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and brought Peter, Barnabas, and the Antioch church over
to the " Apostolic " way of thinking.

B. W. BACON.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE GOSPEL.

A GERMAN philologist once, when summarizing scientific
method, posed the principle that one good argument is better
than any number of bad arguments.   By a good argument
he probably meant one which could not be rejected without
violation of something like natural law.   For the study of
the transmission of the Gospel such an argument has been
provided by the late Professor Nestle in an observation
dealing with Matthew xii. 19, where Isaiah xlii. 2 is thus
quoted : " He shall not strive nor cry," οὐκ ἐρίσει οὐδὲ κραυ-
γάσει.   The Hebrew text offers, " He shall not cry nor lift
up [his voice] " ; [1] the LXX, " He shall not cry nor raise
[the pitch of his voice] " ; [2] whence comes the word " strive "
in the Greek text of Matthew ?   It comes, as Nestle observed,
from the *Peshitta of the Old Testament*, quoted in the Lewisian
Syriac : which indeed means, " He shall not cry nor shout " ; [3]
but the Syriac *n'rïb* would be rendered by any one who was
more familiar with Hebrew than Syriac by " he shall strive,"
because *rïb* is a common Hebrew word for " strive," whereas
the Syriac word is not quite common.   Nestle's observation
gives us a simple and convincing explanation of the source
of the word *strive* in the Greek text of Matthew, and it is an
observation of the utmost importance.   For the Peshitta
Old Testament is elsewhere employed in the Lewisian text
of Matthew, where quotations from the Old Testament are
introduced, and it is only from this Syriac text that one

[1] לא יצעק ולא ישא
[2] οὐ κεκράξεται οὐδὲ ἀνήσει.
[3] לא נקעא ולא נריב.

could find its way into the Greek Gospel. Hence we draw the inference that the Greek copy of the first Gospel is fundamentally a translation of the Syriac Gospel preserved, though it may be in a revised shape, in the Lewisian text.

If the Syriac Gospel had been translated or composed for Jewish readers, we should have expected the quotations from the Old Testament to be made in the original language, as Jewish writers of Arabic habitually cite them. It is clear that in many cases where the Syriac and Greek texts quote the Peshitta and the LXX the argument requires the Hebrew text ; thus in Matthew xiii. 15 the Hebrew text of Isaiah vi. 10, according to which the Prophet is commanded to make the heart of his people fat, i.e. to mystify them, is alone appropriate to the context, though the Syriac and the Greek Gospels follow their respective versions of the Old Testament. In some cases, however, the Hebrew text was too obviously required to permit of this process. Thus in Matthew xxvii. 9 the reference to the Potter rendered the Greek and Syriac versions of Zechariah xi. 13 useless ; since for " potter " the first has " furnace," the second " treasury." There are, however, places where the argument seems to require one or other of these ancient versions; so in Matthew iv. 6, where the Saviour is advised to fling Himself from a pinnacle of the Temple because in Psalm xci. 11 there is a promise that the angels " will guard thee in all thy ways and lift thee upon hands lest thou strike thy foot against a stone," the Peshitta rendering of this passage, quoted in the Lewisian Syriac, seems to suit the argument best : " and on their *arms* shall they carry thee, lest thou stumble with thy foot." For whereas the promise in the Hebrew seems to refer to helping over obstacles this clearly refers to carrying in the arms.

The quotations, then, suggest that in the Greek Gospel there are three layers—a Hebrew layer, a Syriac layer and a

Greek layer ; and it is the presence of the intermediate layer which follows with certainty from Nestle's observation.   Now the tradition is that Matthew wrote in *Hebrew*, and it seems doubtful whether the Hebrew language has ever been confused with the Syriac except by people who knew neither.   Where the phrase " in the Hebrew tongue " occurs in the New Testament it means actually in Hebrew ; the words thus cited in the Apocalypse, *Abaddon* (ix. 11) and *Har-Mageddon* (xvi. 16)- are distinctly Hebrew.   The same is true of those cited in the Fourth Gospel, *Golgotha* (xix. 13), *Gabbatha* (xix. 17), and *Beth-Hesda* (v. 2).   They have indeed Syriac terminations ; but the names are themselves Hebrew, though *Gabbatha* is mistranslated.   Similarly we should be justified in saying " Harmony is a Greek word," " Homer was called by the Greeks the Poet," though the terminations of the Greek forms have been omitted.   The supposition that the Hebrew names have come into the Greek text through a Syriac intermediary sufficiently accounts for the facts.

For the language of Jerusalem in the time of Christ the only evidence which we can safely use is that of Josephus ; because we possess his works in their original dialect, and are not confronted with difficult questions of authorship and transmission before we can use them.   According to him the Hebrew language has a similar alphabet and similar sound to those of Syriac, but is a different idiom.[1]   He does not, however, distinguish his native language from that of the Old Testament.   *Chittim* is a form in use " among us." [2] Since, then, his language was identical with that of the Old Testament and only akin to Syriac, we must infer from this statement that according to him the language of Jerusalem was not Syriac, but Hebrew.

[1] *Antiquities*, XII. ii. § 1.
[2] *Antiquities*, I. vi. § 1.

Where we look for specimens of the actual language in use in his time his evidence is apt to be elusive ; thus he professes to give the " native Jewish appellation " of a place, and then gives Greek words, 'Aκανθῶν αὐλών.[1] The explanation of this appears to be the following. Words in a foreign language convey no meaning to those who are ignorant of it, and are even apt to give offence. Either, then, Josephus himself changed his mind and decided to give a Greek translation instead of the original appellation, or some copyist substituted the Greek rendering. In one case, however, we appear to see behind the veil, and, as often happens, a mistranslation helps us where a correct translation would be useless. This is in the *Jewish War*, V. vi. § 4, where watchers call out, when a machine is about to discharge a projectile, in the native language, " The Son is coming." [2] Many centuries ago the true explanation of this was given ; the words in the " native language " were בָּאָה אֶבֶן,wrongly translated as בָּא הַבֵּן, but meaning " a stone is coming." Now all the words here employed, those for " son," " stone," and " is coming," are Hebrew, not Syriac. Whence it follows that Hebrew was the language used by the besieged Jews.

When, therefore, the tradition makes Matthew compile the first Gospel in Hebrew, this statement is *prima facie* plausible ; but what underlies the Greek Matthew is not a Hebrew text, but a Syriac text, largely preserved, as we have seen, in the Lewisian text. Of this series the clearest case is to be found in the words spoken on the cross, quoted from Psalm xxii. 1. The Lewisian text of Matthew xxvii. 46 quotes them as they are found in the Peshitta of the Old Testament (except that the Hebrew form for " my God " is retained) ; with no sug-

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[1] *Jewish War*, V. ii. § 1.
[2] ὁ υἱὸς ἔρχεται.

gestion that the actual words used by the Saviour are being recorded. In Mark xv. 34 it quotes them precisely as they are found in the Peshitta of the Old Testament. The Greek MSS. take over this quotation (with slight alteration) from the Lewisian Syriac, supposing it to be the original, though the famous MS. D restores the Hebrew. Now the Lewisian text of Matthew preserves the first word of the Hebrew (*ēli*, Syriac *elāhy* or *elōhy*) because it is necessary for the narrative; the Hebrew form might be confused with the vocative of *Elias*, whereas this could scarcely occur with the Syriac form. That the words were actually cited in the Hebrew original (if the narrative be veracious) cannot be plausibly questioned; here, then, we have a clear case in which the Greek text is based on the Syriac.

But we learn from this example that the supposed quotations in the Greek Gospels of the actual words of the Saviour are only quotations of the Syriac translation of an original Hebrew. That such an error could be committed is not surprising to one who has made any study of translations. The Arabic translations of Aristotle which are made from Syriac treat the Syriac as the original language; and many of us must have heard sermons wherein the English of the Authorized Version was treated as the original. Why the Greek Gospels should in certain cases produce the Syriac words is not clear; but the same question might be asked of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, which professes to translate whole paragraphs of German, but only here and there reproduces a German word.

Of the original Hebrew Gospel there is perhaps only one fragment in existence—the text " take no thought for the morrow " (Matt. vi. 34) preserved in the Jewish Oral tradition owing to confusion of the Author with Jesus Ben-Sira. Elsewhere we have at best the Lewisian Syriac, which appears to have undergone some revision from the Greek

translation—the theory that the Greeks were infallible having left its traces here also. Now translations are rarely equivalent to their originals, partly because translators have not the responsibility of authors, partly because no two languages are coincident ; to be intelligible we must paraphrase, and are apt to paraphrase inaccurately. Take the Lewisian text of Matthew vi. 19 (Burkitt's translation), " Lay not up for yourselves treasure *in* the earth " ; every one understands that precept, because it is natural to bury treasure ; the earth was the natural place to deposit money until our banking system was devised ; and even now stores of coin are apt to be underground. But the Greek translation has " lay not up for yourselves treasures *upon* the earth," and why ? Because of what follows : " where moth and eating doth corrupt " : for though men bury coin, they do not *bury* fine apparel, which only is attacked by the moth. For this clause the Lewisian text offers : " where the *sāsā* falleth and corrupteth." This is unconvincing, if *sāsā* be rendered " moth," because the depredations of the moth are not to be feared for what is buried in the earth ; the danger to which reference must have been made is that to which Ben-Sira alludes when he advises men to spend their money on friends and not let it *rust* beneath the stone. But the Lewisian text clearly does not refer to the " moth," but to " rot," which is another meaning of the word *sāsā* (rendered " moth ") ; [1] therefore the Lewisian text " where rot falleth thereon and destroyeth " is correct. The " rot " which the speaker had in view was that which is occasioned by damp. The Hebrew word actually employed is used of brass in the Jewish Oral tradition.[2]

The coins thought of in the text were clearly copper, of which stores buried in antiquity occasionally are dis-

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[1] Thesaurus Syriacus from Proverbs xiv. 30.
[2] Niddah 36b.

covered even in these days. " Copper " is used for money
in Mark xii. 41.

The method of the Greek translator is here revealed,
and it by no means inspires confidence ; though intelligence
must not be denied it. Another example may be found
in Matthew xxiv. 40 (Burkitt's translation of the Lewisian
Syriac), " Then two men will be in the hill, one will be taken
and one left." What is meant by being " in the hill " ?
The Greek translator rightly is dissatisfied with this ; he
therefore gives the Syriac (בטורא) its Palestinian sense
of " in the field." Yet what is wanted is rather a natural
pair, or at any rate a case in which the two persons are
together. Luke (xvii. 35) substitutes " on one bed," and
puts the scene at night. He seems to have given this Syriac
toro the sense of the Latin word. But the Syriac expression
seems to mean " there shall be two on a par " or " in identical
circumstances" ; the definition of *taur* given in the Arabic
dictionaries illustrates the sense exactly : " a *taur* is a thing
that is commensurate, or equal in length and breadth or
correspondent to a thing." [1] The Syriac usage is very
similar. [2] What follows, then, " two women shall be grinding
at a mill " is merely an illustration of the general principle
which this verse expresses.

This example is particularly instructive, because we find
that it is only in the Syriac of Matthew that the primary
translation from the Hebrew is preserved ; the Syriac in the
case of Luke follows the Greek and indeed a " contaminated "
text. A translation of the Gospel should therefore, in the
case of Matthew, be made directly from the Syriac, in the
other cases from the Greek.

There is no tradition that any of the Gospels was originally
in Hebrew or Syriac except Matthew's, whence the Lewisian

[1] Lane.
[2] See Thesaurus_Syriacus, col. 1450.

text in the case of these others is of small importance comparatively; but even the Greek text of these Gospels, where it coincides with that of Matthew, exhibits depravation. Happily we can demonstrate this by an example as cogent as that with which this article started.

In Matthew xviii. 6 (Greek) we read : " Whoso shall cause one of these little ones to stumble it is profitable for him that an *asinine mill* (μύλος ὀνικός) should be hanged about his neck and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." What is an *asinine mill* ? Liddell and Scott hold that it means *an upper millstone*; because the " ass " in Greek meant this. Others interpret from the Latin *mola asinaria*, " a mill turned by an ass," i.e. a mill too large for a man to work. The Syriac here has " a mill of an ass " ; what this means in Syriac is perhaps uncertain ; but the Hebrew which it translates is found in the Jewish Oral Tradition, and we know that " the ass of a mill " means the *stand* of a mill, i.e. the wooden erection whereon the mill is mounted. This last phrase is found in the Mishnic Tractate *Zābim*, where the context leaves no doubt. The Arabs similarly use the expression *ass* where we use *horse* ; when the historian Tabari went to Egypt, his friends told him he would require for his room *two asses* ; he was puzzled until they explained that they meant clothes-horses.[1]

In the Tosefta (a parallel code to the Mishnah)[2] there is a rule that a hand-mill should be no nearer to a neighbour's wall than three spans from the lower stone and four from the upper, whereas an *ass-mill* should be no nearer than three spans from the *strobilos* or four from the *keleth*. The comment in the Gemara is as follows: " The reason for the former rule (the case of the hand-mill) is lest the knocking should injure the wall. But in the case of the ass-mill

[1] Yākūt, *Life of Tabari* (about 900 A.D.).
[2] Baba Bathra at the commencement.

where does the knocking come in ?   What is feared in this
case is the noise." The difference between the two is not,
then, in the nature of the labour employed, but in the struc-
ture of the mill ; in the former case a stone is moved over
the surface of another stone ; in the latter case the stone
revolves on a pivot, maintaining its place. Hence the
commentary called *Tosafoth* rightly urges that the ass-mill
means a mill mounted on a wooden structure. And indeed
if a real ass were employed, the distance of four spans would
be wholly inadequate.

Hence in Matthew we get the correct series ; an original
in Hebrew, having in that language a technical meaning ;
a literal translation into Syriac ; and a translation of the
Syriac into Greek by some one who missed the exact sense.
Mark (Greek) substitutes for " asinine mill " the far easier
" millstone " (ix. 42) ;   but surely no one could maintain
that this was the original phrase.

Of the Greek used in the second Gospel it may be said
that it is on a far lower level than that of the others. Such
gross errors as ὁδὸν ποιεῖν for ποιεῖσθαι, ἀφιέναι σπέρμα
for καταλείπειν are not easily paralleled. From the pre-
servation of some Syriac words in this Gospel, where the
Greek text of Matthew has not got them, we should gather
that its author had access to the Syriac translation of
the earliest Gospel ; this appears perhaps most clearly in
vii. 11 (Greek), " but ye say : If a man say to his father or
mother ' Korban,' i.e. gift, whatsoever thou shalt benefit
from me " ; where the Greek text of Matthew (according
to the best authorities) omits the Hebrew word, and there-
fore the Greek text of Mark cannot have it from the Greek
text of Matthew. Otherwise, however, it is in Matthew that
the genuine form of this passage appears.

Korban was a form of vow ; Josephus states that the
laws of the Tyrians forbade foreign oaths, among others

that which is called Korban; [1] and for this he cites the
authority of Theophrastus " on laws." He then adds that
Korban was a purely Jewish oath, which might be rendered
" gift of God." Theophrastus flourished about 300 B.C. ;
if, therefore, this quotation be genuine, the *Korban* vow must
be of high antiquity ; the Rabbis are familiar with it, and
declare that numerous euphemisms are in use for it, among
them that very root KNM which we find in Phœnician in-
scriptions.

The formula quoted in the Lewisian text of Matthew is
" Korban if thou be benefited by me " ; in the Greek
of both Matthew and Mark " A gift, whatever benefit thou
derive from me." If for " gift " we substitute the equiva-
lent of *Korban, anathema,* clearly the sentence " anathema
if thou be benefited by me " is a curse ; to utter such a
sentence to a parent is to curse that parent, and so violate
the commandment in Exodus xxi. 17. But if we ask the
Rabbis what the words actually meant, we find that they
no more knew than do we. The matter is discussed at
length in the treatise on Vows (B. Nedarim 13a), where we
learn that some vowed in the form Korban, others Like
Korban, or The Korban, or To Korban. Those who, instead
of using the word Korban, vowed by one of the sacrifices or by
some of the sacrificial implements, really meant Korban. R.
Jehudah thought the formula " Lo Korban " meant " by
the life of Korban," Korban being the name of a god.

All, then, that we require to know is that the formula was a
curse ; why then was not one who used this phrase to one
of his parents to be executed ? Because one Menahem b.
Jose inferred from Leviticus xxiv. 16 that execution was
only incurred when the tetragrammaton was mentioned ;
hence " the wise " permitted a son to say this to his father
or mother.[2] But they also held that he was bound by his

[1] C. Apion, i. 22.   [2] Shebuoth 35a.

vow ; hence the Greek text of Matthew continues rightly
" such a person must not honour his father (or mother)."
The word " honour " means " bestow food, clothing, lodging
and conveyance," necessarily forms of wealth, as was in-
ferred from Proverbs iii. 8, where " Honour the LORD " is
followed by " from thy substance."[1]

The charge then is quite clear.   The Law forbids the curs-
ing of parents on pain of death, and enjoins supplying
them with food, etc.   The Rabbinic inferences lead to the
rejection of both these precepts ; for if a man curse his
parents by a formula in which the Divine Name is not men-
tioned, he will escape the punishment, and besides be pre-
vented from giving his parents anything.   That he is
bound by a vow to do evil was inferred from Numbers
xxx. 3 ; a vow to violate a commandment was binding,
though an oath was not.[2]   The case of a man using the
formula to one of his parents is actually considered in the
Mishnah, and the opinion of the majority was that the vow
was binding.[3]

If the texts be examined in the light of the Mishnah,
which happens in this case to be preserved so far as it is
required, it will be found that the order is—

1. Original Hebrew Gospel.
2. Lewisian Syriac.
3. Greek of Matthew.
4. Greek of Mark.

The original Hebrew contained the quotation from
Exodus in the form " he that curses father or mother " ; this
is blurred in the Peshiṭta of the Old Testament (quoted in
the Lewisian Syriac) and the LXX (quoted in the Greek) by
the euphemism " revile " for " curse."

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[1] Kiddushin   38a.
[2] Nedarim 16a, b.
[3] Ibid. 64a.

In the Greek texts the Rabbis are said to annul the word
of God by " your tradition " ; Mark adds " which ye have
handed down." The Syriac of Matthew, instead of " tradi-
tion," has *ordinance* ; and clearly in this case we have not
to do with a *tradition* but with inference and casuistry.
Whatever may have been the original, the Syriac is nearer
in sense to it than the Greek ; and the addition in Mark
(which ye have handed down) is of no help.

In the text of Matthew (Greek) the old rule is preserved,
" he is not to ' honour ' his father or mother " ; Mark has
" ye suffer him not to do anything to his father," etc.
We have seen that the argument depends on the technical
sense of the word " honour."

We may close with one characteristic case of the additions
which the text of Mark makes to that of Matthew, where both
go back to the intermediate Syriac Gospel.

In Matthew xxvi. 7 we read of a woman " having an
alabastron of myron costly," ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου
πολυτίμου. In Mark xiv. 3 it is " having an alabastron of
myron nard pistic costly," ἀλάβαστρον μύρου νάρδου
πιστικῆς πολυτελοῦς. The explanations given of " pistic "
are too helpless to be quoted. Now what we learn from
the Glossary of Bar Bahlul is that *nard* is a gloss on *myron*,
and *pistic* a gloss on the original of *alabastron*. On *myron* he
remarks, " *myron* and *nard* are the same plant." His gloss
on *shāṭiftā* (Syriac for " alabaster ") is *bista*, of which other
varieties are *bistaka* and *pastuka*. The word is said to be
of Persian origin ; it means the same as *ampulla*, i.e. a
flask. All then that Mark adds in this verse to the text
of Matthew is a couple of glosses on two of the words in
the Syriac text before him.

<div align="right">D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.</div>