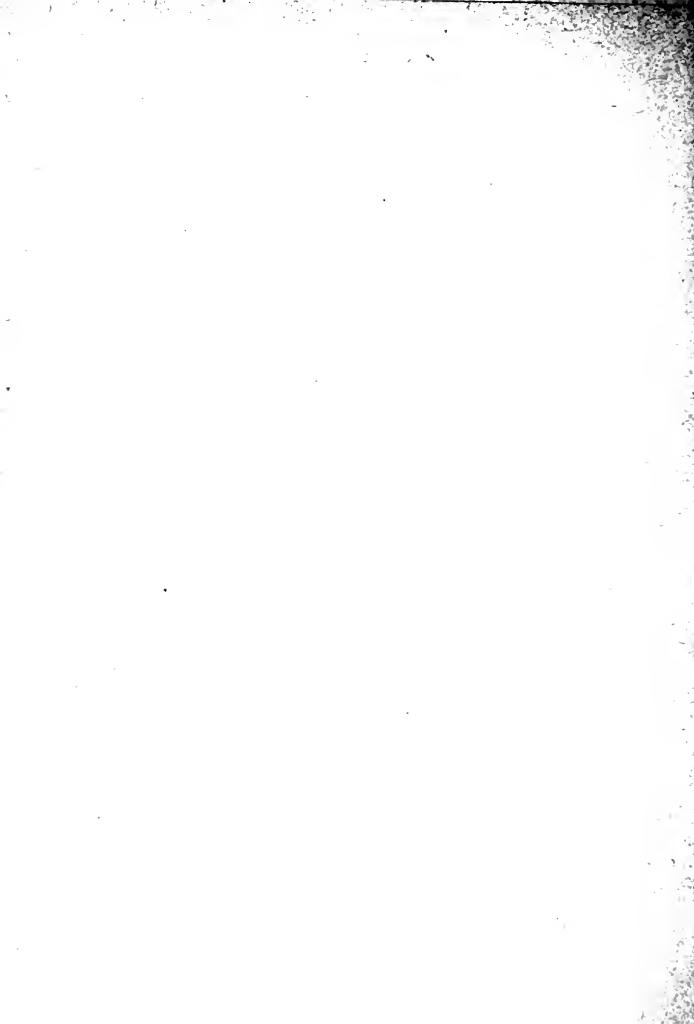
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THE BOOKS OF  
THE NEW TESTAMENT



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THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

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"THE CENTURY BIBLE"



HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
NEW YORK

1909





TO  
*MY COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS*  
*AT BRADFORD AND MANCHESTER*  
AS  
A SLIGHT TOKEN  
OF  
AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE



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# THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE LITERATURE AS A WHOLE

THE perfection of modern printing and the beauty and compactness of our present-day books undoubtedly cause certain loss to the reader of the New Testament. It is charming and convenient to have that greatest of all literature in such compass that one can carry it in a tiny little book. But its very form prevents the reader from realising that he has a library rather than a single work, **a literature rather than a volume**. The twenty-seven separate books which constitute our New Testament cover the period of at least half a century, and probably more nearly a whole century, and are the work of many diverse minds, while they represent many forms of

literary production. Some are personal letters to private friends, *e.g.* Philemon, which can be paralleled by hundreds from the papyri recently discovered in Egypt. Some are letters of a more elaborate character, written to communities, as *e.g.* Philippians. Others, though written in the letter form, partake more of the nature of treatises, as *e.g.* Romans. There are books which seem to be homilies, or early doctrinal tracts, like Hebrews and James. There is the poetical vision of the seer, embracing in itself much that is found in the older Hebrew literature, but inspired with the new spirit of the Christian faith, in the Book of Revelation. There are books which are not mere histories, though they have a distinctly historical character, but present historical events in the light of the special purpose they wish to serve, and in order to make clear the truth they desire to enforce, *e.g.* Matthew and Acts. One book may be said to stand in a class almost by itself, *i.e.* the Gospel of John, as even more clearly than those just named does it use the basis of history for the purpose of teaching spiritual truth. It was early termed the spiritual gospel, and Christians of every generation have felt this to be its peculiar and special quality.

It is not always easy to discover the **particular origin**

of every book, but we are not without pretty clear guidance in the majority of cases. Paul's letters, for instance, are obviously occasional writings, *i.e.* they spring out of some particular circumstance which calls them into being. They are not in the majority of instances premeditated treatises like a modern book of theology, nor are they thrown into the letter form as a mere literary device ; but are actual answers to definite questions, or constitute directions in special difficulties. The Gospels were no doubt originally derived from addresses given to Jewish or Gentile communities in order to instruct them in the life and teaching of Jesus—addresses such as we find recorded in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles. It seems that at first there were many such presentations of our Lord's life and teaching, only a few of which have come down to us embodied in the present Gospels, and in some other writings, of which more will be said later. The beginning of Luke's Gospel tells us of at least one attempt to unite these scattered and probably slighter efforts into one more careful, consistent, and complete record. The Book of Revelation is a combination of letters and a long prophetic message. The latter was probably sent to each church to which a letter is addressed, so that each of

these may be considered as a separate preface to the main part of the book. In Hebrews and James we may possibly have specimens of the early preaching, or of the more formal teaching which was given to the Christian community. Just why these have been preserved to us, and others lost, it is impossible to say, but we should be thankful to have so many varieties of the literary forms into which the Christian teaching of the first century naturally fell.

It is thus clear that the various authors of the New Testament books did not invent **literary methods**, but employed those that were customary in their own day. Letter-writing then, as now, was a common practice. Biography written with a definite purpose is found in the scriptures of the Old Testament, *e.g.* in the stories of Elisha and Elijah, and also in books like Nehemiah and Daniel. The Book of Revelation belongs to the great class of apocalyptic literature, of which the Jews had very many examples. The author of the Epistle of James was obviously a keen student of the Wisdom Literature, represented in the Old Testament by Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and in the Apocrypha by the Book of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. Possibly such Greek writings as the Memoirs of Socrates, by Xenophon, and the



Dialogues of Plato, had some influence on the writers of the Gospels—at any rate, on the author of John's Gospel. It was the freshness of the material rather than the newness of the form that made the literature a new thing in the world, and its originality is to be sought rather in what it declares than in the method of the declaration. The writers were all intimately acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, and had been brought up under its influence. And even the great Personality who is for every one of them the centre of their thought and teaching, had Himself been nurtured on the literature, and found His most natural expression in terms of its language. It is absolutely essential for every New Testament student to keep this in mind, and it is of the greatest value and instruction to have it before the reader in visible form. This is secured for readers of Greek by employing Westcott and Hort or Nestlé's text, and for English readers by the use of the "Twentieth Century New Testament," in all of which quotations from, and reminiscences of, the Old Testament are indicated in special type.

We now pass on to the detailed consideration of the various groups of New Testament literature.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOURCES OF THE LIFE OF JESUS

#### THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

THE word synoptic is now generally applied to the record of the life of Christ contained in the **first three gospels**. It is derived from two Greek words which signify a combined view of any event, and is appropriate, since the account given of the life of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, has much more in common than these three Gospels have with the Gospel of John.

Before beginning the investigation of the problems presented by the fact just stated, it may be well to see what other sources we have for the life of Jesus. These are found in the following forms :—

1. References in books of the New Testament other than the Gospels.
2. References in Latin and Greek historians.
3. References in Rabbinical writings.
4. The Apocryphal Gospels.
5. Traditional Sayings of Jesus preserved in various sources.

1. The Epistles of Paul, some of which are the earliest of the existing writings of the New Testament, do not as a whole give us any additional facts to those recorded in the Gospels, though they confirm the main outline of that record. They concern themselves chiefly with references to the death and resurrection of Jesus, but in I. Cor. xv. we have a reference to an appearance of the risen Lord to James, which is not contained at all in our Gospels, and also one or two other references which are not easily identified with any of the existing records. In the early chapters of Acts we have specimens of the preaching of the Apostles, which contain short *résumés* of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, as *e.g.* in Acts ii. 22-24 and Acts x. 36-43. A very clear reference to the preaching of John the Baptist is contained in one of Paul's speeches recorded in Acts xiii. 23-25, and in Acts xx. 35 there is given a saying of Jesus not recorded in our Gospels. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have many references to the earthly life of Christ, which shows the familiarity on the part of the writer, not only with its general outline, but with its detail, there being hints of His temptation, of His agony in Gethsemane, of the place of His crucifixion, and other matters contained in the epistle. In the First Epistle

of Peter there is the earliest reference to what became a common belief in the Christian Church, namely, to the descent of Christ into the world of the dead, and to His preaching the Gospel there (see I. Peter iii. 18-22, and iv. 6). In II. Peter i. 17, 18, there is a reference to the transfiguration. These constitute the main passages in which, outside the Gospels, the earthly life of Jesus is referred to in the New Testament.

2. Toward the end of the first century of our era the Roman historian Tacitus produced his great work, entitled "The Annals," and in the fifteenth book of the history he has a reference to Christus, who, he says, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and gave the name to the sect of Christians, which in the opinion of the Roman historian is a "most mischievous superstition." Practically contemporaneous with the work of Tacitus is that of Josephus, and there are two passages in his "Antiquities" in which Jesus is mentioned. In book xviii. chap. iii. sect. 3, we find the most famous reference, where Jesus is not only spoken of as a worker of miracles, and a great teacher, but is called the Christ, and mention is made of His death and resurrection. The passage is much disputed, and probably is not authentic in its present form. But the other passage in book xx. chap. ix. sect. 1, shows that Josephus knew about Jesus, for

he there mentions Him, and says that He was called Christ.

3. In the works of the Jewish Rabbinical authors there are frequent references to Jesus, but none of them add anything of historical value to what is contained in the Gospels. Some of the details are similar to those found in the non-canonical Gospels, and others are obviously scurrilous statements of prejudiced enemies of the Christian faith. (See article in Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels (T. & T. Clark), vol. ii., "Christ in Jewish Literature.")

4. Of the large number of the apocryphal Gospels that exist, two at least belong to the first century, the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Peter. The former is only known to us in fragments preserved by various writers, and these fragments contain some of the stories known to us in the canonical Gospels in slightly different form, *e.g.* a very curious account of the temptation, and a detailed story of the appearance of our Lord to his brother James after the resurrection. The origin of the book is at present obscure, but there is no good reason for entirely setting aside its testimony, and one of the most interesting discoveries that could be made would be to find it in its completeness. Of the Gospel of Peter we have a

long section, dealing with the death and resurrection. It is obviously written with a strong prejudice against the Jews, and also emanates from a section of the Christians who denied the real humanity of Christ. It is apparently mainly based upon our Gospel of Matthew, and such details as are contained in it that are at variance with the New Testament story are either unimportant or probably erroneous, as for example, when the order for the crucifixion is assigned to Herod rather than to Pilate. In the resurrection narrative quite new elements are introduced, and some of them of the obviously exaggerated character that belongs to legend. Of the other apocryphal Gospels the most important are those which deal with the infancy and childhood of Jesus, the most famous being the Protevangelium of James, the childhood gospel of Thomas, and the Arabic gospel of the childhood. Many incidents not found in our Gospels, but familiar in Christian legend and poetry, as, *e.g.*, the sudden arrest of movement that took place throughout the whole world of nature at the moment of the birth of Christ, are contained in these books, but they are almost certainly imaginary romances, and more than one of them not earlier than the third century. Into the further question of the apocryphal Gospels it is not

possible to go here, but reference may be made to Professor Andrews' volume in this series, and to Professor Findlay's article in vol. i. of Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels (T. & T. Clark).

5. The early Christian writers are accustomed to quote numerous sayings of Jesus, of which we have no record in our canonical Gospels. For instance, several of them contain the words as a command of Jesus, "Become ye approved bankers;" and amongst the better known and better authenticated sayings are the following: "Ask great things, and the small shall be added to you;" "Ask heavenly things, and the earthly shall be added to you;" "Thou hast seen thy brother, thou hast seen thy God;" "In whatsoever I may find you, in this also will I judge you." Several sayings are contained in certain manuscripts, one in the famous manuscript now found in the University Library at Cambridge, and others in the leaves of papyrus recently discovered at Oxyrhynchus. The most accessible account of all these for the English reader is in Griffinhoofe's "The Unwritten Sayings of Christ," published by Edward Arnold, 1903, or Pick's "Paralipomena," published by Kegan Paul, 1908.

To return now to the question of our Synoptic Gospels. The first point that is noteworthy to any reader of these

three books is the large amount of **common material** that is contained in them. Briefly, that common material covers the period from the mission of John the Baptist to the mention of the fact of our Lord's resurrection. It is found in its simplest form in Mark, though narratives which are common to the three frequently appear with more elaborate detail in his Gospel than in the others. The order in which Mark recounts the incidents is followed more closely by Luke than by Matthew, but both of these writers make considerable and frequent alteration in Mark's language. These obvious facts demand from the student some theory to account for them, and the main theories may be classified as follows:—

(1) **Absolute independence.** Those who take up this position consider that the theory of the direct inspiration of the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit is sufficient to account for all the problems offered by them in their existing form. It is supposed that the Spirit guided each writer to tell his story in his own way, and that all resemblances and differences are to be attributed to the purpose of the Divine Author. Without denying for a moment that this is possible, it is certainly neither probable, nor in accordance with what we know otherwise of the Divine method. The slight variations in passages otherwise



identical are on such a theory extremely difficult to account for, and it is a quite needless strain to put upon our belief in Divine superintendence to insist that these minor alterations are due to the mind of the Divine Spirit.

(2) The theory of a **threefold tradition**. This theory may be held either as an oral or as a written source. It starts from the assumption that the early teachers had agreed upon a form of presentation for the essential facts of the Gospel, either as a definite arrangement made at the outset of their work, or as the result of experience. This material is found in what is common to the first three Gospels, and lies at the basis of each of them. The document, if document it was, is not any longer in existence in a separate form, but can be discovered from a careful comparison of the three separate narratives. This material will be found in a convenient form by English readers as the *Prologue* to the New Testament volume in Dent's "Everyman's Library," and should be carefully read through as an instructive object lesson in what is really common material of the synoptic tradition. The difficulty of accepting this theory as a satisfactory explanation is twofold—(1) That there is no proof of its independent existence; and (2) that if it had so existed,

it is almost impossible to understand how the minor modifications that have been introduced into it by each one of the writers could have arisen.

(3) **Oral tradition.** It is quite obvious to every one that the Gospel must first of all have taken shape in preaching and teaching, and that the early type of such addresses is to be found in the speeches recorded in Acts, so that some kind of oral tradition must lie at the back of all the written forms that exist, or ever existed. But it is a further question whether oral tradition alone will suffice to account for the problems afforded by the existing conditions of the synoptics. It used to be supposed that this would suffice, and in proof of the possibility of a definite form of narrative being thus preserved, we were bidden remember the extraordinary accuracy of the Oriental memory, and the way in which, for example, religious teachers among the Arabs are able to recite the sections of the Koran. But those who thus argued forgot that in such cases there already existed a definite body of teaching in a final form, which had only to be learned and repeated, whereas we have to account for the growth and presentation of something which had not yet acquired a definite form, as is proved by the very

varieties of the narratives themselves. Again, the New Testament is witness that other narratives already existed, for the beginning of Luke's Gospel tells us that "many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters," which surely implies written narratives, since this is what the writer himself proposes to execute.

(4) **Dependence of the Gospels upon one another.**

It is a very old theory which suggests that these three writers may have copied from one another. Thus Mark was called by Augustine the follower and abbreviator of Matthew, and others have supposed either that Luke was acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, or *vice versa*. It is extremely difficult, however, to understand how any one who had Matthew's Gospel before him would produce such a narrative as that contained in Mark. What reason could we suppose for the enormous amount of omission that in such a case must have taken place? The same thing is true if we suppose the relation of copyist to have existed between Matthew and Luke, and in addition, we should have to account for the way in which so many sayings are found in altered forms in these two Gospels. Further, if we suppose Mark to have been the sole

source of either of the other two, it does not suffice, seeing that there remains a large amount of material common to the two which is not found in that Gospel. We are therefore driven to another explanation, which to-day in one or other of its forms holds the field among New Testament students, namely—

(5) **The two-document hypothesis.** This supposes that at the basis of Matthew and Luke there lie at least two documents, the one of which is substantially, if not actually, represented by our Mark, and the other by what is known as the Logia, which is supposed to have contained a large amount of our Lord's teaching, now found in the records common to Matthew and Luke. The existence of the Logia is not a pure assumption, for we shall find when we come to the consideration of Matthew's Gospel that early tradition tells us about such a document. But its exact reconstruction is a matter of enormous difficulty, and one about which New Testament scholars are very divided in their opinions. Some think it consisted of records of teaching, and nothing else; while others, with greater probability, describe it as containing brief introductory and explanatory narratives. There is a further question as to whether Mark himself knew

this Logia document, and, if he did, whether he used it, or, presupposing its existence, made his own document merely supplementary to it. The latter theory seems on the whole more probable. Further, we have to ask whether the Logia are found in their more primitive form in Matthew or Luke. When we regard the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer, to take two simple instances, it certainly seems that Luke preserves the more primitive form. There arise, however, numerous further questions about written sources of the Gospels. Every reader knows that there are parables in Matthew not found in Luke, and many in Luke not found in Matthew. Besides, there is a whole section of narrative in Luke's Gospel which has practically no parallel in either of the others, and this is found mainly in chapters ix. to xix. Here and there Luke is found in agreement with Mark, where Matthew has no parallel, which is only an additional proof of what was said above, that Luke follows Mark's order with greater closeness than does Matthew. In both Matthew and Luke we find much independence of any source known to us when we come to the narratives of the infancy and of the resurrection. In such cases we are probably dealing with quite

independent sources, and it appears that each evangelist must have had access to sources of narrative of which we have now no trace. A very interesting example is to be found in Mark xiii., which is the longest single section of teaching found in the Gospel. It was probably issued as an independent document, and may be the earliest of all the written sections of the New Testament, seeing that Apocalypse was so popular a form of literature, and also that in I. Thessalonians Paul seems to be familiar with the contents of the passage, and also to assume that the Thessalonians knew it. The way in which this document was used by Matthew and Luke forms an easy and instructive study in the methods these writers pursued.

There is no direct independent evidence of the separate existence of any or all of these documents, save the one reference to the Logia by Papias, which will be found quoted under the account of Matthew's Gospel. The form, however, in which quotations from the Gospels are found in the earliest Christian writings frequently suggests rather a general knowledge of the synoptic tradition than an exact acquaintance with the Gospels as we know them. This, of course, may be accounted for in two ways, namely, that the writers knew the Logia, and did not know our present Gospels,

or that they quoted inexactly from memory. What is very certain is that the general substance of our synoptics was quite familiar to the earliest writers, and that the material contained in them was assumed as a matter of common knowledge among the Christian communities to whom they wrote.

### NOTE

In the following pages there will be frequent references to certain writers who constitute the earliest witnesses to the use of the books of the New Testament in the Christian Church. It may be convenient here to set forth a list of the main writers, with their dates, and the contracted forms by which their writings are generally quoted, so that the date of their testimony may be at once clear.

Clement of Rome (Clem.), whose letter to the Church at Corinth dates from about the year 95.

Ignatius (Ign.), who wrote letters to several churches from Asia Minor in and about the year 110.

Polycarp (Pol.), who was Bishop of Smyrna, and a contemporary of Ignatius. His letter is, therefore, of the same date.

The Epistle of Barnabas (Bar.) is a work more difficult to date, but may roughly be dated at about 100.

The Teaching of the Apostles (Did., which is a contraction of the Greek word *didache*, i.e. teaching), a

work of Christian instruction, the date of which it is difficult to fix, but may probably be given as about 130.

The Shepherd of Hermas (Herm.) is an apocalypse, dating from about the year 150.

The Second Epistle of Clement (II. Clem.), which is really not an epistle at all, but a homily, dates from about 170, and the Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons—an important document of about 180 A.D.

The following Christian writers all date from the second half of the second century : Justin Martyr (Just.) ; Tatian (Tat.) ; the letter to Diognetus (Diog.) ; Irenæus (Iren.). To the first half of the third century belong the writings of Clement of Alexandria (Clem. Alex.) ; Tertullian (Tert.) ; and Origen (Orig.), while the works of Cyprian (Cyp.) centre round the date 250. Of later writers, the only one that needs to be here named is Eusebius of Cæsarea, whose main work was published about 330. The oldest extant list of books of the New Testament is that known as the Muratorian Fragment, which dates from the end of the second century. It contains most of the books to be found in our New Testament, and one or two others not now recognised as canonical. It will be referred to as Mur. Other witnesses are the ancient versions, mainly the old Latin and the old Syriac, which were probably made about the middle of the second century, though, of course, none of our present MSS. date from that time.



## CHAPTER III

### THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

**External Evidence.**—Of this Gospel and its author the earliest mention known to us is in a sentence of Papias preserved in Eusebius, where he tells us “Matthew composed the Logia in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted these as he was able.” This sentence causes more difficulty than it clears up, because it seems impossible to identify the Logia here spoken of with the Gospel as we know it, and if it does not mean our Gospel, the question is, what does it mean. Can we reproduce the Logia from the existing Gospel or not? When we come to the witness of Irenæus, he tells us that “Matthew produced a writing of the Gospel, written among the Hebrews in their own dialect.” In the writings of Ignatius there are many quotations which, though not in verbally accurate form taken from our Greek Matthew, are so closely allied with it as to create

a strong probability that they come from that work ; but as many of them are references to the sayings of Jesus, there is no direct proof that they may not be derived from a collection of these sayings now embodied in Matthew's Gospel. The same thing is true of the quotations that occur in the first apology of Justin Martyr. Further confusion appears to have been introduced into some of the testimony to this Gospel by the existence of a Gospel according to the Hebrews, which Jerome tells us existed in Hebrew, and was largely used in certain sections of the Church. It may be that this other document was sometimes meant when the Hebrew Matthew was spoken of, and *vice versa*. Before the end of the second century it is quite clear that our Matthew was the book generally referred to when any reference is made to a Gospel under that name.

**Material of Book.**—When we examine the book itself, we find that if we neglect for the moment chaps. i. and ii., it follows the general line of Mark, but we are very soon aware that there is a great deal more material in it than is contained in that Gospel. To begin with, we have some account of the content of John's preaching, then a long narrative of the Temptation, and when we come to the fifth chapter, we find what is most char-

acteristic of the Gospel, a long address of Jesus, which lasts on to the end of chap. vii. This address concludes with a phrase which recurs in slightly varying form in four other passages, namely, "when Jesus ended these words" (*cf.* xi. 1; xiii. 53; xix. 1; xxvi. 1). It has been suggested that these may mark the original endings of the Logia, since we know that Papias's book on the Logia was divided into five parts. In chaps. xiii., xviii., xxiii., xxiv., and xxv. we have also long series of teachings, and it seems to be the method of this evangelist to mass sayings of our Lord together in such groups. It is for this reason that it seems the most probable theory of the composition of the Gospel, that in addition to Mark, we should suppose him to have also had a document which consisted mainly of such teaching. This is now generally designated by the symbol Q (from the German *Quelle*, *i.e.* source). Opinions differ as to how much of the Gospel is covered by Q; Harnack, for instance, being of opinion that it never contained any story of the Passion. This only accounts for that amount of the teaching that is common to Matthew and Luke, and for the material peculiar to Matthew we must suppose that other sources were in existence from which he drew. There is no real difficulty about this, however, since oral

tradition would account for a certain amount, and scattered written material for the rest. To the latter must be assigned the genealogy, the narratives of the infancy, and probably other sections. It is sometimes quite easy to see how Matthew introduces his new material into the narrative from which he is quoting. A good example is to be found in chap. xiv. 22-23. When this is compared with Mark vi. 45-51, it will be seen that the narrative about Peter's walking on the water is clearly inserted; and when he resumes the Marcan narrative in ver. 32, he alters the verbs to the plural, in order to suit the additional incident he has introduced. Greater difficulty attaches to slight alterations that Matthew sometimes makes; e.g. in chap. viii. 28 he speaks of two demoniacs, where Mark and Luke only name one, and a similar alteration is found in chap. xx. 30. These are not isolated cases, and it appears to have been his manner to heighten the wonder of such narratives in this way. In one instance the doubling seems to have come from a misreading of prophecy; see xxi. 5. He often appears to use great freedom in his editing of sayings, for the hypothesis that he drew them from a source different from that used by Luke would increase rather than lessen the difficulty. Well-known examples

are found in the Beatitudes (*cf.* Matt. v. 3-12 with Luke vi. 20-23) and the Lord's Prayer (*cf.* Matt. vi. 9-15 with Luke xi. 2-4). In addition, the following passages may be compared: Matt. vii. 11 with Luke xi. 13; Matt. xii. 39-41 with Luke xi. 29-30; Matt. xix. 16, 17, with Luke xviii. 18, 19.

The attribution of this Gospel to the Apostle Matthew, it will be seen, is purely traditional, and the most probable explanation is that Matthew himself, as Papias says, produced a work in Aramaic which was the colloquial language of Palestine, and that this lies at the back of our existing Gospel. It is not at all likely that in its present form the book is the work of one of the Apostles.

We have thus a greater freedom in approaching the **question of date**, and have to decide that mainly from internal evidence. The indications that guide us are in the main three. (1) The use of Mark's Gospel shows that this book must have been written later than it, though not from that fact alone much later. (2) The references in chap. xxiv. to the tribulations of the latter days, particularly ver. 15, where he has altered the words "where he ought not" of Mark to "in the holy place," though he has preserved the explanatory parenthesis, "let him that readeth understand." Here we find Jeru-

salem definitely indicated. Some consider that this points to the present form of that chapter being written either before or immediately after the siege of Jerusalem. This is not, however, at all necessary, since the circumstance may be explained either by the evangelist's having embodied an older document without alteration, or by putting himself in imagination into the position of the speaker. It is true that the whole tone of the chapter (see especially vers. 14, 30, and 34) points to an immediacy of the Lord's return, but that was a faith long prevalent in the early Church, and cannot in itself be used as a proof of early date. (3) As a consideration on the other hand, we have many passages in the Gospel which appear to point to a more ecclesiastical position than is found in any of the other Gospels. This is not only the case with the occurrence of the word *Church* (see xvi. 19; xviii. 17), which only occurs in this Gospel, but much more with the conception of the Church, which these and other passages reveal. Further, we find this Gospel has a greater regard for Peter than any of the others, and tells incidents about him not contained elsewhere (see xiv. 28-30; xvi. 17-20; xvii. 24-27). The commission to the Twelve reported in chap. x. (see especially vers. 16-23 and 40-42) reveals a lateness of tone,

and the latter passage probably uses the word "prophet" in the technical sense it assumed in the early Church. These indications suggest Rome as the place from which the Gospel in its present form emanated. The words of Von Soden probably express the truth: "In this Gospel the Roman spirit triumphs over the Pauline, the legal over the religious, the tendency to look backward over that to look forward." If this view be correct, the Gospel may probably be dated in and about the year 90, though it is impossible to dogmatise about such matters.

The **point of view** of the writer is obviously that of a Jewish Christian, and one great object he had in view was to make quite clear that Jesus was the Messiah. The whole trend of the Gospel is designed to prove this fact, and the very form of the genealogy with which it opens is adopted for that reason. The writer is well acquainted with the prophetic literature, though probably his numerous quotations are drawn from some list of Messianic prophecies already in existence, as these appear to have been common among the early Christians. This dominant idea controls his whole work, and there are many passages in which he shows his sympathy with the specially Jewish point of view—*e.g.* when Christ says, "I was not sent save

to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (xv. 24), and when He limits His disciples' work to the same confines (*cf.* x. 6, 23). Much stress is also laid upon the importance and value of the Mosaic Law (see v. 18; xix. 3; xxiv. 20), and the rewards of the kingdom are spoken of frequently in terms suggestive of a Jewish colouring (see xix. 28; xxi. 43). It is not impossible to connect this point of view with the suggestion above made that the Gospel was written in Rome, and has the mark of the early Catholic Church upon it, because we know that part at least of the Church in Rome was strongly Jewish in character, and the Palestinean colouring that is certainly present in the Gospel may be owing to those original documents which lie behind it, and to the strong sympathy of its author with the Church in Jerusalem, from which, indeed, he may himself have come.

### THE GOSPEL OF MARK

**External Evidence.**—It is from Papias that we learn that "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the



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Lord, nor did he follow Him ; but afterwards attended Peter, who adapted His instructions to the needs of his hearers, but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles (or words). So then, Mark made no mistake while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them, for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein." This is the fullest account we have from any early writer of the origin of any Gospel. The earliest writers, as in the case of Matthew, do not afford proof of a knowledge of Mark, and inasmuch as he has less teaching, and the early writers generally quote actual sayings of Jesus, their evidence is less convincing than in the case of Matthew. In Justin Martyr there is a reference to the sons of Zebedee being called Boanerges, which is "sons of thunder," which statement is only now found in Mark's Gospel ; and Tatian, from the fact that he compiled a harmony of the four Gospels, is sufficient evidence that Mark was well known before his day. There is thus evidence from Christian tradition that Mark was current in the early part of the second century, and was definitely associated with the name of Peter as its chief authority.

We have also seen that **internal evidence** proves that Mark is the most probable source of the historical framework of Matthew and Luke, since the great mass of it is taken up into one or other of these Gospels. Indeed, almost all the material peculiar to Mark is (1) the parable contained in iv. 26-29; (2) the miracles of the healing of the deaf and dumb man (vii. 31-37), and of the blind man (viii. 22-26); (3) the questions addressed to the disciples (viii. 17, and ix. 33); (4) the young man described in xiv. 51, 52; (5) Jesus in the hands of the servants of the High Priest (xiv. 65); (6) and Pilate's question to the centurion (xv. 44). But in addition to the actual incidents that are peculiar to Mark, there are certain points of language and style that are very characteristic. His retention of the original Aramaic forms of words and phrases (*cf.* iii. 17; vii. 11; xv. 34, &c.). Greek scholars also find many traces of Aramaic constructions in his Greek. Some have, indeed, gone so far as to suggest that our Gospel is a translation of an Aramaic original, but the indications that have led to this conclusion may quite as easily, and more probably, be due to the state of affairs mentioned by Papias, namely, that Mark was doing his best to re-

present as closely as possible in another tongue the form of teaching due to Peter. He is an extremely vivid writer, and almost always describes his scenes not only with the style, but in the actual tenses of an eye-witness. His narratives are very full of such little points as only an eye-witness would notice—*e.g.* the comparison of the people gathered on the green grass when they were fed by the Lord to beds of garden flowers with their many colours; the fact that Christ took the little children into His arms; the statement that the colt for which the disciples were sent was tied up in the open street. He has also many words that point to a knowledge of the inner thought and mood of our Lord and His disciples (see vi. 6; xiv. 33; x. 32; xiv. 5).

There is one very interesting **point of textual criticism** with reference to this Gospel. A glance at the R.V. in chap. xvi. will show a considerable space between the eighth and ninth verses, and a footnote tells us that some authorities omit the last twelve verses, while others have a different ending to the Gospel. The fact is that there exist in all four different conclusions to Mark's Gospel. (1) There are those MSS., namely the Sinaitic and Vatican, which are the best

of all, and the recently discovered Sinaitic Syrian version, one of the oldest, and two other old versions, which close the Gospel with the eighth verse, though the Vatican leaves a blank space, as if the scribe had known of the ending he eventually meant to insert. It is scarcely conceivable that the Gospel could originally have finished in this form, for the last Greek word is a particle, which could not have concluded a sentence. We must suppose, therefore, either that the author had been abruptly interrupted in the middle of his task, or that the last page or pages of his manuscript must have disappeared. It is hardly possible that this could have happened during his lifetime without the lack being supplied, and so some think that in the second century all MSS. of Mark disappeared save one, and that from this one the final leaf had been lost. (2) The large majority of MSS. have the ending contained in our New Testament, and it is quoted as part of Mark by Irenæus. The first writer who definitely rejected the verses, so far as we know, is Eusebius. In a tenth-century Armenian MS. they are attributed to the Presbyter Ariston, which probably stands for Aristion, who is known as one of our Lord's disciples. The great difficulty about the passage is that its language

is very different from that of the rest of the Gospel, and also that the ninth verse does not run on connectedly with the eighth. For one thing, it speaks of Mary Magdalen as a new person, though she has already been introduced in the first verse of the chapter. This short summary of post-resurrection events was probably added early to give a conclusion to the Gospel. Some writers think that we have a version of the original conclusion of Mark in the last chapter of John, for it is clear from the seventh verse, as well as from xiv. 28, that the original conclusion of Mark would have dealt with appearances in Galilee, and not in Jerusalem. (3) In four MSS. and in certain versions there is another ending still further removed in style from the rest of the Gospel, and it was most probably the work of a scribe, either Latin or Egyptian. It runs as follows: "And they immediately made known all things that had been commanded them to those about Peter. And after this Jesus Himself appeared, and sent out by means of them from the East even to the West the holy and incorruptible preaching of the eternal Gospel." (4) The most recently discovered MS. of the Gospels is that known as the Detroit or Freer MS. found in Egypt in 1907,

and dating either from the fourth or fifth centuries. It contains the ending of Mark that is found in our version, but has in addition three verses between our 14th and 15th, which read as follows, according to the translation of Professor Swete: "And they excused themselves, saying, This world of iniquity and of unbelief is under Satan, who by reason of unclean spirits suffereth not men to comprehend the true power of God. Therefore, reveal Thy righteousness now. And Christ answered them, The term of years of the power of Satan is fulfilled, but other dangers are nigh at hand. And for them that sin I was delivered unto death, that they might return to the truth, and sin no more; that they might inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness which is in heaven." This was only known elsewhere in a Latin quotation of part of the passage in a work of Jerome. What its origin may be is not clear, but its great interest is that it gives us a saying of Jesus not otherwise known. The result of these investigations is to show that at present we have no real conclusion to Mark's Gospel, and must wait in hope that some day a MS. may be discovered that contains the original ending, if it was not lost irreparably in the early days of the second century.

The important question of the exact **relation of Mark to the two other synoptics** must now be considered, and it is one of great difficulty. The proof of the employment of Mark by Matthew and Luke depends very largely for its validity upon points of minute detail that are not easily set forth in the short space here available, and many of them are only clear to readers of the original, because they consist largely of alterations of Greek expressions from the more colloquial form of Mark to the more polished Greek of the other writers. Two classes of alteration may be given as examples: (1) Where Mark uses Latin words or titles, the other evangelists either omit them or put Greek ones in their place; and (2) where Mark uses popular language in the description of diseases, Luke alters to technically accurate medical language. In many cases it has been noted that where Mark uses language that might be supposed to be derogatory to Jesus, or the cause of offence or difficulty to the reader, the other evangelists have softened it down—*e.g.* in Mark vi. 5 we read, “He *could* there do no mighty work;” but in Matt. xiii. 58 it reads, “He did not many mighty works there.” In Mark iii. 5, “with anger” is omitted by the others, so also in ver. 21 of the same chapter the statement, “He is beside

himself," is omitted. Only in Mark vi. 3 is Jesus called "the Carpenter." In Mark ii. 26 the historical inaccuracy contained in the words, "when Abiathar was high priest," is not found in the other evangelists. For further details reference must be made to the larger commentaries and dictionary articles. Many have argued that some of the differences are to be accounted for by the fact that two or even three editions of Mark's Gospel were in existence. Some think that one edition was used by Matthew and another by Luke. Some hold that our present Mark is one of these revised editions, while others consider it, with more probability, to be the original form. These theories are rather too complicated to be probable, and we may take it that the Mark that we possess is to all intents and purposes the same document that was employed by Matthew and Luke.

A further question arises as to whether Mark himself employed **other written documents**. The present writer is inclined to think that he did, though not perhaps the same Logia that were used by Matthew and Luke. The thirteenth chapter was most likely a separate document, and the same may be true of the various parables recorded in the Gospel. It is further a reasonable



assumption that chap. viii. 1-26 is an earlier account of the events recorded in another and more extended form in chaps. vi. 30 to vii. 37. If this latter supposition is correct, the passage in the eighth chapter would then be one of the original sources which lay behind the complete Mark, and which by good fortune has been embedded in it, telling its tale as clearly as does an erratic boulder in the midst of an entirely different geological formation.

The **point of view** of the Gospel may be given in the words of Paul. It is the Gospel of "the Son of God with power." Jesus is represented throughout as the worker of miracles, the healer and the Saviour of men; but while this is true, there is no Gospel that more clearly describes Him in His most truly human nature, and, indeed, lays such stress upon His human characteristics that, as we have found, the other evangelists soften many of them down. In chap. xiii. 32, Mark records the one known instance of our Lord's confession of ignorance. The writer was evidently keeping in view, all through, Gentile readers, since he explains Jewish customs, language, and even topography (see chaps. vii. 2; xv. 42; xiii. 3).

As to the **date** of its writing, the main internal evidences

are in the discourse in chap. xiii., which seems to be written before the destruction of Jerusalem, though, of course, if one is right in supposing it to be an earlier document embodied in the Gospel, it would not necessarily point to the date of the whole work. The words in chap. ii. 26, "it *is* not lawful," seem to point to the existence of the Temple at the moment when they were written. Further, if it is one of the basal documents of Matthew and Luke, it must have been written before them, and we cannot place Luke very late if we accept his authorship of Acts. These indications, therefore, seem to point to about the year 70 as the most probable date of the work.

**Person of Writer.**—Of Mark himself we know practically nothing beyond what the New Testament tells us in the references in Acts, certain of Paul's Epistles, and I. Peter. The idea that the author himself appears as the young man (chap. xiv. 51, 52) is contradicted by the statement of Papias that he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. His close connection with Barnabas is an interesting circumstance in the history of the early Church, and it is not without significance to think that in this Gospel we may have quite as much of the echo and tone of Barnabas's mission preaching as we have of

that of Peter. The connection between Peter's speeches in Acts and the simple form of the Marcan doctrine of the person of Christ is also worthy of study. Two points are noteworthy in Christian tradition about Mark, though it is difficult to attach great importance to either of them. The one connects him with a mission in Egypt, and particularly in Alexandria, while another tells us that he was known as the man with the maimed hand, which may, indeed, be a true statement about him, as it is just such physical peculiarities that often linger as the truthful portion of otherwise worthless tradition.

### THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

**The Historian.**—The third Gospel begins in a way unique among all the books of the New Testament, for the writer gives us at the outset some account of the methods he has employed in preparing his work. The familiar and famous words may as well be quoted here: "Forasmuch," he says, "as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed

good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed." These words reveal to us that the writer was familiar with numerous accounts, presumably written documents, based upon the testimony of eye-witnesses and missionaries, and that he had carefully examined all these in order to form from them a more full and authentic narrative than any known to him. This at once places the Gospel in a position of prominence amongst its fellows, and marks it out as of special value. If we are right in the conclusions already arrived at, then we know at least two of these narratives, namely, Mark and the collection of teachings common to Matthew and Luke. This Gospel, therefore, while it necessarily throws great light upon the synoptic problem, also contributes its own elements of difficulty to that problem. It is clear at the outset that the general order of the Gospel is determined by that of Mark, for when at chap. ix. 50 he leaves Mark's Gospel in order to insert a long section, largely peculiar to himself, up till xviii. 14, at the 15th verse of the latter chapter he returns to Mark again at x. 13

of the latter book, and follows his order closely to the end.

**His Sources.**—When we turn to the second source, namely, the collection of sayings, we find that Luke treats them in quite a different way from Matthew. The latter, as we saw, delights in lengthy combinations of teaching, whereas Luke has, as a rule, much shorter connected passages, and does his utmost to give the teaching in the circumstances that either seem to him appropriate, or that may have been indicated as the proper settings for them in the sources that were open to him. Two points are noteworthy. First, that sometimes, as in chaps. xv. and xvi., Luke masses together parables without more than such introductory words as “and he said,” or “and he spake unto them this parable,” or even, as in xvi. 19, without any introductory formula whatever. In the whole of the section above referred to as peculiar to Luke’s Gospel, this method is very noticeable. It reminds us of a form in which some of the Logia have been recently discovered in the Egyptian papyri, and it may indicate that Luke found these stories in a collection that had no indication of time and place at all, and that he simply arranges them according to his own judgment,

in what appeared to him to be the most suitable manner. For example, in xvi. 13 we have a saying which appears in Matthew vi. 24 obviously not closely connected with the context, so set by Luke that it finds the clearest of illustrations in the parable that precedes it. An interesting study is to make a careful examination of the Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Matthew and Luke, and to endeavour to discover reasons for the contexts in which Luke places the various sayings. Again, Luke's arrangement of the discourses on the last things, and on the siege of Jerusalem, gain greatly in clearness and significance by their setting. (*Cf.* Luke xvii. 20-37 and xxi. 5-38 with Matthew xxiv.) Dr. Wright notes a very interesting example of Luke's method in the case of xi. 9 compared with Matthew vii. 7, and in answer to the question why the change has taken place, says: "The words 'pray' or 'prayer' do not occur in it, and the redactor of St. Matthew, acting, as we are all liable to do, mechanically, did not perceive that this Logion dealt with prayer. St. Luke was more observant."

It seems impossible to come to any conclusion as to what were the sources of the large amount of material

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that is peculiar to Luke, especially the numerous lovely parables in which his Gospel abounds. They constitute, as Dr. Wright says, "the very cream of the Gospel," and yet it is from him alone that we know them. Many have seen in the tone of these parables, and in the general catholicity of Luke's attitude, the influence of Paul; but we can hardly suppose that Paul had access to any sources of Gospel history that were not known to Luke. A most fascinating theory, and one that has much probability about it, is that of Dr. Salmon, who thinks that Luke's Gospel, especially in its peculiar elements, is derived from the form of mission preaching that was familiar to the Church at Antioch. That Church, it will be remembered, was the first to send out missionaries to the Gentiles, and the type of peculiarly Lucan teaching is, therefore, most appropriate to the community.

Harnack thinks that much of the Lucan material is derived from the narrative of Philip the Evangelist, of whose value as a historian he does not entertain the very highest opinion. The infancy and resurrection narratives probably represent different and independent sources. The former show a strongly Aramaic influence, and Sanday is inclined to regard them as the most primitive section of all the New Testament writings.

Others suppose that Luke has himself written them in an archaic style in order to suit the special circumstances they describe. What seems very certain is that the beautiful and well-known poems in the section are the productions of conscious art, and not the extempore product even of inspired imagination. This is obvious to any one who will take the trouble to compare the poems with their Old Testament models. The resurrection narratives show a knowledge only of the Jerusalem tradition, and have no hint of appearances in Galilee.

There is one noteworthy feature in the Gospel which may have a certain bearing upon its origin, namely, the prominence throughout it of **the feminine element**. We are told more about women than in any of the other Gospels, though John's Gospel comes nearest to it, this being one of several points of resemblance between Luke and John. The following are some of the most important occasions on which women are named: the stories about Elizabeth, Anna, the sisters of Bethany, the daughters of Jerusalem, the woman who was a sinner, and the woman named in viii. 1; as also in the following parables: the widow and the unjust judge, and the woman with the lost piece of silver. Harnack



points to Philip's daughters as the most probable sources of this peculiar element.

Of **Luke himself** we do not know a great deal directly in the New Testament. Most of our information is inferential. The name seems to be one of a class of pet names which are common in the period, it being evidently a contraction of Lucanus. We do not even know his birthplace, tradition mentioning Antioch, which many follow on grounds of probability, but Ramsay and others think he was a Macedonian, and probably a native of Philippi, basing the theory upon the circumstances of his first appearance in Acts (*cf.* xvi. 9, 10). He was evidently a Gentile who came into contact and close sympathy with Jews. It is noticed that his adherence to the language of the Septuagint is closer than that of the other evangelists, while his Greek is that of the cultured man of the time. A very special feature of his language is its medical character. Over and over again we find technical medical terms employed where the other evangelists have either no equivalent or use the popular terms of common speech, and in other instances he will use a medical word where the other writers use a common one—*e.g.* in the saying about the eye of a needle, Luke's word is that employed by the medical

writers for a surgical needle. He alone it is who quotes the medical proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," and who in the case of the woman healed on the way to the house of Jairus, omits the harsher words used of physicians in Mark's Gospel. (For a full treatment of the subject see App. I. in Harnack's "Luke the Physician.") It is just possible that he may have studied at Tarsus, which was Paul's university, and that they may have met there. That is at least a feasible alternative to the Macedonian theory. Professor Souter thinks that Titus was Luke's brother (see II. Cor. xii. 18, which he would translate "his brother").

**Date.**—Apparently the Lucan version of our Lord's words about the fall of Jerusalem was written after the event had taken place, and in full knowledge of the facts about its siege by the Romans, so that the Gospel probably was not written earlier than 75; and in order to allow time for the writing of Acts, it is not likely that it was written any later than 80.

The **point of view** of the Gospel is more catholic and universal than that of either Mark or Matthew. The genealogy he preserves when compared with that in Matthew shows this point of view very clearly, for he makes Jesus there the representative of the human

race in its Divine descent ; and all through the position of the writer is that of one who emphasises the sympathy of Jesus for men as men, for the sinful as sinners, and his delineation of salvation is that of its world-wide efficacy.

### THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

When we turn to this, the greatest of the books of the New Testament, we are beset with almost countless difficulties. If we read the book without further question mainly as a wonderful spiritual interpretation of the person and work of Christ, we are impressed afresh on every new reading by its beauty and its power ; but when we go further and raise the many questions that such reading necessarily implies in the mind of the student, we find ourselves faced by enormous difficulties. From the earliest times some of these have been felt, and in our own day a closer investigation and recent discoveries have only emphasised them, and done comparatively little toward their solution.

The first question is, **What John wrote the book?** Early testimony is not so unanimous, as is often

supposed, in saying that it was John the Apostle. In fact, it is very remarkable that none of the early writers actually call him Apostle. The testimony of the earliest writings outside the New Testament—*e.g.* Didymus, Epistle of Barnabas, and Clement—are, as we have already found in other cases, quite indefinite. The Epistle of Polycarp has close verbal resemblances in various passages to the language of this Gospel, and in one place seems almost certainly to quote the First Epistle of John, but there is not any direct quotation, nor, of course, any reference to the author of the work. Irenæus tells us that Polycarp was an associate of those who had seen Christ, and had himself had personal intercourse with John, the disciple of the Lord. There is little doubt that in his own mind Irenæus identifies this John with the Apostle, though he does not say so in so many words. It is quite possible, however, that as Irenæus was a boy when he met Polycarp, he may have confused a more famous with a less famous John, and the person to whom Polycarp referred may have been that John of Ephesus of whom we shall hear more presently.

In the writings of Ignatius there are several clear affinities with the language of John's Gospel, and

in one passage (Rom. vii. 2) an almost certain reference to the story of the woman of Samaria, but in no case does he exactly quote the words of the Gospel, nor does he ever name either it or its author. This is the more remarkable, seeing that he himself writes a letter to the Ephesian Church in which he mentions Paul, but not John. All that can be fairly inferred, therefore, from his writings is a knowledge of the type of teaching contained in the fourth Gospel. With Papias we are in a different position, and one of his statements, preserved by Eusebius, constitutes one of the great grounds of controversy. He tells us that when he met any one who had attended the elders, he used to inquire about the words of the latter, "what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the disciples of the Lord said, and what Aristion and the elder John, disciples of the Lord, say. For I was not inclined to suppose that statements made by the book would help me so much as the utterances of a living and abiding voice." The most obvious interpretation of these words is that Papias himself was in a position to make inquiries from the elder John, while the former John of whom he speaks

had already died. It will be seen that there is nothing in the passage bearing on the Gospel, but we do have evidence of the way in which such writers as Irenæus and Eusebius understood the evidence of Papias; but this does not clearly point to a definite statement that the latter attributed the Gospel to the Apostle, and two recently discovered fragments of the writings of Papias state that James and John both died at the hands of the Jews. Some have thrown doubt upon these fragments, but even if they are authentic, it is not proved that they both died together, and it would not in itself make it impossible that John the Apostle might have suffered at Ephesus, though certainly it would in that case be very unlikely. Justin Martyr shows evidence of knowledge of Johannine language, but not definitely of quotation. It is held that his use of the term "Apostles," as the authors of the *Memoirs of the Lord* to which he frequently refers, must imply his knowledge of Matthew and John. His thought and language also are often similar to that of the fourth Gospel, but, again, this may only be due to his familiarity with that type of teaching. The *Mur. Fragment*, Clement, Alexander, and Irenæus definitely attribute the work to John. The words of

the latter writer are, "John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon His breast, wrote it while dwelling in Ephesus, the city of Asia." These words have been generally taken to mean that Irenæus identified the writer with the Apostle, but it is not absolutely essential to say that if, as we shall see, the "beloved disciple" may not have been the Apostle.

The evidence of the use of the book by the heretical sects of the second century is a very difficult and intricate subject, and cannot here be entered upon. Suffice it to say that among many of them this Gospel seems to have been familiar, and that, therefore, its widespread use in the middle of the century is pretty clear, as is also evidenced by the harmony of Tatian. The result of the external evidence may, therefore, be briefly summarised as follows: (1) The Gospel was in existence early in the second century; (2) it was attributed to a John of Ephesus; (3) its author was not definitely identified with the Apostle until the end of the second century.

Where external evidence is not regarded as quite satisfactory, it is customary to refer to the **internal evidence** as being beyond dispute a proof of apostolic authorship, and the evidence is usually given in four

concentric circles as follows: (1) The author was a Jew, which is proved by his frequent references to Old Testament prophecy (*cf.* xii. 37; xix. 24, 28) and his intimate familiarity with Jewish manners and customs. (2) He is a Jew of Palestine. This is proved by the intimate knowledge of topographical details. Such is his distinction between the two Bethanys, his intimate knowledge of Jerusalem and its environs, &c. (3) That he is a contemporary and eye-witness. This is proved by his familiarity with the attitude of the religious parties in Judæa, and also in his clear interpretation of the mind of the people, as well as in his portraits of individuals like Nicodemus and Caiaphas. (4) His intimate association with Jesus and the other Apostles proves him to have been an Apostle himself. He is certainly described in the book (see xii. 23; xix. 26) as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and he is intimate with such members of the twelve as Philip, Andrew, Thomas, and Judas. His interpretation of his Lord's inward feelings is very close and constant, and if he be not himself the John of the apostolic band, he never mentions the latter. In the other Gospels Peter and John are often closely united, and in this Gospel the unnamed disciple and Peter are shown as close friends. Delff has sug-



gested that the beloved disciple may have been a man of high priestly family, a native of Jerusalem, intimately associated with our Lord and His Apostles, permitted to be present at the Last Supper, and on other occasions, but not himself an Apostle. This theory has great difficulties, but it is not impossible, and this disciple may himself have become known at a later time as John of Ephesus.

One of the great difficulties that attaches to the Gospel is its **relation to the synoptics**. At first glance it is obvious how little they have in common, and how many most important incidents in the latter—*e.g.* the Temptation, Transfiguration, Agony, Lord's Supper, &c.—are wanting in the pages of John. Very slight account is given in the latter of the ministry in Galilee, which occupies so large a place in the synoptic narratives. On the other hand, the important place assigned to the raising of Lazarus in the fourth Gospel makes it difficult to understand why there should be no mention of the event in the synoptics. The well-known difficulty about the date of the Lord's Supper is another marked point of divergence. John says it took place before the Feast of the Passover. With the synoptics it took place on the first day of the feast. The problem cannot be discussed here, but it is a very vital point in the whole

question of the relationship between the two forms of the story.

A further noteworthy distinction lies in the form of the teaching of Jesus as given in the synoptics, and in John. This does not lie so much in the mere length of the discourses, for Drummond has shown that the longest single discourses are contained in Matthew, and also that there are quite as many short aphoristic sayings in the fourth Gospel as in the synoptics, but the character of the teaching is certainly different. There are no parables in the fourth Gospel, and all through the latter Jesus speaks of Himself and of the nature of His person in a way that is rarely paralleled in the other Gospels. There is, of course, one striking passage in the end of chapter xi. in Matthew which has much affinity with the form of His utterances in John, and there are many other points of contact, such as the teaching on the new birth given to Nicodemus, when compared with the well-known sayings in the synoptics, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."<sup>1</sup> In the main, however, the style of the discourses in John are not only very different from those elsewhere recorded, but are so

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix.

obviously coloured by the form of expression used by the writer himself in his narrative and reflective passages, that it is sometimes impossible to tell where the words of Jesus end and the words of the evangelist begin (*cf.* iii. 12-21). The prayer recorded in chapter xvii. is another good example, for not only is such a form of expression as that employed in the third verse practically inconceivable as being used by our Lord Himself, but the whole report of the prayer, unless we could conceive it to be given with perfect verbal accuracy, conveys the impression of an artistic production of the writer, embodying no doubt echoes of what he had heard from the lips of Jesus, but constituting in its present form an ideal prayer of self-consecration and intercession for His disciples.

Further, the way in which the Jews are spoken of throughout the book is quite different from anything found in the synoptics. Severe things are said of sections of the community, such as the Scribes and Pharisees in Matthew xxiii. and elsewhere, but never do we find the whole community of the people classed as enemies of our Lord and His work. The language used is even more severe than that employed by Paul, when in Galatians and elsewhere he deals with the

errors of the Jewish party. The manner in which John the Baptist and his teaching is spoken of also reveals the atmosphere of controversy, suggesting that his influence and the school he had formed is regarded by the writer as a serious rival to the work of Jesus. A further polemical aim is found in the underlying consciousness all the way through the Gospel that the writer is aware of the growing power of certain interpreters of Christianity, who became known later as the Gnostics. The Gospel lays much stress upon Christ as the one agent in all creation, and upon God His Father being the same God that was known to Abraham, and upon sonship of God being only possible through Jesus Christ. It has been further pointed out that the writer carefully avoids using the technical terms of the Gnostic teaching. The points noted above are in direct opposition to the Gnostic idea that creation was accomplished through the agency of angels, and that Divine sonship might be attained through processes of intellectual illumination. The First Epistle of John, which undoubtedly stands closely related to the Gospel, is even more clearly filled with the echo of this controversy.

Even if the **great key-words** of the Gospel were

not struck out in the heat of controversy, they remain very characteristic of the writer's method. He interprets the Gospel in terms of light and darkness, life and death, truth and falsehood, and other similar terms. This gives the writing a unique character, and also presents the Gospel in a very interesting and striking way; but it will probably never be possible to decide how far this is due to his own mental attitude, and how far it goes back upon the actual terminology of Jesus. Another characteristic feature of the Gospel is its use of significant numbers. The number seven occurs in various connections—*e.g.* in the forms of Christ's utterances that begin with the words "I am," and also in the number of witnesses borne to Christ. There are other evidences that a symbolism of numbers was in the writer's mind, a method which was probably derived from the Jewish school at Alexandria.

The German writer, Wendt, whose work has been translated into English, under the title "The Gospel according to St. John," maintains the theory that the fourth Gospel, like the synoptics, is also dependent upon original written sources, which were afterwards worked up by the final editor. He thinks that the

discourses are drawn from an older document, and that the narrative portions are due to the later writer. In the discourses he finds an independent series of Logia which may be ultimately derivable from the Apostle John, just as those in the first Gospel may well owe their origin to the Apostle Matthew. He shows with great skill the resemblances that these bear to the synoptics, though he is inclined to think that the acquaintance shown with the latter is rather that of recollection of their teaching than of the actual use of the written form of these stories. The narrative sections, the editing of the discourses, and, to a great extent, the language in which the latter are couched, are in the main due to the writer. This partition theory has been quite recently supported in another form by Wellhausen. His position is that the Gospel consists of two main documents, the earlier one dependent in its outline upon Mark, and the later one in many ways dependent upon Matthew. It is to the latter that the majority of the long speeches and dialogues belong. The earlier document emphasises the historical side, and the latter lays more stress upon the teaching. The theory is worked out with much ingenuity, and some of its detailed analyses

certainly help to remove great difficulties—*e.g.* in the sections that deal with our Lord's teaching about the Holy Spirit, where every reader feels the difficulty of distinguishing between the passages which speak of our Lord's personal return, and those which describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Wellhausen is able to remove all confusion by attributing one form of teaching to the earlier and the other to the later source. His key-passage is chap. vii. 3, 4, which, as he says, seems to take it for granted that Jesus had not up to this time done any work in Jerusalem. It seems to the writer, therefore, that these verses point to another tradition with which the main part of the chapter does not accord, and give the indication that a double source must be looked for.

There are, however, great difficulties about dividing what has been called the "seamless robe" of the fourth Gospel, and this is especially the case if we regard the prologue, as the present writer does, as not only an essential part of the whole book, but as governing in thought and expression the whole of the work to which it is a preface.

It will be clear from what has preceded that it is not an easy matter to fix upon a **definite date** for the com-

position of the Gospel, but in all likelihood the close of the first century is as probable as any date that can be named. We have also to leave in abeyance the decision as to which John it was who wrote it. One is sometimes tempted to wonder whether John Mark himself might not have been the author. In this way, perhaps, Delff's theory might be reconciled with later tradition. The beloved disciple might then be the youth who fled from the capturers of Christ on the night of the betrayal, as is recorded in Mark's Gospel. The idea that the twenty-first chapter of John represents the original conclusion of Mark is a very attractive one, and would form another link. John Mark disappears from the narrative of the New Testament after his departure on a mission with Barnabas, save for one or two casual mentions in the epistles. Tradition tells us that he went to Alexandria. Suppose this were so, that at Alexandria he became familiar with the thought of Philo, and at a later time settled at Ephesus, and, dissatisfied with his earlier Gospel, wrote a new one, which interpreted his great Friend and Saviour in a new light, we might have a reason for the comparative neglect and the obviously unfinished condition of the second Gospel. All this is admittedly speculative, but in present conditions there



is room for speculation, and it is not more improbable than some theories that have been formed of the origin of the book.

The **point of view** from which the work was written has been generally indicated, and the name by which it became known at the beginning of the third century, namely, "the spiritual gospel," suits it well, if this is not understood as implying an adverse judgment as to its historical value. It seems likely that the writer felt the great danger that menaced the Church from the idea prevalent in many quarters, that our Lord's earthly life was not that of a real man. The emphasis laid by Paul upon the importance of the risen and eternal Christ had by some been so misunderstood as to cause them to think that the story of His humanity mattered little. This writer takes as his thesis the idea that Christ "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." The central idea of the book is well expressed in the well-known lines of Browning's poem, "A Death in the Desert":—

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ  
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee  
All questions in the earth and out of it,  
And has so far advanced thee to be wise."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

THE opening verses of this book claim it as a continuation of the third Gospel, and there are many features of its vocabulary and manner of treatment which support the statement. Much, therefore, which has been said in our discussion of Luke's Gospel is applicable also to this book, so that the student should read that section before continuing the present chapter, as the former material will be taken for granted in the following discussion.

**External Evidence.**—The evidence of the earliest writers outside the New Testament is, as usual, not very conclusive about their knowledge of Acts. Clement of Rome has quotations from the Old Testament in the same form and order in which they appear in Acts, but these may well be derived from some well-known collection of such prophecies, and do not necessarily show a knowledge of this work. He also quotes the saying of

Jesus given in Acts xx. 35, but this also may be derived from some other tradition. Neither are the references in Ignatius or Polycarp conclusive proof that these writers knew the work. In the first apology of Justin Martyr, chaps. xlix. and l., there are references to the Apostles' setting out from Jerusalem to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, but they are expressed in far too general language to say that they show more than acquaintance with general tradition. In a letter written by some Christians in Southern Gaul toward the end of the second century, there seems a pretty clear reference to the account in Acts of Stephen's martyrdom; and the legends of Paul and Thecla, which also date from the second century, are pretty certainly derived from our Acts of the Apostles. The Mur. Can. recognises it, and also contains the account of its authorship by Luke. Later authors accept it definitely; but even in the days of Chrysostom, that great preacher tells us that there were many ignorant, not only of its authorship, but of its existence.

The **internal evidence** of the book's authorship by Luke is, as has been already stated, very definite, its own statement to this effect being supported by grammatical usages peculiar to this work and to the third

Gospel. In it also are found in many places the same medical vocabulary that is a feature of Luke's earlier writing. We must further keep in mind the fact that Luke has told us in the beginning of the Gospel that he knew and had examined various earlier accounts of the life and work of Jesus, and we may legitimately suppose that he adopted the same method in writing his later work. If we may assume this, we shall be prepared to find traces of sources in this book also, and a little examination seems to make these evident. The first and most striking one is what is called by various writers "the 'We' section," "the travel document," or "the journey record," which consists undoubtedly of the following sections: chaps. xvi. 10-17; xx. 5; xxi. 18; xxvii. 1; xxviii. 16. In one document, the Codex Bezae, the "We" form is employed at xi. 28. The natural inference from the form of expression used in these sections is that an eye-witness is giving an account of the events therein recorded, and we may take this as a basis for our study of the rest of the book. If the language used in these passages is similar to that employed elsewhere, we are justified in the conclusion that the author of these chapters is likewise the author of the rest of the work, and a careful examination of the

whole writing justifies the position. It is more markedly true of the second part of the book, which deals with the life and missionary labours of Paul, but even in the earlier section, which tells the story of the early days of the Church at Jerusalem, and the various missionary journeys of the Apostles, the special marks of the same writer are everywhere apparent. In the earlier section, however, there are many passages which show clear traces of their separate origin, as *e.g.* the speech of Stephen, the narrative of the Day of Pentecost, and the addresses delivered by Peter and John. Even in the English translation it is not impossible to recognise a marked difference of language between these and the rest of the narrative. There were probably separate accounts of the work of Philip, Peter, and Stephen current in the early Church, and parts of these Luke has apparently embodied in his completed work.

The **science of textual criticism** has an important bearing upon this book, inasmuch as the Codex Bezae and various documents that are closely allied with it have preserved a text that differs at many points from the ordinary form of the majority of documents. This is seen mainly in numerous additions to the common text. Sometimes these take the form of little local

touches, as *e.g.* in xii. 10, in the account of Peter's escape from prison, where we are told that he and the angel "went down the seven steps"; or in xix. 9, where we are informed that Paul taught daily in the school of Tyrannus at Ephesus, "from the fifth to the tenth hour." Sometimes the alteration makes an obscure passage clear, as in xxi. 16, where the reading of the Codex Bezae is much more probable than the ordinary text. It reads at the place, "and passing on into a certain village we were with Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, and starting thence we came to Jerusalem." Naturally these marked divergences have given rise to many theories about their origin, and as yet no satisfactory conclusion has been reached, though it seems probable that they are ultimately due to the notes of some scribe who has taken this way of preserving traditions which were not embodied in the original writing.

The **date** of the book cannot be very much later than that of Luke's Gospel, and may be even immediately subsequent to it, so that somewhere about the year 80 is the period we must think of as that to which the original belongs.

As to **the nature of the book**, the author's own name for it is a "treatise." It is neither a collection of mere

annals or of the biographies of individuals, nor yet is it a comprehensive record of the Church's origin and development. It seems to fulfil a twofold purpose, being on the one hand a book of practical religious instruction, showing its readers how the Gospel spread and the Church developed under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, and, on the other hand, it is the earliest specimen of the apologies of Christianity which were a marked feature of the second century. All through it is favourable to the Roman Government. The various Roman officials who are introduced are spoken of sympathetically, and the opportunities afforded by the Imperial Government for the spread of the Gospel are everywhere emphasised. The writer's methods are those of the historian of the time, and we must not suppose that all the speeches are to be taken as verbatim reports of the actual words used, but are rather the author's own setting of the arguments employed by the various persons on the occasion in question. Sometimes, as in the case of the speech of Stephen, and of that delivered by Paul at Athens, he seems to be more than usually well informed about the actual language employed, but on other occasions the language is almost certainly due more to the writer than to the speaker. We may be

thankful that he has not always used his editorial powers to harmonise too closely his different sources, as *e.g.* when he preserves for us three separate accounts of Paul's conversion, for in this way we are better able to reach the original account of the events he records.



## CHAPTER V

### THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

A VERY large number of the books of the New Testament are written in the form of letters. This was, of course, no new method invented by the Christian writers. Letters had always been a common way of conveying messages from friend to friend, or from a leader to some community in which he was interested. In the Old Testament we have a letter written by Jeremiah to his friends in exile at Babylon, contained in chapter xxix. of his book of prophecies, and in addition to the actual books written in the form of letters in the New Testament, we have two letters contained in the Book of Acts—one in Acts xv. 23-29, and one in Acts xxiii. 25-30. Recent discoveries among the Egyptian papyri have unearthed many hundred letters of the period, and from these we can discover the general form of letters then current. These have

shown us that Paul and the other letter writers of the New Testament have moulded their communications on the ordinary form of epistolary communication of the period. Perhaps the letter that comes nearest to the general type of such productions is that known as III. John. In addition to the greetings and salutations contained in almost all the New Testament letters, we find that the general form of Paul's letters—namely, salutation, a thanksgiving, a prayer, personal messages, and a final greeting—follows the general outline of ordinary private letters.

**Origin.**—We can thus see that Paul's letters arose out of the ordinary circumstances of social intercourse, being in many cases the result of oral or written messages sent by his friends and converts to himself; and sometimes he certainly embodies quotations from these letters in his own replies. This seems to be the best explanation of such verses as I. Cor. vii. 1; viii. 1; viii. 8, &c. Much light is thrown upon Paul's method and thought by reading his letters in chronological order, and though there is considerable difference of opinion among scholars as to the exact order of some of the letters, there is general agreement as to the groups, and a considerable amount of unanimity as to the exact

order here given. In any case it is important to have the groups clear, and we shall follow this order in the discussions of the individual letters.

I. The **earliest letters**—I. and II. Thessalonians.

II. The **great letters**—Galatians, I. and II. Corinthians, Romans.

This group contains the letters accepted as Paul's by all schools of scholarship, except a few erratic Dutch scholars and their followers. For an account of their views and an effective answer to them, see Shaw's "Pauline Epistles." The views themselves may be read in articles in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*.

III. The **letters written during the captivity in Rome**—Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians.

The **pastoral letters**—I. and II. Timothy, Titus.

We shall begin our detailed discussion, therefore, with

## I. THESSALONIANS

The **city of Thessalonica**, to the Christian community in which this letter was addressed, was one which, under Roman rule, preserved much of its original Greek form, and its magistrates were known by the technical title of Politarchs, as Luke tells us in Acts xvii. 6. It was a flourishing and important city, one of the chief centres

of population in Macedonia. When Paul reached it he began his work, as elsewhere, in the Jewish synagogue, but it was among the Gentiles that he obtained his largest number of converts. The Jews stirred up the rabble of the city against him, and created a considerable riot, attempting to implicate Paul and his friends in a plot against the Roman authority. They were compelled to escape hurriedly to Berea, and at a later time Paul sent Timothy on a visit to the Thessalonian Church. It is as the outcome of this visit that the first letter was written, almost certainly from Corinth, and probably in or about the year 50.

The **immediate object** of the letter was to confirm the faith of the Thessalonians in the truth of the life after death of the believers in Christ, and to assure them that their friends who had died would be at no disadvantage in the event of their Lord's sudden Advent during the life of the survivors. At this period of his ministry Paul evidently looked for that event in the near future, and supposed that he and many of his friends would be alive when it took place. He further deals in the letter with the question of internal disorders in the Church, and gives particular injunctions about the proper conduct of the Christian disciple. It is interesting to trace

in this letter **the germ of many ideas** which were afterwards more fully developed in later communications of the Apostle—*e.g.* we have in chapter i. 3 the group of the three Christian virtues of faith, love, and hope, which afterwards form the subject-matter of I. Cor. xiii. In i. 10 we have emphasis laid upon the importance of the resurrection of Christ as the foundation truth of the Christian faith, and in v. 10 we have the germ of the doctrine of the life in Christ, which takes so prominent a place in later epistles. It is thus clear that there was not such a marked development as is often supposed in the later theology of the Apostle, but that the central ideas of his special doctrines were present to his mind and in his preaching at the outset, and that the fuller statement of these truths in later letters is largely due to the special circumstances of subsequent controversy.

The **earliest definite reference** to the epistle is found in Irenæus, but we know it was contained in the canon of Marcion, and the Mur. Can. contains it in its list. It is only in modern times that its authenticity has been questioned, and the main objection has arisen from its supposed lack of a full statement of characteristic Pauline doctrine, but the explanation of this fact has been given above. It contains a great many

words that are characteristic of Paul's vocabulary in the epistles about which there is no doubt of his authorship, and there are also many forms of expression that are characteristic of Paul. His acquaintance is likewise shown in this letter with the Greek version of the Old Testament, and with the teaching of Jesus, especially as contained in the apocalyptic discourse recorded in Matthew xxiii. and xxiv. (*cf.* especially iv. 16 with Matthew xxiv. 30; v. 2 with Matthew xxiv. 43; v. 7 with Matthew xxiv. 48).

## II. THESSALONIANS

The second letter to the same Church probably followed the first after a very short interval. The **immediate reason** of its being sent is obviously further difficulty about the doctrine of the coming of the Lord. The Apostle's teaching in the first letter had not been clearly understood, and it appears (*cf.* ii. 2) that certain teachers, either by oral or written communications, had thrown doubts upon Paul's theories. In this letter he refers again (*cf.* ii. 5) to the teaching on the subject he had given them when present at Thessalonica, and in a very difficult passage, namely,

ii. 1-12, he discusses the subject of the series of events that must first take place before the Advent is to be expected. Inasmuch as this passage implies a knowledge of his oral teaching, which we cannot recover, it is very difficult to interpret, and forms one of the riddles of the New Testament. The rest of the letter is very like its predecessor in general outline and contents, though we can see that further disturbances of belief had led to increased irregularities of conduct. For one thing, some of the Christians at Thessalonica had come to believe that the Advent was so near an event that they might neglect their ordinary occupations and depend upon their richer brethren for support. Against this attitude the Apostle protests with the greatest vehemence, and gives sane counsel for the quiet and orderly conduct of the Christian life.

Curiously enough, the **external evidence** for this epistle is clearer than for the former one, inasmuch as we find Polycarp in his letter to the Philippians twice quoting from this letter. In one case he seems to have confused the source of his quotation with Paul's letter to the Philippians, but the words he quotes are only found in this letter, and so we take it that

he was acquainted with it, though he had momentarily forgotten the precise source from which the words came. Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho, uses language that bears the closest resemblance to a passage in the second chapter, and the same thing is true in the second century letter from Gaul, referred to on page 20. Irenæus is the first to mention it by name, and it is contained both in the canon of Marcion and in the Mur. Can.

Many modern scholars have raised **objections** to its Pauline authorship on the ground, first, of its language. The peculiar words that are discovered in it are mainly to be found in the unique passage in chap. ii., where we might expect to find them, but the rest of the epistle shows not only much similarity to I. Thessalonians, but also to the other writings of Paul, and the whole tone of the epistle is in close agreement with his general thought. Secondly, exception has been taken to it because it is so close a copy in many respects of the first letter. It is argued, therefore, that some one has copied the former writing in the name of Paul. The resemblances, close as they are, are not, however, to be termed slavish copying, and similar resemblances are traceable at



least in other two of Paul's letters, Colossians and Ephesians. It is not likely that any one who is attempting to pass off a letter of his own under Paul's name would introduce so peculiar a passage as that in the second chapter, and so some scholars suggest that that section is an interpolation, some holding it to be the only genuinely Pauline fragment in the whole letter, while some who regard the rest of the letter as Paul's, look upon this section as unauthentic. The third ground of criticism is also based upon the difficult section so often referred to. It is said that it contains teaching nowhere else paralleled in Paul's writings. This, it must be admitted, is true, but there are many examples in the rest of Paul's letters of isolated discussions, and if the same problems never arose elsewhere, we need not be surprised that he did not discuss them. Unless it can be shown that Paul could not possibly have written in this manner, we need not feel much disturbed by the line of argument that criticises it only because it is unique.

We may turn, therefore, to a brief examination of the difficult passage itself. It is no doubt written in **the general style of Apocalypse**, of which more will be said at a later stage (see p. 167). This always causes obscurity

to later readers who are not in full possession of the facts referred to, and in this particular instance Paul reminds his readers that he is alluding to teaching they had heard from himself. One thing is certain, the persons hinted at in the passage were recognisable by the readers, and we have to remember that some of the phrases employed were current in Jewish literature of the period. The most probable explanation is that the "man of lawlessness" or "son of perdition" was a personification of the Judaizing teachers who were so prominent in the Galatian letter, while the restraining force or restraining person is almost certainly to be identified with the Roman power, for which Paul always had shown the highest respect, though we need not attempt to identify the reference with any one Roman emperor who at the time embodied that power.

The **date** of the letter can only be a little later than that of I. Thessalonians, and we need not attempt to fix it with greater exactitude.

### GALATIANS

The very title of this epistle raises the first and one of the most interesting questions with regard to it, namely, **where is Galatia?** It used to be supposed,

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without any question, that the district so named consisted of the northern part of Asia Minor that lies not far south of the Black Sea. If, however, this is the case, then we have one of Paul's letters written to a community about which we have no information elsewhere in the New Testament. The name Galatia occurs twice in the Acts of the Apostles (see xvi. 6, and xviii. 23). If these verses refer to the northern district of Asia Minor, there is considerable difficulty in understanding the Apostle's movements, as a reference to a map will at once make clear. The fact is that the usage of the term Galatia varied very much during the century that preceded our era and throughout the first and second centuries of our era. There is no doubt that in the second century the term did become confined to the northern district of Asia Minor, but at the period at which Paul was writing, there is every probability that it referred to the Roman province which included the well-known towns of Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, of the missionary work in which we have such careful accounts in the Book of Acts. It has been shown that Luke's method of referring to the district is that which was ordinarily employed in speaking of Southern Galatia, and the argument is also supported

by reference to customs and laws which were peculiar to the district in Roman times, and by which certain passages in the epistle are best explained. The main points that can be elucidated by reference to the current customs in the province of South Galatia are those of adoption, the making of wills or covenants, and the special character of the tutor or *paidagogos* (*cf.* Gal. iii. 24) found in the Galatian letter. The further value of the theory is that, if it is right, we are enabled to have a background of history in reading the letter whereby we can understand the origin of the churches that Paul there founded, and the special connection of Barnabas, Timothy, and Titus with them.

The **main objection** to this theory is that stated with great clearness by Bousset, namely, that Paul tells us in iv. 13 of this epistle that he first preached to the Galatians because of an infirmity of the flesh. Now there is no mention of any sickness in the account given in Acts of the journey in Southern Galatia, but the phrase in xvi. 6, "having been forbidden of the Holy Ghost," may very well refer to some sickness that had hindered his carrying out the journey he had proposed. The majority of the arguments seem, however, to lean to the South Galatian

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theory, and we may take it as more probable than the older view.

There is no question about the **authenticity** of the epistle, for it bears on every line of it the sign manual of the Apostle. Nobody but he could have written these sentences which throb and pulsate with the affection of his heart, and with his righteous indignation against those who were trying to undo his work, and bring an unnecessary bondage upon the new-found freemen in Christ Jesus. Nowhere can we see better the strange involved constructions into which the very turmoil of his thought sometimes carries him. In this letter also we have the central positions of his teaching, given, if not so fully, certainly more passionately than in Romans. The epistle likewise contains a large section of **autobiography**, and that is not without its own difficulties, for it is not easy to reconcile the statements made in some parts of it with those of the historian in the Book of Acts. Where, however, we have to make a choice, it is preferable to accept the personal witness of the Apostle rather than the second-hand statement of a historian, even if he is proved to be in the main a careful one. The chief points of difficulty are those in i. 17, where he

definitely says he did not go to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion, when compared with the statements in Acts ix. 26-30. If it be supposed that the interval in Arabia is not mentioned in Acts, but intervenes between verses 25 and 26, then the statement of Galatians i. 19, that he saw none of the Apostles save Peter and James, and of 22 that he was still unknown by face to the churches of Judea, conflicts with Acts ix. 27, which tells of his introduction to the Apostles by Barnabas, and of verses 28 and 29 which tell of his preaching at Jerusalem. It is also difficult to reconcile the narrative of Galatians ii. 1-10 with the Acts of the Apostles. It certainly does not seem to suit the circumstances of Acts xv., and is more likely to be an account of some private conference of which Luke was either not aware, or did not consider of sufficient importance for the general purposes of his story to record. For Paul, however, the matter was one of vital interest, because it gave him the justification for his subsequent action, and freed him from the charge of acting contrary to the knowledge and express desire of the Apostles at Jerusalem.

In this letter there are one or two passages which

throw light on **Paul's view of the Old Testament**. In that line of his thought, more clearly than elsewhere, comes out his Rabbinical training. He frequently interprets the Old Testament Scriptures in the most allegorical way, and lays such great stress upon single words, or upon a verse taken out of its context, as to spoil the validity of the argument to modern Western minds. Good examples of this are to be found in iii. 13, 16, and of the strange use of allegory in iv. 21-31. He follows the Rabbis in another matter, namely, in personifying Scripture (see iii. 8). But what strikes us more than the methods of his interpretation is the wonderful freedom from all bondage to the letter of Scripture, and the magnificent faith that can read in the whole story of the past the preparation for the Gospel of Christ. This is most remarkable in the central argument of the epistle, that through faith in Christ the Gentiles are able to go back into the relation with God that Abraham possessed, which was a relation founded upon promise, not upon the rigid observance of outward ceremonials. Between God and Abraham the relation was a direct and personal one, and so, through Christ, is it with every soul that believes in Him. This constituted

the greatness and the freshness of Paul's Gospel, and to him the demand of the Jewish teachers that the Galatians, if they would advance to the greatest possible heights of Christian attainment, should superadd to their Christian faith observance of Jewish practices, was nothing short of blasphemy, and was equivalent to denying the very Gospel of Christ. It is for this reason that the Galatian epistle became Luther's favourite, and was such an instrument in his hands for the progress of the Reformation. The letter bears all through the marks of the heat of controversy, but, as Bousset says, "it is in the hottest hours that the finest fruit ripens."

The question of the epistle's **date** has been much discussed, and there are no very definite grounds upon which to decide it. The main elements in coming to a conclusion are (1) the question of its destination, and (2) the content of the epistle when compared with others that belong to the same period. If the Southern Galatia theory is the correct one, then Ramsay's argument that it was written from the Syrian Antioch, when Paul was about to start on his third journey, *i.e.* about the year 53, is a most probable one. Even some who hold the North Galatian theory



are prepared to date the epistle not much later, but others would place it during the third journey, and consider that it must have been written either from Ephesus or Corinth about the year 57. The second consideration deals with the relation of the thought of the epistle to that of Corinthians and Romans. II. Corinthians deals, as this letter does, with Paul's opponents, probably also Judaisers, and Romans discusses at greater length and with more fulness of detail the question of the law, in such a way, indeed, as to lead the majority of readers to think that it is a later treatment of the subject than that given in Galatians. It seems probable, too, that the disturbances in Corinth were subsequent to those in Galatia. The close connection of the first and second letters to Corinth make it, on the whole, probable that the Galatian letter is the earliest of the group. But our knowledge of the whole circumstances is not sufficiently definite to enable us to reach any dogmatic conclusion.

### I. CORINTHIANS

The **city of Corinth** was almost a synonym among the Greeks for pleasure-loving, luxury, and vice. To this city Paul came in the course of his third missionary

journey, and settled down at his trade, formed friendships, and pursued with persistent patience his missionary activities. At last the Jews interfered, and tried to bring Paul under the condemnation of the Roman magistrate. This, however, proved unsuccessful, and Paul worked on patiently, with, it appears, increasing success, winning even the leader of the persecution over to the side of Christ. From Corinth the Apostle passed to Ephesus, and, while there, news would constantly reach him of the state of affairs in the infant community. From I. Cor. v. 9 it appears that he wrote a letter dealing with some of the difficulties in the Church which had arisen from the lax moral atmosphere of "the ancient Paris," for many have drawn the parallel between the gaiety of the old Greek city and the modern French capital. Subsequently (see iv. 17) Timothy was sent as an ambassador, and when again a letter reached him from Corinth itself, he writes the very full answer that is now known to us as the first epistle. It is one of the most interesting and valuable documents in the whole New Testament, not so much for its revelation of the writer—for that we look more to Galatians and II. Cor.—but for the excellent picture it affords of the conditions of early Church life in a Gentile community, and

for its insight into the manners and methods of Christian life, worship, and thought in the middle of the first century.

**Character of Church.**—It is natural that in a letter of this character we should have the darker and more unsatisfactory side of the Church life emphasised, because it is the difficulties of the situation that necessitated the Apostle's discussion, and the dark sides of their practical life which drew forth his warnings and rebukes. But we can also see from one short paragraph (i. 4-9) that there were great elements of successful Christian attainment in the Corinthian Church. They were men who showed a rich knowledge of Christ, and a readiness to proclaim Him. They were not behindhand in any gift of the Christian character, but were, like the Thessalonians, living steadfastly in anticipation of the Lord's appearance. The weaknesses of the Church arose in the main from their readiness to display party feeling. Out of this temper sprang many of their defects. Because of it the rich despised the poor, and the learned the unlearned, and thus disgraceful scenes arose, both at the Lord's Supper and at the ordinary services of the Church. Women, glorying in the freedom and equality that is in Christ Jesus, were forgetful of what seemed to the

ancient world their proper dignity and modesty, and what was lacking throughout the whole community was the spirit of self-sacrificing and self-forgetful love. Liberty of thought had also overstepped what seemed to the Apostle its due limits, both in the practical question of mingling too freely with the heathen community, and in the speculative region of discussion about the nature of the resurrection and the life beyond death. To all these and other topics the Apostle turns with great care and fulness in the pages of this letter.

The **external evidence** for the authenticity of this epistle is earlier than that for any other book in the New Testament, because Clement of Rome, who himself wrote to the Church at Corinth before the end of the first century, counsels them as follows: "Take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul. What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, under the inspiration of the Spirit, he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas and Apollos, because even then ye had made for yourselves parties." This would be sufficiently definite without our looking for further evidence, but we find Polycarp quoting a verse from the epistle, and adding to the quotation the words, "as Paul teaches," and the

epistle is found in the works of Irenæus and in the Muratorian Canon.

Its **internal evidence** of authenticity is equally clear, for the mark of Paul's language and thought is upon every chapter, and the autobiographical passage in chapter xv. would be in itself sufficient to demonstrate whose work it was. Neither is there any question about the unity of the epistle. No reasonable critic suggests that any part should be separated from the whole.

It is impossible here to deal with the many **points of interest** raised by the epistle, but one or two of them may be glanced at. (1) **Paul's claim to the apostolate** as set forth in this epistle (see ix. 1; xv. 8, 9). He bases this position upon his having seen Jesus, and there is no question that the reference is to the vision on the way to Damascus; but he further adds as a proof of his being an Apostle the result of his ministry (*cf.* ix. 2). The second important point is the evidence the epistle gives of **Paul's knowledge of the words of Jesus**. In vii. 10 we have a definite reference to such words as those recorded in Mark x. 9. In ix. 14 we have a reference to Matt. xi. 1; and in xi. 23 we have a clear account of what is recorded in each of the three synoptics about the institution of the Lord's Supper.

These are the most definite cases; but a reference to such a book as Knowling's "The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ," will furnish the reader with many other instances. It is impossible to tell, of course, whether in such cases the writer quotes from oral or written traditions. (2) **Paul's doctrine of the sacraments**, as set forth here. As to baptism, he shows incidentally that he laid very little stress upon his own performance of the rite, being extremely thankful that he had personally baptized very few of the community lest they should increase their party feeling through the circumstance. The spiritual significance of the rite, to which he frequently returns elsewhere, is referred to in xii. 13. A curious practice is alluded to in xv. 29, which has given rise to much discussion. Whatever its real explanation may be, it at any rate shows that for the Apostle baptism had a distinct significance in holding in itself a promise of the risen life in Christ. As to the Lord's Supper, we have not only a statement of its institution, but a picture of the way in which abuses easily arose in connection with it. It was apparently celebrated as part of a real love feast or *agapé*, as it was called in the early Church. The fourth point is **Paul's doctrine of the resurrection**, and here we see that he

made everything centre upon his own vision of Christ at his conversion. This, Paul believed, had been made to him in a spiritual body, and our union with Christ, through faith, guarantees for us the possession of a similar body in the other life. The meaning of the resurrection, therefore, is not exhausted either by the risen life in Christ, through faith, now lived by His disciple, nor by a vague immortality, but by a personal, individual, recognisable life beyond death.

The place from which the epistle was written was certainly Ephesus, and the year most probably 56 or 57.

## II. CORINTHIANS

This letter has well been termed "the greatest apology of the Apostle," and with such clear internal evidence as it possesses of being the production of his own brain and heart, it is little use laying much stress upon the **external evidence**. Still the latter is sufficient. It was known to, and used by Marcion, and is also quoted by Irenæus, and is in the list of the Mur. Can. It has well been styled by Bousset the most intimately personal of all Paul's writings. We may quote part of that scholar's testimony: "If we ask," he says, "who

Paul was, this letter gives the answer in the best possible way. Everything in it is deeply personal. The nervous attractive personality of the Apostle speaks throughout it with the most extraordinary power. What a gamut of changing notes, wooing, rebuking, forgiving love; holy anger flaming in fire; high, strong confidence, and knowledge of his own worthiness in the sight of God and men; a bitter consciousness of the lack of harmony between the outward and the inward man; and yet a joyful expectation of the final harmonising of these discordant elements."

There surround the letter, however, many **questions of difficulty**. The first is concerned with the events that called this letter into being. From the first letter we learn that Timothy had been Paul's messenger to the Church; in this letter, while Timothy is associated with Paul in the opening words, it is not he but Titus that is spoken of as the Apostle's messenger (see vii. 5-15). It is probable that in the interval between the visit of Timothy and Titus, Paul had himself made a hurried visit to the city, which would then be referred to in ii. 1 of this epistle (*cf.* also xiii. 2). It is further clear that another letter must have been written to the Corinthian Church in the interval, for the references in ii. 3, 4



cannot be made by any plausible theory to refer to our first epistle. It is most likely, therefore, that the brief visit, succeeded by the now lost letter, are both understood in this letter, and that when Paul speaks as he does in xiii. 2 of another visit, it is to tell the Church that he will not then spare any means to effect a permanent settlement of all the internal difficulties. The missing letter had apparently been entrusted to Titus, who remained in Corinth a considerable length of time in order to carry out Paul's plan. For some reason, not quite clearly known, Paul had modified his plans of travel between the first letter and the second, probably owing to circumstances which had arisen on the occasion of his hurried second visit. Another of the objects for which this letter was written was to induce the Church of Corinth to aid in the collection of funds for the poor at Jerusalem, to which already the churches in Macedonia had contributed. We can thus see that a good many events had intervened between our first and second letter, and that we must allow a certain interval—perhaps a year or more—between the two epistles.

The most important critical points with reference to this epistle are those concerned with its **unity**. The first discussion centres round the short paragraph con-

sisting of vi. 14 to vii. 1. It will be noticed that the section interrupts the sense, and that vii. 2 follows quite naturally on vi. 13. It has been argued, therefore, that the short paragraph belongs to the epistle of Paul referred to in I. Cor. v. 9. There is, of course, no external evidence for the omission of the section at any time from the epistle, and it is rather difficult to understand how a small fragment of an otherwise lost epistle should have become embedded here, unless, indeed, it were due to the work of some scribe who possessed this little section, and, being very eager that no fragment of Paul's writing should be lost, had inserted it where he thought it was most appropriate. It is possible, of course, that the paragraph does belong to this epistle, but has somehow become misplaced. It is certainly not easy to see its appropriateness in its present connection, but it is pure speculation to suppose that it belongs to a lost letter.

More important is the question of the section of the letters included in chaps. x. to xiii. This is often known as the **four-chapter letter**. The theory is that in these chapters we have the letter referred to in ii. 4 as being written by the Apostle with feelings of intense grief. The main reasons upon which this theory is based are

(1) the desire to find the letter that is missing; (2) the feeling that these chapters are different in tone and feeling from the earlier part of the letter; (3) that the appeal for the collection would, as in the case of I. Cor., come more naturally at the end of the letter than in the middle. (4) There are many passages in these chapters which look as if they refer to a period earlier than that spoken of in the first nine chapters (*cf.* xiii. 10 with ii. 3, and note *write* and *wrote*; *cf.* xii. 2 with i. 23, and note *come* and *came*). Other points of comparison are those that deal with the self-commendation in the latter part of the letter, and his protesting against any need for commending himself in the earlier part. It has further been supposed that the person referred to in chap. x. is the same as the one referred to in ii. 6, and the latter has by many been identified with the wrong-doer dealt with in the first epistle, chap. v., but there is no real proof of the identification in any case, and it is much more likely that different individuals are referred to, and that the whole circumstances are now unknown to us. It must further be remembered that there is no external evidence for such a break in the epistle, and it is not easy to suppose how, had the two letters once existed separately, all evidence of their beginning and

ending should have vanished. There are also internal evidences that make against the hypothesis. We have no references in these four chapters to the personal insult which apparently Paul had received at the hands of some members of the Corinthian Church, and which had been the reason for his writing the severe letter. It is also difficult to understand the mention made of Titus in chap. xii., if this refers to his being sent on that difficult commission. The change of tone between the first and second parts of the epistle is perhaps best explained by the supposition that in the latter part of the letter he is dealing with his opponents, the Judaisers, with whom he has already been dealing in the Galatian letter. Bousset thinks that at the beginning of chap. x. Paul had taken the pen into his hand himself, and purposed writing a short closing message, but that his anger was roused at memory of the Judaisers' methods, and that he was led to pour forth his soul in the passionate utterances that these chapters contain. On the whole, therefore, we must at present accept II. Cor. as a unity, and believe that its very difficulties constitute the more distinct proof that it is a self-revelation of the man of many moods but one unflinching purpose, the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

**ROMANS**

This letter is one of those best vouched for by **external authority**. In Clement of Rome we have many quotations, though the book is never expressly named, but even earlier than he we seem to have references to this epistle within the pages of the New Testament itself. Many similarities exist between it and the First Epistle of Peter (see *e.g.* Rom. xii. 1; I. Peter ii. 5; Rom. xii. 16-18; I. Peter iii. 8-9). Resemblances are also discoverable between it and the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James. In each case there is some discussion as to the priority of the respective books, but in the judgment of the present writer there is no question that Romans is the source in each case. A strong similarity is also discoverable between the Doxology of Romans and the Doxology of Jude. Next to Clement of Rome comes Ignatius, in whose letters there appear numerous reminiscences of this epistle, as is also the case with the Epistle of Polycarp. We have the first trace of the letter by name in the Canon of Marcion, and, of course, it is included in the list of Paul's epistles found in Irenæus and the Mur.

Canon. The internal evidence is strongly in favour of Pauline authorship. Indeed, no epistle is more clearly his work than is this one.

There is, however, some considerable question about the **integrity** of the epistle as it now stands, and there is a good deal even in the external evidence for the view that the whole or part of the last two chapters do not belong to this letter. To begin with, there are some manuscripts which omit the words "in Rome" in i. 7 and 15, which seems to point to the fact that its destination was not quite certain to all scribes, and that there may have been manuscripts which either omitted mention of a destination at all, or gave a different one. When we come to the concluding chapters we find a great variety in the position of the Doxology that now stands at chap. xvi. 25-27. Some manuscripts have it only at the end of chap. xiv., others in both places, while some omit it altogether. It seems that Marcion omitted the last two chapters, and there is some evidence that certain manuscripts followed him. Out of all the numerous theories that have been framed to account for these facts, we can only deal with one that has found a large amount of support, and possesses considerable probability. This

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is the view that chap. xvi. belongs to a **letter addressed to Ephesus**, and not to Rome. The theory is based on the following grounds: (1) That Paul was unlikely to know so many people in Rome before he had visited it; but we must remember, on the other hand, that Rome was the centre of the world's life at the time, and that many friends of Paul might easily have found their way there, and settled down in the city, just as a great many provincials at the present moment could easily send a large number of personal greetings to friends in London, though they may never have visited that city. (2) Some of the names are undoubtedly closely connected with Asia Minor, but what has been just said would explain that also. (3) The warning contained in the chapter (vers. 17-20) against false teachers is thought to be more appropriate to Ephesus than to Rome. On the whole, this theory does not commend itself very much to our judgment, nor is it in any way made clearer by the textual differences above referred to. These seem in some way to have been due to Marcion, and the variety of the position of the Doxology is probably to be thus explained. There is no sufficient reason for cutting off even the final chapter from the epistle, though no matter at all

affecting the thought of the letter would be altered by such a course of action were sufficient probability to be discovered for adopting it.

The **constitution of the Church** at Rome has been a matter of considerable controversy, but, on the whole, the evidence seems to point clearly to its being of the same mixed character as most of the other churches to which Paul's epistles were written; that is to say, it contained both Jewish and Gentile members, and though there are parts of this epistle that seem very distinctly bearing upon Jewish life and thought, they are so written as to be quite applicable to Jews who formed part of a church the majority of whose members were Gentiles.

It is not necessary here to discuss the question of the **origin** of the Church at Rome, though that is in itself a very interesting problem, because the letter itself is sufficient witness that a Christian community did exist there, and to this Paul addresses himself.

The time in Paul's life at which this letter was written appears to be that described in Acts xx. 2, 3. It was soon after the second letter to the Corinthians; on the occasion, indeed, of his third visit to that city. He is in the hope of soon visiting the capital, his intention



being that after he has taken the gifts of the various churches to Jerusalem, he should proceed directly to Rome and the West. We are aware how this design was frustrated by his enemies in Jerusalem, and how it was only after an interval of two years that he reached the city as a prisoner. The **date** of the letter is, therefore, in or about the year 58.

The Epistle to the Romans has a somewhat different character from the rest of Paul's letters, inasmuch as it partakes more of the nature of a **treatise** than of a letter. It is, however, true that the real letter element is not absent from the work, and we can understand that Paul had got his information about the condition of the Church at Rome from numerous friends who had visited it, or from actual members of the Church who were personally known to him. It seems as if the great problems that concern the community were those of Faith, in its Jewish interpretation, and the aspects it assumed in the teaching of Paul. We learn from the close of Acts that these were the questions discussed by him and his fellow-countrymen on the occasion of his visit to Rome, and that helps us to understand the prominent place occupied by these subjects in this letter. It deals with them in a more leisurely and

reasoned fashion than does the Galatian letter, and we can see how reflection upon past controversies has enabled the writer in some ways to make his positions clear, and to relate them to other problems. It is not so much a compendium of Christian doctrine as it is a discussion of the nature of faith in relation to righteousness, (1) as the gift of God bestowed upon us in Christ, and (2) as the fruit of the new life wrought in us by the spirit of Christ. The strong contrast that is thus involved with the righteousness that was thought to be attainable through the law, involves Paul in the discussion of the position of Israel to this new righteousness offered to all men in Christ Jesus, and gives him the opportunity of working out his splendid vindication of the Divine purpose with regard to his own people, and for the setting forth of his own philosophy of history. The twelfth and thirteenth chapters contain fine practical teaching on the Christian life as expressed in the individual, the Church, and the State.

### EPHESIANS

This is the first of the letters generally known as **the epistles of the captivity**, though that captivity has been understood by some as Paul's confinement at Cæsarea,

and by others as that in Rome. In each of the four letters he describes himself as a prisoner (*cf.* Eph. iii. 1; iv. 1; vi. 20; Col. iv. 18; Philem. 10, 13; Phil. i. 7, 13), but as one who had possessed a good deal of freedom, a state of things which is in agreement with what we are told in Acts xxviii. 30. Some have argued that Cæsarea was more easily reached from Asia Minor than was Rome, and, therefore, that the runaway slave Onesimus might choose that city as a refuge. But the Rome of that period, like the London of to-day, was the best hiding-place for all who sought to escape justice; and here again, Rome better suits the conditions. Many references in the letters also point to a life at the centre of things rather than in a far-off provincial town such as Cæsarea. We may take it, then, as pretty generally agreed that the four letters now to be considered were written during the period of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, probably between the years 61 and 63, though the earlier chronology advocated by Harnack makes the Roman imprisonment date from 57 to 59. The majority of scholars, however, favour **the later date**. In characterising the whole of these letters, the present writer may quote words he has written elsewhere: "All the letters that belong

to this period of the Apostle's career are marked by a tenderness of personal feeling and a warmth of intimate regard. There is a freedom from the more bitter controversy of an earlier time, and from the need to rebuke vicious excesses. The sterner tone occurs rather through warning than through reproof. There is no more beautiful letter than that to the Philippians, and no profounder or more highly sustained passages than some in the Ephesians and Colossians, while the unique features of the letter to Philemon make it a priceless gem." (Century Bible, Eph. p. 10.)

In turning to the Epistle to the Ephesians, the first question that meets us is whether **that title** is correct. Some of our oldest authorities do not have the words "at Ephesus" at all, and several early Christian writers, in discussing the passage, omit all reference to them, while Tertullian tells us that another title was known, namely, "to the Laodiceans." Such a letter does exist in a number of Latin manuscripts, and was known to early Greek writers, for its name occurs in the Mur. Canon; but the form in which we now possess it is certainly a forgery, for it consists of nothing but extracts of Pauline phrases strung together from other epistles, and was no doubt com-

posed to meet the reference to such a letter in Colossians iv. 16. A more reasonable theory is that the letter we are now dealing with was the letter therein referred to, and the best way of explaining the fact is to suppose that the so-called Ephesian letter was really a circular one sent to all the churches in that district, including, of course, Ephesus. It is possible that various copies of the letter were made, and the name of each church inserted in the copy sent to that particular city, though it is more probable that only one copy was sent with no name originally given in it, and that at a later time the name of the metropolitan church of Ephesus crept into the document. This would also meet the difficulty that has been felt with regard to this letter, namely, that there are no personal greetings in it to his own friends, and that there is lacking to some extent the note of intimacy that we might expect in writing to a church so well known to the Apostle as was that at Ephesus. It is for this reason that many are inclined to assign the whole or part of Romans xvi. to this epistle (see above, p. 99).

As regards **external evidence** for the epistle, we find in the New Testament itself many points of

contact between this letter and I. Peter (see *e.g.* i. 20-22; *cf.* with I. Peter iii. 22, and, again, iii. 5, 10 with I. Peter i. 10-12). As in the case of Romans, Ephesians seems to be the earlier of the two letters. There are also many resemblances between this epistle and the Fourth Gospel, mainly in John, chapters i., iii., and xvii. It seems likely that this epistle formed a stepping-stone between the earlier Pauline doctrine of Christ and that doctrine which is found in the Fourth Gospel; and when we remember that both writings are associated with Ephesus, we have some indication of the reason of the resemblance. Of the close connection between this letter and that to the Colossians we shall say more in the discussion of the latter epistle. In the sub-apostolic writers, we have not more than traces of the language of this letter, and even Ignatius when he writes to the Church at Ephesus does not mention this letter by name, nor does he definitely quote it; but there is one difficult phrase in chapter xii. of his letter where, addressing the Ephesians, he says they are fellow-initiates of Paul's in the mystery of the Gospel, and then says that Paul makes mention of them "in every epistle." What this means is not clear, but it is certainly striking

that he does not make special mention of what he says to them in this epistle, if Ignatius considered Ephesians to be confined to that community. Irenæus, of course, attributes it to the Apostle, as does the Mur. Canon.

It is when we turn to the question of the **internal evidence** that scholars have most to say against the Pauline authorship of the epistle. Some of the arguments are based upon the **peculiarity of the Greek words** employed, or of the Greek constructions used. The difficulties that certainly exist on both these points are not, however, insuperable when we recollect the difference of subject-matter in many parts of the letter, and the development that may very well have taken place in Paul's thought and style during the interval that elapsed between Romans and this letter. Further objections are raised with regard to **the thought** of the epistle. It is said that the doctrine about the law and about the person and work of Christ is very different from that of the earlier letters, but it can be fairly answered that the circumstances account for this. New problems have arisen in new surroundings, and what is more in evidence here are the speculative heresies of that district

of Asia Minor, whereby men were tempted to look for other mediatorial agencies than Christ Himself, to pay a great deal of attention to the doctrine of angels, and to regard Christ as one among many means of approach to God, even if He was the highest and best. Surely the Apostle is at liberty to vary the emphasis of his thought if he says nothing that is necessarily contradictory to the positions maintained elsewhere in his writings. Finally, the main difficulty centres round **the doctrine of the Church**. The statement in ii. 20, that the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, is felt to be difficult if the letter is as early as Paul's lifetime. The verse is, however, capable of more than one interpretation (see the commentaries). But even if the most obvious meaning is taken to be the correct one, Paul might very well have made that statement, seeing that he elsewhere lays great emphasis upon both Apostles and Prophets (*cf.* I. Cor. xii. 28 and Eph. iv. 11). The passage in iii. 5 presents an additional difficulty, inasmuch as it seems to imply that the whole question of the inclusion of the Gentiles had been spiritually revealed to all the Apostles. This seems to disregard the great work of



Paul's life, but he may either be speaking in the most general language, or else referring to the impression his own arguments had made upon his opponents. On the whole, therefore, there are not sufficiently strong arguments to be adduced to overthrow the general witness of Christian tradition that the epistle is the work of the Apostle. Its beauty and lofty speculation have impressed all classes of commentators, and Coleridge was no doubt right when he described it as "one of the divinest compositions of man." In this letter, more clearly than in any other, does he set forth Christ as the head and centre of the universe, subject only to God the Father, and the Church of Christ as universal and catholic, including all who believe on Him.

### COLOSSIANS

This letter was written to one of the churches which, so far as we know, Paul had never visited. It was probably founded by Epaphras during the time of Paul's residence at Ephesus. Paul may even (see iv. 10) have written an earlier letter to the Church. This one was called out by difficulties and dangers of false teaching, to which they had been exposed, and was sent

to the community at the hands of Tychicus, who was accompanied by Onesimus, of whom we shall hear more in the next letter.

The **external evidence** for this letter is fairly strong. Nothing but echoes of its words are found earlier than Marcion, who included it in his list. It is named as usual by Irenæus, and the Muratorian Canon. Like Ephesians, it has been strongly assailed on internal grounds. Some have endeavoured to accept parts of the letter, and reject other parts, but this theory does not find much favour, nor is it very probable. The obvious close connection of this letter with Philemon goes a long way to confirm its genuineness. The main difficulties that have been felt concerning it are similar to those raised with regard to the Ephesian letter, and can be answered in the same way. A careful comparison with the Ephesian letter makes it seem possible that this may have been the earlier of the two, but, on the other hand, Paul may only have confined himself in this letter to certain aspects of subjects which were dealt with more fully in the longer epistle, and the letters must have been written so close together that it is hardly worth while to spend much time discussing which was composed first.

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The main aspects of the false teaching with which the epistle is concerned are those of **ritual and of asceticism**. To a certain extent they may be thought to be Jewish, and this is further supported by the frequent references to angels throughout the epistle, an advanced doctrine of angels being a feature of later Judaism. It is interesting to think that Paul is still face to face with the dangerous tendencies of the Judaisers, though their point of attack is now a different one from that employed in the earlier churches of Galatia. Paul has the same answer for them that he has for the Ephesians. It is in Christ, and Christ alone, that all solutions to problems of thought and practice are to be found.

### PHILEMON

This beautiful little letter stands **unique** among the generally accepted letters of the Apostle. We know little more about the persons named in it than the letter itself tells us, except from the allusions found in the contemporary letter to Colossæ. We need hardly expect to find much external evidence for the epistle, nor do we find any definite trace of it till we come to the Canon of Marcion and the Muratorian Canon.

In this case Tertullian is the first who distinctly notices it. Of course, the comparative neglect of the letter in these early days would arise from the fact that it contained nothing of a doctrinal character.

The **circumstances of its origin** are sufficiently clear from the letter itself, and that Paul should thus befriend a runaway slave, and plead for his restoration with such exquisite tenderness and courtesy, has by all classes of writers been felt to reveal a very fine side of his character. That Onesimus had become Paul's convert there can be no question, and he had also become loved as a brother, and in his gratitude had rendered himself almost indispensable to the Apostle. With great unselfishness, however, Paul sends him back to his own master, and makes himself answerable for any inconvenience or loss to which Philemon may have been exposed.

The **permanent significance** of the letter lies in its being the first document that deals with slavery from the Christian point of view. Paul does not write an abolitionist pamphlet, but presents the necessary solvent of slavery in the doctrine of universal brotherhood in Christ Jesus. It is thus right on the part of Sabatier to say that it is "an invaluable document of the Pauline

ethics." "We delight to meet it," he continues, "on our toilsome road, and to rest awhile with Paul from his great controversies and fatiguing labours in this refreshing oasis which Christian friendship offered to him. We are accustomed to conceive of the Apostle as always armed for warfare, sheathed in logic, and bristling with argument. It is delightful to find him at his ease, and for a moment able to unbend, engaged in this friendly intercourse, so full of freedom and even playfulness."

### PHILIPPIANS

There are few more striking stories in the Book of Acts than the account in chapter xvi. of the introduction of the Gospel to Philippi. Apart from the dramatic nature of the circumstances of the mission, there is the great significance that attaches to it as being the first work carried on by the Apostle in Europe. The second visit of which we have certain knowledge is related in Acts xx. 6; and this letter itself reveals to us the intimate and loving terms on which he stood with the members of that Church. From them he does not hesitate to accept gifts, and members of the Church seem to be among his most welcome visitors. The

Philippians are his "brethren beloved, his joy and crown."

The **external evidence** for the epistle begins very early, for Polycarp in his letter to the same Church refers to Paul's having written to them, and we are told that the early heretics of the second century knew and used it. The letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne mentions it, and it is included in the Canon of Marcion and the Muratorian Canon, as well as accepted by Irenæus.

The **internal evidence** is no less strong. The personal revelation of Paul's character, the style and language, and the obvious naturalness of the whole composition bear sufficient testimony that the traditional authorship is the true one. Even very advanced scholars of the present day are convinced of that fact. Some, however, think that one or more letters have been combined in this one, the main argument for which position is derived from iii. 1. The word translated "finally" can, however, bear other meanings, and the words "to write the same things," even if they do not refer to the immediate context, may refer to some letter that has been lost. At any rate, the attempts that have been made to reconstruct two or

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more letters out of the existing one are not sufficiently in agreement to be convincing.

The letter as a whole is marked by great **naturalness**. Perhaps no letter of Paul's is more obviously a genuine letter than is this one. As Dr. Kennedy says: "He feels thoroughly at home with his readers. Thoughts crowd in upon him as he writes. His reminiscences of Philippi supply secret links of connection between paragraphs which might seem isolated from one another, links of connection which we can no longer trace." A further characteristic note of the letter is its **joyfulness**. This is the more remarkable when we realise the conditions under which it was written. He was not only a prisoner, but a prisoner with a probability of death always before him, but he has the secret of gladness in the constant and near presence of his Lord, whose advent he awaits with patient hope, and to attain to a share in the power of His resurrection is the aim of his ambition.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

THE three remaining letters attributed to Paul are generally classified under the title of pastorals, because they deal with the subject of the ministry, and are addressed to two pastors, Timothy and Titus. They have much in common, so that before dealing with each of them individually, there are many questions which can best be discussed with relation to the whole group. The first of these is the **historical situation** presupposed in the letters. Recent attempts have been made to find a place for the letters in the account of Paul's life given in the Book of Acts. It is suggested that I. Timothy was written immediately after Paul's leaving Miletus (see Acts xx. 38), in order to supplement the instructions then delivered to Timothy, while the letter to Titus is dated from Rome after the voyage, the visit to Crete referred to in Titus i. 5 being



that which occurred during the voyage recorded in Acts. II. Timothy would then be a little later than Philip-  
pians, just on the eve of Paul's execution. A great  
difficulty that attaches to such a theory is the impos-  
sibility of explaining how the letters of the captivity  
above described could have been inserted between  
Titus and II. Timothy without any obvious influence  
upon them of the style found in the pastoral letters.  
Nor can we find any better reason for accepting the  
theory that Paul writes at one time to a church, and  
at another to an individual, and uses perfectly different  
language, and adopts a perfectly different attitude. As  
Dr. Horton puts it, by such an assumption "we may  
gain the pastorals, but we lose Paul."

The position generally assumed is to suppose that  
after the letter to the Philippians was written, Paul  
escaped from his imprisonment in Rome, and con-  
tinued his activities in the East for some time before  
he was again arrested, and underwent another imprison-  
ment that culminated in his execution. Some refer-  
ences in early Christian writers support the view that  
he travelled farther west than Rome, but we have no  
definite evidence of his ministry during the period  
except what is given us in the letters now under con-

sideration. I. Timothy seems to speak of a journey in Asia Minor and Europe, from which latter place perhaps he writes the letter. According to the Epistle to Titus, he had travelled with the pastor in Crete, and writes to him probably from Corinth. II. Timothy would then reveal to us the conditions of the last imprisonment, where he is in loneliness, and is eager for the presence of Timothy, and for the possession of some of his most valued belongings. It is difficult, however, to employ the testimony of epistles, which we shall see are themselves in question, for the construction of a history for which we have practically no other basis. All that Christian tradition definitely affirms is that the execution of Paul took place near Rome, but we have no independent evidence of its date, nor of the exact circumstances that led up to it. It is quite likely that some elements of genuine tradition are to be found in the pastoral letters, particularly in II. Timothy, but present knowledge does not justify us in reconstructing what are called the last journeys of Paul upon the slight foundations that these letters themselves afford.

The second point of difficulty is in the **character of Timothy** as given in these letters. Much that is said

of him, while perfectly appropriate in the case of a young and untried convert, is difficult to associate with a man who for many years had been Paul's friend and fellow-worker. One would suppose that those years of fellowship might not only have given Timothy a most intimate knowledge of Paul's own ideas and methods of work, but would not have necessitated the frequent references to Timothy's inexperience and timidity, nor would it have been requisite for Paul to adopt, so often as he does, the tone of self-defence on the matter of his apostleship. However much such a defence is in place when writing to a community, many among whom challenge the claim, it is not at all probable that one of his best friends who had frequently been associated with him in writing letters to these communities should require the same assurance. In the case of Titus the difficulties are not so great, but we know so little of the circumstances that it is not very safe to argue either way from the mere contents of the short letter written to him.

The third difficulty is connected with the **developed organisation of the churches**. It is true that no new title is introduced, for we have read of bishops, presbyters, deacons, women workers, and widows both in Acts and in the earlier letters of Paul. But there are

some points in the directions about these various classes which are novel. The position of the Apostle seems rather more authoritative than in the earlier letters. The bishop has a more influential position, both in the churches and towards outsiders, than we find described in any earlier work, and some of his duties, such as the entertaining of travelling brethren, and the care of the churches' finances, seem new. In I. Timothy we find that he has commission to ordain ministers, and to hand on the apostolic tradition, but how far the directions apply only to Timothy or are a general description of every bishopric is not clear. It seems pretty certain that the bishop and the presbyter are one and the same person, though some writers think that in these epistles we have already the traces of the practice of the second century, which separated the two offices. The deacons have not only financial work to do, but also teaching, and if they execute their duties well, may hope to rise to a higher position. Whether the women named are the wives of deacons or a separate class of deaconesses is not certain. The widows, who have already been mentioned in Romans and I. Cor., and the care of whom has been spoken of in Acts vi. 1 and ix. 39, appear in these letters as a separate class. We know that at a later time

widows constituted a distinct order in the Christian community, and the beginning of that state of affairs seems to be traceable in these epistles. It is not, of course, impossible that such developments may have taken place even during the lifetime of the Apostle, and it may be argued that the letters of the captivity which we have already considered have so little to say about Church organisation that the growth shown in the pastoral epistles may have been slowly progressing all the while. But when we turn to the literature of the second century, it cannot be doubted that the Church order herein described seems a most natural stepping-stone between that of the earlier Pauline letters and the Church of forty or fifty years later.

A further difficulty, and a very serious one, is to be found in the **vocabulary and style** of these letters. To appreciate this properly it is necessary to examine the question in the original, but some points can be put quite simply. The average of new words is very high, and a peculiar feature of the matter is not only that different words are employed than what are found in other letters—for this would not be of much importance—but that words not elsewhere used by Paul are common in these letters, and where he uses different expressions

for the same idea in his other letters, these do not occur in the pastorals, and the phrase employed in them is common to them all. Some of the best known expressions are "profitable," "godliness," "sound doctrine," "faithful saying," "come to the knowledge of the truth," &c. (the English reader will find all these words and many others carefully noted in Dr. Horton's commentary in the Century Bible). Many of the phrases occur with such frequency, and are so stereotyped, that they do not appear to have the freshness and vigour of Paul's general writing.

It will certainly appear to many that in spite of these and other difficulties that exist, the authorship of the epistles is settled by the definite claim made by each of them to be written by the Apostle. It is to most modern readers inconceivable that such a claim can mean anything else than **authenticity or forgery**, and so a word may here be said upon the whole question of **pseudonymity** in ancient writings. Whatever decision we may arrive at with regard to the pastoral epistles, the question of pseudonymous writings must face us, in the case at least of II. Peter. The practice was very common among Jewish writers to produce a book under the name of some famous

man of an earlier day, as *e.g.* in the case of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs (see the present writer's commentary on these books in the Century Bible). Many of the later non-canonical books are written in the name of great teachers such as Moses, Isaiah, Enoch, and others, and the theory was that the writer was too humble to claim authority for his own work, and so wrote under the shadow of a great name, being himself in sympathy with the teaching of his famous predecessor. This was a practice which obtained to some extent among the schools of Greek philosophy as well as among the Hebrews. In many cases the names chosen were those of men who had lived so long before the writer's time, that there could be no possibility of misunderstanding, but sometimes the names of practical contemporaries were chosen, as seems to have been the case with the Epistle of Barnabas, the Gospel of Peter, the spurious letters of Ignatius, the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, and other works. It is quite possible, therefore, that with no evil intention or purpose of leading readers astray, the name of the great Apostle may have been used by some of his friends and followers who were anxious to further his work, promulgate his ideas, and in all

probability, find a hearing for teaching that they knew was derived from himself in letters that, in their present form at least, do not emanate from him at all. As we shall see, when we consider the epistles in detail, many attempts have been made to pick out the sections that are genuinely Pauline from those which are due to the later writer, but the task is not an easy one, for different scholars regard it in entirely opposite lights, some considering the autobiographical portions to be undoubtedly genuine, and others picking these out as the undoubted mark of artistic imitation. The present writer is inclined to the view that II. Timothy possesses the largest amount of genuine Pauline material, and is the earliest of the three, but that it is a hopeless task to endeavour to sort out sections which are genuinely Pauline from those which belong to a later hand, and that the most probable theory of the epistles is that some writer or writers intimately acquainted with the Apostle's thought and practice prepared these epistles for the generation that succeeded him, in order to preserve what was known among his friends as to his views on Church life and organisation, and attached to them the names of two of his most famous disciples.



## I. TIMOTHY

The **external evidence** for this epistle is pretty strong. It is attributed to Paul by Irenæus and in the Mur. Can. Marcion knew it, but knew it only to reject it with the other pastoral letters. It was rejected also by Tatian, and by certain heretical writers. Why they were so rejected is not clearly known. Earlier references are supposed to be found to the letter in Polycarp, Ignatius, and even Clement of Rome, but these are very doubtful, and are much more likely to be references to a similar class of ideas found in the common literature, though the coincidences between one passage of Polycarp and I. Timothy are very striking.

Of the general difficulties that attach to the internal evidence we have already spoken, but we may further note the occurrence of the three "faithful sayings" in this epistle, and the long passage, rhythmical in the original, found in iii. 16. These various passages seem like **quotations** of fixed liturgical formulæ, and in that way are different from anything we find elsewhere in Paul. The letter shows a very clear conception of the importance of the traditional Gospel, but this is

not a new feature in Paulinism, for the same thing has been found in I. Corinthians, but there is a more definite indication of a prophetic witness as regards false teaching in iv. 1-4 than we find anywhere else in Paul, with the exception of the passage in II. Thessalonians ii. The character of the false teaching as described in i. 7 shows that it is Jewish in its origin, and the genealogies against which Timothy is warned in the same chapter have undoubtedly a clear reference to well-known elements in Gnostic teaching. Further, the "oppositions" of vi. 20, where the word is really "antitheses," may also be a technical word of these heresies, for we know it was the term employed by Marcion in his book. Hort thinks it might well describe "the endless contrast of decisions found in endless distinctions," which was a mark of all such teachings. The fact that the false teachers seem to have been practical ascetics, and also to have meddled with magical arts (see II. Tim. iii. 13), in addition to the points named above, has led many to consider that they were not only Jews, but had a large element of Essene teaching in their philosophy.

The general character of Christian life described in the epistle is that of the ordered community, and is

quite in agreement with all we know of Paul's earlier counsels to the Christian Churches of Corinth and Ephesus, and all that points to a more defined organisation is only in agreement with the later period to which we are inclined to assign the letter.

The attempts that have been made to split this letter into **two or more** have not been very satisfactory. One condition that has governed these endeavours is to take the general sections of the epistle as a unity, and then to suppose that all parts containing direct personal references have been introduced at a later time, and have thus altered what might be a kind of homily, or pastoral instruction, into a letter. For those who want to study this aspect of the subject more thoroughly, reference should be made to Moffat's "Historical New Testament."

The **permanent value** of the epistle is largely independent of the question of its authorship. Of course, if we were certain that it was written by Paul, there would rest an authority upon its statements that may not be supposed otherwise to inhere in them, but such a view is contrary to the general trend of the New Testament, where some of the greatest books are either anonymous or written by comparatively unimportant persons. It

shows us, then, a sane view of the Christian life, a fine temper of conciliation, and yet an earnest missionary motive, a desire for everything being done decently and in order, but yet a place for the initiative of the Divine Spirit, and an eagerness to provide ready and fitting channels for His action.

It is impossible to fix a definite **date** for this writing. Of course, if it was written by Paul, it would be in some period between 62 and 66, but in the view here taken of it, it probably does not belong to the first century at all, or, if so, just to the close of it, and Harnack is of opinion that in its present form it is not earlier than 140. So late a date seems impossible, owing to the much more advanced Church organisation of that period, and it does not seem at all likely that the letter dates from a later time than the days of Ignatius, and is in all probability earlier than his epistles.

## II. TIMOTHY

The **external evidence** for II. Timothy is practically the same as that for the first epistle, though it is not so extensive or clear. When we turn to look at the **internal evidence** we have a much more complicated problem.

This letter is the most personal of the three, but the very touch of intimacy increases our difficulties. The picture given of Timothy is very hard to accept as historically accurate if this is really later than the first epistle, for he is dealt with as a younger and less strong personality than in the first epistle. If, however, we are right in holding this letter to be really the earlier one, the difficulty is not so marked. The personal revelation of Paul's character has much in it that is in agreement with his earlier writings, and the reference in iii. 11 to the sufferings in Galatia in the neighbourhood of Timothy's home is very characteristic. The same difficulties of language occur in this epistle with in some ways greater force than in the others, but if this is the earliest of the three, then, of course, it would set the fashion for the others. Though not so much is said as in I. Timothy about false teaching, two points are specially mentioned, the magicians of III. 13, which points clearly to magical practices such as were common at Ephesus, and the reference to those who held that the resurrection was already passed (*cf.* I. Cor. xv. 12), who are described in ii. 18. One noteworthy passage with reference to the Old Testament in iii. 15, 16, is more definite in its language than anything found else-

where in Paul. It does not, however, go beyond the implied theory of earlier passages in his letters. The Revised Version translation gives the correct significance of the original, which is descriptive of the effect to be derived from all inspired Scripture, though the passage does not define what parts of Scripture are inspired; and we cannot tell from this section whether the writer is dealing with the Hebrew or Greek Old Testament, the latter, of course, including many books that are not in the former. The letter contains a very beautiful portraiture of the Christian minister in the twofold aspects of the writer as a man with his course completed, and of the ideal set before the younger preacher with his work largely before him. These remain of permanent value to all time, whatever decision we may come to with regard to the authorship. Many personal friends of Paul's are mentioned in the epistle, some of whom are known to us through his other letters. It appears that in any case the writer was intimate with the Pauline circle, and we may take it that the letter contains genuine traditions of the Apostle's relationship to his friends.

The question of **date** is as difficult as in the former case, but this letter probably stands nearer to Paul's

own lifetime, and may belong to the decade 70 to 80.

The question of the **integrity** of the letter has been much in dispute. Some consider that it contains two letters, one running up to iv. 8, and perhaps including also iv. 19-21, while the second letter is the short message contained in iv. 9-18. This would not be difficult to believe, and would help us to understand some of the problems that the present letter contains.

Others, with more elaboration, think that the more general section consisting of ii. 14-iii. 9 is a separate letter, attributed by some to the final author, but chap. iv. 9-15 and 19-21 is a short letter written during the third missionary journey, and that what remains of the epistle is another letter, written at the close of the Roman imprisonment. There is one short section at the end of the first chapter, consisting of vers. 15-18, which seems fragmentary, and contains in itself certain difficulties. It may be a later addition. Of course, all partition theories are open to much criticism, and are at best only theoretical. In the case of such a letter, however, as we are here considering it may be easier to regard the autobiographical passages as genuine than to hold that the whole letter is the invention of a later

writer than the Apostle. Some may feel it difficult to understand how a letter entitled II. Timothy could precede I. Timothy, but the titles may easily have been added at a much later time.

### TITUS

The **external evidence** for this letter is much the same as that for the two former ones, but is strengthened by the fact that it was the only one of the three accepted by Tatian. The history of Titus, so far as we know it, is that he was one of Paul's Gentile converts, who was with the Apostle at Antioch, and went on with him to Jerusalem, where the attempt was made to compel Paul to circumcise him (see Gal. ii.). A further reference in II. Cor. xii. 18 is taken by Dr. Souter to mean that Titus was Timothy's brother, and to him is given the work of organising the collection at Corinth. This duty was well done, and Titus returned with the later message. All other information about him is derived from this present letter, from which it appears that he had charge of the work in Crete. The earlier references we have examined show him to have been a man of great reliability, and of a genial and persuasive temperament, with a personality suited for difficult and



delicate tasks. This letter tells us that Paul and he had been together in Crete, but on what occasion it is impossible to tell (see above, p. 118). This letter purports to have been sent to him by Zenas, of whom we know nothing further, and by Apollos, Paul's well-known friend (see iii. 13).

The **general tone** of the letter is very much akin to that of the other two pastorals. False teachers are active in the community, and are clearly of a Jewish complexion. Church organisation is dealt with on the same lines as in I. Timothy, but more simply. The same features of vocabulary and style are present in this letter as in the former ones. Attempts have been made, not very satisfactorily, to split this letter into Pauline and non-Pauline sections, the only part about which there is absolute unanimity among such critics being that the last few verses are certainly to be attributed to the Apostle. In its present form it probably consists of a Pauline kernel, no longer definitely to be distinguished, worked over by a later hand, and may belong to the latter part of the first century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Note B for latest views on Pauline literature.

## CHAPTER VII

### EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THIS book is **unique** among the books of the New Testament. It is called an epistle, but has practically no features of such a writing, except in its close. There is no opening salutation, and, therefore, the book lays no claim to any definite authorship. The **external evidence** in its favour as a book well known to the early Christian Church begins with a quotation from it in Clement of Rome. It cannot be definitely said that Justin Martyr quotes it, and it is not included in the Canon of Marcion or in the Mur. Canon. We have no reference to it in the extant works of Irenæus, and our next evidence is in Tertullian, who ascribed it to Barnabas. Clement of Alexandria assigns it to Paul, and says that the Apostle wrote it in Hebrew, and that Luke translated it into Greek. Origen knows that tradition assigned it to Clement or to Luke, but for himself the authorship appears an insoluble riddle.

It was a long time before the epistle was accepted by Western Christendom, and even such late writers as Augustine and Jerome were doubtful about it.

Such being a brief outline of the facts of the external evidence, we may consider further the **later attempts** at assigning an **author** to it. It is almost certain that he cannot be Paul, from considerations of tradition, language, style, and thought. It is in all ways far removed from his recognised writings, and has no similarity even to the disputed ones. One clear statement may be mentioned, that of ii. 3, where the writer of this epistle claims to have received his message at the hand of preachers of the Gospel, being in this quite apart from Paul, who always lays stress upon the immediacy of his own message. Many consider that the claims of Barnabas are excellent, and other suggestions have been Peter and Silas, but with little support. It was Luther who suggested Apollos as the author, and the suggestion has met with much favour. Apollos was trained in Alexandria, and this book bears the strongest evidence of Alexandrian influence. He was mighty in the Scriptures, and eloquent, and this book shows both features. We could understand, therefore, the connection between Apollos, Paul, and Timothy. The

only difficulty is to understand how his name could have slipped out of later tradition. The most recent theory is that of Harnack, who says if Apollos, why not the teachers of Apollos, namely, Priscilla and Aquila? And of the two, Harnack leans to Priscilla as the authoress. We know how highly Paul regarded these workers, and the important place they held in the early Christian community. Were she the writer, it might account for the loss of the name, as women teachers were not encouraged in the early Church. We have no facts that can lead us further, and choice must be made between these various suggestions, or else the book be left anonymous.

The **character of the church** to which the letter is addressed is another matter that is not easy to decide. The title might seem to settle, without further dispute, that it consisted of Jews, but apart from the fact that the title is not known before the end of the second century, the word "Hebrews" had a very wide significance. Neither are the references in the epistle itself to the Jews of such a nature as to be only applicable to a Jewish community. Elsewhere than in this epistle we find Gentiles addressed as the seed of Abraham (see Gal. iii. 7, 29), and the effort to limit such passages as chaps. ix. 26-28 and ii. 9, 15 to a purely Jewish

community does not seem to the present writer conclusive. Some scholars consider that the reference in xiii. 13, "without the camp," must point to Jewish readers, but surely it is only a special instance of the general allegorical methods of the writer, and would be perfectly intelligible to Gentile readers trained in such forms of expression. Stronger arguments for the Jewish position are found in the mention of the dangers to which the Christian community is exposed. Many hold that the language used better describes those who were in danger of relapsing into Judaism than into heathenism. The passages that are adduced as the strongest proofs of this position are vi. 6 and x. 29. But in neither case does it seem less appropriate to use the language of those who had enjoyed the privilege of Christian communion and had again fallen back into the shame of heathenism. The strongest point of all used in support of the Jewish hypothesis is the large claim that is made for the Old Testament in the pages of this epistle, but here again the writer may be relying upon what is for him the supreme authority, and feel himself unable to advance any stronger argument than it contains for the position he wishes to emphasise.

The sins to which the community was prone seem to have been those that particularly beset Gentiles—

*e.g.* impurity, slackness, lack of faith and hope; the first principles of the Gospel set forth in the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth chapters are much more appropriate if used in reference to a Gentile than to a Jewish community. It is not necessary to argue, however, that the community to whom the letter was addressed belonged entirely to either section, but that, like the Pauline churches, the Church here addressed consisted both of Jews and Gentiles.

It is not more easy to decide the **place** to which the letter was written, though Rome seems a more probable destination than any other. It may have been to another Roman community than that to which Paul wrote.

There is nothing in the epistle that definitely points to a certain **date**, though the various references to suffering seem to imply a period of persecution past and threatening. This may point to the eve of the persecution under Domitian (A.D. 81-96). Some have supposed that the constant references to the Jewish law imply that the temple was still standing, but it is very striking that the word "temple" never occurs in the epistle, and that all the illustration is drawn from the accounts of the tabernacle ritual. The whole method of treatment is too allegorical to base any historical

assumption on such a passage as xiii. 13. The condition of the Christian community, implied in various parts of the epistle, points to a later stage than the first generation, so that on the whole we may put the letter in a period toward the end of the first century.

The **lessons of the epistle** are those especially designed for a period of transition, and that is the reason why it so frequently strikes readers as modern in tone. It is an elaborate discussion of the permanence of the Christian faith as opposed to the transiency of Judaism. But the truth here illustrated by that example is applicable to many other conditions. The writer's purpose is to show that God "fulfils Himself in many ways," and that neither ritual, law, nor systems of theology can at any one time fully express His message. The one eternal reality is God in Christ. To set Christ forth as "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever" is the great object of the book. What at first seems, on a casual reading, to be the writing of all the New Testament limited to an age and a state of society far apart from our own, becomes, on closer acquaintance, the most illuminating discussion of Christian thought for every period that involves the strain and stress that arise from modification of old views, and the new realisation of the things that are eternal.

CHAPTER VIII  
THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES  
JAMES

THIS is the first of a group of writings known as **General** or **Catholic Epistles**. The most probable origin of the term is the fact that they are addressed to Christians in general, not to particular communities, as Paul's letters are. It is true that this does not apply to the Second and Third Epistles of John, but through being closely attached to the first epistle, they are included in the group. They often appear in a separate manuscript, either alone or with the Book of Acts, and in manuscripts that contain the whole New Testament they either occupy the position they do in our version, or are found between Acts and the Pauline Epistles. The title Catholic is first found for them at the end of the second century.

This epistle is written in the name of James, but no further indication is given whereby to identify him.



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In the view of most it is the brother of the Lord, who became leader of the Church at Jerusalem, that is the author of the book, but the identification arises from the important position held by him, and from the fact that this letter is written to the Dispersion. Except the opening words, there is nothing else in the book that bears the distinct character of an epistle, nor are there any personal references.

It is not easy to find definite **external evidence** of an early date for the use of the epistle, for supposed quotations in early writings are not at all conclusive. In this case we have no reference to the book by name until we come to Origen, who mentions the epistle, and says it was ascribed to James, but the way in which he does so shows that he is doubtful about the ascription. Even at the time of Eusebius hesitation was felt about its acceptance, especially in the Church of the West.

When we turn to the epistle itself we do not find a great deal to help us with regard to the authorship. When we sum up most that has been said, it amounts to little more than the fact that there is nothing in the epistle that James might not have written. There has been considerable discussion as to how far the book is

dependent upon other writings in the New Testament. No very conclusive case can be made for a knowledge of the Pauline Epistles. In the undoubted resemblances that exist between this letter and I. Peter, the real secret is almost certainly their joint use of the same passages from the Old Testament. We do undoubtedly find many echoes of the Sermon on the Mount and other sections of our Lord's teaching (*cf.* iii. 12 with Matt. vii. 16; ii. 13 with Matt. v. 7; and vii. 2 and v. 12 with Matt. v. 34-37). Not only so, but such sayings as i. 4, i. 6, i. 11, i. 17, and many others, are echoes of well-known words of Jesus. The saying in i. 12 is expressed in a form that was frequent on our Lord's lips, and the promise of the "crown" is found also in I. Pet. v. 4 and II. Tim. iv. 8. We have some ground, therefore, for believing that this represents a saying of our Lord unrecorded in our Gospels. This points to a probable origin of the book which has been worked out by the present writer in *The Expositor* (7th ser., vol. vii.). The idea, briefly expressed, is that James, the brother of the Lord, may have made a collection of sayings otherwise not preserved, and have made these the basis of short homilies or reflections, which are collected

together in this present work. It may not have been designed at all as a letter in the first instance, but after the death of James some of his disciples may have realised the value of such a record, and brought them all together in his name, and sent them out with his authority.

There can be no question that the book represents the feelings of a Jewish community, and it is just possible that it consists largely of the adaptation of Jewish synagogue teaching to Christian purposes. It certainly contains no elaborate Christian doctrine, and is quite innocent of any teaching on the person of Christ. It gives an interesting picture of the early community, and the danger of something akin to our modern "snobbishness" creeping in to the Christian fellowship. The famous passage in chap. v. on prayer for and anointing of the sick is once more coming into great prominence in these days when we hear so much of psycho-therapeutics, but it is questionable whether more is meant by it than the importance of prayer in all matters physical and spiritual, and the value of using in a prayerful spirit all known methods of healing.

It is almost impossible to fix on any **date** for the

book, and it has been dated in all periods from about 50 to 130. If it was written and recognised as the earliest of the books of the New Testament, it is difficult to account for the silence concerning it on the part of second century witnesses. But if the theory here suggested of the book be correct, we can easily understand how it may contain elements of very early teaching, and yet may not have been published until early in the second century, and thus the difficulties would be met.

It is interesting to note that in the early centuries there was a **group of literature** to which the name of James was attached, as we shall presently find was also the case with Peter. It is quite conceivable, therefore, that this little book may have been issued in his name, though its final form is not to be attributed to him who was first leader of the Church in Jerusalem.

## I. PETER

The **external evidence** for this epistle is much stronger than for James. In some of the early writings there are echoes of its language, but not convincing proof. When we reach Polycarp's letter, however, it

does appear that in two passages, namely, i. 3 and ii. 1, he quotes from the first chapter of this epistle, and we are told by Eusebius that Papias also knew and used it. Irenæus and his contemporaries quote it as Peter's, and though it does not occur in the list of the Mur. Canon, there is a possibility that the omission is just a slip. It is found in the earliest versions. Both by Origen and Eusebius it is reckoned as authentic.

Our difficulties as to the authorship begin with the **internal evidence**. No conclusive proof is to be drawn from parallels with the Gospels, especially Mark, or with the Petrine speeches contained in Acts. The churches specially mentioned in the salutation are those of Asia Minor. We have no evidence that Peter ever visited these, and it is felt to be strange that he makes no mention of Paul in writing to churches so intimately associated with the Apostle to the Gentiles. It has been supposed that he may be writing to Jewish communities, and not to the churches that Paul founded, but this is, of course, a pure speculation, and in the estimation of the present writer not a probable one. Further, the writer speaks of Mark as being with him at the time of writing (see v. 13), and if the Babylon of that verse means, as it probably does, Rome, then both the writer

and Mark were in the capital of the empire at the time. As Paul is not named, the only explanation is that he was dead, which places the epistle at once in the decade between 60 and 70. Further, from iv. 14-16 we learn that the persecution to which readers were exposed was persecution as Christians, and this, Professor Ramsay argues, could not have been the case earlier than 80; though he accepts that as the date, and also Peter as the author, it is almost impossible to do so in view of the strongly supported tradition that points to the year 66 as that of Peter's martyrdom. A further difficulty arises from the obvious use in this letter of the Pauline epistles, especially of Rom. xii. and xiii., and Gal. iii. and v., and Eph. ii. and iv. Those who accept the Petrine authorship argue that it was in agreement with Peter's well-known impulsive and generous nature thus to quote from one who, at an earlier period in his career, had been bitterly opposed to him. We must remember that too much has probably been made of the opposition of the two Apostles at Antioch, and that Peter himself had vindicated the rights of the Gentiles before the Church at Jerusalem.

As we have already seen, the mere fact of the epistle being attributed to Peter in its opening words is not

conclusive evidence that it was written by him. Quite early there was a whole group of literature in existence to which the name of Peter was attached. The second epistle, which will be presently discussed, the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Preaching of Peter*, and the *Apocalypse of Peter* (for particulars of which the reader should consult Professor Andrews' vol. in this series), and also the later *Clement Recognitions*, which is a romance founded upon the relations of Peter and Simon Magus. Very few scholars would attribute any of these books to the Apostle, and the knowledge of the existence of such a group of pseudonymous writings makes us uncertain about this work in the absence of anything like convincing argument for apostolic authorship. It is true that if it is not Peter's, we have no name to suggest in place of his. It has been supposed that it might have been written by Paul, or by Silvanus, the latter of whom is named in the close of the letter as the amanuensis. Mark might be suggested, a reference to him at the close being taken to be a modest way of hiding his authorship, but there is nothing in the epistle itself that suggests his style, and it would be even more difficult to suppose that he wrote it than to accept the position of an unknown authorship.

The difficulty of authorship is inextricably associated with that of **date**. If we suppose that Peter wrote it before the greater Pauline letters were written, then there was no point in much of Paul's argument, for these communities must already have been familiar with the teaching at the hands of Peter, and if it was written later than all Paul's letters, the silence as to Paul's own work and teaching is inexplicable. Besides, were it written by the Apostle Peter, we should expect many more traces of personal testimony to the knowledge of Christ and of His teaching than we have. As Jülicher says, if we are to suppose that Peter was the author, and he could only speak of Christ like Paul at second hand, it is not easy to see wherein the superiority of the primitive Apostles over Paul can have lain, or "how we are to imagine that the earliest form of the Gospels with all their richness of material ever arose." Harnack thinks that the work was not originally a letter at all, but was written by some prominent teacher towards the end of the first century, and that possibly the author of II. Peter added to it the salutation and the close to give it the appearance of an apostolic letter. This is not a very probable solution, however, because this work was probably in circulation long before the second epistle,



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and it is more likely that, emanating from Rome, the name of Peter was attached to it because it echoed teaching that was well known as his, and because his name would carry weight with it, seeing that he was not only an Apostle, but a martyr, and, therefore, an appropriate consoler in days of persecution. One interesting point about it is the section in ii. 13-17, where loyalty to the imperial authorities is inculcated. This seems to be a counsel of wisdom to those who were exposed to persecution at the hand of the provincial governors. It is difficult to realise the conditions hinted at in various parts of the epistle, unless it was written at a time of systematic persecution. Somewhere, therefore, towards the end of the first century seems the most suitable date for its appearance.

We have seen that in the main the **teaching of this epistle** is in agreement with the teaching of Paul, but there are two striking passages that stand alone in the teaching of the New Testament, namely, iii. 19, 20, and iv. 6—the passages which deal with the preaching to the “spirits in prison.” Many explanations have been given of these difficult passages, which can be studied in any good commentary, but it may be said here that the idea seems to have been derived from Jewish

teachers, who held that those who had passed away, as well as those who would then be alive upon earth, were to see the Messiah, and to receive the blessings of His reign. The idea has certainly no basis in the Gospels or in the Pauline Epistles, and it is best to accept it as a beautiful parable of what was the firm faith of all the early Christian teachers, viz. that in Christ alone was salvation to be found, and that whatever blessing comes to men, He is its Source and Origin, as well as its real Channel, even when the recipients are unconscious of Him to whom they owe such blessings. The truths of the Christian revelation are expressed in a different manner by this writer and by Paul, but they are supplementary, not contradictory. In the language of Professor Bigg, Paul is a mystic, while this writer is a disciplinarian (see Bigg's Commentary, p. 37).

## JUDE

The reason for discussing **this letter before II. Peter** will appear presently, when, in discussing the latter book, we shall find that much of it is already contained in this shorter letter. The writer calls himself in the opening verse not only a "servant of Jesus Christ,"

but "brother of James." We find in Matthew xiii. 55 that a Jude, or Judas to give the correct Greek form, is named as one of the brethren of our Lord, and hence the assumption is that he is the person indicated in this letter. Christian tradition speaks of two of Jude's grandsons being brought before the Emperor Domitian. We are further told that these men lived on into the second century, when they died at an advanced age. If we calculate back on the ordinary averages of life, we shall find that Jude himself cannot very well have lived longer than about 70, so that this letter, were it written by him, would probably be dated somewhere between A.D. 60 and 70. We shall see, however, that the letter bears distinct traces of a much later authorship, and that, therefore, the writer cannot be the Judas mentioned in the Gospels. Some have suggested that he may have been a quite unknown person who bore the somewhat common name, and that the appellation, brother of James, was inserted at a later time to identify him with the brother of the Lord.

When we turn to the **epistle itself** for evidences of its date, we are in a very disputable region. One or two points are clear at first reading, namely, the writer's frank use of writings that were not in the canon of the

Old Testament, which he quotes as authoritatively as others do the Old Testament itself. Now, though there is evidence that Paul was acquainted with some of these books, he never quotes them in this way, and we are inclined at once to think that this points to a later date. In the second place, ver. 17 speaks of the Apostles in a manner that appears only suitable to one who was writing subsequently to their death, and a similar impression is gained from the phrase in ver. 4, namely, "They who were of old set forth unto this condemnation." Further, the description of the false teachers and their errors contained in the epistle certainly points to a later period of error than anything we meet in the Pauline letters. If it is not possible definitely to associate the description with certain schools of Gnostic heretics, as is done by some scholars, we are pretty clear that the same type of teaching, which at a later time marked these, is here found in its earlier stages. We are, therefore, constrained to place the epistle in the second century, though probably quite early in the century. Indeed, it is impossible to give any exact date to it, though the **external evidence** which we now turn to consider puts a certain limit to its date. In the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians,

traces have been found of the language of Jude, especially the same juxtaposition of certain ideas, but these are altogether too indefinite to found upon them the conclusion that Polycarp knew this letter. Writers toward the end of the first century show pretty clear references to Jude's use of the planets as a type of fallen men, but, of course, the idea may have been found in some Jewish writing of which we have now lost trace. The Mur. Canon mentions the book, but in a doubtful way. The book is quoted by name by Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. Origen is aware of the doubts entertained about its authorship, but seems to accept it himself, probably because he was interested in its doctrine of angels. Eusebius seems to have doubted the book's authenticity, but says many regarded it as genuine. It was not included in the Syriac version.

One reason why the epistle was doubted in early times was possibly because of its **use of apocryphal writings**. The *Book of Enoch*, one of the most famous of the Jewish apocalypses, is referred to in v. 14. During the first and second centuries the book seems to have been regarded as quite as authoritative as the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but later writers decided against

its authority, and even criticised severely those who had used it. Another of the Jewish apocalypses used by Jude is the *Assumption of Moses* (see v. 9). This book he evidently takes as quite authoritative, and when the book itself fell into disrepute, it is easy to understand that the epistle which used it would be also lightly regarded, seeing that the ecclesiastical writers regarded Jude's use of it as claiming for the book canonical authority. The great interest for us in his use of these books is that it points to his Jewish sympathies, if not actually to the fact that he was a Jew himself, and is also an evidence of the great place these books played in early Christian thought. It is practically impossible to fix a place of origin or a destination for this epistle. It may be that it originated in Egypt, because the churches there appear to have been more than generally fond of apocalypse, and also liable to the errors in teaching and practice to which this epistle refers.

Apart from its main teaching about the definite errors of those who were bringing corruption into the Church, the epistle is remarkable for the beautiful language and fine thought of the 20th and 21st verses, and also for the lovely doxology with which the letter closes.

## II. PETER

In many ways this is **the most difficult book** in the whole of the New Testament to discuss. The difficulties arise from its contents, its professed authorship, its relation to the *Epistle of Jude*, and the way in which it was regarded by the writers of the early centuries. It is better, perhaps, to begin our discussion with the most obvious fact in connection with it, namely, its **close relation to the Epistle of Jude**. This relation applies in particular to chaps. ii. 1–iii. 3, which should be carefully compared with the section in Jude 4–18. It is not possible here to set out the parallel in detail, but English readers will find it very carefully done in Professor Bennett's commentary on the General Epistles in the Century Bible, pp. 58–61, and his analysis should be carefully studied. There can be no doubt that the writing of one author was known to the other; the only question is as to which was the original, and on this subject the opinions of scholars vary. The present writer has, however, no doubt that Jude was the earlier of the two, because in one or two cases we can see how the writer of II. Peter has modified the earlier statements, one capital example being Jude

17, 18, as compared with II. Peter iii. 2, 3. If this decision be correct, then the results obtained in the case of Jude's Epistle must be presupposed here, which means that this letter was later than Jude; and even if it is argued that it is not necessarily much later, all question of a possible apostolic authorship is impossible.

But there is no question that the letter itself asserts that it was written by the **Apostle Peter**, and in iii. 1 the writer speaks of this work as his second letter. What, then, is to be said about the relation of this work to the first epistle? Apart from the reference just named, there are not very many noteworthy resemblances between the two books. It is true that in each we have references to Noah, and one or two phrases that are confined to these two epistles in the New Testament, but nobody doubts that the writer of II. Peter knew the first epistle, and, therefore, such resemblances are easily accounted for. On the other hand, the differences in style, vocabulary, and thought are much more marked than these slight resemblances; and not only modern critics, but ancient ones, felt that the two writings were not at all likely to have emanated from the same author. In light of what has been said on p. 122 about pseudonymous literature,



we cannot bring in the statement about the Transfiguration, which occurs in chap. i. 16-18, as a proof of Peter's authorship, nor even his use in i. 15 of the striking word "*exodus*," with the meaning "death," which is employed in the Gospel of Luke in the narrative of the Transfiguration. If the epistle were really Peter's, we should rather expect traces of the Marcan form of the story, but much stress cannot be laid on either point. There is a further strong argument against Petrine authorship in the reference in iii. 15, 16, to the letters of Paul; first of all that they are classed as Scripture, and secondly, that it is frankly recognised there are things in them that are hard to understand. It has been said that nobody but Peter would venture to style Paul "our beloved brother," but if we agree that the epistle may well have been written by some one in Peter's name, this is quite the sort of expression we should expect. Further, the whole content of the letter points to a much later period in the history of the Church than anything that could be covered by the life of the Apostle, and all that has already been urged against the Petrine authorship of the first epistle applies with much greater force to this second letter.

To turn, in the next place, to the **external evidence**,

This letter is perhaps the one with the weakest external testimony of any book in the New Testament. None of the early writers afford anything like clear traces of its use, not even in this case Irenæus and Clement of Alexandria. It is not contained in the old Latin or Syriac versions, nor is it named in the Mur. Canon. Origen is very doubtful about its authorship, and Eusebius frankly admits that it is among the disputed books. Even Jerome is doubtful about it, and it was probably not recognised as canonical before the end of the fourth century.

Though the writer uses, like Jude, apocryphal literature, he does not quote it by name, as does that writer, and this is most reasonably explained by dating this letter **later than Jude**, at a period when the Christian Church was less ready to use books which had not upon them the stamp of canonicity. We should thus be compelled to bring the book down pretty far in the second century, certainly later than 140.

It is not easy to fix upon the **place** in which it was written, but either **Rome** or **Egypt** seems most probable. If we are to take the statement in iii. 1 as meaning that the writer destines his epistle for the same churches as those to which the first epistle was sent, we shall

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think of this as being written to Asia Minor, a very suitable place in itself, since we know that the heresies herein referred to were prominent there. Otherwise we might regard it as very appropriate to Egypt, since we have seen that the Epistle of Jude may well have referred to the Christian communities in that land. It may be that Jude's Epistle suggested to this writer his longer and more elaborate work, and that he altered the earlier writing to suit his special purpose. We need not suppose that he was either a Jew or writing to Jewish communities, but that the readers he had in mind were Gentiles exposed to the peculiar errors of early Gnosticism.

There is one other point that indicates a late date, namely, the reference in chap. iii. 1-7 to the delay in the Second Advent. The writer is clearly of opinion that that event is not nearly so imminent as the early Church supposed, and the difficulty aroused in the minds of many through the non-appearance of the Lord has to be met. The same passage brings before us the belief in the destruction of the world by fire, a belief which was widely current in the second century. This epistle clearly belongs to the large set of pseudo-Petrine writings to which reference was made on p. 147.

In conclusion, the epistle may be taken as a most interesting example of the best teaching of the second century, and the great prominence given in it to the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is repeatedly termed throughout it "the Saviour," shows not only the loyalty of the Church to her earlier teachers, but the clear apprehension of the fact that only in distinct faith in His work and person was the true antidote to be found to all false teaching and erroneous practice.

### I. JOHN

The close **relation** of this epistle to **the Gospel of John** is so obvious, and is so generally recognised by scholars of every school of thought, that the reader may refer to what has been said on that point in the discussion on the Fourth Gospel for a general treatment of the whole subject. There can be no question that if the two books did not emanate from the same hand, as is more than probable, they were so certainly the product of the same school that it is impossible to differentiate this from the Gospel. Indeed, there is a good deal to be said for the view that this epistle was a kind of covering letter sent out with the Gospel, and dealing

with its teachings as applied to practical Christian life. The epistle contains evidences of not belonging to the earliest apostolic days, inasmuch as it mentions the period of writing as "the last hour" (see ii. 18). Besides its doctrine of the anti-Christ, which title is confined to the Johannine Epistles in the New Testament, is spoken of as the result of prophecy, apparently either that of the Apostles or of the Lord Himself. The heresies discussed in the epistle are almost certainly those of a Docetic tendency, *i.e.* those which held that our Lord's earthly existence was a mere appearance, and not a real human nature (see i. 1; ii. 22; iv. 2, 3).

The **external evidence** for the epistle is early and abundant. It is almost certainly quoted by Polycarp, chap. vii., and is referred to as John's by Irenæus and other writers at the end of the second century, and is included in the Mur. Canon and the early versions. A curious reference to it is made by Augustine, who quotes iii. 2 as occurring in John's letter *to the Parthians*. It is difficult to account for this, unless the blunder was either made by a scribe, or the word was mistaken for the Greek word for "virgins," which it somewhat resembles, and that this epistle really bore the title *to the Virgins* as derived from the passage in the Revelation xiv. 4.

The epistle lacks both salutation and definite conclusion, but all through the repeated address, "my little children," the expressions "brethren," "beloved," "fathers," and "young men," prove that the writer is appealing to those definitely known to him. Presumably the work emanates from Ephesus, and was probably designed for Christians in Asia Minor. Of course its date will be practically the same as that fixed for the Fourth Gospel.

The epistle is full of the most beautiful thoughts exquisitely expressed, and as a practical treatise upon the love of God as finding its truest expression in the love of our fellow-men, ranks alongside Paul's great teaching on the same subject in I. Cor. xiii. The great doctrines about Jesus as the Son of God and His gift of the eternal life that are given in the Gospel of John are here emphasised and reiterated, and the epistle is also full of the teaching upon the Holy Spirit that is so prominent in the Gospel. There is one very important and interesting **point of textual criticism** in connection with this epistle, that, namely, which concerns the so-called "Three Witness" passage in chap. v. A comparison between the authorised and the revised versions will show that the whole of verse 7 in the

former is omitted in the latter, and that the words "in earth" in verse 8 in the former are also omitted in the latter. The reason of this is that there is no authority for the words in any good Greek text. They are first found in certain Latin writers, from whose pages they became inserted into the Latin version of the epistle, and were eventually introduced into late Greek manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There can be no doubt, therefore, that they never formed a part of the New Testament text at all, and it is most unfortunate that, owing to the rashness of Erasmus, they ever got into the authorised version.

## II. JOHN

This little letter professes to be written by "the Elder," but we have no further indication as to who the Elder was. Later writers identified him with the elder John referred to on p. 49. This was only natural from the similarity between the phrasing of this letter and the first epistle. Here also we have references to the deceiver and the anti-Christ, to the new commandment and to love, and in its few sentences we have the further expressions "truth," and "the world," used in the

sense in which they are employed, both in the first epistle and in the Fourth Gospel.

The epistle is written to "the elect lady and her children," and this phrase has given rise to the discussion as to whether it designates an **individual or a church**. Some of the subsequent matter in the epistle seems more suitably addressed to a community than to a family, and it would be quite easy for the figurative language to arise, especially if one individual church was in the writer's thoughts. On the other hand, the expression was a common one in the letters of the period as a term of endearment between friends, and inasmuch as the second personal pronoun is used at the close of the epistle, an individual seems to be intended. We cannot, however, decide the matter definitely. The somewhat stern injunction in ver. 10 is thought by some to be contrary to the spirit of the writer of the first epistle, but we can well understand how any one who was eager about the purity of Christian teaching might fear that evil communications would corrupt good manners, and there are many references in the early literature to the risks involved in entertaining false teachers.

The epistle is quoted as John's by Irenæus and



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Clement of Alexandria, and the Mur. Canon knows at least two epistles of John, so that we may say this one is vouched for by the document. Origen and Eusebius are in doubt about it.

### III. JOHN

This epistle also claims to be written by the Elder, but in this case to a definite person, Gaius, of whom, however, we know nothing else. Jülicher has pointed out that the praise which is given to him in vers. 3 and 4 is not easily harmonised with the warning in ver. 11, since it is scarcely likely that the writer would suppose that a man to whom he has just given such a high character for Christian conduct would be in almost the same breath described as likely to become an imitator of an unworthy disciple. This is not at all a conclusive argument, seeing that a parallel may be found in many passages in Paul's letters, if not in the case of individuals, certainly of communities. The two other persons mentioned in the epistle are Diotrephes and Demetrius; the former is spoken of sternly as the leader of the party opposed to the writer, and as himself of a masterful and ambitious temper. He also appears to have been quarrelsome and intolerant. Demetrius contrasts with him as a

loyal disciple, and well-esteemed among his brethren, but beyond this we know nothing of either of the men. There is too little material in the epistle to say that it contains strong internal evidence for the same authorship as any of the other books contained in the New Testament, but such evidence as it does afford links it closely with the second epistle.

We need not be surprised that the **external evidence** for such a short and unimportant writing is not strong. There is no certain evidence of it before the third century, and Eusebius reckons it among the disputed books. Whether the reference in ver. 9 to the former writing by the same author be to the second epistle or not, we cannot decide, and the main interest of the writing is twofold. First, that it gives us a clear little miniature of life in the Church communities of the end of the first or beginning of the second century; and secondly, because this little epistle bears the closest resemblance of all the epistles of the New Testament to the ordinary everyday letter of the period, as these stand disclosed to us in the recently discovered papyri.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

THIS name is the Latin form of the Greek title of the book, namely, the Apocalypse, and both names mean in English, "the Unveiling." To many readers it appears a very unappropriate title to apply to a book which has much more the aspect of a riddle than a solution of riddles. There can be no question, however, that the latter was its purpose. It was supposed to be a key to the many problems that surrounded the Christians at the end of the first century, and the strange form in which the book is cast arises from the fact that it belongs to a type of literature unfamiliar to the English reader. The Old Testament is not without examples of Apocalypse. Perhaps the best known is the latter part of the Book of Daniel, but other examples are to be found in the Book of Zechariah, particularly chaps. ix. to xiv.; the Book of Joel, particularly chap. ii. 28-31; and in the Oracles against

foreign nations, found in Isa. xiii. and xiv. ; Jer. xli.-lxi. ; and Ezek. xxv.-xxxii. One of the most apocalyptic passages of the Old Testament is found in what is also one of the latest written sections, Isa. xxiv.-xxvii., in which passage are found two of the great signs of apocalypse, the judgment upon angels and the doctrine of the resurrection.

It may be of use to indicate one or two characteristic features of apocalypse. It is not possible to elaborate the points here, but further reference should be made to Professor Andrews' volume in this series, chaps. vii. to ix. and xv. ; and also Professor Porter's volume, "The Messages of the Apocalyptic Writers," published by J. Clarke & Co., which contains a very full account of one or two of the lesser known books, as well as of the book we are now considering.

The first point to be noted is that **apocalypse succeeded prophecy**. As we have seen, certain passages in the earlier prophets show trace of apocalypse, and the later writings of the Old Testament are many of them apocalyptic. One main distinction is that, while the prophet spoke directly to his contemporaries in language that was plain and forcible, the apocalypticist was a student who used literary methods to wrap up

his message skilfully in secret and allusive language. Why did he do so? Because his work was designed to help those who were exposed to persecution, and who were depressed by their difficulties. It would often have been dangerous to speak out in plain language, because, had the message fallen into the hands of their oppressors, the oppression would only have been increased. Thus it is that we have the weird figures that fill the apocalyptic pages. Many of the creatures the apocalyptic writer creates are monsters, because he is not attempting to describe anything he has seen, but to build up an imaginary being, because he means it to be artificially interpreted. His lions and eagles and many-headed beasts are representatives of kingdoms, monarchs, or governors, whose history and final doom he thus pronounces. But if the writing falls into hands that have no key to his intention, it will only seem like the wild imaginings of a fantastic dreamer.

These writers depended much upon the work of their predecessors. One would take up the vision of a former writer and so modify it as to apply more exactly to the conditions of his own time. We can see this in many parts of the Book of the Revelation,

where this writer works upon the older apocalypses of Daniel or Ezekiel. The reader may turn for two clear examples to chap. i. 13-16, compared with Dan. vii. 9-13, and x. 5-16; and also chap. xxii. 1, 2, with Ezek. xlvi. 1-12. Sometimes this was done by a single writer, and his book consists of what in modern language would be called "various editions," and only careful analysis can discover the successive strata. This must often have been the work of various editors, but in no case are their names known, and the book in the form in which we have it may have been the growth of centuries. Such is the case with one of the greatest of the apocalypses—that known as the Book of Enoch. This also is supposed by many scholars to have been the case with the Book of the Revelation. There are, for example, the three sets of seven signs, seals, trumpets, and bowls. It is quite likely that one of these is original, and the other two successive modifications of the first idea. Similarly, we have the fall of Rome described in four different ways in chaps. xvii. to xix., where, again, it is more than probable that the writer is working over material that he found ready to his hand. Some have thought that there is an original kernel of Jewish apocalypse

in the book, finally altered and adapted by a Christian editor. Whatever is to be said of this theory in detail, there can be little question that it is the real explanation of chaps. xii. and xiii.

Apocalypses seem to have originated with the earliest form of Pharisaism, which means that they were the outcome of the most intense form of Jewish patriotism, and this may account for the violent hatred they all manifest to foreign powers.

Another common feature of apocalypse is the use by all the writers of **visions**. Now, at first sight it might appear that these visions were all actual experiences, but consideration of the literary method that has been described and the dependence of one writer upon another shows that the vision was frequently, if not always, a literary device. In the early days of English poetry a great many poems begin with a poet's vision on a May morning. We are not to suppose that on every occasion the poet actually dreamed such a dream or saw such a vision, but that he has thrown his poetic imaginings into that form.

The apocalypstists were also greatly concerned with the **Messianic hope**, the problem of suffering, and the part played by the unseen powers of good and evil in

the conduct of the world. Hence it is that they have much to tell us of angels, of heaven, and of hell. But in all these respects we must remember that they are echoing the popular thought of their own day, and try to separate the eternal truths taught in their pages from the temporal form in which these truths are presented. These writings also contain a **philosophy of history**, and, as such, are of permanent importance. They are all full of an intense faith in God, and a clear conviction that He will bring order out of chaos, and a safe issue out of affliction, for those that put their trust in Him. They are books of encouragement, of strong hopefulness, and of brave faith. They are, as they have been well termed, "Tracts for Bad Times," but to their writers the dark cloud has always a silver lining, and they felt convinced that they

"Did not err: there does a sable cloud  
Turn forth her silver lining on the night."

One final point to be here noticed about apocalypses is that they are **generally pseudonymous**. For the most part they are written in the name of famous men who lived long before their authors' time, *e.g.* Enoch, Moses, and Baruch, but some of the Christian apocalypses are written in the name of those who are almost, if not



quite, contemporaries, *e.g.* Peter and Paul. This consideration has, as we shall see, considerable bearing upon the authorship of the Book of Revelation, to which question we now turn.

It claims to be written by **John**, but beyond the name there is no clear indication as to which John is meant. If the tradition of the exile of John of Ephesus to Patmos is trustworthy, that would, of course, indicate that he was indicated as the author, but, as we have already seen, there is considerable question as to who John of Ephesus really was. The early Church seems in the main to have assumed that John the Apostle was the author of the book. Justin Martyr definitely calls the author "one of the Apostles of Christ," and Tertullian frequently mentions it as written by the Apostle John. Irenæus, as is his wont, calls John "a disciple of the Lord," but identifies the author with the evangelist, and Clement of Alexandria seems to have no doubt that the author was the Apostle, and further evidence can be adduced that writers of the second century considered the book as inspired Scripture which probably carried with it the assumption of apostolic authorship. A writer of the third century, by name Dionysius, criticised the book on the ground of its

obvious difference in style and language from the Fourth Gospel, and by one at least of the writers at the end of the second century its authorship was attributed to John's great opponent, Cerinthus.

As we have already discussed the problem of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel, the only question that here concerns us is whether the Apocalypse can be attributed to **the same author**. There are undoubtedly striking points of resemblance, *e.g.* the title "Word of God" (xix. 13) applied to Christ; the name "Lamb" that is given to Him in both works, though the Greek word differs; the image of Water of Life, and the term "Shepherd" applied to Jesus. Other phrases common to the two books are the adjective "true," the phrase "he that overcometh," and the words "witness" and "testimony." Other resemblances are more clear in Greek than English, and for complete evidence on these points the student is referred to the English commentary of Swete and the German commentary of Bousset. In spite of these, however, the present writer is of opinion that nothing more is proved by them than that the writer of the Revelation is influenced by the language and thought that was current in the Christian school of Ephesus. The great distinction between the two books

is in the language, the Greek of the Apocalypse being perfectly distinct from that of the Fourth Gospel, and many times the writer disregards all ordinary rules of grammar. It seems probable that we should give more weight than is often done to the custom of apocalyptic writers to hide their own name under that of some much more distinguished person, and to suppose that the writer of the Revelation has chosen to remain anonymous, and to produce his prophetic work under the name of the great personality, John.

The **date** of the book has given rise to much discussion, but of recent years there has been a much more unanimous return to the early tradition, which places it in the reign of Domitian, somewhere about the year 90. It is quite clear that the book was written in a period of persecution, and all the circumstances indicate more closely the persecution under that emperor than any earlier one. The question largely depends upon the interpretation of two difficult passages in the symbolism of the Apocalypse, the heads and horns of chap. xiii. and the ten horns of chap. xvii. It seems obvious that these figures refer to the Roman emperors, and it is likely that in the one case three usurping emperors are omitted, whereas in the other case they are included; and if this be so, the later date would be

supported. The generally accepted interpretation of the mysterious number 666 is that it refers to Nero, and the strange passages in xiii. 3 and xvii. 11 to the well-known and widely-spread belief that Nero was himself to return as a mightier monster of iniquity than he had been in his first reign. The variations in the forms of reference to the emperors is probably due to the fact above noted, that the Apocalypse contains more than one edition of the writer's views.

Many theories are held about the construction of the book, some finding in it many different sources, while others regard it as a perfect unity. There seems little question that, in common with the other apocalypses, there are varying sources worked up by a final editor, but it is not possible in the compass of this book to discuss the many problems raised. The English reader is referred for further particulars to Bousset's article "Apocalypse" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and to Professor Porter's article in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible. The general purpose of the book has been already indicated, and its permanent value is to be found in the triumphant faith it shows in the final victory of Christ, and in the firm belief of the author that in Him all the problems, perplexing and intricate, of human history and of the progress of the universe have their solution.

## A BRIEF LIST OF BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

IN the opinion of the present writer, the best book on introduction is "An Introduction to the New Testament" by A. Jülicher, published by Smith, Elder and Co.; a shorter, but admirable treatment, is to be found in Bennett and Adeney's "Biblical Introduction," Methuen. More conservative positions are found in the introductions of Marcus Dods and McClymont.

An excellent introduction to the Synoptic question is found in "The Study of the Gospels," by Armitage Robinson, published by Longmans, while for more detailed study Harnack's volumes, "Luke the Physician" and "The Sayings of Jesus," should be consulted. On the Fourth Gospel two excellent books can be named, which are not expensive, and deal respectively with the external and internal problems. They are each entitled "The Fourth Gospel"; one by Jackson, published by the Cambridge University Press; the other by Scott, published by T. & T. Clark.

On the Acts of the Apostles, Harnack's new volume should be read, and also Sir William Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller." No better introduction to Paul's Epistles can be found than Shaw, "The Pauline Epistles," published by T. & T. Clark.

The introductions to the individual books in the various volumes of the Century Bible should be carefully studied, and also the articles in the three admirable dictionaries edited by Dr. Hastings.

## NOTE A

### THE RELATION OF THE FIRST AND FOURTH GOSPELS

IT has been frequently noted that there are certain passages in the Synoptics which bear a close resemblance to the language and thought of the Fourth Gospel, notably Matt. xi. 25-30 *cf.* with Luke x. 21-24, but in the examination of such passages it becomes clear that Matthew's Gospel contains a larger number of these than does either of the others, and the following passages should be carefully examined:—Matt. iii. 17, where the words spoken at the baptism are Johannine in form; Matt. x. 24, 25; x. 40; xv. 13; xvi. 17-19; xviii. 18, 19.

If the First Gospel is correctly dated in this book, and is, therefore, the latest of the Synoptics, it is intelligible that these and similar sayings should be preserved in this Gospel alone. It indicates the possibility of the evangelist having knowledge of a certain type of recorded sayings of Jesus to which the other Synoptics had not access, but which were almost exclusively and much more extensively used by the author of the Fourth Gospel. In this way we get a confirmation of the position that Matthew's book is later than Mark and Luke.

## NOTE B

As these pages were passing through the press, a striking volume appeared, entitled "The Pauline Epistles," by Dr. R. Scott, published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark. In this volume an entirely fresh view is taken of the character, constitution,

and date of the Pauline Epistles. The writer considers that he is able to find the work of four different writers in the works usually attributed to Paul, and his grouping of the letters is as follows:—First the strictly Pauline group, consisting of I. Cor., except xv. 20-34; II. Cor., except vi. 14 to vii. 1, and xiii. 11-14; Rom. i. to xi., and xvi. 1-16 and 21-24; Galatians and Philippians. The second or exhortation group:—Ephesians; I. Thess. iv. and v.; II. Thess. i. and ii.; Rom. xii., xiii., xv.; I. Cor. xv. 20-34; and II. Cor. vi. 14 to vii. 1. These Dr. Scott assigns to Silas, and with them associates Hebrews, I. Peter, and the final editing of Matthew's Gospel, all of which, he thinks, show signs of the same hand. The third, or Timothean group:—I. Thess. i.-iii.; II. Thess. iii.; Colossians, Philippians, and probably Rom. xiv. Fourth, or pastoral group (in the following order):—II. Timothy; I. Timothy; Titus. To the same hand he also attributes the closing verses of Romans, and he finds the writer of all these to be Luke. It is impossible in this short note to give the reasons for these striking and novel conclusions. The writer works out his theory with much patience and critical skill, but it seems as if too much stress were laid upon minute points of language, and not enough consideration taken of the larger questions of thought. He is occasionally too subjective in his conclusions, as, *e.g.*, when he deals with the authorship of the Thessalonian Epistles, and says that in them there is an entire absence of every Pauline characteristic. Probably the most valuable part of the book is his suggestion of Luke's connection with the last group of epistles. A very valuable feature of the volume will be found in the excellent outlines of the arguments of the epistles, and in chaps. v. and viii., which deal at length with the ideas contained in them. The book is fresh and original, and demands a thorough study at the hand of all careful students of the subject.

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