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THE CANONICITY AND AUTHORSHIP OF

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

A Thesis Presented to
the Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of New Testament

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

By
Norman P. Wangerin

May, 1948

Approved by: Martin H. Franzmann
W. Arndt.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The writing of this study on the Authorship and Canon-icity of the Epistle of James has proved to be of great value to the author. It has done much to make me understand and appreciate better than before the meaning and message of this short yet important Epistle in the New Testament. I sincerely hope that this thesis will likewise prove of value to any who might read it.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the two persons who had much to do with the writing of this thesis. It is to Dr. Wm. Arndt that I owe the thanks for suggesting the topic to me. Also to him I owe, as a result of his course in New Testament Introduction, the interest which prompted me to choose a topic in this field of study. Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the kind help of Prof. Martin Franzmann in the actual writing of the thesis. His suggestions as to the source material which might be used and of changes which should be made were of great value to me.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this thesis is to establish, as far as that can be done, the basis for the canonicity of the Epistle of James. That problem really involves two questions. In the first place, does the Epistle come from Apostolic times? If it does not, then the problem is immediately settled, and the Epistle does not belong in our Bible. On the other hand, if it does come from Apostolic times, who is meant by the simple superscription "James, a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

To find an answer to the former question the first chapter discusses the testimony of the early Church for and against the Epistle. It tries to show that the misgivings concerning the authenticity of James can be explained and that James was known and used even in the early Christian era. The third chapter, which deals with the literary relationship of this Epistle to the rest of Scripture also supplies evidence that James comes from Apostolic times and is therefore genuine.

The second chapter attempts to answer, as best as that is possible, the question of authorship. This is a problem which can never be solved with absolute certainty, unless we were to find added material from this early period of Christi-

anity. Nevertheless, certain things in the Epistle point to one of the persons called by the name of James in the New Testament. This chapter, then, concerns itself with the internal evidence for the authenticity and authorship of the Epistle.

Much has been written on the Epistle of James, both for and against its canonicity. Some have objected to it because of the late date at which it is mentioned as well as the misgivings which are voiced about it when it does appear in the writings of the Church fathers. Others have objected to it because of its language and style. Still others, like Luther, have objected on a purely doctrinal basis, claiming that its teachings are not in harmony with the rest of Scripture. There is, therefore, a real problem here. In fact, Scott goes so far as to say:

There is no writing in the New Testament on which critical opinion has varied so widely as on this Epistle. According to one view, it is the earliest of the New Testament books; according to another, it is the latest. Some writers have acclaimed it as nearer than any other book to the genuine teaching of Jesus, while some have maintained that it is not Christian at all, but a Jewish tract to which a few superficial touches have been added, so as to adapt it to Christian use. Others would deny that it is distinctively Jewish. They argue from a number of its phrases and turns of thought that it was originally the work of a Greek ethical teacher.¹

1. Ernest Findlay Scott, The Literature of the New Testament, p. 210.

CHAPTER I

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH

It is not until several hundred years after the times of the Apostles that we find actual references to the Epistle of James, but there are allusions to it--some apparent and others not so apparent--in the writings of the early Christian era. The earliest of these allusions are found in the Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Christians in Corinth.

Clement of Rome was one of the earliest bishops of the Church in the eternal city, having lived at the turn of the first century. It is quite definite that he wrote a letter to the Christians in Corinth (known both as the First Epistle of Clement and as the Epistle of the Romans to the Corinthians) during the time of his episcopate. "Hegesippus tells us that it was written in the time of Domitian. If we refer to his reign the calamities spoken of, we get for our date A.D. 95, or a year not long after."¹ Dr. Kleist in the introduction to his translation of the Epistle of Clement also places the date of Clement around the same time. He says concerning

1. A. H. Charteris, *Canonicity*, p. xi.

Clement, "His own term of office must have fallen somewhere between the years 92 and 101."² Thus this letter of Clement is one of the oldest--if not the oldest--of the early Christian writings outside the canonical books. Its testimony in regard to any of the New Testament books is therefore very valuable.

What does Clement know of the Epistle of James? There are no definite references to this epistle at all. Even the allusions are not certain. Yet they are worth looking at, since it is conceivable that they do point to a knowledge of the contents of the Epistle of James on the part of Clement.

The first of these allusions occurs in Clem. 10:1. There we read: "Abraham, called the Friend of God, proved faithful in being obedient to the words of God."³ The important words here are, "ABRAHAM, CALLED THE FRIEND." A similar phrase occurs in 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; and James 2:23. In order to understand why this passage is cited as a possible allusion to James, we must look at these passages a little more closely. In 2 Chron. 20:7, Jehoshaphat speaks of Abraham as the friend of God. In the Septuagint Abraham is in this passage called τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ σου ("the one who was loved of God"). Isa. 41:2

2. Johannes Quasten and Joseph P. Plümpe, eds., Ancient Christian Writers, No. 1, The Epistle of St. Clement of Rome and of St. Ignatius of Antioch, p. 3.

3. The translation of quotations taken from the Epistle of Clement is that of Dr. Kleist, as found in Quasten and Plümpe, eds., op. cit.

also speaks of Abraham as God's friend, but again the Septuagint translates Ἀβραάμ δὲ ἠγάπησα ("Abraham, whom I loved"). In contrast to this Clement speaks of Abraham as "the Friend." (ὁ φίλος). Furthermore, in Clem. 17:2 we read, "Abraham's merit was magnificently attested, and he was styled a friend of God." Here also the Greek is φίλος . . . τοῦ Θεοῦ ("a friend of God"). In James 2:23 we read: "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." In this passage just cited from James the Greek is φίλος Θεοῦ. Zahn also points to these passages in his discussion of allusions to James in Clement. He says, "Like James, he (Clement of Rome) speaks (twice, indeed) of the bestowment of this title as an historical event which is not the case in the Old Testament references, and emphasises the proof of Abraham's faith through acts of obedience (x. 1), while in the same connection (x. 7) he cites Gen. 15:6 quite as it appears in James 2:23, and recalls similarly the offering of Isaac (x. 6)."⁴ Thus, while it is possible that Clement had the other passages in the Old Testament in mind, there is also reason to believe that he was thinking of the words of James, since he uses this word 'friend' and uses it in the way he does.

Another one of these apparent allusions is found in Clem. 12:1. There we read: "Hospitality and faith were the

4. Theodore Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 134.

reasons why the harlot Rahab was saved." James also refers to Rahab as someone who is an example of a truly living faith (Jas. 2:25). It must be added, however, that this reference to Rahab as an echo of James is weakened somewhat by the fact that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews also mentions her as an example (Heb. 11:31), though as an example of faith alone rather than of a living faith, as is the case in James and in Clement's Epistle.⁵

A similar argument to that built around the phrase "Abraham, the friend of God," can also be used in connection with Clem. 30:2, where we read: "For God, it is said, resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." This expression occurs first of all in Prov. 3:34, where the same words are used in the Septuagint as in Clement, except that κύριος is used in the LXX instead of θεός, which occurs in Clement and in Jas. 4:6. True, these words are also found in 1 Pet. 5:5. There, too, θεός is used, and so judging merely from these words we could say that Clement could have just as well been quoting from the First Epistle of Peter. However, as Zahn says, "That in reality Clement followed James appears from the fact that immediately afterward in xxx. 3 he writes ἔργοις δικαιοῦμενοι,

5. Zahn also refers to this, *ibid.*, I, p. 135. There he tries to show that the passage in Clement is perhaps a combination of the reference in Hebrews and the one in James.

6. Zahn mentions a third possibility, namely, "that in early times there may have been a text of the LXX with ὁ θεός." That could easily have been the case.

καὶ μὴ λόγοις ["Let us seek justification by actions, and not just by words."]; and it is more certain that this goes back to Jas. 2:21,24, since there, too, works are contrasted with a λέγειν [a mere saying that one has faith], James 2:14,16."⁷ Zahn also points out that the same contrast is found in Clem. 38:2 ("Let the wise man show his wisdom not in words but in active help.").

In any discussion dealing with this problem it is important to add, as Zahn does, when he says:

That an admirer of Paul acquainted with his Epistles should venture at all to speak of justification through works, could hardly be explained unless he were emboldened by another authority. Clement was aware, too, of the (apparent) difference between Paul's type of teaching and James', for it cannot but appear that he was undertaking to reconcile the two when, shortly after the reference to James (xxx. 3), he attributes Abraham's blessing to the fact that he exercised righteousness and fidelity through faith (xxxi. 2, cf. Jam. 2:22, . . .), then maintains that the devout of all ages have been justified not of themselves, but by the will of God; not through their works, but through faith (xxxii. 3f.).⁸

On the basis of these allusions and the other more remote ones⁹ we cannot say dogmatically that Clement of Rome knew the Epistle of James. On the other hand, they are part of the

7. Ibid., p. 134f.

8. Ibid., p. 135.

9. There may also be echoes of James 2:21; 5:7 in Clem. 23:1-4 (Charteris); of Jas. 2:21 in Clem. 31:2 (Charteris); of Jas. 3:13 in Clem. 38:8 (Charteris); of Jas. 4:1 in Clem. 46:5 (Kleist); of Jas. 2:21 in Clem. 31:2-3; and of Jas. 5:20 in Clem. 49:5 (Zahn).

cumulative evidence that this Epistle was already known to some of the early Christian writers. They are such evidence especially when considered in the light of the allusions to the Epistle of James in that other early Christian writing, The Shepherd of Hermas.

This ancient piece of Christian literature is a homily which has come down to us from the middle of the second century. It is a book of moral teaching rather than a doctrinal dissertation, and contains only one quotation from the New Testament. However, "there are many passages which may be fairly taken as 'echoes' of words and thoughts of the New Testament. Especially are we reminded of James, and of Peter, and of the Apocalypse, though the works of Paul are also frequently suggested."¹⁰

Hermas cannot be used therefore as definite proof that the Epistle of James was in existence at the time of its composition. Nevertheless, the allusions to James are so striking and numerous that it is difficult to deny that the author of Hermas was acquainted with the Epistle of James. Concerning these allusions, Carr in his commentary on the Epistle of James has aptly said: "The presence of James' influence in Hermas appears in a most interesting way, not so much by direct quotation as by a pervading sense of his teaching which penetrates the whole book, together with a constant use of his most characteristic terminology No one can read The Shepherd

10. Charteris, op. cit., p. xxv.

without feeling how great an impression the Epistle of St. James had made in the writer's mind."¹¹ Even Weiss says concerning the author of Hermas, "He leans very much on the Epistle of James."¹²

In connection with the Shepherd of Hermas it is interesting to note the almost perfect agreement among some of the noted writers in the field of New Testament Introduction concerning the influence of James on this work. This agreement is all the more significant when it is remembered that there is a wide divergence of opinion on many of the so-called "echoes" of James in other early post-apostolic writings. This agreement is perhaps best illustrated by the chart on the following page.

However, lest this chart be misleading because of the many references cited from The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, it should be noted here that the authors of this work are very cautious--perhaps too much so--in finding references to James even in these numerous apparent echoes. In their book they have formed four classes of passages according to the degree of their probable use. The passages quoted from The Epistle of James by them in connection with Hermas are classified under 'C' and 'D', the two least probable classifications. Thus concerning some of these references they say

11. Arthur Carr, The General Epistle of St. James, p. x.

12. Bernhard Weiss, A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 49.

SUGGESTED ALLUSIONS TO JAMES IN HERMAS

JAMES	CHARTERIS	THE N.T. IN THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS	MOFFATT	WEISS	SALMON
1:4	Mand.9,6				
1:4;4:6; 5; 11	Mand.9,1	Mand. 9,2 (J.5:11)			
1:5		Mand.9,1;Sim.9,14,1, 2			
1:6-8		Mand.9,1	Mand.9(J.1:4-8)	Mand.9,1;Sim.5,4.3f.	
1:7					Mand.9
1:8;3:8;4: 11	Mand.2,2	Mand.2,3,3(J.4:11)		Mand.2,3(J.3:8)	
1:12		Vis.2,2,7			
1:15;1:26	Mand.12,1,1	Mand.12,1,1(J.1:26)			
1:17;3:15	Mand.11,5	Mand.11,11		Mand.9,11(J.3:15)	
1:21				Sim.1:10	
1:27		Sim.1,3;Mand.8,10		Sim.1:8;Mand.8,10	
2:5		Sim.2:5			
2:7				Sim.8,6,4	Sim.8,6,4
3:2,4,8			Mand.12,1,1-2		
4:5		Mand.3,1;5,2,5-7	Mand.3,1;5,2,5-7	Mand.3,1	
4:7,12	Mand.12,5,2	Mand.12,4;12,5,2	Mand.12,2,4.4,7	Mand.12,2,4.4,7	Mand.12,5(J.4
4:8			Vis.3,2,2		
4:11-12		Sim.9,23,2-4		Sim.9,23,2-4;Mand. 12,6,3	
4:12	Mand.12,6,3				
5:1&c.	Vis.3,9,5	Vis.3,9,4-6			
5:2		Sim.8,6,4			
5:4,9				Vis.3,9,6	

cautiously:

In the foregoing passages there is sufficient similarity of thought and language to suggest a literary connexion with James; but some of the most striking expressions in James are absent from Hermas, and where the language is similar, the connexion of thought is sometimes quite different. The resemblance, therefore, is not sufficient to prove direct dependence, and may perhaps be explained by the use of a common source.¹³

Thus these many references lose some of their value. Yet in conclusion to this section on the Epistle of James they say: "Although the passages which point to dependence on James fail to reach, when taken one by one, a high degree of probability, yet collectively they present a fairly strong case, but we should hardly be justified in placing the Epistle higher than class C."¹⁴

Perhaps it would be well to look at a few of the most outstanding similarities between these two writings. There is a certain amount of characteristic vocabulary or terminology common to both of them. As Carr points out, "A significant instance of this is the frequent occurrence of δίψυχος, διψυχία, διψυχεῖν, words highly characteristic of St. James but rare elsewhere."¹⁵ Salmon also refers to the constant occurrence of δίψυχία in Hermas in the same sense in which it is used by

13. The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers, p. 109.

14. Ibid., p. 113.

15. Carr, loc. cit.

James (Jas. 1:8).¹⁶ Weiss likewise calls attention to the "ever-recurring warning against διψυχία."¹⁷ Finally, Moffatt, too, mentions the "repeated collocations of διψυχία with prayers"¹⁸ as proof for the dependence of Hermas on James. He also mentions the "repeated collocations of the divine ΠΝΕΥΜΑ with κατάκλισην¹⁹ . . ., of bridling and taming . . ., and a number of minor resemblances."²⁰ He concludes that these similarities indicate "not simply a common atmosphere (Ropes), much less the dependence of James on Hermas (Pfleiderer), but a strong probability that James, like the Tabula of Cebes, was known to the latter author."²¹ Another important resemblance, as Salmon points out, is the exhortation (Mand. xii. 5.), "'The devil may wrestle against you, but cannot overthrow you; for if ye resist him he will flee from you in confusion'"²² (So also Weiss, Moffatt, Charteris, The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers. Cf. chart.). Finally the whole of Mand. IX, which speaks of praying with unwavering confidence, is quite obviously a commentary on the passage in James which deals with the same subject (Jas. 1:6-8).

16. George Salmon, An Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament, p. 450.

17. Weiss, *loc. cit.*

18. James Moffatt, An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament, p. 467.

19. So also Weiss, and The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers. Cf. Chart.

20. Moffatt, *loc. cit.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Salmon, *op. cit.*, pp. 450f.

Thus it seems quite clear that the author of the Shepherd of Hermas did know the Epistle of James when he wrote his work. Moreover, his use of it seems to indicate that he regarded it as Scripture. If that is the case, then all the theories concerning its late date and Hellenistic authorship are, of course, immediately proved wrong. It is for that reason that these allusions to the Epistle of James in the Shepherd of Hermas are so important.

After Hermas there are very few passages in the early church fathers which could be called echoes of James.²³ As Weiss mentions,²⁴ it is strange indeed that these references are so scanty after the book had apparently been used so much by the author of the Shepherd of Hermas. There is, however, a passage in the writings of Irenaeus which is worthy of note. In his Adversus Haereses he also speaks of Abraham as the Friend of God. These words do not necessarily imply acquaintance with the Epistle of James, for the expression had by that time been used in several other extant writings, both Christian and Jewish. However, the combination of these words with Gen. 15:6 leads to a verbal reproduction of Jas. 4:23. This could

23. Some of these are listed in Charteris, op. cit., pp. 295f. P.V.M. Benecke in The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers lists a few echoes in the pseudo-epigraphic 2 Clement. There Jas. 5:16 is compared with 2 Clem. 15:1, Jas. 5:20 with 2 Clem. 16:4, and Jas. 5:7,8,10 with 2 Clem. 20:2-4. Zahn also admits the possibility of direct dependence of 2 Clement on James, esp. 2 Clem. 3:4 - 4:3 (Op. cit., p. 135.).

24. Weiss, op.cit., I, p. 95

be accidental, but it is more plausible to assume that Irenaeus is here quoting James.²⁵

The first definite mention of the Epistle of James by name is found in the writings of Origen (c. 185-c. 254). In some of these passages²⁶ Origen says the quotations are the words of the Apostle James or of James, the Lord's brother, as he is called in the Latin translation of Origen by Rufinus.²⁷ However, as Salmon points out, in one of these references (Comment. in Joann. xix. 6) Origen "uses, too, a formula of citation, 'the Epistle current as that of James', . . ., which suggests that he entertained doubts as to the authorship."²⁸ From this it would seem that Origen was fully aware of the fact that not all in the Church of his day accepted the Epistle of James as canonical. Weiss seems to feel that it was Origen more than anyone else who turned that tide of doubt concerning James and the other Catholic Epistles so that they were soon after his day regarded as a closed collection of canonical books.²⁹

25. Ibid., I, p. 96. Charteris also cites this passage as a very significant one. Cf. Charteris, op. cit., p. 295 and also footnote, p. 292. Also cf. Salmon, op. cit., p. 451.

26. Cf. Charteris, op. cit., pp. 297f. for these passages in the original language.

27. Concerning this Latin translation Charteris says: "The translator had a way of inserting expletives and titles. The Greek is explicit as regards the Epistle of James: it is only in the Latin that we find James called the Lord's brother," op. cit., p. 297.

28. Salmon, op. cit., p. 449.

29. Weiss, op. cit., I, p. 119.

That the Epistle of James was a disputed book at this time is also apparent from the writings of Eusebius. Before considering his own position, his reference to the attitude of Clement of Alexandria toward James should be mentioned. Eusebius says the following concerning Clement in H.E. VI. 14: "To sum up briefly, he has given in the Hypotyposes abridged accounts of all canonical Scripture, not omitting the disputed books, -- I refer to Jude and the other Catholic Epistles, and Barnabas, and the so-called Apocalypse of Peter."³⁰ His own view is found in H.E. III. 25. There he speaks of the "accepted writings" and then adds: "Among the disputed writings [ἀντιλεγόμενα], which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and . . ." Again in H.E. II. 23 he speaks of the martyrdom of James the Lord's brother and then says:

These things are recorded in regard to James, who is said to be the author of the first of the so-called catholic epistles. But it is to be observed that it is disputed; at least not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches.

In discussing this subject it is important to note what Plummer says concerning Eusebius' classification of disputed

³⁰. The translation of Eusebius are taken from: The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, a New Series, Vol. I. Henry Wace and Philip Schaff, eds.

and non-disputed books. He shows that this classification cannot be pressed too far in trying to prove that the Epistle of James is not worthy of the name canonical. He says:

Do not let us forget what the epithet 'disputed,' applied to these and one or two other books of the New Testament, really means. It does not mean that at the beginning of the Fourth century Eusebius found that these writings were universally regarded with suspicion; that is a gross exaggeration of the import of the term. Rather it means that these books were not universally accepted; that although they were, as a rule, regarded as canonical, and as part of the contents of the New Testament . . . , yet in some quarters their authority was doubted or denied. And the reasons for these doubts were naturally not in all cases the same. . . . With regard to James, Jude, 2 and 3 John the doubt was rather as to their Apostolicity. They did not claim to be written by Apostles. There was no reason for doubting the antiquity or the genuineness of these four books; but granting that they were written by the persons whose names they bore, were these persons Apostles? And if they were not, what was the authority of their writings? . . . Eusebius says expressly that all these 'disputed' books were 'nevertheless well known to most people.'³¹

From the time of Eusebius the misgivings concerning these "disputed" books, and thus also concerning James, fade more and more into the background. James with these other books is looked upon as canonical. Almost all the well-known Christian writers who followed Eusebius accepted the Epistle of James as an inspired book belonging to the New Testament. Thus, "Athanasius, writing a very short time afterwards (A.D. 326), makes no distinction between acknowledged and disputed books,

31. Alfred Plummer, "The General Epistles of St. James and St. Jude," in "The Expositor's Bible," pp. 15f.

but places all seven of the Catholic Epistles, as of equal authority, immediately after the Acts of the Apostles.³² Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures,³³ written before his episcopate, c. A.D. 349, does the same (Lect. IV. x. 36).³⁴ Other leaders of the Church around this time who accepted the Epistle of James include such men as Lucian of Antioch (martyred 312), Basil the Great, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (c. 329-379), Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 330 - c. 390), and John of Antioch (Chrysostom).³⁵ James was also accepted as part of the Canon by the Council of Laodicea³⁶ (A.D. 364) and the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).³⁷

32. Cf. Athan. Opp. Tom. II. p. 38, as quoted in Charteris, op. cit., pp. 13ff. Here he lists what he calls the Canon of Athanasius.

33. Ibid., p. 19. There Charteris says: "Those [books] which Eusebius a few years before had described as Antilegomena seem in the interval to have been accepted by all. Cyril founds his statements on the general agreement to which the Church had come; and appeals from local or individual peculiarities to that general consent."

34. Plummer, op. cit., pp. 16f.

35. Henry Clarence Thiessen, Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 15ff.

36. "The fact that the authority of these books was sometimes disputed in the third century shows that the verdict formally given and ratified at the Council of Laodicea (c. 364) was given after due examination of the adverse evidence, and with a conviction that the doubts which had been raised were not justified; and the universal welcome which was accorded throughout Christendom shows that the doubts which had been raised ceased to exist." --Plummer, op. cit., p. 14.

37. Concerning the decision of this Council Charteris very correctly says (op. cit., p. 20): "So far as we know it was the first council of the Christian Church which enumerated the Books of the N.T. Scripture. . . The acceptance of the Canon of the N.T. does not rest on the authority of the corporate Church. And it is not as to an Ecclesiastical authority that we look back to the Council of Carthage, but we find in its

Finally, there is the testimony of the Syrian Church, as found in the Peshitta. This ancient version of the Syrian Bible, while omitting the disputed books, includes the Epistle of James. At one time it was thought by scholars that this version came from the third or even the second century.³⁸ However, Burkitt has shown, as Kenyon points out, "that this belief was unfounded, and that there is no evidence of the use of this version before the fifth century, to which the earliest extant MSS. of it belong."³⁹ Nevertheless, the very fact that it omits five of the six "antilegomena" shows that its foundations go back to a much earlier date. While it cannot therefore be conclusively maintained that the early Syrian Church considered the Epistle of James as part of the Canon, the fact that it is included in the Peshitta does point to some extent in that direction.

There is still one more important question which should be answered in discussing the external evidence for the Epistle of James. If this book was known already at an early date, at least in some sections of the Christian Church, why did it remain unknown in others? In fact, we might ask, "Why was it not accepted generally even when it did become known?" The

decree a statement of a well-ascertained fact--the general agreement of the Church as to the nature and the number of the Canonical Scripture."

38. Cf. e.g., Weiss, *op. cit.*, II, p. 412; Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Charteris, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

39. Frederic Kenyon, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, p. 165.

full answer to those questions depends to some extent on the internal evidence, the identification of the recipients of the letter, and the authorship of this book. For that reason the answers will become clearer in the next section, but a few words are in place here.

In answering the latter question we must remember that in at least one sense James is different from any of the other books of the New Testament. It is ethical throughout, and there is a marked absence of doctrinal teachings. That fact stands out very clearly especially in a comparison to any of the Epistles of St. Paul. Another reason why the Church was so slow to accept it when it did become known was the authority on which it rested. It did not claim to be written by an Apostle. True, there were two Apostles who bore the name James, but there was reason to believe that neither of them was the author. If it was written by James the Lord's brother, as some supposed, was that enough reason to accept it as an inspired book of the New Testament?

There still remains the problem that it was little known, especially in the West and among the Gentile congregations. This, however, to a large extent ceases to be a problem when we remember the circumstances of its publication and the limited number of Christians to whom it was originally written. As Weiss points out, "It was addressed to strictly exclusive Jewish-Christian circles, in whose possession it remained; and referred to relations that soon ceased to have any meaning for

the great Gentile Church."⁴⁰ It is addressed to those early Jewish-Christians outside of Jerusalem who still moved to a great extent within the sphere of Judaism and its teachings. We must not forget that there were many such Jewish-Christians, some already from the days of the first Pentecost, and others as a result of the persecutions which scattered them over the Roman world. In fact, much of Paul's preaching, at least in the beginning, was to Jews. As the various Jewish congregations gained more and more Gentile members, some of these distinctive Jewish characteristics which had been brought over from the old religion into the new faded into the background. That was only natural. Yet not all of these early congregations did take on such a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Some remained entirely Jewish, worshipping in their synagogues. This, too, was to be expected. A parallel can perhaps be found in many of the German-Lutheran congregations in America which cut themselves off from the society in which they existed and retained their German culture pattern and characteristics for quite some time. It is to such isolated Christian groups that this Epistle, written to a large extent in the tone of Judaism, a letter from a Jew to Jews, was sent. That explains the reason why it was so little known in the Gentile congregations. On account of the very nature of the letter it was not of much interest to them. Likewise the Jews to whom it had been

40. Weiss, op. cit., p. 111 (Vol. II).

CHAPTER II

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The external evidence presented in the previous chapter seems to indicate, then, that this Epistle comes from Apostolic times.¹ That is especially true if, as seems probable, it was referred to already by Clement of Rome (Cf. Chap. I, pp. 1ff.). We have also seen that the Epistle was quoted with authority as coming from someone who was either an Apostle or an associate of an Apostle in such a way that his writing would be accepted as part of the inspired canon. This narrows the field of possible authors considerably.

However, the superscription to the Epistle ("James, a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ") still leaves

1. There are, of course, those students of the New Testament who will not admit this. Thus Goodspeed says it is the work of some Greek Christian probably of Antioch and was no doubt written in the beginning of the 2nd century (Edgar J. Goodspeed, An Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 293f.). Moffatt takes no definite stand but simply says Herms furnishes a terminus ad quem for the composition of James (Op. cit., p. 467.). Scott says, "Some date about the year 100 A.D. would seem to answer best to all the conditions" (Ernest F. Scott, The Literature of the New Testament, p. 211.). Enslin is not so definite, for he says, "The evidence scarcely warrants a closer dating than the years between 70-125 A.D." (Morton Scott Enslin, Christian Beginnings, p. 333.).

much room for debate as to who the author actually was. James (Ἰακώβος) was a common name among the Jews of Christ's day, for it was the name of their great patriarch Jacob. Thus this name occurs quite frequently in the New Testament. Of the several persons named James² three deserve mention.

There is first of all James, the brother of John, and one of the three disciples in the inner circle of Jesus' friends. Some have argued that a person so singularly favored by Christ certainly must have left some writing behind him (the Epistle of James). To this Zahn answers, "There is no evidence that his position was so commanding as to render unnecessary any

2. Ropes gives the following list in his introduction to James, p. 53, in The International Critical Commentary:

(1) James son of Zebedee and Salome, (elder?) brother of John, included in all four lists of the Twelve, and frequently referred to in the Gospels. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I in or before the year 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2).

(2) James son of Alphaeus, one of the Twelve (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13).

(3) James, the Lord's brother. So described in Gal. 1:19, and mentioned in 2:9,12; doubtless the person referred to, as having seen the risen Lord, in I Cor. 15:7. Evidently the same as James who appears as a leading Christian at Jerusalem in Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Cf. Mk. 6:3 = Mt. 13:55.

(4) James "the less" (ὁ μικρότερος). His mother was Mary, and he had a brother Josias (Mk. 15:40 = Mt. 27:56, Mk. 16:1 = Lk. 24:10).

(5) James father (or, very improbably, brother) of Judas, the latter being one of the Twelve (Ἰουδᾶς Ἰακώβου), Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13. Instead of this Judas another name (either Thaddaeus or Lebbaeus) appears in the list in Mk. 3:18, copied in Mt. 10:3.

(6) James, by whom the Epistle of James claims to have been written (Jas. 1:1).

(7) James brother of Judas (Jude v. 1) by whom the Epistle of Jude claims to have been written.

explanation on his part why he, and not one of the other apostles, should write his opinions to the entire Church. In Acts i.-xii, only Peter and John are prominent. Moreover, when this James is mentioned, he is always spoken of as one of the sons of Zebedee, or as a brother of John."³ Also the external evidence for his authorship of this Epistle is almost entirely lacking. The statement of the Peshitta (itself dating only from the 5th to the 8th century) that this Epistle is from the pen of the Apostle James does not at all limit it to James the son of Zebedee, since either the son of Alphaeus or even the brother of the Lord could be meant by this title. Plumptre says the only other early testimony to authorship by the son of Zebedee is "a Latin MS. [Codex Corbeiensis] of the New Testament, giving a version of the Epistle prior to that of Jerome," but he adds, "the MS. is not assigned to an earlier date than the ninth century, and is therefore of little or no weight as an authority."⁴ Yet a few students of the New Testament have tried to defend this theory.⁵

The view that the other Apostle James, James the son of Alphaeus, is the author of this Epistle has also been defended, though not so much separately as through an identification of

3. Zahn, op. cit., p. 102.

4. E. H. Plumptre, "The General Epistle of St. James," p. 6f., in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, J.J.S. Perowne, ed.

5. Cf., e.g., the arguments of Rev. F.T. Bassett and the refutation of those arguments by Plumptre, loc. cit., or Gottfried Jäger, "Der Verfasser des Jacobusbriefes," in Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche, 1878, pp. 420ff., for the reasons advanced in support of James the son of Zebedee as author of this Epistle.

him with James the Lord's brother.⁶ While it is possible that he wrote this Epistle, nothing at all points to that fact as long as he is not identified with the Lord's brother. (Cf. footnote No. 6 below). Thus we can dismiss him here without further discussion.

There remains, then, James, the brother of the Lord and first bishop of Jerusalem, as the last of these three men under consideration. Most commentators take the view that he is the

6. Such an identification by which James the son of Alphaeus and James the Lord's brother "were regarded as a single individual, was made by Jerome toward the end of the fourth century, and has prevailed in the western church and with modern Roman Catholic scholars" (Ropes, op. cit., p. 54). This theory has also been held by some Protestant scholars, especially in the Lutheran Church (Cf., e.g., the introductory remarks of J.P. Lange in his commentary on the Epistle General of James). It is based primarily on Paul's words, "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19). From this passage it is argued that James the Lord's brother must have been one of the Apostles. However, this argument does not take into account the passages in which 'apostle' is used simply in the wider sense of messenger. Cf., e.g., John 13:16; 2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25 (of Epaphroditus); Acts 14:14 (of Barnabas). Perhaps also, as will be shown later on in this chapter, James had had a special call and therefore had received the title of Apostle in the same way in which Paul had received it. This passage, therefore, cannot be cited as conclusive evidence that James the Lord's brother was one of the Twelve. Furthermore, while as a theory it is possible, the arguments advanced against it are quite convincing. Thus Zahn passes it over with only a few words of reference, not considering it worth discussing (Op. cit., I, p. 102). Ropes refutes it (Op. cit., pp. 57ff.). Plummer (Op. cit., pp. 27ff.) shows the difficulties involved in this theory and maintains that it cannot be held. Plumptre (Op. cit., pp. 10ff) also comes to the same conclusion. Farrar (The Early Days of Christianity, pp. 270ff.) also discusses this view. He concludes with the words, "I hold, then, as certain that James the Bishop of Jerusalem, and 'the Lord's brother,' was NOT the same person as the Apostle, the son of Alphaeus. The latter was one of the Twelve; the former was one of those who up to a late period in the life of Christ 'did not believe on him'" (Ibid., p. 271.).

author of this Epistle. That such a view is well-taken becomes evident as one sees how the Epistle reflects all that we know of this person from other sources. It is often difficult to get a complete picture of even some of the outstanding Apostles because the references to them in the Gospels and Epistles are so fragmentary. Yet there is much in both the New Testament and in tradition on which we can base a quite clear judgment of the character, personality, and training of this man.

What sort of training did James receive? Assuming he grew up in the same household with Jesus,⁷ his training was naturally the same as that which our Lord received. Thus he lived in a pious home in which he shared with our Lord that thorough training in the Scriptures which showed itself so plainly in the teachings of both of them. For that reason the title which Matthew gives to Joseph (Matt. 1:19), because of his religious training and practice, was later also applied to his son whom he had trained so well that he should likewise be called James "the just."⁸ Furthermore, as Plummer points out,

7. This assumption allows for both the "Helvidian" and the "Epiphanian" theory of the relationship between Jesus and James. Whether he was a son of both Joseph and Mary and thus a younger brother of Jesus (the "Helvidian" theory) or a son of Joseph from a former marriage and thus an older half-brother of Jesus (the "Epiphanian" theory) does not enter into this discussion, since in both cases his training would be the same as that of Jesus. That could also be the case in the somewhat fanciful theory of Jerome which makes the 'brethren of the Lord' adopted nephews of Joseph and thus actually cousins of Jesus.

8. Plummer (Op. cit., p. 33) comments thus: "To a Jew the word implied not merely being impartial and upright, but also having a studied and even scrupulous reverence for everything prescribed

"It would be part of his strict Jewish training that he should pay the prescribed visit to Jerusalem at the feast (John 7:10); and he would there become familiar with the magnificent liturgy of the Temple, and would lay the foundation for that love of public and private prayer within its precincts which was one of his best-known characteristics in later life."⁹

Such a training would mold the character of James along definitely religious lines. To him the Law of God together with the ceremonies of the Jewish religion would mean everything and be placed foremost in his life. The many apocryphal stories and legends¹⁰ with their fictitious additions to the kernel of truth around which they are built are unanimous in picturing James the Lord's brother in just this way. Rendall has summed up all this material very well in the following description of James: "His unshorn locks, his sparse attire, his unremitting disciplines of public prayer, made him a notable and picturesque figure at the central shrine; none could ques-

by the Law. The Sabbath, the synagogue worship, the feasts and fasts, purification, tithes, all the moral and ceremonial ordinances of the Law of the Lord--these were the things on which a just man bestowed a loving care, and in which he preferred to do more than was required, rather than the bare minimum insisted on by the Rabbis. It was in a home in which righteousness of this kind was a characteristic that St. James was reared, and in which he became imbued with that reverent love for the Law which makes him, even more than St. Paul, to be the ideal 'Hebrew of Hebrews.'"

9. Ibid.

10. A good collection of this material on James has been gathered by Ropes, op. cit., pp. 64ff.

tion his consistency of life, his devoutness in observance, his fidelity to the traditions of Israel, his passionate desire for religious unity and peace."¹¹

This picture of the character of James fits very well with what we know of him from the New Testament. In the Gospels James is mentioned by name only in Matt. 13:55 and Mk. 6:3, but it is fair to assume that the brethren of Jesus referred to in other passages include James. Thus he would have gone along with Jesus, His mother and His disciples in the beginning of Christ's public ministry from Nazareth to Capernaum (Jn. 2:17). He was no doubt included in that sad pronouncement which Jesus made after His rejection in Nazareth: "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house" (Mk. 6:4). He was also no doubt among the brethren when they urged Jesus to attend the Feast of Tabernacles and heard from Him those words of rebuke (Jn. 7:2ff.). In this account the Apostle John significantly adds, "For neither did his brethren believe in him."

This last statement of John, tragic and sad as it was, is nevertheless just what we would expect of one reared as James had been. To his mind it was impossible for the Pharisees to be wrong. Perhaps at first he was simply bewildered at the opposition of his brother to these religious leaders and at many of the strange new teachings which he had heard from His

¹¹ G.H. Rendall, The Epistle of St. James and Judaic Christianity, p. 28.

lips. How could this brother be what He claimed to be in view of His attitude toward the established religion? It is therefore not unnatural to find James refusing to believe in Jesus or even taking a decided position against Him.¹²

This unbelief on the part of James and of the other brothers of Jesus also explains the words of Jesus to His mother, while He hung on the cross. It has often been asked why Jesus did not give His mother over into the keeping of her own children (or adopted ones) rather than to John. There is no difficulty here, however, if we remember the unbelief of these brothers. Even as Jesus had once remarked that His brethren were those who heard the Word of God (Luke 8:21), so He now gave over His mother to the keeping of His beloved disciple.¹³

Soon after the Ascension, however, the brethren of Jesus

12. Mark 3:21 is another passage taken by many to refer to the attitude of the brothers of Jesus to Him (Cf. Gould's comments on the meaning of *οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ*, as used here by Mark, in The International Critical Commentary. He maintains that the reference to "his mother and his brothers," v. 31, is merely a resumption of the thought of v. 21.). If this passage does refer to the members of His family, it is added proof of the negative attitude which they took toward Jesus and His teaching.

Rendall's comment on this passage is also worthy of note. He says: "Among the figures of the Apostolic age, James is the most tenaciously conservative; and when at the outset of His ministry Jesus broke with the orthodox tradition, challenged the enactments of the Law, consorted with publicans and sinners, declared the Son of Man lord also of the Sabbath, and proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom in terms of catastrophic change, James could put no other interpretation on his conduct than 'He is beside himself'" (Op. cit., p. 18.).

13. This is the view of several commentators on this apparent difficulty. Cf., e.g., Plummer, op. cit., p. 35.

are mentioned especially with the disciples (Acts 1:13f.). Why the sudden change in their attitude? No doubt the fact of the resurrection, that occurrence which had changed the fearful disciples into fearless missionaries who could speak out boldly to the Jewish leaders of Jesus as the Christ, also had its effect on the brethren of Jesus. In the case of James many commentators point to a special reason. They find the clue to this change in Paul's great resurrection chapter (I Cor. 15), where, in listing the appearances of the risen Lord, he says, "After that he was seen of James" (v. 7).¹⁴

Nothing else definite is known of this appearance,¹⁵ but the results are well-known. This appearance is all the more significant because Paul mentions it. Christ had appeared to him personally on the road to Damascus and had changed him from a zealous persecutor into a fearless preacher of the resurrection. To Paul therefore this appearance to James of the risen Lord was very significant. To a large extent his life and that of James had run parallel. Each could truly

14. "That this James means the Lord's brother, and head of the Church at Jerusalem, is clear, because, when the Epistle was written the son of Zebedee was dead, and the son of Alphaeus was unknown to Gentile Christians. They knew of but one James, the one whose authority was so highly venerated, and the only one whom St. Paul mentions by name" (Farrar, op. cit., pp. 290f.).

15. The apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews has the following account: "Now the Lord, when he had given the cloth (sindon) to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him, and said after a while, 'Bring hither a table and bread;' and he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said to him, 'My brother, eat thy bread now, for the Son of Man hath risen from among those that sleep'" (Quoted in Farrar, op. cit., p. 291.).

say that he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," trained in the religion of the Pharisees and determined to defend it. Both had looked with disfavor upon the apparent break which Jesus had made with what they considered the prevailing conservative religious thought. But this very Jesus had a place for both of them in the building of His kingdom. For the fiery Paul lay the task of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles; for the pietistic James, rooted as he was in the Old Testament religion and customs, that of bridging the gap between the Old and the New Covenant. Thus, as God had changed the unwilling Moses and the timid Jeremiah into two of His greatest leaders in order that they might carry out the specific tasks in their respective ages, so Christ appeared to His brother and through that appearance changed him. No longer is he among the opponents of Christianity but instead among its strongest supporters. In fact, in a very short while he assumes a leading role in building the Church. Thus Peter reports to him after the angel had freed him from prison (Acts 12:17). Later he presides over the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:15ff.), and suggests a solution of the problem to those who were present (v. 19). Again at Paul's last visit to Jerusalem he reports especially to James (Acts 21:13). Paul also mentions him in Galatians as the only Apostle except Peter whom he had visited, when he was in Jerusalem three years after his conversion (Chap. 1:19, classes him with Peter and John as one of the pillars of the Church

(Chap. 2:9)¹⁶ and mentions him once more in connection with Peter's wavering in his Christian liberty (Chap. 2:11ff.).

These references clearly show that he quickly assumed a position of leadership in Jerusalem as the head of the Church there and thus agree with the traditions which had grown up around him as bishop of Jerusalem. They also give us added clues to his character, clues which are valuable in determining the authorship of the Epistle of James.¹⁷ Thus at the Council

16. Concerning this passage Rendall remarks: "The years confirmed his spiritual title, and when A.D. 46 Paul went up with Barnabas from Antioch to receive their commission to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9), he actually gave first place of the three chief 'pillars' of the Church--James, Peter and John,--to the name James" (Op. cit., p. 19).

17. There are also valuable clues from the point of view of language. W. E. Oosterley (in The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed., Vol. IV, p. 392) has drawn up a very interesting comparison between this Epistle and the words of James at the Council of Jerusalem. He lists the following points of contact:

"(1) The salutation, χαίρειν, Acts 15:23, Jas. 1:1; this form is found elsewhere in the New Testament only in Acts 23:26.

(2) The words, τὸ καλὸν ὄνομα τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, in Jas. 2:7, which can only be paralleled in the New Testament by those in Acts 15:17: ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ' αὐτούς.

(3) The occurrence of the word ὄνομα in a special pregnant sense, Jas 2:7, 5:10,14 and Acts 15:14,26: this is not used elsewhere in the New Testament in quite the same sense.

(4) The pointed allusions to the Old Testament, which are characteristic of St. James' speech, viz., Acts 15:14, 16-18, 21, also play an important part in the Epistle, or at least in certain parts of it.

(5) The affectionate term ἀδελφός, which occurs so often in the Epistle (1:2,9,16,19; 2:5,15; 3:1; 4:11; 5:7,9,10,12, 19), is also found in Acts 15:13,23; especially noticeable is the verbal identity between Jas. 2:5, ἀκούσατε ἀδελφοί μου, and Acts 15:13, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί ἀκούσατε μου.

(6) Other verbal coincidences are: ἐπισκεπτεσθαι, Jas. 1:27, Acts 15:14; τηρεῖν and διατηρεῖν, Jas. 1:27, Acts 15:29; ἐπιστρέφειν, Jas. 5:19,20, Acts 15:19; ἀγραπτός, Jas. 1:16,19; 2:5, Acts 15:25."

of Jerusalem he speaks as one who is used to having his words listened to (Acts 15:13,19). He shows his knowledge of and love for the Scriptures by his quotation of Amos 9:11. He appeals to Scriptures as the basis for the suggestion he is about to make. Though he was steeped in the Old Testament, he sees that Christ has freed men from the ceremonial Law. For that reason he will not require the Gentiles to be circumcised.¹⁸ However, he does lay down certain principles which he considers necessary and binding (Acts 15:20). His actions at this Council show that he understood well that Christ had turned the Law into a "law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25).

On the other hand, James was still tied to the old customs, as were many of the early Christians. Thus at Paul's last visit to Jerusalem (Acts 21) he advises him to perform certain ceremonies in order to placate the Jewish-Christians. This same attitude also shows itself in the reference Paul makes to those who claimed they had come from James in Jerusalem to Peter in Antioch (Gal. 2:11ff.). Perhaps they were exagger-

18. Rendall's remarks about this decision are once more very well taken. He says: "James, seconding the appeal of Peter (A. 15:13ff.), threw the full weight of his influence upon the side of Gentile immunities from the yoke of rigorism, not excepting the rite of circumcision itself. As at their first start, 'remember the poor' (Gal. 2:10) had been his parting benediction, so now to him the criterion of conduct, of spiritual fruits, of Christian behaviour and fellowship, were sufficient to weigh down the scale. Apart from moral determinants he was ready to accept such compromises, ceremonial, institutional or disciplinary, as served best to meet or relieve the situation" (Ibid., p. 19f.).

ating the position of James¹⁹ in their statements to Peter, but their presence and the effect of their words show nevertheless that James still considered the Jews to be a special class separate from the Gentiles. This is also borne out by the apocryphal accounts which picture him as esteemed by Pharisees as well as by Christian Jews for his pious life.

There remain two important points to consider in discussing the author of this Epistle: one is the approximate date at which it was written by him; the other, the way in which this Epistle reflects all that we know about James the brother of the Lord in such a way that it is the most powerful proof of the authorship and authenticity of this letter. In considering the last of these two points, the simple superscription, "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting," is of great importance. On the surface these words seem to claim no more authority for their author than he might have as "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." There is no mention of Apostleship, as in so many of the other Epistles.²⁰ Just the word 'James' is all that is given to identify its author in the minds of those Jewish-Christians to whom the

19. Rendall seems to feel that these men were honestly representing the position of James at this time (Ibid., p. 19.). Plummer also admits this possibility, op. cit., p. 36. Cf. also Zahn's view, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 104.

20. Cf., e.g., Rom. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; I Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1; II Pet. 1:1.

letter was addressed. Yet this name was considered sufficient by the writer to give authority to the Epistle. Who else could this be but James, the brother of the Lord and well-known head of the Jerusalem Church?²¹ Many of these Jewish-Christians-- though they were scattered throughout the neighboring countries-- no doubt still made their pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the feasts and there came under the influence of the quiet, unassuming, yet powerful personality of this great man. To them his name without any special claims to position would be sufficient to give the Epistle authority. Thus this simple superscription definitely reflects the authority and position of James the bishop and Jerusalem and testifies to his authorship.

21. Rendall says: "From the form of salutation one inference alone seems possible, that the Epistle purports to be the work of James, brother of the Lord, who after the withdrawal of Peter succeeded to the headship of the Christian believers in Jerusalem: . . . None other could be noted by the simple authoritative 'James.' . . . Apart from Paul and Peter, no figure in the Church of the first days plays a more substantial part upon the historic and legendary stage than James, first 'Bishop' of Jerusalem. That the Epistle claims to proceed from him seems certain--and that claim won its way to gradual acceptance in the West as well as in the East, and was probably a determining factor in securing canonicity" (Op. cit., pp. 11f.).

This is also the general view of several other men. Weiss says, "In calling himself simply James and describing himself only as a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:1), his self-designation would only be intelligible to the readers on the supposition that he was the Lord's brother, who by his authoritative position at the head of the Church in Jerusalem possessed such pre-eminence that it was not necessary to distinguish himself from others of the same name" (Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 112.). Even Enslin, while denying that the book was written in Apostolic times, has to admit that its "author intended for it the authority of this great man of the past," for "if written after the first period of Christianity was over, the mention of James with no further qualifications would naturally have suggested but one figure" (Op. cit., p. 333.).

Secondly, the Epistle is also what we would expect from the pen of a man with the training, character and personality which James had. To my mind no one has pointed this out more clearly and concisely than Rendall. For that reason I am taking the liberty to quote him somewhat extensively on this subject in the following pages. Concerning the positions taken by James at the Council of Jerusalem and again at Paul's last visit to that city, Rendall says: "The incidents, though disconnected, yield a consistent whole, and reveal a temper and personality with which the main tenor of the Epistle, alike in its utterances and its reticences, falls into natural accord. It has been impugned as religious opportunism. But the spirit of Christian tolerance, one may almost say of statesmanship, lies always open to this charge; and it was the essence of Judaic Christianity."²²

He also discusses the tone of the Epistle, especially the fact that at times it is difficult to tell whether he is addressing Jews or Jewish-Christians. He says:

In the Epistle it is often hard to say whether the writer is addressing himself to Christians or to Jews; the language and thought accommodate themselves to both, because to the author each God-fearing Jew was a potential or an actual Christian. In this natural blend of Jewish piety and Christian consecration lay the qualifications for leadership, which enabled him for twenty years, A.D. 42-62, to preside over the Church at Jerusalem, and to command the reverence of all Jewish Christians or Christian Jews who flocked thither in attendance at the annual

22. Rendall, op. cit., p. 20.

festivals, or on pilgrimage to the sacred city of the Lord.²³

Again, after describing the numerous metaphors²⁴ in the Epistle which are taken from Palestinian life, Rendall says, "Thus in its topical aspects and expressions the Epistle betrays the authorship of a Palestinian Jew, at home in all parts of the Hellenistic Scriptures. It would be hard to imagine a product more in keeping with all that we know of the antecedents and career of James, brother of the Lord."²⁵

Finally, he points out that the ethics of the Epistle are those of James throughout. He says:

The besetting sins on which he fastens are those of the society in which he lived, but the selection is influenced by his own outlook upon life. In the denunciations of covetousness (4:2), of the pursuit of pleasure (4:3; 5:5), of wealth (4:3-16; 5:1-4), of worldly ends and aims (5:13-17), we hear the voice of the ascetic; the call to patience and long-suffering (5:7-11), and the prohibition of all evil-speaking (4:11-12) come from the pacifist; while the positive injunctions are characteristically those of the 'holy man' and devotee. Life is an austere self-dedication, a constant practice of presence and

23. Ibid., p. 21.

24. Plummer, op. cit., pp. 36ff., has an excellent discussion of these metaphors of James. He compares them to the metaphors of Paul, taken as they are from scenes of human activity. In that connection he shows that the metaphors of James, like those of our Lord Himself, are largely taken from scenes of nature. Thus he perhaps rightly concludes: "The love of nature which breathes through them was no doubt learned and cherished in the village home at Nazareth, and it forms another link between St. James and his divine brother" (pp. 86-87). Therefore also these metaphors in the Epistle point to James the Lord's brother.

25. Rendall, op. cit., p. 38.

fear of God, realised above all in prayer and witness. 'Is any in affliction? let him pray. Is any cheerful? let him sing praise' (5:13). In daily act and exercise the life of James bore witness to the place of prayer²⁶ in the life of consecration.²⁷

The setting in which the Epistle was written also reflects very closely the conditions which prevailed in Jerusalem and Palestine in the years following our Lord's death. These things went from bad to worse politically and socially. The Christians, too, suffered under this misrule. "How chronic and severe their sufferings were may be inferred from the organized collections made for 'the poor saints at Jerusalem' throughout the churches of the West; during the two years (or more) preceding Paul's last journey to Jerusalem these were maintained assiduously It was the inevitable outcome of misrule and of the situation reflected in our Epistle."²⁸ In this connection the second and fourth chapters which speak of the relation of the rich to the poor are especially worthy of note

26. Tradition says that James was one "who was in the habit of entering alone into the temple, and was frequently found upon his knees begging forgiveness for the people, so that his knees became hard like those of a camel, in consequence of his constantly bending them in his worship of God, and asking forgiveness for the people" (Eusebius, H.E., II, 23.). In this connection Plummer also mentions the fact that, as he puts it, "A love of prayer, and a profound belief in its efficacy, appear again and again in the pages of his Epistle (1:5; 4:2; 3:8; 5:13-18). It was out of a strong personal experience that the man who knelt in prayer until 'his knees became hard like a camel's' declared that 'the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working'" (Op. cit., pp. 33f.).

27. Rendall, op. cit., p. 55.

28. Ibid., p. 113.

How these words, incidentally, also fit the character of one who earlier had instructed Paul and Barnabas that they "should remember the poor"! (Gal. 2:10)

Before discussing the possible date at which this Epistle was written one more feature of it must be mentioned. The language and style have often been held up as the surest proof that the Epistle is the work of a Hellenist and not of a simple Palestinian Jew. Ropes points out that the "vocabulary of James consists of about 570 words" and "about 73 of these are not found elsewhere in the N.T."²⁹ However, we must not forget that "only 6 words in the epistle appear to be found neither in the N.T. nor in the Greek O.T."³⁰ Thus the vocabulary is not greater than we should expect of one acquainted with the LXX. That James is familiar with the Septuagint and re-echoes its Greek phrases constantly is also natural. Many of the Jews of the Dispersion and even some of those in Jerusalem were more at home in the Greek Scriptures than in the Hebrew.³¹ Thus Paul also often quotes from the LXX. Furthermore, while there is no denying that the Epistle is written in a good style, it

29. Ropes, op. cit., p. 25.

30. Ibid.

31. Zahn says: "Assuming that the letter was written between 44 and 51, the author had been from fifteen to twenty years a member, and for a number of years the official head of this Jerusalem Church, which very early in its history had more Hellenists than Hebrews in its membership. As the head of this Church, James must have been familiar with the Greek O.T., so that he should make his quotations from the LXX" (Op. cit., p. 113).

is not the work of a classical writer.³² It should also be added that at the time of Christ the Greek language was known and used quite generally in Palestine.³³ Thus to claim that James could not have written such a letter because of his Galilean background is not considering the facts. In regard to this objection Rendall significantly says: "It is time surely to discard the figment of Galilean illiteracy. It was based upon that piecemeal criticism, which builds upon the minor pedantries and amid the little trees of erudition loses sight of the main wood. Philodemus the philosopher, Meleager the epigrammatist and anthologist, Theodorus the rhetorician, and one may almost add Josephus the historian, were all of Galilee."³⁴

As to the date at which this Epistle was written, opinions vary. Some place it as early as 45 A.D. (or even a few years earlier);³⁵ others as late as the second century. Assuming that it was written by James the Lord's brother, we are limited to a period from 45 A.D. to 65 A.D., the year in which tradition says that James lost his life.³⁶ One event of great importance,

32. Zahn discusses the style quite thoroughly in connection with the charge that it is too good to be that of James (Ibid., p. 117).

33. Zahn (Ibid., pp. 34ff.) has a whole chapter in which he discusses the use of the Greek language among the Jews.

34. Rendall, op. cit., p. 39.

35. Cf., e.g., the article by A. Lukyn Williams in The Church Quarterly Review, Vol. 125, No. 245 (Oct.-Dec., 1936), pp. 27ff.

36. There are two accounts of the martyrdom of James. Eusebius (H.E. II, 23) has preserved that of Hegesippus (Quoted by Farrar, op. cit., pp. 303ff; by Plummer, op. cit., pp. 37ff; by Plumptre, op. cit., pp. 26ff.). It is filled with legendary materials but agrees to some extent with the apparently more trustworthy account of Josephus (Ant. XX. ix. 1). It is on the

the Apostolic Council (Acts 15), divides this period into two separate ones. This Council was no doubt held in A.D. 49 or 50. Was the Epistle of James written before or after the Council? Both views have their difficulties. It is, however, quite certain that it was not written immediately before or after the Council because of the entire absence of references to the particular issues involved.

Those who hold to a late date--perhaps a year or two before James' death--usually argue along the lines of Farrar. He says:

The conditions and wide dissemination of the Churches to which it is addressed; the prevalence of the name Christ instead of the title 'the Christ'; the growth of respect of persons as shown in distinction of seats; the sense of delay in the Second Coming, and other circumstances, make it necessary to assume that many years had elapsed since the Day of Pentecost. Further, it seems probable that some of St. James's allusions may find their explanation in a state of political excitement, caused by hopes and fears, which, perhaps, within a year or two of the time when it was written, broke out in the wild scenes of the Jewish revolt. Lastly, it seems impossible to deny that although St. James may have written his arguments about faith and works without having read what had been written on the same subject by St. Paul, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, still his language finds its most reasonable explanation in the supposition that he is striving to remove the dangerous inferences to which St. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was liable when it was wrested by the unlearned and the ignorant.³⁷

basis of this account of Josephus that the death of James is placed at 62-63. Hegesippus places it immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, or about 69 A.D.

37. Farrar, op. cit., pp. 310f.

This argument assumes that James drew from the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and perhaps also Hebrews.³⁸ As will be shown in the next chapter, just the opposite appears to be the case. This view also assumes that the Epistle was written against a wrong application of St. Paul's doctrine of justification. Rendall feels that this^{is} based on the "mistaken assumption that James was controverting the antinomian teaching of St. Paul."³⁹ He is no doubt correct.

The other view is that the Epistle was written before the Council of Jerusalem. However, even if the date of its composition is limited to this period, to determine the exact year is impossible. Thus opinions vary from 44-51.⁴⁰

Most of the commentators who place the Epistle in this period make it the earliest book of the New Testament, even

38. Rendall's comments are very much to the point: "Those who reverse the relation i.e., make James dependent on these other Epistles have to maintain that the author was familiar with and utilised the writings of both Apostles, but that he tacitly disclaimed, or at least betrays no consciousness of, the Christological doctrines by which they set most in store: that he was intimate with the words and teachings of Jesus, but had no acquaintance with the Synoptic record: that of Johannine thought he shows no trace, and equally no taint of Gnostic or Ebionite speculations. How difficult it is to reconcile such data will be obvious at once" (Op. cit., p. 108.).

39. Ibid., p. 103.

40. A. Lukyn Williams (Op. cit., p. 23.) goes back as far as 43 A.D. (before the death of James the son of Zebedee) as a possibility, but seem to prefer 45 A.D.; Thiessen (Op. cit., p. 273.) decides on 45-48; Plumptre (Op. cit., p. 42.), during the time that Paul was on his first missionary journey; Zahn (Op. cit., p. 113.), between 44 and 51; Carr and Salmon are content to place it simply before the Council. Actually the precise date is so difficult to determine that it is impossible to do much more.

earlier than Paul's first Epistle, the letter to the Galatians, though it is possible to assume that they were both written at the same time, since the persons addressed in the two letters are entirely different. Perhaps the chief argument in favor of placing the Epistle so early is that it reflects a very primitive form of Christianity. It is a known fact that in the early years of Christianity there was no apparent break between the Christians and the Jews. Especially in Jerusalem the Christians continued to worship in the temple and to observe the various ceremonies. Also in other Jewish communities the Christians worshipped in the synagogue. As the number of Christians grew in any locality, they no doubt organized their own synagogue. Thus the reference of James (Chap. 2:2) to a synagogue as the place of worship of these Christian Jews is just what we should expect in a letter coming from such an early time in the history of the Church. This also explains why it is so difficult at times to tell whether the author is addressing himself to Jews or to Jewish-Christians.⁴¹

41. Rendall describes these conditions in the early Church at the time when this Epistle was written in the following way: "The first believers were not conscious of any open or deliberate breach with Judaism; they disclaimed none of the requirements of the Mosaic Law or of established custom (A. 10:14): the Law, the Prophets, the Messianic hope were part of their spiritual birthright; adhering to the example set by Jesus himself, their attendance at the temple, their observance of feast and sacrifice were exemplary (A. 2:46; 3:1,11; 5:12,42; 21:20; 22:17); they questioned none of the prerogatives of the ruling hierarchy. . . . They did not even profess or preach a 'pure and reformed' Judaism; they were but one additional 'persuasion' or 'following,' who were content simply to add to the fundamental beliefs and

There remains yet one real difficulty which must be faced, no matter if we place the Epistle early or late in the life of James. Why is the resurrection of Christ never mentioned? This one fact was really the foundation upon which the early Church was built. As we have seen, it was no doubt an appearance of the risen Lord which changed James into a devoted follower of His. The excerpts preserved in the Book of Acts from the preaching of Peter and Paul show without a doubt that this great fact was the key by which they opened the doors of the hearts of men to the message of the Gospel. True, the resurrection is assumed in the opening verse and is definitely alluded to in the phrase, "our Lord Jesus Christ of Glory" (Chap. 2:1),⁴² but we would expect a more definite reference. However, an argument from silence is always dangerous, and so it cannot be used here against the genuineness of the Epistle, though that does not solve the problem.

Rendall gives two possible answers to the fact that this teaching and that doctrine in general are lacking. He says:

While pleading the paramount claims of the ethical teaching of Jesus, [James] had either not yet come

observances of Judaism the conviction that the expected Messiah had appeared in the person of Jesus, coupled with a pledge of abiding allegiance to his person and his teaching" (Op. cit., p. 25.).

42. Chapter 1:18 also certainly shows a depth of theological thought and presupposes the resurrection of Christ. "The word of truth" is the Gospel message, which speaks of the life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This verse in a less developed way is parallel to the thoughts of Paul in Rom. Chap. 8.

to attach to the person of 'the Lord Jesus Christ' as manifested in the flesh the attributes and theological implications, which within his own lifetime became integral parts and verities of Christian belief, or else that in this Epistle he deliberately hold them in reserve as of subordinate importance for the purpose which he had in view.⁴³

The first of these answers cannot be maintained on the basis of facts. While it is true that there was a gradual change from Judaism to Christianity in regard to certain ceremonies, outward forms and ideas, the fundamental teachings of Christ certainly must have been accepted from the very beginning by these early converts, and thus also by James. The preaching of Peter and Paul, mentioned above, permits us to draw no other conclusion.

The second reason of Rendall no doubt comes closer to the truth. Perhaps he deliberately held these doctrines in reserve so that the letter might be circulated also among those Jews who had not yet accepted Christ. At any rate, he was interested in writing an ethical epistle which was to meet certain conditions that existed among the early Jewish-Christians. That was the purpose of the letter. For some reason he did not consider it necessary in keeping with this purpose to lay the foundation for his appeal in the Epistle itself. He takes that foundation for granted. Thus the Epistle resembles very closely the ethical or practical sections in most of Paul's Epistles. The only difference is that Paul precedes these sections with

43. Rendall, op. cit., p. 108.

a doctrinal foundation, while James does not. It is this peculiarity which makes his Epistle sound so much like one of the Old Testament prophets in its teaching.

Thus, if we place the Epistle of James in the early years of Christianity it occupies much the same place in Scripture as James its author occupied in the early Church. In a certain sense both belong to the Old Dispensation as well as to the New. Even as James served as a link in the religion of the Jewish-Christians, joining together for them the religion of their fathers with the teachings of Jesus, so this Epistle is one of transition from the Old Covenant to the New. We should therefore not think it strange to find such an Epistle as the first one of the New Testament Scriptures. It was a matter of life and death for the existence of Jewish Christianity, as Rendall points out, "to reconcile acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Christ with unimpaired faith in Jehovah."⁴⁴ Thus James in a special way through this Epistle "stands for the continuity of revelation, perhaps the most urgent of all issues for the Jewish Church of the first days."⁴⁵ For that reason we must interpret the contents of the Epistle on the basis of the clearer doctrinal pronouncements of the other books of the New Testament, even as we interpret the whole Old Testament in the light of the New. For that reason, too, the theological arguments advanced against the canonicity of James by Luther and others cannot be maintained.

44. Ibid., p. 118.

45. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE LITERARY RELATIONSHIP OF JAMES TO THE REST OF THE CANON

In the opening chapter the literary relation of the Epistle of James to some of the post-Apostolic writings was referred to and discussed. In this closing chapter the literary relation of James to the other books of the Bible (as well as to some of the apocryphal writings) will be pointed out. Much has been written on this subject, and varying degrees of literary relationship have been claimed by different authors. Like the date at which this Epistle was written, so this subject is also one on which no definite statements can be made, especially in regard to several of the writings which are supposed to be related to James.

On the basis of what we know of the character and training of James the brother of the Lord, we should expect that any writing of his would lean heavily on the Old Testament. Actually, however, there are only a few quotations from the Old Testament;¹ but on the other hand, the Epistle is filled

1. W. E. Oesterley, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 392, mentions five direct verbal quotations: Jas. 1:11 from Isa. 40:7; Jas. 2:8

with echoes of Old Testament thought and refers to events and persons² of Old Testament times. Thus Cesterley rightly says: "The atmosphere of the O.T. is a constituent element of the Epistle; for over and above the C.T. events which are mentioned, there is an abundance of clear references to it,³ which shows that the mind of the writer was saturated with the spirit of the ancient Scriptures."⁴ This is exactly what we should expect in a letter written by one with the character and training of James.

The Epistle, therefore, stands in the full stream of New Testament canonical writings, for the New Testament is after all a supplement to the Old Covenant and rests upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Thus the entire book of Matthew is built around one aspect of this view of the New Testament, for it shows that Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies spoken of old. Paul in his Epistles also often refers to the interrelation of the Old and the New Covenants. So James in his Epistle shows a knowledge of the whole of the Old Testa-

from Lev. 19:18; Jas. 2:11 from Exodus 20:13;14; Jas. 2:23 from Gen. 15:6; and Jas. 4:6 from Prov. 3:34. To these could be added several others. Cf., e.g., the parallel passages in Novum Testamentum Graece (Nestle).

2. Jas. 2:20-26 contains references to Abraham, Isaac, and Rahab; Jas. 5:10 to the prophets as an example of patience under ill-treatment; Jas. 5:11 to Job; and Jas. 5:17ff. to Elijah.

3. Nestle (Novum Testamentum Graece) cites more than sixty parallel passages from the Old Testament in the five chapters of James.

4. Cesterley, op. cit., Vol. IV., pp. 392f.

ment Scriptures, and depends on them. There are echoes of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Writings in the Epistle of James. To this last group belongs the book of Proverbs, which some commentators believe affords a number of parallels to the thought and language of James. Of the direct quotations from the Old Testament in the Epistle of James at least one is definitely taken from this book (Prov. 3:34 in Jas. 4:6), but outside of this there are many other passages in which the thought is similar.⁵

This apparent fondness of James for Proverbs is important in discussing the relation of the Epistle of James to the Apocrypha, especially to Ecclesiasticus (The Wisdom of Jesus Sirach) and to the Wisdom of Solomon. Both of these Apocryphal books are very much like Proverbs. That there are many similarities in thought between these books and James cannot be denied. That is particularly true in regard to Ecclesiasticus.⁶ It does seem as though James knew this book

5. Ropes (Op. cit., p. 19) lists the following more striking parallels: "Prov. 11:30 ('the fruit of righteousness,' cf. Jas. 3:19), 19:3 (against blaming God, cf. Jas. 1:13), 27:1 ('boast not of the things of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what the morrow will bring forth,' cf. Jas. 4:13-16), 17:5, 27:21 (testing human qualities, cf. Jas. 1:3), 29:30 ('a man that is swift in his words,' cf. Jas. 1:19)."

6. Farrar (Op. cit., p. 313) lists seven parallels. Plummer (Op. cit., pp. 72ff.) has very effectively arranged the similar passages from the two books in parallel columns. He lists the following points of contact: Jas. 1:2-4,12 with Ecclus. 2:1-5; Jas. 1:5 with Ecclus. 1:26; 51:13,22; 20:15; 41:22; Jas. 1:6-8 with Ecclus. 1:23; 2:12; 7:10; Jas. 1:9-10 with Ecclus. 1:30; 3:18; Jas. 1:13 with Ecclus. 15:11,12; Jas. 1:19 with Ecclus. 5:11; Jas. 1:23; 5:3 with Ecclus. 12:11; 12:10; 29:10; Jas. 1:25

and used it--either consciously or unconsciously--when he wrote his Epistle. However, not all commentators are agreed on this point. Thus Ropes says that the parallel thoughts "may attest a general similarity in the religious and intellectual environment, rather than a proper literary dependence."⁷ Yet he admits that "the author of James may well have read Ecclesiasticus."⁸ Parallels between the Epistle of James and the Wisdom of Solomon have also been pointed out,⁹ but these are neither so numerous nor so striking as those in Ecclesiasticus.

These literary connections of James with the Old Testament and the Apocrypha neither add to nor subtract from the arguments in connection with the canonicity and authorship of this Epistle. They do shed a little more light, however, on the type of man its author was and in that way are indirect testimony to the authorship of James the Lord's brother. On the other hand, the relationship of James to the books of the New Testament is much more important, for it is powerful proof that the Epistle of James is an early work and that it deserves a place in the canon of the Scriptures.

with Ecclus. 14:23; 21:23; Jas. 2:6 with Ecclus. 13:19, Cesterley has also prepared an extensive list of similarities of James to both Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon. Cf., op. cit., pp. 405f.

7. Ropes, op. cit., p. 19. --- Weiss (Op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 114f.) explicitly denies any dependence. He says: "It has been incorrectly held by most that the author adhered very closely to Jesus Sirach. . . . But it must be distinctly denied that there is anywhere an echo of the Book of Wisdom."

8. Ibid.

9. For some of these see Farrar, loc. cit., Cesterley, loc. cit., Ropes, loc. cit., and Plummer, op. cit., pp. 74f.

In comparing James with the other New Testament books, written as they were at about the same time and to some extent with the same religious background behind them, it is difficult to determine how many of the similarities are the result of actual literary dependence. It is almost unthinkable that one would not find numerous parallels in the language and thought of the New Testament books. Thus it would be foolish to claim that all the similarities are due to actual literary dependence. However, two books in particular deserve special treatment. They are the Epistle to the Romans and the First Epistle of Peter.

Romans and James have been the subject of much discussion because some, like Luther, claim they are doctrinally opposed to one another.¹⁰ To a large extent this argument centers around the priority of one or the other Epistle. If James wrote after Paul had written Romans--or even Galatians--and knew what Paul had there written, it is difficult to come to any other conclusion than that James was opposing Paul. However, if the Epistle of James was written first, many of the difficulties are removed entirely, and the others can more easily be explained.

That there is a literary relationship between these two Epistles it is difficult to deny. Zahn points first of all to

10. Farrar (Op. cit., pp. 349ff.) has an excellent chapter titled: "St. James and St. Paul on Faith and Works."

the example of Abraham in the discussion of faith and works in Jas. 2:14-26 and Rom. 4 as an outstanding example of this literary relationship. This is perhaps the best example. Even a comparison of the two passages in the English will reveal many parallels. He also points to the discussion on finding joy in trials (Jas. 1:2-4 and Rom. 5:3-4)¹¹ and on the fight of the Old and the New Man (Jas. 4:1 and Rom. 7:23f.) as further examples of parallels which point to literary dependence. Many others have also been pointed out.¹²

Thus it is quite certain that there is a definite connection between the two Epistles in that the author of one knew the other and used it. However, the really important question is which one of these Epistles was written first. In some cases of literary dependence that question is very difficult to answer. In the comparison before us that is not the case. In fact, it is difficult to explain the depend-

11. Concerning these passages Zahn says: "Not only is there exact verbal correspondence between Paul's εἰδότες (Jas. χινώσκοντες) ὅτι ἡ θλίψις ὑπαμονὴν κατεργάζεται and Jas. 1:3, but the passage in Romans throws light on the meaning of James' somewhat obscure language" (Op. cit., p. 127).

12. J.B. Mayor (in "The Epistle of St. James," in The Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, ed., Vol. II, p. 546.) adds the following to those already mentioned: "Rom. 2:13. . . compared with Jas. 1:22 . . . and Jas. 4:11, ποιητῆς νόμου (the only other place in the N.T. where this phrase occurs); the phrase παραβάτης νόμου, occurring only in Rom. 2:25,27 and Jas. 2:11; . . . Rom. 14:4 . . . compared with Jas. 4:11 . . ."

Rendall agrees on these parallels and adds the following: Jas. 2:1 with Rom. 2:11; Jas 2:20 with Rom. 2:3; Jas. 2:12 with Rom. 2:12; Jas. 5:3,5 with Rom. 2:5; Jas. 2:8-11 with Rom. 13:8-10; and Jas. 4:4 with Rom. 8:7 (Op. cit., pp. 85f.)

ence in any other way than that Paul knew the Epistle of James and used it, either consciously or unconsciously. Rendall's words on the relation of Rom. 5:4 to Jas. 1:3-4 can well be applied in general to all the parallels. He says: "The higher finish, and the closer analysis of the ethical experience, is what we might expect from Paul, but this could hardly revert into the cruder original of James; the cut diamond does not relapse into the raw jewel."¹³ In all these cases the words of Paul are always the more finished. They are elaborations and combinations of the thoughts of James. In fact, Zahn goes so far as to maintain that Rom. 4 is a deliberate commentary on Jas. 2:14-26. He says:

The statement in Rom. 4:2, that Abraham was justified by works, thereby obtaining something of which he could boast, is introduced as the opinion of someone else. . . . It is not one of those apparent conclusions from the preceding discussion, which Paul so often introduces to strengthen the position already developed by refuting supposed inferences from it. Neither is it a familiar sentence taken from the O.T., for the statement is contrasted emphatically with Scripture. . . . Paul does not dispute the application which James makes of Gen. 15:6, nor does he question directly James' thesis. But from the Scripture passage which James had used incidentally, and left without definite explanation, he develops his own thesis, namely, that Abraham's significance for the history of religion rests upon

13. Rendall, op. cit., p. 84. He goes on to give the following analysis of this passage: "τὸ δόκμιον is the LXX term (Ps. 11:6; Prov. 27:21) utilised by James; Paul amends it to his own more classical δοκιμή, which has no place in the LXX; while 1 Pet. 1:7 adhered to the James original. Under the prompting of Paul, James could hardly have substituted τὸ δόκμιον for the neater and more antithetical δοκιμή, and a small point like this goes far to determine priority."

the fact that in the Genesis account his righteousness is reckoned as faith, and so his justification is on the ground of faith.¹⁴

It might be well to conclude this discussion on the relation of the Epistle to the Romans to the Epistle of James with the words of Mayor. Concerning the resemblances which he lists between these Epistles he says: "In these and other cases of resemblance it is easier to suppose that St. Paul works up a hint received from St. James, than that St. James omits points of interest and value which he found ready at hand."¹⁵

The other book of the New Testament which shows a definite literary relationship to James is the First Epistle of Peter. Zahn points out that a striking parallel exists in 1 Pet. 1:6f. and Jas. 1:2-4. Rendall goes so far as to say: "This is a direct quotation of unusual and distinctive phrases, and it is confirmed by numerous correspondences¹⁶ scattered throughout the Epistles."¹⁷ Perhaps the most convincing argument for literary dependence is found in the three Old

14. Zahn, op. cit., I, pp. 126f.

15. Mayor, loc. cit.

16. Zahn (Op. cit., pp. 133f.) lists and discusses the following parallels: Jas. 1:2-4 with 1 Pet. 1:6f.; Jas. 1:13 with 1 Pet. 1:23-25; Jas. 1:21 with 1 Pet. 2:1; Jas. 1:22-25 with 1 Pet. 2:11ff.; Jas. 1:25 with 1 Pet. 2:16; Jas. 4:11 with 1 Pet. 2:11; Jas. 4:6 with 1 Pet. 5:5; Jas. 4:10 with 1 Pet. 5:6; Jas. 4:7 with 1 Pet. 5:8-9. --- Ropes (Op. cit., p. 23.) has essentially the same list, while Rendall (Op. cit., pp. 96f.) on the basis of Mayor's study lists considerably more.

17. Rendall, op. cit., p. 96.

Testament quotations which are common to both Epistles. Is. 40:7 is quoted in Jas. 1:11 and 1 Pet. 1:24; Prov. 3:34 in Jas. 4:6 and 1 Pet. 5:5; and Prov. 10:12 in Jas. 5:20 and 1 Pet. 4:8. The last two of these quotations are of special interest. In the quoting of Prov. 3:34 in both cases ὁ θεός is substituted for the κύριος of the LXX. In the other passage from Proverbs, as Rendall points out,¹⁸ the phrase quoted is derived directly from the Hebrew instead of being quoted from the LXX.

The question of priority in regard to these Epistles can best be answered along the same lines as that in connection with the Epistle to the Romans. The phrases of Peter, too, are more complete and elaborate in comparison to the simple statements of James. It would also be difficult to imagine the doctrinal thoughts of Peter reverting back to those expressed by James without coming to the conclusion that the latter was attempting to water down the teachings of Christianity. Rendall points that out very clearly when he says:

Any attempt to reverse the connexion entails objections far greater than those of literary handling. In 1 Pet. 1:3-7 the palmary quotation is imbedded in triumphant affirmations of belief in the victorious and redeeming powers of the revealed and risen Christ. Isolation from their context comes near to repudiation of its content. It is hard to imagine or reconstruct conditions under which a Christian writer, whether of the first or of the second century, could have detached

18. Ibid.

and quoted these subordinate words, and fallen back upon the lower levels of inchoate¹⁹ Christology associated with them in our Epistle. In their own setting, addressed to readers tried and sore tested, they make a fine and forcible appeal; but as extracts from a far richer environment of 'living and exalted hope' they are robbed of all their inspiration.²⁰

On the basis of these points we can well say with Zahn: "It is plain that the author of 1 Peter was well acquainted with James, and had read the letter reflectively."²¹ Thus, as the Apostle Peter wrote to a different "diaspora" (the Christians--mostly of Gentile origin--scattered throughout Asia Minor), he recalled the words of his successor in Jerusalem, words which had been addressed to "the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (Jas. 1:1).

We could very well sum up this section on the relation of Romans and 1 Peter to James with the words of Rendall:

"Detailed examination has led us to the conclusion that the Epistle was antecedent to the Epistle to the Romans and 1 Peter. Those who reverse the relation²² have to maintain

19. It would be better not to speak of an "inchoate Christology," as Rendall here does, in discussing the absence of the doctrine of Christ and His work in this Epistle. Such a term could be taken to suggest an evolutionary development which is not in keeping with God's plan of revelation. The elimination of this phrase, however, does not detract from the argument that James would hardly omit the Christological thoughts of Peter, which are associated with the parallels to James in his First Epistle.

20. Rendall, op. cit., p. 29.

21. Zahn, op. cit., p. 134.

22. For this view see Edgar J. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 292. He says: "It is clear that James is using 1 Peter."

that the author was familiar with and utilised the writings of both Apostles, but that he tacidly disclaimed, or at least betrays no consciousness of, the Christological doctrines by which they set most in store."²³

On the literary relationship of James to the rest of the New Testament nothing definite can be said. Parallels have been pointed out by a few in some of the other Pauline Epistles, but there is really nothing in any of them to prove literary dependence.²⁴ That can also be said in general in regard to the rest of the New Testament. The similarities which do exist are those of common heritage and environment rather than those of literary dependence. Thus the many parallel thoughts and expressions in the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew, do not necessarily point to literary dependence of the one book on the other. James might well have heard the Sermon on the Mount. At any rate, he certainly must have heard much about it as part of the oral Gospel traditions which no doubt existed in the early years of Christianity. The mention of Rahab the harlot in both James and Hebrews as an example of faith is also perhaps no more than a coincidence. That this one parallel proves literary dependence cannot be maintained. In the Epistle to the

23. Rendall, op. cit., p. 108.

24. That is Zahn's view, op. cit., I, p. 128. Cf. also Rendall, op. cit., p. 96; Flummer, op. cit., p. 47; and Salmon, op. cit., p. 463.

Hebrews Rahab is mentioned as one of the many heroes of the faith which are listed in the well-known 11th chapter. That the author of James should single out just this particular person from that list in which so many other more prominent persons are mentioned seems strange.²⁵ It is therefore unlikely that this passage points to any definite connection.

The Epistle of James, therefore, does not stand isolated from the rest of Scripture. Its author uses the Old Testament--and perhaps parts of the Apocrypha--as the basis for some of the thoughts he expresses. At the same time his words and thoughts are used by Paul and Peter as they in turn write to the newly-formed Christian congregations. In this way also we might say that the Epistle of James serves as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New.

25. Cf. Salmon, op. cit., p. 462. There he shows how difficult it is to maintain literary relationship on the basis of this parallel.

CONCLUSION

In the last analysis the real decision of canonicity rests with the individual. No argument, no matter how well-developed it might be, should be the final reason for accepting the Epistle of James--or for that matter, any book of the Bible--as the Word of God. That decision must finally come on the basis of the meaning of the Epistle to the individual. If there are doubts, therefore, in the mind of anyone as to the genuineness of this Epistle, no better advice can be given than that you read it carefully, prayerfully, and with an open mind. Read it, remembering the setting in which it was written, and see if you, too, will not have to admit with Rendall that: "Ethics do not cover the whole field of religion or philosophy--but the Christian consciousness was rightly guided, when it finally included in the Canon of the New Testament an Epistle, which--even if not of Apostolic authorship--derived from Christian ethos--pure and simple--its warrant of 'God-given inspiration.'"¹

1. Rendall, op. cit., p. 132.

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