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THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM

I

ON comparing the Synoptic Gospels one with another we find that as regards their matter and order of events, as well as the actual words they used, great similarities and no less considerable differences are to be found. About one third of their matter is common to all three writers. Of the \pm 660 verses of Mark \pm 600 are represented in Matthew and \pm 350 in Luke.

What then is the explanation of the remarkable harmony and no less remarkable divergence in the three accounts?

There are three main groups of solutions offered to this question which all N.T. scholars have to face.

In the first place we have the Oral tradition theory held by Westcott and others, especially conservative scholars. By this theory the similarities and differences in the Synoptic Gospels are explained as resulting from the fact that the apostolic tradition through the earliest preaching would soon have received a more or less coherent form. The preaching thus would have become more and more stereotyped, and especially through the catechetical instruction which was given from the earliest times after Pentecost, a standardized form of tradition would rapidly have been produced, and finally crystallized into the Gospels. Mark is thus held to be the Gospel preached by Peter, and Luke the Gospel preached by Paul.

Although the oral tradition undoubtedly played a very important part in the origin of our Gospels, it is by itself entirely inadequate to explain all the phenomena; especially the minute verbal similarities revealed by a close comparison of the contents.

We turn thus to the next theory, namely, The Theory of Written Sources. In its simplest form it is known as the Two Document Theory, which is to the effect that the fundamental basis on which Matthew and Luke were built is consti-

tuted by Mark and a document Q, which accounts for the large amount of common material in Matthew and Luke which is not found in Mark.

Dr. Streeter, however, in *The Four Gospels* proposed a revised form of this theory of written sources, namely, the "Four Document Hypothesis". He holds that a plurality of sources is historically more probable, and so analyses the non-Markan matter in Luke into at least Q and L (where L represents the matter peculiar to his Gospel, which he received from the local tradition at Caesarea). Similarly he maintains that Matthew used a peculiar source (which he styles M) in addition to Q. This supposed source (M) he finds to be Judaistic in character and so assigns to it a Jerusalem origin. Q he connects with Antioch and suggests that it is an Antiochene translation of a document originally composed in Aramaic—perhaps by the Apostle Matthew for Galilean Christians.

Apart from Streeter's theory there are numerous others of the same group, but differing from each other in many points. As Streeter seems to have the biggest following we shall take his theories into consideration, as representative of the written source theories.

Let us now turn to the third group, namely, The Theory of Mutual or Successive Dependence. To quote J. M. Barton in his Introduction to Chapman's book *Matthew, Mark and Luke*. "This hypothesis . . . does not claim to be entirely self-sufficient when it seeks the explanation of the problem in the use by later evangelists of the writings of their predecessors. It allows that each of the evangelists possessed written sources and oral traditions peculiar to himself. But its principal merit is that it preserves, at one and the same time, traditional teaching and the most certain result of modern criticism—the use of one Gospel by another or others. In the form in which the theory is usually presented, it is claimed that, in the first place, Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic and that this was used by Mark. Next the Greek translation of Matthew was made, in partial dependence on Mark and in substantial conformity with the Aramaic original. Finally, Luke wrote, following Mark closely and depending in some measure upon Matthew." Zahn, the great conservative German Protestant scholar, held in the main this view (see his Introduction to the N.T., Part II). Chapman himself accepts this

theory of mutual or successive dependence in a general sense, but with one important exception. To quote J. B. Barton's words again: "It is one of the principal findings of the present book that the *Greek Matthew* served as Mark's chief source, in the sense that Peter, when preaching at Rome, had the Greek Matthew before him and adapted it in his own way to his hearers' needs."

Chapman holds that our first Gospel is the work of the Apostle Matthew, who wrote it in Aramaic probably at Jerusalem any time during the period after our Lord's ascension and \pm A.D. 60, using in the main notes taken down by himself during his time of contact with Christ, and other first hand reports of those things which he did not see or hear himself. Peter would naturally have been acquainted with this Gospel of Matthew of which, at least before A.D. 62, a Greek translation came into his possession, before Mark was written. Concerning the latter Chapman writes: "It would seem that St. Peter is the real author (of Mark), that he is addressing Gentile converts, that he gives only what he himself remembers, that he omits whatever he thinks unsuitable to Gentiles: that he uses our actual Greek Matthew as his textbook, that he reads out of it, in his own wording, whatever he has chosen, in conversational language, with much addition, with many verbal repetitions and all the vividness of personal recollections.

"Mark is present, and takes the lectures down as far as possible word for word, in shorthand. He preserves carefully the redundancies, the pleonasms, the historic present, the recurring *εὐθύς* 'straight away', and the freshness" (p. 90).

The question inevitably arises: Why would Peter being an Apostle and eyewitness make use of Matthew, even if it is granted that Matthew is the work of an Apostle? The obvious answer is that he did not trust his own memory, and it is exceedingly likely that he would have been willing to refresh his memory when preaching on matters which had taken place a number of years before. As Zahn says: "An intelligent author is always glad to make use of existing records in the preparation of his own work" (Introduction, p. 582). Nothing seems to me more probable than that, if Peter was acquainted with Matthew's Gospel, he would gladly use it to refresh his memory, knowing that it was a trustworthy account, and, while retelling parts of it, would add vivid personal

recollections. There is thus no historical improbability in the theory that Peter took Matthew as the text for his lectures on the Life of Christ.

The main purpose of this essay is to set out the internal evidence which seems to me to support Chapman's view. But a few remarks on the external evidence, especially with regard to the First Gospel, and the grounds on which the critics propose to set it aside are necessary. By the middle of the second century the belief in the Church that there were four authoritative Gospels was on so firm a basis that Irenaeus could work out elaborate arguments to show that by the necessities of the case there must be four Gospels, and only four. Such a belief points to an oral tradition going back to a much earlier time.

During the period 180-220 Matthew and John who were Apostles, and Mark and Luke who were disciples of Apostles, were everywhere regarded as the authors of the four books which, even as early as A.D. 150, were commonly called Gospels (Justin, Apology i. 66). Apart from the case of the small Alogi sect, who for doctrinal reasons disputed the Apostolic authorship of John's Gospel in 170, the tradition of the Church embodied in the titles of the Gospels was disputed by no one in the second century, whether by persons inside or outside the Church (Zahn, Introduction, p. 389). Even Marcion and other heretics, who would certainly have jumped at any opportunity of disproving the Apostolic authorship of the Gospels, left the tradition on this point unassailed.

Also as regards the order of composition, Matthew first, then Mark, Luke and John, tradition is unanimous with no indication of uncertainty (e.g. Irenaeus, Origen, and the author of the Muratorian fragment). Only Clement of Alexandria shows a slight divergence by stating that Luke was second and Mark third.

In particular with regard to the First Gospel, tradition is unanimous on two points, first that it was written by the Apostle Matthew, and secondly that it was written in "Hebrew" (i.e. Aramaic) and translated into Greek. The comparatively unimportant position of Matthew in the Gospel story makes it extremely improbable that a false tradition would have chosen him as author of the First Gospel. But the critics try to dispose of both traditions as having arisen out of a mis-

understanding of a statement by Papias, quoted by Eusebius, which reads as follows: "So then Matthew composed the Logia (τὰ λόγια) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could." They suggest that the so-called compiler of Matthew used as one of his sources a document consisting entirely of sayings of Christ, composed in Aramaic by the Apostle Matthew, and that this gave rise to our First Gospel being called after this Apostle.

II

But in the first place, how could a unanimous tradition concerning the origin and authorship of Matthew have arisen in the Church through the misreading of this single statement? For instance, "Origen, whose writings betray not the slightest trace of acquaintance with Papias' work, speaks of the original language of Matthew with as much confidence as does Irenaeus who had read Papias' book" (Zahn, Introduction, p. 517).

Secondly, when Papias wrote that "each one interpreted them (the oracles) as he could, it ought to be obvious that he was referring to a time when there was no written translation available, but each one who read or quoted the Gospel to a Greek-speaking congregation was obliged to make an oral translation to the best of his ability, exactly as happens in the Mission Field to-day before a written translation is issued in a new language. Papias used the past tense, he is not referring to his own time, about A.D. 130, when the Greek Matthew was well known.

Thirdly, as Zahn says, "The transference of Matthew's name from the Hebrew to the Greek Gospel, which took place under the eyes of Papias and others, who like himself were disciples of Apostles, presupposes that in this circle the Greek Gospel was regarded as a complete substitute for the Hebrew book, i.e. as a substantially correct translation of it" (Introduction, p. 516).

Fourthly, if Papias had really meant that Matthew had given an account of the words of Jesus only, it is indeed surprising that he should not have explained himself more fully. So remarkable a fact would require more than a bare allusion in a single word. Moreover no one in the early Church, who had his book before them, interpreted his statement in this

sense. The critics seem to be confusing *λόγιον* "oracle" with *λόγος* "word". Salmon (Introduction, p. 89) has clearly shown from the usage in the New Testament and Philo that *λόγια* means "the inspired utterances of God in His Holy Scriptures", and is applied to narratives equally with discourses. See e.g. Rom. iii. 2, where Paul certainly did not mean the phrase "oracles of God" to be limited to Divine sayings, to the exclusion of the narrative parts of the Old Testament. Thus Papias' words *τὰ λόγια* mean "the inspired Scripture", and refer to Matthew's Gospel. So then the far-reaching deductions which critics have drawn from Papias' statement are seen to be mere mares' nests, and there is not the slightest reason on the ground of all available evidence to doubt the genuineness of the Church's tradition that the Gospels were written by those whose names they now bear, and in the order in which we now have them.

We must now proceed to investigate the internal evidence, to see whether the theory of mutual or successive dependence, which seems in the light of what we have been considering up to now to be the only one compatible with the external evidence, will stand the test of a detailed investigation of the contents of the Synoptic Gospels.

Obviously the greatest objection to the theory of the utilization of Matthew by Mark and Luke is the "one absolutely assured result of a century of learned discussion", as Rawlinson calls it: namely, that Mark is the oldest Gospel which we possess, and that the compilers of Matthew and Luke both made use of it as one of their sources.

Let us then turn to Streeter where he marshals the facts to prove this "assured result", in his seventh chapter, p. 151. He puts forward the following facts as proving the priority of Mark:

(1) Practically all the subject matter of Mark (90 per cent) is reproduced in Matthew in language largely identical with that of Mark, and Luke reproduces about 50 per cent of Mark.

But this just as well applies to the theory that Matthew was first, and that Mark used it, and Luke used Mark. Moreover, it is very important to note that although of the 661 verses in Mark, all but 50 are found in Matthew and Luke, in many cases only parts of these verses appear in them, and barely fifty or sixty have been reproduced in their entirety. Streeter himself tells us (p. 159) that Matthew only reproduces 51 per

cent of the words of Mark in the parts he is alleged to have taken from him. Thus in actual fact only 45 per cent of Mark is reproduced in Matthew. This surely does not suggest that the author was copying from a MS.

(2) In any average section which occurs in the three Gospels, the majority of the actual words used by Mark are reproduced by Matthew and Luke, either by one of them or by both together.

Again, this applies just as well to the theory that Mark used Matthew and Luke used Mark and we have already noted that Matthew only has 51 per cent of the actual words used in Mark where he has (if he used Mark) reproduced Mark's subject matter.

(3) The relative order of incidents and sections in Mark is in general supported by both Matthew and Luke; where either of them deserts Mark (N.B. It is usually Matthew who deserts Mark's order), the other is usually found supporting him.

Again, the theory placing the order Matthew first, Mark second and Luke third accounts for this just as well if not better, and it is important to notice that, in the first sixteen chapters, Matthew (if he used Mark) makes considerable rearrangements in Mark's order, whereas Luke, to use Streeter's words, "hardly ever departs from Mark's order and only in trifling ways" (p. 162). But Mark obviously did not intend to give a strictly chronological or complete account of our Lord's life or teaching, and nothing is more natural than that he would not follow Matthew's order strictly in the first part of his Gospel. As however the tremendous events concerning the suffering, death and Resurrection of our Lord began to draw near, heralded by the death of the Fore-runner, John the Baptist, Peter would naturally want to make the order as chronologically correct as possible, and so we find that from Matt. xiv. 1 (= Mark vi. 14) he adheres strictly to Matthew's order. This seems a much more plausible explanation of the facts than to suppose that the critics' compiler, who had no apostolic authority, would rearrange his principal source, which was of apostolic origin, to such a considerable extent. The fact that Luke, who certainly did use Mark, did not rearrange his order, tends to confirm this argument.

Thus Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of Streeter's reasons for accepting the priority of Mark bear no weight whatsoever, and the more

I study Huck's synopsis, the more I become convinced of this.

(4) The primitive character of Mark is further shown by (a) the use of phrases likely to cause offence, which are omitted or toned down in the other Gospels; (b) roughness of style and grammar, and preservation of Aramaic words. However, all this is easily explained by the theory that Peter retold Matthew adding vivid touches from his own memory. In his fourth chapter Chapman shows conclusively that this is the case.

"If we compare Mark with Matthew, as the part with the whole, the chief characteristic of Mark is seen to be this, that Mark contains nothing but what St. Peter saw or heard, and might easily remember.

"Thus he omits all the long discourses save only short and pithy sayings of the kind that would be easily remembered, and a few parables. He omits all incidents at which Peter could not have been an eye witness. He also omits all incidents which are to the honour of Peter.

"There is one important exception: he repeats the story of St. John the Baptist, though Peter was not present at Herod's feast nor at the execution" (see pp. 43, 133) (Chapman, p. 38). Chapman then discusses in detail all Mark's additions to Matthew, and omissions from him, both of incidents and discourses, and shows the truth of his statements quoted above. Concerning the lack of discourse matter in Mark, Chapman says:

"It may be said that I have given no proof that St. Peter had forgotten what he omits, and omits it because he had forgotten it.

"I have not quite asserted this: I have suggested that some points (including one long denunciation of the Pharisees) were unsuitable to St. Peter's audience, and it is obvious that he intends to relate the life of Christ rather than His teaching.

"But I think that one should bear in mind with regard to *incidents* that St. Peter shows that he was an eye witness by the details he adds, and by the freshness with which he repeats the words of Matthew. Hence I hold that he is equally an ear witness of the discourses which he reproduces, and vouches for them in the same way. But his memory is vague about long discourses: he remembers the sermon itself in its setting; he recognizes the occasion, and hence the way the

sermon began; but he is not clear enough as to the development to do more than leave Matthew's report alone—he cannot alter it or add to it, for his memory of it is not definite enough.

“I take it that this view is suggested by the way he does remember and pick out a number of vivid sayings, of striking antitheses, of quasi-proverbs. These he knows well, and can answer for it; but apart from these he cannot confirm the accuracy of Matthew by his own memory; and he feels it is not worth his while merely to read out Matthew's undoubtedly careful report. . . .

“Thus I take it that Mark is Matthew retold by an eye witness and ear witness, who omits all the incidents at which he was not present, and leaves out in just the same way all the words of Christ which his memory had not clearly and verbally recorded. As is natural, he remembers nearly every incident with extra detail, but not many sayings word for word. . . . Had Mark given the long speeches of Matthew, we should have felt that he was trusting to the accuracy of Matthew's notes, rather than giving them the authority of an ear witness's memory” (Chapman, pp. 42-43).

(5) The way in which Markan and non-Markan material is distributed in Matthew and Luke respectively looks as if each had before him the Markan material in a single document (Streeter, p. 152). This argument sounds at first very formidable but on closer examination we find that it is not at all convincing. We have already mentioned the fact that Matthew in his first sixteen chapters, if he used Mark, rearranged his order considerably. How then can anyone state, as Streeter does, that Matthew took Mark as his framework, into which by means of a complicated conflation process he fitted non-Markan material?

In the case of Luke everything is clear as it can be seen very distinctly how he composed his Gospel by giving alternate blocks of Mark and blocks of non-Markan material. He never mixes the two and follows Mark's order practically right through. This is what a person would expect from an author who made use of an older document such as Mark. It is especially important to note that although Luke rewrites Mark's material in good Greek, he invariably gives substantially the same narratives and sayings as those which he has taken from Mark, and he does not change the “point”, or aspect

emphasized. In Matthew's case, however, we find very often that when he relates incidents or reports sayings, which we have in Mark as well, he makes an entirely different point from that in Mark, and emphasizes entirely different aspects of the narratives or sayings, although he does have striking verbal agreements with Mark. For further details see Chapman's chapter entitled "Matthew is not a précis of Mark", pp. 20-34.

III

I give a short summary of the most important conclusions to which Chapman was brought, as the result of his detailed investigation of the relations between Matthew and Mark, set out in this chapter.

(1) Matthew is generally shorter than Mark when they have common matter, but he almost invariably adds something which is not in Mark. Hence his account is not a précis of Mark. If Matthew used Mark, this would mean that his other sources overlapped Mark at practically every point (cf. Streeter's remark on p. 186: "In fact, to put it paradoxically, the overlapping of Mark and Q is more certain than is the existence of Q").

(2) Matthew not only omits a quantity of Mark's interesting but unessential detail, *but even omits detail which in Mark is essential and is his principal point*. A good précis writer does not omit the point. Yet Matthew's story always has a point of its own, is invariably quite complete, and is better told than Mark's. If Matthew was a late writer who used Mark, he would not change Mark's point. But if Peter as eye witness retold Matthew, he would naturally not only add new details, but would make new points.

(3) Wherever Matthew is notably shorter than Mark, he makes short extracts, not an abstract. (Contrast Luke who never makes extracts but rewrites—just what a person would expect of a careful author who wishes to reproduce his source faithfully but in better language.)

(4) Matthew adds to Mark precision as to order and time, some details and some important points.

(5) Mark adds at every moment details which are not in Matthew, often such as only an eye witness would think of mentioning.

(6) Mark relates only such matters as Peter might have seen or heard, and remembered.

(7) Matthew is literary, while Mark is conversational, explanatory, redundant.

To quote Chapman (pp. 20-21), "this is merely to say that Mark is Matthew conversationally retold by an eye witness and ear witness of what Matthew had set down, omitting all parts of Matthew where Peter was not present, and the long discourses which he would not remember with exactitude. Mark appears to be Peter's reading aloud of Matthew, taken down in shorthand by Mark". Thus the facts seem to show that Peter read out verses of Matthew, and sandwiched between them his own explanations and recollections.

Chapman proves in the above-mentioned chapter all the statements quoted above by a detailed study of the parallels: Matt. viii. 18-34 = Mark iv. 35-v. 20 = Luke viii. 22-39; Matt. ix. 18-26 = Mark v. 21-43 = Luke viii. 40-56; Matt. ix. 1-12 = Mark ii. 1-12; Matt. xx. 29-34 = Mark x. 46-52.

It is interesting to contrast this with Streeter's theory concerning Matthew's complicated method of conflation (p. 246).

A further illuminating point is the following:

Streeter on p. 152 mentions the following objections to the view that the document used by Matthew and Luke was exactly identical with Mark, namely, Why did they omit certain sections of Mark? Let us look at his explanation of this in the case of Matthew, pp. 169-170. I quote a paragraph:

"Is it correct to say that Matthew has 'omitted' these three incidents (cure of a demoniac in Mark i. 23 ff., a dumb man in Mark vii. 32 ff., and a blind man in Mark viii. 22 ff.)? In his account of the Gadarene Demoniacs (viii. 29) he (Matthew) modifies the words of the demoniac so as to combine the cry, as given in his immediate source (Mark v. 7) with that of the demoniac as given in the apparently omitted section (Mark i. 24).¹ This proves that Mark i. 24 stood in the copy of Mark which he used. Moreover, Matthew makes the demoniacs two in number, instead of one as in Mark. Taken together, these phenomena suggest that Matthew considers himself to be, not

¹ But in truth (apart from the plural "we" necessitated by the mention of two demoniacs) Matt. viii. 29 has only *one* word peculiar to Mark i. 24, the common word *ἄλλοες*, art thou come?!

omitting one, but, as it were, *telescoping* two healings of demoniacs which he found in Mark."

Streeter explains the omission of Mark viii. 22 ff. in the same way. Surely this is extremely fantastic and far-fetched? Contrast with this the explanation that Peter retold Matthew, adding new incidents out of his store of personal recollection. Moreover we find on investigation that in almost each one of the additions to Matthew in Mark some special connexion with Peter can be traced, and some of them, e.g. vii. 32-37 (the cure of the deaf mute), viii. 22-26 (cure of blind man) and i. 23-28 (cure of demoniac in synagogue at Capharnaum), are among the most vivid, lifelike and picturesquely described incidents in the Gospels. It is thus extremely probable that they are to be taken as additions by Peter and not omissions by the critic's compiler of Matthew (cf. for details, Chapman, p. 39).

As to the apparent discrepancy between Matthew and Mark, namely, Matthew stating that there were two demoniacs and Mark that there was one, the obvious and natural explanation is that Peter did not intend telling every detail of the incident—one of the demoniacs drew his attention especially, so he was not interested in the other.

We have thus seen that not one of the arguments for the priority of Mark bears the test of investigation. But let us now proceed to present some more positive evidence to show that Matthew, far from being a late compilation by an unknown author, who in a marvellously meticulous way conflated Mark with other sources to produce our smooth running First Gospel, is the work of the Apostle Matthew, and that it was used by Peter and Luke.

I. Chapman, who was at first a follower of the Two Document hypothesis, after he came to the discovery that the arguments which are usually given to demonstrate the dependence of Matthew on Mark are perfectly compatible with the dependence of Mark on Matthew, as we have seen in our investigation, applied the following test to the hypothesis that Mark used Matthew. He reasoned thus: "If Mark abbreviated Matthew, omitting much, adding next to nothing . . . *wherever it makes long omissions we shall find some sign of the gap*—perhaps merely want of sequence, for Matthew is very systematic, or even illogical sequence. If there are no

such signs . . . I shall conclude quite securely that Mark is indeed prior to Matthew" (p. 5). He applied this practical test and came to the following astonishing results: (1) The omission of the Sermon on the Mount (three chapters) is accompanied by a considerable dislocation of order in Mark; so is that of the next great Matthew discourse, the charge to the twelve in chapter x. Let us turn to Chapman's own report of the test and the results. I can give here only a few extracts and summaries of Chapman's detailed investigation into this matter (cf. for the following Huck's Synopsis 90-103, Matt. xiii. 1-52, Mark iv. 1-34). In this section we find Mark has three parables and one explanation, against the seven parables and two explanations of Matthew. Does Mark show any sign of having omitted anything? He does. Twice. Matt. xiii. 3 reads "And He spoke to them many things in parables, saying": Mark iv. 2 reads "And He was teaching them many things in parables, and He was saying to them in His teaching". Here Matthew has "polla" (many things), and proceeds to give actually many parables. Mark retains "polla", and intends to give only three parables, so he adds: "And in the course of His instruction He said" (cf. the Greek text). Thus it seems Mark has before him a series of many, "polla", but he has not given the whole. Again, Matt. xiii. 34 reads: "*All of these* things Jesus spoke in parables to the crowds . . ." and Mark iv. 33 reads: "And with *many such* parables He was speaking the word to them. . . ."

Here Matthew sums up "all these things", but Mark of necessity, as he has left out some of the parables, changes this into "many such": and because Matthew is about to add the explanation of a parable, which Mark has omitted, the latter supplies its place by a general statement (Mark iv. 34) that "in private" (Matt. xiii. 36 "in the house") Christ explained all the parables to his disciples. Can one conversely assume Mark to be the original, and then explain that Matthew in using Mark, noticed the statement that Christ "taught many parables, and among them said . . .", so that Matthew thought this was a splendid place for interpolating a number of additional parables and a couple of O.T. quotations, *altering Mark's two passages which implied that many parables had been omitted.*

Or again Matt. xxiii. 1 reads: "Then Jesus spoke to the crowds . . . saying"—whereas Mark xiii. 38 (parallel

to Matt. xxiii. 1) reads: "And *in the course of His teaching* He was saying": What teaching? Look at Matthew; there are shoals of it. Many other similar cases where Mark "states" that he has left out parts can be found, cf. e.g. Matt. xxi. 33, Mark xii. 1 (here he has taken out the middle parable out of three in Matthew) and Luke xx. 19 (for more examples and details see Chapman, pp. 5-19).

In contrast to Mark, Matthew shows no sign of gaps or the like, his incidents fit neatly and the whole runs smoothly. Even Streeter states that the contexts in Matthew are always exceedingly appropriate (p. 183). In seeing thus the marvellous continuity of Matthew's narratives and reports of sermons, conversations and the like, and on the other hand the lack of logical sequence and general vagueness concerning chronological order in Mark, we are compelled to conclude that it is impossible that Mark can be the source of Matthew instead of Matthew being that of Mark.

Furthermore Chapman in his seventh chapter shows that Mark reveals by quotations that he knew the discourses in Matthew which he does not reproduce (p. 64). "Within the long discourses in Matthew which are not found in Mark, there are certain little bits, single verses, of a quasi-proverbial character which are found in some other places of Mark. I suggest that these are further signs that Mark was cognisant of these Matthean discourses, though he omitted them. Or rather, it was Peter who omitted them, because his memory did not carry all these words of Christ which he found in Matthew, even though he had been present at the sermons reported.

But there were short and striking sayings in Matthew which he did recollect, and he does not omit them but recounts them here or there in a suitable place, for they are important, if brief, and their very brevity makes them valuable mottoes. Chapman proceeds to deal with these sayings in detail and brings forth abundant evidence to show the priority of Matthew (pp. 64-82). Three facts to be kept in mind about these sayings are: (1) They are the only fragments in Mark of the omitted discourses. (2) They are all striking as well as short, and could be inserted in Mark (by Peter) from memory after reading the whole discourse in Matthew. (3) They are all entirely out of place in Mark, and are not found in the parallel parts of

Matthew, but elsewhere. In his examples given in this chapter we perceive clearly the final proof that Matthew is original, in that *Matthew always has the true context for those sayings which Mark (Peter) has taken over from him, whereas in Mark they appear as unconnected excerpts, and Luke has dislocated the order* (see Chapman, p. 67). Once a student of the Synoptic Problem has seen the truth in the successive dependence theory, the more he studies in detail the relation between the Gospels, the more convinced he becomes that Matthew is the genuine work of the Apostle and this does away with the involved series of borrowers, excerptors, interpolaters, form criticism and the like. Unfortunately space forbids me to do more than glance at the mass of evidence.

IV

Before leaving the subject of the priority of Matthew, I want to mention a very important point, namely, that to my mind it seems to be a fact proved conclusively by internal evidence, in addition to the unanimous external evidence for it, that Matthew as a whole is the translation of an original Aramaic work. Zahn in his *Introduction to the New Testament, II* maintains this, as well as the Dutch School of the Free University of Amsterdam as far as I have read their opinions, and in Chapman's book there are two chapters on the subject full of cogent evidence proving that Matthew is a translation from the Aramaic. Chapman not only traces it in the words, constructions, phrases and other literary phenomena, but also shows that the Gospel is an original unity with Aramaic rhythms and formulas right through it. I quote his conclusions regarding the latter investigation, p. 213: "Sufficient examples have been given to enable us to draw some conclusions: (1) In the first place, the rhythms and clichés are (found) throughout Matthew; the whole book is by a single author, as certainly as this is the case with Luke, whose favourite words, dispersed through his book, prove the unity of final authorship. (2) But in Matthew the rhythms go back to the original source, so that if he used written sources, his rhythms were in these. He has, anyhow, preserved them with care, and we need not infer the existence of various sources. (3) Mark and Luke are posterior: they witness to the rhythms and to the formulas by partially preserving them. They have taken over some of his clichés

and his favourite expressions. (4) This love of rhythms and of guiding formulas is Semitic . . . the formulae remind us of Aramaic literature. . . . I do not see how it is possible to suppose that any part of Matthew was composed in Greek; or was derived (unless unchanged) from a Greek source. Either the whole book is a translation, and a faithful translation, from the Aramaic, or else it is a reproduction of equally faithful translations put together so carefully that the unity of each part and of the whole is preserved. The final author cannot have inserted the formulas nor have composed the rhythms; yet they are dispersed throughout.

The only reasonable conclusion is this, that Matthew is the work of an Aramaic author, faithfully translated into good Greek of the period."

It must also be noted that Père Lagrange has in recent years studied with his usual thoroughness and competence this subject concerning the Aramaic original of Matthew, and that his study with its conclusions that Matthew is the translation of an Aramaic original has been before the public in *l'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu* for some fourteen years. And no serious attempt at refutation of his arguments seems to have been made by the critics yet.

As to other internal evidence, I can only give in summary form a few of the remaining reasons for believing Matthew to be the translation of an original Aramaic work. For a detailed study of the subject see Chapman (pp. 181-214), Lagrange (*l'Évangile selon Saint Matthieu*) and Zahn (*Introduction to the New Testament, II, 576 ff.*).

(1) Matthew was plainly written for Jews of Palestine; it implies and presupposes a knowledge of Palestine and Palestinian customs. It is largely composed of discourses which raise Jewish belief and teaching to a higher level, which denounce current Jewish errors, Jewish traditionalism and Jewish hypocrisy. All such passages are omitted or shortened in the other Gospels. Moreover this Palestinian Jewish colouring of Matthew is such an integral part of the whole Gospel, is so natural and suitable right through the Gospel, that it seems impossible that it is a late composition (the compiler having used according to Streeter our Greek Mark, the Greek Q, and the Palestinian tradition, M). Apart from all the other compelling arguments for the priority of Matthew, Streeter's

document M surely cannot account for the Palestinian colouring of almost every part of the Gospel.

We are obliged to conclude from the matter, the purpose, and the intended readers of Matthew that it must have been written in the idiom of Palestine, for only in Aramaic could it reach its audience.

(2) Matt. i. 21 appears to be a direct translation, as the Greek is meaningless, for a Greek reader would not know that "Jesus" means Saviour (Zahn, p. 576, Chapman, p. 183).

(3) Other Hebrew and Aramaic words left unexplained in e.g. Matt. x. 26, v. 22, xxvii. 6 seem to be due to dependence upon the Aramaic original (Zahn, p. 577).

(4) The translation of Jewish scholastic terms by *δέειν* (bind) and *λύειν* (loose) (xvi. 19, xviii. 18) which is literal but unintelligible to Gentile readers (Zahn, p. 578).

(5) Phrases contrary to Greek idiom such as in Matt. iv. 25 (Zahn, p. 577). The following are notable characteristics of Matthew:

(a) The paratactic use of the particle "*καὶ*" (and) in a manner which is more clearly Semitic than the simple repetition of the copula. In cases where Matthew has a Markan parallel, he alone has this Semitic construction. Is it likely that he would have added it if he had been copying Mark? (cf. Chapman, p. 197).

(b) The frequent use of "*πᾶς*" ("all the" etc.) at the beginning of a clause followed by a participle with the article. Since Hebrew readily begins a sentence with "*kol*" (all) the frequency of this use in Matthew is not without significance (cf. Chapman, p. 198).

(c) Matthew's tendency to use "*εἷς*" (one) without a following genitive is markedly Semitic (cf. Chapman, p. 198).

(6) Strong proof that Matthew is a translation is to be derived from a consideration of the form of its citations from the O.T. This is a very important point as it is usually alleged that the way in which O.T. quotations appear in Matthew is proof of its dependence among others on Mark and a collection of testimonia. It is too vast a subject to go into here, hence I refer you to Zahn (p. 579 ff.) and to Chapman's detailed study of the subject in *Matthew, Mark and Luke* (pp. 261-293), to verify the statement made above (6).

(7) Matthew's habitual use of Aramaisms such as "*τότε*" (then), "*οὐρανοί*" (heavens), "amen".

“Then” is found 89 times in Matthew and 6 times in Mark (all in speeches and 5 of them found in the parallel passages of Matthew). Matthew has it 51 times in passages parallel to Mark. It seems inconceivable that Matthew should have used Mark, introducing “then” 45 times without reason into his Markan matter. Further, it seems perfectly clear that the prevalence of “then” in Matthew can only be explained as the literal rendering of an Aramaic idiom. “Then” is found to be very prevalent in other translations from the Aramaic, e.g. 2 Esdras, and as “then” is evenly distributed throughout Matthew it shows that the whole book is a translation (cf. Chapman, pp. 184-186).

“Heavens” is found 55 times in Matthew and 5 times in Mark (3 from Matthew). It is found 32 times in Matthew in the rendering of certain Aramaic theological formulas such as “kingdom of Heaven(s)”. The word “ouranos” (heaven) is not used in the plural in Greek; can we then conceive that Matthew (if he used Mark and Q) continually changed the good Greek “*οὐρανός*” which he found in Mark or Q into the bad Greek “*οὐρανοί*” (heavens) without any reason? Is it not much more natural to suppose that “heavens” in Matthew is the literal translation of the Aramaic word which is used in the plural?

A very important point is the fact that only Matthew has the formula “kingdom of the heavens” whereas the other Gospels use the equivalent “kingdom of God”. It was the custom of the Jews to avoid the word “God”, and substitute “the heavens”. But in Greek there was no such usage, and “the kingdom (or reign) of the heavens” would be scarcely comprehensible. Hence no N.T. writer except Matthew ventures to use the expression. Matthew is writing for Jews, and his translator carefully preserves the Jewish awe of the word Elohim.

Matthew uses “kingdom of the heavens” 33 times, “kingdom of God” 4 times, “the kingdom” 13. Mark’s figures are 0, 14, 0. Mark has 6 times “kingdom of God” for Matthew’s “kingdom of heavens”. There seems to be no explanation of the prevalence of “the kingdom of the heavens” in Matthew except the obvious one, that it is a literal rendering of an Aramaic original (cf. for detailed discussion Chapman, p. 187 ff.).

The figures for the use of the word “God” in the

Synoptists are Matthew 50, Mark 46 (note that Mark is a much shorter writing than Matthew), Luke 120. But the word "Father" is used in Matthew 44 times, in Mark 4 and in Luke 17. A detailed study of those phenomena seems to show that Matthew wrote in Aramaic avoiding as far as possible the word "God" (cf. Chapman, p. 189 ff.).

Matthew's "Father in Heaven" or "Heavenly Father" is an even more striking Aramaism. He has it no less than 20 times in his Gospel. Mark and Luke have a somewhat similar expression only once in their Gospels. These are the only examples in the N.T. outside Matthew. It is difficult to escape the inference that the use of this beautiful Jewish periphrasis for God in Matthew was due to a literal translator, who has fortunately preserved for us a turn of speech used by our Lord (cf. Chapman, p. 190 ff.). "ὁ κύριος" (the Lord) is never used for Christ in Matthew or Mark. "Jesus" is employed by Matthew 150 times and Mark 90. Matthew thus represents archaic Christianity and Aramaic usage. He is followed by Mark (as Peter knew this to have been the original usage) but not by the Greek writer Luke.

Matthew uses "Verily I say unto you" (lit. Amen; I say unto you) 31 times, Mark 13 times (9 from Matthew) and Luke 6 times. John uses it very often as in his time it was almost "biblical" from Matthew and Luke, and definitely liturgical, and he of course knew that our Lord did use this expression. The explanation of these phenomena might be that the Greek compiler of Matthew added "amen", though it was not Greek, twice to Mark's and 6 times to Q's simple "I say unto you", and even changed "ναι" (yes) and "truly" to "amen" and then added 20 more examples of the formula. The more obvious sequence is this: the original Matthew in Aramaic, preserving our Lord's idiomatic phrase; next, a conscientious translator, who can think of no obvious Greek rendering for "amen"; then a reverent editor, Peter, who occasionally preserves the translator's expression, very familiar to himself: finally, a Gentile editor, Luke, who reduces the number and even translates "amen" into "truly" etc. (cf. Chapman, p. 192 ff.).

As to the argument used against Matthew being a translation from the Aramaic, namely, that we find a few explanatory phrases in Matthew, e.g. concerning the beliefs of the Sadducees,

which would have been unnecessary for Jewish readers: surely a translation into Greek, made for the purpose of a wider circulation, could rightly have added a few explanatory phrases where necessary. The strange thing is that there are so many cases where the translator *does not* give explanations, though necessary, and the few cases where he does give an explanation carry no weight to disprove an Aramaic original. There is nothing therefore in this argument to outweigh the cumulative force of all the internal evidence which we have been examining (especially that which shows how Matthew at all points retains what clearly seems to be the original, archaic usage of words and expressions) confirming the unanimous tradition that the First Gospel is the translation of an Aramaic original, itself the work of the Apostle Matthew.

V

Three objections to the unity and apostolic authorship of Matthew must here be briefly considered. (1) Whereas Mark's Gospel clearly gives the impression of a lifelike account by an eyewitness, Matthew does not give this impression in any such striking way. The answer is that the personality of Matthew was entirely different from the impetuous nature of Peter; and he moulded his Gospel more in a literary form than Mark did. His purpose also is not so much to give a lifelike picture of our Lord, as to prove that He is the Christ, the King of the Jews, and he concentrates much more on His discourses than on His acts.

(2) Streeter finds a proof of different sources in the First Gospel, in its alleged double tendency, Judaistic (v. 17-20; x. 5, 6; xv. 24; xxiii. 2, 3) and universalist (viii. 11; xxviii. 19). But there is no reason at all why all these passages should not have been spoken by our Lord, and recorded by Matthew who heard Him. While He was on earth, He limited His own mission and that of the Twelve to the Jews: but this limitation in no way conflicts with the universal extension of His Kingdom after His Resurrection, commanded in xxviii. 19 and contemplated in viii. 11. Again, Streeter regards Matt. v. 19 as a Judaistic invention aimed at Paul, interpreting "commandments" as including the whole ceremonial law. But it was in accord with N.T. usage, and even with that of such a book as

Ecclesiasticus, to confine the meaning of "commandments" to the moral law (see e.g. Eccles. xxxii. 23, 24; Matt. xxii. 35-40; 1 Cor. vii. 19). If the verse was really meant to make the ceremonial law binding on Christians, it is strange that the inventor did not elaborate his point and make it unmistakable! Matt. xxiii. 2, 3 is said to require the disciples to obey all the "tradition of the elders", in flat contradiction with Matt. xv. 6. But if so, xxiii. 2, 3 would be equally in contradiction with verses 16 ff. in the same chapter, likewise attributed to M: which is absurd! It would be as reasonable to interpret Rom. xiii. 1, 2 as requiring a Christian to sacrifice to idols at the command of a magistrate!

(3) It is argued that the presence of so called doublets in Matthew implies the use of different sources. This argument would have weight only if it could be proved that our Lord did not repeat the same sayings in the same or very similar form and that there were no cases during His ministry of cures very much the same or incidents corresponding to each other in some respects. As a matter of fact it is very probable that He would have repeated sayings sometimes, and that happenings similar in many respects would have taken place during His three (?) years' ministry. Only superficiality can induce a person to brand the reports of such cases as doublets.

But it is time to hasten on to the consideration of evidence concerning the "dogmatically believed in" document Q.

The facts concerning the common material in Matthew and Luke which is not represented in Mark are the following (see Streeter, p. 182). (1) The common matter occurs in quite different contexts and is arranged in a different order in the two Gospels. (2) In Streeter's own words the contexts in Matthew in contrast to Luke are *always* exceedingly appropriate. (3) Whereas Luke has in addition to the material represented in Mark more narratives, as well as parables and discourses, Matthew has very little additional narrative but his additional matter consists preponderantly of parable and discourse. (4) The degree of resemblance between the parallel passages in Matthew and Luke varies considerably, e.g. the two versions of John the Baptist's denunciation "Generation of vipers . . ." (Matt. iii. 7-10 = Luke iii. 7-9) agree in 97 per cent of the words used; but the two versions of the Beatitudes present contrasts as striking as their resemblances.

Streeter himself admits (p. 183) that the obvious explanation to account for this common material is that Luke knew Matthew (or vice versa). But he then goes on to say that this theory breaks down for the following two reasons:—

(1) Subsequent to the temptation story, there is not a single case in which Matthew and Luke agree in inserting the same saying at the same point in the Markan outline.

(2) Sometimes it is Matthew, sometimes it is Luke, who gives a saying in what is clearly the more original form.

These two arguments seem at first sight to have some force, but on closer investigation it becomes clear that they prove nothing more than that we have no right or factual basis whatsoever to claim that all or even the majority of the 200 verses common to Matthew and Luke betray literary dependence.

If we adopt the most natural supposition that Luke, in compiling material for his Gospel, found material parallel to some of that in Matthew, and preferred to use the former, it explains the resemblances in a considerable number of the common verses, especially in the case of those verses which although being parallel have very little or no verbal agreements.

As to those parallel verses in Matthew and Luke which agree in nearly 100 per cent of the words, it seems much more natural to suppose that there is direct dependence than to postulate a common source. Detailed study of those bits in Matthew and Luke, not found in Mark, and verbally in striking agreement invariably shows Matthew to be the primitive source and Luke the borrower. We become convinced of this by noticing again among other things that the contexts in Matthew are always exceedingly appropriate, whereas there is, especially in these cases, a lack of continuity and logical unity in Luke. Why, if both used a common source, would the one invariably have the appropriate context and the other not? Everything is explained if we agree with Chapman that Luke, after having practically finished his Gospel, came into contact with the Greek Matthew, and here and there borrowed bits from him. As his Gospel was in fairly good finished form and was becoming too long, he would naturally not have borrowed much from Matthew, moreover he knew his material to be trustworthy and authoritative, why should he then throw out parts of his and incorporate lumps of (the Jewish) Matthew?

VI

If we are not yet convinced of the impossibility and even absurdity of the existence of a document Q, let us turn to Chapman's Chapter entitled "The Impossibility of Q" (p. 95 ff.). I give a summary of some of his material in this chapter. Seeing that Luke and Matthew do not agree as to the order of Q, and that their methods of cutting up the so-called Q material and of combining it with Mark are entirely different, we have no adequate reason for recognizing all this material as one common source. Furthermore the parallels themselves when examined are of such varied character, that it is rather astonishing that they could ever have been regarded as homogeneous. On investigation of the Q material we come to the conclusion that if Q did exist it is rather more like a Greek book for Gentiles than a Palestinian book for Jews. Hence the relation of Matthew to Q becomes paradoxical. Assuming Matthew to be by a Greek author who uses as his principal sources our Greek Mark and the Greek Q, then this writer, whose Greek is at least as good as any in the N.T., had added to Mark and Q a quantity of matter which would interest Palestinian Jews; about Pharisees and Sadducees, arguments from prophecy, the Davidic Genealogy, etc., and matters of local knowledge. The instructions for the Gentiles, Mark and Q, are the first to be written; the Gospel for the Jews, Matthew, is later, and written in Greek! In contrast to this alarming paradox, the converse supposition is simple: Mark and Luke have extracted (directly or indirectly) from Matthew, which was an earlier writing, all those portions which seemed useful for Gentiles, *thus leaving as peculiar to Matthew almost only what was especially interesting to Jews.*

As to the varied character of the Q material we find that:

(1) Where Luke and Matthew agree in Greek words, they usually agree even more closely than Mark and Matthew, or Mark and Luke, in the "triple tradition", that is to say, they are so close that it is perilous to assume a common source, for one is obviously borrowing from the other. In every case it can be shown that Luke is the borrower and Matthew the source.

(2) Where the substance of the story is different in Matthew and Luke, yet there is a likeness in wording, it would

seem that the only reasonable explanation is that Luke had a different source for the same incident, but corrected, added to, or changed it in part according to Matthew's text (cf. the healing of the centurion's servant).

(3) Where the matter is much the same but the wording in Greek is different (cf. "Woes to the Pharisees") it seems perfectly plain that we are dealing with two different reports of the same incident or sermon, and that there is no common source.

Everything tends thus to show the non-existence of a document Q, and that Luke, having used Mark and having nearly completed his Gospel, used Matthew to a slight extent to make a few additions to, or replacements of, small parts of his own material (cf. for detailed proof, Chapman, pp. 100-179).

Regarding the dating of our Gospels.

The chief reasons given by critics for assigning to Luke and Matthew a late date (\pm A.D. 84) are the following:

(1) Since they used Mark as a source they must have been written later than \pm A.D. 65 (as \pm this date is assigned to Mark).

(2) It is maintained that Luke xix. 43, xxi. 20, 24 and Matt. xxii. 7 and xxiii. 38, etc., suggest that the authors had witnessed the fulfilment of the prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem.

(3) That the contents especially of Matthew according to critics reflect a late development of the life of the Christian "ecclesia".

As to (1) this naturally falls away now that we have seen the overwhelming evidence for the priority of Matthew.

The second reason is extremely meagre for

(a) The prophecies given here of the destruction of Jerusalem are not so very explicit or extraordinary, and not even closer to the event than that in Deut. xxviii.

(b) Why do Matthew and Luke not say that Christ's prophecy had been fulfilled (if they wrote after A.D. 70)?

(c) Why do they give the elaborate details as to what our Lord said the people had to do when Jerusalem would be on the point of being destroyed? Surely there is no point in giving all this detail if it was an event of the past? Is it natural, if this terrible happening had already taken place, that they would dwell so much on these detailed instructions?

On the other hand is it not extremely natural that, when writing during the times of the crises before 70 (say 50-70), they would give as complete a report of our Lord's instructions on this subject as possible, to make it sure that people will take note of this? That was why Matthew and Mark inserted the lines "let him who reads understand" as a note of extreme urgency. Of what use would this strong "nota bene" have been after the event had happened?

(d) If Matthew and Luke were written several years after the destruction of Jerusalem, would not they (especially Matthew) have distinguished more clearly between our Lord's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the Day of Judgment (the "Parousia")? Matthew especially seems hardly to distinguish between them at all. Their not doing so seems to be decisive in favour of an earlier date (cf. C. E. Raven, *Jesus and the Gospel of Love*, p. 153).

As to (3) there is not the slightest proof or even sign that this statement is true. On the other hand there is much against it, e.g. (a) several subjects are discussed, such as the lawfulness of the Jews paying tribute to Caesar, which would have had no interest after the extinguishing of the Jewish national existence in Palestine. (b) Our Lord's instructions as to what persons should do when they bring their gifts to the altar, are not likely to have been recorded after the altar, and everything connected with it, had been totally destroyed. Further who can question the fact that the preaching of Jesus, as reported in the first Gospel, transports us in an especially vivid manner into the midst of the historic circumstances of Jewish life at the time of our Lord's life in Palestine? (Note. The non-existence of Streeter's Judaistic document M has already been perceived in our earlier investigation.) (Cf. C. C. Torrey, *The Four Gospels*, p. 256.)

Further, there are the following reasons for dating Acts about A.D. 65. (1) The lack of traces of knowledge of Paul's letters suggests a date before the Pauline epistles had been widely circulated. (2) There is no hint as to the fact of the Neronian persecution nor any clear reference to the catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The author mentions the fact that the prophecy of Agabus had been fulfilled (Acts xi. 28) why, if writing \pm 84, does he not even give a hint that our Lord's prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem had been fulfilled? (3) Acts ends with the imprisonment of Paul

in Rome, where he is awaiting the issue of his appeal to Caesar. Is it not very probable that if the author knew what the issue was, he would have completed the story with an account of Paul's acquittal, if he was acquitted; and of his subsequent re-arrest and martyrdom; or of Paul's and Peter's execution, and of the Fall of Jerusalem, the bitterness of the Neronian persecution, etc., if he had been writing after A.D. 70?

On the whole the most probable explanation of the abrupt ending to Acts seems to be that Luke brought that book up to date, and that Paul was still in his first imprisonment at Rome, or more likely was just released after his first imprisonment when Acts was written. This would give a date \pm A.D. 62 and thus Luke must have been written during or before \pm A.D. 62. It seems very likely that Mark was written in \pm A.D. 62 as this seems to be about the time that Peter and Mark were together in Rome, and Luke's connection with Mark round about A.D. 62 is proved by Philem. 24, Col. iv. 10, 14 and 2 Tim. iv. 11.

Concerning Matthew there is no clear evidence as to the exact time when it was written, any time between \pm 50— \pm 60 seems possible. Matt. xxvii. 7, 8 "that field was called the Field of Blood unto this day" however is significant, as it clearly implies a date at least before 68—70, for after the siege and total destruction and laying in ruins of Jerusalem there would be no point in mentioning this fact about the potter's field, or of the burial of strangers therein, or of a nickname for the place. (For dating Luke and Acts before A.D. 70 compare Chapman, pp. 174—179, and also Harnack's *The Date of Acts and the Synoptic Gospels*.) The Greek translation of the original Aramaic Matthew might have been made by Matthew himself during the period \pm 55—60, and Peter might have had a copy of the Greek translation by the time he went to Rome. After Luke had come with Paul to Rome he would soon have come across the Gospel written down by Mark, but he would have seen that it did not give a sufficiently complete picture of Jesus, and that (much of Matthew not being suitable for Gentile readers) there was a need for a fuller Gospel which would picture our Lord as the Divine and gracious Saviour of the whole world. This need he decided to supply, making use of Mark and his own material which he had gathered, perhaps mostly during his journeys and stays with Paul. But he made only slight use of Matthew, as he knew that Mark had already

taken the most important narrative material from this Gospel, and had presented it in a form more attractive to Gentile readers; and of what remained, and was suitable for Gentiles, his own material paralleled the greater part.

The dates and exact sequence of events cannot of course be fixed precisely, but there is nothing in all available external evidence to make the theories propounded in this paper impossible (even if Peter never was in Rome it would not affect their validity). On the contrary we feel that the combined weight of the external and internal evidence compels us to believe that these theories are in the main the true solution to the Synoptic problem.

The significance of the priority of Matthew, and of Chapman's theory generally, which it has been the purpose of this paper to set out, can hardly be over-estimated, and this for the following reasons: (1) It is the most satisfactory explanation hitherto given of the phenomena revealed by a comparison of our first three Gospels. (2) It agrees with the unanimous date of tradition. (3) It dates all our Synoptic Gospels before about A.D. 64 and thus raises their historical value considerably. (4) By showing Matthew to be the genuine work of an Apostle, who was eminently equipped for his task, and that it was probably written within at most twenty-five years after our Lord's death, it fully establishes the reliability of the contents of our First Gospel. (5) The discredit thrown on the Synoptic Gospels by the late date to which the critics assign them, and by the non-apostolic authorship ascribed to Matthew, is thus removed. The result is that all the modern reconstructions of the life of Christ, in which everything that the reconstructor dislikes is arbitrarily cut out of the Gospels, are shown to be baseless. Further, the picture of Christ contained in the Gospels being shown to be genuine, many of the so-called modern reinterpretations of the significance of His life and death are demonstrated to be mere fictions. (6) Destructive form criticism is also put out of court by the early date and apostolic authority of Matthew.

The priority and genuineness of Matthew, and the early dates of the Synoptics, being fixed, Evangelical Christianity has its intellectual basis materially strengthened, and can go forward with still greater confidence, certainty and power.

J. N. GELDENHUYS.

Emmanuel College, Cambridge.