

know that that was of the glory, the outward manifestation of majesty, which He had with the Father. The clause which follows tells us how—‘taking the form of a servant.’ Not ‘and took.’ It is not an additional statement. It is the explanation of the statement that has just been made. It is what the emptying consisted in. ‘Taking the form of a servant.’ The same word *morphé* is used again, and its meaning must be the same. He had the form of God, He now adopted the form of a servant. That is to say, He was, and continued to be, God by nature; He now added the nature of man to that. And here is the place to notice how unmistakably this great passage asserts at once the true divinity and the true humanity of our Lord. He was originally, and He continued still to be by nature, God—that is the assertion of the divinity. He took upon Him the nature of man—that is the assertion of the

humanity. An accurate exegesis makes the one as emphatic and impregnable as the other.

It is true that the apostle does not say at once ‘taking the form of a man.’ He says ‘taking the form a servant.’ But the meaning is the same. As Bishop Bull has already explained it, he first tells us that Christ emptied Himself; if you ask how, he answers by ‘taking the form of a servant’; and if, again, you ask how He took the form of a servant, he answers by ‘being made in the likeness of man.’ He chooses servant intentionally at the first. For he wishes to emphasise the depth of the humility. He even says a ‘slave.’ It is a bold word; almost offensively bold to feeling, but not too bold for the fact. For the slave is he who is absolutely obedient to the will of his master. And Christ was obedient—He was obedient even unto death; yea, to the death of the Cross.

The Wisdom of Jesus the Messiah.

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AMONG the apocryphal books of the Old Testament is the famous Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus. This book of wisdom was regarded as canonical by the Hellenistic Jews, and so was included in the Greek version of Holy Scripture. It was also quoted as canonical by many of the Palestinian and Babylonian Jews. The Roman Catholics follow the prevalent opinion of the ancient Church, and use it as a part of Holy Scripture. The Lutherans and Anglicans separate it from the canon of Scripture, but recommend its devout use. The Reformed Churches, and more especially the Puritans, abstain from using it, out of fear lest it should encroach upon the sacred enclosure of the canon. For this reason this precious book of ethical wisdom is little known among us.

The Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach belongs to a special type of Hebrew literature, which is called the literature of Wisdom. It is the nearest approach which the Hebrews made to the philosophy of the Greeks. It is not metaphysical or

speculative, but rather ethical and practical. This wisdom found little expression in the times of the prophets. It seems to have flourished after the decay of prophecy. In the Old Testament it is represented in the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Job, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes; in the Apocrypha, in the Book of Tobit, and the Wisdom of Ben Sirach, of the second century B.C., and the Wisdom of Solomon, of the early years of the first century of our era. This wisdom also appears in the earliest tract of the Mishna, in the Sayings of the Fathers, of the first and second centuries of our era. It is also found in the New Testament, in the Epistle of James, and, in a measure, also in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Prologue of the Gospel of John. It constitutes an important part of the teaching of Jesus the Messiah as reported in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It is this Wisdom of Jesus the Messiah, our Saviour, that we are to consider.

The Wisdom of Jesus the Messiah has been put in its historical setting, in the development of the

literature of Wisdom, in order to show that it is our purpose, not to set forth the Wisdom of Jesus in the material sense, as an attribute of the perfections of Him 'in Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden' (Col. ii. 3), but, in the formal sense, to show that Jesus used the forms, methods, and essential principles of the Hebrew literature of Wisdom.

The Wisdom of Jesus is not at present accessible to us in any writing which gives it apart from His other teaching. But it is altogether probable that His Wisdom was originally given in written form by itself; and that this was indeed the earliest of the Gospels, prior to any of our four Gospels, and one of the chief of the sources used by our Matthew and Luke. The earliest Christian tradition, which goes back to the words of Papias, is that Matthew the Apostle wrote a Gospel in the Hebrew language. This bore, doubtless, the Hebrew title Debarim, דְּבָרִים. In Greek the title was known as Logia. Debarim has a wider meaning than words, which is its usual translation, and the nearest equivalent to it. It is used frequently in the Old Testament in the titles of writings. Thus the Ten Commandments are known in Hebrew as the Ten Words (Ex. xxxiv. 1 (J); Deut. iv. 13, x. 7). The Prophecies of Amos and Jeremiah have in their titles the Words of Amos (Amos i. 1), the Words of Jeremiah (Jer. i. 1). The Chronicler uses it in the titles of several of his sources: Words of Shemaiah, of Jehu, of Samuel, of Nathan, of Gad, of Nehemiah, of the Seers (1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29, xii. 15, xx. 34, xxxiii. 18, 19; Neh. i. 1). We cannot be certain, however, whether, in these cases, acts as well as words may not be included, especially as we have דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים (1 Chron. xxvii. 24), for the written chronicles of a monarch. In the literature of Wisdom it is used in titles and sub-titles with reference to the wise in general (Prov. i. 6, xxii. 17; Eccles. ix. 17, xii. 11); or to wise men in particular, such as Agur (Prov. xxx. 1); Lemuel (Prov. xxxi. 1); Koheleth (Eccles. i. 1). דְּבָר, in Hebrew, is primarily a sentence rather than a word,¹ and so is constantly used in the law codes for the earlier sentences of command all beginning with 'Thou shalt not' or 'Thou shalt';² and also for the brief, terse sentences so characteristic of Hebrew

wisdom. The presumption from usage, therefore, is that the Hebrew Debarim, the original of the traditional Logia of Matthew, consisted of just these sentences of Wisdom from the lips of Jesus.

It is in dispute among scholars whether the Logia, after the supposed example of the writings referred to by the Chronicler, contained acts of Jesus as well as words; or whether, after the example of all other references in the Old Testament, it contained sentences only. My opinion is in favour of the latter. For the first and third Gospels evidently rely mainly upon the original Gospel of Mark for the acts of Jesus. But it is agreed that the words of Jesus constituted the characteristic feature of the Logia, whether it contained acts or not.

I shall not attempt to limit the Words in the Logia to the Wisdom of Jesus, although it is quite evident that the common material of the three Synoptic Gospels has little if anything from the Logia; and that the material common to Matthew and Luke, and derived by both evangelists from the Logia, consists chiefly of the sentences of Jesus, which may be classified under the head of Wisdom. The great prophetic discourse of Jesus and the prophetic woes against the Pharisees are common to the three Synoptists. Only three of the parables are common to the three Gospels, two common to Matthew and Luke, one peculiar to Mark, ten peculiar to Matthew, and eighteen peculiar to Luke. In view of these facts we cannot be certain that either the parables or these prophetic discourses of Jesus were in the Hebrew Matthew. It is, however, agreed by all that the sentences of Jesus' Wisdom were therein, and that they were its characteristic feature. Therefore we may conclude that, whatever else the primitive Gospel contained, it contained the Wisdom of Jesus.

It is not difficult to discern the Wisdom of Jesus in the Gospels, and there is little danger of mistaking this material for any other, because its types are so well defined in the other literature of Wisdom.

I shall endeavour to bring out clearly and strongly in this series of articles the Wisdom of Jesus; but I would be understood as not thereby depreciating any other type of the teaching of Jesus. For the teaching of Jesus is wonderfully comprehensive. No such comprehensiveness of form and method, as well as material, can be

¹ See *Oxford Hebrew Lexicon*.

² Briggs, *Higher Criticism of Hexateuch*, new edition, p. 142.

found in any other teacher, whether ethnic, Jewish, or Christian. Jesus seems to have gathered to Himself the lines of instruction that had come down from the most ancient times and those which were active in His own time.

Jesus was a Prophet greater than any that preceded Him. His apocalyptic prophecy (Mark xiii. ; Matt. xxiv. ; Luke xxi.) carries on the line of apocalyptic prophecy of the Old Testament and the Pseudepigrapha, and rises to grander heights. His prophetic woes upon the Pharisees (Mark xii. ; Matt. xxiii. ; Luke xx.) are grander than Isaiah's woes upon the wicked rulers of his time (Isa. v.). There is more predictive prophecy in the teaching of Jesus than in any book of prophecy in the Old Testament.¹ From this point of view Jesus may be called the greatest of the prophets.

Jesus expounded the law codes of the Old Testament and the traditional interpretations in such a manner that He easily rose superior to all the lawyers, who tested Him with the most difficult questions. He used the methods of argument of the rabbinical schools, and vanquished the Pharisees with their own weapons. Jesus was the greatest of rabbis.²

Jesus taught the people in the use of the most beautiful stories that were ever told. There are fine specimens of the Haggada in the Talmud and other early Jewish writings. There are fine specimens in the stories of the Apocrypha, such as Judith, Tobit, Susanna, Zerubbabel, the Maccabee Mother. There are finer still in Ruth, Jonah, Esther, and Daniel of the Old Testament. But none of these can equal the parables of Jesus, which are easily the choicest gems of fiction. Jesus was the greatest teacher of the people.³

If we regard the Gospel of John as in any sense genuine, and look upon the discourses therein contained as chiefly esoteric, then Jesus was a most profound theologian, the Master of doctrinal teaching.

I do not underrate or depreciate any of these other forms of the teaching of Jesus when I strive to show that Jesus was the greatest of the wise men. He Himself said, on one occasion, 'The queen of the South came from the ends of the

earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon is here' (Luke xi. 31).

Jesus was recognised as a unique teacher by the people. 'They were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as having authority, and not as the scribes' (Matt. vii. 29 ; Mark i. 22 ; Luke iv. 32). He spake out of His own knowledge and experience words that were fresh and powerful. His words were life and light ; were spirit and truth.

He presented Himself to His disciples as the unique Teacher when He warned them—

' Be not ye called Rabbi :
For One is your Rabbi ;
And all ye are brethren.

Call ye no one Father :
For One is your Father,
He which is in heaven.

Be not ye called Master :
For One is your Master ;
The greatest among you is your servant.'

Matt. xxiii. 8-12.

This beautiful piece of Wisdom leads us at once into the heart of our subject. It is of great artistic beauty. In the Hebrew original⁴ each line was a trimeter measured by three beats of the accent. The lines are organised in three strophes of three lines each. The number three determines its artistic structure, and it is, accordingly, the cube of three ; three strophes of three lines of three accents.⁵

Jesus put His Wisdom in this poetic form for the reason that Wisdom had been given in the artistic form of Gnostic poetry for centuries, and was so used in His time. If He was to use such Wisdom, He must use its forms. Jesus uses its stereotyped forms, and uses them with such extraordinary freshness, fertility, and vigour, that His Wisdom transcends all others in its artistic expression.

The Greek forms, which alone are preserved to us in the Gospels, were translated from an original Hebrew.⁶ Sometimes this translation mars the

⁴ In translating into an unknown original, we cannot be sure of the exact words that were used, but we may come sufficiently near for our present purpose.

⁵ For my views of the structure of Hebrew poetry, see *Biblical Study*, pp. 264 seq.

⁶ For many years I held that the original was Aramaic (see *Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 70). But a special study of all the supposed material of the Logia has since convinced me that

¹ See Briggs' *Messiah of the Gospels*, p. 72.

² Briggs' *Biblical Study*, p. 309.

³ My article, 'Works of the Imagination in the Old Testament,' in *North American Review*, February 1897.

beauty of the original; and the measures are destroyed by the additions or substitutions which the Evangelists have made for the sake of explanations. This example is exactly like the original, save in two lines, where the Evangelist, in translating into Greek, has added to the original, 'call ye no one Father,' the qualifying words, ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, 'on the earth'; and to, 'for One is your master,' the explanation, ὁ χριστός, 'the Messiah'; which additions make the lines too long, and put them out of harmony with the others. In other respects, the symmetry of the original has been preserved in the Greek.¹

I. THE TRISTICH.

Compare with these three triplets of Jesus two specimens of single triplets from the Sayings of the Jewish Fathers²—

'Be deliberate in judgment,
And raise up many disciples,
And make a fence to the Law.'—i. 9.

'Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not;
But go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity;
Better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.'—Prov. xxvii. 10.

There are only eight triplets in the Book of Proverbs (xxii. 29, xxv. 8, 13, 20, xxvii. 10, 22, xxviii. 10, xxx. 20). They are not frequent in other literature of Wisdom. Jesus uses them frequently, and with fine artistic effect.

The following is an example of a pair of triplets:—

I.

'Ask, and it shall be given you;
Seek, and ye shall find;
Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

II.

For every one that asketh receiveth;
And he that seeketh findeth;
And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.'
Matt. vii. 7, 8.

the original was rather Hebrew. I have no space to give the history of this discussion, or to give my reasons for a change of opinion. Indeed, for my present purpose, it is immaterial which view one adopts.

¹ διδάσκαλος is only a translation of רַבִּי, רַבִּי, and by no means implies a different word in the Hebrew original.

² In the main I follow the translation of Taylor's *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, and the Revised Version of Holy Scripture.

This is the oldest and most famous of the sayings—pre-Christian without doubt. It is a trimeter triplet. The following is a tetrameter triplet, measured by four beats of the accent:—

'Be ye of the disciples of Aaron:
Loving Peace and pursuing Peace,
Loving mankind and bringing them nigh.'—i. 13.

The following is from the Book of Proverbs, a pentameter triplet of five beats of the accent, with cæsuras:—

'Seest thou a man diligent in his business:
He shall stand before kings,
He shall not stand before mean men.'—xxii. 29.

The second and third lines constitute an antithetical couplet progressive to the first line.

The following example from Proverbs reverses the arrangement; for it begins with an antithetical couplet of advice, and concludes with a line giving the reason for the advice:—

The great characteristic principle of Hebrew poetry is its parallelism. These triplets have each three lines of synonymous parallelism. But the second triplet is in synthetic parallelism to the first, because it gives the reason for the first; and there is exact correspondence of reason with exhortation in each of the three lines of the second strophe, compared with each of the three lines of the first strophe. These two triplets have been preserved in their original form in the Greek translation.

Here is a single triplet—

'The foxes have holes,
And the birds of the heaven have nests;
But the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'
Matt. viii. 20; Luke ix. 59.

This is composed of a synonymous couplet, followed by a line antithetical to it.

I shall now give three triplets, in which we have to find the original by the application of the principles of textual criticism to the three different versions of the original given in Matt. v. 29, 30, xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43-48—

1. ' If thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off :
It is better for thee, maimed, to enter into Life,
Than to have two hands and be cast into Gehenna.
2. And if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off :
It is better for thee, halt, to enter into Life,
Than to have two feet and be cast into Gehenna.
3. And if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out :
It is better for thee, with one eye, to enter into Life,
Than to have two eyes and be cast into Gehenna.'

These three triplets are tetrameters, with four beats of the accent. They are three synonymous triplets, in which there is exact correspondence between the three, line for line throughout. It is interesting to note how the original is treated in the several versions. Mark adds to Gehenna, in the first triplet, the explanatory, 'into the unquenchable fire';¹ and to the third, 'where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'² Matthew (xviii. 8) substitutes, in his consolidation of the first and second triplets, 'everlasting fire'³ for Gehenna, and in the third triplet enlarges Gehenna into 'Gehenna of fire.'⁴ It is evident that these changes were all made in order to explain the Hebrew Gehenna to Gentile readers. Similarly, on the other side, Mark substitutes for Life, in the third triplet, the explanatory, 'kingdom of God.'⁵ Furthermore, Matthew (v. 27-30) gives 'right hand' for 'hand,' and 'right eye' for 'eye.' There are other changes in one or more of the versions by paraphrasé, substitution,

condensation, or enlargement; but these may be similarly explained. This shows us that the Evangelists here, as elsewhere, were not so much concerned to give us the words of Jesus in their exact original literary form as to give them in their essential meaning, and that they did not hesitate to paraphrase, enlarge, or condense for this purpose. The forms of Hebrew Wisdom could have had little value for Gentile readers. They would have made a bad impression upon the Greeks, whose poetry was wrought out in such elaborate, nice, and beautiful forms, and who might have been deterred by their prejudice against the Hebrew poetic form from giving heed to the essential contents.

An interesting specimen, to illustrate the method of the Evangelists in dealing with the original Hebrew of the Wisdom of Jesus, is given in Matt. xii. 34-35; Luke vi. 45. The original was, doubtless—

'The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things;
And the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things:
For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.'

Matthew adapts this Logion to the context, in which he uses it by transposing the third line and making it the first line, and prefixes his favourite mode of denunciation, 'Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?'⁶

Luke inserts in the first line 'of the heart'⁷ after 'treasure,' giving the interpretation before the application in his third line. It was evidently not in the original.

2. THE DISTICH.

We have begun with triplets because it was easy to enter into our study of the Wisdom of Jesus through these. But, logically, we should have begun with couplets; for the couplet is the

most characteristic of the types of Hebrew Wisdom. The Book of Proverbs, in its first great collection (x.-xxii. 16), gives 376 couplets. The second great collection (xxv.-xxix.) is also composed chiefly of couplets, although specimens of other forms occur.

The couplets of Proverbs are so familiar, that I

¹ εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἀσβεστον.

² ὅπου ὁ σκόληξ ἀπὸ τῆς οὐλοῦσας καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

³ εἰς πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον.

⁴ γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.

⁵ εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁶ He also uses ἀγαθὰ and πονηρὰ for the τὰ ἀγαθὰ and τὰ

πονηρὰ of Luke; but these are only different renderings of the same original, הרע, הטב; הטבה.

⁷ τῆς καρδίας.

shall not give any of them. I shall limit myself to two specimens from Ben Sira.

This is antithetical—

‘The way of sinners is made plain with stones,
But at the end thereof is the pit of Sheol.’—xxi. 10.

The following is synonymous :—

‘A merchant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong,
And a huckster shall not be freed from sin.’—xxvi. 29.

The following piece is an antithetical pentameter, and the next a comparative hexameter :—

‘Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance :
But from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.’—Matt. xxv. 29.

‘They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick :
I came not to call the righteous, but, on the contrary, sinners.’—Mark ii. 17; Matt. ix. 12; Luke v. 31.

Matthew inserts between the two lines of this couplet a citation from Hos. vi. 6, which is given also in Matt. xii. 7. It is an apt citation, but it is improbable that Jesus made it, at least here. He certainly would not have broken up His couplet of Wisdom in this way. It is, furthermore, not given in connexion with this couplet, by Mark or Luke. Luke adds after sinners, ‘to repentance’; but that is not in the other Gospels, and is doubtless an interpretation. Jesus apparently had a wider call in mind than repentance. The context suggests rather salvation in its broadest sense.

There are two couplets in Matt. v. 17–18 which were gathered by the Evangelist from two different occasions. He uses them to introduce his series of Logia with reference to the relations of Jesus to the Law. The first is an antithetical tetrameter—

‘Think not that I came to destroy the Law :
I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.’

This Evangelist added ‘the prophets,’ in order to make the statement refer to the whole Old Testament. This addition destroys the measure of the line, and has nothing in the context of this discourse or the experience of Jesus to justify it. He was constantly charged with violating and destroying the Law, but nowhere with destroying the

Jesus uses these couplets more frequently than Ben Sira, but not so frequently as the Book of Proverbs. These examples will suffice—

‘Whosoever¹ exalteth himself shall be humbled,
But whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted.’
Matt. xxiii. 12; Luke viii. 4.

This is an antithetical trimeter.

‘Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation :
The spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is weak.’
Mark xiv. 38; Matt. xxvi. 41.

This is a synthetic pentameter.

prophets. The insertion is doubtless in accordance with the Mind of Jesus; but it is improbable that He used the word here.

The second couplet is a synthetic tetrameter. It appears also in a different context in Luke xvi. 17. The original of the two was probably—

‘Till heaven and earth pass away,
One Yodh shall not pass away from the Law.’

The first Evangelist adds ἡ μία κερία, but this is not in Luke. It makes the line too long, and it really weakens the Logion by exaggeration.²

These are specimens of a large number. Some such are in the Gospel of Mark, and a few of them may be seen embedded in the Gospel of John. They are terse sentences, easily remembered in connexion with events, and therefore they found their way into these Gospels, which seem not to have used the Logia.

¹ ὅστις δὲ ὑψώσει of Matthew, and πᾶς ὁ ὑψών of Luke, represent the same Hebrew original, דַּקְרִימָה. Delitzsch rightly uses the participle in both cases, but needlessly inserts לֵל before it in Luke. The force of the gnome is given more accurately by Luke as a general truth than by Matthew, who refers to a future reward in a dogmatic way.

² The slight differences in the introductory clause, εὐς ἂν παρελθῆ of Matthew, εὐκόπωτερον δὲ ἐστὶν παρελθεῖν of Luke, originated from the necessity of adapting this Logion to different contexts.

(The Second Article to follow.)