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As he had an habitual delicacy of the chest the windows of the carriage were kept closed. He arrived home rather heated, and threw open his coat to take his usual walk under the lime-tree avenue in the vicarage grounds. He thus caught a chill, and after a few days' illness passed unconsciously away, from congestion of the lungs, before any of his family could be summoned. His secretaries continued almost to the last the usual reading of the *Times*, Sir Walter Scott, and other literature, as well as the daily religious exercises. The last of his great works, except the rebuilding of the parish schools, was the erection of the splendid new Parish Church of Kensington, in which he preached for about two years, including the very last Sunday of his life. His elocution was so perfect that there was not the least difficulty in hearing him all over that vast building. His remains were buried at Hanwell, and his funeral was a very remarkable sight. Every shop in Kensington was closed, and every inhabitant seemed to have come out to pay their last tribute of respect to their revered Archdeacon. His life was very unobtrusive, but his work remains in the foundations of that national system of Church elementary education which, vigorously followed up by his successor, the present Dean of St. Paul's, now has 2,257,000 children in average attendance, or more than one half the children of the country; in the great work of Church building and parish organization, to which he devoted his energies; and in that education of modern and clerical opinion, which his earnestness, learning, abilities, and sound judgment, conspicuously qualified him to promote.

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

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### ART. III.—A VERY EARLY CHRISTIAN ROMANCE.

#### A Study on the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs.

SOMEWHERE, probably in the first or second decade of the second century, a Jewish Christian, not unlikely living in Pella<sup>1</sup>—a survivor of the Jewish congregation of Jerusalem, wrote the fanciful but deeply interesting book which is the subject of the present article.

He called it the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," and it purported to be a writing containing the last utterances of the twelve sons of Jacob.

These "Testaments" contain solemn warnings to the descen-

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<sup>1</sup> *Pella* was a small city of the Decapolis, the "other side" of Jordan, about twenty miles south of the Sea of Tiberias.

dants of the writers to guard against the special sins and follies into which they, the writers, during their lifetime had fallen. This was the *apparent* object of the book. But its *real* design was to induce the Jews living in the second century of the Christian era to adopt Christianity, not as a new religion, but as a development of ancient Judaism—a development known, predicted, and carefully provided for from the days of their great ancestors, the twelve sons of Jacob, the original fathers of the twelve tribes.

These "Testaments" were evidently well-known to the very early Christian Church. Origen ("Hom. in Jos. xv.," c. 6) quotes them by name, and Tertullian in two places ("Adv. Marc." v. 1; "Scorp," c. 13) weaves into his argument not only the thought, but the very words of our writing.

It was therefore well-known as a work of some authority and importance in the schools of Alexandria and Carthage in the early years of the third century.

From the days of Origen we lose sight of the book for many hundred years. Grostête, the learned and practical Bishop of Lincoln in the thirteenth century, discovered it, and caused a Latin version to be made from the original Greek.

This Latin version of the great Bishop of Lincoln gradually made its way in different European countries, and from it many translations into modern languages have been made.

It was, however, some four centuries after Grostête's Latin version was made that the Greek text was published in 1698 by Grabe, from a Cambridge MS. Since then several editions of the Greek text of the "Testaments" have been put out. A general interest in this most ancient and curious writing seems to be growing up.

The more prominent aspect of the writing is its *moral* teaching; though underneath the moral exhortations which run through all the doctrinal details we can trace a distinct thread of Christian teaching.

The doctrinal statements scattered up and down the "Testaments" are numerous, but are seldom clear cut, definite articles of faith. They are just what we should expect in a very early Christian writing, emanating from a somewhat obscure centre, and in a work probably of one unskilled and untrained as a writer or thinker.

In each "Testament" details—some lengthy, some very brief—are given of the life of the Patriarch whose dying charge the "Testament" in question purports to be. The peculiar sin which seems especially to have sadly coloured the

life-story is in several cases dwelt on, and his children are warned of the consequences which will surely follow them if they in their turn yield to a similar temptation.

The Biblical story in most cases forms the basis of the exhortation, but many details are given of which no trace<sup>1</sup> appears in the Pentateuch. The writer must have drawn them from some other sources.

Thus REUBEN dwells on *fornication*, alluding to his fatal sin with Bilhah. He styles this crime the destruction of the soul—it separates man from God, and brings him near to idols.

SIMEON speaks in the "Testament" of *envy* and *jealousy*, remembering his conduct towards his brother Joseph, because his father loved him.

LEVI. Here we recognise the hand of the Jew still jealous of the law of Moses. Levi is represented as thus reminding his descendants: "Lead your children to read unceasingly *the Law of God.*" "All," he goes on to say, "who know the law of God shall be honoured; such an one shall not be a stranger wherever he happen to go." In the course of his "Testament" he warns his posterity, curiously enough, against arrogance, lest, because of the priesthood, they shall think too highly of themselves.

JUDAH, too, alludes warningly to the sin of *fornication*, referring to well-known scenes in his own life-story, and urges moderation in wine. He speaks, too, of the inordinate love of money—ever a characteristic feature of his people. He dwells on the supremacy of Levi because to his brother God gave the priesthood, whilst to him, Judah, only the gift of the kingdom was allotted, and he set the kingdom beneath the priesthood.

ISSACHAR enlarges on *simplicity of heart*; he, too, exhorts his posterity to keep the law of God.

ZABULON'S theme is especially *compassion*; he strangely presses home the duty towards the neighbour, and even towards beasts.

DAN dwells on *anger* and *lying*, with special reference to the betrayal of Joseph their brother.

NAPHTALI curiously charges his children to reverence *order*, giving instances of the grave consequences which follow any departure from obeying the "order of nature," such as adoring stocks and stones instead of the Lord.

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<sup>1</sup> Many of these details are especially based upon the Jewish "Book of Henoch," compiled about B.C. 107, and upon the Jewish "Book of Jubilees," compiled some time in the first century of the Christian era. In addition to these well-known books, there is no doubt but that the writer of the "Testaments" used a very large Haggadah literature.

GAD, again, presses home the effects of hatred, having regard to the sin of the sons of Jacob against Joseph.

ASHER urges his descendants not to be *double-faced*, but to be one-faced, clinging alone to goodness.

JOSEPH, as might be expected from his eventful history, exhorts his children to *brotherly love*, and dwells on the advantage of *constancy*.

BENJAMIN urges his posterity to be faithful followers of Joseph. He paints *the end of the good man*, taking for his example his brother Joseph's life story.

The thought underlying the "Testament" of Joseph is the following: Joseph is the type of a suffering Christ. The idea in the writer's mind appears to have been so to group the sons of Jacob round Joseph that he shall be the object of the hatred of them all in their manifold sins, and yet, while apparently perishing at their hands, be their deliverer. His history thus becomes a type of the history of Christ, who suffers in consequence of the sins of His people in order to bring spiritual redemption as the atoning Lamb.

The writer of these "Testaments" evidently knew much of Jesus Christ. It is probable that he had before him, at least, a large portion of the canonical books of the New Testament. It is certain that he had been instructed with considerable care in the great truths connected with the Redeemer, for, as far as the author goes in doctrinal teaching here, he is orthodox in the word's highest sense. When he errs it is by defect only; what he tells us is strictly true. His doctrine is evidently derived from the purest, highest sources; it only fails in points—notably, in the teaching respecting the Holy Spirit, in which evidently he had received but scant instruction. In the "Testaments" Christ is God and man in one. It was the Most High who died upon the cross, and yet he is distinguished from God by being His Son.

We find amongst other details careful and accurate statements respecting the person and office of Jesus Christ:

(a) Concerning *His birth*.—Messiah is to be born of a virgin of the tribe of Judah. His name should be Saviour. A star shining in the daytime should announce His coming as King.

(b) *His baptism*. While in the waters the heavens should be opened to Him, and from them, accompanied with the Father's voice, should come forth upon Him the spirit of knowledge and of sanctification.

(c) *His life on earth*.—The "Testaments" dwell upon what His work was to be. How He was to dwell in poverty. In His character He was to be long-suffering, meek, simple of heart, righteous.

He was to be wholly sinless. Though seemingly a man, walking among men, eating and drinking with them—though really a man, He is God as well, God and man in one.

(d) *The manner of His reception among men.*—Although the great God of Israel, He would be counted as a deceiver, and slain by Israel. The sons of Levi shall lay their hands upon Him and crucify Him, taking His blood upon their heads. Though God, He shall die, and that on behalf of men.

(e) *The effect of His death.*—Spotless He shall die on behalf of the impious, and sinless for the sinner, His blood being the blood of the covenant. The end of His death would be the salvation of the world. He dies as the "Lamb of God," or Mediator between God and man.

(f) *Immediate result to Israel of their rejection of Messiah.*—As a punishment for their great wickedness, terrible woes should come on Israel, among which a special dispersion and contempt.

(g) *Ultimate pardon to Israel.*—Israel shall not always rest under her punishment. The Lord will come a second time in pity, and will redeem her through faith and water (baptism).

(h) *The Lord's resurrection and ascension.*—The Crucified One shall rise again from the grave and ascend into heaven.

(i) *Destiny of men who have called upon the Lord Jesus Christ.*—The time of the general resurrection should come, some men rising to glory, some to shame. The time of judgment should come, too; some shall be sent to eternal life, some to eternal punishment. Everlasting peace shall be given to all that have called on the name of the Lord. The saints shall rest in Eden. The Lord Jesus shall open the gates of Paradise, and remove the threatening sword against Adam, and shall give to His saints to eat of the Tree of Life.

With all these abundant references to the person and office of Jesus Christ, to the doom of Israel, and the destiny of men, it is remarkable that the passages which treat of the "Holy Spirit" are very few in number, and are remarkable for their paucity of detail. Two, however, of considerable interest may be quoted: "The Spirit shall be poured out as fire." "Through the Spirit sent forth by Christ, the Spring of life, men shall become sons of God in truth, walking in His commandments."

Some of the teaching of the "Testaments," especially as regards the *nature of man*, is very singular, and is suggestive. It would seem as though the thoughts afterwards developed in the great Gnostic schools very early had begun to perplex men's minds and to lead them astray out of the old paths of Gospel simplicity.

"Man made in the image of God," writes the author of our book, is composed of two parts—body and spirit. Seven spirits were given to man at his creation; viz., the spirits of life, sight, hearing, smelling, taste, speech, and of begetting; to which Belial opposes seven other spirits; viz., the spirits of fornication, contention, gluttony, deceiving, pride, lying, and injustice."

The perpetual conflict that is going on in man is thus defined. "Learn, therefore," says our author, "that two spirits wait on man—the spirit of truth and the spirit of error; and in the midst is the spirit of the understanding of the mind, which can turn to whichever spirit it pleases. Man has a free will, and can choose accordingly, since there are two ways of good and evil. . . . Man is weak and inclined to error, yet if he perseveres in his efforts to do right, every spirit of Belial will fly from him."

The character of morality pressed home in the "Testaments" corresponds very closely to the gentle, quiet, though somewhat ascetic tendency which was remarked at a later period by St. Jerome to exist among the Nazarenes.

Compassion for the unhappy, charity, and kindness to the poor, gentleness, love to animals, peacefulness and quiet are especially enjoined in this most ancient Christian book.

Its *ascetic* tendency is curiously shown in the repeated warnings against women; in its recommendation to temperance and even abstinence in the matter of wine; in its exalted estimate of voluntary poverty; in its high commendation of fasting.

Generally, to sum up the question of its *date* and probable authorship. It seems fair, on the whole, to assume that it was a writing of some authority, put out between A.D. 100 and A.D. 120.

As *Tertullian* in the beginning of the third century twice uses thoughts and words from the "Testaments," and *Origen* before the middle of the same century quotes the work by name, it is clear that the writing was known and used *before* A.D. 200. A reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, allusions to the heathen constituting the majority in Christendom, the evident use of many of the books which make up the present canon of the New Testament, forbid us suggesting any date for the composition of the book *within* the first century.

We are thus limited to some time in the second century for a probable date.

No trace, however, appears of the long troublous period

which set in for the Jewish people about A.D. 117-120, and which culminated in the disastrous rebellion of Barkokebar, A.D. 135.

There seems, therefore, little doubt but that it first appeared some time between A.D. 100 and A.D. 120, and the majority of scholars who have carefully examined the work, such as Bishop Lightfoot, Vorstman, De Groot, Ewald, Wieseler, Dorner, and Sinkler generally agree in assigning this early date to our book.

The spirit of the "Testaments" is evidently Jewish. The thought, the imagery, the language forbids us thinking of anyone but a Jew by birth, by education, by surroundings, as the author. He was living evidently in an atmosphere of Christianity where Christianity was looked on not as a religion superseding or taking the place of the Mosaic law, but as a belief to be added to the sacred tradition of their fathers. His doctrine respecting the person of Christ scarcely falls short of the standard set by the great primitive Catholic fathers. His views respecting the admission of the Gentiles to all the privileges belonging to the children of God are broad, generous, and liberal. His view of the work and mission of St. Paul—one of the burning questions of the sub-Apostolic age—is as accurate as it is far-reaching.

Yet we see clearly he is writing to a *Jewish church*—or to a little group of churches, still proud of their position, still cherishing as their proudest heritage their undoubted descent from the twelve sons of Jacob, to whom the sacred promise for so many centuries back had been entrusted.

Now, in the earliest years of Christianity we know that such a Jewish-Christian Church existed. In the stormy days which immediately preceded the siege and fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) the members of the Church of Jerusalem fled in great numbers from the doomed city; and the famous mother Church, mainly consisting of Jews, was formed again at Pella, a city of the Decapolis beyond Jordan.

These Christian Jews, we read in Eusebius (H. E. iii. 5) were warned by an oracle to flee from the guilty city. When, years after, the Emperor Hadrian built on the ruins of fallen Jerusalem his new city of *Ælia Capitolina*, some of the Pella Christians returned to the old scenes of Jewish greatness, and consented to live in the new city as Gentiles; but not a few, we know, preferred to cling to their old laws and cherished customs. These remained behind at Pella beyond Jordan.

Many of these Pella Jews were, without doubt, Jewish Christians, separated only from their Gentile brethren by their retention of the Mosaic laws.



These Jewish Christians, whose centre seems to have been Pella, were the sect known as *the Nazarenes* in the early Christian Church. They were the fugitives, and the children of the fugitives, of the primitive Jerusalem Church.

Our book, the "Testaments," is a very early witness to their doctrine, their teaching, and their hopes. The writer was most likely a Nazarene. Those whom he addressed in the book were Christian Jews, dwelling for the most part in the little City of "Refuge" beyond Jordan, where they had found a home.

These "Testaments" were intended to confirm in Christianity, Jews already believers in the name of Jesus Christ, by showing them that the Master's religion was but a development of the most ancient orthodox Judaism—a development, too, known, foretold, and prepared for from the days of the great forefather of the race and his famous sons, the twelve patriarchs.

Hence the peculiar form of this strange religious "romance," partly didactic and explanatory, partly hortatory and prophetic, known as the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs."

It is right to say, however, that there is a modern school of German thought which (in the words of one of its latest exponents) looks upon the "Testaments" as a writing lucid and simple, vivid and pointed in its language, filled with exhortation characterized by rare beauty and originality, but at the same time as *honeycombed with interpolations*.

The writer of the present little study on this most curious and interesting book, which, in common with many other scholars, he believes belongs to the very earliest days of Christianity (its author might probably have conversed with St. John), feels that this is not the place to discuss at length either the allegations of the German school in question or the exhaustive replies which could be given to them.

This little study of a most ancient Christian writing would be incomplete without some notice is taken of the witness which it bears to the existence and acceptance as authoritative of the New Testament books.

Now, it is impossible, from the very nature of the "Testaments," that any *direct* reference to the New Testament writings should be found; for our "religious romance" purports to give the dying utterances of men who lived centuries before the New Testament books were put forth. We can, therefore, only look for unconscious allusions, more or less direct; for similarity in language, in thought, in teaching;

for occasional facts derived from New Testament sources, woven into the Messianic or national prophecies of the "Testaments."

In the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" there are a number of peculiar *words* apparently taken from the vocabulary of the New Testament. There are also a few unmistakable *phrases* borrowed—perhaps unconsciously—from the same source, while a vast number of New Testament *facts* are scattered over the whole book—facts especially bearing upon the work and office of the Lord. After a careful examination it appears that a majority of the books of the New Testament were certainly used and studied by the writer of our book. This is especially noticeable in the case of the books written by, or under the influence of, St. Paul.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole—granting that the present text of the "Testaments" (as we believe it does) fairly represents the original document—it seems clear that the writer of the "Testaments" was acquainted with the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, but more especially with St. Luke; with the Acts, the Epistle to the Romans, the second Epistle to the Corinthians, the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians; with the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 1 John, and Revelation. It is probable, but not so absolutely certain, that he made use also of several of the remaining New Testament books.

In the last "Testament," that of Benjamin, occurs a striking passage, in the course of which he lets his readers know something of the form in which he possesses these writings of the New Testament, of which he has in his work made such copious use; viz., of their peculiar vocabulary, of their thoughts, of the special incidents which they relate.

The dying Benjamin is addressing his children, and is telling them what will happen to the beloved tribe far down the ages of time. "No longer," says the dying patriarch, "shall I be called a ravening wolf on account of bygone deeds of rapine, but the worker of the Lord distributing meat to those who work what is right. And in the latter times shall one arise from my seed beloved of the Lord, hearing His voice and enlightening all the Gentiles with new knowledge, shining with the light of knowledge and salvation to Israel, snatching

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<sup>1</sup> It has been computed that of the words peculiar to St. Paul in the New Testament, the writer of the "Testaments" uses no less than fifty-nine words, of which thirty nine occur in no other writer of his age. Similar instances of peculiar words common to the other books of the New Testament and to the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" exist. It seems, however, that the writer of the "Testaments" was more intimately acquainted with the Gospel of St. Luke and the Pauline Epistles.

it like a wolf from them, and giving it in the synagogues of the Gentiles. And until the consummation of the ages shall he be in the synagogues of the Gentiles, and among their rulers, as a strain of music in the mouth of all. And in the Holy Books shall he be written, both his work and word, and he shall be the chosen of God for ever."

There is no shadow of doubt but that by "one who in latter times should arise from the seed of Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord," Paul is alluded to. It has been referred to above that the writer of the "Testaments" possessed, and seems to have made especial use of, St. Luke's Gospel (the gospel of Paul), the Acts, and several of Paul's Epistles. These words in the "Testament of Benjamin," then, tell us in *what category* the writings of the blessed Paul were placed by Christian Jews living in the early years of the second century—that is to say, within twenty years, probably, after the death of St. John.

They were reckoned among the "*Holy Books*," a familiar phrase for the Old Testament Scriptures. These writings of the blessed Paul, including the Gospel of St. Luke, the Acts, and most of the Epistles bearing his name, among those Jewish congregations at the close of the first and beginning of the second century, to whom the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" were especially addressed, were certainly esteemed as forming part of the most sacred volume of Old Testament Scriptures.

H. DONALD M. SPENCE, D.D.

THE DEANERY, GLOUCESTER.  
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The writer of the above little study especially desires to express his obligation to "Die Testamente der Zwölf Patriarchen," Friederich Schnapp, Halle, 1889; to Professor B. B. Warfield's exhaustive essay in the *Presbyterian Review*, New York, 1880; to Dr. Pick's (of Alleghany, Pa.) study in the *Lutheran Church Review*, 1885; to Dr. Sinker, of Trinity College, Cambridge, "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs," Text and Introduction, 1869.

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#### ART. IV.—NOTES AND COMMENTS ON ST. JOHN XXI.

##### No. IV.

**I**N the previous section we studied the narrative of St. Peter's three confessions of love to his Master, and his Master's thrice-repeated restoration and commission of him as a shepherd of the flock. Without returning at any length to that scene, I wish only to notice two or three detached points in it.