GOSPEL CRITICISM
AND
FORM CRITICISM

BY
W. EMERY BARNES, D.D.

T. & T. CLARK
EDINBURGH

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PREFACE

INVESTIGATION into the sources of the Gospels has now been active for more than a century, particularly in Germany, but also in our own country. Recent criticism from the land of Luther has depreciated the historical value of the Gospels, and its confident (or arrogant) champions have exercised, I believe, more than their due influence on British theologians. The present duty of the scholars who put forth new theories is that they should not forget nor neglect the old learning. There were giants in New Testament scholarship at the end of the last century, Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, Sanday, and others. Their works must still be studied, for recent discoveries of fragments of ancient documents have done little towards modifying the broad results of their labours. Dr. Hort's text of the Greek Testament, issued in 1881, has stood well the test of time, though additional ancient MSS have been discovered. And for the English-speaking race a similar verdict must be passed on the English Revised Version of 1881. Its corrected readings cannot be neglected by any true scholar. Criticism of it has been often hasty and trifling and very often ignorant, but the answer to all criticism is that in the Gospels as well as in

the Epistles it brings us nearer to the original. Much is lost in recent work on the New Testament, because the writers in their zeal for communicating new knowledge, neglect to pass on the rich harvest of the end of the last century. The true scholar will rather endeavour to "bring forth things new and old," than to put his whole trust in the results of the latest much-praised monographs.

My complaint against the champions of Form Criticism is that they put aside the testimony of the second century and neglect the work of the older scholars who weighed it and accepted it. Of these champions Dr. Dibelius is the foremost. These pages, therefore, are devoted mainly to a criticism of his book.

Among the works (old and new) which I have consulted are :

Otto Bardenhewer, *Patrology* (E.T. by T. J. Shahan, 1908).

J. M. Creed, *St. Luke* (1930).

G. Dalman, *Sacred Sites and Ways* (E.T., 1935).

Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (E.T., 1934).

R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (1935).

James Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (1918).

A. Plummer, *Gospel according to St. Luke* (I.C.C., 1896). *Gospel according to St. Matthew* (1909).

A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark* (1931).
W. Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research* (1907).
J. Wellhausen, *Evangelium Johannis* (1908).
B. F. Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Fifth Edition (1875). *Canon of the New Testament*, Fourth Edition (1875). *Gospel according to St. John* (1880).
Wilhelm Larfeld, *Griechische Synopse der vier neutestamentlichen Evangelien* (1911).

W. EMERY BARNES.

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GOSPEL CRITICISM AND FORM CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

THE CRITICISM OF THE GOSPELS

IN the twentieth century we are still justified in holding the position of William Paley that we possess in general the story of Jesus Christ in attestation of which the earliest Christians were willing to labour, to suffer hardship, and to submit to persecution and death. That Jesus was accepted by His followers as Messiah; *that He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;* [1] that He died a martyr's death; that He rose again and appeared to many after His resurrection [2]—all this belongs to the story which the earliest Christian missionaries published, and for which they were imprisoned, chased from city to city, stoned, thrown to the beasts, beheaded.

But, on the other hand, it is clear that these earliest missionaries did not (as did their modern successors) carry with them the book of our Four

[1] Acts x. 38. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 4–7.

Gospels. These were not yet written, because they were not yet needed. When Christendom was a small body with two only centres of importance (Jerusalem and Antioch),[1] the oral testimony of the Apostles and other eye-witnesses was available for the Church as a whole. The speech of the Apostles and their glowing eyes were the " books " of the first converts. The first demand made by the hearers of the first century was not for literature, but for the spoken testimony of those who were Christians before them. It was only when the centres of evangelisation became too numerous to be supplied with ministers of the Word, who were also eye-witnesses (or immediate hearers of eye-witnesses), that the need for full accounts in writing of the ministry of Jesus began to be felt. St. Luke acknowledges in his Preface[2] that the hour had already struck : " Many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative." Converts were beginning to feel the want of a written record to remind them of that which they had heard, and further, to fill for them this or that gap which still remained in their knowledge of the ministry of the Christ. The careful statement of Bishop Westcott on this subject has not lost its validity to-day.

" It must not, however, be supposed that this tendency to preach rather than to write was any drawback to the final completeness of the Apostolic

[1] Acts xi. 26. [2] Luke i. 1–4.

Gospel" (*Introduction*, page 165). The Apostolic Gospel was in fact "such a selection of Christ's words and works as the varied phases of the Apostolic preaching had shown to be best suited to the wants of men." "The experience of oral teaching was required in order to bring within the reach of writing the vast subject of the Life of Christ."[1] "The wide growth of the Church furnished (the Apostles) with an adequate motive for adding a written record to the testimony of their living words; and the very form of the Gospels was only determined by the experience of teaching. . . . The primary Gospel was proved, so to speak, in life, before it was fixed in writing" (page 166). "The oral collection became coincident with the 'Gospel,' and our Gospels are the permanent compendium of its contents" (page 167). These sentences of Bishop Westcott are not obsolete to-day. They are to the effect that twenty years of Apostolic preaching after the Ascension resulted in the formation of a "full" oral Gospel whose seat was in Jerusalem. Herein was a supply from which the first and third Evangelists could draw when they composed their Gospels. This supply was guarded by the faithful whom not even persecution could drive from their natural centre, Jerusalem.[2]

More recently (1924–26) Canon Streeter, without

[1] Cf. John xxi. 25. [2] Acts viii. 1.

going so far as to use the phrase "Oral Gospel," accepts as an "Historical probability" the view that "Christians of the first generation" collected and transmitted sayings of our Lord. He adds, "In Jerusalem it is on the whole likely that the sayings would for some considerable time be handed down in oral tradition after the manner of the sayings of the Rabbis, and that in the original Aramaic." But more than this: Dr. Streeter has shown the probability that at the two other churches of early foundation, Antioch and Cæsarea, the oral tradition would soon be written down, and written down in Greek. He writes, "The Churches of Antioch and Cæsarea are those where we should expect to find not only the earliest, but also the most considerable and the most valuable, collections written in the Greek language. For these were the first Gentile Churches to be founded, and also, from their geographical position, were peculiarly well situated for procuring authentic material. Indeed both these Churches had been visited by Peter himself at a very early date. But sooner or later . . . the Jerusalem collection also would be committed to writing. Once that was done, it would sooner or later reach Antioch or Cæsarea, and a Greek translation of it would be made and so become available to the Gentile Churches. The antecedent probabilities then are that there would be three considerable collections

of the teaching of Christ associated with the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Cæsarea" (pages 230, 231).

Dr. Streeter refers specially to the sayings of our Lord, but it must not be thought that the fact that these were specially collected, tells against the view that in addition memories of what Jesus did and suffered were also preserved. The records of Christian preaching preserved in the earlier chapters of the Acts, brief though they are, suggest an outline of the story of the ministry as it was exercised not only in word, but also in beneficial deeds. Thus it stands in Acts x. 36 ff. :

"He sent the word unto the children of Israel preaching the gospel of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) . . . which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen afore of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead." Still

shorter summaries of the story of the ministry are given in Acts ii. 22–24, where the " mighty works " of Jesus are asserted, and in Acts iii. 13–16, where they are implied in St. Peter's affirmation that it was the Name of Jesus which had effected the cure of the lame man at the gate of the Temple (Acts iii. 6).

In the face of such passages, it is surely right to extend Dr. Streeter's statement, and to affirm at least the " historical probability " that Christians of the first generation collected and transmitted accounts of the deeds of Jesus as well as memories of His sayings. These memories need not have been in writing. It seems a curious fact to reading Europeans of the twentieth century that " Almost exactly a generation—some thirty to thirty-five years—appears to have elapsed between the crucifixion of our Saviour and the production [1] of (St. Mark) the earliest of the four canonical Gospels." But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the earliest Christians were Easterns, and thus hearers rather than readers. And they had good reason to be content—and more than content—with oral information concerning the Ministry of Jesus, for there were still the living voices of eye-witnesses to tell them of the wondrous life. Better to listen to St. Peter than to spell out " The Gospel according to——" And further, some weight—not

[1] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, page xii.

too much!—must be given to the suggestion that as there was among Christians an expectation of an early Return of Jesus, they migh tbe somewhat less interested in writing the story of the Past. "Nevertheless," writes Dr. Rawlinson, "it would be a mistake to suppose that the Church was so pre-occupied by the thought of the future, and by devotion to the risen and glorified Christ, as to have lost interest in the historical story of the life of the Saviour upon earth. On the contrary, it is the great and distinguishing characteristic of Christianity (as contrasted, for example, with the so-called 'mystery religions' of paganism, which in some respects superficially resemble it) that its Gospel was rooted in history, and that the facts about Jesus were attested by contemporary witness. The memory of Jesus—of His words, of His deeds, and of the whole impression of His personality—was ineradicable from the minds and hearts of those who had known Him in the days of His flesh." [1]

But now there is a spirit abroad (*Der Geist der stets verneint* [2]), which meets the view thus enunciated by Dr. Westcott and by Dr. Rawlinson with the negation, that any such Gospel, indeed any account written or oral of the ministry could (*sic*) have existed in the early days of Christianity. This

[1] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark*, page xiii.

[2] It will be remembered that Mephistopheles introduces himself to Faust as *Der Geist der stets verneint*, "The spirit of constant negation."

sweeping negative is supported by an equally sweeping assertion. Dr. M. Dibelius, in his book *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (translated under the title, *From Tradition to Gospel*, London, 1934), asserts that the earliest Christians were wholly swayed by the expectation of an early return of Jesus to earth on the clouds of heaven. In other words, they were Second Adventists in religion. The complementary axiom, as stated by Dr. Dibelius, is that among these Christians "a yearning for the end and a consciousness of estrangement from the world would entirely prevent (*sic*) concern for an historical (*sic*) tradition or the development of a literature" (*From Tradition to Gospel*, page 69). Thus is the ground cleared—cleared by a prejudgment on the part of the adherents of Form criticism, for their presupposition that any man who attempted, say, in the second generation, to write the history of Christ's ministry would find only a few disjointed stories on which to found his narrative.

But the case for the purely forward look of the first generation of Christians appears very weak when the grounds for it are examined. A misreading of parts of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians is the source of much error. The Thessalonians had suffered much from persecution stirred up by the Jews,[1] and St. Paul seeks to comfort them. He sends them a message suitable for the

[1] Acts xvii. 1–9.

special occasion, but the message forms only a small part of His teaching.

He writes, " To the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer : if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted [to grant] rest (' relief ') with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." [1]

The nearest parallel to this in St. Paul's other Epistles is perhaps in 1 Cor. xv.,[2] which tells the " mystery " of " the last trump," when the dead shall be raised incorruptible.

But when some of the Thessalonians became obsessed (and as a result idle) with Second Adventist expectations the Apostle rebukes them roundly : They are to take care to *earn their own living*, just as St. Paul himself did, " working night and day." [3]

As for 1 Corinthians, the Epistle written perhaps next but one after Thessalonians, the first fourteen chapters contain very full teaching on several other subjects, and the Apostle comes back to the subject of the Second Advent only in two Aramaic words at the close, *Maran atha*, " Our Lord cometh," or

[1] 2 Thess. i. 5 ff.
[2] Vv. 50–58.
[3] 2 Thess. iii. 7–12.

(possibly) "Come, Lord"=*Marana tha*. His later Epistles deal with the present needs of different churches, but contain very little matter that could be called "Eschatological." It would seem that St. Paul having sufficiently acknowledged his belief in the Return of the Master was content to let the subject rest, and to devote himself in his Epistles, to the building up of "all the churches" as though these were to have a long life.

Further, we see that in St. Paul an expectation of the Second Advent was not inconsistent with a lively interest in the story of the earthly ministry of the Lord. He not only confesses the Resurrection as part of his Creed, but he refers to the appearances of Jesus after his death to Cephas—to the Twelve—to five hundred brethren—to James.[1] He gives an account of the institution of the Eucharist.[2] He knows that Jesus was of the "seed of David," that He "became poor," that He was distinguished for "meekness and gentleness."[3] If he tells his correspondents little of his Master's life except his Master's death on the cross[4] and resurrection, surely it was because earlier disciples of Jesus could tell the details better. His companions at one time were the two evangelists—St. Mark and St. Luke.[5] He might well assume that

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 5–7.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 23 ff.
[3] Rom. i. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 9, x. 1.
[4] Gal. iii. 1.
[5] Col. iv. 10, 14.

they and others like them would fill in the story of the Lord's earthly ministry. When (as St. Luke reports) he urged the Ephesian elders to "remember" the words of the Lord Jesus, he knows that they have been taught these words.[1]

Dr. Dibelius's complementary axiom misses fire. He ventures on the supposition that among the earliest Christians "A yearning for the end (the Second Advent) would entirely (*sic*) prevent concern for an historical (*sic*) tradition." The epithet "historical" is out of place here: it would be readily conceded that our Gospels—I omit Luke—do not place the life of our Lord deliberately and of purpose in the setting of General History. At the beginning of Mark, our Lord's life is "dated" simply by the statement that His preaching followed and continued that of John the Baptist.[2] But the mention of John the Baptist supplies an approximate date, for it links the Gospel to the *Antiquities* of Josephus, in which is recorded the death of John at the hands of Herod Antipas.[3] Similarly the death of our Lord Himself is approximately dated by the statement that He suffered under "Pilate," of whom an account is given in the *Antiquities* of Josephus.[4] But St. Mark's treatment of Pilate and of the condemnation of Jesus warns us that the Christian tradition was biographical

[1] Acts xx. 35.
[2] Mark i. 9–15.
[3] *Antiq.* xviii. ch. 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, xviii. 2, 3, 4.

rather than "historical." This Evangelist does not tell us even that Pilate was governor ("Procurator") of Judæa: he was not interested in Pilate, but only in Pilate's belief in the innocence of Jesus. But the Christian tradition which St. Mark followed had a vivid biographical memory. It told that Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, had borne the cross of Jesus, and it recorded the names of three of the women who saw Jesus die—Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the less, and Salome.[1] Again, it preserved in a vivid touch the relation of Joseph of Arimathæa to the Lord whom he buried. The tradition does not describe him as a "disciple," but just as one "who was looking for the kingdom of God": [2] in the Fourth Gospel the phrase is interpreted (no doubt rightly) to mean that Joseph was a "disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews." [3] In the earlier chapters of Mark the tradition ("the oral Gospel") has preserved the names of the four brethren of the Lord,[4] and also the fact that one of the earliest cures wrought by Jesus was in the house of Simon and Andrew on the person of Simon's wife's mother." [5]

To the names of persons we must add the names of places as evidence for Mark's firm contact with

[1] Mark xv. 21, 40.
[2] Mark xv. 43.
[3] John xix. 38.
[4] Mark vi. 3.
[5] Mark i. 29–31.

a living tradition. His geographical notices are not of a literary character. He does not mention the great (or "greatest") cities of Galilee, as Josephus reckons them—Sepphoris, Tiberias, Gabara,[1] and the "strong fortress of Gamala," nor in the true text [2] is there mention of the important city and district of Gadara. So Mark remembers that Bethsaida was a fishing *village* (κώμη, as St. Peter remembered it?), while Josephus records that Herod Philip advanced the "village" Bethsaida to the dignity of a "city" and called it "Julias." It was at "Julias," not "Bethsaida," at which Philip died.[3] On the other hand, Josephus does not mention Nazareth, nor Capernaum (Kapharnaum), unless "Cepharnome," a village (κώμη) in which he lay for a day through an injury, be a false reading for *Kapharnaum*.[4]

St. Mark's geography is of an intimate "village" kind. Our Lord starts from Nazareth (i. 9), and makes for the Sea of Galilee (i. 16). He goes to Capernaum and (apparently) makes it His headquarters (i. 21, ii. 1). Thence He made a tour of the country towns (κωμοπόλεις) of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues (i. 38, 39). "This province possessed an unusual number of large towns" (S. Merrill in Hastings *D.B.*), so we need not be surprised that St. Mark does not give the names in

[1] *Vita*, 25, 65.
[2] Mark v. 1.
[3] *Antiq.* xviii. 2. 1 and 4. 6.
[4] *Vita*, 72.

detail. Then Jesus "withdrew" to the sea (iii. 7), returned home (iii. 19, Revised Version, marg.), and again sought the seaside (iv. 1), where the boat made it possible for Him to continue His teaching. Next, escaping from the crowd, He crossed eastward to the other side into "the country of the Gerasenes" (v. 1), *not* to the city of Gerasa, which was over thirty miles distant from the sea. Driven thence by the cold hostility of the people, He recrossed the sea westward (v. 21), and went on to "his own country" (Nazareth and its neighbourhood, vi. 1). Repelled thence, He came to the sea again, to the village of Bethsaida (vi. 45, viii. 22–26). Next by boat He arrived at "Gennesaret"; *i.e.* "if not to the city of Ginnesar (*sic*) at least to the district of that name, *i.e.* the plain north of Magdala."[1] Here Jesus was thronged by crowds and vexed by the carping of Pharisees and Scribes, and (for a respite ?) removed into the heathen territory of Tyre (vii. 24). Thence by a wide sweep northward through Sidon and south-eastward through Decapolis He came back to the sea and to Bethsaida (viii. 22). Sum up the story ! Little Nazareth, obscure Capernaum, the "village" of Bethsaida, the small plain of Gennesar—all this is homely geography, surely handed down by a living tradition. And that strange flight to the Tyrian

[1] G. Dalman, *Sacred Sites*, page 128; cf. Josephus, *Bell.* iii. 10, 8 (§ 516), Gennesar, "a very fertile region."

country is surely no possible piece of literary construction.

From the fact of the preservation of these geographical details, as well as of the names of persons, by the Second Evangelist, we have good reason to draw the conclusion that the vivid touches also, which illuminate many of the episodes related by St. Mark, are due not to the literary art of the Evangelist but to the fact that he drew from a living tradition. Dr. Rawlinson, who attributes "a gift of dramatic visualization" to St. Mark, adds: "It remains, nevertheless, true that the Gospel itself conveys the impression, at innumerable points, of just such contact at first hand with historic tradition as is claimed for St. Mark in the earliest statements about the authorship and origin of the Gospel which have come down to us" (*St. Mark*, page xxiii).

When critics deny the preservation of an "historical" (or, better, a "biographical") tradition of the ministry of Jesus, they forget that Jesus had a mother who survived Him,[1] and also devoted followers,[2] both women and men. Are we to believe that these stored up no memories of the words (and acts also) of the Master? And the Twelve—though they often misunderstood Him, would they not preserve among themselves either by happy

[1] Acts i. 14.

[2] Mark iii. 31 f.; iv. 10, xv. 40 f.; xvi. 1–8.

recollection or by eager discussion many of His startling sayings and of His unexpected deeds? And was not the eager expectation itself of the second coming based on a lively memory of the blessings of the first coming manifested in the Galilæan ministry? Such, surely, are the probabilities, and the probabilities receive confirmation from vivid touches which are seen constantly in Mark, which is confessedly the earliest of our Gospels. In the words of Dr. Rawlinson, quoted above,[1] "The memory of Jesus—of His words, of His deeds, and of the whole impression of His personality—was ineradicable from the minds and hearts of those who had known Him in the days of His flesh."

[1] Page 7.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOSPELS

THERE is early written evidence that the "oral Gospel," a detailed story of our Lord's ministry, is no mere fancy of conservative theologians. The Church historian, Eusebius of Cæsarea (present at the Council of Nicæa in A.D. 325), has preserved[1] certain fragments of the *Exposition* (*Expositions*), a work of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis (*fl. circa* A.D. 140). Papias himself was apparently a Millenarian and (according to Eusebius) a man of small mind, but he had the gift to be a collector of the utterances of the men of the generation which preceded his own. Papias tells us in his *Exposition* that in time past he met men who in their turn had met Apostles, "Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew," also two "disciples of the Lord . . . Aristion and John the Elder." Of the men whom Papias met, he made inquiry of the sayings (*or* narratives, λόγους) of Apostles and Disciples. It is probably John the Elder who is cited simply as "The Elder,"

[1] *H.E.* iii. 39.

a description which marks him as belonging to an older generation than Papias himself. To the Elder we are indebted for two statements, each of which has an important bearing on the origin of the Gospels. The first of these concerns the Gospel according to St. Mark, and is specially important on that account. Mark ranks as in a certain sense the "primary" Gospel, for it is generally allowed that Matthew used Mark for the general framework of his narratives, and that both Matthew and Luke drew from it much of their material. Now it is just this Marcan Gospel which the ancient Elder's testimony connects directly with a valuable line of oral tradition.

This testimony besides being ancient commends itself to our acceptance by its intrinsic character. It is not an indiscriminate apologetic statement intended to secure for the Gospel a warrant beyond the facts. It is rather the carefully guarded testimony of a witness who wishes to state the facts as he knows them. It appears in Eusebius, *H.E.* iii. 39, as follows:

"And this the Elder said: Mark having been interpreter to Peter, carefully wrote down, not however in formal order,[1] whatsoever things he (Peter) related from memory of the things either said or done by the Lord. For neither did he (Mark) hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him, but

[1] τάξει.

at a later time, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs of his hearers, but did not teach as one who was composing a digest [1] of the utterances of the Lord.[2] So Mark made no error in thus writing down certain things [3] as (Peter) related them from memory. For chiefly he took care to omit nothing of the things which he heard and to include no false statement among them."

This is a thoughtful judgment on the Second Gospel by one who was at much pains to state the facts as he had heard them.

The Elder is explaining the procedure of St. Mark in recording the words of the Lord. His meaning is that though the Gospel is not a complete and formal arrangement of the Sayings, yet those which it does give are authenticated by the testimony of St. Peter and the carefulness of St. Mark. "A piece of Apologetic," says the modern objector! Is it not rather a very carefully considered statement? The Elder does not attribute the Gospel to the Great Apostle, but to Mark, his attendant. He minimises rather than exaggerates St. Peter's share in the book: "Mark wrote certain of the utterances and deeds of Jesus, as he heard them from the Apostle." That is all.

There is a further qualification standing in the Elder's account. Mark wrote down accurately,

[1] σύνταξιν. [2] τῶν κυριακῶν λογίων. [3] ἕνια.

" not however in order." But modern scholars believe that our Second Gospel " seems to follow with accuracy the order of events." But answer may be made with Dr. Moffatt, " The chronological sequence of the Gospel is better marked in its large sections than in details." [1] Scholars have found within these large sections a grouping of smaller sections according to resemblance of subject and not according to time.

There follows a quotation from Papias with regard to St. Matthew. Eusebius continues his story [2] thus : " Well then these things have been recorded by Papias concerning Mark. But concerning Matthew these things are said, *Well then Matthew compiled the Utterances in Hebrew, and each man interpreted them as he was able.*" By this (plainly mutilated) quotation Eusebius has not told us directly about our First Gospel. The compressed sentence which he has torn out of Papias cries aloud for its context; for, as it stands, it is incomplete. Some suppose that it implies that St. Matthew's only work was written in Hebrew, and that our Greek Gospel of " Matthew " cannot claim the authority of his name. This supposition fails to explain how it is that the name of " Matthew " has clung to our First Gospel throughout its history. Church Fathers who had heard of Matthew's use

[1] *Literature of the N.T.*, 3rd edition, page 220.
[2] *H.E.* iii. 39.

of Hebrew nevertheless cite our First Gospel as the work of the Apostle. Such is the case with Irenæus of Lyons and with Clement of Alexandria. Further, even if we accept in general the view that "The First Gospel is evidently *not* a translation," we must make a reservation of the Utterances contained in it. The style of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Parables of the Kingdom is that of a translation from the "Hebrew" (Aramaic), as seen especially in the Beatitudes and the Parable of the Tares.[1] A reasonable deduction from these facts would be that Matthew first wrote the "Utterances" in Hebrew and afterwards a complete Gospel in Greek.

In any case, the tradition quoted by Papias ought not to be quoted as evidence *against* the ascription of our First Gospel to Matthew, the taker of toll. The taker of toll at Capernaum, in *Galilee of the Gentiles*, would probably have enough education and enough Greek to write the Gospel according to St. Matthew, as well as enough Hebrew (Aramaic) to compile the "Utterances." Nor is there much substance in the objection drawn from the use of the Second Gospel by the writer of the First. Dr Alfred Plummer is breathing the literary atmosphere of the twentieth century when he writes: "It is not likely that the Apostle Matthew, with first-hand knowledge of his own, would take the

[1] Matt. xiii. 24–30.

Gospel of another, and that other not an Apostle, as the framework of his own Gospel." [1] Surely an Apostle, whose main business was to continue stedfastly in prayer and in the (oral) ministry of the word,[2] might be glad to avail himself of the record of one whose mother was a resident in Jerusalem [3] to refresh his own memory and to use as a guide in the general arrangement of his own material. If it be true that the tendency of the early Christians was to preach rather than to write it can hardly be supposed that an Apostle would be too proud of himself as an author to make use of the work of a fellow-Christian, especially as he was giving it a needed and most important supplement consisting of the Sermon on the Mount and a number of Parables. Ancient authors were accustomed to incorporate the work of earlier writers in their own. And if "Matthew" at times shortens the narrative of his predecessor, and leaves out many life-like touches, is it not because he hurries onward to insert in his roll (of limited length) the precious discourses of the Lord? As for the miracles, the deeds of mercy, was it not enough to put down the main facts, when there were already the fuller accounts to be found in Mark? An indication of authorship, which may appear small but is yet surely significant, appears in the

[1] *St. Matthew*, page viii.
[2] Acts vi. 4.
[3] Acts xii. 12.

references to money in the First Gospel, which are certainly more striking than in Mark and Luke and may betray the hand of the taker of toll. In Jesus' directions to the Twelve for their missionary journey, the command to take no money is emphasised : " Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, no wallet," etc. (Matt. x. 9, 10). Contrast Mark vi. 8 : " That they should take nothing for their journey save a staff only : no bread, no wallet, no brass in their purse." Two parables in which the moral turns on money transactions are peculiar to the First Gospel—the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant who owed 10,000 talents [1] and that of the Labourers hired for a penny a day.[2] And it is " Matthew " who alone records that a good sum of money [3] was paid to the watch at the Sepulchre by the chief priests to ensure their silence as to the Resurrection.[4] Some other details in the First Gospel may be cited as consonant with the authorship of Matthew, the publican. Jesus' choice of Capernaum, the home of Matthew, to dwell in is recorded in Matt. iv. 13, while the parallel passages of the other Gospels are content to say, " Galilee." The great Sermon in Luke begins with a Beatitude on " the Poor," among whom Matthew was not to be classed :

[1] Matt. xviii. 23 ff. [2] Matt. xx. 1 ff. [3] ἀργύρια ἱκανά.

[4] Matt. xxviii. 12 ff. I have suggested elsewhere that this story may come from the lost ending of Mark. If so, " Matthew " found it worth incorporating in the First Gospel.

is it without significance that the First Gospel gives " Blessed are the poor in *spirit* ? " for of such undoubtedly was Matthew, the rich publican, who followed the poor man of Nazareth.

Finally, it is only " Matthew " who relates that Judas repented himself, flung back the thirty pieces of silver into the Temple, and went away to hang himself. The taker of toll gives the lesson of the bane of money. And still we must ask, as William Paley asked: If the First Gospel is rightly described as Anonymous, why do early authorities ascribe it to one who was so little eminent among the Apostles as St. Matthew ?

Surely the arguments urged *against* the Matthæan origin of the First Gospel are weak, whether based on the single sentence quoted from the Elder through Papias by Eusebius, or based on its relation to " Mark," or based on the matter-of-fact style of many of its narratives, and the absence of such touches as suggest that the writer was an eye-witness of the scenes which he describes. *Was* Matthew, the toll-taker, as close a follower of the Lord during his ministry as were Peter and James and John ? Did Matthew never return to the place of toll by the seaside at Capernaum ? May he not have missed by absence some of the incidents which are taken from Mark into the First Gospel ? We know too little of the movements in detail of the companions of our Lord's ministry to be

able to say that all the Twelve were present from first to last with Him: indeed we learn that on occasion they were sent off by two and two on independent missions (Mark iii. 14; vi. 7–13.) Matthew in particular, the taker of toll, may have been often absent in order to gather earnings to add to the little stock on which our Lord and His company had from time to time to depend. His claim to be heard as an Evangelist does not rest on his presence at every incident which is described in his Gospel but on his general association with the Eleven, and on the fact that he threw in his lot with them after the Ascension.[1]

Probably we ought to look upon St. Matthew as one who was content that St. Mark, the Interpreter of St. Peter, should remain the standard recorder of the deeds of the Christ, while he himself collected and wrote down the discourses. His own life as a Disciple was inaugurated with a famous discourse, of which he has preserved the kernel in the First Gospel. At his own table he heard our Lord's appeal to a fundamental principle of true religion, backed by a quotation from Hosea vi. 6, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." The quotation, made under such circumstances, remained fixed in the memory of St. Matthew. He records it again as made on another occasion in Matt. xii. 7. There the parallels in Mark and Luke omit

[1] Acts i. 13.

it, but he who was the Lord's host at that remembered meal of Publicans and Sinners could not forget it. We conclude, therefore, that the author of the First Gospel was no less in touch with a living tradition of the ministry of our Lord than the author of the Second Gospel. The First Gospel is Marcan in its account of our Lord's deeds, and Matthæan in its record of His sayings.

For the witness of the early Fathers to St. Matthew's authorship is not easily to be set aside. Against the objection that it is late in date, we set the fact that the geographical dispersion of the several witnesses can only be explained by carrying back the belief in St. Matthew's authorship to a date much earlier than *circa* A.D. 200. In Irenæus of Lyons we have a travelled witness who was acquainted with the Christian churches in Asia Minor, Rome, and Gaul. As a boy, he was in "Lower Asia," and was admitted to the presence of Polycarp, the martyr bishop of Smyrna (Eusebius, *H.E.* v. 20). Later, in A.D. 177–8, he was the bearer of a letter from the church of Lyons to Eleutherus, bishop of Rome (Eusebius, *H.E.* v. 4). His work in five books (*Adversus Hæreses*) was probably completed before A.D. 190.[1] He has very many quotations from the First Gospel and references to it. He does not refer in each case to the author's name—for it is not the custom of

[1] Cf. O. Bardenhewer, *Patrology*, E.T., page 119.

ancient writers so to refer, but his belief as to the authorship of the book is quite clear :

" Matthew," he writes, " preacheth His (Christ's) birth as a man, saying, [The] Book of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham " (*Adv. Hæreses*, iii. xi. 11).

A witness from North Africa to the authorship of the First Gospel is found in Tertullian of Carthage, whose voluminous writings, as many as we possess, must have appeared between A.D. 195 and 218.[1] Tertullian writes : " *Nobis fidem ex Apostolis Johannes et Matthæus insinuant ; ex Apostolicis Lucas et Marcus instaurant* " (" Our faith is implanted in us by John and Matthew of the Apostles, and is renewed in us by Luke and Mark of the Apostolic men " [2]). And again, after speaking of Luke, he proceeds :

" The same authority of the Apostolic Churches will answer also for the other Gospels, which, in like manner and on their authority, we hold : I mean those of John and Matthew." [3]

Yet another voice comes from another quarter. Clement of Alexandria (who was driven from the city in A.D. 202–3 by the persecution of Septimius Severus) speaks quite clearly of the authorship of the First Gospel in the words :

" But in the Gospel according to Matthew the

[1] Bardenhewer, page 180.
[2] *Adv. Marcionem*, iv. ii.
[3] *Adv. Marcionem*, iv. v.

genealogy from Abraham is continued as far as Mary the mother of the Lord. For (he says), they amount to *fourteen generations from Abraham to David*," etc.[1]

The agreement of voices from Lyons, from Carthage, and from Alexandria is truly impressive, especially when we remember that the Christians of *circa* A.D. 200 were not hermits of the desert, but travellers and Christian ambassadors, like Irenæus, or like Clement, who had journeyed through Southern Italy, Syria, and Palestine.[2] Surely the agreement of three such witnesses amounts very nearly to the "*quod ubique*" of the Christian world. No important Christian church is unrepresented, unless it be Antioch of Syria. But here we have to remember the ravages of time in the literature of the Early Church. Surviving from Antioch, we have at present only the short apologetic work of Theophilus, *ad Autolycum*, composed perhaps *circa* A.D. 181–2, which by its nature has little to say about the authorship or authority of any Gospel. It is largely occupied with a discussion of the folly of heathen idolatry and with a refutation of the charge of nameless practices brought by the heathen populace against the Christians. But even so, Theophilus happens to find occasion to quote from the Fourth Gospel,[3] and to assign it to an inspired

[1] *Stromateis*, i. 21 ; cf. iii. 13, 93.
[2] *Ibid.*, i. i. 11.
[3] John i. 1, 3.

man—" John." But we have no right to expect that if Christian Apologists knew the authorship of the several Gospels, their regular practice would be to cite these Gospels with their authors' names to the scornful heathen. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not writers of standard Greek, nor did they represent any school of known philosophy. Of what use would it have been to sound their names in heathen ears ? Christian moral sentiments might appeal to the finer natures among the Gentiles, but not the names of Christian authors.

But the accident—for it is for the most part an accident that there are so few references (real or apparent) to our Gospels by the name of their authors in the years before Irenæus—has led some writers to the view that our Gospels are *anonymous*. The story that Matthew wrote " in Hebrew " has shaken the belief that our Greek Gospel was written by the converted Publican : the statement that the Interpreter of Peter did not write " in order " is enough to persuade some that our Second Gospel is not, as it stands, the work of Mark.

So, amongst others, even Dr. Moffatt (*Introduction*, page 217) has ventured to call our Four, " these anonymous Gospels " ; yet surely the evidence of anonymity is weak, being chiefly evidence from silence, an untrustworthy kind of evidence. Surely some trace of it would have survived in the earliest MSS. or Versions, but what trace can be found ?

The First Gospel is "According to Matthew" in the headings of the Sinaitic codex, and of the codices BC. and in the colophons of the codices AD. The MSS. of the Old Latin as well as those of the Vulgate attribute the Gospel to Matthew. The Old Syriac (Curetonian MS.) has Mattai, *i.e.* Matthew, for its title. The elder Egyptian version, the Sahidic, attributes the Gospel to the same Apostle.

Against this, what is to be said for the anonymity of the First Gospel? No significance can be attributed to the fact that in the Sinaitic MS. of the Old Syriac, "there is no title at all prefixed to St. Matthew": [1] for, in the present condition of the MS., the general title to the Four Gospels is wanting. This in the Curetonian MS. runs: *The Gospels Separate: Mattai.* The probability is that the same title was prefixed in the Sinaitic, for on the proper pages of the MS. there occurs the headline, "Of Mattai." The last leaf of Matthew is unfortunately lost, together with the colophon. There are colophons in Greek cursive MSS. stating that Matthew wrote the Gospel "in Hebrew," and that it was translated "by John," "by James," "by Bartholomew, the all-praiseworthy apostle," "But as some say, by John the Theologian." If such colophons had been found in the more ancient MSS., they might have been significant,

[1] Dr. Burkitt, *Evangelion da Mepharreshe*, vol. ii., page 28.

but in their present homes, and with their discordant voice, they look like guesses of people who did regard our first "Gospel" as Matthew's, though they clung at the same time to the interesting story that "Matthew wrote in Hebrew."

Were the Gospels indeed originally anonymous *and* less esteemed among Christians than the books of the Old Testament ?

The Gospels were known by name and full authority was claimed for them *circa* A.D. 200 ; for this the evidence is express all over the Christian world. But for the earlier period the evidence does not spring to the eye at once in full strength : it has to be sought for and weighed. Justin Martyr is a case in point. His genuine works, his *Apologies* (the first addressed to the emperor, Antoninus Pius), and the *Dialogue* with Trypho, the Jew, are of considerable extent ; they occupy 286 columns of Greek in Migne's *Patrologia*, but in them he mentions no Evangelist by name as an Evangelist, and though he quotes largely from the Synoptic Gospels (such surely is the case), this writer of the middle of the second century seems to some scholars to lay less stress on their authority than do the writers of the end of the second century. Are we then to conclude that our Gospels began only *circa* A.D. 200, to be generally attributed as we now attribute them ? Were they attributed to Matthew the Apostle, to Mark the follower of

Peter, and to Luke the physician of St. Paul, for the first time, only a little before the date of the writings of Irenæus of Lyons, *circa* A.D. 190 ?

The answer can only be given after a careful consideration of the difference of character between the Christian writings of the end of the second century and those of the middle of the century. The difference goes deep. At the end of the second and beginning of the third century, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian were writing for Christians, for men who received the Four Gospels and regarded them as authoritative in doctrinal controversy. The Gnostics (with the partial exception of Marcion), whom these Fathers opposed, appealed to the same Scriptures as their opponents : only they placed a different interpretation upon them. The Canonical Gospels were an obvious arsenal from which the Christian Fathers of the end of the second century could draw their weapons of controversy.

But the case was otherwise in the middle of the century. Then the warfare was between Christian and non-Christian, and the Christians could appeal only in a general way to the quality of the Christian writings indeed, but not to their exact text, nor to their authority ; the text of the Gospels could not lend weapons to both sides. The names of the writers of the books of the New Testament would, in the ears of Christians, lend weight to the words

quoted, but they would be meaningless to the heathen and to the Jew.

It must not surprise us that the case was different for the use of the Old Testament. The Christian could appeal to the Old Testament in controversy not only with the Jew but also with the learned Gentile. In A.D. 200, Moses and the Prophets had existed in Greek for some four hundred years, and the missionary zeal of the Jews had not failed to make these Scriptures known, when they were compassing sea and land to make one proselyte. Moses was known as an author to Juvenal,[1] and by Tacitus as an ancient leader and teacher who gave the Jews a new religion (*novos ritus*).[2] The historian adds that these rites are capable of defence owing to their antiquity. The claim to antiquity availed also on behalf of the books which describe these rites, and the claim to the gift of prophecy (or of power to predict) had its effect on heathen who had faith in the Sibylla. Moses and Isaiah could be cited to " the Greeks," though Matthew and Mark were names not yet known or respected among them.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Pentateuch begins with an arresting challenge to the Gentile philosophers, who from very early times discussed

[1] " Tradidit arcano quodcumque volumine Moses " (*Sat.* xiv. 102).

[2] *Hist.* v. 4.

the origin of the Universe: "In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; so Moses declared, and Moses for his antiquity was accepted as a prophet by the learned heathen. While Greek thinkers said "Yea" and "Nay" and "We cannot know," the ancient Hebrew book said, and said again, that God was the Creator and the purposeful contriver of all. The distracted heathen heard (and often, it appears, welcomed) so clear a voice of guidance from Moses and the Prophets.

Moreover, the ancient Hebrew books were commended to the Gentiles by their claim to be of a prophetic or predictive character, for Prophecy was usually understood in the sense of Prediction. Even the grave Tacitus is obliged to take some notice of prediction among the Jews. "A larger number of the Jews were persuaded that the ancient writings of the priests contained the assurance that at that very time it would come to pass that the East would revive and that men of Judæa would gain rule (attain to power, *rerum potirentur*). These obscure sayings were predictions of Vespasian and Titus" (*Hist.* v. 13). We can understand this attitude of Tacitus, when we remember that the great Greek writers, Aristophanes, Plato, and Aristotle, refer with respect to a collection of heathen predictions which passed under the name of the nymph Sibylla. The heathen of the early Christian

centuries were familiar with the idea of Prophecy and studied with attention Sibylline writings which could claim antiquity; they were thus the more inclined to give an ear to the ancient prophets of Judaism.

In the Apologies for Christianity which belong to the second century, the appeal is made by name to the Prophets of the Old Testament as well as to Sibylline verses whether of Jewish or heathen origin. Among these Apologists are Justin Martyr (*Apol.* A.D. 150–155); Tatian (*Apol. circa* A.D. 165), who urged that Moses is older than Homer; Athenagoras (*de Resurrectione*); and Theophilus. Especially illuminating is the practice of Theophilus of Antioch, sixth bishop of Antioch in succession from the Apostles according to Eusebius[1] He wrote "soon after" the death of "the Emperor Verus (*i.e.* Marcus Antoninus) which took place A.D. 180. In a discourse in three books addressed to a certain Autolycus he tells his heathen correspondent that just as the Sibylla prophesied among "the Greeks," so there arose among the Hebrews not one or two but a number of prophets who were inspired by the Spirit: these, he tells them, showed their powers along two different lines. In the first place, through wisdom inspired by God they were able to tell of the Creation of the World, and secondly, they were given to see in vision and to

[1] *H.E.* iv. 20.

announce beforehand plagues, famines, and wars which "occurred in our own times." It should be remembered that the reign of "Verus," Marcus Antoninus (161–180) was marked by a widespread pestilence, by famine, and by wars with the barbarians on the Rhine, the Danube, and in Spain.

Theophilus in addressing his heathen correspondent is bold with his appeal to Hebrew writers by name and by designation as "prophets," "spirit-carrying" men. Moses naturally heads the list, and twice appeal is made by name to the book of Genesis. Other prophets called prophets and cited by name are David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Habakkuk, Zechariah and Malachi.

But the practice of Theophilus with regard to the New Testament is different. He mentions no writer by name, with the one exception of "John," whom he describes as one of those who were inspired by the spirit, and to whom he appeals for the Christian doctrine of the *Logos*. "John saith, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made" (*ad Auto.* ii. 22: John i. 1, 3). It is obvious why Theophilus makes this one reference to a book of the New Testament by name, though he makes no other. Very many of the heathen felt the power of the appeal which Chris-

tianity made to them by the doctrines of the Unity of God and of the Creation of the Universe by Him. Theophilus says in effect: "We Christians have these doctrines, and we find them set forth not only in the old books, but also in the later writings of inspired men which we as Christians possess."

As for other books of the New Testament, we have some unmistakable quotations, but they are given without the name of the author from whom they are taken. But that the collection referred to by Theophilus included books called "Gospels" is clear. In *ad Autolycum*, iii. 13, Theophilus quotes Matt. v. 28, 32 (on Divorce) and introduces the passage with the formula, "the evangelic voice teacheth." In iii. 14, after the words, "The Gospel saith," he quotes Matt. v. 44, 46 (possibly from memory) in a form which shows the influence of the parallel passage, Luke vi. 27, 28, 32, "Love your enemies," etc. In ii. 13, Theophilus, without acknowledging the source, interweaves with his discourse the words of Luke xviii. 27, "The things that are impossible with men are possible with God."

A word must be added on the general freedom of some of the quotations, whether from the Old Testament or the New, which the early Fathers allow themselves. As a rule, passages are quoted from memory, and under the influence of parallel passages they suffer some change. For instance,

Matt. v. 46 is quoted by Theophilus in the form, "For if ye love them that love you, what kind of reward have ye? This even the robbers and the publicans do." The quotation departs from the Matthæan text in three points. First, the Gospel has "what reward"; secondly, it puts the second half of the verse in the form of a question; thirdly, it reads "the publicans" only, and not "the robbers and the publicans." But it is hazardous to suggest on the strength of these three variations that Theophilus is quoting not "Matthew," but some lost Gospel. The variant reading "the robbers" is startling at first, but it is to be explained from the parallel in Luke vi. 32, "For even sinners love those that love them." Theophilus is combining exposition with quotation. From St. Matthew's version he takes those who sin by extortion, from St. Luke's those who sin by murder, paraphrasing the Evangelist's vague word, "sinners."

It appears from the foregoing study of Theophilus's use of the Scriptures that no support can be got from him for the view that the Gospels were anonymous in the second century. It is true that his references are to "the Gospels" (plural: iii. 12); "the Evangelic voice" (iii. 13); and to "the Gospel" (iii. 14), without mentioning the name of the particular Evangelist whom he is quoting. Yet why should he give the name of

authors who were unknown to the heathen? His object was only to exhibit the excellence of the moral teaching which the Christians were receiving from their own books. It was enough to tell the heathen that this teaching was enthusiastically embraced, and that the Christians stamped the books which contained it with the honourable title of "Good News" or "Gospels." Only in the case of the single quotation of John i. 1, 3 does Theophilus add the name of the Evangelist, "John, one of the spirit-bearers." But if it be said that no one supposes that the Gospels "remained anonymous" as late as the date of the *ad Autolycum*, it may be answered that Justin Martyr some thirty years earlier than Theophilus exhibits the same phenomena in his quotations. Justin, like Theophilus, addresses non-Christians and has the same reasons for not appealing by name to the Evangelists. But in agreement with Theophilus, he appeals by name to the Sibyl (*Apol.* i. 20), and to the Hebrew Prophets by name, and as Prophets—to Moses (*Apol.* i. 33); to David (*Apol.* i. 45); to Isaiah (*Apol.* i. 33, 35, 61, *al*); to Ezekiel (*Apol.* i. 52); to Micah (*Apol.* i. 34); to Zechariah (*Apol.* i. 52). In the *Apology* he nowhere mentions any book of the New Testament by name, though in the *Dialogue* with Trypho, the Jew (chap. 81), he comes very near to naming the Apocalypse of St. John. His words are, "A certain man of ours, whose name

is John, one of the Apostles of the Christ,[1] in a Revelation that was made to him prophesied that the believers in our Christ (' our Messiah ') should pass (live) a thousand years in Jerusalem." Further, as by Theophilus, so also thirty years earlier by Justin, mention is made of Christian books by the name of Gospels (*Apol.* i. 66). "The Apostles in the Memoirs, which were made by them which are called *Gospels*, delivered that thus were they commanded, to wit, that Jesus took a loaf and gave thanks and said, *This do in remembrance of me : this is my body :* and likewise that taking the cup and giving thanks he said, *This is my blood.*" Schleiermacher and his followers, over whom the negative spirit [2] rules, make the negative suggestion that the clause " which are called Gospels " is a gloss. This suggestion ignores the fact that Justin uses the term " Memoirs " for the better information of the heathen, for whom he writes, and that with the same aim he adds the Christian term " Gospels " for the better identification of the books meant. No name of an Evangelist is given by Justin, but his description, in the middle of the second century, of the authorship of the Gospels answers exactly to the belief held at the close of the second century : they were " composed by the

[1] In the case of a New Testament writer, it was necessary to give some description of the writer in the course of controversy with a non-Christian.

[2] *Der Geist der stets verneint.*

apostles of Jesus and by those who followed them" (*Dial.* c. 103): *i.e.* as we should explain the words, by the Apostles Matthew and John, by Mark who followed Peter, and by Luke who followed Paul.

That the Memoirs or Gospels on which Justin draws for his quotations are our Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—has been proved by Westcott in his *History of the Canon* (pages 95–177, Fourth Edition, 1875), after an exhaustive examination. Justin's allusions to Gospel history added to his Gospel quotations amount to over one hundred, and surely prove the use of our Gospels [1] by Justin. But the number of slight variations from our text has given rise to the suggestion that Justin was using some uncanonical Gospel, with or without the addition of the acknowledged Four.

Westcott rejects the suggestion chiefly because the variations are more rationally explained as due to quotation from memory. Ancient books were cumbrous to handle, and it is reasonable to suppose that for short quotations—most of Justin's are short—the memory would be trusted and the books left unhandled. Moreover, there is a tendency observable in many writers to vary the wording of a quotation in order to make its meaning clearer. Further, that Justin does quote often from memory appears from the fact that his quotations of the

[1] With a slight doubt perhaps as to the Fourth Gospel.

same Gospel passage vary in different parts of his writings. Thus, in *Apol.* i. 15, he writes: "Your Father is kind and merciful and he maketh his sun to rise upon sinners and just men and evil men." In *Dial.* 96, on the other hand, he quotes thus: "We see the Almighty God kind and merciful making his sun to rise upon unthankful men and just men, and raining upon holy men and evil men." The passage referred to is Matt. v. 45, but the quotation is coloured by memory of Luke vi. 35, 36.

We have a characteristic instance of Justin's method of quotation in *Apol.* i. 16, as follows: "For he said thus: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven (Matt. vii. 21). For he that heareth me, and doeth the things that I say, heareth him that sent me (cf. Luke x. 16; Matt. x. 40, neither verbally).[1] But many shall say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not in thy name eat and drink and do mighty works? And then I will say to them, Depart from me, workers of lawlessness. Then shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Luke xiii. 26–28*a*: according to the sense, but not *verbatim*), when the righteous shall shine as the sun (Matt. xiii. 43), and the unjust shall be sent

[1] Cf. Luke vi. 46, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

into the eternal fire (Matt. xxv. 41). For many shall come in my name (Matt. xxiv. 5) clothed without with the skins of sheep, but being ravening wolves within. From their *works* ye shall know them (Matt. vii. 15, 16*a*). Every tree that beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire (Matt. vii. 19)."

This passage is here written out just as it occurs in the *Apology*, only with the addition within brackets of references to Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke are undoubtedly here, but Justin has woven together passages from each for better presentation of our Lord's teaching on his final judgment. For such a method in quoting Scripture a striking precedent is found in Romans iii. 10–18, where passages from Isaiah, several Psalms, and the Book of Proverbs are linked together to form a whole.

An interesting fact noticed by Westcott [1] is that Justin makes a clear reference to our Second Gospel, and (it seems) ascribes to it the authority of an Apostle. The point aimed at by Justin may be fanciful, but the reference to Mark cannot be denied. "The mention of the fact that Christ changed the name of Peter one of the Apostles, and that the event has been written in his (Peter's) Memoirs, together with his having changed the name of two other brethren to Boanerges, tended to signify that

[1] *Canon*, page 113.

he was the same through whom the surname Israel was given to Jacob, and Joshua to Hoshea" (so rendered in Westcott).[1] "Now the surname given to James and John is only found at present (1875) in one of our Gospels, and there it is mentioned in immediate connexion with the change of Peter's name. That Gospel is the Gospel of St. Mark" (Westcott), "the Interpreter of Peter." It has been suggested that the reference is to the Gospel of Peter (discovered and published in 1892), but only a portion of this work has been recovered, and James and John are not mentioned in it, nor the fact of the changing of Peter's name.

The most rational conclusion from the study of the mass of Gospel quotations found in Justin is that Justin is using our Synoptic Gospels as his authority for the facts of the ministry and for the meaning of Christianity. Justin, in short, supplies the link which connects the testimony of Papias's Elder with the testimony of the Fathers of the end of the second century. Our Gospels of Matthew and Mark can be traced backward through the second century until they meet a witness who was a "disciple of the Lord."

Note on the Churches of Asia

The value of the testimony of "the Churches of Asia" to the continuity of the Christian tradition

[1] *Dial.*, 106.

can hardly be exaggerated. Papias and his Elder form only one strand in a cord which cannot be broken. The Christian tradition that we find in Ephesus and her six sister churches is not one-sided : Pauline and Johannine elements meet there, and a yet third element must be added by inference, so making the picture of Christianity complete. The Johannine Gospel is generally agreed to have had its origin in "Asia." But, further, it is generally agreed that the Fourth Gospel made use of the Second Gospel, and so is a witness to the early date and the authority of the Gospel according to St. Mark. The Christ of the Seven Churches is thus at once Pauline and Marcan and Johannine. He is One who sits at God's right hand, and is the head of the Church through whom all the members are united to form one Church ;[1] He is the Word through whom all things were made ;[2] He is One who came in the flesh and spoke and taught, "Judge not," who moreover died for our sins and was raised from the dead.[3] At Ephesus,[4] Justin Martyr maintained in his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, that Jesus is both the Word (Λόγος) and the Christ. The Christianity of the Seven Churches was broad as the Canon of the New Testament.

[1] Eph. i. 20–23 ; ii. 20 f.
[2] John i. 3.
[3] Polycarp to the Philippians, §§ 1–3.
[4] Eusebius, *H.E.* iv. 18.

From Asia in his youth came Irenæus with his memories of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and of Polycarp's reminiscences of his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord. "And Polycarp," writes Irenæus, "delivered all things in agreement with the Scriptures." The Scriptures of Irenæus included the Four Gospels. To "Asia" also belonged Polycrates with his memories of John "who reclined on the breast of the Lord," who writes to Victor and the Roman Church thus (Eus. *H.E.* v. 24):

". . . Throughout Asia elemental great ones[1] sleep who shall rise again on the day of the Coming of the Lord, on which He cometh with glory from heaven, and will seek out all the saints, such as Philip, one of the Twelve Apostles who sleepeth in Hierapolis and his two daughters who grew old in virginity and the other (the married one) who lived (walked) by the Holy Spirit and hath her rest in Ephesus: and again John also who reclined on the breast of the Lord[2]—he sleepeth in Ephesus, and again Polycarp in Smyrna, both bishop and martyr, and Thraseas, bishop and martyr who sleepeth in Smyrna. And why need I mention Sagaris bishop and martyr who sleepeth in Laodicea, and yet again the blessed Papirius, and Melito the eunuch who walked in all things by the Holy Spirit who lieth in Sardis awaiting the visitation

[1] μεγάλα στοιχεῖα. [2] John xiii. 23.

from heaven in which he shall rise from the dead."

The object of Polycrates is to defend the Asian custom of keeping Easter, but his appeal also supports our confidence in the continuity of the life of the Church in "Asia." St. Paul—"John" of the Fourth Gospel—Papias's Elder—Polycarp—Justin Martyr—Irenæus—Polycrates—this succession constitutes a stout cord binding the Church of the first days to the Church of the end of the second century. The authority of the Four Gospels is confirmed by this continuity of the life of the Church. The elemental great ones clung to the tradition of their fathers, and would not admit new and strange Scriptures, nor would they cease to cherish the writings which they had received as Gospels.

CHAPTER III

Form Criticism

THE external evidence to be derived from the works of the early Fathers as to the origin and history of the Gospels is seen to be strong when it is carefully examined. It is, however, waved aside by a recent school of criticism, "Form criticism," which essays to write the story of the origin of the Gospels solely from certain bold (or rash) presuppositions of a negative kind, and from subjective judgments on the Gospel narratives. But it is surely unscientific to ignore all statements of the Fathers of the second century from whatever district they come, and to assume that no trustworthy tradition could be preserved even in old established churches such as those of Asia Minor. But *Der Geist der stets verneint* does ignore all this and trusts to its critical sense. But can we trust the judgment of the Form critics, who shut their eyes to the value of so carefully guarded a statement as, *e.g.*, that of the Elder whom Papias quotes on the Gospel of Mark?

Dr. Dibelius (already referred to [1]), putting aside

[1] Page 8.

ancient evidence, starts his investigation into the origin of the Gospels immediately from the text of the Gospels. He notices the patent fact that a Gospel allows itself to be divided up into sections like the "Gospels" of our Order for Holy Communion, each short but relatively complete in itself. The verses or half verses which bind these sections into one narrative he writes down as editorial additions of small value. Thus he gets rid of connecting notes of time and place, and only a number of detached pieces remain. On the presuppositions of Form criticism these were all that an Evangelist could find to his hand. He would have at his disposal no connected narrative,[1] but only separate stories. How were even these preserved?

They were preserved, Dibelius tells us, in the earliest Christian sermons. "Missionary purpose was the cause and preaching was the means of spreading abroad that which the disciples of Jesus possessed as recollections."[2] The critic proceeds by the application of certain tests mainly of a subjective kind to sort the Gospel sections into three main classes: Paradigms, Tales (*Novellen*), and Legends. Dibelius claims to know (rather too definitely, we think) from a study of the notices of sermons given in Acts just what kind of matter

[1] Except probably a narrative of the Passion, says Dibelius, *From Tradition*, pages 178 ff.

[2] *Ibid.*, page 13.

would be used by the preachers. He calls this kind *Paradigms*, *i.e.* examples used in support of the missionary's message. The tests which he employs for identifying Paradigms are three: (1) A Paradigm must be externally rounded off so as to form a natural unit; (2) the narrative must be brief and simple; (3) it must culminate in some striking word or deed of Jesus, as in the case of blessing little children,[1] or the story of the Relatives of Jesus.[2] A Paradigm, as defined by Dibelius, must have none of the vivid touches in the narrative which suggest to most readers the eye-witness as the source of the story: "Every expression of individual sensibility is absent [except that] which is in a high degree concerned with the matter itself"[3] *i.e.* with the word or deed of Jesus himself. Dibelius postulates a severe and restrained type of oratory for the earliest missionaries, and ascribes to their sermons only the "least adorned" of the Gospel narratives. How very *un*human these early missionaries must have been, and yet they won their fellow-men over to the Gospel.

Can we trust Dibelius's separation of genuine "Paradigms" from the general text of the Gospels? He is confident in his own ability to make this separation, but a careful student will hardly share his confidence. His method abounds with un-

[1] Mark x. 13 ff. [2] Mark iii. 20 f., 31 ff.
[3] *From Tradition*, page 37.

certainties, which his positive manner does not remove. Since, says Dibelius, they, the "Paradigms" once existed in isolation, it must be possible to detect independent life in them even to-day; they must have an external rounding off. "Either in a word or a deed of Jesus the action reaches a high point, which is never again surpassed." [1] as in the story of the relatives of Jesus.[2] "Many a Paradigm reaches its point in, and at the same time concludes with, a word of Jesus." [3] But if the last clause of the section makes the Paradigm of general application, and not as referring only to one particular occasion, Dibelius suggests that only the penultimate clause comes from Jesus, while the ultimate is due to the preacher. He has no doubt that Jesus Himself said, "These are my mother and my brothers," but the continuation, "for whosoever doeth the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother" comes rather (according to Dibelius) from the preacher who made Paradigms.[4] So with a guess Dibelius passes on to declare that the isolation of the Paradigm is shown also by the absence of any real connexion with the preceding context. A good example, says Dibelius, is in Mark ii. 23, "And it came to pass on the Sabbath that he was going through the corn fields," the preceding incident being a discussion with the

[1] *From Tradition*, page 44.
[2] Mark iii. 20 f., 31–35.
[3] *From Tradition*, page 56.
[4] *Ibid.*, page 57.

Pharisees concerning fasting. But Dibelius is too positive. There is, in fact, a real connexion between the plucking of the ears of corn on the Sabbath and the neglect of fasting by the Disciples, which is the subject of the preceding section. Both narratives illustrate our Lord's method of training His Disciples. Both may very well have been derived by St. Mark from the same day's flow of St. Peter's reminiscences of the things said by the Lord.

In his hardy rejection of connecting links in the Gospel narrative Dibelius overlooks (or dismisses) the several indications of a trustworthy geographical tradition of our Lord's wandering ministry, which these links supply.[1] Is it reasonable to suppose that a late and ignorant evangelist-editor invented these scattered links, which when gathered together yield us so probable a story of the movements of Jesus ?

A second mark of a Paradigm is the brevity and simplicity of the narrative. In a Paradigm we learn of the actual circumstances only as much as we must know in order to understand the intervention of Jesus. Attractive details are left out. Only short passages could be introduced into a sermon. The Tribute Money [2] is a case in point.

These are rash assertions. Was all early Christian preaching, including that of the fiery St. Peter,

[1] Page 12ff. [2] Mark xii. 13–17.

limited thus? Dibelius is relying no doubt on the reports of Christian sermons which are found in the Acts of the Apostles. But does he suppose that these reports are complete, or even that they are sufficiently full to give us more than a taste of these sermons? His argument requires that we should be able to learn from these summaries not only the contents but also the method and style of the Christian preachers. But the reports are too brief. St. Paul's address at Athens, if given in full in Acts,[1] might have taken three or four minutes to deliver, that at Miletus[2] perhaps six or seven. Whether the discourses of the Apostles were of Lacedæmonian terseness or not, is just what we cannot learn from the reports supplied in Acts; but passages such as Acts ii. 40, xx. 9 do not suggest brevity.

A third characteristic of the Paradigm is *the colouring of the narrative in a thoroughly religious*, i.e. *realistic unworldly manner* (Dibelius).[3] He describes the cleansing of the temple (Mark xi. 15 ff.) as a Paradigm of less pure type, but he declares that the *dénouement*, "He taught the people," brings in the religious touch and so satisfies the needs of the sermon. So the passage is finally judged to be a Paradigm. But is there general agreement on the meaning of the phrase, "in a thoroughly

[1] Acts xvii. 22–31. [2] Acts xx. 18–35.
[3] *From Tradition*, page 56.

unworldly manner"? This test is subjective. Dibelius has his own idea of the "unworldly": most of us would *not* hesitate to regard the Cleansing of the Temple as "unworldly" in the very act.

The aim of Dr. Dibelius in his separation of the Paradigms from the Gospel narrative is to segregate the matter to which he attributes "a relative trustworthiness" from the rest. He is an Apologist for Christianity as he understands it. He writes against the critics who deny that Jesus ever lived. He holds that the Paradigms as belonging to the earliest Christian preaching, when the eye-witnesses were still alive to criticise them, have a claim to acceptance beyond those passages which he classifies either as "Tales" (*Novellen*) or as "Legends." So he finds in contradiction to other German investigators a good deal of matter which has a *prima facie* claim to be considered historical. On the side of historical research, however, his method is open to criticism, for it excludes a number of passages (surely of "historical" value), because they are not likely, at least on his view, to have been used in sermons.

But the serious objection to Dibelius's work is that it is almost wholly subjective. Has he, in truth, so fine a sense of what the earliest Christian missionaries would put in their sermons, as to be able to identify for us in our present Gospels the paradigms of the earliest Christian missionaries?

One fashionable prejudice is conspicuous in our author: he brings forward no Paradigm from the Fourth Gospel. Why is the story of the Feet Washing unnoticed? [1] If, as Dibelius would say in other cases, the introduction is supplied here by the Evangelist, the passage itself answers to the definition of a Paradigm. Though it is at present embedded in the text of the Fourth Gospel, it can be easily isolated. Moreover, it is distinguished by "the brevity and simplicity of the narrative." Finally, it has a thoroughly religious (unworldly) character; it is suitable for inclusion in a sermon; it is from its nature extremely unlikely to be an invention.

To his second class of the Gospel narratives, Dibelius gives the title of Tales (*Novellen* in German). These, he writes, stand out more distinctly in the text of Mark owing to their "richer and more developed form." To the class of Tales, Dibelius assigns nine narratives of miracles beginning with the cure of the leper [2] and ending with that of the epileptic boy.[3] The title "Tales" indicates sufficiently the critic's view of the historical value of the narratives relegated to this class.[4]

When we ask by what marks Dibelius distinguishes the relatively trustworthy Paradigm from the imaginative tale, we find first, that he sets down

[1] John xiii. 4–15.
[2] Mark i. 40 ff.
[3] Mark ix. 14 ff.
[4] *From Tradition*, page 70 ff.

accounts of miracles with but few exceptions as "Tales." Usually for him the miracle stamps the account as not to be counted a "Paradigm." Dibelius seeks indeed to confirm his decision by the use of other tests, but the question arises of the value of his tests. He describes Paradigms as brief, and as hurrying on to report the culminating word or deed of Jesus; so Tales must be described on the contrary as being constructed with "breadth." Dibelius finds in them a descriptiveness which is not found in Paradigms: a technique which reveals a certain pleasure in the narrative itself; a lack of devotional motives, even a secular tone; and finally, a conclusion which emphasises the reality of the miracle. He gives, as an instance, the story of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda (Bethzatha).[1] Certainly the writer must have had pleasure in telling the story, and it is not so short as to be bare of detail; further, it may be called "secular," in Dr. Dibelius's use of the word, if (and only if) we cut the story short at ver. 9*a*. But the *dénouement* in 9*b*–16 cannot fairly be disjointed from the story, even if vv. 17, 18 be taken as a later addition. This moving tale of Christ seeking a "lost sheep," is *not* secular: it is *not* unsuited for use in a missionary's sermon: and surely its length (!)—sixteen verses, would *not* tell against its use, for the hearers would wish to hear the end. Dibelius's distinction

[1] *From Tradition*, page 91; John v. 1–18.

between a Paradigm and a Tale fails here conspicuously—can we accept it in other cases?

Can we, for instance, class the story of Jairus as a Tale? Is the critic right in asserting a lack of devotional motive in this narrative? Jesus says to Jairus, "Fear not, only believe" (Mark v. 36). Surely this is devotional. But no, the critic asserts that the thing which Jesus demands here is not the faith which the missionaries preached, but only belief in His own power as a miracle-worker. Thus Dibelius empties a religious word of its religious significance, and ignores the fact that our Lord regarded His works of power as effected "by the finger of God" or "by the Spirit of God" (Luke xi. 20; Matt. xii. 28). So in Mark iii. 28 f., Jesus maintains that His exorcism of demons is by the action of the Holy Spirit.

Again (*pace* Dibelius), it is faith in God that our Lord asks for from the father of the epileptic boy. Jesus says to the doubting father, "All things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark ix. 23). Belief in whom?—for the person is not named. But the answer is certain, for our Lord uses the language of the Old Testament, in which the word "believe" has its object in JEHOVAH the Almighty. The object is not always expressed in the Old Testament; so Isaiah says with terse severity, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Isa. vii. 9). But in 2 Chron. xx. 20, it

was, "Believe in JEHOVAH your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Jesus wished to be accepted not as a thaumaturge possessing powers of His own, but as one commissioned by the Father to speak and act in His name.

Why, for another instance, is the healing of the leper[1] to be reckoned as a "Tale," and not as a "Paradigm"? It stands first in Dibelius's list of Tales, but it has most of the characteristics of a Paradigm. It is brief: it can be easily isolated from the context: it is "religious" in that it enjoins obedience to the Mosaic Law: it reaches its highest point in a saying of Jesus: it gives a direction which is strictly applicable to the place and to our Lord's attitude to the Law. The Twelve and other disciples needed to be taught that the Law of Moses was still valid for certain crises in their daily life.[2] Dibelius's judgment becomes warped when he has to do with a "miraculous" account.[3]

By writing down as "Tales" those passages which possess the quality which he calls "descriptiveness," Dibelius intends (it seems) to account for the truly lifelike touches which occur not infrequently in Mark. These touches have usually been taken by scholars as testifying to the depend-

[1] Mark i. 40–44.
[2] Matt. v. 17.
[3] *From Tradition*, pages 71 f.

ence of St. Mark on an eye-witness. Now the fact about the style of Mark, as Dibelius himself implicitly confesses, is that while many passages are "descriptive," many others bear the opposite character. Therefore, it is from Mark that the critic chooses for "brevity and simplicity" his eight "pure" Paradigms,[1] and it is again from Mark that he chooses for "descriptiveness" his eight Tales.[2] How, then, are we to decide the question whether these lifelike touches found sometimes, but not always, in Mark come from an eye-witness or from a later editor of the Second Gospel, who chose certain descriptive "Tales" to add to his sober "Paradigms"? The judgment of the Form critics is directly opposed to the judgment of other scholars on this question of internal evidence, and the hope of a decision rests with the external evidence of ancient writers.

Now Dibelius has lightly rejected by a prejudgment some external evidence which exactly meets the case. He asserts positively that Papias in the second century did not know the circumstances under which the Gospels were composed,[3] and yet Papias was in a position to make inquiries into such matters, and did, in fact, make them in a hopeful direction. Further, the statement of the Elder quoted by Papias[4] concerning the circum-

[1] *From Tradition*, page 43.
[2] *Ibid.*, pages 71 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, pages 3 f.
[4] Page 18.

stances under which Mark was written, corresponds closely with the phenomena which both Dibelius and those who differ from him find in the Second Gospel. Mark, the Elder said, did not follow the Lord, but followed Peter, and by careful attention to Peter's teaching given from memory, he wrote down things which appear in his Gospel. But man's memory is variable in quality: sometimes it retains only the substance of the things heard, at other times it preserves the very words, even the very tones of the speaker. Thus the Elder's account prepares us for finding sometimes in Mark passages like those styled "Paradigms" by Dibelius, and at other times passages such as he calls "Tales."

Among the passages which Dibelius sets down confidently as a "Tale" is the narrative of the Feeding of the Thousands in the Wilderness.[1] He finds all the marks of a Tale in it: it is "secular" in tone, and the religious element is lacking: it is marked by joy in graphic description: it contains such touches as the disciples' question: "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?": it depicts the seated multitude and the praying Saviour; and, according to Dibelius, it deals with *Jesus as the thaumaturge.*[2] In spite of all these traits, real or imaginary, on

[1] Mark vi. 30–44; cf. Mark viii. 1–10.
[2] *From Tradition*, pages 78, 90, 95.

which the critic relies, is he indeed justified in his confidence? Are these vivid touches only the tricks of the tale-teller?

In examining the critic's pronouncement, let us first inquire with the Elder's testimony in mind whether some of the graphic touches do not suggest that they are derived from the vivid memory of an Apostle, possibly even from St. Peter.

The opening verses [1] of the account of the Feeding of the Thousands are soberly alive. They give, so we may say with confidence, the very atmosphere of the occasion. The disciples had returned from the teaching and healing tour on which they had been sent [2] They were footsore and mind-tired, and in addition, they were no doubt anxious to report their successes and their failures. For the first time they had been, as St. Mark calls them (here and here only [3]), "Apostles" *i.e.* messengers, and they were returning to the Master who sent them. But they found Jesus beset by crowds, and the disciples could neither rest nor give their report undisturbed. The boat was at hand, and Jesus said, "Come ye apart and rest awhile." But the rest was short, hardly more perhaps than the transit in the boat could give, for on the farther shore a crowd awaited them though the place was desert. But Jesus had com-

[1] Mark vi. 30–34. [2] Mark vi. 12 f.
[3] But see Mark iii. 14 (R.V. marg.).

passion on this new crowd, and took up His burden again and began to teach the people " many things," while His disciples got what rest they could. They were disappointed in their hope of rest ; we feel their disappointment through the narrative of St. Mark. The tiredness of the disciples lasts throughout the incident ; after a time they came to our Lord with the request, " Send them away."

A tired participant in the scene (as we judge) gives his experience to St. Mark, and with the Elder's testimony before us, may we not identify this participant with an Apostle, with St. Peter himself, who in his restless energy was the man to take a lead in that day's work ? The beginning of the Story does not at all give the impression that a mere teller of a Tale is writing " descriptively." And as the narrative proceeds, shall we alter our view ? In the case of this " Tale," two of Dibelius's points stand in contradiction. One mark distinctive of a " Tale " is according to him " descriptiveness," and he quotes as an instance in Mark vi. that " the seated multitude and the praying Saviour are depicted." But another mark of the " Tale " according to the critic is " the lack of devotional motives." Does not the narrative reach its central point in the words, " And looking up to heaven he blessed and brake the loaves ? " What is this but a devotional motive ?

But Dibelius regards this passage as secular in

character, and as designed to exalt Jesus as a thaumaturge. This is an unsatisfying view, even when the incident is regarded in its isolation. Still more unsatisfying is it, when it is viewed in its context. When our Lord reminds the disciples a little later of the Feeding of the Thousands, it is to take their thoughts altogether away from material leaven and material bread.[1] In the actual account the Feeding is summarily stated, the crowd is sent away, and Jesus Himself retires. There is no dwelling on the extraordinary fact that thousands have been fed in the wilderness.

Is Dibelius right in dismissing this narrative as a mere Tale ? He has not given serious attention to some serious considerations. The first of these is the probability, the great probability, that St. Mark received his information from an eye-witness, from a participant, from St. Peter himself. The second consideration is that the Feeding of the Thousands is a story doubly attested. There is an account of just such an incident in a later passage of Mark,[2] which, though it is given as a separate event, is more probably to be regarded as a variant of Mark vi. The place is the same—the wilderness ; the moving cause is the same—the compassion of Jesus ; there is the same hesitation on the part of the disciples ; the same seating of the people ; and the same giving of thanks over

[1] Mark viii. 14–21. [2] Mark viii. 1–10.

the breaking of the loaves. The difference between the two passages lies in the different statement of the numbers (a difference often to be noticed in the most honest reports of the same event), five thousand people as compared with four thousand, *five* loaves as against *seven*, two fishes as against "a few."[1] The only serious difficulty in identifying the two accounts lies in Mark viii. 14–21, where our Lord (as reported by the Evangelist) treats the two accounts as relating to two separate occasions. But in answer it may be said that it was easy for the Evangelist, having these two accounts before him, to make the mistake of duplicating the Lord's question to the disciples, "When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand how many baskets of broken pieces took ye up?"

On the other hand, if it be the fact that Jesus fed the Thousands in the wilderness on *two* different occasions, it is a serious difficulty that the disciples asked a second time, "How shall we feed the men?" and did not rather say, "At thy word we will make them sit down in companies."

Further, it should be noted that this action of our Lord was full of danger for His Mission. It is true that it was inevitable: He who taught His followers to pray for daily bread, was bound to have compassion on the hungry crowd which had

[1] Dibelius drops Mark viii. 1–9 (an independent tradition) too easily as "a shortening." *From Tradition*, page 78, note.

followed Him into the wilderness. But, in fact, this Feeding turned the minds both of the disciples and of the multitudes to think of " the meat which perisheth." So, when a little while after this meal in the wilderness Jesus warned his intimates against " the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod," [1] their thoughts turned to loaves of bread. And in the spiritual Gospel according to St. John, the danger of drawing a false conclusion from the action of Jesus is still more clearly indicated. The effect on the crowd was that they said, " This is of a truth *the prophet that cometh into the world*," not " a prophet," but " the prophet," whose coming is the signal for the coming of a great change : " let the Romans beware." The Evangelist adds, " Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone." [2] A repetition of the Feeding might well have ended in a political outbreak by men who would use the name of Jesus as Messiah.

What, then, we must ask, was the spiritual gain of this single act (as we believe it to be) of Jesus? The Feeding of the multitude was obviously an evidence of the compassion of the Son of man, a proof that He was indeed one with His brethren. But if we look deeper into the nature of the action we find something more. We must ask what

[1] Mark viii. 15. [2] John vi. 14, 15.

exactly did Jesus do? Was it just a multiplying of loaves and fishes, a "miracle" in the physical world?

To this question some scholars have given a negative answer, and their answer is certainly worthy of consideration. They regard the act of the Lord as something greater than a "nature-miracle," as more than a mere victory over matter. They explain it as a moral miracle, as a spiritual victory over the cautious selfishness of the natural man, a triumph over mob mentality. In support of this view, we note that Jesus did not take the whole burden of the Feeding upon Himself: He appealed with urgency to the disciples:

"Give *ye* (emphatic) them to eat."

And again,

"How many loaves have ye?"

"Go and see."

And the Fourth Gospel with its insight into the spiritual aspect of things adds the suggestion that Christ's appeal was passed on by the Twelve to the crowd, and not without success:

"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him,

"There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?"

And then Jesus bade the multitude sit down, not in a mass but by companies,[1] by hundreds and by

[1] συμπόσια, "friendly groups."

fifties. Men from the same town, men from the same village would naturally sit together. And at the centre they could see Jesus standing, pronouncing a blessing, and making distribution from a small, a very small stock of bread and fish. Example is stronger than precept, and the moral majesty of Jesus was present to enforce the example ; may we not then believe that cautious or selfish men, who had hitherto concealed the little stock of food they had brought with them now produced it, being dominated by the example of the Teacher, and ashamed before the hungry eyes of their own company of fifty or a hundred ? Thus (we may suppose) did Jesus by the simplest and most practical of all lessons teach the multitude that His followers must accept from Him the condition, " All ye are brethren." [1]

And to this we must add the lesson He gave to the Twelve when He recalled to their memory the Feeding in the Wilderness, and cautioned them against inclining to the Pharisaic demand for a sign,[2] or to the Herodian fondness for earthly influence and power. Even when Jesus fed the people He remained faithful to His text, " Man shall not live by bread alone." [3]

A full consideration of the narrative tells strongly

[1] Matt. xxiii. 8.
[2] Perhaps for a repetition of the Feeding.
[3] Matt. iv. 4.

against the characterisation of it as a "Tale." We have not found in it "secular" motives, but moral and religious ones. It twice reaches its "highest point," once in the words of Jesus, "Give ye them to eat," and a second time in His action of blessing,[1] while He brake the loaves. St. Mark's narrative stands out with touches (we venture to say) not merely lifelike, but from life: the tired Apostles; the Christ whose compassions did not fail; the daring and successful appeal, "Give ye them to eat" made to the Apostles and passed on to the crowd; the need of avoiding political danger by bringing the scene quickly to a close.

Here is no ornamental "Tale," but a sign-post in the history of the ministry. The true significance of the passage is explained in the Fourth Gospel in the discourse which Jesus gave next day at Capernaum. The people came to Him hinting that they would follow a leader who (like Moses) would give them bread from heaven, but they were dismissed with words which excluded a repetition of the Feeding with loaves. The Lord sought to turn their minds from the material to the spiritual bread: "Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him the Father, even God, hath sealed."[2]

[1] *Giving thanks*; Mark viii. 6. [2] John vi. 27.

" No repetition of feeding with loaves and fishes in the wilderness was to be looked for " : men took this lesson home. There was no longer any danger that enthusiastic Galilæans would declare Jesus king : " Upon this," so it is written with insight in the Fourth Gospel, " many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him." [1] And according to St. Mark, just about this time Jesus made a pronouncement which would still more decisively repel would-be insurgents from becoming His followers : " If any man would come after me, let him deny *himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me." [2] The follower of Jesus must take not the sword, but the burden of the cross. The Galilæans were made to see that the Feeding of the Thousands was not part of the inauguration of an earthly kingdom, but a farewell to the hope that miraculous help would be given to fulfil the Jewish dream of earthly rule. From this point onwards Jesus begins to walk the road which led to Calvary. This passage, which Dibelius takes for a fanciful " Tale," is, in fact, a key-passage in the history of the ministry.

This view of the Feeding of the Thousands is, of course, open to criticism. Let it be agreed that thousands were fed in the wilderness, and it must also be acknowledged that the Evangelists, at any rate the Synoptists, regarded the event as a

[1] John vi. 66. [2] Mark viii. 34

miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes.[1] St. John alone supplies the information that some food was on the field which had not been brought by the disciples: "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two fishes" (John vi. 9). Is it not possible that the Synoptists have mistaken a moral sign for a material miracle? Surely we ought not to exclude the possibility that some facts of the Gospel history have been left to await a fuller illumination from the Christian scholars of later days. The Evangelists, as honest narrators, have given us the facts of the Feeding of the Thousands as they learnt them together with their own interpretation of the facts, but since the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church and still interprets the things of Christ, may not Christians hope to receive in some cases even fuller light than that granted to the Evangelists themselves? [2]

On the general subject of Gospel miracles and of the changed (but not unbelieving) view of these miracles which is held by many to-day, the following words of Dr. Sanday are valuable:

"The evidence is decisive that wonderful things happened in connexion with the ministry on earth of our Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples. We cannot doubt that spiritual forces were at work in those days in a higher degree than they have ever been at work either before or since. And yet we

[1] Mark vi. 41*b*. [2] John xvi. 12–14.

are justified in believing that, in the light of the further revelation that God has given us as to His own ways and methods of working, events would present themselves to us in a manner somewhat different from that in which they presented themselves to the forefathers of our faith nearly nineteen hundred years ago. They described things in one way, and we (if we could change places with them) should describe them in another. The events were the same; and in either case their general effect was the same, namely, to bring home to the minds of men that divine forces were at work in a special and peculiar degree. But we should describe the operation of these forces under certain restrictions and cautions, which did not exist for those who originally bore witness to them." (From a letter of Dr. Sanday to the *Times* of January 5, 1918.)

To a third class of narratives Dibelius gives the name of "Legends." In surveying these, he starts with a general statement, a questionable assertion, which seems intended to prohibit any examination of his view. "The oldest tradition," he tells us, "has no answer to give to questions about persons belonging to the most intimate circles of Jesus." [1] In support of his statement, he gravely points out that in the account of the relatives "seeking" Jesus, no names are given: they are described

[1] *From Tradition*, page 49.

merely as " his mother and his brethren." [1] With equal gravity, he points out in the story of Jesus' rejection in His own country that His neighbours, while mentioning His mother's name and the names of His four brethren and mentioning His sisters' existence, fail to give His sisters' names. His strange inference from this is that when names and details are given in other cases they do *not* come from the oldest tradition. His view is that Christian curiosity was aroused only at a later period concerning persons who came in contact with our Lord : and legends were invented to satisfy this curiosity. Hence arose (no doubt) some of the Apocryphal writings of Christians. In the instance of the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, and some other writings, we may agree with Dibelius. But Dibelius goes on to multiple " legends " in the Gospels.

He states his views in the most positive manner. He discovers a legend in one of the most matter-of-fact passages of Mark, in the call of Simon and Andrew by the sea, followed by the similar call of James and John. " The only thing handed down was obviously (*sic*) the word about the fishers of men together with the names of the men addressed." [2] Then St. Mark added (simply from the tradition of the Apostles' names) the calling of the second pair of brothers, and " he must

[1] Mark iii. 31 ff. (a " Paradigm "). Cf. page 12.
[2] Simon and Andrew.

have invented" this scene of the call of the four disciples.[1]

But the hardihood of Dibelius is best seen in his treatment of the Third Gospel. The story of the preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth has, he tells us, " a legendary conclusion." " The genuine legendary trait of miraculous self-help is here seen in its proper shape." This is a reckless statement. It is not Luke who relates, but Dibelius who imagines a miracle (in the ordinary sense of the word) here. The Evangelist says only, " But he passing through the midst of them went his way." *Only this*—there is no suggestion that He used any word of power or " magical " action to clear His road. The natural explanation of the scene is that it is an illustration of mob-mentality. The mob (*volgus mobile*) easily passes over from mischievous fury to the inactivity of irresolution, when faced by fearless calm. The incident recalls the lines of Virgil : [2]

" As when sedition oft has stirred
In some great town the vulgar herd,
And brands and stones already fly—
For rage has weapons always nigh—
Then should some man of worth appear
Whose stainless virtue all revere,
They hush, they hist : his clear voice rules
Their rebel wills, their anger cools."

(CONINGTON'S TRANSLATION.)

[1] *From Tradition*, page 112.

[2] *Æn.* i. 148–153.

It is surely the moral ascendancy of Jesus that we witness in this scene.

Another instance of the hardihood of Dibelius is seen in his treatment of the Lucan story of the forgiveness of the Sinful Woman. He lightly assumes that the anointing of Jesus in the Pharisee's house related by St. Luke,[1] is to be identified with the anointing at Bethany, described in Mark and Matthew.[2] But the two incidents are unlike in place, in time (as it appears), and certainly in the quality of the main action. It is a straining of the facts to identify these two narratives. The underlying supposition that it is practically impossible that our Lord was twice anointed by a woman is seen to be absurd, when it is remembered that He lived under the scorching Eastern sun. Is it impossible to believe that one woman anointed Him on the head as a guest, while the other attended to Him as a traveller and anointed His feet? But the supposition that these two very different accounts do relate to one incident is the only support of Dibelius's theory of the origin of the Lucan narrative. He puts down the passage as a "Legend" on the assumption that the object of it is to give to the curious additional information about one of the secondary characters of the Gospel story, *i.e.* about the woman (unnamed in Mark and

[1] Luke vii. 36–50.
[2] Mark xiv. 3–9; Matt. xxvi. 6–13.

Matthew) who anointed the Lord in Bethany. This "additional information," according to the critic, is that she was a well-known sinner. But on Dibelius's theory we must ask why did not St. Luke also invent a name for her? And why did not St. Luke assimilate his whole narrative to that of St. Mark, instead of leaving the two narratives with so many points of contrast? St. Luke is often described as a "literary artist"; is it conceivable that such a one should have done his work as clumsily as Dibelius supposes? A better case could be made out for the view that this Evangelist was anxious to show that he had an incident to relate which was *not* to be identified with that told by Mark and Matthew. And surely it is the word and the action (not of the woman, but) of the great Absolver in which the scene culminates.

In his search for "Legends," Dibelius finds one strangely enough in the story of Martha and Mary.[1] To his credit it must be confessed that he falters a little in dealing with it. Since he has laid down the axiom that the earliest tradition could tell nothing about persons belonging to the most intimate circles of Jesus,[2] he is naturally troubled to find these two sisters, both named, entertaining Jesus at Bethany. "If," he writes, "the story concluded with the saying but 'only one thing is

[1] Luke x. 38–42.

[2] *From Tradition*, page 49.

necessary,' we could regard the whole as a Paradigm, which exceptionally had preserved (*sic*) the names of the actors. But now there follows the saying that the good part in the Kingdom of God is promised to Mary. . . . The conclusion, and thereby the whole, is thus dominated by the interest in this person and the promise made to her. Hence the narrative must be regarded as a Legend." [1] He seems to imply that though Mary may be a real person, Martha is only an invented character, a foil to Mary.

Had Dibelius not been under the tyranny of a theory, he would surely have read the story very differently. Does not Jesus Himself dominate the whole scene, as the good physician dealing with Martha's engrossment in lower things, and as the judge of His people, acquitting Mary of the charge brought against her? The only support for Dibelius's view is Dibelius's own axiom about the earliest Christian tradition, that it was necessarily brief, that it contained no names, that it was jejune, except for the short word of Jesus which it carried.

Looking back on these creations of Dibelius, his Paradigms, his Tales, and his Legends, we feel that his distinctive marks are elusive, and that his classification of the contents of the Gospels is fanciful and untrustworthy. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that Papias in the second century

[1] *From Tradition*, pages 119 f.

and Eusebius in the fourth possessed more knowledge of the origin of the Gospels than Dibelius in the twentieth century can show with his confident assumptions and his *a priori* reasoning.

In conclusion, a few words may be added on the Gospel according to St. John. It is no new thing that the historical character of the Fourth Gospel has been denied by the *Geist der stets verneint.* From early days stress has been laid on the theological (rather than historical) aim of the writer. Eusebius records that Clement of Alexandria (driven from the city A.D. 202–203) describes the writing of the Gospel as follows: "Last (of the Evangelists), John, perceiving that the Lord's deeds in the flesh (*τὰ σωματικὰ*) had been set forth in (these) Gospels, being urged by those who knew him, (and) being inspired by God made a spiritual (*πνευματικὸν*) Gospel." [1] So Bishop Westcott writes: "All [the Gospels] alike are consciously based on the same great facts, but yet it is possible, in a more limited sense, to describe the first (the Synoptic Gospels) as historical, and the last (St. John) as ideal; though the history necessarily points to truths which lie beyond all human experience, and the *ideas* only connect that which was once for all realised on earth with the eternal of which it was the revelation." [2] But Form criticism fails to see

[1] Eus., *H.E.* vi. 14. 7.
[2] *Introduction to the Gospels*, pages 249 f.

that a work of idealism may yet possess great historical value. It reckons the Fourth Gospel untrustworthy both where it differs from the Synoptic Gospels and where it offers material peculiar to itself. Dibelius's list of Paradigms (" passages of a relative trustworthiness ") includes nothing from St. John, and the same Gospel is made to contribute five instances to Dibelius's list of Tales (*Novellen*).[1]

But the more careful critics of the twentieth century treat the Fourth Gospel differently. Dr. Moffatt [2] argues for the historicity of the ministry of our Lord in Judæa (Jerusalem), to which St. John bears witness, but of which the Synoptists tell us nothing. He also accepts the date of the Crucifixion given in the Fourth Gospel as correct, while the Synoptists seem to place it on the Great Day of the Feast—an impossibility. Modern Jewish scholars have testified to the knowledge of Jewish matters shown by the Evangelist. Further, it should be said that a number of small difficulties in the text of which some critics made much have disappeared in the light of fuller knowledge. The Fourth Evangelist did not make the topographical and geographical errors which were imputed to him at one time; on the contrary, he shows a contemporary knowledge of Palestine and Jeru-

[1] *From Tradition*, pages 43, 72.
[2] *Introduction*, pages 541 ff.

salem. Moreover, it by no means follows that where St. John differs from the Synoptists they are right and he is wrong. It has been supposed that they confine the ministry of our Lord to the period of a year, while in the Fourth Gospel a period of three years (or two and a half) is suggested, but there is no safe ground for a comparison here. "John," writes Dr. Streeter, "is the first and the only one of the Evangelists who attempts a chronology. It may be that his chronology is not a very good one—but it is the only one we have. Chronology is a very difficult art." [1] Elsewhere, he writes: "Apart from (certain) instances the Johannine chronology solves more difficulties than it raises" (page 421). There seem to be some "slips of an old man's memory" in the Fourth Gospel, but the old man was surely an eye-witness, whose testimony cannot be put aside with safety for the history.

Looking back on much that has been written, specially in the twentieth century, concerning the books of the New Testament, I have to record my conviction that simple justice has not been done to these books. Sufficient allowance has not been made for them on the ground that they are ancient books composed and written out under ancient conditions. Their text could not run as smoothly as that of books put forth by the best modern presses. Ancient MSS. written without division

[1] *The Four Gospels*, page 424.

(for the most part) into chapters, paragraphs, and verses, were clumsy and difficult to revise. An author might be forgiven for failing to verify what he had put down a few pages back, or on a few columns back of a roll. So ancient books even straight from the writer's hand were bound to show some "gaps, discrepancies, roughnesses, and repetitions." Such faults do not prove that another and later hand has invaded the original book and introduced matter of lower authority. Rather they should suggest to us that the work comes to us (with ink undried) straight from the author's hand.

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