

*AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES
DEFENDED AGAINST HARNACK AND SPITTA.*

II.

IN my previous paper I pointed out what appeared to me the overwhelming objections to the Tübingen theory, that the Epistle was written in the middle of the second century after Christ. I have now to examine the opposite theory which makes it a product of the first century before Christ. As I joined Jülicher with Harnack in considering the former theory, so I propose to supplement Spitta's *Zur Geschichte des Urchristenthums* by Massebieau's very interesting paper, *L'Épître de Jacques, est-elle l'œuvre d'un Chrétien*, pp. 1-35, reprinted from the *Revue de l'histoire des Religions* for 1895, in which he arrives independently at the same conclusion as Spitta.

The arguments adduced in favour of the pre-Christian authorship of the Epistle seem to me to be of far greater weight than those which we have previously considered, and I am willing to admit that a strong case is made out for the supposition of interpolation in chap. ii. 1; still my opinion as to the genuineness of the Epistle, as a whole, remains unshaken. The main point of attack is of course the universally acknowledged reticence as to higher Christian doctrines and to the life and work of our Lord. What is new is (1) the careful examination of the two passages in which the name of Christ occurs, and (2) the attempt to show that there is nothing in the Epistle which may not be paralleled from Jewish writings. As regards (1) it is pointed out that in both passages the sentence would

read as well if the name were omitted. To take first the case which offers most difficulties from the conservative point of view (ii. 1) *μη ἐν προσωπολημψίαις ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] τῆς δόξης*, it is pointed out that the construction of *τῆς δόξης* has been felt as a great difficulty by all the interpreters, and that this difficulty disappears if we omit the words in brackets. We then have the perfectly simple phrase "the faith of the Lord of glory," the latter words, or words equivalent to them, being frequently used of God in Jewish writings, as in Ps. xxix. 3 *ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης*, Ps. xxiv. 7-10 *ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης*, and especially in the Book of Enoch; *e.g.*, xxii. 14 *ἠὺλόγησα τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης*, xxv. 3 *ὁ μέγας κύριος τῆς δόξης*, *ib.* v. 7, xxvii. 5 *ἠὺλόγησα τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ ἐδήλωσα καὶ ὑμνησα*, *ib.* v. 3.¹ It is next pointed out that there are other undoubted examples of the interpolation of the name of Christ in the New Testament, *e.g.*, Col. i. 2; 2 Thess. i. 1; James v. 14, and that the use of the phrase *κύριος τῆς δόξης* of Christ in 1 Cor. ii. 8, may have led to the insertion of the gloss here. In the preceding verse (i. 27), which is closely connected with this, *ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ* is represented as watching over the orphan and widow; the only true service in His sight is to visit them in their affliction, and keep oneself unspotted from the world. The second chapter is still occupied with our treatment of the poor. We are warned not to let our faith in the Lord be mixed up with respect of persons (v. 1) and worldly motives (v. 4), and (in v. 5) we are reminded that it is the poor whom God has chosen to be rich in faith. Must not the "Lord" of the intermediate verse be the same as the "God" of v. 27 and v. 5? The same conclusion is suggested by a comparison with the 1st Epistle of Peter, which may be regarded as in some respects a Christianized version of our Epistle. There are many resemblances between 1 Pet. i. 17-21 and Jas. i.

¹ Cited by Spitta, pp. iv. and 4.

26-ii. 2. Thus *μάταιος* of Jas. i. 26 recurs in Pet. i. 18; *πατρί, ἄσπιλον, κόσμου* of Jas. i. 27 recur in Pet. i. 17, 19, 20; *προσωπολημφίαις, πίστιν, δόξης* of Jas. ii. 1 are found in Pet. i. 17, 21; *χρυσοδακτύλιος* of Jas. ii. 2 and *ὁ χρυσὸς καὶ ὁ ἄργυρος κατίωται* of Jas. v. 3 are represented in Pet. i. 18 by the words *φθαρτοῖς, ἀργυρίῳ ἢ χρυσίῳ*. What do we find then in Pet. to correspond to *μὴ ἐν προσωπολημφίαις ἔχετε τὴν πίστιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῆς δόξης*? The words of Pet. i. 17 are *εἰ πατέρα ἐπικαλεῖσθε τὸν ὑπροσωλήμπτως κρίνοντα*, and we may gather his interpretation of *πίστιν* and *δόξης* from 21, *τοὺς δι' αὐτοῦ πιστοὺς εἰς θεὸν τὸν ἐγεύραντα αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ δόξαν αὐτῷ δόντα, ὥστε τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν . . . εἶναι εἰς θεόν*. Here it is the Father, not Christ, who judges without respect of persons; faith is in God, not in Christ; the glory is resident in God and bestowed by Him on Christ. Would St. Peter have written thus, if he had had the present text of our Epistle before his eyes?

The same method of treatment is applied in i. 1 *Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος*, but while Massebieau would bracket only the name *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, Spitta omits the four words between *θεοῦ* and *δούλος*, giving the phrase *θεοῦ δούλος* which we find in Tit. i. 1. Massebieau's excision would give *θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου δούλος*, which he thinks is supported by the other compound phrases (*ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ*, i. 27; *ὁ κύριος καὶ πατήρ*, iii. 9) used of God in the Epistle. I do not however remember any example of the phrase *θεὸς καὶ κύριος*. Philo has *κύριος καὶ θεός* in this order (M., p. 581), and *κύριος ὁ θεός* occurs frequently, even where the Hebrew has the inverted order, as Ps. lxxxv. 8, "I will hearken what God the Lord will say." Of the two suggestions I prefer Spitta's, but it has nothing special to recommend it, as we found to be the case in the previous verse. If the Epistle is proved on other grounds to be pre-Christian, we should then be compelled to admit interpola-

tion here, but not otherwise. We cannot, of course, deny that interpolation is a *vera causa*. We have examples of Hebrew books, which have undergone Christian revision, in the Fourth Book of Ezra, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Didaché, the Sibylline Books, etc. A natural objection however to the alleged interpolation in this case is that, if it were desired to give a Christian colour to a Hebrew treatise, the interpolator would not have confined himself to inserting the name of Christ in two passages only, he would at any rate have introduced some further reference to the life and work of Christ, where it seemed called for. Spitta answers this by citing the case of 4 Ezra vii. 28, where "Jesus" is read in the Latin, instead of "Messiah" read in the Syriac and other versions, also the Testament of Abraham, which closes with the Christian doxology. But if we turn to Dr. James' edition of these apocryphal books, we shall find that interpolation is by no means limited to these passages, cf. Test. Abr., p. 50 foll., and 4 Ezra, p. xxxix. I think therefore that the balance of probability is greatly against the idea that a Christian wishing to adapt for Church use the Hebrew treatise, which now goes under the name of James, would have been contented with these two alterations.

I turn next to the more general proofs adduced by Spitta to show that the Epistle, setting aside the two verses in question, does not rise above the level of pre-Christian Hebrew literature, and that its apparent connexion with other books of the New Testament is to be explained either by a common indebtedness to earlier Hebrew writings, or by the dependence of the other books on our Epistle.¹ In like manner Massebieau, after giving an excellent analysis of the argument, urges that not only does it make no distinct reference to the Christian scheme of salvation, but that it absolutely excludes it. Salvation is wrought by

¹ Spitta, pp. 10-13.

the Word or the Truth, the Law of Liberty progressively realized by human effort aided by Divine Wisdom. If this Word or this Wisdom has descended to earth, it is not in the form of a distinct person, but as an influence, an indwelling spirit, animating and guiding those who are begotten from above, the elect heirs of the kingdom. If belief in Christ is compatible with such a system of doctrine, it can only be belief in Him as a Messiah preparing the way for the kingdom of God. He is no longer essential to salvation. And if not recognised as Saviour, neither is He recognised as Teacher. It is true there is much in the Epistle which is also alleged to have been spoken by Jesus, but there is nothing to mark this as of special importance or authority, like the citations from the Old Testament. The words of our Lord seem to stand on the same level with the writer's own words. At times there appears even to be a contradiction between the teaching of Jesus and that of James, as when the latter tries to excite the anger of his readers against the rich, who had maltreated them; instead of reminding them that their duty was to love their enemies and to do good to them that hated them. In like manner, whereas Jesus had foretold that the Son of Man should come in the glory of His Father to reward every man according to his works, James evidently regards God as the final Judge, for the Judge and the Lawgiver are one (iv. 12), and the cry of the injured husbandmen goes up to the Lord of Sabaoth, whose coming the brethren are to await in patience, for He is near, even at the doors (v. 4, 7, 8, 9).¹

I cannot help thinking that much of the difficulty which is found in the Epistle, arises from our bringing to its study the idea of Christianity which we have derived from the writings of St. Paul. If we compare its doctrine with that of the first two Gospels, I think that in some respects

¹ Massebieau, pp. 2-9.

it shows a distinct advance on these. *There, as here*, and in Romans x. 17, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; it is the word sown in the heart and carried out in the life, which is the appointed means of salvation; but it is not so distinctly stated there, as it is here, that it is God, the sole Author of all good, who of His own will makes use of the word to quicken us to a new life. St. John alone of the Evangelists has risen to the same height in the words "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." If it be said that the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit forms the dividing line between fully developed and rudimentary Christianity, and that we have no right to compare what professes to be a product of the one with what professes to belong to the other; it may be answered (1) that the Evangelists themselves wrote with a full knowledge of the later development of Christianity so far as it is shown in the Acts, and (2) that a comparison with this later Christianity confirms our previous result. St. James would have agreed not only with the words ascribed to St. Peter, "In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to Him," "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"; but also with the words ascribed to St. Paul, "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." Compare with these verses the universalist tone of St. James, his reference to the Spirit implanted in us, the distinctive epithets attached to the royal law of liberty, the promise of the kingdom to those that love God, and are begotten again

through the word of truth to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. One topic indeed is absent from the Epistle, viz., the reference to the Resurrection as proving that Jesus is the Messiah; but if this is a letter addressed, as it purports to be, to believers by a believer, there was no reason to insist on what was already acknowledged by both parties.

So much in answer to the charge that it falls below the standard of early Christianity. The next thing is to show that it rises above the standard of contemporary Hebrew writings. Spitta seems to think that, if, taking the whole range of pre-Christian Jewish literature, inspired and un-inspired, he can here and there discover a parallel for a precept or maxim of St. James, this is enough to prove that the Epistle is itself pre-Christian: but surely this is to forget that the New Testament has its roots in the Old Testament, and that Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil. The right course, as it seems to me, is to take an undoubted product of the first century B.C. and compare it with our Epistle. I have chosen for this purpose the Psalms of Solomon, a treatise which is considered by its latest editors to approach so nearly to Christian thought and sentiment, that they have hazarded the conjecture that it might have been written by the author of the *Nunc Dimittis* included in St. Luke's Gospel. The first difference which strikes me is the narrow patriotism of the one, contrasted with the universalism of the other. In the Psalms of Solomon everything centres in Israel and Jerusalem. The past history of Israel is referred to, as showing that it was under the special protection and government of God (ix., xvii.). God punished the sins of Israel in time past by the captivity in Babylon, He punishes them now by the desecration of their Temple by the Romans (ii. 2, 20-24, viii. 12 foll.). But the impiety of the foes of Israel is not unavenged; Pompeius, the Roman conqueror, has

died a shameful death in Egypt (ii. 30-33). Chapter iv. is thoroughly Jewish in its imprecations. The future glories of Israel are celebrated in chapters x. and xi. The coming of the Messiah as the King of Israel forms the subject of xvii. 23 foll. and xviii. In chapter xvi. the Psalmist prays that he may be strengthened to resist the seductions of the "strange woman." In iii. 9 the just man makes atonement for his sins by fasting (*ἐξιλιάσατο περὶ ἀγνοίας ἐν νηστεία*). The reader will at once see how different the whole atmosphere is from that of our Epistle. It may be said however that we must seek our parallel not in the narrow-minded Hebraism of Palestine, but in the enlightened Hellenism of Philo. Let us take then any treatise of Philo's which touches on the same subjects as our Epistle, say, that on the *Decalogue* or the *Heir of the Divine Blessing*; do we find ourselves brought at all nearer to the mind of our author? The great object of Philo is to mediate between the Jew and the Gentile, to interpret Gentile philosophy to the one, and Jewish religion to the other. And his chief instrument in this work is one which had been already applied by the Stoics to the mythology of Greece, the principle of allegorization. He endeavours to commend the Jewish sacred books to the educated Gentile world by explaining them as an allegory in which their own moral and physical ideas are inculcated. To do this he is obliged to neglect altogether the literal meaning; the lessons which spring naturally from the incidents described are often entirely inverted (*e.g.*, the story of Tamar) in order to extract by any torture some reference to some fashionable thesis of the day, say the dogma of the interchange of the four elements. The same frivolity is shown in the mystical interpretation of numbers, such as 7 and 10. It is true there is combined with this an earnest protest against polytheism, together with a more practical morality, and a loftier religious philosophy, than is to be met with

in Gentile writers ; but the tone is far removed from that of St. James. The former is very much at ease in Zion, the latter has the severity and intensity of one of the old Hebrew prophets ; the former is a well-instructed scribe, the latter speaks with authority ; the former is a practised writer of high aim and great ability, gifted with imagination, feeling, eloquence, the latter speaks as he is moved by the Spirit of God. That, after all, is the broad distinction between our Epistle and all uninspired writing : it carries with it the impress of one who had passed through the greatest of all experiences, who had seen with his eyes that Eternal Life which was with the Father and was manifested to the Apostles.

I proceed now to consider the remaining arguments adduced by Massebieau, and shall then mention some points in the Epistle which seem to be irreconcilable with Jewish authorship, and go on to examine some of the parallels offered by Spitta.

Massebieau thinks that, if St. James were a Christian, he would have distinguished between what he speaks from himself and what he takes from the Gospels. I think the reason why he has not done so is that, while bringing out things new and old from his treasury, he feels that all is given to him from above: the new, as well as the old, is the teaching of Christ. As to the supposed contradiction between the language of St. James and that of Christ in regard to loving our enemies, it is enough to refer to the many warnings against anger (i. 19), quarrelling (iii. 9, iv. 1, 2), and murmuring (v. 8, 9), and to the praise of gentleness, humility, and a peaceable spirit (i. 21, iii. 17, iv. 6). Even where he reminds his readers that the rich deserve no favour at their hands, he is careful to add at once, " If you show favour to them because you remember the royal law, which bids us love our neighbour as ourselves, then you are right ; but if it is mere respect of persons, you trans-

gress the law." As to the coming Judge, any apparent contradiction is explained by St. Paul's language (Acts xvii. 31): "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom he hath ordained."

Among things which seem to be incompatible with Jewish authorship may be mentioned the use of the phrase *ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί* which occurs three times (i. 16, 19, ii. 5) and is very natural as an expression of the strong *φιλαδελφία* which united the early disciples. Spitta only cites examples of the formal *ἀδελφοί*. His attempt to explain away the Christian motive of i. 18 seems to me equally unsuccessful. We read there *βουληθεῖς ἀπεκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἀπαρχὴν τινα τῶν αὐτοῦ κτισμάτων*, which Spitta understands of the first creation of man. He defends this on the ground (1) that the preceding verse reminds one of the words "God saw that it was good" (Gen. i.); (2) that there is a reference to the creation in two parallel passages of the Apocrypha (Sir. xv. 11-20, Wisdom i. 13 f., ii. 23 f.). He interprets *λόγῳ ἀληθείας* of the creative word, comparing Psalm xxxii. 6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made," Aseneth 12, *σύ, κυριε, εἶπας καὶ πάντα γεγόνασι, καὶ ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ζωὴ ἐστὶν πάντων σου τῶν κτισμάτων*, and thinks that *ἀπαρχή* refers to man's pre-eminence over the rest of the creation. The answer to this is that the whole object of the passage is to show the impossibility of temptation proceeding from God, because He is all-good and of His own will infused into us new life by the Gospel, in order that we might be the firstfruits of a regenerated world. The meaning of *λόγῳ ἀληθείας* is proved from its constant use in the New Testament, especially from Ephesians i. 13, *ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας*, and the parallel in 1 Peter i. 23-25, where the phrase *ἀναγεγεννημένοι . . . διὰ λόγου ζῶντος θεοῦ* is explained by the words *τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα*

κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα· τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ εὐαγγελισθὲν εἰς ὑμᾶς. It is plain too from the 21st and following verses, where it is called "the engrafted word which is able to save your souls," and where we are warned to be "doers of the word and not hearers only." Yet even here Spitta (*θέσιν διαφυλάττων*) sticks to it that we are to think only of the creative word. How are we to *do* the creative word? How is it to save our souls? How is it to be to us "the perfect law of liberty" of v. 25? All these phrases have a distinctively Christian meaning shown in the parallels I have cited from St. Peter and St. Paul. To understand them in any other sense makes nonsense of the whole passage. The word *ἀπαρχή* also is mistranslated by Spitta. It denotes not a climax, but a prophecy.

I will notice only one more passage out of many that I had marked, viz., v. 14, 15 *προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀλείψαντες ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι· καὶ ἡ εὐχὴ τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμνοντα, καὶ ἐγερεῖ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος*. This simple regulation, as to the method to be pursued in working a miracle of healing, seems to me not less strong a proof that the Epistle was written at a time when such miracles were expected to be wrought, and were regarded as customary incidents,—a state of mind of which I do not think any example is to be found either in the century preceding the preaching of the Baptist, or in the post-apostolic age,—I say, this is not less strong a proof of a contemporary belief in such miracles, than are St. Paul's directions about the gift of tongues and prophecy, as to the existence of those phenomena in his day.

In my edition, p. iii. foll., I have argued that the Epistle must have been written by St. James, (1) because of the resemblance which it bears to the speeches and circular of St. James recorded to the Acts; (2) because it exactly suits all that we know of him. It was his office to interpret Christianity to the Jews. He is the authority whom

St. Paul's opponents profess to follow. Tradition even goes so far as to represent the unbelieving Jews as still doubting, at the end of his life, whether they might not look to him for a declaration against Christianity.¹ (3) The extraordinary resemblance between our Epistle and the Sermon on the Mount and other discourses of Jesus is most easily accounted for, if we suppose it to have been written by the brother of the Lord (p. xlii. foll. of my *Introduction*). Spitta labours to show that this resemblance is due to the fact that both borrow from older Jewish writings. Even if this were so, it would be far more probable that one of the two borrowed indirectly through the other than that they should both have chanced to collect, each for himself, the same sayings from a variety of obscure sources. But it is mere perversity to put forward such vague parallels as are adduced from rabbinical writings on the subject of oaths, for instance, or the perishable treasures of earth, by way of accounting for the exact resemblance existing between James v. 12 and Matthew v. 34-37, James v. 2, 3 and Matthew vi. 19.

As to the warning against oaths, Spitta has nothing to appeal to beyond the very general language of Ecclesiastes ix. 2, Sirac. xxiii. 9-11, Philo. M. 2, p. 194, in contrast to the literal agreement of James, "Above all things swear not, neither by the heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay, lest ye fall into condemnation"; and Matthew, "Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." He suggests, however, that possibly the latter passage was

¹ Hegesippus in Eus., *H. E.*, ii. 23.

not really spoken by Christ at all, since He did not act upon it when adjured by the chief priest: it may have been a Jewish maxim in vogue at the time, which was incorporated in the Sermon on the Mount at a later period. Even if it were spoken by Christ, He may possibly have taken it from some Jewish source of which we have no record.

On the perishableness of earthly riches the agreement is not quite so close; still there is much more similarity between James' "Go to now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you: your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your silver and your gold are rusted, and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire: ye have laid up your treasure in the last days"—there is, I say, much more similarity between this and Matthew's "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt," than there is between either of these and the passage from Enoch xvii. 8-10 referred to by Spitta: "*Woe to you who acquire silver and gold in unrighteousness, yet say, We have increased in riches; we have possessions, and we have acquired everything we desire. And now let us do that which we purpose; for we have gathered silver, and our granaries are full, and plentiful as water are the husbandmen in our houses. And like water your lies will flow away; for riches will not abide with you, but will ascend suddenly from you; for ye have acquired it all in unrighteousness, and ye will be given over to a great condemnation.*"

It is, I think, unnecessary to go further. In almost every instance in which Spitta attempts to explain away parallels between our Epistle and the Gospels, which have been pointed out by commentators, his efforts seem to me to be scarcely less abortive than in the cases I have examined. The authenticity of the Epistle remains in my

judgment alike impregnable to assault, whether it be urged from the pre-Christian or from the post-Apostolic side.

J. B. MAYOR.

ST. JOHN'S PARADOX CONCERNING THE DEAD.

(REVELATION XIV. 13.)

THIS is one of the most remarkable passages not only in the Apocalypse but in the Bible. It breaks a long reticence. The life of the disembodied soul had been hitherto almost ignored. Even the raptures of a Paul had centred mainly round a resurrection morning, when the dead should break their silence and resume their place in the universe. Here the silence has itself become vocal. The attention of the seer centres, not on the resurrection morning, but on that state of the soul which is popularly called disembodied, and, for the first time in Bible literature, the interest of the reader is solicited for those who are at present in the condition we name death.

I understand the passage to mean that at this particular epoch a change had taken place, not in the state of the departed dead, but in man's conception of that state. "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow with them." The suggestive word is to me the word "write." It is not that from henceforth the dead are to be more blessed, but that from henceforth we are to *think* of them as more blessed. It is really, as I understand it, "write from henceforth, blessed are the dead." It is the proclaiming of a new revelation on the subject, which is to be incorporated for the future with the sum of human knowledge. The books in which man records his thoughts of the departed are