

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

A SURVEY OF THE SYNOPTIC QUESTION.

IV. NEW HYPOTHESES.

So far as we have yet gone, the most recent literature on the Synoptic Gospels is seen to be still moving in the grooves which were, broadly speaking, traced for it by Holtzmann in 1863. It has however, at the same time, a more novel element, which perhaps strikes the attention all the more because of the amount of coincidence between several writers widely apart from each other, and approaching the subject without any kind of concert or communication. This is enough to show that there is a tendency in the air, though I must not be supposed to imply that the theories which are the subject of this coincidence are either as yet made good or even that they are likely to maintain themselves permanently.

Let us begin with Mr. Wright. Mr. Wright holds that our present Gospels, as we have them, were written within the decade 71-80 A.D. So far he is only adopting what, if we look at other countries besides England, might be described as, on the whole, the prevalent view. But then he goes beyond this, and he proceeds to date as well the other documents which are worked up in our Gospels. The first cycle of teaching, of which he speaks as compiled by St. Peter, he would place within twelve years of the ascension; for the second cycle, which he believes to have been brought into shape by St. Matthew, and the third cycle, which is supposed to contain, not the whole, but a considerable portion of the peculiar matter now found in St. Luke, he requires some twelve years more. It may be remembered that some MSS. of the Gospels, the oldest of which is Cod. Cyprius (K), of the ninth century, assign dates to our Gospels: to St. Matthew eight years after the ascension, to St. Mark ten (or on another reckoning twelve), and to St

Luke fifteen. Mr. Wright makes no appeal to these: his reason for fixing upon the twelfth year after the ascension is that he takes that as the date of the dispersion of the apostles—following, I suppose, the tradition, which was already of some standing at the end of the second century.¹ He supports this date partly by the general argument that by this time regular catechizing had begun—which we may more or less grant; partly by another argument, of which I think we shall do well to take note, without altogether committing ourselves to it, that if our Gospels were written when we imagine them to be written, “the very early date of the first cycle becomes a necessity, or we shall not have time to account for the great divergences which confessedly exist in our three editions of it.” But when he goes on to claim the support of Papias, I am afraid that he is misinterpreting the tradition which we owe to that writer. Mr. Wright speaks of St. Mark as the “chief of the catechists” at Jerusalem; and he appears to think of him as making the notes on which his Gospel is based at the time when St. Peter left that city. But Irenæus says expressly that St. Mark did not write down his notes of St. Peter’s preaching until after the death of the apostle. And in any case I have no doubt that the preaching of St. Peter in question belongs to the end of the apostle’s life, when St. Mark was again in his company, and not to the first part of his career, before the break up of the apostolic circle. The same tradition which connects St. Mark’s Gospel with St. Peter also connects it, not with Jerusalem, but Rome.

We observe, further, that Mr. Wright places first the historic Gospel, the record of things “said and done,” the Petrine Memoirs, and not the Matthean collection of discourses. It will appear in the sequel that I regard this as the less promising form of the hypothesis.

¹ Lipsius, *Apokr. Apostelgesch.*, i., 13 f.

While then I am much inclined to agree with the broad lines of the analysis of the Gospels as Mr. Wright has traced them, I cannot attach much importance to the particular feature in his theory which has the greatest amount of novelty, his bold assignment of a date to the first committal of the Petrine Memoirs to writing. We are however reminded of another attempt, made some few years ago, to penetrate behind our canonical texts to the earlier history of those Memoirs. It was in 1884 that Dr. Edwin A. Abbott and Mr. W. G. Rushbrooke brought out their little work on *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels*. The introduction contained a somewhat peculiar theory as to the nature of that tradition, which has not so far been received very favourably. Dr. Abbott held that the original form of the tradition corresponded nearly to the actual words that are common to our three Synoptics, and that it included little more than these. The notes of which it was composed were thus so terse and brief that, "like a modern telegram," they had to be expanded before they became intelligible; and the divergences between the Gospels arose from the different ways in which they were expanded. As a theory this was rather sharply criticised by Dr. Salmon in his well-known and justly valued *Introduction to the New Testament*,¹ and I am inclined myself to think that it made the fundamental document more curt and disjointed than was necessary. I believe that the original tradition contained, not only the points common to all three Synoptics, but also those which St. Mark shares alternately with each of his companions. But however that may be, Dr. Abbott's preliminary explanations contained some brilliant specimens of critical acumen, which the student of the Synoptic problem cannot afford to neglect, especially at the present moment. Their tendency was to account for some of the variants in the three Gospels by confusion

¹ Pages 147-151.

arising out of textual corruption or ambiguities in the fundamental text, supposing that text to be Greek. A simple and attractive example was St. Mark xiv. 49 (=Matt. xxvi. 55, Luke xxii. 53), where the difference between "I was in the temple" (Mark, Luke), and "I sat (*ἐκαθεζόμενον*) in the temple" (Matt.), was explained as due to the ambiguity of *ἦμην*, "was" (which is actually found in St. Mark), and *ἤμην*, "sat" (which is paraphrased in St. Matthew), the MS. of course at this date not having any breathings. Some other explanations of apparent differences involve nothing more serious than the different supplying of an omitted subject ("He eateth," "your Master eateth," "ye eat" in Mark ii. 16 = Matt. ix. 11 = Luke v. 30), or the different dividing of clauses where in the original the sense was not helped by punctuation (Mark xiii. 9, 10 = Matt. xxiv. 14, x. 18, and possibly elsewhere).

The climax of ingenuity was reached when, in the parable of the talents or pounds, "over many things" was equated with "over ten cities" (*ἐπιπολλῶν = ἐπιπολεῶν*); and even more when, in St. Luke viii. 39, "publishing throughout the whole city" was explained as merely a variant on St. Mark v. 20 (*ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει = ἐντηπολεῖ*). Conjectures like these last perhaps come under the head of those which are almost too brilliant to be true. But Dr. Abbott's examples are not only all scholarly, and all possible, but some of them reach a distinct degree of probability; and his case as a whole seems to me quite to deserve a hearing, especially at a time when much is said about variants derived from the Hebrew or Aramaic and little about variants derived from the Greek.

In this respect, to glance back once more over the pages of Dr. Abbott may help us to keep our balance when we turn to Prof. Marshall. One might say beforehand, speaking from the general point of view of Synoptic criticism,

that those explanations are most likely to hold good which in sections presumably belonging to the Petrine Memoirs assume a variant through the Greek, and in sections presumably belonging to the *Logia* assume a variant through the Hebrew or Aramaic. But this is only an *a priori* view: we must hold lightly to it, as to all the hypotheses we have to deal with. In particular, we must not make up our minds too fixedly as to what belongs to the one document and what to the other. Let us patiently weigh and test what is said on all sides, prepared to accept what is proved, but not regarding the proof as complete too prematurely.

In this task there is reason to expect that we shall receive valuable help from Prof. Marshall. I am writing as the second of his series of articles, in the February number of *THE EXPOSITOR*, has just reached me; and it is impossible not to augur well from the close and careful study to which it bears witness.¹ It seems to me that Prof. Marshall is fortunate even in his limitations. I gather that his investigations have been conducted independently of those on the Continent which run most parallel to them. This gives all the greater weight to the points of coincidence which I believe will be found to exist between them.

Mr. Marshall claims to bring forward proof (1) that many passages in our present Gospels are based upon an original document or documents written in an Aramaic dialect similar to that of the Targums; (2) that such a document was already known to St. Paul. As one of the examples adduced in support of this is taken from 1 Thessalonians v. 3, we must suppose that it was known to St. Paul throughout the whole of his career, so far as it is covered by his extant epistles: in other words, its date must be at least

¹ Since this was written the further case in the March number has been presented, and I regret to learn that Semitic scholars do not think so favourably of it as I had hoped.

earlier than the year 52 A.D. The proof in this case would perhaps be hardly stringent. There is not, I think, anything decisive to show that the words in question came down to St. Paul in writing, and not orally. But it is true that, when we descend to 1 Timothy v. 18, the words, "the labourer is worthy of his hire," are quoted expressly as "Scripture"; and Prof. Marshall appears to be prepared to maintain that St. Paul's quotations generally are taken from a written Gospel. I gather also that, although he will not press the point, he is yet inclined to identify this Gospel with the *Logia* which Papias ascribes to St. Matthew.

Here we are confronted with a view which a short time ago would have been regarded as highly paradoxical, but which is now stoutly maintained from several distinct quarters at once. Mr. Halcombe has an elaborate argument to prove, not only that Gospels, but that our present Gospels, are included in the *logoi* and *paradoseis* to which there are such frequent references. Here we may well hesitate to agree with him, but the chapter in which this is maintained¹ nevertheless deserves reading. Then we have Mr. Wright putting his Petrine Memoirs within twelve years, and his other two leading documents within twenty-four years, from the ascension—let us say, not later than the year 54 A.D. Again we may question the validity of the reasoning, but at any rate the opinion is there. And most solid of all is the imposing body of proof advanced by Dr. Resch.

Dr. Resch covers most of the ground occupied by his English supporters, and considerably more. He has the keenest eye for possible quotations from a Gospel in the epistles. He not only annexes in this sense a number of passages introduced by *γέγραπται*, *ἐγράφη*, *ἡ γραφή λέγει* (1 Cor. ii. 9, ix. 10; 1 Tim. v. 18; St. James iv. 5),

¹ *Historic Relation of the Gospels*, pp. 32-50.

or λέγει simply, with ἡ γραφή or an equivalent understood (as in Eph. v. 14). Once more, as to some in the early Church, St. Paul's κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιόν μου becomes a quotation, if not from St. Luke, yet from an evangelical document. Formulæ like πιστὸς ὁ λόγος have the same origin, and phrases like ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἐν λόγῳ Κυρίου, also point to some recorded saying. It is fair to add that in these instances he is frequently able to appeal, not merely to the formula, but also to some patristic parallel which, if not expressly set down as a saying of the Lord, might not unreasonably be considered such.

Further, Dr. Resch makes a very large use of Professor Marshall's weapon of various translation. By this means he is able to refer many anonymous quotations in the epistles to a Hebrew original, and so to increase the probability that they are taken from a Gospel. And just as Prof. Marshall fortifies himself by analogous cases from the Old Testament, so he too strengthens his position by an appeal to similar varieties of rendering in the different columns of the Hexapla. A convenient summary of instances is given from the Acts, many of St. Paul's epistles, Hebrews, St. James, and the Apocalypse; and it will be interesting to see how this list compares with Prof. Marshall's.¹

Both writers hold that the document which was quoted thus freely was the *Logia* of St. Matthew. I have little doubt that if any form of written Gospel existed at this early date, the view that it was the *Logia* is the most tenable. And I have little doubt also that if the use of it in the other books of the New Testament can be proved, Dr. Resch and Prof. Marshall between them will do as much as lies within the power of man to prove it. I hope that their arguments will receive a full and candid consideration. I desire myself to give them this, and

¹ *Agrapha*, pp. 89-92.

therefore I do not wish to speak too decidedly, although I must confess that at present my leaning is to the side of scepticism. This side is stated with his usual force by Dr. Paul Ewald.¹ He naturally dismisses the formulæ of quotation as proving nothing. If it were certain that a Gospel was in existence, then we might be justified in referring the formulæ to it; but the formulæ in themselves by no means necessarily point to a Gospel. The real quotations from "Words of the Lord" Dr. Ewald reduces to six (1 Cor. vii. 10 f., ix. 14, xi. 23 ff; 1 Thess. iv. 15 ff; Acts xx. 35, xi. 10).² And then he points to the fact that *not one* of these passages agrees verbally with anything in our Synoptic Gospels. He insists, further, on the absence of proof that the *logoi* or *paradoseis* included anything like a written Gospel. Perhaps there is just a little more to be said for this than he allows, based especially on the prologue to St. Luke (*πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν . . . καθὼς παρέδοσαν . . . ὑπηρέται τοῦ λόγου . . . περὶ ἧν κατηχήθης λόγων*). Still if, as I believe, St. Luke did not write before the year 80 A.D., his language—press it as we may—would prove nothing as to the existence of a Gospel in the year 52.

One obstacle in the way of supposing that the *Logia* of St. Matthew existed at such an early date, though obvious enough, I do not think has been noticed. It is that the supposition conflicts, or at least appears to conflict, with the external evidence. Irenæus says expressly that St. Matthew put forth his Gospel "amongst the Hebrews in their own tongue, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and founding the Church."³ This would carry us to a date A.D. 63-67, or at the latest 68. I confess that

¹ *Hauptproblem*, etc., pp. 143-148.

² Mr. Marshall would add to these Rom. xiv. 14-21, as agreeing in substance with parts of the Sermon on the Mount, Rom. xiii. 7, and 1 Tim. v. 10 (THE EXPOSITOR for July, 1890, p. 70 f.)

³ *Ap. Euseb.*, *H. E.* v. 8.

such a date appears to me more probable. If not, we should have to suppose that Irenæus is thinking—as he may be himself, though it is less likely that the authority from which his statement was derived was thinking—not of the original work of St. Matthew, but of the Gospel as we have it.

Let us keep our minds open; though in weighing the case as it is presented to us by Dr. Resch or Prof. Marshall, we shall, I think, do well to remember how many possibilities there are on all sides. It does not follow that everything which is capable of being represented as a various rendering from the Hebrew is really such a variety of rendering. There is an inherent tendency in the human mind to paraphrase and the use of synonyms, which may come into play quite as possibly without any intervening of translation: one writer may use *τηρεῖν* and another *φυλάσσειν*, one *ἀδικεῖν* and another *ἀνομεῖν*, and the like, without having a Hebrew original before them. Hence, even granting that there was a Hebrew original, it would have to be proved that that original was a Gospel; and granting that there was a Gospel, it would have to be proved that it was a *written* Gospel; and granting that it was a written Gospel, it would have to be proved that it was one of those incorporated in our present Gospels, and not extra-canonical. It seems to me therefore, with all respect for the two zealous and capable scholars whose work we are considering, that they have a considerable task before them before their case can be regarded as proved.

It must be remembered however that this particular position, that a written Gospel existed before even the earliest of St. Paul's epistles which have come down to us, and that it is freely quoted in those epistles and in other books of the New Testament, is only part of what they undertake to establish. Dr. Resch and Prof. Marshall travel in company some way further. They both

agree in contending that there are traces of the same Semitic original in the Gospels themselves; that many of the varying expressions in those Gospels are due simply to differences of translation; and that when Papias speaks of the "many who translated St. Matthew's *Logia* as best they could," his words are verified by the actual diversities which meet the eye in our present Greek Testaments.

Here I, for one, am prepared to meet our two inquirers half-way. I believe antecedently that what they maintain is probable, and that it only needs the sharpened attention, the critical acumen, and the knowledge of Semitic dialects which both of them possess, to bring out the facts of which they are in search. There will doubtless not be wanting scholars competent to estimate their success, though I have previously explained that I cannot count myself among the number. They must not however be surprised if we outsiders exercise a certain wariness and caution in committing ourselves to results before they are endorsed as well by Semitic scholars as by students of the Synoptic problem. May I describe frankly what will be my own attitude of mind on the subject?

1. I do not wish to hold obstinately to any one particular theory, in case good reason should be shown for changing it. At the same time, there seems to me to be such a degree of presumption in favour of the Two-Document Hypothesis, that I should start from that, at least provisionally. But if we accept the statements of Papias, which so far as we have seen are confirmed rather than refuted by critical analysis, it is involved in the hypothesis that the first main document, the Petrine Memoirs, was originally written in Greek, and the second only, the Matthæan *Logia*, composed in the first instance in Hebrew. Assuming this, it would follow that assent could be given far more easily to the theory of a Hebrew original in those parts of the Gospels which probably

come from the *Logia* than in those which seem more likely to have belonged to the Petrine Memoirs. An example lies near at hand. Dr. Resch gives some boldly marked specimens of his reconstruction of the Hebrew text underlying the divergent Greek readings which have come down to us. The first of these is taken from St. Matthew xxv. 35, 36. These verses are quoted no less than four times in the *Clementine Homilies*, in all four cases freely and allusively; still there is so large a constant element running through the passages that, after verifying each reference, I am inclined to think that Dr. Resch is justified in his version of the text which the Clementine writer had before him. Compared with the canonical text the variants can be represented as well in English as in Greek.

MATT. XXV. 35, 36.

ἐπείνασα,
καὶ ἐδώκατέ μοι φαγεῖν·
ἐδίψησα,
καὶ ἐποτίσατέ με·
ξένος ἦμην,
καὶ συνηγάγετέ με·
γυμνός,
καὶ περιεβάλετέ με·
ἡσθένησα,
καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με·
ἐν φυλακῇ ἦμην,
καὶ ἤλθετε πρὸς με.

I was hungry,
and ye gave Me to eat :
I was thirsty,
and ye made Me to drink :
I was a stranger,
and ye took Me in :
I was naked,
and ye clothed Me :

CLEM. HOM.

ἐπείνασα,
καὶ ἐθρέψατέ με·
ἐδίψησα,
καὶ ποτὸν παρέσχετε μοι·
ξένος ἦμην,
καὶ ἐδέξασθέ με·
γυμνός,
καὶ ἐνεδύσατέ με·
ἐνόσησα,
καὶ ἐπεσκέψασθέ με·
ἐν εἰρκτῇ ἦμην,
καὶ ἐβοηθήσατέ μοι.

I was hungry,
and ye fed Me :
I was thirsty,
and ye gave Me drink
I was a stranger,
and ye welcomed Me :
I was naked,
and ye arrayed Me :

MATT. XXV. 35, 36.
 I was *sick*,
 and ye visited Me:
 I was in *prison*,
 and ye *came to Me*.

CLEM. HOM.
 I was *ill*,
 and ye visited Me:
 I was in *ward*,
 and ye *succoured Me*.

The structure of the two versions is the same, indeed it could hardly be different; but almost every marked expression varies, and in the Clementines the variations are repeated so often, that they are not likely to be a mere caprice of the writer. I am not competent to judge of the Hebrew translation which Dr. Resch has appended; but beforehand I should be quite prepared to hear that the verdict of Hebraists was that it was successful. The passage is taken from a chapter which very probably belonged to the *Logia*, which we believe to have been originally written in Hebrew.

In the next of his examples too Dr. Resch has a plausible case, which I can quite imagine impressing the reader at first sight, but I am by no means so clear that it really holds good. Here we have the triple synopsis, and the passage is also quoted in a very divergent manner by Clement of Alexandria.

CLEM. ALEX.
 (*Pædag.* 1, 2, p. 101.)

ἀνάστα, φησὶ
 τῷ παρειμένῳ,
 τὸν σκήμποδα
ἐφ' ὃν κατὰ-
κεισαι λαβὼν
ἄπιθι οἴκαδε.

Stand up,
saieth He, to the
palsiedman; and
picking up thy
truckle-bed where-
on thou liest,
begone homewards.

LUKE v. 24.

εἶπεν τῷ πα-
 ραλελυμένῳ·
 ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρας
 τὸ κλινιδίόν σου
 πορεύου εἰς τὸν
 οἶκόν σου.

He *said* to
 the *paralysed*:
 Arise, and *tak-*
ing up thy
little couch, go
to thine house.

MARK ii. 11.

λέγει τῷ πα-
 ραλυτικῷ· ἔγειρε,
 ἄρον τὸν κρά-
βαττόν σου, καὶ
ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν
οἶκόν σου.

He saith to
 the paralytic:
 Arise, take up
 thy *pallet-bed*,
 and depart to
 thine house.

MATT. ix. 6.

λέγει τῷ πα-
 ραλυτικῷ· ἔγειρε,
 ἄρόν σου τὴν
 κλίνην, καὶ
 ὑπαγε εἰς τὸν
 οἶκόν σου.

He saith to
 the paralytic;
 Arise, take up
 thy couch, and
 depart to thine
 house.

The last two columns, St. Matthew and St. Mark, agree closely together, and it is allowed that they represent the same version; but St. Luke differs in several slighter points, and Clement of Alexandria almost as much as it is possible to differ. I do not however attach any importance to this. I believe that Clement is simply paraphrasing the whole passage, as one very often does in a sermon, for the sake of greater freshness modernizing the familiar words, and using one's own natural style of narrative. I believe that Clement has done this, and that there is no ground for saying that he made use of another version of a Hebrew original. A line or two lower down, he quotes from St. John, "Lazarus, come forth"; yet the Greek for "come forth" (*ἐξιθι*) is quite different from that of our Gospel (*δεῦρο ἔξω*), and no one would say that St. John wrote in Hebrew. It will be observed that *ἐξιθι* in this quotation corresponds to *ἀπιθι οἴκαδε* in the preceding, and shows that forms of this kind were running in his mind.

Neither can I attach much more weight to the variants in St. Luke. They none of them go beyond those slight verbal changes which the evangelist elsewhere allows himself. He avoids the form *παραλυτικός*, which does not occur at all in his Gospel, though it occurs five times each in St. Matthew and St. Mark: *κλινίδιον*, as compared with *κλίνην* in St. Matthew, is a mere literary variation. And *ὑπάγειν* is another word of which St. Luke is not very fond. It occurs only five times in the corrected text of his Gospel, against fifteen times in the shorter Gospel of St. Mark, and twenty times in St. Matthew. On the other hand, *πορεύεσθαι* is found only three times in St. Mark, and those three all in the disputed verses at the end of the Gospel, and no less than fifty times in St. Luke.

Lastly, the fact that St. Matthew and St. Mark are so clearly based upon a common Greek original naturally

raises a presumption against the use of an altogether different original by St. Luke.

I am aware that Dr. B. Weiss sees in this section of the paralytic a mingling of the *Logia* with the Petrine Memoirs, and that is a point which I do not wish to prejudge: it is possible that the coincidence between the *κλινίδιον* of St. Luke and *κλίνην* of St. Matthew, as against St. Mark's characteristic *κράβαττον*, may not be altogether accidental: still I greatly doubt if any important influence on this passage is due to divergent rendering from the Hebrew.

2. A second caution that I should be disposed to observe has just been indicated. When two variant expressions are put before me as due to divergent rendering from the Hebrew, I should ask if they are equally explicable as differences of style. Mr. Marshall writes in the February EXPOSITOR,¹ "If one evangelist says *πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην*, while the other says *ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην*; if one says *ἀνέστη*, and another *ἠγέρθη*, our attention is aroused." He adds, very rightly, that "we shall not feel secure to build on such superficial cases." I would go further, and say that there was not even a *prima facie* case for any thought of a Hebrew original in the examples quoted. We have just seen that *πορεύεσθαι* does not occur at all in the body of St. Mark's Gospel, whereas it is a favourite expression in St. Luke. Now considering how closely St. Mark represents the Petrine Memoirs, and considering how far more probable it is that those Memoirs were originally in Greek, and that the greater part of them was used equally by St. Luke, the variation cannot in many instances at least be due to anything but idiosyncrasy of style. The same holds good for the other example given: *ἀναστῆναι* occurs twice, or possibly three times, in St. Matthew, to fifteen times in St. Mark, and twenty-four times in St. Luke. It is clear that the word must have

¹ Page 123.

been avoided by the first evangelist, even where it stood before him.

3. Yet one more caution. The critic must be on the watch for variants which have arisen, not from any fundamental Hebrew, but simply in the course of transmission of the Greek text. I do not absolutely say that in some of these cases traces may not be preserved of an older form of text. The subject is a highly interesting one, and I do not think that we have as yet got quite to the bottom of it. I should myself be only too glad to rescue all that can be rescued from the footnotes of a critical Greek Testament as genuine and, as Dr. Resch calls it, "pre-canonical" material.¹ My impression is however that he has gone too far in this direction. He claims especially, as satisfying the required conditions, many of the variants of the so called "Western Text," headed by Codex Bezae (D); and no doubt there are some of the variants in this text (as notably the incident of the man working on the Sabbath) which have a strong ring of genuineness. Let it be remembered that there are four possibilities: (1) that these readings, as Dr. Resch thinks, really belong to an older stage in the history of our present Gospels; (2) that they are derived from oral tradition; (3) that they are derived from some other written source, not pre- but extra-canonical; (4) that they are simple corruptions of the canonical text. Each of these possibilities ought to be fully weighed before a decision is given; or rather, it is not only single readings that should be weighed, but whole groups of readings. In the verse (Matt. xi. 27), "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him," there are, besides others, two considerable variants which

¹ I am not sure that I am right in supposing that Dr. Resch treats "pre-canonical" and "genuine" as equivalent terms. Some of the readings which he quotes from St. John on p. 23 f. cannot be genuine.

have a large amount of extremely early support: (i.) the order of the two principal clauses ("no man . . . Father," "neither . . . Son") is inverted quite fully and deliberately by the following authorities quoting the whole verse: Justin Martyr three times, *Clementine Homilies* four times, Marcion, the Marcosians as quoted by Irenæus twice, Irenæus himself twice (though not in two other places), Epiphanius three times, quoting the whole verse, and six times besides omitting the last clause, though four times also with the other reading, as well as by a cloud of other authorities, quoting the two first clauses only; (ii.) the aorist ἔγνω for the presents ἐπιγινώσκει (Matt.) or γινώσκει (Luke) is found in Justin Martyr twice out of three times, in the *Clementine Homilies* five times, in the Marcosians (*ap. Irenæum*), in Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria six times out of eight, Origen eleven times,¹ etc. Decisive authorities we should say for both readings, if we looked only at their diffusion and at their date: and yet all these early authorities which transpose the clauses really stand self-condemned, because the last clause, "and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him," clearly requires that "the Son" shall have been the subject of the clause immediately preceding. And even as regards the aorist ἔγνω, we are warned not to attach too much weight to the patristic quotations, however numerous and however early, by the parallel case of St. John i. 13, where it is extremely probable that, not only the commonly quoted authorities, Irenæus three times, Tertullian twice, Ambrose and Augustine once each (though not in other places), but also, as Resch has proved, Justin Martyr in no less than five clear allusions, read ἐγεννήθη (for ἐγεννήθησαν, referring the words to Christ), which is certainly wrong.

I have mentioned some of the cautions which I should

¹ I have used besides Tischendorf the careful discussion of these readings in Bousset, *Evangelicentate Justins*, p. 100 f., which I have partially verified.

myself use in approaching the deeply interesting theories of Prof. Marshall and Dr. Resch. I do not wish to express a more definite opinion about them at present—not because I think that it will really be difficult to form one, but because I do not think it either fair to them, or a sound process in itself, to hazard any sweeping general opinion after the hasty and partial study which I have as yet been able to give to them. In a case of cumulative evidence like this, a number of particular arguments may fall through, and yet enough may be left standing to bear the conclusion: it is only right to take the soundest arguments, and view them, not singly, but together.¹

W. SANDAY.

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HADES.

A CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PROFESSOR FRANZ
DELITZSCH AND PROFESSOR VON HOFMANN.

DELITZSCH TO HOFMANN (*cont. of letter*).

PERMIT me briefly to return to Ephesians iv. 8-10. As the Hebrew קְהַלְיֹת הָאָרֶץ is used without exception to designate the inward parts of the earth and the lower world, τὰ κατώτερα τῆς γῆς and the fuller τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς can only mean the lower regions of earth, considered as lying beneath the upper world, and, like ἄδης or ἄβυσσος in other passages, it is the polaric opposite to οὐρανός; instead of which word the apostle, wishing to choose the most absolute expression for the highest, as he has already done for the lowest point, uses the phrase ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν. You will answer, that the connexion requires us to understand τὰ κατώτερα in the sense of the earth con-

¹ I have not found myself able to conclude the subject in the four papers originally planned; there is still one more to follow, dealing chiefly with Dr. Resch.