

SWEETGOSPELHARMONY.COM PART I

# THE GOSPEL HISTORY AND ITS TRANSMISSION

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## PREFACE

THE ten Lectures contained in this volume were delivered in the spring of this year at the Passmore Edwards Settlement in London as the Jowett Lectures for 1906. I repeated them with very little change for my inaugural course at Cambridge as Norrisian Professor of Divinity, so that it seemed advisable to keep them in lecture form when they came to be printed.

It is sometimes supposed that the result of modern historical criticism is to diminish the historical value of the Gospels. My own researches have made me believe that there is a much larger element of genuine history in the Canonical Gospels, than a general view of the tendencies which influenced Christendom during the first century and a half of its existence might have led one to anticipate. The general aim, therefore, of the last three Lectures, those on the Gospel Canon, on Marcion, and on the Apocryphal Gospels, is to elucidate this to me somewhat remarkable fact, to examine the reasons why the tradition by which the Catholic Church

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came to hold fast is on the whole so much truer to the actual course of events than the theories of the Heretics.

While the volume was passing through the press, I read Professor Harnack's new book *Lukas der Arzt*. After some consideration I thought it best to leave my Lectures as they were, without attempting to review this brilliant vindication of the Lucan authorship of the Third Gospel and the Acts. With the greater part of Harnack's thesis I find myself in thorough agreement, though I still hold that S. Luke had read Josephus (or at least part of the *Antiquities*), and that both Gospel and Acts were the work of the author's old age. But whatever view may be taken, there can be no doubt that Harnack has said in this monograph the true and necessary word on many a vexed question connected with the subject; especially I must here single out the admirable remarks on the 'Paulinism' of S. Luke. 'Wo ist denn der Paulinismus, ausser bei Marcion, geblieben?' asks Harnack (p. 101). He himself says something in answer to this pregnant question, but the fact that he asks it at all may serve to shew that my Lecture on Marcion was not out of place in this book.

F. C. BURKITT.

CAMBRIDGE, October 1906.



## PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THIS new Edition of my Lectures is an almost unchanged reprint of the former Edition. I have added a Note on de Bruyne's discovery of the Marcionite Prologues to the Pauline Epistles, and I have corrected a few minor errors. But I cannot say that the criticism, to which parts of my book has been subjected, has caused me to regret the line I took. The criticism has been exceedingly kindly; but in a good many cases it has seemed to me that the writers have not quite understood what I was aiming at, or what were the rocks ahead which I had perceived. To judge by most of the criticisms one would suppose that I had been the first person to deny the historical value of the Fourth Gospel for determining the course of events in the public life of our Lord, or the first to have rejected the historicity of the Raising of Lazarus! As a rule the critics limit themselves to bringing forward reasons why the Synoptic Gospels are silent about the Raising of Lazarus: what they have not done is to explain how and where the tale as told in the Fourth

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Gospel can possibly be inserted into the framework given by S. Mark. The 'argument from silence' in this case is not merely that the Raising of Lazarus is ignored by S. Mark, but that his narrative appears to leave no room to fit it in.

What I have had in view in writing these Lectures on the Gospel History and its transmission to us is something very different from an attack upon the much assaulted Fourth Gospel. I was not anxious to prove that the narrative books of the New Testament are not all historical: that was a conclusion only too likely to be arrived at in the case of the Sacred Writings of an obscure Jewish sect that was destined in the end to dominate the Roman world. If there is one thing more than another that clearly issues from A. Schweitzer's admirable history of the attempts to write a Life of Jesus (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*, 1906) it is this, that the complete historical scepticism of Bruno Bauer was not a mere individual eccentricity, but the expression of serious difficulties in an excessively complicated historical problem. The rise of Christianity is such an extraordinary event, that we must be prepared to find again and again that those who study it find themselves bewildered, and that then they begin to doubt whether the traditional accounts of the process have any historical foundation at all.

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The more we investigate the early history of the Christian Church with open and unprejudiced eyes, the more we find ourselves in a strange world, dominated by fixed ideas that are not our fixed ideas and permeated by an intellectual atmosphere quite different from ours. We come to ourselves, and we rub our eyes and wonder if what we have been gazing upon ever had any reality. It was for the student in this state of mind that my book was written. What I have attempted to shew is, that at least the Gospel according to S. Mark is in touch with the actual condition of Palestine in the times of the Herods; and, further, that the course of events in the second century enables us to understand some of the reasons which led the Church to cherish on the whole a historical, as distinct from an ideal, account of the foundation of Christianity.

F. C. BURKITT.

CAMBRIDGE, *May*, 1907.



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IN the interval between the second and the third editions of this book, English readers have been effectively introduced to what is called the Eschatological view of the Gospel History, most prominently associated with the name of Dr. Schweitzer, of Strassburg, and the question arises how far modifications should be introduced dealing directly with the problems now under discussion. After consideration it seems to me better not to make any great changes in the text as originally written. I have altered a phrase here and there, and rewritten a paragraph in order to bring Chapter IV. more definitely into line with the conclusions so eloquently set forth by Dr. Verrall in his *Christ before Herod*.<sup>1</sup> But even Dr. Verrall's Essay raises some objections to the point of view from which the public career of Jesus Christ is looked at in part of Chapter III., and certainly if this part of the book be left unchanged some indications of its relation to Dr. Schweitzer's view will not be out of place.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 138.

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Put in a single phrase, the question is whether I ought to retain the Map facing p. 92. One of the most curious features of the Gospel History as told in S. Mark is the long absence from Galilee indicated in Mk vii 24, 31. The small amount of tradition connected with this period, which very likely took up more than half the time included in the Ministry, is easily explicable, for we are expressly told in vii 24 that Jesus had sought retirement; but the question remains why He sought it.

The object of the Map is to point out the fact that, according to Mark, during this period of retirement Jesus had avoided the dominions of Herod Antipas. But Dr. Schweitzer does not connect this retirement with Herod at all: Jesus, he says (*Quest*, p. 362), 'really does flee; not, however, from hostile Scribes, but from the people, who dog His footsteps in order to await in His company the appearing of the Kingdom of God and of the Son of Man—to await it in vain.' And while Dr. Schweitzer seems to exclude Herod from one point of view, Dr. Verrall from another reminds us that 'the "hostility of Antipas," "the designs of Antipas," "the danger from Antipas," are phrases easily found, as one may say, anywhere except in the Evangelists.' Perhaps this is a little over-stated, unless we are

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careful to understand it exclusively of the personal attitude of the Tetrarch ; but it may serve to warn a reconstructor of the Gospel history against unduly magnifying the political prominence of our Lord and His disciples, or of the danger in which they stood from the government of Galilee.

Nevertheless I retain the Map, and with it most of the theory which the Map is intended to illustrate. In the first place, it really does exhibit the places named in our only source, and the order in which they are named. Gennesaret, Tyre, Sidon, Decapolis, 'Dalmanutha' - Tiberias, Bethsaida, Cæsarea Philippi, a journey through Galilee, 'the borders of Judæa,' Jericho, Jerusalem,—these are the stations named in Mark ; and even if it be no true itinerary, it is well that we should clearly realise what kind of route our document puts before us. On an uncoloured sheet of paper the route is indeed odd ; with the territory of Antipas indicated it becomes, I venture to think, more intelligible, and I have suggested in the Note to p. 92 that the enduring physical features of Palestine supply some reasons for the most northerly angle of it.

Very possibly I may have exaggerated 'the danger from Antipas' ; in any case the parts avoided are the Tetrarch's territories and also (till the last journey) the land of Judæa. Possibly

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if I were to plan the whole section over again I might lay more stress on the idea of retirement, of waiting for the Kingdom of God, rather than that of exile; but whatever may have been the cause the long cessation of public work still remains—*αὐτομάτη ἡ γῆ καρποφορεῖ*, and the Sower was letting the wheat and tares grow unchecked to the Harvest. Absence from Herod's territory was also absence from the districts where Jewish life and religion were predominant; it involved a cessation of most of the features which we commonly associate with our Lord's Ministry. We do not even know how many of the Disciples followed Jesus to the borders of Tyre.

It still seems to me that the idea of retirement and passive waiting for the Kingdom is not quite enough to explain all the data given by S. Mark. Especially, it is not enough to explain the passage through Galilee *incognito* (Mk ix 30); this, if nothing else does, points to the avoidance of definite political dangers, or rather the definite choice of one danger rather than another. Jesus goes to Jerusalem to die, because a Prophet must perish at Jerusalem—there and not elsewhere. The Gospels show us Jesus not only going forward to His Death, but also choosing the time of it and the place: it is one of the special merits of the Gospel according to Mark that it gives us



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some indications of the means whereby Jesus preserved His freedom until the time for the Passion arrived.

I have attempted elsewhere to set forth my reasons for regarding the picture of the Gospel History given in Mark as being in its main features historical.<sup>1</sup> The scope of this book never included a discussion of this fundamental question. What I specially have had in view has been a consideration of the reasons that led the Church to preserve so historical a tradition of its origins, and to contrast the Church's theory with a non-historical theory like Marcion's. It might have been thought in England a few years ago that such a consideration was unnecessary. Now we are confronted with the movement in which Professor Arthur Drews, of Karlsruhe, is the chief figure, the movement which preaches in the name of modern Comparative Religion that Jesus is not a historical personage at all, but the rendering into history of a primitive religious myth. In words notably orthodox in sound, Professor Drews declares that 'the Jesus of the Gospels is to be understood only as a God made man' (*The Christ Myth*, Eng. tr., p. 265), while his book ends by

<sup>1</sup> Besides what I have said in the little book called *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, I have attempted to give my reasons for dissent from the historical scepticism of Wrede in the *American Journal of Theology* for the current year (1911).

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saying that the 'chief obstacle to a monistic religion and attitude is the belief, irreconcilable with reason or history, in the historical reality of a "unique," ideal, and unsurpassable Redeemer' (p. 300). This book has reached a third edition in Germany. It is, in my opinion, as unsatisfactory as Marcion's Gospel; but the whole movement shows that the question of the existence of the merely historical, nationalistic, Jewish element in Christianity is still as living a question as it was in Marcion's day. It is the question whether human ideas or the one non-recurring Course of Events constitute the true reality. I cannot but believe that the Church was right when it included the Course of Events in the Christian Creed.

F. C. BURKITT.

CAMBRIDGE, *February*, 1911.

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# THE GOSPEL HISTORY AND ITS TRANSMISSION

## I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

Lo, in Four Volumes hath our Sun shone forth.

S. EPHRAIM, *Lamy* iv 659.

THE Gospel History and its transmission is a wide subject, and it is not to be supposed that any one could exhaust it in ten Lectures. At the same time, it is impossible to talk profitably for ten hours on a single subject, however wide, without going into details; and details are apt to be dry and tiresome. I am very glad, therefore, that my subject is one of such importance and interest to every thoughtful man who is born in a Christian land, that I can appeal to its general importance and interest when I claim your attention in the discussion of dry and tiresome details.

We are all agreed, I suppose, as to the import-

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ance of the Gospel History, whatever our religious views may be. The brief and tragic career of Jesus of Nazareth, put to a shameful death by the rulers of Jerusalem though He taught love to God and kindness to men, would in any case have been a moving and pathetic incident. But when we remember that this tragic incident was the immediate starting-point and source of all the varied manifestations of Christianity, we are compelled, whether we be orthodox or unorthodox, believers or agnostics, to acknowledge that the study of it has a transcendent interest, and we shall be prepared to admit beforehand that no pains and no attention can be too great to bestow on its investigation.

Nevertheless it is easy, nay inevitable, that we should sometimes lose sight of the greatness of the subject—inevitable, that is, if we give the several parts of our task the attention which they need. Indeed, the parts and the details are so interesting and absorbing to the investigator, that it is often easy for him to forget the whole. I shall therefore ask your pardon beforehand if I sometimes seem to be shewing you the trees, when you want a view of the wood. Before, then, we enter the wood together let us look at some of the reasons which make detailed examination of the trees necessary; or, to drop the

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metaphor, let us explain why we need to attack critical and literary questions about the Gospels, before busying ourselves with the real problems of the Gospel History.

The first thing that an unsophisticated little child asks about a story is, 'Is it true?' It is indeed the most vital and important question to ask, but the answer cannot generally be contained in a simple 'yes' or 'no.' And the child gradually learns, as he grows up, that 'Is it true?' must often be the last and not the first question to be asked. Undoubtedly this is the case in the study of the Gospel History. There is no dispute as to the object of our study. We want a true portrait of our Lord and of His work among men. But there is more than one kind of truth in portraiture. There is the truth of the photographer and the truth of the impressionist artist. A complete set of working drawings for St. Paul's might very well fail to reveal the true architectural relation of the Cathedral to the great City, which can be suggested by a picture, faulty and inaccurate as it may be in many a detail. It is not fair to blame the architectural drawing for failing to give the general impression, or to blame the picture which aims at giving a certain impression for being unreliable in details. And one of the problems before us is whether our Gospels are to

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be classed with architectural drawings or with impressionist pictures, or with some other kind of portraiture.

Besides this, we have to a great extent to reconstruct the Portrait for ourselves. As I have said, it is not fair to blame our documents for not giving us more than they profess to give; but at the same time we may legitimately try to learn from them more than the writers directly aimed to tell us. We have to learn not only to hear our witnesses, but also to cross-examine them.

To reconstruct the Portrait of Jesus Christ for ourselves—this is a task which is incumbent not only upon all Christians, but also upon all those who are concerned with religion and the aspirations of the human race. And to make this reconstruction we must study the Gospels. It will be one of the conclusions which I shall bring before you, that the study of all Four Canonical Gospels, even the Fourth Gospel, is necessary. Neither of them is entirely superseded by the others. Each one of them contains an exceedingly valuable element which is not represented in the others. I am not saying, I am very far from saying, that each of our Gospels is equal to the others in historical value or in philosophical value. The contrary is the case. But each of



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them does singly preserve portions and aspects of the Gospel History which we cannot afford to lose.

I have spoken of 'reconstructing the Portrait of Jesus Christ for ourselves.' Some of you may perhaps reply that this is not a work for everybody, and that it is not to be expected that the ordinary Christian, who has his own work and his own studies to attend to, should go through the critical investigations that occupy learned men. You will expect me, perhaps, to tell you of this brilliant Monograph, or that epoch-making Article, which will really explain the origin of Christianity, or the relations of the Gospels to one another and to history. This is, of course, part of my business, but it is the least important part. Naturally there are some branches of Gospel study which must be left in the hands of specialists, and in regard to these branches our chief duty is loyally to accept the specialists' matured conclusions. To begin with, there are questions of language. The Gospels are written in Greek, and they deal for the most part with the sayings and doings of persons who spoke a language akin to Hebrew, known to modern scholars as Jewish Aramaic. Now it is eminently desirable that those who make a study of the Gospels should know Greek and Aramaic. You have only to

## THE GOSPEL HISTORY

read Professor Wellhausen's short commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels to see how many things are immediately clear to one who has a thorough command of Aramaic, which are only half-perceived by less fully equipped scholars. And it is obvious that minute investigation of the style of the several Gospels, of the use the Evangelists made of their sources and of the Old Testament, can only be satisfactorily carried out in the original Greek.

Yet the fact remains that an intelligent use of the English Bible brings us face to face with the most important Gospel problems, and even suggests their solution. It is one of the great attractions of Biblical study that the chief document is in everybody's hands in an available form, so that all the main results and many of the processes of learned critical study can be at once made plain to those who will read the English Bible carefully for themselves. Far be it from me to undervalue the help that erudition gives, or to seem to assert even for one moment that the investigator can do without it. Again and again the amateur in Biblical study, as in other subjects, falls into errors and pitfalls from which a little more solid learning might have saved him. But if the ordinary Bible reader—I will not say 'the man in the street,' for that phrase has a certain

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connotation of heedlessness, which disqualifies the class to whom it is applied from the right to sit in judgement—but if the ordinary Bible reader must be shy of trying to blaze out a path for others to follow, he has every right to demand that the steps which others cut for him shall be made quite plain. There is nothing in the nature of the subject to prevent him from understanding every step of the way that his guide is taking him, and sometimes he may claim the right of refusing to follow any further in a new path, at least till cause be shewn that it is the right one.

What I have said about questions of language is true also of textual criticism. The scholar really familiar with the ancient manuscripts and versions of the New Testament has a great critical instrument at his command. He sees before his eyes the process by which many a characteristic phrase has become obliterated in the course of the transmission of the Gospels down to modern times. He can read the Gospels in a form appreciably nearer the originals than it was possible for Erasmus or Bentley to do. But after all, the problems raised by the MSS only touch the fringe of the subject; the great difficulties are not obliterated in the purest text, or in the most corrupt.

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The only things of quite capital importance that the textual criticism of the Gospels tells the ordinary, non-specialist student is—(i) that the paragraph known as the last twelve verses of S. Mark [xvi 9–20] is a later addition, made to complete a work which (as we have it) is mutilated and incomplete at the end; and (ii) that there was circulated in the West of Europe, about the middle of the second century, an edition of the Four Gospels which contained a number of noteworthy interpolations, some of which present claims to be regarded as materials for history intrinsically as strong as can be urged for much of what is found in the genuine and authentic text of the Gospels. The story of the woman taken in adultery is certainly not a genuine portion of the Fourth Gospel, and the story of the man working on the Sabbath, found in Codex Bezae, is certainly not a genuine portion of the Third Gospel (see p. 9). We cannot trace back the literary history of these tales with any assurance, but they do not read like the invention of an annotator.

But—and this is the point which I wish to emphasise here—suppose that a student had no knowledge of MSS and versions beyond what he finds in the margin of the Authorized and the Revised English versions. In this case he will

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MATT xii 3-8.

... he said unto them,  
Have ye not read  
what David did, when  
he was  
an hungred, and  
they that were with him ;  
how he entered  
into the house of God,  
and did eat  
the shewbread,  
which it was not lawful  
for him to eat, neither  
for them that were with him,  
but only for the priests ?  
Or have ye not read  
in the law, how that on  
the sabbath day  
the priests in the temple  
profane the sabbath,  
and are guiltless ?  
But I say unto you,  
that something greater  
than the temple is here.  
But if ye had known  
what this meaneth,  
'I desire mercy, and not  
sacrifice,' ye would not  
have condemned the guiltless.  
For the Son of Man is  
lord of the sabbath.

MK ii 25-28.

... he said unto them,  
Did ye never read  
what David did, when  
he had need, and was  
an hungred, he, and  
they that were with him ;  
how he entered  
into the house of God  
when Abiathar was high priest,  
and did eat  
the shewbread,  
which it is not lawful  
to eat save for the priests,  
and gave also to them  
that were with him ?  
  
And he said  
unto them,  
The sabbath  
was made  
for man,  
and not man  
for the sabbath :  
so that  
the Son of Man is  
lord also of the sabbath.

LK vi 3-5.

... Jesus answering them said,  
Have ye not read even this,  
what David did, when  
he was  
an hungred, he, and  
they that were with him ;  
how he entered  
into the house of God ;  
and did take and eat  
the shewbread,  
and gave also to them  
that were with him ;  
which it is not lawful to  
eat save for the priests alone ?  
[On the same day  
seeing a certain man  
working on the sabbath,  
he said to him,  
Man, if indeed thou know  
what thou doest,  
thou art blessed ;  
but if thou know not,  
thou art cursed  
and a transgressor  
of the law.]  
*So Codex Bezae (D).*  
*All other authorities have*  
And he said unto them,  
The Son of Man is  
lord also of the sabbath.

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not have heard of the story of the man working on the Sabbath, for there is no note about it in the margin of Lk vi 5. Consequently he will not be troubled to explain how the story was transmitted if it be genuine, or how it came to be invented if it be altogether unhistorical. Such a student will merely observe that in this whole section of stories about Sabbath observance S. Luke is content to follow S. Mark, as he does elsewhere. But when our student comes to investigate the corresponding section of S. Matthew he will find, even if he confines himself to the Authorized Version, that he has to face very much the same problem that he left in S. Luke to the professed textual critic. He will find that the First Evangelist bases his narrative on S. Mark, just as S. Luke did, but that he adds to the words of our Lord about David and the shewbread, 'Have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? I say unto you, that something greater than the temple is here, but if ye had known what is meant by "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," ye would not have condemned the guiltless.' Whence did our Evangelist get these words? Have they the same claim on our acceptance as those narratives which are related by all three Synoptic Evangel-

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ists? Have they any better claim on our acceptance than the precisely similar story of the man working on the Sabbath, found only in a single ancient MS?

Thus the attentive reader of the Gospels in English has forced upon him the same problems that occupy the technically learned textual critic. Moreover, the textual critic brings but little towards the direct solution of the problems, except what is afforded by the very existence of these important variants and interpolations. I mean, that the mere fact of their occurrence is enough to shew us that the text of the Gospels, the actual wording, and even to some extent the contents, were not treated during the second century with particular scrupulosity by the Christians who preserved and canonized them. There is nothing in the way which Christians treated the books of the New Testament during the first four centuries that corresponds with the care bestowed by the Jews upon the Hebrew Scriptures from the time of Aqiba onwards.

All this, of course, is sufficiently well known, and I am not bringing it forward now to discredit antiquated theories of verbal inspiration, or to justify us in making extensive and drastic changes in the transmitted text. What I have rather in mind is the danger of applying to the criticism of

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the Gospels a method which has been found suitable enough in the case of the Pentateuch, but is far too mechanical for the free and unofficial literary habits of the early Christian writers. We all know something about the 'higher criticism' of the Pentateuch. We know that the general structure of that venerable compilation has been divined, and the several documents of which it is composed marked off. The separation of these documents has been effected by internal evidence only, but there is such a general consensus of agreement in the final results that the outsider, the non-specialist, cannot but acquiesce in the verdict. I should be the last person in the world to say anything to disturb the assured results of Pentateuchal criticism. I firmly believe in the three main strata of legislation, viz. the books of Prophetic story (JE), the Deuteronomic literature (D), the Priestly Code (P). I believe that these three documents, or rather literatures, came into existence separately one after the other, and that they have been combined together to make our Pentateuch, as the critics say. But I have my private doubts whether we can trust some of the minor and minuter pieces of analysis, an analysis which descends to the confident assignment of every single fragment of the Massoretic Text to



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its proper source. I am pretty sure that we cannot reconstruct the earlier documents with anything like completeness, except perhaps the Priestly Code, which as a literary whole is the latest of them all. And I am absolutely certain that the analogy of the Pentateuch will not help us much when we try to investigate the sources of our Gospels.<sup>1</sup>

It is one thing to demonstrate that the Gospels were compiled from previously existing sources ; it is quite another thing to attempt to reconstruct these sources. In the case of the Pentateuch there is some justification for the reconstructors. To begin with, the Pentateuch is essentially a codifying of legislation, and a code to be useful must in some respects be complete. Moreover, the compiler of the Pentateuch was dealing with an ancient and venerable literature. The later stratum (P) was already statute law ; the earlier portion (JE, D) was a legacy from the old times, from the pre-exilic state. The main business of the compiler was incorporation ; earlier documents and codes were to be superseded by the new Pandect. Something, of course, is left out in such a procedure, but most of what is important

<sup>1</sup> 'In den Erzählungsbüchern des Alten Testaments liegt die Sache ganz anders [als bei den Synoptikern], und auch dort kann die literarische Analyse zum Kinderspiel ausarten' (Wellhausen, *Einl. in die drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 57).

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is retained. Indeed, one of the really striking features about the narrative in Genesis, to take the obvious instance, is the number of Doublets, *i.e.* stories told twice over. We have two stories of Creation, two stories of the Flood, two stories about the destruction of Sodom, two stories about the Patriarch's wife and the heathen monarch. The critical explanation, no doubt correct, is that in all cases these Doublets are parallel stories taken from the separate documents or literatures out of which the Pentateuch is compiled.

Now in the Gospels we do occasionally meet with the same sort of thing, but far less frequently, and the same explanation does not always seem to apply. The true analogy to the criticism of the Pentateuch in New Testament literature would have been afforded by the Diatessaron, if unfortunately the Gospels were no longer extant and we were reduced to extracting the Gospel history from Tatian's famous Harmony. The Diatessaron, like the Pentateuch, is a compilation. If we had only the Diatessaron to go upon, I think it very likely that critics might have identified the Fourth Gospel, and reconstructed it almost entire: this would correspond to the Priestly Code in the Pentateuch. It would further have been recognised that there were

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other earlier documents of superior historical value besides the Johannine Gospel, and some of the characteristics of some of these documents might have been discovered. We should probably also have distinguished the two Nativity stories of Matthew and Luke, and recognised the Jewish-Palestinian character of some sections of Matthew. But I do not think the Synoptic Gospels as wholes would have been successfully reconstructed; we should have had to remain content with passing historical judgement on single narratives and sayings.

Now, if we should fail when we attempt to reconstruct the Gospels out of the Diatessaron, supposing we had no independent knowledge of the Gospels themselves, how much more shall we fail if we attempt to reconstruct the sources of the Gospels out of the Gospels? Such an attempt assumes what may be called literary piety on the part of the surviving writer whose works we try to use as a quarry, and literary piety is a quality—I will not go so far as to call it an absolute virtue—which hardly makes its appearance in Christendom before 150 A.D. Indeed, there is not much of it to be found even then. I am not quite sure if I have made my meaning clear. What I mean can be illustrated by considering the same passage to which reference has already been

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made. I hope subsequently to shew you that our first Gospel, the Gospel according to Matthew, was directly based on our Gospel according to Mark; and, further, that this is the case with respect to the passage Matt xii 3-8, which has been already quoted. On this view, Matt xii 3-8 is simply rewritten from Mk ii 25-28, with another saying of our Lord, drawn from another source, worked into the narrative. As I say, I hope to give you some reasons for believing this in a subsequent Lecture; I must ask you now to take it more or less upon trust, merely premising that it is a generally accepted conclusion, not a private fad of my own. But the reason why it has been possible to formulate this conclusion is that the Gospel of Mark is actually before us. I venture to assert that if we had only had Matt xii 3-8 and Lk vi 3-5, we could never have reconstructed Mk ii 25-28, their common source. We should never have known that the common source contained a curious, and chronologically a rather inaccurate, reference to Abiathar, nor should we have guessed of the existence of the characteristic saying, 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' Being, as we are, in possession of the common source, we can give a fairly intelligible account of the manner in which the later Evangelists treated it, when adapting it for

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their own narratives ; but we could not reconstruct the source from these later narratives alone.

The Gospel according to S. Mark is not the only source used by Matthew and Luke, but it is the only source which has survived. We see, clearly enough, that we could not have reconstructed the Gospel according to S. Mark out of the other two Synoptic Gospels, although between them nearly all Mark has been incorporated by Matthew and Luke. How futile, therefore, it is to attempt to reconstruct those other literary sources which seem to have been used by Matthew and Luke, but have not been independently preserved.

Another instance of the literary procedure of an Evangelist has been well characterised by my predecessor in the Norrisian Chair. He is writing of what he calls the 'moulding influence of the editor's hand,' and goes on to say : 'S. Mark's record of the opening words of the dialogue between our Lord and the rich young man is as follows (x 17 f) :—"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? . . . Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." With this S. Luke's account (xviii 18 f) coincides. But in S. Matthew (xix 16 f) a significant variation confronts us. The word "good" reappears indeed, but its reference is wholly changed—"Master, what *good thing* shall I do

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that I may have eternal life? . . . Why askest thou me *concerning that which is good?* . . . One there is who is *good*." Here it is clear that the wording of the dialogue has been altered to avoid the appearance of our Lord's calling in question His own goodness, and of His refusing to accept the attribution to Himself of what is Divine.<sup>1</sup>

So far Dr. Chase. It is quite evident that if we only had had the narrative of S. Matthew we should never have guessed how the dialogue stood in his source. We might have said that something was wrong in the report, and that our Lord was not generally accustomed to discuss the Meaning of Good, but we should have been unable to reconstruct the original form of the conversation. The chances would be that the most ingenious restoration would have been rather further from historical truth than the narrative as told in S. Matthew.

It may perhaps seem a melancholy doctrine, to teach that the Evangelists whose works we possess altered freely the earlier sources which they used as the basis of their narratives, and yet that we can do little towards reconstructing these earlier sources. Of course, it would be indeed unsatisfactory if we had reason to believe that the accounts of Jesus Christ on which we rely were

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 387.

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misleading. If, for instance, it should be proved that the Gospel according to Mark, or according to John, gave a thoroughly false notion of the life or personality of our Lord, even when we looked at these documents from the proper point of view, then indeed we should be in a melancholy position. But as a matter of fact, this is far from being the case. Every picture demands that we shall look at it from the proper point of view, whether our object be to learn from the picture, or to pass judgement upon it. And when we come to examine the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to John, we shall find that it is necessary to look at it from a quite peculiar point of view. This we might expect beforehand to be the case with any work of exceptional character. But this does not prove it to be valueless, or that we could do better without it.

Let us admit at the outset that there are many things in the Gospel History, about which we most of us feel much excusable curiosity, which nevertheless we must be content to leave undefined. When a great man leaves this earth, we have begun to feel that all is not satisfactory unless we have the 'Life and Letters of Mr. Z.' in two volumes, written by one of his nearest friends, to be followed at an appropriate interval by 'The real Mr. Z.,' a work compiled by a more

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or less discriminating critic. If there be any dark or mysterious episodes in Mr. Z.'s career, we want the searchlight turned on to explain the matter from all points, and from the standpoint, if possible, of all the actors in the drama.

We cannot get that out of our materials for the Life of our Lord. On the very shortest estimate the length of the Ministry must have extended to about 400 days, and I doubt if our Gospels contain stories from 40 separate days. So that nine-tenths at least of the public life of Jesus remains to us a blank, even if we were to take every recorded incident as historical and accurately reported. And all the recorded sayings of Christ, how long would they take to pronounce? With due gravity and emphasis they might take six hours,—hardly, perhaps, so much. In other words, they would take no more than two great political speeches, and a considerably less time than this present course of Lectures.

Even apart from the results of the 'higher criticism,' we do not possess enough information to enable us to write a biography of our Lord after the modern pattern. But this is not all loss. The real question is not whether we have as much as we should like, but whether we have as much as we need. The craving for elaboration is really a kind of covetousness; and a man's life, as our



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Lord Himself tells us, does not consist in the abundance and superfluity of things connected with him. How often it is one story, one letter, one illuminative saying or judgement of the subject of a bulky modern biography, which tells us more than all the rest what the real meaning of the life was. The part of Lady Macbeth is just 250 lines long; how many a biography in two large volumes tells us less of what is really essential about its hero!

To come back to the Evangelists, we have quite enough in mere bulk to obtain an intelligible picture of the Gospel History, if our materials are fairly trustworthy. We have admitted that it is to some extent and from some points of view regrettable that our sources are not more extensive. But I should like here to say a few words in passing upon another side of the question. I have said that our Evangelists altered freely the earlier sources which they used. They changed, added, omitted. This sounds, no doubt, very terrible and dangerous. Let us put the statement, then, in another form, a form quite as legitimate, but less shocking. Let us say that the Evangelists were historians, and not chroniclers. This does not assert that they were trustworthy or even truthful. There are plenty of people who do not agree with Macaulay or with

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Froude, who would be eager to deny the quality of trustworthiness to these distinguished historians. 'Well,' you may say, 'this is worse than ever. Is it not a misfortune that our knowledge of Christ should come to us only through writers, of whom you assert that they are not less partisan than Macaulay, and not more trustworthy than Froude?'

Waiving the question for the present whether the Evangelists are, as a matter of fact, suitably compared with Macaulay and Froude, I still think there is something to be said in reply.

Put very shortly, I think we may say that a true impression is on the whole and for most people better conveyed by a friend than by an observer wholly dispassionate. What is the real reason for the modern demand for documents? Is it not because we believe in our hearts that we, the modern historian, have a better right than those who have gone before us to sit in judgement on the evidence? This conviction is justified in certain departments of thought, and it is not to be denied that some of these departments of thought concern Gospel study very nearly. One of them, of course, is the question of what is commonly called 'miracle'; no doubt, we are better qualified than the Christians at the end of the first century of our era to decide what is, and

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what is not, a likely contravention of the uniformity of nature. I am not so sure that we are better qualified to judge ethical questions, to choose the good and reject the evil. In all seriousness I am not prepared to maintain that Professor Schmiedel's Christ, or Professor Harnack's Christ, or Count Tolstoi's Christ, is in essentials any nearer the historical truth than the Christ as conceived by S. Luke or the compiler of the Gospel according to S. Matthew. All kinds of science are valid in their own province: this is the great critical principle of which M. Loisy is the prophet, and for which he is the symbol. The chronicling of events is one thing, and the characterisation of a personality is another. The course of events is a fixed objective series; things happen once for all, and the determination of the course of past events is a wholly definite task, difficult indeed, yet perfectly mechanical. In this sense, a Cambridge audience does not need again to be reminded that 'History is a science, no more and no less.'

But the appreciation of a living personality is not entirely a mechanical task, for it describes the effect of the personality on the writer or speaker: one man may be the subject of many adequate portraits. And from this point of view we shall do well to approach the Gospels in the spirit of

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those who are as ready to be taught as to sit in judgement. 'Matthew' took the narrative of 'Mark'; he set the Sermon on the Mount at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, and he added, at the end of the final warnings concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, the parable or discourse about the Sheep and the Goats. By doing this, says the objective historian, the narrator of facts, 'Matthew' has entirely disturbed the balance of the story. The progress of the narrative is destroyed; we cannot trace in 'Matthew' the development of hostility in our Lord's opponents, the disciples appear from the very beginning as an organised body distinct from the unbelieving Jews, and so the march of events becomes incomprehensible. Furthermore, we shall be told that the Sermon on the Mount itself is not a true discourse at all; it is a cento of more or less detached sayings, grouped under heads, and many of these sayings, even if they be genuine, belong to the later stages of the Ministry. We shall find also that many critics are inclined to assign the parable of the Sheep and the Goats to the latest cycle of the Synoptic period, and to say that in any case it has no historical claim to be considered a part of the discourse traditionally ascribed to Christ upon the Mount of Olives. All this is more or less

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justifiable historical criticism. The story of Jesus Christ's life on earth, it cannot be too often repeated, happened in one way, and one way only. And when our object, a noble and worthy object, is to trace out to the best of our power the story of that life regarded as an outward chain of events, it is our first duty to weigh these historical considerations, to choose the probable course of events on which to believe, and resolutely to reject a presentation of the course of events, which careful consideration shews to be historically improbable.

But this is not all. The course of events is important, but the effect produced upon us by the course of events is still more important. What was the effect which the course of events, the Life of Jesus Christ on earth, produced on our First Evangelist? Was it not this, that it made him arrange his Gospel as it stands for us to read? When we take as our aim and object to consider what was the real effect of Jesus Christ's Ministry, in other words, to consider what manner of man He was, it is not for nothing that we find these dislocations and rearrangements which so seriously disturb the historical order of the First Gospel. It is not for nothing that the Evangelist would not describe the preaching of Jesus, not even for a chapter, without telling his readers at length

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that what Jesus preached was the blessedness of those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, that anger was like murder and lust like adultery, and that miracles and prophesyings even in His own name were nothing without simplicity and sincerity of life. It is not for nothing that the Evangelist considered it appropriate to make Jesus conclude His discourse on the Coming of the Son of Man and the consummation of all things by a description of the End in which the *King of the Day of Judgement* appears not as the *Merciful* and *Compassionate* towards His followers and the avenger of their sufferings, but as one that pronounces His highest blessing on those who, being in no sense His disciples, and without looking for His reward, had yet been kind to the unfortunate and the wretched. Interesting indeed is the question, but after all of secondary importance, whether the words which describe this scene are a literal Greek translation of words once upon a time spoken by Jesus of Nazareth; what is of real moment, a fact certainly of objective history, is that the total impression of the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth made the Evangelist write in this manner, and made the Society for which he wrote accept the portrait he has drawn. The more a rigorously objective criticism impels us to regard this and that

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traditional Saying of Christ as a later accretion into the Gospel legend, how much more wonderful, how much more forceful, must He have been, round whose Personality grew up not only the stories of the Nativity and the Temptation, but also the parables of the Prodigal Son and of the Pharisee and the Publican? I hope I may not be misunderstood: we have not discussed these stories and parables yet at close quarters, and for aught our investigation may show, we may yet find that they are authentic reminiscences. What I want to urge here, now that we stand on the threshold, is the witness borne by the Evangelists to the moral impression produced by Jesus Christ upon His followers. The Evangelists are not mechanical chroniclers, they are not afraid to treat the material before them with great literary freedom, and here and there we actually see unhistorical legends growing as it were before our eyes. Under these circumstances, the real miracle, which only escapes our notice because it is so familiar, is the irresistible vitality of the ethical teaching of the Gospel. The Fire has been laid on the earth, and we see it kindling on every side. The Christian has hardly need to claim more from the scientific historian than that the life of Jesus Christ on earth inspired the canonical Gospels, made the Evangelists

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write as they did, made the Gospels what they are.

We might perhaps stop here, and say that further investigation is superfluous. But this would be, I am sure, a wrong conclusion. I shall therefore say a few words upon the reasons which make minute and searching investigation of the details of the Gospel History a profitable as well as a fascinating study. As I said at the beginning of this Lecture, we lose ourselves so often and for so long in the details that we sometimes forget the general reasons for our occupation. For this cause we shall do well to consider why we are thus occupied, and what we may hope to find.

And here I may take as my text two contrasted sentences from the *Cambridge Theological Essays*, which together express what I wish to say better than I could have put it myself. The first is from Dr. Cunningham, who reminds us that we must not expect to attain to fuller appreciation of religious truth merely by studying the details of the Synoptic Problem. "The most complete success," he says, "in the reproduction of the past would still show us the crowds who stoned the prophets, or from whom the Lord turned because of their unbelief."<sup>1</sup>

This is expressed with as much truth as

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Theol. Essays*, p. 39.



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picturesqueness. We shall only be disappointed if we expect orthodoxy to be the natural result of a competent knowledge of the history of Dogma, or if we expect to understand the nature of conscious life by a study of the process of Evolution. What such study will give us is not the vital truth, but the removal of errors. Historical criticism does not create, it clears away; clears away everything but the objective fact of the course of events. But the course of events remains. Dr. Cunningham does not deny that the crowds who stoned the prophets were really there. They are a part, and a real part, of the whole truth; and perhaps, but for historical criticism, we might forget their existence. Nevertheless we shall do well to master Dr. Cunningham's warning at the outset, lest we be disappointed later on with the results of our inquiries. We must be prepared to find the unbelieving crowds and the other less obviously edifying parts of the scene loom larger and more important the nearer we get to them. We must be prepared to find the whole drama of the rise of Christianity more confused, more complex, more secular, in a word, more appropriate to the limitations of its own age, than we should gather from the epic selectiveness of the Creeds and the theological manuals.

Why then, you may say, should we proceed at

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all? What is the ultimate use of this destructive historical criticism? The answer lies, I am sure, in that other sentence from the *Cambridge Theological Essays* to which I referred above. It comes at the end of a footnote in Dr. Foakes Jackson's admirable Essay on 'Christ in History,' coming, in fact, rather as a *caveat* or necessary reservation than as part of the author's special thesis. Dr. Foakes Jackson has been speaking of the evolutionary standpoint from which we now rightly treat Church History. He points out the impossibility of resuscitating the past, that is, the impossibility of resuscitating the practices and the standpoint of past ages as actual rules for our own conduct, and his whole Essay is an attempt to portray our Lord as one who is constantly revealing Himself with increasing clearness to the conscience of men (p. 524). Yet he feels himself constrained to add: "At the same time, since in every age the Church is tempted to regard her interpretation of her Lord as final and complete, a return to the historic Christ is a constant necessity, and the only cause of progress."<sup>1</sup>

It is not to get new ideas of religion or of philosophy that we need a minute and searching historical criticism; rather do we need to test

<sup>1</sup> *Camb. Theol. Essays*, p. 476 note.

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the ideas we already have by the historical facts, and we cannot get at the facts without the criticism. Not that it is always or generally an easy task to exercise a true historical criticism upon a great subject, and it is only too easy to fall into error. But of this, at least, we may be confident, that our errors will not long escape detection: if not by our own generation, then by the next. And the attempt to 'return to the historic Christ' is the only way by which we can escape from the tyranny of the last generation's theories about Christ.

I ventured at the beginning of this Lecture to speak of the task incumbent upon us all as the reconstructing of the Portrait of Jesus Christ. Perhaps it would better express my meaning if I said the painting of the Portrait on the retina of our minds. We have to answer for ourselves the old question, 'What think ye of Christ?' and the answer varies for various ages and various degrees of intelligence. But that the retina of our minds may take an impression of Christ, it is necessary that Christ be brought before them; and this I understand to be the work of the historical critic and investigator.

The events of the first century are imperfectly known to us; it may turn out on investigation that some things happened differently from what

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we thought, or what our fathers thought. But there is one thing at least which we know before we start. We know that the events of the first century produced the second and succeeding centuries. There is no need for the most timid to be afraid of the results of historical investigation. We know the result of the events beforehand; the investigations of the critics cannot alter the events of past history. We have no reason to be afraid of the unbelieving crowds that Dr. Cunningham has called up from the past: they were really there and really dangerous, but the Christian Church came through somehow in spite of them.

## II.

### THE GOSPEL OF MARK: ITS LITERARY ORIGINALITY.

*Marcus . . . Euangelium . . . scripsit, ostendens in eo quid et  
generi suo deberit et Christo.*

ANY estimate of the effect of the Gospels upon the early Church and upon later ages must almost inevitably begin with a statement about the date, literary origin, and historical value of the Gospels; and these are questions of such importance and complexity that a statement of conclusions alone would not carry sufficient weight. It will be necessary, therefore, first to consider the Gospels at some length as literary and historical documents, and afterwards, with the help of the results thus attained, to examine their influence upon the Church and their place in the development of the Christian religion.

The four Gospels are not by any means four independent literary works. The Fourth Gospel is most conveniently treated apart. But the three

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Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, obviously have something in common : they must either copy one another or make use of a common source. The first question is whether this source or sources be written or oral. All kinds of answers have been given in the past, but I have no doubt at all which answer is correct. I am fully convinced that the main common source of the Synoptic Gospels was a single written document.

In the first place, the common matter is not mere floating tradition, the property of all the Christian community. Had it been this, I cannot but think that the incidents identically related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, would have been to a larger extent the critical points of the Ministry, and not a capricious selection of anecdotes. The story of the Resurrection, the words from the Cross, the narrative of the Last Supper,—in these we might have expected all our authorities to agree, even in detail ; but they do not agree. On the other hand, the parenthesis which explains that Jesus turned from addressing the Pharisees to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Arise,' is found in all three Synoptic Gospels ; all three insert the statement concerning Herod's alarm about Jesus at the same point, and Matthew and Mark go on to

## ONE WRITTEN COMMON SOURCE

relate, so to speak in a footnote, the circumstances of John the Baptist's murder; all three inform us that the Pharisees, when they asked about the tribute-money, began by assuring our Lord that He taught the way of God in truth. These points are matters of secondary detail; an oral teaching or a catechetical tradition which contained them must be held to have had singular consistency. And if our Evangelists had worked upon a fixed oral tradition of this definite sort, I cannot imagine how they dared to take such liberties with it. An oral tradition which is definite is authoritative: can we conceive of an oral tradition which accurately distinguishes between the *baskets* (κόφιναι) of fragments taken up after the feeding of the 5000, and the *creels* (σφυρίδες) taken up after feeding the 4000, but which left the details of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection vague?

A written source, on the other hand, is perfectly definite, but not necessarily authoritative. When the Evangelists simply copy their common source they agree, whether the point of agreement be important or unimportant, while at the same time the existence of the written document did not prevent the use of other documents or of any oral information which might come to hand. There was nothing in the nature of things to

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compel either of our Evangelists to reproduce the whole of the documents upon which they worked, or to follow them exactly: if they had had such respect for their predecessors' work as never to alter it, they would never have dared to supersede these documents or traditions by their own new Gospels. They would have been mere scribes or, at the most, harmonists like Tatian.

Our Synoptic Gospels, then, resemble one another because they are based on common written documents. But we can go one step further. In the parts common to Mark, Matthew, and Luke there is a good deal in which all three verbally agree; there is also much common to Mark and Matthew, and much common to Mark and Luke, but hardly anything common to Matthew and Luke which Mark does not share also. There is very little of Mark which is not more or less adequately represented either in Matthew or in Luke. Moreover, the common order is Mark's order; Matthew and Luke never agree against Mark in transposing a narrative. Luke sometimes deserts the order of Mark, and Matthew often does so; but in these cases Mark is always supported by the remaining Gospel.

Now what is the deduction to be drawn from



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these facts? There is only one answer. We are bound to conclude that Mark contains the whole of a document which Matthew and Luke have independently used, and, further, that Mark contains very little else beside.

This conclusion is extremely important; it is the one solid contribution made by the scholarship of the nineteenth century toward the solution of the Synoptic Problem. And I think it will not be out of place to pause for a moment to pay a tribute to the memory of the great scholar Lachmann, who was the first clearly to formulate it as long ago as 1835. Lachmann started from the central fact that the common order of the three Synoptic Gospels is Mark's order. "There is not so much diversity," he says, "in the order of the Gospel tales as most people imagine. It is indeed very great if you compare the Synoptic Gospels indiscriminately together, or compare Luke with Matthew; but if you compare Mark with both the others separately the diversity is inconsiderable."<sup>1</sup> And he goes on to draw the conclusion that the order of the narrative, as we

<sup>1</sup> *Sed narrationum evangelicarum ordinis non tanta est quanta plerisque videtur diversitas; maxima sane si aut hos scriptores eadem complexione omnes aut Lucan cum Matthæo composueris, exigua si Marcum cum utroque seorsum* (Lachmann in *Studien und Kritiken* for 1835, p. 574, quoted by Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 43).

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read it in Mark, is presupposed by and underlies the narratives in Luke and Matthew.<sup>1</sup>

Until Lachmann's time the prevailing opinion had been that S. Matthew's Gospel was the earliest, or at least that it offered the most primitive arrangement. The priority of Matthew was upheld by critics of such different opinions as S. Augustine and Ferdinand Christian Baur, the founder of the Tübingen School. I am not going to give a history of the ebb and flow of modern criticism; it will be enough to say that the relative priority of Mark is now accepted almost as an axiom by the great majority of scholars who occupy themselves with Gospel problems. But I should like to observe that this great change of opinion is a result of the change of method used in studying the question. From Augustine to Baur, and indeed often at the present day, attempts have been made to determine the relation of the Synoptic Gospels to one another by beginning with historical and dogmatic considerations; Lachmann, as you see, treated it mainly as a question of literary criticism. Far be it from me to disparage the high studies of history and philosophy in favour of literary criticism; but

<sup>1</sup> *Quid superest nisi ut illum quem omnes velut sibi præscriptum sequuntur ordinem, prius quam ipsi scriberent, auctoritate ac traditione quadam evangelica constitutum et confirmatum fuisse dicamus?* (Lachmann, p. 582.)

## THE PLACE OF LITERARY CRITICISM

as the wise man said, 'To everything there is a season,' and in the particular study before us the season of literary criticism comes logically first. As long as those who studied the Synoptic Problem attacked it by considering mainly the actual contents of the Gospels, they seemed to be unable to shake off a certain confusion between the earliest Synoptic Gospel and the primitive preaching of Christianity. It has always seemed to me, though from the nature of things it would be very difficult to prove, that this was the master cause which made Baur and his followers proclaim the priority, at least the relative priority, of S. Matthew's Gospel. What they really cared about was the Sermon on the Mount. S. Matthew's Gospel contains the Sermon on the Mount, and S. Mark's does not; they concluded, therefore, that S. Matthew's Gospel is earlier than S. Mark's. This is, of course, a very crude way of putting the matter, but I believe it to be near enough. At least it expresses the truth that Baur had a much firmer hold on primitive Christian Ethics than primitive Christian History, and it is the History we are now investigating—the History and the way that History is told in our documents.

Let us come back again to our examination of the three Synoptic Gospels and see whether we

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cannot advance yet another step. We have seen that the marked agreement of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in many minor points, taken together with their frequent difference in many important points, indicates the use of a common written source rather than a common tradition. And further, the fact that Matthew and Luke never agree in order, and hardly ever in wording, against Mark indicates that Mark contains the whole of a document which Matthew and Luke have independently used. Now let us go on and see whether there is any reason to suppose that the document thus used by Matthew and Luke is any other than the Gospel according to S. Mark itself.

Suppose for a moment that the common source was not S. Mark, but some earlier document, the greater part of which has been incorporated in our S. Mark,—a document, in fact, such as the Germans call *Ur-Marcus*. Well, then, we have Matthew, Mark, and Luke all basing their work upon this *Ur-Marcus*. What will be the result? As long as they all copy *Ur-Marcus* exactly, they will all agree. That is, indeed, what we often find. Sometimes one of the three, say Matthew, will not copy exactly: either he will drop something out, or add something fresh, or make some change or correction. In that case, if Mark and

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Luke still go on copying exactly, they will still agree, but Matthew will be different. That also is what we find, and the same is true if it was Luke who did not copy exactly. But if it was Mark that did not copy exactly when Matthew and Luke did, we should find Matthew and Luke agreeing against Mark ; and this we do not find. Either, therefore, Mark always copied this hypothetical *Ur-Marcus* exactly, or we must suppose that wherever he did not copy exactly, Matthew and Luke also did not copy exactly.

Again, it will naturally happen that at a given point both Matthew and Luke will be unwilling simply to copy the *Ur-Marcus*. If they have no acquaintance with each other's work, the result of their ceasing to copy out their exemplar will be that they will produce something different from it and from each other. In such a case Mark, Matthew, and Luke will all differ from each other, a state of things often found. But it will equally be the case whether Mark copies *Ur-Marcus* exactly or not, *i.e.* whether the common original was identical with our Mark, or different from it. Instances, therefore, in which all three Synoptic Gospels differ from each other, tell us nothing about the existence of an *Ur-Marcus*.

What, then, are the conditions which call for the hypothesis of an *Ur-Marcus*, or, in other words,

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which make it unreasonable for us to believe that Matthew and Luke actually used not our Mark, but an earlier edition of that Gospel?

A moment's consideration will tell us that the hypothesis of an *Ur-Marcus* can only be required by those places where Matthew and Luke agree against Mark; or where, all three Synoptists being different, the differences cannot be explained from the text of Mark as it stands. We must therefore pass in review the very few places where Matthew and Luke may be said to agree against Mark. These have often been collected together; the clearest arrangement is to be found in Sir John Hawkins's *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 174, 175 (2nd ed., pp. 210, 211). Sir John reckons 20 or 21 places in all, some of them concerned with very small points indeed: in others the agreement between Matthew and Luke is best explained as due to special and fairly obvious causes.

### 1. Mk ii 22 = Matt ix 17 = Lk v 37, 38.

*Mark*—And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but new wine into fresh wine-skins.

*Matthew*—Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

*Luke*—And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins; else the new wine will burst the skins, and itself will be spilled, and the skins will perish. But new wine must be put into fresh wine-skins.

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Here Matthew and Luke agree in stating directly that the wine will be *spilled* (ἐκχεῖται Matt, ἐκχυθήσεται Lk), while in Mark the verb ἀπόλλυται applies to the wine as well as to the wine-skins.

### 2. Mk iv 11 = Matt xiii 11 = Lk viii 10.

*Mark*—And He was saying to them, 'Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God.'

*Matthew*—And He answered and said to them, 'Unto you it is given to **know** the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.'

*Luke*—And He said, 'Unto you it is given to **know** the mysteries of the kingdom of God.'

Matthew and Luke agree in inserting the verb 'to know,' in explanation of what Sir John Hawkins calls the more difficult expression, viz. 'Unto you the mystery is given.' 'To give the mystery of (a rite)' is simply 'to initiate into (a rite).'<sup>1</sup> Mark preserves the Aramaic expression; Matthew and Luke give a paraphrase of Mark which is so natural that it is not necessary to explain it by having recourse to a documentary source. It should be added that 'mystery' (τὸ μυστήριον) is probably the original reading in Matt xiii 11 as well as in Mk iv 11.

### 3. Mk v 25-27 = Matt ix 20 = Lk viii 43, 44<sup>a</sup>.

*Mark*—And a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had

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<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Aphraates (p. 21) speaks of our Lord *giving the mystery* of baptism to the apostles.

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spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched His garment.

*Matthew*—And behold, a woman, who had hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind, and touched the border of His garment.

*Luke*—And a woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, which could not be healed of any,<sup>1</sup> came up behind, and touched the border of His garment.

I have quoted the introduction to the story of the Woman with an Issue rather fully, although the only point that Matthew and Luke have in common against Mark is that they say she 'came up behind, and touched the border of his garment,' while Mark has 'came in the crowd behind, and touched His garment.'<sup>2</sup> Apart from this one point, the passage very well illustrates the normal characteristics of the three Synoptic Evangelists. Mark is the fullest, the most graphic; Matthew the shortest, and the least interested in subsidiary detail. It is surely not necessary to suppose that Matthew and Luke were obliged to have recourse to something different from Mark in order to account for the mention of 'the border.' In Mk vi 56 we read that the sick who touched the border

<sup>1</sup> This is the true text, attested by the Sinai Palimpsest as well as by B D and the Sahidic.

<sup>2</sup> Mk has ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὅπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ; Matt and Lk have προσελθοῦσα ὅπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ.



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of Christ's garment were healed :<sup>1</sup> if we are to look for a literary source from which to derive the word in Matt ix 20, Lk viii 44, this is the most probable one.

It should be added that it is not quite certain that 'the border' really belongs to the text of Luke. In Matt ix 20, τοῦ κρασπέδου is omitted by the best Old Latin MSS, but it is found in all Greek and Syriac texts. But in Lk viii 44, τοῦ κρασπέδου is not only omitted by D and the best extant Old Latin texts; the Old Syriac version also paraphrases, having 'laid hold of the skirt of His garment' for ἤψατο [τοῦ κρασπέδου] τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ. In the other Gospels ἤψατο is not paraphrased, so that perhaps τοῦ κρασπέδου may have been absent from the Greek text that underlies the Old Syriac.

4. Mk vi 14 = Matt xiv 1 = Lk ix 7.

*Mark*—And King Herod heard. . . .

*Matthew*—At that season Herod the Tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus. . . .

*Luke*—Now Herod the Tetrarch heard all that was done. . . .

Mark here calls Herod Antipas incorrectly a 'king'; Matthew and Luke give the correct title. But he is called 'king' in Matt xiv 9, following Mk vi 26.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is confirmed by the parallel Matt xiv 36.

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5. Mk vi 30-34 = Matt xiv 13, 14 = Lk ix 10, 11.

*Mark*—And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And He saith unto them, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest awhile.' For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart. And many saw them going, and knew, and on foot from all the cities they ran together there, and outwent them. And He came out and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things.

*Matthew*—Now when Jesus heard, He **withdrew** from thence in a boat to a desert place apart; and when the multitudes heard, they **followed Him** on foot from the cities. And He came out, and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, and healed their sick.

*Luke*—And the apostles, when they were returned, declared unto Him what things they had done. And He took them, and **withdrew** apart to a city called Bethsaida. But the multitudes knowing it **followed Him**; and He welcomed them, and was speaking to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing he cured.

The<sup>1</sup> introduction to the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand exhibits very well the characteristic differences of the three Gospels. I cannot see that there is any need to suppose that any other source underlies Matthew and Luke here, except the text of Mark as we have it. It is true that there are some points shared by Matthew and Luke which are not found in Mark. They have *withdrew* (*ἀνεχώρησεν* Matt, *ὑπεχώρησεν* Lk), where Mark has *went away* (*ἀπῆλθεν*), all three words being quite common, and *ἀναχωρεῖν*

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being specially characteristic of Matthew. The curious wording of Mark, where it says that 'many went round by land and arrived beforehand at the point of disembarkation,'<sup>1</sup> becomes in Matthew and Luke the commonplace statement that 'the multitudes followed Him.' Finally, where Mark speaks of our Lord beginning to teach them, Matthew and Luke both speak of healings, but not at all in the same words. This introduction of general healings without details is characteristic both of Matthew and of Luke; *e.g.* Matt ix 35, xix 2, xxi 14; Lk v 15, vii 21. The mention of such healings here is surely due to the general tendencies of the Evangelists rather than to the following of a special documentary source.

When we compare these trifling agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark with those of Matthew and Mark alone, or Mark and Luke alone, we cannot but feel that they belong to a different order and demand a different explanation. Matthew and Mark both tell us about the journey by boat, and the uninvited arrival of the multitude by land (πεζῇ), and they verbally agree all through the phrase, 'and he came out and saw a

<sup>1</sup> In Mk vi 34, I cannot but think that ἐξελθών means 'when Jesus had got out of the boat,' otherwise 'outwent them' has no meaning. This also is the view of the passage taken by Dr. Swete in opposition to Hort, who thought it meant 'when Jesus had come forth from some sequestered nook in the desert.'

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great multitude, and He had compassion on them.' Mark and Luke agree in beginning with the return of the apostles from their missionary tour, and in mentioning that Jesus preached to the waiting multitudes. Moreover, the common omission by Matthew and Luke of the circumstance that our Lord and the apostles were so busy that they had no time for meals is explicable enough: such a detail, vivid and interesting as it is to us, is not obviously edifying. To omit it would be the natural course for a later Evangelist, especially to writers such as Matthew and Luke, who have so much fresh matter to add, which is not represented in Mark at all.

6. Mk viii 29 = Matt xvi 16 = Lk ix 20.

*Mark*—'Thou art the Christ.'

*Matthew*—'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

*Luke*—'The Christ of God.'

No argument for the use of a common document by Matthew and Luke can be based on the addition of 'of God,' because of the difference of expression.

7. Mk ix 7 = Matt xvii 5 = Lk ix 34.

*Mark*—And there came a cloud overshadowing them. . . .

*Matthew*—While He was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. . . .

*Luke*—And while He said these things, there came a cloud and overshadowed them. . . .

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It is fairly obvious that no conclusion can be drawn from this; any more than from the fact that in Mk ix 4 = Matt xvii 3 = Lk ix 30, Matthew and Luke agree in having the commonplace order 'Moses and Elijah,' while Mark has 'Elijah with Moses.'

### 8. Mk ix 19 = Matt xvii 17 = Lk ix 41.

*Mark*—And He answereth them and saith, 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be by you? how long shall I bear with you? carry him unto Me.'

*Matthew*—And Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? carry him hither to Me.'

*Luke*—And Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be by you, and bear with you? bring hither thy son.'

Here, as elsewhere, I have made some slight changes in the familiar diction of the English in order to emphasise some of the slighter verbal agreements and disagreements. The agreement of Matthew and Luke in adding *perverse* to *faithless* does indeed shew that they have a common literary source at this point; but that source is Deut xxxii 5, where the LXX has γεγενῆσκα καὶ διεστραμμένη, 'a crooked and *perverse* generation.' That this phrase came readily to the pens of early Greek-speaking Christians is illustrated by its occurrence in Phil ii 15.

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9. Mk x 30 = Matt xix 29 = Lk xviii 30.

*Mark*—‘A hundredfold.’

*Matthew*—‘Manifold.’

*Luke*—‘Manifold.’

Westcott and Hort read ‘manifold’ in Matt xix 29, but very many ancient authorities have ‘a hundredfold,’ like Mk x 30. But what makes the agreement of Matthew and Luke of no significance in either case is that it is probable that in Lk xviii 30 we ought to read ‘sevenfold’ with D and the Old Latin MSS.

10. Mk xi 19 = Matt xxi 17 = Lk xxi 37.

*Mark*—And every evening He went forth out of the city.

*Matthew*—And He left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

*Luke*—And every day He was teaching in the temple; and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

11. Mk xi 27<sup>b</sup> = Matt xxi 23<sup>a</sup> = Lk xx 1.

*Mark*—And as He was walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders. . . .

*Matthew*—And when He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching. . . .

*Luke*—And it came to pass, on one of the days, as He was teaching the people in the temple, and preaching the gospel, there came upon Him the chief priests and the scribes with the elders. . . .

I only include these two passages, because they occur in Sir John Hawkins's List.

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12. Mk xiv 45 f. = Matt xxvi 49 f. = Lk xxii 47 f.

Here Matthew and Luke agree in recording that Jesus spoke to Judas at the moment of the Arrest, but as they do not agree at all as to the words spoken, this passage cannot supply an argument for the use of a common literary source other than Mark.

13. Mk xiv 72<sup>b</sup> = Matt xxvi 75<sup>b</sup> = Lk xxii 62.

*Mark*—And when he thought thereon, he wept.

*Matthew*—And he went out, and wept bitterly.

*Luke*—[And he went out, and wept bitterly.]

The resemblance between Matthew and Luke is too close here to be the result of independent interpretation of Mark's obscure phrase *καὶ ἐπιβαλὼν ἑκλαiven*. But Lk xxii 62 is omitted by all the MSS of the Old Latin version. It is impossible to supply any cogent reason for this on the supposition that the words are genuine; it is therefore probable that the verse in Luke is an early harmonistic addition derived from Matt xxvi 72 itself.

14. Mk xiv 65 = Matt xxvi 67, 68 = Lk xxii 63-65.

*Mark*—And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, 'Prophesy': and the officers received Him with blows of their hands.

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*Matthew*—Then did they spit in His face and buffet Him : and some smote Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophecy unto us, thou Christ : **who is he that struck Thee ?**'

*Luke*—And the men that held Him mocked him, and beat Him. And they covered Him up, and were asking Him, saying, 'Prophecy : **who is he that struck Thee ?** And many other things spake they against Him, reviling Him.

This passage undoubtedly supplies more support than any other to those who believe that Matthew and Luke used Mark in a form different from that in which it is known to us. It is true that a number of Greek MSS add in Mark the missing words after 'Prophecy,' in agreement with Matt xxvi 68, but they are not the best MSS, nor are they supported by the Latin and the Syriac. It is wholly contrary to analogy that these MSS should have inherited the true text in a passage where our better MSS have a corruption. Of course, it is possible that we have here a primitive lacuna in the text, and that the ancestor of all our MSS, a copy which was (as we know) mutilated at the end and had several blunders elsewhere, had here lost a line after *Προφήτευσον*.

I do not think we are in a position entirely to solve this problem, but it stands practically alone. If two or three other instances of equal cogency occurred, we should be obliged to conclude that Matthew and Luke used a form of Mark different from what we know, and the question would arise



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whether this was a better or a worse text than that which we have. For though the longer text here is appropriate enough in Luke, according to whose narrative our Lord is rudely treated by the guards as they are whiling away the night hours till it shall be time for Caiaphas to get up and try the Prisoner, it is not so appropriate in Mark and Matthew, where the ill-treatment comes after the trial by Caiaphas, a trial which ended by taking Jesus away 'straightway' to Pilate, according to Mk xv 1. I cannot help thinking that *τίς ἐστὶν ὁ παῖς σου*, in Matt xxvi 68, is after all a mistaken addition by the Evangelist, and that the real meaning of the covering of our Lord's face, in Mk xiv 65, is that the Jewish Court regarded Him as a condemned criminal, like Haman of old.<sup>1</sup>

15. Mk xv 30 = Matt xxvii 40<sup>b</sup> = Lk xxiii 35<sup>b</sup> and 37.

*Mark*—Save Thyself, and come down from the cross.

*Matthew*—Save Thyself; if Thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.

*Luke*—Let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ of God, His chosen.

(the soldiers saying) If thou art the King of the Jews, save Thyself.

These passages in Matthew and Luke can hardly be held to shew literary connexion; I give

<sup>1</sup> Esth vii 8.

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them merely because like Nos. 10 and 11 they figure in Sir John Hawkins's List.

16. Mk xv 39 = Matt xxvii 54 = Lk xxiii 47.

*Mark*—And when the centurion who stood by over against Him saw that He so gave up the ghost, he said, 'Truly this man was a son of God.'

*Matthew*—Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, 'Truly a son of God was this man.'

*Luke*—And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous man.'

I do not think there is any indication here that Matthew and Luke have here any common source, though Matthew mentions τὰ γινόμενα and Luke τὸ γεγόμενον. The word for 'centurion' is κεντυρίων in Mark, ἐκατόνταρχος in Matthew, and ἐκατοντάρχης in Luke.

17. Mk xv 42-46 = Matt xxvii 57-60 = Lk xxiii 50-54.

*Mark*—And when even was now come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, there came Joseph from Arimathæa, a worthy councillor, who also himself was looking for the kingdom of God; and he boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the corpse of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled . . . and granted the corpse to Joseph. And having bought a linen cloth, he took Him down, and wound Him in the linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of a rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

*Matthew*—And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was

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Jesus' disciple : **this man** went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up. And Joseph took the body, and **wrapped** it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock : and having rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, he departed.

*Luke*—And behold, a man by name Joseph, who was a councillor, a good man and righteous (he had not consented to their counsel and deed) from Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, who was looking for the kingdom of God : **this man** went to Pilate, and asked for the **body** of Jesus. And he took it down, and **wrapped** it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb that was hewn in stone, where never man had yet lain. And it was the day of the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

I have quoted the passages which have to do with Joseph of Arimathæa in full, because they seem to me to be very instructive for our purpose. The points which Matthew and Luke have in common are emphasised as before in thick type. The only one of importance is the word used for enshrouding our Lord's body. Matthew and Luke say that Joseph *ἐνετύλιξεν αὐτό*, while Mark has *αὐτὸν ἐνείλησεν*, both Greek words being quite common. Matthew and Luke also agree in refusing to speak of the dead body of Jesus as a corpse (*πτῶμα*), but Mark, according to the true text, has no such scruple. It should further be noticed that Matthew and Luke agree in the form of the sentence, 'this man went to Pilate.' Against these comparatively slight coincidences we may notice that Mark and Matthew

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have in common the mention of the evening at the beginning, and the description of the tomb and the rolled stone at the end; while Mark and Luke have in common the mention of the Preparation, the term 'councillor' (βουλευτής, *i.e. decurio*) applied to Joseph, and the description of him as 'looking for the kingdom of God.' Furthermore, it should be noticed that Mark calls Joseph of Arimathæa εὐσχήμων βουλευτής. Now εὐσχήμων is a word exactly like our 'worthy' or 'respectable'; εὐσχήμων βουλευτής means 'a worthy alderman,' where 'worthy' means of good standing either morally or financially. And, as a matter of fact, Matthew interprets it by πλούσιος, 'rich'; while Luke interprets it by ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος, 'good and righteous'; and, further, he supposes that the 'council' to which Joseph belonged must have been the Sanhedrin of chief priests and elders which condemned our Lord. Thus the phrase actually used by Mark explains some of the characteristic differences of Matthew and Luke.

18. (Mk xvi 1) = Matt xxviii 1 = Lk xxiii 54<sup>b</sup>.

Sir John Hawkins here notices that Matthew and Luke, but not Mark, make use of a rare word, ἐπιφώσκειν, to express the 'dawning' of a new day, not however of the same day, for in Luke it is used of the 'dawning' of the Sabbath,

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in Matthew of the day after the Sabbath. The peculiarity of the expression consists in this, that whereas the Greek word means 'to grow light,' the Jewish Sabbath begins at dusk on what we call Friday evening. But as the word does not come in the same context in Luke and Matthew, it cannot prove that they are making use of the same special literary source. In the Gospel of Peter, § 2, ἐπιφώσκει may come direct from Lk xxiii 54, but its occurrence in that document, again in another context, may serve to shew that the word did not seem particularly odd to Christians about the end of the first century AD.

19. Mk xvi 5 = Matt xxviii 2, 3 = Lk xxiv 4.

*Mark*— . . . A young man . . . arrayed in a white robe.

*Matthew*— . . . An angel of the Lord . . . his appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

*Luke*— . . . Two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

Here in the Greek 'dazzling' is ἀστραπτύση, lit. 'flashing like lightning'—a very natural enhancement of the simple 'white,' given by Mark.

20. Mk xvi 8 = Matt xxviii 8 = Lk xxiv 9.

[Not included, because we do not know the conclusion of the incomplete sentence in the middle of which Mk xvi 8 breaks off.]

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These twenty passages contain all the instances which Sir John Hawkins gives, as to which he says it seems almost impossible that Matthew and Luke could have accidentally concurred in their additions to the narrative of Mark.<sup>1</sup> In other words, these passages afford the strongest evidence that can be found against the supposition that Matthew and Luke used our Mark much as it has come down to us. It appears to me that the evidence is extremely weak, and that we are not compelled by it to imagine a hypothetical *Ur-Marcus*, a Gospel very much like our Mark, only slightly different here and there, differing, in fact, very much as a first edition of a modern book may differ from the second or subsequent editions.

We have lingered to-day among details. In the Introductory Lecture I said that I might be obliged to ask you to look at the trees, when you wanted rather a view of the wood as a whole, and now I fear you will think that I have taken you into a thicket. We have for the moment lost sight of the religious and historical value of the

<sup>1</sup> Yet another instance is given by Sir John (*Horae Synopticae*, p. 175), viz. the omission of Bethphage in Mk xi 1, according to D and the Latin texts, whereby this place would be named by Matthew and Luke only. But the subsequent discovery of the Sinai Palimpsest has told us that the Old Syriac version did not omit Bethphage in Mk xi 1, so doubtless it really has a place in the genuine text of Mark, and therefore does not come in our list.

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Gospels in a preliminary literary question, and even the literary question is confused by subsidiary detail. But we really have got through the thicket at last, and we shall be free to study our documents from a more general and historical point of view. I do not mean that we have settled all the questions connected with the literary genesis of the Second Gospel. Far from it: all that we have done is to explore a particular nook, an obscure corner out of which might conceivably have issued a fatal objection to our considering the Gospel according to S. Mark as a primary source for the Gospel History.

We have looked well over this corner, and found no irresistible argument for an *Ur-Marcus*, for an earlier edition of our Mark. If there were time we might go over the ground so admirably covered by Sir John Hawkins, and consider the parts of Mark not represented in Matthew or Luke. These peculiarities of Mark are divided by him into passages seeming to limit the power of Jesus Christ, or to be otherwise derogatory to or unworthy of him;<sup>1</sup> passages seeming to disparage the attainments or character of the Apostles;<sup>2</sup> other passages which might cause offence or difficulty;<sup>3</sup> minor enlargements of the narrative, such as later adaptors would omit in

<sup>1</sup> *Horae Synopticae*, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

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works primarily intended for edification, including some Aramaic phrases and unimportant proper names.<sup>1</sup> These are followed by a long list of rude, harsh, obscure or unusual words or expressions, which may therefore have been omitted or replaced by others.<sup>2</sup> All these peculiarities of Mark may be summed up as exhibiting un-ecclesiastical unconventionality, a characteristic which we might expect to find in a primitive document coming from the circle of the earliest Christians and written before it had been considered what style of writing was appropriate for telling the story of our Lord's Ministry.

All these things tend to demonstrate the originality of our Mark, and therefore to shew that 'Ur-Marcus' either never existed or was almost indistinguishable from the Mark we possess. But the most convincing argument against postulating a literary source behind our Mark remains to be noticed. It is this—that the hypothesis of an 'Ur-Marcus' presupposes an interest in the biographical details of the public life of Jesus Christ, of which there is little trace elsewhere. In the extant remains of very early Christian literature we find the doctrines of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; we find the arguments from prophecy; we find the ethical

<sup>1</sup> *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 100-105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-110.



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teaching of the Sermon on the Mount; and as early as the middle of the 2nd century we find copious references to the stories of the Nativity. In other words, we find what corresponds to the rudiments of the Creed, together with a real and vivid interest in Christian morality. But the details of the Galilean Ministry of Jesus Christ are hardly mentioned. It is not a mere chance that the fragments of non-canonical Gospels discovered in recent years—the Oxyrhynchus *Logia* (so-called) and the Gospel of Peter—concern themselves the one with detached Sayings of Jesus, the other with the Passion. It is the peculiar merit of S. Mark's Gospel, from the point of view of the historical investigator, that it deals mainly with a cycle of events foreign to the life and interests of the growing Christian communities.

The Gospels according to Matthew and Luke represent far more nearly than the Gospel according to Mark the temper and the preferences of the early Churches: one of the unsolved problems of the New Testament literature is to supply the reasons why Mark became part of the Church's Canon. I therefore think it most improbable that this Gospel was one of a series of successive revisions of what was fundamentally the same work. Both the merits and the defects

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of the Gospel according to Mark seem to me to shew that we are dealing with what is, from a literary point of view, an original document and not an adaptation of something else.

This is not the same thing as asserting that Mark is either a faithful or an intelligent transcript of the events with which it deals, or that some of the sayings and tales which are related in it had not already passed from mouth to mouth and acquired thereby a more or less fixed form. What I think to be essentially new in Mark is the general cast of the whole narrative, the story of our Lord's Ministry told from the beginning to the end. It is our main historical source, and it is not itself based on older literary sources, but the single narratives represent the way in which the disciples of the disciples of Jesus told to one another such stories of the earthly Ministry of their Lord as they remembered in the light of all that had happened during the momentous thirty or forty years which succeeded the Crucifixion.

In one instance it is possible that a written source may underlie the words of the Second Gospel, viz. in the Eschatological Discourse (Mk xiii 3-37). It was antecedently not improbable that what professed to be words of the Lord about the Last Times should be independently circulated, especially during the agony

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of Jerusalem in AD 70, and our Evangelist may very well have incorporated such an independent fly-sheet into his work, with or without alteration. Whether the substance of this chapter be authentic reminiscence can only be determined by the same general tests of internal evidence that we apply to other parts of the Gospel; its external attestation is the same as the rest of the work—that is to say, it comes to us on the authority of the Evangelist who incorporated it. Both the general purport of the discourse and most of the single sayings seem to me, if I may venture to give an opinion, perfectly to harmonise with what we otherwise know of the teaching of Jesus. But the literary form is different from the rest of Mark; it is much the longest uninterrupted speech in the Second Gospel, and the several sentences are articulated together with *δέ* and *γάρ* and the other appropriate particles. One has only to compare it with the string of loosely connected Parables and Sayings in Mk iv 3–32 to feel the difference.

The hypothesis that the Eschatological Discourse in Mk xiii once circulated, very much in its present form, as a separate fly-sheet, explains the allusion to 'him that readeth' in Mk xiii 14. And I venture to suggest that this fly-sheet, rather than our Gospels themselves, may have been the

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ultimate historical source from which the eschatological chapter at the end of the Didache was derived. But however this may be, there is no doubt that this one Discourse stands alone in S. Mark's Gospel. Nowhere else is there any sign that I can see of the use of previously existing written sources. On the other hand, I believe with Wellhausen that 'Mark was known to both the other Synoptists in the same form and with the same contents as we have it now.'<sup>1</sup> It is, I repeat, our main source for the Gospel History. In the next Lecture we shall examine it as a whole, with the object of inquiring to what extent the picture which it presents of the outward life of Jesus Christ is to be taken as a credible historical view.

<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 57.