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## SUGGESTIONS ON THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW.

IN September and October, 1904, I published in the *Monthly Review* two articles on the subject of the origin of the Gospels, but dealing exclusively with the Gospel of St Mark. The theory which was set forth in those articles must be briefly presented here in outline in order to render what is said on St Matthew more easily intelligible.

I argued that the reason why the various traditional accounts of the origin of St Mark's Gospel appear to be confused and incompatible one with another was because they do not all refer to the same edition, as we should now call it, of the Gospel; and I suggested that there were three editions of St Mark, all put forth by the evangelist himself, but at different periods—the first at Caesarea about A.D. 42, the second some years later at Alexandria, and the third at Rome after the martyrdom of St Peter, say in A.D. 68 or thereabouts. The first of these editions was used by St Luke, the second is incorporated into St Matthew's Gospel, and the third is the Gospel of St Mark as we have it now. I shewed that this theory, though at first sight it may seem rather wild, finds support in the writings of the earliest centuries, and has, therefore, so much at least of solid basis to rest on. Moreover such a theory, if it can be admitted, would go far towards the solution of many of the more obvious difficulties of the Synoptic Problem. For detailed evidence I must be content here to refer to my articles in the *Monthly Review*. My present object is to carry the investigation a step further, and to see how far it is possible, with the help of this hypothesis, to contribute something towards the solution of the difficult problem as to the origin of the Gospel which has come down to us connected with the name of St Matthew<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In my study of the subject I have derived most help from Wright's *Synopsis*, Bacon's *Introduction*, and Godet, who has the clearest statement that I have seen

In the first place we have to notice that, according to the unanimous testimony of antiquity, St Matthew wrote his Gospel not in Greek, but in Hebrew—that is to say in the Aramaic dialect which was the spoken language of Palestine in our Lord's time. Not only is that the testimony of Papias, who was almost a contemporary, but it is corroborated by every writer of the earliest centuries who touches upon the matter; and they seem in most instances not to be dependent only on Papias for their information. Unless we are to throw over primitive tradition altogether we must be prepared to admit that St Matthew wrote in Hebrew and not in Greek, and therefore that the Gospel which we call by his name to-day is, so far as it represents his original work, a translation, possibly indeed made by himself, but far more probably by another hand.

But, secondly, our present Greek Gospel is not a translation at all, at least it is not in its entirety a translation of a single work originally written in another language. That is a point which it is quite within the power of criticism to decide, and it is one on which critics are unanimous. The Greek Gospel, therefore, is not a mere translation of the Hebrew Gospel originally written by St Matthew. On the contrary, it is a composite work, and incorporates the Gospel of St Mark practically entire. If, therefore, we are to find in it a translation of the Hebrew Gospel written by St Matthew it is to the remaining and non-Marcian portions that we have to look. For it may be that the Gospel has received its title, 'according to St Matthew', not because St Matthew himself is to be regarded as the original author and composer of the whole of the book as we now have it, but, *a principali parte*, because the book contains incorporated in it, as its most important constituent, the work which St Matthew actually did compose. In that

about the division of the *Logia* into five books. Sir John Hawkins (*Horne Synoptics* p. 132) has noted, in regard to the five collections of Discourses in St Matthew, that Papias also divided his *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord* into five books; and—since this article was in type—I learn that Dr Nestle has drawn attention to the probability of connexion between the work of Papias and the five collections of Discourses in St Matthew, suggesting that a collection of the Discourses of our Lord in five books was the basis of his Exposition as also of our First Gospel (see his article 'Die Fünfteilung im Werk des Papias und im ersten Evangelium'—*Zeitschr. f. die neutest. Wissensch.* Bd. i (1900), S. 252-254).

case the position would be analogous to that of the book of the Psalms, which are called 'the Psalms of David'—not because David wrote the whole, for he certainly did not, but because the psalms which David did compose are included in and form the most important part of the whole book. Another instance might be found in 'the Proverbs of Solomon', which include, beside Solomon's, collections of proverbs the authors of which are actually named as Agur and Lemuel (Prov. xxx and xxxi).

Taking, then, this theory of incorporation as our working hypothesis, we proceed to the examination of the text of the Greek Gospel with a view of reconstructing from it, if we can, the substance of St Matthew's Hebrew composition. It can hardly have been a 'Gospel' in our modern sense, and is possibly accurately described by Papias as *Logia*, which is most naturally translated as meaning a collection of discourses<sup>1</sup>. The fidelity with which the editor has preserved the substance, and in very many cases the actual words of St Mark, leads us to suppose that he will in all probability have been equally careful in dealing with the text of his other, and in some ways his principal, authority.

We begin by going through the Gospel and striking out, paragraph by paragraph, and verse by verse, all those portions which are also to be found in St Mark's Gospel, and which are, therefore, indisputably Marcan in origin. These portions may be set aside for the purposes of our present enquiry, though, of course, we must not forget that there is always a possibility that the Marcan Gospel and the Hebrew Gospel of St Matthew may have overlapped, and that the same matter may have been found in both. We must not, therefore, finally conclude that because a particular passage is found in St Mark it cannot also have been contained in the original St Matthew. But for the present, while our ideas are still so undecided, we put the whole of the Marcan matter aside.

The remainder of the Gospel, when the Marcan narrative has been abstracted, presents an amorphous and confused appearance. The Gospel of St Mark has formed, so to speak, the backbone,

<sup>1</sup> No doubt the term *Logia*, as Lightfoot has shewn, need not exclude narrative matter; but still the other is the more probable interpretation, and as such is adopted throughout this article.

around which the rest has been grouped, and taking it away has resulted in leaving the rest without any clear connexion or cohesion. But we can do something still to bring our remaining materials into order. There is a well-marked group of narratives included among them which have a character quite distinct from the rest, and are short narratives, each complete in itself, which seem to have been interpolated from elsewhere into the Marcan text, of which they were not originally part. This group comprises the whole story of the birth of our Lord contained in the first two chapters of St Matthew's Gospel; and also the narratives of St Peter walking upon the sea (xiv 28-32), the coin found in the mouth of the fish (xvii 24-27), the suicide of Judas (xxvii 3-8), Pilate's wife's dream (xxvii 19), Pilate washing his hands before the people (xxvii 24-25), the earthquake at the time of the crucifixion and the rising of the saints (xxvii 51-53), the guard set on the tomb (xxvii 62-65), and the bribing of the soldiers (xxviii 11-15); besides several single verses of lesser importance. If the position of any one of these narratives in St Matthew's Gospel be carefully studied, it will be seen that it has simply been inserted into the text of St Mark in such a way that if it is taken away or bracketed out, the text that remains will be practically identical with that which is found in St Mark's Gospel. We will take one instance as an example to shew what we mean.

## St Mark.

xv 14. And Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, Crucify him.

15. And Pilate, wishing to content the multitude, released unto them Barabbas, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

## St Matthew.

xxvii 23. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified.

(24, 25. Pilate washes his hands.)

26. Then released he unto them Barabbas: but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

It is quite clear in these cases that the relations of these narratives are more probably with the Marcan source of

St Matthew's Gospel than with the source which we are now trying to recover. They seem to be additions drawn from some other source and inserted into the original text of St Mark at some time between the date of its first composition and that of its union with the other source or sources to form the Gospel of St Matthew, and we therefore strike them out, just as we have done already with the more purely Marcan matter, as not being useful for our present purpose, which is to recover, if it be possible to do so, the original non-Markan writing which has been combined in this Gospel with the text of St Mark.

The usual, and one might almost say the invariable, course which has been followed by the critics in their endeavours to attain their object has been to take as the basis for further investigation those portions of the non-Markan matter in St Matthew's Gospel which are also found, either actually or at least in substance, in St Luke's Gospel. They have assumed, that is to say, that the authors of both St Matthew's Greek Gospel and St Luke's Gospel have had access to and have made use of the book of the *Logia* which Papias tells us was composed in Aramaic by St Matthew, and have accordingly endeavoured to reconstruct this original writing from those portions which are found in both of these two Gospels, and yet cannot be shewn to be drawn from the Gospel of St Mark. But this method has not succeeded in giving us any clear and definite ideas; on the contrary, it can only be said to have proved itself a failure. The resulting collection of material is not uniform either in matter or in style, and does not lend itself to such a description as that of 'The Discourses of the Lord'. Such invariable failure, even in the hands of the ablest scholars, to attain definite results, or to throw any clear light on the problem they are trying to solve, suggests strongly that they have missed the way and have wandered down a path which will not lead them to the discovery of the truth. We, therefore, put this method altogether aside, and cast about to see whether we cannot find some other clue which may guide us to more satisfactory results.

There are two directions in which such a clue may possibly be found. The one is in a careful comparison, one with another, of those non-Markan passages which are found both in St Matthew

and St Luke, and the other is in the internal evidence afforded by St Matthew's Gospel itself. For it is clear from the very name that it is in St Matthew's Gospel rather than in St Luke's that we shall expect to find the clearest traces of St Matthew's earlier collection of discourses in Aramaic. If we are not mistaken, it is quite possible to find such clues in each of these examinations—clues which lead in the same direction, and therefore give a strong probability to the conclusions which follow from their pursuit.

The non-Marcian passages of St Matthew, when carefully compared with St Luke, fall readily into three classes very clearly marked off one from another. The first class will consist of those passages which are to a considerable extent *verbally* identical with the parallel passages in St Luke. In these cases there must be, in some way or other, dependence upon a single Greek source, and almost certainly a written source, for the only other alternative, namely that one evangelist has directly copied from the other, is quite inadmissible for other reasons. The second class will include all passages reproduced *in substance but not verbally*. In these cases there is obviously some literary connexion between the two, but it need be nothing more than oral tradition, which has reached the two evangelists in different ways and through different channels. The third class will consist of those passages which are to be found in St Matthew's Gospel only, and of which there is no counterpart to be found in St Luke.

The passages which show *verbal* identities, and which must therefore be due to the use of a common Greek source, are very easily distinguishable by the aid of any good Synopsis of the Gospels. The following must certainly be assigned to this class:

Matt. iii 7-12	Luke iii 7-9, 17,	The Baptist's Preaching.
iv 2-11	iv 9-13,	The Temptation.
viii 5-13	vii 1-10,	The Centurion's Servant.
viii 18-22	ix 57-60,	Would-be Disciples.
xi 2-19	vii 18-35,	The Baptist's Message, &c.
xi 20-7	x 13-16, 21-2	Woe to Chorazin, &c.

In the same category we must probably place a passage in

chapter vi 22-33, on worldliness, and a good deal, though it is difficult to say exactly how much, of chapters xii and xxiii, which are mostly concerned with denunciations of the unbelief of the Galilæan cities and of the Pharisaism of the day. Taken all together these passages have strongly Marcan characteristics and affinities, and we should have no hesitation in assigning them to that source were it not that they are either missing altogether from St Mark's Gospel, or else are found there only in a very much shorter form. Still they obviously are not sufficiently continuous or connected to justify us in assuming another and a separate source, nor do they seem likely to have belonged to the collection of 'discourses' of which we are in search. We will, therefore, without at present considering the question of their origin, strike them out in their turn, as not being of interest for our present purpose.

If at this stage we pause and examine our much reduced Gospel of St Matthew we shall find that we have, almost without knowing it, attained a very interesting result. For the remaining portion, leaving isolated verses out of consideration, proves to be composed of a number of large blocks of material, and these of a singularly homogeneous character. We have struck out practically the whole of the first four chapters, and we have the 5th, 6th, and 7th chapters left to us almost entire.

After the 7th chapter we have the 10th, a good deal of the 13th and 22nd, and almost all the 24th and 25th, and that is all. Everything else has been struck out under one or other of the headings of which we have treated above.

On looking closely at these remnants which we have thus sifted out from the whole Gospel, we cannot fail to be struck with the uniformity of the matter of which they are composed. They consist entirely of discourses spoken by our Lord, the Sermon on the Mount forming the first portion, and the rest being either parables or else discourse matter of a similar character. There is absolutely no narrative remaining now that the Marcan foundation on which these discourses have been built up has been removed. Altogether we could not possibly find anything which would answer more perfectly to such a description as Papias has given us of St Matthew's work. We have here 'The Discourses



of the Lord' in a collected form, and unmixed with any extraneous matter. It hardly seems necessary to carry our investigations further to discover the other source which has been combined with St Mark to form our present Gospel. And since it is manifest that the compiler of our present Gospel has been careful to preserve the whole of St Mark's work so far as it was known to him, we have every reason to suppose that he will have dealt in a similarly conservative spirit with his other principal source, so that we have here not merely extracts from the *Logia* of St Matthew but an incorporation of the whole of this earlier work. We have the more reason to think this because the Greek Gospel now bears the name of St Matthew, and this could hardly have come to be unless St Matthew's work were fully represented in it.

It will be felt by almost all who examine these discourses that in their unity of treatment and in the completeness of the subject-matter is involved a very considerable probability that we have in them a full representation of the original work, but this probability is very much increased, and our ideas of the original form and contents of the book of the *Logia* are made very much clearer by a remarkable peculiarity in the actual text which we may now proceed to notice. This peculiarity consists in a kind of refrain, or recurring formula, which is placed by the evangelist at each of the places at which he resumes the ordinary narrative after the longer passages of discourse material. This formula recurs five times, precisely at the close of those five long discourses which we have already separated out from the rest of St Matthew's Gospel, and is almost identically the same in every case. 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings' (vii 28, xi 1, xiii 53, xix 1, xxvi 1). The only variations are that at the end of the series of parables the formula runs 'When Jesus had finished these parables', and that in the last case (xxvi 1) it is 'When Jesus had finished all these sayings'. One is naturally led to the idea that we have in these five great discourses—thus definitely marked off and indicated by the compiler of the Gospel—the five parts of an earlier book, antecedent to our present Gospel and now separated and distributed in the larger work. Nor is it necessary to do anything more than simply to bring them together to reconstruct what was apparently the complete work in five

chapters or, as in those days they would have been called, five books. Collected together they form a complete treatise on the teaching of Christ concerning the new kingdom—a treatise which contains all that part of His teaching which was of a permanent and legislative character, and from which all that was merely local and temporary has been excluded. The whole treatise seems designed to serve as a manual of the New Law for the use of the Church at large, drawn exclusively from the teaching of our Lord and expressed wholly in His words. Its contents will be as follows:

Book

- |                   |                           |   |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---|
| I (v, vi, vii.    | The Sermon on the Mount). | The New Law.  |
| II (x.            | Mission of the Twelve).   | The Rulers of the Kingdom.                                |
| III (xiii, xxii). |                           | Parables of the Kingdom.                                  |
| IV (xviii).       |                           | Relations of the members of the Kingdom one with another. |
| V (xxiv, xxv).    |                           | The coming of the King.                                   |

The single note of 'the Kingdom', and 'the New Law' runs through all the five discourses and gives its character to the whole. The unity and completeness of subject is so striking that it is impossible that it can be merely due to chance, and we may with considerable confidence assume that we have here a complete earlier work, and in all probability, therefore, the actual book of the 'Discourses of the Lord' to the existence of which Papias has borne witness.

It is worth while too to notice the number of the chapters into which this book seems to have been divided. We can understand that as there were five 'books' of Moses and five 'books' of the Psalms, so also it would have seemed right in the eyes of a Jew of that period, to whom the symbolism of numbers meant so much more than it does to us, that there should also be five 'books' of the Sayings of the True Prophet whose coming Moses and David had foretold. It is also, perhaps, worth our while to notice that the 'Explanations of the Sayings of the Lord' which were published by Papias were also divided into five books, as we learn from Irenaeus. It suggests that the basis on which those 'Explanations' were built, the text in fact to which they served as a commentary, was no other than the *Logia* of St Matthew,

and that each 'book' of the Explanations corresponded to and commented on one of the 'books' into which the original work of St Matthew was divided.

Now if the *Logia* must thus be restricted to the five great discourses, two very interesting and important conclusions immediately follow. The first is that the whole class of matter which shews *verbal* coincidences between St Matthew and St Luke, and which is not contained in St Mark at all, cannot have formed part of the *Logia*. We shall have, therefore, now to return to the consideration of this part of the Gospel in the hope of determining whence it actually was drawn. The second conclusion, which follows as a corollary to the first, is that St Luke either does not reckon the *Logia* at all among his sources, or if he does, it is through a different translation than that which is contained in St Matthew. This is proved to be so by the fact that no part of the *Logia* material contained in both Gospels shews verbal coincidences.

We go back, then, to the consideration of the passages we have already noted as shewing a close verbal connexion, and which are enumerated on p. 192. If they are not from the *Logia* whence do they come? The obvious answer is that they are Marcan in origin. For in every way they conform to what we have learnt to expect in those portions of St Matthew and St Luke which are drawn from that source. They greatly resemble St Mark's Gospel both in their style and in the nature of their contents. They are not inserted into the text as later interpolations, but are closely connected with and grow naturally out of the portions that are Marcan beyond dispute. Moreover, they shew constant verbal coincidences with the corresponding passages in St Luke, and therefore they must either be Marcan in origin or else we are compelled to invent another Greek written source which has been used by both evangelists. If we do assume the existence of such a source, we have still to explain how it comes about that both have preserved these disjointed fragments of this source and nothing more, and why they have both joined them on, independently of one another, in several instances to exactly the same phrases of St Mark. Obviously it will be a far more simple explanation if only we can consider them as Marcan. But, on the other hand, how can they possibly be Marcan, if St Mark's

Gospel has not got them? The answer is that this is possible in one way, and in one way only. It is possible only if there were several editions of St Mark, of which editions our present St Mark is the latest, while the other evangelists made use of earlier ones. It is possible, that is to say, only if we can conceive that St Mark included them in his earlier editions, and that thence they found their way into St Matthew and St Luke, but that they were deliberately cut out from his last edition by St Mark himself. The theory of the three editions of St Mark once more supplies us with a possible solution of a problem that is otherwise very hard to solve.

If we consider the passages in question in this light we shall see at once that many of them, however suitable for a Gospel written in Palestine in A.D. 42, might be less valuable for Roman readers after A.D. 70. The figure of John the Baptist and his preaching were of less importance for Gentiles who had never heard of John than for those to whom his name and teaching were familiar, and who possibly were already prepared, with the Jews themselves, to hold him for a prophet. The same argument applies to the denunciations of the unbelief in Galilee, and of the legal narrowness of the Scribes and Pharisees. We can understand that none of this would seem important or interesting in the eyes of Roman readers who knew little of Jewish sects and parties. On the other hand it is hard to see grounds for the omission of the healing of the centurion's servant. Still the hypothesis that all this material did originally form part of St Mark's Gospel is by far the simplest that presents itself, and does not seem open to any very serious objection.

I suggest, then, that St Matthew's Gospel, in its present form, is the result of a fusion of two earlier documents. The first, and by far the longer, of these documents was a form of St Mark's Gospel, earlier and also more extensive in its contents than our present St Mark, which had also been enriched by a number of additional narratives which had been inserted into its text. The second document was a Greek translation of the *Logia* of St Matthew, a work consisting of five chapters, each of which chapters has been inserted almost intact and fitted on to some appropriate portion of the Marcan narrative without any great attention to exact chronological order.

The locality where this fusion of the two documents was carried out can be fixed with a good deal of certainty. In the first place it is hardly possible that it was Jerusalem, though Jerusalem, oddly enough, has been the place most commonly fixed upon by those who have ventured conjectures on the point. There is no time either before or after the catastrophe of A.D. 70 when the production of a *Greek* Gospel of this kind is likely to have taken place at Jerusalem itself. Moreover there is a kind of detachment and aloofness about the whole feeling of the Gospel, which is most difficult to reconcile with the idea that it had its origin in the very midst of the stormy scenes which preceded the destruction of the city. Geographical indications tend in the same direction. The author speaks of Palestine as 'Syria' (iv 24), which was the name of the Roman province. Nor is there the exactness of topographical detail which we should expect in a book compiled in the very spot in which took place so many of the principal events of which it is treating. The book, too, is clearly written for Jews, and the language of Jews in Jerusalem was not Greek but Aramaic. Its readers need translations of words like Golgotha, and were therefore not Jews of Jerusalem but of the dispersion. It is to some large centre of Greek-speaking Jews outside the Holy Land, rather than to Jerusalem itself, that we must look. Alexandria is the obvious place which meets all the requirements. There was a large colony of Jews in that city, and Greek was the language that they spoke. Moreover there was a flourishing Christian Church there from very early times, and this Church must have needed a Gospel in its own language. It did possess one such of its own, for St Mark, as tradition tells us, either carried his Gospel there or else actually wrote it out for them on the spot. Now the Marcan portion of St Matthew seems to be precisely this second or Alexandrine edition of St Mark, for it is demonstrably later than the parallel passages in St Luke and earlier than the Gospel of St Mark itself. If, then, the edition of St Mark which was used in the preparation of St Matthew's Gospel was this Alexandrine edition, it is only natural to suppose that Alexandria was the place in which St Matthew's Gospel was composed, especially as it fits in so well with all the other requirements of the case.

There is an indication that this was really so to be found in Justin Martyr's 'Apology'. St Matthew's Gospel speaks of the Wise Men as having come from 'the East'. But St Justin, apparently using some other and more exact tradition, speaks of them in three separate places as having come 'from Arabia'. He was born in Nablous or Samaria, and Arabia would not, of course, be properly designated to any dweller in Palestine by the expression 'the East', but rather 'the South'. If, then, St Justin is using a true tradition when he says that the Wise Men came from Arabia, and if St Matthew's Gospel consequently means Arabia when it speaks of 'the East', it follows necessarily that that Gospel was composed, not in Palestine, which lies to the north of Arabia, but in that country which lies to its west—that is to say, in Egypt. For it is in Egypt, and nowhere else, that Arabia would naturally be designated by the general phrase 'the East'.

If we grant that Alexandria was the place in which the Gospel according to St Matthew assumed its present form, we shall not have much difficulty in arriving at a very probable conjecture as to the way in which this came about. It must remain little more than a conjecture because there is little or no direct evidence to guide us; but it will at least afford us a possible outline of the facts, which may perhaps be allowed to stand until further evidence enables us to make a still closer approximation to the truth.

St Mark, according to tradition, came to Alexandria, in obedience to St Peter's directions, somewhere about the year A.D. 42. At Alexandria, and for the benefit of his Egyptian converts, he wrote down again the *résumé* of St Peter's preaching which we call the Gospel of St Mark. This Gospel, we can understand, naturally became the official Gospel of the Church of Alexandria. Other places had other accounts of the life and teaching of our Lord. Those places which owed their conversion to St Paul must have had left with them some written gospel narrative, a narrative which probably had some relation to the later Gospel of St Luke. So, again, Jerusalem had its own records. But the record preserved at Alexandria, the original 'Gospel according to the Egyptians', was a form of the Gospel of St Mark.

Most probably this Gospel was actually known as the 'Gospel according to the Egyptians'. Professor Harnack is no doubt right when he tells us that the territorial titles 'according to the Hebrews' and 'according to the Egyptians' are earlier than the later titles which are founded on authorship. But he is surely wrong when he goes on to infer that the later apocryphal Gospel, which usurped the name, must have existed before the canonical four. The original 'Gospel according to the Egyptians' must have been the Gospel which was given to them by St Mark, who first preached the Gospel to them, and then, after the title had become disused in the second century, a second and apocryphal Gospel appropriated the name, the original history of which was by that time forgotten. It is precisely what we see happening in the case of all the apocryphal writings. They always tried to obtain acceptance by sailing under false colours, and endeavouring to pass themselves off as other and more ancient documents than they really were. It is not too much to say that the existence of an apocryphal writing in the second century almost always presupposes and points back to the existence of an earlier and genuine writing for which it desired to be mistaken.

We may suppose that this Gospel of St Mark, in its second form, was, from at least the year 50 A.D., the official record of the Churches of Egypt, and was read in the public assemblies of the Christians on the Sunday, just as the Jews had been long accustomed to read the Old Testament Scriptures in the synagogues. It would have been regarded as a very precious and authentic document, but not as inspired Scripture in the same sense as the Old Testament. The time for that was not yet, for 'the living voice', to use the phrase of Papias, still remained with the Church, and men were not solely dependent on any book for authentic information about our Lord. So we can understand readily enough that when from time to time there arrived at Alexandria other documents which were guaranteed as trustworthy records, there would always be a tendency to incorporate them with the existing Gospel, and to enrich it with this additional information. It is in this way that we may suppose that the Birth narrative of the first two chapters came to be prefixed, and that the other short passages which have been interpolated, especially into the

story of the Passion, came to be added. They were, in the judgement of the Church of Alexandria, as authentic, as worthy to be read in the churches, as was the Gospel of their founder St Mark. Why should they not be added in, in the places to which they naturally belonged, and thus provide the faithful with a fuller and a richer narrative of the life of Christ? They need not have come all at once, but may have arrived separately. More probably they are extracts from other documents of the Church, and have been selected from a larger mass of material. But, be that as it may, the point to be kept clearly in remembrance is that the Church of Alexandria judged them to be authentic, and to be worthy of being added to the Gospel as read in the churches of Egypt, and that to that judgement they owe their present position.

But one document which came in this way to Alexandria was of such length and importance that it hardly lent itself to this procedure. It was the *Logia*, the collection of the Discourses of Christ which had been drawn up by St Matthew in Hebrew, and bore his name. As it stood it was not useful in Alexandria, for the language in which it was written would have been understood only by a few. Before it could be used it must be translated into Greek, and this we may suppose was done at an early date. Then, perhaps for a number of years, the two books would probably have existed side by side, each held in equal honour and both alike read in the churches. After a time the inconvenience of having two books would begin to be felt, and the idea of combining both into a single continuous narrative would be entertained, and in that way our present Gospel would naturally come into existence. It is, in fact, the first of the 'Harmonies', the initial product of that tendency which led afterwards to the compilation of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, and which has ever since, all through the ages, been producing countless volumes, the object of which has been to gather into a single story all that is told us in the various records of the life and teaching of our blessed Lord.

The compilation was, however, no mere affair of 'paste and scissors'. It took place at a very early date indeed, when as yet there was no special reverence for the actual words, as distinct from the substance of the sacred books. Everything



contained in the two books seems to have been carefully preserved, but in many cases there have been considerable abbreviations, and also constant alterations for the improvement of style. The whole Gospel, from end to end, bears the impress of a single mind, and is the work of one who spoke Greek fluently and is master of a good Greek style. The literary ability which has woven together into a single narrative of striking unity materials of diverse origin, and has done this with so little interference with the materials themselves, is of no ordinary kind.

The date at which the Gospel was compiled can be assigned with some confidence to within a few years, one way or the other, of the destruction of Jerusalem. Harnack puts it at about A.D. 75, being influenced by the thought that St Mark's Gospel was not composed, according to tradition, till after St Peter's death, and that some years must be allowed before it can be supposed to have been incorporated into a later gospel. But if, as I have tried to shew, it was not the final and Roman St Mark which was thus incorporated, but an earlier edition which probably had existed since A.D. 45, this reasoning loses its force. The internal evidence of the Gospel itself is much more readily compatible with an earlier date. For instance, it is hard to understand why the solemn warning 'Let him that readeth understand' (xxiv. 15) should be retained in a redaction made after the cause for the warning had been removed by the fulfilment of the prophecy. This reasoning is made still more clear by a comparison of the whole passage as it is given in each of the three synoptics. St Matthew seems to be earliest and to have written when no part of the prophecy had been fulfilled. St Mark is later, for the word 'immediately', almost certainly a Marcan word originally, for St Mark uses it constantly, has been removed, and so the two prophecies are distinguished one from another. The part which has to do with the destruction of Jerusalem is fulfilled: the part dealing with the end of the world is still future. St Luke is later still, for he explains 'the abomination of desolation' to mean the Roman armies of the siege, and interposes 'the time of the Gentiles', during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down, between the two events.

Turning to tradition we find two dates assigned. Eusebius

(*H.E.* iii 24) says that 'Matthew, having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to others delivered to them his Gospel written in their own language'. This we may take as referring to the *Logia* and embodying a true tradition. The occasion of the writing of the *Logia* was the departure of the apostles from Jerusalem, to begin their more general missionary work. The date traditionally assigned for this departure is about A.D. 42. Irenaeus, however, gives a different date. He says that 'Matthew produced a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect when Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church of Rome'. The date when St Peter and St Paul were both at Rome is just before their martyrdom in A.D. 67; and this is too late a date for the composition of the *Logia*, but fits in admirably with the requirements of the Greek Gospel. If we may suppose that Irenaeus has confused the two events, just as I have already suggested must have happened in the parallel case of St Mark, there is no reason why this date, say A. D. 66, should not be accepted as the date of the amalgamation of the two great evangelical documents at Alexandria to form the Greek 'Gospel according to St Matthew'. In that case we have once more found Catholic tradition to be easily reconcileable with the results of modern critical study. Nor need any orthodox and conservative reader be terrified at what has been suggested. St Matthew's Gospel, even if only part of it is actually St Matthew's work, may rest throughout on apostolic authority, and was probably compiled within the apostolic period. It comes to us, as I have tried to shew, on the authority of the Church of Alexandria, confirmed at a later date by the acceptance, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, of the Universal Church.

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