

THE
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

ARTICLE I.

GIFTS OF HEALING.

BY EDWARD M. MERRINS, M.D., WUCHANG, CHINA.

THREE or four years ago, a distinguished bishop of the Episcopal Church arraigned the Christian world for its lack of interest in the general uplifting of the great mass of our people, and urged that active steps be taken at once to cure their mental and physical as well as their moral ills. "What I should like to see," said he, "is a greater understanding, a more active interest in the institutional church. I mean by that a church which provides for the social and physical welfare of its people with as much interest as it preaches at them from the Bible." Conversely, it was being asserted in the secular press that, for the first time in the life of man upon the earth, the care and cure of the body had definitely taken precedence of the care and cure of the soul, and that much of the personal influence and mystical authority exercised formerly by the priest had passed over to the physician. Short as the time has been, a surprising change, traceable to a variety of causes, has since taken place. The soul is once more regarded as the dominant partner; and ministers, sighing for new worlds to conquer, are opening clinics in connection with their churches, where they under-

ARTICLE VII.

FERRIS'S "FORMATION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT."¹

BY REVEREND PARKE P. FLOURNOY, D.D.,
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THIS is a book on a subject of acknowledged obscurity. We do not know much about the formation of the New Testament. There is but little contemporary literature to throw light on the subject; and the author of this book, which deals with it, does not seem to wish to lessen the difficulties which encompass it, by using such light as we have. He claims that the New Testament church had no New Testament, and seems disposed to think that it would probably be better if we had none; or rather, that instead of a closed canon we should still be guided by "open vision," with writings added to those which we have in our New Testament, and much of that omitted.

The book is published by the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, and is written by one who is (or was) a pastor, presumably interested in the spiritual welfare of all whom he can reach with his voice or pen. Yet, to one reader at least, the book, instead of being likely to minister to the edification of its readers, seems calculated to unsettle their faith.

His treatment of the New Testament is such as to throw doubt (1) upon its completeness, (2) upon the authenticity

¹The Formation of the New Testament. By George Hooper Ferris, A.M. Pp. 281. 90 cents, *net*.

of parts of it, and (3) on its authority as a guide to faith and godly living. His views of inspiration are of the loosest. His presentation of the facts connected with the formation of the New Testament is exceedingly one-sided and defective. While professing a conscientiousness which he reproaches the great mass of his brethren in the ministry as lacking, he yet seems to be so under the influence of his theory about the formation of the New Testament, that he is incapable of presenting the facts in an unprejudiced way. There is an utter lack of balance in his treatment. His finger is always on the scale which he wishes to go down. He continually underestimates the importance of the dates and genuineness of the New Testament books, and of apostolic authority in connection with their production and their use by the church. He is very earnest in presenting the claims of apocryphal literature to a place beside the books of the New Testament. He seems especially anxious to impress the reader with the "vast mass" of literature out of which he represents the books in our New Testament as having been selected by arbitrary ecclesiastical authority. He pours contempt on portions of the New Testament, and exalts to the highest rank such a book, e. g., as the "Shepherd of Hermas," and speaks of it as more generally read and admired by early Christians than any book in our New Testament.

Most readers will probably agree that, if what has been said above is true, "The Formation of the New Testament" is a dangerous book. I verily believe it is; and will now proceed to show that, in spite of the very favorable notices of it in many religious publications, the objections to it which have been mentioned are well founded. It should be said, in advance, however, that it is not intended to intimate that the writer *intends* to mislead: he seems entirely sincere. But his

doubts about the New Testament, expressed with unusual force as they are, are all the more dangerous to his readers, in this "age of doubt," by reason of the very sincerity with which they are expressed. The fact that the book bears the imprimatur of one of the largest and most orthodox Protestant denominations, and is written by a minister of the gospel, will commend it to the confidence of a multitude of readers who would not have been reached or affected by a similar book written by an acknowledged skeptic. The many true and excellent things said — and remarkably well said — will aid in commending the dangerous views, advocated with great skill and no little learning.

But let us look into the book, and see whether the serious charges made against it are true. It is well to begin with what is the main contention of the author. He states it as follows:—

"In the middle of the second century we find that our New Testament books were mixed in with a great mass of literature, containing Epistles, homilies, prophecies, apocalyptic visions, apostolic histories, and gospel narratives. No effort had been made to sift this material, and some of these books were prized more highly than those which eventually found an entrance into the authoritative collection" (pp. 14-15).

The most dangerous errors, as has often been remarked, are half-truths. At the middle of the second century there were some writings which *some* may have considered almost on a level with the books of our New Testament, and, later, a large number of apocryphal writings claiming apostolic authorship was in existence, and some of these are attached to some ancient manuscripts. That there was "a great mass of literature" at the middle of the second century of as early origin as the books of the New Testament, and as fully accepted as authoritative by the great body of Christians of

that time, is utterly untrue. Let us hear Professor Caspar René Gregory, of Leipzig, who is regarded as the successor of Tischendorf as the first textual expert in the world. In a recent work, speaking of Clement of Rome, he says:—

“According to the theories which represent his time as one that overflowed with evangelical and epistolatory literature, that would lead us to assume the existence of twenty or fifty Gospels and numerous letters, it would have been almost impossible for him to have written so much, so long a letter, without quoting here and there, or betraying in passing a knowledge of the contents of Gospels and letters that are unknown to us.”¹

And Dr. Gregory is a higher critic too. Yet so he finds the state of the case to be in a period about a half-century earlier than the middle of the second century. Let us see how it was at a later period.

Irenæus, writing in the episcopate of Eleutherus (174-189, Kurtz), writes of the New Testament books. Let us see what the veteran New Testament scholar of Cambridge University (England), Professor V. H. Stanton, has to say of his testimony on this point:—

“It is impossible that Irenæus should have made his statements on the subject of the Four Gospels with such calm assurance, if within the period since he reached or had nearly reached man's estate, that is since *circ.* 155 A.D., any one of them had been commonly spoken of as a work recently introduced, or if any other Gospel besides these had been treated as equal to them, in any of the leading Churches of Christendom with which he was acquainted.”²

Thus the most prominent Christian in Rome about 100 A.D. and the chief Christian writer of his time in Gaul about 180 A.D. seem to be entirely ignorant of the existence of “a great mass of literature” and of the fact stated by our author in the twentieth century that “some of these books were prized

¹The Canon and Text of the New Testament, pp. 65 f.

²The Gospels as Historical Documents, p. 274.

more highly than those which eventually found an entrance into the authoritative collection."

Professor Jülicher, of Marburg, quotes¹ Th. Zahn as saying:—

"The third generation after Christ (c. 100) the principal parts at least of the New Testament were already an actually working authority, recognized as binding in all parts of the Church."

So far as the Gospels are concerned, the case seems to have continued the same a hundred years later. Clement of Alexandria writes:—

"Primum quidem, in nobis traditis quatuor Evangelis non habemus hoc dictum, sed in eo, quod est secundum Ægyptios" ("First, then, we have not this saying² in the four Gospels that have been handed down to us, but in that according to the Egyptians").

This very clearly shows that the four Gospels were regarded, to use Dr. Sanday's happily adapted phrase, as "a garden enclosed," all so-called Gospels of whatever character—ascetic, like the little-known one "according to the Egyptians"; docetic, like that according to Peter; or Ebionite, like that according to the Hebrews—being carefully excluded. If Clement of Alexandria knew the whole Christian church better than any other man of his day, Origen probably knew the church and all its literature, twenty-five or thirty years later, more perfectly than any other man of his generation. When we open Origen's "Commentary on John," and read (i. 6), "Now the Gospels are four," we find that, even at that late date, after much of the apocryphal matter had been produced, there was no great need of "sifting."

When we remember what titanic efforts radical critics have made to discredit the Fourth Gospel, it is refreshing to glance

¹ Introduction to the New Testament, p. 460.

² The "saying" purported to be our Lord's answer to a question by Salome.

down the page a little way and find this greatest scholar of his age, born only about eighty-five years after the death of the last of the apostles, writing these words:—

"The Gospels then being four, I deem the first fruits of the Gospels to be that which you¹ have enjoined me to search into according to my powers, the Gospel of John, that which speaks of him whose genealogy had already been set forth, but which begins to speak of him at a point before he had any genealogy."

We have looked into the state of the case before and after the period — the middle of the second century — at which our author represents "our New Testament books" as "mixed in with a great mass of literature, containing Epistles," etc., and "some of these books" "prized more highly than those which eventually found entrance into the authoritative collection," and found that, though other works are occasionally quoted or referred to, it is evident that the New Testament books alone were accepted by the whole church as the authoritative and normative records of Christianity, at least so far as the Gospels are concerned.

Let us look at the acknowledged productions of the most eminent man and martyr who lived and wrote just at this time — the middle of the second century — Justin.

It is perfectly natural that a man born in Palestine about the time of the last apostle's death, or soon after, should have known of unwritten traditions about Him who had wrought his miracles and spoken his wonderful words there during the preceding century — and of some written by the "many" of whom Luke speaks, and that he would mention some facts not mentioned in our Gospels. Only a fraction of all these is recorded in the four Gospels, and it is not strange to find some references to things not found in our Gospels in Justin Martyr's apologies to the Emperor Antoninus Pius and in his

¹Ambrosius.

dialogue with a Jewish disputant about Christ. The legend of the fire in the Jordan at the baptism of Christ (like that of the angel descending and troubling the waters of the pool of Bethesda,¹ a statement which does not appear in our earliest Greek texts or in the Sinaitic Palimpsest) may be one of these oral traditions.

But, after all efforts, it seems that no critic has been able to identify any such statement of Justin with known texts of apocryphal Gospels.² There is now no doubt, however, as to Justin's use of all four of our Gospels. The veteran New Testament critic Dr. Bernhard Weiss, of Berlin University, speaks on this point thus:—

"However natural it may be to assume that Justin made use of an extra-canonical, heretical, or apocryphal Gospel, we find no adequate reason for such assumption if we take into account the growing insignificance of the features which cannot be traced to our Gospels, in proportion to the rich material which leads to their present form."³

Any one who will take the trouble to read, for instance, the fifteenth chapter of Justin's "First Apology," made up to a large extent, of quotations from the Synoptic Gospels, will find it impossible to believe that he did not read Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We, indeed, find Justin in appealing to the Emperor quoting the Greek philosophers, with whose works Antoninus might well be presumed to be acquainted; and we also find him referring to Plato and Socrates as almost Christians. But as he affirms that Plato was acquainted with Old Testament Scriptures,⁴ this is not very strange. Neither is it strange that in speaking to the Emperor of Christ as the *Λόγος*, "the Word," that he should speak of Plato's views of

¹ John v. 4.

² G. T. Purves, *Stone Lectures* (Princeton), p. 189.

³ *Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, sect. 7. 2.

⁴ *First Apology*, chaps. lix., lx.

the Logos. His theology may, indeed, have been tingured with some of his original views as a Greek philosopher, but this should not blind us to the fact that, for his knowledge of Christ, he continually refers, both in his apologies to the Emperor and his dialogue with the Jew, to "the memoirs of the apostles," "memoirs of the apostles and their followers," as if referring to Matthew and John, who were apostles, and Mark and Luke, who were followers of apostles.¹ He also uses the expression "the apostles, in the memoirs drawn up by them, which are called *Gospels*."² He shows, too, what was the estimate placed by Christians of the middle of the second century upon the Gospels as a part of the Holy Scripture, in his brief view of Christian worship:—

"On the day called Sunday there is gathering together of all who dwell in city and country with one accord (or in one place), and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read."³

He then describes the administration of the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

By reading the sixty-first chapter of the "First Apology" one can see an outline of our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus on the necessity of the new birth and of its spiritual and mysterious nature. The view given of Christ throughout is that he is the Word of God. This is by no means a Unitarian view of Christ; yet Dr. James Drummond, who is probably the most learned Unitarian writer and professor in the world to-day, has this to say:—

"I must conclude, therefore, as best satisfying on the whole the facts of the case, not only that Justin regarded the Fourth Gospel as one of the historical 'memoirs' of Christ, but that it is not improbable that he believed in its Johannean authorship."

¹ See Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, chap. ciii.

² First Apology, chap. lxvi.

³ First Apology, chap. lxvii.

In spite of all this, our author, however, tells us:—

"He [Justin] can be taken as a certain testimony to the fact that in the year 150 A.D. the Church in Rome did not possess a new collection of documents that could be placed side by side with the Old Testament as a canon of authority" (p. 58).

That Justin used extensively the Epistles of Paul as well as the four Gospels is made clear by Dr. Bernhard Weiss in his "Introduction to the New Testament,"¹ to which, for brevity's sake, the reader must be referred. His use of the Epistle of James,² of First Peter,³ and of Acts⁴ is clearly shown. His knowledge of the Revelation is indicated by such words as these:—

"There was a man with us [Christians] whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation that was made to him."⁵

Then follows a reference to the "thousand years . . . the general . . . eternal resurrection and judgment of all men," which shows that the book of Revelation in the New Testament was meant (Rev. xx.).

It is true that Justin's quotations are often evidently from memory, and not always verbally accurate; and it is likely that the text he used was in many cases slightly different from our "Received" text, and also from the Westcott and Hort text; but this does not affect the fact of quotation. His quotations from the Old Testament are very similar to those from the New in this respect. They, too, are often inaccurate. We must remember that there were no chapters and verses to facilitate reference, and that Alexander Cruden was not yet born.

¹ Sect. 7. 4. It must be said, however, that Weiss does not think that Justin considered the Epistles of Paul equal in authority with the Old Testament Scriptures.

² Dial. xvi.

³ Dial. lxxii.

⁴ First Apol. xxxix., xl., l.

⁵ Dial. lxxxii.

But what is more convincing still is the fact that there came to Rome about 150 A. D. a Greek philosopher (Tatian) who, under Justin's influence, became a believer in Christ; and we now have in his extant writings not only quotations from the Gospels and other books of the New Testament, but the four Gospels in a very unique form. Tatian prepared with great skill an edition of the Gospels so woven together as to give a continuous narrative of Christ's life and ministry, his death and resurrection, so far as it could be done in the words of the four Gospels.

Hence our author objects to Tatian and his Diatessaron, or Harmony of the Gospels, more seriously even than he does to Justin. And why? Ah, he sees here that his theory is in danger! In Tatian the four Gospels appear united in a unique way, and show a *Gospel* canon in existence. Dr. Gregory is no conservative critic; and yet what does he see in the Diatessaron?

"For Tatian made a harmony of the Gospels. Now what Gospels did he use? The Gospel to the Hebrews, or a Syriac or a Hebrew Gospel? . . . He called it the Through Four, which is a name taken directly from the Four Gospels. The Greek name is Diatessaron. But what four Gospels did he use? Our four Gospels. The four Gospels of the Church. The only one of the four that anyone would have been inclined to have doubts about, would have been the Gospel of John, and Tatian began precisely with verses from that Gospel."¹

And he uses ninety-six per cent of John's Gospel.

Dr. Gregory continues:—

"He appears to have known pretty much all our New Testament books, and I affirm that an educated Christian at Rome at that time could not help knowing them."

Now, strange to say, our author endeavors to use the Diatessaron to support two of his contentions; namely, that there was no New Testament at the middle of the second

¹ Canon and Text of the New Testament, p. 123.

century, and that the canon was formed by arbitrary ecclesiastical authority (p. 53). There is just enough truth in this to make his statement dangerous to one's confidence in the New Testament — an object which the author seems to have in view throughout his whole discussion. It is true that there was no canon clearly authorized by the church universal in an ecumenical council; for there was no such organic unity of the church at the time, and the first ecumenical council was not held till about one hundred and seventy or seventy-five years later — and that council did not *make* a New Testament canon. When the Third Council of Carthage (397 A. D.) acted on the canon, it did nothing toward the "formation of the New Testament," but simply recognized the New Testament which had been in existence long before, placed upon it the testimony of its approval for the use of the church, and excluded some writings which had come to cling to it like barnacles on a ship. The scraping off of these hindering elements has caused our author much displeasure.

Dr. Gregory's idea of the "formation of the New Testament" seems quite different from that set forth in the book before us. He does not think that there was no New Testament in existence before the Third Council of Carthage by any means. He recognizes the essential fact

"that the larger number of the books of the New Testament were from a very early period beyond all doubt in possession of and were diligently used by many Christians."¹

Then, as to the method of the formation of the New Testament, he goes on to say:—

"We have to seek for signs of the combination of, the putting together of, the uniting of, two or more books in such a way that they were to remain together as forming a special and definite volume of a more or less normative character for the use of Christians and the Church."

¹ Canon and Text of the New Testament, p. 8.

Now, does it not look as if there was a "uniting of" more than two of these different writings in the Diatessaron, made up of the very words of our Gospels, to give as full a view as possible of Christ's embassy for the salvation of the lost? Does not the very form in which it comes to us indicate that it was for the public services of the church, divided as it is into fifty-five sections, so as to cover the fifty-two, or fifty-three, sabbaths of the year and holy days like that of the celebration of our Saviour's resurrection?¹

As to the date of the preparation of the Diatessaron by Tatian, Dr. Sanday thinks it not improbable that some rough draft of it was used by Tatian and Justin together,² as many other scholars think also, because of the many instances of the combinations of the quotations of different Gospels in the Apologies and Dialogue. Harnack says of Tatian's Diatessaron, that "it cannot have been produced during his later years."³

Who can fail to see in this Diatessaron of Tatian the existence of a most important part of the New Testament canon? But definition of the canon by ecclesiastical authority, a thing of later times, is a secondary matter to this. This gathering together in this unique form for private reading, and especially for the public services of the church, of our four Gospels,

¹ The Syrians, doubtless, were Quartodecimans, as we know that Polycarp was. His visit to Anicetus at Rome was made, quite probably, while the Diatessaron was in course of preparation.

² Bampton Lectures, p. 301.

³ Harnack is confident that it was first written in Greek, and afterwards translated into Syriac for the use of Syrian Christians. Dr. Gregory also holds this view; though Dr. Rendel Harris thinks it was made up from a Syriac version of the separate Gospels. However this may be, it was probably the work of some years, and was at least begun soon after the middle of the second century—not improbably in collaboration with Justin Martyr. Our author, too, says: "Undoubtedly Tatian constructed this book in Rome, and took it with him to Syria" (p. 52).

and those only, with such reverent care for the very words of the Gospels that not even explanatory phrases are introduced, shows that the Gospels were the fully established records of our Saviour's life, and indicates that they had long been accepted as the "memoirs of the apostles," as Justin calls them.

This book on "the formation of the New Testament" entirely ignores another remarkable discovery throwing no little light on the subject — the Syriac Gospels discovered by Mrs. Lewis, of Cambridge, England, in company with her twin sister, Mrs. Gibson, at the St. Catherine convent on Mount Sinai. Our author has been a very diligent student of Harnack's "History of Dogma"; yet he has not noticed at all what Harnack says about what has a much more vital bearing on the formation of the New Testament. In the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, May, 1898, Harnack, after mentioning the Apology of Aristides and the Diatessaron of Tatian as important discoveries, uses these words:—

"But of still greater value was the find which we owe to a learned Scotch lady, Mrs. Lewis."

"As the text is almost completely preserved, this *Syrus Sinaiticus* is one of the most important witnesses for our Gospels; nay, it is extremely probable that it is the *most* important witness for our Gospels."

A very elaborate and learned article in the *Church Quarterly Review* (London) for April, 1903, after reviewing the discussions of Hjelt, Gwilliam, Zahn, and Burkitt on the respective dates of the four Syriac versions of the Gospels, places them in the following order: 1. The Lewis Palimpsest; 2. Diatessaron; 3. Curetonian; 4. Peshitta.

If the Lewis Palimpsest of the four Gospels is older than the Diatessaron of Tatian, Harnack is certainly right in his estimate of the value of this discovery; for it shows us all

four of our Gospels already translated into a different language from that in which they were written, and already gathered and combined in a Gospel canon from which all other elements are excluded, quite early in the second century.

Another very important witness — one who testifies to the fact that before the year 125 A. D. the rest of the New Testament was already "formed"—is not called into court by the author of "The Formation of the New Testament." But the discussion of the Apology of Aristides must be reserved for another article.

THE BIBLIOTHECA SACRA

ARTICLE I.

JOHN BUNYAN.

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AMONG the old English divines of the Anglican Church, there were men of great genius, eloquence, and learning. Such were Richard Hooker, Joseph Hall, Thomas Fuller, and Jeremy Taylor; but Dr. Thomas Arnold says, "I hold John Bunyan to have been a man of incomparably greater genius than any of them, and to have given a far truer and more edifying picture of Christianity."

This man of extraordinary genius, however, was born in the humblest class of society and had but few educational advantages. "I never went to school," he says, "to Aristotle and Plato, but was brought up in my father's house in a very mean condition among a company of poor countrymen." Born November 30, 1628, at Elstow, Bedfordshire, into the family of a tinker, "of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land," as he says, and brought up by his father to the same calling, the whole extent of his acquisitions from the poor instruction and brief school-days given him, was "to read and write according to the rate of other poor men's children." But God plants a great mind where he will, and gives the highest powers of intellectual

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ARTICLE II.

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TESTAMENT."¹

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EUSEBIUS² speaks of Quadratus as a prophet, and as an evangelist who traveled to many countries and peoples, and who, with others who did the same work, "also delivered to them the books of the holy Gospels." He speaks of him as one of those "who held the first rank in the apostolic succession." Eusebius tells us, also, of Quadratus, that he presented to the Emperor Hadrian an apology or defense of Christians who were suffering persecution, and that this work was in his own hands. This apology may have been presented to Hadrian at his accession (117 A. D.), some seventeen years after the death of the Apostle John. It is noteworthy that, as early as this, evangelists had already been engaged in distributing "the books of the holy Gospels" wherever they went.

But Eusebius introduces us to another defender of the faith, who presented his apology to the same emperor (Hadrian) at Athens in the eighth year of his reign; and that apology, both in the original Greek and in a Syriac translation, has come to light of late years. Dr. Rendel Harris discovered the Syriac translation in the St. Catherine convent on Mount Sinai in 1889, and this led to the discovery of a

¹ Concluded from page 525.² *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 37.

large part of the Greek text embedded in another work, called "Barlaam and Josaphat."

In this apology, Aristides tells Hadrian of the "holy Gospel writing" which the Christians had, "and their other writings," which he exhorts the Emperor to read, and from which he said he derived his information. There is no reason to doubt that these were our Gospels and other writings in the New Testament. His condensed account of our Saviour's incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection he speaks of as taught in "the Gospel, as it is called . . . which, a short time ago, was preached among them," and adds, "and you also, if you will read therein, may perceive the power which belongs to it."

There are the clearest references to the Acts of the Apostles, and a remarkable parallel, in this speech of the Athenian philosopher at Athens, to the address of Paul to the philosophers on Mars Hill at Athens, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Acts. When he says that one of the apostles "traversed the countries about us," we can hardly help believing that he refers to Paul, the apostle who first brought the gospel to Athens, Corinth, and Macedonia.

But Aristides gives evidence that he not only knew the matter contained in the Gospels and the Acts, but also the Epistles and the Revelation. There is remarkable coincidence in forms of expression; as, for instance: Paul says, "By him all things consist"; Aristides says, "Through him all things consist." Paul says the heathen "serve the creature [or creation] more than the Creator"; Aristides says they "began to worship the creation more than their Creator." James exhorts Christians to be "gentle and easy to be entreated"; Aristides says, "They are 'gentle and easy to be entreated.'" Paul speaks of the Jews as "my brethren, my kinsmen ac-

ording to the flesh," and uses the expression "not after the flesh, but after the spirit"; Aristides says, "Brethren, not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Peter, speaking of the Epistles of Paul, says, "As also in all his Epistles . . . in which are some things hard to be understood"; Aristides, having told the Emperor of "the holy Gospel writing," says, "There are found in their other writings [i.e. other than "the holy Gospel writing"] things which are hard to utter and difficult for one to narrate." In Hebrews ii. 5 and vi. 5 we find the phrase "the world to come"; Aristides speaks of those who seek "the world to come." John, in the Revelation, speaks of the things which must come to pass hereafter, having already received the command from the Saviour, "Write . . . the things which shall come to pass hereafter"; Aristides says, "Since I read in their writings, I was fully assured of these things as also of things which are to come." Paul repeats God's promise, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them"; Aristides says the Christians "have the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself graven upon their hearts." Paul exhorts Christians to give "not grudgingly"; Aristides says the Christians "give ungrudgingly." Peter speaks of the regenerated as "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever"; Aristides says, "Let all that are without the knowledge of God draw near thereto [i.e. to their doctrine], and they will receive incorruptible words." John the beloved says, "Let us love one another"; Aristides says, "And they love one another."

It would seem that to deny that Aristides was acquainted with our New Testament books would require a considerable amount of hardihood. *And this address to Hadrian was made*

125 A.D., according to Eusebius. Well may Professor Harnack say, as he does in his notable article in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* (May, 1898), "The discovery of this Apology is a find of the first importance."

These facts show, I think, that the theory of the formation of the New Testament presented to us in this book under review is radically false. The New Testament was not "formed" by the action of the Third Council of Carthage in the fourth century any more than the whole Bible was "formed" by the decrees of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth. Leipoldt, in a single sentence, presents a very different view:—

"It was a perfectly natural development which raised to the rank of canonical Scriptures Gospels and letters which were much used, often read and held in reverence from the beginning."¹

He evidently does not consider the formation of the New Testament the act of arbitrary ecclesiastical authority.

With this view another recent utterance of scholarship agrees:—

"There was then no formation of the canon in the sense that a general council took up the question. The number of books in the New Testament simply grew. When anyone had the question as to the sacred character of a book to decide, he was very likely to ask whether it was from an apostle or not."²

For lack of space, no reference has been made to Polycarp as a witness to the New Testament; though, as Dr. Gregory says, his Epistle is full of it. *And he sat at the feet of the Apostle John.*

Also, it will be noticed that no reference has been made to Ignatius, whose acknowledged letters Dr. Sanday finds steeped in Johannine thought. And he suffered martyrdom soon after the beginning of the second century.

¹ *Geschichte des Neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig, 1907).

² Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, p. 293.

Even the writers of apocryphal books and Gnostic disquisitions knew the New Testament. Apocryphal Gospels are witnesses for the true. Dr. Sanday says: "A new element is introduced into the question by the discovery of the Gospel of Peter, which uses all four Gospels," etc.¹ The Gospel according to the Hebrews draws three-fourths of its matter from our Gospels.

About 160 A.D., Heracleon, a Gnostic, wrote a commentary on St. John's Gospel. Says Dr. Sanday:—

"There is no distinction between the words of Christ and the parts of the Gospel which are due to the Evangelist. The latter are expounded as an authoritative text in the same manner as the former.

"But the way in which Heracleon sits down to write this commentary shows that he is not introducing any new conception, but is acting upon one which is already settled and established. Nor does Heracleon stand alone. All the other Valentinian leaders, as well Ptolemaeus his colleague in the West as those of the Anatolic or Eastern branch of the School, our knowledge of which is derived from the so-called *Excerpta Theodoti*, place the Fourth Gospel with the other Gospels on the same footing of Divine authority."²

But another Gnostic, Basilides, long before him, used the New Testament as of divine authority. Dr. Gregory says of Basilides that he

"lived, so far as we can judge from the accounts, soon after the beginning of the second century. He wrote twenty-four books on the Gospel. It is clear that he accepts in general the books of the New Testament. He appears to know Matthew, and he quotes Luke, John, Romans, First Corinthians, Ephesians, and Colossians. He may have alluded to First Timothy, and have quoted First Peter. Now, it is extremely strange that . . . [he] should do what no one had done before him . . . namely, quote the books of the New Testament precisely in the same way as the books of the Old Testament."³

Common sense demands an answer to this question: If these writings, evidently the same with, at least, the bulk of

¹ Bampton Lectures, p. 301, note. ² *Ibid.*, p. 307.

³ Canon and Text of the New Testament, pp. 69 f.

our New Testament, were universally regarded by Christians in A.D. 125 as inspired and authoritative, and had been circulated all over the Roman world long before and accepted everywhere as the sacred records of Christianity, how did they attain to this universal acceptance in this character? The only rational answer is that they went forth under apostolic authority. Thus accepted by the great body of Christians, many thousands of whom were younger contemporaries of the Apostle John, they must have had apostolic authorship or authorization. Any other attempted explanation of their universal acceptance is irrational and incredible.

Thus it seems clear that there began to be a New Testament for the "New Testament Church," which our author avers had no New Testament, when the first writing in it came to a church with apostolic authority. When a letter came with such authority to a single church, it was at least the New Testament in germ to that church. The formation of the New Testament did not take place by the arbitrary act of the church in the North African city within three years of the beginning of the fifth century, but altogether in the first century. The picture of the Church standing by a pile of innumerable productions and sifting out the books of our New Testament is a travesty on the actual process of its formation. Under the influence of his theory, the writer scoffs at the idea of apostolic authority having given us the New Testament with divine sanction; and, ignoring it, asks the question: "If we reject the Catholic doctrine of an inspired church can we get a closed canon? Indeed, how did we get our New Testament anyway?" He says truly, "These are questions raising anew the very problem of the seat of authority in religion" (p. 16).

It is easy to ask puzzling questions about almost any subject, and especially easy to ask them in a way to raise apparent-

ly insoluble problems on a subject of so much mystery as that of inspiration, and so much historical obscurity as that of the gathering together of the many writings which compose our New Testament. If we admit what our author insists on as true, that the Catholic Church gave us our New Testament (p. 20), then we are indeed inconsistent in maintaining the divine authority of the New Testament, and denying the divine authority of the Catholic Church. Then, how are we Protestants to have confidence in the New Testament as of divine authority?

As one Protestant, I would say that a satisfactory solution of the problem is this: Not the Catholic Church, but *God*. gave us the New Testament. Our Saviour explained to his apostles that his going away, the thought of which grieved them so sadly, was expedient for them. His going away was essential to their receiving his Holy Spirit in the measure and manner necessary for those exalted functions for which they were appointed. He promised that through the Holy Spirit, given according to his promise and the promise of the Father, they should be led into all truth, and that all things should be brought to their remembrance. Now are we to assume that this guidance was to be withheld from those who should be called to write, while it should be given to those who were only to speak of these things? or are we to assume that it would be withheld from these apostles in giving their approval of those writings which in their lifetime were given to the church for all time?

The opinions of riper scholars than our author may be referred to here. That the authority of the apostles was appealed to in these matters in the apostolic and sub-apostolic times, Jülicher plainly shows.¹ Speaking of the prologue to

¹ Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 474-491.

the Acts of the Apostles and Luke's Gospel, he remarks that the terms linking the two together indicate this, that "under the collective description 'those things which have been fulfilled among us,' Luke thus early, perhaps, includes both Acts of Jesus and Acts of the Apostles." This he thinks "best shows the light in which the Apostles were regarded in his age." He goes on to say:—

"Naturally, everything which had any significance among Christian circles in matters of teaching and life, of discipline or the usages of public worship, was now traced back to the Apostles; the word 'Apostolic' became a synonym for 'ecclesiastically correct,' and whatever men wished to establish as truly Christian was handed or written down, in good faith, as the rule or doctrine of the Apostles. Thus in 2 Peter iii. 2 the command of the Lord and Saviour is described expressly as being vouched for by 'your Apostles [commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your Apostles].' God, Christ, the Apostles: Clement¹ considered these degrees as no less complete than universally recognized [Christ sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ]—both, consequently, springing in their order from the will of God, and the Divinity of apostolic institutions was thus proved."

He then proceeds to show that in the epistles of Clement, Polycarp, and Ignatius, "the apostles" are regarded as an incontrovertible authority,² and we know that Justin Martyr's name for the four Gospels is "memoirs of the apostles."

"A New Testament grew, or was composed, out of partial collections which were already in existence." "One of those collections was the Gospel"; and certainly, he says, "the

¹ First Epistle, chap. xlii.

² As to apostolic authority, let us hear a second-century witness: "For the Lord of all gave to His apostles the power of the Gospel through whom also we have known the truth, that is, the doctrine of the Son of God; to whom also did the Lord declare: 'He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and Him that sent Me.'" (Irenæus, Against Heresies, book iii., Preface.)

"We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later

Memoirs of the Apostles belonged to the most precious of our Scriptures." Another collection was "the Apostles," and Jülicher draws attention to the fact that Polycarp,¹ the disciple of the beloved disciple, uses this language in speaking of the Epistles of Paul: "His scripturis dictum est as applied both to Psalm iv. 5 and Eph. iv. 26."

Thus the answer to the puzzling question of this book is clearly made. The New Testament was not a gift of the Catholic Church, but the gift of God, through Christ and through his apostles. Had the Third Council of Carthage never met, our New Testament would in all probability have been precisely the same as it is now. Indeed, it was precisely the same before the Council met; and it appears that the only thing done in the matter was to decide upon the authorship of one Epistle which was already accepted as a part of the New Testament — the Epistle to the Hebrews. Even such a higher critic as Jülicher, as we have seen, quotes Th. Zahn, the coryphæus of German New Testament scholarship, as saying that in "the third generation after Christ (*c.* 100) the principal parts at least of the New Testament were already an actually working authority, recognized as binding in all parts of the Church."

The New Testament was completed when the last words period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith. For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed 'perfect knowledge,' as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled with all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do equally and individually possess the Gospel of God." (*Ibid.*, iii. 1.)

¹ Epistle to the Philippians, chap. xii.

were written, not when the whole collection of writings was distributed and accepted as "an actually working authority, recognized as binding in all parts of the Church." Its completion came not with the action of the Third Council of Carthage, but in the apostolic age. Part after part was given out according to the need, and each part, though it may not have been immediately distributed and universally recognized as such, was a part of what we now call the New Testament. Like the Old Testament, it came in "divers portions and in divers manners," and in it "God hath at the end of these days spoken to us in his Son." The "great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." The permanent records of this testimony are the New Testament.¹

As has been well said by Professor Armstrong, of Princeton Theological Seminary, the New Testament is not "an authoritative *collection* of writings, but a collection of *authoritative writings*."

Is the defining of the canon by an ecumenical council an all-important thing, after all? It may have a relative importance for the placing of the writings of the New Testament before the people and the exclusion of extraneous mat-

¹ As to the claim that the fact that some writings were sometimes read in the public services of some churches placed them on a level with the books of the New Testament, Dr. Gregory says: "What was read in the public meeting was read either under the head of: God to Man, or under the head of: Man to Man" (p. 235). The same thing is still done without the slightest danger of confusion or misunderstanding, as, e.g., when a sermon is read in the absence of the minister, or some edifying passage is read by the minister himself. After considering the claim that the first letter of Clement of Rome was used as Scripture, Dr. Gregory says: "So there is no thought of its being scripture in the mind of Irenæus. Clement of Alexandria quotes his namesake often and with respect, but does not use his letter as scripture" (p. 238).

As to the Shepherd of Hermas, which the author of this book

ter. But the Scriptures, and not the ecclesiastical ring which surrounds them, are the essential thing. The shell of the egg is of relative importance, but the egg itself is what we want. The shell, whatever its value, is not very digestible. If the writings which make up the New Testament had never been bound into one volume, they would yet have been of incalculable value to us. Indeed, if they had come to us thus, we should have had an advantage in one respect: they would have impressed us more distinctly, thus separate, as the different testimonies of many witnesses to the great facts and truths of the gospel. Then many mistakes have been made in attempts at defining the canon. Two councils, held only three years apart, made different deliverances as to the authorship of a most important book of the New Testament—the Epistle to the Hebrews.

After all, the authority of the books of the New Testament is a matter to be determined by evidence, not by inclusion in a canon. If we were bound to accept as Scripture all the writings included in the canon by the Third Council of Carthage and the Council of Trent, for instance, we should have to accept the Apocrypha of the Old Testament; so that we would have to take some matter inclosed in the shell, which thinks was more widely read and more highly prized in the second century than any New Testament book, and the exclusion of which from our New Testament he so laments, besides its "unpleasant" feature to those who do not enjoy prurient productions, and its Adoptionism in its presentation of the person of our Lord. It came undoubtedly, as the Muratonian Canon tells us, from a period long after the apostolic age, and, therefore, could not have apostolic authority. The Muratonian Canon has this to say of it: "But it cannot until the end of time be published (that is: read as if it were scripture) in the church before the people neither among the completed number of the prophets nor among the apostles. [Dr. Gregory remarks:] That tells us that two kinds of scripture books were then read in the church [about 170 A.D.], prophets and apostles."

would have been rather indigestible for most of us. As an egg is an egg from the time it is the size of a pinhead, New Testament writing was New Testament in character and authority from the first inspired writing — whether Gospel or Epistle, or Acts or Apocalypse — to the time that the shell of ecclesiastical approval was placed around it by a church council. On this meat the New Testament church grew and throve; and it is on this that the Christian church is to live and flourish to the end.