

## PROFESSOR TORREY'S THEORY OF THE ARAMAIC ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

PROFESSOR CHARLES C. TORREY's theories of Aramaic origins concern not only the four Gospels but also the first half of the book of Acts. The subject falls accordingly into three parts. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) constitute one problem; the Gospel of John another; and the first half of the Acts a third. As the elements which enter into each of these problems are quite different, the subject of this paper falls into three parts, each of which must be treated separately. We proceed first, therefore, to examine Torrey's theory of the composition of the Synoptic Gospels.

Professor Torrey has been working on these Gospels for many years. As long ago as 1912 he published a preliminary study of his thesis concerning them in *Studies in the History of Religions Presented to Crawford Howell Toy* (pp. 269-317) entitled 'The Translations Made from the Original Aramaic Gospels'. His recently published *Four Gospels* gives us, however, for the first time his whole argument.

Torrey's contention is that all of our Synoptic Gospels, which exist now in Greek only, or in translations made from the Greek, were originally composed in Aramaic, and that our Greek Gospels are themselves translations from Aramaic originals. He further claims that all of our Synoptic Gospels were composed in Aramaic before the year A.D. 60. As this claim consists of two parts, one relating to the original language, and the other to the date of original composition, and as the problems connected with these two parts lie in very different fields, the two parts of the claim must be examined separately. It will be convenient to treat the question of date first.

It has long been recognized by scholars that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are inter-related, and the attempt to explain their inter-relations constitutes the Synoptic Problem, which has engaged the attention of the foremost New Testament scholars of the world for the last 157 years. The problem is a twofold one—to account for the likenesses and differences of these works. They agree in material, in arrangement, and in language; they differ in materials, arrangement, and language. The agreements extend at times to the use of very rare words; the differences at times amount to contradictions. In the last 150 years every possible hypothesis has been tried, and little by little a consensus of scholarly opinion has been reached, the main parts of which are as widely accepted and abiding as are the fundamental

assumptions of chemistry among authorities in that science. With the exception of some twenty-eight verses the whole of the Gospel of Mark is included in Matthew and Luke. For at least sixty years the fact demonstrated by the late E. A. Abbott that St Mark was employed as a source by the authors of Matthew and Luke has been accepted by all writers on the subject. Forty-five years ago the late Professor J. H. Thayer used to say to those of us who were then his students, 'Gentlemen, you may put a peg in there and it will stick ; that has been proven'. Time has shewn that Thayer was right.

Matthew and Luke contain another body of common material, the wording of which in these two Gospels corresponds as closely as the wording of the Marcan material does in all three. This second body of material, which has sometimes been called 'The Double Tradition', sometimes 'The Logia', and which, since Harnack in 1907 dubbed it 'Die Zweite Quelle', has been known by the symbol Q, is not contained in Mark, and is generally recognized as a second early written source employed by the authors of Matthew and Luke. It contains approximately 192 verses. A two-source theory of the Synoptic problem has been generally accepted for approximately forty years.

When, however, the material of these two sources has been withdrawn, there remains in each of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke a considerable body of material that is in no other Gospel. In the attempt to explain the way in which this material came into these Gospels the late Professor E. D. Burton of Chicago published in 1904 a four-source theory, which was further developed by his pupils H. B. Sharman, D. R. Wickes, and A. M. Perry, and which might be called the 'Chicago Theory' of the Synoptic Problem. Strangely, no notice of this theory was taken by European scholars, and very little by scholars in my own country. In 1924, however, at Oxford, Mr Streeter put forth a four-source theory, some of the features of which were identical with features of Burton's theory—a theory which has been earnestly advocated by Vincent Taylor and tentatively accepted by others. As a consequence a four-source solution of the problem has been making way, though in the minds of most scholars Oxford instead of Chicago has the credit of first projecting it. According to this theory there was an early document, which we designate M, employed by Matthew alone, and another designated L, employed by Luke alone. The existence of these two documents is by no means as well established as is the existence of Mark and Q, but to one who, like the writer, has given careful study to the problem their existence seems very probable. A comparison of these documents among themselves indicates that they vary considerably in date. The materials of L, for example, clearly breathe a later atmosphere than either Mark or Q.

In addition to this documentary study there has grown up in Germany since the war a method of study known as 'form-criticism', by which one endeavours to date the time in the Apostolic Age when the stories in the Gospels and the Gospels themselves took shape by the way in which the literary form and interest reflects the currents of interest and thought of the various decades of the first century. The Gospel of Luke is thus shewn to correspond to the interest in the prosecution of the mission to the Gentiles, while the Gospel of Matthew corresponds to a somewhat later period when interest in ecclesiastical organization was coming to the fore, and when the claims of St Peter to the primacy of the Apostles was a matter of particular interest.

The emergence of the Gospels, as envisaged by the long study and rigidly critical processes thus briefly described, is seen to be a process of fifty or sixty years. The Gospel of Matthew can hardly have been written before A.D. 80, at least fifty years after the crucifixion. What has Professor Torrey to say of the results of Synoptic study, with which the names of the most eminent scholars of the last 150 years are associated? On p. 261 of his *Four Gospels* he says this: 'It may be doubted whether any sane human being ever went through such extraordinary performances in incorporating and editing a written document as both Mt. and Lk. are by the ordinary hypothesis supposed to have gone through in dealing with their predecessor (Mk.).' With this scornful remark the work of a century and a half of the occupants of eminent university chairs is swept aside!

To the ear of the present writer the remark of Torrey just quoted sounds strangely like the scornful utterances with which in the eighties of the last century, when both the writer and Pentateuchal criticism (at least in my country) were young, the documentary hypothesis of the Hexateuch used to be disposed of by the fundamentalists. And the writer recalls how the late George Foote Moore published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1890 (vol. ix 207 ff) an extract from Tatian's *Diatessaron*, an Arabic version of which Ciasca had published in 1883, and shewed how Tatian, in weaving the four documents of our Gospels into a single narrative, had actually done everything that the fundamentalists have said no sane man would do. The demonstration was so complete that the late Charles A. Briggs reproduced a part of it in his book *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch* (New York, 1893, p. 138 f). I venture to say that now Tatian stands as a witness to that which Torrey declares no sane man would do. The only exception would be that Tatian does not allow himself to attempt to improve the language of his sources, since, by his time, the Gospels were assuming a sacred authority, but that Matthew and Luke did this the most superficial comparison of their Gospels with their source Mark shews. The

evidence is patent to any tyro in Gospel criticism. As a friend and admirer of Torrey, I cannot but regret his intemperate language with reference to this point. A view that has been held with practical unanimity by all competent investigators for fifty years—a list of investigators that contains the names of E. A. Abbott, J. H. Thayer, Paul Wernle, Adolf Harnack, E. D. Burton, William Sanday, Sir John Hawkins, and Canon H. B. Streeter, to mention only a few—cannot be thus dismissed with impunity. To impeach the sanity of such a group creates immediately in the mind of the reader a suspicion that the mind of one who so writes is obsessed.

Torrey's theory of the dates of the Gospels breaks down because he does not allow time for the occurrence of phenomena that are demonstrably present. To take time for one example. He dates Mark in the year A.D. 40 because of the reference in Mk. xiii 14 to the statue of Caligula (*Four Gospels* 262). It may be readily granted that the verse refers to the attempt of Caligula and was first written in the year A.D. 40, but it does not follow that the Gospel was composed then. As long ago as 1864 Colani pointed out that there are in the thirteenth chapter of Mark two easily separable strands that are clearly contradictory in some details. One strand contains words of Jesus; the other is a Jewish-Christian apocalypse of the year A.D. 40. This view has been accepted by a long array of eminent scholars. Surely some time after the year A.D. 40 must have been the date of the composition of the Gospel, or its evangelist would not have mistaken a pseudepigraphic work for a genuine utterance of Jesus and have woven it into other notes of a discourse of the Master.

For reasons such as these I cannot accept Torrey's dating of the Gospels. I am quite ready to grant that the Gospel of Mark, of which (I believe) we can trace two editions in the Apostolic Age, was first published about the year A.D. 50, but that all the processes of Gospel writing and editing which are demonstrably traceable in Matthew could have been compressed into the next ten years I find it impossible to believe.

Before taking up Torrey's evidence for Aramaic originals of the Gospels it may be helpful to note that the theory of an early Semitic Gospel is not new. J. G. Eichhorn set forth in 1794 in *Die allgem. Bibliothek der bibl. Lit.* v 759 ff the theory that forty-four sections in which the Synoptic Gospels agree were taken by the evangelists from an Aramaic Gospel composed by one of the disciples about the year A.D. 35—a theory that he further elaborated in the two editions of his *Einleitung* in 1804 and 1820. In the British *Expositor* for 1891 and 1892 the Rev. J. T. Marshall, Principal of the Baptist College, Manchester, published a series of articles in which he endeavoured to prove that at the back of our Synoptic Gospels lies an Aramaic original, and that the

variations between the Synoptic accounts of various events and sayings are to be explained by mistranslations, the confusion of Semitic letters, the transposition of letters, &c. In the nineties of the last century a learned German pastor, Alfred Resch, published a series of volumes entitled *Aussercanonische Paralleltexte zu den Evangelien*, in one of which he endeavoured from similar phenomena to prove that behind our Synoptic Gospels there lies an original Hebrew Gospel. Torrey is, however, so far as the present writer knows, the first to claim that our Gospels *in toto* were written in Aramaic.

Turning now to Torrey's direct evidence of translation, I have examined each of the 228 notes on the Synoptic Gospels on which he rests his case that these Gospels are 'translation-Greek'. I have endeavoured to give each instance a candid and an unprejudiced examination, and the only convincing evidence of translation from the Aramaic that I find lies altogether in the earliest sources which lie at the back of the Gospels. This evidence is most abundant in Q and the notes on which parts of St Mark are based. There are two possible instances in L, the document peculiar to Luke, and one very doubtful instance in M, the document peculiar to Matthew.

To be more specific, Torrey's instances of Aramaic fall into six classes.  
 1. Linguistic errors in translation; 2. Supposed graphic mistakes;  
 3. Excessive literalism; 4. Misunderstandings of the various functions  
 of the Aramaic relative pronoun; 5. Failure to recognize that Aramaic  
 interrogative sentences, which lacked an interrogative particle, were  
 questions; 6. Instances in which sentences are divided in the wrong  
 place because an Aramaic sentence began without a conjunction.

In an article like this no adequate treatment of these different kinds of evidence can be entered upon, but a brief estimate must be given of each of the classes of evidence cited. Let us take them in reverse order beginning with No. 6. Instances of wrong sentence-division were easily made in an unpunctuated Greek text (and the earliest manuscripts were unpunctuated), so that one has no need to call in the Aramaic. Thus in Lk. xxiv 10 (cited by Torrey, p. 314) it is clear that καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐτῷς belongs to the sentence ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδηληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Μαρία Ἰακώβον, and that ἐλεγον πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ταῦτα formed a new sentence, but there is no need to look further than the conditions of early Greek writing for the cause of the unhappy division. There is no division, for example, in the sentence in B, N, and W, the facsimiles of which I have personally examined. The division is the work of later copyists or editors, who were far removed from Aramaic influence.

As to the hypothesis that in a number of cases an Aramaic interrogative sentence unmarked by a particle has been mistaken for an assertion,

there is naturally no case of it that is clearly demonstrable. There are cases in which it may possibly have occurred, but it is also possible that the Gospel writers did not always write with absolute clearness, and that we, by seeking to clear away all the things that appear obscure or difficult to us nineteen hundred years later, are demanding of them standards of writing to which we do not attain ourselves. The most probable instances of this kind I find in the sources of Mark, but even there they are not demonstrable.

As to misunderstandings of the Aramaic uses of the relative pronoun, there may be instances of it in the earliest sources of the Gospels, but I am sure that Torrey has invoked it where it is entirely unnecessary, as, e.g., in Mk. iv 12: *ἴνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν*. The *ἴνα* in this and similar cases is not due to Aramaic but to theology. The early Christians through using Scripture inherited in some respects the theology of the eighth-century prophets, who had in their theology no place for a devil. Amos (iii 6) says: 'Shall evil happen in a city, and Yahweh did not do it?' When God does everything, both good and bad, that which results from his action is believed to reveal his purpose. This is the thought of Isa. vi 9, 10, where the Hebrew employs *לֹא*, 'lest', and the LXX render by *μή ποτε*, but which St Mark replaces by *ἴνα*, interpreting the result as purpose, just as St Paul did when he wrote *μὴ ἐπταίσαν ἴνα πέσωσιν*; 'They didn't stumble that they might fall, did they?' i.e. 'God did not let them stumble because he wanted them to fall, did he?' The recognition of this theological attitude of mind in Apostolic Christianity renders in such cases the supposition of an Aramaic original for them quite unnecessary.

An instance of what seems like unnecessary literalism is found in Mk. vi 22: *καὶ εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς Ἡρῳδίας*. This Greek reproduces the anticipatory pronoun before Herodias. It seems quite probable that St Mark had the story in an Aramaic memorandum. Such idioms, however, do not, on the part of one brought up to speak Aramaic, necessarily mean more than that the idiom of his native language is reasserting itself. Of this I shall speak further in connexion with the Fourth Gospel.

Torrey's strongest arguments for his theory lie in the field of supposed mistakes due to graphic errors, and in supposed mistakes in translation. The most persuasive example of the former in the whole array cited by him is his solution of the difficult *πᾶς γὰρ πυρὶ ἀλισθήσεται*, 'Every one shall be salted with fire', Mk. ix 42, an enigmatic statement which Matthew and Luke in employing Mark as a source discreetly omit. Torrey supposes the Aramaic to have been *kol bā'ēsh yithm'lach*, 'whatever would spoil, is salted', and that the translator, using an unpointed text, mistook *bā'ēsh* for the Hebrew *bā'ēsh*, because of a Hebrew quotation

containing the word *fire* in the preceding verse, and translated 'salted with fire'. The conjecture is ingenious and solves a difficulty. It may be the right solution.

Another, which, though much more difficult, one would like to believe, is his solution of ἐὰν μὴ πυγμῆ νίψωται τὰς χεῖρας οὐκ ἔσθιοντιν of Mark vii 3. Why it could be said that the Jews, in their ceremonial ablutions, 'wash their hands with the fist' has always been inexplicable. Torrey supposes that the original Aramaic ran, 'unless they wash their hands, *at all* (Aram. *ligmar*) they do not eat', or, as we should say, 'they do not eat at all'. Torrey then supposes that the translator mistook *ligmar* for *ligmod* (the text being unpointed, and the confusion between *daleth* and *resh* easy), and as *ligmod* corresponds exactly to the Greek πυγμῆ he brought the word back into the first clause, thinking to wash with the fist more probable than eating with the fist. The explanation is ingenious, the confusion between the *daleth* and *resh* is constant in nearly every form of the alphabet and the solution rids us of an exegetical crux. We cannot be certain that this is the true explanation of the difficulty, it is too complicated to be convincing, but it is certainly an attractive one.

As examples of linguistic errors in translation claimed by Torrey we may cite Mt. vi 12, ἀφες ἡμῶν τὰ ὄφελήματα ἡμῶν, 'forgive us our debts'. Torrey rightly says that the Aram. בָּטַח, בְּטַח, while sometimes employed for debt, primarily means 'sin' and that Luke has rightly rendered τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν. Space forbids my quoting more examples of this class, though there are a considerable number in which Torrey's claim seems to be justified. Not all his examples, however, will bear close scrutiny. In the *Harvard Theological Review* for October, Professor Ralph Marcus has examined all the examples of mistranslation and mistakes which Torrey claims arose from a confusion of consonants in the first fourteen chapters of Matthew, and out of eighteen cases of supposed mistranslations he finds that only four are really valid, and of nine supposed cases of graphic confusion he finds that not one is valid. Torrey's reply to Marcus in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, March 1935, is far from convincing.

In my first examination of Torrey's evidence I had selected thirteen instances in Mark where traces of Aramaic influence might possibly be fairly claimed, nine in Q, one in M, and two in L. Since reading the article of Professor Marcus I am sure that this number would be somewhat reduced upon a further critical examination. In making such an examination, one should bear in mind a feature of Torrey's method of securing his Galilean Aramaic, which he does not make clear in his book, but to which Marcus has called attention. Where Jewish Aramaic does not afford the word Torrey needs for his supposed

Galilean Aramaic original, he goes to the Old Syriac version and takes a word over from that. For example, in Mt. iii 16 he explains *εὐθύς* as a mistranslation of *mehdā*, which means both 'at once' and 'thereupon', but, as Marcus has pointed out (*H.T.R.*, p. 224), *mehdā* is unknown in Jewish Aramaic. Most of us, too, with Marcus, see no difficulty in *εὐθύς*. If it is to be explained away, however, the explanation should rest on Jewish-Galilean linguistic usage, and not on that of distant Edessa. True, Torrey would doubtless justify his procedure by his theory (p. 283) that the Old Syriac translation was made by Christians from Galilee who had settled near Antioch—a theory that is pure conjecture, and which is not altogether consonant with Streeter's theory based on a wide induction of facts that the text of the Old Syriac is the second-century text of the Church of Antioch. Why Galileans should, in the second century, be translating the Antiochean text into Syriac is difficult to explain, and how, if they did, they could be so confidently identified as Galileans is still more difficult to understand. Enough has been said, however, to shew the uncertainty of Torrey's whole theory. It is a hypothesis resting on other unproved and unprovable hypotheses.

To sum up, then, there is every probability that the earliest accounts of the doings and sayings of Jesus were collected in Aramaic. Form-criticism has shewn that the earliest parts of the Gospels to be collected were the Passion Narratives. Jewish Christians, compelled to justify to fellow Jews how one who was crucified could be the Messiah, necessarily gathered these narratives in order to justify that belief. Soon the exigencies of edification and teaching would lead to the gathering of stories of the sayings and doings of Jesus. There is every probability that these earliest collections were in the Aramaic, which was the mother tongue of those who, on account of their association with Jesus, were alone qualified to collect his sayings or tell what he did. The few passages in which an Aramaic solvent is either necessary or decisive belong almost exclusively to Mark and Q. There are two in L and one possibly in M. In my judgement the materials collected in L were collected and probably put into Greek by Philip or his daughters at Caesarea, where Luke, who resided there from A.D. 58 to 60, obtained them. We know that he was once entertained at Philip's house (Acts xxi 8), and it is natural that during his two years' residence there he should have been a frequent guest at the house of Philip. Philip was of the dispersion and would naturally write in Greek, but his informants, from whom he had collected materials, perhaps through many years, must have spoken Aramaic, and it would be natural for an Aramaism or two to survive. Of the locality of M we cannot speak so confidently. Recent writers on Matthew think of Antioch or North

Syria as the place of its composition (Torrey is wrong in saying that it is unanimously ascribed to Palestine), but M must ultimately go back to a Galilean source.

That our present Synoptic Gospels were composed in Aramaic and afterwards translated into Greek there is nothing to prove and, in my judgement, much to disprove. Mark frequently quotes Aramaic words and phrases and then translates them. That is not the work of a translator but of a composer. When he employs the word *korban*, and then explains for Gentiles what *korban* means (Mk. vii 11), he is not writing in Aramaic, but in Greek. There was no Gentile Aramaic-reading public for which to write, and, if there had been, the phenomenon itself points to composition in Greek. Torrey's claim of a large Aramaic-reading public in Palestine among Christians is, for the later decades of the forty years between A.D. 30 and 70, an unconfirmed and improbable conjecture. True, Josephus says that he first wrote his *Wars of the Jews* in Aramaic, but there is no reason to suppose that he did this for the Jews of Palestine. He was suspected, and not without reason, of having been a traitor, and it is probable that in writing his *apologia* he had in mind the rich and powerful *Goliouth* in Babylonia, which spoke Aramaic. As Marcus has pointed out, Greek was much more commonly understood in Palestine than Torrey supposes. If the first edition of Mark was composed about the year 50, Christianity was already well established in Antioch and adjacent regions, in Cilicia, and probably in Galatia. The demand was for a Gospel in Greek for the Gentiles, not for Aramaic-speaking Christians in Palestine, and the Gospel of Mark, though based on oral and written materials that had been collected during the previous years in the Aramaic tongue, bears on its face the evidence that it was written in Greek.

Similarly, the Gospel of Luke, written for the Gentiles of the Pauline mission, even if composed as early as Torrey believes it to have been, was clearly composed for a Greek-speaking circle of readers. If Aramaisms appear in it here and there it is because its author embodied in his work sources that were based on traditions, oral or written, or both, which had first taken shape in Aramaic, or had been formulated by people who thought in Aramaic, and had never wholly emancipated themselves from their native idiom. The same is true of the Gospel of Matthew.

To repeat: the evidence collected by Torrey, when sifted, confirms what the higher criticism of the Gospels had led us to expect, that the earliest traditions and sayings of Jesus were collected in the language with which his immediate disciples were most familiar, viz. Aramaic.

We turn now to the Fourth Gospel, the problems connected with which are of a different character. Not Torrey, but the late Professor

C. F. Burney was the first to attempt to prove in his book, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford, 1922), that John is a translation from the Aramaic. Wellhausen, an eminent Aramaic scholar, had published two books on the Gospel and had not suspected what Burney regarded as the truth. Burney believed that the Gospel was uninfluenced by Philo, that the source of the *Logos* of the Prologue was the *Memrā* of the Palestinian Rabbis. Accepting with many other scholars the testimony of the De Boor fragment of Papias that John the Apostle was martyred by the Jews, he ascribed the Gospel to John the Presbyter, a native of Palestine, who, he supposed, wrote it at Antioch A.D. 75–80. In the next year Professor J. A. Montgomery, without having read Burney's book, independently in his *Origin of the Gospel According to St John*, attempted to prove the Aramaic and Palestinian background of the Gospel.

Burney rested his argument on such facts as the following: the Prologue to the Gospel can be translated literally back into good Aramaic, and such a difficult idiom as the πρὸς in καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν (John i 1) is a literal translation of the Aram. מִלְּאָה. The supposition that the Gospel was composed in Aramaic accounts for the divergence of the Greek texts between οὗ and ὁ in John i 13, הַ in Aramaic being either singular or plural. The frequency of the *casus pendens* in John is, he thought, a Semitic idiom. The uses of connectives and pronouns and the order of words in the sentences are all of the Aramaic type. The uses, often unhappy, of *iva* betray that they are attempts to translate Aram. הַ. The regular employment of *iva* μή as an equivalent of Hebrew יֵהּ shews that the author was translating the Aramaic נִמְלָא, by which in the Targums יֵהּ is regularly rendered. The use of negatives in St John is quite Semitic. In addition Burney devoted a dozen pages to the presentation of alleged mistranslations of the Aramaic original of the Gospel. Burney recognized from the nature of the Gospel that it could not have been written before A.D. 75–80. As he could not posit an Aramaic-reading public for it at Ephesus at that date, he hazarded the guess that it was composed at Antioch or in northern Syria. Apparently this locality was chosen because Burney believed that the Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch were pervaded by the thought of the Gospel of John.

Montgomery's thesis was not quite the same as Burney's. Montgomery endeavoured to shew that the Fourth Gospel was the work of a well-informed Jew, not of the Pharisaic party, whose life-experience was gained in Palestine during the first half of the first century, and whose mother tongue was Aramaic. The linguistic evidence on which he relied is similar to Burney's. He did not attempt to determine where the book was written, or at what date. With the conclusions, as

thus stated on the last page of Montgomery's book, I could heartily agree. With the contention on p. 23, that the *Logos* of St John is simply the Jewish *Memrā*, I cannot agree. Neither does Torrey, nor the late George F. Moore.

In October 1923 Torrey published in the *Harvard Theological Review* an article of thirty-nine pages entitled 'The Aramaic Origin of the Gospel of John', in which, while agreeing with Burney that our present Gospel is a translation from the Aramaic, he rejected many of Burney's arguments, but added many original ones of his own. He claimed that the Gospel, including ch. xxi, was written in Palestine in Aramaic before A.D. 70.

Professor William Manson, in his book *The Incarnate Glory* (1923), adopted Burney's theory *in toto*. Vacher Burch, in *The Structure and Message of the Fourth Gospel* (1928), accepted Burney's theory of composition in Aramaic, and held that the original Gospel was written in Palestine by John the Apostle before A.D. 70, but translated and enlarged later at Ephesus by the author of the First Epistle of John.

Of the reviews of the works of Burney, Montgomery, and Torrey, the most important were those by Professor Allis in the *Princeton Theological Review*, 1928, xxvi 531-572; by G. R. Driver in the *Jewish Guardian*, and by W. F. Howard in Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, ii 413-485 (Edinburgh, 1929). These writers deny that the Gospel is a translation from Aramaic, but incline to the theory that its author had an Aramaic source, probably oral, for the words of Jesus. Howard's Appendix to Moulton's Grammar of 'Semitisms in the New Testament' is one of the best discussions of the subject that has yet appeared. In 1931 Ernest Cadman Colwell, a pupil of Professor Goodspeed, published through the University of Chicago Press a book of 143 pages entitled *The Greek of the Fourth Gospel*, in which he shewed from the works of Gildersleeve that the supposed Semitism of the *casus pendens* is good Greek and was employed by Plato, Isocrates, Xenophon, Herodotus, Euripides, Aeschylus, and Homer. Colwell further shews that many of the supposed Aramaisms can be paralleled in Hellenistic writers such as Epictetus. Colwell also pointed out that about 90 per cent. of the Aramaisms claimed by the advocates of an Aramaic original can be paralleled in Hellenistic Greek. He claimed further that the method followed by these scholars is unsound; that they employ no adequate control; that they are inaccurate and inconsistent; that they accumulate Aramaisms of the most uncertain character and then point to the cumulative force of the list: working independently, they do not pick the same mistranslations, and they reject each other's results.

In the treatment of the Fourth Gospel in his *Four Gospels*, 1933, Torrey ignores all criticisms of his theory. No notice whatever is taken of the literature just mentioned. He presents notes on 102 verses, in which he argues with varying degrees of confidence for an Aramaic original. All these verses are now found in the first twenty chapters. Ch. xxi, which was confidently asserted in 1923 to be translation-Greek, is now asserted with equal confidence not to be. He holds (p. 264), on the basis of his evidence, that the Fourth Gospel was written in Aramaic in Palestine before the year A.D. 70, and carried out of the country to be translated somewhere else at a later day.

Ancient ecclesiastical tradition connects the origin of the Fourth Gospel, as well as that of the other Johannine writings, with the Province of Asia, and it is the almost unanimous opinion of modern scholars that the tradition is confirmed by the contents of the Gospel. The opinion is equally almost unanimous that the Gospel cannot have been written earlier than A.D. 90, nor later than A.D. 120. One has but to mention these facts to make clear how revolutionary Torrey's opinions as to the place and date of composition are.

I have been a student of the Gospel for more than forty years, and have read and studied with some care the voluminous literature that has been written about it during that time. These works contain the names of such scholars as B. Weiss, W. Bauer, W. W. Wendt, Wellhausen, Schwartz, Soltau, Spitta, James Drummond, E. F. Scott, Sanday, Streeter, Garvie, B. W. Bacon, Strachan, Warburton Lewis, Percy Gardner, Archbishop Bernard, and W. B. Howard, not to mention less prominent writers, and I have no hesitation in saying that the Gospel reveals that its writer had in mind certain aims, polemic and ecclesiastical, which suit the Ephesian environment about the turn of the century, but most of which were non-existent, so far as anybody knows, in Palestine before the year A.D. 70. His polemic aims were opposition to the Gnostics, of whom, as we know from the Ignatian Epistles, there were many in the region at the time, opposition to the sect of John the Baptist, which had had representatives in Ephesus for many years (see Acts xviii 25 and xix 3), and opposition to the Jews, a leader of a certain sect of whom, Cerinthus by name, was, as we learn from Irenaeus (*adv. Haer.* III, 3, 4), living at Ephesus at the turn of the century, and probably also opposition to the teachings of the Stoics. The ecclesiastical aims were (1) to emphasize the doctrinal basis of the Church; (2) to correct what the author regarded as a too great reliance on the sacraments on the part of his contemporaries. These aims of the writer were demonstrated by E. F. Scott in his *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, 1906, and by R. H. Strachan in his book *The Fourth Evangelist, Dramatist or Historian?* 1925, and have never been successfully dis-

proved.<sup>1</sup> My own studies of the Gospel have confirmed my conviction of the correctness of these contentions. Proof that a writer in Palestine could be prompted by all these aims before the year A.D. 70 needs to be very cogent in order to be convincing. There might be opposition to the Jews, as there might be opposition to a sect of John the Baptist in Palestine, but that there was anything in the Palestinian Church to call forth such ecclesiastical aims there is nothing to make us believe.

Each of Torrey's 102 evidences of translation from the Aramaic I have studied, and I find not one of them convincing. One of them, the attempt which Torrey, like Burney, makes to justify the reading of the late manuscripts, ὁ . . . ἐγενήθη, in John i 13, instead of οὐ . . . ἐγενήθησαν, and so secure the Gospel as a witness for the Virgin Birth, to my mind introduces a thought contrary to the writer's whole conception of Christ. To his mind it would derogate from the incarnate *Logos*, by whom the worlds were made, to suppose that he had to call in the Holy Spirit to form a body in which he could dwell. His thought was: 'The word became flesh and tabernacled among us' (i 14). The incarnation was, he believed, a sovereign act of the *Logos*, just as he declares in x 18 that no one took his life: 'I have power to lay it down, and . . . to take it again.' In ch. i 12, 13 the author is referring to the new birth of believers, which he further elaborates at the beginning of ch. iii.

A large number of Torrey's supposed Aramaisms are in my judgement not valid at all and are not necessary. The great majority of those that are real Aramaisms can be accounted for by the fact that the author was a Jew, probably born and reared in Palestine, who to the end of his days thought in Aramaic. Though something akin to this view had been suggested by Wellhausen, Montgomery, and Howard, Torrey emphatically rejects it. In spite of the emphasis of his rejection it appears to me the only plausible explanation of the linguistic peculiarities of this Gospel. Every one of us who has tried to speak a foreign language knows how difficult it is to speak idiomatically; to write a foreign tongue idiomatically is even more difficult. The correct use of prepositions is particularly perplexing. How many of us in talking English with a German have listened to such expressions as

<sup>1</sup> G. H. C. MacGregor, points out rightly, in *John in Moffatt's New Testament Commentary* p. xxx, that the polemic against the Baptist sect cannot have been more than a very subordinate aim on the part of the writer. The argument of the works of Hugo Odeberg (*The Fourth Gospel*, Upsala and Stockholm, 1928), Dibelius ('Johannesevangelium' in *R. G. G.* 2<sup>nd</sup> Auf., 1928), and Bultmann (*Z.N.T.W.* xxiv, 1925, 100–146), that the Gospel of John is influenced by the tendencies of Jewish syncretistic mysticism, embodying influences which came from Persia, and especially (Dibelius and Bultmann) that the references to the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel betray Mandaean influence, is, I think, by no means made out.

'I will meet you on the railway station'. I myself have in my time tried to speak German and French and Arabic, but I have always thought in English and I have often afforded great amusement to my hearers. Translation varieties of any language may be thus produced, like that of the German professor who said to his English-speaking table-companion, 'You don't must trouble yourself to speak German by me; when you speak English I understand your meanness very well.'

But, Torrey would say, while that may be possible in conversation, it is unthinkable that a man, with the command of such a wide literary vocabulary as that exhibited by any one of our evangelists, should manifest such incompetence in managing the idioms of the language. The existence of such a learned patois he declares impossible. Here, in my judgement, he goes beyond the evidence. Perhaps no scholar of recent times has been more widely acquainted with Greek than the late R. H. Charles, who knew Greek literature from Homer to medieval Hellenistic writers. He knew his Semitic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Ethiopic equally well. In his exhaustive commentary on the Book of Revelation Charles, who had made the most careful study of the language of that book ever published, asserts that its author 'while he writes in Greek thinks in Hebrew' (vol. i, p. clxiii), and Charles goes on to prove it by adducing six pages in fine print of Hebraisms. To my mind Charles has proved his point, and, if it was possible for the author of one New Testament book to think in Hebrew while writing in Greek, it was also possible for another to think in Aramaic.

During the debate on this matter at the meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature last December, when Torrey was criticized for disregarding the evidence of the Greek papyri in his book, he challenged any one to produce from the papyri fifty lines of literary Greek comparable to the Greek of the Gospels. The challenge is, perhaps, safe if the length of a passage is kept to fifty lines, as few papyri contain so many lines, and none of them, except those which are copies of classical or biblical texts, contain literary material. I venture to think, however, that, *mutatis mutandis*, some of the edicts of Roman officials found in Egyptian papyri present phenomena analogous to those in the Greek of the Gospels. Thus Oxyrh. 1101 (Grenfell and Hunt *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* viii), a papyrus of twenty-seven lines, contains an edict of the Praefect Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, in which Latinisms are even more abundant than Aramaisms in the Fourth Gospel. Such edicts may, I think, be placed beside the Book of Revelation as examples of the possibility of a kind of composition which Torrey denies.

What seems to me Torrey's most convincing instance of mistranslation in the Fourth Gospel is his explanation of ἐνεβριμήσατο and ἐμβριμώμενος in John xi 33 and 38. Why Jesus should be angry with Mary

and her friends for weeping because Lazarus had died, or because people were suggesting that He, who had opened the eyes of the blind, might have prevented Lazarus's death, it is difficult to conceive. Torrey thinks the Aramaic had *r'gaz*, which could mean both 'angry' and 'sad', and that the translator selected the wrong Greek word. It is not necessary, however, to postulate an Aramaic original to account for the phenomenon. A man of culture, in speaking a foreign language of which he has in general good command, may select the wrong word. In the early nineteenth century a Frenchman of aristocratic family—a man who had been educated for the Roman priesthood—was converted to Quakerism and became a Quaker preacher. He travelled widely in Europe, delivering his religious messages to sovereigns and even to the Pope. He spoke English fluently, and travelled as a Quaker preacher both in England and America. Once in a prayer for a congregation, offered when some of my kinsfolk were present, he besought the Lord to 'pickle' the congregation when he intended to ask that they be preserved! Such slips in the choice of words do not necessitate the supposition of translation from a written original.

We must, I think, pronounce upon Torrey's theory of the origin of the Fourth Gospel, not only the verdict 'not proven', but 'most improbable'. There is but little space left in which to speak of the Book of the Acts, but, for the purposes of this paper, not much is needed. In the early years of the last decade of the last century, Martin Sorof, Fr Spitta, Paul Feine, Johannes Jüngst, and Carl Clemen analysed parts or all of the Book of Acts into sources. Practically all of them found a Jewish-Christian source in the early chapters, and some of them found it running through the whole book. These witnesses did not, however, agree among themselves. All made their divisions in different places. Harnack, in his *Apostelgeschichte*, 1908, traced two sources in chapters i–xii, one of which he thought emphasized the activities of Peter; the other, the activities of Philip. K. Lake, in vol. iv of the *Beginnings of Christianity*, accepts in general Harnack's division of the documents for Acts i–v. Torrey, in his *Composition and Date of Acts*, 1916, endeavoured to shew that Acts i–xv is a translation of an Aramaic document. His method was the same as that employed in his studies in the Gospels. Acts xvi–xxviii betrayed, in his opinion, none of the characteristics of translation Greek. In 1922 J. de Zwan, in vol. ii of the *Beginnings of Christianity*, examined the matter afresh. He shews that the arguments for an Aramaic original are fairly strong for Acts (i 6–v 16 and ix 31–xi 18), while the examples cited by Torrey for ch. xv can be paralleled in later chapters of the book, in which Torrey claims there are no traces of translation Greek. That the last part of Acts was based in any way on an Aramaic source

is to me unthinkable. That parts of the first twelve chapters may have been seems to me probable because of two instances of mistranslation which Torrey has adduced. The two do not rest on the same degree of certainty, however. While the first seems certain, the second can only be said to be probable.

The first is in Acts ii 47, where we are told that 'The Lord added to the church daily those that were being saved ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ. Now ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ is an idiom frequently employed in the New Testament in the meaning of 'together'. Thus it is employed in Acts i 15 and ii 44. That meaning in ii 47 would make nonsense. The translators of the American Revised Version omitted it altogether from their text, relegating it to the margin as a disturbing element. Torrey points out that in Palestinian Aramaic, נִמְלָא, which would be rendered into Greek by *σφόδρα*, making the sense 'The Lord added to them greatly day by day those that were being saved', might be mistaken for ἐπὶ τῷ αὐτῷ. This seems a convincing and happy solution of the difficulty.

The other example occurs in Acts xi 28. Agabus, a prophet we are told, predicted that there should be a great famine through all the world, ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην, which came to pass in the reign of Claudius. The Greek phrase employed is often used for the *orbis terrarum* of the Roman Empire, though not its exact equivalent. Lake renders it by 'all civilization'. Now the fact is, there was no famine in the reign of Claudius either throughout the empire or all civilization, though Suetonius (*Claudius*, xix) and Tacitus (*Annals*, xii 43) both tell us that widespread famine was a feature of the reign of Claudius. Josephus in several passages describes a famine in Judaea during his reign (*Ant.* iii 15, 3; xx 2, 5; and xx 5, 2), which caused the Jews much distress. Torrey proposes to solve the difficulty by supposing that the author was translating a document written in Palestinian Aramaic, and that he was familiar only with North Syrian Aramaic or at least was not familiar with the Jewish usage of נַעֲמָן for the land of Judaea. By נַעֲמָן כִּי his document meant 'throughout all Judaea', but he mistook it to mean 'throughout the world' and so rendered it by ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην. If we were sure of an Aramaic original this would doubtless be the solution of the difficult reading, but it is possible that the phrase ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν οἰκουμένην was a not unnatural exaggeration. I am of the opinion that Torrey's explanation is probably right, but in view of the possibility just mentioned the instance cannot be considered as quite as probable as that in ch. ii 47. It does seem highly probable, however, that an Aramaic source or sources underlay parts of the early chapters of the Acts.

If the observations made above on the three divisions of the problem are just, as I believe they are, Torrey has failed to prove his case as to

the origin of the Gospels because he has relied on one factor only (and that a highly debateable one)—a factor, too, that is incapable of explaining all the phenomena which have to be taken into account.

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## THE PROBLEM OF THE LITURGICAL SECTION OF THE DIDACHE

THE problem of the Didache has recently been raised again in the two articles which appeared in the JOURNAL last year (xxxv 113, 225) containing some of the unpublished work of Dr Armitage Robinson. The subject of the work thus made public is the first portion of the Didache (sections i–vi). But the note on p. 116, with its references to the *κλάσμα* and to the expression *ἐπάνω τῶν ὁρέων*, shews that questions connected with the liturgical section continued to occupy the mind of this distinguished scholar to the end.

It is with this section that the following pages deal. For convenience the text is printed in full from Lightfoot's edition of the Apostolic Fathers.

**IX.** Περὶ δὲ τῆς εὐχαριστίας, οὗτῳ εὐχαριστήσατε· 2. πρῶτον περὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀγίας ἀμπέλου Δαυεὶδ τοῦ παιδός σου, ἃς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 3. περὶ δὲ τοῦ κλάσματος· Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῆς ζωῆς καὶ γνώσεως, ἃς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 4. Ὡσπερ ἦν τούτο τὸ κλάσμα διεσκορπισμένον ἐπάνω τῶν ὁρέων καὶ συναχθὲν ἐγένετο ἔν, οὕτω συναχθήτω σου ἡ ἐκκλησία ἀπὸ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν· ὅτι σοῦ ἐστιν ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ δύναμις διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 5. μηδὲς δὲ φαγέω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν, δὲλλ' οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα Κυρίου. καὶ γὰρ περὶ τούτου εἴρηκεν ὁ Κύριος· Μὴ δῶτε τὸ ἄγιον τοῦ κυνί.

**X.** Μετὰ δὲ τὸ ἐμπληθῆναι οὗτῳ εὐχαριστήσατε· 2. Εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι, Πάτερ ἀγιε, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀγίου ὄνόματός σου, οὐ κατεσκήνωσας ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς γνώσεως καὶ πίστεως καὶ ἀθανασίας, ἃς ἐγνώρισας ἡμῖν διὰ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ παιδός σου· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 3. σύ, δέσποτα παντοκράτορ, ἐκτισας τὰ πάντα ἐκεκεν τοῦ ὄνόματός σου, τροφήν τε καὶ ποτὸν ἔδωκας τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν ἵνα σοι εὐχαριστήσωσιν, ἡμῖν δὲ ἐχαρίσω πνευματικὴν τροφὴν καὶ ποτὸν καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον διὰ τοῦ παιδός σου. 4. πρὸ πάντων εὐχαριστοῦμέν σοι ὅτι δυνατὸς ἐλ σύ· σοὶ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας. 5. μηδίσθητι, Κύριε, τῆς ἐκκλησίας σου τοῦ ῥύσασθαι αὐτὴν ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ καὶ τελειῶσαι αὐτὴν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, καὶ σύναξον αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τῶν τεσσάρων ἀνέμων, τὴν ἀγιασθεῖσαν εἰς τὴν σὴν βασιλείαν, ἣν ἡτοίμασας αὐτῇ· ὅτι σοῦ