

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

BOOK I

THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

THE EARLIEST BOOKS OF TESTIMONIES¹

? c. A.D. 45

Dr Edwin Hatch appears to have been the first in modern times² to suggest—in 1889, the year of his death—that composite quotations from the Old Testament were derived from earlier collections of Bible passages. Speaking of the Jews he says: “It may naturally be supposed that a race which laid stress on moral progress, whose religious services had variable elements of both prayer and praise, and which was carrying on an active propaganda, would have, among other books, manuals of morals, of devotion, and of controversy. It may also be supposed, if we take into consideration the contemporary habit of making collections of *excerpta*, and the special authority which the Jews attached to their sacred books, that some of these manuals would consist of extracts from the Old Testament.”³

In this, however, he is thinking solely of collections of extracts from the Old Testament made by Jews for Jewish edification and propaganda. It is curious that the next step, which seems so natural to us after it has been pointed out, was never in his mind, viz. Collections of “Extracts from the Old Testament” drawn up by Jewish Christians for controversy with Jews.⁴

Sanday and Headlam in 1895 developed the suggestion, when they thought that “the habit had probably arisen of quoting

¹ Parts of this paper were read at a meeting of the Victoria Institute in 1929, and are printed in the *Transactions*. I should like to say here, once for all, that, although I cannot accept Dr Rendel Harris’ theory of *one* Book of Testimonies only, I gladly acknowledge my debt to his learning and research. I have used both parts of his *Testimonies* (1916 and 1920) very freely.

² Harnack says (*Hist. of Chr. Dogma*, edition 3, E.T. i. 175), “Hatch has taken up the hypothesis of earlier scholars.” Perhaps he means Credner, *Beiträge zur Einl.* ii. 318–328. Cf. Moffatt, *Introd. to Lit. of N.T.* edition 3, 1918, pp. 23–25.

³ *Essays in Biblical Greek*, 1889, p. 203.

⁴ Harnack (*loc. cit.*) does not seem to go beyond Hatch. Sanday, however, as early as 1876, nearly came to this when he said: “We know that types and prophecies were eagerly sought out by the early Christians, and were soon collected in a kind of common stock from which every one drew at his pleasure” (*The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 272).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

4

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

passages to prove the calling of the Gentiles (evidently therefore 'the habit had arisen' among Jews who were Christians); and these would become commonplaces, which at a not much later date might be collected together in writing".¹

Sanday and Headlam became more definite a few pages further on, where, in considering the close relationship between St Paul's and St Peter's quotations of Isa. xxviii. 16 (the Stone), they say: "This may have arisen from St Peter's acquaintance with the Romans; but another hypothesis may be suggested (observe that this plainly is considered an original suggestion on their part), which will perhaps account for the facts more naturally. We know that to prove from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ was the constant practice of the early Christians. Is it not possible that even as early as this there may have been collections of Old Testament texts used for controversial purposes arranged according to their subjects, as were the latter *Testimonia* of Cyprian?"²

These words come so very close to the theory as it is expounded by Dr Rendel Harris that we may assume that the suggestion was at once accepted by him, and indeed marks the point from which he started, whether he was aware of this or not.³ His theory is this: A Collection of texts from the Old Testament which bore testimony to Christ and Christian teaching—hence called the *Book of Testimonies*—was drawn up in very early times, indeed before the composition of our present Gospels. It antedates "the four Gospels, since it is earlier than the earliest of the four".⁴ It precedes even St Paul's Epistles. It was "an Apostolic work, which passed into obscurity."⁵ "It was a *vade-mecum* for teachers, and indeed for all who wished to answer objections made by Jews, and to win them to the true faith."⁶ "Apollos might come to Ephesus with a minimum of luggage, and still be able to convince the Jews publicly concerning Jesus Christ; but, without minishing the scholarship of the great rival and colleague of St Paul, we may be

¹ On Rom. ix. 26, p. 264.² On Rom. ix. 33, p. 282.³ Rendel Harris does not refer to Sanday and Headlam in *Test. i. 3*, but passes from Hatch and Harnack to Dr Drummond (*Fourth Gospel*, 1903, p. 365), who says: "It is conceivable that there may have grown up, whether in writing or not, an anthology of passages useful in controversy, and that this affords a possible explanation of the phenomena of the Johannine quotations."⁴ *Test. i. 23*. Box (*Centenary Bible, St Matthew*, 1922, p. 24) has a clear account of this early "Messianic *florilegium*".⁵ *Test. i. Introduction*.⁶ It was "the propaganda material of a new religion" (*Test. ii. 94*).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The Books of Testimonies*

5

sure that the average Christian man and woman had a slender Biblical collection, and depended for the most part on the handbook, which was published under the name and authority of St Matthew."¹

Further, Dr Rendel Harris thinks, although the *Book of Testimonies* became gradually expanded and modified, it yet remained essentially the same book, continuing in existence throughout the first, second, third, and indeed many centuries, at least as late as the twelfth, and perhaps to a time even later than the invention of printing.²

The germs of the Christian appeal to the Old Testament are to be found in our Lord's own teaching. He said, for example, that Isaiah's words described the attitude of the Jewish Traditionalists towards Him: *This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.*³ He also quoted Genesis as confirming His attitude to the question of divorce.⁴ Then, again, He quotes Ps. cxviii to illustrate the treatment that He was already receiving, and was about to receive, from the Jews, with the assurance of the ultimate triumph that the psalm foretold of Him: *The Stone which the builders rejected, etc.*⁵ Further, He appeals to Ps. cx as a witness that He held, after all, a higher relation towards David than might be gathered from His earthly descent from him: *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand.*⁶ It will have been noticed that all these passages have been taken from the Gospel according to St Mark, because that is certainly the earliest of the Four, and not likely to contain references to Old Testament texts which were adduced only by Apostolic or Evangelistic preachers, and, though placed in our Lord's mouth, were not really spoken by Him. That

¹ *Test.* ii. 108.

² *Test.* i. 101. Two side-issues connected with this *Book of Testimonies* may be mentioned, although to discuss them would take us too far from our main objective.

A. J. H. A. Hart suggested in the *Expositor*, July, 1906, that the *Logia* of Papias were such a Collection of Old Testament texts.

B. There is some slight evidence for attributing the *Book of Testimonies* to St Matthew in the fact that a *Book of Testimonies* exists under the name of Matthew the Monk. Although this, as it stands, belongs perhaps to the beginning of the fourteenth century, there are some reasons for believing that the work underlying it was composed in quite early times. It is divided into five books like Papias' Commentaries.

³ Mark vii. 6 (see Isa. xxix. 13).

⁴ Mark x. 7 (see Gen. ii. 24).

⁵ Mark xii. 10 (see Ps. cxviii. 22 *sq.*).

⁶ Mark xii. 36.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

question, however, though of extreme importance and interest, is not before us.

But the real starting-point for us lies in the last chapter of St Luke. We are told there that on the walk to Emmaus and again shortly afterwards, our Lord showed to His disciples *from Moses and all the Prophets*, and again, *from the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, the things concerning Himself*. He gave the testimony of the Scriptures to His sufferings, to His rising from the dead on the third day, and to the preaching of repentance and remission of sins to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. From this passage it would appear that although our Lord had occasionally referred to the Old Testament in confirmation of His actions or teaching, and had indeed also, as we learn from other Gospels than St Mark's, especially indicated to His disciples some confirmation from the Old Testament of the fact that He should die and rise again, yet He had never put the whole case so fully and systematically before them as in that walk to Emmaus and at His subsequent appearance to the eleven. It was, for example, no part of the equipment of the twelve or the seventy when they were sent out through Galilee.

Rendel Harris is right when he says: "It is not possible to reduce this statement to a lower meaning than that the early Church believed that they had supreme authority for their method in dealing with the Old Testament, and that this authority thus given to the method must have covered, in part, the matter and the arrangement."¹ In any case, would not the passages adduced by our Lord be so stored up in their minds, and the method be so brought home to them by Divine influence after Pentecost, that they would hand it on to others, who, in their turn, were coming into contact with other Jews, and be required to bring before them the evidence of the Old Testament Scriptures?

There is, however, no direct evidence for the existence of one such *Book of Testimonies par excellence*. It has indeed been supposed that Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa in the latter part of the fourth century quotes it by name,² but this is an error. The title of his work is *Selections of Testimonies to Jews (taken) from the Old Testament* (Ἐκλογαὶ μαρτυριῶν πρὸς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς), and he nowhere hints that he has used any collection of excerpts, much less that he used any one famous book. A similar mistake has been made about Dionysius bar Salibi, in the twelfth century, in his

¹ *Test.* ii. 97. Cf. also pp. 70, 95.

² Rendel Harris, *Test.* i. 35.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The Books of Testimonies*

7

treatise *Against the Jews*.¹ After giving many quotations from the Old Testament he says in v. 17: "All these testimonies give information about the Three Persons", etc. Then in sec. 18 he adds: "For after we have shown from the Scriptures", etc. The Syrian Father is referring to the Scriptures only, and uses an ordinary word² for their testimonies in its ordinary sense.³

For, in fact, there is every probability that there was not only one *Book of Testimonies*, but several. It is not likely that at first the Old Testament passages were even written down at all, for they would be but few, and very easily remembered. But as time went on, and the multitude of the believers increased, and their unconverted friends asked them the reason of the Faith that was in them, many would begin to make written memoranda of the chief texts for their own use. It is not probable that such notes would always be alike. To one Evangelist certain texts would appeal, to other Evangelists others. There would thus be many little *Books of Testimonies*, as we may call them.⁴ But in process of time there would arise someone who felt called upon to produce, perhaps for the purpose of teaching the teachers, something more elaborate and more complete. He would never, indeed, get anything quite complete, but he would do his best. One such writer would enlarge, but another would trim away such texts as he himself did not find relevant. But there would inevitably be a large measure of matter that was common to all such books. And, in fact, several of such little books have survived to our own time.

Not that any lists of actually Apostolic, or even sub-Apostolic, days have survived. They have not. How devoutly we wish they had! We have nothing really definite even of the second century, though the little tract called *Jason and Papiscus*, written not later than the middle of that century, was criticised severely by Celsus about A.D. 178, and not very favourably by Origen about A.D. 248. But with the exception of its general character, and of one or two quotations, it is completely unknown to us. Tertullian, however, at the end of the second century gives us such a list in his treatise *Against the Jews*, and so especially does Cyprian nearly fifty years later in

¹ Edition Zwaan, Leiden, 1906. ² ἰστορικόν ³ *Test.* i. p. 58.

⁴ So, we are told, "Among the Waldensians [in the twelfth century] the minister or teacher carried his little book in his hand, containing various portions of the Bible, sometimes the whole of the New Testament, with chosen selections from the Old" (L. Isr. Newman, *Jewish Influence on Christian Reform*, 1925, p. 226).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

8

The Ante-Nicene Fathers

the first two books of his *Testimonies*. Soon after that they begin to increase in number, the more noticeable being Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa's *Selections* of such Testimonies in the latter part of the fourth century. Perhaps the most complete of all such lists is Isidore of Seville's treatise *Against the Jews* in the very end of the sixth century. There are also *The Teaching of Jacob (James)* in the seventh century, the five-chaptered treatise of Matthew the Monk (but perhaps even as late as cent. xiv), and so on till Dionysius bar Salibi's treatise *Against the Jews* in the twelfth century. But similar lists have never ceased to be drawn up, and hardly a year passes in which some devout and worthy soul does not compile such a collection of proof-passages for Jewish readers, under the naïve assumption that it has never been done so well before.¹

Now are there traces of the existence and use of such little *Books of Testimonies* in the New Testament itself? Have we any evidence that the Evangelists, for example, used such compilations?

How can we know? What tests can we apply to finding out whether the New Testament writers used such books? In the first place would not the passages selected be arranged under subjects, or, at least, some passages be placed under other passages, without much consideration of the Biblical books from which the individual verses were taken? For example: Isaiah is a big book, and its name is more easily remembered than that of most books; passages from it would be so numerous, and often so important, that texts from other lesser books might well be found in a list containing passages taken chiefly from it. A text from Malachi, for instance, might easily be put in a list made up chiefly of passages from Isaiah. If so, it would be very easy for a writer to attribute a passage to Isaiah which really occurs only in Malachi. This seems a reasonable explanation of what has happened in Mark i. 2. The Evangelist says: *Even as it is written in Isaiah the Prophet*, and promptly quotes not Isaiah but Malachi, adding a passage from Isaiah immediately afterwards. He may well have been using a *Book of Testimonies* in which Malachi is quoted under the general heading of Isaiah.² It is worth noticing that Justin, in the middle of the second century, makes the same kind of mistake when he affirms

¹ So M. J. Brierre-Narbonne, *Les Prophéties Messianiques de l'Ancien Testament dans la Littérature Juive*, Paris, 1933. Also his *Exégèse talmudique des prophéties messianiques*, Part i. 1934, ii. 1935.

² Yet Q did not use a *Book of Testimonies*. For he quotes Mal. iii. 1 alone (see Matt. xi. 10; Luke vii. 27), while both Matt. iii. 2 and Luke iii. 4 only quote Isa. xl. 3 from Mark.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)*The Books of Testimonies*

9

that Isaiah says: *A Star shall arise out of Jacob* (Num. xxiv. 17), and only afterwards adds, *And a Flower shall come up from the root of Jesse* (Isa. xi. 1).¹

So also in Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa "Isaiah" is said to write: *Did I ever command in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt* etc. (Jer. vii. 22), followed by *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices*, etc. (Isa. i. 11).² So too Irenaeus quotes Isa. liii. 8, then Lam. iv. 20, as Jeremiah's (this was natural enough), and then goes on to say that "the same Prophet" said Isa. lvii. 1, 2.³

Closely akin to this, though not quite identical, is the case where a single text, one alone and not connected with a second as in our last examples, is wrongly attributed to a certain author. For some reason or other such wrongly attributed texts are often found in the name of Jeremiah. In the New Testament the famous example is Matt. xxvii. 9: *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet*, but the words given are those of Zech. xi. 13, with perhaps some reminiscences of the language of Jer. xviii. 2 and xix. 1, 2. It may perhaps be mentioned here that in Matt. xiii. 35 the Sinaitic MS. reads (with some lesser authorities): *That there may be fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah saying, I will open My mouth in parables: I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world*, though the words really are found only in Ps. lxxviii.

Justin, it may be added, does the same sort of thing when he says that those Christians who are of Gentile origin are greater in number and truer than those who are of Jewish or Samaritan origin, and (a little further on) proves this by saying: We will report what has been said by Isaiah the prophet. For he said thus: *Israel is uncircumcised in heart, but the Gentiles in the uncircumcision* (of their flesh), a saying which occurs only in Jer. ix. 26.⁴

The combination of two or more passages of the Old Testament recurring in two or more authors, without any error of nomenclature such as we have already seen, also suggests the use of a *Book of Testimonies*. For example, parts of Ps. cx, either *Sit Thou*

¹ 1 *Apol.* xxxii. 12. Justin's reference in *Trypho*, cvi. 4, is right.

² *Test.* xii (Zacagni, p. 315); R. H. *Test.* i. 35. The two passages occur, but separately and without any names, as early as *Barnabas*, ii. 5, 7, but only Isa. i. 11 in Cyprian, *Test.* i. 16.

³ *Preaching*, §§ 70–72; R. H. *Test.* i. 69 sq. Observe that Justin Martyr (1 *Apol.* xlvi. 4) also quotes Isa. lvii. 1, 2, but with no reference to "Jeremiah".

⁴ 1 *Apol.* liii. 3, 10, 11. It may be noticed that although Lactantius is following Cyprian in his recension of texts, and although Cyprian attributes Jer. iv. 3 sq. to its proper author, Lactantius himself says it is by "Isaiah" (*Instit.* iv. 17). See R. H. *Test.* i. 79.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-03968-0 - *Adversus Judaeos: A Bird's-Eye View of Christian Apologiae Until the Renaissance*

A. Lukyn Williams

Excerpt

[More information](#)

on *My right hand*, or *Until I put Thy enemies under Thy feet*, are combined with Ps. viii. 6, *Thou hast put all things under His feet*, by St Paul, both in 1 Cor. xv. 25 *sq.* and in Eph. i. 20, 22, and also by the writer to the Hebrews in i. 13; ii. 6–8. It is possible, of course, that the writer to the Hebrews knew St Paul's Epistles, but it is at least as probable that both he and St Paul were using a common source, part of such a book as those we have in mind.¹

There is, again, a passage in Acts xxvi. 22 *sq.* to which an even more striking interpretation has been given. The Greek is difficult, but the R.V. represents it fairly when it reads: *I stand unto this day, testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.* The wording from the first *how* onwards so closely resembles that of the titles to chapters in Cyprian's collection of *Testimonies* and elsewhere, that the suggestion has been made that we have here in fact the actual titles, or two titles, of sections in the *Book of Testimonies* which lay before St Luke when he compiled the Acts, one showing that Christ was to suffer, and the other that He was to rise again. It is not impossible.²

We can, I think, hardly be wrong in considering that the writers of the New Testament had at their disposal collections of what we call proof-texts from the Old Testament.

We must, however, be on our guard against assuming that

¹ Similarly, Justin (*Trypho*, lxxvi. 7; xlv. 4) combines Ps. cx. 3 and Ps. lxxii. 5, 17; and so also does Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa (*Test.* i. 292); and also Dionysius bar Salibi, v. 9 (p. 28). In Irenaeus' *Preaching*, § 43, they are also combined, under the name of "Jeremiah". So Lactantius *Inst.* iv. 8 quotes Jeremiah (i. 5) and then attributes to him a form of Ps. lxxii. 17. Again, *Barnabas* (xii. 10 *sq.*) combines Ps. cx. 1 with Isa. xlv. 1. Cyprian quotes (*Test.* i. 21) Isa. xlv. 1 alone. But Pseudo-Gregory of Nyssa (*Test.* xvi. 324) combines them, adding: "Isaiah says more clearly (than David) *The Lord saith to my Christ Cyrus*, explaining that this cannot refer to Cyrus the Persian, for Cyrus was killed by the Massagetae, and his skin made into a bottle." Not dissimilar is the curious interpretation that *Presents to king Jareb* (*Jarim*, LXX) in Hos. x. 6 refers to the sending of Jesus by Pilate to Herod! This is found in Justin (*Trypho*, ciii. 4), Irenaeus (*Preaching*, § 77), Tertullian (*c. Marc.* iv. 42), Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat.* xiii. 14), and elsewhere (see R. H. *Test.* i. 66 *sq.*).

² R. H. *Test.* i. 19 *sq.*, 59. Zwaan in Foakes-Jackson and Lake's *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii. 49 *sq.*, says that "headlines" from the *Book of Testimonies* are "quoted", and adds that "the interruption of Festus shows that Paul had been pouring out a stream of such 'proof-texts' (xxvi. 24), referring to Gospel history (xxvi. 26) as their fulfilment".