

THE BEARING OF "THE TEACHING" ON THE  
CANON.

THE question as to the authority and position of the canonical books of the New Testament in the first and second centuries is one of the utmost importance both for history and theology. If, then, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" be indeed a treatise of the high antiquity which has been claimed for it, we naturally turn with deep interest to its pages to ascertain (among other things) what are its contributions to the many critical discussions which have arisen during the last century respecting the genuineness and authenticity of the books which compose our present Canon. In the present paper I will try to offer some assistance to this inquiry.

We are met on the threshold with a circumstance which will shew us how much caution is necessary before we conclude that this or that book was entirely unknown to a particular writer merely because he makes no allusion to it. The general tone of the writer of "The Teaching," as well as some of his special allusions, seem to indicate that he was a Jewish Christian. If so, we must assume that he was well acquainted with the Old Testament, and we might expect to find in him frequent references to the sacred books of the Old Covenant, of which so many were read in the weekly services of the Christian "synagogues."<sup>1</sup> But just as the Old Testament references are few in some of the Epistles, so in this little pamphlet they are only three in

<sup>1</sup> I use the word "synagogue" to describe the meeting-place of Jewish Christians, because St. James does so. James ii. 2, *ἐὰν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ εἰς συναγωγὴν ὑμῶν.*

number. In the second chapter, describing the way of life, there is a natural reference to the Ten Commandments.<sup>1</sup> Apart from this allusion, little or no direct use is made of the Old Testament. Neither the Psalms nor the Historical Books are quoted. There are passages which may be reminiscences of phrases in the Septuagint version of Isaiah. Thus in Chapter 2 the writer says, "*Thou shalt not take evil counsel against thy neighbour.*" This phrase (λαμβάνειν βουλήν) does not occur in the New Testament, but we find it in Isaiah iii. 10 (LXX.). "*To tremble at the words of a person*" is also unknown to the Evangelists and Apostles, but occurs in Isaiah lxvi. 2.<sup>2</sup> There are only two distinct quotations from the Prophetical Books. One is in Chapter 16 from Zechariah xiv. 5: "*The Lord shall come, and all his saints with him.*"<sup>3</sup> The other is at the close of Chapter 14, from Malachi i. 11, 14. It is not quite exact, for it runs, "*in every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice; for I am a great king saith the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles.*"<sup>4</sup>

There are passages which might be supposed to refer to the Sapiential Books (especially the Book of Proverbs), but they may be derived from other sources, especially from the Book of Ecclesiasticus. This book, as well as the Book of Wisdom—to which our author does not refer—were evidently well known to St. James also. In Chapter 3 the author says, "*Accept as good all the workings (of Providence) which happen to thee, knowing that nothing happens without God.*" No doubt the same sentiment is found in the sacred writers, as in Hebrews xii. 7-11;

<sup>1</sup> Heathen worship and heathen vices were still prevalent when this treatise was written, for Christians are warned against them. Some of the words used to describe them are found also in the LXX., as "enchanter" (επαιδός, Lev. xix. 31), and "sacrificer" (περκαθαίρων, Deut. xviii. 9).

<sup>2</sup> τρέμοντα τοῦ λόγου μου.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Deut. xxxiii. 2; Jude 14; Matt. xxv. 31.

<sup>4</sup> The quotation omits the ἐγώ and the παντοκράτωρ of the original, and uses "wonderful" for "illustrious" (ἐπιφανής).

but the allusion is unmistakably to Ecclesiasticus ii. 1: "Whatsoever is brought upon thee accept." The word for "workings" (*ἐνεργήματα*) only occurs in 1 Corinthians xii. 6, and as a various reading in 1 Corinthians xii. 10. It is not found in the LXX, but is used by the Son of Sirac in Ecclesiasticus xvi. 15.

Another reference to Ecclesiasticus is quite indisputable. It occurs in Chapter 4, "*Be not one who stretches out his hands to receive, but clenches them for giving.*" The Son of Sirac says, "Let not thy hand be opened out (*ἐκτεταμένη*) to receive and shut in repaying."

Again in Chapter 4 we find, "*Thou shalt not be of a double heart (*διψυχῆσεις*) whether it (the thing which thou askest in prayer) shall be or not.*" The word *δίψυχος* occurs in St. James (i. 8; iv. 8); and in Philo, but the writer was probably thinking of Ecclesiasticus i. 21, "Come not unto him with a double heart" (*ἐν καρδίᾳ δισσή*).

Once more in the same chapter, "*Thou shalt not turn away from him that is in need*" is an all-but-certain reminiscence of Ecclesiasticus iv. 5, "Turn not away thine eye from the needy." This word for "the needy" (*τὸν ἐνδεόμενον*) does not occur in the New Testament, and is not common in the LXX.

There is perhaps a reference to another Apocryphal book in Chapter 1, where we find the negative form of the golden rule, "*Whatsoever thou wouldst not to be done to thee, do not thou to another.*" The positive form of the rule is of course found in the Gospels (Matt. vii. 12; Luke vi. 31), but the negative form occurs in Tobit iv. 15, "Do that to no man which thou hatest." St. Clement of Alexandria is perhaps referring to this passage when he quotes as "Scripture" the words, "Thou shalt not do to another what thou hatest."

So far, then, our enquiry gives us this interesting result—that, like St. James, the writer was much influenced by

the sapiential literature of the Apocrypha, to which he refers more directly than to the Canonical books of the Old Testament.

Turning to the books of the New Testament, we find a number of passages which, though they are not quoted with verbal accuracy, can only be derived from the Gospel of St. Matthew. Such general references are at least fourteen in number; and, besides these, we have four decisive quotations. Thus in Chapter 8 we find the Lord's Prayer quoted from St. Matthew with the doxology, and with very slight divergences.<sup>1</sup>

In Chapter 9, "*Give not that which is holy to the dogs*" is an exact quotation from Matthew vii. 6 (comp. xv. 26), and the *metaphorical* use of the word in this form is peculiar to St. Matthew among the Evangelists.<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter 10, "*Hosanna to the Son of David*" is another decisive quotation from Matthew xxi. 9, 15. Here, however, the manuscript reads, "Hosanna to God."

Once more, in Chapter 7 the Baptismal Formula is taken from Matthew xxviii. 19.

It is, then, certain that the writer knew the Gospel of St. Matthew; and we have here an important confirmation of the views of those who, following the Church tradition, hold that this was the earliest of all the Gospels.

On the question of the *Unity* of this Gospel the "Teaching" throws no special light; for, as might have been expected from the purely practical character of the little work, the allusions are to the Discourses of our Lord only, and not to other incidents in the Gospel narrative. Thus out of nearly twenty references more or less direct, eight are to the Sermon on the Mount and four to the great eschatological discourse. The instruction here offered to the

<sup>1</sup> "Debt" for "debts" (St. Luke "sins"); "heaven" for "heavens" (which is characteristic of St. Matthew); "on earth" for "on the earth," and the omission of "the kingdom" from the doxology.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15. τὰ κυνάρια, Matt. xv. 26; Mark vii. 27.

catechumens is exclusively on the way of life and the way of death ; and it is probably *assumed* that, before embracing the Christian religion at all, they had been thoroughly instructed in the theological truths of the Gospel, to which in this part of the book there is no allusion.

But did the writer know the other Synoptists? That he was acquainted with St. Mark we cannot affirm. There is no reference to that Gospel, but it seems certain that he knew the Gospel of St. Luke.

Thus in Chapter 16 he writes, "*Let your lamps not be quenched, and your loins not be ungirded, but be ye ready.*" This must probably be a reference to Luke xii. 35, for though there is no verbal exactness, St. Luke alone of the Evangelists uses the plural *λύχνοι*,<sup>1</sup> and he alone uses the plural *αἱ ὀσφύες*.<sup>2</sup>

Again in Chapter 1 we read, "*To every one that asketh thee give, and ask not back.*" The first clause is found in Matthew v. 42, but the verb "to ask back" is used by St. Luke alone in vi. 30.<sup>3</sup>

In Chapter 1 the writer says, "*If any one take thy cloke (ἱμάτιον) give him also the tunic (χιτῶνα).*" The articles of dress are found in this order, which is the natural one, in Luke vi. 29, but in St. Matthew we find (v. 40), "*If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy tunic, let him have thy cloke also.*"

In other passages where we might suppose that St. Luke's Gospel is referred to, there are equally near or nearer parallels in St. Matthew ; but the latter passages will probably be regarded as proving—or at any rate rendering probable—the very interesting fact that St. Luke's writings were known to this early writer. This

<sup>1</sup> In the parable of the Virgins St. Matthew uses *λαμπάδες*.

<sup>2</sup> It also occurs in 1 Pet. i. 13.

<sup>3</sup> And as a various reading in Luke xii. 30. We may notice that in Chapter i. "Do not even *the Gentiles* the same" is nearer to Luke vi. 28 ("sinners") than to Matthew v. 44 ("publicans").

would be in accordance with the old tradition that the earliest Gospels were the two which contained the genealogies.

I say St. Luke's "writings," because there seems to be one plain reference to the Acts. In Chapter 4 the writer says, "*Thou shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that they are thine own.*" The allusion to Acts iv. 32 seems undeniable, "And not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own (ἔλεγεν ἴδιον εἶναι) but they had all things common."

It would have been of inestimable value to us, as putting an end to a modern controversy which threatens to be interminable, if we could prove that the writer made use of the Gospel of St. John. There is, however, no certain indication that he was acquainted with it, and undoubtedly he had not been deeply influenced either by the style, phraseology, or theological conceptions of the Beloved Disciple. We might, at first sight, imagine that there is an approach to Johannine terminology in the post-communion eucharistic formula given us in Chapter 10. "*To us thou didst grant (ἐχαρίσω) spiritual food and drink and eternal life by thy Son (παῖδος).*" But in this clause the verb χαρίζομαι is used only by St. Luke and St. Paul; "*drink*" (ποτός) does not occur in the New Testament;<sup>1</sup> "*food*" (τροφή) is not used by St. John;<sup>2</sup> nor "*spiritual,*" though it occurs frequently in St. Paul, and once in St. Peter;<sup>3</sup> "*eternal life*" is used in all the Gospels; the word παῖς meaning both "son" and "servant" is used of Jesus by St. Luke alone.<sup>4</sup> We might have adduced the latter fact as

<sup>1</sup> We have πῶτος, *drinking*, in 1 Peter iv. 3.

<sup>2</sup> τροφάς. John iv. 8.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Peter ii. 5. We have "spiritually" in Rev. xi. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Acts iii. 13; iv. 27-30. Compare the use of the same word as applied to "David" and "Israel" (Luke i. 54, 69; Acts iv. 25). The author of "The Teaching" also applies it to David (Chap. 9); and since St. Luke's use of the word is borrowed from Jewish-Christian sources, we have here another indication of a Jewish-Christian treatise.

an additional proof of the writer's acquaintance with St. Luke, had it not been that this usage of the word occurs also in a quotation from Isaiah xlii. 1 in Matthew xii. 18.

But if there is nothing in this clause which implies any acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel, we find two Johanne phrases in the same chapter. One of these is "*Holy Father,*" which occurs in John xvii. 11, and there alone. The other is "Remember, O Lord, thy Church to save it from all evil, *and to perfect it in thy love.*" The first clause in this sentence is doubtless taken from the Lord's prayer (*ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ*), though we find a similar phrase in John xvii. 15; but the phrase "to perfect in love" occurs nowhere in the New Testament except in 1 John iv. 18, "*hath not been perfected in love.*" If this phrase be taken from the first Epistle of St. John the probability is increased that "Holy Father" comes from the Gospel; but it can hardly be said that we can rely on either quotation in any argument about the date of St. John's writings. There is no phrase that can be traced to the Apocalypse; for "neither adding nor taking away" in Chapter 4 may come from Deuteronomy xii. 32, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

None of the Antilegomena—such as Jude; 2 and 3 John; or 2 Peter—can derive any additional support of their authenticity from this treatise. We must not, however, suppose that the absence of allusion to them tends to throw suspicion upon them; for, strange to say, there is no *certain* quotation from any writer of the New Testament except St. Matthew and St. Luke. Undoubtedly genuine as are the bulk of St. Paul's Epistles, and early as they were known to the Church, we cannot positively prove that the writer was acquainted with them. Short of proof, however, there is a passage which seems to imply a knowledge of the Epistle to the Romans. Speaking of the duty of

freely imparting to our brother, the writer says (Chap. 4) "*For if ye are partakers in the immortal, how much more in things mortal.*" This can hardly be an accidental resemblance to "For if the Gentiles partook of their spiritual things they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things."

Such a phrase as "*thou shalt teach them*" (thy children) "*from youth the fear of the Lord*" is too general to be referred to Ephesians vi. 4; "*And ye slaves shall be subject to your masters as to the image of God in shame and fear,*" resembles, but only vaguely, Ephesians vi. 5-8. The expression "*My son, fly from every evil, and from everything like it*" (Chap. 3) reminds us at first sight of 1 Thessalonians v. 22, "*Abstain from all appearance of evil;*" but it is now generally agreed that the verse should be rendered "*Abstain from every form of evil.*" It is conceivable, indeed, that the writer may have understood this clause in the sense of our Authorized Version, and some probability is added to this when we notice that his closing words about the "*flying forth*" (of the saints) in heaven, and the sound of the trumpet and the resurrection of the dead, recall 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-17, although the events are spoken of in a reverse order, namely, (1) the "*flying forth*" (?) of the saints; (2) the trumpet; (3) the resurrection; (4) the coming of Christ. The mention of the world-deceiver (*κοσμοπλάνης*), with his signs and portents, slightly recalls 2 Thessalonians ii. 1-12, but might also have been derived from Matthew xxiv. 3-5, 24, 30, especially as in another place the writer quotes from Matthew xxiv. 31.

On the whole, then, it seems likely that the writer had read the Epistles to the Thessalonians and the Romans, but there is no proof that he was acquainted with St. Paul's other Epistles. His method of enumerating vices differs considerably from that in the lists furnished by several

passages of St. Paul. For instance we do not find in St. Paul the verbs *μαγεύω, φαρμακεύω, διψυχῶ*, nor the adjectives *διγνώμων, δίγλωσσος, κακοήθης, θύμικος, κενόδοξος, πονηρόφρων, ύψηλοφθάλμος*, nor the words *έπαιιδός, οίωνοσκόπος, πανθαμάρτητος, περικαθαίρων, διπλοκαρδία, ζηλοτυπία, αὐθάδεια, άμφιβολία, φθορεύς, γόγγυσος*. The only other passage which immediately recalls any other New Testament writing is, "*abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts.*" This, with the exception of the word "worldly," might come from 1 Peter ii. 11. We can lay no great stress on the fact that "worldly lusts" occurs in Titus ii. 12.

If we take a group of the more remarkable words which occur in the little pamphlet we shall find a considerable number of expressions which have no parallel either in the LXX. or in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> The independence of position and originality of view thus indicated deepen our interest in "The Teaching." The absence of any reference to so many books of the New Testament accords with the view that we have before us a very early document, but it does not of course prove that the sacred writings were unknown to the writer, and still less does it furnish any argument for the view that they were not then known to the Church in general. The object of the writer was very limited, and if he wrote either as a member of some small community or in some remote district it is quite possible that Gospels and Epistles which were current in Italy, in Egypt, and in Asia Minor, might not as yet have fallen into his hands. The dissemination of all the sacred books was perhaps less rapid than we sometimes imagine, and we have abundant evidence that some of them only won their way slowly into general recognition. On the whole, this little treatise,

<sup>1</sup> Besides the words mentioned in the previous clause we find many interesting words which require further examination, such as *κατάθεμα, έκπέτασις, πλάσμα, κλάσμα, κοσμοπλάνος, χριστεμπόρος*, and such phrases as *ή κτίσις τῶν ανθρώπων*, and *πύρωσις τῆς δοκιμασίας*. *Χριστιανός* has by this time acquired a good sense, and *κυριακή* for 'Sunday' which is only found in Rev. i. 10, has come into vogue.

while it adds so largely to our knowledge of early Church organization, contributes very few materials to the history of the Canon.

Since this paper was in print there have been many contributions to the criticism of "The Teaching," but none which alter any of the views which I have expressed.

The Rev. A. Plummer, in *The Churchman*, thinks that besides the possible Johannine reminiscences here mentioned, (i.) the word *κατεσκηνώσας* "thou didst enshrine," in Chapter x. may be a reminiscence of *ἐσκήνωσεν*, "He tabernacled," in John i. 14, and of the thought expressed in Revelation ii. 17; (ii.) that *Παντοκράτωρ* and *Δεσπότης* as applied to God may come from the Apocalypse (Rev. vi. 10, etc.); (iii.) that "let *this world pass away*," may come from 1 John ii. 17; (iv.) that the prohibition to listen to a teacher who "teaches another doctrine" may be a reminiscence of 2 John 10; (v.) that "every proved and true prophet" resembles 1 John iv. 1; and (vi.) that *κυριακή* may come from Revelation i. 10.

I do not think that these resemblances can at all be built upon. (i.) The verb *κατασκηνοῦν* occurs also in St. Matthew and St. Luke and in the LXX., not in St. John at all, still less in the rare factitive sense. (ii.) *Παντοκράτωρ* and *δεσπότης* are applied to God in the LXX. The former occurs also in 2 Corinthians vi. 18; the latter is applied to God by St. Luke, whom, as we have seen, the author had read (Luke ii. 29; Acts iv. 24). (iii.) The phrase "Let the world pass away," may have come from 1 Corinthians vii. 31. (iv.) This prohibition is of too ordinary a kind to be at all pressed. (v.) The phrase "tested" is far more common in St. Paul and St. Luke than in St. John, who only uses it once; and "true" (*ἀληθινός*) occurs in 1 Thessalonians i. 9 and is frequent in the LXX. Nor surely can anything be inferred from the fact that *Κυριακή* (as in Rev. i. 10) has

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become a substantive, even if the strange tautology of the manuscript of the "Teaching" (*κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ Κυρίου*) here represent the true reading.

It was to be expected that the "Teaching" would be vehemently disparaged by some writers, although its general tone resembles in many particulars that of the earliest Christian writers, and singularly accords with what Pliny tells us about the Christians in his famous letter to Trajan. When however Canon Churton, in the *Guardian*, calls it "*distinctly anti-Pauline and heretical*," and says that it is pervaded by a "*Sadducean tendency*," and that "*it corresponds exactly to the teaching which might be expected from the false apostles and deceitful workers who transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ*" (2 Cor. xi. 13), he seems to forget that he is adopting towards the little tract a tone very different from that which was prevalent in the early Church. Eusebius ranks it with the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas; Athanasius speaks of it with respect as one of the books appointed to be read by the Fathers; and Clement of Alexandria actually quotes it as Scripture. Mr. Churton implies that the writer "evades the doctrine of the Cross." The charge rests on the misconception that it was his object to give a compendium of Christian theology. Why should he be charged with "evading the doctrine of the Cross" any more than St. James, who in his Epistle does not mention the Cross, and scarcely touches upon some of the most central truths of Christian theology?

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