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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

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1929

724TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MAY 6TH, 1929,
AT 4.30 P.M.

LIEUT.-COL. F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the Election of George Brewer, Esq., as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced the Rev. Canon A. Lukyn Williams, D.D., to read his paper on "Early Anti-Judaica: the Books of Testimonies."

*EARLY ANTI-JUDAICA: THE BOOKS OF
TESTIMONIES.*

By THE REV. CANON A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D.D.

HOW are Jews to be won for Christ? That, for Christian people, is always a pressing question, never more pressing than at this time, but answered by each generation of Christians in its own way.

At the very first, indeed, the one argument was Christ Himself, Christ in His supreme moral glory and the wonderful

attractiveness of His Personality, together with the success of His Life, His Resurrection, and His work in the world. But almost at once, to some degree even before His death, the question arose: In what relation did Christ stand to the Old Testament, and the hopes and promises contained in it?

Our object to-day is to see how this question was answered by the very early Christians. I shall try to state the facts as they present themselves to me, in as positive fashion as I can, and to explain them as it seems to me they ought to be explained. But it will, alas! also be necessary to criticize what appear to be mistaken opinions. I shall close with calling your attention to the light which our subject throws upon the faith of those early Christians.

Now it is true that sometimes our Lord had occasion to refer to the Old Testament as corroborating Himself and His work, even during His ministry. He said, for example, that Isaiah's words described the attitude of the Traditionalists towards Him: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."* He also quoted Genesis as confirming His attitude to the question of divorce.† Then, again, He quotes Ps. cxviii to illustrate the treatment that He was already receiving, and was about to receive, from the Jews, with the assurance of the ultimate triumph that the Psalm foretold of Him: "The Stone which the builders rejected," etc.‡ Further, He appeals to Ps. cx, as a witness that He held, after all, a higher relation towards David than might be gathered from His earthly descent from him: "The LORD said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand."§ You will have noticed that I have purposely limited myself to references in the Gospel according to St. Mark, because that is almost certainly the earliest of the four, and the least likely, therefore, to contain references to Old Testament passages which were adduced by Apostolic or Evangelistic preachers, and though placed in our Lord's mouth, were not really spoken by Him. That question, however, though of extreme importance and interest, is not before us.

But those genuine references by our Lord to the Old Testament were, after all, only sporadic, and such as were called out by the needs of the moment. The real starting-point for us lies in the

* Mark vii, 6. (See Isa. xxix, 13.) † Mark x, 7. (See Gen. ii, 24.)

‡ Mark xii, 10. (See Ps. cxviii, 22 sq.) § Mark xii, 36.

last chapter of St. Luke. We are told there that on the walk to Emmaus,* and again shortly afterwards,† our Lord showed to His Disciples “from Moses and from all the Prophets,” and again “from the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms,” “the things concerning Himself.” He gave the testimony of “the Scriptures” to His sufferings, His rising from the dead on the third day, and the preaching of repentance and remission of sins to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.‡ From this passage it would appear that although our Lord had occasionally referred to the Old Testament in confirmation of His actions or teaching, and had indeed also, as we learn from other Gospels than St. Mark’s, especially indicated to His Disciples some confirmation from the Old Testament to the fact that He should die and rise again, yet He had never put the whole case so fully and systematically before them as in that walk to Emmaus and at His subsequent appearance to the eleven. It was, for example, no part of the equipment of the twelve, or the seventy, when they were sent out through Galilee.

It is, however, more important still for our purpose to notice, as Dr. Rendel Harris does, in a book to which I shall refer a good deal, that “It is not possible to reduce this statement to a lower meaning than that the early Church believed that they had supreme authority for their method in dealing with the Old Testament, and that this authority thus given to the method must have covered, in part, the matter and the arrangement.”§

Would not this teaching of the Master, the Master risen in His glory, have burnt into the hearts and memories of those who listened? Would it not have had for its immediate outcome the repetition of the lessons so often learned during those forty days in which they could still question Him and be answered audibly by Him? And would not those passages be so stored up in their minds, and the method be so brought home to them by Divine influence after Pentecost, that they would hand it on to others, who, in their turn, were coming into contact with other Jews, and be required to bring before them the evidence of the Old Testament Scriptures?

You see at once that the matter is one of extreme importance.

* Luke xxiv, 27. † Luke xxiv, 44. ‡ Luke xxiv, 46.

§ Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 97; cf. also pp. 70, 95.

There are two points for us to consider: First, the lists of such passages; and, secondly, the method of interpretation that was employed.

I.

First, the Lists of Texts.—Now, when I say “Lists,” I do not mean that at the beginning these were very long or very formidable. I should suppose that at first the passages were not written down at all, for they were but few, and these easily remembered. But as time went on and the multitude of the believers increased, and their unconverted friends asked them the reason of the Faith that was in them, many would begin to make written memoranda of the chief texts for their own use. It is not probable that such notes would always be alike. To one evangelist certain texts would appeal, to other evangelists others. There would thus be many little Books of Testimonies, as we may call them.* But in process of time there would arise someone who felt called upon to produce, perhaps for the purpose of teaching the teachers, something more elaborate and more complete. He would, one may be sure, never get anything quite complete, but he would do his best. One such writer would enlarge, but another, perhaps, would trim away such texts as he did not himself find relevant. But there would inevitably be a large measure of matter that was common to all such books. And, in fact, several of such lists have survived to our own time.

Do not mistake me. I do not mean that any lists of actually Apostolic, or even sub-Apostolic, days have survived. They have not. How devoutly we wish they had! We have nothing really definite even of the second century, though the little tract called *Jason and Papiscus*, written not later than the middle of that century, was criticized severely by Celsus about A.D. 178, and not very favourably by Origen about A.D. 248. But with the exception of its general character, and of one or two quotations from it, it is completely unknown to us. But

* So, we are told, “Among the Waldensians [in the twelfth century] the minister or teacher carried his little book in his hand, containing various portions of the Bible, sometimes the whole of the New Testament, with chosen selections from the Old.” (L. Isr. Newman, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform*, 1925, p. 226.)

Tertullian at the end of the second century gives us such a list in his treatise *Against the Jews*, and so especially does Cyprian in the first two Books of his *Testimonies*. And soon after that they begin to increase in number, the more noticeable being Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's *Selections* of such Testimonies in the latter part of the fourth century. Isidore of Seville's treatise *Against the Jews* in the very end of the sixth century, the *Teaching of Jacob (James)* in the seventh century, the five-chaptered treatise of Matthew the Monk, on which Dr. Rendel Harris provides us with many speculations (though, as it stands, it cannot be earlier than the fourteenth century), and so on, until Dionysius bar Salibi's treatise *Against the Jews* in the twelfth century. But similar lists, as we all know, have never ceased to be drawn up, and hardly a year passes that some devout and worthy soul does not compile such a collection of proof-passages for Jewish readers, under the naïve assumption that it has never been done so well before.

But here an interesting question comes up. I have mentioned some lists that occur in the second and later Christian centuries : but are there traces of the existence and use of such lists in the writings of the New Testament itself ? Have we any evidence that the Evangelists, for example, used such compilations ?

You ask, How can we know ? What tests can we apply to finding out whether the New Testament writers used such *Books of Testimonies* ? There is, I think, at least one test. Suppose that such lists existed, would not the selected passages be arranged under subjects, or, at least, would not some passages be set under others, without much consideration of the books from which the individual passages were taken ? For example : Isaiah is a big book and its name is more easily remembered than that of most books, and passages from it would be so numerous, and often so important, that texts from other lesser books might well be found under a list containing passages taken chiefly from it. A text from Malachi, for instance, might easily be put in a list made up chiefly of passages from Isaiah. If so, it would surely be very easy for a man to attribute a passage to Isaiah which really occurs only in Malachi. This seems to be a reasonable explanation of what has happened in Mark i, 2. The Evangelist says : " Even as it is written in Isaiah the Prophet," and promptly quotes, not Isaiah, but Malachi, adding a passage from Isaiah immediately afterwards. He may well have been using a *Book of Testimonies* in which Malachi is

quoted under the general heading of Isaiah. It is worth noticing that Justin, in the middle of the second century, makes the same kind of mistake when he affirms that Isaiah says: "A Star shall arise out of Jacob" (Num. xxiv, 17), and only afterwards adds, "and a Flower shall come up from the root of Jesse" (Isa. xi, 1).*

Closely akin to this, though not quite identical, is the case when a single text, one alone and not connected with a second as in our last examples, is wrongly attributed to a certain author. For some reason or other, with which we are not for the moment concerned, such wrongly attributed texts are often found in the name of Jeremiah. In the New Testament the famous example is Matt. xxvii, 9: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet," but the words given are those of Zech. xi, 13, with perhaps some reminiscences of the language of Jer. xviii, 2, and xix, 1, 2. It may perhaps be noticed here that one of our very best MSS., the Sinaitic, together with other authorities of less importance, reads in Matt. xiii, 35: "That there may be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world," though the words really come in Ps. lxxviii.

Justin, it may be added, does the same sort of thing when he says that those Christians who are of Gentile origin are greater in number and truer than those who are of Jewish and Samaritan origin, and (a little further on) proves this by saying: "We will report what has been said by Isaiah the prophet. For he said thus: 'Israel is uncircumcised in heart, but the Gentiles in the uncircumcision (of their flesh),' " a saying which is to be found only in Jer. ix, 26.†

The combination of two or more passages of the Old Testament recurring in two or more authors, without any error of nomenclature such as we have already seen, also suggests the use of a *Book of Testimonies*. For example, parts of Ps. cx, either "Sit Thou on My right hand" or "Until I put Thy enemies under Thy feet," are combined with Ps. viii, 6, "Thou hast put all things under His feet," by St. Paul, both in 1 Cor. xv, 25, 26, and in Eph. i, 20, 22, and also by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in chaps. i, 13; ii, 6-8.‡ It is possible, of course,

* I *Apol.*, xxxii, 12. Justin's reference in *Trypho*, cvi, 4, is accurate.

† I *Apol.*, liii, 3, 10, 11. (See Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, i, p. 17.)

‡ Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 38.

that the writer to the Hebrews knew St. Paul's Epistles, but it is quite a rational theory that both he and St. Paul were using a common source, part of such a Book as those we have in mind.

There is, again, a passage in the Acts to which an even more striking interpretation has been given. The Greek is difficult, but the R.V. represents it fairly when it reads: "I stand this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." The wording from the first "how" onwards so closely resembles that of the titles to chapters in Cyprian's collection of *Testimonies* and elsewhere, that the suggestion has been made that we have here in fact the actual titles, or two titles, of sections in the *Book of Testimonies* which lay before St. Luke when he compiled the Acts, one showing that Christ was to suffer, and the other that He was to rise again. It is not impossible.*

We can, I think, hardly be wrong in considering that the writers of the New Testament had at their disposal collections of what we call proof-texts from the Old Testament.

Before leaving, however, the subject of the lists of proof-texts, it may be asked whether one should not rather speak of one such list *par excellence*. And this question must be definitely faced, because Dr. Rendel Harris, to whom we owe so much for bringing the subject before us, has adopted this opinion very decidedly, and has been followed by many writers who have given a general assent without going deeply into the question for themselves. His chief disciple, moreover, Dr. Vacher Burch, has staked everything upon it. Dr. Rendel Harris has written a great deal about the subject of the proof-texts, especially in the *Expositor*, and has republished his essays without alteration, or modification, or adjustment, in two slim volumes called *Testimonies* (1916 and 1920). Some of the essays in those volumes are contributed by Dr. Vacher Burch. Unfortunately neither

* Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, i, pp. 19 sq., 59. Zwaan, in Foakes Jackson and Lake's *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii, p. 49 sq., says that "headlines" from the *Book of Testimonies* are "quoted," and adds that "the interruption of Festus shows that Paul had been pouring out a stream of such 'proof-texts' (xxvi, 24, τὰ πολλὰ . . . γράμματα), referring to Gospel history (xxvi, 26, οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐν γωνίᾳ πεπραγμένον τοῦτο) as their fulfilment."

of the two authors has the gift of lucidity of thought and expression, and it is often hard to grasp their meaning. But so far as I understand them their theory is this: A collection of proof-texts was drawn up in very early times, before the composition of our present four Gospels, and was known as *The Book of Testimonies*. It was written probably by St. Matthew himself. It was a *vade-mecum* for teachers, and, indeed, for all who wished to answer objections made by Jews. It took on a different form after A.D. 70 (the Fall of Jerusalem) from that which it had before, being sometimes enlarged, sometimes modified. But it was still the one and the same book, and it continued in existence throughout the first, second, third, and, indeed, many centuries, at least as late as the twelfth.

It was, further, Dr. Harris assures us, a work of extraordinary importance. "The work in question" (to quote his actual words) "is the first known treatise on Christian theology,"* "the first handbook on Palestinian theology."† Or, as Gwatkin says with reference to Rendel Harris' theory: "If these early writers are all borrowing from some very early manual of proof-texts which must be at least earlier than the first Gospel, we may safely say that few books have so deeply influenced Christian thought."‡

I have already given some of the evidence to which Rendel Harris and others refer, but I should like to make some remarks about what he is pleased to call the direct evidence for the existence of this one Book. He says "Nyssen" (by this term he means the Pseudo-Gregory of the end of the fourth century) "is working, as he himself affirms, from a *Book of Testimonies*." And, again, "he is ostensibly quoting *Testimonies*."§ But the nuance is mistaken. The *Testimonies* to which "Nyssen" refers are simply and solely texts of the Bible, taken chiefly, though not entirely, from the Old Testament, and "Nyssen" does not even hint that he has used any collection of excerpts, much less that he used any one famous Book.

Again, Rendel Harris says of Bar Salibi in the twelfth century that, after quoting in his *Treatise Against the Jews*|| several

* Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, i, Introduction.

† Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 52.

‡ *Early Church History* (1909), i, p. 199.

§ Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, i, p. 35.

|| Edition Zwaan, Leiden, 1906.

texts about the Trinity, he "comes at last to the conclusion that 'all these things we have made clear from the testimonies,' " the implication being that Bar Salibi is making use of a book of excerpts. But the fact is quite otherwise. He says in sec. 10 : "But they say, 'Teach us here, where did the prophets speak of His rule?' And we say readily, 'David wrote.'" And then follow twenty-seven or twenty-eight quotations until the end of sec. 16, and in sec. 17 he says : "All these testimonies give information about the Three Persons," etc. Then in sec. 18 he adds, "For after we have shown from the Scriptures," etc.* The Syrian Father is referring to the Scriptures only, and uses an ordinary word for their "testimonies" in its ordinary sense.†

There is, indeed, so far as I know, not a single direct allusion in any patristic writer to "the *Book of Testimonies*." True that *Selections* (Ἐκλογαί) is the title of the Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's treatise, as also of a treatise composed by Melito,‡ which has not come down to us. But there is no reference to such a book as *The Selections* (αἱ Ἐκλογαί) *par excellence*, or, as it happens, even to any work at all with that exact title.

II.

There is no reason to think that there was only one *Book of Testimonies*, or even one which attained pre-eminence. There were many. Whether, however, such collections of texts were actually written down (at least in very early days) is not so sure. Probably they were, but there is something more important than that. In the long run it is not the lists of Old Testament passages that matter, but the method by which those lists were compiled, the principle of interpretation of the Old Testament which caused the early Christians to use certain texts in the Old Testament as proofs for their belief that the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus were in full accord with the hopes of the revelation given by God through Moses, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings, the promise of the Messiah and all that He was to accomplish.

* Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, i, p. 58.

† Ἐκλογαί.

‡ See Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 57.

The witness of the Old Testament was everything to the Jews. Jews as such, and Jews as Christians, were agreed about the full inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures—so full that “although the word of a mere man has only one true meaning,” says the Talmud, “God spoke one thing, but two things did I hear” (Ps. lxii, 11); “for this power belongeth to God; one utterance issues in many meanings.” So we read in Jeremiah: “And as a hammer when it smiteth the rock”—“As this hammer divides itself into many sparks (or, perhaps, into many shivers), so one utterance issues in many meanings.”*

Besides, Jews were wont to learn by the experience of new facts to learn to see ever fresh meanings in Scripture, as Klausner has shown.† This principle was taken over gladly by such Jews as became Christians, who allowed the new facts about the Christ as seen in Jesus of Nazareth to throw light on the sense of the Scriptures. Toy was quite right when he said in 1884: “The New Testament writers handle the Old according to a Talmudic manner, *plus* their Messianic hope.”‡ They would naturally see first the Christian interpretation of a few great passages such as Isa. liii (the Passion), and Isa. xxviii, 16, Dan. ii, 34, and Ps. cxviii, 22 (the Stone), and the method would be continued from year to year and from decade to decade, with ever enlarging scope of Christian exegesis. In this way there gradually arose a *corpus* of traditional explanation of the Old Testament.§ Whether this was ever written down as fully as any one person could write it, or whether only certain parts of it were written down, was more or less accidental. It depended on whether the need arose.

We know that sometimes the need did arise. Cyprian’s “*filius*,” Quirinus, *i.e.* probably a layman in his diocese, asked his “father” Cyprian, and Isidore’s sister Florentina asked her

* T. B. *Sanhed*, 34a; cf. *Mechilta* on Exod. xv, 11 (Horowitz edit., p. 143, J. 4).

† *Die Messianische Vorstellungen des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter der Tannaim* (1904), p. 88. See also his *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (Hebrew) (1927), p. 314. Cf. my *Hebrew-Christian Messiah* (1916), p. 12.

‡ *Quotations in the New Testament*, p. 21. See Vacher Burch in *Testimonies*, ii, p. 34.

§ For an example of development in such a use of the Old Testament see Cyprian’s *Testimonia*, ii, p. 16 (the Stone), p. 19 (the Brideroom), p. 20 (the Cross).

brother, for such a summary of Old Testament texts which they could use for the furtherance of their own faith, or for direct controversy with Jews. At other times a writer, unasked so far as we know, wished to gather up into a short and convenient treatise the passages which he himself had found, or had heard from the experience of others, to be useful in dealing with Jews, or, as with the *Teaching of Jacob* in the seventh century, in instructing Jews who had been baptized by force. There was no authoritative standard book to draw upon, at least there is no mention of the existence of such a book. There was only the traditional teaching which Christian teachers had received. It was the *method* which continued, not the Book.

If it be replied that in some cases the similarity of words and of the order of quotation, and the like, suggests, as indeed it does, a Book rather than merely oral tradition, much less only similarity of method, the answer is that the use of books is not excluded. Naturally, certain texts would be apt to be set in a certain order, both in arrangement of subjects and in individual sequence, and writers would, no doubt, often strengthen their memory by referring to any written collection they might happen to possess, but to say that this implies—as Dr. Rendel Harris assumes throughout—the existence of one Book throughout the ages, or of several Books historically connected with each other, is to go beyond the evidence.

It will be seen that my form of the explanation of the facts is that so long as the same method of curious verbal interpretation of Scripture lasted so long would common matter be likely to continue. In other words we cannot be surprised that the use of common matter continued as late as Bar Salibi in the twelfth century, for the method of interpretation lasted until then.

One rather asks, whether we have any reason to think that it ceased at that date.

True, that in one particular there has been a change, and it is so great as to veil the continuance of the one method. It is this. The current Greek Version of the time and district was in early days the standard used for quotations from the Old Testament. Jerome's work, at the end of the fourth century, in some degree, and the renaissance of Hebrew scholarship in the sixteenth century, in a greater degree, changed that standard from the Greek to the Hebrew. But the method remained unchanged. A whole series of tracts for the Jews

has been written since the Reformation, in which the old arguments of early collections of *Testimonies*, notably Cyprian's and Isidore's, have appeared without any consciousness of borrowing on the part of their compilers. Historical criticism, and scholarship as we understand the term, were non-existent. The words of the Old Testament—the Hebrew words now—were seen to fit in with the life and teaching of Christ. Let us take them, said the authors of our tracts, disregarding the context, for they are all God's words, and use them as Testimonies, that we may show to ourselves and to all who accept the Scriptures, notably the Jews, that the Old Testament does bear witness to the truth of the Gospel.

You will not misunderstand me. I am not arguing that we *ought* to use this method, and write our tracts and controversial literature accordingly. No such thing. For us to do so would be to fly in the very face of the Holy Spirit who has led us to truer knowledge of Scripture. But I do say this, that to argue for the existence of one special *Book of Testimonies* lasting essentially until now, or until the twelfth, or even only as late as the second century, because of such usage and arrangement of Old Testament passages, is to forget the all-important fact that wherever the method of interpretation is unchanged, there the same results are bound to follow. To talk of *The Book of Testimonies* is inaccurate. *Books of Testimony*—Yes. There are dozens, but one Book, small and growing and altered, with its various forms in vital connection with each other—No.

To sum up, *The Book of Testimonies* is, in fact, a myth; but the proper meaning of "myth," we are told, is the pictorial representation of a spiritual truth. In this case the truth is the permanence of a certain method which produced catena after catena of texts from the Old Testament which were regarded as *Testimonies* to Christ and Christianity. Words were everything; grammatical meaning and historical reference were of little account.

III.

A final word on the mentality of those who pursued this method in the first few centuries.

Originally they were but simple folk, Galilean fishermen, and afterwards Gentile converts, who were, for the most part, of

humble training. If any of the early believers had had Rabbinic teaching like St. Paul, he would use the same method.

But when philosophers began to accept Christ there came a slight reaction. Possibly even the fourth Gospel represents the better side of that reaction, as Vacher Burch suggests.* Similarly Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* is, I believe, the attempt of a Christian philosopher to put the arguments for Christ in a way which would appeal to Jews of education more than the common method. But it almost perished, its text now resting in reality on only one manuscript, and it had little, if any, influence on writers after the time of Irenæus and Tertullian. It is not by accident, on the other hand, that though the simple tract *Jason and Papiscus* was ridiculed by Celsus and not defended in its form by Origen, it had an enormous number of imitators. For as we all know, the simpler the method the more easily is it grasped and followed, especially in ages when learning tends to diminish rather than to increase. For, indeed, philosophical attempts to grapple with the Old Testament as such did not come to their own much before our own time, and, until they did, so long was the Old Testament treated as little more than an arsenal of weapons for Christian warfare.

It will not, I think, be out of place to notice here that in the *Books of Testimonies* there is very little reference to the Holy Communion. Of course, Mal. i, 11 is adduced in evidence that it was foretold (quite wrongly, I believe), but I do not remember any other passage being brought forward. It looks as though for those earliest Christians the Holy Communion did not take that position of extreme importance in men's thoughts that some would insist upon to-day.

But what Rendel Harris and Vacher Burch do teach us (and it is a great lesson to have been allowed to teach) is the antiquity and priority of the orthodox idea of Christ, which some writers have asserted to be a comparatively late development. The lesson, from which there is no escape, is that the early, and simple, and non-"philosophic" opinion about Jesus existed and prevailed from the very first, and that this was held by the writers of the New Testament records. In other words, the more the facts about the *Books of Testimonies* are studied the earlier and the more definite does the orthodox belief in Christ appear. The

* In Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 71.

compilers of the Testimony Books, even in the earliest forms which preceded the Gospels, know of no such stage of belief in Christ as that He was only Man. On the contrary, they regarded Jesus from the first as having been born of a Virgin, and, indeed as Very God who had come down from Heaven.*

And it was these simple-minded Christians, with their crude and naïve use of the Old Testament, who conquered the world, because they were filled with zeal for Jesus the Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Redeemer, and Saviour, and Judge.

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Lieut.-Col. F. A. Molony) said : It takes a little thinking before we can realize the importance of the subject which Dr. Lukyn Williams has brought before us to-day. What were these Testimonies ? May I enlarge on a specimen of one, to which the learned Doctor has already referred ?

Ps. cxviii was well known to all Jews, because it was part of the Hallel sung at every Passover. It contains the passage : "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner."

Christ quoted this in His famous argument with the Scribes and Pharisees in Passion Week, immediately *after* His parable of the wicked husbandmen who killed the only and well-loved son of the owner of the vineyard. He implied that the corner-stone of Jewish history must be the long-expected Messiah, and thus predicted that He would be rejected and killed, and yet afterwards reign gloriously.

Soon after the prediction had been fulfilled by Christ's death and resurrection, St. Peter publicly quoted the passage from the psalm again. What a powerful testimony this was ! The two great arguments for Christianity—that drawn from the prophecies and that drawn from the Resurrection—were combined in it.

Again, St. Paul, preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, and alluding to such predictions of Christ's sufferings as are contained in Ps. xxii and Isa. liii, pointed out that they were all fulfilled in Christ, and he was careful to bring out the strong point of the argument, namely, that they were fulfilled not *by* Christ but by His enemies ; who would have been very careful not to fulfil them had they remembered the

* Cf. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, ii, p. 52.

predictions, because they thereby proved that Jesus *was* the Messiah, and their object at the time was to prove that He was not. Now the believing Jews naturally thought that, if they could only bring forward enough of such Testimonies, either drawn from, or based on, the Old Testament, they must convert their brethren. But herein arose a difficulty; very few had copies of any books of the Old Testament, and most probably none had complete Scriptures. How they solved this problem by collecting Testimonies the learned Doctor has described to us, and he has spoken on a still more important point, namely, the method of interpretation that was employed.

The Chairman then proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Lukyn Williams, which was passed by acclamation.

Dr. THIRTLE said: I speak for all present, I am sure, when I say that we welcome very heartily the highly illuminating paper to which we have listened this afternoon. Alike in substance and in presentation, it is what we should expect from Canon Lukyn Williams. During a long course of years Dr. Williams has been before the world as a scholar of profound erudition, and at the same time his interest in the witness of the Church to the people of the Synagogue has been an important factor in his career as a Christian minister.

To some, maybe, the paper will come as a revelation—something new in critical thought; to others, however, more or less familiar with the literature of what are known as the “Testimonies,” it comes as a rectifying statement of great value. Every now and then one meets with references to the subject, on the part of scholars disposed to accept, offhand, all that comes from the pen of Dr. Rendel Harris and Dr. Vacher Burch, and one is truly thankful that the labours of those investigators should command the attention of scholars, both in the Church and without. But here, this afternoon, we have had the privilege of a lecture in which the entire subject has been discussed with candour and with stabilizing results. We have, in fact, been shown wherein the theory is strong and wherein it is weak; and it seems to me that we shall generally agree in the judgment that, while there is no evidence of a general “Book of Testimonies,” singular and inclusive, there is little doubt that

from age to age in the history of the Church, pursuing a certain simple method, men have prepared catena after catena of Old Testament passages such as were regarded as testimonies to Christ and Christianity, and calculated to prove of service in placing the Gospel before the Jewish people. Good men did this in the early days of the Church, and they do it to-day. Taking the words of Scripture, they gather and arrange—in particular has this been done to impress unbelieving Jews—the while leaving to others the obligation of justifying a procedure which, though more or less mechanical, has proved helpful and conclusive to many minds.

If the appeal to Holy Scripture is vital in the presentation of revealed truth, most certainly the appeal to the Old Testament is final in the approach to such Jews as in some measure are acquainted with the writings of Moses and the Prophets. As the lecturer has intimated, such appeal in ordered fashion has been made a thousand times, and we may well conclude that it will continue to be made. Students of a past generation will recall how, in two substantial volumes, Dr. John Pye Smith dealt with what were regarded as the Messianic passages of the Old Testament. With great care he formulated a list of passages, and proceeded to adduce comments, critical and expository. Gentiles as well as Jews were helped by his treatment of a great subject, and as we to-day go to the Jews with the Gospel we go in the light of the same Scriptural facts and arguments. Are our quotations loose, as in the case of the early Fathers? Nevertheless, being from the Old Testament, they cannot but attract attention, and to many they may prove conclusive.

Do we find a certain freedom in such "Books of Testimonies"? Assuredly, and in that case we may consider them as belonging to a large class, some such lists being made up, as we have heard, of Scripture passages, and others, in corresponding fashion, of sayings gathered from early Christian tradition. Of the latter class we have an example in what have been styled the "Unwritten Sayings of Jesus," the *Logia*, given to the world some thirty years ago by Grenfell and Hunt, edited from papyri found near the ruined city of Oxyrhynchus. These sentences, in series, beginning with the formula "*Jesus saith*," were apparently intended to summarize familiar utterances, some of them admittedly foreign to the Gospel

story; and I venture to suggest that certain of the "Sayings" were collected and handed on with the definite intention of meeting Jewish prejudice or unbelief. In particular, I have in mind the second series of seven or more "Sayings."

Here is one of the "Sayings": "*Jesus saith*: Wheresoever there be two, they are not without God; and where there is one alone, I say I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find Me; cleave the wood and there I am." My remarks by way of explanation will be brief. First, as we well know, the Rabbis demanded a certain quorum for worship (called *minyan*); but the Lord spoke a word of emancipation when He promised His presence where "two or three" might gather in His Name. The first part of the Saying recalls the Lord's utterance in this regard. The intention of the remaining words was, as I suggest, to show, in particular to Jews, that ancient things, quite familiar in Israel, were typical of Christ and His work. "Raise the stone"—that is, build an altar; "cleave the wood"—that is, offer sacrifice. What then?—"Thou shalt find Me: there I am." The terms employed bring to mind scenes on Mount Moriah, with Abram as the actor, and on Mount Carmel in presence of the prophet Elijah. The claim of Christ's presence as expressed in the Saying supplies an argument in parable, and the issue is clear—Christ is both altar and sacrifice; both institutions looked forward to Him. Here was a lesson in typology, an element in Christian apologetic—an important aspect of truth to be impressed upon the Jewish mind. Does not the Saying indicate that there were those who approached the Jews along lines that diverged from the practice of merely giving excerpts from Holy Scripture? Hence we have in the Saying an illustration of the subject introduced by Dr. Lukyn Williams.

We do well, I think, to cherish the memory of men who, in the early Church or since, have shown a passion for presenting Gospel truth to the Jewish people. In history this proceeding is represented as *against the Jews* (p. 243), that is, as *anti-Judaica*; but in some cases, most certainly, the "anti" found expression in a deep spiritual sympathy, which completely veiled any spirit of opposition from the Christian side of the controversy.

Reverting to the subject so ably brought before us, we should, I think, be profoundly thankful that all down the ages Christian

men have set in order the great facts of the Gospel, for Jews on the basis of the Old Testament, and for all and sundry in the light of Old and New Testaments together. They made, as we have seen, lists of "Testimonies," even as we make them to-day. And may I not add, that we should also be thankful that, while placing the entire theory of "Books of Testimonies" in the light of ascertained facts and legitimate inferences, Dr. Lukyn Williams has enabled us to see that a wholesome proportion was observed in such work. First, in the early days, Eucharistic doctrine was not given the commanding place which has been claimed for it in more recent times; and, second, the outstanding facts of the Gospel were given a place in such presentations of testimony—Christ was beyond question the Son of God, and came to earth as the Saviour of men, as Evangelical believers maintain.

Lieut.-Col. SKINNER said: Since reading the advance copy of Canon Lukyn Williams' interesting and most helpful paper, I have been wondering if the "Testimonies" could be invoked to explain the palpable discrepancy between the passage in Isa. liii, 7, and the same passage as read by the Eunuch of Queen Candace in the hearing of Philip the Evangelist (Acts viii, 32), the two versions being as follow:—

Isaiah.—"He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

Acts.—"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth."

The version in Acts is clearly inaccurate, on two counts. Sheep are shorn, not lambs; while lambs, not sheep, were offered in sacrifice. Indeed, it is scarce too much to say that the latter inversion well-nigh destroys the beauty and significance of the original text, since clearly the allusion of Isaiah is to the substitutionary sacrifice of a lamb without blemish, prophetic of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and not merely to the killing of a sheep for food.

Perhaps the Lecturer can kindly help us to understand how such a mistake can have been made, and equally how it can have escaped revision to this day.

Mr. W. C. EDWARDS said : Our lecturer believes that there were, once upon a time, a number of "text"-books—"Books of Testimonies"—and he suggests that these very books were used in the production of the Gospels ; he thinks that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and even the Apostle Paul himself, used such ! I must quote his words : "We can, I think, hardly be wrong in considering that the writers of the New Testament had at their disposal collections of what we call proof-texts from the Old Testament." "It is possible, of course, that the writer to the Hebrews knew St. Paul's Epistles, but it is quite a *rational* theory that both he and St. Paul *were using* a common source, part of such a book as those we have in mind."

This I doubt. Though it may be *rationalistic*, in my humble opinion it is not *rational*. I suggest that the early disciples used for their arguments verses taken from the Old Testament, as taught by the Holy Spirit, and followed the examples of the Apostles, notably as we may read in Acts iii ; vii ; ix, 20-22 ; xiii ; xxviii, 23 ; etc. ; but that the great Apostle depended upon these primers, or such hypothetical lists, seems to me very unlikely. Upon what real foundations is this literary hypothesis built ? I say it has no foundation at all.

How did the Holy Gospels possibly and probably come into being ? I suggest that in those early days—the days of the Church's first love—a great number of the hearers and followers of Christ used to repeat that they had heard from His own lips, using such a phrase as the Apostle did at Miletus. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts xx, 35).

To these early disciples special grace was given—the Holy Spirit, according to promise, brought all things to their remembrance (John xiv, 26). As the years rolled on, and one by one "fell on sleep," these "Testimonies," repeated at first almost verbatim, became second-hand and third-hand, etc., and became rather mixed. People copied and treasured these "Sayings" to which Dr. Thirtle has referred (read John xxi, 25).

I should like to refer to 2 Pet. i, 14-21. I believe that we have in that Epistle the substance of some addresses of the Apostle, and that the Apostle did cause to be written at his dictation the Gospel known

as "Mark's." It is obviously the account of an earwitness as well as an eyewitness. Then came the Evangelist and Apostle Matthew, and the Evangelist Luke, whose account is definitely stated to be a compilation and the composition of a man who was a scholar and historian, who could arrange all the facts in "proper order." He claims (Luke i, 2) to have received what followed from eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word: to have a "perfect understanding of all things from the *very* first," and wrote that his friend Theophilus and all lovers of the God incarnate might know the certainty of all these things which the Gospel called by his name records. Possibly he was one of our Lord's first Gentile disciples, and almost certainly the beloved companion of the great Apostle Paul.

Lastly, there came the inspired testimony of the Evangelist and Apostle John, who wrote as his signature, "This is that disciple that testifieth these things, and we know that his testimony is true" (xxi, 24). "There are many other things (xxi, 25) which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ—the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (xx, 30–1). With all my soul I accept the inspired records of the life of the Incarnate Son of God.

Mr. W. HOSTE said: One realizes, as one listens to this paper, that it is from one in love with his whole subject, and that he has given us the very best that can be said for it. One cannot help feeling, however, that some of the grounds of the argument are rather precarious, if not *admittedly* tentative. He himself speaks of the "many speculations" (p. 243) of the high priest of the cult, Dr. Rendel Harris; so apparently the speculative element must be expected in this enquiry. It seems that the proofs resting on the comparative ease with which the name "Isaiah" could be remembered, can hardly be called convincing. One can certainly go a long way if one admits such suppositions as proofs. May not the facts admit of quite a different explanation? In both the cases cited, where two quotations of different origin are ascribed to the same Prophet, it is the concluding quotation which tallies with the alleged Old Testament writer. May not this be simply to avoid the awkwardness of the double citation of authority? The human author is

not of the first importance, where "men spake from God." In the case of Matt. xxvii, 9, instead of too easily ascribing a mistake to one who, according even to Renan, wrote the most wonderful book in the world, might it not be permissible to seek a solution of the difficulty on more prosaic lines, *e.g.*, from the fact that Jeremiah, being the longest of the Prophets, not infrequently gave his name to the whole prophetic volume, just as the Psalms are sometimes referred to under the generic name of David (Heb. iv, 1). Sometimes, too, the Prophets repeat the same message verbatim. For instance, Mic. iv, 1-3, tallies exactly with Isa. ii, 2-4. How easy it would be to convict of mistake a New Testament writer quoting Mic. v, 1-3, as by Isaiah the Prophet, if one happened not to be familiar with Isa. ii. Jeremiah who, as the lecturer points out, does refer to the potter's field, may also have spoken in the sense of Zech. xi, 13. I suppose the "anti" in "anti-Judaica" would have the sense of sitting down *opposite* Jews in a friendly spirit rather than in antagonism.