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The Bible as Literature and Much More.

ROBERT STUART MACARTHUR.

II

The Assured Genuineness of the Bible.

(Continued from last issue.)

We do not receive the books of the New Testament simply on the authority of fathers or councils, but on the evidence which led them to accept these writings as credible and inspired. It is possible to show the genuineness of these books as truly as it is to show the genuineness of the poems of Homer, the orations of Demosthenes, the Commentaries of Caesar, or any of the writings of ancient or modern times. We ask no favors for the Word of God. We submit it to all appropriate tests to determine its genuineness and authenticity. If it cannot stand these tests, it will perish; if it cannot stand these tests, it ought to perish. No book has been subjected to tests so severe; and no book has so successfully responded to the severest tests. It has been thrust into a furnace heated seven times hotter than it was ever heated for any other book, and it has come forth without even the smell of fire upon its pages.

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES.

What are some of the historical evidences in favor of the genuineness of the Word of God?

We give especially those that have reference to the New Testament, because the New Testament writers quote frequently from the books of the Old Testament, and in various other ways give it their endorsement. Regarding the Old Testament the testimony of Jewish authors, ancient and modern, affirms the sacredness of the books which now comprise our Old Testament Scriptures. The oldest complete version in any language—the Alexandrian, known as the Septuagint, 280-150 B. C., and the Samaritan Pentateuch, give similar testimony. More and more is the scholarship of the world coming to believe in the person of Homer. Difficult as it may be to account for one Homer, it would be vastly more difficult to account for many Homers. The criticism which now is attempting to destroy the personality of Moses, has vainly attempted to destroy the personality of Homer. It has also tried its wits upon the reality and personality of Shakespeare. It will as certainly expend itself in vain upon Moses and the Pentateuch as it has upon Homer and the Iliad, and Shakespeare and his dramas.

All the books of the New Testament, with the exception of 2d Peter, were used in more or less connected form in the latter half of the second century. This collection implies that these writings long had an existence as separate books. Their origin must have antedated by a considerable period the time when they appeared as a recognized collection of sacred writings. Tertullian, born at Carthage, about 150 or 160, died there between 229 and 240, the first great writer of Latin Christianity, and one of the noblest characters of the ancient church, speaks of the New Testament as made up of the gospels and the apostles. He affirms the genuineness of the four Gospels, the Acts, 1st Peter, 1st John, thirteen epistles of Paul, and of the book of Revelation; thus endorsing twenty-one books of the twenty-seven comprising our New Testament Scriptures. The Muratorian Canon in the west, and the Peshitto, the *correct or simple*, Version of the east, as Dr. A. H. Strong has pointed out, having a common date of about 160 to 170, taken together, witness to the fact that at that time every book of our present New Testament, with the exception of Second Peter, was received as genuine. The Christian and Apostolic Fathers in the first half of the second

century testify that these books were written by the Apostles themselves. It is thus certain that the origin must go back to the first century, if not to the time when the Apostles themselves were living.

In proof of this statement, Irenæus, probably born in Asia Minor about 115, and died in Lyons about 190 to 202, and certainly one of the most distinguished authors and theologians of the early church, quotes the four Gospels by name. He was, as it is well known, the disciple and friend of Polycarp, the exact dates of whose birth and death are in doubt, who was a personal acquaintance of the Apostle John. Thus the testimony of Irenæus is virtually the evidence of Polycarp, whose testimony, in turn, was virtually that of the Apostle John. Justin Martyr, the first Christian apologist whose works have come down to us, who suffered martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius, notably in 164, who is mentioned for the first time by Tatian as the "most wonderful Justin," and who is quoted by Tertullian as the "philosopher and martyr," speaks of "memoirs of Jesus Christ," he also used the term "gospels," and his quotations are evidently citations from our accepted gospels. Papias, perhaps, 80-165 or 164, whom Irenæus calls "the hearer of John," declares that Matthew wrote in the Hebrew dialect the "sacred oracles," *ta logia*, and that Mark, the interpreter of Peter, wrote under Peter's direction an account of the same events and discourses. The Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, Clement of Rome supposed to be the fellow-laborer of Paul, and mentioned in Phil. 4:3 who died 101, Ignatius of Antioch, martyred 115, and Polycarp companions and friends of the Apostles, have left us in their writings over one hundred quotations from and allusions to the New Testament writings; and among these every book except four minor epistles, II Peter, Jude, II and III Epistles of John, is represented. It is well known that the early churches took the greatest care to assure themselves of the genuineness of these writings, and that they accepted them as genuine only on the most conclusive evidences to that effect. It would be easy to give with fullness of detail these evidences. Those who wish to study the subject at length, can do so by examining Dr. A. H. Strong's chapter on "Positive Proofs that the Scriptures are a Divine Revelation," in his variously learned and altogether admirable volume on "Systematic Theology."

Regarding the evidence concerning the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews, satisfactory statements are not wanting. Tatian, the Assyrian, and the disciple of Justin, repeatedly quotes from the four gospels. He also composed a harmony of our four gospels, which he named the "Diatessaron," meaning the Gospel according to the four. While the differences in style between the gospel by the evangelist John and the Apocalypse are recognized, those differences are explicable on the ground of John's greater familiarity with Greek when the gospel was written, he having formerly been more cognizant with Aramaean. The points of similarity between the two books are very marked. This fact is observed in the common use of the titles for Christ, "The Lamb of God," "the Word of God," and "The True." These are frequent epithets applied to our Lord in both books. The Epistle to the Hebrews was accepted during the first century after it was written. To this fact Clement of Rome, North Martyr, and the Peshitto Version bear witness. In the Roman, North African, and some other churches, the genuineness of this book was doubted for two centuries. It was believed that some of its characteristics were inconsistent with the traditions of a Pauline authorship. But this conclusion was at most merely a matter of opinion, and certainly an opinion not based on very firm foundations. At the end of the fourth century Jerome, after a careful review of all the evidence accessible in the case, decided in favor of the earlier opinion; Augustine followed Jerome in this opinion; so did also the Third Council of Carthage, in the year 397. The book has ever since held its place in the list of the received books of the New Testament. Many students of the late Dr. A. C. Kendrick will remember his interesting and learned discussion as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He with some others was disposed to believe that it was written by Apollus, who was an Alexandrian Jew, "a learned man," and "mighty in the

Scriptures." But even granting that Apollus was its chief author, he may have written at the suggestion and under the direction of the Apostle Paul; so that the spirit of the Epistle is virtually Pauline, even though Apollus may have chiefly assisted in producing this great work, or even have been its exclusive writer.

Thus we have these ancient, unprejudiced, competent and learned authors in favor of the genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures. It is well nigh impossible to account for the unanimity of this competent testimony on any other hypothesis than that of the genuineness of the Scriptures to which the testimony is borne.

(To be Continued.)

Mg Dream.

I dreamed that I wandered afar,
In a land that was fair to see,
Where the angels were all white robed,
And I longed like them to be.

The streets were pure silver and gold,
The city was built in a cloud,
And the people all looked very happy,
And sung sweetly in voices loud.

Alleluiah! Alleluiah! Praise God!
Kneel down and adore the Son;
Give Him honor, and praise, and laud
Him for all that He has done.

I raised my eyes to see my Saviour,
When a voice in so tender a tone
Said, not yet, my dear child, not yet
Canst thou see God's own beloved Son.

I meekly bowed my head,
And murmured a silent assent,
And not yet have I seen my Saviour
Since: the time I dreamed I went.

Sin and its Penalties.

JOSEPH A. BENNETT.

Sin as a word is small and easily written, but as a principle it is mountainous, nay it is a chain of mountains, which girdle the world and rise so high as to shut out the light of heaven, and forever bar the pathway to the skies. Various attempts have been made to scale these mountains, but in vain. With much toil and effort men have clambered up their rugged sides, only to fall at last exhausted, with frowning and insurmountable crags still above them. These mountains are covered with a darkness and gloom which clings to them like a funeral shroud, and from peak to peak, and crag to crag there leap the sad notes of the requiem and the dirge, the sound of falling tears and breaking hearts can be heard on every hand, while ever and anon the awful shriek of a lost soul plunging into everlasting torments makes the very air to vibrate with inexpressible agony. Not least among the terrors to be found on these dark mountains, is a fierce and hungry bird of prey called "Remorse." Keen of vision and swift of wing it pursues its victim and feeds on mind and heart, and no effort to drive it away is ever successful. Sometimes, indeed, it may seem to leave its victim, but it is sure to come back again with renewed strength and vigor. A dark picture this. Who would care to live, or rather to die on these dark mountains? for there is no real life there. Ah, who indeed? Surely none but those who have been driven there by an unavoidable fate. Surely none are mad enough of their own free will, to choose these deadly hills. Yes, wonder of wonders, that is just the case, not a single soul in all that shadowy land, need be there, or stay there, unless he deliberately chooses to do so. Those who fail in surmounting these peaks, fail because they are determined to conquer in their own strength, but is there escape in any other way? Yes, certainly, and for the most part the people on yonder mountains know it. There is one person, and only one, whose smile can turn the darkest night into brightest day, whose blood falling upon the mountains of sin, will wash them all away, and whose voice of music will not only hush the chidings of conscience, but will