

ARTICLE V.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPHUS CONCERNING
JESUS.

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FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS, otherwise known as Joseph ben Matthias, was born about seven years after the crucifixion of Christ. He did not survive his sixty-third year apparently, for he died not far from 100 A.D., possibly by violence, soon after or near the close of the reign of Domitian. Of priestly descent and related to the Maccabees, he was intimately acquainted with Jewish traditions and beliefs, but he was also an admirer, and seemingly an honest one, of Rome and her institutions. Loyalty to his own people led him to oppose the Roman power, however, until he sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of Vespasian. Accepting the inevitable, he then went over to the standard of his conqueror and remained faithful to the end.

His youth was spent in Jerusalem, so far as is known, but at the age of twenty-six he went to Rome and remained there for a time. He returned deeply impressed by what he had seen, but still loyally Jewish. Soon after this he was intrusted with important missions in Galilee by the authorities at Jerusalem, with whom he seems to have been on intimate terms, and he thus became familiar with all the peculiarities of that turbulent province. His experiences there were many and varied, and he had ample time and opportunity to learn all that was to be known of the region and its people.

His later years were devoted to writing, and his histories are remarkable both for their fullness of detail and for their comprehensiveness. They form, indeed, the most important source of information concerning his times that the world now possesses. Personally, he appears to have been by nature deeply religious; and one of the reasons which he gives for undertaking a history at all, is the habitual perversion of the truth concerning these things, displayed by others in their writings. He thus binds himself in advance to be fair and accurate in his statements, and he professes to have set forth the facts without bias in all that he has to say. He even asks indulgence for such lamentations over the misfortunes of his people as he has admitted into his account of the wars, on the ground that those parts of his work are to be regarded as personal rather than as historical elements.

In his "Antiquities of the Jews" he has this to say concerning Jesus:—

"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, — a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day" (*Antiq.* xviii. 3. 3).

Coming from a Jew, this is certainly a remarkable statement. And yet, if he lived up to his avowed purpose of telling the exact truth concerning Jewish affairs without addition or omission, it is the least that he was able to say in view of the facts. That he had such a purpose and fully intended to

live up to it cannot be doubted, if his own statements have any weight, since he definitely says:—

"As I proceed therefore, I shall accurately describe what is contained in our records, in the order of time that belongs to them; for I have already promised so to do throughout this undertaking; and this without adding anything to what is therein contained, or taking away anything therefrom" (*Antiq.*, Preface, 3).

That the Jewish records contained some reference to Jesus cannot be questioned; for the trial and condemnation by the Sanhedrim necessitated such an outcome. The execution by Pontius Pilate, moreover, to which Tacitus bears witness (*Annals* xv. 44), was of sufficient importance to demand recognition in the public documents. In addition to these things, there was the persistent tale that he had risen from the dead, which had to be faced and explained away (see *Matt.* xxviii. 11-15).

That no notice was taken of these events in the official records of the Jews is beyond belief, and these writings were unquestionably consulted by Josephus in the course of his investigations. Furthermore, that he could not fail to be conversant with the facts, will be denied by no one, since they must have been matters of common remark in his boyhood, if not later; and an active youth with such a mind as his can always be trusted to listen to and retain in memory anything that he hears which is out of the ordinary. That the story of the crucifixion and resurrection fulfils the required conditions may be regarded as self-evident.

Again, for at least twenty-five years after the latter event, or until Josephus was near the end of his "teens," the activities of the native Christian church in Jerusalem, combined with the pronounced and, at times, deadly hostility of the Jewish authorities to its very existence, must have furnished

abundant material for remark among the members of a proverbially excitable race; and it is simply inconceivable that Josephus had no part therein. His natural fairness of mind and his disposition to balance probabilities in an effort to get at the truth would naturally lead him to inquire into the matter and get the story of the disciples as well as that of the officials; and his desire to be impartial must have influenced his opinion concerning these affairs, as it certainly did concerning others. That he knew of all these events, therefore, cannot be questioned. No intelligent person could live in Jerusalem or in Galilee and remain in ignorance of these things, and he lived in both.

But this is not all, for, while he says nothing of studying so unpopular a belief as Christianity then was, he does tell of studying not only the sect of the Pharisees but also those of the Sadducees and the Essenes, and, not content with this, he actually went into the wilderness to become the disciple of an ascetic. Of these things, he says:—

“And when I was about sixteen years old, I had a mind to make trial of the several sects that were among us. . . . I thought that by this means I might choose the best, if I were once acquainted with them all; so I contented myself with hard fare, and underwent great difficulties, and went through them all. Nor did I content myself with these trials only; but when I was informed that one, whose name was Banus, lived in the desert, and used no other clothing than grew upon trees, and had no other food than what grew of its own accord, and bathed himself in cold water frequently, I imitated him in those things. . . . So when I had accomplished my desires, I returned back to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them” (Life, 2).

His last teacher, then, seems to have been an imitator of John the Baptist, if not actually his disciple; and it is therefore not

to be wondered at that Josephus betrays an intimate acquaintance with the life of John, although he ignores some phases of his preaching. He was practically compelled to ignore them, as a matter of fact, because of the limitations of his work; but that he had not looked into them, and into their relation to the life of Jesus, is altogether improbable, in view of his known disposition and character. After trying all these other sects, he would not be likely to ignore entirely the existence and teachings of the followers of Christ, although policy might influence him to avoid doctrinal beliefs.

He chronicles the fact (*Antiq.* xviii. 5. 2) that "some of the Jews" regarded the destruction of Herod's army by Aretas as a judgment from God sent upon him as a punishment for beheading John the Baptist, and he also makes it clear that the better class of citizens condemned the action of the high priest in assembling the Sanhedrim and sentencing James to death. He says of him:—

"so he [the high priest] assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" (*Antiq.* xx. 9. 1).

He relates with evident satisfaction that the high priest was deposed as a result of the affair, and he speaks of him as a "bold man in his temper, and very insolent." Now, whatever else these facts may show, they cannot be said to disclose any suggestion of a bitter hostility either towards Christ himself or towards his followers. In fact, they almost appear to indicate a feeling quite the opposite of this, and Josephus lacks but little of seeming to be among the almost persuaded. To claim that he was, would be going too far; but it is not too much to say that he tried to be fair and to tell all the facts.

In concluding his "Antiquities," he makes this emphatic statement:—

"And I am so bold as to say, now I have so completely perfected the work I proposed to myself to do, that no other person, whether he were a Jew or a foreigner, had he ever so great an inclination to it, could so accurately deliver these accounts to the Greeks, as is done in these books. For those of my own nation freely acknowledge, that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to Jews; I have also taken a great deal of pains to obtain the learning of the Greeks, and understand the elements of the Greek language" (*Antiq.* xx. 11. 2).

He adds in the next paragraph, that "there are still living such as can either prove what I say to be false, or can attest that it is true." Is it likely that he would be ignorant of, or purposely avoid mentioning, the crucifixion of Christ; and, if he did mention it, would he be likely to say nothing of the resurrection? But, supposing he were not personally convinced of the truth of the story, would he not have been sure to chronicle the fact that "some of the Jews" claimed that Jesus rose from the dead?

The pertinency of these questions will be recognized, when it is remembered that the passage quoted above concerning Jesus has long been regarded as a forgery. Writing in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" Dean Farrar says: —

"That Josephus wrote the whole passage as it now stands no sane critic can believe. *Vespasian*, not *Jesus*, was the *Messiah* of the 'ambiguous oracle' of that apostate Jew. There are, however, two reasons which are alone sufficient to prove that the whole passage is spurious,—one that it was unknown to *Origen* and the earlier fathers, the other that its place in the text is uncertain. It is now found after the historian's notices of *Pilate*, but the remarks of *Eusebius* show that in his time it was found before them. We must conclude then that *Josephus* preserved a politic silence respecting *Christ* and the *Christians*, . . . and this was quite possible, because he was writing mainly for *Greeks* and *Romans* who were profoundly ignorant of the whole subject" (*ninth ed.*, vol. xiii. p. 658).

He adds that it is evident that "Josephus knew a great deal more than he chose to say." Of the statement concerning James he says:—

"The passage was early tampered with by Christian interpolators who wished to make it a more emphatic testimony in favor of Christ, but in its present form its genuineness is undisputed" (*l. c.*).

But if this passage is genuine, it is pertinent to ask why he speaks in such a familiar way of "Jesus, who was called Christ." Was he so well known that that was sufficient? And if not, is it not clear that Josephus himself had already explained the matter in such a way that this later reference was a natural one? But, again, if he was so well known, would Josephus be likely to omit an account of him from his writings? And if the Greeks and Romans, for whom he mainly wrote, "were profoundly ignorant of the whole subject," was it in keeping for Josephus to speak in this matter-of-fact way of "Jesus, who was called Christ," unless he had himself previously explained who Jesus was?

It will not do to presume too much on the ignorance of the Greeks and Romans, because Tacitus, as was stated above, makes mention of the crucifixion. Incidentally, he berates the Christians as "a class hated for their abominations," and he calls their belief "a most mischievous superstition." He bears emphatic witness, however, to the fact that it spread with increasing vigor even to Rome soon after the death of Christ. Verily, these things were not done in a corner, and the world did not escape taking cognizance of them. The resurrection was everywhere proclaimed with vigor by Paul and his coworkers, and the whole early church bore witness to it, not only by word of mouth but also by their methods of worship.

As Tacitus died in the early part of the second century, and apparently had no personal knowledge of Judea, it is plain that Josephus had a far better opportunity than he did to learn the facts, which were already, at the time the "Annals" were written, matters of common knowledge. Tacitus did not deign to consider the story of a resurrection; but Josephus could not so readily dodge the claim. Writing, as he did for men not of his own race, and men who were not so excitable and were therefore not so liable to visit their wrath upon his head for doing it, he might easily have voiced his own conviction that the resurrection was a fact, and then explained it by the sacred writings. He could do this and still believe that Vespasian was the Messiah, because he would not really be inconsistent from a Jewish standpoint, even if he went as far as that.

Just here it should be said that there is no field in which scholars have been so much at fault as that which affects viewpoint. Instead of leaving no stone unturned in the effort to get at the true meaning of an author, they judge too often by outward appearance, and reach wrong conclusions by doing so. This is apparent even in the last revision of the New Testament. The true rendering of Luke viii. 14 is not "pleasures of this life," but 'pleasures of their way of living,' and 2 Timothy ii. 4 is similar; for the same Greek word is used with the meaning, 'entangleth himself with the affairs of his way of living,' or, in other words, he no longer attempts to attend to his own personal matters and he does not try to live as he did at home. It is just here that the first test of a soldier is apt to come; and, if war is not to be placed among the "affairs of this life," it is hard to tell where to classify it. It certainly does not belong in heaven, whatever may be said of some other place, or rather state.

The Messiah was to be a king. That was universally conceded. But there were other prophecies in direct conflict with this, and the Jewish rabbis have had to explain them. They have sometimes done so by postulating a second quasi-Messiah, who was to die as a scapegoat, and fulfil the requirements of a number of passages which would otherwise be, to them, inexplicable. To us, since we understand the true meaning of the word "kingdom," as it is used in the Messianic passages, the whole thing is simple enough, and we need no help in understanding it; but to put Josephus into our shoes and to imagine that we can judge him by our standards is something more than merely an unfair proceeding. It is positively unscientific.

Even a good translation cannot be made from the standpoint of the translator. He who undertakes such a task must divest himself, as far as possible, of his own personality, and put himself in the place of the man he seeks to interpret. Otherwise he cannot reproduce his author's meaning with any degree of certainty. Few observe this requirement, however, and the fact is constantly made evident. The word "amazement" (A. V. "amazed") represents the ordinary Greek word for astonishment in Luke iv. 36; but in v. 28 it is allowed to stand for an entirely different term, which is the etymological equivalent of the English word "ecstasy." The difference deserves recognition. In the latter passage, a strange exaltation, a something that lifted them out of themselves, was what is referred to, while in the earlier chapter it was merely a natural astonishment.

Eventually, the notes that are found in school and college text-books will not show this lack of vision. At present, they do so altogether too often. In like manner, remarks on construction not infrequently suggest a pair of linguistic spectacles,

of a decidedly modern pattern, perched securely on the nose of the editor; and it is sometimes apparent that the lenses are of sufficient strength to warp his vision seriously. In other words, the grammatical relations found in his own language are allowed to modify or even reverse those which the arrangement of the words in the original tongue would naturally demand. The trouble is caused by a neglect of native idioms, as such, a study of which is absolutely necessary, if the translator is to have any true *Sprachgefühl* for his author's linguistic forms. He must get a new pair of spectacles, if not a new brain, in order to do his subject proper justice, and so must a critic.

It cannot be claimed that Canon Farrar and his fellow critics did these things. Modern ways of thinking were allowed entirely too much influence in their conclusions to make that possible, and they actually assumed that it was allowable to judge Josephus as if he were a product of nineteenth-century conditions in a Christian country instead of the result of Jewish and Roman influences at the very beginning of our era. Josephus could not look back, as we can, and his vision must have been poor and nebulous on the whole Messianic question. This should be self-evident, but it has not even been considered, to all appearance, since we must at once modify our whole conception of his position, if we give this phase of the matter any sort of attention. What did he know of our Messiah? Nay, what does the modern Jew know of him? Isaiah is practically tabooed by Hebrew rabbis, because it has become a belief and almost a proverb that too much study of the prophet will result in making a "turncoat," or *meshummad*. The Jew has no place even now for the Christian conception of the Messiah, and he wants none. How, then, is Josephus to be placed in such a category?

He found an "ambiguous oracle," which he could not possibly comprehend. Of it, he says:—

"But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was found also in their sacred writings, how, 'about that time one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.' The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand" (Wars, vi. 5. 4).

The oracle itself was plainly something outside of the Scriptures, although it was confirmed by them, and this fact is important. It foreshadowed a universal king; and, to his mind, Vespasian was such an one. He therefore concluded, with the same undue haste that is so often in evidence in the work of modern critics, that Vespasian fulfilled the oracle. He says nothing about a Messiah or anointed one, at all; and the fact that this king was to be an "anointed one," according to the Scriptures, probably meant little or nothing to him, since the term itself was a more or less familiar one. It was used of Saul by David (1 Sam. xxiv. 6), when he spoke of him as the "anointed of Jehovah"; it was employed in connection with others, as, for instance, the patriarchs (Ps. cv. 15); and even Cyrus himself was so designated (Isa. xlv. 1).

With these usages, Josephus must have been perfectly familiar, and it is manifestly absurd to pin him down to the modern Christian conception of a single "anointed one," who is *the* Messiah. It would be strange indeed if no progress had been made in eighteen centuries in the interpretation of scriptural teachings concerning the Saviour. Josephus could not comprehend—the Jew has never been able to do so—that the Scriptures had reference to a spiritual kingdom, a king-

dom within men, and not to the pomp and circumstance of external rule. He therefore thought as he did, and, for him, no other course was possible. But there were other scriptural prophecies which seemed to be clearly fulfilled by Jesus. He must have known them; for he was beyond question familiar with Isaiah. He could not have been ignorant of Jesus and his life; and, with the same freedom and directness that he had manifested in reference to Vespasian, he accepted the conclusion that Jesus was the person referred to by the sacred writings. This, at least, is what the facts seem to indicate.

To him, Vespasian was a royal "anointed one," or a Messianic king of vast and unlimited sway. He was therefore the ruler that was to be. Jesus, on the other hand, had nothing royal about him; but he was apparently another "anointed one," sent to fulfil other prophecies which, in effect, were the exact opposite of those relating to the kingdom. That both should be fulfilled by one person was beyond his ken; for he could not possibly conceive of such a thing, and there was therefore no inconsistency in his choice of two persons in this connection. Simple fairness demands that this be recognized; for Josephus cannot be judged by our standards unless he also possessed our knowledge. To claim that he did so would be sufficiently preposterous to bring its own refutation, and the point needs no elucidation.

If he mentioned Jesus as Christ, he did not use Christ as a proper name; for he simply accepted the epithet of the people in the Greek vernacular, which made him an "anointed one," or *Christos*. He did not thereby subscribe to our belief, because he did not even know what our belief includes. He could not, unless he was a closer student of New Testament teachings than any one has ever been willing to admit. This particular Jesus was the one called *Christos*, and the meaning of the

word itself seems at times to require the article before it. To omit it would be somewhat like omitting "the" in such forms as Peter the Hermit. As Josephus deals with various other persons of the same name, he has followed the most easy method of distinguishing this one. No other course would have been as natural or as effective, and Josephus was trying to state facts as he saw them, from a standpoint that was almost as much Roman as it was Jewish. He mentions, under the name Jesus, the son of Ananus (Wars, vi. 5. 3), the son of Damneus (Antiq. xx. 9. 1, 4), the son of Gamala (Life, 38), the son of Gamaliel (Antiq. xx. 9. 4; Wars. iv. 4. 3, 5. 2), the son of Saphat (Life, 22; Wars, iii. 9. 7), the son of Sapphias (Life, 12, 27; Wars, ii. 20. 4), the son of Phabet (Antiq. xv. 9. 3), the brother of Onias (Antiq. xii. 5. 1; xv. 3. 1), and the son of Thebuthus (Wars, vi. 8. 3). In each instance, he is as explicit in his identification as there is any need of being, and, where there is any occasion for doing so, he gives details of the man's life, character, and occupation. Did he say nothing about Jesus the Anointed One?

It must now be evident that the argument based on the Messianic beliefs of Josephus is no argument at all. His idea of the meaning and the scope of prophecies that were just beginning to be fulfilled in his day can no more be compared to our own conception of these things, with eighteen centuries of growth in clarity of vision, to say nothing of experience, than the idle guesses of a boy of twelve can be compared to the deliberate judgment of a man of mature years. We forget that each generation inherits the wealth of its predecessors in other things than mere worldly goods, but the fact remains, and sooner or later it must be included in all our premises if we have a due regard for the truth.

The question is not yet settled, however, since two other indictments are still to be considered. It was alleged in the quotation given above that the passage was unknown to Origen and the earlier church fathers, and that the remarks of Eusebius place it before the historian's notices of Pilate, instead of after them, where it now appears. Origen is supposed to have died in A.D. 253, while Eusebius is said to have been born eleven years later, in 264 A.D.; and it therefore follows, if this passage is really a Christian interpolation and a forgery, that within a space of not over fifty years, by some means difficult to imagine, Christian literary rogues were clever enough to get the paragraph into the original text without raising a howl of protest from the enemies of their beliefs, and that they were also clever enough to cover their tracks so completely that the fact was not discovered, until the superior acumen of modern critics dragged it forth into the light. Does this seem probable on its face?

Was it possible, as a matter of fact? Could the thing have been done? Is human ingenuity equal to such a task? Would Eusebius himself have been able to begin it even, by pretending that the passage was there? Could any one have secured its insertion in that, or in any other way? And if the thing was done at all, why have we no record of it? Were all the outstanding MSS. gathered up and destroyed by the Christian plotters after they had furnished duplicates with the passage interpolated as we now find it? And if this was not done, why did no one ever discover the fraud at the time of its perpetration? But, suppose that it had been actually possible to commit such a forgery, would there have been no one with a memory of the earlier text? Assuredly, our modern critics, clever as they are, must yield the palm to these early gentlemen, who could deceive their own generation and so many

later ones in this matter, besides hypnotizing into silence or forgetfulness any and every stray scholar who might otherwise have betrayed them. After quoting at length from Josephus, Eusebius says, of the passage in question:—

ταῦτα περὶ τοῦ Ἰωάννου διελθὼν καὶ τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν τοῦ συγγράμματος ἱστορίαν ὡδέ πως μέμνηται “ γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνὴρ, εἴ γε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρὴ· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητὴς, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τάληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν τῶν Ἰουδαίων, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. 8. ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτιμηκότος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρώτον ἀγαπήσαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰσέτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὀνομασμένων οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φύλλον ” (H. E. i. 11. 7f.).

McGiffert omits the most important sentence and renders:—

“After relating these things concerning John, he makes mention of our Savior in the same work, in the following words: ‘And there lived at that time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed, it be proper to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, and a teacher of such men as receive the truth in gladness. And he attached to himself many of the Jews, and many also of the Greeks. He was the Christ. When Pilate, on the accusation of our principal men, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him in the beginning did not cease loving him. [Why not?] Moreover, the race of Christians, named after him, continues down to the present day.’ ”

It will be seen that this corresponds very closely with the English version of the passage in Josephus, as it was quoted from Whiston at the beginning of this article. A careful comparison with an ancient text of the original disclosed only such slight verbal variations as are wont to be found in all such cases. Josephus seems to have said ‘many Jews’ instead of ‘many of the Jews,’ Eusebius has ‘many from the Greeks,’ with an inserted *αφο*, there is another variation in connection with an article in the phrase translated ‘those who loved him

at the first, and the phrase *peri autou* follows *thaumasia* in Josephus instead of preceding it. If no such variations were found, it might be argued that the passage in Josephus was a forgery by the hand of Eusebius, if such a thing is conceivable; but the fact that they are found is a strong presumptive argument in favor of the genuineness of the original paragraph. The alterations are exactly such as are commonly made in quoting from memory, and that was the universal habit within certain limits in earlier times; for accuracy of quotation hardly antedates the year 1840 as a regular practice, and accuracy of definition has the same limitations.

The passage quoted by Eusebius concerning John, which he here refers to, passes unquestioned; but he quotes this one immediately with the same assurance and with the same assumption of its familiarity to the readers of the historian. How could he do this, if there was the least suspicion of its genuineness? And how could there be no such suspicion, if the passage itself had not been in existence over fifty years? If the supposition that Josephus did write the paragraph has produced a *crux* for the critics, what shall be said of the contention that he did not write it? Has that produced no *crux* at all for the rank and file whose common sense demands satisfaction even at the hands of superior beings with a gift of second sight that enables them to discover things hidden from less-favored mortals? And if the thing explained actually involves less difficulty than the explanation by which it is removed, is the last state better than the first?

Again, what proof is there that the passage was unknown to Origen? Does the bare fact that he did not quote it establish his ignorance of the paragraph? Is there no possibility that he did not regard it as of sufficient importance to incorporate in his work? And is there no chance for the supposi-

tion that he may have simply overlooked it in his argument because of other things? Did no modern critic ever realize when his work was done that he had inadvertently omitted something which would have been of service in developing his thesis if he had not passed it over because of its very familiarity? Are human limitations confined to modern men in this particular? Was it impossible for an ancient father in the church to omit something that he had no intention of passing by when he began his dissertation? These factors must be disposed of before it will be at all safe to argue, from the omission of a statement, that any given author was incapable of making it, and Origen does not lie outside the pale of this contention. Whether he knew the paragraph or not, no man can say with certainty; but the chances are that he did, though he did not happen to make use of it.

But there is more to be said concerning the matter of quotations; for it must not be supposed that everything was quoted from memory in olden times. Long and unfamiliar passages were undoubtedly copied from the original with some degree of care; but things that were familiar and fairly brief were never dignified by such a treatment. The ancient scholar's notebook was his brain, and he used it as the modern student does his written page. This fact seems to have escaped the critics in some unknown way; but it must be reckoned with nevertheless, if our views are to conform to actualities. To put an ancient scholar into modern harness in his work is an anachronism, if it is nothing more; but the thing is constantly done in articles that pass for authoritative statements of fact. What has become of our perspective?

That Eusebius actually quoted from memory in this instance, is made clear by his words of introduction. 'About as follows,' is what he says, and the meaning cannot be avoided.

He was not copying from a written page. It was his memory that he was depending on, and this fact in itself shows how familiar the passage was to him. Such forms of introduction were common enough in treatises of various kinds, as must be remembered by those who have made use of the grammarians, and they are significant. The passage was so well known that he could quote it thus with safety and incur no risk of misleading any one. Others knew it too, and they would recall it, just as he had done. His whole attitude, in short, bespeaks the use of an unquestioned and authoritative historical statement which his readers would readily accept at its face value.

As to the question of order, little need be said. If accuracy of quotation is a modern virtue, as has been suggested already (this has long been taught by one of the foremost of American linguists), it follows that when men put things down as they came to mind there must have been some variations in the order of the statements involved. It was accordingly the easiest thing in the world for Eusebius to recall the paragraphs with the order inverted, if he really did any such thing; for the argument from the order is at best only an inference. Errors of this kind, however, are extremely common in quotations from memory; for some men instinctively invert things and others occasionally do so without being aware of it at the time. If Eusebius did invert the order and the fact has any significance at all, it merely implies that he had grown somewhat careless about the exact words and their arrangement because of their great familiarity, and he did not stop to consider the matter with diligence. The expression "mess of pottage" is not in the Scriptures; but most persons would accept it as being there simply because it is so familiar in connection with Jacob and Esau. Quicksands of this type do

not afford good foundations for elaborate structures, and it is just as well not to build on them.

But Eusebius also quotes the other passage, and it may be well to cite his version of it:—

“καθίζει συνέδριον κριτῶν, καὶ παραγαγὼν εἰς αὐτὸ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ λεγομένου, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ, καὶ τινες ἑτέροις, ὡς παρανομησάντων κατηγορίαν ποιησάμενος παρέδωκε λευσθησομένους” (ib. ii. 23. 22).

Including the subject, McGiffert's rendering is:—

“Ananas, . . . called together the Sanhedrim, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, James by name, together with some others, and accused them of violating the law, and condemned them to be stoned.”

The text of Josephus mentioned above has a slight difference in the order of the words which implies the meaning ‘the so-called *Christos*,’ or ‘the so-called Anointed-one,’ instead of ‘the one called Christ,’ and, in all probability, the meaning of the other passage is similar. ‘He was the Anointed-one, the one so known,’ was what Josephus intended to say, not ‘he was the Christ,’ in the modern Christian sense. Such over-translations are common; but they are not accurate, and they should not be accepted. Language has content as well as form, and the content of a given word or phrase is the important thing, although its form is what is commonly considered. Meaning alone should be the goal of the investigator. It is the only genuine intellectual coin. All else is spurious.

Again, just preceding this quotation Eusebius has another, in which he says:—

ἀμέλει γέ τοι καὶ ὁ Ἰώσηπος οὐκ ἀπώκνησε καὶ τοῦτ' ἐγγράφως ἐπιμαρτύρασθαι δι' ὧν φησι λέξεων “ταῦτα δὲ συνβέβηκεν Ἰουδαίοις κατ' ἐκδίκησιν Ἰακώβου τοῦ δικαίου, ὃς ἦν ἀδελφὸς Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, ἐπειδήπερ δικαιοτάτον αὐτὸν διῆτα οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀπέκτειναν” (l. c. 20).

As rendered by McGiffert, this last passage reads:—

“Josephus, at least, has not hesitated to testify this in his writings, where he says, ‘These things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was a brother of Jesus, that is called the Christ. For the Jews slew him, although he was a most just man.’”

Just where Eusebius found this statement is not clear; but it is entirely in keeping with the other passages and is in the style of the historian. It is therefore probably genuine. That, at least, is the presumption, and the burden of proof lies with those who would reject it. There is certainly no need of jumping to the conclusion that this shows an attempt to tamper with the passage, on the part of “Christian interpolators who wished to make it a more emphatic testimony in favor of Christ”; for it is quite as easy to account for such an omission in modern MSS. as it is to explain an insertion of that character in ancient ones, even as a marginal reading. The order of the words respecting Jesus is that which Josephus uses elsewhere, and the sentiments expressed plainly tally with his other teachings. If the statement actually did originate in some MS. from a marginal reading, it may have been an insertion from the historian’s own hand, added in some other connection as an afterthought. It has all the earmarks of a genuine quotation, and as such it should be received, until proof to the contrary is forthcoming. If it was due to the hand of a scribe, it was a reminiscence of other familiar teachings of the historian. If it was, on the other hand, a part of the original text, its omission, in some MS. and its later transcriptions, probably occurred in the usual way by a slip on the part of the scribe, as his eye returned to the page he was copying.

But if the presumption in favor of the genuineness of this brief statement is fairly strong, it is as nothing compared with

that in favor of the genuineness of the paragraph concerning Jesus himself. When the general hostility of the entire gentile and Hebrew world to all things Christian is remembered, it is little short of marvelous that the entire passage concerning Jesus is found in all the extant MSS. of Josephus. If there was the slightest doubt, moreover, in the days of Eusebius with regard to its genuineness, it is simply inconceivable that he should have quoted it twice as genuine, and especially that he should have used it in the second instance (Dem. Ev. iii. 3. 105, 106) in an effort to convince the Jews of the truths of the Gospel. The possibility of extirpating a passage of that kind from a MS. or MSS. in copying seems far greater than that of inserting it, and the unvarying character of the testimony found in the documents themselves presents an insurmountable obstacle to the supposition that the passage is a Christian forgery.

Josephus tried to tell facts. He agreed to tell all the facts. He promised to omit nothing. To rule out the paragraph in question is to say that he was not honest, that he did not keep his word, and that he purposely dodged this particular issue. It is, moreover, not in the least necessary to suppose that he was potentially a Christian at heart, in order to account for the presence of the passage in his works; for he was not propounding personal beliefs, and his own beliefs were not pertinent in the case beyond a simple question of fact. If he had evidence that seemed to him conclusive beyond reasonable doubt that Jesus rose from the dead, he had no alternative but to chronicle the event. He did so as briefly as possible and dropped the matter there. He apparently did not care to go further, even if he did recognize the miracle, and he may have regarded the Christian views as extreme. It was certainly not necessary that his own convictions should be won

over concerning scriptural doctrines and Christian claims. He was a historian, not a writer on dogma, and as such he must have acted in this matter. As such, he must also be judged, and it is manifestly improper to attack this question on any other basis, unless we can truthfully assume at the start that Josephus was dishonest. He was something of a partisan at times, but he would hardly have been human if he had not had this failing, and his traducers are in no position to throw stones on that score.

The presumptive argument, then, is in favor of the passage as it stands. There is, in fact, no basis for any other belief except the intellectual difficulties of men who use their own modern conception of the entire matter with too great freedom to see clearly what position Josephus really occupied. To understand him, we must put ourselves in his place and divest ourselves of all modern views and prejudices. This is not an easy thing to do; but it is a necessity if one is to be fair. He tried to be just that, and he did the best he could. This is sufficient to explain the whole difficulty, and with this we should be content.

Others have written on this passage in years past; but it has been impossible to take the time to consider anything but the presumptive side of the question, and none of their writings have been consulted. Most of them are now out of date, and the limits of such an article as this forbid any attempt to deal with that side of the question. If any such have considered the problem from the angle here employed, it is not known to the author, who has written simply as the conviction has been slowly forced upon him by a long consideration of the question on its merits alone.