GROWTH & STRUCTURE OF THE GOSPELS

B. K. RATTEY

THE GROWTH & STRUCTURE OF THE GOSPELS

By

B. K. RATTEY, S.Th.

LICENSED TEACHER IN THEOLOGY; LATE DIVINITY MISTRESS AT KING EDWARD'S HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, BIRMINGHAM

With a Foreword by

The Right Rev. A. W. F. BLUNT, D.D.

BISHOP OF BRADFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD

1935

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
AMEN HOUSE, E.C. 4
London Edinburgh Glasgow
New York Toronto Melbourne
Capetown Bombay Calcutta
Madras Shanghai
HUMPHREY MILFORD
PUBLISHER TO THE
UNIVERSITY

By the same author

A SHORT HISTORY OF
THE HEBREWS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THIS little volume had its origin in a course of lectures on the Synoptic Gospels given to teachers at Stoke Rochford near Grantham. The original lectures have been entirely rewritten and, having been enlarged by the addition of three chapters, they are now published at the request of those who heard them, and in the hope that they may be found helpful by a wider circle of teachers and students.

My indebtedness to scholars who have made a special study of this field of learning is apparent on every page, but in the footnotes and in the short Bibliography I have indicated some of the chief sources upon which I have drawn.

My thanks are especially due to Dr. A. W. F. Blunt, Bishop of Bradford, for the Foreword in which he has so generously commended this book, and to my friends Canon H. L. Pass, B.D., formerly Principal of Chichester Theological College, and Professor W. F. Howard, D.D., of Handsworth Methodist College, upon whose scholarly judgement I have constantly relied.

To the officers of the Clarendon Press I would express my appreciation of the trouble they have taken in preparing this volume for publication.

Epiphany 1935. B. K. R.

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	THE PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPELS	7
II.	THE FORERUNNERS OF THE GOSPELS	17
III.	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK	33
IV.	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE	49
V.	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW	64
VI.	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN	80
VII.	THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	96
	INDEX	112

FOREWORD
by the
Bishop of Bradford

In the sphere of religious education few things are at present more necessary than that teachers of Divinity should be helped to teach it with both knowledge and appreciation. So many, for instance, are called on to give religious instruction, who have never formed any acquaintance with that wealth of light which has been cast on it by a century's application of scientific critical method. They have not had time to learn either the fascination of the subject, or the way in which criticism—after weighing various evidence and trying various explanations—gradually corrects its mistakes, prunes its exuberances, and stabilizes its conclusions. They have seldom either the leisure or the opportunity to study a big Commentary, nor do they know which of the many books on the subject which they see advertised will meet their particular need. They want something which the properly qualified student, with a knowledge of the subject as a whole, can give them by means of a constructive presentation of the position now accepted by the majority of scholars in this country, especially in regard to the way in which the four Gospels came into being and were accepted by the Church as authoritative records of the life and teaching of our Lord. If they can be supplied with such a book, to study for themselves and to place in the hands of their more intelligent pupils, they will thus be better able to forearm these pupils against the danger of falling victims in later life to the generalities which self-confident but ignorant persons, with a superficial acquaintance with 'the higher critics', are so ready to disseminate.

It is from this point of view that I am glad to commend this little book of Miss Rattey's on the study of the Gospels. She has shown herself in her book, *A Short History of the Hebrews*,

to be a really helpful interpreter of the learned to the unlearned. I am sure that such a book as this will enable teachers in Schools and Training Colleges to help their pupils—without in any way upsetting their faith—to attain some proper understanding of the way in which Gospel-criticism conduces to an intelligent appreciation of the abiding value and interest of the evangelic records.

Advent 1934. ALFRED BRADFORD.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE following short list of books may be found useful by those who wish to give further study to the Gospels. The more difficult books are marked with an asterisk.

ABRAHAMS, I. *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels.* Cambridge University Press.

*ALLEN, W. C. *The Gospel according to St. Matthew.* I.C.C.

*BERNARD, J. H. *The Gospel according to St. John.* I.C.C.

BOX, G. H. *St. Matthew. Century Bible.*

BURKITT, F. C. *The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus.* Constable.
The Gospel History and its Transmission. T. & T. Clark.

Clarendon Bible—*St. Mark* by A. W. F. BLUNT, *St. Luke* by H. BALMFORTH.

GORE, C. *Jesus of Nazareth.* Home University Library.
Belief in Christ. Murray.

HEADLAM A. C. *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ.* Murray.

HOSKYNS, E., and DAVEY, N. *The Riddle of the New Testament.* Faber and Faber.

HOWARD, W. F. *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Interpretation and Criticism.* Epworth Press.

MOFFATT J. *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament.* T. & T. Clark.

*RAWLINSON, A. E. J. *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ.* Longmans.
The Gospel according to St. Mark. Westminster Commentaries.

ROBINSON, J. ARMITAGE. *The Study of the Gospels.* Longmans.

*SANDAY, W., and Others. *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem.*

*STANTON, V. H. *The Gospels as Historical Documents.* 3 vols. Cambridge University Press.

STREETER, B. H. *The Four Gospels.* Macmillan.

TAYLOR, V. *Behind the Third Gospel.* Oxford University Press.
The Formation of the Gospel Tradition. Macmillan.

Articles on the Synoptic Problem and on each Gospel will be found in

(1) *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture,* including the Apocrypha, edited by C. GORE, H. L. GOUDGE, and A. GUILLAUME. S.P.C.K.

(2) *A Commentary on the Bible,* edited by Dr. A. S. PEAKE. Jack.

I

THE PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPELS

THE Gospels contain no sudden or solitary message. In them is to be found the answer given by God to all the great questions about Himself, but they also represent the fulfilment of hopes whose roots are embedded deep in the history of the human race. With one exception the Gospels are the work of Jews, men whose characters had been disciplined by obedience to the Law, and whose minds had been prepared by the teaching of prophets and seers to welcome the good news that God had 'visited and wrought redemption for His people'. These Evangelists well knew that God had chosen their race for a particular purpose, and that the promises made by Him through His servants the prophets would in His own good time be fulfilled. To their ancestors God had spoken in divers portions and in different ways, but they were fully persuaded that all the purposes and promises of God had reached their consummation in a single Person, Jesus, the Christ, and that at the end of the days God spoke to them through His Son.

It was this faith in the living God, actively at work in the world and in His own particular people, that enabled His disciples to answer the call of Jesus, to respond to His teaching and to obey His commands. He Himself came not to destroy but to complete and bring to perfection the work of all those who had prepared the way for Him. His teaching rested on Judaism, and took for granted the main principles of Judaism; but it also transcended them. He set before His followers a new righteousness far exceeding the highest ideals with which His disciples were familiar. He gave to them a new conception of God and of His demands upon men, but He also opened to them new sources of spiritual power by means of which they might become fellow-workers with God in the achievement of His purpose for mankind.

Yet, because Jesus was born in the land of the prophets and was Himself obedient to the Law, He set His seal upon the preparation which had been made within the history of His race for that self-disclosure of God which it was His mission to make. Regarded solely from the standpoint of world empire, the history of the Jews is not remarkable. It gained permanent significance from the way in which it was interpreted by men of God, and also because, step by step within its shelter, spiritual principles were proclaimed and translated into a moral code which ultimately exercised a unique influence upon the human race. Canaan lay upon one of the most famous highways of the ancient world and the Jews lived in close touch with, yet apart from, the main stream of world civilization. They were seldom independent; they were in turn the vassals of Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Alexander the Great brought Greek influence to bear upon their political and religious life and the Romans found them the most turbulent of their subjects. Though conquered, the Jews remained a race apart, 'a people that dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations',[1] yet their own national and religious development was constantly enriched by the contributions of those races to whom they were in turn subject. The civilization of Canaan was itself penetrated by Babylonian culture, and to that culture the Hebrews were indebted for elements in their legislation, as well as in their social and religious life. A more developed angelology bore witness to the influence of Persia, and the Wisdom literature showed that Judaism was not incapable of assimilating Greek thought. 'The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts, all nations shall serve him' sang the Psalmist, and the desirable things of many nations were laid under contribution and absorbed by Judaism, in order that the purpose of God might ultimately be brought to perfection by their means.

[1] Num. 23^9.

It seems strange that a nation which enjoyed so little political liberty should be destined ultimately to exercise so great an influence upon mankind, yet the successive experiences of independence and subjection, which resulted in the narrowing of their political horizon, tempered the faith of the Jews and gave to it an enduring quality. Whenever the nation began to play a part in world history and to be prosperous, their ambition was always checked by a man of God who claimed to voice the will of God in regard to them. Both in Israel and Judah the monarchy came to a disastrous end; the Exile seemed to mark the death of the nation. Yet to the monarchy the Jews owed the Temple, and in the Temple were centred all their hopes and aspirations. After the Exile the Temple became to the Jew the outward and visible sign of his spiritual heritage, a pledge that God's covenant with His chosen people still held good, and, as long as the Temple remained inviolate, political vassalage was endured with patience.

But in the third and second centuries B.C. Greek influence began to be felt in every department of national life. Hebrew had become a dead language after the Exile and its place had been taken by Aramaic, a language akin to Hebrew. But when Palestine was included in the empire of Alexander the Great, Greek conquests paved the way for colonies of Greek-speaking people and the Jews became familiar with Greek language and thought, customs and culture, and a mass of Jewish-Greek literature came into being.[1] Many Jews migrated to Alexandria, and ultimately it was found necessary to have the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek, in order that they might be understood when read in the synagogue. This translation, called the Septuagint, was begun at Alexandria about 250 B.C. and became eventually the Bible of the Greek-speaking Jews and the mother of the New Testament scriptures. When the Greek language was wedded to Hebrew

[1] e.g. Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.

thought, the most exact form of human expression became the medium by which the loftiest spiritual conceptions were made available for the civilized world. Thus the ideal of the unknown prophet of the Exile was brought a step nearer to its realization. 'It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.'[1] Moreover, during the last century B.C. Jewish synagogues were found in every great trading centre of the Roman Empire and, as a result, there came into existence a body of Gentile God-fearers who, having been influenced by the teaching of the Jewish scriptures, accepted the monotheism and the moral standards of the Jews. These Gentiles eventually formed the bridge by which the good news of the fulfilment of the promises made to the fathers in the Law and the Prophets was carried into every province of the Empire and even to Rome itself. At a time when Jewish national ambition was being severely restricted and attempts had even been made to stamp out their religion, a wider field of opportunity was opened out, and the purpose of God was fulfilled in ways which only became apparent to later generations.

But the really unique feature in the history of the Jews is the wonderful succession of inspired men who attempted to guide the conscience of the nation. They claimed to be spokesmen of the living God and, at turning points in the history of their race, to proclaim that which they had learnt in His councils. The message of the prophets often cut violently across the political theories popular in their day, but so firmly convinced were they of the truth of their message that they were prepared to stake their life upon it.[2] The prophets differed widely in their personality, and the message delivered by each was characteristic of the man. Each stressed

[1] Isa. 49^6.

[2] e.g. Micaiah and Jeremiah.

a particular aspect of the doctrine of God and of human duty which had been neglected by his contemporaries; each built upon the foundation laid by his forerunner and carried a step further that which his predecessor had taught. Yet there were certain truths which were proclaimed by all the prophets, and chief among these was the doctrine that the living God is active in history. It was in the light of that conviction that they interpreted not only the history of their own race, but that of their neighbours. The migrations of races were His work: it was He who brought the Philistines from Caphtor (Crete) and the Syrians from Kir, even as He delivered His own people Israel from slavery in Egypt. It was His purpose ultimately to make even Assyria and Egypt a blessing in the midst of the earth, enemies though they were of Israel, 'mine inheritance'.

History was, therefore, to the Hebrew prophets neither the consequence of human ambition, nor the result of conflict between warring gods, but 'the march of God across the track which men call time'. It bore witness to their conviction that God was guiding His world to His own appointed goal, the kingdom of God, in which His sovereignty was to be perfectly realized, first in Israel, and through Israel in the whole world. Though insignificant in the eyes of men, the Jews were 'the weak things of the world' by which God willed to 'put to shame the things that are strong; that no flesh should glory before God'.[1] Their emergence from nomadic life, their settlement in Canaan, the rise of the monarchy, their dispersion among the nations of the world, these were but stages by which God was leading His people towards a goal, dimly foreseen by each prophet, but proclaimed by all with unanimity and conviction, and embodied in a literature which was accepted by the Christian Church as the record of the divinely inspired preparation for a world-wide religion.

[1] 1 Cor. 1^{27-29}.

To Greece mankind has turned for leadership in thought, to Rome for ideals of law and good government; but the debt which the world owes to the great religious teachers of the Hebrews is that their writings were 'the sacred school of the knowledge of God and of the spiritual life for all mankind'. That knowledge was not confined to one period of their history only; it was a progressive revelation vouchsafed to them 'in divers portions and manners', as they were able to understand it. Nor was the advance continuous, for there were frequent set-backs and long periods of stagnation. Nevertheless, it is possible to mark certain stages by which the way was prepared for the attainment of that goal which is the test of such a progressive revelation. To do so, we must look back across the centuries which stretched between Moses, the founder of Hebrew religion, and St. John the Baptist, the last of the prophets.

At Mount Sinai Moses laid the foundations upon which national unity was ultimately built, and taught the principles by which human conduct must be guided in the worship of one God, and in the observance of His moral law. 'There is no approach to God—no doing of the work of God—except by keeping His moral commandments, which are the expression of His essential character.'[1] When national unity had been secured by the establishment of the monarchy, it became the task of the prophets to remind both king and people of their moral obligations and of the responsibilities which their privileged position involved. Then, on the eve of national disaster, a revised book of the Law, forming the nucleus of the book of Deuteronomy, was accepted by the nation and its precepts ratified by a solemn covenant. This second Law gathered up and applied to daily life the moral and spiritual teaching of the pre-exilic prophets, and preserved it in writing: hence, religion was saved though national independence was lost. Even in Babylon a loyal minority moulded

[1] Gore, *The Philosophy of the Good Life*, p. 163.

their lives in obedience to the precepts of this Law and waited in confidence for the redemption of their race. These men, the true Israel within Israel, saw in the Exile the just punishment of a righteous God upon a people who had disobeyed His law and failed to realize His purpose, and by amendment of life they sought to fit themselves for His service. From this time of purgation came a new sense of the value of the individual soul in God's sight, and a new understanding of the work which He had entrusted to them on behalf of the Gentiles. To this wider sense of their vocation the second part of the book of Isaiah (chapters 40–55) and the book of Jonah bear witness.

From the close of the fifth century B.C. the life of the Jews was dominated by the Law, the third and final revision of which was incorporated in the Pentateuch. The Law emphasized the importance to the community, as well as to the individual, of repentance towards God and of a life disciplined by obedience to His will, if His glory was to be manifest among men and if Israel, purified, was to be vindicated as a people of God's own possession. During the last three centuries B.C. the Law served as a protection to the spiritual life, not only of the individual Jew, but also of those communities which gathered Sabbath by Sabbath to worship in the synagogues. It defended their peculiar treasure, belief in One, Holy, Righteous God; it fostered obedience to the declared will of God and it enjoined a lofty standard of conduct; it produced a strong and sincere piety which resisted the attractions of Hellenism and enabled the Jew to remain steadfast under persecution. Its fruits are to be seen in the Psalter, as well as in the beautiful characters of the men and women who meet us in the pages of the New Testament. The Law was holy, and righteous, and good, and it served as a tutor to bring men to God, for at its best it moulded the characters of the men who welcomed the fuller revelation of which St. John the Baptist was the herald.

But in the writings of the prophets and their successors we find a confident belief that a kingdom of righteousness will be established in which the purpose of God will be completely realized, and the hopes of Israel find their consummation. Although this kingdom was to be centred in Jerusalem, it was to be a new and heavenly city from which sin and suffering would be banished, and where the righteous would find peace and joy, and grow in knowledge and holiness in the presence of God and of His Anointed.

Before the Exile the prophets pointed to a warrior-king of Davidic descent who, after annihilating his foes, would establish a kingdom of peace. The apocalyptic seers, the successors of the prophets, spiritualized this conception of the Messianic king and, in the years immediately preceding the mission of St. John the Baptist, they taught that the kingdom would be inaugurated by God Himself, and that the king would be endowed by Him with special powers for his work. And so it came about that, side by side with the expectation of the Messianic Son of David, there grew up the conception of the Elect One, the supernatural Son of Man, coming as Judge upon the clouds of heaven. Each conception was in itself inadequate, as the sequel showed, but each helped to prepare the way for One who fulfilled and transcended the highest hopes of prophets, priests, and apocalyptic seers; One who Himself bore witness to the significance and abiding worth of the long preparation made through the Hebrew scriptures by those 'who died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar'.[1]

The religion of the Jew, 'the gospel of God which He promised afore through His prophets in the holy scriptures', prepared the way by which God fulfilled the hopes which He had Himself inspired. He 'raised up a horn of salvation, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets', and sent the king,

[1] Heb. 11[13].

'born of the seed of David according to the flesh', yet 'declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection of the dead'.[1]

It is not unlikely that Jesus, the Christ, was Himself educated in the synagogue school at Nazareth and, if so, it would be there that He would begin to acquire that familiarity with the Jewish scriptures which is so evident in His teaching. He maintained that not one jot or tittle should pass from the Law till all had been fulfilled; yet having been fulfilled, it was to be superseded by a higher authority. The laws for the citizens of His kingdom demanded a righteousness which went far deeper than that of the best of His contemporaries, and made demands more far-reaching than those of the Mosaic Law upon which it was based. When asked which commandment was greatest of all, He referred the questioner back to the Law which for him was authoritative. In the synagogue at Nazareth He read the prescribed passage from the book of Isaiah, and asserted 'to-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears'. He severely blamed those 'who knew not the scriptures nor the power of God', who searched the scriptures and yet failed to see that 'these are they which bear witness of me'. 'The kingdom of God is in the midst of you,' He cried, but Jerusalem, which failed to realize it, was destined at no distant date to be judged for its neglect to read the signs of the times and to recognize 'the Day of the Lord'. The king entered the holy city, not at the head of a victorious army, but 'lowly, and riding upon an ass'; 'having salvation', He was nevertheless rejected by those whom He came to seek and to save. His kingship was proclaimed from the Cross in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, but it was a kingship marked by giving to the uttermost; by self-sacrifice, service, love He drew all men to Himself. He commanded His disciples to go into all the world, proclaiming 'the good tidings', making disciples, and admitting men of

[1] Rom. 1^{2-4}.

every race to membership of the New Israel, the Christian fellowship of which the New Testament writings are the product.

The earliest Gospel opens with the proclamation, 'the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye'; the last ends with the declaration that 'these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name'.[1]

Jesus the Christ, who is God and man, stands at the centre of the world's history. Towards Him the past moves and in Him the eternal purpose of God comes to fulfilment. 'On account of His infinite love He became what we are, that He might make us what He Himself is,' and all subsequent history is the gradual appropriation of the results of that redemptive love.

[1] Mark 1^{15}; John 20^{31}.

II

THE FORERUNNERS OF THE GOSPELS

'THEY continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.'[1] Such is the earliest picture which we possess of the life of the Christian community in Jerusalem in the years immediately following the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord. Tersely, but significantly, it puts before us the specifically religious aspect of the Christian life, while the verses immediately following depict, rather more fully, the social aspect of that life in its relation to the world without and to the brethren within the fellowship.

This fellowship, called 'the Way', then consisted entirely of Jews who seemed to their friends a group of devout persons, differing from others in that they believed that the scriptures had been fulfilled, that the Messiah had come, and that they knew Him. They went daily to the Temple, they were scrupulous in the performance of their religious duties; they were kindly affectioned one to another in brotherly love, and gained the goodwill of their neighbours; they were so filled with power from on high that men and women were daily attracted to their fellowship, and they themselves manifested that spiritual joy and enthusiasm which was so unusual a feature in Jerusalem under Roman rule.

The leaders, in their public teaching, constantly appealed to the Law and the Prophets, in which they had themselves been educated in the synagogue school. Yet not only in the school, but on the seventh day of the week passages from those same scriptures were read in Hebrew in the synagogue and, lest any should fail to understand, a running paraphrase in Aramaic was supplied. The lessons were arranged with as much care as those in our own lectionary: the first was taken

[1] Acts 2^{42}.

from the Law, namely the first five books of the Old Testament, and the second from the Prophets, both former and latter, i.e. from the history books as well as from the books of the greater and lesser prophets. It was this second lesson which our Lord was invited to read in the synagogue at Nazareth, when the portion of scripture appointed for the day was that taken from Isaiah $61^{1, 2}$: 'The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,' a passage full of Messianic significance, and interpreted as such by the religious teachers of the day. The address, or sermon, was usually based upon some subject connected with the lessons, and St. Luke tells us that, having read the appointed passage from the roll of Isaiah, our Lord's teaching on that occasion was based upon the lesson He had just read, and was summed up in the words, 'To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears':[1] a message which was expressed by a Jewish Christian many years later in the words, 'God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son.'[2]

Whether recorded in the Gospels or interpreted in the Epistles, the life and work of our Lord is set against the background of those ancient Hebrew writings in which were preserved the highest hopes and loftiest conceptions of prophet, priest, and psalmist, all of whom pointed with confidence to a future time when God would intervene in the affairs of men. The Evangelists declare that this hope was no illusion, and that it alone provides an explanation of the action of the living God at a particular moment in history, and of the salvation which He offered to men through His Son Jesus, the Christ.

[1] Luke 4^{17-22}, cf. Acts 13^{15}.

[2] Heb. $1^{1, 2}$. R.v. mg. 'in a Son'.

The Old Testament from first to last pointed forward to a divine event: the Gospels declare that this divine event took place in Palestine with the advent of the Messiah in His humiliation, and that the destiny of men was dependent upon their recognition of Him as the Messiah, and upon their inclusion in that kingdom of God which had been founded by Him in their midst. Therefore, it was to the Law and the Prophets that the new community of believers naturally appealed, when they declared to their fellow Jews that their Master, Jesus, was the Christ, and that in Him all the promises of God had been fulfilled.

Of our Lord's boyhood at Nazareth no record has been preserved, but it seems probable that He Himself, like other Jewish boys, was brought up in the synagogue school, where He would not only learn to read and write, but also to commit to memory passages from the scriptures. In every township and village there was a teacher, for in obedience to the precept of the Law, 'teach them diligently to thy children', the Jews were careful that their sons should be instructed in that knowledge which is the source of all happiness. At certain fixed seasons the Jew went up to Jerusalem for the festivals and, as a boy of twelve, Jesus Himself went thither for the Passover, and was found among the teachers of the Law 'both hearing them, and asking them questions'. He, too, was familiar with the hopes of His nation, and with the attempts which had been made to actualize them; He knew the yearning for freedom which was so characteristic of the turbulent Galileans among whom He grew to manhood, and the failure of those nationalistic movements which Rome had repressed so cruelly. He even included one of these ardent patriots, Simon the Zealot, among His immediate followers. He came to establish a kingdom upon the foundations which had already been laid by the noblest of Israel's religious teachers, 'to fulfil', not destroy, their loftiest aspirations and to keep the promises which had

been made to the nation in the name of God Himself. But from the first He set His face steadily against that popular conception of the kingdom and the king which was fixed so firmly in the mind of the Apostles, and which was so common in the Galilee of His day, while at the same time He substituted for it ideals and principles which far transcended human thought, however lofty.

Before we consider the ways in which the first Christian teachers made their appeal to the Law and the Prophets in support of their assertion that 'God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified', it will be well to examine very briefly a few instances taken from the earliest literary sources in the Gospels, in order to judge how our Lord Himself used them, for it is reasonable to infer that the exegesis of His followers was based upon His own method of interpretation of the scriptures. In one Gospel we are indeed told: 'And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.'[1]

(a) Retiring after His baptism by John to the desolate region of the Judæan wilderness, our Lord pondered in solitude the problems which thrust themselves upon Him in view of His consciousness of His Messianic mission. To the twelve, or to some among them, He Himself communicated in the form of three pictures, or parables, the intense spiritual struggle which He then experienced, and not only then but at different times throughout His ministry.[2] All His illustrations of the possibilities which tempted Him turn upon the popular conception of the Messiah, as one who would feed the hungry, who would demonstrate His exceptional power by signs, and be a mighty ruler like those earthly monarchs who exercised authority whether in Rome or Jerusalem. All presuppose His realization of His Divine Sonship and of the work given Him to do;

[1] Luke 24^{27}.

[2] Mark 8^{11}; 14^{32-39}; Luke 4^{13}; Heb. 4^{15}.

each temptation to be such a Messiah as men expected was vanquished in the strength given by the scriptures.[1]

(*b*) When in prison John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to our Lord with the question, 'Art thou He that cometh, or look we for another?' Our Lord answered neither yes nor no; but having told the two messengers to look around and then to tell John what they had seen for themselves, He summed up His mighty works in words, which pointed directly to passages in which the advent of the Messianic kingdom is proclaimed. 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.'[2] John, having known the scriptures from boyhood, would undoubtedly interpret the message aright and would realize that the kingdom had indeed come; that he had himself been its herald, and that the words of Malachi had been realized, 'Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple.'[3] In the prison at Machaerus John had been driven to doubt his own vocation, but now he was comforted. To the twelve and to the crowd our Lord stated clearly: 'If ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come.'[4]

(*c*) 'Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.' This passage, peculiar to the first Gospel, belongs probably to the same early source as the last, though omitted by St. Luke. Far from annulling the will of God as expressed in the Law and the Prophets, it was our Lord's purpose to endorse that old Law

[1] Deut. 8^{3}; $6^{13, 16}$; Ps. 91^{11-13}.

[2] Isa. $35^{5, 6}$, and 29^{19}.

[3] Mal. 3^{1}.

[4] Matt. 11^{2-14}; cf. Mark 9^{11-13}.

which had faithfully done its work of preparation for the new Law of the kingdom, which He Himself was about to proclaim. But when that Law had been filled out with the larger and deeper meaning which He gave to it, and the principles inherent in it had been made plain, then a new Law, expressed in new forms, would take its place. This teaching is illustrated by the parables of the wine skins and the patched garment, and the history of the early Church is an apt commentary on it.[1]

(d) But even more important is the fact that central in all the separate sources of the life of Jesus is His own teaching of suffering and death, teaching which the twelve at the time utterly failed to comprehend, and which called forth an indignant protest from Simon Peter. Nevertheless, our Lord pressed this teaching home. He undoubtedly interpreted His Passion and placed His death upon the Cross in closest connexion with a passage in Deutero-Isaiah,[2] which conflicted so fundamentally with the popular, nationalistic conception of the Messianic Son of David, that it is no wonder that the twelve at the time were unable to grasp it. Yet we find this theme occurring again and again especially in the last period of the ministry . . 'the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many'.[3] 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.'[4] 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'[5] Such teaching reflects our Lord's own conception of His mission, and it is too firmly rooted in the oldest Gospel tradition to be lightly set aside. Yet it is drawn from the pages of the Old Testament.

From these instances, taken from the different literary sources used by the Evangelists in compiling their record of the life

[1] Gal. 5^{22} f.; Acts 15^{1-35}.

[2] Isa. 52^{13}–53^{12}, the last of the four songs of the suffering servant.

[3] Mark 10^{45}. [4] John 12^{32}. [5] John 15^{13}.

and work of Jesus, the Christ, we realize that our Lord constantly wove His own conception of His mission into the texture of those scriptures which He came 'not to destroy, but to fulfil', and based His teaching upon principles, which were already well known and accepted as binding by those to whom He came. 'The sower went forth to sow his seed,' but the harvest depended upon the way in which the ground had been prepared to receive it.

When we turn to the events recorded in our earliest Church history, the Acts of the Apostles, we find that His followers appealed to the scriptures in the same way as their Master did. Immediately after our Lord's Ascension, Simon Peter suggested to the disciples the choice of a successor to Judas, in order that the number of the official witnesses to the Resurrection might be complete and, in support of his suggestion, he appealed to a passage from Ps. 109: 'his office let another take.' At Pentecost he explained to the crowd, amazed by the spiritual rapture of these Galileans, that the outpouring of the Spirit promised by the prophet Joel as the sign of the advent of the Messianic age, 'the Day of the Lord', had actually taken place, and he connected this with Jesus, whom God had raised from the dead.[1] 'Being therefore at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.' 'Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.'[2] Whether to Christians assembled for prayer, to the members of the Sanhedrin, or in his own letter to 'sojourners of the Dispersion', the Apostle appealed on the ground that the scriptures had been fulfilled in the human life of the Son of God, who came in lowliness and who endured rejection and suffering, but who will 'at the end of the times' be manifested in glory.[3] James, the Lord's brother, in the

[1] Joel 2^{28-32}. [2] Acts $2^{33, 36}$. [3] 1 Peter 2^{21} ff.

judgement given at the Council at Jerusalem and in his letter to Christians of the Dispersion shows the same attitude to the ancient scriptures.[1] These two men were representative Jewish Christians of Palestinian upbringing whose outlook was to a certain extent narrow; but there were also Hellenistic Jews such as St. Stephen, St. Philip, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, men whose sympathies were wider, yet it was to the same scriptures that they turned to justify their contention that 'Jesus is the Lord'. To the Ethiopian St. Philip explained the passage concerning the martyrdom of the suffering servant in such a way that it was linked up with the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, the Passion of Christ, and the teaching which Jesus Himself had given.[2] That this teaching soon became crystallized in the phrase 'the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world' is clear from the Gospel according to John, the symbolism used in the book of Revelation, the teaching of St. Paul, and the hymn familiar to us in the Liturgy.[3] In fact the Apostles, whether in the teaching given to Christians gathered for worship on the first day of the week, to Jews in the Temple Court, or to God-fearers, such as Cornelius, made their appeal first and foremost to the Hebrew scriptures. Hence, it seems highly probable that one of the earliest Christian documents, written probably in Aramaic, though eventually translated into Greek, consisted of a collection of passages from the Old Testament loosely strung together for apologetic purposes. The practical value of such a collection is clear; especially in the hands of Jewish Christian teachers whose work lay, as the early chapters of Acts show, among their fellow countrymen in Palestine and in the immediate neighbourhood, and who had as yet no

[1] Acts 15^{14-21}. The Epistle of James is so steeped in the thought and language of the Old Testament that it reads almost like the work of a prophet.

[2] Isa. 53^{7}. In Acts 8^{32} f. the passage is quoted from LXX; hence the difference from our text.

[3] 1 Cor. 5^{8}; Rev. 5^{6-14}; 14^{1-5}.

clear vision of a mission to the Gentiles. The use to which such a collection could be put may be seen, not only in our first and fourth Gospels, but also in such early Christian documents as the Epistle of Barnabas, the first Apology of Justin Martyr and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. This Jewish Christian manual is now generally referred to as the Testimonia or Testimonies.[1] Examples of its contents and of the way in which it was used, will be seen when we deal in more detail with St. Matthew's Gospel, but here it is only necessary to give a general idea of its purpose. It must always be remembered that in comparison with the collection of our Lord's teaching, which was already beginning to take shape orally, it is of secondary importance, yet as interpreting His Person and His work in the light of the Law and the Prophets it would be of the utmost value for contemporary apologetic purposes. The Testimonia would contain passages taken from the Old Testament, not because they were originally interpreted by Jewish teachers as Messianic, but because they served to illustrate some particular incident in the life of our Lord; the fact came first, and the quotation served to emphasize it and to give it significance. The Old Testament scriptures were, therefore, interpreted afresh in the new light shed upon them by the life of Jesus of Nazareth. For example, it had long been the custom that the clothes of prisoners should be the perquisite of the Roman soldiers on duty at an execution; but when the Roman soldiers divided among themselves the garments of the Christ and cast lots for His seamless coat, the fourth Evangelist was reminded of the words of Ps. 22^{18}: 'They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture do they cast lots.'[2] In the first Gospel passages from Isaiah are used to call attention to the opening of the ministry in Galilee, our Lord's

[1] W. C. Allen, *Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. lxii. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, vol. i.

[2] John 19^{24}.

use of parables, and the rejection of the king by his own people.[1]

But the followers of our Lord, as we meet them in Acts, were first and foremost missionaries. When the teaching spread and opposition was aroused, they were driven from Jerusalem and they fled east as far as Damascus, west to Caesarea, and north to Antioch on the Orontes. But wherever they went they proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, that He had founded a kingdom universal in its scope, and that He demanded a new righteousness from the citizens of His kingdom. There were many still living who had seen Jesus of Nazareth and who had heard His teaching; there were many whom He had healed, and with the main facts of His ministry and of His Passion Christians were familiar. What was soon needed was a record of 'what Jesus began to teach' and, in much the same way as the epigrammatic sayings of the Rabbis were preserved in the schools, so were the words of the Lord Jesus gathered together, written down, and preserved. That some of these found no place in our written records is but natural; for example, that preserved by St. Paul: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'[2] That so many were preserved is one of those miracles to which attention is rarely drawn. We must remember that in the Old Testament we find collections of the prophets' teaching, but no record of the life of the teacher. To get some idea of the man himself, Amos, Isaiah, or Jeremiah, we have to piece together passages embedded in his message. What the prophets taught was to the Jew primary: the man himself was secondary, for they had little interest in biography. Hence in the early years, when the Christian fellowship consisted of those Jews who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah, it was His teaching which took first place in their minds; and it was His teaching which, having

[1] Matt. 4^{15} f.; 13^{14} f.; 15^{8}. The writers of the Epistles also seem to have used similar collections, cf. Rom. $9^{32, 33}$ and 1 Pet. 2^{6-8}. [2] Acts 20^{35}.

been for several years preserved orally, was at length written down, either in Aramaic or in Greek. If in the former language, it would soon be translated into Greek, for only thus would it be available for Greek-speaking Jews like St. Stephen and St. Philip and, above all, for those who like St. Barnabas of Cyprus, Saul of Tarsus, and men from Cyrene began missionary work in the great city of Antioch, not only among God-fearers but among Gentile polytheists.[1] For these Christians a short summary of what our Lord taught in the tongue with which they were familiar was essential, in order that they might solve the moral problems of everyday life according to the principles laid down by their Master. Thus an essentially Christian document came into existence in response to the practical needs of the primitive Christian community. It was prefaced by a short summary of the work and teaching of St. John the Baptist, the promised messenger or herald of the Messiah; it contained an account of his baptism of our Lord and the signs which accompanied it, followed by the full record of the Temptation; but, as far as we are aware, it did not contain any account of the Passion.[2] It consisted of short paragraphs of teaching which could easily be committed to memory, e.g. the short discourse on the character of the citizens of the kingdom, beginning with beatitudes and ending with the parable of the two builders,[3] various short discourses and sayings, such as those found in Luke 7^{18-35}, 10^{2-16}, 11^{14-26}, and 12^{22-34}. Short passages have also been included in the teaching which the first Evangelist gathered into that great discourse in chs. 5–7, generally known as the Sermon on the Mount.[4] This primitive Christian document contained a few terse parables, e.g. the lamp and the measure, the leaven and

[1] Acts 11^{20}.

[2] The events of the Passion appear to have assumed narrative form at a very early date, for they naturally held a primary place in the minds and affections of the Christian community.

[3] Luke 6^{20-49}.

[4] e.g. Luke 11^{9-13}; $12^{58, 59}$.

mustard seed, the salt, the two masters, the two ways; it also included the lament over Jerusalem and the account of the healing of the centurion's servant. It was, therefore, admirably suited for catechetical instruction, which, as we know from St. Luke's preface, as well as from the custom of the Jewish schools, was in those days the common method of education. This early Christian manual of teaching has, as a separate document, entirely disappeared, for as soon as the writers of the first and third Gospels had incorporated it in their records separate copies of it were no longer made. It is possible that Justin Martyr, a Christian philosopher, who was put to death in Rome in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, was familiar with it as a separate document, for he says, 'Short and concise came words from Christ', and in order to show the Emperor the most characteristic features of the teaching of our Lord, he quoted passages which are for the most part to be found in this primitive document.

We cannot be certain who was the compiler of this little collection of sayings, but the Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea attributes the following statement to Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (A.D. 130). 'So then Matthew composed (= put together in writing) the oracles (of Jesus) in the Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic) language, and each one interpreted them as he could.'[1] Whether this statement is accurate or not in regard to St. Matthew does not concern us at present; but it is of great interest, since it seems to show that the teaching of our Lord was first written down in Aramaic; that it was then translated freely by the teacher and explained by him to congregations which only understood Greek, in much the same way as a Hebrew reading from the Law was explained in Aramaic to a Palestinian congregation ignorant of Hebrew. But, by the time that the first missionary journey outside Palestine took place, it seems probable that a Greek translation

[1] Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, p. 45.

had been made. Thus it came about that the first written record of our Lord's teaching took shape in a Hellenistic Jewish community, in all probability that which was established at Antioch on the Orontes.[1] It was from that city that the first missionary campaign was launched, and it was there that pagan Gentiles were first admitted to the Church. This may explain the inclusion in a collection of ethical precepts of the one narrative of the healing of the centurion's servant, for in it are the words 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel'. These words place the Gentile upon an equality with the Jew in the kingdom of God and of His Christ; or as it was finely summed up by the great Apostle to the Gentiles: 'There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'[2]

When we try to reconstruct this document, called by scholars Q (from the German word *Quelle*, i.e. a source), it is best to do so first from St. Luke's Gospel, because he seems to have preserved the order of his original sources more carefully than the writer of our first Gospel has done. Of course we can only get a general idea of the contents of this primitive document, since we have to-day no independent copy of it by which we can test the omissions of one or both Evangelists. It is extremely likely that the first Evangelist has preserved some passages which St. Luke for various reasons omitted.

The following reconstruction is taken from Dr. Streeter's book *The Four Gospels*, but it is arranged to some extent as in the second volume of the late Dr. Stanton's work, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*.[3]

[1] Dr. Streeter suggests that this collection of teaching may have been the original Gospel of the pro-Gentile Church of Antioch. *The Four Gospels*, p. 291.

[2] Gal. 3^{28}.

[3] B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p. 291; V. H. Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, vol. ii, pp. 102–4.

The contents of the source (in Greek) known to and used by our first and third Evangelists, now generally designated Q.

I. The ushering in of the Ministry of the Christ.

The mission of St. John the Baptist.	Luke $3^{2b-9, 16, 17}$.
The Baptism of our Lord.	„ $3^{21, 22}$.
The Temptation.	„ $4^{1-13 \text{ (or } 16a)}$.

II. The first stage in the preaching of the Gospel.

The character of the heirs of the kingdom: a discourse beginning with beatitudes and ending with the parable of the two builders.	Luke 6^{20-49}.
The faith of the Gentile centurion and its reward.	„ 7^{1-10}.
The message of John the Baptist and the reply of Jesus.	„ 7^{18-35}.

III. The extension of the Gospel: rejection or reception of truth.

Warnings to two would-be disciples.	Luke 9^{57-60}.
Instructions given to the seventy.	„ 10^{2-16}.
Thanksgiving to the Father.	„ 10^{21-24}.
Instruction on prayer.	„ $11^{2-4, 9-13}$.

IV. Jesus and His antagonists.

Accusation of collusion with Beelzebub, and demand for a sign.	Luke $11^{14-26, 29-32}$.
Singleness of purpose (lamp and eye).	„ 11^{33-36}.
Denunciation of Pharisees.	„ 11^{39-52}.

V. Exhortations to disciples.

	Luke 12^{1b-12}.
Solomon and the lilies, fear not little flock.	„ 12^{22-34}.
Watch, illustrated by a prudent steward.	„ 12^{39-46}.
Divisions (among human relationships) and signs.	„ 12^{52-59}.
Mustard seed and leaven.	„ 13^{18-21}.
Lament over Jerusalem.	„ 13^{34-35}.
Parables of the salt and of the two masters ($14^{34, 35}$; 16^{13}). Sayings concerning:—Humility, renuncia-	

tion, divorce, offences ($14^{11, 26, 27}$; 16^{16-18}; 17^{1-6}).	
The return of the Son of Man.	Luke 17^{22-37}.
Parable of the Pounds.	„ 19^{12-27}.

Such is the outline, as far as we are able to reconstruct it to-day, of the Christian document which contains the earliest collection of our Lord's teaching and which is incorporated in two of our Gospels. It is shorter than the Gospel 'according to Mark', from which it differs in that its subject-matter is almost entirely ethical. The teaching contained in it is conveyed by means of short, pithy sayings, or rhythmic parallelisms, in brief parables or similitudes: a form of teaching which would ensure its preservation without much difficulty in a community where the memory was a highly trained faculty. When, however, the followers of 'the Way' went forth to the Greek cities on the coast, or farther north to Damascus and Antioch, it would be possible for them to teach the central facts of our Lord's life orally; but they would soon feel the need of a record of His teaching in Greek, if these Hellenistic Jews, as well as Gentile God-fearers, were to make it their own. That this had begun to take shape in Galilee in Aramaic within a few years of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord seems possible, and, since it originated in a community all of whose members were Jews by birth and education, it is only natural that it should be stamped with many of the distinctive features of those prophetic rolls of teaching with which they were themselves familiar. Like these it includes very little narrative matter, but contains sayings grouped in such a way that they can easily be committed to memory. The largest of these groups is that which the first Evangelist has expanded into the Sermon on the Mount, but which St. Luke appears to have preserved in its more original form. It must not be forgotten that the Rabbis were accustomed to make their disciples commit to memory important

sections of their teaching, and it is by no means unlikely that the earliest tradition in regard to the grouping of these sayings and parables goes back to Jesus' own lifetime. 'There is', says Dr. Vincent Taylor, 'in the great majority of the sayings attributed to Jesus a self-authenticating note which stamps them as His, and not the formations of the community.'[1] It should, however, be remembered that, before being incorporated in the first and third Gospels, Q had probably no fixed form. Additions came to it naturally and easily, and it is quite possible that different parallel versions of it were in existence in different Christian communities. 'The presence of Q at different centres is practically certain, in view of the fact that Matthew and Luke, writing at different places, used this document; and, if this is so, especially if Q was a Greek translation from an Aramaic original, the different copies can hardly have remained unaltered and free from natural expansion.'[2] In the Gospel according to Mark there are only echoes of some portions of this teaching, and in explanation of this it has been suggested that the Evangelist was writing to supplement Q, which was then well known to the Roman Christians for whom his Gospel was intended, and that such passages of teaching as he did include were quoted by him from memory, or from a local version of the teaching of Jesus with which his readers were familiar.[3] It is, however, to the writers of our first and third Gospels that we owe the fullest account of the teaching of Him of whom it was said 'never man so spake', and whose teaching was marked by a note of authority so new and so unmistakable that the multitude marvelled, 'for He spake as having authority, not as the scribes'.

[1] V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, p. 110.

[2] V. Taylor, *Expository Times*, vol. xlvi, p. 73. See also Streeter, op. cit., pp. 238–46.

[3] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. xl.

III

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

IT was probably about the year A.D. 65 that a small papyrus roll, or volume, written in simple, vernacular Greek was first read to Christians when they met for worship on the first day of the week. This little volume was not only unusual in its subject-matter and contents, but its appearance was an event of the greatest historical significance, for it was destined to be the first of those precious documents which we call the Gospels, books whose influence was to be felt from century to century, and far beyond the limits of the then known world. One purpose of the writer seems to have been to encourage those who were suffering in the cruel persecution begun in A.D. 64 by the Emperor Nero (54–68), by reminding them of their Master's teaching about martyrdom and by His own example at His trial and crucifixion. But it was also the intention of the writer to supply Christian evangelists with an account of the beginnings of the Christian faith, and to supplement a tradition which was fragmentary and, for the most part, oral by a record in writing of 'that fundamental Apostolic tradition upon which from the first the spoken message of the Gospel had been based'.[1]

The first of the Gospels, the second volume in our New Testament, is entitled 'according to Mark'. John Mark, however, was not one of the twelve Apostles chosen by our Lord as His close companions and followers, and it is only natural for us to ask upon what tradition he relied, and to what sources of information he had access, when he compiled this record of the public Ministry and Passion of Jesus, the Messiah.

From the Acts of the Apostles and from the letters of St. Paul we know more about John Mark than we do about

[1] A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. xxi.

the majority of the twelve themselves. His mother, Mary, lived in Jerusalem and it was in her house that the Christians used to meet, and to her house that St. Peter at once went after his escape from prison in A.D. 44.[1] John Mark accompanied his relative, St. Barnabas, and Saul of Tarsus when they set out from Antioch on the first missionary venture, but for some unknown reason he left them in the lurch at Perga and returned home.[2] When St. Paul refused to take him on his second journey to Asia Minor, St. Barnabas came to his help and took him with him to Cyprus. Some years later Mark became reconciled to St. Paul, who commended him warmly to the Christians at Colossae as a fellow-worker who had been a comfort to him.[3] St. Timothy, on his way to Rome in response to St. Paul's urgent summons, 'do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for the time of my departure is come', was expressly told to bring Mark with him, 'for he is useful to me for ministering'.[4]

Although John Mark began his work as an evangelist as the disciple of St. Paul, it is as the disciple and long time follower of St. Peter that he is best known among early Christian writers. In his letter written from Rome to the Christians in Asia Minor, St. Peter speaks of him affectionately as 'Marcus, my son', an expression which can readily be understood if, as has been suggested, he was the young man, perhaps the son of the owner of the very house in which our Lord and His Apostles stayed on their last visit to Jerusalem. This youth appears to have followed them, as they made their way from the upper room across the Kidron to the Garden of Gethsemane, but he fled when one of the Temple guard tried to seize him.[5] It is, therefore, quite possible that from boyhood he had come into close contact with followers of our Lord, and that in this way he had unusual opportunities

[1] Acts 12^{12}. [2] Acts 13^{13}; 15^{38}. [3] Col. 4^{10}. [4] 2 Tim. 4^{11}.
[5] This incident is related in Mark $14^{51, 52}$ and in no other Gospel.

of learning about His ministry from those who had been with him from the first. A Palestinian by birth, he would of course speak Aramaic;[1] but at some period in his life he also became familiar with that form of Greek spoken by city Jews in Palestine as well as by those of the Dispersion, and learnt to write it in a simple, vigorous style, though, judged from the standpoint of a Greek, his constructions were often faulty and many of his expressions ungrammatical. To one who became the companion of both St. Paul and St. Peter, and who travelled from Jerusalem through Asia Minor and eventually to Rome, such knowledge was of the greatest value.

Tradition says that after the martyrdom of St. Barnabas in Cyprus and of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome, John Mark went to Egypt and taught in Alexandria, where he too suffered for the faith. Of this, however, we have no really reliable evidence. But valuable and trustworthy information in regard to the Gospel which is entitled 'according to Mark', has been handed down to us from Christian writers early in the second century A.D. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, writing about A.D. 130, says that 'Mark having become the interpreter of Peter,[2] wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, (attended) Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs of his hearers, but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it

[1] Hebrew had long been a dead language, studied by the Rabbis who were learned in the scriptures. St. Paul spoke Aramaic, but he learned Hebrew and studied the Law under Gamaliel, the most famous Rabbi of his day. (Acts 22^{3}.)

[2] 'Having become', &c. 'This has been the usual translation since Lightfoot's time, but our later knowledge of the *κοινή* given by the papyri shows that the better translation is "who had formerly been . . ."' I am indebted to Dr. W. F. Howard for this note.

his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein.'[1] Other well-known Christians, such as St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (A.D. 130–202), Tertullian of Carthage (A.D. 160–220), and St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150–215), support the statement made by Papias, and we have, therefore, every reason to believe that the Gospel 'according to Mark' is based upon the actual witness of the Apostle Peter, as it has been handed down to us by 'Marcus, my son'.

But even though it is generally recognized to-day that 'it is as a disciple of St. Peter that St. Mark has left his impression upon tradition',[2] and that his Gospel owes its authority to the Petrine tradition incorporated in it, nevertheless this does not mean that the Gospel in its entirety was dependent upon the witness of St. Peter, and that St. Mark merely acted as his secretary; his share in the work was, in fact, far more important than that. It was primarily because the Gospel contained much that St. Peter was accustomed to teach, and because the Evangelist John Mark was known to have been St. Peter's constant companion and interpreter in Rome, that it became pre-eminently the Gospel of the Church in Rome, and also a source of information so highly esteemed by two other Evangelists that they used it in the composition of their own narratives of the things which were delivered unto us by those who 'from the beginning were eyewitnesses', such as St. Peter, and 'ministers of the word', such as John Mark himself.[3] In many of the incidents which are recorded as having occurred during the Galilean ministry there are signs which seem clearly to point to their derivation from an eyewitness. The stories are told graphically and vividly, but they are also enriched by details, perhaps in themselves

[1] Gwatkin, *Selections*, p. 45.
[2] New Commentary. C. H. Turner, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 43.
[3] Luke 1^2.

unimportant, yet such as an eyewitness would be likely to relate, simply because they remain fixed in his mind, as such minute details frequently do. The attitude, expression, and gestures of our Lord have been noticed, and the comments of the disciples as well as those of the crowd have been remembered. This is particularly noticeable in the account of the healing of the epileptic boy, which is related with a wealth of detail entirely absent from the other Gospels. Moreover, the scene is described from the point of view of some one who approached the crowd with our Lord, and who did not shrink from recording the failure of the disciples to heal the boy, and their anxious question addressed to Jesus when they were alone.[1] When He healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath Jesus *looked round* on the Pharisees *with anger*, 'being grieved at *the hardening of their heart*', for they criticized His action;[2] when the storm arose on the lake He was asleep *in the stern* of the vessel, His head *pillowed on a rower's cushion.*[3] *Looking on* the rich young man who *ran* to Him and *kneeled* to Him, *He loved him*, but at His stern demand the young man's countenance *fell*;[4] sitting in the Women's Court, opposite the almsboxes, He *watched* those who gave alms, and noticed that the rich gave much.[5] He *took* the children *in His arms* to bless them,[6] and on that last journey to Jerusalem our Lord walked alone, ahead of His disciples, who followed Him, lost in wonder and awe, which was gradually merged into fear.[7] Details such as these could most naturally have been supplied by one who was himself present on those occasions and who watched our Lord closely, for they tend to disappear as the story is told and re-told, and they are absent from the parallel passages in the first and third Gospels.

It has recently been suggested that a fresh understanding of

[1] Mark 9^{14-29}.
[2] Mark 3^{5}.
[3] Mark 4^{38}.
[4] Mark $10^{17, 21, 22}$.
[5] Mark 12^{41}.
[6] Mark 10^{16}.
[7] Mark 10^{32}.

the Gospel story is gained if, in certain incidents, 'we' is substituted for the Evangelist's 'they'.[1] Especially is this the case in those narratives in which the twelve are present, or where Peter, James, and John only are with our Lord. For example, 9^{33} would run: 'and *we* came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he asked *us*, What were ye reasoning in the way? But *we* held our peace: for *we* had been disputing one with another in the way, who was the greatest.' Other passages which gain a new meaning if read in this way are 9^{14}, 10^{32}, and 6^{30-33}, where the narrator even remembers that 'we had no time to get a meal', a fact to which he also refers in 3^{20}. St. Peter would naturally remember every detail of what happened on that first sabbath in Capernaum, the scene in the synagogue, the healing of his mother-in-law, the crowd who gathered round the house door at sunset pleading for help, and his own search for our Lord early next morning.[2] It is not without significance that the only other record of the first days spent by these fishermen friends with their Master should be found in the fourth Gospel, in which, as some believe, has been preserved an independent witness to those early days of the Lord's ministry.

Another characteristic of the Marcan Gospel is, that in it have been retained in Aramaic the actual words spoken by our Lord on certain occasions.[3] John Mark translated them for the benefit of his Gentile readers, but the other Evangelists omitted the Aramaic words altogether, and were content to record them in Greek only; it is to St. Peter and his disciple that we owe their preservation as they were originally spoken by our Lord. Moreover, in passages such as 1^{36}, 11^{21}, and 16^{7}, St. Peter is himself mentioned by name, whereas in the

[1] New Commentary. C. H. Turner, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 48.

[2] Mark 1^{21-37}. By some commentators this narrative is regarded as representing a typical day in our Lord's ministry rather than a particular Sabbath remembered by St. Peter.

[3] Mark 5^{41}; 7^{34}; 15^{34}.

other two Gospels we find 'the disciples' or 'they'. Who but St. Peter could have said in regard to the withered fig tree, 'Peter calling to remembrance saith'? And none but he is likely to have recorded so fully his threefold denial of his Master,[1] or to have omitted the blessing which the writer of Matt. 16^{17-19} has preserved for us. Therefore, from the evidence afforded by the Gospel itself, as well as from the testimony of early Christian writers, we are justified in believing that in this, the earliest account of our Lord's ministry, St. Mark has preserved for us many of the personal recollections of Simon Peter, the Galilean fisherman, who was one of our Lord's most intimate friends.

Attention has often been called to the fact that in this Marcan record we have no notes of time and that the scenes, each complete in itself, follow in swift succession, linked by the word 'straightway'. We, therefore, gain the impression that the incidents are separated from each other by no long interval of time, and that the ministry lasted for a year or perhaps eighteen months, whereas from passages in the third Gospel, as well as from the series of festivals mentioned in the fourth, it seems likely that it lasted considerably longer, in all probability nearly three years.[2] Moreover, since Papias stated that John Mark did not record 'in order what was said or done by Christ', but 'made it his one care not to omit anything or set down any false statement', it has often been assumed that no attempt was made by the Evangelist to arrange his narrative in chronological order. In fact, too much attention has often been directed to St. Peter, and too little to the part played by his disciple in determining the form of his attempt to compile the first written record of the public ministry of our Lord.

The personal recollections of St. Peter have given authority and added value to the narrative compiled by this Christian

[1] Mark 14^{66-72}.

[2] Luke 9^{51}; 13^{1-5}; 17^{11}; John 2^{13}; 5^{1}; 6^{4}; 7^{2}; 10^{22}; 12^{1}.

teacher, and it is not improbable that some of them were 'carefully and accurately' set down by John Mark, even in St. Peter's lifetime. That does not account entirely for the origin of the Gospel, or even for the first half of it. From the earliest days there was undoubtedly preserved orally among groups of Christians in Galilee, and among that Christian community in Jerusalem in which John Mark himself grew to manhood, an outline of our Lord's ministry in Galilee, as well as of the events of His arrest, condemnation by the religious and political authorities, His Crucifixion, and His appearances after His Resurrection to His disciples. Such an outline of the ministry in its briefest form is to be found in St. Peter's words to the household of Cornelius.[1] Attention has also been called to the fact that a general outline of the Galilean ministry may be obtained by grouping together Mark $1^{14, 15, 21, 22, 39}$, 2^{13}, 3^{7b-19}, $4^{33, 34}$, $6^{7, 12, 13, 30}$: passages which at present appear to form the framework into which separate incidents have been set. When read consecutively these generalizing summaries provide us with an account of the Galilean ministry in three clearly marked stages:

(i) Synagogue preaching and exorcism in Capernaum and elsewhere.

(ii) Teaching and healing by the sea-shore in the presence of crowds from all over Palestine.

(iii) Retirement to the hills with a small body of disciples who are then sent forth to teach and to heal.

The suggestion has recently been made that this brief summary may represent the Palestinian outline of Jesus' ministry in Galilee, which John Mark and other 'ministers of the word' were accustomed to teach orally.[2] If, however, into this outline the Evangelist inserted, at points which to him seemed most

[1] Acts 10^{35-43}.

[2] 'The Framework of the Gospel Narrative', an article by Professor C. H. Dodd, *Expository Times*, vol. xliii, pp. 396-400.

suitable, St. Peter's own recollections of incidents of which he had himself been an eyewitness, as well as isolated narratives handed down by tradition, this would explain not only the omission of notes of time and sometimes even of place, but also the general lack of orderly sequence in the narrative to which attention has so often been called. It would also help us to a better understanding of the statement of Papias, for, while the Gospel owes its authority primarily to the witness given by St. Peter and to his teaching as preserved by 'Marcus, my son', the tradition enshrined in it also rests upon the witness of the primitive Christian community in Palestine, as well as in Rome, to the outline of the ministry in Galilee, and to the events which have been placed in the last week at Jerusalem. Should this theory be correct, not only could the Marcan tradition claim a double attestation, but new light would be thrown upon the arrangement of the Gospel, for the division of the subject-matter into two parts, the Galilean ministry and the Judaean respectively, has given rise to a number of difficulties. That our Lord, a loyal Jew, only went to Jerusalem once, as the Marcan Gospel apparently relates, and that He failed to proclaim His message there until the last week of His life, is extremely unlikely, especially in view of the indications found in the third and fourth Gospels. If we are right in supposing that the incidents were grouped in this particular way by Mark himself, because he was doing his best to fit Petrine material into the general outline of the ministry as preserved among groups of Christians in Palestine, then the lack of ordered time sequence in the narrative can be explained, and there is little reason to doubt that the ministry lasted less than the three years indicated by passages in the other Evangelists, and also that it included more than one visit to Jerusalem.[1]

[1] There is no reason why John Mark should not have incorporated in his Gospel material already grouped, though whether in oral or in written form it is impossible

The outline of our Lord's ministry, as recorded by John Mark, served as the basis of the Gospel 'according to Matthew' and was largely used by St. Luke in the composition of his record; moreover, it is now generally agreed that it was well known to the writer of the fourth Gospel. It is, therefore, important that we should have a clear idea of the contents of 'the good news' as recorded by John Mark, before we proceed to examine the ways in which that record was supplemented and enriched from other sources.

The Gospel, or glad tidings which came to men through Jesus Christ, opens with a reference to two passages in the Old Testament, Isaiah 40^3 and Malachi 3^1, for Christians realized that the hope to which these prophets gave expression was fulfilled in the mission of John, son of Zacharias, generally known as the Baptist. In the wilderness of Judaea he called men to repent, and baptized them in preparation for the coming of one mightier, the latchet of whose shoes he himself was unworthy to loose. He baptized our Lord, whose consecration to His Messianic mission was followed by His retirement to the wild and desolate region of Judaea, where in solitude He overcame the temptations which faced Him, especially at the outset of His work.[1]

After John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, Jesus returned to Galilee and began to teach with authority in the synagogues, making Capernaum His centre, and to heal those who appealed to Him for help. The common people heard Him gladly and glorified God, saying, 'We never

to say; e.g. 2^1–3^6, five instances of Pharisaic opposition; 11^{15-33}, 12^{13-40}, a group of five incidents at Jerusalem, introduced by the Temple cleansing and followed by the warning against the Pharisees. V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 176–80.

[1] 'If we are to understand truly anything about the mission of Jesus, we must recognize that at that moment He received with unhesitating conviction the assurance of His divine vocation as the Messiah and the power to fulfil it.' Gore, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 46.

saw it on this fashion', for He taught with an authority which was unique and showed His power to heal both body and soul. He gathered around Him a band of followers, chief among whom were two pairs of brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedee, and their friends Andrew and Simon Peter. But by His utter disregard of the additions to and explanations of the Law, known as the traditions of the elders, and held by the Pharisees to be almost equal in value with the Law itself, He aroused the hostility of the most narrow-minded among them, and they made common cause with the Herodians, or government party, to check His activities. The first period of our Lord's work in Galilee closed with the outspoken hostility of the Pharisees, and His own deliberate choice from among His followers of those men who were to be His close companions and to be trained by Him to carry on and extend His work. These were they by whom the fire kindled by Him on earth was to be kept alive and spread.

The second period of our Lord's ministry opened with His withdrawal from the cities of western Galilee to the shores of the Lake. Filled with compassion He taught the crowds who followed Him, 'for they were as sheep not having a shepherd'; He employed parables, not only because the story helped to convey teaching in such a way that it could easily be remembered, but also because the parable called forth effort on the part of the hearer, if its true meaning was to be grasped. It served, therefore, as a means of separating those who were spiritually in earnest from those who were merely curious or thoughtless: in fact, each parable acted as a judgement on those who heard it, and illustrated the meaning of the saying: 'For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.'[1] Privately to the twelve He explained the deeper principles underlying His teaching about the kingdom

[1] Mark 4^{25}.

which He came to establish; He further disciplined and tested them by sending them forth to prepare men to enter it. But the enthusiasm of the multitude, which reached its height after the feeding of the five thousand, was regarded as dangerous both by the political and the religious leaders.[1] Deputations of scribes of the Pharisees had already been sent from Jerusalem to question our Lord, and by them His message was definitely rejected.[2] Herod Antipas had recently put John the Baptist to death and it was probably to avoid any further action on his part that Jesus, accompanied by the twelve, withdrew from Galilee to the borders of Phoenicia, and then passed eastwards in the direction of Caesarea Philippi.

It was in the neighbourhood of that city, so hateful to any loyal Jew, that our Lord asked the question, 'Who do you say that I am?' On behalf of the twelve St. Peter answered, 'Thou art the Christ', and this recognition of Him as the Messiah so long hoped for marked a crucial stage in the education of the Apostles and in the work which our Lord came to accomplish. Upon this solid foundation He could indeed build. Nevertheless, the popular, nationalistic ideas closely connected with the Messianic Hope, and tenaciously held by the twelve themselves, needed correction, and His statement that He would be rejected, suffer, and be put to death seemed to them at the time quite incomprehensible. It was this teaching, closely connected with the Old Testament ideal of the servant of God who, though rejected and slain, became the redeemer of his people, that our Lord repeatedly presented to the twelve during the last period of His ministry; teaching to which they were at the time deaf by virtue of the very strength of their conviction that their Master was the promised Messiah.[3] Moreover, to three of the Apostles was vouchsafed the vision of His glory on the

[1] We are told in the fourth Gospel that the people wanted to make Him king (John $6^{14, 15}$).

[2] Mark 3^{22}; 7^{1} ff.; 8^{11}.

[3] Mark 8^{31-34}; 9^{30-32}; $10^{33, 34, 45}$.

Mount of Transfiguration, confirming and strengthening their trust in Him and in His mission. Both in regard to the vision and their recognition of Him as Messiah He enjoined silence until 'the Son of Man should be risen', a saying which St. Peter says they 'kept', though they debated among themselves what it meant.[1] In sharpest contrast to the heavenly vision was the scene in the plain, where the epileptic boy was healed by our Lord, though the nine Apostles were powerless to help him.

During the period which preceded the last journey to Jerusalem our Lord's attention seems to have been concentrated upon the education of the twelve, to whom He gave intimate and personal teaching, and from whom He demanded complete renunciation and unqualified surrender to His call to service.[2] After one brief visit to Galilee and a period of retirement on the east of Jordan, our Lord and the twelve prepared to go up to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. At Jericho the blind beggar, Bar-Timaeus, received his sight and joined the throng of pilgrims who followed the Lord and His friends up the steep and barren road leading to the Mount of Olives, from which, across the deep ravine of the Kidron, they saw Jerusalem.

In the second part of this Gospel (chs. 11–15) attention is concentrated upon the events, which are recorded as taking place at Jerusalem during the last week. Jesus deliberately accepted the public recognition of Himself as Messiah when He entered Jerusalem, riding on an ass, to the accompaniment of shouts of 'Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'.[3] But the Sadducees were seriously alarmed by this Messianic demonstration and determined to put a stop to

[1] Mark $9^{9, 10}$.

[2] Some scholars believe that this section contains collections of teaching (e.g. 9^{33-50}) given on different occasions, but inserted by the Evangelist at this point. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 126.

[3] A direct quotation from Ps. $118^{25, 26}$.

a movement which, originating among the turbulent Galilean pilgrims, might involve them in difficulties with the Roman authorities. The incidents which occurred during this last week are in the Marcan Gospel set out in order, but it is possible that they had already been grouped in this way for teaching purposes.[1] The cleansing of the Temple court took place on the second day and, as He walked in the Temple courts on the third day, the incidents happened which were concerned with questions asked: (*a*) by the Sadducean priesthood, outraged by His high-handed action in a place where they alone exercised authority; (*b*) by the Pharisees and Herodians bent on mischief; (*c*) by the Sadducees who disbelieved in any resurrection from the dead, and (*d*) by one serious student of the Law, who put his question in all sincerity.[2] The anointing at Bethany occurred on the fourth day, and on the evening of the fifth day Jesus and the twelve returned to a house in the city where, in readiness for the Passover, a room had been prepared. It was then that our Lord gathered His Apostles round Him in the upper room and instituted 'a new rite in commemoration of His death, which He was to offer to God as the sacrifice by which the New Covenant of God with Israel was to be inaugurated'.[3] At Gethsemane He was betrayed by Judas and forsaken by His Apostles and, having been tried by both the Jewish and the Roman authorities, He was condemned to death by crucifixion: for blasphemy said Caiaphas, for treason said Pilate officially, though in his heart of hearts he knew that it was 'for envy that the chief priests had delivered Him up'. The account of the trials, of the scourging, and of the crucifixion itself is given with simplicity, dignity, and restraint. The body of Jesus was removed from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea and laid in his own grave, for the sabbath began at sunset and, soon after,

[1] The cleansing of the Temple may have occurred earlier in the ministry, as the fourth Gospel suggests.

[2] Mark 11^{27}–12^{37}.

[3] C. Gore, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 156.

groups of pious Jews would be celebrating the Passover in every house in Jerusalem.[1] There was no time to embalm the body of the Lord, and the women, having seen the tomb secured by the rolling into place of a great stone, returned to the city.

The original ending to this Gospel has been lost, and more than one attempt was subsequently made to supply the deficiency. The narrative, written by St. Mark himself, is contained in 16^{1-8}, and breaks off abruptly. It tells how the women went to the tomb on the first day of the week at dawn. They were intent upon the practical question of how the heavy stone, which closed the entrance, was to be removed when, to their surprise, they found that it had already been rolled back. Entering they saw a young man seated on their right who told them that Jesus was risen, and bade them 'Go, tell His disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee'. Trembling and astonished they fled, saying nothing to any one; for they were afraid. Clearly the Marcan Gospel was not meant to end in this way; yet any attempt to reconstruct the original ending is hopeless. The loss must have taken place quite early, for it had already occurred when the first and third Evangelists used this Gospel in compiling their own records.[2] All we can say is that ancient manuscripts frequently became damaged; the conclusion of a document was mutilated, or even lost, and in all probability this is what happened in this case.

But the unsatisfactoriness of so abrupt an ending was soon recognized and at some later date, though not later than the first half of the second century, some unknown writer tried to

[1] Mark 15^{42}; John 18^{28}; $19^{14, 31, 42}$.

[2] 'It appears almost certain that the lost ending was unknown to St. Luke, who shows himself acquainted with the Gospel up to 16^{8}, . . . and then continues with the tradition of appearances of the Risen Lord in Jerusalem and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.' 'Mt's narrative becomes exceptionally vague at the exact point where the authentic text of Mark now ends.' A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, pp. 268 f.

provide a more fitting conclusion to the Gospel by adding twelve verses containing a summary of our Lord's appearances to His disciples and to one of the women. As soon as this was done, it was naturally regarded as an improvement, and when fresh copies of the Gospel were made, they all ended as those in our Bibles do to-day. This longer ending contains material suitable for the instruction of Christians who needed a short summary of the appearances of the Lord after His Resurrection. It is not unlike that which St. Paul gives in 1 Cor. 15^{3-8}, and which he says that he was himself taught. The material contained in it is based upon the third and fourth Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

The Gospel according to Mark contains the briefest outline of the ministry of Jesus, the Christ; yet so unique has been the position of authority which it has always occupied, that it served as the foundation upon which two other Evangelists built, and it was also used by the authors of heretical writings such as the Gospel of Peter. It owes nothing of its authority to its style, for it is singularly destitute of literary grace; it owes much to the witness of the first of the Apostles, Simon Peter, whose personal testimony it has undoubtedly preserved; but it owes its authority, even to-day, to the picture which it presents of Him, who was truly man 'in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin', and truly Son of God who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.[1]

[1] See Heb. 4^{15}; 2 Cor. 8^{9}.

IV

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

'THE third book of the Gospel, that according to Luke, was compiled in his own name in order by Luke the physician, when after Christ's ascension Paul had taken him to be with him like a student of law.'[1]

Well-known Christian writers in the second century A.D., such as Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and the author of an annotated list of the New Testament books, commonly called the Muratorian fragment, had no hesitation in ascribing the third Gospel to the Gentile Christian, Luke, the companion and faithful friend of St. Paul. The best modern scholarship has endorsed this attribution, and therefore we too are on safe ground, when we regard the third Gospel as the first portion of an historical work of which two volumes have come down to us. The Gospel is referred to in the preface to the Acts as 'the former treatise concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach'; the Acts of the Apostles is the sequel to the Gospel.

The author of these two volumes, himself the most accomplished of all New Testament writers,[2] intended to give a full and accurate account of the origin and growth of Christianity, and in this way to provide a formal Defence, or Apologia, to the Roman world of those who 'obey the established laws, yet surpass them in their lives. . . . Who have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world'.[3] Though both books were dedicated to his excellency Theophilus, a Roman official of high standing who had already received rudimentary, catechetical instruction in the faith, we are justified in infer-

[1] Muratorian fragment. Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, p. 83.

[2] With the possible exception of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[3] Epistle to Diognetus, cited from Gwatkin, op. cit., p. 15.

ring that St. Luke had in view, not only the personal needs of Theophilus and those of the Christian community to which he belonged, but also those of that vast cosmopolitan civilization of which Rome was the centre. It was his intention to show that the Christian revelation was universal in its character and in its appeal; but that it did not disturb the pax Romana, nor was it the enemy of the social and moral order: facts which the representatives of Roman justice had repeatedly acknowledged. In those events which took place in Palestine at a definite point in human history, St. Luke saw being wrought out an age-long purpose of God in the face of human perversity and self-will, and it is this divine revelation which he has set forth in his Gospel with such great literary ability and spiritual insight.

St. Luke was a Greek physician[1] who had probably been first attracted to Judaism and was himself a God-fearer before he was converted to Christianity. If that occurred at Antioch, then it would explain not only the fact that the author of Acts seems to show particular interest in and knowledge of what occurred at Syrian Antioch, but also the statement of the Church historian Eusebius that 'Luke was by birth from those of Antioch'. Moreover, the Bezan text of Acts 11^{28} suggests that St. Luke himself was present, when the decision was made to send help to the famine-stricken Christians in Judaea by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.[2] He was familiar with the LXX, the Greek Old Testament, and used its language and phraseology freely and skilfully. He joined St. Paul at Troas about A.D. 50, but it is hardly likely that he first became known to him there, for when they arrived at Philippi he at once took part in evangelistic work, and was apparently left in charge of the Church

[1] Col 4^{14}.

[2] The Codex Bezae is a bilingual manuscript of the Gospels and Acts, copied in the sixth century. From a monastery at Lyons it came into the hands of the reformer Theodore Beza. It is now in the University Library at Cambridge. The Bezan text of Acts 11^{28} reads: 'When *we* were assembled, one of them spake,' &c.

in that city for several years, a task which would only be entrusted to a Christian teacher of some standing and experience. At Easter A.D. 56 he, with the delegates from other Gentile churches in the provinces of Macedonia, Achaia, Asia, and Galatia, accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem with the gifts, which the Gentile Christians were sending to the mother church in token of their brotherly love. There the Jews caused a great uproar in the Temple court and made a deliberate attempt to kill the Apostle to the Gentiles. His life was saved by the intervention of a Roman officer who dispatched him in haste to Felix, the Roman governor at Caesarea; there he remained for two years. His friends ministered to his needs and he was given a certain amount of indulgence, but when Felix was recalled in A.D. 58 his case had not been decided. The matter was then brought to the notice of Festus, his successor, who, after having heard Paul's defence, declared that he was guilty of no crime against the civil power but, as he had appealed to Caesar, to Rome his case must be referred, and therefore to Rome he was sent.[1]

During the years A.D. 56–8, spent by St. Paul in bonds at Caesarea, St. Luke had been his constant companion. Caesarea was a city in which many Christians were to be found, chief among whom was Philip, the evangelist of Samaria;[2] it lay within a short distance of Galilee and also of Judaea, and it was then that St. Luke had ample opportunity to question all those whom he met, who had seen and heard the Lord Jesus, and to gather accounts of that which 'Jesus began to do and to teach' from those best able to give him that reliable information upon which he set such store. At that time there were many still living who had seen our Lord and who had heard His voice; many too who had been healed by Him. At Capernaum, at Bethsaida, and in the villages on the lakeside little collections of His teaching, stories of His acts of power,

[1] Acts 20^{4}–26^{32}.

[2] Acts 8^{5-25}; 21^{8}.

would still be treasured and repeated when Christians met for worship or for instruction.

In the third Gospel not only do we find many instances of our Lord's mighty works and of His parables, which St. Luke alone has preserved for us, but there are also included in it incidents, which he undoubtedly received orally from those who took part in them, or from those who were in a position to give him first-hand information in regard to them. From both the third and fourth Gospels we learn that our Lord had friends in the village of Bethany, but St. Luke alone tells us the intimate little story of Martha and Mary, the sisters of that Lazarus who was raised from the dead.[1] Martha, distracted with much serving, appealed to our Lord to send to her help her sister Mary, who sat at His feet and heard His word. Our Lord gently chides Martha for her over-anxiety and defends Mary 'who hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her'. From none but Martha herself could St. Luke have heard that story: this, then, is information received at first hand from one who can be called an eyewitness.

Another marked characteristic of St. Luke's work, not only in the Gospel but also in the Acts, is the interest which he takes in Samaritans, those half-Jews who were so hostile to their southern neighbours, by whom they were cordially disliked. In the Acts we hear of St. Philip's successful missionary work in a city of Samaria,[2] and of his home in Caesarea where both St. Paul and St. Luke stayed;[3] but in his Gospel St. Luke records the parable which our Lord told in answer to the question 'Who is my neighbour?', the hero of which was a Samaritan;[4] the healing of ten lepers, only one of whom showed himself grateful, and he was a Samaritan;[5] and he also records the hostility shown to our Lord and the twelve on their way through Samaria by certain villagers who refused

[1] Luke 10^{38-42}. John 11^{1-44}. [2] Acts 8^{1-13}. [3] Acts 21^{8}.
[4] Luke 10^{25-37}. [5] Luke 17^{11-19}.

them hospitality.[1] Incidents such as these were in all probability related to St. Luke at Caesarea by St. Philip, the first missionary to the Samaritans. Here, then, we have information peculiar to this Gospel obtained directly from a 'minister of the word'.

It is material such as this that we designate L, and in it we include the information which St. Luke obtained either orally or in writing from eyewitnesses, or persons upon whose testimony he felt he could rely. As in later years St. Luke incorporated into the volume known as the Acts of the Apostles notes, which he made while he was a fellow-worker with St. Paul, the so-called 'we'-document or travel diary, so too he incorporated into the work, which is called 'the Gospel according to Luke', material which he himself gathered with the utmost care from trustworthy persons. This information St. Luke, a man trained in the science of his day, believed to be accurate and of the utmost importance: indeed, it is not unlikely that it was primarily on account of this special information that he wrote a Gospel at all.

Before examining the other sources of information which were utilized by St. Luke in the composition of his record of our Lord's ministry, it will be well to notice some of the incidents, parables, and detached sayings, which are found only in the special Lucan material. Among the incidents are: the account of the penitent woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee,[2] the healing of the dropsical man[3] and of the woman bent double,[4] both of which took place on a sabbath; the restoration to life of the widow of Nain's son, the healing of ten lepers only one of whom returned to give thanks to his benefactor;[5] the sending out of the seventy and their return with joy,[6] and the story of Zacchaeus, the little tax-collector at Jericho, who was so eager to see our Lord.[7] Found only in the

[1] Luke 9^{51-6}. [2] Luke 7^{36-50}. [3] Luke 14^{1-6}. [4] Luke 13^{10-17}.
[5] Luke 7^{11-17} and 17^{11-19}. [6] Luke $10^{1, 17-20}$. [7] Luke 19^{1-10}.

Lucan material are also certain incidents in the Passion, such as the trial before Herod, the words to the compassionate women of Jerusalem and to the penitent thief, the statement that 'the Lord turned and looked on Peter',[1] as well as the account of the appearance of the Risen Lord to two disciples on the way to Emmaus and afterwards to the eleven.[2]

Seventeen parables are peculiar to this Gospel. They differ from those in the first and second Gospels, not only in form and imagery, but also because, strictly speaking, they contain no reference to the kingdom of God, as is the case with all those which are peculiar to the first Gospel. They are really short tales of human life, and the moral of most of them, though plain, is driven home by an emphatic statement at the end, e.g. the parable of the Pharisee and the publican ends with the words: 'everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted',[3] and the parable of the rich fool, with the moral: 'So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.'[4] Among these Lucan parables are some of the best known and the best loved: the wise father and his two sons, the good Samaritan, Dives and Lazarus, the great supper, the two debtors, the unrighteous steward, the importunate widow, the friend at midnight.

St. Luke was interested in the subject of voluntary poverty, the right use of wealth, and the duty of almsgiving, for we find that in the Acts of the Apostles he dwells upon the readiness of the primitive Christian community to share their goods and to distribute to those in need. In the Gospel he includes particular injunctions to renounce worldly possessions,[5] and warnings against covetousness and indifference to the needs of others,[6] while the Pharisees are rebuked, not only because they reject the counsel of God but also because they are lovers of money.[7]

[1] Luke $23^{9-12, 27-31, 39-43}$; 22^{61}. [2] Luke 24^{13-40}. [3] Luke 18^{14}.
[4] Luke 12^{21}. [5] Luke 11^{41}; $12^{33, 34}$; 14^{33}. [6] Luke 12^{13-21}; 16^{19-31}.
[7] Luke 7^{30}; 16^{14}.

All these passages are stamped with St. Luke's own characteristic phraseology and style.

But in addition to the material which he had himself collected St. Luke used two other documents: the collection of teaching now designated Q, and the Gospel according to Mark. We know from his use of the latter, that he was more careful to retain the order of his original documents than was the first Evangelist, and it is therefore highly probable that his arrangement of Q is the more faithful to the original. Moreover, not only as an Antiochene but also as a Christian missionary, he must have taught for many years the principles embodied in Q as well as the outline of our Lord's life, His Passion, and His Resurrection. If in our Bibles we mark all the Q passages in addition to St. Luke's special material, we shall notice, not only that these two are found side by side, i.e. we have always Q+L, but that these two occur in three large sections, (*a*) 3^{1}–4^{30}, (*b*) 6^{17}–8^{3}, (*c*) 9^{51}–18^{14} to which a short section, 19^{1-28}, serves as an appendix. The recognition of this fact led Dr. Streeter to suggest that at Caesarea St. Luke compiled a document, consisting of his own special matter together with the collection of teaching (L+Q), which was 'a kind of half-way house between Collections of Sayings like Q, and the biographical type of Gospel of which Mark was the originator'.[1] This could not be called a complete Gospel, although it did include St. Luke's own account of the Passion and the appearances of the Risen Lord to His followers, for there were big gaps in it, especially in regard to the ministry in Galilee. It was not until he became familiar with the Marcan Gospel, as well as with the account of the Birth and Infancy of the Lord Jesus, that the Evangelist was able to complete the work which he began in Caesarea. To this hypothetical first draft of the third Gospel the name Proto-Luke was given by Dr. Streeter, and that title is now commonly

[1] B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, pp. 199–222.

used to designate it. Although no proof of the existence of such a document is at present forthcoming, nevertheless the suggestion that there was such a record has been welcomed by many scholars, who regard it as a valuable contribution to our understanding of the formation of the Gospel tradition.[1] Hitherto we have been able to rely upon two primary sources for the life of Christ, Mark and Q, the former representing the Petrine tradition current at Rome, the latter the teaching given in the Church at Antioch. To these may now be added a third, St. Luke's own special material, gathered by him at Caesarea between A.D. 56 and 58 which, when combined with Q, gave to the world the first outline of that Gospel whose preface has, in the light of that discovery, gained a fresh and deeper significance.

Proto-Luke may be grouped in five large sections:

1. 3^{1}–4^{30}. The historical statement ($3^{1, 2}$), with its six-fold date supplied by St. Luke, is followed by the account of the work of St. John the Baptist and his baptism of our Lord, the Temptation, and the rejection at Nazareth.[2]

2. 6^{17}–8^{3}. The discourse, delivered on a level place after the appointment of the twelve, begins with the beatitudes in their specifically Lucan form and ends with the parable of the two builders. This is followed by the incidents of the healing of the centurion's servant and the restoration to life of the son of the widow of Nain, the answer given to St. John's disciples, the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and the list of ministering women.

3. 9^{51}–18^{14}. This central section of the Gospel contains the main portion of Proto-Luke. Here discourse and incident are interwoven. Incidents connected with Jerusalem and

[1] V. Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel*, see chs. viii and ix, and *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 6 f., 51 f., and Appendix.

[2] To this section must be added 5^{1-11}, the call of four disciples, where St. Luke has preserved a different tradition from that found in Mark 1^{16-20}.

references to 'going up to Jerusalem' divide this section roughly into three periods, and seem to indicate three visits to Judaea.[1] In view of the definite statements in the fourth Gospel, which indicate that the ministry extended over a period of nearly three years and included several visits to Jerusalem for certain festivals, this is very significant.

4. 19^{1-28}. The story of Zacchaeus and parable of the pounds.

5. 22^{14}–24^{53}. The narrative of the Passion, the accounts of the appearances of the Risen Lord, and of His Ascension.

As thus reconstructed Proto-Luke is a document parallel to and rather longer than the Marcan Gospel. It gives us an independent account of the life and ministry of our Lord 'from the baptism which John preached' to His Resurrection, and it ends with His injunction to His disciples 'to preach unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem'.[2] It is a narrative marked by tenderness and sympathy and rich in incident and parabolic teaching. It supplements the earlier records; it does not supersede them.[3]

There were, however, gaps in the narrative, especially in regard to our Lord's ministry in Galilee, and it was only when St. Luke was able to supplement the first draft of his narrative by copious extracts from the Marcan Gospel, with which he probably became familiar in Rome, as well as by the addition of the first chapters containing the Birth and Infancy narratives, that he felt able to write his preface, and to assure Theophilus that he had traced 'the course of all things accurately from the first, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word'.[4]

[1] Luke 9^{53}; 13^{22}; 17^{11}.

[2] Cf. Acts 10^{34-43}.

[3] For a detailed examination of Proto-Luke see V. Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel*, and *The First Draft of St. Luke's Gospel*.

[4] Luke 1^{2}.

But we must now see how St. Luke handled his Marcan material. From the way in which the Gospel is arranged it appears likely that the Evangelist used Proto-Luke as a framework, and that into this he inserted passages from St. Mark's Gospel at convenient places. He was faithful to the Marcan order, but he polished the Marcan language as well as the grammar and, on the whole, abbreviated the record by removing what he regarded as redundancies. Marcan material was inserted in two large sections at 4^{31}–6^{16} and 8^{4}–9^{50}; but the writer included at 5^{1} his own account of the call of the two pairs of brothers, in preference to that in Mark 1^{16-20}, for where Mark and his own source overlapped he always preferred his own.[1] He failed to insert, however, one long section, Mark 6^{45}–8^{26}, and one reason for this may be found in the fact that he had little space to spare. A papyrus volume was of a regular length, and his own special material filled the greater part of it. Moreover, the nature of the subject-matter made it possible to omit these incidents without disturbing his general plan.[2] Finally, he carefully revised his own account of the Passion and transferred to it the passages which he had already noted in Mark, in order to enrich the narrative and make it more complete. There is little doubt that at a very early date the story of the arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion of our Lord was narrated as a continuous whole, and also that more than one form of the tradition was current among groups of Christians. The Marcan story, based as it was on the witness of St. Peter, was in all probability widely known; but the writers of the third and fourth Gospels have each preserved for us details, which they have in common and which might

[1] e.g. Luke 7^{36-50} was preferred to Mark 14^{3-9}.

[2] Among the incidents omitted by St. Luke are the feeding of the 4,000 and the walking on the sea, discussions with the Pharisees about the traditions and the request for a sign, two miracles omitted also from the first Gospel, and the incident of the Syro-Phœnician woman. For probable reasons for St. Luke's omission of this section see V. H. Stanton, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 156–160.

otherwise have been lost.[1] They record the Passion narrative as it was taught in the primitive Christian communities at Caesarea and at Ephesus.

When the Marcan passages had been inserted the Gospel was almost complete, but St. Luke had yet to add the first two chapters which record the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Many eminent scholars believe that St. Luke is here dependent upon an Aramaic document, or documents, which have been re-written by him. Others, however, are of the opinion that he is here recording a tradition which reached him orally. But whichever of these hypotheses be correct, it is admitted that the language is characteristically Lucan, though modelled on that of the Greek Old Testament. The whole narrative contained in these chapters is in fact steeped in the language and thought of the Old Testament, and it expresses simply and naturally the Messianic belief of those devout men and women who were looking for the fulfilment of the promises of God and for the advent of the Christ. Consciously, or unconsciously, the writer seems to have shown a certain parallelism between the birth and infancy of John and of Jesus. The birth of John was out of the ordinary course of nature, but the birth of the Messiah was more wonderful still. John is to be the prophet of the Most High, 'for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways';[2] but the message of Gabriel is 'He shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end'.[3]

It is intrinsically improbable that St. Luke, a Gentile Christian, should be able to compose unaided these two chapters. They show an intimate knowledge of Jewish customs, and of modes of thought which are not only entirely Hebraic in

[1] For details see V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, p. 53, note 1; *Behind the Third Gospel*, pp. 222 f. [2] Luke 1^{76}. [3] Luke $1^{32, 33}$.

outlook and atmosphere, but reflect a very early conception of the Messianic Hope; they also include three marvellous hymns, voicing the longing of the Hebrew saints in words which recall the language of the Psalms. It is far more reasonable to suppose that St. Luke had access to information which originated in a Jewish Christian circle, perhaps in that very group of women who play so prominent a part in this Gospel;[1] but whether directly or indirectly the record must rest ultimately upon the word of her who 'kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart'.[2]

From the careful statements in his preface we infer that St. Luke meant to write a full and comprehensive 'narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us', and 'although many had taken in hand' to do the same, he evidently regarded their work as incomplete or insufficient, and he was therefore impelled to supplement it. We have seen what sources of information were at his command and how he utilized them. Nowadays our attitude to every subject is predominantly critical, and it is but natural that we should look more closely than our parents did at the composition of the Gospel records, and examine carefully the material from which the Evangelists compiled those writings which have been treasured by Christians for centuries. This testing of the foundations seems to be the work which has been entrusted to recent generations; but much depends upon the spirit in which it is done.

'We gladly recognize the divine element in the Gospels, but we see that they came into existence in human ways, that in His wisdom God did not think it necessary to safeguard them by protective measures, but left them free to win their own way and to make their

[1] Luke $8^{2, 3}$; 24^{10}. Among the women mentioned only in this Gospel are Elizabeth, Anna, Joanna, Susanna, the widow of Nain, and the compassionate women of Jerusalem.

[2] Luke $2^{19, 51}$. See also V. Taylor, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth*, pp. 22–87.

own conquests. We believe also that, while the results of this method are often perplexing to us, God's way has proved to be to His greater praise and glory. But if this is so, it is all the more necessary to understand the process by which the tradition has been formed and transmitted. . . . We of to-day are responsible only for the progress which it is ours to make, and when we have finished our task, we must give place to others.'[1]

To some of us these studies are so full of interest that we pursue them with enthusiasm, but we need to be careful lest we become so absorbed in the analysis of the parts that we lose sight of the living whole. We can all keep an open mind and listen to what men who have devoted their lives to the patient study of the text are able to tell us, then, having examined our title-deeds with their help, we can go back with renewed confidence to ponder afresh the message contained in the record of each Evangelist and to translate it into daily life.

There are certain features in St. Luke's Gospel which distinguish it from that 'according to Mark', which is primarily concerned with what Jesus did, and that 'according to Matthew', which shows that the scriptures have been fulfilled. From first to last it is radiant with joy: joy marked the birth of St. John the Baptist, 'Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth' said the angel to Zacharias; the angels brought tidings of great joy not only to the shepherds at Bethlehem, but to all mankind; the seventy returned from their mission 'with joy', and our Lord rejoiced with them at the victory gained over evil.[2] 'There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance' is the refrain to the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep. The restrained rapture and vivid intensity of the early chapters find their echo in the last chapter, which tells how the disciples were

[1] V. Taylor, *The Transformation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 2 f.

[2] Luke 10^{17-20}.

filled with joy when their Lord appeared among them and, after His Ascension, 'they returned with great joy to Jerusalem and were continually in the Temple, blessing God'.

Further it is the Gospel which, both by precept and example, emphasizes the importance of prayer: our Lord spent the whole night in prayer before choosing the twelve Apostles; He was praying alone before He tested them with the question 'Who do you say that I am?'; it was while He was praying that the three Apostles, Peter, James, and John saw His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. It was His own practice which led one of His disciples to say, 'Lord, teach us to pray'. He prayed in Gethsemane and on the Cross, for those who crucified Him and for Peter 'that thy faith fail not', and for His disciples 'that ye enter not into temptation'.

It is the Gospel which has given us the Christmas message, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace among men in whom He is well pleased', and the story of the Birth of the Christ child in a stable at Bethlehem, and the visit of the shepherds: incidents which are familiar to Christians of every race and colour. It has given us the Easter assurance that 'death is swallowed up in victory'. 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon', and not only to him, but to the two disciples who went to Emmaus, and to the eleven as they were gathered in the upper room.

Central in the Gospel is the figure of Him who is the Saviour of the world, the Redeemer of mankind, who speaks and acts with authority, whose mighty works are signs to those who have eyes to see, of the advent of the kingdom of God,[1] and of the Presence of Him who is the 'light to lighten the Gentiles', as well as the fulfilment of the highest hopes of those who were 'looking for the consolation of Israel'. He is the friend of Samaritans, of publicans and sinners, and the champion of those who are the outcasts of society, the penitent

[1] Luke 17^{21}.

thief and Mary of Magdala; for, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, He was 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities' and He 'bore gently with the ignorant and the erring'; 'though He was a Son, yet learnt He obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation'.[1] Not only is this Gospel a work of rare beauty and tenderness, but it is that of a competent historian, who has combined the spiritual enthusiasm of the Christian missionary with sincerity, regard for truth, and fidelity to his sources. It is intelligible to the mind, attractive to the heart, and a revelation to the soul of man.

[1] Heb. $5^{2, 8, 9}$.

V

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

WE have seen that in the Gospel 'according to Mark' we have a series of vivid pictures of the life of 'Jesus of Nazareth who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil'.[1] The incidents are grouped by the Evangelist according to place rather than time, and the Gospel narrative, therefore, falls into two main divisions: the account of the ministry in Galilee, and that of the incidents which occurred at Jerusalem during the last week. The chief feature of the Marcan account, as distinct from that of the other Evangelists, is that in it are faithfully and graphically reproduced scenes, in which Jesus may be seen moving among the men and women of Palestine, healing the suffering and sympathizing with the heavy laden. It is the Gospel of action, of quick intuition rather than reasoned thought, of deeds rather than words, and in it are preserved the recollections of one who spent three years in close companionship with our Lord, and who loved Him much. It represents the teaching current in the Christian community at Rome about A.D. 65, and it owes its authority to the witness of St. Peter, the leader of the Apostolic band.

In the third Gospel, that according to Luke, we have an historical work undertaken by a Gentile Christian, who was equipped for his task by training as well as by natural gifts. He was careful in regard to his authorities, he sifted his material, he arranged it in an orderly sequence and, 'having traced the course of all things accurately from the first', this Greek Evangelist gave to the world the Gospel, which declared that 'upon those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death' the light had at last shone, and that the Redeemer of the world had proclaimed 'tidings of great joy' not only to the Jewish

[1] Acts 10^{38}.

nation, but to the Samaritans, the women, the sinners, and to humanity at large. It is not without significance that in this Gospel the earliest teaching, given by our Lord at Nazareth, pointed to the universality of His kingdom, and that His last injunction to His disciples was that 'remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations'.[1] From first to last the Gospel is marked by breadth of sympathy, tenderness, humanity, and joy in the restoration to health of the suffering and the sinful. 'The whole is one gospel of the grace of God and of the truest humanism.'[2] The author Luke, a physician as well as a Christian teacher, made the first draft of his Gospel at Caesarea about A.D. 58 and completed it, probably at Rome, between A.D. 70 and 75. It is the work of a competent historian, who combined with the enthusiasm of the missionary both the desire for accurate information and unusual opportunities for obtaining it.

The first Gospel, that 'according to Matthew', covers almost the same ground as the third and employs two of the same sources, yet the author was guided by a different purpose, and his work was planned on entirely different lines. Though written later than the other two, it was placed first in the New Testament probably because in the early years of Christianity it was regarded as pre-eminently *the* Gospel, and was so widely popular, that in the writings of the early Christian Fathers quotations from it are found more often than from the other three. It is essentially the Hebrew Christian Gospel, and one of the chief aims of the author is to show that the ancient scriptures have been fulfilled, and that Jesus is the Messiah; that His followers are the New Israel, the heirs to the promises made to the patriarchs, but that His kingdom transcends all limitations of race, and is universal in its scope and in its character.

The two chief sources used by the first Evangelist were Q

[1] Luke 24^{47}.

[2] Gore, *New Commentary*, p. 207.

and Mark; but he employed them in his own special way and with considerable freedom. His method was to arrange his material according to subject-matter and to form groups of teaching, of works of mercy, and of parables. For example, in chs. 5–7 we have a collection of teaching familiarly known to us as 'the Sermon on the Mount', the opening, closing, and central portions of which are similar to those found in the Lucan discourse on the plain.[1] A large number of the sayings included in this discourse are, however, distributed in the central section of the Lucan Gospel; for example, the well-known comparison of Solomon and the lilies and the warning against over-anxiety are found there.[2] Again, in ch. 13 seven parables of the kingdom are grouped, of these the parable of the sower and its explanation belong to Mark; but others, such as the wheat and the tares, the drag net, the pearl of great price, and the treasure hid in a field are peculiar to this Gospel and are probably derived from Q, though of this we have no clear proof, since Q no longer exists as an independent document. Both these groups—the collection of teaching and that of the parables—end in much the same way: 'and it came to pass, when Jesus ended these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching',[3] 'and it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence'.[4] Now in this Gospel there are five of these groups of teaching and each ends with a similar formula. The remaining three are found at the conclusion of the charge to the twelve, the discourse about true greatness, and an apocalyptic discourse.[5] To the Jew such numerical grouping was not only familiar but significant, for there were five books of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, and the Proverbs, while the five Megilloth, or rolls, were read on occasions of liturgical importance. It is not improbable that the Evangelist arranged his material in this way, because he meant his Gospel to con-

[1] Luke 6^{20-49}. [2] Luke 12^{22-34}; cf. Matt. 6^{25-33}.
[3] Matt. 7^{28}. [4] Matt. 13^{53}. [5] Matt. 11^{1}; 19^{1}; 26^{1}.

sist of five books of 'the sayings and doings of Jesus', and that by this means he intended to suggest to Jewish Christians, that the new Law of Jesus superseded that delivered by Moses from Mount Sinai.

Another example of such grouping is found in chs. 8^{1}–9^{34}, where the Evangelist has selected incidents principally, though not entirely, chosen from his Marcan source. He disregards the Marcan order and uses his material very freely; he both abbreviates and alters the wording of his source and, having already given an example of Jesus' teaching, he now gives examples of His deeds of mercy. These he arranges in groups of three, separated by a short piece of teaching or by some incident. Three miracles of healing, those of the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law, are followed by the reply given by our Lord to two would-be disciples;[1] three signs of power exercised over the tempest on the Lake, the mind of the maniac, and the paralysed man at Capernaum, are followed by the call of Levi and the teaching about fasting.[2] Three miracles illustrate Christ's power to restore life to the daughter of Jairus, to restore sight to two blind men, and to restore speech to the dumb man.[3] The effect of these signs upon the multitude is summed up in the words: 'the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel' and, on a later occasion, 'they glorified the God of Israel'.[4]

But the first Evangelist not only combined the material, which he took from his two principal sources, in this characteristic way—a method which makes his Gospel eminently suitable for oral instruction—but he also used a collection of proof-texts, chosen from the ancient Hebrew scriptures.[5] In the light of our Lord's life and ministry such passages assumed for His followers a new and deeper meaning, and they were peculiarly valuable to this Jewish Christian Evangelist, whose

[1] Matt. 8^{18-22}.
[2] Matt. 9^{9-17}.
[3] Matt. 9^{18-33}.
[4] Matt. 9^{33}; 15^{31}.
[5] See pp. 18–25

chief purpose in compiling his record was the instruction of those of his own race. The original manual was probably written in Aramaic, and was at first used for teaching purposes by Jewish Christians in Palestine,[1] but it had already been translated into Greek when the first Evangelist employed it in the compilation of his Gospel. The quotations from this source are introduced by a regular formula, 'that it might be fulfilled' or 'then was fulfilled', and there are eleven passages of this kind in the Gospel.[2] It is worth while examining a few of these in detail, for they serve to show how a Jewish Christian teacher, seeing in the facts of our Lord's life the direct fulfilment of scripture, appealed to his fellow Jews; but they also emphasize the interpretation of our Lord's Person and of His mission, which formed the bed-rock of Christian teaching in the first century.

(*a*) The Evangelist having related the story of Herod's massacre of the babes at Bethlehem, an incident which is entirely in keeping with that king's character for craft and cruelty, then quotes a passage from Jeremiah to illustrate his narrative.[3] It describes a mother in Israel, typified by Rachel, bewailing the fate of her sons, as they pass her grave near Ramah on their way to exile. The one is not prophetic of the other, but in the mind of the Evangelist the parallelism was obvious, especially as the grave of Rachel was popularly supposed to be near Bethlehem.[4]

(*b*) 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.'[5] In the first place there is no passage in 'the Prophets' which connects the Messiah with Nazareth. Secondly, no connexion with Nazi-

[1] Acts 8^{30-35}.

[2] Matt. 1^{22}; 2^{5} f., $^{15, 17, 23}$; 4^{14}; 8^{17}; 12^{17}; 13^{35}; 21^{4} f.; 27^{9}.

[3] Matt. 2^{17} and Jer. 31^{15}. 'Matthew, aware of the tradition regarding Bethlehem, uses the passage in Jeremiah to illustrate his narrative.' G. H. Box, *Century Bible*, *St. Matthew*, p. 87.

[4] In Gen. 35^{19}; 48^{7} Ephrath is Beth-lehem.

[5] Matt. 2^{23}.

rite can be intended, for a Nazirite our Lord was not.[1] There are two explanations which commend themselves to scholars to-day on account of their essentially Jewish character, and either of them may be correct. (i) The Evangelist is playing upon two Hebrew words, which have the same consonants, but which, if read with different vowels, may mean the Nazarene, or Nazorean, a word used of their Master and of Christians in a contemptuous way by those outside their fellowship. (ii) Or it may be an allusion to the Hebrew word for 'the Branch', a designation of the Messiah as the branch or shoot of Jesse's stem. In this way the Evangelist was endeavouring to express the conviction of Jewish Christians that Jesus was 'the shoot of Jesse's stock', 'the Branch' of whom Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah spoke, and that He fulfilled prophecies which were always interpreted by the scribes as referring to the Messiah.[2] He was writing as a Jewish Christian to other Jewish Christians, who would have no difficulty in understanding his allusion.

The conviction that Jesus is the Messiah runs like a golden thread throughout the narrative, and is also emphasized in the genealogy with which the Gospel opens. This genealogy is artificial in structure, for not only have some royal names been omitted, but it has been divided into three sections, each of which ends with the name of a king: David, the king who established the kingdom; Jechoniah, the captive king who lost it; and Jesus, the king who restored it. Each of these three sections includes fourteen names or generations, and to this attention is called by the Evangelist.[3] Now, the numerical value of the consonants in the name of David is fourteen and, though this procedure may appear to us strange, the arrange-

[1] Num. 6^{1-21}; Judges 13^{5}; Amos 2^{12}. Unshorn locks and abstinence from wine were distinctive features of the Nazirite vow, which was originally undertaken as a protest against evils connected with Canaanite worship.

[2] Isa. 11^{1}; Jer. 23^{5}; 33^{15}; Zech. 3^{8}; 6^{12}.

[3] Matt. 1^{17}.

ment of the genealogy in this way would appeal to those Jewish Christians for whom the Evangelist was writing, and would serve to reaffirm his main theme that Jesus was the Son of David, the promised Messiah. Thus the genealogy is governed by an apologetic or didactic purpose, and may be regarded as a numerical acrostic on the name of David.

But in addition to these three sources of information, namely the Gospel according to Mark, which forms the scaffolding of the Matthaean Gospel, the discourses and sayings commonly known as Q, which seem to have been used more fully than in the third Gospel, and the collection of passages taken from the Old Testament, the first Evangelist incorporated material peculiarly his own, some of which may have reached him orally.

This special matter may be divided into three groups, though these groups cannot properly be regarded as being equal in value and importance. First, material probably belonging to Q, some of which was omitted from the third Gospel, possibly because St. Luke thought that it had not the same interest for his Gentile readers as it had for Hebrew Christians, but which the writer of the first Gospel preserved, because it harmonized with his main theme. Thus to Q are generally ascribed: ten parables illustrating different aspects of the kingdom of heaven, the majority of which are introduced by the formula 'the kingdom of heaven is likened unto'; certain passages in which the new righteousness required of the citizens of the kingdom is contrasted with that enjoined by the Mosaic Law;[1] teaching concerned with prayer, fasting, and almsgiving;[2] the gracious words of invitation addressed to those who are weary and heavy laden,[3] and the solemn warning, reaffirming that found in Mark 9^{42}, against despising the little ones whose 'angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven'.[4] The inclusion

[1] e.g. Matt. 5^{17-45}. [2] Matt. 6^{1-18}. [3] Matt. 11^{28-30}. [4] Matt. 18^{10}.

of such passages, together with those which contain stern denunciations of the Pharisees, culminating in a severe judgement pronounced on them,[1] and the added stress placed upon the apocalyptic element in our Lord's teaching are entirely in keeping with the Jewish Christian tone of the Gospel as a whole, and with the purpose which the writer had in view.

Secondly, in addition to these passages there are three, apparently from a different source, which are concerned with St. Peter, in whom the Evangelist shows a special interest. The account of his walking on the sea to his Master faithfully reflects the character of this impetuous, loving disciple;[2] the finding of the stater in the fish's mouth is a story which would be of interest to Jews of the Dispersion, for it provided the solution of one of their problems.[3] Not only does this Evangelist call St. Peter the first or foremost of the Apostles, but he alone has recorded our Lord's joyous response to his confession of Him as Messiah, and the promise 'upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it'.[4] This last passage is full of Jewish expressions and ideas and undoubtedly formed part of a very early Christian tradition.[5]

There is, however, in ch. 27, a third group of incidents connected with the trial of our Lord by Pilate, which represent Palestinian traditions, which are not only of secondary importance, but also of extremely doubtful validity; these were in all probability received by the Evangelist orally. Included in this group are the message sent by Pilate's wife concerning her troubled dream; Pilate's washing of his hands as a symbol of his innocence, a Jewish custom with which it is unlikely that a Roman official would be familiar;[6] the setting of a Roman

[1] Matt. 23^{1-36}.

[2] Matt. 14^{28-33}.

[3] Viz. were they to continue to pay the Temple tax? See G. H. Box, *Century Bible, St. Matthew*, p. 275; Streeter, op. cit., p. 504.

[4] Matt. 16^{17-19}.

[5] See note in *Century Bible, St. Matthew*, p. 261.

[6] Deut. 21^{6-9}.

guard near the tomb at the request of the chief priests, and the bribing of the soldiers by the Jewish rulers.[1] To these must be added the account of the violent death of Judas, the earthquake, the opening of the tombs, and the appearance in Jerusalem of the Hebrew 'saints that had fallen asleep'.[2] For stories such as these it is difficult to find a satisfactory explanation. Taken as a whole, the matter peculiar to the first Gospel, which appears to have been derived orally from a cycle of Palestinian traditions, cannot command the same respect as that which St. Luke collected with such care; but it may serve to indicate the date at which the Gospel was compiled and the Christian community for which it was intended.

The internal evidence in regard to the date is slight. An organized Christian community is implied by the regulations in regard to discipline, and sufficient time has elapsed for false teachers to appear.[3] The destruction of Jerusalem is probably referred to in the words: 'the king was wroth, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city';[4] but the strongly marked apocalyptic and anti-Pharisaic tone of the Gospel seems to show that not many years had elapsed since that event. A date about the year A.D. 85 is thought by Dr. Streeter to satisfy all the evidence and to conflict with none.[5]

For what Christian community was this Gospel written, and how was it that it received the title 'according to Matthew'? The answers to these questions are not to be found in the Gospel itself, but a partial solution of the problem may be suggested by writings of the second and third centuries. We know that St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (martyred at Rome about A.D. 115), was familiar with the Gospel 'according to Matthew', for in the letters which he wrote on the way to

[1] Matt. $27^{19, 24, 25, 62-66}$; 28^{11-15}.

[2] Matt. $27^{3-10, 51-53}$.

[3] Matt. 7^{15-22}; $18^{17, 18}$.

[4] Matt. $22^{6, 7}$. Probably added later. The parable gains in coherence by their omission. G. H. Box, *Century Bible*, *St. Matthew*, p. 308.

[5] Streeter, op. cit., p. 524.

Rome there are passages which are reminiscent of that Gospel. Moreover, he also refers to 'the Gospel' as if it were the title of a book. 'The real significance, then, of the use of the term "the Gospel" in Ignatius is that it probably implies that at Antioch in his day there was as yet only one Gospel recognised as "the Gospel" by the Church. . . . And since, whether or no Ignatius had glanced through other Gospels, Matthew is certainly the one he knew best, it is a reasonable inference that when he speaks of *the* Gospel he means Matthew.'[1] Moreover, it was at Antioch that the question of the terms upon which Gentiles were to be admitted to the Church became so pressing, that a decision had to be reached by those in authority as soon as possible.[2] At that time, A.D. 49, St. Paul and St. Barnabas had just returned from their first missionary venture and were at Antioch. So too was St. Peter, who may have been in charge of the Jewish Christian work there during their absence; that he was in a position of authority is clear. Now, not only does the first Gospel contain information about St. Peter, which would be of particular interest to Christians in Antioch and yet which is not recorded elsewhere, but the one source used by the Evangelist very fully was that early collection of the Sayings of Jesus, now known as Q. Therefore, it seems probable that the first Gospel was itself compiled at Antioch by a Jewish Christian teacher, whose name was unknown, or, if known, was not of sufficient importance to be attached to a Gospel.

Further, from Christian writers such as St. Irenaeus, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea, we know that to the Apostle Matthew was attributed a Gospel of some kind in Aramaic, though the first Gospel it certainly was not, for that was written in Greek, and Greek documents were employed in its composition.[3] The statement made by Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in

[1] Streeter, op. cit., pp. 504–7. [2] Acts 15^{1-3}; Gal. 2^{11-14}.

[3] Matt. 9^{9} and 10^{3}. It is worthy of note that in this Gospel the tax-collector,

Phrygia, in the first half of the second century is more explicit. He said: 'Matthew composed the oracles (of Jesus) in the Hebrew (i.e. Aramaic) language, and each interpreted them as he could.' We have already seen that these words are by many scholars regarded as referring to the document which we call Q, the source employed so freely and so fully by the writer of our first Gospel in the composition of his peculiarly Hebrew Christian manifesto.[1] That the first Gospel should have received as its title 'the Gospel according to Matthew', because that Apostle was held to be the author of one of its chief sources, appears the more likely, when we remember what the Jews were accustomed to do with the writings of their own great teachers. It was by no means unusual for Jewish writings, which included the contributions of various authors, to bear the name of the chief contributor, e.g. the book of Isaiah is a composite work, to which the name of the earliest and most famous contributor was given, and the Psalms, though generally called 'of David', include hymns belonging to various periods of Hebrew history. The first Gospel is also a composite work in which the centre of interest lies in the collection of our Lord's teaching rather than in the narrative matter. It is, therefore, possible that the name of the Apostle Matthew was employed in the title in preference to that of the less well-known compiler of the record as a whole, because he was held to be the author of the chief source. As in the Jewish prophetical roll, so too in this Jewish Christian Gospel, the name of the author of a part was appended to the whole. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the hypothesis outlined above is only of the nature of a theory, which has appeared to many scholars to satisfy the enigmatical statement of Papias.

called from the place of toll to be a follower of our Lord, is named Matthew, although in both the Marcan and Lucan records he is called Levi, the name Matthew appearing solely in the list of the twelve Apostles.

[1] See p. 28.

Although we are ignorant of the name of the Christian teacher to whose spiritual genius we owe the document, which has been called by Renan, 'the most important book of Christianity—the most important book that has ever been written', we know that like the author of the Epistle of James, with whom he had so much in common, he was himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He, too, was writing at a time when the lamp of faith was burning dim, when Judaism was showing itself increasingly hostile to the Church, and when disasters and catastrophes seemed to point to the speedy advent of 'the day of the Lord'.

The first Evangelist's aim was to establish the faith of his brethren by reminding them of 'the eternal purpose of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord',[1] that mystery which, having been hidden through the ages, was now revealed through the apostles and prophets. To give expression to this great subject he massed his material, expanded his sources, stressed his theme, and illustrated from those scriptures which were valued 'above gold, yea above fine gold', the steps by which the Law and the Prophets had prepared the way for One 'who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead; even Jesus Christ our Lord'.[2]

In the prologue (chs. 1 and 2) the Evangelist pointed to the royal descent of Jesus, born in Bethlehem, the city of David, and told how the kings of the east brought to Him royal gifts, thus symbolizing the homage of the Gentiles of which a prophet had spoken: 'Nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . they shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good tidings of the praises of the Lord.'[3] Like a second Moses the Child was saved from death, that He might become the Redeemer of His people, and His

[1] Eph. 3^{11}. [2] Rom. 1^{3} f. [3] Isa. $60^{3, 6}$ mg.

return from Egypt to dwell in Nazareth was illustrated from the saying of the prophet Hosea.[1] The incidents related in these two chapters are wholly Jewish in their setting and in their expression, and, in the opinion of some scholars to-day, they owe their preservation to traditions handed down in the family of Joseph, whose relatives appear to have played an important part in the primitive Jewish Christian community in Palestine.[2]

In the central portion of his Gospel the Evangelist took his stand upon the Law and the Prophets, not 'one jot or one tittle of which shall pass away, till all things be accomplished'. First came the herald, who made ready the way by urging repentance in view of the nearness of the One mightier, 'whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly cleanse his threshing-floor', separating wheat from chaff. St. John the Baptist was the last and greatest of the prophets, yet 'he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'.

After John's imprisonment Jesus came into Galilee teaching, healing, and proclaiming the good tidings of the kingdom of heaven (or of God), a subject which occupied the chief place in His teaching. The Law of the kingdom was proclaimed from the Mount by One who was greater than Moses; based upon the principles found in the scriptures, it yet transcended them, for new and far-reaching demands were made upon character and conduct. Lowliness and humility, transparent sincerity, purity of heart, self-sacrifice to the uttermost, love to God and man which knew no limit imposed by race, these alone made men worthy to enter it. The kingdom was already in their midst. Like leaven or the mustard seed it was active, but its full glory had not yet appeared nor was the time

[1] Hos. 11^1; cf. Matt. 2^{15}.

[2] Among these relatives were James (died A.D. 62), Symeon (died A.D. 112), and the brethren of Jude. See Stanton, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 347. For a full discussion of the subject cf. V. Taylor, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth*, pp. 88–114.

of its appearance known to any, 'for of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only'.[1]

As the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai was marked by a solemn covenant, confirmed by the pouring out in sacrifice of that blood which is the life, so too was the new Law which superseded it; the conception of the new covenant 'comes out clearly in the Institution of the Last Supper, and obviously expressed some of the deepest thoughts of Jesus'. His own words, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins', are sacrificial, and give expression to an idea which is an integral part of the teaching found throughout the Old Testament. The author of the New Covenant points to the Cross as the sacrifice, consummating and sealing that covenant relationship with God of His followers who represent the New Israel. 'The fundamental place occupied by the Old Testament idea of a covenant-relation could not be made clearer. The "new covenant" implies the old; it has its roots in history and thus strikingly illustrates the close and intimate connexion between the Old Testament and the New.'[2]

The same is true of our Lord's teaching in regard to the Messianic Hope. According to the writer of the first Gospel, He accepted the title 'Son of David' and the homage of His nation, when riding upon an ass He entered Jerusalem to the cry of 'Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest'. Yet He deliberately refused to identify Himself with any nationalistic conception of the Messiah, and used of Himself and in making His highest claims the title Son of Man which, while insisting upon His true humanity, pointed to His future glory. This title had no political significance, but it was pregnant with

[1] Matt. 24^{36}.

[2] *The People and the Book.* G. H. Box on the Significance of the Old Testament in Relation to the New, pp. 433–67.

meaning to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear. It has been well said that 'it indicated the meeting point of what was humanly perfect with what was perfectly divine'. Nor was that all, for the conception of the Messianic kingdom, expressed in the prophets' ideal of the Son of David and in the apocalyptic vision of the Son of Man, was by our Lord Himself immediately after St. Peter's confession closely connected with the conception of the Suffering Servant found in Isaiah 53. This idea, which involved rejection, suffering, and death at the hands of His fellow countrymen, He forced upon the unwilling attention of the Apostles again and again. He thus gave to sacrifice and service a central place in the highest ideal of kingship and, by translating it into action on Golgotha, He transfigured and transcended the noblest human ideals of both prophet and apocalyptist. 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.'[1] His kingship was proclaimed from the Cross to Jew and Gentile alike, and from that throne He summoned to His kingdom men and women of every race, who were willing to take up the Cross and follow Him. There is a tradition that after the Crucifixion the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and this incident, mentioned by all three Synoptists, seems to be by them regarded as symbolical, that the old dispensation had passed away and that the work of preparation was finished. In the past God had spoken to Israel by 'divers portions and in divers manners'; now at the end of the days He had spoken to them in His Son, who was by the nation, through its rulers, rejected and slain.

Nevertheless, to Him was given all authority in heaven and in earth, 'and it is in the plenitude of this Divine authority that He lays upon His Apostles and His Church His last great charge, and leaves to them His last great promise'.[2] If, as has been suggested, this Gospel was compiled at Antioch, the

[1] John 12^{32}.

[2] Plummer, *Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 429.

Evangelist may himself have been an eyewitness of the manner in which that command had been obeyed, and had himself realized the truth of that promise: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'[1]

[1] Matt. 28^{20}.

VI

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

THE fourth Gospel is admittedly the latest of those contained in our New Testament and, since it is independent of the chief sources used by both the first and third Evangelists in compiling their accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus, the Christ, it differs very considerably from the record contained in the synoptic Gospels. This Evangelist, writing towards the end of the first century A.D., had something to add to the story with which his fellow Christians were already familiar. He, too, brought forth out of his treasure things new and old, like the scribe 'who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven',[1] and in his turn he enriched and amplified the record of his predecessors. It would appear that in some places he preserved a more primitive tradition than they, one which went back to the very earliest days of the ministry;[2] in others he made explicit that which in their account was implicit;[3] yet he also included traditions and descriptive phrases which had already found a place in the synoptic Gospels.[4] In fact, ever since the third century A.D. it has been recognized that the Gospel 'according to John' was written to supply something which was lacking in the earlier narratives, and St. Clement of Alexandria indicated the special contribution made by the last of the Evangelists, when he wrote: 'Last of all John, perceiving that the bodily facts had been set forth in the Gospels, being urged by his friends and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual gospel.'[5]

[1] Matt. 13^{52}.

[2] John 1^{35-48}; 3^{22-30}; 4^{1-3}.

[3] Luke $10^{21, 22}$; cf. Matt. 11^{25-27}. This saying is not recorded in the fourth Gospel, but the thoughts found in it are expressed again and again.

[4] e.g. John 13^{1-17}, cf. Mark 10^{42-4}; John 13^{20}, cf. Matt. 10^{40}; John 15^{20}, cf. Luke 6^{40}.

[5] His theory of authorship may not be generally accepted to-day, but that does not take from the value of his statement.

The outline of our Lord's Galilean ministry and the story of His Passion and Resurrection, as found in the first three Gospels, are based upon the Marcan tradition, supplemented from those reliable and trustworthy sources, which to each Evangelist seemed of primary importance. Moreover, each writer felt at liberty to arrange his material in the way which to him appeared most suitable, in view of the needs of those for whom he was writing, and in accordance with his own method of literary workmanship. Each record is stamped with the personality of the Evangelist who compiled it, yet taken together the Gospel records 'express, with complete lucidity, the message of Jesus to those whom He addressed as well as to succeeding generations. But we must recognize that the record has been put into shape, and that it is not the less precious because it has been arranged with such rare skill'.[1]

But it was because he too had something of value to add to the picture of Jesus of Nazareth, as it had already been drawn by his contemporaries, that the fourth Evangelist added his witness. That he knew the Marcan Gospel is generally recognized; that he was familiar with the collection of our Lord's teaching now known as Q is highly probable. Like the first Evangelist he has a tendency to gather into long discourses material, which he has himself cast into its particular form; but, unlike his predecessor, he has in several places included his own comments or meditations upon the words spoken by Jesus, and the passage runs on so smoothly that we hardly notice the transition from the words of the Master to the thoughts of the disciple.[2]

Assuming that his readers had already been instructed in the general outline of the life and ministry of Jesus, this Evangelist omitted any account of the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the institution of the Eucharist, and the Agony in Gethsemane, as well as the collection of teaching concerning

[1] Bernard, *St. John's Gospel*, vol. i, p. cxv.

[2] e.g. John $3^{16-21, 31-6}$.

the kingdom of heaven found in the Sermon on the Mount; to these records he had apparently nothing further to add. But he also knew that his readers were familiar with the chief persons in the story, and therefore it was enough for him to refer to the twelve without giving a list of their names or any explanation of their appointment; Andrew is called 'Simon Peter's brother', the imprisonment of St. John the Baptist is only mentioned in order to indicate the time of his ministry in Aenon near to Salim, when he and our Lord were working in the same neighbourhood.[1]

The Galilean ministry of our Lord had been described on the witness of St. Peter by the pen of John Mark, so there was little need to relate that afresh in detail; but the Judaean ministry had not been recorded with equal fullness. Yet that it formed part of the earliest Christian tradition is indicated in the passage: 'that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached'.[2] It was necessary to show, therefore, that the Messiah came to His own in Judaea and gave full opportunity to the Jews in the Holy City to accept Him, but that they and their rulers rejected Him. This Evangelist not only related incidents which took place during a ministry in Judaea, which preceded that in Galilee, and which occurred after the baptism of Jesus by John and before the latter's imprisonment at Machaerus, but he also carefully recorded various visits of our Lord to Jerusalem which took place at the great festivals of Passover, Tabernacles, and the Dedication. By the mass of the country-folk our Lord was regarded as a prophet,[3] and it is unlikely that He would have had a following had He not, like every loyal Jew, visited Jerusalem for the Passover, and for some at least of the other great festivals. Nor does it seem possible that the good news of the kingdom should have been announced in

[1] John 3^{24}. [2] Acts 10^{37}. [3] John 6^{14}; Mark 6^{15}; 8^{28}.

Galilee, and should only have been proclaimed in Judaea during the last week of our Lord's earthly life, as the Marcan tradition appears to suggest. The account given by the fourth Evangelist of a ministry lasting nearly three years, and including more than one visit to the Holy City, serves not only to fill a serious gap in the synoptic record, but also to explain the hostility, which our Lord's teaching gradually aroused in Jerusalem among the Sadducees, whose interests were so closely bound up with those of the Roman government. In this most important matter the fourth Evangelist has amplified the tradition found in the Marcan record, and has given further support to that, of which indications may be traced in the central section of the Lucan Gospel, where there are several references to our Lord's being in or near Jerusalem during the course of His ministry.[1] It may not be legitimate from passages such as these to draw the conclusion that St. Luke believed that the ministry lasted three years, but taken in conjunction with the lament over Jerusalem, where the words 'how often' undoubtedly imply previous visits to the capital, they do give additional support to the testimony of the fourth Gospel in regard to our Lord's repeated visits to the Holy City, and to the way in which His claims were met by the official representatives of Judaism.[2]

Therefore, if these statements be correct, we seem driven to the conclusion that both in regard to the scene of the ministry and its duration, the fourth Gospel has supplemented the synoptic record and has made it more intelligible.

Any one who for the first time reads two accounts of the same incident is at once struck by the differences between

[1] Luke 10^{25-37} between Jerusalem and Jericho; 10^{38-42} at Bethany; 13^{1-5} at Jerusalem; 13^{34} at Jerusalem. The first three are from St. Luke's own special source.

[2] The journey through Samaria recorded in Luke 9^{51-6} is quite distinct from that found in Luke 17^{11}. The fourth Gospel and the third support each other in regard to Samaria.

them; it is only on a second, or even a third reading that he becomes aware of the underlying similarities and of the numerous points of agreement which the two accounts present. Yet it is these agreements which are of paramount importance and which ultimately carry more weight than the differences. When we read the fourth Gospel, we are at once struck by the difference between it and the synoptic records. We miss the numerous parables, as well as the short, pithy sayings by which our Lord was wont to convey His teaching; we miss the many stories of sufferers in mind and body, who came to Him for healing from every district in Palestine and who occupied so large a place in His ministry; we miss the constant presence of the twelve and the familiar background of Galilean life. We have, in fact, become so familiar with the picture of our Lord as drawn by His contemporaries that at first we find it difficult to adjust our gaze to a view, which brings out the deeper meaning underlying the history and the universal significance of the human life of Jesus of Nazareth, 'who went about doing good, and healing all those that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him'.[1] It is here especially that the fourth Gospel not only endorses the witness of the Synoptists, but is in harmony with the deeper thought expressed in passages in St. Paul's Epistles, which are even earlier in date than the first Gospel.[2] By linking this teaching with incidents chosen from the earthly life of Jesus, the Christ, the fourth Evangelist has given to it a rock-like foundation, against which the intellectual speculations of every generation have beaten in vain.[3]

When we traced the steps by which the synoptic Gospels reached their present form, we saw that each came into being

[1] Acts 10^{38}. [2] 2 Cor. 4^{6}; 8^{9}; Phil. 2^{5-8}; Col. 1^{15-17}; 2^{3}.

[3] Doctrine did in fact develop from forms rudimentary to those more mature. Judged by standards of later orthodoxy early doctrinal statements may appear rudimentary, inadequate, elementary, but *not* untrue, *not* insignificant. Cf. A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, pp. 7–9.

in response to some need of the Christian fellowship, and that each Evangelist in compiling his record had a definite purpose in view. In the preface to the third Gospel this purpose finds its clearest expression, for St. Luke explains that he has 'traced the course of all things accurately, from the first', and that he has obtained his information from reliable sources. His purpose is primarily to give Theophilus more exact knowledge of those things in which he has already received preliminary, oral instruction; but he is also writing with the wider audience of the Roman Empire in view. His purpose is, then, to set out in an orderly narrative the historical basis upon which the Gospel tradition rests. But the purpose which inspired the fourth Evangelist to record that to which witness had been borne by one, whom he calls 'the beloved disciple', is expressed with equal clearness at the end of his narrative, 'but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name'.[1] His aim was, therefore, essentially religious, though in a lesser degree theological, and his work was the result of mature reflection upon the facts. He discerned in a particular history and in a particular Person a universal significance for the knowledge of God and of man's destiny, and his record was inspired by devotion to that Person: a devotion which might be shared by the simplest believer as well as by the worshipping community. The faith of Christians, living in the province of Asia at the end of the first century, was seriously threatened and the true humanity of our Lord was in danger of being undervalued, owing to strange speculations which were then current. It was, therefore, in response to the needs of his own age that the Evangelist wrote down the testimony of the last survivor of the Apostolic band. He was, of course, at liberty to use whatever method seemed to him most likely to achieve his purpose, and he therefore selected certain episodes, which to him were of

[1] John 20^{31}.

value because of their spiritual significance. He expressed in long discourses and conversations the discussions which took place in regard to the claims of Jesus, and showed how witness was borne to Him and by Him during the course of His ministry; naturally it was in Jerusalem that these claims were disputed most hotly. His acts of compassion were to the writer not only signs of power, but they also acted as a judgement upon those who witnessed them, and set them within the kingdom of light, or among those who loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 'What men think of Jesus is seen to be the measure of their spiritual characters: each in turn who comes near to Him finds himself exposed to the light and judged.'[1]

In some instances the author seems to have arranged his material, in order to bring out a particular aspect of our Lord's teaching by means of the sign which is connected with it. For example, the account of the feeding of the five thousand is the prelude to the teaching about the living bread, given in a synagogue at Capernaum, and summed up in the words 'I am the bread of life'.[2] 'I am the light of the world' explains the significance of the healing of the blind man. Life was restored to the dead limbs of the paralysed man at Bethesda, for in Jesus was life, and 'He quickeneth whom He will'.[3] He raised Lazarus from the dead, and declared 'I am the resurrection, and the life'.[4] This mighty work, which was regarded by the Evangelist as the immediate cause of our Lord's death, was closely connected with His teaching in regard to the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep.[5] Such a method of arrangement is admirably adapted for teaching purposes, and serves to bring out the inner significance of the life which the Evangelist is recording, and to place it in its true relationship to God and to mankind.

[1] Armitage Robinson, *The Study of the Gospels*, p. 126. [2] John 6^{26-58}.
[3] John $5^{1-9, 21-6}$. [4] John 11^{25}. [5] John 10^{11-18}; 11^{1-53}.

But it is the style in which the fourth Gospel is written which distinguishes it most markedly from that of the synoptic records. This style, which is unique, is found in every part of the Gospel, as well as in the three Epistles which are traditionally ascribed to the same author.[1] All the material used by this Evangelist has passed through the medium of his own thought and has been translated into this, his own characteristic idiom, for the style of writing is the same, whether the words are those of St. John the Baptist, of our Lord Himself, or of His opponents: the Evangelist's judgements, comments, and meditations are all cast in the same mould.

To some readers the style in which this Gospel is written may appear monotonous, especially 'in contrast with the wealth of the Synoptic discourses in expression and in imagery',[2] but the style itself bears witness to the nationality of the writer, for it is intensely Jewish: Jewish in its use of direct speech, where we should use indirect; Jewish in its sense of dramatic fitness and in ability to present a scene vividly; Jewish in its use of paradox, parallelism, and rhythm, those poetic features which distinguish the message of the psalmists and prophets, and which meet us again in the earliest collection of our Lord's teaching, as well as in passages peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel.[3] Uniquely impressive and unusual though this style is, it is singularly suitable for the purpose which the Evangelist had in view, and that it is not foreign to our Lord's manner of speaking is evident from passages in the Synoptic tradition, which are expressed in similar language. This is especially true of the well-known passage: 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it is well pleasing in thy sight. All things have

[1] Brooke, *The Johannine Epistles*, pp. i–xix, lxxvii–lxxix.

[2] W. F. Howard, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, p. 215.

[3] e.g. Matt. 10^{40} f.; 11^{28-30}; 25^{31-46}.

been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him'.[1]

It is, however, unquestionable that the difference between this Gospel and the Synoptics is most acutely felt in the great discourses, found in chapters 5 to 10 and 12. These discourses are concerned primarily with the claims of Jesus, and with the controversies which His teaching provoked among the Jewish leaders in Church and State. Naturally such discussions took place for the most part in Jerusalem where, as the Marcan Gospel clearly indicates, our Lord's authority was challenged by the chief priests, and His attitude to the State was questioned by the Herodians.[2] Though different in form, content, and phraseology from those in the first and third Gospels, these discourses undoubtedly contain the substance of our Lord's teaching and faithfully reproduce the characteristic form of His message, even though in the presentation of his material, as well as in his grouping of it, the writer has been guided principally by the needs of Christians in the province of Asia at the close of the first century A.D.[3] 'Less historical in the narrower sense of the word his work may be, but it (his Gospel) is the most historical of all, because here more than anywhere else we read the secret of the significance of Jesus.'[4] This Evangelist has indeed preserved for

[1] Matt. 11^{25-7}; Luke $10^{21, 22}$, a passage belonging to the earliest stratum of Christian tradition.

[2] Mark 11^{27}–12^{37}. 'My own conviction is that most of the controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees took place in Jerusalem and not in Galilee.' Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, vol. i, p. 13.

[3] John 12^{25} is parallel to Mark 8^{35}; Matt. 10^{39} and 16^{25}; Luke 9^{24} and 17^{33}. In John 13^{16}; 15^{20} there is the same teaching as in Matt. 10^{24} and Luke 6^{40}. John 12^{44} and 13^{20} are practically the same as Mark 9^{37}; Matt. 10^{40} and 18^{5}; Luke 9^{48}, 10^{16}. A complete list of such instances will be found in W. F. Howard, op. cit., Appendix F, p. 267. That this Evangelist has preserved sayings not found elsewhere is certain, e.g. 6^{27}; 16^{21}; 20^{29}.

[4] V. Taylor, op. cit., p. 117.

us 'a genuine tradition of an aspect of Jesus' teaching which has not found a place in the Synoptics',[1] but one which is essential to any true understanding of the impression, which our Lord made upon His closest friends, not only by what He taught and what He did, but by what He was. 'We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.'[2] Especially is this true of the teaching preserved in chs. 13–17 which are connected with the Last Supper. Here, too, the fourth Evangelist has not only enriched the earlier records from teaching, preserved in the mind of a disciple peculiarly receptive to it, but he has also given to us an insight into the mind of Jesus as He went to His death. It has been rightly said, that in these chapters 'we are brought nearer than elsewhere into the presence of Christ', and it is not surprising that they have always been dear to both learned and simple, to the scholar and the peasant, to the man of letters and the saint.[3]

But who is the author of this wonderful Gospel, the crown and culmination of the New Testament?

It has been generally recognized that the writer of the fourth Gospel was a Jew who wrote in Greek, but who, since his native tongue was Aramaic, naturally thought in that language. He was familiar with Palestine, and his Gospel reflects with fidelity conditions which existed there in the first century A.D., and which could never have been reproduced after the fall of Jerusalem. This writer was deeply versed in the Old Testament scriptures, and it is highly probable that he too inserted passages from a collection of Old Testament proof texts (Testimonia) which were introduced by a similar formula to that found in the Gospel 'according to Matthew', e.g., 'For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled,

[1] Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism in the Gospels*, vol. i, p. 12.

[2] John 1^{14}, cf. also the frequent references in this Gospel to His glory: 2^{11}; $12^{23, 28}$; $17^{4, 5}$.

[3] Sir Walter Scott, when dying, asked that these chapters should be read to him. Wordsworth found this Gospel 'a fabric of adamant' for his faith.

A bone of him shall not be broken.'[1] He seems to have been familiar not only with the Septuagint (LXX), but with the Hebrew text, of which he gives his own free rendering.[2] The Aramaic names of persons and places are freely used, but they are explained for the benefit of Greek readers,[3] while the title 'the Christ', which is equivalent to the Messiah, is repeatedly employed.[4] This Evangelist calls the attention of his readers to Jewish customs and observances, with which apparently he expects them not to be familiar,[5] and he shows his knowledge not only of Rabbinic methods of argument, but also of Jewish doctrinal controversies current in the first century. He is aware not only of popular Jewish beliefs in regard to the Messiah,[6] but also of those which were characteristic of the official teachers, whose contempt for the unlearned he especially mentions.[7] He knows the importance which the Pharisees attached to the observance of the Sabbath,[8] and their habit of searching the scriptures, and basing their conclusions upon fantastic arguments derived from isolated texts.[9] He shows a more intimate knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem than do the Synoptists, and in his account of the Passion this is especially noticeable. He places the Crucifixion on the day called the Preparation of the Passover, at the time when the Paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple court, and he sees in the fact that the limbs of Jesus were not broken by the Roman guard a fulfilment of the Old Testament injunction in regard to the Paschal lamb.[10] The independent way in which

[1] John 19^{36}.

[2] e.g. John 12^{38}; 19^{24} agreeing with LXX. 12^{40}; 13^{18}; 15^{25}; 19^{37} agreeing with the Hebrew. [3] Rabbi, Rabboni, Kephas, Messiah, Golgotha.

[4] e.g. John 4^{29}; $7^{26, 41}$ f.; 10^{24}.

[5] e.g. ceremonial purification, John 3^{25}; 11^{55}; 18^{28}. The use of spices at burials, 19^{40}; the Preparation of the Passover, $19^{14, 31, 42}$. [6] John $6^{14, 15}$; $7^{27, 31, 41, 42}$.

[7] John 7^{45-52}; 11^{47-53}. [8] John 5^{10-18}; 9^{13-34}. [9] e.g. John 5^{39}.

[10] John 19^{36}; 1 Cor. $5^{7, 8}$; cf. Exod. 12^{46}. Justin Martyr and St. Irenaeus also regard Jesus as the true Paschal lamb. The reliability of the Johannine tradition in regard to the Passion is being increasingly recognized.

this Evangelist narrates the history of the Passion and corrects details found in the synoptic narrative, especially in regard to so important a matter as the date of the Crucifixion, seems to show that we have here the story of an eyewitness, or the record of a writer, who believed that he was relying upon testimony which he regarded as beyond question.

Therefore, the internal evidence goes to prove that the writer of the fourth Gospel was himself a Jew, steeped in the Hebrew scriptures and familiar with Jerusalem, of which he was in all probability a native, yet it does not necessarily prove that he was himself one of the twelve. On the contrary, the Evangelist himself seems to be distinguished from a teacher, to whose authority he appeals as an eyewitness of the tradition, which he has himself preserved in writing. 'And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.'[1] There are also references in this Gospel to an unnamed disciple, who is called the 'beloved disciple', and also 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'.[2] This disciple is as closely connected with St. Peter as is John, the younger son of Zebedee, in the synoptic Gospels and the Acts. Moreover, it seems strange that there should be no reference at all to one of the three Apostles who were admitted to closest fellowship with our Lord, and yet John, the son of Zebedee, is never mentioned, unless it is he to whom the writer refers in this indirect way. That St. John should speak of himself thus seems extremely unlikely, but that disciples of this aged saint were accustomed to refer to the last of those who had companied with the Lord Jesus 'from the baptism of John, to the day that he was received up' by the endearing phrase, which one of them has here preserved for us, is in the highest degree probable, especially as the tradition of the Church from very early days connected the name of John, the son of Zebedee, with the 'disciple whom Jesus loved', who

[1] John 19^{35}.

[2] John 1^{35-40}; 13^{23}; 18^{15} f.; 19^{26}; 20^{2}; 21^{20}.

at the Last Supper reclined on Jesus' bosom, and to whose care His mother was entrusted.[1] If the writer of the Gospel bore the same name as the 'beloved disciple' upon whose witness he relied—for John was a very common name among the Jews—and was himself a younger contemporary,[2] who stood in much the same relation to John, the son of Zebedee, as did John Mark to St. Peter, then we can understand how confusion might arise in regard to authorship.[3] That the Apostle wrote this Gospel with his own hand is nowhere asserted between chapters 1–20; but that it was accepted as that 'according to John' in the sense that it represented what the son of Zebedee was accustomed to teach about the life and work of his Master, Jesus, the Christ, gave to it a place of authority beside the synoptic Gospels. The Apostolic witness was primary; the literary method by which it was preserved in writing was secondary.

The external evidence in regard to authorship may be briefly summarized as follows: (i) the tradition that John, the son of Zebedee, taught in the province of Asia and died at a great age in Ephesus receives strong support from both orthodox and heretical sources. (ii) The identification of John, the son of Zebedee, with 'the beloved disciple' has been based by many upon the testimony borne to it by reliable witnesses such as St. Irenaeus, himself a disciple of St. Polycarp, who had, according to tradition, been a disciple of St. John, and by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus. (iii) The attestation of the Ephesian elders to the authority of the Gospel[4] affords evidence that it enshrines the testimony of an immediate disciple of our Lord, that disciple being no other than 'the beloved

[1] John 13^{23}; 19^{26} *f.* Early Christian writers are explicit about this.

[2] He may in early boyhood have seen the Lord, and if so it would explain such passages as John 1^{14}; 1 John 1^{1}.

[3] Some have suggested that he is to be identified with John the Presbyter to whom Papias refers as being a 'disciple of the Lord'.

[4] John 21^{24}.

disciple'; though they were probably mistaken in thinking that the Apostle wrote it with his own hand.[1]

Therefore, from both internal and external evidence we may conclude that the fourth Evangelist preserved the testimony of John, the son of Zebedee, one of our Lord's most intimate followers, although he himself handled his material with considerable freedom, and shaped it to meet the spiritual needs of Christians in Ephesus towards the end of the first century A.D.

St. Luke, the Gentile historian, prefixed to his record of 'the things which Jesus began to do and to teach' a preface very different from the Prologue in which the fourth Evangelist set out the Godward rather than the manward aspect of the Christ—a conception which lies at the root of all that follows in the Gospel itself. It had been a fundamental belief of Judaism that God is life and light,[2] and these two conceptions are in the Prologue ascribed to Him, whose teaching and whose Person the Jews rejected, because 'they loved darkness rather than light'. The purpose of the Evangelist is to connect the Son's work of redemption with the Father's work of creation, and to show the same Person to be active in both. 'All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.'[3] St. Paul, who tells us that he relied upon the testimony of those Apostles whom he calls 'the pillars',[4] held the same belief and had expressed it many years earlier to Christians in the same province of Asia in the words: 'who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist'.[5] Both St. Paul

[1] On the question of authorship see W. F. Howard, op. cit., pp. 230–5. Bernard, op. cit., pp. xxxiv–lxxi.

[2] Gen. 1^3; 2^7; Ps. 27^1; 36^9. [3] John $1^{3,4}$. [4] Gal. 2^9.

[5] Col. 1^{15-17}; 2^9; cf. 1 Cor. 8^6; 2 Cor. 5^{18} f.; Eph. 1^{9-10}; Heb. 1^{1-4}.

and the writer of the Prologue are true to their Jewish upbringing, yet they interpret that which they have 'learnt and have been assured of' to Greek-speaking Christians in terms with which their hearers have themselves been familiar from their youth, but the full significance of which only the Christian revelation can make real to them.

In the stately and beautiful hymn which forms the Prologue to the Gospel we have a summary of Christian doctrine from a theological point of view. The term 'Logos' (or Word) is used, for by it the Greeks were accustomed to describe the medium through which God became known to men, as a man's thought becomes known to his fellows through his spoken word. God spoke to men: Jesus, 'who is God Himself in the reality of manhood' is the Word through whom He spoke and was revealed; and He is all, and far more than all, that either Jewish or Greek thinkers had claimed for the divine Word (or Logos). It was because 'God so loved the world' that the Word 'was made flesh and dwelt among us', and, being God, lived as perfect man among men a truly human life. The world did not recognize Him for what He was, and His own race, the Jews, rejected Him; yet to those whose spiritual insight was clear He gave power to become sons of God. In receiving Him they found that they were entirely changed, re-born spiritually, indwelt by a new power and possessed of fresh gifts of grace and truth. 'Thus in Jesus all the obscure things of the incomprehensible God are translated, as far as practical human needs require, into the intelligible lineaments of a human character. "He that hath seen" Jesus "hath seen the Father." "He is the light which lighteth every man", and He is the principle of rational order in the whole universe of His creation.'[1]

[1] Gore, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 240. Cf. Scott Holland, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 140. 'We were brought into contact with that uttermost and absolute reality which is God Himself. He whom no human eye can see was made known to us,

The Gospel ended originally with the confession of the faith of Christendom by the doubter St. Thomas, and the Evangelist's own statement of his purpose in writing. Then, at some later date, probably after the death of the last of the Apostles, St. John, the final chapter was added as an epilogue. It may have been written at the request of the Ephesian elders, whose attestation it carries, but it has been considered by many, chiefly on the ground of style, to be the work of the author of the Gospel as a whole. Its purpose was to explain a saying of the Lord, which had been interpreted to mean that 'the beloved disciple' would live to see the Second Coming of his Master, and to correct a misunderstanding in regard to it.

The writer of the fourth Gospel had long meditated upon the life of Jesus, the Christ, and he compiled his 'spiritual Gospel' to confirm the faith of Christians, both Jews and Greeks, living in a world of speculation not altogether unlike our own. His Gospel is rooted in history; the reality of the human experience of the Son of God is stressed even more than in the Marcan record, and yet the writer is not content to set forth 'the bodily facts' alone. Conscious that he is led by the Spirit of truth, whose advent was promised by the Lord before His Passion, the Evangelist draws out the inner significance of the Incarnate life, and illustrates by the incidents which he has chosen for narration that Christ is the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the true Vine, the Saviour of the World, the revelation of the Father and the means of access to Him. Everywhere the heavenly lesson is revealed through the earthly fact, and the divine glory breaks through, irradiating the whole texture of the earthly life of Jesus. 'The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we contemplated his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

as our own God and Father, through the manifestation made in us by Him who was everlastingly one with Him, heart to heart and face to face, His very Son.'

VII

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE term 'Canon' is derived from a Greek word meaning a standard or rule. It is used in regard both to the Old and New Testaments to describe the literature, whether Jewish or Christian, in which the standard of belief and practice is set forth; hence, it came to be applied specifically to the list of sacred books, which were regarded as authoritative for doctrine and which were read in public worship. The first steps towards the formation of the Old Testament Canon were probably taken during the Exile, and the process was only completed at the great Synod held at Jamnia at the end of the first century A.D. The three divisions of the Hebrew scriptures, viz. the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, represent approximately the stages by which the Canon gradually came into being and gained official recognition.

The Christian Church was the 'heir to the promises made to the fathers', and the Christian missionaries, themselves Jews, appealing at first only to their fellow Jews, turned to the Law and the Prophets in order to prove that 'the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets', He had fulfilled in sending Jesus the Christ.[1] The Old Testament scriptures were from the first the Bible of the Christian Church; they were read in public worship, they were appealed to in support of the Christian doctrine of the new community, and they were thus found to be 'profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness'.[2] There was, in the earliest days of Christianity, no idea that any other writings could either supplement or supersede them. At the same time, as we can see from the Acts of the Apostles as well as from St. Paul's Epistles, the record of the life and work of Jesus was being appended to the Jewish scriptures, and

[1] Acts 3^{18}.

[2] 2 Tim. 3^{16}.

interpreted by the light which these sacred writings shed upon the purpose of God revealed in Him.[1]

From the first the twelve Apostles bore living witness to those facts of our Lord's Life, Death, and Resurrection which we now find in the Gospels, and the message that 'every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins'[2] was proclaimed in public places and in private houses, in cities and in villages, from Judaea to Samaria, from Jerusalem to Caesarea and Damascus. But whenever and wherever groups of Christians met on the first day of the week for 'the breaking of bread and the prayers', the incidents of the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection would be commemorated by the personal followers of Jesus, and His mighty words and works called to remembrance. The way was thus being prepared for those written documents, which were to preserve for ever the oral traditions delivered by men who had heard the voice of the Son of Man, and had seen Him face to face. 'The time is one in which precious fragments are treasured for their immediate interest and value; Christian hands are full of jewels, but there is no desire to weave a crown.'[3]

However, it was not long before circumstances made a written document, or documents, necessary, and it was in response to the practical needs of Christian teachers that the first Christian writing, or scripture, was given permanent shape. Missionary work, begun by Greek-speaking Jewish Christians in Antioch on the Orontes, a very famous city with a strangely varied population,[4] necessitated the delivery of the 'good news' in Greek, and, as we have already seen, it was not long before a collection of the Sayings of the Lord Jesus was provided in that language, in order that 'ministers of the word'

[1] e.g. Acts 8^{35}; 18^{28}. [2] Acts 10^{43}.

[3] V. Taylor, op. cit., p. 175.

[4] When Christianity reached Antioch it came into the full stream of the life of the Roman Empire.

might the more easily teach the new law of the kingdom to those Gentiles, who were ready to make a complete breach with their old manner of life.

Moreover, as soon as the missionary work of St. Paul had resulted in the establishment of the Church in the provinces of Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia, letters of exhortation, reproof, or counsel were sent to their spiritual children by those missionaries to whom they owed their Christianity, and it seems to have been customary to read these letters when the brethren were assembled for worship. Such letters, or epistles, were not only communicated to those to whom they were originally addressed, but they were sometimes passed on to neighbouring Christian communities.[1] After the death of the writer, or even before, it seems likely that his letters were collected, and that copies were made and distributed; in this way small collections of documents would tend to be formed in more than one locality. Interesting evidence for this practice may be found in the letter, sent to St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, from the Christians at Philippi, asking for letters of St. Ignatius. As leader of the Christians St. Ignatius, the second Bishop of Antioch, was arrested and sent to Rome in charge of a body of soldiers. On the way he wrote letters, seven in all, to Christian communities which had sent representatives to greet him at Smyrna, and to others whom he had met on his journey. He also addressed a letter to Christians in Rome. After his martyrdom in the Colosseum (about A.D. 115) the Philippians wrote to the Bishop of Smyrna asking for any letters of Ignatius possessed by the Christians in that city, in order that they might be copied and added to their own collection. Bishop Polycarp in his reply says: 'The letters of Ignatius sent to us by him, and all the rest which we had by us, we have sent to

[1] The Epistle to the Ephesians was probably a circular letter intended for other cities in the province of Asia besides Ephesus. Col. 4^{16} shows that epistles were exchanged.

you, as you enjoined. They are attached to this letter . . . If ye have any more certain knowledge concerning Ignatius himself, and those with him, inform us.'[1]

From such a passage as this it may reasonably be inferred, that the Church was already in possession of a considerable number of documents from the hands of Apostles and those who had been instructed by them. Some of the latter were so highly esteemed by Christians, and were for many years so popular that, for a time, they even found a place in the Canon of New Testament books: the Epistle of Barnabas, written by an Alexandrian Christian, and the Shepherd of Hermas, an allegorical writing belonging to the first half of the second century, are examples of such works.[2] There were, however, others which, though popular for a time and in certain special localities, never won general recognition. Among these were several apocryphal Gospels, which were written for edification or to satisfy devout curiosity about the mother of our Lord, or about His infancy and childhood,[3] and apocryphal Acts containing traditions about St. Peter and St. Paul.[4] A Gospel 'according to the Hebrews' held for many years a position of authority among the scattered communities of Jewish Christians who, having been excluded from Jerusalem by the edict of Hadrian in A.D. 135, were settled on the east of the Jordan. None of these documents, however, were widely circulated, nor were they generally regarded as being in any way comparable to the four Gospels in authority, and after a time they ceased to exercise any influence upon the Church in the Graeco-Roman world. Nevertheless, the existence of Christian writings of such very doubtful value gradually compelled the Church

[1] Kidd, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church*, p. 47.

[2] Both these writings are found at the end of the Codex Sinaiticus, a Greek MS. belonging to the fourth century, recently acquired by the British Museum.

[3] e.g. The Protevangelium of James and the Gospel of Thomas.

[4] e.g. The Acts of Paul, containing the episode of Paul and Thecla, and the Acts of Peter, in which is found the well-known 'Quo Vadis' story.

to discriminate between those records, which could claim apostolic authority, and these spurious documents. To us it may seem strange that the Church was so slow to realize the need for a decision in regard to the books, which were to be recognized as of equal authority for the teaching of the *New* Covenant with those which were already accepted as valid for a knowledge of the *Old* Covenant to which, as the New Israel, the Church was heir. But just because the decision, when made, had been reached naturally and almost inevitably, it had an authority which came to be universally acknowledged.

By the middle of the second century it became imperative for the Church to meet the challenge of those teachers, who claimed to supplement Apostolic writings from unapostolic sources, and the need for a list of sacred books, to which appeal could be made in cases of dispute, began to be more acutely felt. Men who claimed to be Christians were teaching various strange doctrines, which proved very attractive to those converts who, whether consciously or not, brought over into Christianity pagan ideas of conduct, as well as pagan ways of thinking, which were wholly incompatible with Christian belief and practice.[1] The variety of these speculations, generally known as Gnosticism, was bewildering; but common to them all was the belief that matter was evil. Now this belief could not be held by a Christian, for he knew that by His Incarnation and by becoming truly man the Son of God had shown that to be false. Nevertheless, these fantastic ideas became widely popular, and writings in which they found expression were soon in circulation, claiming the authority of Apostles or of their friends and disciples. Naturally Christians wanted to know which writings contained the teaching handed down through the Apostles from the Lord Jesus Himself, and which

[1] 'Gnosticism was in fact an attempt on the part of early thinkers to graft the faith in Christ upon a pagan stem.'

were to be regarded as unworthy of credence. The opinions expressed by individual bishops and teachers about these disputed documents began to gain more than local recognition and acceptance and, by a gradual process of selection and limitation, collections of writings were formed in the chief centres of Christianity, and the way was thus slowly being prepared for the formation of the first New Testament Canon. The basis of any Canon was a belief in the Apostolic authority of the writings included in it, and the four Gospels were, about the middle of the second century, universally accepted as occupying the premier place in such a list, for 'the Lord of all gave to His Apostles the power of the Gospel' and they not only preached it 'all alike and severally', but set it forth in writing. It was, therefore, the struggle to overcome false teaching within her gates which compelled the Church to define her sacred books.

One Gnostic teacher, named Marcion, took a step which was destined to have far-reaching consequences, and which really hastened the Church's decision in regard to this most important matter. About A.D. 140 Marcion came to Rome from Sinope in Pontus, and for four years he was a Christian teacher. Then, having fallen under the influence of a Syrian Gnostic named Cerdon, he developed heretical opinions and was excommunicated by the Roman Church. As he was not only a very able man, but also a man of austere life and great religious zeal, he soon made many converts. Realizing the value of the Church's organization, he adopted it for his followers, but he also provided them with a small collection of sacred writings: in fact, he gave to his sect a much abridged Bible called the *Evangelium* and the *Apostolicum*. Since Marcion rejected the Old Testament entirely, and believed that the Apostles had failed to understand Christ, and that St. Paul alone had fully grasped His teaching, he included in his Canon ten Pauline Epistles and the third Gospel, after having carefully

removed from these writings any passages which did not harmonize with his own peculiar ideas. 'Thus Marcion for the first time emphatically presented, both to the Jewish and to the Christian world, the conception of a fixed and definite collection of Christian literature, conceived of as having canonical authority *over against and in distinction from the Old Testament*.'[1]

Marcion claimed for his teaching the authority of one Apostle and of one Gospel, but the Church could reply by appealing to the teaching preserved in the churches founded by Apostles, and to the four Gospels which were the peculiar treasures of those churches. Moreover, not only were all the Epistles of St. Paul regarded by Christians as profitable for teaching and instruction, but the Epistles attributed to St. Peter, St. James, and St. John were recognized as being of equal authority. 'Thus the Church was able to meet Marcion's somewhat crooked appeal to one Gospel by an appeal which could be made with equal justice to St. Paul and to certain of the original Twelve.'[2] Further, the Church also possessed in the Acts of the Apostles a valuable history of the early days of the Church, and a record of the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem and Antioch through the provinces of the Empire to Rome itself. All that was needed was that the Church should declare that these books were to be acknowledged as being of equal validity with those of the Old Testament, since they contained that final revelation for which the Hebrew scriptures had prepared the way. This could not be done in a hurry, and, although the task was not actually completed until the end of the fourth century, the first steps towards the preparation of such a Canon of scripture appear to have been taken in Rome as early as A.D. 180. Unfortunately we only possess a fragment of the earliest list of the New Testament writings acknowledged as

[1] Streeter, op. cit., p. 6.

[2] Leighton Pullan, *Church of the Fathers*, p. 91.

scripture by the Roman Church, and drawn up, probably, by the famous scholar Hippolytus;[1] it was evidently framed during a period of controversy, for it condemns certain Gnostic writings. It also shows that the Church was not yet sure which Christian documents ought to be accepted or rejected for, speaking of the Epistles of St. Peter, the writer says 'and of Peter (one Epistle which) only we receive; (there is also a second) which some of our friends will not have read in the Church',[2] but he includes the Shepherd of Hermas, although he himself regarded it as being suitable for private reading only. Speaking of writings forged under the name of St. Paul to suit the heresy of Marcion, he adds: 'There are also several others which cannot be received into the Catholic Church, for it is not suitable for gall to be mingled with honey.'

By the end of the second century the use by Melito, Bishop of Sardis, of the phrase the *Old* Testament to describe the Hebrew scriptures shows that the phrase *New* Testament was already being employed to designate the writings of the *New* Covenant, which were thus placed on the same level as those which had hitherto been regarded as having a unique claim to authority. The Canon of the New Testament was not finally decided until the Council of Carthage met in A.D. 397, but the majority of the books which now find a place in our New Testament were 'acknowledged' as scripture as early as A.D. 180, and the peculiar authority of the four Gospels was established even earlier. There remained, however, a small number of 'disputed' books, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and the Apocalypse, which were only admitted to the Canon after some discussion had taken place, and others, like the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas which, though popular, were not ultimately

[1] Hippolytus (A.D. 155–236) was a pupil of Irenaeus; he was one of the most learned men of his day.

[2] Gwatkin, *Selections from Early Christian Writers*, p. 87.

thought worthy of a place in the Canon. In fact, the process by which the Canon gradually assumed its final form was not unlike that which took place in regard to the Creed, which grew by addition of statement of fact, so as to give complete, though still simple, instruction about 'the Lord Jesus' until it attained a form which could claim œcumenical authority.

We have already traced the steps by which before the year A.D. 100 oral tradition in regard to the life and teaching of our Lord gave place to written records and our four Gospels were compiled; we have also seen that by the year A.D. 200 the mind of the Church had been made up in regard to the majority of the books, which were to be read in public worship and acknowledged as authoritative for guidance in matters of faith and practice. We must now turn to the writings of some of the leaders of the Church, in order to illustrate the different ways in which Apostolic writings, and especially the four Gospels, were appealed to by Christian writers in support of their teaching, and in the defence of Christianity against error. It will be convenient to confine our attention to examples of the use of the four Gospels by such well-known Christians as St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr, Tatian, and St. Irenaeus of Lyons, for these writers are representative of the Church in different parts of the Roman Empire, and their writings are characteristic of different periods between A.D. 95–190.

First, however, we should notice that 'the memoirs of the Apostles', as Justin Martyr calls them, were not referred to as 'Gospels' until the middle of the second century. It has been suggested that the word 'Gospel' was first used at Rome of the 'Gospel according to Mark', and that it was subsequently applied to other lives of Christ.[1] The Jews, as we know, were in the habit of referring to the books contained in the Pentateuch by a word which occurred in the opening sentence of

[1] Streeter, op. cit., pp. 497 ff.

each volume. For example, the word Genesis comes to us through the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the first Hebrew word in Genesis 1, meaning 'in the beginning'. Now the Marcan Gospel opens with the words 'The beginning of the *gospel* of Jesus Christ'. When portions of this book were read in public worship some title was needed as preface, and as the first word would be similar in meaning to that already used for Genesis, the second word, *evangelion*, meaning gospel or good news, would seem more suitable and may, therefore, have been employed. At a later date the different Gospels were distinguished from each other by the phrase 'according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John', as the case might be. We must, however, remember that they were all written without any division into chapters or verses; that they were written in capital letters without any break between the words, without full stops or commas, that they were all copied by hand, and that the manuscript of a Gospel read in Rome would, in some respects, differ from a manuscript of the same Gospel read in Ephesus or in Alexandria.

We will now illustrate from the writings of these leading Christian teachers in the sub-apostolic age,[1] the unique position of authority which the Gospels occupied, the way in which they were quoted, and the gradual movement by which the New Testament Canon came into existence and was universally accepted.

By the earliest teachers the Gospel 'according to Matthew' was most frequently used,[2] probably because (*a*) it so clearly showed the fulfilment of prophecy, (*b*) the teaching of our Lord was grouped in that Gospel in such a way that it was especially suitable for catechetical purposes. At the end of the

[1] The sub-apostolic age is that in which the successors to the Apostles were the chief teachers.

[2] e.g. by St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Smyr. i. 1; cf. Matt. 3^{15}. Polyc. i. 2, 3; Matt. 8^{17}.

first and the beginning of the second century the minds of Christians were so saturated with the familiar words of the Gospels that they wove them almost unconsciously into their writings, and seldom quoted them exactly. The letter of St. Polycarp to the Philippians is 'an unconscious mosaic' of New Testament quotations, and that of St. Clement, Bishop of Rome, written to the Corinthians in A.D. 95 or 96, contains the following summary of our Lord's teaching on long-suffering and forbearance.

> Thus He (the Lord Jesus) spake:
> Shew mercy, that you may receive mercy;
> Forgive, that you may be forgiven;
> As you do, so shall it be done to you;
> As you give, so shall it be given to you;
> As you judge, so shall you be judged;
> As you are kind, so shall you be treated kindly;
> With what measure you measure, therewith shall it be measured to you.[1]

Although this passage reproduces the substance of teaching found in the Sermon on the Mount, we notice at once a considerable difference, for St. Clement appears to be quoting from memory rather than from a written document.[2] It almost looks as if we have here an example of the way in which sayings of our Lord were sometimes arranged, in order to fix them in the memory of the hearer.

In writings belonging to the early years of the second century we notice that the Gospels are reproduced more exactly, and that the selected passages are no longer being quoted from memory, but from written documents. The letters of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, contain few direct quotations

[1] V. H. Stanton, op. cit., vol. i, p. 6.

[2] The summary in St. Polycarp's Epistle, written about A.D. 115, agrees more closely with the wording of our Gospels, and the first and eighth Beatitudes are added.

from the Christian scriptures; but in them are to be found echoes of the language of the fourth Gospel, as well as several passages which seem to show that the writer was especially familiar with the Gospel 'according to Matthew'.[1] The writer of the Christian manual known as the *Didache*, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, speaks of 'the prayer which the Lord in the Gospels commanded us to pray'; he then quotes it from the first Gospel, almost word for word. Elsewhere he combines passages from the first and third Gospels, and uses language ('as ye have it in the Gospel') which seems to indicate that his authority was a document. The Shepherd of Hermas contains passages which are parallel to sayings found in the four Gospels.[2]

The first writer who refers directly to the memoirs of the Apostles as 'Gospels' is Justin Martyr. He was converted at Ephesus and came to Rome, where he taught as a philosopher. About A.D. 150 he wrote an *Apologia*, or Defence of Christianity, which he presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. In order to refute the charges of atheism and immorality which were commonly brought against Christians, he described what they did when they met on Sunday 'the day on which we hold our common assembly, because it is the day . . . on which Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead'. And he adds: 'For the Apostles in the records which they made, and which are called the Gospels, have declared that Jesus commanded them to do as follows.' In another place Justin refers to the Apostles as 'those who made memoirs of all the things concerning our Saviour Jesus Christ'.

The next witness to the authority of the four Gospels and

[1] 'The allusions of Ignatius to the actions and words of the Lord exhibit a tradition closely akin to that found in St. Matthew's Gospel with which these Epistles exhibit more numerous parallels than with any other N.T. writing.' J. H. Srawley, *The Epistles of St. Ignatius*, p. 29.

[2] For a list of such passages see Stanton, op. cit., pp. 70–5.

to the unique position which they occupied in the Roman Church is Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr. He came from Mesopotamia to Rome and while there, or soon after his return about A.D. 170, he compiled a Harmony of the Gospels known as the *Diatessaron* or 'the Gospel of Jesus Christ by means of the Four' (Evangelists), in which he carefully arranged passages from the four Gospels in order to make a connected account of our Lord's life. Whether the *Diatessaron* was originally written in Greek, or whether Tatian himself translated the Gospel passages into Syriac, is uncertain; but during the third and fourth centuries this Harmony was the only text from which the Gospel was read in public worship in the Syriac-speaking Church of Edessa, and even when copies of the separate Gospels in Syriac were available, it would seem that the Christians there were with difficulty persuaded by their bishops to use them in place of the Harmony with which they had for so long been familiar. The evidence of Tatian's work is valuable, for it clearly shows that by the middle of the second century the four Gospels, which we now find in our Bibles, were the only ones recognized as authoritative by those 'who follow the apostolic doctrines'.

The next witness to the way in which the four Gospels were regarded in the latter part of the second century is St. Irenaeus. He was born in the province of Asia about A.D. 120, and as a young man he was taught by St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had himself known John, 'the disciple of the Lord', and who used to describe 'his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord and how he would relate their words'.[1] Irenaeus taught for some years in Rome and then became Bishop of Lyons (Lugdunum) in succession to Pothinus, who had been martyred in the terrible persecution which broke out there in A.D. 177. His best known work is that entitled *Against Heresies, a Refutation of the Knowledge*

[1] Letter of Irenaeus to Florinus. Gwatkin, op. cit., p. 95.

falsely so called. He refutes the false teaching of the Gnostics, and invokes against them the tradition of the Church and the authority of the scriptures. He maintains that St. Peter and St. Paul taught a common body of Christian truth, and refers to 'the well-known Church, founded by the two most glorious Apostles Peter and Paul at Rome'. He declares that 'the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and where John lived unto the days of Trajan, is also a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles'.[1] Over against the claims put forward on behalf of Gnostic literature, he asserts the authority and inspiration of the four Gospels and of these alone. In defending them he uses illustrations which may to us seem strange, but which are important, as showing that these four alone were regarded as being of unique authority for the knowledge of the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that they had been for so long a time regarded in this way that their position was no longer open to question.[2] 'It is impossible that the Gospels should be in number either more or fewer than these. For since there are four regions of the world wherein we are, and four principal winds, and the Church is as seed sown in the whole earth, and the Gospel is the Church's pillar and ground, and the breath of life: it is natural that it should have four pillars, from all quarters breathing incorruption, and kindling men into life.'[3] 'This Fourfold gospel, held together by one Spirit, is like the Order of the Universe in its completeness, compactness and strength.'[4]

The last document to which we must turn is the earliest known list of the books which were accepted as canonical by the Church in Rome.[5] Part of it is missing, but the fragment which we still possess was discovered in 1740 by Muratori,

[1] Kidd, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church*, vol. i, p. 124.

[2] The evidence of Irenaeus is of special value as he was familiar with the traditions of the Church in Asia, Rome, and Gaul.

[3] Kidd, op. cit., p. 126.

[4] V. H. Stanton, op. cit., vol. i, p. 244.

[5] See p. 103.

the librarian at Milan: hence its name, the Muratorian Fragment on the Canon. It represents the official view of the Roman Church near the end of the second century and, since it is the earliest list of New Testament writings which has come down to us, the testimony which it bears to the Apostolic authority of the accepted writings should carry weight. Of the third Gospel we are told 'Luke wrote in his own name in order, after the Ascension of Christ, and when Paul had associated him with himself as one studious of right. Nor did he himself see the Lord in the flesh; and he, according as he was able to accomplish it, began his narrative with the nativity of John.

'The fourth gospel is that of John, one of the disciples .... And hence although different points are taught us in several books of the Gospels, there is no difference as regards the faith of believers, inasmuch as in all of them all things are related under one sovereign Spirit which concern the (Lord's) nativity, His passion, His resurrection, His conversation with His disciples, and His twofold advent, the first in the humiliation of rejection, which is now past, and the second in the glory of royal power, which is yet in the future.'[1]

Thus we see that by the year A.D. 200 the majority of the books, which to-day find a place in the New Testament, were recognized by the Church in the great centres of Christendom as containing a reliable record of Apostolic teaching.[2] The unanimity thus reached was not arrived at by discussion or argument, nor was it imposed from without by the decision of a Council. It expressed a conviction which had long been held, and which was founded upon the belief that the Gospels preserved the witness of Apostles, or of apostolic men who had been their companions or disciples, and that no other writings had an equal claim to be regarded as trustworthy. 'A community',

[1] Kidd, op. cit., p. 167.

[2] The exceptions were the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse (Revelation), and some of the Catholic or general Epistles.

says Dr. Streeter, 'can only invest with canonical authority literature which is already ancient, and which has already, by its own intrinsic merit, attained to a high degree of authority and repute. Official canonisation cannot create scripture; it can only recognise as inspired books which already enjoy considerable prestige.'[1]

Behind these four Gospels stands the witness of the living Church as a whole; yet each represented the Apostolic tradition as preserved by the Church in the most notable cities of the Empire. At Rome the memoirs of St. Peter had been preserved by John Mark, who himself represented the tradition of Jerusalem, and at Ephesus the witness of John, the son of Zebedee, had been recorded by an unknown disciple of that aged Apostle. At Antioch the first collection of our Lord's teaching had been incorporated by the first Evangelist in a Jewish Christian Gospel, while the third Evangelist gathered up and combined in a Gospel of supreme beauty the treasures of Caesarea, Antioch, and Rome. There is an old Jewish legend which says, that when God gave the Law from Mount Sinai His Voice sounded from north and south, east and west, from heaven above and from the depths beneath. The Voice went out into the world and the nations heard it each in their own tongue, and the Voice was to each one as each had power to receive it. This is a parable which may be applied with even more force to the new Law, and its truth the student will prove, as he ponders the words of the Gospels with growing experience and undiminished patience. It is he himself alone who limits the meaning which he finds in them. 'Literature has no books which can justly be compared with the Gospels, which indeed come to us from men, but in the last analysis are the gifts of God, seals of His grace and sacraments of His love.'[2]

[1] Streeter, op. cit., p. 4.

[2] V. Taylor, op. cit., p. 189.

INDEX

Acts of the Apostles, 23, 49, 54, 97, 102.
Antioch, 27, 29, 73, 98.
Aramaic, 9, 17, 27, 35, 38, 68, 89.

Beloved disciple, 91, 92.
Bethlehem, 59, 62, 68, 75.
Bezan text, 50.

Covenant, 46, 77, 100, 103.
Crucifixion, 46, 58, 78, 90 f.

David, Son of, 14, 22, 59, 70, 75, 77 f.
Diatessaron, 108.
Didache, 107.

Epistle of Clement, 106.
— of Barnabas, 25, 99, 103.
— to the Hebrews, 18, 24, 103.
Eusebius, 28, 50, 73.

Gnosticism, 100, 109.
God-fearers, 10, 27.

Hippolytus, 103.

Ignatius, St., 72, 99, 105, 107.
Irenaeus, St., 36, 49, 92, 104, 108 f.

James, St., 23, 24 n.
John the Baptist, St., 21, 27, 42, 61, 76, 82.
John, St., son of Zebedee, 43, 62, 80, 91 f., 93, 95.
Justin Martyr, 25, 28, 49, 104, 107.

Law and Prophets, 10, 17, 19, 21, 75 f., 96.
Luke, St., 49–51.

Marcion, 101 f.
Mark, St., 33–5, 38 f., 40, 82.
Matthew, St., 65, 73 n.
Messiah, 14, 19 f., 22, 26, 44 f., 59, 69 f., 77, 90.
Moses, 12, 20, 67, 75 f.
Muratorian Canon, 49, 103, 110.

Nazareth, 15, 19, 65, 68, 76.
Nazirite, 68.

Papias, 28, 35, 39, 74.
Parables, 43, 54, 66.
Passover, 19, 45, 47, 82, 90.
Paul, St., 26, 34 f., 48 f., 50 f., 53, 73, 93, 99, 110.
Peter, St., 23, 34 f., 39–44, 47, 54, 62, 71, 73, 91, 99.
Philip, St., 24, 52 f.
Pilate, 46, 71.
Polycarp, St., 92, 98, 106, 108.
Proto-Luke, 55–8.

Q document, 29–32, 55, 66, 70, 73, 81.

Resurrection, 47, 48, 55, 97.

Samaria, Samaritans, 52 f., 62.
Septuagint (LXX), 9, 50, 90, 105.
Sermon on the Mount, 27, 31, 66, 82, 106.
Shepherd of Hermas, 99, 103, 107.

Tatian, 104, 108.
Temptation, 20, 27, 81.
Testimonia, 25, 67, 89.
Transfiguration, 45, 62, 81.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, OXFORD
BY JOHN JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY