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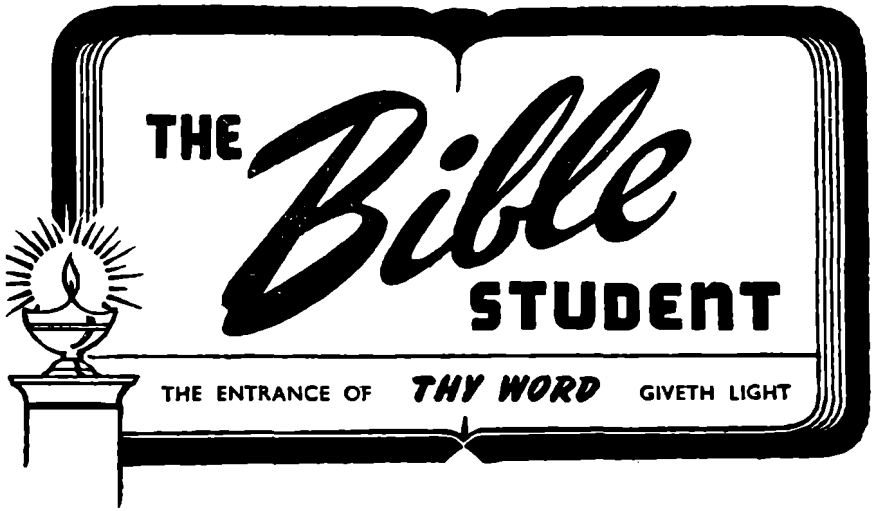
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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

This very inadequate survey of this problem should show us once again that the foretelling of the future in prophecy has always a spiritual purpose, which is liable to be lost, if we concentrate on fulfilment. We have also been warned against reading preconceived ideas into Scripture, which must always be allowed to interpret itself.

(*To be continued*)

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

Principal Emeritus JAMES WILLOUGHBY, M.A.

In the following the term, 'an apostolic man', means a close companion of an apostle. A writing is said to be 'apostolic' when it is the writing of an apostle, or of an apostolic man. It is said to be 'canonical' when it is apostolic, and it is said to have been 'received' when it has been accounted canonical. The list of books in the New Testament is its Canon.

In Christian writings which are not canonised, and which belong to the 1st century of our era, although their quantity is very small, there are clear traces of thirteen of our twenty-seven N.T. books.

In Christian writings of the 2nd century, every one of our books, with the possible exception of 2 Peter, are quoted, or alluded to, and even in the case of 2 Peter there are verbal coincidences, and there is what looks like an allusion to one passage in that epistle.

In Christian writings belonging to that century are many hundreds of quotations from the N.T. Justin Martyr, in the first half of the century, quotes it nearly 400 times. Twenty of the N.T. books will be considered now, and the other seven later.

I. Twenty of the New Testament books circulated, and were universally received by the Christian Churches very soon after they had been written.

In proof of this statement I shall bring forward five witnesses—

1. *Our first witness is the Peshitto Version.* This is the Aramaic Version of the Bible. Aramaic was the language spoken in

Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia in apostolic days. Westcott believed that this version was completed early in the 2nd century A.D. It contains the twenty books referred to, and other N.T. books as well.

2. *Our second witness is the Old Latin Version.* It was completed in North Africa long before the end of the 2nd century A.D. It contains the twenty books, and other N.T. books as well.

3. *Our third witness is the Muratorian Fragment.* This is a fragment of a writing discovered by Muratorius. It appears to have been written in Italy about the year A.D. 170. In it there are references to the twenty books referred to, and to other N.T. books as well.

4. *Our fourth witness is Irenaeus.* He was a bishop in France up to about A.D. 180. He had been instructed by Polycarp, a bishop in Smyrna, who had been instructed by the living voice of the Apostle John. Irenaeus recognized the twenty books, and other N.T. books as well.

5. *Our fifth witness is Clement of Alexandria.* He was a Christian teacher whose testimony belongs to about the year A.D. 200. Clement recognized the twenty books in question, as well as other N.T. books.

Now the Peshitto was made in the east, and contains the books received by the churches there. The Old Latin Version was made in the west, and contains the books received by the churches there. The Muratorian Fragment was also made in the west. Irenaeus belonged to France, and Clement to Egypt. Accordingly we have witnesses belonging to widely different parts of the world testifying that these twenty books are canonical, and there does not appear to be any evidence to the contrary. Hence it is reasonable and natural to conclude that these twenty books in, or very soon after, apostolic days were by Christian Churches universally received.

These books make up more than six-sevenths of the entire New Testament.

II. The seven remaining N.T. books were not universally received as soon as the other twenty.

It is, however, reasonable to conclude on the evidence about to be exhibited that every one of the twenty-seven books was

received from the very first by the person, church or community to whom it first came, and who knew well from whom it had come, and by whom it had been written.

The seven books in question are: Hebrews, James, 2nd Peter, 2nd and 3rd John, Jude and Revelation. These do not make up one-seventh of the entire N.T. Evidence for the view that they are rightly included in the N.T. Canon will now be exhibited.

1. *The Epistle to the Hebrews.* Some theologians, while holding that this epistle, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, 'this treatise', is canonical, do not, however, think it was written by Paul. Let us now consider first, reasons given for not believing that it was written by him and, secondly, reasons given for believing that in some real sense it was a work of his.

First, reasons given by some for not thus believing:

(1) It does not bear his name. This, however, would be sufficiently accounted for, if he intended it be, not a letter, but a treatise.

(2) The writer says, '... so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him' (2:3), but these words no more disprove that the writer was the Apostle Paul, than that the words, 'Neither have we hearkened unto Thy servants, the prophets, which spoke in Thy Name ...' (Daniel 9:6) disprove that the speaker was the prophet Daniel. Frequently a person speaks or writes as if he were one of those whom he addresses: he, as it were, puts himself amongst them.

(3) There are differences in style between Hebrews and each of the thirteen epistles bearing Paul's name. There are differences in style, but we so frequently see a wide difference in style between two writings written by the same person that one wonders why some scholars attach very great weight to difference in style. The poem, 'To-morrow', differs widely in style from 'The Northern Farmer: Old Style', and each differs widely from 'Locksley Hall', yet each was written by Tennyson. The poem beginning with, 'John Gilpin was a citizen', and the hymn, 'God moves in a mysterious way,' were both written by Cowper. Any one of a hundred different combinations of circumstances

might account for such differences. The difference in subject-matter between Hebrews and each of the thirteen epistles bearing Paul's name may account for the difference in style or, if Paul wrote Hebrews in Aramaic for Aramaic speaking Hebrews, and it were translated under Divine inspiration by his companion Luke, this might account for it. Some scholars object that it bears the marks of an original composition; but surely there could be a translation having all the appearance of an original.

Secondly, reasons for believing it was written by Paul, or that it was in some real sense a work of his:

(1) According to Peter, Paul wrote an epistle or treatise to Hebrews, some of whom lived in Asia Minor (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1, 2 with 2 Peter 3:1 and 15), and it is not likely to have disappeared.

(2) Hebrews ends thus: 'Grace be with you all. Amen'. In 2 Thess. 3:17 Paul says, 'The salutation of me, Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen'. No N.T. epistle bearing any other name ends with this, or a similar, salutation.

(3) What is said about 'Timothy in ch. 13:23 is very like what Paul would say.

(4) Hebrews appears to have been written before the destruction of the temple, and I suppose that in no part of the world were there more Hebrews than in Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria and Egypt, and these Hebrews would know who it was that had written to them. Dr Salmon, while not trying to prove it was Paul's nevertheless says, 'The epistle to the Hebrews was accepted as Canonical by the whole Eastern Church with no exception that I know of, and that it is St Paul's was also the received tradition and popular belief of the east'. (*Introduction*, p. 234.).

(5) Another writer says, 'The early fathers of the Eastern and Alexandrian Churches in the second and third centuries tell us that the "ancients", who must have been contemporary with those who received the original, if not the same persons, had handed it down to them as a writing of Paul's. And the most learned of them, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius . . . held this testimony to be conclusive'. (Green's *Angus*, p. 31).

(6) Jerome who spent many years in Palestine believed Paul to have been the author of Hebrews, as did also Augustine.

(7) In the A.V. and R.V. it is said to be Paul's.

2. *The Epistle of James.* It is probable that this epistle came first to the Churches in Syria, Palestine and Alexandria, for he lived in Jerusalem, and his epistle was written to Hebrews. It is included in the Peshitto Version and was therefore received by the Churches in Syria and Palestine; and in about the year A.D. 240 it was quoted several times by the learned Origen of Alexandria, and he calls its writer, James. Eusebius of Caesarea, the great Church historian, born about A.D. 265, quotes the epistle as the work of a *holy apostle*, and calls it '*Scripture*'.

3. *The 2nd and 3rd Epistle of John, and Revelation.* Since the Apostle John in the latter part of his life lived in Ephesus, it is natural and reasonable to conclude that his epistles, and his Book of Revelation first came to the Churches in Asia Minor. There was intercourse between these Churches and the Christian community in Rome, which was visited by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, in the 2nd century A.D. John's three Epistles and the Book of Revelation are referred to in the Muratorian Fragment which, as we have seen, appears to have been written in Italy about the year A.D. 170. There was intercourse between the Christians in Rome and those in North Africa. The three Epistles of John and the Book of Revelation are in the Old Latin Version which was made long before the end of the 2nd century A.D. in North Africa. Irenaeus, a bishop in France, who had been taught by Polycarp, who had been taught by the living voice of the Apostle John, recognized the 1st and 2nd Epistles of John, and the Book of Revelation in the 2nd century; and, so far as I am aware, there is nothing to show that he did not also recognize the 3rd. The learned Origen of Alexandria, about 60 years later, referred to the Book of Revelation as having been written by the Apostle John.

4. *The Epistle of Jude.* I cannot suggest to what churches this epistle first came, but the destruction of Jerusalem may account for its absence from the Peshitto. It is, however, in the Muratorian Canon, and it is quoted by Clement of Alexandria about the end of the 2nd century A.D., and its writer claims to be

Jude, the brother of some well-known James. The Apostle Jude was brother of a well-known James. Tertullian, a little after the end of the 2nd century, states that it was written by the Apostle Jude, and it is quoted by Origen of Alexandria.

All the foregoing 26 Books are quoted or referred to by Christian writers in the 2nd century A.D., that is to say, very soon after they had been written.

5. *2nd Peter*. This remains to be considered. Its writer claims to be the Apostle Peter, and declares that he was with the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, and we have no evidence, internal or external, proving it to be a forgery. It purports to have been written to some to whom the 1st Epistle was written, namely, to Hebrew Christians in Asia Minor. In the writings of Melito, a bishop in Asia Minor, written about A.D. 170, there is what looks like an allusion to one passage in 2nd Peter. There are verbal coincidences with this epistle in the writings of Polycarp, another bishop in Asia Minor, and in the writings of Clement of Rome, both of whom lived in, or almost immediately after, apostolic days. As we have seen, there was then intercourse between the Christians in Asia Minor and Rome, and this Epistle is in the Canon of the learned Origen, and was quoted by him about the year A.D. 240 although he refers to doubts in the minds of some regarding its authorship. It is in the Canon of the great Athanasius of Alexandria, and of the learned Jerome in the 4th century. It is highly probable that for its genuineness these great men had strong documentary evidence, and that otherwise they would not have recognized it as canonical.

If we had as strong evidence for the authorship of any ancient Greek or Latin classical work as we have for the authorship of 2nd Peter or of any of the other six considered just now, and no evidence to rebut it, the authorship of that classic would never be disputed.

To some it may seem unsatisfactory that all twenty-seven N.T. Books are not named in all the ancient lists to which reference has been made. This, however, can be easily accounted for: (a) Apostolic writings were not all written in the same land: they were written in widely different parts of the world. (b) They were

not written in the 20th century, but in the 1st, and in the 1st century one or more might take a long time to circulate to all Churches in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea. (c) When such a writing would reach a distant Church, it might be that a considerable time would elapse before that Church would have sufficient evidence to justify its reception. (d) The destruction of Jerusalem which had been the headquarters of Primitive Christianity might have interfered greatly with the circulation and authentication of some of the N.T. Books. (e) The Peshitto may have been made before the Books not in it were written, and the Old Latin Version may have been made before the Books not in it had reached North Africa.

It is eminently satisfactory that when the seven Books had circulated widely some of them were not at once received by some Churches, and that others were not at once received by other Churches: satisfactory for two reasons. In the first place, it shows that the early Christian Churches would not receive writings claiming to be apostolic without satisfactory evidence proving them to be such; and in the second place, the fact that some of the N.T. writings were not received at once as apostolic by Christians in distant localities makes all the stronger our conviction regarding the genuineness of the twenty Books which were thus received, and which make more than seven-eighths of the entire N.T.

I do not think there is evidence that, after the seven Books had widely circulated, doubts were entertained regarding the genuineness of any of them by more than a small minority of the Lord's people then on earth; and that doubts were entertained regarding the genuineness of some by some Christians is not to be wondered at. I suppose nothing in the history of literature is more certain than that Bunyan wrote the 'Pilgrim's Progress', yet some even in his day doubted that he was its author.

It is very satisfactory to know that all 27 Books in our N.T. Canon have been received as apostolic by Athanasius, the Council of Carthage, Jerome, Rufinus, Augustine, the Council of Trent, and by the common consent of the various Protestant Churches. These Churches have differed widely amongst themselves on some subjects, and they have all differed very widely from the Church

of Rome on very many subjects, but it is indeed a most happy thing that all these Churches are agreed concerning the Canon of the New Testament.

The evidence exhibited in this article makes it reasonable to conclude that every book of the twenty-seven was from the very beginning received as canonical by the person, or the Church, or the community, to whom it first came, and who must have known well who wrote it.—*Bible League Quarterly*.

BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS

H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D.

Man in Society

We have been considering the words which express the fundamental relationships of human life; we must now consider those that arise out of the wider relationships of human society, though the inclusion of some in this section, rather than in the preceding, may well be regarded as arbitrary.

The first group we must consider consists of those who for reasons of age or lack of freedom had no personal place in the society around them.

The most general word for the dependent members of a family or clan is *tap*. It has no plural, and this shows that it is the fact of dependency that is being stressed—cf. the lack of plural for '*adam*'. In English it is rendered children, little children, little ones, and once, misleadingly, families (Gen. 47:12). Koehler gives the fundamental meaning of the word as 'those of a nomadic tribe who are not (or in small extent) able to march'. Quite consistently with this we find the bulk of its appearances in the earlier books of the Old Testament, though its use in post-exilic books like Ezra and Esther shows that its use never died out. It should be borne in mind that in its widest use *tap* will have included women and those old men unable to fend for themselves any longer.

While we may accept the standard English translation in about half the cases in which *tap* is used, even though it stresses youth rather than dependency, in the others it is definitely inade-