

Twelve thus depicted, without a primary reference to that great Apostle who, when even Peter was recreant and blind to the real significance of the doctrine he professed to follow, cut into the very rock foundation of the Church the true gospel of the redemption. No language ever framed can so express the whole heart secret of the Fourth Gospel as that great utterance of Paul, wherein, as against the inadequate apprehension Peter had shown of the true meaning of the cross, he pours out his soul's experience of Christ. If the Fourth Gospel be "the heart of Christ," the heart of the Fourth Gospel is Paul's confession of his faith in Galatians ii. 20: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, WHO LOVED ME (τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με), and gave Himself up for me." In this sense Paul, and whosoever has had Paul's experience—whosoever has thus seen the Lord, whether in the body or out of the body, whosoever has come to "know Him and the power of His resurrection"—is the "disciple whom Jesus loved."

B. W. BACON.

### *THE AUTHENTICITY AND ORIGINALITY OF THE FIRST GOSPEL.*

I. BEFORE the close of the second century of the Christian era the three Synoptic Gospels formed part of the undisputed Canon of the New Testament. And since that time until very recent years their authenticity has not been seriously questioned. At the present day the result of a very searching criticism has been to confirm the authenticity of St. Mark and St. Luke, but to place considerable doubt on the authorship of the Gospel attributed to St. Matthew, and this in spite of what seemed to earlier scholars indis-

putable evidence to the contrary. If the often cited, and now familiar words of Papias quoted by Eusebius (*H.E.* iii. 39) refer to a Hebrew Gospel of which the existing Greek Gospel is a version, the question of authenticity is set at rest and must be decided in favour of St. Matthew's authorship. But the perplexity begins with the interpretation of these words, which are as follows: *Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἐβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο. Ἑρμῆνευσεν δὲ αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος.* 'Matthew composed or compiled the *logia* in the Hebrew dialect. And every one interpreted them as he was able.'

In other passages Eusebius <sup>1</sup> cites Irenaeus and Origen <sup>2</sup> to the effect that St. Matthew wrote a Gospel for the Hebrews in their own language, and also states that "having preached the Gospel to the Hebrews, as he was about to go to others also, he delivered to them the Gospel as preached by him (τὸ κατ' αὐτὸν εὐαγγέλιον), thus making up for the loss of his presence in person."<sup>3</sup> He also mentions a report that Pantaenus having gone to preach to the Indians found that the Apostle St. Bartholomew had already left with them a copy of the Gospel according to St. Matthew written in Hebrew characters.<sup>4</sup>

From these passages the earlier commentators drew the conclusion that St. Matthew first composed his Gospel in Hebrew (no distinction being made between the *logia* mentioned by Papias and the Hebrew Gospel referred to by Irenaeus and Origen), and that afterwards either he himself or some scribe under his supervision translated that Gospel into Greek.

The discovery of the Oxyrhynchus "Sayings of Christ" or *logia*, however, caused a distinction to be made between the Papias *logia*, and the Hebrew Gospel referred to in

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *H. E.* v. 8. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 24. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* v. 10. 3.

the other passages. The *logia* were considered to be detached "Sayings of Christ" such as those contained in the Oxyrhynchus fragment without note or comment, and therefore needing explanation. This would account for the words added by Papias: "Every one interpreted them according to his ability" (*ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος*). Afterwards, it was thought, these 'words' of Christ were incorporated in the Gospel as we now have it.

As for the Hebrew Gospel according to St. Matthew, it has disappeared with the exception possibly of a few fragments; and it is not necessary for the purpose of this paper to discuss the identification with the Hebrew Gospel seen by Jerome at Caesarea or other questions which have arisen concerning it with one exception. That exception, however, is an important one. It has been assumed that the present Greek Gospel according to St. Matthew is a translation of the Hebrew Gospel, and that its authenticity depends on that fact. In the words of the most recent and certainly among the ablest editors of the first Gospel, "Our first Gospel was not originally written in Hebrew, nor is it likely that in its present form it is the work of an Apostle."<sup>1</sup>

The first of these two propositions may be assented to without involving the acceptance of the second. It may, however, be remarked in passing that no less an authority than Blass decides that "it is not necessary to admit that Matthew has given us only proverbs and speeches, but nothing or next to nothing of narratives. . . . There is no emphasis on 'sayings' in the passages quoted, as Zahn has well pointed out; the emphasis is chiefly on 'in the Hebrew tongue.'"<sup>2</sup> Dr. Blass proceeds to show

<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew in the International Critical Commentary, edited by W. C. Allen, p. lxxx.

<sup>2</sup> The *Expository Times*, August, 1907, p. 491.

by illustration from the Gospel that the Greek St. Matthew bears marks of translation—"one of several translations."

For the purpose of our argument, however, it may be conceded that the Papiian *logia* were detached sayings after the manner of the Oxyrhynchus papyri.

Then it is difficult to discard the evidence that St. Matthew also wrote a Gospel in the Hebrew or Aramaic tongue. No evidence could be more plainly stated, and there is nothing to make it improbable or to contradict it. But on the other hand, the evidence that St. Matthew is the author of the Greek Gospel as we now have it rests on grounds equally or almost equally convincing. From the very first his name has appeared with the other Synoptists as the author of the Gospel attributed to him; and no other name has ever been suggested to take his place. Again, the probability is great that one of the Apostles should have composed a Gospel; and no one of the Apostles could have been more fitted for the task than St. Matthew. His occupation as collector of dues and taxes from men of various nationalities and the necessity of keeping accounts and official records would tend to equip the future Evangelist for his sacred work. On the other hand Matthew, the publican, the member of a despised order, of whom no incident or spoken word has found a place in the Gospel narratives, is perhaps the least likely of the Apostolic body to have won the name of Evangelist unless it rested on fact.

But it is contended that because St. Matthew wrote the *logia* in Hebrew or Aramaic, and the *logia* in the Greek Gospel do not bear the mark of translation, therefore St. Matthew cannot be the author of the first synoptic Gospel.

In this way the evidence of Hebrew *logia* and a Hebrew Gospel by St. Matthew is brought to bear against the authenticity of the Greek Gospel.

The opinion of Dr. Blass in regard to the indications of translation in St. Matthew's Greek Gospel has been already cited. But putting aside this possibility, and granting for the sake of argument that the Greek Gospel according to St. Matthew is an original work, it seems to the present writer that it is still possible to maintain its authenticity on practically the same grounds as that on which the authenticity of the two other synoptic Gospels is maintained. Indeed the acknowledged fact of a Hebrew Gospel composed by this Evangelist is a powerful argument in favour of a similar, but independent work in Greek by the same author. Eusebius states as the motive for writing the Hebrew Gospel the Apostle's desire to console his converts for his absence by the possession of a Gospel in their own tongue. What then is more probable than that the same Evangelist should desire to render the same service to those "others" of whom the historian speaks (*ὡς ἤμελλεν καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέροισι ἰέναι*, *H.E.* iii. 24. 6)? It is indeed a pure conjecture that St. Matthew's literary work should have been confined to the Hebrew *logia* and Gospel, the existence of which is definitely attested. It is not only possible but *a priori* probable that he composed other *logia* and a Gospel in Greek even if we had not weighty external evidence of the fact.

It is the opinion of Zahn and of other scholars that in the Eusebian quotations the stress is to be laid on the words "in the Hebrew tongue" or "in their own dialect," the historian wishing to note, what was indeed an exceptional fact, that an Aramaic narrative of the life and acts of Christ should have been composed.<sup>1</sup>

But the most formidable objection to the authenticity

<sup>1</sup> So complete was the prevalence of the Greek language in early Christian literature that Döllinger (*Studies in European History*, p. 170), writing of the early Christian communities, asserts: "The liturgies and sermons, and their own early writings, were all exclusively Greek."

of the first Gospel is derived from the result of research into the synoptic relations of the first three Evangelists. These results have shown that nearly the whole of St. Mark's Gospel has been incorporated in the other two synoptic Gospels and, in the words of Mr. Allen,<sup>1</sup> "It is indeed not impossible, but it is very improbable that the Apostle should rely upon the work of another for the entire framework of this narrative."

No doubt, as Dr. J. A. Robinson remarks, "If a modern writer were to act thus we should give it the harsh name of plagiarism . . . but in the age with which we are dealing such appropriations were considered perfectly legitimate."<sup>2</sup>

But although some of our greatest Biblical scholars are convinced that St. Matthew and St. Luke had before them, as they wrote, the existing Gospel according to St. Mark, this cannot be accepted as a proved fact, and some of the divergencies and omissions are very difficult to explain on this hypothesis.

How far this is true can only be ascertained by a careful and elaborate examination of parallel passages. But a glance at that part of Rushbrooke's *Synopticon*, where the Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels is set forth, will show that it is quite easy to exaggerate the proportion of common matter. For instance, in the parallels, Mark iv. 35-41, Matthew viii. 18, 23-27, less than half is common matter, and some of the changes are unaccountable on the hypothesis of a written copy lying under the eye of the Evangelist. Why, for example, should St. Matthew change St. Mark's report of the words addressed to our Lord: *Διδάσκαλε, οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα*; to *Κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα*? St. Luke's report of the same cry has all the marks of independent inquiry: *'Επιστάτα, 'Επιστάτα, ἀπολλύμεθα*. Again why should St. Matthew prefer

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. lxxx.

<sup>2</sup> *The Study of the Gospels*, p. 28.

σεισμός μέγας to the Homeric λαίλαψ μεγάλη ανέμου of St. Mark ? And where did St. Luke get his still more vigorous κατέβη λαίλαψ ανέμου if not from a distinct authority ? In many other cases the correspondence is close, as in the parallels Mark viii. 1-9 and Matthew xv. 32-39. And in some the single occurrence of a rare verbal form incontestibly proves a common source, as the occurrence of ἀπεκατεστάθη in the parallels, Mark iii. 5, Matthew xii. 13, Luke vi. 10.

But this phenomenon of likeness and unlikeness, difficult of explanation on the supposition of a Marcan original, is precisely the result to be expected from an oral catechetical Gospel. That such was at any rate the beginning of the Gospel, we know from the account of the early Church given in Acts ii. 42, where we are told that the disciples continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine (διδαχή), which must have been centred in a narrative of the words and acts of Jesus, which for the purpose of transmission, and for assisting the memory of hearers, would presently assume a more or less fixed form. Now it cannot be doubted that St. Matthew was himself one of these Apostolic lecturers or teachers in the first days of the Church in Jerusalem ; one, therefore, to whom the *logia* discoverable in St. Mark's Gospel may in part be due. Nor is there anything in the Gospel attributed from the earliest ages to St. Matthew to make it unlikely to have formed the substance of his teaching at Jerusalem. That teaching may have been, and probably was, enlarged and enriched by the acquisition of other recollections, many of which in all probability came from St. Peter through the Marcan *logia*.

Such a conclusion, it seems to the present writer, would satisfy both the contents of tradition and the requirements of modern synoptical research. Both are deserving of respect. It is certainly not a time to treat lightly the voice of an ancient and undisputed tradition when in other fields

of research the tendency is not to discard but to confirm and verify the existence of legendary things and ancient civilizations. The throne of Minos and the arts of Crete are significant witnesses to the trustworthiness of tradition.

II. Apart from the question of authenticity there is another point on which we trust that the conclusions of recent criticism on the first Gospel will not be received without careful reconsideration. It is a point of literary appreciation. Our contention is that whether St. Matthew himself or some other gifted disciple of Christ composed this Gospel, the work which he accomplished entitles him to rank not as a mere "editor" or "redactor" but as an original writer of pre-eminent skill and influence. It is true, as has been observed above, that a great part of the Gospel is composed of matter common to St. Mark and St. Luke. That was inevitable in a work of this description. No disciple of Christ would essay to write a Gospel without endeavouring to incorporate the *ipsissima verba* of his Master. He would go to the highest sources possible. The probability that such sources may have been, in part at least, St. Matthew's own recollections has been suggested. But, as we have seen, incorporation of original documents was the usage of the time. It no more detracts from the originality of authorship than the use made by Virgil or Horace, or by Dante, or even by Shakespeare and Gibbon and by successive English historians of the authorities often quoted verbatim by those distinguished and original authors in their poems or historical narratives.

On this point it is of interest to cite some remarks of the late Professor Conington in his Introduction to Virgil. *Mutatis mutandis* they are closely applicable to the subject of this paper: "There is something almost unexampled in the state of feeling which at Rome, and in the Augustan age in particular, allowed palpable and avowed imitation



to claim the honour of poetic originality. . . . Striking as the phenomenon is, the circumstances of the case enable us readily to account for it. The Roman knew only of a single instance of a national literature in the world : it challenged his allegiance with an undisputed claim, and his only course seemed to be to conform to it, and endeavour, so far as he could, to reproduce it among his own people. . . . And yet there can be no doubt that Virgil ranked as an original poet in his own judgment no less than in that of his contemporaries, and that on the strength of these very appropriations, which would stamp a modern author with the charge of plagiarism.”<sup>1</sup> Like the Roman poet the Christian Evangelist had one source alone, which he was bound to incorporate in his work ; and like him does not thereby lose his claim to originality. For what constitutes originality in the author, and places him above the rank of “ editorship ” or “ redaction ” is the way in which he groups and presents his facts, and brings them to bear on the purpose for which the work was undertaken. And the test of originality is the impression created by the work, and its influence on succeeding generations. *Securus judicat* holds good of the *ordo saeculorum* as well as of the *orbis terrarum*. And both verdicts have been secured by St. Matthew. The Gospel which bears his name possesses that indefinable distinction which has given it an influence proper only to works of genius, or, as it is competent for us in this case to say, to inspired literature.

<sup>1</sup> *Vergili Opera*. Conington, vol. i. pp. 4 and 6. Compare also in reference to Dante: “Dante est un génie double, à la fois éclectique et original. . . . Vous voyez bien qu’il n’a rien créé, ou plutôt il a tout créé. C’est de la sorte que précèdent les inventeurs : chacun suit les éléments, dont ils se servent, personne ne sait le secret de leur mise en œuvre.” Labitte, *La Divine Comédie avant Dante*. (Cited in Longfellow’s translation of Dante, pp. 735, 736.)

It is indeed impossible to substantiate these points in the course of a short paper, but among the notes of originality and independence in the use of common matter may be named : definiteness of purpose ; grouping of subject matter ; choice of incidents and notes on their special significance in relation to the purpose of his Gospel.

The Gospel of St. Matthew is essentially a Gospel of the Kingdom. The Christ therein described is born King of the Jews, the promised heir of the house of David, who fulfils the prophetic picture of the world-wide kingdom of heaven, who triumphs in Jerusalem and reigns upon the cross.

Again, this Gospel is a message to the Jews explaining to them the true realization of their national destiny in Christ and the refutation of the false ideals and aspirations which had been set before them by their spiritual guides.

A comparison of parallelisms, with a word added here and a phrase omitted there, will show originality and purpose in St. Matthew's mode of presenting incidents. But it is perhaps in this Evangelist's manner of grouping sayings of our Lord and incidents in His life that the secret of his genius chiefly lies. Such juxtaposition focuses the teaching or emphasizes a particular aspect of our Lord's life and character with a concentrated force which has pressed the lesson home on countless generations. It will be sufficient to note three examples of this characteristic of St. Matthew's style : The Parables of the Kingdom in chapter xiii. ; the denunciation of the Pharisees in chapter xxiii. ; and above all the masterly exposition of our Lord's teaching in St. Matthew's report of the Sermon on the Mount, equally a mark of evangelistic genius, whether we are to record it as an inspired recollection or as a disciple's ordered statement of doctrine collected from sayings uttered on different occasions.

No argument, such as has been attempted in this paper,

can be considered complete without a full and careful examination of the text of the Gospel and citations to prove the points adduced ; but perhaps what has been advanced may lead some to hesitate before rejecting St. Matthew's claim to the authorship of the Gospel or to its rank as a work of original, if inspired genius.      ARTHUR CARE.

### MARRIAGE PROBLEMS AT CORINTH.

(1 CORINTHIANS VII. ETC.)

THE letter which the Corinthian church had addressed to St. Paul about its difficulties probably began with the topic of marriage ; at any rate, it is in connexion with that problem that the Apostle first makes mention of the letter (1 Cor. vii. 1). There had been much difference of opinion at Corinth. If they could have brought their own wise heads into agreement, they would not have troubled their founder with questions ; their words breathe no spirit of modesty. Usually, emphasis has been laid upon the probable drift of Corinthian opinion towards ascetic condemnation of marriage ; lately, however, Professor Sir W. Ramsay has argued that there must have been a party at Corinth who desired to impose marriage as a universal duty, and that St. Paul's decisions are mainly intended to bring that party to a better mind. We may content ourselves with recognizing that there must have been extreme antagonisms in Corinthian opinion, and that it is hardly likely any of the brethren had hit the precise happy mean which St. Paul indicates, or even that other central line which modern Protestantism might prefer. And we might describe the extreme Corinthian views as follows : on the one hand, a party holding that *marriage is dangerous if not polluting* ; on the other hand, an "enlightened" party holding that *celibacy is contemptible*.