

PART II:

# Mighty words, Mighty deeds

In the Bible, without doubt, are history and tale:  
proverb and enigma: correction and wisdom:  
knowledge and discretion: poetry and word-play:  
conviction and counsel: dirge, entreaty, prayer,  
praise, and every kind of supplication; and all this  
in a Divine way superior to all the prolix benedictions  
in human books; to say nothing of its containing  
in its depths the Names of the Holy One, blessed  
is He, and secrets of being without end.

(Solomon b. Isaac)

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## THE CONTOURS OF THE NAZARENE BIBLE

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God shall stand for ever. (*Isaiah 40:8*)

A change of Scripture could signify, indeed, often does signify, a change of religions. For instance, the Samaritans have the Torah *i.e.*, the five *Books of Moses*, plus *Joshua*. That is all. This, their canon, represents their understanding as to what constitutes God's standard for sacred literature. Rabbinical Judaism has the *Tenakh*, thirty-nine books consisting of *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings); Orthodoxy has 75 books, consisting of testaments *Old* and *New*. (Included in this number are nine books, sometimes referred to as inter-testamental, deuterocanonical, or apocryphal, yet, in their view, are canonical); Catholicism has 73 books; Protestantism, 66; the Mormons, more than 80, while the Church in Ethiopia has two canons - one long, one short, and both uniquely its own.

If anything the Nazarene Scriptural canon is as distinct from those already mentioned as they are from each other. If we want to know more about the Nazarenes, we would do well to find out what they were reading - as well as what they were writing - as Scripture. But let us not suppose in the absence of an authoritative pronouncement from God (of which there is none) that they held hard-and-fast doctrinaire views. Because we simply do not have a "Thus saith the Lord" on the matter, personal discretion must necessarily come into play.

In part it is a matter of allegiance: the Samaritans look to Moses but not to David. The Jews look to David but not to Jesus; Christians generally look to the Jesus of the *New Testament* while Mormons look to all of the above, plus Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon*. But who has the right to determine which books are in and which are out? To say that it's self-evident or obvious when all the while thoughtful, well-educated people differ, is to fly in the face of the facts. The existence of competing canons is proof that no consensus exists.

Let us ask again, which Bible, whose Bible? To such Protestants as adhere to the swinging-door theory, that God closed the *Old Testament* canon 400 years before opening it again for the *New*, it will come as no small surprise to learn that the Nazarenes' canon of Scripture looked rather more like Orthodoxy's and Catholicism's than their own, which is to say that the inter-testamental concept so dear to Protestant theologians is a fictitious construct. (Evidence confirming this comes from J. Rendel Harris's recovery of Matthew's *Testimonia* demonstrating much Nazarene dependence on the so-called "deuterocanonical" books to establish Jesus' messianic claim.)

And what of this "deuterocanonical" business, a secondary canon. It's like being just a

little pregnant. Either one is pregnant or not pregnant. Either a book is inspired or not inspired. But let us take care not to call uninspired that which Jesus called inspired.

Even within Judaism, consensus in Jesus' day on the Bible's boundaries was not to be found for what the Sadducees in the Temple thought on the matter did not agree with what the Pharisees in the Synagogue thought, much less with what the Jews in Alexandria thought. As for the *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* translators, they observed:

At the time of Jesus and rabbi Hillel – the origins of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism – there was, and there was not, a "Bible." . . . There was a Bible in the sense that there were certain sacred books widely recognized by the Jews as foundational to their religion and supremely authoritative for religious practice. There was not, however, a Bible in the sense that the leaders of the general Jewish community had specifically considered, debated, and definitively decided the full range of which books were supremely and permanently authoritative and which ones – no matter how sublime, useful, or beloved – were not.

In about 90 AD, the Rabbinical school in Jamnia is said to have rejected certain books, among others: *Ecclesiasticus*, *the Wisdom of Solomon* and the *Gilyonim* (the Aramaic gospels). Later, the entire *Septuagint* would be rejected. All of these writings helped to establish Jesus' messianic claim. Later, much later, in the 1880's AD, an abject, Judaizing Protestantism, embracing this rabbinical judgment, removed from their Bible the inter-testamental books, thereby largely conforming its *Old Testament* with that of the rabbinical *Tenach* while rejecting certain Scriptures recognized as valid by Jesus and his apostles.

Every communion takes pride in its own canon. How seriously is this taken? Very. For instance, a little known fact regarding the Bible's removal from American public schools: it did not happen, as one might suppose, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to a challenge from atheists or by the ACLU but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to a conflict between immigrant Catholics and Protestants in Boston. No room for compromise existed. No one wanted their child exposed to someone else's Bible, be it *King James* or *Douay*.

Is it possible to believe in God but not believe in God's miracle: a Bible perfectly preserved, complete, knowable?

(Miriam Weinstein, *A Nation of Words*)

Actually, living with ambiguity and uncertainty is far better than having the kind of cocksure, know-it-all certitude that commonly passes for biblical learning. Thus, in response to Miriam Weinstein's question, the answer is, unequivocally, yes! Only the compulsively anxious-minded would care to see the great, unfathomable ocean that is the Bible reduced to a "knowable" backwater which passes for fundamentalist biblicism. Typically, hierarchical de-

nominationalism, be it rabbinical or churchly, does not encourage its communicants to think for themselves, which is why it defines minutely the doctrines that are to be believed and from which they are not to deviate. Yet it is a believer's prerogative to form his or her own opinions and change them as he or she grows. Thinking to clarify matters, organized religion only muddles them further by attempting, first, to narrowly define for their respective members what constitutes God's Word, then, compounding error with error, attempting to narrowly define its meaning. While this may help bind a communion's adherents together more tightly, it necessarily alienates all others whose scriptural canons or interpretations differ; it is a surefire recipe for division. The remedy is respect for individual judgment. If Jesus is the Truth, then the Bible is but the truth about the Truth, while our interpretation of the Bible is, at best, the truth about the truth about the Truth. To make a litmus test of our interpretation is to go the sectarian road.

To say, "God said it, I believe it, that settles it," settles nothing. Do we really know what God said? And if so, do we really know what He meant or how to apply the meaning correctly? Where then lies the path between denying altogether the possibility of identifying God-inspired books and dependance on a religious institution to define them for us? It would be for us to make this a matter of personal discovery, not by starting with a doctrinal claim, but with a question mark. After that, instead of expecting a once-for-all discovery, let's make of it an ongoing adventure, for only a personal, experiential approach can make the Bible come alive. Far better is it to form a point of view slowly, hesitantly, than smugly thinking it's all so simple and self-evident. Maybe it is not God's communicating inadequately, but our listening inattentively that is the source of misunderstanding, for, in substituting what is programmatic and mechanistic, do we not inadvertently tune out the Spirit? May we not lose sight of the vital good that Scripture can do us, for:

All scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy. That is how the man who is dedicated becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

#### THE NAZARENE BIBLE

. . . that the scriptures might be fulfilled. (John 17:22, see also Mark 14:49)

The gospels are integrally connected to a larger body of writing for sure, but the nature and extent of that connection (what might be termed a boundary issue), remains in certain respects uncharted territory for we have no "thus saith the Lord." Therefore, it is a matter of personal discretion. By appropriating such books as the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Sirach*, for use in their *Testimonia*, the Nazarenes, beginning with Jesus, demonstrated that their Bi-

ble looked rather more like that used by Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, than it did that currently used by Protestant Christianity or by the Jews. But what of the “Old Testament”/ “New Testament” dichotomy? These are not legitimate terms, for just as there’s one Lord, one faith, one baptism, so is there one body of Scripture – not bifurcated, *Old* and *New*. For instance, without *Maccabees*, a regrettable historical gap exists, for Jesus kept Hanukkah (see *John 10:22-23*).

Conversely, propounding what is called the “swinging door theory,” various Protestant theologians have claimed that the door of Scripture opened with Moses but that it blew shut about 400 BC, only to swing back open for the *New Testament*, after which, presumably, it was shut for good. But Nazarenes, not knowing anything about such a theory, as do Orthodox, as do Roman Catholics, had available for their use the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a book Protestants dismiss as “inter-testamental or “deutero-canonical.” One passage in it reads:

Let us oppress the poor Righteous Man. . . . Let our strength be the law of righteousness, for that which is feeble is proved unprofitable. And let us lie in wait for the Righteous Man, for he is ill-profitable to us, and he opposeth our works, and he upbraideth us with sins of the law, and he allegeth against us sins of our discipline. He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the Lord’s son. He was made to reprove our thoughts. He is grieveth unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other men’s, and his ways are diverse. We are esteemed of him as base metal, and he abstaineth from our ways as from uncleannesses. He pronounceth the end of the righteous to be blessed, and boasteth that God is his father.

Let us see if his words be true: and let us tempt what [shall happen] in his outgoing. For if he is the Righteous Son of God, He will help him, and deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us examine him with shameful treatment and torture, that we may learn his gentleness and judge his forbearance. Let us condemn him with a shameful death, for he shall be visited out of his own words.

These things they imagined, and they were deceived, for their own wickedness blinded them. And they knew not the mysteries of God, neither hoped they for the wages of holiness, nor discerned a reward for blameless souls. For God created the Man for incorruption and made him the image of His own being.

(*Wisdom of Solomon 2:10-23* +/-110 BC)

Protestants say that the New Testament created the Church. Conversely, Catholics say that the Church created the New Testament. While the evidence of history supports the Catholics’ claim, both parties, once they put on their New Testament blinders, are equally oblivious to their indebtedness to the Nazarenes or that outside their New Testament are writings, such as the *Odes of Solomon*, which are just as inspired as the ones in it.

While it is not necessarily what one believes but how one construes it that counts (which

is why good people are found spread liberally amongst all the various communions), seeing Jesus through the apostolic writings, rather than through a distorted *New Testament* lens, can only help. My intention is to make good the claim that with a deft hand, the Church subtly, but systematically, skewed Jesus' portrayal in its "canonical" gospels as one who was aloof not only from women in general, or from the Magdalene, in particular, but, as well from John the Baptizer, his own disciples, his family, his brother James, as well, his Jewish people. By gratuitously portraying a less human, less humane, more God-like Jesus who was often angry, arbitrary and enigmatic, the Church authorities cunningly increased their own latitude to act arbitrarily and capriciously. By confusing the time-line, they turned what had been a straightforward narrative accessible to laymen, into a never ending source of controversy for theologians. As well, it was no accident on the part of Church authorities to give Mary Magdalene and James the Just short shrift; it was all part of a bid to replace the original apostolic community with a Gentile organization intent on channeling the transcendent and taming it that its communicants might not come back with too many new understandings.

**AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**  
**(ABRIDGED)**

J. Rendel Harris

(Editors note: Adolph Harnack of Germany came up with a seemingly outlandish proposal that both scandalized and endeared him to the public, namely, that the author of The Epistle to the Hebrews was a woman, namely, Priscilla. He claimed this would explain a certain tendency he detected in the Epistle to "feminize." J. Rendel Harris, who touched academic swords with Harnack on a regular basis (albeit in a collegial sort of way), responded with his own analysis of the Epistle. His analysis included a consideration of the Bible which the author of Hebrews was using, a matter of obvious application here, where the Protestant Bible is challenged as not being that of the apostles. Because in Harris's article the issues of authorship and canonicity are inextricably linked, I have included both, even though the principle issue here is that of canonicity. – (P. S. I have my own candidate for author and it's not Priscilla. More about that later.)

I propose to approach this subject from two fresh points of view; first, by comparison with a similar roll of heroes elsewhere; second, by a more exact elucidation of the persons intended . . . We begin, then, by asking for a similar composition. For it is agreed on all hands that this is the meaning of Hebrews XI. Its watchword is Faith, but its subject is the praises of the elders. It is true that the roll-call is prefaced by a statement that the worlds were made by the word of God and that it is by faith that we understand this. But then this is preceded by the statement that "Faith is the mark of the men of old time"; so we see clearly

that the allusion to creation only means that the writer is turning the pages of his Bible for instances of faith, and recognizes in passing that even in Gen. 1:1 we find a place for faith, in the conviction that the Seen is the product of the Unseen. But this allusion is only there for the sake of literary completeness; it amounts to saying that we will search the Bible through for this thing, from Genesis to whatever was the last book in the writer's Old Testament. And as we are going to to examine the roll-call in Hebrews by the side of another famous roll-call, it will be necessary to find out, if possible, just what the last book in the writer's Bible was. And I think it is not difficult to see to see that it must have been the fourth book of Maccabees. The fourth book of Maccabees is not much read nowadays, and its authorship is unknown: for a time it passed under the name of Josephus, but it can easily be seen that such an eloquent treatise, with such flashing rhetoric, and such acquaintance with Stoic philosophy cannot have been the work of Josephus. Moreover, it must have been earlier. It is concerned with the praises of the mother and her seven sons who withstood the frown of Antiochus the tyrant and despised his laws. It tells of the triumph of reason over passion, and it glows with the hope of an immortal life beyond the pains of death or the tortures of the tyrant. The early Christian Church took over the Maccabees and set them amongst the saints, where the Greek Church still commemorates them, and this book, the so-called fourth of Maccabees, is the text book, as I suspect, of the primitive commemoration. When the writer of this book has described in detail the resistance which the Maccabees mother and her seven sons made to the ordinances and threats of Antiochus (the key note of resistance is the two words "until death itself"), and when the death of the seven sons has been followed by the suicide of the mother, he says that it would have been well to put an inscription on their tomb for a national memorial, and to say –

"Here lies an aged man, and an aged women, and her seven sons through  
The violence of a tyrant, who sought to overthrow the Hebrew polity.  
But they avenged their race, by looking away to God, and by enduring  
Tortures even unto death."

Now if we compare the closing passages of Hebrews XI. with the opening words of Hebrews XII. we shall find all commentators agree that the bede-roll includes the Maccabees, and concludes with them; but it has not been so generally noticed that Hebrews XII. continues with the Maccabees, and imitates the language which is suggested for their memorial. Look at the expressions, "Let us run our race also, looking away to Jesus, for ye have not yet resisted unto blood.

So we may say that the Bible of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews ran from Genesis to IV. Maccabees. But I must not dwell further on this point, but return to the other bede-roll with which I propose to compare that in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

In the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach there is towards the end of the book, a celebrated chapter, which is commonly read in English Colleges on the day appointed for the commemoration of benefactors. It is



called the *Praise of Famous Men*, from its opening words, "Let us now praise famous men." In Greek its title is "The hymn (or praise) of the fathers." The writer, then, records in detail the praises of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Phinehas, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the twelve prophets, Zerubbabel, Nehemiah: and then after a few stray references to earlier worthies, the writer settles down to dilate on the merits and glory of the latest hero of all, Simon the Son of Onias.

Now if we review this list, I think we shall see that here also the writer is turning the pages of his Bible, at least mentally, when he writes; the reference to the twelve prophets probably shows that he is working from a book. So he is doing just the same as the writer to the Hebrews is doing. And the curious thing is that he never mentions a woman at all in the whole of his story of Israel. This, then, is the way in which a man would write the historical summary; and the observation and the comparison with Hebrews, strongly confirms Harnack's suggestion that the latter writer feminized. It is either a woman, or a man under the influence of a woman.

But, having made this comparison, and shown how it works in favor of the Priscilla hypothesis, we can go a step further; we can try and get some closer idea of what the Bible writer of the writer to the Hebrews was like, and so make some further identification of the persons whose praises are there, at least in epitome. We will identify some further characters in the cloud of witnesses. The cloud, in fact, very readily becomes crystalline, though I do not think the interpreters of the Epistle have adequately recognized this. When we read the chapter carefully we soon see the roll of the saints changes into a roll of the virtues of the saints; the names of the heroes and heroines are dropped, and their deeds only are commemorated; but it is not difficult, speaking generally and recognizing that we are making a Biblical study, to identify the persons behind the actions. No one, for instance, has the slightest doubt that "stopped the mouth of lions" refers to Daniel, and "quashed the violence of fire" refers to the Three Children; and it would be a perverse exegesis, which should try to add any other figure to Daniel because the plural is used and we are told that "believers have stopped lions' mouths and quenched fire." So we know that Daniel was in the Bible which we are exploring for. In the same way any one who is acquainted with the apocryphal books that tell of the death of Isaiah and his rapture to heaven, or of the murder of Jeremiah by his compatriots, will have no doubt that Isaias and Jeremiah were intended by the terms, "were stoned and sawn asunder"; the legend of Isaiah's death at the hands of Menasseh and of Jeremiah's end must have been in the hands of the writer of the Epistle, who may very well have had the traditions in a written form; but it is sufficient if we say that the thought of Isaiah and Jeremiah in the Bible History called up their traditional deaths. So we are encouraged to seek for further identifications and we know the way to go to work. The presumption is that we are dealing with Biblical matter, and that a single person or group of persons (as in the case of the Three Children), underlies each clause; though we do not know that they are restricted to single clauses. (The Maccabees, for instance, appear to

be diffusely treated.) But in order to make our identifications correctly, we must observe that such identifications were matter of inquiry in the first century of our era, probably within twenty-five years of the production of the book.

If, for instance, we turn to the first Epistle of the Clement of Rome. C. 17, we shall find him speaking as follows:

“Let us become imitators of those who went about in goatskins and sheepskins, preaching the coming of the Christ: I mean Elijah and Elisha and also Ezekiel; and besides them those men also that obtained a good report.”

Here we see (1.) That Clement knows his Epistle to the Hebrews, (ii) that he has been identifying the characters in the eleventh chapter. Of the acquaintance of Clement with Hebrews there cannot be a shadow of doubt: he quotes it so often, that some early writers suggested that he might be the author; and it is curious that he never says he is quoting, as he does when he quotes Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians. So either the authorship was unknown in Rome, or, as Harnack suggests, it was suppressed.

Clement goes on to say that “Abraham obtained an exceeding good report and was called the friend of God,” in which we see him combining the language of Hebrews with that of the Epistle of James. There are other coincidences and assonances, besides his larger quotations, by which we can see how thoroughly Clement had assimilated the Epistle to the Hebrews. Now let us turn to the fifty-fifth chapter in which Clement is enumerating the sacrifices which have been made from time to time through love of others. After allusions to pagan illustrations of the virtue of self-sacrifice, he turns to the Scripture and remarks as follows:

“Many women being strengthened by the grace of God have performed many manly deeds. The blessed Judith, when the city was beleaguered, asked of the elders that she might be suffered to go forth into the camp of the aliens. So she went forth and exposed herself to peril and went forth for love of country, and of her people which were beleaguered: and the Lord delivered Holofernes into the hand of a woman.”

Bearing in mind what we have already said about Clement’s acquaintance with the eleventh chapter, and the identifications which he has made in it, let us throw into parallelism this passage of Clement with Hebrews xi. 34;

<b>Clement.</b>	<b>Hebrews.</b>
Many women were made strong by the grace of God;	Out of weakness were made strong:
performed many manly deeds;	Waxed valiant in fight;
Judith went forth to the camp of the aliens	turned back camps of the aliens.

It seems clear, then, that the persons, who out of weakness became strong are in Clement's judgment women in general and Judith in particular. But this identification in which Clement passes from the general statement as to woman's weakness, to the particular triumphant instance, requires that the word "woman" in Hebrews xi. 35 should stand higher up, or that it should be repeated. The text must run "women out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, overthrew camps of aliens." But at this point the objection will be made that if we are in this way resorting to the dangerous expedient of conjecturally restoring the text, we must go further; we must correct the masculine word for valiant into the feminine. If we do, I think we shall miss the point of the writer, who wants to say that "weak women became strong (men) in fight" and uses the masculine deliberately. Clement sees this and therefore explains that "women made strong by Divine Grace performed manly deeds;" he is explaining the masculine adjective. So, after all, our conjectural emendation, as far as we have gone, need not amount to more than the displacement or repetition of a single word. But perhaps the suggested use of the masculine adjective may be thought too rhetorical a device for the Epistle to the Hebrews. In that case we must emend.

But this is not all that we learn from Clement; not only has he identified Judith as the woman who overthrew the camp of the aliens, but he goes on with another illustration of feminine courage. "To no less peril did Esther also, *who was perfect in faith*, expose herself that she might deliver the twelve tribes of Israel, when they were on the point to perish. For through her fasting and her humiliation she entreated the all-seeing Master, the God of the Ages; and He, seeing the humility of her soul, delivered the people for whose sake she encountered the peril." The allusion to Esther, following on Judith, with the statement as to the perfection of her faith, suggests that we are still in the region of Hebrews XI. and raises the question as to whether Esther also must not be found in the roll of heroes. But it is not quite so easy to define Esther's position as it was Judith's. Perhaps "escaped the edge of the sword" may cover the case, but the description is very general and can hardly be relied upon with confidence. (We might perhaps compare Esther xiv. 13 "Think not that thou shalt escape.") It depends in part on the unknown order of the books of the Bible in the writer's collection. We do not know how the books were arranged or what was the order of chronology deduced from them. As I said above, we are sure that the history ends with Maccabees: over and above the reference to IV. Maccabees, we have the language of II. Maccabees, imitated as in Hebrews xi. 38 ("wandering in deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth") with which we may compare II. Maccabees x. 6 (they were living herded together like beasts in the mountains and in the caves").

And now we have said sufficient as to the structure of the Praises of the Famous, and the conclusion must be that there are Famous Women in the list as well as Famous Men. To Sarah and Rahab and the Widow of Sarepta we have added Judith and Esther. So there ought to be no hesitation in saying positively, what Harnack said doubtfully, that the eleventh chapter has feminized. And if this be correct, the case for authorship of Priscilla is much strengthened, by the removal of some of the strongest objections. We are still

somewhat surprised at not finding a definite reference to Deborah, but what we have found is positive evidence, which silence on certain points hardly affects any further.

(ii.) There remains one further, and perhaps fatal objection to be met, the masculine grammar of the chapter. The eleventh chapter, like the rest of Hebrews, has the transition to which Harnack alludes from "We" to "I." In xi. 2 we have "We understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God". But this is only the "we: of the community, and so has no bearing upon "dual" or "multiple" authorship. On the other hand we have in v. 32 the words "The time would fail *me* recounting," &c. And here we have not only the singular but the masculine singular. And this masculine participle is the real rock in the track, if we want to refer the Epistle to the Hebrew (or even the eleventh chapter) to Priscilla.

There remains, however, the possibility that, as it is a case or variation of a single letter, the text may have undergone correction. In that case we should probably find the original reading lurking somewhere amongst the MSS., unrecognized or unrecorded. So far as I have been able to make investigation, I have not found any trace of the supposed missing reading. And until such traces can be found, it is only fair to say that the adverse evidence at this point to the Priscilla hypothesis is very strong: and it would not be proper to cure the text of its difficulty by a conjectural emendation unless the case were already finally settled by other considerations. So we may leave the matter in uncertainty, but with the hope that after all some light has been thrown upon the meaning of the text, and that, sooner or later, decisive evidence as to authorship may be forthcoming.

We need not make apologies because we are not able to settle finally all the points that come up before us for investigation, There is much that will always remain obscure in the history and the interpretation of an ancient literature; on the other hand there is also much that can be elucidated. The twentieth century has its disadvantages but it is not a bad time to live in for the genuine explorer. And if our lectures can only be decorated by the title of side-lights, we may hope that they have the merit of being fairly clear of prejudice, and that in seeking after further light, we have not added anything either to the fog that bewilders or to the darkness that paralyzes those who are engaged in the progressive interpretation of the Christian religion.

#### G R E E K   T E X T   T Y P E S

The three commonly recognized texts are the Alexandrian, thought to have arisen in, or at least favored by, Alexandria to the south; the Byzantine which was favored by, Byzantium in the east; and the Western Text, alleged to have arisen in Italy to the west (but, in reality, was everywhere, north, east, south, west.) The Alexandrian is preserved in the oldest complete NT, the *Codex Sinaiticus*, and is favored by most Ph.D. biblical scholars. The Byzantine, also called the Majority Text because the vast majority of Greek manuscripts, some 5000, are of this textual tradition, is the one from which the *King James Version* was trans-

lated. It too is championed by many. Meanwhile, the Western Text, though having the best claim to originality, as Burkitt points out above, is all but an orphan.

#### ON CANONICITY

The restraint of revelation  
is the unheralded accomplishment  
of enduring religions.

Explanatory note:

In transcendence we go beyond,  
shifting context and meaning  
in the wake of revelations we experience.  
This is inherently disturbing or disrupting  
of the individual and societal status quo.

Thus a primary function of religions  
is to delimit transcendence and channel revelation,  
to prevent going beyond established boundaries  
of texts, creeds, interpretations, and performances.

In so doing, religions to some extent point their adherents  
away from raw encounters with the real mysteries,  
and away from greater revelations,  
while also protecting them from the attendant dangers of the divine wind.

(David Kailin)

#### FRAGMENTS FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS

From early times mention is made in the historical record of a fifth gospel, one often termed the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*. A question-begging title, it invites the inference that other gospels might have been of Gentile provenance. Is it possible that the Gospel which is commonly called the fifth gospel was, or at least was derived from, that which was the first?

The following selections are excerpted from Ron Cameron in *The Other Gospels: Non-Canonical Gospel Texts* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 85-86. Philipp Vielhauer and George Ogg made the original translation in *New Testament Apocrypha* and also one quote is from *The Other Bible*, editor, Willis Barnstone.

1. It is written in the Gospel of the Hebrews:

When Christ wished to come upon the earth to men, the good Father summoned a mighty power in heaven, which was called Michael, and entrusted Christ to the care thereof. And the power came into the world and it was called Mary, and Christ was in her womb seven months.

(Cyril of Jerusalem, *Discourse on Mary Theotokos* 12a)

2. The mother of the Lord and his brothers said to him, "John the Baptist baptizes for the forgiveness of sins; let us go and be baptized by him." But he said to them, "In what way have I sinned that I should go and be baptized by him? Unless, perhaps, what I have just said is a sin of ignorance."

(Jerome, *Against Pelagius III.2*)

3. According to the Gospel written in the Hebrew speech, which the Nazaraeans read, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit shall descend upon him. . . Further in the Gospel which we have just mentioned we find the following written:

And it came to pass when the Lord was come up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit descended upon him and rested on him and said to him: My son, in all the prophets was I waiting for thee that thou shouldest come and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest; thou art my first-begotten Son that reignest for ever.

(Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah 4* [on Isaiah 11:2])

4. And if any accept the Gospel of the Hebrews - here the Savior says:

Even so did my mother, the Holy Spirit, take me by one of my hairs and carry me away on to the great mountain Tabor.

(Origen, *Commentary on John 2.12.87* [on John 1:3])

5. As also it stands written in the Gospel of the Hebrews:

He that marvels shall reign, and he that has reigned shall rest. (Clement, *Stromateis* 2.9.45.5)

To those words (from Plato, *Timaeus* 90) this is equivalent:

He that seeks will not rest until he finds; and he that has found shall marvel; and he that has marveled shall reign; and he that has reigned shall rest.

(Ibid., 5.14.96.3)

6. As we have read in the Hebrew Gospel, the Lord says to his disciples:

And never be ye joyful, save when ye behold your brother with love.

(Jerome, *Commentary on Ephesians* 3 [on Ephesians 5:4])

7. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which the Nazaraeans are wont to read, there is counted among the most grievous offences:

He that has grieved the spirit of his brother. (Jerome, *Commentary on Ezekiel* 6 [on Ezekiel 18:7])

8. The Gospel called according to the Hebrews which was recently translated by me into Greek and Latin, which Origen frequently uses, records after the resurrection of the Savior:

And when the Lord had given the linen cloth to the servant of the priest, he went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until he should see him risen from among them that sleep. And shortly thereafter the Lord said: Bring a table and bread! And immediately it added: he took the bread, blessed it and brake it and gave it to James the Just and said to him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of man is risen from among them that sleep.

(Jerome, *De viris inlustribus* 2)

An abbreviated commentary from: *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1924), pp. 1-8. Regarding *The Gospel According to the Hebrews* by M. R. James:

This is on a different level from all the other books we have to deal with. It was a divergent yet not heretical form of our Gospel according to St. Matthew. Even to sketch the controversies which have raged about it is impracticable here. What may be regarded as established is that it existed in either Hebrew or Aramaic, and was used by a Jewish Christian sect who were known as Nazaraeans (Nazarenes), and that it resembled our *Matthew* closely enough to have been regarded as the original Hebrew of that Gospel. I believe few, if any, would now contend that it was that original. It is generally, and I believe rightly, looked upon as a secondary document. What was the extent of the additions to or omissions from *Matthew* we do not know: but two considerations must be mentioned bearing on this: (1) The Stichometry of Nicephorus assigns it 2,200 lines, 300 less than *Matthew*.

Jerome, who is our chief source of knowledge about this Gospel, says that he had made a Greek and a Latin version of it. The statement is wholly rejected by some, and by others thought to be an exaggeration. It is very difficult to accept it as it stands. Perhaps, as Lagrange suggests, the truth may be that Jerome took notes of the text in Greek and Latin. Schmidtke, it should be added, has tried to show that all Jerome's quotations are borrowed from an earlier writer, Apollonaris; but there is no positive evidence for this.

## RECONSTRUCTING GOSPEL CHRONOLOGY

An additional source of help in reconstructing the event-filled years of ministry may have been a day book, a kind of accounts journal kept for the purpose of satisfying the Temple and Herodian taxing authorities' requirement that gifts to their ministry be accounted for. The logical person to keep the tax account would have been Matthew, the tax-collector. His other name, Levi, may indicate that he was connected to the Temple's Levitical priesthood.

Evidence for such a book having once existed is the peculiar exactitude with which various locations and individuals, not later important in the history of the Nazarene movement, are named throughout the gospels. Certainly, in sequencing the multitudinous happenings, travels, and personalities encountered, possessing such a chronicle would have been most helpful. While we have no direct, historical reference to a Nazarene accountant ledger, one scholar who has looked into this matter, Jerry Clontz, has deduced the following reasons why the keeping of such a journal would have been a valuable adjunct to the ministry:

1. Tithes – The OT tithing requirement to be paid yearly at the temple in Jerusalem would've required a ministry like Jesus' group to keep an account ledger to know how much to tithe at Jerusalem at Passover every year.
2. Taxes – The Romans and Herodians levied taxes that may have required accounting records.
3. Proof of Innocence – Jesus' group was traveling from town to town with a money box. In order to prove that they weren't bandits that stole the money they would've possibly kept records of donors names and the cities where they lived in addition to the amounts received. Also they would've kept notes indicating why the people donated money to them to prove it wasn't from illegal activity. The notes would've included significant events that resulted in donations i.e. miracles, healings or information concerning moving sermons or inspiring stories. If Roman soldiers stopped them and arrested them as bandits they would have needed enough info that the soldiers could check at the various towns involved. This information would've needed to be memorable enough that it could be verified several months or a few years after the donations occurred.
4. Couriers of offerings to the temple – It is possible that donations to Jesus' group included offerings that ultimately were destined to the temple. Jesus' group may have acted as couriers taking offerings to the temple that they were entrusted with. The Book of Acts relates similar courier activity involving Paul. If they were couriers for temple offerings they would've kept records of the amounts entrusted to them as well as the names and cities of the donors for the temple authorities.



Additionally, Clontz points out the value of such a ledger for internal financial control. How was it known that Judas Iscariot was filching from the money box? An audit of the accountant's ledger. If such a ledger had indeed existed, it probably also included abbreviated jottings of key names, places, events, sayings, donations, disbursements, thereby creating useful associations by which to jog memories. In whose possession was it? Matthew's? Peter's? Maybe it was held jointly and in trust, available to anyone within the inner circle of apostles who might have had need to consult it. Luke, the evangelist, notes that Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others were contributing to the support of the ministry out of their private means. He didn't get this information from consulting canonical *Matthew* or *Mark*. Perhaps he had access to the account ledger itself or, else, to some source that did.

#### MATTHEW AND THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS

We have the apparently independent testimony of three witnesses in the second century – Papias, Irenaeus and Pantaeus – that St. Matthew wrote in “Hebrew.” Nor is there any ancient authority to the contrary. The Fathers of the Church are agreed that it was so, and only since the Reformation has the fact been seriously, and I think, most unjustifiably called in question. (Arthur Wright)

Though little known of in our day, what is sometimes referred to as the 5<sup>th</sup> gospel (which may actually have been the 1<sup>st</sup>), the *Hebrew Gospel*, was broadly attested to in antiquity:

Matthew, having written the Gospel in Hebrew, published it in Jerusalem, and slept in Hierae of Parthia.  
(Hippolytus, *De Duodecim Apostolis*)

The first Gospel was written by Matthew, who once had been a tax collector but later became an apostle of Jesus Christ, having published it for believers from Judaism, composed in Hebrew script.  
(Origin, Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.25.4)

[the Nazoreans] have the Gospel according to Matthew complete in Hebrew. For it is still distinctly preserved among them, as it was originally written, in Hebrew script. (Epiphaneus *Pan.* 29.9.4)

And of Matthew it is said, when Jews who believed approached him and asked him to reduce his spoken words into writing for them, he brought forth the Gospel in the Hebrew Language.  
(John Chrysostom, *Hom. Mtt.* 1.3)

. . . The Hebrew itself is preserved to this day in the library at Caesarea which was collected with such care by the martyr Pamphilus. I also had an opportunity of copying it afforded me by the Nazarenes who use the book, at Beroea, [modern-day Aleppo] a city of Syria. (Of *Illustrious men*, Jerome)

Having only fragmentary quotes, and not the text itself, we cannot say with complete assurance what all the *Hebrew Gospel* did contain, except this we know, that it was profound:

“And also in the Hebrew Gospel we read of the Lord speaking to his disciples, ‘Never be ye joyous save ye behold your brother with love.’” (Jerome, *Comm. Eph* 5.4)

And in the Gospel according to the Hebrews which the Nazarenes are accustomed to read, it is placed among the greatest sins ‘if a man have grieved the spirit of his brother.’

(Jerome, *On Ezekiel. xviii. 7*)

As we have found somewhere in the Gospel which the Jews have in the Hebrew tongue where it is said: “I choose for myself them that are good: the good are they whom my Father which in heaven hath given me.”

(Eusebius, *Theophany*)

Also, in the Gospel according to the Hebrews is written the saying, ‘he that wondereth shall reign, and he that reigneth shall rest.’ (Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* l. 9. 45)

In the Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew it is thus: Our bread of the morrow give us this day; that is, ‘the bread which thou wilt give us in thy kingdom, give us this day’. (Jerome, *On Ps. cxxxv*)

In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use (which I have lately translated into Greek from the Hebrew, and which is called by many the authentic Matthew), this man who had the withered hand is described as a mason, who prays for help in such words as this: ‘I was a mason seeking a livelihood with my hands: I pray thee Jesus, to restore me mine health, that I may not beg meanly for my food.’

(Jerome, *On Matt. xii. 13*)

The Gospel also entitled ‘according to the Hebrews’ which I lately translated into Greek and Latin, and which Origen often quotes, contains the following narrative after the Resurrection: ‘Now the Lord, when he had given the cloth to the servant of the priest, went to James and appeared to him.’ For James had taken an oath that he would not eat bread from that hour on which he had drunk the cup of the Lord till he saw him risen from the dead. Again a little later the Lord said ‘Bring a table and bread,’ and forthwith it is added: ‘He took bread and blessed and broke it and gave to James the Just and said to him, “My brother, eat your bread, for the Son of Man is risen from those who sleep.’

(Jerome, *Vir. III. 2*)

But according to the Gospel that is written in the Hebrew language, the Nazarenes read:

... ‘It happened that when the Lord came up out of the water, the whole fountain of the Holy Spirit descended on him, and rested on him, and said to him, ‘My Son, in all the prophets I awaited you, that you might come and I might rest in you. For you are my rest, you are my first-born Son, who reigns eternally.’”

(Jerome, *Comm. Isa. 11.1-3*)

We are informed by the Strichometry of Nicephorus that the *Hebrew Gospel* consisted of “2200 lines (300 lines less than canonical *Matthew*)” indicating that it was a substantial work in its own right. Patristic quotation from it which probably concentrated on its unique aspects allow us to conclude that it was not merely a harmony of the other synoptic gospels, or a 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Aramaic knock-off of canonical *Matthew*, but an independent composition within the synoptic tradition. It may well have led the way in creating that tradition.

Albeit no copies of the *Hebrew Gospel* have survived, as we see above, quotes from it by various Church Fathers have. Did such a valuable document perish through neglect or was it actively sought out for destruction? Sad to say, deliberate destruction of manuscripts, even if completely orthodox, has been Church policy in times past. Even so great a Bible translator or as William Tyndale was burned at the stake for producing a vernacular version. While it is practically axiomatic for most Christians that the Church is God’s approved instrument, his chosen vessel, for preserving and perpetuating the Gospel, that assumption needs to be tempered by the knowledge that this same institution lost or even deep-sixed many valuable texts.

#### A HEBRAIC SOURCE FOR CANONICAL MATTHEW AND CANONICAL LUKE

A written, literary relationship between *Matthew*’s and *Luke*’s gospels exist, one standing wholly apart from any relationship they have with *Mark*. In 2002, Robert McIver and Maria Carroll published their findings in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, in which they concluded:

... any sequence of exactly the same 16 or more words that is not an aphorism, poetry or words to a song is almost certain to have been copied from a written document.

*(Experiments to Develop Criteria for Determining the Existence of a Written Sources, and their Potential Implications for the Synoptic Problem)*

According to their research, *Luke* and *Matthew* share eleven such passages, while *Mark* has three in common with *Luke* and nine in common with *Matthew*. Arises the question: did *Luke* depend on *Matthew* or, conversely, did *Matthew* depend on *Luke*? Answer: neither the one nor the other. No way did *Luke* systematically deconstruct *Matthew*’s highly structured Sermon on the Mount and spread its contents throughout half a dozen chapters. No way did *Luke* truncate *Matthew*’s Lord’s prayer so as to provide a more anemic telling. By the same token, no way would the apostle *Matthew*, had he had *Luke*’ *Gospel* in front of him, have completely overlooked *Luke*’s nativity story; likewise *Luke*’s Perea ministry section. *Matthew* did not have *Luke*’s *Gospel* to look to; neither did *Luke* have *Matthew*’s *Gospel* but, as I shall have occasion to relate later, there were a host of intermediate documents.

#### LUKE, THE EVANGELIST:

. . . of Antioch in Syria, by profession a physician; who, having been a disciple of the Apostles, and having afterward followed Paul until his martyrdom, and having served the Lord continually, without wife and without children, fell asleep at the age of 84 in Boeotia, being full of the Holy Ghost.

(An early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Latin introduction to *Luke's Gospel*)

A widely held assumption is that Luke was a Gentile writing to a Gentile audience. This is a modern idea. Try finding ancient authority to back it up! There is none. I will concede that Luke had a Gentile audience in mind, but only if it is also conceded that he had a Hellenistic Jewish audience in mind. According to *MS Pepys 2498*, Luke was Cleopas' fellow-traveler on the road to Emmaus. If so, that would settle the matter, he was a Jew in the Holy Land conversant with either Aramaic or Hebrew or both. Scholars who have looked into it agree, *Luke's Gospel* does, indeed, evidence an unusual number of Semitisms:

Hebraisms proper are special characteristics of Luke. There is reason, therefore, for a closer scrutiny of this evangelist with its wealth of Hebraisms. (Gustav Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*)

For all its good Greek, Lukan style has always been noted for a significant amount of Semitisms.

(Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*)

Fitzmyer, whose stated opinion is that Luke was a Gentile, finds his Hebraisms "puzzling." He concludes that their source "will remain a mystery."

But just maybe James Edwards, in *The Hebrew Gospel & the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* solves the mystery. He traces a possible source of Luke's Hebraisms back to a dependence on the Hebrew Gospel. Giving the following as an example of this dependence, Edwards states that:

In a letter to Hedybia, Jerome writes that many Jews came to faith when Jesus prayed from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Like many citations from the Hebrew Gospel, this prayer for forgiveness is found in the canonical Gospels only in Luke (23:34). Jerome does not mention the Hebrew Gospel as the source of the story, but three late (ninth-fourteenth-century) texts that appear to quote the passage from Jerome do. In a ninth-century *Commentary on Isaiah*, Haimo of Halbertstadt writes: "As it is said in the Gospel of the Nazarenes: at the voice of the Lord many thousands of the Jews who were standing around the cross believed." The same testimony is repeated in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Hugo of St. Cher: "And he prayed for the transgressors (Luke 24): Father, forgive them because, etc. At that voice many thousands of the Jews who were standing around the cross believed, according to the Gospel of the Nazarenes." Finally, the anonymous fourteenth-century *History of the Passion of the Lord* expands the story: "Father, forgive them, because they do not know they do.

And take heed of what is said in the Gospel of the Nazarenes that at this important prayer of Christ eight thousand were converted to the faith at a later date.”

It may be that Luke preserved for us the better part – or at least the best parts – of *Hebrews*, a consideration that softens somewhat the blow of losing this valuable text. Besides the *Gospel according to the Hebrew*, another source for *Luke* was the *Testimonia*.

Foreasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed. (Luke 1:1-4 KJV)

It has long been assumed that the “many” referred to above by Luke were busily writing gospels. But the same verses, re-translated by B. P. W. Stather Hunt sees it another light, that *Luke’s* prologue is referencing to the writing of the *Testimonia*. Hunt’s translation reads:

Since many took in hand to make a reconstruction of those prophecies which have been fulfilled among us (even as they delivered it to us, who were themselves eyewitnesses and ministers of the word) it seemed good to me also, having studied the whole argument carefully from the beginning, to put those events in written order for you, so that you may know the certainty of the matters wherein you have been instructed before our eyes. (Luke 4:1 Hunt)

Justifying the changes he has introduced, Hunt asserts that ἀνατάξασθαι, translated by the KJV above as “set forth in order,” is in error. He points to Irenaeus’s usage of this word in the following sentence: God “inspired Ezra the priest, of the tribe of Levi, to *reconstruct* all the words of the former prophets.” Therefore “recovery,” not “order,” is the correct meaning. Another point Hunt makes relates to πεπληροφορημένων which the KJV translated it as “most surely believed.” Lightfoot claims no justification for this translation exists, while J. M. Creed in his book, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, writes: “the word is equivalent to πληρώω, to fulfil.” Of this Hunt writes: “that is exactly what we have been claiming, and what better description could we have of a document wherein prophecy and its fulfilment are arranged under definite heads.”

#### JAMES THE JUST, HIS ROLE IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPEL TRADITION

James, the Lord’s brother, as overseer of Jerusalem’s Nazarene community for 32 years, was well-positioned to play a leading role in the written gospels’ development. It’s likely that he was responsible for the *Gospel of Matthew* having assumed the canonical form that it has. This *Gospel*, which has a more developed articulation of Jesus’ thoughts than does *Luke’s*, speaks of “the poor in spirit” and those who “hunger for righteousness” whereas

*Luke's* simply refers to the poor and the hungry. Probably a catechismal objective was in view, leading to the dominical sayings in canonical *Matthew* being bundled into five major discourses. Luke, likewise, was familiar with most of these sayings but not necessarily in a thematically collected form. Both Luke and James knew of the Lord's sayings from other sources, one of those being the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, a text Church Fathers credited to Matthew.

Though canonical *Matthew* breathes the very atmosphere of Jerusalem, its Greek is more Greek than is canonical *Luke's*. How can that be? Was this Matthew the evangelist's doing? I think not. Rather, I believe that James took extracts of Jesus' sayings recorded by Matthew and translated them into Greek, combining this with an early version of *Mark's Gospel* to create our familiar canonical *Gospel of Matthew*. In what sense then is *Matthew's Gospel* actually Matthew's? Only in an honorary sense, that it ultimately derived from an extract from Matthew's notes or else an extract made from his *Hebrew Gospel*.

It's ironic that not only have many doubted Luke's proficiency in Hebrew but also James' proficiency in Greek. We should know better. For one, we have James' *Epistle* before us which is excellent Greek, besides which, for another, we know that James grew up in Nazareth only four miles from the Galilee's most prominent Greek-speaking city, Sepphoris.

In our day, normative or rabbinical Judaism's rejection of the *Septuagint* Greek version of the Scriptures is complete and unequivocal but it was not always so. Originally and for many centuries thereafter, the *Septuagint* was seen by Jews as one of their most noble accomplishments. It was only after Christians adopted it that they reject it. It should come as no surprise that when the *Septuagint* was yet in good odor with the Jews generally that a 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, Law-observant Jew, James, the brother of Jesus, would sponsor a Greek edition of the Gospel to accompany the *Septuagint*. As James plainly tells us at the outset of his *Epistle*, his purpose was to reach out to diaspora Jewish believers spread abroad throughout the world. Often those who extol Paul's worldwide ministry overlook, James's worldwide ministry. Well do we know what language James would have used, for the diaspora Jews favored, not Hebrew but Greek.

#### JAMES'S HEBREW MATTHEW

Because his first responsibility was to Jerusalem's Nazarene community, and only secondarily the diaspora, it is logical to suppose that James would first have wanted to have a Hebrew edition of the Gospel and not just a Greek one. And it just may be that we have a goodly portion of that very Hebrew text as James knew it, or at least we have a near cousin to it. The text I am referring to is not to be confused with *Matthew's Gospel according to the Hebrews*. Rather, I am speaking of a text which more resembles our canonical *Matthew*.

Published in 1385 by Shem-Tob ben-Isaac ben-Shaprut as part of a larger, anti-Christian treatise called, *Evan Bohan*, his Hebrew *Matthew* is the oldest complete Hebrew text of that book in existence.

For a long time it was assumed that Shem-Tob's *Matthew* was his own translation from Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Modern studies have completely disproved that. There are many, many readings connecting it to earlier texts to which no one in the Middle Ages would have had access. Rather, this Hebrew *Matthew* provides abundant evidence of having passed through the hands of the Ebionites (a heretical, 1<sup>st</sup> century offshoot of the Nazarenes) who evidently modified it that it might better accord with their peculiar views. Despite omissions and additions made by those through whose hands it passed, this text is still at root Nazarene. Its text gives fair evidence that it goes right back to the beginning in Jerusalem where James, the Lord's brother, was overseeing Jesus' resurrection community.

One unique aspect of Shem-Tob's text is its use of the Tetragrammaton, which it does so 19 times. (Chalk one up for the Jehovah Witnesses.) Other unique readings follow:

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE GREEK**

**THEM-TOB'S HEBREW IN ENGLISH**

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

He will baptize you with the fire of the Holy Spirit.

Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.

Be careful, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour when the bridegroom will come

What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder

Whatever the creator has joined together man is unable to separate.

And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mothers or children or lands, for my sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

Everyone who leaves his house and his brothers, also his sisters, his father, his mother, his wife, and his children for my name will receive a hundred like them and will inherit the kingdom of heaven.

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.

You are a stone and upon you I will build my house of prayer.

Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her.

Truly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in all the world, that which this one has done will be said in reference to my memory.

Come, see the place where he lay.

Come, therefore, and see the place where the lord arose.

The scholar who has done the deepest study of the Shem-Tob's *Matthew* is George Howard:

Shem-Tob's Hebrew Matthew is characterized by literary devices such as puns, word connections, and alliteration. These are numerous – the text is saturated with them, far beyond what appears in the Greek – and belong to the very structure of the Hebrew text.

A pun appears in the Hebrew text of 10:34-36, giving the section literary structure. Verse 36 reads: The *enemy* is to be *loved* ones. “Enemy” and “loved ones” are similar in sound and appearance, being האויבים *ha<sup>o</sup>oyvim* and אהובים *ahuvim*, respectively. From this pun, the word “love” (אהב) emerges as a catchword that makes contact with the next pericope, in which it reappears as a major element. The absence of vs 38 is important for this catchword context, since its occurrence in the Greek text disrupts the connection. It reads: “And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” The Greek form of vs 39 is also disruptive of the catchword context, reading: “He who *finds* his life will lose it.” Both of these interruptions are absent in the Hebrew text, allowing the pun/catchword *love* to dominate the entire section. The Hebrew is clearly more artistic than the Greek, even though its literary structure is based upon a shorter text (the absence of vss 37b-38). The short text is supported, however, by P<sup>19</sup> (=P. Oxy. 1170) a fourth- or fifth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Vs 37b is also missing in B\* D 983 and a few others. (George Howard, *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*)

Working the same ground, but a generation earlier than Howard, was Hugh Schonfield, whose book: *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel* was published in 1927. To explain certain similarities between Hebrew Matthew and the Vulgate, he observes:

It is to Jerome that the revision of the Latin version, known as the Vulgate, is due, and it is not impossible that he may have incorporated into his revised text readings from the Aramaic Gospel which he held in high esteem. . . . In many instances the reading of the Hebrew are a distinct improvement over the Received Text.

Schonfield then offers various examples of possible improvements, two of which I pass along here:

Matt. 5:46 – In this place and throughout the Gospel the Hebrew has transgressors for publicans. This appears to be the true reading on the following grounds: (1) The parties in question are commonly associated with sinners or harlots. Now if tax-gatherers was intended, it is curious to find them singled out for classification with such company. Why not dicers, usurers, or members of some other immoral profession? If, however, we accept the word transgressors we find the conjunction to be an ordinary Jewish usage: thus we get such associations as these – “the wicked (Sept. ‘Ungodly’) and the sinner” (Prov. 11:31); “the ungodly and the sinner” (1 Pet. 4:18); “sinners and ungodly” (Enoch 38:3); “sinners and evil doers” (*ibid.* 45 5). (2) . ינר often used in the O. T. of transgressing the Law, covenant, the commandments of God (Deut. 26:13; Josh. 7:11; Dan. 9:11, etc.) and in the N. T. we have the Greek equivalent ‘a transgressor of the law,’ (James 2:11); Why do you also transgress the commandment of God?” (Matt. 15:3). (3) At the time of Christ this very term



“transgressors,” was used to denote a class of people who might fitly be grouped with sinners, harlots, and heathen.

Matt. 8:20 – “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heavens have nests; but the son of man hath not a floor whereon he may lay his head.” The addition of the word floor, gives a new pathos to this utterance, which seems to accommodation tin the common khan or carravan-serai of the village, where the rudest provision was made for the traveler in the allotment of a paved recess, raised a foot or two above the level of the courtyard where the cattle were tied. “Such travelers would neither expect nor require attendance, and would pay only the merest trifle for the advantage of shelter, safety, and a floor on which to lie.” (Farrer, *Life of Christ*)

#### **THE BOOK OF ENOCH AND THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL TRADITION**

Given how well attested it is by scholars, one would not suppose any particular degree of courage would attach to speaking about a 4<sup>th</sup> synoptic gospel; rather, one might suppose gratitude would be an appropriate response, but James R. Edwards disabuses us of this notion:

. . . from the first study program in Israel that I led, in 1968, . . . I rejuvenated my Hebrew in order to read the OT with greater facility, but one of the unanticipated consequences of this rejuvenation was a different perspective on the *New Testament*. In no NT book did Hebrew make a greater difference than in my reading of the Third Gospel. . . . in the Gospel of Luke – or at least parts of it – the subtext became much more visible. The Hebrew words seem to have been erased less completely than elsewhere in the Gospels. They are more evident, intrusive, and inescapable. . . . Nor did Luke seem to make an effort to tame or camouflage the Hebraisms. Their primitive and alien dignity seem to be consciously retained without Hellenizing or harmonizing to Lukan style. They give every appearance of coming from a *source* that the author valued and attempted to preserve. . . .

At the time I did not know that my discovery concurred with that of other scholars. In the past century and a half, scholars have repeatedly recognized an inordinately high number of Semitisms in the Third Gospel. Conversations with colleagues on the topic evoked within me the same hopes and fears I faced as a mountaineer before attempting an ascent. . . . One of my most respected mentors suggested that the Hebrew Gospel could be a trap. An acquaintance, less well known, told me that if I published my thesis it would be the end of my scholarly career. Without having willed it, I stood at a classic existential fork in the road.

By acknowledging the validity of a fourth synoptic gospel, Edwards found himself in a quandary. Proceed as he was doing and he would find himself contradicting one of Christendom’s more cherished shibboleths, the fourfold gospel tradition (three synoptic gospels

plus *John*). The restriction on the number of gospels to four has a long history going back to an influential, 2<sup>nd</sup> century theologian by the name of Irenaeus, who wrote:

It is impossible that the Gospels can be more or less than they are. For as there are four zones in the world which we inhabit, and four principle winds, while the Church is spread abroad the earth, and the pillar and basis of the Church is the gospel and the spirit of life, it is right that she should have four pillars exhaling immortality on every side, and bestowing renewed vitality on men. From which fact it follows that the Word has given us four versions of the Gospel, united by one spirit.

Where was Irenaeus getting his ideas from? Is there a “thus saith the Lord” backing him up? His source was “*The Book of Enoch*” which at the time of his writing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century was accepted in some quarters as Scripture. Among other things, this book graphically describes how the antediluvian patriarch, Enoch, in the company of an angel, took a miraculous flight to “the stone which supports the corners of the earth, and the four winds which bear up the earth, and constitute the pillars of heaven.” These, so Irenaeus assures us above, are “facts.”

Though the “*Book of Enoch*” did not ultimately gain Church sanction in Europe and was lost there, it did gain canonical status in, of all places, Ethiopia where to this day the Church preserves it as part of its *New Testament* which is why we have exact knowledge of it. Although the book itself had disappeared in Europe, some of its imagery lingered on. For instance, it was *Enoch’s* cosmological concepts which got certain mediaeval astronomers into hot water. If the inspired prophet saw the stone which supports the corners of the earth, then how dare these impious men claim otherwise and say the earth goes around the sun!

What if on such a basis the four winds, the four corners of the earth, etc, Irenaeus had asserted that there were four and only four apostles when we know there to have been twelve or four commandments when we know there are ten? Why, then, was it so important to him to assert that there were four, and only four, gospels? We have to speculate a little as to his motives which possibly had to do with the known rivalry between the Church and the Nazarene community as they vied for the leadership of the Jesus’ movement. That may go a long way toward explaining why Aramaic antecedents are underplayed while Greek is treated as king.

#### JOHN MARK

John Mark comes to us highly recommend: Peter in his first epistle (5:13) calls him “my son.” (It is not thought that he was speaking in terms of physical generation but in the spiritual sense.) And to Timothy Paul said of Mark: “he is profitable to me for the ministry” (*II Timothy 4:11*). Mark’s home in Jerusalem was a gathering place for believers. It is where

Peter headed to when released from prison, “where many were gathered together praying.”

A traveling man, Mark, so Eusebius informs us, was sent to Egypt in the first year of Emperor Claudius’s reign, 41 A.D. and, according to Jerome, he took with him there his gospel. According to St. Chrysostom, he wrote his gospel in Egypt. Later he accompanied Paul and his cousin Barnabas on Paul’s first missionary tour which took them from their starting point in Antioch to Seleucia and from there to Cyprus, then to Salamis and then on to Perga in Pamphilia (See Acts chapters 13-14.) This would be about 50 AD. For reasons not explained, John Mark then abandoned the mission and returned to Jerusalem. Later, when he wanted to join Paul’s and Barnabas’s second missionary journey, Paul opposed him which led to a sharp dispute between Paul and Barnabas with the upshot being that Paul took Silas instead while Barnabas took Mark, the latter two returning to Cyprus. Sometime after 61 AD, Mark is reported to have joined up with Peter in Rome:

In his *Hypotyposes* Clement of Alexandria tells us that it was part of the tradition of former times that ‘When Peter had publicly preached the word in Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, those who were present, being many, urged Mark, as one who had followed him for a long time and remembered what he said, to record what he stated; and that he having made his Gospel gave it to those who made the request of him; . . .’

(Theodore Zahn)

From internal considerations, as well as we see above, from historical considerations, reason exists for supposing that Mark prepared multiple editions of his gospel narrative.

. . . We shall show presently that the Markan narrative in the first Gospel bears unmistakable marks of an Alexandrian origin, while canonical Mark as distinctly points to Rome. . . . But if these marks appear in these two gospels, the Lukan Mark has many traits which point to a Palestinian origin, . . .

(William West Holdsworth, *Gospel Origins*)

Organizing the statements of Scripture and the Church Fathers about Mark and the *Gospel of Mark* is a daunting task. To help us through it all is William West Holdsworth’s 1913 book, *Gospel Origins: a study in the Synoptic Problem*. His is one of the more useful treatments of this subject in that he thoroughly understands that *Mark* went through several editions, an important insight in unlocking the Synoptic puzzle. However, Holdsworth is not up on the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* nor fully aware of a Semitic *Vorlage* generally.

St. Mark was the son of a woman named Mary, and his mother’s home in Jerusalem seems to have been a place of resort for the disciples. There is a tradition that the Upper Room, where the Lord celebrated the last Passover, as well as the room in which the disciples were assembled at Pentecost, was in her house. Some have supposed that the man carrying a pitcher of water, and the young man who fled away naked, which are mentioned only in the Markan narrative, were

St. Mark himself. Papias says that 'he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but subsequently attached himself to Peter.' The latter, on being delivered from prison (Acts xii.), went at once to St. Mark's house, 'where many were gathered together praying.' He was well known there and was recognized by the servant, whose name was inserted in the record by the person from whom St. Luke derived the earlier chapters of 'The Acts of the Apostles' – probably from St. Mark himself. We are told, again by Papias, that St. Mark became the interpreter of St. Peter, and as the latter was probably unable to speak Greek with ease, this was likely enough. It has often been pointed out that the address given by St. Peter in the house of Cornelius (Acts x. 34 ff.) is an epitome of the second Gospel, and this becomes significant if St. Mark was one of the brethren that accompanied St. Peter from Joppa (Acts x. 23). We have only to accept that the newly baptized in Caesarea wished to retain some record of St. Peter's preaching, and that St. Mark wrote down what St. Peter had said, and left it with them. Eusebius tells us that St. Mark was sent to Egypt in the first year of the Emperor Claudius, which would be in A.D. 41, and both Eusebius and Jerome tell us that he took his Gospel with him. St. Chrysostom tells us that he wrote his gospel in Egypt.

Both statements might well be true if St. Mark, wishing the Church in Alexandria to 'possess some record of apostolic teaching on the facts of Christ's life, re-wrote 'as much as he remembered' ( ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν ) of St. Peter's addresses. This document would pass into the treasured records of the Church in Alexandria.

We next find St. Mark in the company of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch. Presumably he had returned from Egypt to Jerusalem, and accompanied the two apostles on their missionary journey, which may be assigned to the year A.D. 50 (Acts xiii. 5). He did not, however, continue long. They were together when St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 10), and St. Mark's name occurs again in connection with St. Luke's in the Epistle to Philemon (24). The reference in the Colossian Epistle shows St. Mark to be on the point of making a journey from Rome to Asia, but a few years after this he is again required at Rome by St. Paul, who says (2 Tim. iv. 11): 'Take Mark and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the ministry,' words which Zahn (vol. ii. p. 448) interprets to mean that St. Mark was in possession of 'treasure of narrative from the lips of Peter and of other disciples of Jesus, who were accustomed to come and go in his mother's house.' Apparently he did return to Rome, for it is generally accepted now that the reference in I Peter v. 13 is to be taken as showing that St. Mark and St. Peter were together in that city when the first Epistle of Peter was written. This would be after the year A.D. 61. This falls in with other references in Patristic writings. In his *Hypotyposes* Clement of Alexandria tells us that it was part of the tradition of former times that 'When Peter had publicly preached the word in Rome, and declared the Gospel by the Spirit, those who were present, being many, urged Mark, as one who had followed him for a long time and remembered what he said, to record what he

stated; and that he having made his Gospel gave it to those who made the request of him; . . .’  
 (T. Zahn, p. 432). . . . The last Father to be cited in this connection is Irenaeus, who says (*Haer.*  
 iii. 11) that ‘Matthew published his Gospel . . . while Peter and Paul were preaching and  
 founding the Church in Rome. After their departure Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter,  
 himself also has handed down to us in writing the things which were preached by Peter.’  
 . . . We shall show presently that the Markan narrative in the first Gospel bears unmistakable  
 marks of an Alexandrian origin, while canonical Mark as distinctly points to Rome. . . . But if  
 these marks appear in these two gospels, the Lukan Mark has many traits which point to a  
 Palestinian origin, . . . (pp. 114-117)

#### DOUBLETS IN MARK

Evidence indicating multiple editions of *Mark* is the presence of what are called ‘doublets.’ As J. T. Marshall observed in a 19<sup>th</sup> century treatise: *The Aramaic Gospel*:

In describing the healing of the leper who came to Christ I the first days of His ministry, with such wonderful faith, saying, “If Thou art willing Thou art able to cleanse me,” we find different phrases used to describe the fact of his recovery.

Matt. viii, 3: His leprosy was cleansed.

Luke v. 13: His leprosy departed from him.

Mrk I. 12: His leprosy departed from him, and he was healed.

We would suggest that this difference is due to a various reading: אהגקה for אהגדה .  
 In the reading in Mark’s Gospel, “His leprosy departed from him, and was cleansed,” we have our first instance of a phenomenon which will before long engage our serious attention – doublets in Mark. . . . a translator is acquainted with two translations of the original, in his uncertainty as to which is correct, . . . sometimes inserts *both*.

For other examples of doublets see Burkett’s *Rethinking Gospel Sources*, pages 122-126. What *Mark*’s editing reveals was a consistently conservative approach, i.e., an attempt to conserve ever so slightly divergent readings even if this led to some degree of redundancy. Indeed, a cautious conservatism pervades the entire gospel-writing enterprise.

#### ERRANCY OR INERRANCY?

The question as to why God has allowed variants to creep into the early texts and versions of these sacred books must be a puzzling one to many minds. The answer may be that His work is not mechanical, like ours. Is it not possible that we have ourselves confounded the idea of inspiration with that of dictation? The latter

would have meant the production of a text whose every letter might have been worshiped; the former means that God put it into the hearts of chosen men the desire to write what they knew for a certainty about His dealings with them, but that He kept them at perfect liberty both to express and to transmit His meaning in their own way.

(Agnes Smith Lewis, *The Old Syriac Gospels*, 1910)

The idea of the gospel accounts as having been worked up from rudimentary, eyewitness reports into more finished products is anathema to fundamentalists who prefer that they had simply dropped from the heavens. Rather than having an angel drop off some golden plates for translation or leaving us his own divine account, Jesus, instead, left his apostles at perfect liberty to express, each in his or her own way, his message, for, in fact, the gospels are the product of human hearts and human hands with abundant evidence of intermediate documents indicating that literary effort was required. It will be gratifying to some, while disturbing to others, to learn that one such intermediary document, MS Pepys 2498, has survived to our day, allowing us to go behind the *New Testament* to an earlier strata of witness.

What then of the theory of Peter or Mark not having set pen to paper until after twenty, thirty, forty years had passed? Three distinct groups, each for their own reasons, have upheld this theory. Originally, various Gentile Church scholars, in seeking to distance Christianity from its Semitic roots, wanted Greek translations not to be thought of as translations, but as original compositions. It wouldn't do for Aramaic-speaking fishermen to start writing right off the bat. Then, in the modern era, destructive critics entered the fray. In their disbelief that Jesus did the miracles attributed to him, they want to give the evangelists time enough to make it plausible to say that they conjured up fabulous tales. Curiously enough, in defense of their theory of inspiration called "inerrancy," certain Protestant scholars have also entered this fray. They posit that in some discrete moment in time, the Holy Spirit visited each evangelist and had him write out his gospel, as it were, by dictation, an angel guiding his hand, while a voice from heaven spoke. To explain word-for-word correspondence among the synoptic gospels, they concede, one canonical writer could borrow from another – but not from intermediate, non-canonical source. Decades of oral ministry by the apostles works for all three groups. Greek only also works for all three groups.

#### **SYNOPTIC MERRY - GO - ROUND**

A problem for fundamentalists to solve and for the rest of us to ponder are the numerous, word-for-word agreements appearing so frequently among the synoptic gospels. Obviously, there is literary dependence. But who was depending on whom? Was *Mark* prior to *Matthew* and *Luke* and therefore available to them as a source? or was *Matthew* prior to them all? Maybe *Luke* was prior to them all. If one considers all the permutations, more than a dozen ways exist for one or more of the gospels to be used by one or more of the other gos-

pels. Each possibility has its champions. For instance, 1,500 years ago Augustine of Hippo favored *Matthean* priority. According to the Augustinian hypothesis, *Matthew's Gospel* was utilized by Mark and his *Gospel* was used by Luke. Since the Reformation, most scholars of Protestant persuasion have posited *Markan* priority. According to the *Holtzmann/Streeter hypothesis* (advanced by H. J. Holtzmann in 1863, and refined in 1924 by B. H. Streeter), Mark wrote his gospel first. This was later independently used by Matthew and Luke. Over the last 30 years arose what is called the Jerusalem School whose scholars, observing that *Luke* translates back into Hebrew the easiest. Thus, they are proponents of *Lukan* priority.

But it goes beyond the schools mentioned above. Because each one advances a position easily enough refuted by every other school, further complexities have been introduced, such as positing a hypothetical (some would say mythical) “Q” document (“Q” short for *quelle*, German for “source”) Thus there exists the “three-source hypothesis” whereby Luke supposedly knew *Matthew's Gospel*, *Q*, and *Mark*. Then, too, there is the “four-source hypothesis” and beyond that many other theories. Ronald Higgins, for instance, advances “*Matthean* posterity,” that is, that Matthew utilized both *Mark* and *Luke*. Conversely, A. M. Farmer's take is that Luke used both *Matthew and Mark*, a view shared by both Michael Goulder and Mark Goodacre. After several centuries of this sort of argumentation, the only real question is: how do we escape from all the idle, Alice-in-Wonderland speculation?

The improbability of any of these options which some call “the synoptic maze” is laid out in a copiously documented book titled: “*Rethinking the Gospel Sources*” by Delbert Burkett. Backing up his thesis with chart after chart, he demonstrates the necessity of intermediate Greek documents. *Matthew*, for instance, uses not canonical *Mark* but a *proto-Markan* text. *Luke* uses a second *proto-Markian* text. Our canonical *Mark* combines the two *proto-Markan* texts which is why canonical *Mark* offers us numerous, discrete episodes, called *pericopea*, which provide a fuller, more satisfying telling of events than do either *Matthew* or *Luke*. Our *Mark*, albeit the fuller text at many points, uses noticeably less grammatical Greek, indicating thereby that in some respects its text is the earlier, more primitive one. Both *Luke* and *Matthew* correct its grammatical blunders but we need not suppose that the *Mark* they were working from and correcting was fully the canonical *Mark* with which we are familiar.

#### COMPARING TEXT WITH TEXT

A careful and minute study of a Greek harmony of the Gospels reveals a threefold classification of their contents.

A. – There are numerous passages – sections, verses, or phrases – in which each of the evangelists stands alone.

- B. – There are many instances in which two, or sometimes three, evangelists agree verbatim; or at all events the differences are not greater than may have taken place in process of transcription from a Greek text, . . .
- C. – There are other instances where the parallel passages agree in thought, but not in words. (J. T. Marshall)

As scholars have long observed – and laymen with a Greek copy of the gospels can easily confirm – word-for-word correspondence exists in various places among the synoptic gospels while in other places, the ideas correspond but the words do not. Because the evangelists have woven a complex tapestry from a welter of languages and intermediate documents, alas, no longer extant, we might as well resign ourselves to not having an overarching theory explaining everything they did. But then only the anxious-minded need to have all the answers tied up in a neat package. The rest of us will be happy enough to have provisional answers. In this regard, though he flourished more than a century ago, J. T. Marshall in his era went well beyond where Delbert Burkitt has gone in ours. The latter only considers Greek usage, which is useful enough in helping us understand agreements in language, but Marshall, by deducing underlying, Aramaic usage, allows us to understand linguistic incongruities:

- I. If in the parallel passages in the synoptic Gospels we find ‘resemblance in substance, but not in words,’ this is the indication that first places us on the alert.
- II. If in such parallel passages we notice an unusually rich Aramaic colouring, and,
- III., if the verbs differ in voice or tense, we have confirmatory evidence. His evidence is much increase if
- IV. Be also present: that is, if two divergent Greek words in the several Gospels can be shown to be derived from the same Aramaic consonants, only differently vocalized. But No.
- V. is our main support. If in homologous passages which possess some or all of these marks we come across two Greek words, in two several Gospels, which are unlike in meaning, but these meanings can be shown to belong to one and the same Aramaic word, we may then with confidence affirm that the two Greek words have been translated from the same Aramaic original. For instance, Matthew vi. 12 says: “Forgive us our debts,” ὀφειλήματα ; Luke xi. 4: “Forgive us our sins,” ἁμαρτίας . Why his disagreement in so peculiarly sacred a passage? If the prayer had originally been given by our Lord in Greek, such a diversity would be impossible. When we remember however, that the Aramaic word ܪܘܒ means (1) a trespass, (2) a debt, we perceive that the two evangelists were translating the same word ܪܘܒܝܘܬܐ . We intend to adduce about *thirty* clear cases like this.



## A NAZARENE REFERENCE IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travaillth in birth, and pained to be delivered. . . . And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God . . . And to the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

(Revelation 12:1-2, 5-6, 14-17)

About 1900 AD, a remnant scrap of gospel text was discovered in an area which is now inside modern-day China, but which once laid aside what was then the Silk Road running through Turfstan. Written in an ancient, Parthian dialect, these fragments were published in Berlin, in 1904. Dating to before 1000 AD, this text, denominated M-18, has a few unique and surprising connections to *the Nazarene Gospel Narrative*. First, the Parthian fragment:

Think about what Jesus told you while still in Galilee, "It is necessary for me to be delivered to them, and to be crucified; on the third day I will rise from the dead."

Then, from the *Nazarene Gospel Narrative*:

. . . it was necessary for him to suffer his passion on the cross, and to die, and on the third day to rise from death to life." (NGN 103:12)

Finally, from *Luke*:

. . . the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise. (Luke 24:7)

Neither the Parthian fragment nor the Nazarene Gospel have *Luke's* "Son of Man." They do share, however, the statement about rising from "the dead" or "death." Another parallel:

And they all struck him below the ear . . . (NGN 98:23)

. . . they struck him on the upper jaw. (M-18)

These two very specific texts, which are basically equivalent, are not found in other witnesses. Occasionally such small, verbal agreements as these add up to something significant, in this case, that a harmonizing, possibly Nazarene, gospel text was influencing gospel transmission in some of humankind's furthest out outposts. But why at the edges? Because this was beyond the reach of the Jewish Establishment, as well, beyond the reach of the Roman Church. The Nestorians, a Persian-based form of Christianity, were active a thousand years ago, in taking the Gospel to the Far East. To this day, the Serpent, ever wroth with the woman, makes war on her offspring and to this day the earth, yet helps to protect the woman's offspring from the ever growing intrusion of the all-seeing eye of the Zionist national security state.

#### THE DIATESSARON

About 170 AD, Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, created a combined text out of the four canonical gospels. The Greek term for this is "Diatessaron," meaning the combining of four. Masterfully interwoven, some think Tatian achieved this result by taking a knife to four manuscripts and cutting out single words and painstakingly reassembling them to form a unified text. However that may be, his text became the standard gospel text of Syria for several centuries until finally a Church prelate gathered up all the copies of the Diatessaron he could find and destroyed them. He did his job so well, not one Syriac copy of the Diatessaron survived. But that was not the end of the matter, for in translation, the Diatessaron had spread throughout the world: in Arabic, in Persian, in Latin, in German, and in many other languages. Its spread occurred often without official Church sanction. The basis for its popularity needs explaining, which the late, Diatessaronic scholar, William Petersen, did superbly in his book: *Tatian's Diatessaron: its Creation, Dissemination, Significance, and History in Scholarship*:

Although the idea of a gospel harmony seems odd today – especially to Biblical scholars who are trained to detect the slightest differences among the gospels, and to lay persons, some of whom are taught Biblical inerrancy – they are still common. Children are taught the story of Jesus' life in a harmonized form. Cinematic and theatrical adaptations of Jesus' life (e.g., "Passion Plays") harmonize the gospels. The "Words of Institution" used in liturgies are a harmony of the three synoptic versions, each of which is different) and Paul's (I Cor. 11:24), which adds the uniquely Pauline "do this in remembrance of me." These examples reveal two powerful motives for creating a harmony: teaching (or evangelization), and the desire not to omit anything (or put differently, to reproduce fully what is spread out among various sources). These same motives were operative in the second century, and probably contributed to the creation of harmonies in the early church. In antiquity (and perhaps even now) a third motive also seem to have been at work, and that was the desire to disarm critics of Christianity, such as Celsus (*fl.* C. 180), who used the inconsistencies and contradictions in the gospels to prove that the new religion was a fraud.

## VULGATIZATION AND HARMONIZATION

Reconstructing the Diatessaron's text has been no small task, for not only was the original Syriac text completely destroyed but most of the surviving copies in translation have been subject to revision whereby they were conformed to the standard canonical text. That standard in Latin was Jerome's Latin Vulgate – "vulgate" being a word in this context meaning "common." But the process of revision, because it was laborious, was often executed haphazardly, the revisor's attention being subject to what is called "editorial fatigue." Thus, valuable readings were retained. Back in the 1930's, a Middle Dutch text, known as the "*Leige Diatessaron*" was discovered by the dean of Diatessaronic scholars, Daniel Plooij, to have largely escaped the vulgatization process. Conversely, assimilation was a two way street with Diatessaronic or pre-Diatessaronic readings sometimes being incorporated into canonical texts:

In 1980, I pointed out a number of harmonistic readings in the Old Syriac Gospels which are unsupported by the Diatessaron and agree with pre-Tatianic authors. From these studies, it may be concluded that harmonization characterized the Gospel tradition from very early times, even before Tatian made his harmony. (George Howard)

Gilles Quispel, has documented unique textual correspondences between the *Heliand* and MS Pepys 2498, also, between an Old High German Diatessaron preserved in the library of St. Galen, a monastery founded by the Culdees. These and the Liege Diatessaron were never systematically vulgatized, therefore mostly escaped the vulgatization process.

The Gospel describes Jesus as a rabbi and his followers as disciples. In Antiquity, as often as not, Christ was represented as a philosopher surrounded by his students. But in Anglo-Saxon England schools were hardly known and philosophers did not appeal to the imagination of the people. The society was based on the idea of loyalty: a knight was supposed to be loyal to his lord. It is often said that this idea of the comitatus is typically Germanic. But it is found in feudal societies all over the world. Therefore, when Christ is described as a king and his disciples as "thegnas", as happens in the poem *The Dream of the Rood*, this reflects not so much a Germanic as a feudal society.

The venerable Bede has described in a famous passage in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (IV, 24) how these biblical epics originated: an indigenous poet, Caedemon, would go to a learned monk and have translated to him a passage of the Bible; the next day he would return and show his idiomatic, heroic, poetical translation of it. And this would go on until a complete poem had come about. . . . And it is quite possible that the *Heliand*, made after Anglo-Saxon examples and

meant to be sung in the halls of the squires was made in the same way. The *Heliand*, the most beautiful achievement of the Carolingian renaissance . . . is an Saxon poem of 5983 verses which tells the story of the life of Christ. . . . the Heiland is based on a Latin Diatessaron. (G. Quispel)

**FROM THE PREFACE TO THE LIÈGE DIATESSARON**

D. Plooij, 1929

Until 1923 it was common opinion among scholars that Tatian wrote his Diatessaron in Greek; that he translated it into Syriac and that the Latin Harmony extant for instance in the Codex Fuldensis was a more or less independent reproduction of the Greek Diatessaron. Zahn however, and after him Vogels, who studied the tradition of the Harmony in the West, discovered that this line of tradition was not so simple as it was supposed to be, and that the standard Vulgate text of the Fuldensis showed traces of an Old-Latin form. In 1910 already Vogels stated that the text of the Gospels in Codex Bezae, i.e. a fundamentally Old-Latin text, was deeply influenced by harmonistic readings from Tatian's Diatessaron, but even so the Greek origin of the famous work remained axiomatic and unquestionable.

In 1922 however a closer study of the text of a mediaeval Dutch Harmony, preserved in a XIV cent. Manuscript in the Liège University Library under the title *Vita Jesu Christi Flanrice*, . . . showed that the Liège text had been translated from an otherwise lost Old-Latin text, and that this Old-Latin text showed traces of being translated not from a Greek but from a Syriac original. On this find I reported in . . . 1923 under the title: *A primitive Text of the Diatessaron*, and followed in 1925 by a second study . . . *A Further Study of the Liège Diatessaron*.

Two theses were maintained in these studies:

1. That the Vulgate Latin Diatessaron is based upon an Old-Latin form of the text, which has largely influenced the whole Old-Latin textual tradition of the Gospels, and accordingly is anterior to these, i.e., belongs to the period of about 200 A.D.; and
2. That this Old-Latin text is a translation not from the Greek but from the Syriac.

The importance of these theses – if they are found to be confirmed by the facts – is so far-reaching for the text of the Gospels (and, as the problem belongs to the great problem of the 'Western' Text, also for the rest of the N. Test. Text, especially of Acts), that the interest taken in the new solution was quite justified: It would establish to a great extent the far-reaching influence of Tatian's work on the N. Test. Textual history, and would show at the same time a close relation between the early Syriac- and Latin-speaking Christianity (independent of the Greek-speaking Church) of which otherwise so little is known. Of a Greek Diatessaron in the meanwhile, not a single line has hitherto been discovered, and its existence, taken to be axiomatic, remains entirely hypothetical.

The thesis of a Syriac origin for the Latin Diatessaron, being based upon textual data offered by a xiii century Dutch translation, was so romantic and unexpected, that the incredulity of scholars was entirely explicable if not justified. Their scepticism has been a little modified since the appearance of the second study, but as yet the whole attitude remains unaltered.

**THE ORIENTALIST LOOKS WESTWARD AS WELL AS EASTWARD**

. . . the likeliest historical scenario, it seems to me, is that the Old Latin source of the Magdalene Gospel [MS Pepys 2498] had been cherished and preserved in the British Isles for over a 1000 years.

(Yuri Kuchinsky)

There is a mystery to be unraveled regarding the presence of various Diatessarons in mediaeval Europe. We know that they were spread there by missionaries from the British Isles by a class of people known as “Culdees” but how came Culdees to have Tatian’s Diatessaron in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, when long before, in 5<sup>th</sup> century, it had been completely rooted out of its presumptive homeland of Syria? More mysterious yet is the presence of a unique pre-Tatianic Diatessaron, MS Pepys 2498, in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Without gainsaying in any way the innate spiritual qualities of the Celts, we detect as part of their cultural heritage a Nazarene infusion. Here to some extent we enter a land of legend as misty as the emerald isles themselves. Gilles the Wise, a 5<sup>th</sup> century historian, Briton’s earliest, in describing Britain as God’s “latter day Israel,” wrote obliquely, so we believe, of Joseph of Arimathea, when he said:

“We know that Christ the true Sun afforded His light to our island in the last time of Tiberias Caesar.”

Joseph of Arimathea was reputed to have been a wealthy tin merchant who, according to tradition, traveled repeatedly to Cornwall, Wales, for tin, a commodity mined there in abundance. It is further alleged that Joseph brought with him his nephew, Jesus, when yet a teenager. As William Blake asks most sweetly:

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England’s mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England’s pleasant pastures seen?  
And did the countenance divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?*

It is further alleged in legend that Joseph returned to Glastonbury after Jesus’ ministry in the company of 12 evangelists to establish a mission and that 12 hides of land, i.e., 1900 acres, were granted them.

*The pure culdees*

*were Albys earliest priests of God,  
ere yet an island of her seas  
by foot of Saxon monk was trod.*

But what of this word “Culdee”? Some say it was derived from a Gaelic word *Culdrich*, meaning “pilgrim.” But others aver that it came from the Caldeean (Syriac), meaning “holy man.” In the Aramaic that would be *khalid*, meaning “friend of God.”

The original Caldees were “Jacobites,” which is to say, their branch of Christianity derived from James, not Paul. They observed the Passover, not Easter, believed in a married, not a celibate, priesthood, observed Levitical food injunctions, such as the avoidance of pork, and they kept the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. Their form of Christianity pre-dated the Church’s.

The question of Culdee Easter observance is rather complex, to be sure. And yet, it is reasonably clear that they were quartodecimans, i.e. they always celebrated Easter on the full moon of 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, coinciding with the Passover observances of the Jews. Interestingly, this is supported by Enc. Britannica, . . .

“. . . the church in Britain, which had few links with European churches at this time, retained the Quartodeciman position . . .” . (The Western calendar and calendar reforms - Britannica.com),

Culdees fully accepted marriage for priests, bishops, and even for monks. This puts them very close to the Jewish tradition, where marriage is recommended to all rabbis. (Yuri Kuchinsky)

Even great monastic communities were sometimes under the tutelage of a woman, such as Brigid oat Kildare or Hilda at Witby. And when the light of learning had burned low or been extinguished in much the rest of Europe, the Culdees were actively establishing monasteries, not only in the British Isles, but across northern Europe, even as far away as Kiev.

. . . confining our attention to its spread on the Continent, we find this religious community in France, at the beginning of the eighth century, existing in the heart of the National Church, and not merely tolerated, but over the whole country, from the Jura to Nantes, and from this, line as far north as the delta of the Rhine, *Rome-free*, and entirely unrestricted in its internal organization, decidedly favored by the Merovingian kings, even dominating the National Church in the sense of spiritual and intellectual influence, and often also taking part in external government by the appointment of its abots to important sees. We find the whole of the north of France sowed, so to speak, with monasteries, with all their peculiarities, in unopposed development. Then we find the whole of the Rhineland converted to Christianity by the Culdean Church, and ecclesiastically governed by it in its own peculiar manner; likewise the whole of the country now called Franconia, and Alamannia, and Bavaria, converted and ecclesiastically governed by Culdeans, and Culdeans alone.

All of the distinctive peculiarities of the Culdean Church – its married priests, its sending out of its missionaries

by twelve, its practice of constructing settlements in separate houses, its subjection of chorepiscopi (or bishops of monasteries) to the rule of the abbots – all this we find in Bavaria and Alamannia in 730-739, just as it was in Scotland in 565. (Johannes Ebrand, a 19<sup>th</sup> century historian)

Culdee artwork, as found in the marvelous Book of Kells has no element that identifies it as having been derived from Greece or Rome but its motifs and designs correspond amazingly to what one can find from Ethiopia. This is not to say that there was ever direct course between England and Rome, only that their art shared a common source halfway between the two. All of this fits a pattern. The famous Stowe missal of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century found in 1795 secreted in the walls of O’Kennedy Lackeen Castle gives good indication of having been influenced by the Syrian *Didache*, and, as well, by the East Syrian liturgy of Mari and Addai. Then, too, there is Celtic music:

Although the Celtic chant is said to be lost, that is not altogether true. A piece of Celtic Psalm music from Inchcolm Antiphonar, originating from West Highlands, and resembles in scale, key, timing, melodic movement and general embellishments a chanted song sang an isolated Christian group in Ethiopia. It is generally believed by historians that the isolated Ethiopian Church retained the most ancient of Christian music, possibly from original Palestinian or Temple sources.

Additional recent evidence of a fusion of Celtic Hebraic Chant form is the result of the systematic deciphering by Haik-Vantuura of the notation existing in the ancient Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Masoretic author Moses ben Asher, noted in the text that the notation was “delivered to him as it was passed down from the prophets of old.” Analysis reveals that there are many similarities in the embellishments, modes and melodies of the early Irish Psalmody and the Hebrew Temple chant of the Book of Psalms.

(David Michael “Eastern Bishops and the Celtic Order of the Culdees”)

The Culdees, being of a decidedly scholarly bent, applied themselves not only to Scripture but also to the practical arts, making it a part of their ministry to teach the people improved agricultural techniques. With regard to their own Scriptural tradition, the Culdees, instead of changing over to Jerome’s 4<sup>th</sup> century, Latin Vulgate, continued with the Old Latin text called *Itala*. That could be seen as indicative of a kind of conservatism but in this instance, not of the selfish variety, for:

. . . unlike the Catholics of the time, the Culdees believed that the Scriptures should be translated into the vernacular languages of the people. Another similarity to the Protestants, and a clear influence on Wicklif, the first prominent translator of biblical texts into English. The Culdees even preserved the knowledge of biblical languages. For example, St. Adamnan, a biographer of Columba, was very knowledgeable of not only Latin, but also of Greek and Hebrew. (Yuri Kuchinsky)

The Culdees were ones for keeping Rome at arms length:

*Gwae ni cheidw ey gaiul,  
ac ef yn vigail  
ac ni areilla!  
Gwae ni theidw ey dheueid,  
rhae bleidhie Rhiefeniaid,  
ai ffon grewppa!*

*Woe to those priests I say,  
who keep not vigil over their flocks  
as befits their office!*

*Woe if elders keep not  
from Roman wolves, their fold of sheep  
with staffs and weapons strong!*

In a letter from St Columban to Pope Boniface (AD 590), Columban does not write as a subordinate, but as a fellow bishop, in no way inferior to the Roman Pope. In his letter, Columban encourages Boniface to "cleanse his holy See" from error. While he does agree to honour the See of Rome, Columban reserves the highest place of honour for the See of Jerusalem, since it is known scripturally as the place of the Lord's resurrection. In these disputes, Culdees often appealed to ancient records that proved, according to them, that the bishop of Rome should not pretend to command other Christian bishops. (Yuri Kuchinsky)

#### **P E L A G I U S ,   T H E   C U L D E A N ,   A N D   N E S T O R I U S ,   T H E   C H A L D E A N**

From the British Isles, came Pelagius, a Culdean whose writings have mostly been lost, nay, destroyed, but we do have a few letters from which I have extracted the following concerning grace and freewill, the issue over which he was condemned:

"God's grace lies in the fact that we have been so created as to be able to do this by the will, and in the further fact that God has given to us the assistance of His law and commandments, and also in that He forgives their past sins when men turn to Him... [and] in these things alone. . . . This grace we for our part do not, as you suppose, allow to consist merely in the law, but also in the help of God. God helps us by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens the eyes of our heart; whilst He points out to us the future, that we may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the snares of the devil; whilst He enlightens us with the manifold and ineffable gift of heavenly grace."

Even in condemning him, Pelagius's opponents are compelled to speak well of him:

Pelagius was highly educated, spoke and wrote Latin as well as Greek with great fluency and was well



versed in theology. In Rome itself he enjoyed the reputation of austerity, while St. Augustine called him even a "saintly man", *vir sanctus*: . . .

The gravest error into which he and the rest of the Pelagians fell, was that they did not submit to the doctrinal decisions of the Church. . . . at that time, the doctrine of Christian grace was everywhere vague and undefined; even the West was convinced of nothing more than that some sort of assistance was necessary to salvation and was given gratuitously, while the nature of this assistance was but little understood. In the East, moreover, as an offset to widespread fatalism, the moral power and freedom of the will were at times very strongly or even too strongly insisted on assisting grace being spoken of more frequently than preventing grace. It was due to the intervention of St. Augustine and the Church, that greater clearness was gradually reached in the disputed questions and that the first impulse was given towards a more careful development of the dogmas of original sin and grace.

*(New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia)*

Because few of Pelagius's writings have survived, it is not possible to speak definitively about his beliefs. This we know, in December in 415 AD the Synod of Diospolis concluded:

Now since we have received satisfaction in respect of the charges brought against the monk Pelagius in his presence and since he gives his assent to sound doctrines but condemns and anathematizes those contrary to the faith of the Church, we adjudge him to belong to the communion of the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, in 418 AD, at the behest of Saint Augustine and Hoorius, emperor of Rome, Pelagius was excommunicated by Pope Zosimus and, as well, he was expelled from Jerusalem, after which he was sent to Egypt, never to be heard from again.

To a surprising degree, just a few years later, the distinguished orator and theologian, Nestorius, met the same fate as did Pelagius, his writings were burned, he was excommunicated from the Church, and then he was banished to the desert of Egypt where he died. Again let us allow his opponents to tell the sorry tale:

Nestorius was a disciple of the school of Antioch, and his Christology was essentially that of Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, . . . The lot of Nestorius was a hard one. He had been handed over by the pope to the tender mercies of his rival, Cyril; he had been summoned to accept within ten days under pain of deposition, not a papal definition, but a series of anathemas drawn up at Alexandria under the influence of Apollinarian forgeries. The whole council had not condemned him, but only a portion, which had not awaited the arrival of the bishops from Antioch. He had refused to recognize the jurisdiction of this incomplete number, and had consequently refused to appear or put in any defence. . . . He retired to his monastery at Antioch with dignity and apparent relief. The bishops who were suspected of being favourable to Nestorius were deposed. An edict of Theodosius II, 30 July, 435, condemned his writings to be burnt. A few years later Nestorius was dragged from his retirement and banished to the Oasis [Egypt].

The Persian Church was now organized, if not thoroughly united, and was formally committed to the theology of Antioch. . . . Nestorius has always been venerated as a saint by the Persian Church. The Persian Christians were called "Orientals", or "Nestorians", by their neighbours on the west. They gave to themselves the name Chaldeans; . . . One thing more was needed for the Nestorian Church; it wanted theological schools of its own, . . . Barsaûma opened a school at Nisibis, which was to become more famous than its parent at Edessa. The rector was Narses the Leprous, a most prolific writer, of whom little has been preserved. This university consisted of a single college, with the regular life of a monastery. Its rules are still preserved. At one time we hear of 800 students. Their great doctor was Theodore of Mopsuestia. . . . The fame of this theological seminary was so great that Pope Agapetus and Cassiodorus wished to found one in Italy of a similar kind. the attempt was impossible in those troublous times; but Cassiodorus's monastery at Vivarium was inspired by the example of Nisibis.

The Nestorians also penetrated into China and Mongolia and left behind them an inscribed stone, set up in Feb., 781, which describes the introduction of Christianity into China from Persia in the reign of T'ai-tsong (627-49). The stone is at Chou-Chih, fifty miles south-west of Sai-an Fu, which was in the seventh century the capital of China. It is known as "the Nestorian Monument". (New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia)

. . . the controversy between Nestorius of Constantinople and Cyril of Alexandria, a bitter dispute that racked the entire oecumene. The Christian church's decision on the Arian heresy, at Nicaea in 325, brings in its wake further problems of the same kind. If Jesus is 'of one substance with the Father', he is incontrovertibly God. It follows that the Virgin Mary, though herself entirely human, gives birth to God. The phrase *theotokos* ('bearer of God' in Greek) is soon widely used of her.

This becomes a political issue in the 5th century when Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople, says that the word *theotokos* should not be used. An ecclesiastical rival, Cyril the patriarch of Alexandria, seizes the opportunity to harm Constantinople by declaring its bishop a heretic.

Nestorius dies in about 451 - the year in which another council, at Chalcedon, confirms the decisions of Ephesus and specifically declares that Mary is indeed *theotokos*, the Mother of God. In certain regions, particularly Syria, there is widespread support for Nestorius. Christians of this persuasion, escaping from militant orthodoxy, move east into Persia. (Wikipedia)

What at root was the controversy about? Why were Pelagius and Nestorius dealt with so harshly? I would suggest that theological differences were only part of the story. Yes, Pelagius emphasized free will when Augustine emphasized the bondage of the will and, yes, Nestorius, emphasized the manhood of Christ, but these differences in emphasis hardly consti-

tuted heresy. More to the point, these were men who thought their own thoughts, expressed themselves freely in their own way, and weren't about to knuckle under, which was infuriating to those who demand conformity of thought and obedience to "higher authority," which raises a question, who needs a one-size-fits-all organization, anyhow? That wasn't part of the original faith once delivered to the saints but some latter accommodation to the world. Note, too, that much of the controversy occurs at the borders and follows linguistic and cultural divides: the Gaelic divide in Briton, the Berber divide in North Africa (i.e., the Donatist controversy in which Augustine played a key roll in bringing in Roman force of arms against the local church). In the East there was the Semitic divide.

#### THEODORE OF TARSUS (602 - 690)

One of the most remarkable personalities of his era was Theodore of Tarsus, the eighth archbishop of Canterbury. Born in the same city as was the Apostle Paul, a Byzantine Greek, beginning about age 12, he lived under Persian rule and absorbed Persian culture. Later he matriculated in Antioch from whence he received much the same theological training Nestorius had and was a lifelong proponent of that school's unique theological emphasis. After that he studied in Constantinople and became completely conversant with Roman civil law and Greek rhetoric and philosophy, as well, medicine. After that he moved to Rome, where he lived with eastern monks in a monastery and continued his education, becoming fully acquainted with Latin culture, both sacred and profane. Consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 669, thereafter, he established an influential school which ushered in the "golden age" of Anglo-Saxon scholarship.

Theodore of Tarsus was a strong partisan of duothelitism (= Christ had a divine and human will). Through him some niceties of Greek theology fell on English soil, which turned out to be extremely fertile. Commentaries of Theodore have been identified which show him to be a sober exegete of Scripture with great attention to the letter of the Bible. He was the real teacher of the venerable Bede, who was an outstanding biblical scholar, especially in his wonderful commentary of Luke. The English were not slow to discover what this seemingly dogmatic detail meant for their faith. With this stress on the human will of Jesus the church legitimated their view that Christ was a king who willingly died for his people. In the end this view was of great help in delivering the Nordic peoples from their submission to fate. Alcuin, who made his theology the dominant philosophy of the Carolingian epoch, put it in this way: "*Non aliqua necessitate coactus sed propria voluntate passus est pro nobis, dum voluit*". That Christ broke fate by his will helped the Christians who still struggled with the old idea of "*Wurd*" (fate) to discover his and so their own liberty. It was this shade of Christianity, both popular and learned, which was brought by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries to Northern Europe. It is reflected in the *Heliand*, where Jesus wills the will of God:

He need not have stood,  
nor such grievous sufferings,  
nor have endured such anguish.  
But He did so for this host  
Since He wanted to save  
the children of men.

And this leads up to Anselm of Canterbury, according to whom the humanity of Christ atones for mankind by its voluntary suffering, and to Bernard of Clairvaux's mysticism of the Bridegroom on the Cross. Western Christianity, the theology of the Cross, so different from the Byzantine stress on Godman and triumphal resurrection, has its roots in Anglo-Saxon England. (G. Quispel)

#### **C H R I S T O U R E X A M P L E**

"I came down from heaven, not that I might do mine own will but the will of the Father which sent me!"

By appealing to our better angels, by appealing to us to follow his example, Jesus holds us accountable to respond to his commands. In this, one might say that he maintains an optimistic view regarding our competency to respond. As Jesus said:

"God prevent it that man should tempt Him by asking for help to be saved, but not help himself."

"Whoso maketh earnest supplication with open heart, his prayer shall be heard before God."

"It behooveth him who would be my disciple, to give the most careful attention to letting go of all such things as would be disturbing of my love."

"Whoso will have life without end, look that he keep the commandments of God."

Not all, however, believe we have better angels or light within. At the far end of the spectrum in its pessimistic assessment is that ultimate expression of fatalism devised by puritanical Calvinism, as summarized by the acronym TULIP:

Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

But it wasn't just John Calvin who offers the council of despair, much likewise can be found in Martin Luther's book: *The Bondage of the Will*. But where are they getting this

stuff from? As it turns out, both Calvin and Luther were Augustinian, both follow the lead of the western Church's preeminent theologian.

The argument then is not just over the separated gospels of the Church versus the combined gospels of the Nazarenes, nor at root was it even doctrinal, but there existed non-compatible world views: one hopeful, one pessimistic.

. . . it's helpful to think of the [two] natures [of Christ] adverbially. The divine Son exists humanly -- not in a diminished sense of 'rather *like* the human than *as* human', but in acknowledgment that humanity, the full human natural realm, is now the way in which the Son divinely exists. He has a divine will humanly, which means equally that he has a human will divinely, since it is the human will of the divine Son. It is *both* a human and a divine will, inasmuch as it is the singular will of the God-man. The real challenge of the dythelete controversy was not over confessing that Christ had two natural wills in perfect union, but articulating how they could be in such a perfect union while being *both active*. (Matthew Steenburg)

### *Celtic Prayer*

*Let us go forth,*

*In the good news of our merciful father,  
In the gentleness of our brother Jesus,  
In the radiance of his Holy Spirit,  
In the faith of the apostles,  
In the holiness of the saints,  
In the courage of martyrs,*

*Such is the path for all servants of Christ,*

*The path from death to eternal life.  
The will of God be done by us,  
The law of God be kept by us,  
Our evil will controlled by us,  
Speedy repentance made by us,  
Blessed death welcomed by us,  
God's highest praises sung by us.*

*Let us go forth,*

*In the wisdom of our all-seeing Father,  
In the patience of our all-loving brother,  
In the truth of the all-knowing spirit,  
In the learning of the apostles,  
In the patience of the saints,  
In the gracious guidance of the angels,  
In the self-control of the martyrs,*

*Christ's death would I ponder,  
My own death remember;  
Christ's cross would I carry,  
My own cross forget.*

# Linguistic issues

## THE LANGUAGES OF PROCLAMATION

A standing joke among a certain class of sophisticates is that rube Christians are so ignorant, they actually believe the Bible to have been originally written in King James English. Perhaps a few do. The joke, however, may be on the advanced thinkers who suppose that the gospels were originally written in Greek, the one *faux pas* being as big as the other. If not Greek, then in what language were the gospels originally recorded? Silly question that! No stone was left unturned by Jesus' followers in their effort to reach the world with the Gospel. In the multilingual society in which they lived, a variety of languages were employed to document the life and ministry of our Lord and the synoptic gospels bear good testimony to this admixture for from it a rich tapestry was woven.

It would be a nice thing, one might suppose, to say that all languages were created equal but that would be to overlook the fact that in Palestine in the 1<sup>st</sup> century different languages served different functions. Even within the home, it was commonly the case that two languages were employed. The term scholars use for this is *diglossia* and it involved what is referred to as a top language and a bottom language. Then, too, there was a *lingua franca* used outside the home, usually by men transacting commercial business.

The type of languages which we have called 'home-languages' often enjoy among their speakers great affection and tenacious loyalty, but no social prestige. In most cases, one language is spoken in ordinary, everyday life by everybody, and the other is employed in formal speech, on formal occasions, in writing, in religious activities, and the like. . . . not everyone is able to handle the upper language. In most cases it is imparted by some process of formal education. The number who can understand it to some extent will be larger than those who can speak it and write it. In contrast to the *lingua franca*, anyone who handles such a prestige language will aspire to do so perfectly, without mistakes, even though perhaps not elegantly.

(*Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century*)

## THE SUITABILITY OF ARAMAIC, THE LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE

When once the Church of Christ fully realizes the truth, which has hitherto lain in a state of sub-consciousness, that our Lord spoke Aramaic, there can not fail to be a strong desire to get back to the *ipsissima verba* which proceeded from his lips, . . . (J. T. Marshall)

Once a transcription of Jesus's speech had been made, Matthew (or whoever else) may then have made a translation. The question is: from which language and into which language? In reply: it is established fact that the common folk of Jesus' day spoke Aramaic. From this one logically infers that the language Jesus used in his discourses to the multitudes was Aramaic. Actually, we don't need to deduce; our Greek version provides telling evidence, not only of Aramaic loan words, but of outright Aramaic usage as when Jesus said to the little girl whom he raised from death to life: "*Talitha cumi*," i.e., "Damsel arise." And from the cross, Jesus said: "*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*", i.e., "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thus we see that at the point of death, at least as recorded in *Mark*, Jesus, in addressing God, did not speak Hebrew, the language of the Bible but, rather, as people in extremity tend to do, he returned to the language of his cradle and of his mother, Mary.

Aramaic, the common tongue of the Middle East, was also the language of home and market in the Holy Land and by Jesus' day had been in continuous use some 500 years, indeed, ever since the first Temple's, (that being Solomon's) destruction in 587 BC. After Alexander the Great had swept through the Holy Land essentially unhindered in 325 BC, Greek became the favored language of a cosmopolitan elite, yet Aramaic continued in use the same as ever by common folk. In 64 BC, Rome, under Pompey's leadership, vanquished the Selucid (Greek) Kingdom after which Latin became the language of government but still Aramaic remained as the language of the people. As an example of the resiliency of Aramaic usage, I have personally inspected a modern-day *ketubah*, that being the traditional marriage vows a Jewish couple take, having Hebrew characters but Aramaic wording.

When in 539 Cyrus conquered Babylon and set up a Persian empire on the ruins of the Babylonian one, Aramaic was made the language of administration for the whole empire, except the Persian homeland, and became the *lingua franca* used between its many-tongued population. This language, now referred to as imperial Aramaic, was cultivated by scribal schools and seems to have enjoyed great prestige. This lasted a long time beyond the existence of the Persian empire.

The lower languages of the Aramaic *diglossia* were, according to the locality, various forms of dialect tending towards middle Aramaic, or dialects belonging to proto-Arabic, the predecessors of classical literary Arabic. It is not to be excluded that there were also places with an Aramaic-Hebrew diglossia in which Aramaic played the role of the upper, and mishnaic Hebrew that of the lower language. It may be assumed that immediately after the beginning of the Maccabean revolt, Hebrew was in a very healthy state. Being an important symbol in the struggle against Greek influence, it may possibly have made good some previous losses. However, in 165 or 164 b.c.e. Simon and Judas went out to Galilee and Transjordan and led the Jews living there to Judaea, thus sharply reducing the area where Hebrew was spoken, and possibly importing to the center elements already speaking Aramaic. When in 104-103 Aristobulus conquered Galilee and part of the land of the Arab Ituraeans, and John Hyrcanus between 135 and 104 conquered Idumaea, and in both cases the local inhabitants were forced to accept Judaism, large numbers of Aramaic speakers were incorporated into the community, and some of those who took their new religion seriously would come and settle in Jerusalem. Indeed the very splendor of the Temple attracted Jews from eastern, Aramaic-speaking countries, and thus further increased the percentage of Aramaic speakers in Judaea. (*Hebrew and Aramaic of the First Century*)

#### L I N G U I S T I C   C O U S I N S :   A R A M A I C   A N D   S Y R I A C

While no Palestinian Aramaic gospel has survived to our day, a close, 2<sup>nd</sup> century relative of it has, that being Old Syriac. Albeit translated from Greek or Latin, it retains West Aramaic elements, perhaps because its translators were Palestinian Jews. Its Middle Eastern flavor becomes evident by comparing F. C. Burkitt's translation of what Jesus said to the repentant thief on the cross, (*Luke 24:43*), with that of the Greek-derived, King James Version:

Verily say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise. (KJV)

Amen I say to thee to-day that with me thou shalt be in the garden of Eden. (SYRIAC)

As this verse demonstrates, it is characteristically Semitic to look for a colorful, vivid expression, whereas the Greeks gravitate more naturally to a generalized categorization.

#### F R O M   A R A M A I C   T O   G R E E K   A N D   B A C K   A G A I N

Whether one reconstructs Aramaic from Greek or Greek from Aramaic, either way, a certain amount of educated guesswork is involved. Notwithstanding that, in the hands of a skilled linguist this approach can help us recover what Jesus actually intended to convey. One brief example: from *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel* by Maurice Casey, the author offers as a conjectural emendation the following translation of *Matthew 8:20 / Luke 9:58*:

The jackals have holes, and the birds of the air have  
roosts, and a son of man has nowhere to lay his head.



As Casey observes, the Holy Land is on a migratory route where birds roost but do not nest. Since a nest is something which is built, the point of Jesus' expression, that animals, unlike humans, do not have to build homes, would be clearer if the word was roost, not nest. But this is speculation lacking any textual support.

Additionally, according to Casey, Jesus did not take upon himself the apocalyptic title "Son of Man," but, rather, used a common Aramaic expression which applies to mankind generally. He thinks, possibly, that a linguistic misunderstanding occurred. Though Casey didn't know it when postulating this, documentary evidence exists, MS PEPYS 2498, that being a gospel where this title is completely absent.

#### **THE SUITABILITY OF HEBREW, THE TRADITIONAL BIBLICAL TONGUE**

Beyond the use of Aramaic, Jesus also used Hebrew, for not only did he address the multitudes in the street but also the learned, religious leaders within the precinct of the Temple. Hebrew at that time was still very much a living language. Not only are 3/4 of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Hebrew but many secular documents from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple era are also in Hebrew. Said Origen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century: "the beginning of the Gospel is connected with the Jewish writings."

Parents will often go to great lengths to see that their children are able to speak a language which they themselves do not normally use. This may well be the implication of the passage, often quoted as evidence that Hebrew was still spoken in *Sifeon Deuteronomy* 26:4. 'And you shall teach them to your sons' (Deut. 11:19): your sons and not our daughters, according to R. Jose ben Akiba. Hence it has been said: when the toddler begins to speak, his father shall talk to him in the Holy Tongue and teach him the Law. And if he does not speak to him in the Holy Tongue and does not teach him the Law, it is as if he had buried him. The statement shows clearly that the child is assumed to have started speaking in another language, and that it is only the father who can talk to him in the Holy Tongue. . . . Such a passage proves that there was still a living tradition of speaking the language, in this case no doubt mishnaic Hebrew. . . . While we may assume that in Jerusalem and Judea mishnaic Hebrew was still the ruling language, and Aramaic took the second place, the situation must have been reversed in areas such as the costal plain and Galilee. There Aramaic, and possibly Greek, were the dominant languages spoken by the people from all classes, while Hebrew mainly functioned as a literary language. The important point to remember is, however, that prestige and loyalty were accorded to Hebrew, and perhaps to Greek, but not to Aramaic, and that therefore many of those who habitually spoke Aramaic, but had acquired a certain facility in in Hebrew, would count themselves as Hebrew speakers. Those who, like Jesus, took part in the discussions in the synagogues (Mark 1:21) and in the Temple in Jerusalem (Mark 11:17) and disputed on Halakah (Matthew 19:3)

no doubt did so in mishnaic Hebrew. In other words, while in Jerusalem mishnaic Hebrew was a home language and probably already also a literary language, and Aramaic a *lingua franca*, in Galilee Aramaic was a home language and mishnaic Hebrew the upper language of a diglossia.

(*Hebrew and Aramaic of the First Century*)

#### THE SUITABILITY OF GREEK, THE LANGUAGE OF THE EDUCATED WORLD

Indicative of the use of Greek in Palestine: Jesus conversing with the centurion, Jesus and Pilate conversing, Peter and Cornelius conversing; the inscription on the cross in Greek.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of Greek in the developing synoptic gospel tradition. While the initial work was done in Palestinian Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew, the final editing was almost all in Greek. Particularly useful in understanding the editorial process is to compare text to text. As we see below, all the words are identical except the first one, which is Peter's address to Jesus. *Mark's* transliterated Aramaic title, "Rabbi," *Matthew's Gospel* and *Luke's*, each in its own way, changed toward something more properly Greek.

MATTHEW 17:4	MARK 9:5	LUKE 9:33
<p>κύριε, καλόν ἐστίν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι</p>	<p>ραββί, καλόν ἐστίν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι</p>	<p>ἐπιστάτα, καλόν ἐστίν ἡμᾶς ὧδε εἶναι</p>
<p>Lord, it is good for us to be here.</p>	<p>Rabbi, it is good for us to be here.</p>	<p>Master, it is good for us to be here.</p>

#### THE SEMITIC STYLE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (ABRIDGED)

Michael D. Marlowe

Although the language of the New Testament is fundamentally the *koine* or "common" Greek of the period in which it was written, the New Testament authors wrote in a *Hebraic* or *Semitic* style which is not entirely idiomatic Greek. This stylistic character may be seen in several areas, including the grammar, syntax, semantics, and rhetorical features of the text. Particular examples of this style are called linguistic *Hebraisms*, or, more broadly, *Semitisms* (a term which covers Aramaic influences as well as Hebrew).

A *Semitism* is defined as a linguistic usage, expression or construction typical of a Semitic language appearing in another language. It is not necessary for an expression to be ungrammatical or otherwise completely outlandish in the usage of the second language in order for it to be considered a Semitism. Although some Semitisms are of this stark and absolute nature, others are what we may call relative Semitisms, when there is an unusual strain against ordinary usage probably due to Semitic influence. So there is a gray area, in which

there is some room for disagreement in marginal cases. One scholar may consider an expression to be a Semitism while another doubts whether it is right to classify it as such. Nevertheless, all scholars agree that various Semitisms are abundantly present in the New Testament.

There is also some disagreement as to why they are there. Some scholars are inclined to think that much of the New Testament was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, and that the Semitisms of the Greek text are a consequence of the translation of these original sources, in which Hebrew or Aramaic idioms were reproduced literally. Thus, the Semitisms of the New Testament are explained in the same way as we explain the Semitisms of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which often literally reproduces the Hebraisms of its Hebrew source. Other scholars prefer to explain the Semitisms of the New Testament as a consequence of peculiarities in the Greek commonly spoken by bilingual Jews in the first century. Other scholars believe that the Semitic style of the New Testament is best explained as a kind of "Biblical" style which Jewish authors or preachers of the era would have used, not so much in their ordinary speech, but in their writing and in preaching, after the model of the Septuagint.

Probably there is some truth in all of these explanations. It can hardly be doubted that at least some of the material included in the Gospels (especially the sayings of Jesus) was originally recorded or perhaps orally transmitted in Aramaic, and that at some point this Aramaic was translated into the Greek which we have in our New Testament.

When we have good reason to suppose that an expression in the New Testament reflects a Hebrew idiom, then it should be interpreted as if it were "Hebrew in disguise." In this manner we correctly apprehend the meaning of many words and expressions in the New Testament.

#### WRITTEN ON THE FLY

As it was their Master, so also his followers. They were on the run for their very lives. Eventually, as did their master, they, too, succumb to the religious Establishment's wrath:

Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin. (*1 Peter 4:1*)

They were not deterred. Despite arrest and flogging, Peter and John said:

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (*Acts 4:20*)

Anticipating that their earthly sojourn was liable to be brief and end violently, the apostles delayed not but with events yet fresh in their minds, committed to parchment that which they had seen, heard, and handled of the Word of Life. Most particularly, as chief apostle, it was Peter's place to see that this happened:

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it proper, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:12 - 21)

As we infer from the excerpt above, Peter did not want to wing it on a personal testimony, a mere verbal, when “a more sure word of prophecy” was called for, that being an authoritative text. Our tendency is to think of the *New Testament* as something apart from prophecy but not so the apostles for their Bible was not bifurcated *Old* and *New*. They knew nothing about a *New Testament*; rather a twofold division of Scripture: the *Law* and the *Prophets*; or, else, a three-fold division: the *Law*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*. Be it prophecy foretold or prophecy fulfilled, prophecy is still prophecy. The Gospel was prophecy to them.

#### EXPECTATIONS OF JESUS' SOON RETURN

According to the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, the apostles “were so absorbed in the expectation of the speedy return of Christ that they did not feel called to make provision for the instruction of subsequent generations.” In other words, some number of decades passed before it dawned on them that Jesus’ *parousia* would be delayed. Yet the only notion the apostles could have had on the matter of Jesus’ second coming would have been from Jesus himself. No, Jesus did not misinform them; rather, they were to occupy until his return, whenever that might occur. Since one of their key job requirements, as stated by Jesus in his commissioning of them, was to “go into all the world,” they did not wait years or decades as the encyclopedia insinuates; rather, they buckled right down right away to the task at hand to produce a written account and, as we can see, their Gospel testimony has indeed gone forth into all the world.

## PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Were not the apostles raised to value Holy Writ? Of course they were. It came to them, as it were, with their mothers' milk. No way on God's green earth as leaders of a prophetic, messianic movement there were they were going to leave to others the privilege of committing the Gospel to parchment or papyrus when responsibility for doing so was their own.

But what did a fisherman, Peter, know about the making of books? Initially, probably not much. Was he a skilled writer? or schooled in Greek? Highly doubtful on both counts. Was he even literate? No matter. He was the right man for the job because he was forthright and had the courage of his convictions. Wasn't he the very one who had hopped from the boat into a frothy sea to walk to Jesus? Yes, the very one, and though he faltered and began to sink, at least he was game to try. Nor was he too proud to own up to his failings which were many. Because of his honesty, his refreshing candor, he was the one to fashion a new literary genre – the gospel, where divine and human elements collide and interact. How involved was Peter in the writing process? For sure we know that, as one of the Gospel's key protagonists, he had much in the way of firsthand information to contribute.

This too we know, that Peter and his colleagues, in telling the greatest story ever told, did so with such aplomb that it's remained on the bestseller list ever since. Rather than novelists or raconteurs, they were men shot through with the glory of having been with Jesus. With the Nazarene community's backing, they carried forward with "the ministry of the word":

Then the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven of honest report, full of the holy ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. (Acts 6:2-5)

### PETER WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS

By reason of there having been many witnesses, there were many able and willing to help in the work of reconstructing the events of Jesus' ministry. Can you not picture marathon bull sessions at which each disciple contributed his or her two cents, for having made a indelible impression, Jesus remained to them all a living presence. Particularly, Peter would have had the help of James and John, the three of them having formed Jesus' inner circle. It was these three who accompanied Jesus up the mount of transfiguration and who were with him in the garden of Gethsemene. It is most likely that these three constructed the Gospel narrative. It is most likely that Matthew, Thomas, and Luke were most responsible for preserving Jesus' sayings.

Since it was not only fisherman but educated people who were attracted to Jesus, certainly there existed in their midst those who could serve the apostles in the capacity of amanuensis. “Marcus, my son” wrote Peter in *I Peter 5:13*. This was the John Mark of *Mark’s Gospel*. Also, because he tells us so, we know Peter had assistance in writing his first epistle:

“By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying . . .”  
(*I Peter 5:12*)

#### THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

The idea of the gospels as having been worked up from rudimentary, battlefield reports into more finished products back at headquarters is anathema to those who prefer that they had simply dropped from the heavens. But did they? Admittedly, not every subject is a good candidate for investigation but in this case evidence aplenty exists that intermediate documents once existed. It will be gratifying to some, and no doubt disturbing to others, to learn that at least one of these intermediary manuscript survived, allowing us to go behind the *New Testament* and helping us in confirming that other, earlier versions also existed.

What then of the theory about Peter not having set pen to paper until after twenty, thirty, forty years had passed? Three distinct groups, each for their own reasons, have upheld this theory: originally, various Gentile Church scholars sought to distance Christianity from its Semitic roots. They wanted Greek translations not to be thought of as translations but as original compositions. Then, in the modern era, destructive critics entered the fray. In their disbelief that Jesus did the miracles attributed to him, they want to give the evangelists time enough to have conjured up fabulous tales. In defense of their theory of inspiration called “inerrancy,” certain Protestant scholars have also entered the fray, positing that in a discrete moment in time, the Holy Spirit had each evangelist write out his gospel, as it were, by dictation, an angel guiding the hand while a voice from heaven spoke. To explain word-for-word correspondence among the synoptic gospels, they concede that one canonical writer could borrow from another – but not from intermediate, non-canonical texts. Decades of oral ministry by the apostles works for all three groups. Greek only also works for all three.

Regarding the issue of oral versus written transmission, by way of rebuttal, I offer the following quote from Bernhard Weiss (*Introduction*, vol. ii., p. 209) who states that the agreements existing among the synoptic gospels is not simply one of an occasional word; rather it:

. . . extends to finishing touches and details of expression, as also to its introductory and transitional formulae, and in many cases continues throughout long speeches and even series of narratives such as could never have been transmitted in oral tradition.

## CHURCHLY EMENDATION

A scholarly book, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* by Bart Ehrman shows us how heated 2<sup>nd</sup> century doctrinal disputes had become over such issues as adoptionism (that is, was Jesus born the Christ or did he become so at baptism?) or docetism (did Jesus just seem to be flesh and blood human or was he really so?) For the most part, scribes were faithful transmitters, not creators, of tradition, but at times they were tempted, if only subliminally, to fix things up a bit to make a theological point and this, too, is reflected in the manuscript record. We should take some comfort in the knowledge that this activity was happening only sporadically and not in an organized way and that, except for some embroidering around the edges, the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Church just did not have motivation, skill, or imagination to carry off a major revision of the synoptic gospels. As to the Church's handling of *John's Gospel*, I address that in due course as a separate matter having to do with Mary Magdalene.

By comparing the Alexandrian text with the Byzantine text with what is called the Western text, that is, the three major editions of the Greek text that have come down to us, we find various alterations but they are mostly of the scribal error variety. In the case of the Byzantine text, there is reason to think says Kirsopp Lake that the "Byzantine text itself was a revision made by the originator of the lectionary, and that because of its persistent use it came to influence the gospel MSS.

What we do not find is a heavy, agenda-driven rewrite. It may have been by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the *New Testament* gospels were so widely dispersed as to be beyond recall or for anyone to have edited them without being detected.

## ALL WRITING IS REWRITING

The creative period of gospel development lasted approximately 35 years, that is, from 30 AD to about 65 AD. But then, in 62 AD, James was martyred in Jerusalem. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome during the Neronian persecution, sometime between 64 AD and 68 AD. As for Luke's gospel, its writing probably preceded that of his *Acts of the Apostles*, which book draws to a close with Paul's house arrest in Rome in the early 60s AD. But matters didn't end there. Jesus' blood relatives, *desposyni*, rendered literally meaning: "belonging to the Lord," continued refining the text. This would be a source of controversy because the emerging proto-Catholic Church highly favored its own version of "apostolic succession" which devalued Jesus' blood relatives. Cleopas was the father of Symeon and Symeon ben Clopas, was James's successor in Jerusalem where he oversaw the community of faith for more than forty years, until in 107 AD, when he too was martyred.

Leaving nothing to us in writing, Jesus trusted, instead, that his Spirit-empowered disciples would produce *their* own witnesses of him in *their* own words, in *their* own way, in *their* own good time, an awesome responsibility. Yes, the apostles would want to refine the expression of their thoughts, for, yes, writing, like life itself, requires, not just inspiration, but perspiration. Life, not being handed to us on a platter, takes working at, always.

If Jesus wanted us to have a divine document, he could have left us one, authored by himself. Instead he saw to it that we would have a human document written on the fly by those not trained as scholars. How did the apostles accomplish their task? By giving to it due diligence, for when we add to our faith the substance of righteousness, benefits multiply:

. . . giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged of his old sins. (// Peter 1:5-9)

In a human/divine partnership, both parties to the Abrahamic Covenant have promises to keep and responsibilities to uphold. That is where the Gospel comes into the picture, to help us succeed in holding up our end of the bargain. By word and deed Jesus in the gospel accounts provided us a role model to emulate; as well offering us wise admonitions to reflect on and live by. Through the renewing of our minds, the Gospel helps us as we are *transformed* into the people God would have us to be and not just be *conformed* as to doctrine, school, or sect. It's not magic. Character development is not the work of a day nor ever easy.

#### MEMOIRS OF THE APOSTLES

With the passing of the apostles from the scene, as note has already been made, the creative period of gospel development ended but the work of collating what was achieved continued on. Departing Jerusalem in 66 AD, the Nazarenes returned after its destruction in 70 AD, to continue building on its apostolic foundation. Overseeing this was Symeon ben Cleopas, a relative of James and of Jesus. Appointed as James' successor, he served into Emperor Trajan's reign, when, in 107 AD, he too was martyred. Under his leadership, an antagonistic division within the Nazarene movement between the Hellenistic wing in Galilee and the Judaic-Christian wing in Jerusalem was healed. This would have occurred after Paul and James were gone from the scene. As part of the healing process, the Jerusalem-oriented *Gospel of Matthew* and the Galilean-oriented *Gospel of Luke* were harmonized. The evidence for saying this comes from a harmonized synoptic gospel used by Justin Martyr (martyred about 165 AD). In his two defenses of the Faith (called *Apologies*) presented to



the Roman Senate, Justin Martyr quotes repeatedly from a document which he refers to as *the Memoirs of the Apostles*. In the main it combines *Matthew* and *Luke* and to a lesser degree, *Mark*, but also a non-canonical gospel which, as best as scholarship can tell us, was the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* but possibly, as well, a *Logia*, that being a sayings gospel. Absent are quotes from *John's Gospel*.

Before considering which gospel text Justin used, we should first know a little about Justin himself, that he was born at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in Palestine, in the town today called Nablus, but which in his day was called, Flavia Neapolis, and, in ancient times, Shechem; that, as a youthful seeker of truth, he became a philosopher but in about 130 AD converted, becoming a Christian. Thereafter, he traveled widely and ultimately migrated to Rome where he established a Christian academy; and from whence he authored numerous books, three of which have survived to our day. A substantial thinker, he was strategically located in a major Christian center. For those reasons, it is likely that the gospel text he used was not idiosyncratic or parochial but reflected the practice of Christianity in his era.

Extracted from Justin's extant writings and italicized, are those parts of certain passages lacking a canonical counterpart. Taken together, such passages have led some scholars to conclude that a non-canonical gospel had been incorporated into Justin's apostolic *Mem-oirs*:

The parents of Jesus could find no lodging in Bethlehem, so it came to pass that *he was born in a cave near the village* and laid in a manger.

At his birth their came Magi *from Arabia* who knew by a star that appeared in the *heaven* that a king had been born in Judaea.

By a process of nature he grew to the age of thirty years or more, *not comely of aspect (as had been prophesied)*, practicing the trade of a carpenter, *making ploughs and yokes, emblems of righteousness*.

At the baptism of Jesus a fire was kindled on the Jordan, and, as he went up out of the water, a voice was heard from heaven *saying in the words of David, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.'*

Jesus too, like John (*whose mission ceased when he appeared in public*), began his ministry by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Those who *from their birth*, blind, dumb, lame, he healed - indeed he healed all sickness and disease and he raised the dead. *The Jews ascribed these miracles to magic*.

“There shall be schisms and heresies.”

“In what things I take you [by surprise] in those things I will judge you.”

After it [the Lord’s Supper] Jesus sang a hymn, and taking with him three of his disciples to the Mount of Olives was in an agony, his sweat falling in *drops* to the ground. His captor surrounded him *like the horned bulls of Psalm xxii*, there was none to help, for his followers *to a man* forsook him.

He was led both before the Scribes and Pharisees and before Pilate. In the trial before Pilate he kept his silence as *Psalm xxi*. He has the piercing with nails, the casting of lots and the dividing of garments, and the *sneers* of the crowd and their taunt, *he who raised the dead*, let him save himself.

One of the more intriguing ideas concerning the gospel text Justin was using was advanced by A. J. Bellinzoni in his book: “*The Sayings of Jesus in the writings of Justin Martyr*,” wherein he suggests that Justin was employing not one but two gospel harmonizations in the epistle he addressed to the Roman Senate: one liturgical, the other, catechismal. Since Justin’s purpose was to set the Senators’ minds at ease about the lurid rumors they had been hearing about cannibalistic Christians drinking blood as part of their Eucharistic rite and other calumnies of like character, he demonstrated the falsity of these charges by giving to them samples of Christian teaching to baptismal candidates. The following appears as a single unit in Justin’s text:

<i>Apol.</i> 16:9	<i>Mt.</i> 7.21	→	<i>Lk.</i> 6.46
	↓		↓
<i>Apol.</i> 16:9			<i>Lk.</i> 6.47 → <i>Lk.</i> 10:16
<i>Apol.</i> 16:9	<i>Mt.</i> 7.21		<i>Lk.</i> 13:26f
			↓
<i>Apol.</i> 16:9			<i>Lk.</i> 13:28 → <i>Mt.</i> 13:42f.
<i>Apol.</i> 16:9	<i>Mt.</i> 7.21, 16, 19, and <i>Mt.</i> 7.21		

Writes Bellenzoni:

... we can conclude with certainty that these five verses are based on a source that was a carefully composed harmony of material from Matthew and Luke and that was based on the order of Matthew 7. It has already been argued above that the entire section *Apol.* 15-17 may have been based on a single source different from the source underlying the rest of Justin’s sayings of Jesus, and I have tried to indicate that this section has many features in common with primitive Christian catechisms. It is, therefore, quite probable from the foregoing discussion that there is underlying *Apol.* 15-17 a primitive catechism in use in Justin’s school in Rome, a catechism that was known in similar form to Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and the author of the Pseudo-clementine *Homilies*, a catechism

based primarily on the text of the Sermon on the Mount but that harmonized related material from Mark, Luke, and from other parts of Matthew, and a catechism whose tradition was of great influence in later manuscript witnesses of the synoptic gospels.

#### LATE 1<sup>ST</sup> AND EARLY 2<sup>ND</sup> CENTURY QUOTATIONS FROM THE SYNOPTICS

. . . the Gospel quotations found in the Apostolic Fathers must be considered. Numerous instances are found which look like quotations from the Synoptic Gospels, but in only a few cases is the resemblance really close; . . . This will be seen if certain passages of 1 Clement of Rome and Polycarp, which resemble parts of the sermon of the mount, are compared with the saying most like them in S. Matthew and S. Luke. . . . the word for 'forgive' both in Clement and Polycarp, is ἀφίετε, while in S. Luke vi. 37 it is ἀππολύετε; . . . If we account for variations of Clement of Rome from the Synoptic Gospels as due to mere looseness of quotation, it is hard to account for the exactness with which Clement's wording is reproduced in other writers. The suggestion that Clement himself was quoting exactly, not from the Canonical Gospels, but from some collection of Christ's sayings similar to, but not identical with, S. Matthew's second source, seems to offer a better solution. This hypothesis is supported by the words with which Clement introduces his quotation, which closely resemble those with which the saying 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' are introduced in Acts xx. 35, 'to remember the words of the Lord Jesus.' Similar words, 'Remember the words of Jesus, our Lord,' introduces another notable quotation in Clement of Rome (xli. 7, 8).

'Woe to the man, good were it for him if he had not been born, than to cause one of the elect to stumble; better would it have been for him that a millstone should have been placed about him, and that he should have been drowned in the sea, than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.'

Here the opening words are all found in S. Mark xiv. 21; the remainder is similar to Christ's warning against causing little ones to stumble, but is not an exact reproduction of any one of the three evangelists, as will be seen if the three passages are compared.

S. Matthew xviii. 6: –

'Whosoever shall *cause one of these little ones* who believe in Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a *millstone* turned by an ass should be hanged *about* his neck, and that *he should be drowned* in the depth of the sea . . . however, *woe to that man* through whom the cause of stumbling comes.'

S. Mark ix, 4: –

"And whosoever *shall cause one of these little ones* who believe on Me to *stumble*, good is it *for him* rather if a *millstone* turned by an ass encircles about his neck, and he is cast *into the sea*.'

S. Luke xvii. 1,2: –

'It is inevitable that causes of stumbling should come; however, woe to him through whom it comes. It is advantageous for him if a millstone encircles about his neck, and he is cast *into the sea*, than that *he should cause one of these little ones to stumble*.'

Now, if this be a correct explanation of the fact that these quotations show marked divergences from the Synoptic Gospels, it follows that the sayings of Jesus were preserved in a larger number of forms than those included in the Gospels. This would support the hypothesis . . . that, prior to the formation of the Canonical Gospels, a number of different collections of Christ's sayings existed, and were subject to a gradual process of accretion and arrangement. Thus the process, which ended in the production of the Synoptic Gospels, would be more intricate, and the literature out of which they are formed more extensive, than is at present generally held.

Too much stress must not be laid on the variations found in the Gospel quotations in the Apostolic Fathers, but they do form part of the evidence which must be taken into account in forming any adequate theory of the formation of the Gospels, for the resemblances existing between certain apparent quotations in Clement of Rome, Polycarp (and Clement of Alexandria, though he is of later date), in points where they differ from the Canonical Gospels, forbid us to explain all the variation offhand as due simply to loose quotation from memory. To put the matter in a slightly different way, it may be said: –

- I. The variations in the Gospels themselves between similar sayings prove the existence of more than one tradition.
- II. That the sources from which the Gospels were drawn should have remained in use after the composition of the Gospels is quite probable.
- III. There is, then, nothing *a priori* improbable in the assumption that writers of the early second century should have quoted from the sources rather than the Gospels.

(Eric Rede Buckley, *An Introduction to the Synoptic Problem*, published in 1912)

Buckley's book is evidence that many of the ideas advanced here are not recent innovations but have been kicking around for the better part of a century. That doesn't make them true, just persistent. In all this while, however, they have not been discredited, just ignored.

#### **J U S T I N , T H E D I D A C H E , & T H E P S E U D O - C L E M E N T I N E H O M I L I E S**

As previously noted, outside of the *New Testament*, to about the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, very few secondary sources containing extended quotations from the canonical gospels currently exist and, such quotes as we do have do not properly corresponded with the canonical gospels. Arises the question: how representative are the surviving witnesses? We cannot say for sure. But a pattern does emerge from which we conclude that in this sub-apostolic period, no one was using a fourfold gospel. In fact, we know of no instance where the individual synoptic gospels: *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* were in common use together.

What, then, was going on? two things: harmonization and conflation. Harmonization involves the combining of readings from two or more different sources, whereas conflation involves the combining of readings from the same source. But this activity was not necessarily

happening haphazardly. Rather, by comparing three sources: Justin Martyr's writings, the *Didache*, and the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, we can tell that they were sharing a common gospel text. Since it is not likely that they were relying on each other, this would indicate that all of them had available a prior text and that may have been an authorized, official text.

Having already said somewhat about Justin Martyr, we will move on to mention a very early Church manual, the *Didache*, a most curious and interesting text which seems to preserve early Nazarene traditions, such as the existence of an itinerant ministry, also, charismatic manifestations. Further contributing to the impression that it was of primitive provenance is a certain naive quality, such as giving out as the way to discriminate between hypocrites and true believers is by detecting on which days one group observes its fast days as opposed to the other group. Some scholars think it dates as early as mid-1<sup>st</sup> century. Others see it as a composite work with some early elements but also some late elements.

Then, too, there are the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* which scholars date to the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. While they purport to be by Clement, the very Clement whom Paul mentioned in his epistle to the Romans and who later was Bishop of Rome, no one today actually believes this, the near-universal consensus now being that this is a fabulous tale, albeit one serving pious ends. Once very popular, with over 100 manuscripts of it in both Latin and Greek yet existing, its particular value these days is its gospel quotations which have a particular affinity with those found in Justin's writing, just as Justin's have an affinity with those found in the *Didache* and in other sub-apostolic and patristic writings.

The modern, scholarly investigation of the gospel text found in the *Homilies* is credited to A. Neander in 1723, who thought its gospel recession had been derived from the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*. In 1818, Orelli detected an apocryphal tradition "of the ancients" and, in 1832, K. A. Credener, concluded that an apocryphal gospel had been used. These findings have been reaffirmed over the centuries by other scholars, most recently by Leslie L. Kline whose book: *The Sayings of Jesus in the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* summarizes much previous research. He asks:

What does this study of the sayings of H (i.e., the *Homilies*) tell us about the history of gospel material in the early church? Primarily, it confirms the existence and influence of a harmonized sayings collection which was used by Justin and H and probably known to others (Did. 1.3, 2 Clement, perhaps Clement, Origen and others.) . . . the influence of the sayings collection probably continued for some time. It may even have exercised an influence on the [canonical] textual tradition. We saw numerous occasions in which the readings of H departed from the Nestle text, but were found in the manuscript tradition.

In conclusion, it is not as if the individual synoptic gospel accounts did not exist mid-2<sup>nd</sup>

century. They existed alright. It's just that we can't find anyone who was actually using them. The clear preference of the time was for a harmonized text.

#### HARMONIZATION: OUR COMING INTO THE GOOD OF IT

One of the documents scholars of various shades of opinion like to hypothesize about is Matthew's long lost *Logia*. But let us start off with a housekeeping chore, that of learning the terminology applied to it, for this has changed over time. The first modern to speculate about such a document was an Englishman, Herbert Marsh. In 1801 he called it by the Hebrew alphabet's 2<sup>nd</sup> letter ב, "*beth*." But in 1832, Fredrich Shleiermacker called it "*Logia*," that being the Greek word for "Oracle." It was then assigned the Greek letter lamda λ. He did this on the basis of Papias of Hierapolis's ambiguous statement (c. 125 AD) that "Matthew compiled the oracles (*logia*) of the Lord in Hebrew," which begs the question, which Lord or whose dominical statements, Jesus' or God's? If the former, than Jesus' words were in view; otherwise God's prophetic statements were in view. Because the propriety of using Papias's statement was open to question, toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Johannes Weiss renamed the *Logia* with the more neutral sounding "Q" (short for *quelle*, German for "source").

Never mind how denominated, the larger issue is, can our consideration of such a hypothetical document bring Jesus' teachings into better focus for us today? Some answering this question affirmatively, say that "Q" was developed over time in three distinct stages, and that by application of redactional analysis, we can peel back the layers until we get to the true, historical Jesus. Large symposiums are held to debate such matters in all seriousness. Too often the intention driving such interest seems to be an effort to cast doubt on Jesus' messianic role in favor of Jesus as Jewish sage, or even Jesus as Stoic philosopher.

After more than a 100 years of discordant debate over such matters as these, a debate generating much heat but providing little light, we might want to handle "Q" with asbestos gloves, if at all. Except for the good work of one scholar, Charles A. Briggs, I would let it go at that. But Briggs has shown us a better, more productive approach. The informing idea of his article: *The Use of the Logia of Matthew in the Gospel of Mark*, is that by bringing together all the evidence which the synoptic gospels provide us, we can recover the cadence of Jesus' speech, that it was vibrant poetry, not prose. Jesus, as with the voice of many waters, spoke poetry. Given his working knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew, Briggs, to a remarkable degree, I think, has succeeded in doing what he set out to do. I cannot say I agree with at every point or affirm every finding but Brigg's findings are thought-provoking. In somewhat abridged form (I have left out much of the Hebrew), here is his 1904 article:

## THE USE OF THE LOGIA OF MATTHEW IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK (ABRIDGED)

Charles Biggs

In this paper I shall limit my attention to the Logia. I have shown in my articles on the Wisdom of Jesus, that the Logia of St. Matthew contained only the sayings of Jesus in the form of Hebrew Wisdom, and not his parables, or his discussions in the form of Halacha; and that these sayings were usually introduced by the words, "Jesus said," and had only occasional brief historical allusions. The Logia of St. Matthew contained no historical narrative whatsoever. It is just these Sayings of Jesus that we are to investigate in this paper.

They are all of the type of Hebrew Wisdom; that is, like those of the Book of Proverbs, the Wisdom of Ben Sira, and the Sayings of the Fathers in the Mishna. They are Hebrew gnomic poetry, having parallelism, measured lines, and, where sufficiently long, strophical organization. They were written in Hebrew, the religious language of the Jews of the first century of our era, and not in Aramaic, which was the language of common life in a great variety of dialects, but not the language of literature or of religion in the Apostolic age.

These logia, for the most part, appear in several versions in the Gospels. We have to use the principles of textual criticism to determine their original form, namely : (1) the reading which lies at the root of all the variations, and best explains them, is to be preferred. (2) The most difficult reading is more likely to be correct, from the natural tendency of the scribe to make his text as easy and intelligible as possible, and the natural process of simplification in transmission. (3) The reading most in accordance with the context, and, especially, with the style and usage of the author and his times, is to be preferred. This is on the principle of consistency and "intrinsic probability."

Those readings are to be preferred —

- (a) which give the best parallelism,
- (b) which accord with the measure of the lines,
- (c) which make the strophes symmetrical,
- (d) which accord with the gnomic language and style.

With this statement of principles we may take up the logia in detail.

- (1) They that are strong have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous; but on the contrary, sinners.

This is an emblematic couplet, hexameters, with the caesura after the fourth beat in both lines. It is given in Mk. 2:17, Mt. 9:12-13, Lk. 5:31-34, in all at Levi's farewell feast, in response to the Pharisees who charged Jesus with impropriety of conduct in eating with Publicans and sinners. This is, in all three, introduced by a formula:

Mk.: ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς.

Lk.: ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς.

Mt.: ὁ ὁὲ εἶπεν.

The original of these variations was  $\gamma\lambda\psi\ \tau\omega\kappa\lambda$ .

The Oxyrhynchite logia all begin with λέγει Ἰησοῦς, as Mark, not εἶπεν, as Matthew and Luke.

The variations of the couplet itself are :

(a) Mark and Matthew, οἱ ἰσχύοντες, *they that are strong*, which is an exact translation of the original.

Luke, ὑγιαίνοντες, is a better medical term and better Greek, indicating, therefore, intentional change.

(b) Mark and Matthew have ἦλθοι, Luke ἐλήλυθα; both translations of Hebrew pf.  $\text{׀ָהָלַח}$ .

(c) Luke adds the explanatory εἰς μετάνουιναι, which makes the line too long for the measure, and cannot, therefore, be original.

(d) Matthew interjects between the two lines of the couplet a citation from Ho. 6:6, which is apt, but destroys the beauty of the couplet. It certainly was not original, but came from the editor of the present Matthew; who, indeed, gives the same citation again, Mt. 12:7.

Was this couplet we are considering in the original Mark as a part of the narrative, and was it derived with the narrative from him by Matthew and Luke, or do the evangelists all cite from the Logia of Matthew? The evidence of the introductory formula is dubious, because it was necessary in its connection with the narrative, and, therefore, cannot prove citation from the Logia. Two of the changes of Luke are stylistic and interpretative; the only one that looks like independence of Mark is the use of the perfect for the aorist. On the whole, it is probable that this logion was in the original Mark, and that it was not derived from the Logia; and that the other Gospels depend on Mark for its use here; although Luke may also have been influenced in his version by its use in the Logia.

(2) No one putteth a new piece of cloth on an old garment,

For the new teareth from the old and the rent is made worse.

No one putteth new wine into old skins,

For the wine bursteth the skins and the skins perish.

No one desireth new wine, who drinketh old,

For old wine is better than new wine.

This is an emblematic saying in three hexameter couplets.



This logion in Matthew and Mark is without introduction. But Luke has ἔλεγον δὲ καὶ ραραβολὴν. This does not stand for parable in the usual New Testament sense of a prose Haggada, but for the Hebrew לְשׁוֹן, an emblematic gnome, as not infrequently in the Gospels. It is probable that Luke found it in his original, the Logia of Matthew. It is evident that he does not depend on Mark, for he not only has quite a different version of two of the couplets from Mark and Matthew, but he alone gives the third couplet. Matthew also differs so much from Mark that it could not have derived the logion from Mark. All three depend on the same original, the Logia of Matthew. The variations appear sufficiently in the Revised English Version:

"No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made.

"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 (they put) new wine into fresh wine-skins."

(Mk. 2:21-22.)

"No man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment ; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made.

"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 wineskins, and both are preserved."

(Mt. 9:16-17.)

"No man rendeth a piece from a new garment and putteth it upon an old garment; else he will rend the new, and also the piece from the new will not agree with the old.

"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.

"And no man having drunk old (wine) desireth new; for he saith, The old is better.'" (Luke 5:36-39)

The Gospels all mingle interpretation with the original; in fact, giving us paraphrase rather than translation of their original. The Gospels are evidently independent in their use of their source in the Logia of Matthew; but they all give the logion the same place in their Gospels. Does this imply that they found it here in Mark, and changed it intentionally by going back to the original in the Logia? That is improbable, because Mark is, in fact, nearer to the original, in the two strophes it uses, than either of the others. There was no sufficient reason, therefore, to leave this version and resort to the original; certainly not for Matthew, for it is difficult to see why in this case Matthew would

omit the third strophe, given by Luke only. In fact, this logion, while topically appropriate where the Gospels have given it, has no real propriety there. Jesus had sufficiently answered the Pharisees in the previous context. The application of this logion to the question of fasting is not evident in itself. It was more appropriate to later conceptions than to the historical circumstances in which it is placed. It seems probable that it was not in the original Mark, but was added here for topical reasons by the Greek translator.

- (3) The Sabbath is for man,  
Not man for the Sabbath.  
The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. (Mk. 2:27-28, Mt. 12:8, Lk. 6:5.)

This is composed of a trimeter antithetical couplet, with its synthetic consequence in a third line.

The first two lines were used by Mark only. Matthew and Luke condensed the logion into the last line. But no logion ever consisted of a single line. Mark and Luke have the same introduction, καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς; Matthew, as usual, omits it. This logion has no other than a topical relation to its present place in Mark. It is possible that the others condense from Mark, or that they all use the same source, the Logia of Matthew. We cannot determine in this case. In the former case, the logion came from St. Peter, the authority for the original Mark.

(4) Two logia are attached by Mark, 3:23-29, to the story that his friends thought Jesus was beside himself, Mk. 3:19:6-21, which is unknown to Matthew and Luke. Matthew attaches the same logia (Mt. 12:25-32) to the healing a dumb demoniac, Mt. 12:22-23; which, in accordance with Luke, is a much later event, and adds still other logia to them, Mt. 12:33-45. Luke attaches the first of these logia, Lk. 11:17-22, to the same event as Matthew, Lk. 11:14, and then adds other logia to those given in Matthew, Lk. 11:23-36; but Luke gives the second logion in another group of logia, Lk. 12:10. It is evident, therefore, that these evangelists use two independent logia in connections which seem to them most suitable topically.

It is improbable that either Matthew or Luke derived them from Mark, otherwise they would have given them in connection with the same incident as Mark. It is also improbable that they were in the original Mark, otherwise Matthew or Luke would have given the incident with them. It is probable, therefore, that they were added to Mark by the second hand; and that the three evangelists use the same source, the Logia of Matthew, and use it independently.

Mark introduces the logia by the words ἐν παραβολαῖς ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς. This implies that they were enigmatic מְשָׁלִים; and, as we have seen, this term was doubtless in the original of Matthew's Logia. It is also probable that in this case the first logion had a brief historical introduction, which appears in the three evangelists, probably in the briefer form, resembling Mk. 3:22:

The scribes which came down from Jerusalem said:

"He hath Beelzebub, and, by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons."

The original was probably three tetrastichs:

If a kingdom is divided against itself, it is brought to desolation.

If a house is divided against itself, it cannot stand.

If Satan is risen up against himself, he is divided.

If Satan is divided, his kingdom cannot stand.

If I by Beelzebub cast out demons,

By whom do your sons cast them out ?

But if I by the finger of God cast out (demons),

Then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

When the strong man in armor guardeth his court,

Then his goods are in peace in his house.

But when a stronger than he cometh and overcometh him,

He taketh his armor and divideth his spoil.

Luke is, throughout, nearest to the original. Matthew condenses more than Luke, but gives the three strophes. Mark omits the second strophe altogether, and condenses in other respects. Therefore, from this point of view, it is improbable that Matthew and Luke used Mark. This logion, with its introduction, came first into the Greek Mark from the Logia of Matthew, and was not in the original Hebrew Mark.

The second logion of Mark, 3:28-29, has certainly only a loose, topical connection. It is separated from the previous logion, in Mt. 12:31-34, only by a logion couplet, not used in Mark, but given also in Lk. 11:28. But the second logion of Mark is given in Lk. 12:10 in an entirely different connection. The original was probably:

Their sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men,

And all their blasphemies wherein they blaspheme ;

But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

Whosoever shall speak against the Son of man shall be forgiven;

But whosoever shall speak against the Spirit shall not be forgiven,

Neither in this age, nor in the age that is to come.

Matthew is much nearer the original, giving both strophes. Mark gives only the first, Luke only the second. In the first strophe, Matthew uses the term " the Spirit." The measure of the second strophe requires " the Spirit" also. But Mark uses "Holy Spirit" in the first strophe, Matthew and Luke in the second; " Holy " in both cases being an addition

of the evangelists. It is most probable that this came from the second hand rather than from Mark. Both of these logia in Mark have only topical propriety.

(5) A trimeter tristich, Mk. 3:34-36 Mt. 12:49-50 Lk. 8:21:

Behold my mother and my brethren !  
For whosoever doeth the will of God,  
The same is my brother and my mother.

The first line is the same in Mark and Matthew, except that in the Greek style of the one we have ἴδε, in the other ἴδοῦ. But Luke omits the line altogether. Mark gives the second line. Matthew changes τοῦ Θεοῦ into τοῦ πατρός μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, characteristic of the present Gospel of Matthew, and not of its source, the Logia. Otherwise, there is only the stylistic difference of ὅστις for ὅς. In the third line, Mark inserts καὶ ἀδελφή; so Matthew. Luke combines both lines into a prose sentence and paraphrases, omitting "sister": "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God and do it." All attach this logion to the same incident; and it is most appropriate there. It seems to have been derived from Mark by the others, and to have been in the original Mark.

(6) Mk. 4:21-25 gives five logia between the parable of the Sower and the parable of the Seed growing secretly. They certainly did not belong there in the teaching of Jesus. They have only topical propriety; for none of them are given by Matthew in this connection. Four of them are given by Lk. 8:16-18, in the same connection as Mark, but three of them also elsewhere. The remaining one is given by Luke elsewhere.

(a) vs. 21 is given by Lk. 8:16, in the same connection; and, then again, 11:33, in connection with another set of logia. It is also given in Mt. 5:15, in still another set of logia. The original form seems to be most nearly preserved in the latter passage, though the couplets are differently distributed. They were originally two independent tetrastichs. The original was probably:

No one, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it under an ephah;  
But putteth it on a lampstand, that they which enter in may see light,  
For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest,  
Nor anything secret that shall not come to light.  
Ye are the light of the world.  
A city set on a hill cannot be hid.  
So let your light shine before the children of men,  
That they may see your good works and glorify your Father.

Luke, in both passages, paraphrases rather than translates. It is evident that Luke, in neither passage, uses Mark; because in both he is much nearer the original than Mark. Mark gives this logion in its most condensed form, and puts it in the form of a question: "Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand?" It is introduced, however, by *καί ἔλεγον αὐτοῖς*, the usual formula introducing a logion. It is evident that the three evangelists are independent in their use of this logion. They all alike derived it from the Logia of Matthew.

(d) vs. 22 is also given by Luke here, 8:17, but in Lk. 12:2 an entirely different context. It is given by Mt. 10:29 in connection with the Commission of the Twelve. The connection of Lk. 12:2 is most appropriate, moreover, as it is there associated with another logion, given by Mt. 10:27-32, in connection with the Commission of the Twelve. The original was probably a tetrameter tetrastich:

There is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed;  
There is nothing hid, that shall not be made known:  
That which one saith in darkness, in the light shall be heard :  
That which one whispereth in the ear, on the housetop shall be proclaimed.

...

It is strange that Luke should have given, in this, as in the previous logion, two different versions of the same original, from the Logia of Matthew ; but I see no escape from the conclusion that he did so here and elsewhere. Mark and Lk. 8:17 both omit the last two lines of the logion given in Mt. 10:27 and Lk. 12:3. There is an interesting difference between them which shows a variant interpretation of a common Hebrew original.

The ptcs. of the original are interpreted by Luke as referring to the disciples, "what ye have said," "what ye have spoken"; but in Matthew, as first person, referring to Jesus, "what I tell you," in the first clause; in the second, "what ye hear." In all probability, the original was designedly indefinite, referring to neither Jesus nor his disciples particularly, but to any one whatever, as I have rendered it.

(c) vs.23-24 breaks up two lines of a couplet, assigning one to the conclusion of the previous logion, and the other as an introduction to Mark's fourth logion. The latter is given by Luke here as an introduction to the last logion given by Mark in this place. The original was doubtless :

If any one hath ears, let him hear;  
But let him take heed how he hears.

The formula indicates derivation from the Logia of Matthew; but the separation of the lines is that of an editor wishing to combine the two heterogeneous logia. It is improbable that it was so in the original Mark. It is improbable

that if Luke found it there he would omit the logion to which it was attached. Moreover, the first line is given in a similar form in all three evangelists at the close of the parable itself: Mk. 4:9, introduced by *καί ἔλεγεν*; Lk. 8:8, *ταῦτα λέγων ἐφώει*; Mt. 13:9, without introduction. It is quite possible that it originally belonged just here.

(d) vs.24b is given by Lk. 6:38, Mt. 7:2 in the Sermon on the Mount, where it properly belongs. Luke alone gives the logion in its completeness:

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged:  
Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned:  
Eventually acquit, and ye shall be eventually acquitted:  
Give, and it shall be given unto you in good measure;  
Full and pressed down shall it be given unto your bosom:  
With what measure ye measure, it shall be measured to you.

Matthew omits two lines of the first strophe and two of the second, giving only the first of the first strophe and the last of the second strophe. Mark gives only the last line of the second strophe, and adds another verb to make it more emphatic. It must be evident that these three evangelists are all independent in the use of a common source. It is altogether improbable that this line was in Mark when Matthew and Luke use Mark. Luke. It came into the text from the second hand.

(e) vs.25 is given by Lk. 8:18b, and also Mt. 13:12. Lk. 19:26 also gives it in connection with the parable of the Pounds, and Mt. 25:29 in connection with the parable of the Talents, these being different versions of the same parable.

The original was probably :

The one that hath, to him shall be given ;  
The one that hath not, what he hath shall be taken.

Lk. 19:26 is nearer the original. Mt. 25:29 paraphrases; so does Lk. 8:18. The form of Mk. 4:25 is so different from any of them that there can be no dependence of Luke upon Mark here. They all use independently the same source, the Logia of Matthew.

It is evident, therefore, that all these logia were not in the original Mark; but came into Mark from the Logia of Matthew by a second hand, probably the translator.

(7) Mk. 6:4 gives a saying of Jesus in connection with his rejection at Nazareth, which appears in the same context in Mt. 13:57, Lk. 4:24; and, also, in Jn. 4:44, on Jesus' journey northward, through Samaria to Galilee, probably with

Nazareth as its destination. In all these passages only a single line is given. The other line of the couplet is missing. Happily, the entire couplet is given in the Oxyrhynchite fragments. Jesus saith:

A prophet is not acceptable in his own country.  
A physician works no cures upon them that know him.

This is introduced by λέγει Ἰησοῦς, and was evidently in the collection of Logia as a separate logion. Luke is nearer to it in the use of δετός ἐν τῇ πατρίδι ἑαυτοῦ. Mark and Matthew use ἄτιμος; John, τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

Mark emphasizes by adding "among his own kin, and in his own house." Matthew adds, "and in his own house." Luke certainly used the logia from the collection of Logia, even if he had Mark before him. Matthew is so close to Mark that it looks like dependence upon him. On the whole, it seems most probable that this logion was in the original Mark, as it is so suited to its context.

(8) Mk. 6:8-11 gives a logion in connection with the Commission of the Twelve. This is given in Mt. 10:9-14 Lk. 9:3-5. It is doubtless in its original place in Mark, and Luke used it there. It is in a condensed form in Mark, when compared with Matthew, which gives it from the Logia of Matthew with many other similar logia.

(9) Mk. 8:34b-9:1 gives several logia in connection with Jesus' prediction of his death and resurrection, in the closing weeks of his ministry in Galilee, (a) vs.34b, Mt. 16:24, Lk. 9:23, a couplet of discipleship. The original:

If any man would come after me,  
Let him deny himself and follow me.

The versions of the three may all be explained as translations of the Hebrew Mark, and the logion was doubtless in the original Mark. They all add καὶ ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ, to which Luke adds καθ' ἡέραν. The reference to cross-bearing may not be original; it makes the last line of the logion just these two words too long if it be a tetrameter couplet. It probably was derived from the logia of the final commission, given out of place in Mt. 10:38, in connection with the original Commission of the Twelve, and in Lk. 14:27, in connection with a series of logia grouped about the warning to count the cost of discipleship.

(b) vs.35, Mt. 16:25, Lk. 9:24, Jn. 12:25 is another logion supplementary to the previous one, and may indeed be a second couplet of it. The original was:

Whoso findeth his life shall lose it,  
But whoso loseth his life shall find it.

This is a simple antithetic couplet of the tetrameter movement, complete and perfect in itself. This was cited, Mk.

8:35, as follows:

Whosoever would save his life shall lose it,  
And whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it.

It is evident that Mark interprets in the use of "would save" and "shall save" for "find" in the two clauses; and that it inserts "for my sake and the gospel's" in order to show that this loss of life must have a Christian motive. Furthermore, this addition destroys the measure of the line, and transforms the couplet from poetry to prose.

Mt. 16:25 is nearer the original, having "shall find it" in the second clause, instead of Mark's " shall save it." Lk. 9:24 also inserts the demonstrative, "the same shall save it."

But Matthew and Luke, in other passages, cite the logion directly from the Logia, and not mediately through Mark. Thus, Mt. 10:39 cites it exactly from the Logia; and makes no change except by inserting "for my sake" in the second clause. Lk. 17:33, however, paraphrases here, so that the most of the language is new:

Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it,  
But whosoever shall lose (his life) shall preserve it.

It is noteworthy, however, that no additions are made to it.  
But the greatest change is found in the Gospel of John, 12:25:

He that loveth his life loseth it,  
And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

The first line is simply a paraphrase; but the second line makes a long insertion as well as a paraphrase, so that nothing of the original is left but the substance of the thought. Furthermore, the antitheses of love and hate, and of this world and the life eternal, are characteristic of the author of John's Gospel, and show clearly how his mind has colored and reconstructed the logion of Jesus (*Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 69-70).

Mk. 4:35 was doubtless, in its Hebrew form, the original of the three Versions in Greek, which, appearing in the same context, differ only by amplification. The logion here is in a prosaic form, which might well have come from the original Mark. But the form in which it appears in the other passages was doubtless derived from the Logia of Matthew direct. In other words, they found it both in the Hebrew Mark and the Hebrew Logia.

(c) vs.36-37, Mt. 16:26, Lk. 9:23 give us also logia in a prose form, so nearly alike that they may be explained as translations of the same Hebrew sentence in the Hebrew Mark. We might find the original logion as follows:

What shall a man be profited



If he gain the world and forfeit his life ?

What shall a man give in exchange for his life ?

If we may thus restore this triplet, it is probable that the three logia were all parts of one logion, given by the Hebrew Mark, in a prose form, from the teaching of St. Peter.

(d) vs.38 Mt. 16:27 Lk. 9:26. This logion in Mark is in a prose form, and Luke depends upon it. Matthew, however, omits the first two lines, and gives a fourth line, not in the others.

The original was probably:

Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words.

Of him will the Son of man also be ashamed,

When he comes in the glory of his Father with the angels.

Then will he reward each according to his work.

(e) 9:1 Mt. 16:28, Lk. 9:27 give a logion introduced by Mark and Matthew by ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, and by Luke λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ἀληθῶς, doubtless all derived from the Logia. It is attached to the previous ones without historic connection, and refers to an entirely different situation. Its present position has led to serious mistakes in its interpretation. The original connection has been lost. The original was probably:

Some are standing here,

Who will not taste of death,

Till they see the kingdom of God.

Luke, in the Bezan codex, gives the logion in its simple and complete form. He does not condense the Greek Mark, who substitutes for kingdom of God "the kingdom of God coming in power." Matthew substitutes "the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

It is possible that the original Mark had the simple Hebrew logion, and that the change in Mark is due to the Greek translator; but it is most probable that all derive from the same source, the Logia of Matthew. However, they have not any of them given this logion a very appropriate place.

(10) Mk. 9:35-37 attaches two logia to the rebuke of the disciples for reasoning among themselves who should be greatest. Jesus takes a little child in his arms to point the lesson. Mark separates the two logia by the statement of his taking the little child. Lk. 9:48 gives the first of them after the second. This may be stylistic. Mt. 18:5 only uses the second; and gives another logion before it, used by Mk. 10:15 and Lk. 18:17.

(a) The first of these is given also Mt. 20:26-27, Mk. 10:43-44 in connection with the reproof of James and John, where the logion is complete and doubtless in its original place.

It is also given Mt. 23:11 in another connection, evidently out of place. Lk. 22:26 gives it also at the Lord's Supper. It is probably an addition to Mark by the second or third hand. It is also tacked on in Lk. 9:48. The narrative is more forcible without it. We shall consider it where it belongs, Mk. 10:43-44.

(b) The original of the second logion was:

Whosoever receiveth one of the little ones, receiveth me.

Whosoever receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me.

This was doubtless in the Hebrew Mark. The second line is given exactly by Luke, but enlarged by Mark. It is not given at all by Matthew. The first line is enlarged by all, by the addition of "in my name." The reference to little ones is indefinite in Mark and Matthew, but definite in Luke.

(11) Mk. 9:41-50 give a series of logia, not in Luke here, doubtless, therefore, an addition to the original Mark from the Logia of Matthew. Some of them are in the parallel of Mt. 18.

(a) vs. n is not in either Matthew or Luke here, but is given by Mt. 10:42, in connection with the Commission of the Twelve. The connection is not very appropriate in either case.

The original was probably:

Whosoever giveth a cup of water to drink,

He shall not lose his reward.

It is doubtless an addition to Mark by the second hand.

(b) vs.42= Mt. 18:6-7. It is given by Lk. 17:12 in a better connection.

The original was probably this:

Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling !

It must needs be that occasions of stumbling come ;

But woe to him through whom they come.

Whoso causeth one of the little ones to stumble,

It were better for him if he had a millstone about his neck,

And that he should be sunk into the depths of the sea.

Matthew gives it completely, only that Gospel transposes the strophes to connect them better with the logion as to little children. Luke gives all but the first line. Mark gives only the second strophe, and that with some modifications. It is impossible to suppose that either Luke or Matthew found this logion in the original Mark.

They derived it from the Logia of Matthew, as did Mark of the second hand.

(c) vs. 43-47, Mt. 18:8-9. This beautiful tristich is given by Mt. 5:29-30, in his version of the Sermon on the Mount, but evidently out of place.

The original was :

If thy light hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off:  
It is better for thee maimed to enter into life,  
Than to have two hands and be cast into Gehenna.  
And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off:  
It is better for thee halt to enter into life,  
Than to have two feet and be cast into Gehenna.  
And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out:  
It is better for thee with one eye to enter into life,  
Than to have two eyes and be cast into Gehenna.

These are tetrameters. Mark is much nearer the original than Matthew in either of his versions. He must have cited it from the Logia more accurately. It was not given by Luke at all. It is suited to the previous logion, which Luke gives in a more appropriate place. It is doubtless an addition to the original Mark. Furthermore, Mk. 9:48 adds a term which is characteristic of Matthew elsewhere.

(d) vs 49-50:

For every one shall be salted with fire.  
Salt is good:  
But if the salt have lost its saltness,  
Wherewith will ye season it?  
Have salt in yourselves.  
And be at peace one with another.

This logion is given in Mt. 5:13, in the Sermon on the Mount:

Ye are the salt of the earth :  
But if the salt have lost its savour,  
Wherewith shall it be salted?  
It is thenceforth good for nothing,  
But to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

It is also given by Lk. 14:34-35, attached to the logion on counting the cost:

Salt therefore is good :  
But if even the salt have lost its savour,  
Wherewith shall it be seasoned?  
It is fit neither for the land, nor for the dunghill:  
Men cast it out.

The connection of Luke is certainly most appropriate. It belongs to the Perean ministry. The introductory sentence of Mark is doubtless a seam of explanation. It could hardly have been in the original Mark. The original was probably as follows:

Salt is good for seasoning;  
But if the salt have lost its savour,  
Wherewith shall it be salted?  
It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill,  
But to be cast out and to be trodden under foot.  
Have salt in yourselves.

(12) Mk. 10:11-12 Mt. 19:9.

This logion is attached to the question as to divorce most naturally; it is, however, given again by Mt. 5:32, in his version of the Sermon on the Mount, and also by Lk. 16:18, in a connection where it is evidently out of place. Both the evangelists modify the original, but in different ways. It is probable that Matthew here depends upon Mark. 5.

(13) Mk. 10:14-15, Lk. 18:16-17, Mt. 19:14.

This section was probably derived by all from the Logia of Matthew; and it is the same incident as Mk. 9:33-37, Lk. 9:46-48, Mt. 19:14, derived from the original Mark. It is, therefore, an addition to the original Mark.

There are two logia here:

And he said unto them:

- 1) Suffer the little children to come unto me;  
Forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
  
- 2) Verily I say unto you: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child,  
he shall in no wise enter therein.

This is identical in Mark and Luke. Matthew (19:14) omits second strophe here, but gives it in the other place, 18:3-4: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Matthew here has two couplets, and these are quite near their original gnomic form. Mark condenses the second under a prose sentence, and omits the first altogether.

(14) Mk. 10:31, Mt. 19:30 attached to the discourse as to the call of the rich ruler:

But many that are first shall be last;  
And the last first.

This is given by Matthew again, 20:16, at the close of the parable of the Hired Servants:

So the last shall be first, and the first last.

It is given by Lk. 13:30, in connection with the parable germ of the Foolish Virgins:

And behold, there are last which shall be first,  
And there are first which shall be last.

The logion is most complete in the version of Luke, and most appropriate there. It is tacked on in Mark, and can hardly be original.

(15) Mk. 10:42-45, Mt. 20:25-28.

This is most suitable here. But it is given by Lk. 22:25-26 at the Last Supper appropriately, and again by Mk. 9:35 in another connection, already considered as inappropriate :

The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them;  
And their great ones exercise authority over them.  
Whosoever would be great among you shall be your minister;  
And whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant.  
The Son of Man came (not to lie ministered unto but) to minister,  
And to give his life a ransom for many.

(16) Mk. 11:25:

And whensoever ye stand praying,  
Forgive, if ye have aught against any one;

That your Father also (which is in heaven) may forgive you your trespasses.

This is not in Matthew here, and is out of place in Mark. The phrase of Matthew, "Father which is in heaven," is an evidence that the logion is not original to Mark. It is similar to Mt. 6:1415, in the Sermon on the Mount, and is doubtless a reference to the section in the Lord's Prayer on forgiveness.

(17) 12:38-40, Mt. 23:1, Lk. 20:45-47 is doubtless in place here, and quite near the original:

Beware of the scribes,  
Which desire to walk in long robes,  
And love salutations in the market-place,  
And chief seats in the synagogues,  
And chief places at feasts;  
They which devour widows' houses,  
And for a pretence make long prayers;  
These shall receive greater condemnation.

Luke copies this closely. But Matthew gives a long discourse, in which these lines appear in a different order, some of them not at all. Lk. 11:43 gives also:

For ye love the chief seats in the synagogues,  
And the salutations in the market-places.

We have examined carefully the logia used in the Gospel of Mark. Several couplets are given in connection with historical incidents, which evidently were with the stories in the original Mark. Several logia are given in a condensed or prosaic form in connection with certain incidents where they seem to be in their original place. None of these give evidence of derivation from the Logia of Matthew. But the greater portion of the logia used in Mark are in places where they have no close connection with the context. They seem to have been added for topical reasons, and to have been derived from the Logia of Matthew. They were not in the original Mark; but were added to the original Mark by the second, and, in some instances, by the third hand.

#### **JERUSALEM'S NAZARENE COMMUNITY - R. I. P.**

In the conflict of 66-73 AD, known as the first Jewish-Roman War, Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed and the countryside laid waste. One might suppose that it would be the end of the matter, that it would be a long time before Jewish nationalism reasserted itself. Not so. 60 years later, if anything, a bigger conflagration occurred. The sequence of events was this: in 118 Hadrian became Emperor. Initially he favored, or at least acted as if he favored, Jewish aspirations, even granting permission to the Jews to rebuild the Temple, to

which ended the collecting of materials was begun. However, the relationship soon soured. Going back on his word, Hadrian demanded that the Temple be moved to some other location so that he could proceed with plans to build a temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount. As early as 123 AD, some Jews had adopted hit-and-run guerilla tactics. Hadrian responded by bringing in the Sixth Ferrata, a powerful Roman legion. He also appointed a particularly harsh governor, Tinnelius Rufus, who ruled with a rod of iron. For several years the pot simmered. Then, in 132 AD, a full scale revolt broke out led by Shimon bar Kokhba. At first, this rebellion was highly successful but eventually the tide turned, Jerusalem again being destroyed, as well, 50 Jewish fortresses and 985 villages. More than 500,000 Jews are thought to have perished.

The relevancy of all this for the Nazarenes and for the Gospel is this: Bar Kokhba, because he purported to be the Messiah, made himself a fierce opponent of the Nazarenes, viewing as a rival claim their belief that Jesus was the Messiah. Of this Justin Martyr wrote:

Barchochebas, the leader of the revolt of the Jews, gave orders that Christians alone should be lead away to cruel punishments, unless they should deny Jesus as the Christ and blaspheme.

(Justin, *First apology* 31.6)

On the one hand, the Romans outlawed Sabbath observance, Torah reading, and circumcision. Being Law-observant, the Nazarenes could not comply. On the other hand the Nazarenes could not follow a false messiah. As if caught in a nutcracker between the Jewish Establishment and the Roman Army, the Nazarenes were largely destroyed, after which their rival, the proto-Roman Catholic Church, felt emboldened to go its own way, leading to what some have termed the “Great Gentile Hijack,” after which issues of text and canonicity were theirs to decide by default. Now the choice is ours: whether to stick with what is churchly or go with what is Nazarene and apostolic.

#### OLD TEXTS / NEW DISCOVERIES

Literary analysis, as above, rests on the availability of texts to be analyzed, which brings us to the issue of archeological discovery and its ability to open anew the debate.

In 1896, two youthful Oxford fellows, Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt, funded by the Egypt Exploration Society of London, traveled about 150 miles up the Nile to the Bahr Yusuf branch of the Nile, then headed inland. Motivating them was the hope of finding papyri containing classical literary works which travelers reported as being available in that area. There they hit the mother lode: Euclid, Euripides, Aristophanes, and much, much more.

The ancient town Oxyrhynchus to which they went, called Behneseh by the locals, consisted, according to Hunt, of “a few squalid huts,” bordering on an east-west caravan path at

the edge of the Great Western Desert. At one time it had been a thriving regional capital, having its own canals which connected it to the river Nile, supplying it with abundant water.

The name "Oxyrhynchus" comes from a species of fish and translates as "sharp snout." But the fish had gone the way of the canals, for after the Arab invasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the canals fell into disrepair and dried up, as did the town itself, dependent as it was upon them, after which, a 1000 plus years, the desert's sifting sands covered over its refuse heaps.

But sometimes, as we know, one man's trash becomes another man's treasure. And so it was that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the town's buried treasures began to be exposed as the peasants fashioned a living from marketing its ancient papyri to European collectors. Today, after more than a hundred years of continuous excavation, the discoveries keep a-coming.

The relevancy to this study is that among the discoveries of 1897 were certain Greek sayings of Jesus, some never before seen. Eminent Bible scholars, including Adolf von Harnack and J Rendel Harris, detected in these sayings an underlying Hebrew stratum older than our canonical gospels. Because they were fragmentary and had not the title, they knew not the work from whence they came, that they were from the *Gospel of Thomas*. Nevertheless, working with he had, Harris, in particular, was able to draw many far-reaching conclusions:

I was looking at the text of the book of Deuteronomy . . . There, before my eyes, were the opening sentences:

"These are the words which Moses spake to the people in the wilderness,"

and at looking at them I was at once struck by their parallelism with the opening sentences of the recently found Sayings of Jesus:

"These are the words (the wonderful words) which Jesus the living One spake, &c."

It was natural to suggest the Christian writer had imitated the opening to Deuteronomy. In that case, there was an intention: we were being called from the words of Moses to the words of Christ. The very name of Deuteronomy to a Jew is taken from its opening Hebrew words; *Elle Debarim* is what they call it, or "These be the words"; and it follows that every Jew would catch the meaning of the form in which the Book of Sayings was cast. They are an intimation that we are leaving Moses for Christ.

(*Side-lights on New Testament Research*, 1908)

As indicated by Dr. Harris in the *Contemporary Review* article following, the newly discovered *Logia* gave the impression of predating canonical sources. I quote his 1898 article in full.



## THE "LOGIA" AND THE GOSPELS

J. Rendel Harris

IN the following remarks I wish to express the opinion which I have formed of the importance of the new discovery of *Logia* in the criticism of the Gospels, both as regards their text and their composition. I shall not attempt at the present time an exhaustive treatment of a subject which is already provoking an astonishing diversity of opinion. My object is simply to draw attention to the fact that this single page of *Logia* is in evidence for the disputed question of the influence of extra-canonical texts upon the readings of the New Testament, and that our existing Gospels occupy a subordinate position relatively to some such extra-canonical texts as we get a glimpse of in the fragment of *Logia*.

In order to make this statement, it is not necessary to discuss the various hypotheses which are current with regard to the origin or interpretation of these curious sayings. If, for example, it should be maintained, as by Dr. James in the *Contemporary* for last month, that the *Logia* in question are a series of excerpts from one or more uncanonical Gospels, I shall not spend time in confuting the statement (though I do not believe it to be a correct one), because Dr. James concedes the vital point of the existence of non-canonical sources of the evangelic tradition, though the concession is slightly veiled by the suggestion that the *Logia* are only a series of excerpts. As they are not excerpts from any known or authorised Gospels, we are introduced by them into the lost evangelical literature of the early Church, for either the *Logia* are themselves a part of that literature, or are derived from some unknown branch of it. And this is a vital concession in view of the steady contradiction of the existence of such literature by the great representatives of orthodox criticism.

Neither do we discuss in detail the conflicting interpretations of the several *Logia*, except so far as is necessary to vindicate their extreme antiquity and the correctness of their ascription to Jesus Christ. We shall do this for a single *Logion* which has been the subject of the worst misunderstanding. For example, with regard to the "Fast and Sabbath" *Logion* (if I may give it a name), I find in recent journals such decided statements as the following. The *Athenaeum* of August 7, in a review whose author is somewhat difficult to recognize, declares that:

"The second fragment states that *unless you fast you will not find the kingdom of God, and unless you keep the Sabbath you will not see the Father*. The Therapeutae fasted every day and the whole day, and they were rigid in the observance of the Sabbath. They believed fasting essential to salvation. They were bound to carry on the contemplation of God during the daylight, doing nothing else; thinking that all the deeds of the body, such as eating and drinking, should not be begun till darkness came on. The fragment has the words . . . [the world] added to . . . [unless ye fast], which makes no sense. The editors try to force a sense into them. The reading may originally have been . . . [until sunset] . . . . If our conjecture were correct, then the saying would embody exactly the rule of the Therapeutic. The great object of the Therapeutae was to see the Father, to attain to the vision of God."

And the same opinion is expressed, without any reference to a possible Therapeutic origin for the *Logia*, by an able American writer (Dr. B. W. Bacon) in the *New York Independent* for July 22. He says:

"It is well known that a number of reported sayings of our Lord were rejected by the consensus of the early Church as not genuine, although they were current in early circles; and the second of these sayings may very well be of this character. *It imposes the duty of fasting and the duty of keeping the Sabbath under penalty of rejection from the kingdom of God.* There is nothing like this in the Gospels, and nothing like it in any of the Epistles," &c.

The remarks which follow will show that the words underlined in the two extracts which I have given are a misapprehension of the meaning of the *Logion*.

I shall also, in the second place, explain more fully what I apprehend to be the general effect of the new discovery upon the Higher Criticism, as well as the Lower Criticism, of the New Testament. With regard to the latter, it is, indeed, easy to see that the recovered *Logia* confirm Resch's view as to the genesis of variants in the New Testament by extra-evangelic influences. The Oxford editors have drawn attention to one striking case. But Resch is not merely a "lower" critic busied with readings of the existing Gospels; he is a "higher" critic occupied with the genesis of all Gospels out of their primitive deposit. And if Resch is right in supposing that there was a primitive, oft-translated Hebrew book of *Logia*, or *Ur-Evangelium*, we shall many of us have to abandon the theory, defended so zealously by Lightfoot and Westcott, that our Gospels are themselves the primitive deposit.

Here, for the first time, we are definitely introduced to a new stratum in the history of the evangelic literature, which may be only separated from the lowest stratum of the deposited tradition by the fact of a translation from Hebrew into Greek. That is to say, *We are behind the Gospels.* Once again the higher critics have turned out to be right and the conservatives wrong; for the latter have steadily ignored the existence of written documents underlying our Canonical Gospels, while the former have recognised their existence, and have used the critical art to recover them.

Yesterday there were no *Logia* in the minds of the majority of English-speaking critics; to-day every one is talking *Logia*. And when one reads over, in the light of the present discovery, the laborious attempts made by Westcott, in his "History of the Canon," to prove that the variations in the evangelical quotations of the Fathers are not due to the use of extra-canonical sources, the conviction is overwhelming that he was defending an untenable position. We cannot any longer say, with the easy confidence that Westcott does, that "Papias bears direct testimony to our Gospels,"\* nor can we assent, without grave reservations, to the statement that Papias tells us the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark were current in his time, and that of the *former* Papias says, "Matthew composed the Oracles in Hebrew; and each one interpreted them as he was able." It may be so, but it does not any longer seem likely. And when, in a footnote, Westcott goes so far as to say that "the sense [of this passage in Papias] would be best expressed by the translation, 'Matthew composed his Gospel in Hebrew,' giving to the word its necessary notion of scriptural authority," it is difficult to be patient with the apparent *petitio principii* involved in the substitution of "Gospel" for "*Logia*," and the attempt to limit the authority of the New Testament Scriptures to their canonical form.

We are told, further, that "it has been shown that the use of *ru Aoyto* for the Scriptures generally is fully established," and Westcott is "not aware that *X6yia* can be used in the sense of *Xoyoe*, discourses." The interpretation, however, which Westcott rejects is rendered peculiarly attractive by the repeated "Jesus says" (*Xey«*), which is so striking a characteristic of the new document.

Now, perhaps, some one will say, "We readily concede that the existence of collections of Christ's sayings is demonstrated and must be allowed for in the criticism of the existing Gospels. In this sense, then, the *Logia* of Jesus are behind the Gospels, and are an earlier stratum. But does it follow that the recovered *Logia* have come down to us without contamination and without accretion; and may we not, – even in this single page, be in danger of ascribing too high an authority to sayings which perhaps do not belong to the primitive tradition at all?" To such an objection it would be well to give heed, and perhaps the best way to make a test of the matter is to examine one of the difficult non-canonical sayings in the *Logia*, determine its true meaning, and see whether it lies before or after some landmark in the literature of the New Testament.

We will take, then, as a specimen, the curious *Logion* No. 2, to which we referred in our opening sentences:

"Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye keep the Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father."

Here a superficial criticism detects the influence of the fourth Gospel in the phrase "see the Father," and concludes, therefore, for the lateness of the *Logion*. But let us examine the matter more carefully. The *Logion* is in the form of a Hebrew parallelism, and we infer that the expression, "see the Father" is another way of saying "find the kingdom." It is to be compared with the expressions "theirs is the kingdom," and "they shall see God," in Matthew. There is no necessary connection with the fourth Gospel.

(The equivalence of the phrases referred to can also be seen from\* such a passage as this from the Acts of Thomas, "Blessed are ye meek, for God has counted you worthy to inherit his kingdom; . . . blessed are ye meek, for ye shall see the face of your Lord.")

Next we ask, What is the meaning of the expression "Fast the world," with its harsh grammar?

On turning to Clement of Alexandria (Strom. iii. p. 556) we find him discussing a passage in Isaiah (lvi. 3-5) in which the Lord promises a special blessing on those eunuchs who keep His Sabbaths. Clement explains that *they keep the Sabbath by refraining from sins*, and that, having thus cut themselves off from all sin for the kingdom of heaven's sake, they are blessed in that they fast from the world . . . Here, then, is the very expression which puzzled us in the *Logion*, only the grammar, or perhaps the Hebraism of the language, has been corrected. Note the connection between the two ideas of *keeping the Sabbath* and *fasting the world*. Evidently our *Logion* is a true case of Hebrew parallelism, both members of which are in Clement's mind.\*

Next turn to the seventh book of Clement's "Stromateis" (Strom. vii. p. 877), and we find him discussing the

character of the Gnostic, as he loves to call the spiritual man. He tells us that this Gnostic understands the meaning of the two fasting-days in the week p for the Wednesday and Friday are the days of Mercury and Venus. Now Hermes is the covetous nature and Aphrodite the sensual, and the true Gnostic fasts with regard to the life that loves greed and \* We owe this reference to Dr. Joseph B. Mayor.

Please note. He fasts according to the law from base actions, and according to the Gospel from wicked imaginations. And Clement goes on to say that such a one, having carried out the command according to the Gospel, *makes a Lord's day* of that day in which he casts away the base imagination, he glorifies the Lord's resurrection in himself, and when he receives the comprehension of the intellectual vision, he reckons *to see the Lord* as he directs his eyes towards things invisible. Note the connection of ideas; *he fasts, he keeps a spiritual Sunday, and he sees the Lord.* We are very near indeed to our *Logion*.

Turn, in the next place, to the Prophetic Eclogues of Clement (p. 992), (a passage which we again owe to Professor Mayor), and we find Clement discussing again the nature of fasting. He shows it cannot be the mere absence from meat, for meat does not commend us to God. It must then be understood mystically; fasting is a form of dying, and so we are to *fast to worldly things* in order that we may die to the world, and after that may partake of heavenly food and live to God.

So here we have another enforcement of the doctrine that we are to fast to the world. We may be sure that Clement knew the *Logion* and that he interpreted both parts of it, the fast and the Sabbath, mystically. So the expressions are justified and the meanings are also clear. *It has nothing to do with fasting or keeping the Sabbath in the common sense.*

We shall see this still more clearly if we recall the fact that all the primitive preaching about which we know anything involved a proof from the Old Testament that God was going to make a new covenant. And this involved also, as the controversies and books of testimonies' against the Jews show, the doctrine of a new law, new baptism, new circumcision, new fast, new Sabbath, new sacrifices, &c.

Now this doctrine of the new fast was usually grounded on a passage in Isaiah lviii.: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen," &c., Accordingly, Justin says in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jewish Rabbi (c. 15), "Now learn to fast *the true fastoi* which Isaiah speaks, in order that you may please God." And again (c. 12): "The time is come when you need a new circumcision and you want the old one in your flesh. The new law commands you to Sabbatize continually, and you think yourselves pious if you are idle for one day, not understanding the reason why it was appointed; and if you eat unleavened bread, you say you have fulfilled the will of God. The Lord our God delights not in these things. If there is among you a perjured person, or a thief, let him cease to do such things. If there is an adulterer, let him repent, and thus he has *Sabbatised the true* and delightsome *Sabbath* of God." Here the very expression is found concerning which the Oxford editors ask, . . . "It is curious that in quoting from this chapter the obligation of

a perpetual Sabbath, they missed the answer to their question about the meaning of the *Logion*.

But was it an ancient one? We may admit that it is involved in the teaching of Clement and Justin. But does it explain anything in the New Testament? We say it does. For this doctrine of "fasting the world" underlies such an expression as 1 Pet. ii. 10, "*Abstain* from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." If this at first sight seems a little remote, it ceases to be so when we notice the form which the same sentiment takes in the Teaching of the 12 Apostles, "*Abstain* from fleshly and *worldly* lusts." So we can from one single and spiritual *Logion* trace the language of the first Epistle of Peter, and of the Teaching of the Apostles as well as the later explanations of Clement and Justin.

The antiquity of the *Logion* is, therefore demonstrated; and we do not hesitate to state our belief that it is a genuine saying of Jesus Christ.

Nor is it without interest that Clement of Alexandria, with his, at first sight, peculiar mysticism, turns out to be the best exponent of the mind of the Master. Between Christ's time and Clement's, the doctrine of the Real Abstinence had been replaced by a Holy Wednesday and Friday; the True spiritual Rest had suffered also from the accretion of a fresh sacred feast-day. But Clement brushes these on one side, as Christ had brushed away the Monday and Thursday fasts of the Jews, and says we fast to Mercury and we fast to Venus, we die to desire of gain and we crucify the flesh with the passions thereof. And his interpretation was Christ's, which he had rediscovered and reapplied to the religious practices of his own day.

We have now examined carefully into the meaning of this *Logion*, and we have concluded it to be just as primitive as any of those its companions that go under the name of Canonical Gospel. The idea that it involved the obligation of fasting and Sabbath-keeping is the exact opposite of the truth.

Now the effect of this discovery of the antiquity of the recovered matter upon the criticism of the Gospels cannot fail to be great; for we find not only that we are behind the Gospels, but that *there is more in the sources of the Gospels than is conserved in the Gospels themselves*.

The next thing that is clear is that we have to do with something more than an oral tradition preceding our Gospels. We shall prove this by actually recovering by critical methods the opening sentences of the *Ur-Evangelium*, in one at least of its primitive forms.

The general consent of critics has recognized in Acts xx. 35 a true *Logion* of Jesus Christ, either oral or written. It is introduced by the remark that "we ought to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Here there is a suggestiveness about the intruded words, "how He said." They remind one of the recurring "Jesus says" of the recovered *Logia*.

Now let us turn to the Epistle of Clement of Rome (c. 13), and we find the writer advising us “to be mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake when teaching sweet reasonableness and long-suffering, for thus He said:

“Be merciful that ye may obtain mercy: Remit that it may be remitted to you: As ye do, so shall it be done unto you: As ye give, so shall it be given unto you: As ye judge, so shall it be judged unto you: As ye are kind, so shall kindness be done to you: With what measure ye mete, it shall be meted to you.”

Now, these are certainly *Logia*, but they vary from the existing *logia* of the New Testament in such a way as to preclude the thought that they are a free reminiscence of Matthew and Luke. And these *Logia* are introduced by a statement similar to that in the Acts, that *we are to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, for thus He said*. The same seven *Logia* recur with hardly a variation in Clem. Alex. (Strom. ii. p. 476), where they are introduced by the words, “the Lord says.” There is no reason to suppose one Clement is quoting the other.

Further, in the 46th chapter of the same epistle, we find Clement of Rome saying, “*Remember the words of Jesus our Lord, for He said*, Woe to that man; and it were good for him if he had never been born, than that he should offend one of my elect: it were better for him that a millstone should be placed about him and he be drowned in the sea, than to offend one of my little ones.”

Here again we find the saying repeated by Clem. Alex. (Strom. iii. p. 561), and introduced by the words, “the Lord says.”

Here, then, is another combination of *Logia*, and it is certainly *not* from the Canonical Gospels, though Westcott will have it to be a recollection of these. And this Gospel extract of Clement of Rome is again introduced with the words which enjoin the recollection of Christ's sayings.

Next turn to the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (c. 2), and we find him enjoining upon us “*to remember the things which the Lord, said in His teaching* :

Judge not that ye be not judged: Remit and it shall be remitted to you: Be merciful that ye may obtain mercy: In what measure ye mete, it shall be measured back to you: and that Blessed are the poor, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

Here we have the same peculiarity—viz., a quotation of *Logia*, not from our Gospels, with a prologue about the remembrance of what He said. And we have noticed the phenomenon four times. We conclude that it was the introductory formula of the book, which must have been something like this: “We ought to remember what things our Lord said in His teaching, for He said . . .” and then probably follows the first *Logion*.

How ancient this collection must have been, if we find it quoted by Paul, by Clement of Rome, and by Polycarp!

The critical importance of this attempt to restore the opening of a primitive collection of *Logia* is very great.

On the one hand, it gives us the suggestion of an earlier Gospel or Gospels than any of our existing volumes. On the other hand, it prevents our quoting Clement and Polycarp as attesting the antiquity of the Canonical Gospels. And this means a possible lowering of our idea of the antiquity of the extant Synoptists. We conclude, moreover, from a study of the variants in the recovered *Logia* that there is reason to believe not only in the existence of much pre-canonical evangelic matter, but also (we refer especially to the reading, "a city *built* on a hill," in the seventh *Logion*, whose origin Kesch divined so acutely) in the influence that the extra-evangelic documents have had on the transmission of the text of the canonical Gospels.

Again, in Egypt, in 1945, a precious lode of texts emerged from the sands of upper Egypt, this time in a place called Nag Hammadi near where once, millennia ago, had stood a monastery. An alert Arab farmer, Mohammed Ali al-Samman, looking for nitrogen-rich fertilizer called *sabakh* uncovered a sealed, 4-ft. tall, earthen jar containing 13, leather-bound books dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. After getting them home, Mohammed Ali's mother promptly used one of them as a fire-starter. One was given to a Coptic priest. Others were exchanged for cigarettes and oranges; the rest were sold to black market dealers. One ended up in Europe in the possession of Carl Jung but, finally, it and the others were reunited under the auspices of the Coptic Museum in Cairo. Only in the 1980's were they fully translated into English. Since then, these texts, over 1000 pages of material, have been working their way into public awareness, altering perceptions regarding Jesus and altering perceptions of Christian origins. Not all of these texts were Gnostic in character. One was of Plato, and one of Jesus.

Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi collections were hidden away for the same reason, to escape destruction either by the Romans, or by Rome's surrogate, the Church. When the bishop, Athanasia, decreed certain books canonical in 367 AD, it implied that others were heretical. And so some thoughtful individual or group secreted away those texts that did not make the cut and did such a good job of it, they survived 1,5000 years. That is what kept many precious words of Jesus from being lost to humanity as the Church assiduously sought to erase from memory any telling of the gospel other than its own.

The failure by the powers-that-be to destroy all evidence puts one in mind of Moses who, when he was 40 years old, slew an Egyptian and then buried him in the sands of Egypt. Evidently he left a toe sticking up out of the sand, because word of his deed got out and he had to flee. Likewise, though it generally went about its self-appointed task of suppression with great diligence, the Church overlooked a few texts whose survival, albeit tattered and torn, will prove in the long run most detrimental to its cause. History it is said is written by the winners. For a long while the Church was that winner but the truth will out in the end. Meanwhile, It is our privilege to relate an alternative telling and assess its value.

## NON-CANONICAL GOSPELS

In his most famous surviving work, *Against Heresies*, Irenaeus made many an argument against non-canonical gospels. However, one argument he did not make, indeed, I suspect, dared not make, is that of priority. All he would have had to do to clinch his case was to show how the canonicals were older and thus more original than any of the others. But this he did not attempt to do and, I suspect, for good reason, that too many people were around at that time, the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century, who knew otherwise, who could have called him on it.

. . . there has always been a synoptic problem, ever since the three Gospels appeared together in the canon of the New Testament. . . . every attempt at solution seemed only to add to the difficulty of finding an adequate one; . . .  
(James Iverach, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*)

So many contradictory hypotheses to contend with, so many scholars to advance them! For instance, there's the oral hypothesis tradition first advanced by Gieseler in 1818, later to be upheld by Alford and Wescott. But this did not adequately explain all the verbal agreements. Thereafter a variety of mutual use hypotheses came into being whereby each of the three synoptic canonical gospels has been accorded – by reputable scholars, I might say – first, second, or third place chronologically with each being described as either the source for, or else as having been derived from, one or more of the others, with every possible combination having its advocates. For a century Ph.D candidates have intently scrutinized the texts and have advanced and exploded innumerable theories without coming to consensus: there is Streeter and Holtzmann's Two Source Hypothesis; the Greisbach Hypothesis championed by Farmer; the Farrar Hypothesis backed by Goulder; the Jerusalem School Hypothesis; the Augustinian Hypothesis wherein *Mark* is seen as the last gospel to have been written, a view adopted by F. Baur and the Tübingen school etc, etc. 'Round and 'round we go. Why? because one dare not suggest intermediate, non-canonical texts.

The average Church communicant, knowing little about the growing body of research presented here, in all sincerity struggles on to distinguish what is valid and apostolic and what is not. (I know: for 35 years that was your's truly.) But if we would stop and think about it, we would see that it is simply not credible that any of the canonical gospels were written by a single individual. The complex web of interrelationships and mutual borrowings had to have required a long process of development. Verbatim agreements demonstrate literary dependence. Had the gospels been intended to be purely individual, one-witness accounts, they would not have shamelessly cribbed word-for-word from each other. No, they are jointly-witnessed accounts. And behind each account were Christian communities who sponsored the apostles' work of witness. As Stather Hunt ably wrote:



I wish also to draw attention to a small point which has been largely overlooked. When in the Gospels and the Acts the Apostles and others are described as '*witnesses*' (Lk. xxiv. 48; Acts I. 8, 22; ii. 32; iii. 15; v. 32; x. 9, 41; xvii. 15; xxvi. 16. Cf. Heb. xii. 1; I Pet. v 1), this is generally taken to mean much the same as when to-day in certain circles a man is described as '*witnessing for Christ*'. But this is to miss the whole significance of the word. Unlike any man of to-day the Apostles were witnesses for Christ because they had seen with their own eyes the events which testified to His Messiahship. Thus in Lk. xxiv. 48, after He had given a long list of prophecies and '*opened their understandings that they might understand*' the way in which those prophecies had been fulfilled in Him, our Lord says to His disciples '*You have seen these events with your own eyes, and therefore you are the people who must testify and explain to others*'.

If this interpretation is correct it means that the Apostles were commissioned by our Lord for the express purpose of bearing witness *from their own personal experience of them* to the truth of those events which proved His messiahship, . . . This is why St. Luke in his preface emphasizes that he had obtained the *facts* (ἡράγματα) of his Gospel from *eye witnesses*, who could of their own knowledge vouch for the truth of '*those things which have been fulfilled among us*'. In other words, the purpose of his Gospel was not to give a biography of our Lord but to set forth evidence of eye witnesses that '*those things which God had announced before by the mouth of all the prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled*' (Acts iii. 18). So that the first task of the Apostles was to bear witness to the *fact* that these prophecies had all been fulfilled in our Lord, (Jno. xv. 27), and the Acts show that this is precisely what they did. Thus the foundation of the Gospels, and of the Christian religion itself, was laid upon testimony; the human testimony of the Apostles, and the evidential testimony of the messianic prophecies. (Stather Hunt, *Primitive Gospel Sources*)

If the canonicals are not to be accepted uncritically, neither should the non-canonicals be rejected uncritically. Both categories have valid and invalid elements. Nevertheless, the standard academic line remains that of Robert M. Grant, Professor of New Testament, University of Chicago who in his book, *A Introduction to the New Testament*, states:

. . . since the norms for determining authenticity must lie within the canonical gospels, it is hard to see what contribution apocryphal gospels could make even if some of the material in them should be judged genuine.

This type of reasoning may have had its day once but for a host of reasons is passé. By availing ourselves of *MS Pepys 2498*, the *Nazarene Gospel Narrative*, we can dispense with the notion of the canonicals being "the norm." However implausible, the standard, academic line is to deny the existence of a Hebrew or Aramaic original. Who do they suppose the Galilean fishermen were, Greek scholars? Once it's recognized that the canonicals cannot be relied upon without reservation, then the door is open to consider other sources of information. From too long dependence on a single textual tradition, the Alexandrian text-

type, on which the vast majority of modern *New Testament* translational activity is based, a kind of mental laziness has overtaken the field of biblical study. At first, parting with this accustomed crutch will seem painful, nevertheless, doing so is not without its compensations: narrow certitude may be out, but the joy of unfettered discovery is in.

Whether an expression was derived from a canonical or non-canonical source, it matters not, for the legitimate function of scholarship to look dispassionately upon it and bring forward any relevant information. That is what AnneMarie Luijendijk did regarding an expression found in the Greek version of the Gospel of Thomas. From an article of her's posted to the internet, I have excerpted the following:

In 1953, French papyrologist Roger Rémondon obtained a small, inscribed linen shroud from an antiquities dealer in Behnasa, the site of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus. [On it] "Jesus says:

'There is nothing buried that will not be raised.'

With these confident words written on a linen shroud, a deceased Christian in late antique Egypt was interred to await resurrection. For, as those familiar with the Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas will recognize, the funerary sentence is very similar to the concluding line of its logion 5. Is there indeed a literary connection with the Gospel of Thomas? We know from papyrological evidence that the Gospel of Thomas was read in Oxyrhynchus in the third century.

But what happened later? Was that still the case in subsequent centuries? Despite the forceful exclusion of the Gospel of Thomas from the New Testament canon by church leaders, I argue that this funerary bandage hints that the Gospel of Thomas was still in use and considered ritually effective in the Oxyrhynchite community well into Late Antiquity.

The saying on the shroud matches the Greek text of the Gospel of Thomas (as far as preserved) almost verbatim [yet] I do not picture a scribe poring over a manuscript of that text and, having located the right saying, copying it on the shroud. . . . just like contemporary ecclesiastical authors quoted mostly from memory, I imagine that the scribe who drafted this verse on the shroud – or whoever commissioned it – would have known this saying from studying, memorizing, and reciting the Fifth Gospel.

Christian funerary prayers ask for the physical resurrection of the dead person, as, for instance, in this mid-fourth-century liturgy attributed to Sarapion of Thmuis in the Egyptian Delta:

We pray to you for the sleep and rest of this your (female or male) servant. Give rest to his soul, his spirit, in green pastures, in the inner rooms of rest with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all

your saints. And raise (her/his) body on the appointed day according to your truthful promises so that you may give to him according to the worthy inheritance(s) in your holy pastures.

In a sermon held ca. 450, abbot Shenoute of Atripe (an approximate contemporary of the person behind the saying on the shroud) assured his audience of a restored body at the resurrection:

Even if they pluck out your eyes, you will not rise in the resurrection without eyes. . . . Even if they remove your head, you will rise again with it upon you. Even if they cut you apart limb from limb, not only will you rise and not be separated from the little digit on your hand or your foot, but you will also rise with a spiritual body.

Whoever commissioned the saying on the funerary cloth believed also in the physical resurrection of the body. This inscribed funerary shroud in its affirmation of bodily resurrection, appropriately depicts the cross. It functions as symbol of the resurrection: it both wards off evil and is a "landmark of paradise."

The sixth-century Egyptian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes:

"The cross, interchangeable with the Tree of Life (as contrasted to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), was a potent symbol of the economy of salvation, Christ's resurrection, and humankind's future resurrection."

Testimonia to the Gospel of Thomas reveals that influential Christian authors in this period reject it. Eusebius of Caesarea groups the Gospel of Thomas among the heretical texts. Cyril of Jerusalem prohibits its reading, claiming: "Let no one read the Gospel of Thomas."

In his article on "The Canon of the New Testament in Antiquity," Christoph Marksches advocated that we should look beyond influential church leaders and canonical lists in order to understand early Christian reading practices and take into account also "which types of canons and books of contents of canons appeared in the public, liturgical and private lives of ancient Christians."

While this phrase is present in the Greek text, it is absent from the Coptic translation. The addition of this saying to the Gospel of Thomas in logion 5 is not the insertion of an independently transmitted *agraphon* attributed to Jesus. This was never an oral saying to begin with. Rather, I contend, it was an exegetical addition, where the scribe interpreted the "hidden and manifest" in logion 5 as "buried and raised," in an allusion to the Pauline creed in 1 Cor 15:4, "that he was buried and that he was raised." This funerary cloth allows us to catch glimpses of the people that read the Fifth Gospel and applied it to their lives, or better, their deaths.

#### A ZEAL FOR GOD BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE

Wholesale destruction of gospel texts begin in earnest with one bishop, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, even bragging how he had withdrawn two hundred *Diatessaronic* manuscripts from churches in Syria.

What lay behind Theodoret's book-burning zeal was his own peculiar circumstances. Having run afoul of the authorities doctrinally over the matter of Christ nature, whether he had two distinct natures, as Nestorius had asserted, or not, he was deposed from his bishopric, being declared a heretic by the Council of Ephesus in 491 AD. The following year, however, he regained his oversight of 800 congregations by servilely submitting to the Imperial Commissioner at Calcedon. He did so by authoring a *Treatise against Heresies*, detailing his many acts against even the *appearance* of Nestorianism. Hence his specious charge that the Diatessaron, because it did not include the genealogies, was against Christ's human nature. In fact, the Diatessaron has as many references to Jesus' human nature as the canonicals do.

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