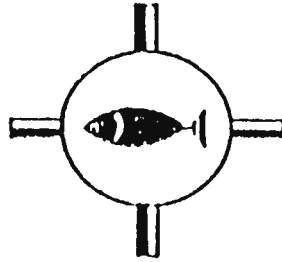


LIBERAL CATHOLIC INSTITUTE OF STUDIES



Unit 9

CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

Paper 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES

Volume I

by the Rt. Rev. R. S. McGinnis Jr.



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AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES

Volume II

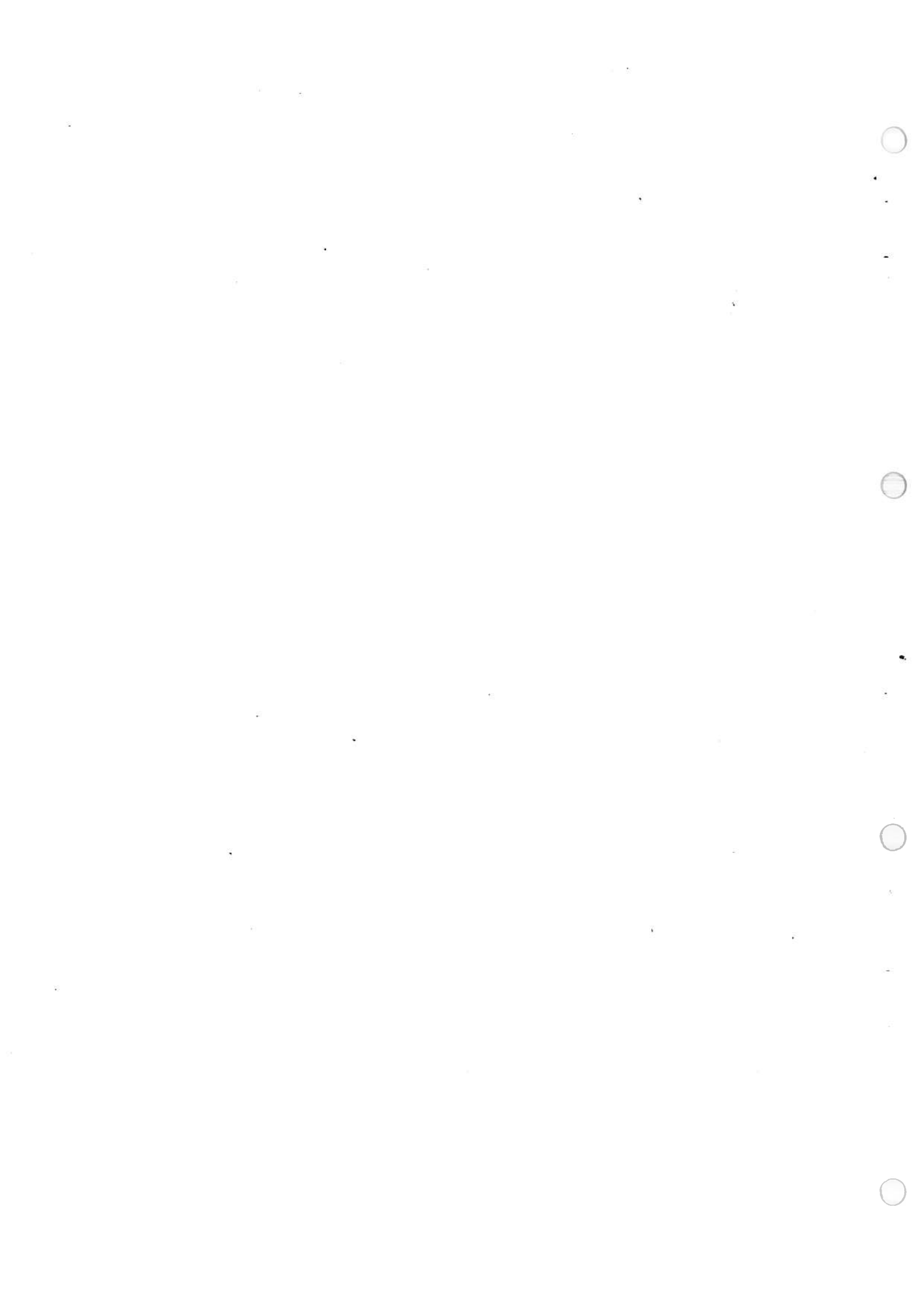
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CHAPTER VI

LITURGY AND THE BIBLE

From the earliest days of Christian worship the Bible has been a normative factor in the fabric of the Liturgy. The formation of common worship patterns and practices drew freely upon scriptural sources available. The ambo and holy table stood as companions in the Eucharistic rite. Just as then, the Bible helps to mark out the path through illumination in the work of transformation during the sacramental encounter and sharing with the Living Christ.

A. The Scriptures in Early Christian Worship

The cultic practices of early Christians obviously did not begin in a cultural and religious vacuum. Primitive Christian worship was influenced to a great extent, of course, by the Jewish synagogue services which included readings from the Law and the Prophets, prayers, the Psalter, benedictions and interpretation of the holy writings (Old Testament). To a lesser degree there was the influence of the Temple organization with its priesthood, altar and sacrificial system as well as the effect of the Graeco-Roman mystery religions upon Gentile followers of the Way. In time there emerged distinctive Christian liturgical practices for corporate worship which centered, as from the beginning (I Cor. 10:16-17), in the Eucharist—remembering the Last Supper in Jerusalem while experiencing the Presence of the Christ anew at the holy table. The successors of the men of Emmaus continued in the "breaking of bread" and communion with the Living Lord.

Early Christians employed no books in their common worship except the Bible which originally consisted of Jewish Scriptures with the addition of writings of the Apostles. These readings were carried out during the first part of the Eucharistic liturgy as part of instruction and preparation, and "as long as time allows" according to Justin during the second century A.D. The multiple readings were finally reduced to three, those being from the Prophets (Old Testament) and the Epistle and the Gospel from the New Testament. The *Apostolic Tradition* of St. Hippolytus during the second century A.D., along with the *Didache* a century later, help to give insight into the dynamics of developing Christian worship. The elaboration of the rites, especially after Constantine, brought about suggested and later required readings and prayers during the celebration of the Eucharist. However, without the printing press the realization of uniformity in these matters was impossible during the days of the early Church. Massey Shepherd points out in his *The Worship of the Church* that although the Roman rite "served as the common core of the medieval Church's worship, there was no such thing as a uniform observance of it."

However, during the Middle Ages it became customary in the West to reduce the readings from the Bible to two lessons at Mass, those being the appointed Epistle and Gospel. A trace of the Old Testament lesson remained in the form of selections being employed on an occasional basis as "the lesson for the Epistle". The current *Liturgy According to the Use of the Liberal Catholic Church* reflects this two-fold usage of scriptural lections during the Eucharist with the Old Testament remnants as described above. The liturgical renewal within the Roman Catholic Church and among Anglicans has gone back to the earlier custom allowing the three lessons within the context of the Eucharistic liturgy.

B. Biblical Usage in The Liturgy

From the Invocation to the Benediction the Eucharistic rite of the Liberal Catholic Church breathes of the Bible. This includes the scriptural lections, the gradual, the sermon, the biblical phrases and words and allusions from the Scriptures which help to form the structure and content of the ritual itself. In the current Liberal Catholic *Liturgy*, 141 out of the 469 total number of pages are devoted to scriptural selections appointed for the seasonal Epistles, Gospels and Proper Graduals at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This does not include those propers printed toward the close of *The Liturgy* to provide for such events as a Requiem or Nuptial Mass, the Ordination of Deacons and Priests and the Consecration of Bishops and Churches. Furthermore, special honor is given to the reading of the Gospel by having the congregation to stand, following the ancient custom, and censing the Gospel book just prior to the recitation of the appointed reading.

The Epistle, Gradual and Gospel in the Liberal Catholic Eucharistic liturgy are bracketed, meaning that they may upon occasion be omitted, just as a similar provision is made for the two lessons at Prime and Complin. However, *The Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Rite* quote clearly states the preference that the Gradual should be retained even if the Epistle and Gospel are not read. Moreover, both of the latter must be read at the Mass or none at all. The rubrical provision for this omission is mainly because of the desire to be able to shorten the service for a private or semi-private daily celebration. In a much lesser sense than the pragmatic issue at hand, this provisional deletion can also be taken to indicate an attitude of the Liberal Catholic Church concerning the nature and role of the Scriptures reflected most succinctly in the *Statement of Principles*.

Prime and Complin also call for two biblical lessons normally to be read, those being drawn from the same source for the Eucharist, namely the Epistles and Gospels. In the interest of the economy of time and special circumstances the rubrics provide for the omission of the two lessons at these offices as previously indicated. However, flexibility for special occasions ought not be confused with the norm intended in these liturgical matters whether concerning daily offices or Eucharist. Psalms are also appointed for Prime and Complin as well as at Vespers. Besides this, short scriptural lessons are also provided for the occasions of the Baptism of Infants and Children, the Service of Healing and the Burial of the Dead. It should be quite obvious from these brief reflections that the Liberal Catholic *Liturgy* is permeated with the Scriptures throughout.

C. Versions of the Bible Appointed for Lections

The beauty and familiarity of the King James Version of the Bible has been the standard for liturgical readings in English speaking countries within the Liberal Catholic Church. The Epistles and Gospels printed in *The Liturgy* reflect this choice of biblical versions. "The Authorized Version of the Scriptures," as the preface to the first and second edition of *The Liturgy* says, "has for the most part been used, for although the Revised Version is certainly a more faithful rendering of the original, it still leaves so much to be desired as not to compensate, in our opinion, for the loss of the majestic English of the King James's version."

The passing of time has made it quite evident that there is now the need to have alternative versions to the above made permissible, those which are both more faithful to the original text and written in more modern language. Responding to this obvious feeling of many Churchmen, the Sixth General Episcopal Synod took action in 1971 which permitted the local Ordinary to allow liturgical lections in more modern versions than the standard 1611 version. The December, 1971 issue of *Clergy Notes* indicates this implementation in the American Province wherein the Regionary Bishop authorized the use of either the *New English Bible* or the *Revised Standard Version*.

Another concern which has been expressed, besides the issue of contemporary scriptural versions, is the desire for additional biblical lections in order to broaden the base of scriptural selections and to encourage a familiarity with a larger part of these sacred writings. The Seventh General Episcopal Synod of 1976 confirmed a resolution of the Fourth Synod in 1958 concerning this subject. The resolution calls for the Liturgy Committee "to search the Scriptures to select additional (and appropriate) Epistles and Gospels for the various Sundays and Feast Days, either from the Authorized Version or any suitable Revised Version." Furthermore, such selections are to be authorized by each Regionary concerned for alternative use and on an experimental basis. These new selections are eventually to be printed as a supplement to *The Liturgy* and not part of it. Of course, liturgical reforms among Anglicans and Roman Catholics have already lead to the usage of contemporary scriptural versions for liturgical readings as well as making use of a multiple-cycle scheme of lections formulated on an annual basis within the ecclesiastical year.

D. Appointed Selections for the Lectionary

The Eucharistic liturgy according to the use of the Liberal Catholic Church basically follows the Mass of the Roman rite of the pre-Vatican II variety with certain revisions of which several are pointed out in the prefaces to *The Liturgy*. Bishop Leadbeater's *The Science of the Sacraments* contributes to a better understanding of the two similar rites by providing a textual comparison of each along with an appropriate commentary discussing various aspects of the Mass. Differences between the model of the old Roman Catholic liturgy are more noticeable, of course, in the shorter form of the Liberal Catholic Eucharist. Both the longer and the shorter form of this Church's Mass, although set in the Tridentine style, have always been in the vernacular as is true regarding all public services of the Liberal Catholic Church.

This Church has followed the earlier liturgical practice of using a one-cycle annual lectionary of appointed readings for Sundays and feast days although, as already noted, new and alternate selections are now being studied. Moreover, the Liberal Catholic Church reckons "Sundays after Trinity" in the carrying out of the second part of the liturgical year, and keeps the custom of the pre-Lenten season as well as the observance of the octaves in the calendar. However, the number of official saints days was reduced at the time of the first printing of *The Liturgy* in 1919, and there was an economy practiced in the matter of proper graduals.

The scriptural selections for the Epistles and Gospels for *The Liturgy* were done with care in order to express the true sentiments and outlook that would be most expressive of — and harmonious with the Liberal Catholic Church's practice and thought. In making these selections for such readings both Anglican and Roman Catholic materials were consulted and used as well as those used by neither church body. Bishop Leadbeater reflects upon this process in *The Science of the Sacraments* wherein he speaks about choosing passages that were both suitable and edifying. He indicates that this procedure did not always follow the reading of the text in consecutive verses if not germane to the main purpose of the proposed reading. A result of this practice calls for some measure of patience in trying to match the verses of the lection in *The Liturgy* with those in a contemporary version of the Scriptures.

Various scriptural lessons from the Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha are employed in the liturgical services for the feasts and holy days throughout the Church year as well as provisions for the occasions of requiems, nuptials, ordinations and consecrations. Readings are taken mainly from New Testament sources. However, in the current lectionary arrangement there are six books of the Old Testament drawn upon for readings. These are Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Malachi, the Psalms and I Samuel. The Apocrypha provides three books, those being Ecclesiasticus, Tobit and the Wisdom of Solomon. (The latter are included in the list of Old Testament books for Roman Catholics but are not considered canonical in any sense by Protestants, as discussed previously in Chapter V of this *An Introduction to Biblical Studies*.)

Turning to the New Testament, all four Gospels are represented in the current lectionary of *The Liturgy* with the Gospel of Mark never being read on a day other than Sunday. Furthermore, an analysis of the Gospel readings shows that the most frequently used Gospel in the appointed lections is the Fourth Gospel and not one of the synoptics. John is read no fewer than 30 times. The second most popular Gospel in terms of lectionary inclusion is that of Matthew, being called upon 23 times. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is made use of seven times for lection material and the book of Revelation is used six times. Of the epistles, or letters, I Corinthians is most often chosen for readings, that being nine times, whereas I Timothy and Titus are only read once each during the year. Of the 27 individual books in the New Testament corpus, 21 are employed in the lectionary of *The Liturgy*. The six books of the New Testament which were not chosen for contributions for lections are II John, III John, Jude, II Thessalonians, II Timothy and Philemon—all epistles.

E. The Inner Side of Liturgical Readings

The third great movement in the liturgical drama of the Eucharist is listed in *The Work of Transformation* as the reading of the Collect, Epistle and Gospel. Bishop Wedgwood writes in *New Insights Into Christian Worship* that "these serve the purpose, not only of instructing and exercising the minds of people, but also of contributing mental matter to the eucharistic edifice." This is supportive of the idea that the great services of the Church are more than just for the benefit of the individuals who have gathered at the altar but are a collective effort to supply a "constant spiritual stimulus to the outside world" as the first Presiding Bishop said.

The Gospel, which has always been regarded as the most important of the readings, is an occasion of the outpouring of grace and offers a means to proclaim readings in harmony with the Ancient Wisdom. The tracing of the three signs of the cross upon the forehead, lips and breast prior to the Gospel being read signifies the desire to be illumined and filled with God's truth. According to Bishop Leadbeater in *The Science of the Sacraments*, these three small crosses are intended to open the centers of the forehead, throat and breast to the Divine influence about to be poured in.

Geoffrey Hodson points out in *The Inner Side of Church Worship* the need for self-preparation preceding participation in ceremonial. What better way than reading over the appointed Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the day and meditating upon the intention in preparation for the Eucharistic banquet?

F. Homiletical Perspective

The appointed Collect, Epistle and Gospel for the day also offer both appropriate and varied themes for the preacher in the seasonal and systematic manner. An expanded lectionary of alternate readings increases this choice of possible texts and subjects for the work of the pulpit. The sermon is not considered to be a necessary part of the Eucharist in the Liberal Catholic Church, an example being a daily celebration. However, it is customary on Sundays and upon other occasions.

Although the giving of a sermon is a variable in the context of the Liberal Catholic rite, it has a function which contributes not only to the individual worshipper but the design of the service as well. Obviously the sermon is a means of instruction and devotion. Various kinds of sermons are designed for different purposes and occasions; some will be thematic, others expository in explaining different scriptural texts and some more devotional in nature. Although continuing education is necessary among Christians for sustaining growth in spiritual matters, the sermon should not be confused with a lecture period which would have more time and an opportunity for questions and discussion. Indeed, the sermon may be didactic at times, but it is always set within the context and framework of the liturgy with the ensuing limitations of time and purpose.

A sermon may inform the individual, call for change, ask for response to a higher way, inspire renewal or bring about commitment. The Word, read and preached, has its own sense of immediacy to Divine Wisdom; and when going

beyond learning and knowledge communicates more than these by opening higher levels of thoughts for an outpouring of blessing. More than this, the lections and sermon interact in their own sense of harmony and purpose in the liturgical work of transformation when rightly understood. Moving beyond the individual worshipper, Christian worship is understood by Liberal Catholics in its highest sense as ultimately helping the surrounding world "by pouring out upon it a great flood of spiritual power" as *The Liturgy* states. This is more completely done, of course, in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Given this understanding of worship, careful attention ought to be given both to the content and delivery of sermons (or homilies) as well as reviewing the scriptural lessons prior to a service for familiarity and paying attention to such matters as pronunciation, diction and the like.

When the sermon is delivered during the Eucharist, its proper place in the liturgy is immediately after the reading of the Gospel and just prior to the recitation of the Creed or the Act of Faith. The sermon, when given, is considered to be an integral part of both the structure and movement of the service as indicated above. The *Code of Canons* will not allow for a sermon to be delivered just preceeding or immediately after the Mass although an address may be given at either of these times as long as it is made quite clear that it is "a separate and distinct presentation." While women are not ordained in the Liberal Catholic Church, a woman may be invited to preach at the discretion of the Ordinary. Regardless who the preacher is, the General Episcopal Synod has recommended that sermons "shall not exceed fifteen minutes in length" as stated in *The Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Church*, an action that makes it quite clear that brevity is a virtue in the craft of sermon-making.

In the preceeding discussion concerning the relationship between the Bible and liturgy, the term "Scriptures" has primarily referred to the holy book of Christians. The following, seventh, chapter deals with the question of this Bible and the sacred writings of other world religions.





CHAPTER VII

NON CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES AND THE BIBLE

A. Variety of Sacred Scriptures

Wherever mankind is to be found religion resides to one degree or another and in various forms. The physical presence of temples, pyramids, megaliths, mosques and churches are reminders of the human religious expressions. Indeed, there is no other phenomenon which is so consistent and pervasive within societies as the human spiritual pilgrimage. The plurality of primitive, ancient and living religions attest to the millions of people being involved in a continuing and common quest along the spiritual path--sometimes criss-crossing and at othertimes paralleling the way of Divine Wisdom.

Throughout the development of world religions prophets have spoken, founders arisen, masters taught, ideas challenged, and doctrines expounded. Various oral traditions, laws, stories and teachings have been preserved within religious communities, both orally and in written form. These have naturally formed the basic corpus of sacred texts of various faiths. All of living religions today in some sense have sacred scriptures. Without doubt religion is doubly rich because of these writings while often being perplexed at their differences, interpretations and questions concerning primacy, inspiration and authenticity.

At a given world congress of religions a display of sacred writings representing the different faiths would be a mutual meeting place of the many adherents. Naturally, people of a particular belief would be drawn initially to the revered writings of their own confession. The Buddhist, for example, would recognize *The Tripitaka* (Three Baskets) while the Shintoist would look for the familiar *Ko-ji-ji* (Records of Ancient Matters) and *Ninon-gi* (Chronicles of Japan) and the Taoist would search for the venerated *Tao-Teh-King* (Canon-of Reason and Virtue). The Hindu would pick out the sacred *Veāas* (Books of Knowledge) and the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Blessed) while the Muslim would take up the holy *Koran*. The person of Jewish faith would reach for the hallowed Scriptures of the *Old Testament* (including the revered *Torah*) and the Christian, of course, would add to the latter a copy of the beloved *New Testament*.

The above scenario illustrates the multiplicity of sacred texts representing various religions. Confucianism, Jainism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism could also have been included in the group. As just indicated, all religions

today in some sense have sacred scriptures. However, the distinction between "scripture" and other literature, especially religious writings, in some traditions has not been as decisive and final as within Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Issues involved which need clarification in such matters include the origin and inspiration of the texts, the recognition of an official corpus and the rejection or method for further additions to the original writings.

B. Scriptural Authenticity

In Chapter II of this *An Introduction of Biblical Studies* the reader's attention was drawn to the method in which Judaism, Islam and Hinduism have dealt with the question of an ongoing, written supplementary body of material which postdate their original scriptures. Judaism has their *Talmud* and Islam their *Haddith* while Hinduism deals with materials in later *Sutra* periods. Within Protestant Christianity the Bible stands as a complete text while within Catholicism the question of tradition must also be dealt with.

If one were to settle satisfactorily the above questions there is also the consideration of the matter of the inspiration of the text. Besides this there are decisions to be made concerning which texts to be officially sanctioned within a religion's canonical scriptures, and added to this is the dilemma of interpretation which is never-ending. Within Christianity the question of "which Bible" does not make the task any easier, that is, depending upon whether a person is an Anglican, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Liberal Catholic or Eastern Orthodox—much less if the additional issue of versions is raised or the question of Mormonism inserted. Needless to say, an attempt to have "the real scriptures stand up" is not as simple as some uninformed may have thought.

If, as indicated, those within a common religion as Christianity have difficulty settling upon the correct text, a further question concerning the world's "other Bibles" may seem to be an impossible subject. What about the acceptance and validity of the abundance of other scriptures? Can they all be considered equally "the Word of God" or accepted as sacred? If so, in what way? If not, why not? How are Christian Scriptures different or unique say from the *Koran* of Islam or the *Avestas* of Zoroastrianism? Can these religious books stand the test to be placed side by side and considered of equal value, being and ultimately must be responded to by the faith of individual devotees as they are informed by their own beliefs—and hopefully having a measure of toleration for others. As to the sacred texts of a given religion, the faith community will assign the value, credence and credibility to them. That is, placing their own *imprimatur*, so to speak, upon them—even with some differences within the same faith family. In this sense scriptural authority is living and does not deal only with past pronouncements, but includes a viable and dynamic stamp of approval through contemporary cultic usage and current congruent life styles.

Given the fact that God has made Himself known at all times and in all places throughout the aeons, it is reasonable that the Divine Wisdom must have in some fashion or to some degree been operative in the writings of

major religious faiths around the world. Furthermore, if peace and brotherhood are mutual tenets of the various religions on earth, it is also reasonable that the people of good will concerned will view each other's holy books with some sense of appreciation, comparison and value—if not respectful tolerance.

C. Common Bonds of Sacred Writings

Although religious experiences of mankind have varied in emphasis, outward form, language and cultural settings, there are several areas held in common by most. One of these areas that brings together religious thinkers in matters of sacred writings is the mutual discussion about those things sacred and profane. Mircea Eliade's book, entitled *Sacred and Profane*, as well as Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* are indicative of this shared fundamental concern. Besides sacred writings, of course, are objects, seasons, people and places. How are "scriptures" to be considered different and apart from other literature of a given group? What are the characteristics of sacred writings which set them apart?

For one thing the sacred scriptures of a religion are considered in some sense to be "inspired". The term "inspired" is being used advisedly and in a broad sense of the word in its application to various religious traditions. Buddhists, of course, would be uncomfortable with the term if the object of inspiration were a god or gods. In this case inspiration would come from man's religious intuition or enlightenment and transmitted through the written word. Whereas for Christians, God is the source of that inspiration of the recorded Word. Chapter II of this *An Introduction to Biblical Studies* has enumerated some of the problems concerning the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Liberal Catholic Church not to be excluded.

Another common characteristic of sacred writings which helps to set them apart from other literary sources is the fact that they are foundational to whatever religion concerned. That is, the sacred writings help to constitute the very roots of a faith's foundation and contribute to its authenticity, consistency and perpetuity. The essential fabric of the original stories, teachings and uniquenesses are not only preserved in the written tradition but permeate the structure of that faith community in an ongoing manner. This written word is both a construct of past heritage as well as being a continuing conditioner of the faithful anchored to that original constitution. The Word sanctions and creates, sustains and controls. These developments take place in varying ways and to different degrees within the varieties of religious bodies affected. In this sense the *Koran* and the *Vedas* and the *New Testament* have withstood time and witness to the ages of religious history in civilization's "Long Search". Therefore, whether by design or other, these sacred writings stand as genuine illuminaries with various names and themes, of different value and emphasis along the Path of the Ancient Wisdom leading ultimately to the light of the Christ, He who has many other sheep "not of this fold". These pages are the carpet of words covering the mosaics of the temples, mosques, churches and cathedrals in cities and villages worldwide, quietening and disquietening, inspiring, challenging and comforting.

D. Scriptural Religious Identity

Having spoken of common characteristics of sacred scriptures representing different religions, and acknowledging their common search for truth, it may seem strange to question whether selections from the *Koran* or *Bhagavad Gita* should be read in Christian churches if desired, since these writings share the claim of being sacred books. A negative answer would perhaps first be taken to be an expression of prejudice or exclusiveness. This is not the point. The fact is that these writings would simply be outside the practicing faith community at hand. Not only would there more than likely be a general misunderstanding of these readings but even more important would be the intrusion or imposition of a foreign construct upon the pattern of faith being promulgated and witnessed to. In simple terms, they would be out of place, and the converse would certainly be true for the Christian Bible as a continuing lectionary used *regularly* for non-Christian liturgical occasions. It is not an exclusive attitude to affirm that a Christian ought to "speak Christian" while appreciating the larger fellowship of religious bodies.

In a very good sense of the idea each religion has its own roots, heritage, terminology and expected loyalties as well as accumulated customs. Each major-claimant tells the faith-story in its own unique manner and for its own particular family, using its accepted language and mystique. The first Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church addressed the question why scriptures of other religions are not appropriate to be included as passages in the regular lectionary of the Church in *New Insights Into Christian Worship*. Bishop Wedgwood said: "The answer is that such mixing of streams of religious influence seems often to produce a clash of influences." This is a sensible answer since variously appointed angels, evolutionary paths, masters and traditions are involved in such a decision. This is something often not obvious in the understandable and laudable haste to be brotherly and charitable as a corrective to countless charges of prejudice, intolerance and even violence because of different religious beliefs.

What has been said does not mean that an occasional reading of other world religion scriptures is inappropriate, such as on "World Religion Sunday" discussed below. Nor does this disallow for illustrations of spiritual subjects from the pages of other sacred texts than the Bible or comparative word study in teachings and homilies. The question involved is that of seriously being committed to one's own Christian faith and appreciating others rather than being lost in a maze of well-intentioned syncretism. In other words, as Jesus said, "a man cannot serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). Having made this very clear it should now be said with all sincerity that a Christian should understand other religions and respect them as he would desire for his own. A serious study of comparative religions will go a long way in helping to bring about a genuine appreciation of common religious approaches and will contribute significantly to harmony and brotherhood. Such studies are not only salutary but needed.

E. The Liberal Catholic Church and World Religions

A larger question must be answered which goes beyond a comparative study of sacred texts of whatever world religions. What about the religion *per se*

itself? This ultimately has to be answered. How is one to view other religious claimants in relation to his own in such matters as authority, authenticity and accommodation? Reference to even the phraseology of other "world Bibles" causes discomfort among some. This points to the heart of the issue. How inclusive—or exclusive—can religion be? Some faiths of a more syncretic nature would not be as concerned with the question as a Christian, for example, whose particular denomination may view the uniqueness of Christianity in such a limited way that "salvation" is simply denied to all others who adhere to another faith system regardless how devoutly or sincerely they may be.

In reality it is perhaps a question of degree, the degree to which one religious body officially and/or unofficially grants recognition, sanction and legitimacy to another group in the same field of endeavor. There are some, unfortunately, who are narrow minded and so prejudiced that this cannot even be a viable option for them. Others, not so smug, may be no less bending but are at least tolerant on the issue. There is, of course, a certain amount of threat involved for one who may not be secure in the matter of either conviction or understanding his own religious position, and this uneasiness is reinforced by isolation and the refusal to take the time or interest in studying other religions even from a comparative perspective.

A Christian must ultimately ask if it is possible for one to have a genuine, primary and optimum commitment to the Master Jesus and at the same time understand the Divine Wisdom being manifest in some degrees and/or in different ways in other religions? One may also ask whether this would be in as complete a form or in an inferior manner? If it is possible in any degree, to what extent does this detract from one's original Christian confession, if any? Furthermore, what impact does such a possibility have upon one's own apostolate and missionary response to go "into all the world" proclaiming the Gospel of Christ (Matthew 28: 19-20)?

Perhaps the wrong questions are being asked, or else from the wrong perspective. This same Jesus who speaks of himself in esoteric terminology as "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6) also prays for those "other sheep not of this fold" (John 10:16). Certainly the later cannot be conceived as contradictory to what he has just said, or in any manner implying a compromise of basic beliefs. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that God's ways are operative in a much wider and deeper sense than some would care to allow or acknowledge.

Once the above is realized there is the necessity of coming to grips with the Christ as "The Way" in a more liberated understanding. Once the Christ-principle is accepted as being historic, mystic as explained, for example, by Annie Besant in her *Esoteric Christianity*, the way is cleared to turn to the alternate unfoldment of Divine Wisdom in a truly Catholic (universal) manner. This larger perspective of the Christ places the nature of "salvation" within the evolutionary framework of man's individual and social redemption throughout the many lifetimes necessary. This process, therefore, becomes both cosmic and terrestrial in a more significant and stunning way than perhaps imagined before. The short Act of Faith in the Eucharistic liturgy of the Liberal Catholic Church states the essence of this extended viewpoint when

it affirms that "all his sons shall one day reach his feet, however far they stray". Rather than a reaction of lethargy this should call for a truly energetic response of mutual concern to encourage one another enthusiastically and joyfully along the Path to the attainment of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23).

Roman Catholic Vatican II of the sixties was anticipated to some degree concerning the question of non-Christian religions by the 1916 *Statement of Principles* of the Liberal Catholic Church. The latter, the appropriate quotation reads, "believes that there is a body of doctrine and mystical experience common to all the great religions of the world and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any." The Liberal Catholic Church does not deny inspiration to other great religions. Furthermore this Church affirms that all religions proceed from a "common source" and recognizes that "different religions stress different aspects of this teaching. . ." In this sense of the word the term "catholic" is fully extended in its meaning. In no way does this minimize the witness of the Liberal Catholic Church as part of Catholic Christianity nor does it dilute her teachings. More than mere charity, it is an acknowledgement of the true nature of religion and a bold initiative to affirm and witness to a fact difficult for some to fully appreciate or accept.

That the Liberal Catholic Church recognizes the need to give due attention to other world religions is made concrete by the action of the General Episcopal Synod which made the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity to be observed as "World Religion Sunday" on an optional basis. This observance allows the usage of the special collect "For Those of Other Religions" (*The Liturgy*, p. 465, 5th Edition) as an additional prayer that Sunday. This prayer appointed is as follows:

O God, the Father of Mankind, help us to see thy light and love shining in all the great religions of the world, and to understand the manifold ways in which thou dost use them in the fulfilment of thy plan; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Besides the provision for this prayer, the Priest has permission to read whatever appropriate passages from the scriptures of world religions during the time of the sermon at the Eucharistic celebration. Although this is perhaps a limited response, it is nonetheless an official annual provision calling attention to the oneness felt, understood and accepted by Liberal Catholics in the world family of religions. Hopefully this kind of encouragement will lead to comparative studies of religion, cooperative efforts in areas of mutual concern and a lessening of prejudice and misunderstanding within religious circles. These efforts are in no way eclectic in the sense of promoting a cut and paste approach to religious faith. Nor are they intended to dilute or dissuade a Christian or any other from his convictions, beliefs and cultural heritage. It is born out of genuine love and concern for peace, goodwill and harmony directed toward all who walk along the Path of the Ageless Wisdom of God.





CHAPTER VIII

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The discovery of the treasures of Tutankhamon in Egypt in 1922 brought about worldwide attention. This archaeological find has continued to cause interest among people and more recently in the tour of selected artifacts of King Tut at various museums across the United States. Interest and curiosity in archaeology is not only salutary for the serious student of the Bible, but completely necessary as an important tool in having a better understanding of the Scriptures.

A. Archaeology's Impact Upon Biblical Studies

The chance finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 in caves on the northwest corner of the lake after which the manuscripts were named is a well-known discovery in archaeology that has contributed significantly to biblical studies. A more recent discovery of clay cuneiform tablets at Ebla in Syria (1976) adds another chapter to the archaeological record of scripture illumination. In the work of the archaeologist a cheap broken pottery dish or a small denomination coin may take on much more value today than the original owner ever dreamed. The purpose of the study of archaeology is not to "prove" the Bible, but to provide helpful information about the people of the Bible lands and their times. Contributing to hermenutics in a major way, the discipline of archaeology provides scholarly inquiry with documentation of such things as economic, sociological, political, military and religious background of a particular people as well as the biblical texts themselves.

The discovery of the Rosetta Stone (1799) in Egypt, for instance, enabled scholars to read Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions which had previously been undeciphered. By the same token, the translation of one of the three languages of the Persian Behistun Inscription (1835) was the key to the ancient cuneiform tongue. The Siloam Inscription (1830), as another example, tells about Hezekiah's underground tunnel which provided for Jerusalem in times of siege (II Kgs. 20:20). The Mari Tablets (1933) provided a considerable amount of information about the civil and political history of Mesopotamia between 2400-1700 B.C. And, of course, the aforementioned Dead Sea Scrolls, perhaps the most important archaeological find of the century in the Near East, offer the oldest manuscripts of Old Testament books known to date. Moreover, these scrolls from Qumran also provide an important insight into a Jewish religious group besides the Pharisees and Sadducees during the time of Jesus. Such examples are only a few of the numerous archaeological discoveries relevant to biblical studies.

Even the ancient Greeks considered themselves modern by the fact of having a word in their vocabulary signifying the discussion of antiquities, that word being *archaiologia* or our English "archaeology"--the scientific study of the remains of the past, objects written or unwritten. The science of archaeology is concerned about all aspects of a culture or area of focus. The work of an archaeologist will include such varied duties as photography, excavating, record keeping, cataloguing, and publishing. It is a time-consuming, detailed and challenging field of study.

B. Background to Modern Scientific Archaeology

Actually, biblical archaeology is a relatively new science. In all too many instances collectors of antiquities in the past were unfortunately more interested in treasures than the area of scholarship. Because of this, untold clues and information have been lost to scientific investigation. Modern archaeology may be said to have had its beginning in 1798 when Napoleon was accompanied by nearly one hundred scholars and artists on his invasion of Egypt. These scholars copied texts, wrote out descriptions and made water-colored illustrations for their texts. Perhaps the most famous and helpful discovery of this campaign was the Rosetta Stone which has been mentioned above.

Early in the nineteenth century Claudius J. Rich, an Englishman employed by the East India Company in foreign service at Bagdad, observed in the surrounding region mounds of ancient cities and found many inscriptions. Although he made no significant publications, he did stir up interest of others; one such was another Englishman, Austin H. Layard, who in 1845 began excavations at Nimrod and especially at the mound of Kuyunjik, which was the site of the ancient biblical city of Nineveh.

But it was the American Edward Robinson of Union Theological Seminary in New York who has the distinction of beginning the scientific study of the localities and antiquities of Palestine. This man explored Palestine in 1838 and 1852, mapping it as he went and making extensive observations and notes. The Palestine Exploration Fund was organized in London in 1865 and its first representative, Captain Charles Warren, made a series of sketch maps of the country, and actually carried out excavations on the temple hill in Jerusalem as Jack Finegan notes in his *Light from the Ancient Past*. The American Palestine Exploration Society was founded in 1870 on the model of the British organization. Twenty years later the Ecole Biblique et archaeologique Francaise was founded in Jerusalem.

Scientific archaeology can be said to have begun in 1890 when pottery was found to be of great use in the area of chronology. Since the style of pottery changed frequently, it was realized that it could be charted according to style and materials used. This fact was understood by a brilliant Englishman, Sir Flinders Petrie, as he excavated at Tell el Hesie. As he dealt with pottery and understood its significance for dating purposes, he formulated the fundamental principle of sequence-dating in which it is possible to extend relative chronology into periods in which no stratified remains are available for direct observation as Albright discussed in his *Archaeology of Palestine*. Thus the archaeological chronology of Palestine was established as a very important tool for dating purposes.

Biblical archaeology was to start in earnest as a discipline and come of its own actually after World War I when under General Allenby the Turks were driven from the Holy Land and the British Mandate established in Palestine. After the Armistice (1918) the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) became an important archaeological center with locations now in Amman, Bagdad, Carthage and Jerusalem under the long leadership of the famous scholar, William Foxwell Albright. The institution in Jerusalem is now named after him. This important archaeological organization publishes the scholarly *Bulletin* and the semi-popular *Biblical Archaeologist* as quarterly journals.

Three periods of modern scientific archaeology may be suggested: (1) 1890-1914: World War I stopped excavations. (2) 1918-1940: This was a very fruitful period of excavations in Palestine but was interrupted by World War II. (3) 1946-Present: One must keep in mind the political boundaries resulting from the Israeli-Arab conflicts as the endeavor of archaeology continues.

C. Basics to Archaeological Investigations

Biblical archaeology has all the fascination of any unravelling mystery and puzzle. Through scientific methods ancient remains of the past are discovered and uncovered with the overall objective of a better understanding of the Scriptures. The reader by now will probably have realized that such archaeological investigations are not all gold and glamor, but a composite of hard work, sweat, discipline and an endeavor involving much time and money.

Sir Mortimer Wheeler has said in his book, *Archaeology From the Earth*, that "there is no right way of digging, but there are many wrong ways." After a site has been chosen for excavation and permission has been granted by the local authorities, a number of people with different skills as well as a large variety of material and supplies must be secured. Besides common laborers there must be personnel trained in such areas as photography, drafting, surveying, sketching and cataloguing. The logistics of feeding, housing and transportation are only some of the details which concern the director of the dig. What one is attempting to accomplish in the excavation will greatly be influenced by the funds which are available. After any soundings are made at the site the director will then decide the method of excavation and the area will be carefully translated into proper grids for later identification and recording purposes. The actual work of digging will not only involve shovels, but toothbrushes, small knives and tweezers since some things which will be uncovered are very fragile indeed. The techniques of this science have been developed slowly over the years through practice, error and experimentation. Aerial photography has added a practical dimension not only by recording an area but provides a revealing technique that cuts through the ages through the means of infra-red photography. Often ancient roads, camps, foundations and other important finds will be made known by this method whereas otherwise unnoticed.

A *tezz* is the Arabic word for "hill" or "mound". It is an artificial hill built like layers of cake containing towns and each of these layers, or stratum, is known as a level of occupation. Beth-Sheen and Megiddo had seventy feet of debris on them, for example, and the mounds themselves will

vary in size. Megiddo, which covers 35 acres, is the largest single *tell* excavated thus far. The more recent occupational remains are naturally found toward the top of the site at whatever location.

There are three basic methods of excavation for the option of an archaeologist. These include: (1) Tunneling, (2) the Trench Method, and (3) Stratification. Tunneling was used much in Mesopotamia in the early days but it is the worst of the approaches since it destroys much historical information and is not used now. The trench method cuts the mound into trenches and these must be wide enough so that they will not cave in. This method is employed when a sounding is needed or there are not sufficient funds to uncover the mound layer by layer. One advantage of this approach is that it leaves some areas for further investigation when even more advanced procedures in excavation may have been developed. Jericho is an example of a site which has been trenched excessively. The third method mentioned is a process whereby each item in the stratum is charted and then another layer cleared. Such stratification may be complete or partial—again leaving some sections for further inquiry at a later date. Megiddo is an example of a dig that began as a complete stratification, but it was soon apparent that too much money and time would be needed to finish the project.

The evolutionary pottery calendar has been mentioned as a method which permits archaeologists to date sites thanks to Petrie's efforts beginning in 1890. There are three characteristics of pottery which are employed to help determine chronology by specialists. (1) Form is the shape of an object, such as a vase or a jug or a dish. The shape may be determined by its use such as an amphora used to store grain or liquids and the hydria which was used to keep water. The lip of a jar, or neck of a vase, or handle on a piece of pottery will also be part of this shape pattern. (2) Wear is the fineness or coarseness of the clay used in making the artifact. It also includes the number and size of limegrits in the clay along with the color and manner or degree of baking such as in open fires or later kilns. (3) A third observation which the archaeologist makes is the decoration of the pottery. This includes burnishing which closes the pores by rubbing something over the wet clay and makes the object unusable for containers of liquids. Polishing is the reverse of burnishing, that is, a rag or brush is used to get off particles of clay to keep pores open so that water or wine, for example, could be stored therein. If not to be permanent the jug or jar would be sunbaked, but if a more lasting piece of pottery were desired, it would be fired. The potters used many dies and baked them into the pottery. Decorations were also painted on the pottery. Enslizing was another means of decoration and was made by taking a sharp tool or stylis and making impressions upon the soft clay. The term "potsherd" (or sherd) means simply a broken piece of pottery and is regularly found in the vocabulary of the archaeologist. Another common term relating to pottery is an "ostrakon" (ostraca in plural) and refers to a pottery fragment, or sherd, with writing on it.

It must be remembered that dating varies in different places in terms of the development of such items as bronze or iron. Whereas the use of bronze may be early in one geographic area, it may be introduced later in the culture of another place. An example is that copper was being used in

the Near East (Chalcolithic Age, 4000-3000 B.C.) at an earlier date than the American Indians. For general purposes of chronology the following dates may be helpful in relation to dating in the Holy Land in biblical and pre-biblical times. The dates follow those published by the Hebrew University Department of Antiquities and the Israel Exploration Society.

- (1) *Paleolithic or Old Stone Age*: 500,000-10,000 B.C.
Little is known about this period since it is before recorded history. Caves have been found at Mt. Carmel from 230,000 B.C.
- (2) *Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age*: 10,000-7,500 B.C.
Evidence has been found about agriculture in this age and evidence of the first domesticated animals. Cave art has also been discovered.
- (3) *Neolithic or New Stone Age*: 7,500-4,000 B.C.
Pottery was invented during this period and there are signs of the earliest forms of villages or communal settlements.
- (4) *Chalcolithic or Copper-Stone Age*: 4,000-3,000 B.C.
Copper was introduced for the first time and settlements increased. Highly decorated pottery has been found during this period.
- (5) *Early Bronze Age (Canaanite)*: 3,000-2,000 B.C.
There are organized kingdoms in Egypt at this time as well as in Mesopotamia. Laws are codified and there is international trade as well as a developing epic literature.
- (6) *Middle Bronze Age (Canaanite)*: 2,000-1,500 B.C.
This is the Patriarchal Age. There is the beginning of the alphabet in Canaan and Sinai. There are improved fortifications and the horse and chariot are introduced into Canaan and Egypt by the Hyksos.
- (7) *Late Bronze Age (Canaanite)*: 1,500-1,250 B.C.
This is the time of Moses and the birth of the Hebrew Nation and their Exodus from Egypt.
- (8) *Iron Age I (Israelite)*: 1,250-930 B.C.
The land of Canaan is conquered by the Hebrews and the Twelve Tribes settle in the land. This is the period also of the united monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon and the time of the Old Testament prophets.
- (9) *Iron Age II (Israelite)*: 930-586 B.C.
The Divided Monarchy is portrayed in this period with the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. to the Assyrians and then Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

- (10) *Persian Period:* 586-332 B.C.
During this period there is the fall of Jerusalem and the beginning and conclusion of the Babylonian captivity with the rebuilding of the Second Temple at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- (11) *Hellenistic Period:* 332-37 B.C.
This era witnesses the Hellenization of Palestine and the reaction by the Maccabees.
- (12) *Roman Period:* 37 B.C.-324 A.D.
These are the times of Jesus Christ, the Herodian dynasty and the Roman governors including Pontius Pilate. It includes the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 A.D. with the destruction of the Second Temple at that time. The second Jewish revolt is during 132-135 A.D. (or C.E.) Books of the Bible are settled upon as canonical following the events in the Acts of the Apostles such as the missionary journeys of Paul. The period ends with the early Church Fathers.

Archaeologists not only use the pottery calendar for chronological purposes, a calendar that has been refined and purified over the years, but other available sources as well to cross check for correctness. Artifacts such as cylinder seals, farming implements, coins, tools, jewelry and weapons are some of these other clues to dating. Whereas pottery goes back to about 7,000 B.C. numismatic evidence can only be dated back to about 500 B.C. On the other hand, the use of Radio Carbon 14 can be dated back to about 50,000 B.C. with a marginal error of some 50-100 years. Geological stratification is a further contributor to dating purposes for earlier periods. All of this is to emphasize that a correct dating of people, places, things, organizations and ideas (as Alvin Toffler would list from his *Future Shock*) is of basic importance to the scholarly pursuit of the field of archaeology.

D. Important Biblical Archaeological Discoveries

In a January 1963 interview with William F. Albright appearing in *Christianity Today*, the renowned archaeologist was asked which archaeological discoveries of recent times did he consider to be the most significant. His reply was: "Ugarit (Ras Shamrah) for early Hebrew literature and its dates; Qumran (Dead Sea Scrolls) for all branches of biblical study (especially for early dating of New Testament books); Chenoboskion (Nag Hammadeh) for pre-Gnostic contents of New Testament books." These three discoveries will be considered briefly in the remaining portion of this chapter. Since it is impossible to mention all of the major excavations and discuss all of the important discoveries relevant to biblical studies, a selective approach has had to be made. Therefore, three categories have been chosen which will include geographic places, inscriptions and tablets and a concluding reference to appropriate manuscripts. These categories have been chosen for convenience in introducing illustrative material and the category dealing with inscriptions and tablets has been arbitrarily singled out for emphasis. The methodology of presentation in each category will follow a chronological pattern of discovery by archaeologists.

1. Geographic Places

The Tigris and Euphrates Valley, or Mesopotamia, was the home of various ancient peoples living before the time of the Hebrew Patriarch Abraham. Also, this was the area to which the people of Israel were brought in Babylonian captivity in later years. This was also the vicinity of ancient *Nineveh* across the Tigris at Mosul where diggings were begun in 1931-1932. Explorations at *Ur*, the home of Abraham, were begun earlier in 1918 and continued by C.L. Wooley from 1922 through 1934. The splendor of *Babylon* is now known from the archaeological diggings of R. Koldewey in 1899 and onward. Egyptian archaeology is another complete area of inquiry with its tombs, pyramids, monuments and inscriptions. The nature of this brief investigation will, however, only permit selective illustrations of archaeological sites in the area of Palestine itself or today's Israel and Jordan.

As W.F. Albright notes in *The Archaeology of Palestine*, a complete revolution in surface explorations in archaeology was brought about in 1838 with the work of the American Edward Robinson as he crossed and recrossed this geographical area. Reference has also been made to Flinders and his chronology of pottery as it was developed in the southwestern part of Palestine at *Tell el Hesi* in 1890. This site revealed that eight cities had been built one upon another from about 1,700 B.C. although none of these was the biblical *Lachish* as Petrie had originally thought.

Macalister directed excavations at biblical *Gezer* from 1902-1909, a site six miles southeast of Ramle and known as *Tell Jezer*. Mention will be made below concerning the importance of the Gezer Calendar found at this site which gave the calendar its name. Of greater importance and interest, of course, were the excavations of the Old Testament location of *Jericho* in the Jordan Valley just a short distance north of the Dead Sea. *Jericho* began in 1907 as a joint German-Austrian endeavor and continued in operation through 1909. This was followed by a more intense campaign from 1930-1936 under John Garstang with evidence that the site had been inhabited through many centuries. The study of pottery dated a severe conflagration about 1,400 B.C. (Jos. 6:1-21). *Jericho* was again under serious archaeological investigation from 1952-1956 with the British Kathleen Kenyon as the director of the work. Garstang's walls, believed to have been destroyed by earthquake and fire in 1,400 B.C. are now dated at an earlier time. The *Jericho* of the New Testament period was excavated during 1950-1951 by J.L. Kelso and J.B. Prithcard with the resultant discovery of a large civic center attributed to Herod Archelaus.

From 1908-1910 Harvard University conducted a campaign at *Samaria*, rebuilt as the Greek city of *Sebastiyeh*. There, remains of a palace are thought to go back to Omri who transferred the seat of his government to Samaria (I Kgs. 16:24) and above this level were the ruins of a larger palace which may have been the "ivory house" built by Ahab (I Kgs. 22:39). From 1931-1935 there was a joint British-American-Hebrew University project

Samaria and this effort cleared up numerous persistent chronological uncertainties such as the round towers lining the acropolis which proved to be Hellenistic instead of Israelite. After World War I, John Garstang headed an excavation at the old Philistine city of *Ashkelon* as well as the one at *Gaza*, both along the Mediterranean Sea. More recent work has been done at both of these sites.

The first American expedition to be organized during the period between World War I and II was at *Beth-shan* (*Beth-Shean*), which was also the Hellenistic *Sythopolis*. From 1921-1933 there was an accumulative number of ten campaigns at this site which is located at the point where the Valley of Esdraelon descends into the Jordan Valley. Occupation at this ancient mound occurred first about 3,000 B.C. Much was learned in this excavation about the religious practices of the non-Israelites in ancient Canaan from a successive find of temples.

Capernaum, known from the New Testament in connection with the ministry of Jesus, preserves extensive ruins along the northwestern side of the Sea of Galilee. Work was begun here in 1916 and the most important ruin at *Capernaum* is now the famous synagogue explored and restored partially by members of the Franciscan order on whose property the remains now stand. The present ruined synagogue, oriented towards Jerusalem, is dated to the second century A.D., but is built on older foundations.

Megiddo, one of the chariot cities of King Solomon, is an example of one of the most systematic and extensive archaeological excavations in the area of Palestine. Between 1925 and 1936 the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago carried out this work at *Tell el-Mutesellim*, the mound of ancient *Megiddo*. Among the major discoveries was the "Stables of Solomon" furnished with mangers for the horses and space as well for housing the chariots. Also, of importance are the massive and distinctive Solomonic gates at the entrance to *Megiddo*. This ancient site stands as a sentinel guarding the best pass from the Mediterranean coastal plain to the Valley of Esdraelon and has always been of great strategic importance to military campaigns. There Thutmose III met the Asiatics, Josiah was slain by Necho and through the same pass the British General Allenby sent his forces to surprise the Turkish defenders in 1918.

The "Decapolis" is mentioned at least twice in the Gospels (Mt. 4:25 and Mk. 5:20) and was a type of confederacy of ten towns, as the name suggests. *Sythopolis* (*Beth-Shan*) was one of these and has been mentioned already. *Jerash* or *Gerash* was another town and was located some fifty miles from the Sea of Galilee on one of the tributaries of the River Jabbok. Yale University and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem conducted excavations at this site from 1923-1934 and have come to find that this city was one of the most impressive centers in the early centuries of the Christian era in trans-Jordan. Beautiful colonnade streets and temples and theaters adorned the city. Synagogues and early Christian churches have also been uncovered in the ruins.

Professor Nelson Gleuch of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, made important contributions to archaeology in his survey of Trans-Jordan from 1933-1943 during which time several hundred mounds were examined and information gathered in the ancient kingdoms of Moab, Edom and Nabataea. Gleuch tells of the discovery at *Tell el Kheleifeh* of the ancient site of *Ezion-gaber* where Solomon maintained a port on the Gulf of Aquaba on the Red Sea in his book *The Other Side of the Jordan*. A large smelting refinery was built at this port city in the tenth century B.C. and indicates the presence of not only early industry but the evidence of international trade during Solomon's reign.

Mention will be made below concerning the Lachish letters found at *Lachish* or *Tell ed-Duweir* during the 1932-1938 excavations at this Old Testament site, one of the fortress cities ringing Jerusalem. This fortified position was taken by Joshua and later lost by the Israelites to the Babylonians prior to the fall of the capital city in 586 B.C. In 1973 the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Tel Aviv together with the Israel Exploration Society resumed work at the site of *Lachish*.

Wheaton College's Joseph P. Free engaged in a series of summer excavations beginning in 1953 at *Dothan* (*Tell Dotan*) a mound eleven miles north of *Samaria*. *Dothan's* history can be traced to about 3,000 B.C. It was the place where Joseph, favorite son of Jacob, was placed in a cistern by his jealous brothers and later sold into slavery which had its strange conclusion in Egypt (Gen. 37: 17-36).

During the first century B.C./A.D., the Jewish Essene sect considered themselves to be the Sons of Light. Although the group was known previously through such sources as Josephus and Philo of Alexandria, the cache of their writings only became available by the chance discovery of scrolls in caves overlooking the Dead Sea by a Bedouin shepherd youth in 1947. This major archaeological discovery and recovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is an interesting story in itself. Subsequently the site of *Qumran*, the community's center, was excavated from 1953-1956. John C. Trever's *The Dead Sea Scrolls; A Personal Account*, Millard Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* and Yigael Yadin's *The Message of the Scrolls*, among others, relate the story of the finding of these scrolls, their identification, dating and importance. Theodore H. Gaster's *The Dead Sea Scriptures* offers a look at the text of some of the books of the Essenic library at *Qumran* in English.

So far eleven caves have been found in this area which has revealed manuscripts of the *Qumran* corpus. In all, ten almost complete scrolls have been found and fragments of more than six hundred various books--about a fourth of which are copies of biblical writings. The dry climate of the area, of course, has been a major factor in the preservation of these priceless documents through the centuries. The Temple Scroll, which was found in 1969, has just been published by Yigael Yadin. The Essene community dates from the second century B.C. and was destroyed in 69 A.D. by the Roman Tenth Legion as it marched on its way to subdue Jerusalem. The biblical books found at *Qumran* will be discussed briefly later in this chapter under the manuscript section and the secular books from the library will be discussed in the next

chapter. Not only does the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls offer copies of books of the Old Testament one thousand years older than previously known, but it allows a first-hand look at the Essene community of the times of Jesus Christ.

Tell el-Qedah or ancient *Hazor* occupies an ideal strategic location in northern Galilee. The site was excavated by Garstang in 1928, but no report was published and most of the records were lost in World War II. *Hazor* was excavated more recently in 1955-1956 by Professor Yigael Yadin with evidence of seventeen strata of occupation beginning about 4,000 B.C. The Canaanite city of *Hazor* was razed by the Hebrews during the thirteenth century B.C. and the Israelite city was destroyed in turn by Tiglath-pileser III in the eighth century B.C. During the 1950's another important excavation was carried out at the ancient port city of Caesarea built by Herod the Great (not to be confused with *Caesarea Philippi*). Philip the Deacon lived in this Mediterranean seaport (Acts 8:40), and here Peter preached to Cornelius (Acts 21:8), and Paul was imprisoned for two years at this location (Acts 26). The work of archaeologist began at this site in 1956 and recovered the remains of a splendid city with an amphitheater, aqueduct and a hippodrome accommodating 20,000 spectators. Also, in 1960 there was an underwater exploration of Herod's port by the Link Expedition.

Three and one-half miles southeast of *Bethlehem* are the remains of another Herodian site, a stronghold of Herod the Great known as *Herodium*. This unusual conical hill was artificially heightened as a desert watch-tower and fortress. Although Herod the Great died in Jericho he was buried here. *Herodium* was excavated by Fr. V. Corbo in four campaigns from 1962-1967 without any indication of Herod's tomb.

The natural fortress *Massada* lies on the western bank of the Dead Sea almost 2,000 feet above the seashore. Herod the Great strengthened and equipped this rock fortress. In 70 A.D. Jewish Patriots overwhelmed the Roman garrison and held out until 73 A.D. at which time the 960 defenders took their own lives rather than surrender to the Roman troops. Excavations at *Massada* started in 1955 and continued through 1956 under the direction of Professor Yigael Yadin with volunteers from many countries. Herod's palaces were uncovered and many objects discovered including portions of at least two scrolls, one of which contains Psalms 81-85.

Finally, something must be said about *Jerusalem*, the Holy City, as one turns away from many other important excavations and discoveries because of the necessary selective presentation involved in this chapter. *Jerusalem*, set in the Judean hills some 2,500 feet above sea level, has its own charm and appeal--especially in the narrow streets of the Old City and environs. The present impressive walls of Old Jerusalem are additions from different periods of construction. They were rebuilt in their present form by the Turks in 1542 A.D. and are two and one half miles in circumference with an average height of 40 feet with 34 towers and 8 gates. It is impossible to take many steps in these old streets before confronting some past event or person in biblical history. Although interest has never been lacking among archaeologists in this city there is a particular problem which involves the presence of present structures over sites desired to be excavated.

An important undertaking was begun in 1925 and continued at intervals to 1940 in establishing the Third Wall of Jerusalem built by Herod Agrippa I more than a decade after the death of Jesus, although this line has been correctly pointed out by Robinson a century earlier. Herod's massive citadel, better known as the Tower of David, has been appraised, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre investigated and lately renovated. The Tower or Castle of Antonio has been excavated as well as the Pool of Siloam, the Pool of Bethesda and the tunnel of Hezekiah among other things of interest to the field of archaeology. Excavations in the present "basement" at the Convent of the Sisters of Zion were undertaken from 1931-1937 and uncovered the paving stones which were a street level at the time of Jesus Christ.

Today, the sacred Muslim Dome of the Rock stands on the site of the ancient Jewish Temple. The holiest shrine of the Jewish world is the Western Wall (Wailing Wall) which is a portion of the retaining wall that Herod built around the second Temple in 20 B.C. A large esplanade has now been cleared to accommodate the thousands of visitors and worshippers at this site. Excavations conducted at the southeastern section of the Temple Mount just outside the area of the Dome of the Rock was begun in 1967 and continued through 1977. Digging at the southern wall has revealed four major historic periods, these being Arabic, Byzantine, Roman and Herodian. From the latter period a monumental staircase leading up to the Temple Mount was discovered. . . And the visitors keep coming up to Jerusalem to look, and the pilgrims to pray, and the scholars to study and learn from these ancient remains of earlier times in which people worked out their meaning, purpose and destiny to life.

2. Inscriptions and Tablets

A vast majority of the papyrus and animal skins used as writing materials recording ancient documents of the Near East have been lost through the ravages of time, wars, fires and the like. This is a sobering thought today in terms of contemporary libraries housing paper books, celuoid reels of microfilm and microfitch cards. Those writing materials which have survived much better, of course, have been the thousands of Middle Eastern inscriptions and tablets. These chiseled and engraved testimonies have survived the destructions of time and preserve valuable information for contemporary scholars of the Bible.

The Rosetta Stone is one of the early important discoveries in the annals of archaeology. Mention has been made earlier of the one hundred scholars accompanying Napoleon on his Egyptian campaign in the eighteenth century. A four foot stone tablet inscribed with a decree honoring the accession of King Ptolemy V Epiphanes (c. 203-c.181 B.C.) by the priests at Memphis was found in 1798 at Rosetta (Rashid) near the western most mouth of the Nile. The Greek text at the bottom was read easily by scholars and with patience, the two Egyptian scripts above were finally deciphered by Champollion and his son thus providing the key which unlocked the door to the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics on the numerous monuments and tombs. While topmost record of this trilingual inscription was in hieroglyphics, the second was written in demotic (which was a streamlined cursive form of the language), and the third, as noted, was Greek.

The Behistun Inscription (or Besutun in modern Iran) was noticed by the English diplomat, Major Henry C. Rawlinson, in 1835 high on the side of a cliff 225 feet above the Persian plain. Rawlinson climbed the height and copied the inscription which, like the Rosetta Stone, was in three languages. These languages proved later to be Akkadian, Elamite and Old Persian. By translating the latter scholars were able to find clues to the other two ancient tongues and read of the victory by Darius I Hystaspes (known also as Darius the Great) over the rebel Gaumata. The victorious ruler reigned from 522-536 B.C. Interestingly, an anthropomorphic head symbolizing Ahura Mazda, the god so prominent in Persian dualism, also appears on the rock panel. Rawlinson's translation made the hitherto unreadable cuneiform writing of Mesopotamia available to the scholars.

The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III records how Jehu, King of Israel, paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in the ninth century B.C., one of the latter's military campaigns. This six foot, four-sided limestone pillar was found in 1846 by A.H. Layard, a British subject, at Minrod in his archaeological diggings there.

The Tablets of Origin and Flood refer to cuneiform tablets found in the famed library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh from the times of the seventh century B.C. The creation account is polytheistic in nature, but has some similarities with the account of origins in Genesis 1 and 2. The Myth of Adapa brings to mind the biblical mythology of the Fall of Man and offers suggestive illustrations about the tree of life. The flood Tablets exhibit a most striking parallel to the description of that of the Noah of the Bible. The Gilgamesh Epic depicts the continuing search of Everyman for immortality. These ancient Babylonian accounts preserve and pass along these stories from even older Sumerian versions. These documents were discovered over a period of time from 1848-1876.

The Nazareth Inscription calls to mind the tomb of Jesus Christ and the official seal placed on it by Pilate (Mt. 27:66). This inscription is an imperial ordinance concerning the crime of the violation of tombs as a capital offence. Whether it is assigned to Tiberius or Claudius is still questioned by some. The inscription was brought to Paris from Nazareth in 1878 and is now in the Bibliotheque Nationale.

The Moabite Stone was discovered at Dibon in what is today Jordan by a Lutheran clergyman, the Rev. F.A. Klein, in 1868. This is also sometimes called the Stele of Mesha and dates to 850 B.C. with some 300 words in the language of Canaan. The importance of the Moabite Stone is that it provided extra-biblical evidence of Israel's King Omri (885-874 B.C.) whom Mesha had defeated in battle (II Kgs. 3:4 ff). It was fortunate that Klein, with the help of the Frenchman Clermont-Ganneau, made a "squeeze" of the stone since they couldn't move it when the object was discovered because local inhabitants broke it into two larger fragments and eighteen smaller pieces. These were later recovered and a reconstruction was fortunately possible.

The Siloam Inscription was discovered in 1880 by a boy who had been wading in a pool in Jerusalem. He had entered Hezekiah's tunnel about 19 feet from the Siloam end of the conduit and noticed an inscription which proved to be a commemorative record of the completion of the 1,777 foot-long rock tunnel c. 700 B.C. (II Kgs. 20:20) which provided Jerusalem with a sure water supply during the time of a military siege.

The Tell el-Amarna Tablets consist of a group of clay tablets accidentally found by an Egyptian peasant woman at Tell el-Amarna in 1887 some 300 miles north of ancient Karnak and Luxor. This collection of letters written in cuneiform represents a series of correspondence from vassal princes and governors in Syria and Palestine and Pharaohs Amenhotep III and Akhnaton in the mid-fourteenth century B.C. It was evident from these ancient letters that things were not well and the anguish of the times is clear. Egypt must send additional help in order to maintain their sovereignty in those territories! This, of course, was at the time of the religious reformer Akhnaton (Amenhotep IV) when internal problems were pressing the royal court in Egypt. The Amarna Letters were largely unanswered. It was also intriguing to see the word "Apiru" or "Habiru" mentioned in this corpus of letters. Could these be drifters or actually some of the Israelites having fled Egypt?

The Merenptah Stela was found in Merenptah's mortuary temple at Thebes in Egypt in 1897 by Sir Flinders Petrie. This son of Ramesses II took a large black granite stela of a predecessor and carved an inscription victory on it about 1299 B.C. in the usual hieroglyphic. The importance of this monument is that it is the only reference specifically to Israel in Egyptian documentation. The text speaks of "humbling Israel". The stela indicates that Israel was already in western Palestine around 1229 B.C. and is an attractive bit of evidence favoring the latter dating of the two prevalent theories regarding the Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt during the days of Moses. The two possible dates for this Exodus are generally given as 1550 B.C. and 1250 B.C.

The Code of Hammurabi preserves the codified laws of Hammurabi who was ruler of Babylon from 1728-1686 B.C. This copy of the legal documentation was found by de Morgan in 1901 at Susa where it had been carried as a trophy of war. In actuality the Code of Hammurabi was a compilation and codification based on older Sumerian originals. The code was inscribed on a round-topped stela of black diorite a bit over six feet tall and is now housed in the Louvre. Written in cuneiform, the code contains 282 items covering a wide variety of cases. There is a similarity in many respects to laws which were later to be found in the Pentateuch but predate the Mosaic code by several centuries.

The Gezer Calendar is a small limestone tablet found at Gezer in Palestine by Macalister in 1908. Although probably only a schoolboy's exercise, it contributes to knowledge of agriculture practices in Palestine in the tenth century B.C. by recording a list of various months and agrarian duties that had to be performed during these seasons such as planting, harvesting and the like.

The Nuzu Tablets are illustrative of such patriarchal customs as adoption, marriage, rights of the firstborn, the teraphim and other cultural concerns. The Code of Hammurabi (1901), discussed above, also illustrates this period as well as the Mari Letters from Tell el Hariri on the Middle Euphrates (1933). The ruins of ancient Nuzu or Nuzi are east of the Tigris near modern Kirkuk and was the center of a non-Semitic people called the Hurri or the Horites in the Bible. The 3,000 Nuzu Tablets were found in 1925.

The Ras Shamra Tablets (Ugarit) provide students of the Bible with extensive epic literature from ancient Ugarit, now Ras Shamra on the Syrian coast. Of special interest are the various cults of El, Baal, Dagon, Asherah and Canaanite fertility sects. The hundreds of tablets unearthed there are written in alphabetic cuneiform and were found by chance by an Arab farmer in 1928 and in the following excavations beginning in 1929 by C.F. A. Schaeffer.

The Lachish Letters were discovered in 1935 and 1938 at Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) in archaeological excavations under the direction of J.L. Starkey who was murdered by bandits in 1938. Lachish was a city in Judah not far from Jerusalem and fell to the Israelites as recorded in Joshua 10: 31 ff. The Lachish Letters are composed of twenty-one ostraca and provide a rare specimen of the writing of classical Hebrew outside the manuscripts of the Old Testament. These letters are dated shortly before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to the Babylonians (Jer. 34:7) and relate the anguish of soldiers defending this town which was one of the garrison towns ringing the capital city of Jerusalem.

A Temple Warning Sign was found in 1935 near St. Stephen's Gate at Jerusalem and dating from the period of Herod's times. The inscription forbade non-Jews to enter the court of the Jews recalling Acts 21:28-31. The stone reads: "No alien may enter within the balustrade and enclosure around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will render himself liable to the death penalty, which will inevitably follow." A sign similar to this was found earlier in 1871.

The Ebla Tablets are among the most recent archaeological finds of importance to biblical studies. The excavation which brought these tablets to light was carried out by a team of Italian scholars at Tel Merdikh in Syria beginning in 1968. This site is located about 50 miles from the Mediterranean and is nearby to Aleppo. An inscription on the Statue found during 1968 identified Tell Mardikh as Ebla. Over thirteen seasons of excavations have taken place at this ancient site and in 1975 there were 15,000 tablets found in the royal archives. Economic tablets revealed much international trade indicating a mighty commercial empire, and there were also literary, historical tablets as well as lexicons pertaining to their language. A major contribution is the record of the development of the Canaanite culture and linguistic root made possible by studying these records. A large number of names in the tablets are the same as those in the Old Testament such as Abraham, Saul and David. This is also a likely source of later biblical writers, such as the geneology of Genesis 4 which is apparently recording an earlier list even perhaps from Ebla. This helps to further demonstrate the fact that the scriptural tradition is on a more solid and older foundation. Also, there is indication that the name "El", which

was the god-element or the appellation for the high God, such as in Michael, was changed to "Ya" or Michaya with this difference in mind. As these tablets are studied further they will contribute to a more complete understanding of the economic, political, religious, literary and historical background to Middle Eastern culture during the third millenium B.C.

3. Manuscripts

Archaeologist have made repeated contributions to an increasing number of books of the Bible or fragments of these and especially since the nineteenth century of our era. From various copies of biblical manuscripts scholars have been able to produce reliable texts for translations of the Scriptures. Such things as the comparison of available extant manuscripts, the different writing styles, materials used by copyists and the evolution of language aid in the slow reconstruction of biblical writings. A discussion of "Scriptural Textual Studies" appears in Chapter V of this particular introduction to the Bible. Mention is made in Chapter V of scrolls and codices with special reference to Codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus.

The earliest fragment of a manuscript of a New Testament book that is known today is the one identified as Papyrus Rylands Gk. 457. It was discovered in the John Rylands Library in England in 1935 among other papyri which had been acquired fifteen years earlier. The fragment is from the Fourth Gospel and has been dated to the first half of the second century A.D. The oldest copy of any of Paul's letters is a papyrus codex found in 1931 and is part of a collection purchased by Chester Beatty of London dating from the third century A.D.

The major find of the century for biblical scholarship, no doubt, has been the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 at Qumran. This Essene community was excavated during 1953-1956 under the leadership of Pere de Vaux, Director of the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem (Jordan) and G.L. Harding, Director of the Jordan Government Department of Antiquities. This settlement flourished from about 100 B.C. to 68 A.D. when it was destroyed by Roman forces destined for Jerusalem to subdue the capital city. These Essenes were a very active Jewish sect during the times of Jesus Christ and the archaeological excavations at Qumran have thrown much light upon this group contemporary with him. In fact, the secular documents in the library of the Essenes reveal a religious viewpoint much more in harmony with the outlook of early Christianity than either the Pharisees and much less the Sadducees. Although both of the latter are mentioned in the New Testament, this observation is even more interesting since the Essenes are not named in the Scriptures. Implications relevant to origins of the primitive Christian Church are abundant in the Essenic writings as Jean Danielou's *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity* and William S. LaSor's *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* have discussed. However, both the Essenic community and early Christianity must be dealt with in terms not only of their similarities but their differences as well just as the two aforementioned authors point out. With reference to biblical manuscripts found at Qumran, parts of all of the books of the Hebrew Old Testament have been discovered among the Dead Sea writings with the exception of the book of Esther. Two almost complete

copies of Isaiah have been uncovered. Together these biblical scrolls provide a Hebrew textual source over one thousand years older than the previously known Massoretic documents.

Professor Yigael Yadin was in charge of the explorations which were conducted at Massada the latter half of the twentieth century. This site of the Jewish rebels' last stand against the Romans in 73 A.D. is a rock-fortress which stands at the eastern edge of the Judean desert with an impressive drop of hundreds of feet to the western shore of the Dead Sea. Massada is also located south of the Essene Qumran community. In November, 1963 portions of at least two scrolls dating to the first century B.C. were found at Massada and these revealed Psalms 81-85 with remarkable resemblance to the style of those at Qumran. Excavations like this will continue to add to the catalog of biblical scholarship and the sometimes painfully slow reconstruction of knowledge of the Middle East's past cultural heritage.

E. Archaeology's Role in Esoteric Studies

The discipline of archaeology in biblical studies impacts esoteric interests by providing an outlay of facts and figures representing ancient human beings in the Middle Eastern cultural milieu along their evolutionary path. The study of archaeology deals with specifics and the concrete such as objects of the past, dates, places, customs and languages. The scholar is able to gather, of course, much valuable and enlightening information from representative physical remains of the past. As a result, chronologies may be readjusted, earlier theories modified, tentative beliefs reconsidered or little known areas of knowledge expanded.

A biblical student with esoteric orientation will be alert to treat the findings of archaeology at various levels of interpretation and understanding, just as with scriptural texts. He will come to archaeology not as a stranger to the use of mythologies in literature of the Middle East and a high degree of symbolism will not be an unfamiliar way of thinking. Liturgical customs and rituals will naturally suggest deeper meanings and the expression of the close relationship of man to nature will be appreciated. In some ways the esoteric oriented student will even be more at ease within certain framework of these earlier eras than perhaps with some things in more recent times--times which have been overburdened with materialism, modern technology and the fragmentation of science and religion. By reaching back into history through the aid of biblical archaeology the pilgrim-student not only views an unfolding evolutionary drama, but is able to discern valuable insights applicable for today. Those who "have ears to hear" (Mt. 11:15) ought to be quite aware when "the stones cry out" (Lk. 19:40).

With the aid of archaeology the student of the Bible with esoteric interests has the opportunity to study and evaluate evidences of man's long search for truth in the ancient Near East for himself. Moreover, he is made more keenly aware of the ongoing quest for the wisdom of God through the means of numerous illustrations provided by the discipline of archaeology.



CHAPTER IX

Extra-Canonical Jewish and Christian Writings

by the Rt. Rev. Sten von Krusenstierna

A. Terminology

Apocrypha (from the Greek *apo* = away--and *Kryptein* = hide): "Books hidden away" or "Secret Books", was the name given by Jerome to the books from the Old Testament in Greek (the Septuagint) included in his Latin *Vulgate*, but which were not included in the Hebrew Old Testament.*

The word Apocryphal is now generally used to designate only books or writings from Jewish or Christian sources not included in the O.T. or N.T. canons. The term does not necessarily imply that these books are spurious, inauthentic or unorthodox. The term Apocryphon is used for a book purporting to be secret or to contain material of an esoteric nature.

Deutero-Canonical (from the Greek *deuteros* = second): "secondary canonical" A term coined in the 16th century by Roman Catholic scholars for the Books of the Apocrypha. In the Bibles used by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches the Books of the Apocrypha are distributed throughout the O.T. and not gathered into a single group as in the Protestant Bibles (which follow Luther's German translation of 1534).

Pseudepigrapha (from the Greek *pseudein* = deceive, *epi* = at, on--and *graphein* = write) "writings under assumed names": a term used for writings under a pseudonym. It is employed especially to designate Jewish works of the late centuries B.C. purporting to have been written by ancient patriarchs or prophets. The practice of using such pseudonyms was not uncommon in antiquity, and was later also very common among Christian writers of the first four centuries A.D.

B. Jewish Sources

1. Pseudepigrapha and Apocryphal Writings

These comprise a large collection of Jewish Books outside the Septuagint canon which can generally be dated between 200 B.C. and 100 A.D. Many of these books would have been known to the N.T. writers and there is no doubt that they have had an influence on the concepts and teachings found in the N.T. The majority of these writings are of an apocalyptic character and are also in some cases expressions of the Jewish mysticism of the period. Among them are:

* See Chapter 5 (section D) of Volume I of this paper.

The Book of Jubilees
The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
The Testament of Job
The Life of Asenath
The Psalms of Solomon
The Book of Enoch
The Secrets of Enoch (Slavonic Enoch)
The Sibylline Oracles
The Assumption of Moses
The Apocalypse of Baruch
III Maccabees
IV Maccabees
The Letter of Aristeas
The Ascension of Isaiah
The Apocalypse of Abraham

Of these *The Book of Enoch* is by far the most important. There are three different books attributed to Enoch:

- 1 *Enoch*, often called the "Ethiopic Enoch", as it has survived mainly in Ethiopic manuscripts.
- 2 *Enoch*, "The Secrets of Enoch" or "Slavonic Enoch", known only from manuscripts in Slavonic.
- 3 *Enoch*, a work in Hebrew, presumed to be a somewhat later work than 1 *Enoch*.

1 *Enoch* is thought to be composed of different sections dating from a period from before 170 B.C. up to 64 B.C. (R.H. Charles in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, O.U.P.*) but probably also contains very much older material.

The Book of Enoch was highly regarded by the early Christians and considered as scripture by some of the Church Fathers, including Ireneus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria. The expression "Son of Man" is used here for the first time,* together with the terms "the Righteous One", "the Elect" and "the Anointed One" (Greek *Christos*) as designations for the Messiah.

Part of the content of the book are the visions of Enoch, who, led by an angel, travels through the heavenly spheres. Other parts contain "parables" or "similitudes" and prophesies, mainly concerning future calamities, the punishment

*In Ezekiel (2:1ff.) the prophet is so addressed by the Lord, perhaps to emphasize his humanity.

of the wicked and the blessings in store for the righteous. Such ideas as *Sheol* as a place of purgation, the Day of Judgement, heaven and hell and many other concepts found in the N.T. can be clearly discerned here. Numerous parallel passages can be found both in the Gospels and the Epistles showing that the writers drew on Enoch. The book of Revelation is in some parts almost a Christian version of Enoch. The Epistle of Jude (14, 15) quotes two sentences from the book of Enoch (2 and 26:2).

The Secrets of Enoch (2 Enoch) is also thought to have had an influence on early Christianity. The idea of the millenium, later prominent in Christian apocalyptic, is found here as in some other pre-Christian apocalyptic writings which express the hope for a future golden age to come. This book, together with *3 Enoch* is also of special interest for the study of Jewish mysticism of the period, the so-called *Merkabah* (throne-chariot) mysticism in which ancient seers like Enoch, Abraham or Baruch are portrayed as having ascended through the seven spheres of heaven to the very throne of God. *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (first century A.D.) is another typical example of this kind of literature.

The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs is divided into twelve books, purporting to relate the messages which the twelve sons of Jacob gave to their descendants when approaching death. The date of the work is uncertain. There are many parallels with the N.T. The *Book of Jubilees* (c. 100 B.C.) arranges the story of Genesis and Exodus into forty-nine periods, each of forty-nine years length. *The Psalms of Solomon* (70-40 B.C.) depict the Jewish world as divided into the righteous (the Pharisees) and the unrighteous (the Saducees) and predict the coming of the Messiah.

Among the many apocryphal Jewish writings some were of an apocalyptic (from the Greek *apokalypsis* = revelation or "unveiling") nature. They generally claim to reveal hidden mysteries in visions and also to unveil the future, the "last things", often a catastrophic end of the current world and the coming of a saviour and a new era. These writings may originally have been of an esoter character and in professor Scholem's view were a combination of apocalyptic mysticism, theosophy and cosmogony (G.G. Scholem: *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 43.) Typical apocalyptic works in the Bible are the book of Daniel and Revelation.

The apocalyptic writings generally show a marked influence of Zoroastrian eschatology, particularly in such concepts as the resurrection of the dead, a final Day of Judgement and the ideas of heaven and hell. Some of these concepts were later inherited by Christianity. It is now generally believed by many scholars that after the Babylonian captivity, Jewish thought was much influenced by Zoroastrian doctrines.

The first chapter of Ezekiel was taken as a model on which future apocalyptic writers could expand when relating their own visions and mystical experiences of higher worlds. The work was then ascribed to one of the ancient patriarchs to give it added status. In many cases much older material was included.

2. The Qumran Manuscripts

In chapter VIII the discovery of the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves at Qumran, near the Dead Sea, in 1947, was mentioned. Among the manuscript found were practically all the books of the Hebrew O.T. and copies of many Apocryphal Jewish books including some of those just mentioned. The "scrolls"

had obviously belonged to the Library of the Essene community which is thought to have occupied the site around the nearby large monastic-type building from 125 B.C. to 62 A.D.

Among the scrolls found were also some presumed to have been written and used by the sect. These documents throw much light on Jewish and Essene mystical and apocalyptic thought of the period. The most important are:

The "Zadokite" Document
The Manual of Discipline
The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness
Psalms of Thanksgiving
Commentaries (*Midrashim*) interpreting O.T. texts as
prophesies fulfilled in the time of the sect

The Zadokite Document (also called the "Damascus Fragment") and The Manual of Discipline (also called "The Sectarian Document") are compilations containing the rules of the community and formulations of its ethical standards. Typical subjects of the Manual are: Commitment; Initiation; Those excluded; Social relations; The Obligation of Holiness; Control of Speech; Communal Duties, etc. There are also regulations concerning the appointment of elders ("men of perfect holiness") and rules concerning their conduct. A lengthy passage deals with the subject of "the two spirits in man" which are described as "the spirit of truth and the spirit of perversity". These two spirits are pictured as struggling in the heart of man.

In the Zadokite Document, so called because of the expression "Sons of Zado" (*Zadok* = holy) used in the document, are found subjects such as: God's vengeance and providence; God's judgement on the wicked; Ancient sinners; The righteous Remnant; The works of Belial (Satan); The obligation of the Covenant; Future rewards for the faithful; Observing the Sabbath, etc.

The Hymns or Psalms of Thanksgiving are generally of a very devotional character, at times using the vocabulary characteristic of mysticism. Some of them are quite beautiful and are reminiscent of the Psalms or the Hermetic hymns:

I give thanks unto Thee, my God
For Thou hast wrought a wonder with dust
And hast shown forth Thy power
In that which is molded of clay.

...
Thou hast put in my mouth the power to praise
That I may sing of Thy lovingkindness
And rehearse Thy might all day
And continually bless Thy name.

I will show forth Thy glory
In the midst of the sons of men
And in Thine abundant goodness
My soul will delight.

(adapted from Hymn 17 in T.H. Gaster: *The Dead Sea Scriptures*)

Many scholars have been impressed by the numerous parallels with N.T. writings and the striking resemblance between the Qumran community and what we know of the early Christian communities.

The community calls itself by the same name ('*edah*) as was used by the early Christians of Palestine to denote the Church...There are twelve "men of holiness" who act as general guides of the community—a remarkable correspondence with the Twelve Apostles. These men have three superiors, answering to the designation of John, Peter and James as the three pillars of the Church (Gal. 2:9). There is a regular system of *mebaqqerim* or "overseers"—an exact equivalent of the Greek *episkopoi*, or "bishops" (before they had acquired sacerdotal functions). And the Brotherhood described itself as "preparing the way in the desert"—words which John the Baptist likewise quoted from the Old Testament in defining his mission (John 1:23).

The Manual of Discipline and the Zadokite Document may be compared, in fact, with the Didache, the Didascalía Apostolorum and the Apostolic Constitutions—the primary documents relating to the organization of the primitive Church. Indeed, if we get away from the Greek terminology...we shall find that it bears a quite remarkable correspondence to that found in the Qumran texts.

(T.H. Gaster in *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, p. 39)

Scholarly opinions concerning the Qumran community, the Essenes, and their relation to early Christianity, are divided. While some scholars see in the Qumran sect an early Christian or Jewish-Christian group, the majority regard the Qumran community as part of the Essene fraternity referred to by Philo, Josephus and the elder Pliny. That the sect of the Essenes had an influence on early Jewish Christianity is no longer in doubt; some scholars have even classified early Christianity as an "Essenism".

Much of the literature of the Qumran sect is of a distinctly apocalyptic character. This is particularly apparent in its eschatology. The members of the sect called themselves "sons of light" or "the elect" and regarded themselves as "the remnant" which still kept the Law, while the rest of the world was in the clutches of Belial, the Lord of darkness. At the end of the present era, after a final conflagration, God, with the help of the "sons of light" and the Angelic host, will finally be victorious; a new Teacher will arise who will usher in a Golden Age when all things will be renewed. The wicked will go to endless torment in fire and darkness while the righteous will enter heaven and receive "a crown of glory". Similar ideas occur in several of the apocryphal books mentioned, such as the Sibylline Oracles, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Book of Jubilees.

Dr. Gaster in *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (pp. 23-26) shows the almost complete parallels of these concepts with those in Zoroastrian (Iranian) eschatology. It now seems clear that Jewish thought in the last centuries B.C. was strongly influenced by Zoroastrian dualism and its doctrines concerning the "last things"

3. The Talmud

After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the dispersion of the Jews, the need was felt for a compilation of their oral and other teachings, especially those concerning the interpretation of the *Torah* (law). The *Torah* is mainly contained in the first five books of the O.T. which were attributed to Moses (The Pentateuch). The expression "the law and the prophets" is repeatedly found in the N.T. referring to these books and the Prophets.

In the third century A.D. such a compilation was carried out, said to have been under the editorship of Rabbi Judah, "the chief". This compilation, called the *Mishnah* (Repetition-Instruction) comprised six books and became the basis of the *Talmud* (Research). In the following centuries the *Mishnah* was supplemented by many commentaries by Babylonian and Palestinian Rabbis. These were included in the *Talmud* as the *Gemara* (Learning). The main body of the *Talmud* had been formed by the end of the fifth century.

There are two main versions of the *Talmud*, the Palestinian and the Babylonian. Both contain many volumes and have been translated into many languages. The material in these volumes is mainly of the Halacha, Legal or Prescriptive, type; while other parts contain Haggadah (Narrative) material, consisting of parables, legends, folklore, etc. The part of the *Talmud* called the *Tosefta* (Supplement), comprising of six books, is a compilation of early material not included in the *Mishna*, mainly of the Haggadah type.

Next to the O.T. the *Talmud* is the most important textuary of orthodox Judaism.

C. Christian Sources

The extra-canonical books and writings in this category are very numerous and we can deal only with the most important of them. Many of them seem to have been in general circulation among Christians during the first three or four centuries—at least until the final formation of the N.T. canon towards the end of the fourth century. They vary greatly in content and value.

1. The Apostolic Fathers

Under this heading are classified certain books and letters which at one time were included in the N.T. canon or are thought to represent writings of the early post-apostolic Fathers. Among them are usually included:

The Shepherd of Hermas

The Epistle of Barnabas

The Letters of Clement, I and II

The Letters of Ignatius

The Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

The Epistle to Diognetus

The Didache

The Fragments of Papias

The Shepherd of Hermas is thought to have been written in the early part of the second century. It is the longest of the Apostolic writings and consists in large parts of a series of visions in which the author is addressed by an angel in the guise of a shepherd. The work stresses the importance of a virtuous life and repentance. It had a wide circulation in the early centuries and served as a textbook for catechumens.

The Epistle of Barnabas is an early work, probably written in Alexandria towards the end of the first century. It stresses the allegorical interpretation of the O.T. and is generally critical of orthodox Judaism. Towards the end it describes "the way of light" and "the way of darkness" reminiscent of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the *Didache*.

The first letter of Clement, bishop of Rome, written in 96 A.D. to the Church in Corinth, is of historical importance as giving us an insight into the organization and problems of the Church at the time. The apostles had "appointed bishops and deacons" for the Christian communities and they are to be obeyed. In the letters of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, to various churches, we find even stronger emphasis on the authority of the bishop. He also stresses the importance of the Eucharist and the consecrated bread as "the body of Christ". He also warns against Docetism (from the Greek *dokeo* = "I seem"), a tendency among some early Christians to regard the suffering of Christ as apparent only (the idea that if he was God he could not suffer).

The Didache (Greek: "Teaching") also called "The Teaching of the Apostles" is an early manual of instruction, a copy of which was discovered last century. It describes the two ways: "the way of life" and "the way of death", here probably based on O.T. sources (Jer. 21:8). It also contains instructions concerning baptism, fasting and Church organization which are of great historical interest.

The work Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord, by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the early part of the second century, only survives in quotations, mainly by the church historian Eusebius. Of historical interest are the quotations from which it appears that there were two John's, one the apostle, the other "the elder". Also that Mark was the interpreter of Peter and that Mathew (or Matthias) "composed the sayings (*logia*) of the Lord in the Hebrew language, and each interpreted them as he could". Papias was a "millenarian", i.e., he believed in a thousand-year period of blessedness after the Resurrection.

2. The Apocryphal New Testament

This term is used for a very large number of books and writings which were in circulation among Christians in the early centuries, some of them also being popular in medieval times. Most of these writings are of doubtful value but some of them contain material of historical and doctrinal significance. Many derive from early Judeo-Christian sources, others contain particular "heresies", others again are strictly orthodox, or have been "corrected" to conform to orthodox views. (The Gnostic writings will be dealt with in a separate section.)

These writings can be divided into Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypses. To call them "apocryphal" does not necessarily mean that they are not authentic. In early Christianity there existed many groups holding different views concerning the divinity of Christ and other doctrines which only later crystallized into specific dogmas.

The Gospel according to the Hebrews and The Gospel according to the Egyptians (both thought to be early second century) only survive in quotations from the Church Fathers. Jerome claims to have translated the former from the Aramaic and that it was thought to have been the original version of the Gospel of St. Mathew. Both these Gospels have affinity with Matthew's Gospel and seem to have been in use by local groups in Palestine and Egypt.

Of a slightly later date is The Book of James, also called the Protoevangelion. It is of importance as it gives an account of the birth of Mary, her infancy and the names of her parents, Joachim and Anna (not mentioned in the N.T.). This book was very popular in the Middle Ages.

There are several Infancy Gospels. These belong to a type of legendary narratives of a somewhat childish and fantastic type which seem to have been popular at one time. They are full of alleged miracles wrought either by the child Jesus or by the apostles without any moral justification. The apostles ride on clouds and anyone opposing them immediately falls dead!

The Gospel of Nicodemus (also called The Acts of Pilate) is a lengthy narrative in several parts. It is of interest in describing the descent of Christ into Hades (I Pet. 3:18) where he liberates Adam and the Prophets who had been imprisoned there, together with the souls of many pre-Christian people. Writings of this type give us an idea about how Christians of the time thought about such thorny theological problems as what would happen to the souls of good and righteous men and women who had lived before the time of Christ.

There are a number of pseudepigraphic Acts ascribed to the various Apostles and to Paul*. They are usually classed as "romances" but in some cases may contain remains of the historical tradition. Such may especially be the case with The Acts of Thomas (late second or early third century), a lengthy account of the missionary work of the apostle Thomas in India, including the conversion of King Gundaphorus and the final martyrdom of Thomas. The Acts of Thomas also contain several poems, including the beautiful "Hymn of the Soul" and a primitive Veni Creator. The descriptions of Baptism and the Eucharist are also of historical interest.

Another popular work in the early Church—in which miracles abound—was The Acts of Paul and Thecla. A Greek girl named Thecla is converted by Paul, is later thrown to the lions but escapes and becomes a teacher. Paul here seems to approve of women teaching!

*According to tradition many of the early Acts were collected and edited by a certain Leucius Charinus.

Among the Apocalypses the Apocalypse of Peter is thought to date from the early second century and was at one time regarded as scripture. Part of it is a vivid description of the torments of hell.

The so-called Clementine Literature has a special place among the apocryphal writings. Among them the Homilies and Recognitions describe the travels of Clement of Rome and purport to contain letters from him to Peter and James. The theology is Judeo-Christian; Jesus being "the true prophet."

For further studies, the student may consult M.R. James: *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 2 vols. (1924) or W. Schneemelcher and E. Hennecke: *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols. (1965). For the study of early Christian doctrines the Apocryphal literature is of great value.

3. Gnostic Writings

In the early years of Christianity no dogmas had yet been laid down and many different interpretations of the Gospels and the teachings of Christ existed in different places among different groups. In the second century several schools existed besides the "orthodox" school which finally won the day. Many of these schools or sects are usually grouped together under the name Gnosticism, being regarded as the first and most dangerous "heresy" of Christianity. The Gnostics claimed to possess the secret teachings of Jesus, given to his disciples after his resurrection.

The Gnostics were actually the first theologians of the Church and they gradually forced the orthodox school to establish a definite theology, some aspects of which were actually borrowed from the Gnostics. Among the Gnostics the school of Valentinus (second century) was the most influential. Partly influenced by the philosophy of Plato and Zoroastrian dualism, he developed a logical system of cosmology in which the creator of the world was the Demiurge of Plato, while the true God was the unknown Absolute beyond all manifestation.* We cannot at this point go further into the very complicated systems of the Gnostic schools and why many educated Christians of the day were attracted to them.

The Gnostic writings at one time must have constituted a very extensive deposit. Before the discovery of the Nag Hamadi Library, many Gnostic texts were known from incomplete fragments only. Some texts, however, had been found, mainly in Coptic translations. The most important of these is the *Pistis Sophia* ("Faith-Wisdom"). It is a composite work of the second or third century. Parts of it are extracts from the "Books of the Saviour" and other works.

A Gnostic poem of rare beauty is The Hymn of the Pearl, also known as "The Hymn of the Soul" or the "Hymn of The Robe of Glory". It is included in some manuscripts of The Acts of Thomas (see above). A Gnostic type of mystery ritual called The Hymn of Jesus is included in The Acts of John. This again is very

*Many early Christians had difficulty in equating the cruel and jealous God of the O.T. with the loving Father of Jesus Christ. It was therefore only natural for them to see the O.T. God as a "lower" deity and identify him with the Demiurge (Creator) in Plato's Timaeus.

beautiful—it was set to music by Gustav Holst.

The scholar G.R.S. Mead, a theosophist, in 1900 published the first edition of a work sympathetic to Gnosticism, entitled Fragments of a Faith Forgotten. In this and later editions, he included several Gnostic text, known at that time, with comments. It is still one of the best books for the study of Gnosticism.

4. The Nag Hamadi Texts

In 1945 a whole library of predominantly Gnostic works were discovered at Nag Hamadi (the ancient Chenoboskion) in upper Egypt. It was a collection of twelve codices, containing 52 different texts or tractates, many of them not previously known—or known from fragments only. The texts are all in Coptic, translated from the Greek. Not all the texts are Gnostic; Hermetic and non-Christian Jewish treatises are among those found. The date of the binding of the codices is approximately 360 A.D., but the originals of the texts (before translation) must be much older, some of them even from the first or second century.

The books were probably at one time part of the library of a nearby monastery of St. Pachomius. For some reason the monks must have hidden the books in the large jar in which they were later found—which they then buried. The dramatic story of the discovery and the further vicissitudes of the collection are vividly described in Professor Elaine Pagel's book, *The Gnostic Gospels* (Random House 1979). She relates how the Dutch scholar Gilles Quispel went to Egypt to look for some of the texts:

Arriving in Cairo, he went at once to the Coptic Museum, borrowed photographs of some of the texts and hurried back to his hotel to decipher them. Tracing out the first line, Quispel was startled, then incredulous, to read: "These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke, and which the twin, Judas Thomas, wrote down."

They were the first words in the now well-known Gospel of Thomas, one of the most important books in the Nag Hamadi collection. The texts are now available in English translation (*The Nag Hamadi Library*, edited by J.M. Robinson, Harper & Row, 1977). Among the texts included are:

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Philip

The Apocryphon (Secret Book) of John

The Apocryphon of James

The Apocalypse of James (1 and 2)

The Gospel of Truth

On the Resurrection

The Dialogue of the Saviour

Among these, The Gospel according to Thomas has so far proved to be the most important. This Gospel is not in the form of a narrative, as in the case of the Canonical Gospels. It is a collection of 114 sayings (*Logia*) of the Lord. Some of these sayings are also found in the Canonical Gospels, but many are not. Many scholars are of the opinion that these sayings are genuine and go back to a very early tradition. Some of the sayings are cryptic, almost in the nature of Zen *Koans*.

The Gospel of Truth (second century) is thought to be a tractate by Valentinus or from his school. It is presumably the *Evangelium Veritatis* mentioned by Ireneus. In the Gospel, Christ is the divine Son, the Word, or the "Name" of the Father, who passes on the knowledge of man's past and future. The Apocryphon of James is in the form of an epistle and contains a dialogue by James and Peter with the Lord just before His ascension.

The Apocryphon of John is a work of mythological cosmogony using the early chapters of Genesis as a basis. The creation, fall and salvation of humanity are described. From the Supreme Deity (not anthropomorphic, as is the case in the O.T.) emanate beings of light, including Christ and Sophia (wisdom). It is in the form of a revelation given by the risen Christ to the apostle John.

The Nag Hammadi books are of great importance not only for the study of Gnosticism as a "parallel" revelation to orthodox (and later "official" Christianity), but also for the study of early Christianity in general. The Dead Sea Scrolls can give us an insight into the origins of Christianity; the Nag Hammadi Library may give us an insight into its early development. The last decades of this century may witness some interesting developments in this field, as scholars get down to a more intensive study of the new material.

5. Other Writings

Another type of writings are those containing ecclesiastical regulations and general rules for moral conduct. They are mainly of historical interest. The Didache has already been mentioned. The Apostolic Tradition is generally thought to have been the work of Hippolytus and contains a description of practices current in Rome in the early 3rd century. The Didascalia Apostolorum is an early Church Order composed in Syria in the third century.

The Apostolic Church Order is thought to have been composed in Egypt at the end of the third century. The most complete work is The Apostolic Constitutions (fourth century). Parts of it are based on the Didache and the Didascalia Apostolorum. It also contains the Antiochene Liturgy and the "Apostolic Canons" and was probably compiled by an Arian in Syria.

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