

And still does the answer come back to us :

'Blind! I live, I love, I reign; and all the nations through
With the thunder of my judgments even now are ringing.'

'Be patient; stablish your hearts; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.'¹

Before I went into the ministry I used to like to go into the engine-house of the works where I was engaged. We

¹ G. Jackson.

had there what were called 'horizontal,' two of them, working like two mighty arms, each 600 horse power. It was something to stand and watch those mighty arms, moving almost in silence, and doing all the driving work of that big firm. It was an inspiration to stand and watch them. But out of sight there was the engine bed, high blocks of stone, cemented together, and if you moved one of those stones, the great arms would pull the place to pieces in a minute. Fixed and settled you had all that might fulfilling its purpose in silence. It is when the soul is fixed immovably to God that it can do all its work, and it is only then.²

² J. Whitehead.

Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR WRIGHT, D.D., VICE-PRESIDENT OF QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

AFTER seventeen years of careful deliberation Dr. Sanday and some members of his 'Seminar' have issued a volume of essays. Had they been unanimous in supporting the 'two document hypothesis,' or had they agreed about the nature and contents of the document which they call 'Q,' they might have caused considerable anxiety to the upholders of the oral hypothesis. But as one of them (Dr. Bartlet) issues a 'minority report,' in which he repudiates the two document hypothesis as far as 'Q' is concerned, and pronounces it inadequate with respect to St. Mark; while another (Mr. N. P. Williams) declares that the simplest explanation of St. Luke's omissions is that 'he omitted them because they were not in his copy of St. Mark'; while a third (Mr. Streeter) writes that "'Matthew"¹ and St. Luke would each have been a catechist before he became an Evangelist, and each would look least closely to his written source where he knew best his materials by heart,—I for one am relieved to find that truths for which I have been contending during twenty-one years, have made such progress towards acceptance in the sister University, and I gladly rush into the fray to assist the independent thinkers with whom my sympathy lies.

And first, to show goodwill, let me supplement Dr. Sanday's account of the conditions under which the Gospels were written by two suggestions, one

¹ The word 'Matthew' in inverted commas is used for brevity to signify the author of our first Gospel. Critics are now generally agreed in holding that Gospel in its present form to be the work of an unknown author.

of which he has perhaps overlooked, the other he has not cared to record. (1) The ancients had neither spectacles nor magnifying glasses. Since, therefore, some of them were admittedly men of sixty or upwards, it is reasonable to assume that their eyesight was imperfect. They could read a MS. when all was plain, but a blur or a blot would baffle them. In this way a believer in documents may most easily account for St. Luke's rendering of 8¹⁴ and of several other passages. (2) The ancients had no law of copyright. If a man possessed a MS. and took pains to correct it, his corrections might be accepted and would actually drive out the original readings. In this way Cod. C of the Gospels underwent a grammatical revision, and Cod. D was shamelessly harmonized. There is therefore nothing strange in Dr. Sanday's contention, that our St. Mark is not derived from the book which St. Mark wrote, or from that copy of it which St. Luke and 'Matthew' made use of, but from a corrected copy which has superseded the original. I submit, however, that the loss of the last page of St. Mark points rather to the fact that his Gospel was not copied till St. Mark was dead. Nor is this surprising, for its short and severe chronicle could ill compete with the fuller and more attractive history which was current in Rome orally. If so, the revision must have been made by St. Mark himself, when he resolved to publish, or by some literary expert whose professional skill he employed. That there was such a revision is supported by the weighty authority of Sir John Hawkins, who

writes: 'There are strong marks of a compiler's hand in our second Gospel,' and surely my doctrine of a trito-Mark is simpler and more probable than Dr. Sanday's of a revision by a stranger. St. Mark's anxiety to make his work acceptable fully accounts for the thorough overhauling to which it has been subjected. But what motive could induce the mere possessor of the MS. to spend so much labour upon it? The changes are not dogmatic, but literary. An author's vanity (if I may use the term without offence) will explain them, but an outsider would have small vanity to move him. 'Matthew' and St. Luke revised their work before publishing it, with equal pains.

Sir John would be ready to admit the doctrine of a proto-Mark, 'if he could discover any appreciable linguistic differences in different parts of (St. Mark's) Gospel.' But why should he require such differences or expect to find them? The proto-Mark was, I presume, the outcome of St. Peter's teaching and of St. Mark's translating during the early period before St. Paul carried off St. Mark to act as Chazzan on the first missionary journey. But St. Mark abruptly returned to Jerusalem and presumably resumed his translations there. Thus the deutero-Mark was the work of the same author (St. Peter), and the same translator (St. Mark), within a year or less of the completion of the proto-Mark. It finally underwent the same revision at the hands of St. Mark himself or of his literary expert. What room is there for any other differences than might arise from a little of that practice which makes perfect? Take a similar case. Jane Austen wrote three of her novels within three years. Who would expect to find literary differences between them? There might be such, if a candid friend or a curt reviewer had pointed out, for example, her blunders in the use of pronouns. If not, those blunders would be repeated, as in fact they are. Her mistakes in spelling were corrected by the printer, to remind us that even in the case of the Gospels we do not possess exactly the original text. On the whole, I see no reason to abandon the doctrine of a proto-Mark. It seems to me, as to Professor Stanton and to Mr. N. P. Williams, to be the simplest, if not the only possible solution of a complex problem. Dr. Sanday's persistent and pronounced hostility to it is remarkable.

It is, in my opinion, a capital fault in this volume that not a word is said in it about children and

their needs. Yet we can never understand the origin of the Gospels, unless we consider the children. The Church has always been zealous for religious education. In this respect, as in many others, the Apostles copied the synagogue, which was a school as much as a Church. Every synagogue had a Chazzan, who taught the boys during the week and waited upon the adults on the Sabbath. The boys, however, were his chief charge, for, if they were neglected, the cause of Judaism was lost and religion would have expired in a few generations. Now education in the East consisted in learning by heart. There was simply no other method. Jewish boys were taught to repeat the Law; Christian boys had some further lessons in the Gospels. Thus a body of Gospel teaching accumulated, which every boy knew in boyish fashion—lazily and imperfectly—but the Chazzan knew it perfectly. There are plenty of clergy even now, who can repeat the Church Catechism without missing or misplacing a word. And so it becomes impossible to maintain, what in this volume is often asserted or assumed, that when 'Matthew' or St. Luke preserve a *logion verbatim*, they cannot be trusting to oral tradition, but must needs be copying from a book. Close correspondence in wording merely proves close contact with the original teachers: diversity shows either that they followed a different Greek version (Papias says that several were in use), or that they received the record after it had passed through many minds and memories, every one of which distorted it a little. For in first learning changes are made; in later stages there is more fidelity. I recently showed (*THE EXPOSITORY TIMES*, xxi. 212) that Professor Stanton in his elaborate work on the Gospels has made the portentous mistake of leaving the children of the important Church at Jerusalem and in all the Syriac-speaking congregations without any history of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection for forty years. So fatal is it to concentrate attention on men and women but neglect the children. Grown-up men are catechized sometimes. In a negro school which I inspected at Philadelphia some grey heads were present, but they were the least promising of the scholars. No experienced teacher would advise a man of forty to learn by heart.

The words 'conflate' and 'conflation' occur many times in this volume, but the art of conflation is not fully discussed, as its intrinsic

importance demands. That 'Matthew' makes huge confluents, which cannot have been found in 'Q,' is freely conceded, but that St. Luke also systematically conflates is, I think, only once asserted. Dr. Bartlet prefers to think with Dr. Stanton, that St. Luke was little more than a copyist, fortunate enough to have his work prepared for him by Philip the Evangelist or by others. Sir William Ramsay, however, has vindicated for St. Luke the claim to be a first-rate literary historian. The number of such artists was limited, and it seems more probable that St. Luke, who was capable of doing the work, actually did it, than that he trusted to others. That he had kept a commonplace book and entered into it all the fragments of deutero-Marcan or other matter which reached him, and worked them up at last into discourses, is far simpler than to imagine that so many *logia* were found in two sources. If St. Luke had them before him in his copy of St. Mark, why did not he use that copy to put them in their proper order? They are invariably misplaced.

Fragments are as numerous in the Gospels as my old pupil the Regius Professor of Hebrew in his forthcoming book will show them to be in Isaiah. The use of catchwords is as great in the Gospels as in the Prophets and Psalms, but no notice is taken of them in this book. Questions like these are, I venture to assert, more likely to reward the worker than the 'futile' attempt to reconstruct 'Q.' The documentary hypothesis neglects the genesis of the Gospels, only beginning to work at them after 70 A.D., when the most interesting phases have gone by. Let any one ask himself what happened when St. Mark sat down to write; and, if he admits that a document is simply oral tradition committed to writing, he will only have to work backwards to become a believer in the oral hypothesis. While I, on the other hand, concede freely that Matthew and St. Luke began their work of consolidation by committing all the traditions to writing, for, unless they had written records, I do not see how they could manipulate them as they have done. No one, unless it be Shakespeare, writes a good book without great destruction of paper.

Dr. Sanday insists upon the necessity of limiting the length of a book. He roundly asserts that books must be written to scale. This idea is not new, but has often been asserted in the last decade, first, I think, by Dean Armitage Robinson. St.

Luke, I venture to say, is much more likely in this matter to have followed the use of the synagogue than the dictation of his bookbinder. In the synagogue the whole Law is now written on one roll. There is a presumption that it was so in the first century. At any rate, Lk 4¹⁷ seems to assert that the prophecy of Isaiah was inscribed on one roll. Some doubt may possibly be felt about the exact meaning of the common text of that verse, for 'a roll of the prophet Isaiah' may mean that Isaiah consisted of several rolls—two or three volumes. But the Western reading, 'And there was given to him the prophet Isaiah, and he opened and read,' has much to recommend it. It is not the work of a harmonist, and therefore cannot be summarily rejected. It is short and sufficient, while the common text is prosy and conventional. It leaves no doubt that one roll contained the whole book. Now Isaiah has 66 chapters against St. Luke's 24. In a modern Bible he covers 104 pages, while St. Luke covers 40. He occupies, therefore, a roll two and a half times as great as St. Luke's, and gives us reason to maintain that stationers then, as now, were ready to sell you as many sheets of papyrus, cut to size, as you desired. Bookbinders also would take your sheets, when transcribed and numbered, glue them together, fasten them to a roller, smooth them with pumice, add a title, and enclose them in a case. Why not? Does any one believe that in Hellenic synagogues Genesis, Exodus, and other books were divided into two volumes each? Yet they are much longer than St. Luke's Gospel.

Again, the medieval picture of the four Evangelists writing their Gospels, which Professor Sanday has put for his frontispiece, is interesting as showing how authors worked in the West at the time of Charles the Great: it must, I am afraid, be pronounced worthless for illustrating work in the East during the apostolic period. Certainly the Apostles understood the use of a chair, for Isaiah speaks of the throne of God and St. Paul of the judgment seat of Christ. Roman magistrates also had chairs of state, and the chancel of a synagogue had a semicircle of chairs for the Rabbis. But chairs were not used in common life. Men reclined at meals on mats. Students squatted on a carpet. I have a photograph of a Jerusalem teacher and his pupils so placed, and I have never seen a student in the East occupy any other position. In the Coptic Church at Cairo the Patriarch kindly

supplied me with a chair, but he sent a choir-boy to borrow it from an Englishman's house, there being no such article of furniture in the church. As for tables, the floor makes an ample table; that and their knees are all the table that they possess. Low tables were used by the wealthy in imitation of Roman custom at the triclinium, but not in ordinary households. Nor were the ancients so careless in copying as the exigencies of Dr. Sanday's hypothesis makes him suppose. The scribes copied the Law with exactness, if not with the minute precision to which they afterwards attained. Tatian, in composing his Diatessaron, had the same task as that which confronted St. Luke, with the added difficulty of translating, but he performed it with creditable accuracy.

Dr. Bartlet does not tell us why he deems it certain that St. Luke had St. Mark's Gospel in writing before him as well as the oral record which he regularly preferred. The law of parsimony seems to militate against that idea, which, I suppose, is put forward from the common belief that oral tradition could not furnish the order, though it might suffice for the words. That idea has been often refuted. Once grip the fact that St. Luke frequently reproduces the proto-Mark, though St. Mark himself has abandoned it, and many of Dr. Bartlet's difficulties disappear.

Again, the editorial work of an ancient author was very serious. Think how Livy must have corrected his crude authorities to reduce them to literary form and infuse into them the graces of his inimitable style. Horace bids a beginner to take abundance of time, keeping back the work eight years for revision and polishing. Pliny the younger complains of a friend that he is using the file too freely: let him publish without further delay, or the graces of his work will be destroyed. There is abundance of editorial change in 'Matthew' and St. Luke, partly for theological reasons, to smooth away difficulties and give no handle to the enemy, partly for stylistic changes or to connect paragraphs. It is the first duty of a critic to distinguish editorial work and hold it cheaper than that which rests on sources.

There were two kinds of oral tradition—(1) the formal lesson committed to memory and regularly repeated; (2) the looser recollections of an oft-told tale. The writers in this book freely acknowledge the latter, but, with some exceptions, they are slow to admit the former. Hence they do not appreciate

the strength of the oral hypothesis. We await Harnack's book, in which the Gospels are going to be dated much earlier than we have ventured to demand. That the work of weaving four or five strands into one cord was done early, I have long maintained, but publication was a different thing. That St. Matthew's Gospel was put into its present form for the most part before the destruction of Jerusalem, is certain from the way in which the eschatological sections are arranged. But ten years of oral teaching probably passed before the final publication took place, during which the path to acceptance was smoothed by oral recitation. St. Luke certainly composed his Gospel before the destruction of the temple, but published it in a revised form long afterwards. To give a finished Gospel, like 'Matthew' or St. Luke, in place of the numerous disconnected traditions which were current orally, was nothing short of a revolution, and could only have been done tentatively and very gradually, so conservative are men's instincts in religious matters. The new Gospels were enormous improvements, but many men would cry, 'The old were good.'

I have learned much from the Oxford school, as will appear if I have health and strength to prepare the fourth edition of the Synopsis. I urge them therefore to continue their studies, as I hope to continue mine. I venture to predict that some of them eventually will not differ from me more than they now differ from one another.

For nearly forty years after the Ascension oral teaching admittedly supplied the need of Church schools, and thousands of Christian children were educated by it. Now St. Luke was the friend of St. Paul; he had gifts which eventually made him the historian of the Church, he was probably a church officer: it seems to me that when he reminded Theophilus of the catechizing of boyish days, he implied that he had been the catechist himself. Yet some people write as though St. Luke had suddenly discovered two documents, of whose contents he was as ignorant as Hilkiah was of the contents of the book of the Law which he found in the temple. Is that possible? To those who deny the existence of the Christian Church or minimize its activities, it may be conceivable that a dark veil of ignorance enveloped the world until our Gospels were written, but any one who has a sense of history, must deny this. Grant that the Church in the warmth of her first love

was at least as active in propagating the faith as the synagogue had taught her to be, and some sort of 'deposit' must have accumulated. The traditions on which our Gospels were founded were originally oral, and were the growth of many years' effort: the written Gospels were the fruit of a revolution.

Is it not high time frankly to admit that it has been a mistake to oppose the oral to the documentary hypothesis, as though they were rivals? In truth, they both played a part in the genesis of the Gospels. Oral teaching is always based on a document, though it be but a tablet and stylus, or an ostrakon. Every Chazzan or Catechist kept as many notes as his individual idiosyncrasies

demand. Every Catechist who had proper Christian ambition kept a commonplace book in which to enter fugitive fragments. Many Catechists (as St. Luke tells us) made the attempt to weave into one cord the several strands of teaching. The task was too hard for the majority, and they seem to have abandoned it, but our four Gospels were created. Beside them the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the Gospel of the Nazarenes, the Gospel of St. Peter held their own in some quarters for some time. Oral teaching continued for many years; indeed, it has never ceased, but it was at last definitely founded on some books. Thus oral teaching and documents went hand in hand.

Literature.

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION.

THE Tercentenary of the Authorized Version has made a considerable stir in this and other English-speaking lands. And a fair amount of literature about the English Versions has come out of it. Already two or three books have been noticed.

Of the rest, we take first—*An exact Reprint in Roman Type, Page for Page, of the Authorized Version, published in the Year 1611*, which Mr. Frowde has issued at the Oxford University Press, under the editorship of Mr. A. W. Pollard (8s. 6d.). The type is small, of course, but it is quite legible, and evidently the utmost care has been taken to prevent error. Mr. Pollard's introduction is a rapid survey of the earlier translations into English.

Mr. Frowde has also published, and Mr. Pollard has again edited, *Records of the English Bible* (5s. net). This volume contains the documents relating to the translation and publication of the Bible in English from 1525 to 1611. And a most useful volume it will be. We have such curiosities in it as Sir Thomas More's 'Plan for a Limited Circulation.' It may safely be asserted that this book will be at hand when in future any man undertakes to write about the English Versions.

From Cambridge we have Dr. John Brown's *History of the English Bible* (1s. net). It is a volume of the new series entitled 'The Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature.' It is from

Cambridge that the most important of all the literature called forth by the Tercentenary comes. This is an edition of the Psalms according to the six greatest English translations after Wyclif. The six are those of Coverdale (1535), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Version (1560), the Bishops' Bible (1568), the Authorized (1611) and the Revised Versions (1885). They are printed in three columns to the page. And as the editor is Dr. William Aldis Wright, the editing is unsurpassable. The title is *The Hexaplar Psalter* (25s. net).

Mr. Murray has issued a cheap (1s. net) edition of Mr. H. W. Hoare's book, *Our English Bible*.

More significant are two volumes issued by Messrs. Wells Gardner. One, under the title of *The English Bible* (2s. net), is 'an historical survey from the dawn of English history to the present day,' by the Rev. J. D. Payne, M.A., Vicar of Charlbury. The other is entitled *Testimonies to the Book* (1s. 6d. net). It is a collection, made by Mr. Frederick Sherlock, of the sayings of men and women about the Bible. Here is one saying—and from Napoleon: 'There are some men who are capable of believing everything but the Bible.'

Last of all, from the John Rylands Library, in Manchester, there comes a careful, helpful list of editions of the Bible contained in that library, with an introduction, presumably by the librarian, on the history of Bible translation (6d. net).