

Other evidence exists which leads me to localize Capernaum at Khan Minyeh, but I do not give it here and now. If there is any defender of Tell Hum who cares to write in its defence, I shall most respectfully consider his arguments, and deal with them in the light of the evidence at my disposal.

WILLIAM KNIGHT.

*THE LIFE OF CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.*<sup>1</sup>

XLI. THE DENUNCIATION OF THE TRAITOR, XIV. 17-21.

IN the evening Jesus and His disciples came to the guest-chamber where the supper was prepared, and took their last meal together ; and the Master spoke to His followers for the last time of the Kingdom of God. The next few hours were crowded with poignant memories, and of this last conversation, only a few sentences on two topics are recorded. Indeed, at this time Jesus seems to have been preoccupied and reserved, and His manner might quell the spirits of His companions, so that the meal proceeded in silence, broken only by the brief utterances called for by ritual or etiquette. He may have received a warning. Treacherous plots are seldom kept secret for days together. When Jesus spoke it was only to plunge His hearers into deeper gloom by His ominous words.

“In truth I tell you that one of you shall betray me, one of you who are eating with me.”<sup>2</sup>

The disciples broke in upon Him with eager protests :

<sup>1</sup> These studies do not profess to be an adequate historical or dogmatic account of Christ ; they simply attempt to state the impression which the Second Gospel would make upon a reader who had no other sources of information as to Jesus, and was unacquainted with Christian doctrine.

<sup>2</sup> These paraphrases of verses 18 and 20 might be challenged ; they would not be *primâ facie* the most natural renderings of the Greek taken as isolated sentences ; but they are required by the context. Perhaps the Greek misrepresents an original Aramaic or has been corrupted by parallel narratives.

“Surely it is not I! surely it is not I!”

Judas would not be the least insistent. Others may have had thoughts of treachery or desertion, and yet have rallied to loyalty in these very protests; but to Judas the words of Jesus set an irrevocable seal upon his evil purpose. The disciples were left to the answer of their own consciences; Jesus merely answered that one of the twelve would betray Him.

“It is one of the twelve, one of you who are sharing this meal with me.”<sup>1</sup>

Then for a moment the veil that hides the inner life of Jesus is lifted. “The Son of Man,” He says, “goes His way, treading the path ordained for Him in the Scriptures.” His mind was still occupied with the issue of the crisis; He had meditated afresh on the teaching of the Old Testament as to the career and experiences of the Messiah, but He had found no gleam of hope for the immediate present; from these oracles came words of doom; the Son of Man must die; but alas that He must be ushered to the gates of death by a traitor, one of His intimate friends. His wounded heart mourned over the failure of His disciple.

“Alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is to be betrayed; it had been well for that man if he had not been born.”

#### XLII. THE NEW COVENANT, XIV. 22-25.

The meal went on, and by and by Jesus spoke again of His death; and after the manner of the ancient prophets He spoke not only in words, but also by acted symbols; He took bread, blessed it, divided it into portions, and distributed it among them, saying, “Take this, it is my body.” In the same way He took a cup of wine, and gave thanks, and passed it to them, and they all drank of it.

<sup>1</sup> See note 2 on previous page.

Then He said, "This is my blood shed for many as the blood of a covenant. In truth I tell you that I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."

These sombre enigmatic words fell heavily on the ears of the disciples, and stirred uneasy questionings ; they implied that Jesus was to be offered in sacrifice, and the disciples were invited to partake symbolically of the flesh and blood of the victim. Those who partook of the flesh of victims at sacrificial feasts were the worshippers by whom and for whom the sacrifices were offered. Jesus therefore was about to die for them ; but were they offering Him up, giving Him to death ? He had said that one of them was to betray Him ; was that what He meant ? But He seemed Himself to be courting death. They could not understand Him. His death might involve their ruin ; at any rate it disappointed their hopes and ambitions. How then was He dying for them ? Then, too, in the sacrifices the worshippers did not partake of the blood ; that was poured out at the altar as God's portion. They were to drink wine as representing the blood of Jesus offered as a sacrificial victim ; such a symbol was unique and awful for Jews ; it suggested terrible Gentile rites in which the worshippers fed symbolically on the flesh and blood of dead gods.

Then by one of those sudden and seemingly inconsequent transitions which perplexed His followers so that they could not understand His sayings,<sup>1</sup> He spoke of drinking wine with them at a royal banquet.

Thus a momentary glimpse into the mind of Jesus shows that He accepted death as inevitable, in the conviction that He was dying for those who believed on Him. Beyond death He saw Himself reunited with His followers in the blessed life of the Kingdom of God.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mark viii. 17, 21.

## XLIII. WARNING OF DENIAL, XIV. 26-31.

The meal over, they sang a hymn, after the usual custom, and left the house to make their way out of the city and spend the night outside, in accordance with the plan followed by Jesus during His visit to Jerusalem. Night had fallen, but the full moon of the Passover season cast its weird alternation of light and darkness. Apparently they had no difficulty in passing the gates ; at these great feasts many of the pilgrims would lodge without the walls, and egress and ingress would not be strictly controlled. By this time the disciples had learnt that they were going to a garden called Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. When Judas heard this, he felt that his opportunity had come ; indeed if he were to keep faith with the authorities he must be prompt <sup>1</sup> ; otherwise he might be prevented from fulfilling his bargain by some unforeseen event, or by Jesus' departure from Jerusalem at the end of the feast. Therefore, as they passed along, Judas slipped away and betook himself to the High Priest's. Possibly there were other desertions. After a while Jesus noticed the absence of Judas ; it seemed a presage that others would leave Him ; and that the gradual dwindling of His company of followers would soon be completed, and He would be left quite alone. He turned to those who were still with Him, and told them that Judas would not be alone in his failure.

“Ye shall *all* be shaken from your loyalty, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”

And again there followed mysterious words that spoke of restoration and reunion.

“But after I rise again, I will go before you into Galilee.”

Peter replied, with his wonted impetuosity, ignoring what he did not understand :

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark does not tell us when Judas left Jesus.

“ Even though all shall be shaken, I shall not.”

But the months they had spent together had revealed to Jesus the instability of His follower. Peter faithful to the last ! Peter patiently enduring the danger and disgrace of the solitary adherent of a discredited Messiah ! No !

“ In truth I tell thee that thou to-day, this very night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.”

Peter was stung to the heart and protested yet more vehemently :

“ If I must die with Thee, I will not deny Thee.”

And his comrades echoed his protests.

#### XLIV. GETHSEMANE, XIV. 32-41.

When they reached Gethsemane Jesus, as on other occasions, left most of His disciples, and only took with Him Peter and James and John. With these three He sought some inner recess, while the others remained on the outskirts of the garden. He knew now that the suspense of the last few days was at an end, and the critical moment had come. By this time Judas must have betrayed His whereabouts, and the officers would be on the way to arrest Him. Perhaps they might put Him to death on the spot. So now, as often before, He sought God in prayer. When last He prayed thus, supported by the silent sympathy of His three friends, He had been encouraged by the vision of Prophet and Lawgiver, and by a voice from heaven speaking words of approval. But now there was no heavenly vision and no Divine voice. Instead a horror of great darkness fell upon Him ; dismay and distress took possession of Him ; and He said to the three, “ My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.”

Hardly an hour ago He had been drinking with His disciples the cup which was the symbol of coming death ; then He had looked on beyond death to the happier fellow-

ship in the Kingdom of God ; but now there is no word of any anticipation of the glory of the Kingdom. Not long since He had asked two of His companions if they could drink of the cup which He was to drink of ; now He asked another question, Must He drink that cup Himself ?

He now separated Himself a little from His three remaining companions ; He bade them stay where they were and watch, while He went forward a little—not out of hearing—and fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible this hour might pass from Him. “ Father ! Father ! all things are possible for Thee, take away this cup from me.”

The three men a little way off listened with sinking hearts ; hitherto with every presage of ruin there had been the calm stern courage of the Master, and the triumphant note of the coming of the Kingdom. If His spirit failed, where should hope or encouragement or strength be found ? Then an irresistible drowsiness crept over them ; they were tired by the long day, worn out by conflicting emotions, and they fell asleep. Later on they woke to find Jesus standing over them ; they might discern the marks of conflict, but as yet their heavy eyes could discover no token of victory. His voice fell upon their ears :

“ Asleep, Simon ! Couldst thou not watch one hour ? Watch ye and pray, that temptation may not befall you, for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Then He left them, and for a while they struggled to keep awake, and again they heard His prayer that He might be spared the coming agony. Then sleep once more overcame them, and they knew nothing till again they half woke and found Him beside them ; and dazed and heavy they knew not what to say to Him ; and as He turned away, they fell asleep again. Then for the third time He came back to them, and they tried to rouse themselves, but He bade them

sleep on and take their rest. The conflict was over; the victory was won; His need was past, and their opportunity was lost.<sup>1</sup>

But at this moment He caught the gleam of torches and heard footsteps and the sound of voices; and now at last the Three started up broad awake as He spoke with a sharp note of warning.

“The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go”—to the other disciples—“Behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand.”

#### XLV. THE ARREST, XIV. 42-52.

But as He spoke His enemies were upon Him. No doubt they had taken precautions against His escape, had surrounded His company and come up quietly so that they were not perceived till they were close by. We are not told what happened to the other disciples, who were not in Jesus' immediate company; probably they had no time to give an alarm, but succeeded in joining their brethren. The authorities felt that Jesus was the one important person and treated His followers with contemptuous indifference. Therefore the band charged with the arrest did not at once rush forward and try to seize them all; such an attempt would have led to confusion in which Jesus might have escaped. It had been arranged that the traitor should indicate Jesus by an unmistakable sign; he was to go forward and greet Him as a friend. Perhaps Judas imagined that his treachery was still unknown to Jesus, and that this greeting would disarm suspicion and give time for the officers to seize Him. Besides Judas would be close to Jesus, and could help to prevent His escape. Thus as the

<sup>1</sup> The meaning and reference of the word *apekhei*, E.V. “it is enough,” are quite uncertain. In the LXX. it is used in various passages to translate eight or nine different Hebrew words.

hostile band paused, Jesus saw one man separate himself from them and come towards Him. He recognized Judas and discerned his purpose. The traitor, excited, anxious that there should be no mistake, overdid his part; not content with the formal kiss of greeting, he hailed Jesus as "Rabbi!" and kissed Him again and again, till his companions hurrying up laid hands on Jesus and made Him their prisoner.

Men's recollections of this scene were incoherent and fragmentary, but it was remembered afterwards that at least one blow had been struck for the Master. Perhaps the High Priest's posse had attracted attention, and its object had been guessed; the meaning of an alliance between Judas and the Temple authorities was obvious. Amongst others, friends of Jesus joined the party in the hope of effecting a rescue, and now when He was seized one of these drew his sword, struck at the follower of the High Priest who was in command of the party, and cut off his ear. There is no sequel to this incident, and we are not told what became of the swordsman. Probably in the prevailing excitement, while the attention of friends and foes alike was concentrated on Jesus, the blow was not noticed for the moment; and the man, finding that he was not supported, disappeared before he was recognized.

When Jesus could obtain a hearing He turned to His captors with an indignant protest.

"You have come out with swords and staves to take me, as if I were a robber; for days I have been at your disposal in the Temple as I taught, and you did not seize me."

Why had they thus sought Him at night in a lonely place, as if He were a criminal, conscious of His crime and lurking in obscure hiding-places? He had asserted His claims openly in the Temple; He had courted arrest and trial. Why did they not take Him then? He sought to

testify by His death to the truth of His teaching. Did they hope to hinder that testimony by sudden murder or secret assassination? Preoccupied with the bearing of events on His cause and His mission, He took no account of the impromptu, abortive movement to seize Him in the Temple,<sup>1</sup> or the prudential reasons which stood in the way of any serious attempt to arrest Him there.<sup>2</sup> But in a moment He checked Himself; the future of the Kingdom of God was not at the mercy of the petty policy of intriguing priests; the Scriptures must be fulfilled; God would work out in His own way the eternal purpose foreshadowed in His Revelation to Israel. Jesus, therefore, allowed Himself to be led away without resistance or further protest, and His disciples fled.

One adherent, however, still followed Him. It seems that the noise made by the posse on its way to Gethsemane had roused from sleep a youth who was attached to Jesus; he had gathered their errand, and without waiting to dress had hastily wrapped himself in a linen cloth and followed them. This improvised toilette was not so different from ordinary dress as it would be with us; and up till the time of the arrest no special notice had been taken of him, and he ventured to follow the party as they set out to return to Jerusalem. But now his costume and his interest in Jesus attracted attention; some one laid hold of his linen wrap, but the youth slipped out of it and escaped.

W. H. BENNETT.

### *SCRIBES OF THE NAZARENES.*

#### I. RECORDS OF THE MASTER'S TEACHING.

To most readers the title "Records of the Master's Teaching" will suggest at once the Four Gospels and nothing else.

<sup>1</sup> Mark xii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Mark xiv. 2.

But such records as they contain are only incidental and subordinate to the object of each author and compiler.

A Gospel is just an Announcement, whether it be vocal or written. It consists of *good* news, as the Greek and English terms suggest, because it is the Proclamation of the Sovereignty of Heaven or of Jesus Christ, to whom this is entrusted. But the main purpose of all Evangelists is to establish the proposition that Christ crucified, despite the scandalous paradox which the fact involves, was to believers God's Power and God's Wisdom. Their appeal, then, lay rather to the facts of His earthly life, regarded as parabolic prophecies of His glory, than to the Teaching which He imparted to His disciples and which formed the Law of His Church. The signs—or some of the clearest, which convinced the first generation of Christians or Nazarenes and made them such—were the proper means to this end.

When the Christian missionaries addressed themselves to Jews, they had first to discuss the academic questions—“Is the Messiah capable of suffering? Will He be the first to rise from the dead and so proclaim light to the People, and, as the prophets held, to the Gentiles also?”<sup>1</sup> But the Gentiles, who had no conception, true or erroneous, of a Messiah at all, had only to learn that *one that was never thought of hath worn the diadem*<sup>2</sup> and was ready to deliver them also, when their own kings *sat down upon the ground*. For both proof was needed of the assertions, that Jesus was Messiah or Deliverer, and that the expected Messiah was Jesus. Many of the signs which Jesus wrought before His disciples were omitted in the recital; but such and such were written, in order that readers *might believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God, and that believing they might have life in His name.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Sir. xi. 5.

<sup>3</sup> John xx. 30 f.

The method adopted in the Fourth Gospel was also that of the first Evangelists, who used vocal preaching. Sermons of St. Peter are preserved in the first part of Acts, whose primitive conception of the Person of our Lord stamps them as unmistakably authentic. Speaking to the Jews assembled in Jerusalem, he first dwells on the prophecy fulfilled in the Descent of the Spirit upon the Disciples and then briefly describes their Master, who, now risen, as David foretold,<sup>1</sup> and glorified, had poured out this, which they saw and heard. He speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, as he himself had known and come to know Him :—*A man approved of God unto you by powers and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know.*

The stress is all on the prophecy : the facts in which it is fulfilled are notorious. A written Gospel framed on this model would be little more than a string of prophecies, like those of Joel and of David—a collection of Oracles, such as tradition assigns to St. Matthew.

But when he speaks to Cornelius at Joppa, St. Peter barely refers to prophecy and gives an outline of the essential facts, though even here he is able to assume some acquaintance with the life and death of Jesus. This less meagre account shows how the oral Gospel tended necessarily to include some summary of the benefits wrought by Jesus, when its exponents addressed themselves to ignorance, partial or complete. But the crucial fact for St. Peter, as for St. Paul, is the Resurrection : of the Teaching of Jesus there is no mention, since His Presence is imminent. The first Apostles were men who could speak from personal experience of all the life of Jesus from His baptism to His assumption. They had prophecies with which to sting the guilty consciousness

<sup>1</sup> The Messianic interpretation of Ps. xvi. is demonstrated at length. Cf. the question "Concerning whom doth the prophet say this ? Himself or another ?" (Acts viii. 34).

of the Jews, and facts with which to pierce the indifferent ignorance of the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

The preaching of St. Peter at Jerusalem and Joppa is typical of the missionary work of the original Apostles. As their sphere of work extended and the cities of the world, and not only of Israel,<sup>2</sup> lay before them, they hurried on from place to place. The Evangelist performed his function and departed : he might return to confirm his churches, but only for a moment. His work was that of the pioneer, and, if he wrote, it was only on the hearts of his converts. But, when the Lord delayed His coming and eager faith grew cold, a record of the facts or the prophecies or both was needed. So the writer of the Gospel succeeded to the speaker, conforming necessarily to the type laid down.

Irenæus<sup>3</sup> testifies to this connexion between the vocal and written Gospel, stating it in a concrete form, such as tradition loves : “ We came to know the plan of our salvation through none others than those through whom the Gospel came to us. They proclaimed it then : afterwards, by God’s will, they delivered it to us in writing to be the foundation and pillar of our faith. . . . Matthew among the Hebrews, in their own tongue put forth a writing of the Gospel, while Peter and Paul were evangelizing in Rome and founding the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself also delivered to us in writing the preachings of Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel which Paul preached. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who reclined upon His breast, himself also published the Gospel while living in Ephesus of Asia.” But missionary work only called for fact and prophecy. The teaching of Jesus concerned those who built up the Church and not its founders :

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 34-43 ; Acts i. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Adv. Haer.* iii. 1.

the importance of His words and still more the committal of them to writing belongs to a later stage.<sup>1</sup>

Parables, which puzzled those who had given up all to follow the Galilean prophet, were ill-adapted to win or confirm those who had not felt the spell of His living presence. These they might expound, as they had heard Jesus expound them, in private, as need arose. But the commission given to the disciples of John Baptist was theirs: they must *go and report what they had seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead arise, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*<sup>2</sup> The Master's Teaching was not their main concern, who strove in speech or writing to demonstrate the reasonable necessity of faith in His Person. Not to them, the scribes of the Nazarenes, nor to the recorders of their preaching<sup>3</sup> can we look for absorption in the Wisdom of Jesus, reputed son of Joseph of Nazareth. The words of the preacher and the endorsement of the writer dealt primarily with far other matters. Their duty was to educate their audience as they themselves had been educated, to carry them back to the historical origin of the faith, when they too were ignorant and

“knew not yet  
the great event  
of those so low beginnings,  
from which we date our winnings.”

Their readers or hearers were enabled to witness each succes-

<sup>1</sup> So Eusebius, referring to the sub-Apostolic age and the contemporaries of Quadratus (98-117 A.D.), “Most of these disciples (of the apostles), smitten in soul with vehement love of philosophy by the divine word first fulfilled the saving ordinance and distributed their goods to the needy. Then setting out on their travels they performed the work of evangelists ambitious to proclaim the Christ to such as had not heard the word of the faith and to deliver the scripture of the divine gospels” (Eus. *H. E.*, iii. 37, 2).

<sup>2</sup> Luke vii. 22 f. There is here no anti-climax. The prophecy, cited in an ampler form, is fulfilled literally and spiritually. Bodily healing was necessary as evidence of the forgiveness of sins: *vide* Mark. ii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Luke preface.

sive act of power, which elicited the wondering question *who then is this?* Step by step their belief was raised and purified, as they contemplated the gradual manifestation of His glory, aided by the perfected insight of the eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word.

At different times and in different places other Gospels have been preferred to the Canonical Quaternion of Irenaeus.<sup>1</sup> Some of these Origen identified with the tentative narratives to which St. Luke refers in his preface :—

“ Perhaps, then, he says, the word *attempted* contains a hidden accusation against them, who rashly and without spiritual endowment came to the recording of the Gospels. For Matthew did not *attempt*, but wrote, being moved of the Holy Spirit. So also Mark and John and Luke in like manner. The composers, however, of the Gospel inscribed : ‘ According to the Egyptians and the Gospel entitled, “ Of the Twelve ” *attempted*.’ He goes on to mention the ‘ Gospel according to Thomas ’ and the ‘ Gospel according to Basilides.’ ”

Jerome follows him and improves upon his statement in such a way as to justify the deduction that St. Luke wrote late in the second century A.D., to compete with the tentative Gospels of various heretics, whose date is known.

These “ apocryphal ” Gospels—if one may judge from extant fragments—conform to the Canonical type. At times they assume a special character and profess to deal with a part only of the Lord’s Incarnate life, which may, or may not, be described fully by their successful rivals. There are Infancy-Gospels and Passion-Gospels ; but both alike deal

<sup>1</sup> So (e.g.) Serapion (ob. 209 A.D.) found the Gospel according to Peter in use at Rhossus in Cilicia, and at first allowed it to be read (Eus. *H.E.* vi. 12). Cf. the currency of the Gospel according to the Hebrews among the Nazaraei of Beroea in the time of Jerome (*De viris ill.* 3; cf. Com. in Ez. xvi. 13, etc.).

with the acts rather than the words of Jesus and, with few exceptions, utilise *pro more* material which is accounted Canonical. The child Jesus is made to perform miracles, which are merely a feeble imitation of those recorded elsewhere, as part of His public ministry ; and, if the period chosen be the Passion, witnesses are brought forward before the Court, who describe the acts of the prisoner at the bar.

An instructive and characteristic example of the Teaching of Jesus preserved in these sources is the saying which Cassian<sup>1</sup> quoted, and which Clement of Alexandria found, in the Gospel according to the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup> According to this saying, full knowledge of all mysteries will be given *when ye tread upon the garment of shame, and when the two become one, and the male with the female neither male nor female*. This description of the world to come is clearly based on the Canonical saying : *cum enim a mortuis resurrexerint neque nubent neque nubentur sed sunt sicut Angeli in caelis*.<sup>3</sup> It has been elaborated in the interests of some sect, which advocated virgin-marriage<sup>4</sup> and obeyed St. Paul's saying : *Tempus breve est : reliquum est ut et qui habent uxores tamquam non habentes sint . . . præterit enim figura huius mundi*.<sup>5</sup> Man is to share in the general restoration of the Universe and regain the lost innocence of Adam and Eve, who learned good and evil, and therefore clothed themselves with the garment of shame. Man and wife shall still be one, as God decreed, but a *new* (*καινή*)—perhaps a *common* (*κοινή*)—creature, as St. Paul said.<sup>6</sup>

There are many such "Unwritten Sayings" of Jesus whose value lies in the fact that they afford internal evidence,

<sup>1</sup> Floruit 170 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Al. Strom. iii. 13 (p. 553, P). Cf. 2 "Clem." Cor. xii. 2 and the Oxyrhynchus fragment of a lost Gospel, "His disciples say unto Him, When wilt Thou be manifest to us and when shall we see Thee? He saith, When ye shall be unclothed, and not ashamed."

<sup>3</sup> Mark xii. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 25 ff.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 29, 31.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17 ; Gal. vi. 15.

not of their own authenticity, but of the authority of the Four Gospels and the Apostles, and that they illustrate the byways of Church History.

But the Canon of the New Testament contains also didactic writings, which are traditionally ascribed to disciples of Jesus or their associates. And, if the disciples deserved their name, we may look with confidence to them and their pupils for reflexions of the teaching of their Master, albeit *per speculum in aenigmate*. A pupil, like St. Paul, may find it necessary sometimes to cite his authority, when he speaks in the name of Jesus; but one who belonged to "the Twelve," and any who claimed to write in the name of any one of them, spoke presumably as they had learned, directly or indirectly, from the Rabbi of Nazareth. They might adapt the Teaching to suit new circumstances; but it remained—in oral or written tradition—the code which all Christian missionaries enforced, with or without express reference to its author.

One example will show the existence and the value of this evidence. Writing to the Church at Corinth, St. Paul, who had enjoyed a limited intercourse with St. Peter and James the brother of the Lord, is able to appeal to the supreme authority in the matter of the vexed question of Divorce:—*Iis autem qui matrimonio iuncti sunt, praecepit non ego, sed Dominus, uxorem a viro non discedere*.<sup>1</sup> Herein St. Paul supports the Second and Third Gospels<sup>2</sup> against the first, which admits one exception<sup>3</sup>:—*Omnis qui dimiserit uxorem suam excepta fornicationis causa facit eam moechari*. In the First Gospel the saying is given twice, once in the original context<sup>4</sup> and once<sup>5</sup> with the formula: *it was said to the*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vii. 10 f.   <sup>2</sup> Mark x. 11 f.; Luke xvi. 18.   <sup>3</sup> Matt. xix. 9, v. 32 f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Mark. x. 1 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Luke l.c.: The exception stultifies the absolute opposition of new and old which the formula, to be appropriate, requires.

*ancients . . . but I say unto you*, in both cases admitting the exception which warranted divorce. According to this report, Jesus followed the doctrine of the school of Shammai.<sup>1</sup> But according to the reports of the Second Gospel, which gives the attendant circumstances, and of the Third, which is content to report the new law, Jesus taught—as St. Paul testifies—that the marriage bond was indissoluble, appealing from the words of Moses to the word of God. For long enough the Christian Church followed Jesus, and the Jewish nation the conservatism of Hillel, whose school supported the view that the husband might dismiss his wife at will. The compromise of “Matthew” and Shammai was not accepted.

It is not without interest to notice that St. Paul was, like Jesus, confronted with a society, in which women were beginning to claim the same rights as men in this matter.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, at Corinth the women were to the fore—presumably because more of them had been converted to Christianity. Whereas the like action on the part of Salome, which prompted the Pharisees’ question, “was not according to the Jewish laws.”<sup>3</sup> The revolt of a section of the Church from Jesus’ commandment is illustrated, if not described, by St. Matthew’s account of a protest made by the disciples at the time.<sup>4</sup> At least, they could limit, if they dare not defy, this uncompromising condemnation of the Jewish custom.

Thus from apocryphal and apostolic records alike we return inevitably to the Gospels, as containing the Canon of the Lord’s words, by which alone, as by a touchstone, the true metal must be approved. But at the outset we have found that there are discrepancies in the Gospels,

<sup>1</sup> Git. ix. 10; Yer Sotah i. 1. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mark x. 12; 1 Cor. vii. 10. <sup>3</sup> Joseph. *Ant.* xv. 7, 10; cf. xviii. 9, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xix. 10.

which are inconsistent with the traditional account of their apostolic origin.

It is natural enough that the ordinary churchman—or ecclesiastic, as Origen named him—should regret the happier days when the traditional titles of the books were themselves a part of Scripture and Scripture was inerrant. Irenaeus' account of the four Gospels has a prescriptive right to acceptance: the Alogi who substituted Cerinthus for St. John as the author of the Fourth Gospel are forgotten; and, with them, other earlier champions of "the Gospel according to the Hebrews" and the like. Whether Hermas asserted it or not, the common view has long been that the Church rests on the foundation of the four Gospels. To dig till the real foundations are laid bare is still regarded as a work of supererogation by many. Nevertheless, the lover of true history may yet serve the Church by digging thus; for the sand which has gathered round may eat into the foundations, further with each successive flood. Apart from this danger, the winds may find it easier to blow gently on the sand, till it whirls about and hides the rock, so that men may think the house is built actually upon the sand. After all, the Church rests not on shifting traditions, not even on the four pillars which are the Gospels, but on the foundation laid once for all, which is Jesus Christ. Higher Criticism which questions the validity of tradition and compares Scripture with Scripture, is not yet branded as a heresy; and even those who attempt to practise it may share the regret of the "ecclesiastic" and dwell lingeringly upon the part of the tradition of the Church, which concerns the Gospels. But Higher Criticism being a means of attaining truth is a necessary weapon in the armoury of every "ecclesiastic." The tradition must be analysed, and the Gospels<sup>1</sup>: *Habentes igitur talem spem, multa fiducia utimur et non sicut Moses*

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 12, iv. 6.

*ponebat velamen super faciem suam ut non intenderent filii Israel in facie eius . . . quoniam Deus . . . ipse illuxit in cordibus nostris ad illuminationem scientiæ claritatis Dei, in facie Christi Jesu ! ”*

“Ecclesiastical history,” as Jerome knew it, gave an account of the four Gospels, which is practically an elaboration of that given by Irenæus.<sup>1</sup> The section which describes the origin and date of the Fourth Gospel is as long as all the rest together. “Last, there is John, Apostle and Evangelist, whom Jesus loved much, who, reclining upon the Lord’s bosom, drank in purest streams of doctrines, and who alone deserved to hear from the cross, *Behold thy mother*. He, when he was in Asia, and when already the seeds of the heretics were sprouting—of Cerinthus, Ebion, and the rest, who deny that Christ has come in the flesh (whom he himself calls Antichrists in his Epistle and the Apostle Paul often assails)—was compelled by almost all the then bishops of Asia, and by embassies of other churches, to write in a loftier strain, and, so to speak, to burst through, not with rash but happy audacity, to the Word of God Himself.”

This tradition is compact of many elements. Some of the points are taken from the New Testament, others from extraneous sources, which can be traced back to the early part of the second century. They have been intertwined in such a way as to suggest that the vague formula *according to*, which at least admits of other interpretations, implies definite authorship; and that the four Evangelists were quite independent of one another. According to this account, the First and Fourth Gospels contain the reminiscences of St. Matthew and St. John respectively, and the Second and Third preserve at second hand the preaching of St. Peter and St. Paul. They were written with different objects and in different places. Hence, as Chrysostom

<sup>1</sup> Vide supra, page 67.

insists, their general agreement is a great proof of the truth of their narrative.<sup>1</sup>

Traditions of this kind are now rejected with as little hesitation and consideration, as they were once received.

But in this case, at all events, one may reasonably plead for a stay of execution. The history of the formation of the Canon of New Testament Scriptures proves that Apostolic authorship, or at least Apostolic authority, was the first essential. If this tradition be simply a tissue of inventions, its origin must be sought in some unknown province of Christianity, since it is altogether inconsistent with the known tendencies of the thought of the Church. Irenaeus found—if none before him—four anonymous records of the Lord's incarnate life, in which again and again emerge four disciples—the most elect of the more elect of the elect. Surely it was natural and easy to lie in state under the name of an "Elder," and to present the Church with the records of Simon and Andrew, James and John.

It is difficult to see why the formula *according to* should have been adopted at all. Forgers, who knew their trade, spoke boldly of the "Gospel of Peter" and so forth. Yet it is so definitely the proper title of a Gospel that it has been adopted by some of the Apocryphal writings at the cost of its proper significance, which would imply that one was the Gospel as narrated (e.g.) by the Hebrews and recorded by one of their disciples.

Only in the case of the Fourth Gospel is the tradition at all in accordance with probability on the assumption that it reflects not fact but fancy. St. Matthew the publican is the last person—with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot—upon whom a reader of the Gospels would fix as a plausible father for one of them. St. Mark, according to universal testimony, was not a personal follower of the Lord. St. Luke is repre-

<sup>1</sup> *In Matt. Hom.* (ed. Field, p. 4).

sented as the disciple of St. Paul, who declared—according to early patristic interpretation—that he had no knowledge of Christ after the flesh, of the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. Whatever be thought of the ascription of the Fourth Gospel to St. John and of the connexion between St. Mark and St. Peter, as regards the rest of the tradition, the conclusion is irresistible: it must be an accumulation of fragmentary facts rather than a pointless farrago of inept falsehoods.

The Fourth Gospel, which, if this part also of the tradition be credible, is the one primary Apostolic record, must be set aside for the present. The story of its origin is given by Clement of Alexandria, on the authority of the Elders, in much the same form as by Irenaeus and Jerome. But even here it must be said that no other adequate explanation of the phenomena, which it presents, has as yet been forthcoming. As regards the other three, the Synoptics who give a common view of their great subject, one has to consider the statements of Papias, which clearly underlie the ecclesiastical tradition, and to investigate the validity of the use to which they have been put.

Papias, then, who made a collection and exposition of the Lord's words, mentioned in his preface the tradition of the Elder, fragments of which relating to Mark and Matthew are preserved by Eusebius. The description of Mark is couched in terms of St. Luke's preface,<sup>1</sup> "Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, whatever things he remembered (*or* Peter mentioned) [these] he wrote *accurately*—not, however, *in order*—[namely] the things either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but afterwards, as I said, [followed] Peter, who made his teachings as need arose. But [he wrote] not as making a composition of the Lord's words. So that Mark erred not, when thus he wrote some things as he remembered (*or* as

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 31.

Peter mentioned) them. For his one purpose was to avoid the omission of anything he heard or the falsification of anything therein.”

The reference of this early tradition to *a* Gospel—if not *the* Gospel<sup>1</sup>—according to St. Mark does not seem to be open to any serious objection. The historical sermons delivered by St. Peter abroad were faithfully recorded by the interpreter, who translated them from Aramaic into Greek for the sake of the Church at large, as formerly for the audiences who assembled to hear the Galilean preacher.

Papias seems to insist on the implications of the Elder's statement, that Mark derived his knowledge from St. Peter, whose interpreter he was, and to combine his inferences with his report. This Gospel was the work of one who received the tradition from an eye-witness, and was, therefore, as appears from the apologetic tone of Papias, depreciated. Whether its detractors made use of St. Luke's preface—as Papias certainly does—or not, their feeling is natural: the materials of the missionaries, whether they based thereon an appeal to Jews or Gentiles, might satisfy the convert, but not for long the catechumen. The wonder is, humanly speaking, that the Gospel, which is admittedly incomplete and lacking in order, should survive in any form. Few of its few distinctive features have left any trace in the meagre remnant of the occasional writings belonging to the sub-Apostolic age. The early Gnostics used it in the interests of their theory, which separated Jesus from Christ and declared that Christ was incapable of suffering and that Jesus suffered.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, it was copied so little that all our texts are derived from one defective copy, which lacked the original ending. To this fact is probably due the nickname of St. Mark, *ὁ κολοβο-δάκτυλος* (“He with the mutilated finger”). It is not clear whether the present Second Gospel

<sup>1</sup> So Iren. iii. 106, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Iren. iii. 11. 10 (ed. Harvey, vol. ii. p. 46).

contains or actually constitutes the narrative of St. Mark, to which Papias refers. The phantom of an original Mark has been laid by authority,<sup>1</sup> but continues still to haunt some of the most diligent students of the problem. But, speaking generally, the internal evidence of the extant Gospel according to St. Mark, corresponds to the tradition preserved by Papias. It is a Gospel which describes Jesus of Nazareth, the man commended by God to the Jews by powers and wonders and signs which God wrought through him. It does not reflect the settled conviction, that this Jesus was all the while the Son of God ; but preserves, with extraordinary fidelity, the chequered growth of the belief that He was *aut Deus aut non bonus*. The abrupt conclusion is typical of the whole record. The women, who had ministered to Jesus out of their substance during His wanderings, visit His grave and are charged by its angelic custodian with the message : *He was raised and precedeth you into Galilee : And going forth they fled from the tomb, for trembling and ecstasy possessed them. And they told no one anything, for they were afraid.*

Of Matthew, Papias or his informant said : “ Matthew composed the Dominical Oracles in the Hebrew tongue and each one interpreted them as he was able.” There are difficulties in the way of acceptance of this statement, as referring to the origin of the first of the present four Gospels. Rather, it supplies an explanation of the origin of its traditional title. The Dominical Oracles are the oracles belonging to (or concerned with) the Lord—Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament, in fact, which a Christian would describe as “ the things concerning Jesus.” A collection or composition of these was, and is, the proper material of a

<sup>1</sup> Professor Swete says (*St. Mark*, p. lviii. note) : “ The present writer has risen from his study of the Gospel with a strong sense of the unity of the work and can echo the *requiescat Urmarkus* which ends a recent discussion.”

missionary to the Jews, such as Matthew.<sup>1</sup> Such a collection is a distinctive feature of the First Gospel: scattered as they are, the prophecies introduced by the formula *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken* are obviously derived from one source, and are the Logia of Matthew to which Papias refers. The origin of the remainder of the First Gospel must be left to practitioners of the "Higher Criticism."

With regard to the Fourth Gospel, Papias is reported to have used its testimonies. For the Third no statement of his is handed down. It is clear that he was acquainted with St. Luke's preface, and probably took the same view of Gospels which consisted only of prophecies or of facts. To judge from the preface of his Expositions of the Lord's words, at any rate, he seems to have resolved to do what St. Luke did. Like St. Luke he had in view catechumens, who as such had been instructed in the new morality. The recital of facts effected conversion: the convert was catechized in the moral teaching—*Jesus says . . .* But the catechist was naturally engrossed in the conclusions at which Jesus or His apostles had arrived: the catechumen had no assurance of certainty, as he passed from Jesus the Wonderworker to contemplate Christ the Lawgiver. For St. Luke facts were of value as well as the teaching, and in his Gospel and the sequel he presented an historical narrative of the foundation of the Christian Church as the best means of confirming the neophyte. Papias' work, on the other hand, was to expound the Lord's sayings, and with this end in view he sought out—as, doubtless, St. Luke did—all independent evidence available apart from the books:—

“Nor will I hesitate also to combine with the interpretations for thy benefit whatever I well learned from the elders and well remembered, being assured of their truth. For I did not, like the many, take pleasure in the much-speakers but in teachers of the truth; nor in the remembrancers of alien commandments, but the remembrancers

<sup>1</sup> The tradition that the ex-taxgatherer devoted himself to work among the Jews is sufficiently arduous and lacking in plausibility to be credible.

of those which were given to faith from the Lord and proceeded from the truth itself. But if also anywhere there came one who had followed the elders, I was wont to enquire of the words of the elders :— what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip—or what Thomas, or James, or John, or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and the things which Aristion and the Elder John, the Lord's disciples, say. For I supposed that things taken from books would not profit me so much as those coming from a living and abiding voice."

The repositories of the Apostolic tradition could answer the new questions which the records left untouched.

Now Augustine, the contemporary of Jerome, inferred, from the close resemblance of the Second to the First Gospel, that the former was an abbreviation of the latter. This excursion into the Higher Criticism of the Gospels he supports by showing the mystical significance of the fact. "He who undertook to describe the royal character of Christ had a comrade, who followed his steps. Luke, on the other hand, whose attention was taken up with the priesthood of Christ, had none to abbreviate his narrative ; for the priest entered alone into the sanctuary."

This precedent may be cited—if need be—in defence of such studies as aim at the discovery of the sources which lie behind the four Gospels in their present form. Their agreement is not necessarily a proof of their respective credibility, but often merely evidence of their mutual dependence or common indebtedness to some pre-existing tradition.

There appears to be a growing consensus of opinion among those who have followed up the methods of Augustine, to the general effect that the First, Second and Third Gospels rest for the most part on two primitive documents or traditions. The former is generally considered to be identical with, or to be contained in, the Gospel according to St. Mark : the latter is defined as the matter common to the other two Gospels, which is not also preserved by St. Mark.

The former contains comparatively little of the Master's Teaching, and yet enough to suggest that later compilers were apt to develop and modify what they report.

There is a saying connected with the accusation that Jesus cast out devils by the aid of Beezebul, which has been so treated in the First and Third Gospels as to define a new and, contrary to expectation, a venial sin. The narrative of the Second Gospel is perfectly natural: the argument of Jesus' commentary on the charge proceeds to its proper and inevitable conclusion:—*Verily I say unto you, that all things shall be forgiven to the sons of men—the sins and the blasphemies whatsoever they blaspheme: but whosoever blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, he hath not forgiveness for ever, but is guilty of the eternal sin.* The Evangelist adds the explanation:—*because they said "he hath an unclean spirit."*<sup>1</sup> In the First Gospel the historical setting of the saying is preserved, but supplemented by the secondary and isolated form, which alone is given by St. Luke.

PRIMARY FORM, with narrative.		SECONDARY FORM, isolated saying.	
Mark iii. 28. Verily I say unto you	<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 31. Therefore I say unto you	Matt. xii. 32.	Luke xii. 10.
all things shall be forgiven to the sons of men—the sins and the blasphemies whatsoever they blaspheme.	every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men	and whosoever say a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him	and every one who shall say a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him.
But whosoever blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, he hath not forgiveness for ever, but is guilty of eternal sin.	but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven.	but whosoever speak against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (age) nor in the future.	but to him that blasphemed against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven.

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 28–30.

The conjunction of the primary and secondary forms of the saying in the First Gospel has produced a shortening of the former, which is followed in the secondary form as given by St. Luke : there is, however, other evidence which supports the reference to *the age* as part of the original. The only difference between the two reports consists in the substitution of *the Son of Man* for *the sons of men* and the simple transposition, by which it becomes dependent on *blasphemy* (or its equivalents) and no longer on *shall be forgiven*. So, a specious antithesis is secured between the two members of the saying ; and the forgiveness promised is limited to one particular example—blasphemy against the Son of Man—of *all the sins and blasphemies whatsoever men blaspheme*.

But the primary form suits the context and arises out of it : its first member does not assert that all sins—with one exception—will be forgiven, but stands in emphatic contrast to the second—*though all (other) sins be forgiven, yet the blasphemer of the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven*.<sup>1</sup> Sins against man were only forgiven on condition of confession and reparation ; but here is no question of that discrimination between the persons offended, which, indeed, Jesus discouraged in His disciples. To say *Jesus has an unclean spirit* is more obviously a blasphemy against the Son of Man than a sin against the Holy Spirit. It is necessary to search for an adequate motive to explain this adaptation of the condemnation.

The narrative is concerned exclusively with the encounter between Jesus and the scribes, who came down from Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Standing among the crowds, who were wondering at the great Exorcist,<sup>3</sup> they attempted to undermine His

<sup>1</sup> The law is summarized in love of God and love of one's neighbour ; the latter is the only visible proof of the former.

<sup>2</sup> Mark iii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Luke xi. 14 f.

popularity by explaining that His power was not from Jehovah, as the Evangelists assert, but from His ally—Beezebul. At first Jesus meets them on their own ground with argument and a parable : finally He denounces them as sinners past hope of pardon. It is hardly conceivable that any Christian teacher in the first century should wish to spare the Scribes, their typical enemies, and to explain, against the gloss of St. Mark,<sup>1</sup> that they did not really sin against the light, having none.

Nevertheless the context as given in the primitive narrative supplies the motive for the mitigation of this stern sentence. Before the Scribes appear on the scene it stands written, *and he comes home and again a crowd comes together, so that they could not even eat bread. And having heard his family came out to take charge of him, for they said, " He is beside himself."*<sup>2</sup> And after the episode is closed, all three Synoptists record the message sent by His mother and brethren and the implied repudiation of their claim upon Him :—*and he answered and saith to them, Who is my mother and brethren ? And looking round on those who were sitting round him in a circle, he saith, Behold my mother and my brethren ! Whosoever do the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.* Only the other primitive record of the Fourth Gospel affords any parallel to this description of the unbelief of the Lord's homefolk ; and there,<sup>3</sup> only His brethren are mentioned by the disciple, who received Mary as his own mother.

The repudiation might be explained as in no way reflecting upon their character, but rather showing that the Master had made the sacrifices which He demanded of His disciples. But the mention of their arrival before or with the Scribes,

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 20. Their "judicial blindness" might be held to preclude unpardonable sin ; but without conversion there is no forgiveness (ib. iv. 12).

<sup>2</sup> Mark iii. 19-21.

<sup>3</sup> John vii. 1-8 ; cf. ii. 4.

and its motive, was an obvious stumbling-block to Christians, who revered at any rate James, the brother of the Lord, first bishop of Jerusalem. The First and Third Gospels accordingly omit the notice, which precedes this incident ; and Christian catechesis embodied in the " Western Text " gives a dexterous turn to the possibly ambiguous Greek, reading, *and when the scribes and the rest heard they came out to seize him, for they were saying he maddeneth them.*

But the danger latent in the Marcan narrative is not merely that a simple reader might be scandalized by the errand of the mother and brethren of Jesus. He would be ready enough to set against it St. James' repentance of his unbelief and the sign of his forgiveness recorded in tradition. So St. James, at any rate, might be acquitted as having atoned for this sin by the austere piety of his later life, and by the martyrdom which crowned it. But as the text stands in St. Mark, His family were saying, *He is mad*, and the Scribes, *He hath Bezebul* : surely these are but different ways of stating the same conclusion. His family, then, must lie under the same condemnation—which is intolerable. Therefore, before the simple expedient of omission or of alteration of the preliminary mention of His family was adopted, advantage was taken of the difference of phrase, and the sentence was adapted to support the distinction between the blasphemy of His family—against the Son of Man—and that of the Scribes—against the Holy Spirit.

And before this the evidence suggests that the reference to eternal sin and impossibility of forgiveness had been dropped, as in the secondary form of the First and Third Gospels. The accumulation of successive and mutually exclusive modifications of the original has at least given scope to the subtle ingenuity of expositors. But, even when later piety had removed all trace of the complicity of Jesus' mother and brethren in the errand of the Scribes, there were others, who were

satisfied that the only verdict, of which even fuller evidence admitted, was *Jesus accursed*; and afterwards were fain to win a pardon for the blasphemy. So the secondary form was kept side by side with the primary in order that nothing and no one be lost. The Evangelists who spoke and wrote had the mind of Christ and trusted in the promise, "the Paraclete . . . shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things which I said to you." The words of Christ being spirit and life, tended to take to themselves a body wherever they were deposited, to adapt themselves to their environment and to grow.

This investigation, like the examination of the pronouncement upon the question of Divorce, raises a serious question: If even the Synoptists differ among themselves, is the touchstone—or the treasury of common repute, or its key—useless? It is no new problem.

Origen recognizes the discrepancies between the narratives of the four Evangelists, which, perhaps, like the contradictions of the Old Testament and the New, furnished the starting-point of the Gnostic theory of varying degrees of inspiration. The tenth volume of his Commentary on the Gospel according to St. John<sup>1</sup> begins at the point where Jesus went down to Capernaum. He compares at once the statements of the Synoptists:—"The other three who wrote Gospels say that, after the Lord's struggle with the devil, he retired into Galilee. But Matthew and Luke say that, having been first in Nazareth, He deserted that place and came and dwelt in Capernaum. Moreover, Matthew and Mark actually state a cause for His retirement thence: He had heard that John was delivered up."

After quoting the passages<sup>2</sup> concerned, Origen draws the inference:—"The truth concerning these things must lie in

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 12; cf. iii. 23 f.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. iv. 11-15, 17; Mark i. 13 ff., 21; Luke iv. 13-16, 31.

the spiritual meaning, or, if the discrepancy be not resolved, we must give up the faith concerning the Gospels as not truly nor by a Divine spirit written or accurately remembered." The Synoptic and Johannine accounts cannot both be true, and there are many other cases in which a careful critic will find a lack of agreement in respect of the history.

Origen's solution was the method of mystical interpretation which apparently needed much eloquence, as well as emphasis on the only—and impossible—alternative, to commend it. The spiritual teaching of Scripture, which is thus ascertained was, he says, the chief object which the Evangelists kept before them. "When it was possible, they were true to spirit and fact; but, when both spiritual and literal truth could not be preserved, they preferred the spiritual to the literal. Hence often the spiritual truth is preserved, as one might say, in the bodily or literal lie."<sup>1</sup>

His application of the method to this particular difficulty contains a golden sentence: "John Baptist, in his name-sake's Gospel, survives for long without being cast into prison. But in Matthew he is delivered up into prison almost during the temptation of Jesus: wherefore,<sup>2</sup> also, Jesus retires into Galilee, avoiding imprisonment. But in John, the Baptist is not found delivered into prison at all. *But who is so wise and sufficient for so much as to learn all Jesus from the four Evangelists and to be able<sup>3</sup> to understand each one separately and to see all His visitations and words and deeds in each place?* After the merry-making at Cana Jesus goes to Capernaum, the Field of Consolation, to console His companions and not the people there."<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere, Origen asserts that the Gospels are as full of absurdities as the Pentateuch<sup>5</sup>: as when the devil is said

<sup>1</sup> Orig. in Joh. tom. x. 5.    <sup>2</sup> δι' ἑ for δι' ἑν.    <sup>3</sup> χωρήσαι.

<sup>4</sup> ib. 8.

<sup>5</sup> *De Principiis*, iv. (*Philocalia*, c. i.).

to have led Jesus into an high mountain that he might show Him thence all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory. There are precepts in the Gospels, too, which are as preposterous as any of the Mosaic Law : as for example, *salute no one by the way*,<sup>1</sup> and, again, the description of a man who is said to be smitten on the *right* cheek, whereas any normal person using his right hand hits the left cheek.<sup>2</sup>

So, in his general method of exegesis, Origen found a ready answer to those who urged that the Scriptures were mutually contradictory : it was no expedient extemporized to meet a particular need. The stumbling-blocks of Scripture force us to look for something diviner than the letter, which is often irrational and impossible.

Discrepancies in matters of fact, like the date of the imprisonment of John Baptist, were naturally the first to attract the notice of the critical inquirer. Different versions of the words of the Lord were readily accepted as complementary. But divergences in the reports of identical sayings must be recognized—and welcomed—as clues which lead up to the original. The good coin has often been restamped by an approved banker, before it was put into circulation. “By means of such various—not contrary—expressions we learn a most useful and very necessary lesson, that we ought to look for nothing in the words of each Evangelist, save the meaning which the words ought to serve ; that no one lies, if he say in other words what the speaker meant . . . Not in words only, but in all other symbols of minds, only the mind itself must be sought after.”<sup>3</sup>

The meaning set upon the teaching of the Master, of which Augustine here speaks, varied according to the needs

<sup>1</sup> Luke x. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Aug. *de Consensu Evv.*, ii. 67 : referring to the different accounts of the raising of Jairus' daughter.

or insight of the Scribes : *there are diversities of ministries*, even in the ministry of the Word, *and the same Lord*. As disciples, they had always found hard sayings therein, which baffled their growing intelligence : as Scribes taught of God, they tended naturally to add, or even substitute for the actual words, the meaning, as they conceived it, speaking as and only what their disciples also were able to contain. So they brought forth new things and old ; and the streams of tradition, which meet in the fourfold Gospel, received gradually their colour and their course. Additions for the purpose of elucidation of word or work are not necessarily fictions, as Origen is ready to admit : “ Scripture,” he says, “ interwove with the history what did not happen now little, now much, now things possible and now things impossible.” But some element of truth must be recognized in the view, which he advocated in common with the Gnostics :—“ that the Apostles admixed things belonging to the Law with the Saviour’s words ; and not only the Apostles, but also the Lord Himself spoke now from the Demiurge, now from the Intermediate, and now from the Supreme.”<sup>1</sup> The time for plain speech to those outside was come,<sup>2</sup> when Jesus rose from the dead.

In this work and that word the glory of grace and truth lurked obscure. Prophecy must illuminate fact till the speaker be revealed—*all Jesus*—as to those who fled despairing to Emmaus. Thus and thus is He proved very Man as thus and thus He was proved to be very God. Scriptural writers have pieced the evidence together.

All things are double one against another ;  
 and He did nothing imperfect :  
 One thing establisheth the good of another ;  
 and who shall be filled with beholding His glory ?

<sup>1</sup> Iren. *Adv. Haer.*, iii. 2, 2 ; cf. i. 7, 3. The letter of Ptolemaeus to Flora shows that Irenaeus gives a fair account of the Gnostic view.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Mark viii. 31 with iv. 11.