Jude 1:14 (John Nelson Darby) 62324

Collected Writings of J.N. Darby: Apologetic 1, Prophecy of Enoch, The (1:14)

Mr. Newman next refers to another common objection. Jude has quoted the prophecy of Enoch. He has this excuse that this is commonly so stated, since Archbishop Lawrence published his book; and Origen has taken it for granted.

But I beg leave to say, that there is not the smallest proof of any kind that he has done so. The fathers are historically very useful, like all contemporaneous authors; their judgment, and not the least so Origen's, is nothing worth.

Now what proof have we that Jude quoted this book? Just none. It is evident that there was a traditional account that such a prophecy existed. This book of Enocli records it. Jude authenticates the prophecy as far as his authority goes. But that Jude took it from the book of Enoch, there is not the slightest proof whatever.

Enoch, all know, was favored of God; the prophecy ascribed to him, is a testimony of a doctrine established by a multitude of passages. Its written preservation in christian times was more timely, as then Christ's coming in glory was the immediate and proper hope of the Church. While at all times a most solemn prophetic warning, it was less suited to be preserved as a part of the divine record, while God was still carrying on His government under the law. Everything is in its place.

It is the simple fact of the existence of the passage in both Jude and Enoch, which is used as a proof that it is quoted, which is no proof at all, because it is evident each may have taken it up if it was current by tradition. And the copying is very much less probable than the latter supposition, because the passage is not the same in both. It is thus given by Archbishop Lawrence: "Behold, He cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon them, and destroy the wicked, and reprove all the carnal for everything which the sinful and ungodly have done and committed against Him."

Thus it stands in Jude: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodhly committed, and of all their hard [speeches] which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Now, that these passages refer to the same prophecy I see no reason to doubt; but I do not see the smallest sign that one was copied from the other. They differ very sensibly one from the other. There is nothing about what ungodly sinners have spoken in the book of Enoch-no expression such as "destroy the wicked" in Jude. The phraseology too in Jude is quite different and very peculiar. I should say, from the language and omissions, that it certainly was not a quotation.

But, further, the doctrine also is very different. The book of Enoch makes God come to execute judgment on His saints. There is no such doctrine as this in Jude. And the book of Enoch distinguishes particularly executing judgment on them, the saints, and destroying the wicked. No such idea as this exists in Jude. Nor is it a mere question of Ethiopic,1 which I certainly could not solve. It is the positive doctrine of the book of Enoch, "while judgment," it is said, just before, "shall come upon all, even all the righteous." Thus His executing judgment upon them [the preserved] is the specific doctrine of the passage. It certainly is not that of Jude; for he says Enoch prophesied of the reprobate. And, while speaking of executing judgment on all, there is no such a thought as executing judgment on the saints and destroying the wicked. Jude goes on to speak of His convicting the ungodly for their deeds and their words against Him. So that the substantial meaning of the passages is quite different, as one contains what the other does not; and the language is quite diverse too. I conclude, with undoubting certainty, that one was not quoted from the other (unless the author of the Book of Enoch used Jude in his own way), and that Jude's is divine, accordant as it is with the whole testimony of the word, and the apocryphal Enoch's human.

But further: What proof have we that the book of Enoch was written first? I doubt it exceedingly. Dr. Lawrence takes as his fixed point of departure, in making the inquiry, that the quotation of Jude proves it was written before his epistle. But this is begging the question. I have already shown that, to say the least, it is an assumption without any proof (what can be adduced in the way of evidence proving, as I judge, the direct opposite).

Indeed, the proof that the writer was before Jude is to me very doubtful.

There are passages which seem to be quoted from the New Testament. Some of them I should not insist upon, because they may have been proverbial, and so used by the Lord Himself among the Jews.

They are the following:

"It would have been better for them had they never been born." "At that time I beheld the Ancient of Days while he sat upon the throne of his glory, while the book of the living was opened in his presence, and [while] all the powers of the heavens stood around and before him." "And he, the Son of man, shall be the light of nations" (this may be from Isaiah). "But in the day of their trouble the world shall obtain tranquility." "In these days shall the earth deliver up from her womb, and hell deliver up from hers that which it has received." "The word of his mouth shall destroy all the sinners and all the ungodly, who shall perish at his presence." "Trouble shall come upon them as upon a woman in travail." "Before the Son of man, from whose presence they shall be expelled."

These look very like allusions to passages in the New Testament. But there is another circumstance. The writer says, referring to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, "Then I grieved extremely on account of the tower, and because the house of the sheep was

overthrown. Neither was I afterward able to perceive whether they again entered that house." Now this comes after a passage (chap. 88: 92) where it is said, "I saw, too, that he forsook the house of their fathers and their tower, giving them all into the power of every beast," which refers to the Babylonish captivity; and after he had announced the call of seventy accountable shepherds, which Dr. Lawrence himself applies to the rulers from Nebuchadnezzar down to Herod the Great. So that the destruction here alluded to was under or after the seventy shepherds; whereas their accountable rule began with Nebuchadnezzar: so that this was evidently another overthrow of "the house of the sheep." At any rate, as he gives the Jewish history up to Herod, he must have known they had their house again; indeed, he speaks evidently of Zerubbabel, Joshua, and Nehemiah or Ezra, and of the rebuilding of the temple. (Phases, p. 113.) This would lead one then to suppose that he wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem2 by the Romans, and was thus unable to say that the temple would be restored.

One passage looks very much as if he considered the Christians as a perverse race; but that a remnant would be preserved, to whom the power and glory would be given. At any rate, he speaks of the Jews being perverse at this epoch. These are his words, "Afterward, in the seventh week [coinciding with that in which Christianity appeared], a perverse generation shall arise; abundant shall be its deeds, and all its deeds perverse. During its completion the righteous selected from the plant of everlasting righteousness [a remnant of the Jews] shall be rewarded, and to them shall be given sevenfold instruction concerning every part of his creation." (Chap. 92: 12.) After this they shall execute judgment on oppressors, sinners shall be delivered up into the hands of the righteous, and the house of the great King shall be built up forever.

That is, he promises, after this week of perverse men, the full establishment of Jewish privileges in a Jewish way.

He speaks much of the Son of man, the Elect, the concealed One revealing the wisdom of the Lord of spirits; but Judaism is set up by power. And the only notice of the christian week is perverse men doing a great deal.

It would rather appear to me the work of a Jewish writer, who, when Christianity had come, sought to buoy up the hopes of the Jews in their own expectations, when now given up a prey to the lions and all beasts.

The house was destroyed, perhaps Christianity prevalent. He made use of the name of Enoch as being one of which tradition had preserved some memorial. The Cabalists seem to have possessed this book from allusions in the book Zohar, quoted by Dr. Lawrence.

There is a difficulty apparently in the twelve shepherds, which Dr. Lawrence applies to the Asmonean princes and Herod. But he introduces Matthias, which I should judge doubtful, and Alexandra, a woman. Take away these two, and you have two shepherds after Herod. Were it not so, it would be merely closing the account of native princes with Herod, after which the state of Palestine was so uncertain (either a tetrarchy or a province, or for a little while again nearly united under Herod Agrippa) that he drops the history of it as a distinct thing. The view that I have presented is corroborated by chapter 89. After the twelve shepherds, he gives a sword into the sheep's (Jews') hands to slay the beasts of the field; and the Lord judges. That is, he puts power into the hands of the Jews at the close of this period.

I need not pursue this subject any farther. It suffices to have shown that there is no probability whatever that Jude quoted from this spurious book-I may say a certainty that he did not, and that there is great ground to suppose that the Book of Enoch was written after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.3 But if Jude has not quoted it, it is very little matter when a mere spurious book full of nonsense was written. It is useful historically, as showing the Jews' opinions in those days. I may remark that he is most distinct in his assertion, that there were openings for the abyss of waters to break forth from beneath for the deluge, and clefts for it in which to run back again, just, indeed, as the heathen sheaved at Delos and other places for the retreat of their deluge.4

This objection of Jude's quoting from the Book of Enoch I hold to be totally unfounded. It certainly is wholly unproved. The ancients supposed it merely; they give no evidence as to the fact.

Mr. N. goes on to say, that "it does not appear that any peculiar divine revelation taught them [the New Testament writers] that the Old Testament is perfect truth." (Phases, p. 126.) They did not need one. They knew prophets had delivered it from God, as Peter says, and had not spoken by the will of man. But I further answer, they had; for the Lord confirmed this their faith in the Old Testament over and over again in the most explicit way.

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