

*THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE
PATRIARCHS IN RELATION TO
THE NEW TESTAMENT.*

At the request of several scholars I have undertaken to write an answer to Dr. Plummer's review of my edition of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. I have edited many non-canonical Jewish works and written much on this literature, but hitherto I have only once replied to a review on any of my books. For controversy of this nature I have no leisure. Hence it is with extreme reluctance that I write the subjoined *notes* in order to oblige my friends, and to prevent those who are not specialists in this subject from being misled by Dr. Plummer's criticisms. The consideration of Dr. Plummer's criticisms has confirmed me as to the justness of my views on the Testaments.

1. *Original language of the Testaments.*—The Testaments were written in Hebrew. This is now universally acknowledged, although only twenty years ago it was universally believed that they were originally written in Greek.

2. *Place of writing.*—The Testaments, like the Book of Enoch, were written in Galilee. Their author definitely mentions the places in Galilee where certain of his visions took place. In Galilee there was greater religious and ethical freedom than in Judea.

3. *Time of writing.*—I cannot here enumerate the various grounds for assigning the Testaments to the close of the second century B.C. They are given at length in my *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (A. and C. Black),¹ and have been so cogent as to convince practically all my reviewers save three, and these, I feel confident, will in due course yield to the arguments, which have convinced all students who

¹ I have published a series of studies of the Testaments, beginning with the year 1899 and closing with the two volumes published last spring.

have made a first-hand study of this literature. Thus this second century B.C. date is accepted by Bousset, in the *Zeitschrift f. d. Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1900, pp. 187-197; by Professor Beer, of Strassburg, in the Article on "Pseudepigrapha" in the new edition of Herzog and Plitt's *Real-Encyclopaedie*; by Dr. Köhler, in the Article on the Testaments in the *Jewish Encyclopaedia*; by Dr. Perles, in a review of my edition and an original study of the text in this year's *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*; by Père Lagrange, in his work on *Le Messianisme chez les Juifs*, 1908; by Professor Burkitt, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1908; by Dr. Oesterley, in *The Doctrine of the Last Things*, 1908, and by many other scholars.

Yet in the face of the arguments that have convinced the above Christian and Jewish specialists Dr. Plummer writes: "Let us take any time between B.C. 100 and A.D. 50 for the Hebrew original." In my opinion the origin of the book within these dates is inexplicable, and in this view I believe I am at one with those who know this period best. Dr. Plummer quotes Professor Harnack in support of this late date. But though I have the greatest respect for this scholar on the field of Christian literature, he has made no first-hand study of Jewish Apocalyptic literature. Besides, when he assigned the Testaments to the beginning of the Christian era, he had not at his disposal adequate material on which to form a just conclusion.¹

4. *Christian Interpolations*.—But even though we accept the questions of language and data as settled, there still remains the possibility that the conclusions arrived at may be true only of the ground-work of the book, and that other

¹ The Testaments are not intelligible unless we suppose them to be written in a period when Israel was flourishing and independent in Palestine, and under the sway of Maccabean priestly rulers. There are half a dozen chapters containing a bitter attack on the Maccabees. These are at variance with their content and are later Jewish interpolations,

parts of it, i.e. those that are most akin in character to the New Testament, may have been subsequently added by Christian scribes. To a very limited extent this is quite true, but, after all, these interpolations are not very numerous—moreover, they are not ethical but dogmatic statements, and as a rule they are easy to detect. One Testament is wholly free from them in all the chief authorities, while, in the last two Testaments of Joseph and Benjamin, of the eight interpolations in the Greek Version only one is found in the Armenian. Thus as late as the sixth century some of the Testaments were free from Christian additions. Moreover, even passages where the diction seems Christian it is sometimes genuinely Jewish. Thus in T. Levi ii. 11, after the words, “And through thee (i.e. Levi) and Judah the Lord will appear to men,” we have the apparently suspicious line $\sigma\acute{\omega}\zeta\omega\nu \acute{\epsilon}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu\tau\hat{\omega}$ (v.l. $\alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$) $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu \gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omega\nu$. In my text I obelized the phrase $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \acute{\epsilon}\alpha\nu\tau\hat{\omega}$ as a Christian interpolation or as unintelligible. Now I find that it is a literal reproduction of the Hebrew בְּעַצְמִי , which should here have been rendered by $\alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$. In other words, the passage describes a theophany, such as is found eight times in the rest of the Testaments, and the second line should be rendered, “He Himself saving every race of men.” The same Hebrew idiom is similarly rendered in T. Sim. vi. 5. The text thus refers to God Himself. Now in Ben Ammi, a writer of the second century A.D., we find practically the same statement as in our text. After declaring that in the past partial salvations had been wrought by individual men, as Moses, Elijah, etc., he goes on to say that God Himself would effect the final salvation of Israel— $\text{אֲנִי בְּעַצְמִי גּוֹאֵל אֶתְכֶם}$ — $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \sigma\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega \acute{\upsilon}\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ (Midr. Wajjikra on Lev. xvii. 3).

5. *Unity of the religious and ethical basis of the Testaments.*—When the above score or so of Christian interpolations have been excised, as well as some later Jewish interpolations

of the first century B.C., we have a book exhibiting a remarkable unity in religious and ethical thought. The phrases and clauses in this book, which find remarkable parallels in the New Testament, *belong essentially to its very texture*, and not in a single instance are they out of harmony with the uniform tone of the book. The writer was a member of the Chasidim who had taken up and developed the best elements in the Old Testament. Thus our author is the first Jewish writer to quote with any adequate recognition of their significance the notable words of Genesis i. 27, "God created man in His own image."¹ Starting from such a foundation it is not strange that, like the greatest prophets of the past, he should look forward to the salvation of the Gentiles—a belief that he expresses repeatedly. Again, as the mind of our author was of a profoundly ethical character, it is natural that he should look forward to the achievement of salvation through character rather than through outward ordinances as the author of the contemporary Book of Jubilees did. The Law furnished the norm according to which character should be shaped. Nay, more, it was a spiritual guide and a light to illumine man on the way that led to God; for, as a later member of this school taught, "the Law was given to lighten every man" (T. Lev. xiv. 4—circa 50 B.C.). Our author thus believed that salvation was designed by God for all men and was to be realized through character—character, that is, won gradually in the spiritual fulfilment of the Law given of God.

6. *Thus the Testaments constituted a book of religious ethics.* Ethics and religion were never sundered for the true Chasid. The Ethics of the Testaments spring naturally from the fundamental principles of our author combined with the special character and incidents recorded of each of the patriarchs.

¹ Never quoted subsequently in the Old Testament. First quoted in Sirach.

Let me take as an example the Testament of Gad. Now the leading ideas of this Testament are envy, hate and love. At the outset Gad confesses (i. 9; ii. 1-2) that He hated Joseph from his heart and sought to destroy him, but that God delivered him out of his brethren's hands (ii. 3-5). Next he proceeds to set forth before his children a series of remarks on the evils of hatred, how it hates truth, rejoices in slander, joins hands with envy against a prosperous rival and mates with lying (iii.-iv. 1-5, v. 1). Then he presses on them the duty of love; "For the spirit of love worketh together with the Law of God" (iv. 7). That this love they can attain through right-doing; for "righteousness casteth out hatred, humility destroyeth envy." Hence "he that is righteous and humble is ashamed to do what is unjust, being reprov'd not of another but of his own heart" (v. 3). Such truths Gad declares he learnt not from man but through repentance and spiritual experience (v. 2, 6, 8). But the true Chasid is to be free not only from the hatred that springs from envy at another's success, but also from the hatred that arises naturally from the wrong done by a neighbour. Here it is that the Testament reaches its natural climax in the great passage on forgiveness, wherein Gad instructs his children how a man is to be delivered from the sin of hating his neighbour, however deeply he wrongs him—nay, more, how he is to seek to deliver his neighbour from his wrong condition, and under all circumstances to maintain a right attitude towards him free from all personal animosity (vi. 3-6). This chapter contains the most noble and remarkable statement on the subject of forgiveness in all ancient literature. Its originality in its present context cannot, I hold, be reasonably questioned nor its influence on the sermon on the Mount. The next chapter (vii.) follows with teaching no less lofty. As in the case of a man who has wronged us we are to banish all feelings of

personal resentment, so in the case of a successful rival we are not only to banish all feelings of envy or jealousy, we are to do more, we are also to pray for him that he may be prospered to the full (vii. 1). "Put away, therefore, envy from your souls, and love one another with uprightness of heart" (vii. 7).

Before I leave this subject I may point out that the existence of a high conception of the doctrine of forgiveness in certain circles in Palestine is attested by the fact that it made its influence felt even on such a cultured man of the world as Sirach, whose statements on this question give, no doubt, but a pale reflection of the reality, but are, nevertheless, invaluable in showing that Jewish thought in the second century B.C. had advanced beyond the Old Testament stage.

By a close study of the other Testaments it could be shown that the same high ethical teaching is present in each—not as an interpolated element, but as an essential characteristic.

The preceding facts are, I conceive, sufficient to prove that where a close affinity exists between the New Testament and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the relation of the latter to the former may be taken with some exceptions to be one of dependence, and therein an answer is virtually given to Dr. Plummer's objections. But before I close this reply I wish to pass a stricture or two on Dr. Plummer's criticism, and also to remove, if possible, some of the special difficulties he feels in the matter of the Testaments.

First of all, Dr. Plummer fails to attach the adequate weight to the evidence I adduce as proving the dependence of Hermas on the Testaments. Seven of the eight parallels I give occur in the course of a single short chapter of less than 300 words. The fact should *not* be ignored. The evidence, moreover, in such a case is cumulative. Further, if Dr. Plummer had consulted either

the English or Greek index he would have found that the use of "spirit" in a good or evil sense is characteristic of the Testaments, being found nearly seventy times. Again, a reference to the index would have shown him that the phrases "the spirit of truth," "the spirit of error," occur not once, but several times in the Testaments. These facts, taken in conjunction with what precedes strongly presume the priority of T. Jud. xx. 1: δύο πνεύματα σχολάζουσι τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ τῆς πλάνης, to *Hermas*, *Mand.* vi. 2. 1. δύο εἰσιν ἄγγελοι¹ μετὰ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, εἰς τῆς δικαιοσύνης καὶ εἰς τῆς πονηρίας—in fact, the evidence for the direct derivation of the latter from the former is practically conclusive. But, again, Dr. Plummer has ignored the strongest parallel that I gave. This parallel is as follows:—

T. Iss. iii. 8. πᾶσι γὰρ πένησι
καὶ θλιβομένοις παρείχον ἐκ τῶν
ἀγαθῶν τῆς γῆς ἐν ἀπλότητι
καρδίας μου.

Hermas, *Mand.* ii. 5, οἱ μὲν
γὰρ λαμβάνοντες θλιβόμενοι—4.
ἐκ τῶν κόπων σου πᾶσιν ὑστερη-
μένοις δίδου ἀπλῶς.

I hold, therefore, that nothing has been advanced to show that *Hermas* is not dependent on the Testaments.

In the next place, Dr. Plummer asks how it is possible that the Testaments could have had such a great influence on the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Epistles and yet have exercised none on Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, Aristides, Justin Martyr, 2 Clement, etc. To this I might rejoin: How is it that the Gospel of Mark exercised such a preponderating influence on the First and Third Gospels and yet has left no certain trace in Barnabas, the *Didaché*, 1 Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, 2 Clement? ² Or, again, how is it that the *Similitudes* of Enoch exercised such a great influence on the Fourth Gospel and certain passages of the Synoptics

¹ ἄγγελοι is characteristic of this part of *Hermas*.

² The present text of St. Mark is, as Professor Burkitt has pointed out, derived from a single mutilated MS.

and yet are not quoted by a single Apostolic Father? Or how is it that 1 Thessalonians, the earliest Pauline Epistle, has left no trace on Barnabas, the Didaché, 1 Clement, Polycarp, 2 Clement? But I need not further press this argument. Dr. Plummer's question is answered satisfactorily by the fact that, when the New Testament books were published, they speedily ousted from circulation the very books on which the Jews who embraced Christianity had been brought up, and by which they had been prepared for the higher revelation.

One more note and I have done. Dr. Plummer cannot understand how it is that the Testaments have so largely influenced St. Matthew and St. Luke and have hardly if at all influenced St. Mark. Here again the answer is obvious. The influence of the Testaments as an essentially ethical work is naturally seen in the First and Third Gospels, which record the ethical teaching of our Lord. There is little room for the exercise of such influence in the Second Gospel, which confines itself to narrative.¹

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STUDIES IN CONVERSION.

I. JUSTIN MARTYR.

IN the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, besides the Parable of the Sower, there are three pairs of parables, in which the commencement, the development and the consummation of the kingdom of heaven are respectively set forth—its commencement in the Parables of the Treasure Hid in a Field and the Pearl of Great Price, its development in the Parables of the Mustard-seed and the Leaven, and its consummation in those of the Wheat and the Tares and the Drag-net.

¹ The eschatological element naturally had some influence on the New Testament, but this was wholly secondary.