

hard to hold fast our faith in God, and the invisible operations of his law, and the secret equity of his providence, when a slight exertion of our own craft, or a little help from our neighbours, seems all we need to secure our immediate and certain good. It is our constant temptation to put our trust in men—in our own cunning or our own might, or in our neighbours' might and cunning—instead of holding fast our confidence in God and in the blessedness of obedience to his law. And, therefore, we need to remember the doom of those who refused the softly-flowing waters of Shiloah, and rejoiced in Rezin and Remaliah's son; that, warned by their doom, we may not share their sin. S. COX.

IV.

THAT CHRIST SPOKE GREEK.

I now proceed to a consideration of the objections which may be urged against the view that Greek was the dominant language of Palestine in the times of Christ and his apostles. Such objections are to be expected. For as there is no proposition which does not contain a contradiction in terms but may possibly be true, so there is no proposition which does not rest on mathematical evidence but will be found in some measure open to objections, and must, however certain in itself, be defended against them.

The first objection to be noticed is of a purely *a priori* character. It rests on the alleged tenacity of vernacular language, and is usually accompanied by

a statement of the special unlikelihood which is supposed to have existed in the case of the Jews that any other tongue should have gained supremacy over their ancient national language. This objection need not long detain us, for the appeal must here, as in every such case, be made to facts. The decisive question is, Was it, or was it not, the case that, in our Saviour's days, the Greek language had obtained prevalence in Palestine? It is only if no certain evidence exists that we can allow the *a priori* principle any weight in determining our judgment. All mere presumptive reasoning must yield in the face of actual proof. Its very strongest conclusions vanish at once when shewn to be inconsistent with even the smallest amount of incontrovertible fact; and therefore, while far from acknowledging the validity of the objection in the principle which it involves, I may be content simply to point to the evidence already brought forward to demonstrate its inapplicability in the special case which has engaged our consideration. Many and varied proofs have been adduced to shew that Greek *was* in reality the reigning language of Palestine in the time of Christ; and unless these proofs can be repelled, the result to which they lead remains totally unaffected by any *a priori* considerations. They present the stubborn resistance ever offered by facts to all mere theories, however plausible; and if they cannot be questioned or set aside, they demand, with the imperial authority of truth, to be accepted in all their length and breadth, and with all their manifest and legitimate conclusions.

This *a priori* objection to the views which I have

advocated, though so inherently weak, is a very favourite weapon with a certain class of writers on the opposite side of the question. Such arguments as the following are continually employed: "We cannot conceive that Greek was employed by our Saviour and his disciples;" "The Jews were too tenacious of all that was national and peculiar ever to have parted with their ancestral language;" "How can we doubt that Hebrew was the dialect which our Lord and his contemporaries made use of?" &c. Now I crave leave to retire from this ground altogether, not from any fear of being beaten on it, but because it is not the ground on which the controversy can ever be settled. The question is purely one of *fact*, and nothing else can properly be allowed any weight in deciding it. Let the opponents of those views which have been here presented leave the shadowy realm of presumptive reasoning altogether, and let us meet on the substantial ground of actual evidence, where alone the contest can find issue, and where the irresistible testimony of truth may be proved to belong either to the one side or the other.

It is then with a feeling of satisfaction that I proceed to a consideration of those *a posteriori* arguments by which the conclusions aimed at in these papers are sought to be invalidated. Many of these arguments bear only against the opinion that Hebrew, in the form of Aramaic, was not employed for *any* purpose by the Jews of our Saviour's day, and present, therefore, no really hostile aspect to the views for which I contend. It is idle to prove that Aramaic was frequently used by the contemporaries of Christ and his disciples. The evidence of that fact

is, I believe, abundant and conclusive. I willingly admit that the Jews of the period were, generally speaking, *διγλωττοι*, and I entertain no doubt that they often found it convenient and agreeable to employ their national language. But the admission of this fact does not in any way controvert the thesis which I have propounded. Both truths rest on their own appropriate evidence; and the many proofs which may be brought forward to shew that the Jews were then acquainted with Aramaic, and often made use of it, stand in perfect harmony with the parallel proofs which have been adduced to evince that they were equally well acquainted with Greek, and generally employed it for all public and literary purposes.

These remarks furnish a sufficient reply to the objection based on several passages in Josephus,¹ in which the historian reports that, by the command of Titus, he addressed his besieged countrymen, *τῇ πατρίῳ γλώσσῃ* and *Ἑβραϊζῶν*. Of course the Jews understood Aramaic, and, for fanatical reasons, had then fallen back upon its use much more than at a somewhat earlier period of their history. But that fact certainly does not disprove what we so clearly learn from the same writer, that they were also familiarly acquainted with the Greek language.

There are two other passages generally quoted from Josephus,² in the former of which he speaks of the Greek as a *ξένη καὶ ἀλλοδαπή διάλεκτος*, which every one admits it to have been; and in the latter tells us that he had devoted himself to the study of Greek learning, but had not been able to acquire a correct

¹ *Wars*, v. 9, 2; vi. 2, 1.

² *Antiq.* Proem. 2; *Antiq.* xx. 11, 2.

pronunciation, on account of the habit which prevailed in his native country. The whole difficulty which this passage seems to present vanishes when we take into account the object which Josephus had professedly in view. It was not his purpose merely to write in Greek, but in pure and classical Greek; and it is in perfect consistency with the position which I uphold that he should have felt great difficulty in accomplishing this purpose. His *πάτριος συνήθεια* greatly hindered it. His case was analogous to those Scottish writers of the last century (Campbell, for instance, in the preface to his work on the Gospels), who speak of the pains which they had taken, often, as was felt, with but partial success, to write in correct and classical English. The Hebraistic Greek to which Josephus was accustomed in Palestine might almost have been reckoned a different language from that employed by the classical historians. It was therefore an onerous task which he undertook when he engaged to write an account of the institutions of his country on the model of native Greek writers; and we wonder not that he required all the assistance he could procure in this undertaking, and excused the delay which had occurred in the publication of his work by a statement of the difficulty he had experienced in composing it.

It is next contended that there is no evidence of the Septuagint translation having been used in the synagogues of Judæa, as might have been expected if the Greek language prevailed in that country. This objection has been strongly pressed by many learned writers, and in a tone of triumph which seems to indicate that it is deemed unanswerable. Never-

theless, as appears to me, it is an objection which when examined resolves itself into another confirmation of the views here sought to be established.

What then, I beg to ask, is the nature of the evidence demanded on the point in question? Is it no evidence that we find the passages quoted by our Lord in the synagogues (see Luke iv. 16-20; John vi. 26-35) agreeing almost *verbatim* with the version of the LXX.? Is it no evidence that we learn from the Gospels throughout that the ancient Scriptures were read in the synagogues of Palestine in a language well understood by the people, and are at the same time sure that the Biblical Hebrew was then totally unintelligible to most of them, while we have no proof that any written version of the Old Testament ever existed except that of the LXX.? Is it no evidence that we find the earliest Fathers of the Church, who lived in times bordering on those of the apostles, unanimously speaking of the Septuagint as in habitual use among the Jews; and that it is not till we come down to Jerome that we find any doubts suggested as to that Version having been employed by our Lord and his apostles? To my mind every available source of evidence which is worth anything points to the conclusion that the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures was then regularly used in the synagogues of Palestine. Let us subject the question to the test of history. We see our Lord entering the synagogue at Nazareth, and having a book put into his hands, from which He reads in the hearing of the people. In what language was that book composed? This question, if it can be answered, is decisive of the point under discussion. Nor does

there seem much difficulty in answering it. We know, beyond all dispute, that ancient Hebrew could not have been the language of the book, since that was then unintelligible to the great body of the people. The ground is narrowed, then, to the old question between the Septuagint translation, which was certainly then in existence, and a written Chaldee paraphrase, which is summoned into being for the occasion. One should imagine that if there is anything required to decide between these competing claims, it is found in the twofold fact, that no proof can be brought from the New Testament that even an oral Chaldee paraphrase was then usually given in the synagogues of Palestine, and that the passage referred to is preserved by the Evangelist in almost the exact words of the Septuagint version.

And then, if we look at the statements of the early Christian writers, we find that with the greatest unanimity they corroborate this conclusion. Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian all contain statements which clearly testify to the habitual use of the version of the LXX. among the Jews. It was not, as has been already remarked, till the time of Jerome, that the idea began to spread that any other form of the ancient Scriptures was generally employed by our Lord and his disciples. In short, as there is nothing more than assertions to be found that the Old Testament Scriptures existed in any other form among the Jews of our Saviour's day than in the Hebrew original and the Greek translation, and as they certainly were not read by our Lord and his contemporaries only in a dead language, we necessarily conclude, in full accordance with the impression

derived from the earliest Christian and Jewish writers, and above all from the records contained in the New Testament, that the Greek version of the Old Testament was in our Saviour's time regularly read in the synagogues of Palestine.

Advancing now to a consideration of the objections derived from the New Testament itself, I shall notice very briefly, in the first place, those Aramaic words and phrases which occasionally present themselves, and on the occurrence of which not a little is often based. In fact, the few Hebrew words which are found in our Lord's discourses have been frequently referred to as decisive of the whole question at issue. The fallacy involved in such a mode of argument was formerly pointed out. It was remarked that nothing could be more natural than that such terms should from time to time occur if the relation of the two languages were such as is here supposed. It was also shewn how difficult it is to account for the retention of these few words in their original form on the hypothesis that the language employed by our Lord and his disciples has for the most part been translated. By all the rules of logic, indeed, the occurrence of those few Aramaic words which appear in the New Testament, so far from proving that that was the usual language of Christ and his followers, rather proves the contrary, and leads us to conclude that they generally made use of the Greek language.

Again, we are told by St. Paul, in the narrative of his conversion given before Agrippa (Acts xxvi. 14), that the exalted Saviour then spoke to him "in the Hebrew tongue." The inference which many have drawn from this is, that Hebrew was then the pre-

vailing language of the country, and the language, accordingly, which our Lord habitually made use of during his sojourn upon the earth. But this way of viewing the matter deprives the Apostle's statement of all significance. If Hebrew had been the usual language of public intercourse at the time, and the language habitually spoken by Christ, what need was there for the Apostle to remark that it was now made use of by the Saviour? All his hearers would of course suppose this, had it been true that Aramaic was the language generally employed. The very fact that St. Paul regards the matter as worthy of being mentioned, shews that the occurrence was exceptional, and that it was therefore a thing which would not naturally suggest itself to the minds of his audience. We are thus led to the old conclusion—Greek, and not Hebrew, was the language commonly made use of in Palestine as the medium of public intercourse; and in accordance with this, the Apostle now mentions it as something singular and striking that he was, on this occasion, addressed by the Saviour in Aramaic, and not in the usual Greek, which might have been expected to be employed.

It is hardly needful, after what has already been said, to do more than notice the objection, brought forward by some, to the effect that "it is scarcely credible that the poor woman who came out of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon could have uttered her cries and lamentations in *Greek*. She spoke the native language of her country. It was Syro-Phœnician or Syro-Chaldaic, and the same mixed language, with some variety of dialect, prevailed at that time over Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. There seems the

highest probability that most of our Saviour's conversation with the scribes and Pharisees, and that all his addresses to the common people, were spoken in this vernacular tongue; but when it was subsequently ordered that the New Testament should be composed in Hellenistic Greek, they were enabled by that Divine power which we term inspiration to convert this provincial and transient dialect into its present fixed and enduring form."¹ This is a delicious passage, as exhibiting long-prevalent views in all their crudeness. No answer to it is required beyond referring to what has been proved above. Few, I imagine, will be inclined to attribute the Greek of the New Testament to inspiration if it can be accounted for on natural grounds; and equally few, I trust, will find any difficulty in believing that a woman of Tyre and Sidon, who is expressly styled by St. Mark *Ἑλληνίς*, addressed her petition to Christ in the Greek language.

Again, it is objected that we read (Matt. xxvi. 73; Mark xiv. 70) that Peter was discovered to be a native of Galilee by the dialect which he employed, and must therefore have been speaking the vernacular language. Granting that this was the case, it proves nothing against the proposition which I have endeavoured to establish. It is, on the contrary, in closest accordance with the view which has been here exhibited of the relation subsisting between the two languages. It was exactly in such circumstances as those referred to that we should expect the vulgar tongue of the country to be employed; and it is surely nothing strange that the dialect of it which

¹ Grinfield's "Apology for the Septuagint," p. 12.

Peter was accustomed at times to speak in Galilee should now be stated to have been found somewhat different from that generally prevalent in Jerusalem.

We find another objection sometimes derived from the question of the Roman officer to Paul (Acts xxi. 37), "Canst thou speak Greek?" With strange perversity, Father Simon says, regarding this question, that it "implies a supposition that *all the Jews of Jerusalem* did not speak in that tongue." The plain truth is that the words have no reference to the Jews of Jerusalem, or any other Jews, at all. This is obvious from what follows. The Roman soldier had imagined that Paul was a notorious Egyptian bandit, and, rightly or wrongly, had concluded that in that case he would be ignorant of Greek. As soon as he heard the Apostle make use of that language, he expressed his surprise, and exclaimed, "Thou art not then (better thus than interrogative, as in our Authorized Version) that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers." The words have thus no bearing whatever on the language of Palestine. And Paul by his answer shews that, whatever might be supposed to hold good in the case of the rude Egyptian referred to, it was nothing remarkable that a Jew like himself should be found acquainted with Greek. "I am," said he, "a Jew of Tarsus, and I beseech thee suffer me to speak to the people,"—a request which the chief captain immediately granted, doubtless expecting, as we shall soon see the people of Jerusalem themselves did, that Paul would now address the multitude in the Greek language.

Another objection, or quasi-objection, is derived curiously enough from the languages in which the accusation placed over the cross of our Lord was written. Some have argued that Hebrew was employed because that was the only language known by the inhabitants of the city, while Greek was used merely for the sake of those Gentiles, or foreign Jews, who were then present in Jerusalem. But such an argument has no real foundation. The statement made (Luke xxiii. 38), that the superscription over the Redeemer's cross "was written in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew," does in fact furnish an excellent illustration of the views which I have set forth as to the relation then subsisting between the languages of Palestine. There was, first of all, the Greek, almost universally employed and understood, used especially for all literary purposes and on all public occasions. There was, next, the Hebrew or Aramaic, commonly made use of in familiar intercourse by the natives of the country, but the employment of which was scarcely a matter of necessity to any. And there was, last of all, the Latin, a tongue scarcely ever heard among the Jewish inhabitants, but employed by their Roman rulers, as being the imperial language, for all official purposes. Many similar cases might be quoted. Thus we are told that when the youthful son of James II. was acknowledged by Louis XIV. as heir of the crown of England, this was done "in Latin, French, and English."¹ On this occasion French alone would probably have served every practical purpose, just as Greek alone would have been prac-

¹ Macaulay's "History of England," v. 294.

tically sufficient in regard to the inscription placed upon the cross. But in both cases there were formal reasons why the three languages should be used.

I have reserved to the last some remarks on another passage in the Acts, which is often referred to with peculiar confidence as militating against the proposition which I have been seeking to establish. We are told (Chap. xxii. 2) that "when the Jews heard that Paul spake to them in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence;" these last words especially being rested on by those who contend that our Lord and his disciples *must* have employed the Aramaic language. But a careful consideration of all these circumstances is quite sufficient to explain, in full consistency with the views which I have advocated, and even as still further illustrating and confirming them, both the fact that the apostle now made use of Hebrew, and the other fact that his hearers were agreeably surprised at being addressed by him in that language.

Let the reader then observe, as is obvious on a single glance at the narrative, that the Jews clearly *expected* on this occasion not to be addressed in Hebrew, but Greek—a point which proves both their familiarity with that language and the habitual use which was made of it in public intercourse. It is manifest, therefore, from this very passage, that in accordance with what has been so repeatedly urged in these papers, Hebrew was not in that age the ordinary medium of communication employed by public speakers or instructors in Palestine.

Why, then, it will be asked, did the Apostle now

make choice of it? and why were the Jews inclined to hear him more patiently on perceiving that he employed it? Evidently, as appears to me, from the special circumstances in which, relatively to his auditors, the apostle was then placed. In the immediately preceding context we learn that a great uproar had been excited among the Jews on account of St. Paul's fancied opposition to all that they deemed most sacred. On perceiving him in the Temple, some Jews of Asia had cried out, saying, "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place." Now, such being the nature of the suspicions with which the minds of the Jews were filled against him, nothing was more fitted to win for him a favourable hearing, if that were possible, than at once to commence his address to them in their national language. His adoption of the Hebrew tongue was an instant witness in his favour. It proved that he was not so utterly estranged from all that was specially Jewish as his enemies had represented; and no sooner, accordingly, had the sound of the old ancestral language been heard from his lips, than the prepossessions against him lost much of their force, and there was manifested a greater disposition to hear him patiently.

This seems to me the only satisfactory explanation of the passage. To infer from it that Hebrew was the usual language of public address at this time, is not only opposed to the narrative itself, but serves to strip the conduct of the apostle of all its meaning.

Yet that has not unfrequently been done. Thus, Dean Milman speaks of St. Paul's employment of Hebrew on this occasion as being "absolutely necessary, in order to make himself intelligible to the people."¹ According to such a view, Paul had no option in respect to the language which he employed. It was essential that he should speak to the multitude of Jews around him in Hebrew, simply that they might understand him, and thus mere common sense dictated the employment of that language. But, surely, that is not what the narrative suggests. There was a deliberate choice made by the Apostle as to the language in which he should speak. And, on the ground which I maintain, his conduct at this time manifested that prudence and skill by which it was in general so remarkably distinguished. It cannot be doubted that, prevalent as the Greek tongue then was in Palestine, the Jews, like any other nation, would be pleased on such an occasion as the present, when their prejudices had been violently excited, to listen so unexpectedly to the accents of their national tongue. And St. Paul, with that consummate wisdom which led him to become "all things to all men," now adapted himself to that most natural feeling. To the Jew he became as a Jew, for the purpose of obtaining a friendly hearing; just as formerly at Athens he had, for the same end, become as a Greek to the Greek, and expressed himself in the language and style of an accomplished Grecian.

We have thus found fancied objections really changing into additional confirmations of the views

¹ Bampton Lecture, p. 184.

sought to be established. And this is a very convincing sort of evidence. To quote the words of Sir John Herschel :—"The surest and best characteristic of a well-founded and extensive induction is when verifications of it spring up, as it were, spontaneously into notice from the quarters where they might be least expected, or even among instances of that very kind which were at first considered hostile to them. Evidence of this kind is irresistible, and compels assent with a weight which scarcely any other possesses." ¹

It has been proved then, I believe, beyond the reach of all reasonable objection, and from the undeniable facts of New Testament history, that Greek and not Hebrew was the common language of public intercourse in Palestine in the days of Christ and his apostles. And if this has been done, we may be allowed to express some gratification at the thought that, in our existing Greek Gospels we possess, in the form in which they were uttered, the words of Him to whom the illustrious testimony was borne—"Never man spake like this man." *He* spoke in Greek, and his disciples did the same while they reported what He said. Their inspiration consisted not, as has been thought, in being enabled to give perfect translations, either of discourses delivered or of documents written in the Hebrew language, but in being led under Divine guidance to transfer to paper for the benefit of all coming ages those words of the Great Teacher which they had heard from his own lips in the Greek tongue; which had in that form been imprinted on their affectionate memories; and which were by them

¹"Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy." 180.

in the same language faithfully committed to writing, while they literally experienced a fulfilment of the gracious promise, — “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

A. ROBERTS.

THE GOSPEL IN THE EPISTLES.

I believe that Jesus Christ rose again from the dead, that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and from thence shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

ON these doctrines of the Christian faith the Epistles with which we are dealing are quite as explicit in their statements as the Gospels, and we therefore propose only to quote one or two passages from them, for to cite all their expressions on the resurrection of Jesus, the greatest theme of Christian teaching, would be to quote whole chapters of the Epistles *in extenso*. But that there may be no doubt about what St. Paul understood by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will be well to cite a few of his expressions on the subject before we proceed further. In the Epistle to the Romans (vi. 8–10) he writes: “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” There is no question that in the first clause of this passage the Apostle is speaking of the mortification of evil within the heart of the