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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS.

THERE is a peculiar interest and fascination attaching to the lost Gospel known to us by the name of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which is not shared by any one of the other Evangelical narratives outside the Canonical four. All the others are apocryphal, on a lower level of historical value; if indeed they can be said to possess any historical value at all. But the Gospel according to the Hebrews by its very title claims an authority equal to, if not actually greater than, that of the four which eventually received the approval of the Church. The territorial designation goes better with the preposition employed than does the name of an author, and Prof. Harnack's opinion that such titles were older than the personal ones seems likely to be well founded. We are transported back to a time, at the very beginning of the Church's history, before any one of the Gospel stories had attained to universal acceptance, but when each narrative was still the exclusive possession of the city or district for the benefit of whose inhabitants it had been originally composed, and was only known to other Christians as the Gospel used by such and such a people, or preserved in such and such a city. It was probably only at a later date, and possibly only after the four Canonical Gospels had been collected together to form a single volume, that these more ancient titles gave place to those which are so familiar to us to-day, the Gospels according to St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John.

Only two of these territorial titles have come down to us, though there may possibly have been others almost equally well known; the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and that according to the Egyptians; titles which thrill us with interest, and with curiosity to know what were the contents of the documents that were known by names of so suggestive a character. We feel ourselves carried back to those dim years, of which we know

so little and would wish to know so much, immediately succeeding the times of the Apostles, while the centre of the Christian religion was still for practical purposes in the East, and while the Temple at Jerusalem was still standing. Already, these titles seem to say to us, there were Gospels known in the infant Church—already the things which Jesus did and said had been committed to writing—and already two such narratives stand out prominent among the rest for interest and authority—the possessions respectively of the Churches of Jerusalem and of Alexandria—the ‘Gospel according to the Egyptians’, and the ‘Gospel according to the Hebrews’.

Of the original ‘Gospel according to the Egyptians’ we can form a fairly definite notion. It can hardly have been anything else than some form of the Gospel of St Mark. All Christian tradition is unanimous in assigning to St Mark the work of evangelizing Egypt and founding the Church of Alexandria. When we find, therefore, that a special ‘Gospel according to the Egyptians’ was in existence from very early times, and when we find St Chrysostom actually stating that St Mark wrote his Gospel in Egypt, we can hardly help coming to the conclusion that these two traditions are correlated. St Mark, we may suppose, left behind him in Egypt a Gospel narrative which may not indeed have been absolutely identical with that which we now call by his name, but which, on the other hand, it is natural to suppose had some close affinities with it, and this narrative became known to the Christians of the first century as the Gospel according to the Egyptians.

On this hypothesis it follows, of course, that the various scraps which are quoted by Origen and others from a Gospel which was known to them under this name, since they have no apparent affinities with the Gospel of St Mark, must either be additions made at a later date to the original narrative, or else, and perhaps more probably, be quotations from an apocryphal Gospel which usurped the name in the second century, after the original Gospel of the Egyptians had become known throughout Christendom as the Gospel according to St Mark. In either case they are of no value to the student who desires to recover the text of the original document, and the details in which it varies from that form of the Gospel of St Mark which we now possess.

These considerations on the Gospel of the Egyptians are not without value for our study of the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Here again we are confronted by a number of extracts, purporting to be drawn from the Gospel in question, but which have all the appearances of a later and less authentic origin. It may be best for us to neglect these quotations for the present as being quite possibly later additions, or even quotations from an apocryphal document masquerading under a venerable title, and passing itself off as an authentic record of the life of Christ. In either of these cases they will only mislead us, and therefore for the present we put them aside, fully recognizing that they may be of value and interest, and intending to submit them to a careful examination at a later time, but for the present endeavouring to form for ourselves on *a priori* grounds some idea of the probable character of the original document, before we go on to consider whether any of the existing fragments may possibly have formed part of it.

We take then as our point of departure, a passage in the writings of Irenaeus, about the close of the second century, which is the earliest description which has come down to us of the Gospel whose nature and history we are trying to investigate. 'The Ebionites', St Irenaeus says, 'use no other Gospel except that which is according to St Matthew, and refuse the Apostle Paul, saying that he is an apostate from the law.'¹ It is not a very explicit statement, but it is sufficient to give us a starting-point for our enquiry, especially when we supplement it by a parallel passage from Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History. Eusebius is obviously basing himself on Irenaeus and his words are little more than a quotation from the earlier writer, but they contain the important additional information that the Gospel used by the Ebionites was not really the Gospel according to St Matthew, as Irenaeus had supposed, but was the Gospel according to the Hebrews. 'This Gospel', he says, 'is the only one that they use, for they reckon the others to be of little value.'² We learn from these passages that the Gospel according to the Hebrews was, in the latter half of the second century, the more or less exclusive possession of the Jewish community beyond the Jordan who were known as Ebionites, and that they

¹ Iren. i 26. 2.

² Eus. *Hist. Eccl.* iii 27. 4.

used it to the exclusion of the more widely known Greek Gospels, which were at that time just attaining the position of being admitted to the Canon of the Church, holding that it was more ancient and of greater authority than they were. It was connected with the name of St Matthew, so much so that Irenaeus supposed it to be actually identical with the Gospel which he knew under that name. From other and later sources we know that it was written in Hebrew, or rather in Aramaic, a fact which accounts at once for its limited diffusion, and for its gradual disappearance as Aramaic ceased to exist as a living language. As there is no reason to suppose that St Irenaeus knew Aramaic or that he had ever seen a copy of the Gospel in question, we cannot take his evidence as implying that there was any similarity of contents between this Hebrew Gospel attributed to St Matthew and the Greek canonical Gospel which bears his name. All that St Irenaeus really knew was, apparently, that the Gospel used by the Ebionites was by them attributed to the hand of St Matthew, and from that he not unnaturally jumped to the conclusion that it was identical with the one with which he was already familiar.

The people among whom this Gospel was preserved deserve a moment's attention. They were the descendants of the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem who had fled from the city on the approach of the Roman armies, and had taken refuge at Pella. From that place, when Jerusalem had been destroyed, and their return thither was thereby rendered impossible, they had gone on to the populous district beyond the Jordan and had settled down at Kokaba in Batanea. Among them were the descendants of the 'brethren of the Lord', who appear to have enjoyed a certain pre-eminence, and from among whom the Bishops who governed the community seem for a considerable period to have been chosen. This little colony of Christians, cut off as they were both by language and by race from the main stream of Greek-speaking and Gentile Christianity, in which the ideas peculiar to the new religion were rapidly developing themselves and assuming a permanent form, remained wholly Judaic and even reactionary. They looked back to Jerusalem as not merely the cradle but also the natural centre of their religion, and Christianity was in their eyes not intended to supplant Judaism

—that they regarded as a blasphemy and a heresy—but only to fill it in and to give a new direction to the tendency of its development. Hence they kept the Law as still binding upon them, and regarded St Paul as a heretic and an enemy, the *homo inimicus* of the parable, who had sowed tares among the wheat and so succeeded in crossing and bringing to nought the purposes of God. They kept the Jewish Sabbath as well as the Christian Sunday, called their churches by the name of 'synagogues', and ardently expected a miraculous restoration of Jerusalem to be once more the centre of the religious world, Christian as well as Jewish.

This attitude of mind had its inevitable result on their views of the person and work of Christ. They regarded Him as the Jewish Messiah, but hardly as the Redeemer of the human race. He was a Prophet, the last and greatest of the Prophets no doubt, but still only a Prophet; that other Prophet whom Moses had foretold that God would raise up like unto himself. So 'the true Prophet' was the ordinary phrase by which they designated the Founder of their religion, rarely did they speak of Him as the Christ, or as the Saviour or the Redeemer. As time went on, and especially after the founding of Ælia Capitolina by the Emperor Hadrian on the old site of Jerusalem drew off from among them all who were not forbidden on account of their Jewish blood to return to the Holy City, they became more and more reactionary, more Jewish and less Christian, until by the end of the fourth century we find them regarded definitely as heretics and separated from the main body of the Christian Church, still clinging obstinately to their Jewish customs, and speaking of Christ not as God, although called the Son of God, but as born after the ordinary way of nature of Mary and of her husband Joseph.

Such were the people among whom the Gospel according to the Hebrews circulated, and such were the doctrines that they held. Let us see now whether we have sufficient material before us to enable us to arrive at any probable conclusion as to the nature and contents of the book which alone made up the whole of the sacred literature which they had added to those Scriptures of the Old Testament which had formed the Bible of their ancestors.

In the first place we may assume, I think, not indeed with certainty but at least with a strong degree of probability, that the original composition of their Gospel must be dated back to some time anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem. No book written in their exile would have attained so commanding a position, since it would have had to contend with others of an authority not much inferior to its own. Its unique position resulted from the fact that it and it alone had been accepted by their forefathers while they still dwelt at Jerusalem, and therefore it shared in the mysterious sanctity which invested all that was connected with the Holy City. We have then to picture to ourselves, if we wish to form an idea of this Gospel which has so unfortunately perished, an Evangelic narrative of the earliest period, written in the Aramaic dialect which was current at Jerusalem and was called by the name of Hebrew, owing its origin especially to the Apostle Matthew, and lending itself to a certain extent, by its omissions and fragmentary character to inadequate and even heretical notions about the Person and work of our Lord. We are at once irresistibly reminded of that other mysterious document, also written in Hebrew and assigned to St Matthew, our knowledge of the existence of which we owe to Papias, or rather to the 'presbyter' from whom he derived his information: 'Matthew then compiled the Discourses [of the Lord] (τὰ [κυριακὰ] λόγια) in the Hebrew tongue, and every one translated them as he was able.' Is it possible seriously to maintain that there were two separate documents, each of them written at Jerusalem during the Apostolic age and in the Hebrew tongue, each of them assigned to the Apostle Matthew, and each of them dealing in some way with the Gospel story? Or are we not rather forced to the conclusion that these two documents, whose descriptions are so strangely similar, must really be identical, and that the lost Gospel according to the Hebrews, in its earliest and uninterpolated state, was indeed none other than the Book of the Logia, the Discourses of Christ, drawn up by St Matthew at Jerusalem about A. D. 40, and carried with them into exile by the fugitive Christians when they left Jerusalem for ever, a little before its final destruction in the year 71?

If we can accept this identification of the Gospel according to the Hebrews with the *Logia* of St Matthew, we are at once able

to determine, at least roughly, the nature and the limits of its contents. I know that the Dean of Westminster has given his opinion that any such attempt to define the contents of the *Logia* is premature, and that he apparently doubts even whether the *Logia* ever existed as an actual document; but in this he seems to me, as to many others, to be altogether unduly cautious. It may be premature to attempt to define with exactness what the *Logia* contained, but we can be tolerably certain at least of this, that it had no narrative of the birth or early years, and that it lacked also any details of the crucifixion. It was devoted in the main, as its name implies, to the discourses of Christ, and dealt only in a secondary manner, if at all, with His actions. On these main points there is a very general agreement of all the critics, and we shall probably be fairly safe if we adopt them as the basis for our further investigations on this subject.

What, then, we have to ask ourselves next is whether we can bring any definite and external evidence which may lend support to the rather precarious edifice we have built up on *a priori* lines. An argument of this sort is useful as providing a working hypothesis, but is dangerous to rely on unless it fits in with and helps to explain the other facts which are already known to us. Is there then any sort of reason for holding that the continued existence of a Gospel of this kind, confined exclusively to the period of the public ministry, and not dealing at all either with the way in which Christ came into the world, or with His death upon the Cross, is rendered probable by actual facts by which the theory can be tested?

We may find, I think, such support, firstly, in the history of the Ebionite people, and of the heresy which was developed among them at a later date. It is a singular phenomenon in any case that a body of professing Christians should have gone back from the position held by the Apostles, so far as we know, even from the first days after Pentecost. Some of the tenets of the Ebionites were no doubt due to an excessive conservatism, and simply reflect the primitive conditions which the Catholic Church soon outgrew and broke loose from. But others, such as the obscuring of the sacrificial aspect of the death of Christ and of His work as the Redeemer of the human race, must, surely imply a definite falling away from dogmas that had once been

clearly held. The Ebionites on this point bear witness against themselves, by their insistence on the doctrine that all earthly sacrifice had ceased, while they denied the One Sacrifice which was the only justification for such teaching in the mouth of one of Jewish descent. They were, therefore, we are justified in saying, not merely conservatives who had failed to keep pace with the developements of the Church, but reactionaries who had given up and gone back from some of the truths they once had held.

Now such a falling away is made far more easy to understand, if indeed it is not altogether accounted for, if we can adopt the hypothesis that they were possessed only of a partial Gospel and that, on account of their excessive reverence for it, they despised and rejected the fuller Gospels which would have supplied material for the preservation of their faith. If the Gospel which they possessed had no story of the birth of Christ, and no details of His Passion, but confined itself wholly to the record of His teaching, is it not obvious that, as the years went on, there might easily have arisen a tendency to forget the doctrines for which that Gospel did not supply foundation, to exalt unduly the Prophetical office, and to leave out of account Christ's office as Victim and as Priest? The Ebionite heresy would be the almost inevitable consequence of such an incomplete and one-sided picture of the life of Christ as would have been afforded by such a book as we have reason to believe the *Logia* must have been, unless that picture was supplemented, and its shortcomings made up, by the additional teaching supplied by the other Gospel histories.

We shall be led again to a similar conclusion if we make a careful examination of the few Ebionite writings which have survived the passage of the centuries. The most useful for our present purpose are the so-called Clementine Homilies, which are full of quotations drawn either from our present Gospels or else from some other narratives which have very much in common with our Gospels. There are but few questions connected with our present subject which have been more fully discussed than this one of the Clementine quotations, the one side arguing keenly that they resemble the Canonical Gospels too closely to allow us reasonably to refer them to any other document, and

the other arguing equally forcibly that the divergencies from our Gospels are so constant, and the actual coincidences so few, that no theory of quotation by memory, or of unconscious combination of separate texts, is sufficient to explain them, unless we allow at least that one or more other gospels were also employed. The question is very much complicated by the fact that this book of Homilies, in the form in which it is known to us, is itself a composite document, and has been worked over and interpolated, probably more than once, by hands that are later than that of the original composer.

It is, I think, extremely difficult to draw any satisfactory conclusion from even a minute study of these quotations. Any conclusion we arrive at is liable to be vitiated by these interpolations. Nor on the other hand is it easy to pick out the interpolations with any certainty, on account of the loose and disjointed character of the argument. But if we do not make a minute study, but only try to get as it were a bird's-eye view of the general character of the quotations, paying but little attention to any occasional exceptions to our deductions with which we may happen to meet, we may, I venture to think, obtain results which are distinctly valuable and illuminating, and which altogether bear out the conclusions at which we have already arrived. These results we may formulate as follows:—

1. From the singular likeness *in substance* of the great majority of the Clementine quotations to passages in the Gospel according to St Matthew, we may conclude with practical certainty that the author must have possessed either the Gospel of St Matthew itself, or else one at least of the sources from which that Gospel was compiled, or else another Gospel which included one at least of those sources.

2. From the fact that the quotations, though so like St Matthew in substance, are hardly ever *verbally* exact, we conclude that the possession of a source, either in its original form or else as included in another Gospel, is more probable than the possession of St Matthew itself.

3. This last conclusion is materially strengthened by the observation that the quotations are by no means drawn equally from all the various portions of St Matthew, but are, on the contrary, almost strictly limited to those portions of the Gospel

which are probably taken from the *Logia*. There are no quotations from the first four chapters, nor any from those chapters which deal with the Passion and Resurrection. Very few of the quotations allude to any event in our Lord's life, almost all refer to words which He is recorded to have spoken. A very large proportion are drawn from the Sermon on the Mount.

If a reference be made to a list of these quotations, such a one for instance as may be found in Preuschen's *Antilegomena*, the facts to which I have drawn attention stand out with almost startling clearness. The quotations begin suddenly at the fifth chapter and end with equal abruptness at the end of the twenty-fifth. In the intermediate chapters some seventy quotations are noted, and of these seventy twenty-three, or just one-third, are from the Sermon on the Mount, and thirteen more are from chapters xxiv and xxv. The large majority of the others, if looked up in such a book as Wright's *Synopsis*, will be found to be assigned by him to the *Logia* as their source. There are exceptions, but they are very few in comparison with the others. When we consider that the *Logia* portions of St. Matthew do not amount to a third of the whole Gospel, we shall see at once that it can scarcely be due to chance alone that so very large a proportion of the quotations should be drawn from so small a portion of the Gospel. We can scarcely escape the conclusion that the writer could not possibly have had the whole Gospel before him, but was limited to one or more of the sources employed by the author of the Gospel.

The evidence of the second century seems, then, to be pretty clear and free from difficulty. But the question is complicated by some other evidence which comes to us from a much later period, the end of the fourth century and the time of St Jerome, which we must now proceed to examine.

St Jerome, in the course of his Biblical studies, had become aware of the existence of an Aramaic Gospel, written in Hebrew characters, which was preserved and used by the Christians of the Syrian Beroea. At a later date he found a second copy of the same work in the library of the priest Pamphilus at Caesarea. He had the highest opinion of the importance of his find, and he obtained leave to copy it, and then proceeded to

translate it both into Greek and into Latin. The result of this careful study was to convince him that he had made no less a discovery than that of the Hebrew original of St Matthew's Gospel. He seems to have retained this opinion for many years, possibly as many as thirty, but at the same time he identified it also with the Gospel according to the Hebrews¹, though of course this identification in no way excludes the other.

He quotes this Gospel no less than thirteen times, sometimes at considerable length, and from his quotations, especially when taken in conjunction with his opinion, expressed many times with great conviction and never withdrawn, that this was indeed the Hebrew original of the Greek Gospel, we can form a tolerably accurate idea of the contents of the document. It must have borne a very close resemblance indeed to St Matthew, or St Jerome could never have supposed it to be the original, but on the other hand it must have differed from it in some notable particulars, and in a good many small details, or he would never have put himself to the trouble of translating it into Greek.

Such a close resemblance to our St Matthew cannot possibly have arisen by accident, but must involve a close connexion, direct or indirect, between the two Gospels. There are only three conceivable ways in which the resemblance can have come about. The first is that apparently held by St Jerome, who thought this document to be the earlier, and the Greek Gospel to be a translation from it, or at least to be founded upon it. The second is that held by many critics of the last century, especially by Lightfoot, Westcott, and Salmon, and is that the Greek Gospel is the original, and that the Hebrew document is merely secondary, and either translated from or at least founded upon the Greek. The third, which is that which I desire now to put forward, is that both the Greek Gospel and the Hebrew document are independent compilations from the same sources, made probably the one in imitation of the other.

Modern critics are more or less agreed that St Matthew's Gospel is the result of a fusion of three main documents, the

¹ Compare St Jerome, *Catal. Script. Eccl.*, written about A. D. 392, with the same author's *Dial. adv. Pelag.* lib. iii. The passages may be conveniently read together with the others bearing upon the question in Nicholson's *Gospel according to the Hebrews* p. 20 sq.

story of the Birth; the Logia; and some form of St Mark. Any Hebrew document which so closely resembled the Gospel as this seems to have done must have been made up of the same three sources. And St Jerome's quotations seem to shew that this was actually the case. He gives two quotations from the first two chapters, and his document had also a story of the Passion which closely resembled that of St Mark. He notes one or two differences only, as for instance that the Lintel of the Temple was said to have been broken, when St Mark says the Veil of the Temple was rent. Had there been other really notable differences he could hardly have failed to note them in like manner in some one of his many writings. We have every reason to suppose therefore that each of the three main sources was employed in the compilation of both Gospels. But, next, the Aramaic does not seem to be a mere translation from the Greek, but on the contrary seems to be the original. The phrase 'He shall be called a Nazarene' is inexplicable in the Greek, when given as a citation from prophecy, but St Jerome found it quite clear in the Hebrew. 'He shall be called Nétser, a branch', the reference being evidently to Is. xi 1, and perhaps, as Mr Nicholson has suggested, also to Zech. vi 12. The play upon the word was of course impossible in Greek, and hence the obscurity of the passage in St Matthew. This seems clearly to point to the Aramaic of *this* portion of the Gospel being earlier than the Greek, and this conclusion is strengthened by two other details which we also learn from St Jerome; the one that the reading 'Bethlehem of Judah', which he found there, is better than the 'Bethlehem of Judaea', which is the reading of the Greek, and the other that the quotations in this portion did not follow the Septuagint as they do in St Matthew, but were from the original Hebrew. On the whole then we seem justified in assuming that, at any rate as regards this introductory portion, St Jerome was right in his opinion and that he had discovered the Aramaic original on which the Greek Gospel was founded, and of which, indeed, it seems to have been a translation.

In the same way we can fairly argue that, if St Jerome's new Gospel is thus shewn not to have been *wholly* translated from the Greek, but as regards one portion to have incorporated the

original Aramaic, we shall probably be right in assuming that the same was true as regards another large portion; namely, that portion which was drawn from the *Logia*. We have no reason to suppose that there was a double translation, first from Aramaic into Greek, and then back again into Aramaic. It is obviously simpler and more reasonable to suppose that the compiler of St Jerome's Gospel here also made use of the original, with which, if our surmises in the earlier part of this article are well founded, he can hardly have been unacquainted, and that, consequently, St Jerome was right again as regards this second portion of the document he had found.

When we turn to the Marcan portion, which must have supplied the backbone of the narrative, the case is altogether different. Here we are still in possession of the source itself, though possibly in a slightly altered form, and that source, St Mark's Gospel, is generally believed to be an original Greek work and not a translation from the Aramaic. As regards this portion of the document St Jerome was in error, the Aramaic version must have been founded on the Greek, and not *vice versa*. The suggestion, then, which I desire to make is this. The Gospel document discovered by St Jerome was not either a translation from the Greek of St Matthew, nor the Aramaic original of that Gospel. It owed its similarity to St Matthew to the fact that it was compiled out of the same sources as that Gospel had been. But, whereas St Matthew is the result of a fusion of St Mark with Greek translations of a Birth Narrative and of the *Logia*, St Jerome's Gospel was the result of a fusion of the original Birth Narrative and the original *Logia* with an Aramaic translation of St Mark. In neither case can we use the word translation in any sense which will exclude a good deal of variation, and the incorporation of independent traditions. The value, therefore, of each one of St Jerome's quotations must be judged on its own merits. It is probable that we are possessed of all the most important passages in which the Aramaic document varied from the Greek St Matthew. Some of these are exceptionally valuable, as representing the original, and enable us to correct and explain the text of St Matthew. Some are possibly due to a mistranslation or a faulty text, and are, therefore, of no value at all. Some, again, may embody an independent and

genuine tradition, as, for instance, the narrative of the healing of the man with a withered hand, which is clearer and much more vivid in the Aramaic than in the Greek. Others again may be merely late traditions which have crept into a text that was insufficiently guarded by wide diffusion over the world. To examine them all in detail and to decide to which class each of them belongs would not be possible within the limits of such an article as this.

It is worth while, however, to point out that there is a certain amount of confirmatory evidence for the actual existence in Syria of just such a Gospel as that which we have been describing in the quotations from the 'Memoirs of the Apostles' to be found in Justin Martyr. There can be very little doubt that Justin was acquainted with three at least of our present Gospels, St Matthew, St Luke, and St John, and that he quotes from all three. It would be surprising if he did not, since all must have been known at Rome before the period at which he was residing there. But at the same time it must, I think, be admitted that he also quotes from another Gospel which is unknown to us, and that, in fact, it is from that other Gospel that most of his quotations are taken. This Gospel must have been singularly like the Gospel of St Matthew, for almost all his quotations agree with that Gospel in substance, but there is just the same constant disagreement in verbal matters, and sometimes in arrangement, which we find in the Clementine Homilies. Justin is not, however, quoting from the same Gospel as the author of the Homilies, for his Gospel included the Birth Narrative and the Marcan story of the Passion. Nor does it seem to be actually from St Matthew that he is quoting, for his Gospel has special details, such as the fact that the stable at Bethlehem was a cave, or that the wise men came from Arabia, which he could not have derived from St Matthew. Such a Gospel as we have described as being that found by St Jerome would exactly meet the case, and would account for all his quotations, two of which, indeed, not drawn from our Gospel, are actually to be found among St Jerome's quotations from his Gospel document. Justin was a native of Shechem, the modern Nablous, and was converted while still residing in his native place. He can hardly have failed, therefore, to understand Aramaic, which

indeed would probably have been his mother tongue, and there is no improbability in our supposing that he became so familiar with this Aramaic Gospel that he continued to quote it even after he had become acquainted with the other and more widely known Gospel in Greek.

Before we leave the subject it is necessary to say a few words on the Gospel used by the heretical Ebionites in the fourth century, our knowledge of which is almost wholly due to Epiphanius. This Gospel was certainly not identical with the document found by St Jerome, for it lacked any narrative of the birth. Moreover it was apparently of distinctly heretical tendency, while St Jerome's document had no heretical tendency at all. The absence of a Birth-narrative suggests the *Logia* as its parent, and this is what we should expect also from the place in which it originated and the sect whose tenets it expressed. A glance at the tables in Preuschen's *Antilegomena* will once more be found illuminating. The quotations from this Gospel given by Epiphanius are closely related to passages in *all* the Canonical Gospels. We may conclude, I think, that it was a secondary Gospel, probably based mainly on the *Logia*, but compiled at a comparatively late date by some one who was acquainted with the Canonical Gospels, and designed to forward the interests of the Ebionite heresy. If that be so the quotations from it are of little interest for our present purpose and need not be further discussed at present.

It may be well for the sake of clearness to sum up the suggestions which I have ventured to put forward and have tried to prove in this article. I suggest that we must distinguish three different documents, all of which were spoken of in ancient times as 'the Gospel according to the Hebrews'. The first was identical with the *Logia* of St Matthew; and was long preserved by the Jewish community, the remnant of the mother Church of Jerusalem, in their exile beyond Jordan. It was the source of the quotations found in the Clementine Homilies, so far as these are not due to later interpolations. This earliest 'Gospel according to the Hebrews' was the only Gospel used by those Jewish Christians who were cut off by their geographical position from intercourse with the Western world, but was soon felt to be insufficient by those who lived in Syria. This led to

the compilation of a fuller Gospel, possibly in imitation of the Greek Gospel of St Matthew, and out of the same sources. It is possible, on the other hand, that the Syrian compilation may have been the earlier, and that the Greek one was the imitation. In any case the time at which it was produced was probably not later than the close of the first century, while the various sources were still extant and available. The resulting document seems also to have borne the name of 'the Gospel according to the Hebrews', and to have been fairly widely known. It is probably quoted by St Ignatius (*Ep. ad Smyrn.* c. 3); by Papias (Euseb. *Hist. Eccl.* iii 39); by St Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* ii 9); by Hegesippus (Euseb. *H.E.* iv 22); by Origen (*Comm. in Ioan.* ii § 63), and by Justin Martyr. These quotations seem to imply an early translation into Greek, but if so that translation was not known to St Jerome, who became acquainted with the document in Aramaic and translated it into Greek and Latin. Lastly, the original *Logia* Gospel became more and more corrupted and interpolated as the Ebionites separated themselves more and more from orthodox Christianity, and by the end of the fourth century seems to have become a mere heretical Gospel overlaid with matter drawn from other sources, apparently from the canonical Gospels amongst others, and deliberately corrupted to favour the tenets of the heretical sect by whom it was used.

A. S. BARNES.