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Julio Trebolle Barrera

*The Jewish Bible*  
*and the Christian Bible*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE  
HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

*Translated from the Spanish by*  
Walfred C. Watson

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*Note*

Each chapter in this book is preceded by its own detailed table of contents.

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*Note to the Revised English Edition*

This translation includes a revised and updated version of the text for the sections with the headings «The Dead Sea Scrolls» and «Developments in the canon» under the canon: Parahiblical Literature. I would like to thank Professor Florentino García Martínez (Göttingen) for the text he made available to me earlier, now published as «Literatura exegética» and «Literatura paratrabaja» in *Literatura hebrea intertestamentaria*, eds. C. Aranda Pérez – F. García Martínez – M. Pérez Ferrnández, Estada 1993, 37–192.

JULIO TREBOLLE BARBERA

*Translator's Note*

This project has taken two years to complete and includes a considerable amount of new and corrected material, supplied by the author. I now wish to thank Bill for their friendly cooperation over this period and in particular Professor Julio Trebolle, who invited me to Madrid for a week of intensive translation work, which was interspersed with more leisurely activities including a memorable visit to Toledo.

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After writing almost exclusively research studies with only a very restricted readership, I have felt the need and above all have had the great pleasure to write a book which attempts to be in the nature of a 'textbook' or 'reference work', and also in large measure a book with wide circulation, intended for a more general public. This work arises from the research which suggested many ramifications that are developed here.

I ignored the advice of a friend and colleague who warned me: «Don't write a book like this, least of all for students». In recent years, especially in the universities of the United States, university teaching and large circulation have been sacrificed on the altar of pure research, which gives the professor more prestige and allows him greater access to the funds required to secure academic work. From this perspective, writing books for students or for the general public is time wasted or at least time stolen from research.

The professor has often ceased to be a professor. He becomes a researcher who at most imparts to his doctoral students the methods and results of his research. If, at the behest of the administration, he is required to give more general courses, he focuses his attention on very specific topics, leaving the student to acquire for himself the general information to be found in current «learned societies» and in the monographs available. As a result this has gradually led to the basic formation of the university student at the intermediate level being abandoned. Some American universities have become aware of this mistake and now attempt to remedy it, reinstating the role of the teaching professor.

The view which the research scholar has of the Bible and of biblical texts can be extremely incomplete. Professor Goshen-Gottstein of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who died in 1991, has left in writing a sharp criticism of the present situation of biblical studies. In what was his last public appearance, a few years after having survived a deep coma for several months, Goshen-Gottstein criticised *the current fragmentation of biblical studies*, separated into several disciplines or specialties, with no communication possible or furnished among the specialists and among the associations or publications of each specialised field: Masoretic text, Greek version, ancient ver-

sions, apocryphal or pseudopigraphical books, texts from Qumran, Targumic texts, inscriptions, Ugaritic texts, etc. Study of the biblical books, both OT and NT, also proceeds along very different and unconnected paths, depending on method and analytical approach: textual criticism, source criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, comparative philology and lexicology, historical and sociological study, history of religion and of exegesis, biblical theology, etc. The very trends which claim to represent a global and scholastic approach, focusing, for example, on stylistic and structural analysis of the biblical books or on study of the Bible in terms of the canon as a whole, end up creating new schools and specialisations under the guidance of new *zweckmäßig*. Teaching experience shows, however, that it is difficult for the student and reader to gain a *systematic and global* vision of the many aspects offered by study of biblical literature.

This book attempts to build bridges between fields of study which used to be connected at the beginning of modern criticism but which the demands of specialisation have increasingly separated. It will come as a great surprise that a single book discusses in the same breath the more practical matters of textual criticism and the approaches of highly theoretical hermeneutics. Study of the Bible requires the cooperation of epigraphers and palaeographers at one extreme and of historians of biblical religion and of Jewish and Christian thought at the other. Today there are many problems which need *interdisciplinary discussion*.

Throughout the whole of this book and for the sake of objectivity, all personal opinion concerning facts, arguments and conclusions of current research is avoided. However, the overall approach of the book and the choice of material presented as well as the opinions discussed, consistently reflect a personal vision of all the questions discussed and the serious intention of providing a new vision of the study of «Biblical Literature». This Foreword and the Introduction are suitable places for showing the author's preferences and the perspective for problems debated throughout the book.

1. In the field of linguistics, the trilingual Bible requires a new dialogue instead of the old remoteness among scholars of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The Hebrew-Aramaic-Arabic trilingualism in which the Jewish masoretes, grammarians and exegetes of the Arabian East and of Muslim Spain operated should not forget the assistance of Arabic for understanding the grammatical and exegetical tradition accompanying the transmission of the biblical Hebrew text. The discovery in modern times of the Semitic languages of the ancient Near East has given rise to a new form of trilingualism made up of the language trio Hebrew-Aramaic-Ugaritic-Akkadian, which helps to explain many questions either badly posed or inaccurately resolved in the past with the sole aid of textual criticism or the witness of the versions. It

1. M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, «The Hebrew Bible in the Light of the Qumran Scrolls and the Hebrew Samaritan Bible», *Congress Volume Jerusalem 1967*, Leiden 1968, 41-55.

also allows biblical literature and religion to be set in the cultural context from which it originated.

2. Within *literary studies*, the present book will especially try to connect two fields which modern biblical criticism has increasingly separated: the study of the *literary and redactional formation* of the biblical books and the study of the *transmission and interpretation of the text* in these books. Literary-critical criticism has reserved the first field for itself, by preference devoting attention to study of the origins of the traditions and of the biblical texts in terms of the socioecology, history, literatures and religions of the ancient Near East. The second field remained the province of sciences considered to be auxiliary, such as textual criticism or the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation of the Bible, with a special bias towards the history of Judaism.

This book gives particular importance to an area bordering on both these fields: the area represented by the history of the transmission of the text and its textual criticism in the OT and NT. The lengthy *process of the formation of the Bible and of the religion of Israel* crystallised in the different texts of the OT, which produced a *process of interpretation*. This, in turn, crystallised into the *new way of the Christian religion*, the NT, and of the *Jewish religion*, the Mishnah and the Talmud.

The first of these two processes, the literary formation of the Bible, remains outside the purview of this book. Study of its sources, traditions, redactions, literary forms, etc. of the various biblical books is the favourite subject considered in the many books with the title 'Introduction to the Bible'. They are also studied in the series of exegetical concentrations on the different biblical books. These matters will continue to determine the programmes of «Biblical Literature» courses and will also continue to require a very considerable part of research on the Bible. This book, however, demands much more space for discussion of another set of problems, some virtually forgotten and others apparently marginal or clearly marginalised.

This requires giving a new focus on the course as a whole, a focus also required for a *new direction in biblical studies* in general. The view of the Bible provided in the standard introductions to the Bibles, which come chiefly from Germany and are mostly used for teaching in Faculties, is so a large extent incomplete. This is because it leaves out or treats very perfunctorily aspects which from every point of view are indispensable for understanding the Bible and cannot be considered as purely introductory matters or as mere post-biblical developments. This is the immense area of everything connected with the *sources, texts, versions and interpretations or hereseneses* (all these terms are in the plural) both of the Hebrew Bible and of the Christian Bible, and both forming an integral part of the *social and intellectual context* in which Judaism was born in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, in which from there arose Christianity in the Roman period. The content of this book, therefore, becomes a *true history of the Bible*, from the period in which the collections of OT books were formed until the period

when, both in Judaism and in Christianity, are canon, the text, the versions and the main lines of biblical interpretation became crystallised.

In this period, Jewish and Christian intellectuals had to complete three basic tasks which the *classical philology* of the Alexandrians had achieved, only shortly before in respect of Greek literature: to establish a canon of works from the classics, fix their text and interpret their meaning according to principles and methods suited to the literary form of each work. Using the work programme of Alexandrian philology as a model, this book is divided into three main sections devoted to literary, textual and hermeneutic tasks. Here, the «Alexandrian connections» serve at every moment as a reminder not to forget the need to maintain the *connection between classical and Jewish studies* which produced the «Tillyard Catalogue» of the Renaissance and the *terrible study* of the Bible until 19th century philology.

3. In respect of history, particular attention is paid here to the *Persian, Hellenistic and Roman periods*, now better known thanks especially to the discoveries from the Dead Sea. This is when the various collections of the OT books took shape and the process of transmission, translation and interpretation of the OT began, until the time when on the one hand the Christianity was founded, and on the other the corpus of rabbinic literature was formed.

The *origins of Christianity* should not be sought in the Hellenistic pagan world of mystery religions and Gnosticism so much as in its Jewish, Old Testament and intertestamental roots, without forgetting, however, that the Judaism of that period was already very Hellenised.

Judaism and Hellenism should not be perceived so much as two opposite poles: it is preferable to speak of a *Hellenistic Judaism*, which incorporated many elements from Greek culture in a Jewish tradition, without necessarily giving it its pagan veneration.

Not should the Judaism of the Hellenistic period be seen through the prism of the *apocryphal Judaism* of the Mishnah and Talmudic period. Still less should it be seen with the prejudices which turned the Judaism of the Persian and Hellenistic period into a late, decadent and legalistic phenomenon compared with the earlier religion of the biblical prophets or later Christianity. On the contrary, the Judaism of the centuries before the destruction of Jerusalem is marked by a great variety of movements and social groups and the vitality of its ideas and beliefs. These cannot be lumped together under the adjective *apocryphal*, for as yet there was no agreed canon and therefore no normative Judaism.

The Hellenistic period, which was post-classical and post-biblical, distinguished by the meeting of cultures from the East and the West, caused languages, literary traditions and religious beliefs to come into contact. This meeting occurred more often in countries of transit and in front of zones like those of the geography of Israel. Hellenistic Judaism was a first attempt, fruitful and painful at the same time, at what shortly after was developed in Christianity: the *synthesis between Greek culture and biblical tradition* by means of accepting some elements and rejecting others from each.

4. *The formation of canonical and non-canonical collections.* In the 18th and 19th centuries, classical works and perfums were studied for practical use, with the neglect of the ancient period, criticised as primitive, and of the post-classical period, disorganised like the Hellenistic, as syncretistic, baroque and disorderly. Study of the Bible also has usually been reduced to study of the classical books of Judaism and Christianity. The respective collections of *canonical books*, ignoring or despising the remaining literatures, especially apocryphal works. On the other hand, confessional study of the Bible as carried out both by Jews and by Christians did not cease to stress study of the canonical books, to the exclusion, in practice, of the apocryphal books. In Judaism and Christianity, study has largely been centred on their respective orthodoxies and central messages, represented by the rabbinism of the Synagogue and by the Great Church.

Study of the Hebrew Bible must be carried on, instead, within the wider context of Jewish literature of the Persian and Hellenistic period, with special attention to study of the *apocryphal literature* or *pseudepigrapha*, which imitates and develops canonical literature. Study of this kind complements and also stabilises the confessional direction of biblical studies, concentrated almost exclusively on the books of the canon.

Before considering the Bible from a theological perspective as a collection of canonical books to the exclusion of the apocrypha, it is necessary to consider the Bible from the literary and historical perspective, as a collection of books of different genres (legal, historical, prophetic, wisdom and apocalyptic). This was to give rise to a range of *literature formation*, *subdividing* what was already considered to be classical, as well as a whole corpus of traditional interpretation collected together in rabbinic literature and, suitably Christianised, in the same manner as the various classifications possible for the apocryphal books – by genre, language, origin, background, content, theological authority, etc. – the present book classes the apocrypha and the pseudepigraphical books in terms of their relation to the canonical books in all the aspects just mentioned.

On the other hand, the textual and literary history of canonical and apocryphal literature, both Jewish and Christian, has to be considered in relation to the *social and intellectual history* of the period. The collection of canonical and apocryphal books, their text, and above all the interpretation of their contents, acquire very different perspectives depending on whether reference is made to Samaritans, Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, Hellenists, Jewish-Christians, ex-pagan Christians, Gnostic Jews, Gnostic Christians, etc.

It is not possible to continue speaking of the existence of an Alexandrian Greek canon, which was absorbed by Christianity, nor even of a *closure of the canon* at the synod of Yabneh towards the end of the 1st cent. ad. Some authors tend to suppose that the Hebrew canon of the OT was already virtually formed in the mid-3rd cent. bca. It cannot be said, however, that this path leads to a satisfactory explanation of the origin of the Christian canon of the OT from its Jewish precursors among the Essenes or among the Jews

of the Greek diaspora, which supposed the existence of a nation, which was laid open or, at least, not completely closed.

In this book, a *history of the canon of the Hebrew Bible* will be attempted which runs parallel with the history of the Temple. Defining the limits of the sacred area of the Temple and defining the limits of the textual area of the canonical Scriptures run in parallel and have a matching development. Four periods can be distinguished in the restoration and progressive expansion of the Temple and of the sacred Books: the canon of the Restoration until the Exile, the canon of the Maccabean restoration until the Hellenistic crisis, the canon corresponding to the expansion of the Temple in the Hecatomitid period (expansion of Scripture orally among the Pharisees or in writing among the Essenes and Hellenists), and, lastly, the canon of the Pharisee Restoration after the disaster of 70 C.E.

Critical study of the Bible, guided by the spirit of the Antilegomenon, has preferred to be concerned with the analysis of literary sources and of the historical origins of the biblical tradition and very little with the knowledge of later developments of general biblical tradition. However, the Bible, the Book of Life, like the Tree of Life of paradise, demands to be known and explained *as much or more by its fruits as by its roots*.

Biblical scholars use editions of the Hebrew text of the OT (Leningrad) and editions of the Greek text of the NT. However, the Hebrew Bible was never published or read as a separate and completely unified book in the way it is published and read by modern critics. The Hebrew Bible was never separated from other texts compiled and read together with the biblical text. It is enough to look at a rabbinic edition of the Bible to realize that the Jew does not have only the biblical text before his eyes. The text is printed on a two-page, as if it were a quotation or text reference, surrounded by other texts printed in parallel columns and in the upper and lower parts of the same page (the Aramaic versions or Targumim and rabbinic commentaries). A Jew reads the Bible within the context of a complete tradition which provides the canon, he reads the written Torah in the light of the oral Torah, or the same way, the Christian Bible ends with the books of the NT, so that a Christian reads the complete Bible in the perspective of its ending and of the books which gather together the tradition that gave rise to Christianity.

The type of study advocated here complements and balances the critical direction of biblical studies and tries to re-evaluate a field of study traditionally left in the hands of those specializing in Judaism or the history of Christian theology. This field is the history of biblical interpretation which starts from the exegesis practices within the Bible itself up to the exegesis developed in Jewish and Christian, rabbinic and patristic literature, passing through the exegesis contained in all intertestamental and apocryphal literature. Study of Jewish and Christian exegesis also demands reflection on the kind of hermeneutics sustaining them both.

When the preparation of this book was well under way I had the satisfaction of reading an article by Professor J. L. Kugel of Harvard University with the title «The Bible in the University» (1995). Kugel criticises current

reading of the Bible, which mixes approaches derived from historical and literary discipline with certain provisions of a confessional character, mostly Protestant. Then he notes that biblical studies have to have as their subject the history of those the Bible was formed and how it was transmitted, read and interpreted, from the formation of the biblical collections up to the periods when these collections became the *Miqva'* or *Tanakh* of the Jews and the Bible of Christians.<sup>4</sup>

Critical exegesis, even what appears to be the most secular, has not ceased to be very influenced by the Protestant distinction between the Word of God contained in Scripture and the merely human words contained in later interpretations in the dogmas of the Christian Church or the Jewish Synagogue respectively. In this perspective, critical exegesis grants more importance to the oracles attributed to the prophet Isaiah than to others which seem to have been added in the book bearing his name. However, exegesis has to forego giving preference to the before in a lot of biblical texts, especially if the criteria of choice are foreign to the texts and to biblical tradition. Kugel describes very clearly the intention which should direct study of the Bible as envisaged by this book: to trace the growth of the Bible from its earliest origins to the life and thought world of ancient Israel to its institutionalization in the life and thought world of early Judaism and Christianity (p. 10; Kugel, 1965).

Kugel prepares for the field of the Hebrew Bible and of Jewish exegesis. He does not explain the field of the History and criticism of the text, but from time to time can provide data for a history of exegesis. Biblical tradition, however, is primarily the transmission of the actual text of the Bible in material form: the *meaning of Scripture* is contained in the letters of the script.

3. The field of *textual criticism* is the preferred terrain of the spirit of the Renaissance and of the Enlightenment. To this is dedicated the central section of this book which is, no doubt, the most cautious. It relates the history of the biblical text by going back through History. Modern research had to retrace the textual history of the Bible starting from modern editions of the Bible and reaching back (through mediaeval manuscripts, recensions of the Byzantine period, Jewish versions and the newly discovered manuscripts from Qumran) to the stage of the most ancient texts preserved, and as far as possible, to reconstruct the text closest to the original of the biblical authors.

In principle, textual criticism of the canonical texts is no different from that of classical texts. The final aim is to trace and reconstruct the text of the works of the biblical authors exactly as they came from their hands. The possible differences between textual criticism of classical texts and of the biblical Scriptures are due to the extreme complexity of the transmission of biblical texts, made worse especially by the existence of many versions and an

4. ... Kugel's definition in the University. *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters*, vol. 301, 1965, p. 10. (Culpeper D.N. in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1972, 42-66, 42-43).

cient recensions. On the other hand, religious texts took on less value in each and every one of the stages of their long textual transmission, not are they any valid in the form which can be considered original or oldest. Biblical criticism has to decide between keeping to the original and ancient texts which may bring us closer to the times of Moses and of Jesus of Nazareth, and faithfulness, on the other hand, to later tradition which formed Judaism and Christianity. The first of these concerns, the return to the original word of the great founders, which is the basis of the inspired character of Scripture corresponds to the scientific concern to unearth the oldest text, from the collection of texts preserved from antiquity. Strangely, this is a concern which, from different perspectives, fundamentalists and critics share. The second concern affects what is undeniable for a Jewish or Christian reader of the Bible: the preservation and appreciation of the Tradition of the Jewish *rabbi* (Fathers) and of the *Fathers of the Church*, for this Tradition determines the extent of the biblical canon and the canonical interpretation of Scripture. This concern is foreign to scientific criticism which places that tradition in parentheses or despises it, considering it to be a dogmatic development which detracts from the original texts.

In this field of textual criticism, so conspicuously positivistic, this book tries to provide not only the results of modern research but also to present, as well the paths, sometimes unsuccessful and almost always tortuous, by which modern research has gone forward and goes forward. It provides the cooked dish and the kitchen recipe, so that the student and the reader can actually share the secrets of the brew which is modern research and know the ingredients used by researchers in their mixtures, and thus be initiated into the mysteries of investigative reason.

In previous studies on the text of the historical books of the OT I have drawn attention to an extreme example which, while not very common, comprises the best example of how the Bible is trilingual, not only in interpretation but also in text – and how this trilingual character allows a path to be traced of approaching the ancient forms of the biblical text. It is a matter of those cases in which the Old Latin text (the *Vetus Latina*) translates the Greek text of the LXX version which in turn translated a different Hebrew text from the traditional or masoretic text. These texts in Greek and Hebrew were lost, displaced by the official texts then current, and have only survived as variants in the Old Latin text. This can be expressed concisely as «From the Old Latin through the Old Greek to the Old Hebrew».

To counter the surprise this could provoke, an important example can be remembered here of how similar events can happen in modern times as well. A few years ago, the text of the address which Albert Einstein would have given had he been present at the official session when he received the Nobel Prize for physics in Stockholm in 1921 was published in Germany. At that time Einstein was in the University of Kyoto where he gave an address in

2. J. B. de Solms, «From the Old Latin through the Old Greek to the Old Hebrew» (2 Kgs 19, 23-24), *Studia Theologica*, I, 1 (1966), 17-36.



German of which he left no written record. One of Einstein's Japanese students translated it for those attending the conference and took very detailed notes, which he published two years later in Japanese. This text was translated into English in 1982 (*Physics Today* 8, 1982). A German translation was made of this English version, and published in 1983. One has to ask whether, after all these translations (from German to Japanese, then into English and then into German), Einstein would have recognised as his own the text now published in its original language. Evidently, the factual formulation has undergone many changes, but the content of the publication is important enough to merit the attention of scientists. In a similar way, readings of a lost Hebrew text can sometimes be reconstructed on the basis of a Latin text which faithfully translates the partially lost text of the LXX version, itself a faithful translation of that Hebrew text. The fact that some manuscripts from Qumran represent what has textual tradition confirms the correctness of the hypothesis even in those cases where there is no evidence among the Qumran manuscripts.

Study of the manuscripts from Qumran Cave 4 has reassessed the wisdom of the ancient versions as a means of approaching lost forms of the Hebrew text now reappearing piecemeal among the fragments from Qumran. Accordingly, a special seminar is devoted to a new phenomenon with rich rewards: quite a few old books underwent *intensive editions* and were transmitted in *different textual forms* which circulated freely in the various geographic centres of Judaism and among the various Jewish groups of the pre-Rabbinic and pre-Christian period. The biblical manuscripts from Qumran published most recently have brought new texts to light which must be described as *shades of grey*, for they lie halfway between the biblical text, properly speaking, and a paraphrase text, which can retain old elements or add new ones. The *flexibility and textual diversity* of the biblical books corresponds to the diversity of Jewish society in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, as mentioned already.

It will be stressed repeatedly that it is not possible to solve adequately the problems relating to the literary formation of the biblical books (source criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism) without at the same time taking into account the limits and criteria of the history and criticism of the text. Literary theory notices a crucial distinction between the process of the *literary formation* of a book and the *transmission* and *interpretation* of its text. In practical analysis shows that these three fields continually touch and overlap so that it is not possible to reach a satisfactory solution to the problems except through an *interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars studying literary criticism, textual criticism and the history of interpretation*. The principles and methods of textual criticism do not change, but their application varies depending on whether the history of the biblical text is viewed as a single straight line of transmission or as bundles of lines coming from very different sources and intersecting each other a great deal. The history of modern biblical criticism has known several movements and trends. Some are more favourable to literary criticism (sources, traditions, redactions) and

others more unwilling to accept the need for it, tending to keep textual criticism and literary criticism well apart. Some are more inclined to the reconstruction of texts and sometimes literary forms; others more sceptical in this regard with a greater tendency to stress the soundness of the textual and literary tradition; some more inclined to follow the Masoretic Hebrew text and others more inclined to correct its possible mistakes and accept the validity of alternative textual traditions. Some more convinced of the possibility of the critical use of the versions, even as a historical source, and others no less convinced of the targumic and exegetical nature of its variants, etc.

What is certain is that, at the time of reconstructing history, since they are versions which present two different forms of the text which correspond to two different editions, it is not wise to rely on passages included in the text of the second edition of the book. This is the case of the longer version of the book of Jeremiah transmitted by the MT and to give one example, such as the name of Jer. 39: 13. Comparison with *sefer ha-shma'ot* (ע' ח' כ"א) and the long text (ע"ג) will show us the characteristics of the second corrected and augmented edition and at the same time make it possible to engage a targumic text in a holistic, horizontal and genetic exegesis on the two forms of Jer.

6. *Interpreted in and hermeneutics.* Once the text is known in its various forms, times and places and also in the most original form possible, it is time to pay attention to the wide field of biblical interpretation, not from the aim of this book or even of biblical studies as such as write a *history of the rabbinic and Christian exegesis of the Bible*. The words of Jameson Pabikar apply here even more than in his own classic work: 'The history of biblical interpretation and the development of hermeneutics do not really of their own accord and cannot of their direct concern here.' Study of biblical literature must always and above all be a reading and re-reading (Makhean = repetitions) of the actual biblical texts. The aim of this book, however, cannot be to carry out an exercise in assessing the methodologies of Jewish or Christian exegesis.

In the section dealing with Christian Hermeneutics, attention is paid in a special way to the problem which the *two-fold legacy, Jewish and pagan*, the Christian and Greek philology, posed for Christianity, it is also a matter of finding the paths which the Great Church and other marginal or marginalised movements of Christianity followed with the aim of incorporating, purifying or rejecting different aspects of that *double pre-patriotic evangelium*. In the context of the dispute about the historical primacy of archaism or heterodoxy and of the various Christian movements which started but stopped midway or veered away from the central movement, here special attention is paid to *Jewish-Christianity* as a catalyst in the shift from Jewish exegesis to Christian exegesis and to the peculiar exegesis of Old Testament and Jewish legends and miracles practised by *Gnosticism*.

6.1 For an excellent Christian Hermeneutic, *A History of the Development of Hermeneutics in the Context of the Catholic Tradition* (1972-80), Giuseppe Lamberti (1971), 8.

The way Jewish and Christian hermeneutic is presented here follows like a guiding thread the dichotomy between a literal and historical interpretation and an allegorical and spiritual interpretation (between *ḥesed* and *ḥesed*). This dichotomy between letter and meaning sets in motion mediocrity, causality, both Jewish and Christian. The same dialectic also crises modern hermeneutic, which oscillates between two poles. One is historical and philological analysis, more positivistic and an aim to enlightenent hermeneutic. The other is the need to give meaning, and relevance for our time to the great myths, legends, traditions and texts of the masses, according to the ideal of romantic and post-critical hermeneutic.

This amounts to no more than hinting at fundamental questions for the history and understanding of the Bible: the hermeneutical assumptions and the methods of interpretation developed within the biblical books and in the Jewish and Christian Exegesis of that period or immediately after; the global but detailed vision which the Torah and the whole of the *miqra* set together acquired in Judaism and Christianity respectively; the main lines of Jewish and Christian interpretation; the inclusion or rejection of elements from the philosophy, religion and literature of the Persian world at first and that of the Greek and Roman world, etc.

The formation of the New Testament texts and their interpretation of the era is only intelligible if the procedures and exegetical traditions of Jewish hermeneutic are known. However, Jewish exegesis should not be studied in terms of a better understanding of Christian sources. Jewish hermeneutic, both halakic and haggadic, is a reality in its own right. It comprises the very heart of Judaism, defined as the religion of the Jewish Torah, the written Torah, comprising the *Tanakh* and the oral Torah, included in the corpus of authorized interpretations of the Torah (the Mishnah and the Talmud).

Similarly, study of Christian hermeneutic consists in investigating thoroughly the very essence of Christianity as the religion of the *newa* Covenant founded on the *sofot*: the Christian Bible is simultaneously *sofot* and *newa* Testament (Covenant Testament, *sofot* and *newa* Testament).

... *Jewish Bible and Christian Bible*. This book constitutes a basic thesis. There is a correspondence between the lines of formation and transmission of the books of Jews and Christians and the channels by which Judaism and Christianity were formed and spread. The first writings of the Christians gave the impression of being merely additional texts of Jewish literature. Christianity seemed to be one more sect or marginal group among those which existed in Judaism in the period before 70 c.e. However, this affiliation alone is not enough to explain «the origin, being and existence» (to paraphrase the title of a book by Américo Castro) of Christians in terms of Jewish literature and the Judaism of the period. From the very first moment Christians accepted and passed on as their own books, texts and interpretations of the various Jewish groups. From the beginning, Christianity also assimilated followers from all these groups: Samaritans, Essenes, Hellenists and even Phar-

isees, Sadducees and others. The first Christians did not make up a new group of 'separate ones' as the Pharisees were (*ἰσραήλ-ἑσπεράτοι*) or the Essenes who withdrew to the desert of Qumran. Peter's decision to remain in Jerusalem after the death of Jesus and later to take the road to the Mediterranean coast and finally the mission among the gentiles is in contrast with the decision of the Teacher of Righteousness to lead his Essene community to the desert of Judah.

Recent research continues to find parallels between the New Testament texts and the Essene writings and others, now known through the Dead Sea Scrolls. It has to be said that in the NT there is hardly one literary expression, institution, rite or ethical norm, or even one idea or theological symbol which does not have antecedents in the OT and Jewish «inter-testamental» literature (however, for a complementary view, cf. pp. 32-33). It is symptomatic that there have been attempts to connect Jesus with the Essenes and to reduce Christianity to «an Essenism that succeeded», as Renan so aptly (and, inaccurately) put it. Nowadays, however, research is equally aware of the weight of the differences, or more so. In the early years of study of the biblical manuscripts from Qumran, more attention was paid to the agreements of the new manuscripts with the *ספרים קדומים*. Today it is accepted that it is also necessary to notice the differences and the idiosyncrasies of each text. Similarly, in social religious study it is necessary to acknowledge the weight of the differences between the Christian group and the other Jewish groups. Ultimately, the figure of Jesus is closer to a Pharisee than to an Essene and originates principally in the figures of the biblical prophets and of the late biblical Hasidim.

Research into the parallels between the NT and Qumran have been focused on studying many matters of detail. However, if after looking at the trees it is a matter of seeing the wood, in other words, if libraries or collections of books are compared and mutually isolated verses from one book or another, two contrasting scenes emerge. Pharisaic Judaism, although the most open and dynamic of the Jewish groups, was moving even before the period of Yabash towards establishing a closed biblical canon, excluding works asserted to be «apocrypha» from other groups and even from the Pharisaic group itself. It was also moving towards the fixing of a single biblical text and of an authorised tradition of oral interpretation, to the exclusion or abandonment of other forms of the biblical text and of the interpretative traditions of other Jewish groups. On the other hand, Christianity appears as a marginal group of Judaism which, however, accepts from the first moment all the forms of the biblical text (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) and all the works and literary forms which circulated among the various Jewish groups, and takes on board Jews following all movements and origins. It can be said that before forming a symbiosis with the immense Greek and Roman world and achieving a full syncretism of Jewish and pagan elements, Christianity made a first but no less important *melé* of all the literary, social, reli-

2. W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity*, Phaidon, pp. 11-34, 37.

gions and their original elements of the Judaism of the period.

The awareness that the first Christians had to be the true Israel, coincides with what the Qumran community thought of themselves or the Pharisees could claim for themselves. However, the Christians claimed to represent and transcend and to be the heirs of all possible types of Judaism, especially those which soon ceased to be influential in the official Judaism of the rabbis. It is important that until the second Christian generation, the generation of Paul's disciples, elements from Essaicism continued to enter Christianity. Also, this generation experienced a return to Old Testament ritual elements which came from the Sadducees.

In this book's great importance is paid to the fact that the Christians accepted the Greek Bible of the LXX and a large part of the Jewish apocryphal works, which rabbinic Judaism rejected so soon. (The Christians also continued to pay attention to works typical of official Judaism, such as the versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.) These works came into Christianity from the hands of very different groups (Hellenists, Essenes, Samaritans, Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, etc.). These works brought into Christianity a wide range of trends and ideas (sapiential and philosophical, apocalyptic, messianic, eschatological, etc.). It is a mistake to contrast Jesus and apocryphal Christians, close to the Essene group with dogmatic Pharisees and orthodox Jewish Sadducees. All these groups were equally attracted by apocalyptic ideas and, at the same time, by legal and ritual concerns, and shared in one way or another in the Hellenistic environment. Christianity attempts a dialectic synthesis of these elements, overcoming them all (*Aufhebung*). It tries to create a triple synthesis and a triple transformation. It abandons the Temple very soon (in a form very like that of Qumran Essaicism), but transcends and absorbs many of the Old Testament and Zadokite ritual traditions (just as rabbinic Judaism will be forced to do so, but in a different way). It abandons promising the Torah which is gradually transcended into an allegory of the New Covenant, and it also abandons apocalyptic hope in a restoration of Israel which it slowly exchanges for a realised eschatology inaugurated by the coming of Christ the Messiah.

So then, Judaism ended by closing circles around the leaders of the Pharisee movement, whose intention was a series of reforms to unify Judaism. From the multiplicity of books, texts and interpretations and from the array of movements and socio-religious groups it became a unity and a monolith in terms of literature, social practices and religion (although this did not mean that differences ceased within rabbinism). The literary and textual history of the Jewish Bible is the history of the reduction from a multiplicity of books, texts and interpretations to one canon, one text and one authorised interpreter. The history of Judaism is also the history of the Pharisee movement, which created other groups and other forms of Judaism. Among these other forms of Judaism, Samaritanism was the only one develop to some extent, whereas Sadduceism and Essenism, which had known great splendour, remained completely forgotten. Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and other

Jewish groups diverted history and a large part of their literature was preserved only through the Christian tradition.

With a broader and more open criterion than in pharisaic Judaism, the Christians inherited many of the Jewish books excluded by rabbinic *tafsira*, even some of pharisaic extraction (though it must not be forgotten that Christianity discarded completely the rich and ancient Hellenistic literature which did not fit in with the Tenah. The Christians included in their Bible the so-called deuterocanonical books and preserved many of the apocryphal books, some of which enjoyed great authority in various churches. They also embraced all the forms of the text in circulation, with every kind of variant and in different text editions (e.g. the book of Job). They also used all the literary forms of Jewish literature, many of them abandoned in later rabbinic literature. In this sense it can be said that triumphant and normative Judaism, formed in the period of the Mishnah and the Talmud, was born somewhat later than Christianity. The latter preserved many elements from earlier Judaism and evolved in continuity with the Old Testament traditions and the Jewish traditions of the Persian and Hellenistic period, traditions which rabbinic Judaism itself discarded or ceased to develop.

The inclusion of so many divergent Jewish elements within Christianity brought in its wake the period of disagreements which together with the disagreement caused by the inclusion of very different sectors from the Greek and Roman world, could only speak of the continuous emergence of various churches. In many cases these were not real objections to an orthodoxy which had not yet been established. Rather, they were anticipations of more successful approximations, which helped the central movement of Christianity define the main lines along which it had to move (cf. pp. 247-249).

8. *Jewish Religion and Christian Religion.* In terms of the history of religions, Judaism and Christianity appear to be two religions derived from one and the same biblical religion, but on diverging lines of development because of their different approach to interpreting biblical literature and religion. With the binomial Law and the Prophets, Judaism stresses the Law of Torah of Moses and Christianity stresses the Prophets who foretold Christ the Messiah. Judaism and Christianity are two branches and two different developments of the Law and the Prophets. Judaism prefers to be inspired by Genesis and therefore affirms the Law. Christianity is directed more towards an Apocalyptic, and develops a religion of hope in apocalyptic salvation. Judaism therefore affirms the Law (though an oral tradition comparable in worth to the written Law). The interpretation of the Law by the Wise men of Israel takes the place of the words of the Prophets who had

6. H. Siegmund expresses the view on the Talmudic dispute in the main movement of Judaism in his book *Die Talmud*. H. Siegmund, *Die Talmud* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 113. Cf. also the book by Siegmund in *Das Neue Testament*. H. Siegmund, *Das Neue Testament* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 113. Cf. also the book by Siegmund in *Das Neue Testament*. H. Siegmund, *Das Neue Testament* (Leipzig, 1905), p. 113.

cessed in Israel. In turn, Christianity writes a text claiming to be the fulfillment of the biblical Prophecies and the culmination of the Law.

A Jew tends to equate Judaism with biblical religion. A Christian also tends to think of Judaism, in effect, as an extension of biblical religion, not maintaining at the same time that the OT was its true culmination in Christianity and not in Judaism. On the other hand, modern criticism tends to isolate the OT from later tradition. Jewish and Christian alike tend to consider it as testimony to a religion of the ancient Near East.

The collection of laws which makes up the OT had an open structure, which allowed an oral or written development and at the same time required a continuous effort of interpretation, which gave rise to the oral Torah and the amoraic literature. The Torah or Pentateuch displays an open promise with an unresolvable ending. The *fulfillment of the Torah* is the essential condition for speeding up the *fulfillment of the Promise*. Therefore, Judaism developed a body of literature, but soon on the verge of stalling and again fulfillment of the Torah. Christianity developed another body of literature directed instead to the fulfillment of the Promise in Christ. When Judaism and Christianity began to take shape in their respective oral narratives forms, the differences between them began to deepen and become more obvious. The Jewish religion is based on the knowledge and practice of a sacred Law and on a historical person (Moses). Christianity, instead, focuses on the person of Jesus of Nazareth who takes on the prerogatives of prophet and Messiah and the position of "Son of God".

The Mishnah and the Talmud, the body of literature developed by rabbinic Judaism, can be considered as successors in respect of Jewish literature of the preceding period. So is the "New Testament", though more than a prophetic and apocalyptic genre. The Jewish groups most involved in the ancient orient's Torah, as were the Samaritans and Sadducees, accused the Pharisees and Essenes of bringing in a new Law and new laws, in short, a new Bible. On the other hand, the NT seems to be more rooted in the literary forms and in the apocalyptic of the period before the OT than in the distinctive literature of Judaism, the Mishnah and the Talmud. The NT anticipates the changes in language, genres, motifs, etc. The literature of rabbinic Judaism, later than the Christian one, in fact breaks away from the genres, themes and motifs typical of intertestamental literature and becomes a sort of contra-texta genre typical of the time of interpretations of chapters and verses of the Scripture.

It can be said that History has not known more than two actual Bibles: the rabbinic Bible, which includes the oral Torah, and the Christian Bible, which adds the NT. A third Bible would have been formed - the Graeco-Latin Bible - but it did not amount to more than a "dead church" just like Christian religion. The "Latin Bible", i.e., the separate and independent one of modern criticism now studies it in the *Biblia Hebraea*, never existed. True, before the formation of the rabbinic and Christian traditions there did exist a collection of sacred writings of the old religion of Israel. However, this collection began to be formed at the same time as it was being absorbed into a Jewish tradition

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which, right from the first, accompanied it, marking the limits of the collection, the text of each book and the channels of their interpretation.

Neither in Judaism and Christianity can one speak of the existence of a «Bible» until the moment when a biblical canon began to be determined. This does not happen until the moment when a tradition of interpretation has also started to take shape and before any authoritive and canonized value. In Judaism, the process of defining the canon of the Scriptures and the parallel formation of oral tradition happened basically between the 2nd century and the 4th century. In Christianity, this process was practically completed towards the end of the 4th century, when the nucleus of the 27 books already constituted the OT as a unit. In Judaism, the Mishnah and the Talmud do not form part of the Scriptures, but they form the canon of their interpretation. In Christianity, instead, the 27 books up form an integral part of the canon of Scriptures and forms both the canon and the interpretation of the OT.

Modern criticism studies biblical religion as a religion of the ancient Near Eastern world. It analyses biblical texts in the form that they had before they made up the Bible as a unit. In other words, when there were no more than isolated texts, put together at most in small collections of legal, narrative, prophetic or wisdom content. This critical approach deconstructs the biblical texts and separates them from later media, Jewish and Christian. Against this critical view, which decomposes the Bible into its original elements, voices are raised today which from confessional stances, sometimes decidedly conservative, reclaim a canonical view of the Bible (ecumenical criticism) and also from purely literary viewpoints advocate a «holistic» and structural view of the Bible.

Modern criticism of the OT, which isolates its field of study from all later tradition of interpretation, Jewish or Christian, can thus find the detached writings collected together in OT and the process which leads to its make-up, can be the object of literary and linguistic studies, deprived even of Jewish or New Testament connections. There are many attempts at a «Theology of the One» which, however, will have a more or less Christian inspiration and attitude.

To consider the OT as *Biblia Hebraica*, independent and autonomous, comes chiefly from the Reformation and the Enlightenment more than from Judaism itself. Protestantism tends to consider the OT independently of the NT, as two opposite poles which represent Law and Grace. Biblical criticism, born of the Enlightenment, tends to consider biblical literatures in terms of the other literatures of the ancient Near East, isolating it from its later canonical developments at the hands of the rabbis and the Fathers. It is significant that in Protestantism a «Biblical Theology» of the OT could have developed more or less independent of the NT (*Quintus et cetera*). Catholicism has hardly known this development and Judaism definitely does not know a theology of the *Tanakh*, independent of Jewish tradition.

So then, the problem of the relationships between the two historical *Bibles*, rabbinic and Christian, and of both to the *Tanakh* or «Old Testament»



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