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## THE ARAMAIC GOSPEL.

### ITS CONTENTS.

WHEN the indications of the existence of an Aramaic source as the basis of much of the common matter of the Synoptic Gospels had been laboriously collected, there were two possible methods in which the evidence might effectively be exhibited. It was possible to *classify* the evidence, and to show that the divergences which we assume to have taken place in the transcription of the Aramaic text were of the same *kinds* as we find in other Semitic texts; or it was possible to take each discourse or narrative separately, as given in the respective Gospels, and to show how large a proportion of the divergences, in those parallel accounts that give evidence of having belonged to the primitive gospel, are due to various readings in the Aramaic original. The former of these methods seemed to us the preferable one, as being best suited to the pages of a Magazine. We do not regret the decision. It has yielded us valuable results. We have appealed to three sources for information as to the *kinds* of error to which Semitic scribes are specially liable. (1) We appealed to the Old Testament quotations which are found in the New Testament, and ascertained that the divergences between the two are for the most part explainable on the supposition that the Hebrew MSS., from which the New Testament quotations were made, differed slightly from the text which the Masorites have preserved for us. (2) We have also directed attention to the variations which occur in the two recensions of the same psalm, as preserved in Psalm xviii. and

2 Samuel xxii. ; and (3) we have compared the manner in which Proper Names are spelled in the First Book of Chronicles with their spelling in the earlier books of Scripture. From these investigations we received concurrent testimony that the frailties of Semitic scribes, in their tedious employment, admit of a fourfold classification : 1. the insertion of different vowels. 2. The misreading of a letter. 3. The omission of a letter. 4. The transposition of two adjacent letters. We then set ourselves to show that the assumption of these very *kinds* of divergence, in writing or reading a primitive Aramaic text, explains a large number of the variations which occur in parallel passages of the Synoptic Gospels.

But more than this, it has recently occurred to me, that there is a tolerably constant ratio in the numbers of these kinds of "errors of the Scribe." In the three sources from which our illustrations have been drawn, speaking generally, the numbers of errors which fall in classes 1 and 3 are about equal; those in class 2 are about as numerous as 1 and 3 together; and those in class 4 are very few. Here evidently is law at work. And is it not a remarkable proof that our hypothesis is a *vera causa*, when we can show that the same ratio is discernible in the classes of various readings which we claim to have discovered as existing in MSS. of the Aramaic Gospel. The number of cases that we have claimed to find of diverse vocalization are about equal to those of omission of a consonant; those of misunderstanding of one letter are about equal to these two together; while the cases of transposition of two letters are but four. In the sixty-two instances of various reading in the Proper Names in the first Book of Chronicles, as compared with the earlier books, thirteen belong to class 1; twenty-eight to class 2; eighteen to class 3; and three to class 4. Now I admit that it would have been a shock to my confidence, if, when the mass of evidence came to

be analysed, it had appeared that the ratio between the number of instances of the several *kinds* of divergence was widely different from that which occurred in the transcription of other Semitic texts. If, for instance, in order to explain the divergences in the Greek, it had been thought necessary, in numerous instances, to *transpose* the letters in the hypothetical Aramaic word, it might with reason have been expected that there had been some unwarrantable manipulation of the Aramaic words; but when we only profess to find *four* out of a round hundred, and in 1 Chronicles there are *three* in sixty-two, and the other cases are in the same ratio, it must be conceded that so far as this line of evidence goes, we seem to be in the right vein; especially when it is stated that the idea of comparing the kinds of divergence in our assumed Aramaic Gospel with those in the Hebrew did not suggest itself until our cases in evidence had been fully collected.

Speaking for myself, however, I confess that the second mode of presenting the argument is the more impressive; that is, to examine each several narrative or discourse as a whole, exhibiting the homologous passages from the Synoptic Gospels in parallel columns. To study the homologues, line by line, and to find that almost every divergence in the common matter yields to our solution, brings overwhelming conviction to my own mind, and I am hopeful that by and by it will gain for the theory universal acceptance. It is surely a significant fact that wherever the indications of translation exist, they swarm. There are, as we have often remarked, many portions of the Synoptic Gospels in which the divergences stoutly refuse to yield to our hypothesis, but (unless the passage be a very short one) we never find solitary indications. If the parallel passages give any indication at all of translation work, we may confidently expect that almost all the divergences are explicable by our theory. And when it is remembered that

thus far the labours of but one lone student have been directed to this field of inquiry, it may confidently be expected that a richer harvest will be reaped when other and abler scholars bring their learning to bear on this important theme.

It would occupy too much valuable space in the pages of THE EXPOSITOR to do full justice to the evidence by deploying the parallel passages side by side with the homologous phrases on the same line. By and by it is my intention to do this in a separate volume. In the meanwhile, I would strongly advise those who wish to appreciate the force of the argument, to mark in the margin of some Harmony of the Gospels the instances which we have explained on our hypothesis, especially in the Parable of the Sower, the Sermon on the Mount and its parallels scattered in various parts of the Gospel of Luke, the healing of Jairus' daughter, the Gadarene demoniac, and some others, from which so many of our illustrations have been drawn. We venture to think that the *tout ensemble* will be far more convincing than the reading of each case separately. In none of the pericopæ just named are there less than twelve to fifteen instances in which the divergences are explicable on our hypothesis, and numerous other differences which can hardly be called divergences are all in harmony with the theory.

And now we address ourselves to a very important question: What were the contents of the primitive Gospel? The Church Fathers without a discordant voice affirm that Matthew wrote *Ἐβραϊστί*—which word in the New Testament always means “in Aramaic.” That which he thus wrote is called by Papias, *τὰ λόγια*, which rigorously means “the utterances,” but is used by the apostle Paul to designate the whole Old Testament—“the oracles of God” which were entrusted to the Jews (Rom. iii. 2). The usage

of the word therefore leaves it quite an open question, whether the *Logia* consisted solely of discourses, or a mixture of discourse and narrative, such as is found in the Old Testament, and also in our present Gospels. In our paper of last February, a *résumé* was given of the varied ways in which it had been sought to recover the contents of the primitive Gospel, as to the existence of which, within our present Gospels, there has been a growing consensus during the past few years. We then announced as a new criterion for the determination of the problem, a linguistic test. Those parallel passages in the Synoptists which present phenomena compatible with translation from a common source, and in which the divergences can be explained by the assumption of very trifling and common variations in an Aramaic exemplar, must be assigned to the *Urevangelium*. I am free to confess that at the outset I had no idea that the theory would apply to more than the discourses of the Lord Jesus; but after a time, when the method was applied to the narratives, they disclosed in some cases more numerous indications of translation than some of the discourses. Having taken the clue into our hands, we were, of course, obliged to follow its guidance implicitly.

The list which we now subjoin is at best but tentative. It is a list of those passages in which the present writer has detected indications of translation. If the further researches of Semitic scholars should reveal the fact that some other portions of the Gospels comply with these conditions, these will of course need to be added; and, on the other hand, if it should occur that in any pericope all the indications claimed should finally be voted untenable, such passage will need to be omitted.

	MATTHEW.	MARK.	LUKE.
The Baptism of John . . . .	iii. 1-6	i. 1-6	iii. 3-4
John's testimony to Christ . . .	11	7, 8	16
The Baptism of Christ . . . .	16-17	9, 11	21-23
* <sup>1</sup> The Temptation . . . . .	iv. 1-11	12, 13	iv. 1-13
Return to Galilee . . . . .	12, 17	14-15	14-15
The Capernaum demoniac . . . .		21-8	31-37
Simon's wife's mother . . . .	viii. 14-16	29-34	38-41
The desert place . . . . .		35-39	42-44
Healing of the leper . . . . .	2-4	40-44	v. 12-14
*Healing of the paralytic . . . .	ix. 2-8	ji. 1-12	17-26
The call of Matthew . . . . .	9-13	14-17	27-32
The withered hand . . . . .	xii. 9-14	iii. 1-6	vi. 6-11
The call of the Twelve . . . .	x. 2-4	13-19	12-16
The Sermon on the Mount . . . .	v.-vii.		17-49
			<i>et passim.</i>
The parable of the sower . . . .	xiii. 1-23	iv. 1-20	viii. 4-15
The lamp and the bushel . . . .		21-5	16-18
The mustard seed . . . . .	xiii. 31, 32	30-32	xiii. 18, 19
The storm at sea . . . . .	viii. 18, 23-7	35-41	viii. 22-25
The Gadarene demoniac . . . .	28-34	v. 1-20	26-39
Jairus' daughter . . . . .	} ix. 18-26	22-43	41-56
The woman with the issue . . .			
The mission of the Twelve . . .	x. 1, 5-15	vi. 7-11	ix. 1-6
"Beware of men" . . . . .	17-20	xiii. 9-13	xxi. 12-17
"The disciple not greater," etc.	24-5		vi. 40
"Fear them not" . . . . .	26-33		xii. 2-9
"Not peace but a sword" . . . .	34-6		51-3
Cross bearing . . . . .	} x. 37-38	viii. 34-38	xiv. 25-27
"Whoso receiveth me" . . . .	x. 40		x. 16
*The five thousand . . . . .	xiv. 13-21	vi. 30-44	ix. 10-17
Peter's confession . . . . .	xvi. 13-20		
The transfiguration . . . . .	xvii. 1-8	ix. 2-8	ix. 28-36
The demoniac boy . . . . .	14-21	14-29	38-42
"One of these little ones" . . .	xviii. 6-9	42-50	xvii. 1-2
Divorce . . . . .	xix. 3-6	x. 2-9	
The rich young ruler . . . . .	16-22	17-22	xviii. 18-23
The blind man near Jericho . . .	xx. 19-34	46-52	35-43
Tribute to Cæsar . . . . .	xxii. 15-20	xii. 13-17	xx. 20-26
*The last things . . . . .	xxiv.	xiii.	xxi.

<sup>1</sup> As to those passages marked thus (\*) it is doubtful whether they existed in the Aramaic Gospel in their present form.

I must again repeat that this list of contents is merely tentative. It claims to be nothing more than a list of those passages which seem to me to yield indications of translation from a common Aramaic source. It possesses many features in common with other lists of the contents of the *Logia*, but coincides most closely with the results of Dr. B. Weiss. In our paper of February, 1891, it was shown that his Method was totally different from the one here adopted, and yet in the main he assigns the same sections to the "Source" as are found above. As regards those portions of the Synoptic Gospels which were not included in the *Logia*, it may be well that I should state that I see no reason for ascribing to them an inferior historic credibility on that account.

Further, it is quite possible that the list is incomplete, especially as regards those passages which only occur *once* in the Gospels. Our method works by means of comparison. When two divergent Greek words in parallel passages yield the same, or two slightly different, Aramaic words, then our method comes into play. Those pericopæ which only occur once, our Method leaves for the most part undecided. There are only two conceivable ways in which the criterion can be applied to such passages. 1. If there be any *various readings*, which are so ancient as to go back to the very days when the Aramaic Gospel might well be supposed to be still in use, and which can be shown to be explainable as translations of the same or a slightly different Aramaic text. 2. If there are confessedly *obscure words* in those passages which are only found once in the Gospels, and a retranslation of such words into Aramaic, slightly altered, produces a new meaning, lucid and contextual, such passages we shall claim for the *Logia*. These indications are decidedly inferior in demonstrative force to those which we can adduce from the passages which occur twice or thrice, and yet they are



worthy of notice, as the best evidence we can have in the circumstances.

One or two illustrations may be here introduced as specimens of what may be done in this direction.

#### I. Various readings in the Greek Testament.

(a) We have already alluded to the very ancient various reading in Matthew xix. 17, where the Textus Receptus reads, "Why callest thou Me good?" but the Greek MSS., which are usually, in their unison, most reliable, read, "Why askest thou Me concerning the good?" We have also shown that in Aramaic the former is

לְמָא אָמַר אֵת לִי טַב

the latter      לְמָא אָמַר אֵת לִי לְרַטְבּ or לְטַב

If the theory advocated in these papers be established, the evidence of the Aramaic must have a voice in the decision of questions of criticism; and in the case before us it is by no means certain that the later Greek MSS. have not preserved for us the correct text, especially as this is presumably the translation of the original Aramaic in Luke xviii. 19, and Mark x. 18.

(b) In Matthew vi. 1 we have a very old various reading. The Revised Version reads: "Take heed that ye do not *your righteousness* (τὴν δικαιοσύνην ὑμῶν) before men, to be seen of them," instead of "*your alms*" (τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην ὑμῶν). There is no doubt but that these two Greek words are translations of the one Aramaic word צְדָקָתָא, which means both "righteousness" and "almsgiving." The fact that the one word should possess both these meanings is of itself an indication of the value which later Jewish Theology attached to almsgiving, as constituting the essence of righteousness. There is a tendency in the Hebrew צְדָקָה to assume the meaning of "mercy" rather than of "justice" or "righteousness." The LXX. recognised this by rendering צְדָקָה nine times by the Greek word ἐλεημοσύνη,

which means (1) "mercy," (2) "almsgiving." The Jewish Rabbis were more free than the LXX. in giving this meaning to ܩܪܘܢܐ: *e.g.* in Proverbs xi. 4, "Riches profit not in the day of death, but ܩܪܘܢܐ delivereth from death"; and in Proverbs x. 2, "Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but ܩܪܘܢܐ delivereth from death"—in these passages the Greek is *δικαιοσύνη*, but the Rabbis interpreted ܩܪܘܢܐ to mean "alms"; and it is not uncommon even now for alms to be collected at Jewish funerals while the collectors recite the words, "Almsgiving delivereth from death." In these circumstances, it remains an open question whether BDN have, in Matthew vi. 1, as accurately represented the meaning of our Lord by *δικαιοσύνη*, as the Curetonian Syriac and the rest of the Greek MSS. by "almsgiving," *ἐλεημοσύνη*.

(c) In the closing words of the "Sermon on the Mount" we have in Luke's Gospel two readings, both of which are very ancient: *τεθεμελίωτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν* = "because it was founded upon a rock"; and *διὰ τὸ καλῶς οἰκοδομηῆσθαι αὐτήν* = "because it was well built." It will be conceded that the difference between *γὰρ* and *διὰ* is precisely what we should expect in translation from a common source, and the difference between "founding" and "building" is not too great to be compatible with the same theory. But can we explain *καλῶς* and *ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν*? Let us see. The picture presented is that of a house built near a wady. The rugged weather-worn cliffs which form the side of the torrent-bed are on the top coated with soil and marl, through which the wise man digs till he reaches the solid cliff. Such a region is suggested by the word ܩܘܪܝܢܐ in Proverbs xiii. 15, "The way of transgressors is *hard*." R.V. "*rugged*." Perhaps better still, "*rocky*." The Mishna interprets the word to mean, "a strong rushing wady": but it is probable that the reference is rather to the ruggedness of the rocky path along the wady, than to the "deceitful brook." The Targum renders the passage

thus : **וְאִרְחָא תְּקִיפָא דְּבִזְוִי תִּיבַד** "The rocky way of spoilers shall perish," or, "lose itself." In Job xviii. 4 the Targum of Buxtorf gives *two* traditional translations of the clause : "Shall the *rock* be removed out of its place?" In the one, the word **טִינָר** is, as frequently, used for "rock" : in the other we have **תְּקִיפָא**. That is to say, the form which is usually an adjective, meaning "firm," "strong," "hard," "rocky," here becomes a substantive, "the rock." This is interesting, as the Targum of Job is written in Palestinian Aramaic. If now we may suppose that the Lord Jesus used this word, the rendering of the expression, "upon the rock" would be **עַל תְּקִיפָא**. But as **תְּקִיפָא** is rarely used as a substantive, the words **עַל תְּקִיפָא** in an Aramaic document would more readily suggest an adverbial phrase, "strongly," "firmly." Hence, we conjecture, arose the various reading : "It was **WELL** built."

Now let us consider what is implied in the phenomenon before us. We have presumably several Aramaic MSS. in existence ; and an authoritative translation is made by the Evangelist, but some scribe is acquainted with another reading in the Aramaic or with a current Greek rendering thereof, which he prefers to the Greek of his copy, and he inserts that instead of what he has before him. The thing can be detected, because both the better and the inferior renderings have come down to us. But is it not conceivable that in some cases the original translation of the Evangelist may have been lost, and the inferior substitute alone have survived, especially in passages which occur but once in the Gospels? The occurrence of some very obscure passages confirms this opinion. We pass on now therefore to some few conjectural emendations which we advance with unfeigned diffidence.

## II. Conjectural emendation of some obscure Greek words.

(α) In Matthew xvi. 18 we read, "On this rock I will build my church, and the *gates* of Hades shall not prevail

against it." The word "gates" in this connexion is startling; and a glance at the commentaries shows that no one seems satisfied with his interpretation. Can it be that the word "gates" is not original, but a second-rate rendering inserted by a later scribe? Very probably so. The regular word for "gate" in Aramaic is ܦܘܪܬܐ: plural, ܦܘܪܬܝܢ. But the verb ܦܘܪܬܐ means to assail, devastate, ravage, make inroads. So the noun ܦܘܪܬܝܢ means, ravages, inroads. It is used of the irruption of an army into a city, and of an inroad of the sea. We respectfully submit whether our Lord did not intend the latter meaning. The church is described as a city built in an enemy's country, or liable to the assaults of the enemy. Is it not probable that the thought of our Lord was: "The *ravages* or *inroads* of (the hosts of) Hades shall not prevail against it"?

(b) Mark x. 29, 30: "There is no one who hath left house or brethren . . . who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren . . . and lands *with persecutions*; and in the world to come eternal life." The strange way in which persecutions are dashed across the fair picture, which is, by the way, so lusciously overdrawn in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, is felt by all to be a difficulty. If we retranslate the word "persecution" however into Aramaic, it yields us almost certainly ܦܘܪܬܝܢ. The change of one letter gives ܦܘܪܬܝܢ = fine raiment: used specially of the costly fine wrap worn on the head and neck. It is the name of the "veil" in which Rebekah adorned herself when she was about to see Isaac for the first time (Gen. xxiv. 65); and it formed part of the array in which, according to the Second Targum of Esther, Haman was to adorn Mordecai (Esther vi. 8). When it is remembered that to an Oriental, raiment is a part of wealth, it cannot be alleged that the word is too sensuous, especially as it stands in conjunction with houses and lands.

III. There are few passages in the Gospels which have more taxed the ingenuity of translators than the words of Matthew vi. 16, ἀφανίζουσι γὰρ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν. It is usually rendered, "For they *disfigure* their faces." No one pretends however that this word means "to disfigure" elsewhere. Its primary meaning is to cause to disappear; hence ordinarily it means, to make away with, destroy utterly. In the present passage, it is claimed that from the idea of causing to disappear, the word means to bedaub the face with ashes and dirt, so as to render it invisible (cf. Meyer *in loco*). Let us now see how this is confirmed by our Aramaic theory. The word ἀφανίζουσι (Vulgate, *exterminant*) would be in Aramaic ܐܦܢܝܙܘܣܝ, 3 pl. of ܐܦܢܝܙܐ. But if we change ܙ into its cognate ܕ, we obtain ܐܦܢܝܕܘܣܝ, 3 pl. of ܐܦܢܝܕܐ, to bedaub, beplaster. The word is used of the slabs which were to be placed on Mount Ebal, and on which, when "plastered with plaster," the law was to be written (Deut. xxvii. 2). In the Mishnic tractate *Shabbath*, it is used of daubing the face with depilatory, in order to remove superfluous hairs. We would suggest then that the correct reading of the Aramaic was ܐܦܢܝܕܘܣܝ = they *bedaub* their faces. We thus obtain the very meaning which Meyer contrived to read into ἀφανίζουσι.

Conjectural emendation ought to be undertaken very sparingly and very cautiously. These are the only cases in which we can confidently recommend its application. The cases adduced are interesting, but their value is merely subjective. Those who admit them in evidence will recognise that they point clearly in the same direction as the other arguments we have adduced in favour of a written Aramaic Gospel.

A large part of the Sermon on the Mount is only found once in the Gospels. When however any part of Matthew v.-vii. is reproduced in Luke, we invariably notice that the divergences yield to our hypothesis, and therefore we feel

justified in inferring that the whole was contained in the original Aramaic Gospel.

At this point we may allude to a difficulty which has been raised by one or two kind friends. "We admit," it is said, "the probability of your hypothesis to account for the divergences, but how do you explain the *coincidences* in the passages where divergences exist?" Dr. B. Weiss felt this difficulty, and met it thus: "The writing which lies at the basis of our three Gospels cannot have been the primitive Hebrew work of Matthew itself, since they agree so closely in many instances in the Greek wording, but can only have been an old Greek translation of it."<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Dr. Weiss here uses the term "Hebrew" laxly as the language of Palestine; for elsewhere<sup>2</sup> he speaks of "the Aramaic source" as equivalent to the above. Thus he postulates (1) the Matthæan *Urevangelium*; (2) A Greek translation of this used by the several canonical evangelists. For my own part, I have felt no necessity for this multiplication of documents; but would rather invoke the aid of oral or catechetical instruction. A current Greek rendering of the Aramaic, with which each Evangelist was familiar, while he translated from the written document, supplemented from time to time by personal information, amply explains all the phenomena.

As one practical outcome of our researches, the *contents* of the Aramaic Gospel will be to many a matter of deep interest, and our list will be scanned very closely. It cannot be denied that the criterion used to decide as to its contents has the immense advantage of allowing no play to subjectivity. We have been guided solely by linguistic considerations. Those parallel passages which bear indica-

<sup>1</sup> Weiss' *Introduction to the New Testament*. English translation in Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton's Foreign Biblical Library, page 235.

<sup>2</sup> Weiss' *Life of Christ*, vol. i. chap. ii., in Messrs. Clark's Foreign Theological Library.

tions of translation-work, we include; those which do not, we exclude. And what is the conclusion at which we arrive? In the main it is this, that in its narratives the primitive Gospel is closely followed in the Gospel of Mark; but at the same time it contained most of the earlier discourses of Matthew. At all events this much is to my mind certain, that these narratives and discourses both existed originally in Aramaic, and from this were translated into their present form; and the examination of the language gives no ground for the surmise that there were two Aramaic *Urevangelia*—an “Ur-Marcus” and an “Ur-Matthæus.”

Those who have any acquaintance with the criticism of the Gospels as conducted in Germany, well know how hotly the dispute has raged, as to whether the longer or the shorter form of the narratives is the earlier. Did Matthew condense the narratives? or did Mark amplify? The result of our investigations leads us unhesitatingly to the conclusion, that the *longer form of the narratives is the original*. The design of the first Gospel is different from that of the second. Speaking generally, we may say, the first Gospel abbreviates the narratives; the second abbreviates or omits the discourses.

We see further that the Aramaic Gospel was chiefly a record of the Galilean ministry. In our paper of last September we endeavoured to show that there were indications that the first Gospel was written in the Galilean dialect. According to all ancient testimony it was written by a Galilean—the tax-gatherer Matthew; and therefore it is antecedently probable that provincialisms would occur in his literary productions. The concurrence of these two lines of evidence furnishes a weighty argument for the truth of our position. This is confirmed again when we discover that the work thus written was largely the Galilean Gospel; that is, the record of Christ’s deeds and words

in Galilee. In connexion with this, it is interesting to note, that the central part of the Gospel of Luke, from ix. 51 to xviii. 14, is largely occupied with a Samaritan ministry. It is here alone that we read of the mission of the seventy, who were *not* forbidden to enter into the cities of the Samaritans (x. 1-24). Here only do we read of the repression of the misguided zeal of the Sons of Thunder in a Samaritan village (ix. 52-6). Here only do we find the parable of the Good Samaritan (x. 25-37); and the record of the ten lepers, of which the only grateful one was a Samaritan (xvii. 11-19). This seems to render it probable that of the "many who had taken in hand to draw up a narrative," more or less fragmentary, of our Saviour's history, and to whom Luke acknowledges his indebtedness (Luke i. 1-4), one had written specially on the Samaritan ministry, and that work may have included many of the unique events and discourses found in the centre of the third Gospel.

It will be observed that the Aramaic Gospel gives no certain evidence of having contained an account of the Nativity. It seems to have opened precisely as the second Gospel does. We are free, however, to confess that inasmuch as the first two chapters of Matthew are not found elsewhere, and as our method is almost inapplicable to events not narrated twice, it *may* be that this in whole or part was found in the primitive Gospel. It will be observed also that there is no mention of the ministry in Jerusalem. On this point we can speak confidently, because we have a triple, indeed fourfold, account of the Passion; and the divergences give no indication of an Aramaic original. It is also noteworthy that there are no discourses of our Saviour which manifest phenomena so diverse from those on which we rely for inclusion in the Aramaic Gospel, as our Lord's predictions concerning His death.

Can we now venture to suggest a date at which the



Aramaic Gospel was probably written? This may most satisfactorily be answered if we ask, When did it happen that it was desirable or necessary that the Galilean ministry should be committed to writing, although there was as yet no need to write the history of the Judean ministry? The most probable answer to this question is that the Church at Jerusalem would need a written record as an authoritative standard *when the apostles left Jerusalem*. The advocates of the oral Gospel lay great stress on the excellent memories of the Orientals, and their ability to commit to memory much longer portions than our Gospels. But it was not because the conservative and reproductive faculties of the Orientals were defective, that a written Gospel was desirable, but because their imaginative faculty was exuberant; and the way in which fancy ran riot is clearly seen in the Apocryphal Gospels. The Galilean apostles did not leave Jerusalem for some few years after the resurrection; but unless church tradition is to be distrusted, there came a time when they did all leave. Indeed we gather from 2 Corinthians x., xi., that at that time it had come to be regarded as one of the marks of a genuine apostle that he should break up fallow ground, and preach the gospel where previously it was unknown. We would suggest then that the Gospel of the Galilean ministry was written in Aramaic within twenty years of the death of Christ, at a time when those who were members of the Church at Jerusalem, could well remember the circumstances of the Saviour's death, and there was no immediate need for committing *them* to writing, but when it was desirable to have an authorized record of what took place in Galilee, and to have our Lord's words reduced to fixed and definite form. This would most probably occur before the Twelve left Jerusalem on their respective apostolic missions.

It must be conceded that this investigation has throughout been conducted in the scientific spirit. We have

applied a test which satisfies the demands of literary criticism; and we have applied it unflinchingly, without allowing any predispositions to influence our decisions; and yet when calmly regarded, our investigations are a decided gain to the Christian faith. We have furnished an oft-wished-for explanation of many of the bewildering divergences in the Synoptic Gospels—an explanation at once in harmony with the principles of textual criticism, and also with Inspiration, as rightly understood. But we have done more than this. We have shown (and hope to do so more fully by and by) that a written account of our Lord's life existed many years before our present Gospels were penned. There is at the present time a decided disposition among scholars to date our Greek Gospels much later than was once supposed. But whensoever our Greek Gospels were written, many years must have elapsed between that time and the composition of the Aramaic Gospel; otherwise the errors of the scribe, which we find somewhat numerous, would not have had time to creep into the MSS. On this account our studies have an apologetic value. They carry back the existence of a written record some twenty years nearer the occurrence of the events than our present Gospels. The most wonderful of the miracles are there narrated—and not in an abridged form, but usually in the full form of the Gospel of Mark. We thus rejoice that the final outcome of our researches tends by carrying the date of a written Gospel further back than has hitherto been thought admissible, and by thus removing the possibility of the incrustation of legend and of myth, to strengthen the foundations of our holy faith.

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