

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

LITERATURE.—The Gospel of Matthew has been often commented on. Omitting those commentaries included in the general commentaries of the New Testament, and those already indicated in the Literature of the Synoptic Gospels, the principal commentaries are those of Alexander of Princeton College (New York, 1861); De Wette (4th ed. Leipzig, 1857); Ewald, *Die drei ersten Evangelien übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen, 1850); Lange (Bielefeld, 1861; English translation by Schaff, New York, 1864); Morison (London, 1870; last ed. 1883); Meyer (6th ed. 1876; 8th ed. by Weiss, 1890; English translation by the Rev. P. Christie, Edinburgh, 1877); Keil (Leipzig, 1877); Mansel in *Speaker's Commentary* (London, 1878); Plumptre (London, 1878); Kübel (Munich, 1889); Carr in *Cambridge Bible for Schools* (London, 1890). Also Tholuck's *Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount* (Hamburg, 1833; English translation, Edinburgh, 1860); Ebrard's *Gospel History* (translation, Edinburgh, 1860); Lord Arthur Hervey's *Genealogies of Our Lord* (Cambridge, 1883); Robert's *Discussions on the Gospels* (London, 1862); and Nicholson's *Gospel according to the Hebrews* (London, 1879).

I. GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

We have already considered the genuineness of the Synoptic Gospels conjointly; but we require to consider the testimonies which relate to each Gospel separately; and this is especially necessary with regard to the Gospel of Matthew, on account of the peculiar nature of the evidence referring to it.

Some critics have gone the length of asserting that the Gospel of Matthew has scriptural attestation in its favour, being quoted or referred to in the Epistle of James.¹ The similarities between that Epistle and the Sermon on the Mount are indeed so numerous and striking that they cannot escape notice.² Out of numerous instances may be adduced three, in which the resemblances are most remarkable. "Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (Jas. ii. 8). These words, found in Matthew's Gospel (xxii. 39), appear to be given as an express quotation from Scripture (*κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν*).³ "Can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives? or a vine, figs?" (Jas. iii. 12), where there is a strong similarity to our Lord's words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 16). "But above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by the heaven nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay" (Jas. v. 12). This prohibition against swearing appears to be a direct citation from the Sermon on the Mount, where the same prohibition is given in almost identical terms (Matt. v. 34-37). We do not, however, think that these and similar expressions in the Epistle of James are references to or citations from Matthew's Gospel. The probability is that the Epistle was written before the Gospel. These similarities may be accounted for by referring them to the sayings of Christ, which, either in a written or in an oral form, were current among the early Christians, and which, as we have seen, formed one of the main sources of the Synoptic Gospels.

The most important document bearing upon the genuineness of the Gospel of Matthew is the Didaché, or "Teaching of the twelve apostles." This valuable document was discovered by Philotheos Bryennios in the Jerusalem monastery in Constantinople in 1873, and published by him in 1883.⁴

¹ See Schmid, *Biblical Theology of the N.T.* pp. 364-366.

² Lists of these similarities are given by Theile, Kern, Huther, Schmid, Beyschlag, Reuss, Erdmann, Alford, Davidson, Bassett, Plumptre, and Salmon.

³ James may be here quoting from the law of Moses, Lev. xix. 18.

⁴ The reader is referred to Schaff's *Oldest Church Manual* for an

There can be no reasonable doubt of its genuineness. It was repeatedly mentioned by the early Fathers. Clemens Alexandrinus quotes it as Scripture,¹ and it is referred to by Irenæus. Eusebius mentions it among the spurious writings.² It appears to have been an early Church manual, possibly for the use and instruction of catechumens, describing the "two ways," the way of life and the way of death. It has all the marks of high antiquity, as there are in it no references to the Gnostic heresies, nor to those changes in Church orders which arose in the beginning of the second century.³ "The Didaché," observes Dr. Schaff, "has the marks of the highest antiquity, and is one of the oldest, if not the very oldest, of post-apostolic writings. There is nothing in it which could not have been written between A.D. 70 and 100."⁴ It abounds with reminiscences of the words of Christ as given in Matthew's Gospel. There are at least twenty-two references, and several of them almost exact quotations. The following are the most striking references: "If anyone give thee a blow on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and thou shalt be perfect. If anyone shall compel thee to go with him one mile, go with him twain. If anyone take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also."⁵ "Baptize ye into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost,

exhaustive account of the Didaché; see also *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, edited, with a translation and notes, by Boswell D. Hitchcock and Francis Brown, New York, 1884.

¹ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom.* i. 20: "It is such a one that is called in Scripture (γρᾶφῆς) a thief. It is therefore said: 'Son, be not a liar; for lying leads to theft.' Comp. Didaché iii. 5: 'My child, become not a liar; since lying leads to theft.'"

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 25. All that Eusebius probably means is that it was not written by the apostles. It is included in the *Strichometry* of Nicephorus.

³ It is a matter of dispute whether the description of "the two ways" in the Epistle of Barnabas is taken from the Didaché, or conversely. The priority of the Didaché is advocated by Zahn, Funk, and Langen, and denied by Bryennios, Hilgenfeld, and Harnack; whilst Bishop Lightfoot and Warfield supposed that both Barnabas and the writer of the Didaché drew from a common source which is lost.

⁴ Schaff's *Oldest Church Manual*, p. 119.

⁵ Ch. i. 4; comp. Matt. v. 39-41.

in living water.”¹ “Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in His gospel. After this manner pray ye”; and then follows the Lord’s Prayer, including the doxology.² “The Lord hath said, Give not that which is holy unto dogs.”³ Now, the question is, How are we to account for these minute resemblances? If the citations had been confined to passages contained in the Sermon on the Mount, we might suppose that, as in the case of the Epistle of James, they may have been taken from the oral Gospel as preached by the apostles.⁴ But as they extend to other parts of Matthew’s Gospel, we appear to be shut up to the conclusion that they are actual quotations from that Gospel: that the author or authors of the Didaché, in drawing up this Church manual, drew many of the precepts contained in it from the first Gospel. The parallels are much closer than those found in the writings of the apostolic Fathers or of Justin Martyr.⁵

The Gospel of Matthew is referred to or quoted by all the apostolic Fathers. Thus Clemens Romanus (A.D. 96) says: “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus which He spoke concerning gentleness and longsuffering. For thus He said, Be ye merciful, that ye may obtain mercy. Forgive, that it may be forgiven you: as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye are kind, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.”⁶ And again: “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, how He said, Woe to that man; it would be better for him that he had never been born, than that he should offend one of My elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be hung about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the sea, than that he should offend one of My little ones.”⁷

¹ Ch. vii. 1; comp. Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Ch. viii. 2; comp. Matt. vi. 5, 9–13.

³ Ch. ix. 5; comp. Matt. vii. 6.

⁴ The opinion of Lechler.

⁵ It is, however, to be observed that Dr. Salmon supposes that the Didaché of Bryennios had been preceded by a shorter form which did not contain the references to the Sermon on the Mount; *Introduction to the N.T.* 7th ed. p. 559.

⁶ Clemens Romanus, ch. xiii.; comp. Matt. vi. 12–15, vii. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.* xlv.; comp. Matt. xviii. 6.

One of the earliest of the Christian writings is the so-called Epistle of Barnabas. The whole Greek text of this Epistle is found in the Sinaitic manuscript (Ⲱ), not, however, as if it were one of the canonical books of the New Testament, but as an extra-canonical book, being placed after the Apocalypse. Another manuscript of this Epistle was one of the important discoveries of Bryennios.¹ It is of doubtful origin. Clemens Alexandrinus repeatedly quotes it, and expressly attributes it to the Apostle Barnabas, the companion of Paul.² Elsewhere he states that he was one of the Seventy. Origen quotes it twice, and calls it the Epistle of Barnabas.³ Jerome also assigns the authorship of the Epistle to Barnabas.⁴ Eusebius, on the other hand, ranks it among the spurious books.⁵ In the present day it is generally regarded by biblical scholars as not the work of Barnabas.⁶ But whether genuine or not, its great antiquity is universally admitted. Such high authorities as Bishop Lightfoot⁷ and Weizsäcker, arguing from a passage found in it giving an enumeration of the Roman emperors, infer that it was written in the reign of Vespasian, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem⁸ (A.D. 70). But the inference

¹ In the same volume which contained the Didaché. The documents contained in that volume are as follows:—1. A Synopsis of the Old and New Testaments by Chrysostom; 2. The Epistle of Barnabas; 3. The First Epistle of Clement; 4. The Second Epistle of Clement; 5. The Didaché; 6. The Spurious Epistle of Mary of Cassoboli; 7. Twelve Pseudo-Ignatian Epistles.

² Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom.* ii. 6.

³ Origen, *De Principiis*, iii. 2; *Contra Gelsum*, i. 63.

⁴ Jerome, *De Vir. Ill.* 6.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 25.

⁶ Its genuineness has been defended by Professor Milligan, Smith's *Christian Biography*, article "Barnabas." Its genuineness is also maintained by Gieseler, Guericke, Bleek.

⁷ Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers: St. Clement of Rome*, vol. ii. p. 506. With Lightfoot and Weizsäcker, Professor Sanday also agrees. See Sanday's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 235, and also Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to the N.T.* 7th ed. p. 518.

⁸ The passage is as follows:—"Ten kingdoms shall reign upon the earth, and a little king shall rise up after them, who shall subdue three of the kings under one. In like manner Daniel says concerning the same: And I saw the fourth beast, wicked and strong and savage beyond all the beasts of the earth, and how from it sprang up ten horns, and out of

which they draw from this passage is doubtful. The most generally received opinion is that the Epistle of Barnabas was written by an unknown author toward the close of the first century (A.D. 100). The following quotations from Matthew's Gospel are found in it: "Let us beware, lest we be found (fulfilling the saying) as it is written (γέγραπται), Many are called, but few chosen."¹ "But when He chose His apostles who were to preach the gospel, He did so from among those who were sinners above others, that He might show that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."²

The next Father, in order of date, is Ignatius (A.D. 118). The genuineness of his Epistles has long been the subject of dispute. They exist in two recensions, the larger and smaller or Vossian recension. Cureton discovered a Syriac manuscript containing only three Epistles, and these in a more abridged form than the smaller recension. After the learned investigations of Bishop Lightfoot, it is now generally acknowledged that the seven Epistles found in the smaller recension are genuine, though perhaps containing several interpolations, and that the Curetonian recension is an abridgment.³ Now, in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, the best attested of all his Epistles, we have the following distinct quotation from Matthew: "It is better to die for the sake of Jesus Christ than to reign over all the ends of the earth: for what shall a man be profited if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul."⁴ And in the Epistle to Polycarp we have the following words: "Mitigate violent attacks by gentle applications. Be in all things wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove."⁵

them a little horn, an offshoot, and how it subdued under one three of the great horns," Barnabas, ch. iv. According to Lightfoot, the three great horns are Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, who ruled conjointly; and the little horn who was to subdue them was Nero revived. See also Ramsay's *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 307.

¹ Barnabas, ch. iv.; comp. Matt. xx. 16.

² Barnabas, ch. v.; comp. Matt. ix. 13.

³ The reader is referred to Bishop Lightfoot's learned and exhaustive work, *Apostolic Fathers: St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp*. See also Zahn's *Ignatius von Antioch*; Gloag's *Introduction to the Johannine Writings*, pp. 100 f.

⁴ Ep. ad Romanos, ch. vi.; comp. Matt. xvi. 26.

⁵ Ep. ad Polycarp, ch. ii.; comp. Matt. x. 16. The words here are

The Epistle of Polycarp (A.D. 116) was written shortly after the martyrdom of Ignatius. Its genuineness is attested by Irenæus, who was one of his disciples: "There is also a powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith and the preaching of his truth."¹ In this Epistle of Polycarp there are two quotations from the Gospel of Matthew. "Remember what the Lord said in His teaching, Judge not, that ye be not judged: forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you: be merciful, that you may obtain mercy. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And once more, Blessed are the poor and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of God."² "Beseeching the all-seeing God in our supplications not to lead us into temptation; for as the Lord has said, The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak."³

We have already had frequent occasion to allude to the testimony of Papias (A.D. 120). "So then Matthew wrote the oracles (λόγια) in the Hebrew language, and everyone interpreted them as he was able."⁴ We have endeavoured to show that Papias here does not, as many biblical scholars affirm, speak of some original document which lay at the foundation of Matthew's Gospel—the nucleus of that Gospel; but that he alludes to the canonical Gospel as we possess it, and which was in existence in his days.⁵

It is unnecessary to refer to the testimony of the early post-apostolic Fathers; for it is now hardly disputed that the Gospel of Matthew was received as authentic by the Christian Church in the middle of the second century. Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), when he speaks of the Memoirs or Memorabilia of Christ, frequently refers to this Gospel, without, however, naming it, often quoting the precise words, but

nearly identical with those in the Gospel of Matthew: *φρόνιμος γίνου ὡς ὄφεις ἐν ἄπασι καὶ ἀκέραιος ὡσεὶ περιστέρα*, the singular being employed.

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hæc.* iii. 3. 4.

² Polycarp, Ep. ad Philip. ch. ii.; comp. Matt. vii. 1, 2, v. 3, 10.

³ *Ibid.* ch. vii.; comp. Matt. vi. 13, xxvi. 41.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 40.

⁵ *Supra*, pp. 18-20.

more frequently quoting from memory, thus occasioning a slight difference between the words of Jesus as quoted by Justin and those found in the Gospels. It is unnecessary to give instances of the quotations which are scattered throughout all the writings of Justin. Jeremiah Jones gives twenty-seven quotations from the Gospel of Matthew by Justin,¹ whilst Kirchhofer increases the number to thirty-one.² Professor Sanday gives us a table of all the references of Justin to our Gospels, and observes: "The total result may be taken to be that ten passages are substantially exact, while twenty-five present slight, and thirty-six marked variations."³

Irenæus (A.D. 180) is the first Father who names Matthew as the author of the first Gospel. "Matthew, the apostle, declares that John, when preparing the way for Christ, said to those who were boasting of their relationship to Abraham: O generation of vipers, who hath shown you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit meet for repentance."⁴ And again: "Matthew, when speaking of the angel, says: The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep."⁵

But the genuineness of Matthew's Gospel is not only attested by the early Fathers, but also by the early Gnostic heretics. Basilides (A.D. 125), Valentinus (A.D. 150),⁶ and Heracleon (A.D. 160), in the fragments of their works preserved in the writings of the Fathers, have references to or citations from it.⁷ Besides, there are the Old Latin and Syriac versions made about the middle, or at least before the close of the second century. It is more than probable that the Gospels were the first books which were received by the Christian Church as canonical and divinely inspired, and were read, as Justin informs us, in their public assemblies. This would naturally be the case, as the life of Christ, His discourses and actions, would be regarded by the early Chris-

¹ Jones, *On the Canon*, vol. iii. p. 27.

² Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 89-104.

³ Sanday's *Gospels of the Second Century*, pp. 113-116.

⁴ Irenæus, *Adv. Hæc.* iii. 9. 1; comp. Matt. iii. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.* iii. 9. 2; comp. Matt. i. 20, 21.

⁶ *Ibid.* i. 8. 2.

⁷ See Davidson's *Introduction to the N.T.* 1st ed. vol. i. pp. 70, 71. Sanday's *Gospels of the Second Century*, pp. 188 ff.

tians of primary importance. This consideration sufficiently accounts for references to them being of such early date.

Although, certainly, the genuineness of Matthew's Gospel rests chiefly on the external evidence, which is in itself perfectly sufficient, yet there is not wanting internal evidence which confirms the external, though we do not place the stress of the argument on it. The attributing of the Gospel to Matthew, a comparatively unknown and obscure apostle, is in itself a presumption in its favour. If the design were to palm a Gospel upon the Church, it would not be attributed to an apostle who is never mentioned, except in the narrative of his call and in the lists of the apostles, and of whom there are hardly any records in ecclesiastical history; but to some more distinguished apostle, such as Peter, James, Andrew, Thomas, or Philip, whose names occur in the Gospels in connection with events in the life of Jesus. Besides, this Gospel contains within itself the evidences of its authenticity; it bears upon it the impress of truth. The discourses of our Lord, especially the parables and the Sermon on the Mount as there recorded, are beyond the capacity of the human intellect to compose; they are divine utterances, and all attempts to imitate them end in failure. Even those inspired writings which follow the Gospels are cast in a different mould; they want the simplicity, the freshness, the naturalness, the impressiveness of the parabolic element. As Professor Salmon says: "In point of style we travel into a new country, when we pass from the Synoptic Gospels to the Apostolic Epistles";¹ whilst the writings of the apostolic Fathers are mere dross compared with the gold found in the Gospels.

But, notwithstanding this strong attestation in favour of the Gospel of Matthew, its genuineness has been disputed on various grounds. The doubts as to its apostolic origin are drawn from the nature of the work, and not from any defect in the external evidence. They arise chiefly from the exigencies of the case in the attempts of critics to solve the Synoptic problem. It has in recent times been disputed by

¹ Salmon's *Introduction to the N.T.* p. 136.

Schleiermacher, Sieffert,¹ Eichhorn,² Meyer, Reuss, Holtzmann, De Wette,³ and Davidson.

1. It is affirmed that the Gospel, as we now have it, cannot be the original Gospel of Matthew, but must be a compilation; that there was a previous Aramaic Gospel, or a collection of Logia, probably written by Matthew, which formed the groundwork or nucleus of the canonical Gospel; that this Aramaic Gospel was increased by subsequent additions at different periods, and was translated by different persons, and that from this our canonical Gospel was gradually formed; that the original Gospel is now lost, and that what we now have is a translation or recension of it with additions by an unknown author or authors. This is the opinion of those who hold the two document hypothesis. Thus Meyer observes: "In the form in which the Gospel now exists, it cannot have originally proceeded from the hands of the Apostle Matthew."⁴ Professor Sanday, in his article in the *Expositor*, already referred to, says: "This at least is a point on which there is increasing unanimity, that the Apostle Matthew did not write the whole of the first Gospel as we have it. That he wrote a section of it, so important that his name passed from that to the whole, is by most writers willingly conceded; but analysis reveals the composite nature of our Gospel too clearly for it to be probable that we have in it the original work of our apostle, as it left his pen."⁵ And so also Dr. Marcus Dods observes: "In the present state of criticism, it is impossible to speak with certainty of the origin of the first Gospel. That the apostle, by whose name it is still called, had something to do with its composition is tolerably certain, but it is also certain that it passed through more hands than his before it reached its present form."⁶

Now it is admitted that in a certain sense the Gospel of

¹ *Ueber den Ursprung des ersten kanonischen Evangeliums.*

² According to his theory of the original Gospel, which regards the canonical Gospel as a later edition. So also all those who adopt his theory or the modern modification of it.

³ See De Wette's *Einleitung*, § 98a.

⁴ Meyer, *Matthew*, vol. i. p. 3, translation.

⁵ The *Expositor*, vol. iii. fourth series, p. 303.

⁶ *The Supernatural in Christianity*, p. 83.

Matthew may be regarded as a compilation. How far it is so will be more fully determined when we come to consider the sources of the Gospel. But it is not a compilation in the sense of those objectors, namely, that there is only a nucleus which can primarily be referred to Matthew, whilst the rest has arisen from subsequent additions or accretions. A change of Gospels, the substitution of one for another, or the enlargement of a previous Gospel, is not only never hinted at by the Fathers, but its occurrence is difficult to conceive, considering the sacredness attached to these records of the life of Jesus; it would involve time, and the early formation of Matthew's Gospel does not give sufficient time for such a growth and development. This Gospel was certainly recognised before the close of the first century, and time must be allowed even for this early recognition. Besides, the uniformity of style and expression in our Gospel proves the unity of authorship. There are the same expressions, as, for example, "That it might be fulfilled," "the kingdom of heaven,"¹ "the end of the world," continually recurring, and marking the individuality of the author.²

2. It has been maintained that the first Gospel, at least as we now have it, could not possibly be the work of an apostle who was the constant follower of our Lord, because it wants all the characteristics of an eye-witness. Many of the most important incidents of our Lord's life are omitted. There is no mention of the Judæan ministry which, as we learn from the Gospel of John, formed so important a part of our Lord's mission. In the narrative there is a complete want of graphic description; it is a narrative of incidents without anything to suggest that the narrator himself was present when these incidents occurred.

To this objection it is replied that it was not the design of Matthew or of any of the evangelists to compose a complete biography of Christ, but merely to give a sufficient

¹ Whilst elsewhere in Scripture the phrase is the kingdom of God, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, Matthew uses the phrase, the kingdom of heaven, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, more than thirty times.

² A full list of these peculiarities in Matthew's Gospel is given by Credner, *Einleitung in das N.T.* p. 63.

selection of facts from a life so full and beneficent. The Judæan ministry is omitted probably because that ministry occupied so small a portion of the life of Christ ; it was only occasionally, at the annual festivals, that He went up to Jerusalem ; by far the greater portion of His life was spent in Galilee. Besides, there are indications in this Gospel that our Lord, during the course of His public ministry, did visit Judæa. Thus we read : " It came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan " (Matt. xix. 1). And with regard to the want of graphic details, this has been greatly exaggerated, although it is admitted that in this particular the Gospel of Matthew is surpassed by the Gospel of Mark. This, however, is no objection to the genuineness of the Gospel. To write in a graphic manner depends upon the idiosyncrasy of the writer ;¹ and, as has been well remarked : " This is a phenomenon which meets us every day ; it is not the contemporary and the eye-witness, but the historian of a succeeding age who takes the keenest interest in minute detail, and records with faithful accuracy the less prominent circumstances of a great event." ²

3. The want of chronological order is frequently adduced as an argument against the genuineness of Matthew's Gospel. We have already had occasion to advert to the chronological order of the evangelists.³ It is seldom that the three evangelists are at variance on this point. The most obvious case is the stilling of the storm and the cure of the Gadarene demoniac recorded by all three.⁴ In Matthew these incidents are stated as having occurred before our Lord had

¹ " It is," observes Dr. Davidson, " a weak argument to adduce the want of graphic description in one who was an eye-witness like Matthew. The power of vivid description is a talent which does not depend on an external call. . . . If the writer had not the gift of picturesqueness before he became an apostle, he did not get it afterwards." *Introduction to N.T.* 3rd ed. vol. i. p. 343.

² Carr's *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 11. He illustrates this by Macaulay's graphic description of the reign of James II.

³ See *supra*, p. 41.

⁴ Matt. viii. 23 ; Mark iv. 35 ; Luke viii. 22. See Norton, *Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. pp. 293, 294.

delivered the parable of the Sower and the other kindred parables; whilst Mark and Luke reverse the order, and inform us that it was after our Lord had delivered these parables on "that day when the even was come that He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side" (Mark iv. 35). But we cannot see how this is any objection against the genuineness of the Gospel; the difference is very slight and unimportant. The evangelists do not seek to follow a chronological order in their narrative; there are undoubtedly variations on this point between them. The order laid down in the Gospel of Mark is in general the order to which Matthew and Luke adhere; but it is doubtful if even this order is correct. Exact chronology was a mere secondary consideration with the evangelists.

4. It has further been objected that there are mythical incidents recorded in the Gospel of Matthew which render his whole narrative suspicious. The incidents alluded to are those which are stated to have occurred at the death of Christ—the rending of the vail of the temple, the earthquake, and the saints coming forth from their tombs (Matt. xxvii. 51–53). The rending of the vail of the temple is mentioned by the other two evangelists, so that it is to the resurrection of the saints, which is recorded by Matthew only, that the objection applies. Many admit the legendary nature of this incident, and suppose that it was not an original part of Matthew's Gospel, but an insertion by a later hand. Thus Meyer calls it "a mythical apocryphal addition," and supposes that the Greek editor of Matthew inserted it in translating from the Hebrew Matthew.¹ Similarly Norton observes: "The story must be regarded as a fable, probably one which, in common with others now utterly forgotten, was in circulation among the Hebrew converts after the destruction of Jerusalem. Some possessor of a manuscript of Matthew's Hebrew Gospel may be supposed to have noted it in the margin of his copy, whence it found its way into the text of others, one or more of which fell into the hands of the Greek translator."² There is, however, no critical ground to justify

¹ Meyer, *in loco*.

² Norton's *Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. pp. 214, 215.

this supposition. The incident is omitted in no Greek manuscript. It is adverted to by Ignatius when, speaking of our Lord's descent into Hades, he says: "He whom they rightly waited for being come, raised them from the dead."¹ Others suppose that the passage is not to be understood literally, but symbolically, as an emblem of Christ's victory over death and the grave; but for this supposition there is no ground: it is recorded as part of a narrative. It is one of those supernatural incidents which meet us in every page of the Gospels. It is true that this wonderful and miraculous incident is only recorded by Matthew; but there are other supernatural events, equally wonderful, which are recorded in only one of the Gospels: as the raising of the son of the widow of Nain by Luke, and of Lazarus by John.

5. Another objection to the genuineness of the Gospel according to Matthew is, that there are in it frequent repetitions of the same events, showing that the author of the Gospel incorporated without revision two documents, each of which gave a narrative of the same incident. Thus Dr. Davidson observes: "Other particulars are wrongly narrated, as is the case with the miraculous feeding of the four thousand men in the wilderness very soon after a similar event (comp. xv. 32-38 with xiv. 16-21). In like manner, the same transaction is repeated in xii. 22-30 and ix. 32-34, which passages are so similar that we must assume a double narrative of the same event. A similar repetition of the same thing appears in xvi. 1, where the event in xii. 38 is re-enacted. The number of these duplicates is considerable, so much so as to show carelessness, forgetfulness, or needless accumulation of material."²

We have already alluded to this subject when we considered the existence of doublets in the Synoptic Gospels, and need not repeat what was then said.³ In the instances stated by Dr. Davidson there is a similarity, but not an identity of particulars. The two accounts of the miraculous feeding of

¹ Ignatius, *Ep. ad Magnes.* ch. ix. It is also referred to in the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus. Jones, *On the Canon*, vol. ii. p. 255.

² Davidson's *Introduction to the N.T.* vol. i. pp. 339, 340, 3rd ed.

³ See *supra*, p. 37.

the multitude differ in many points, in the amount of provisions, in the number fed, and in the quantity of fragments afterwards gathered; in the two miraculous cures, in the one case the man possessed with a devil was blind and dumb, in the other case he was only dumb but not blind; and the demand of the Pharisees for a sign from heaven might have been twice repeated, as such signs were regarded by them as the credentials of the Messiah.

II. THE AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL.

Irenæus is the first Father who assigns our first Gospel to Matthew. We have an account of his call to the apostleship given us by all the Synoptists.¹ The name Matthew in Hebrew (מַתְתִּי) signifies the gift of Jehovah, similar to the Greek Θεόδωρος. In the list of the apostles given by Mark he is called "the son of Alphæus" (Mark ii. 14), and as another apostle is called "James the son of Alphæus" (Luke vi. 15), it is inferred that these apostles were brothers. Others, inferring from various indications in Scripture that Alphæus is the same as Clopas the husband of Mary, the sister of the Virgin,² suppose that Matthew was nearly related to our Lord. And others from his frequent conjunction with Thomas, called Didymus or "the twin," that he was his brother. All these are idle conjectures. Matthew was by occupation a publican or tax-gatherer, a member of a class hated and despised by the Jews, as collectors of a hateful tax and standing memorials of their subjection to the Romans. Hence the phrase "publicans and sinners." As, however, Capernaum was in the province of Galilee, the dominion of Herod Antipas, it is not improbable that Matthew was an officer under that monarch, and not under the Romans. The promptitude with which he obeyed the call of Christ is an indication that there had been a previous preparation going on within him, and that he had been impressed with the teach-

¹ Matt. ix. 9-13; Mark ii. 14-17; Luke v. 27-32.

² The Apostle James the Less is mentioned as the son of Alphæus (Mark iii. 18) and as the son of Mary (Mark xv. 40), supposed to be the same as Mary the wife of Cleophas or Clopas (John xix. 25).

ing of Jesus. Matthew made a great feast in honour of Christ, at which many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and His disciples.

In the account given by Mark and Luke, Levi appears as the name of the publican who was called;¹ whilst in the lists of the apostles given by the same evangelists the name is Matthew, without any notification that he is the same as Levi formerly mentioned.² Hence it has not unreasonably been inferred that we have the account of the call of two different persons, of Matthew who afterwards became an apostle, and of Levi who was only a disciple. Some suppose that Levi was a superintendent publican and that Matthew was his subordinate, and that our Lord called both at the same time. This distinction between Matthew and Levi was recognised by the Fathers. Clemens Alexandrinus, quoting from Heracleon the Gnostic, mentions Matthew, Philip, Thomas, Levi and many others who did not suffer martyrdom, but died a natural death.³ So also Origen in his answer to Celsus, who taunts the Christians with the low condition of the apostles, inasmuch as they were publicans and fishermen, observes that Matthew and Levi, or as he calls him Lebes (ὁ Λεβῆς), were publicans.⁴ The same opinion was held by Grotius, Michaelis, Neander, Sieffert, Hase, Hilgenfeld, and Reuss.⁵ As, however, the incidents are recorded by the three evangelists in almost precisely the same words, it is highly probable that their narratives relate to the same event; and consequently that the Levi of Mark and Luke is the same as the Matthew of Matthew's Gospel. The use of two names was not uncommon among the Jews at this time; for example, Simon was called Peter, Lebbæus was surnamed Thaddæus, Thomas was called Didymus, Joses was called Barnabas, John was surnamed Mark, Simon was called Niger, Judas was surnamed Barsabas, and Saul was also called Paul.

¹ Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27.

² Mark iii. 16; Luke vi. 15.

³ Clemens Alex. *Strom.* iv. 9.

⁴ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, i. 62. It is, however, possible that by Lebes, Origen might intend the Apostle Lebbæus, Matt. x. 3.

⁵ De Wette's *Einleitung in das N.T.* § 97a.

We have hardly any notices of Matthew in the patristic writings and in ecclesiastical history, and what we have are of a legendary nature. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us that he led an ascetic life: "The Apostle Matthew partook of seeds and nuts and vegetables without flesh";¹ and he has preserved the following saying of Matthew recorded in some Gnostic writing: "They (the Gnostics) say in the traditions that Matthew the apostle constantly said, 'If the neighbour of an elect man sin, the elect man has sinned. For had he conducted himself as the Word prescribes, his neighbour also would have been filled with such reverence for the life he led as not to sin.'"² Eusebius informs us that Matthew, after he had preached the gospel to the Hebrews, that is, to the Jews in Palestine, went forth to other lands, but without mentioning any particular country.³ Socrates, in his Church history, says that he went to Ethiopia.⁴ Other writers mention Parthia, India, and Macedonia. Some affirm that he died a natural death, whilst Nicephorus states that he suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia.⁵

III. THE SOURCES OF THE GOSPEL.

It is a very difficult question to answer, Whence did Matthew obtain the materials out of which he formed his Gospel? We may distinguish three sources: 1. *Personal observation*. If the author of this Gospel was the Apostle Matthew, he would be one of the constant followers of Christ, a witness of many of His actions, and a listener to many of His discourses. He would also come into intimate contact with his fellow-apostles, and thus from their narratives would supplement his own. Matthew then would not be merely a compiler of the sayings or writings of others, but a narrator of what he himself saw and heard. 2. *Oral tradition*. This must have been the source of much of the Synoptic narratives. As we have already seen reason to

¹ Clemens Alex. *Pædag.* ii. 1.

² Clemens Alex. *Strom.* vii. 13.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 24.

⁴ Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* i. 19.

⁵ The Catholic Church keeps September 21st as the anniversary of his martyrdom. See Cave's *Lives of the Apostles*.

believe, that before anything was reduced to writing there was a certain stereotyped form of an oral Gospel which constituted the teaching of the apostles for the use of catechumens.

3. *Written documents.* We have stated that it is probable that at a very early period there were Gospel fragments. To the use of these written documents we attribute the great similarity that exists in many portions of the Synoptic Gospels. There was a historical framework common to all three. The account of the birth of our Lord, the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt, in the first two chapters of this Gospel, was probably an early document derived from Mary or from the brethren of our Lord, and treasured up by the primitive Church. The discourses and parables of our Lord were perhaps collections made of the sayings of Christ which would be distributed throughout the churches. We have also seen that it is extremely probable that Matthew made a free use of the previously written Gospel of Mark.

According to Papias, Matthew composed his oracles (*λόγια*) in the Hebrew language. We have already seen that the term *λόγια* is not to be restricted to the discourses of Jesus, but includes also the incidents of His life, in short, that it is equivalent to Gospel. It is, however, undoubtedly true that this Gospel, more than the other two, contains long discourses of our Lord, and in this particular resembles the Gospel of John; whether these discourses were delivered in full at one time, or whether they are collections of the sayings of Jesus delivered at different times. Examples of these are the Sermon on the Mount (v.—vii.), the apostolic commission (x.), the testimony concerning the Baptist (xi.), the series of early parables (xiii.), the characteristics of discipleship (xviii.), a second series of parables (xxi. 28—xxii. 14), disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees (xxii. 15—40), the denunciation pronounced against the scribes and Pharisees (xxiii.), the prediction concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (xxiv.), and the so-called parables of the passion (xxv.). The designation *λόγια*, applied to the Gospel of Matthew, is highly appropriate. It is a plausible and attractive idea that these sayings or discourses of Jesus formed the original Gospel of Matthew, and that the other portions

were subsequent additions made by unknown editors.¹ Thus Weiss supposes that the discourses of Matthew formed the original Gospel, and were the groundwork of the three Synoptics. But such an idea is extremely problematic and incapable of proof. As already stated, the same style and language, the same favourite expressions, pervade the whole Gospel, and prove the unity of authorship. Matthew, it would appear, was a collector of the sayings of Jesus, and united in one discourse many utterances which were spoken at different times, and many parables which were delivered on different occasions. In all probability these collections were made by Matthew himself of the sayings of Jesus, which were either handed down by tradition, or existed in written documents, or were heard by himself. Matthew drew them from Galilean tradition, whether oral or written, or from actual knowledge.

IV. THE DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL.

It is the uniform testimony of the Fathers that Matthew wrote his Gospel for the use and benefit of the Hebrew Christians; that is, not only for those who were resident in Palestine, but for Jewish converts scattered throughout the world. Thus Origen, as quoted by Eusebius, observes: "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Churches of God, I have learnt by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, and it was prepared for the converts from Judaism and published in the Hebrew language."² Its chief design was evidently to prove that Jesus was the Christ; that the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament received their accomplishment in Him. The

¹ View of Godet, *New Testament Studies*, p. 20: "Some coadjutor of Matthew," he observes, "who had helped him in his work of evangelisation, undertook the labour of translating into Greek *the discourses* which had been drawn up by him in their original language, and to complete this work by distributing their contents through an evangelical narrative, complete in itself and conformable to the type of Christian instruction adopted by the apostles."

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 25.

genealogy of Jesus is traced back, not as in Luke's Gospel to Adam, the ancestor of the human race, but to David the Messianic king, and to Abraham the father of the Jewish nation. The Gospel commences with the words: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham." In the Sermon on the Mount, where the principles of the religion of Jesus are enunciated, our Lord says that "He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them"; to impart to the commandments of the moral law a higher and more spiritual meaning. Jewish customs and localities are supposed to be known to the reader. Jerusalem is called the holy city, and Bethlehem the city of David. The teaching of Matthew's Gospel resembles that of the Epistle of James in regarding Christianity not as superseding Judaism, but as its development.

Hence the Gospel of Matthew, above all the other Gospels, is pervaded by the Old Testament; there are more than seventy quotations from it, or references to it. This Gospel is interwoven with proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus. His birth is foretold under the Messianic name, Emmanuel (i. 23); He is born in Bethlehem of Judæa, because so it was foretold by the prophets (ii. 6); He and His parents fled to Egypt, "that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled" (ii. 15); the massacre of the children of Bethlehem took place, in fulfilment of the words spoken by Jeremiah the prophet (ii. 18); He came and dwelt in Nazareth, "that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet" (ii. 23); John the Baptist was His forerunner, as was foretold by the prophet Esaias (iii. 3, xi. 10); leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, that the words of Esaias the prophet might be accomplished (iv. 13, 14); He cured diseases, that that which was spoken by Esaias might be fulfilled (viii. 17); He was possessed of a meek and retiring disposition, according to the description of His character given by the same prophet (xii. 17-21); He taught the multitude in parables, as was foretold of Him (xiii. 35, 36); He entered Jerusalem in lowly triumph riding upon an ass, in accordance with the prediction of Zechariah (xxi. 4, 5); He appealed to the words of David,

in proof of His Messiahship (xxii. 41-45); at His apprehension all His disciples forsook Him, in fulfilment of the prophet's statement (xxvi. 31); He was sold for thirty pieces of silver, the exact sum stated by the prophet (xxvii. 9); the soldiers who crucified Him parted His garments among them, and thus unconsciously fulfilled the statement of the prophet (xxvii. 35); and on the cross, in the hour of His agony, He appropriated to Himself the words of the prophetic Psalmist (xxvii. 46). The formula, "that it might be fulfilled" (*ὅπως πληρωθῇ*), occurs eight times in this Gospel.¹ The life of Jesus is recorded as the fulfilment of prophecy; He is portrayed as the great Messianic King, to whom all the prophets bear witness, and in whose life their predictions received their accomplishment.²

V. THE LANGUAGE OF THE GOSPEL.

The subject which we have now to discuss is one of extreme difficulty. In what language was the Gospel of Matthew written? Was it Hebrew, that is, Aramaic,³ or Greek? The difficulty consists in the conflict between the external and internal evidences: the former being in favour of an original Aramaic Gospel, and the latter tending to show that the Gospel of Matthew, as we now possess it, must have been written in Greek, and cannot be a translation. There is no difficulty in believing that some of the documentary sources of the Synoptic Gospels may have been written in Aramaic; but the question is, Was there an original Aramaic Gospel, of which the canonical Gospel of

¹ Matt. i. 22, ii. 15, 23, viii. 17, xii. 17, xiii. 35, xxi. 4, xxvii. 35.

² "Matthew desired to set forth Jesus to the Jews as their very Christ; the Legislator of a new and spiritual law; the King of a new and spiritual dominion; the Prophet of a new and universal Church; the divine Messiah who should soon resolve all doubts, returning in the clouds of heaven to judge and save." Farrar, *The Messages of the Books*, p. 40.

³ We frequently use the term Hebrew, because it is so used in Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers; but the vernacular language was Aramaic or Syro-Chaldaic, a cognate language, resembling Talmudic Hebrew, and substantially the same as that in which part of the Books of Ezra and Daniel are written.

Matthew is the translation? And with this is closely connected another important question, What was the nature of the "Gospel according to the Hebrews" used by the Hebrew-speaking Christians, so often referred to and quoted by the Fathers, and which has for centuries been lost?¹ Was it, as many critics suppose, the original Aramaic Gospel of Matthew, of which ours is only the translation?

With regard to the language of the Gospel of Matthew, the external evidence is entirely in favour of an original Hebrew Gospel. The testimonies of the Fathers are unanimous. Papias (A.D. 120), in the passage preserved by Eusebius, so often quoted, and which has proved so fruitful of conjectures, writes: "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone translated them as he was able."² We have endeavoured to show that by the "oracles" is most probably meant the Gospel;³ and if so, we have in this testimony of Papias an assertion of its Hebrew origin. "Everyone," he says, that is, every Greek Christian who was ignorant of Hebrew, "translated them as best he could." Irenæus (A.D. 180) writes: "Matthew published his Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect."⁴ Eusebius relates that Pantænus (A.D. 200), the chief of the catechetical school of Alexandria, having gone to the Indians to diffuse the Christian religion, found among them the Gospel of Matthew; for Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had before his arrival preached the gospel to them, and left with them the writings of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time.⁵ The same statement is made by Jerome.⁶ Origen (A.D. 230), in a passage preserved by

¹ Considering the remarkable discoveries which have lately been made, there is nothing extravagant in supposing that this Gospel of the Hebrews may yet be found. This would be of great importance, would solve many difficulties, and throw a flood of light on the Synoptic problem.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39. *Vide supra*, p. 19.

³ *Vide supra*, p. 65.

⁴ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 1; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 8: ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 10: Ἑβραίων γράμματα.

⁶ *De Vir. Illustr.* ch. xxxvi.

Eusebius, writes: "Among the four Gospels, which are the only indisputable ones in the Church of God, I have learnt by tradition that the first was written by Matthew, who was once a publican, but afterwards an apostle of Jesus Christ, who delivered it to the Jewish believers, composed in the Hebrew language."¹ Eusebius (A.D. 325) also attests the Hebrew original of Matthew's Gospel. "For Matthew having first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other nations delivered to them the Gospel in their native tongue."² Cyril of Jerusalem (A.D. 345) says: "Matthew, the author of the Gospel, wrote it in the Hebrew language."³ Epiphanius (A.D. 348) writes: "They (the Ebionites) also receive the Gospel according to Matthew, and this is the only one they use. They call it the Gospel according to the Hebrews: for the truth is that Matthew is the only one of the New Testament writers who published his Gospel in the Hebrew language and in Hebrew characters."⁴ Augustine (A.D. 380) observes: "Of these four (evangelists) only Matthew is reckoned to have written in the Hebrew language; the others in Greek."⁵

But the most important testimony is that of Jerome (A.D. 390), both on account of his intimate acquaintance with Hebrew, and on account of the minuteness of his statement. He not only asserts that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, but that he himself possessed a copy of it, and translated it into Greek. "Matthew, also called Levi, who from being a publican became an apostle, first of all wrote a Gospel of Christ in Judæa in Hebrew letters and words for the sake of those of the circumcised who believed. Who afterwards translated it into Greek is uncertain. Moreover, this very Hebrew Gospel is in the library at Cæsarea, which was collected with great care by Pamphilus the martyr. With permission of the Nazarenes, who live at Berœa in Syria, and use that volume, I took a copy."⁶ And again: "The

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 25: γράμμασιν Ἑβραϊκοῖς συντεταγμένον.

² *Ibid.* iii. 24.

³ *Catechet.* 14.

⁴ Epiphanius, *Hær.* xxx. 3.

⁵ *Consensus evangelistorum*, i. 2. 4.

⁶ *De Vir. Illustr.* ch. iii.: Matthæus, qui et Levi, ex publicano Apostolus, primus in Judæa propter eos qui ex circumcisione credi-

Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use, which we lately translated from Hebrew into Greek, and which is called by most the authentic Gospel of Matthew.”¹ The testimony of the later Fathers, of Chrysostom, Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Theophylact, are to the same effect.

Thus, then, the external evidence is entirely in favour of an original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. All the Fathers, from Papias to Jerome, and from Jerome to Theophylact, attest that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Aramaic, and that the Greek Gospel, which we now possess, is only a translation. Nor is there any contrary testimony; not one of the Fathers speaks of an original Greek Gospel. “No matter of fact,” observes Greswell, “which rests upon the faith of testimony can be considered certain, if this is not so.”² Bishop Westcott writes: “Till it can be shown that the writers quoted are untrustworthy generally, it is purely arbitrary to reject their statement because it is not sufficiently explicit.”³ And Tregelles observes: “If early testimonies and ancient opinion unitedly are to have some weight, when wholly uncontradicted, then it must be admitted that the original language of the Gospel of Matthew was *Hebrew*, and that the text which has been transmitted to us is really a Greek translation.”⁴ Besides, it is to be observed that there is an antecedent probability that Matthew would write his Gospel in Hebrew. If he wrote chiefly for the Hebrew Christians, and if Hebrew was the vernacular language of Palestine, as we shall afterwards see was most probably the case, then the probability is that he would write in that language.

derant Evangelium Christi Hebraicis literis verbisque composuit; quod quis postea in Græcum transtulerit, non satis certum est. Porro ipsum Hebraicum habetur usque hodie in Cæsariensi bibliotheca, quam Pamphilus martyr studiosissime confecit. Mihi quoque a Nazaræis qui in Beroæ urbe Syriæ hoc volumine utuntur, describendi facultas fuit.

¹ *Comment. ad Matth.* xii. 13: Evangelium quo utuntur Nazareni et Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone transtulimus et quod vocatur a plerisque Matthæi authenticum.

² Greswell's *Harmony of the Gospels*, vol. i. p. 101.

³ Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 208, note 2.

⁴ Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii. p. 1623. Article, “Versions, Ancient (Greek).”

Nevertheless, this evidence, apparently so strong and unanimous, has been disputed by the majority of modern critics. Papias, it is said, is described by Eusebius as a man of very limited understanding,¹ and certainly many of his statements recorded by Eusebius seem to prove this; that, however, is no reason why we should refuse credence to his assertion of a matter of fact, that Matthew wrote his oracles in Hebrew. Irenæus, it is suggested, may have founded his opinion on the testimony of Papias, whom he held in high estimation; but for this there is no proof; it is a mere conjecture. The statement about Pantænus, given by Eusebius, has been discredited as mythical; it is, however, a statement independent of Papias; and if it be a legend, yet it presupposes the prevalence of the belief in a Hebrew Gospel. Origen, the only one of the Fathers before the fourth century who was skilled in Hebrew, and thus qualified to judge, gives his testimony as a tradition: "he had learned by tradition (ὡς ἐν παραδόσει μαθὼν) that Matthew wrote in Hebrew"; but this tradition presupposed the prevalent belief regarding a Hebrew Gospel in the time of Origen. The strongest testimony is that of Jerome. He affirms that he had the Hebrew Gospel in his possession; and not only so, but that he took a copy of it and translated it into Greek. An attempt has been made to neutralise this statement. It has been asserted that if this Hebrew Gospel was the same as our Greek Gospel of Matthew, there would have been no reason for its translation. It would appear, besides, that Jerome vacillated in his opinion. At first, when he obtained possession of the Gospel of the Nazarenes, he believed that it was the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew; but afterwards, when he came to examine and translate it, he expresses himself hesitatingly, and gives his judgment in a modified form. "The Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use is called by most (*a plerisque*) the authentic Gospel of Matthew."² "The Gospel

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39: σφόδρα σμικρὸς ὢν τὸν νοῦν φαίνεται. Elsewhere, indeed, Eusebius says: "Papias was well known as a man skilled in all manner of learning, and well acquainted with the Scriptures," iii. 36. But this sentence is now regarded as spurious.

² *Comment. ad. Matth.*

according to the Hebrews, written in the Syro-Chaldaic language, but in Hebrew characters, which the Nazarenes use, is by most supposed (*ut plerique autumant*) to be the Gospel according to Matthew.”¹ Now, it is admitted that there is some ambiguity in the language of Jerome, and that he appears to have confounded the Gospel of Matthew with the Gospel according to the Hebrews, regarding them as the same. But, notwithstanding this ambiguity, which certainly weakens his testimony, he still holds to the opinion that the original Gospel of Matthew was written in Hebrew. The relation of these two Gospels—the Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Matthew—is reserved to form the subject of future consideration, in order not to interrupt the course of this discussion.

But whilst the external evidence, as contained in the testimonies of the Fathers, is wholly in favour of an original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, the internal evidence is to the contrary effect; and it has been affirmed that the Gospel of Matthew, as we now possess it, must have been an original document, and could not have been a translation. Some of the arguments in proof of this are not convincing, but others are undeniably strong.

1. It is affirmed that from its nature the Greek text of our Gospel cannot have been a translation from the Hebrew. It bears no marks of being a translation: the style is clear and flowing, without the slightest stiffness, bearing the impress of originality. There are in it numerous explanations of Jewish customs which would have been unnecessary had the Gospel been written in Hebrew for Hebrew converts. Thus: “On that day came to Him Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection” (xxii. 23). “That field was called, The field of blood, unto this day” (xxvii. 8). “Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would” (xxvii. 15). “This saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day” (xxviii. 15). Further, if the Gospel was written originally in Aramaic, there would have been little use of a Syriac translation, as it would be understood by the Syrian Chris-

¹ *Dialog. adv. Pelagianos*, iii. 2.

tians; or at least the Syriac translation would have been made from it, and not from the Greek, which on this hypothesis was itself a translation. "We have," observes Professor Moses Stuart of America, "the Peshito, a version of a very early age, in a language which was twin-sister to the Hebrew of that day, yea, almost identical with it: and yet this version is demonstrably not from a *Hebrew* original of Matthew, but from the present Greek canonical Matthew." Besides, it is the present Greek text that is uniformly quoted or referred to by the Fathers, and that at a period so early as the time when the Epistle of Barnabas was written (A.D. 100). There are also paronomasiæ, or plays on Greek words, which could hardly occur in a translation, as *κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει* (xxi. 41), *ἀφανίζουσι ὅπως φανῶσι* (vi. 16).

To these objections it is answered: that the excellence of the translation may remove all traces of its having been written in a foreign language; that the explanation of Jewish customs was necessary for those Jewish converts who lived outside of Palestine and used the Hebrew language; that the Fathers quoted from the Greek because it was before them, whilst they may not have seen the Hebrew original, which might not have been circulated beyond Palestine; and that paronomasiæ are very few, and may occur in translations as well as in the original. We have a remarkable instance of a paronomasia in the Authorised Version of Jas. i. 6: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth (*δακρυώμενος*) is like a wave (*κλύδωνι*) of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."¹

2. There are in the Gospel of Matthew several Aramaic expressions, the translations of which are subjoined. Thus: "They shall call His name Immanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us" (i. 23). "They came unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull" (xxvii. 33). "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (xxvii. 46). These Aramaic expressions may have been preserved in the Greek Gospel on account of their weighty character; but the interpretation of them could not have formed part of a Hebrew

¹ So also in Rom. ii. 18.

original. To this objection, two answers are given: The translation of these Aramaic expressions may have at first been put as a marginal note for the information of Greek readers, and afterwards have been inserted in the text. For this, however, there is no critical authority, as they are found in all manuscripts. Or the translator of the Hebrew original might himself have given the interpretation; a supposition which is not improbable.

3. A far more formidable objection to a Hebrew original arises from the fact that there is often an identity between the Greek of Matthew's Gospel and the Greek of the Gospels of Mark and Luke. This, it is evident, could not possibly have been the case if the Greek Gospel of Matthew was an independent translation. A Hebrew original of Matthew may account for a variation in his Gospel in the narrative of the same events and discourses contained in the other Gospels, but the agreement in expression is a proof that the Gospel of Matthew could not be an independent translation. If Matthew and Luke use precisely the same words, as is often the case, it is a proof that both had the same Greek source before them.

Here, undoubtedly, there is an objection to an original Hebrew Gospel of great force, and the answers given to it are somewhat unsatisfactory. Meyer gives the following answer: "The frequent identity of expression in Matthew with Mark and Luke does not necessarily point to an original composition of the former in Greek, but leaves the question quite unaffected, as the translated Matthew might either have been made use of by the later Synoptics, or might even have originated from the use of the latter, or of common sources."¹ According to this distinguished critic, either Mark and Luke may have made use of the translation of Matthew, or the translator of Matthew may have used these Gospels, or all three may have drawn from common sources. But none of these suppositions can be correct. The Gospel of Luke, we have seen, was independent of that of Matthew;² and to suppose that the translator of the Hebrew Matthew drew from the

¹ Meyer's *Commentary on Matthew*, p. 10, translation.

² See *supra*, p. 50.

same common source as Luke, may not indeed be an impossible, but is a highly improbable supposition, and detracts from the value and accuracy of the translation.

Some attempt to solve this difficulty, arising from the conflict between the external and internal evidences regarding the language of Matthew's Gospel, by the assumption that Matthew wrote two editions of his Gospel, the one in Hebrew, for the use of Christians who spoke Hebrew, and the other in Greek, for the use of Christians who spoke Greek. This hypothesis of a twofold Gospel of Matthew is of comparatively recent origin, and has no support from the writings of the Fathers, who never attribute the translation of the Gospel to Matthew himself. It is, however, very plausible and not indefensible, because, if adopted, it at once reconciles the declarations of the Fathers concerning an original Hebrew Matthew with the proofs that our present Gospel was written in Greek; the external and internal evidences are brought into agreement.¹ Such a theory, with various modifications, has been adopted by such distinguished critics as Bengel, Schott, Olshausen, Thiersch, Guericke, and Schaff; and among English theologians by Townson, Whitby, Benson, Bloomfield, Horne, Archdeacon Lee,² and Bishop Ellicott. Thus Schaff writes: "If we credit the well-nigh unanimous tradition of the ancient Church concerning a prior Hebrew Matthew, we must either ascribe the Gospel of Matthew to some unknown translator who took certain liberties with the original, or what seems most probable, we must assume that Matthew himself, at different periods of his life, wrote his Gospel first in Hebrew, in Palestine, and afterwards in Greek. In doing so, he would not literally translate his own book, but, like other historians, freely reproduce and improve it. Josephus did the same with his history of the Jewish war, of which the Greek only

¹ If we cannot positively assent to its truth, yet neither can we reject it, but, on the contrary, may favourably entertain it as a solution of difficulties. "There seems," observes Dr. Townson, "more reason for allowing two originals than for contesting either: the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for the Hebrew, and evident marks of originality for the Greek."

² Dr Lee, *Inspiration of the Holy Scripture*, pp. 566-574.

remains.¹ When the Greek Matthew once was current in the Church, it naturally superseded the Hebrew, especially if it was more complete."²

Others, admitting that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew, in order to give apostolic authority to the translation, assign it to different apostles. Thus the author of the *Synopsis Scripturæ sacræ*, in Athanasius' works, assigns it to James; Theophylact, to John; Anastasius Sinaita supposes that Paul and Luke conjointly translated the Gospel into Greek. Gresswell makes the strange supposition that Mark was the translator of the Hebrew Matthew.³ All these are mere fanciful conjectures. Another opinion is that the *λόγια* or oracles of Matthew mentioned by Papias was not the Gospel of Matthew, but another work of his written in Hebrew, containing chiefly discourses of our Lord, which he afterwards translated and embodied in his Gospel written in Greek.⁴

It is exceedingly difficult to arrive at any certain conclusion as the result of this discussion. On the one hand, the external evidence in favour of an original Hebrew Gospel is uniform and undisputed: the Fathers are unanimous on this point, and there is no contrary testimony. But, on the other hand, the internal evidence in favour of an original Greek Gospel is so strong and apparently so convincing, that were it not for the external evidence it would hardly have been doubted. The attempt to overthrow the external evidence by asserting that the Fathers, following the assertion of Papias, were mistaken, is a violent solution; the testimony of Origen, for example, cannot in this manner be set aside. A possible solution may be that the Gospel according to the

¹ So also Ihne wrote his excellent history of the Romans both in German and in English. They were separate works: the English was not a translation of the German.

² Schaff's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 626.

³ Gresswell's *Dissertations*, vol. i. p. 122. He gives it as his conjecture that "Mark translated the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, and wrote his own supplementary to it, either both at Rome, or both about the same time."

⁴ For this ingenious supposition, see Morison's *Commentary on Matthew*, Introduction, pp. xlv f.

Hebrews may have been originally the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, but afterwards became much altered from its original form by interpolations and omissions. In general, greater weight must be given to the external evidence which relates to matters of fact than to the internal evidence which, for the most part, rests on subjective considerations.

Critics are nearly equally divided upon this question. Grotius, Eichhorn, Kuinoel, Michaelis, Sieffert, Tholuck, Olshausen, Meyer, Ebrard, Godet, Lange, and Luthardt; and among English theologians, Walton, Mill, Principal Campbell of Aberdeen, Greswell, Norton (of America), Tregelles, Cureton, Dr. Samuel Davidson, and Westcott, maintain the Hebrew original of the Gospel. Whilst the Greek original is maintained by Erasmus,¹ Beza, Wetstein, Hug, Credner, De Wette, Ewald, Bleek, Tischendorf, Holtzmann, Zahn, and Weiss; and among English writers by John Lightfoot, Lardner, Jones, Moses Stuart (of America), Archbishop Thomson, Alford, Morison, Roberts, and Salmon.

Another important point, intimately related to this discussion, remains to be considered: the nature of the Gospel according to the Hebrews (*εὐαγγέλιον καθ' Ἑβραίων*), and its relation to the Gospel of Matthew. Many critics suppose that this Gospel, divested of its apocryphal additions, and having its omissions restored, was the original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, and that our canonical Gospel is a translation of it before it was mutilated. Undoubtedly such a Gospel was in use among the Hebrew-speaking converts at a very early period. It is often quoted by the Fathers, and was held in estimation among them, being sometimes cited as Scripture. It occurs under various names, as "the Gospel of the Ebionites," "the Gospel of the Nazarenes," and "the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles." Its origin is obscure. Some suppose that it is cited by Ignatius in his Epistle to the Smyrneans, when, in opposition to the Docetic conception of our Lord's body, he says that our Lord, after His resurrection, said to His disciples: "Lay hold, handle Me, and see

¹ Erasmus appears to have been the first to suggest that Greek was the original language of the Gospel of Matthew.

that I am not an incorporeal demon.”¹ Eusebius states that he knew not whence Ignatius derived his information;² but, according to Jerome, it was a quotation from the Gospel of the Nazarenes.³ The probability, however, is that the reference is to Luke xxiv. 39: “Handle, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having.” Eusebius informs us that Papias gives us an account of a woman who had been accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.⁴ It is to be observed that Eusebius does not here affirm that Papias quoted this statement from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, but merely that such a statement is to be found in that Gospel. The first direct testimony to the existence of such a Gospel is contained in the somewhat ambiguous statement of Eusebius concerning Hegesippus (A.D. 180). “He (Hegesippus) states some particulars from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, and from a Syriac Gospel, and particularly from the Hebrew language, showing that he himself was a convert from the Hebrews.”⁵ Irenæus (A.D. 180) states that the Ebionites used the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiated the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law.⁶ In these words of Irenæus we have an evident reference to the Gospel of the Ebionites (the same as the Gospel according to the Hebrews), which was attributed to Matthew. It was accordingly in existence in the time of Irenæus, and appears to have been regarded by him as the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. Clemens Alexandrinus writes: “Matthew, in the traditions exhorting us, says, Wonder at what is before you, laying this (namely, wonder) down as the foundation of all further knowledge. So also in the Gospel to the Hebrews it is written, He that wonders shall reign, and he that has reigned shall rest.”⁷

¹ Ignatius, *Ep. ad Smyr.* ch. iii. δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 36.

³ *De viris illustr.* ch. xvi.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

⁵ *Ibid.* iv. 22: ἐκ τε τοῦ καθ’ Ἑβραίους εὐαγγελίου καὶ τοῦ Συριακοῦ καὶ ἰδίως ἐκ τῆς Ἑβραϊδὸς διαλέκτου τινα τίθησιν. The exact meaning of the words is very difficult to determine. May it not be that Hegesippus alludes to the Syriac version?

⁶ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* i. 26. 2.

⁷ Clemens Alex. *Stromata*, ii. 9.

Origen speaks of this Gospel in doubtful terms: "If anyone admit the Gospel according to the Hebrews."¹ "It is written in a certain Gospel, which is entitled, 'according to the Hebrews,' if anyone please to receive it, not as of authority, but for illustration."² Eusebius classes it among the *νόθοι* or spurious writings: "In this number some have placed the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews who have received Christ are particularly delighted."³

The strict Jewish Christians, who held that the law of Moses was not abolished, but still binding on all Christians, and who refused to hold communion with the Gentile converts, separated of their own accord from the Catholic Church, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, or were cast out. They are known in ecclesiastical history as Ebionites.⁴ Irenæus is the first who mentions this sect: "Those who are called Ebionites agree that the world was made by God; but their opinions with respect to the Lord are similar to those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They practise circumcision, persevere in the observance of the customs which are enjoined by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life that they even adore Jerusalem, as if it were the house of God."⁵ After their separation from the Catholic Church, they adopted various heretical opinions. They held low views of Christ, denied His divinity, regarding Him as the son of Mary born in wedlock, and rejected the Epistles of Paul. There seems, however, to have been at an early period a diversity of opinion among them. Thus Origen observes: "Let it be admitted that there are some who accept Jesus, and who boast on that account of being Christians, and yet would regulate their lives like the Jewish multitude in accordance with the Jewish law, and these are the twofold sect of the Ebionites, who either acknowledge with us that Jesus was born of a virgin, or deny this, and

¹ *Comment. ad Joann.*

² Origen on Matt. xix. 19.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 25.

⁴ According to Tertullian, the Ebionites were the disciples of a heretic called Ebion; but it is more probable that the word is an appellative meaning *poor*.

⁵ *Adv. Hær.* i. 26. 2. So also Hippolytus, *Refutat. omn. hær.* vii. 22.

maintain that He was begotten like other human beings."¹ And the same distinction is made by Eusebius: "The Ebionites," he observes, "hold poor and mean opinions concerning Christ. They considered Him a plain and common man, who was justified only because of His superior virtue. There are others besides them who were of the same name, but avoided the absurdity of these opinions, not denying that the Lord was born of a virgin."² Epiphanius is the first Father who calls these two classes by different names; those who held heretical opinions concerning the person of Christ he terms Ebionites, and those who held comparatively orthodox views he terms Nazarenes.³ Probably the heretical views of the Ebionites were of later growth, as Justin describes the strict Jewish Christians only as weak brethren who had not attained to the liberty of the Gospel.⁴ In accordance with this difference of opinion, there appear to have been two recensions of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the one called the Gospel of the Ebionites, and the other the Gospel of the Nazarenes;⁵ and there is also a difference in the quotations from them as given by Jerome and Epiphanius. It was the Gospel of the Nazarenes that Jerome translated.

Mr. Nicholson, in his learned work, *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*,⁶ supposes that it was written by Matthew, and that he also wrote the Greek Gospel that bears his name. The one was an edition of the other, just as modern authors publish editions of their works, often much altered. "My

¹ *Contra Celsum*, v. 61.

² *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 27. These two classes are to be identified with the Ebionites and Nazarenes. See De Wette's *Einleitung*, § 63a.

³ *Hær.* xxx. 3. 13.

⁴ *Dial. cum. Tryph.* ch. xlvii.

⁵ According to a statement of Epiphanius, the language of the Ebionite Gospel would appear to have been Greek, *Hær.* xxx. 3. 13, an opinion adopted by Hilgenfeld. This, however, is very doubtful. The language of the Nazarene Gospel was undoubtedly Hebrew.

⁶ This is a work of great erudition which has been too much overlooked. In it there is a most valuable collection of all the fragments of this Gospel, scattered throughout the writings of the Fathers, with valuable critical annotations. He gives thirty-three fragments, many of them of a highly interesting character. See also Anger in his *Synopsis Evangeliorum*.

hypothesis," he observes, "is that Matthew wrote at *different times* the canonical Gospel and the Gospel according to the Hebrews, or at least that large part of the latter which runs parallel with the former."¹ Afterwards, as he supposes, the Gospel of the Hebrews became corrupted with additions,² abbreviations, and heretical views; but in its original state it was the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew.

It would certainly appear that the Gospel of Matthew lies at the foundation of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, whether in its corrupt state as used by the Ebionites, or in its comparatively pure state as used by the Nazarenes. For this we have the distinct testimonies of Epiphanius and Jerome. The Ebionite Gospel, or the Gospel of the Hebrews in its corrupt form, as is evident from the extracts from it and references to it contained in the writings of the Fathers, is clearly heretical, and is to be classed among the spurious Gospels, being a mutilation of the Gospel of Matthew, just as the Gospel of Marcion was a mutilation of the Gospel of Luke. On the other hand, Epiphanius informs us that the Nazarenes had the Gospel of Matthew in a comparatively complete form in Hebrew.³ The question then naturally arises: Might not this Gospel of the Hebrews, as preserved by the Nazarenes in its original state, when divested of its accretions and with its omissions restored, be the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew attested by the Fathers, and which was lost after its translation into Greek? This, however, is exceedingly doubtful, as the fragments of it which remain are additions which find no place in our canonical Gospel.⁴

Some of these additions found in the writings of the

¹ *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, p. 104.

² Many of these extra canonical additions Mr. Nicholson defends, and supposes to be genuine.

³ τὸ κατὰ Ματθ. εὐαγγέλιον πληρέστατον.

⁴ For a most interesting list of these fragments, see Nicholson's *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, pp. 28-77; Resch's *Agrapha*, pp. 322-342; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 433-438; Salmon's *Introduction to the Study of the N.T.* pp. 208 ff. The Gospel of the Hebrews with these extra canonical additions must be of a later origin than the Gospel of Matthew. See Abbott's article on the Gospels, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. x. p. 818, note.

Fathers are of an interesting nature. We give a few examples. The man with the withered arm is described as a mason, who came to Jesus saying: "I am a mason, seeking a livelihood by the labour of my hands. I pray thee, Jesus, to restore me to health, that I may not beg my bread."¹ The Holy Spirit is called "the mother of Christ." The Lord is introduced as saying: "My mother, the Holy Ghost, lately took Me by one of the hairs of My head and carried Me to the great mountain Tabor."² The account of the rich man who came to Jesus asking, What must I do to inherit eternal life, is thus expanded: "Another rich man said unto Him, Master what good thing must I do to live? He said to Him, Fulfil the law and the prophets. He answered Him, I have fulfilled them. He said to him, Go, sell all that thou hast, and distribute to the poor, and come follow Me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, for it pleased him not. Then said the Lord to him, How sayest thou I have fulfilled the law and the prophets, seeing that it is written, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; and behold many of thy brethren, the sons of Abraham, are clothed in filth, and dying from hunger, whilst thy house is full of much goods, and nothing goes out of it. And He turned and said to Simon, sitting beside Him, Simon, son of Jonas, it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."³ It is in this Gospel that the legend of our Lord's appearance to James is found. It is given as follows: "And when the Lord had given His linen cloth to the servant of the high priest, He went to James and appeared to him. For James had taken an oath that he would not eat bread from that hour on which he had drunk the cup of the Lord until He saw Him risen from the dead. Then our Lord said, Bring a table and bread. And He took the bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave

¹ This is found in Jerome, *ad Matth.* xii. 13. See Resch's *Agrapha*, p. 379; Nicholson, p. 46.

² Found in Origen, *Comm. ad. Johann.* § 63. See Nicholson, pp. 74-76.

³ This passage is found in the Latin version of Origen's commentary on St. Matthew; see Resch's *Agrapha*, p. 387; Wescott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 434; Nicholson's *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, pp. 49-51; Salmon's *Introduction*, p. 213.

it to James the Just, saying, Eat thy bread, My brother, for the Son of Man is risen from the dead."¹

Another important point, intimately connected with the subject under discussion, regards the language spoken in Palestine in the days of Christ and His apostles. Hug was among the first to maintain that the prevailing language of Judæa and Galilee at this time was not Aramaic but Greek, and that, consequently, if Matthew wrote his Gospel to the Jews in Palestine, he must have done so in Greek.² This opinion has recently been maintained with much learning and ingenuity by Professor Roberts of St. Andrews. He thus states his theory: "What I maintain is that Greek was the language which our Lord and His followers habitually used in their public addresses." "While it is generally said that our Lord *for the most part* spoke in Hebrew and only sometimes in Greek, what I venture to maintain is that our Lord spoke for the most part in Greek and only now and then in Hebrew."³ Now, certainly it must be admitted that Greek was commonly used in Palestine in the time of our Lord. The conquests of Alexander, the policy of the Roman government, the intercourse with Greek Jews who came to worship at the annual festivals, and the Hellenic tendency of the Herodian family, must have diffused the Greek language. There were numerous Greek cities scattered throughout all Palestine, especially in the province of Galilee, called on that account Galilee of the Gentiles.⁴ Greek was the language in which legal proceedings were carried on by the Roman government, and must have been used in commercial transactions with foreigners. It was doubtless the language in which our Lord spoke before Pilate. At the same time, we can hardly assume that Greek was the prevailing language. Palestine appears at this time to have been bilingual; both Hebrew and Greek were spoken;

¹ This tradition is found in Jerome's *De vir. illustr.* ii. For remarks on it, see Resch's *Agapha*, p. 421, and Nicholson, pp. 62-88. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 7.

² Hug's *Introduction to the N.T.* vol. ii. p. 54 ff.

³ Roberts, *Greek the Language of Christ and His Apostles*, pp. 15, 16.

⁴ Casarea, Ptolemais, Scythopolis, Pella, Tiberias, Casarea Philippi, Samaria, Antipatris were Greek cities.

Hebrew probably by the country people, and Greek by the educated and those residing in towns; as is the case with the Celtic and English in the Highlands of Scotland, and with the Welsh and English in Wales. Paul in addressing the Jewish mob in Jerusalem, spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue, in consequence of which he was heard with greater attention (Acts xxii. 2). And in his address before Agrippa he mentions that the voice which came from heaven at his conversion addressed him in the Hebrew tongue (Acts xxvi. 14). The few words of our Lord which have been preserved are Aramaic, apparently intimating that this was the language in which He generally spoke: as Cephas, Boanerges, Ephphatha, Talitha-cumi, and the exclamation on the cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*. So also we learn the same use of Hebrew by the people from the writings of Josephus. He wrote his history first in Hebrew, which he calls his native language, and then in Greek. "I propose," he says, "to narrate in the Greek language to those under the Roman dominion the things which I formerly composed for the barbarians of the interior in my native tongue."¹ And whilst he calls Hebrew his native tongue (*πάτριος γλώσσα*), he speaks of Greek as a foreign language (*ξένη διάλεκτος*).² When, at the request of Titus, he addressed his countrymen, it was in Hebrew: "Josephus, standing where he could be heard, declared the message of the emperor in Hebrew."³ From all this it would appear that although Greek was well known to the Jews, and they could converse in it, yet their native language, that which they usually employed in mutual intercourse, was not Greek but Aramaic, called in Scripture "their language" (Acts i. 19).⁴

We have already had occasion to refer to the style and diction of Matthew. There is a frequent recurrence of peculiar expressions. The phrase, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophets," is of constant

¹ Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* Preface. ² *Ant.* Preface. ³ *Bell. Jud.* vi. 2. 1.

⁴ For the extent to which Greek was spoken in Palestine, see Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, div. ii. vol. i. pp. 47 ff. He comes to the conclusion that the lower classes in Palestine possessed either no knowledge, or only an insufficient one, of Greek.

occurrence. The expression, "the Son of David," the Messianic title of our Lord, occurs eight times. 'Ο λεγόμενος is a favourite expression, announcing the meaning of the epithets applied to Christ and His disciples. "The kingdom of heaven" is used in this Gospel instead of "the kingdom of God" employed by the other Synoptists. The phrase, *συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος*, occurs four times, and is only found elsewhere in Heb. ix. 26. *Τάφος* is the word for a tomb, which occurs six times, and is never used by the other evangelists, who use either *μνῆμα* or *μνημεῖον*. *Τότε* is the usual particle of transition. There is also a large number of words which are peculiar to this Gospel.¹ Hebraisms occur, but not more frequently than in many other writings of the New Testament, and are not sufficiently numerous to indicate traces of a translation from the Hebrew. "The style of Matthew," writes Schaff, "is simple, unadorned, calm, dignified, even majestic; less vivid and picturesque than that of Mark, more even and uniform than Luke's, because not dependent on written sources. He is Hebraising, but less so than Mark, and not so much as Luke in his first two chapters. In the fulness of the teaching of Christ he surpasses all except John. Nothing can be more solemn and impressive than his reports of those words of life and power, which will outlast heaven and earth (xxiv. 34). Sentence follows sentence with overwhelming force, like a succession of lightning flashes from the upper world."²

VI. INTEGRITY OF THE GOSPEL.

1. The principal passage in the Gospel of Matthew, the genuineness of which has been disputed, is the first two chapters, containing the genealogy of our Lord and the narrative of His birth. Doubts were first thrown upon the apostolic origin of this passage toward the close of last century (A.D. 1771) by an Englishman named Williams, in a work

¹ For the characteristic words and expressions in Matthew's Gospel, see Credner's *Einleitung in das N.T.* pp. 62-39; Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the N.T.* 3rd ed. vol. i. pp. 371-379.

² Schaff's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 620.

entitled, *A free inquiry into the authenticity of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel*. He was followed in Germany by such distinguished critics as Eichhorn, Schleiermacher, and Bertholdt, and by Priestley and his school in England. Andrews Norton of America, an Arian, though belonging to the positive school of criticism, supported the same opinion. He conceived that these two chapters did not form a part of the original Hebrew Gospel, but were an extraneous document inserted by the translator into the Greek Gospel. "There are," he observes, "strong reasons for thinking that the first two chapters of our present copies of the Greek Gospel of Matthew made no part of the original Hebrew. We may suppose them to have been an ancient document, which, from the connection of the subject with his history, was transcribed into the same volume with it, and which, though first written as a distinct work with some mark of separation, yet in process of time became blended with it, so as apparently to form its commencement. Being thus found incorporated with the Gospel in the manuscript or in manuscripts used by the translator, it was rendered by him as part of the original."¹ So also Meyer, while admitting that the passage formed an integral portion of the Hebrew Gospel, of which our canonical Gospel is the translation, yet calls in question its apostolic authority. "The portions composing both chapters," he says, "were originally special Gospel documents. Ch. i. 1-16 appears to have been *one* such document by itself, then vv. 18-25 a *second*, and ch. ii. a *third*, in which are now found for the first time the locality and time of the birth of Jesus."² He appears to regard it as a legendary account which found admission into the Gospel. The passage has been defended by Griesbach, Müller,³ and Alford, and even by such rationalistic critics as Credner,⁴ Paulus,⁵ and Kuinoel.⁶

¹ Norton, *The Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. pp. 16, 17.

² Meyer's *Commentary on Matthew*, Eng. trans. vol. i. p. 80.

³ *Ueber die Aechtheit der zwei ersten Kapitel des Evang. nach Matth.*

⁴ *Einleitung*, p. 68.

⁵ *Exegetisches Handbuch*, vol. i. p. 137.

⁶ *Novi Testamenti Libri Historici*: Prolegomena, § 3, De authentia, cap. i. et ii. Evangelii Matthæi.

The external objections to the genuineness of these chapters are of no weight. The chief argument is that they are not contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews as used by the Jewish Christians, and hence it has been inferred that they formed no part of the original Hebrew Gospel of Matthew. Epiphanius, who appears to have regarded the Gospel according to the Hebrews, or as he calls it, the Gospel of the Ebionites, as the same as the original Aramaic Gospel of Matthew, though in an incomplete, adulterated, and mutilated form, states that it commenced with the baptism of John: "The beginning of their Gospel was this: It came to pass in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, that John came baptizing with the baptism of repentance in the river of Jordan" (Matt. iii. 1-7).¹ We have already considered the relation of this Gospel to the Gospel of Matthew. It is not now in existence, so that we cannot verify this statement. But as the majority of Hebrew Christians were Ebionites who called in question the divinity of Christ, it is highly probable that from dogmatic motives they did reject the first two chapters of Matthew, which taught the miraculous conception. Tatian also, in his Diatessaron, omitted the genealogy. But this is no serious objection to the genuineness of these two chapters, since Tatian, although he omitted the genealogy of our Lord as not being essential to his harmony, did not omit the narrative of the birth of Christ,—the miraculous conception, the visit of the Magi, the appearance of the star, and the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem.

But the principal objections arise out of the narrative itself. The visit of the Magi and the appearance of a star are said to be of a legendary character, resembling the accounts which the heathen gave of the birth of their demigods. The massacre of the infants of Bethlehem, an act of unexampled and unheard of barbarity, is unrecorded in history, and besides was wholly unnecessary, as Herod might easily have accomplished his purpose without having recourse to such a deed of cruelty. And it is affirmed that the account of the birth of Christ as recorded by Luke is wholly different from that here

¹ *Hær.* xxx. 13.

given us by Matthew, and that the events which follow are at variance: instead of the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt, there is the presentation in the temple and the return to Nazareth.

The external testimony in favour of the passage is so strong and convincing, that we do not see how it can be set aside by any objections of a subjective or internal nature. The passage is contained in all Greek manuscripts and in all the ancient versions of the Gospels. It is frequently alluded to and quoted by the early Fathers. Thus, in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians (A.D. 115), there is an allusion to the star. "How was He manifested to the world? A star shone forth in the heavens above all the other stars, the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment."¹ Justin Martyr (A.D. 180) mentions all the incidents contained in the narrative—the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, and the massacre of the infants. "Now this King Herod, at the time when the Magi came to him from Arabia, and said that they knew from a star which appeared in the heavens that a king had been born in your country, and that they had come to worship Him, learned from the elders of your people that it was written regarding Bethlehem in the prophet: 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art by no means least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall go forth the leader who shall feed my people.' Accordingly the Magi from Arabia came to Bethlehem and worshipped the child, and presented Him with gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh; but returned not to Herod, being warned in a revelation, after worshipping the child in Bethlehem. . . . So Herod, when the Magi from Arabia did not return to him, as he had asked them to do, but departed by another way to their own country, according to the commands laid on them; and when Joseph, with Mary and the child, had gone into Egypt, as he did not know the child whom 'the Magi' had gone to worship, ordered the whole of the children then in Bethlehem to be massacred."² As we have already stated, the whole passage, with the exception of the genealogy, is contained in the Diatessaron of

¹ Ignatius, *Ep. ad Ephes.* ch. xix.

² *Dial. c. Tryph.* ch. lxxviii.

Tatian (A.D. 160). There are frequent references to it in the writings of Irenæus (A.D. 180). Thus he refers to the genealogy of our Lord as recorded by Matthew: "Matthew relates His generation as a man: The birth of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham: and also, The birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise."¹ And he mentions the visit of the Magi and the appearance of the star: "Matthew says that the Magi, coming from the East, exclaimed: We have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him."² It is needless to pursue the references to the passage further. There is no doubt that it constituted an original portion of the Greek Gospel of Matthew. To affirm, with Norton, that it formed no part of the original Hebrew, but was an insertion into our Greek Gospel by the translator,—granting the existence of a Hebrew original,—is a mere assertion, for which the only proof is its omission in the defective Gospel according to the Hebrews.

The internal evidence is in favour of the genuineness of the passage. It forms an appropriate introduction to the Gospel. Thus the beginning of chap. iii.: "And in those days" (*Ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις*), is, by reason of the conjunction *δὲ* and the phrase *ἡμέραις ἐκείναις*, in apparent connection with what precedes. So also the statement, that Jesus leaving Nazareth, came and dwelt in Capernaum (iv. 13), presupposes the previous residence in Nazareth mentioned in the passage (ii. 23). The style and diction of the passage correspond with the rest of the Gospel. The favourite formula of Matthew, when introducing any prophetic statement: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord through the prophet" (*ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*), occurs, either in full or in an abbreviated form, five times (i. 22, ii. 5, 15, 17, 23). The Messianic title used by Matthew, the son of David (*υἱὸς Δαυεὶδ*), occurs twice (i. 1, 20). The favourite term, *λεγόμενος*, used in announcing the meaning of an epithet applied to the Messiah (*Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός*, i. 16), or in stating names and surnames (*εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ*, ii. 23), is twice employed. The peculiar use of

¹ Irenæus, *Contra Hæc.* iii. 11. 8.

² *Ibid.* iii. 9. 2.

ῥηθεις, ῥηθεν, occurs four times, whilst of the other Synoptists only Mark has τὸ ῥηθεν (Mark xiii. 14).¹ Of course it may be answered, that these similarities of diction are attributable to the translator in rendering the Hebrew original into Greek.²

The visit of the Magi and the appearance of the star are objected to as being legendary, and giving countenance to the superstitious ideas of astrologers. "In the story of the Magi," observes Norton, "we find represented a strange mixture of astrology and miracle. A divine interposition is pretended, which was addressed to the false opinions of certain Magi respecting the significance of the stars, and for which no purpose worthy of the Deity can be assigned."³

The incident occurs as part of the continuous narrative of the evangelist; and, if we admit the supernatural in the narrative, there is no reason why it should be regarded with special suspicion. Many eminent critics, among them Alford, explain the incident from natural causes. The Magi were a well-known body of religious astronomers, or perhaps astrologers, resident either in Chaldaea or in Persia. The country from which they came is not stated; there is merely the indefinite expression: "Behold wise men came from the East." The Fathers, in general, have fixed on Arabia. Whether the star was a miraculous or a natural phenomenon is a matter of dispute. An extraordinary astronomical fact, regarded by astronomers as demonstrated, is mentioned by Kepler. About the period of the birth of our Lord there was a remarkable conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces, which occurred three times in the year of Rome 747, or B.C. 7, on May 29, September 29, and December 5. This fact was carefully examined by the Rev. Charles Pritchard, the honorary secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, and its accuracy was vouched by him. At the same time, it must be observed that the planets were never so closely conjoined

¹ See Guericke, *Isagogik*, pp. 240, 241.

² So Meyer: "The unity of the Greek style and expression is to be explained from the unity of the translator."

³ Norton's *Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. p. 208.

as to appear one large star; there was always a space equal to the diameter of the moon between them.¹ But to stargazers as the Magi, and especially to astrologers, it must have proved a striking phenomenon. It has accordingly been supposed that this celestial phenomenon constituted the star which appeared to the Magi, and that its occurrence three times seemed to guide their steps from the East to Bethlehem.² "Supposing," observes Dean Alford, "the Magi to have seen the *first* of these conjunctions, they saw it actually 'in the East'; for on the 29th of May it would rise three and a half hours before sunrise. If they then took their journey, and arrived at Jerusalem in a little more than five months" (the September conjunction would occur); "if they performed the route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the December conjunction would be before them in *the direction of Bethlehem*. These circumstances would seem to form a remarkable coincidence with the history in our text."³ The coincidence is certainly very remarkable, but it is doubtful whether this conjunction of these planets is to be identified with the star of Bethlehem. For one thing, we would require to put back the birth of our Lord seven years, to B.C. 7. This, however, is no insuperable objection, as it is now generally admitted that there is an error in our Christian era, and that our Lord's birth is antedated by several years. Still, in all probability, the star was a supernatural phenomenon, as it is apparently so described in the narrative—some meteor, divinely formed for the purpose, which, by its movements, guided the wise men to the infant Messiah. The supreme dignity of our Lord, as the long promised Messiah, the Son of

¹ See art. "Stern der Weisen" in Winer's *Biblisches Realwörterbuch*; art. "Star of the Wise Men," by Rev. Charles Pritchard, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*; Alford's *Greek Testament* on Matt. ii. 2; Kepler, *De Jesu Christi vero anno natalitio*; Wieseler's *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, pp. 86 ff., Eng. trans.; Ellicott's *Lectures on the Life of our Lord*, p. 72, note 2.

² A distinguished Jewish rabbi, Abarbanel, states that there was a tradition that the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the sign Pisces was most important for the Jewish nation, that it took place at the birth of Moses, and that it will occur at the advent of the Messiah. Ebrard's *Gospel History*, p. 178; McClellan, *On the Gospels*, p. 400.

³ Alford's *Greek Testament*, note on Matt. ii. 1, 2.

God, and the Redeemer of the human race, were reasons sufficient for the occurrence of extraordinary phenomena at His birth.

The massacre of the infants of Bethlehem is regarded as another incident which casts a doubt on the truth of the narrative (Matt. ii. 16). There is no reference to such an occurrence in the contemporary history of Josephus. The barbarities of Herod are there minutely described, but this barbarous and apparently unnecessary slaughter of helpless infants is not even hinted at.

The answer to this objection is obvious. Such an act of barbarity is entirely in conformity with the character of Herod. He waded through blood to his throne, and his whole reign was steeped in blood. He put to death his wife, Mariamne, and his three sons, Alexander, Aristobulus, and Antipater. Immediately before his death, he caused the principal men among the Jews to be arrested and collected in the Hippodrome at Jericho, and gave orders that they should be put to death immediately at his decease, so that there should be a general lamentation at his death.¹ Nor is the massacre of the infants to be exaggerated. Bethlehem was a small village, and the infants slain, from two years old and under, would be few in number,—a trifling incident compared with the other enormities of Herod, who rivalled Nero in his cruelties, though on a smaller scale. Josephus might easily pass over such an act of cruelty in recording atrocities of a much more stupendous nature.

But the chief objection is the apparent discrepancy between this narrative and the narrative of our Lord's birth as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. We have already had occasion to allude to the striking difference between these two narratives in proof of the statement that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke must have been written independently of each other; it is here referred to for another reason, because it has been maintained by those who deny the genuineness of Matthew's narrative that the difference is so great as to amount to a contradiction, so that both accounts cannot

¹ For a striking statement of the cruelties of Herod the Great, see Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 30, Bohn's edition.

possibly be true.¹ For example, it is affirmed that the residence of Joseph is differently stated by these two evangelists. According to Luke, Joseph and Mary dwelt in Nazareth. "Joseph," we read, "went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem" (Luke ii. 16). He remained there until the rites according to the law of Moses were completed, and then he and Mary returned to Nazareth, which is expressly called their own city (*εἰς τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν Ναζαρέτ*, Luke ii. 39). Whereas Matthew, without mentioning any previous residence in Nazareth, relates that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa; that Joseph and Mary left that city in consequence of a divine warning and fled to Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod; that after the death of that monarch they returned, but, in consequence of another divine premonition, did not resume their residence in Bethlehem, but withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23). Now, certainly, the natural impression from this narrative is that Bethlehem and not Nazareth was the residence of Joseph. This, however, is not asserted by Matthew, and the fact that Joseph came and dwelt in Nazareth is in itself a presumption that he had some previous connection with that town.

The difference in the incidents recorded by the two evangelists is certainly remarkable, but they are not so much at variance as to create a distinct discrepancy. We have only to suppose, what is in itself probable, that Joseph and Mary remained a full year in Bethlehem, and that the visit of the wise men did not follow directly after the visit of the shepherds. The Magi found Jesus and His mother, not in the stable of the nativity, but in a house (*ἐλθόντες εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν*, Matt. ii. 11); and the age of the infants who were slaughtered was from two years old and under, according to the time which Herod had carefully learned of the wise men (Matt. ii. 16).

The possible chronological order of events, which is that given in its general features by Tatian in the Diatessaron, is

¹ See Meyer, *in loco*, and Schleiermacher's *St. Luke*, translated by Bishop Thirlwall, pp. 44 ff.

as follows: Jesus, according to both Matthew and Luke, is born in Bethlehem of Judæa. According to Luke, He was born in a stable, and on the evening of the day of His birth He was visited by the shepherds. Soon after, Joseph with Mary and the child would remove to a house. Forty days after, according to the provisions of the law of Moses, the presentation in the temple of Jerusalem took place, where the child was recognised by Simeon and the prophetess Anna. From Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem, perhaps with the intention of taking up their permanent residence there, as the city of David so hallowed in their view by what had occurred. Probably about a year after this the visit of the Magi and the appearance of the star occurred. Then, warned by God of the danger which threatened the child from the jealousy of Herod, they fled into Egypt, where they remained until his death, probably for a very short period. During their absence the massacre of the children of Bethlehem occurred. On hearing of the death of Herod, Joseph and Mary returned to Judæa, possibly to resume their residence in Bethlehem; but, in consequence of another divine warning, they returned to Nazareth, their former abode. By such a method any apparent discrepancy is obviated; at least it is shown that there does not exist any antagonism between the two narratives. We have only to suppose that Luke omits in his narrative the events which occurred during the temporary residence in Bethlehem. The return to Nazareth which he mentions (Luke ii. 39) is the same which Matthew mentions as taking place on their coming back from Egypt (Matt. ii. 23).¹

2. Another passage, which has been and is still disputed, is the doxology attached to the Lord's Prayer: "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. vi. 13).

The argument for the omission or retention of these words rests entirely on external evidence: there is nothing in the words themselves which can be adduced as an argument either for or against their insertion. The argument in favour of the genuineness of this doxology is that it is found

¹ See Wieseler's *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, p. 136, chap. iii. Succession of events in the history of our Lord's childhood.

in several important uncial MSS. (E, G, K); in all the cursive MSS. except five; in all the Syriac versions; in the Codex Brixianus (*f*), an important manuscript of the Old Latin, in the Ethiopic and Armenian versions, and in the two Egyptian versions, the Sahidic and the Coptic. It is found in Tatian's Diatessaron, and in the Didaché, though only in part, ἡ βασιλεία being omitted.¹ It is quoted by Chrysostom and subsequent Fathers. The argument against its insertion is that it is not contained in the principal uncial MSS., the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Codex Bezae; the Alexandrian and the Codex Ephraemi are here defective. It is wanting in the MSS. of the Old Latin, with the exception of the Codex Brixianus, and in the Vulgate. It is not quoted by any of the Greek Fathers until Chrysostom, and is omitted by the great Latin Fathers—Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome. It occurs with several variations, as: "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is omitted in the form of the Lord's Prayer as given in the Gospel of Luke.²

The words are rejected by the vast majority of the critical editions of the New Testament, by the Complutensian editors, Erasmus, Bengel, Mill, Wetstein, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort. Scrivener is almost the only one who expresses any dubiety. "It is right to say," he observes, "that I can no longer regard this doxology as *certainly* an integral part of St. Matthew's Gospel; but I am not yet absolutely convinced of its spuriousness."³ The words are regarded as spurious by Grotius, Luther, Melancthon, De Wette, Tholuck, Meyer, Olshausen, Alford, Davidson, Wordsworth, M'Clellan, Morison,

¹ Didaché, ch. viii.

² For discussions on the genuineness of the doxology, see Alford's *Greek Testament, in loco*; Davidson's *Biblical Criticism*, vol. ii. pp. 427-430; Scrivener, *Introduction to the Criticism of the N.T.* vol. ii. pp. 323-328, 4th ed.; Cook, *Revised Version of the First Three Gospels*, pp. 57 ff.; M'Clellan's *New Testament*, p. 647; Westcott and Hort, *New Testament in Greek*: Notes on select readings, pp. 9, 10; Roediger, *Synopsis Evangeliorum*, Appendix iii. p. 229.

³ Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the N.T.* vol. ii. 323, 4th edition.

and the most noted commentators. It is expunged in the Revised edition without any marginal note expressive of hesitation.¹ "There can be little doubt," observes Dr. Hort, "that the doxology originated in liturgical use in Syria, and was thence adopted into the Greek and Syriac Syrian texts of the N.T. It was probably derived ultimately from 1 Chron. xxix. 11 (Heb.), but, it may be, through the medium of some contemporary Jewish usage; the people's response to the prayers in the temple is said to have been: 'Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom for ever and ever.'"²

VII. THE DATE OF THE GOSPEL.

The time when the Gospel of Matthew was written is still a point of great dubiety. There is much diversity in the statement of the Fathers. Irenæus places it after A.D. 60; Eusebius, about A.D. 44, when the apostles were dispersed; Theophylact, at A.D. 41; and Nicephorus, at A.D. 48, fifteen years after the ascension. Different years, between A.D. 37 and A.D. 100, have been assigned by critics.³ The question may be put in this form, Was the date of this Gospel before or after A.D. 60?

The early date, before A.D. 60, has been adopted by Townson, Michaelis, Roberts, and Davidson (1st edition of his *Introduction*). Those who fix upon this date have the support of Eusebius, who says: "Of all the disciples (apostles) of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials; and they, tradition says, were led to write only under the pressure of necessity. For Matthew, who had at first preached to the Hebrews, when he was about to go to other peoples, committed his Gospel to writing in his native tongue, and thus compensated those whom he was obliged to

¹ We, however, think that there should have been a marginal note stating that the passage is not altogether devoid of support.

² Westcott and Hort's *Greek Testament*: Notes on select readings, p. 9.

³ The Tübingen school assign a much later date to Matthew's Gospel: Pfeiderer supposes that it was written about the middle of the second century. Dr. Davidson, in the last edition of his *Introduction*, says: "The Gospel may be dated about 105 A.D." vol. i. p. 370.

leave for the loss of his presence.”¹ According to this statement, whilst the apostles remained in Judæa, there was an oral communication of the Gospel; the actions and the discourses of Christ formed the subject of their preaching, and of the instructions given to the disciples; the want of a written Gospel was not then felt; but when they had to leave Judæa and go to other nations, the loss of their oral communications had to be supplied by some written documents; and, according to Eusebius, this was the occasion of Matthew’s writing his Gospel. It is difficult to determine the date of the departure of the apostles from Judæa, but it could not have been long after the ascension. At the council of Jerusalem (A.D. 51) there were only present Peter, John, and James the Lord’s brother; and on a previous occasion (A.D. 40), on his visit to Jerusalem, Paul saw none of the apostles save Peter and James the Lord’s brother (Gal. i. 18, 19). The probability is that the persecution by Herod Agrippa (A.D. 44) drove the apostles from Jerusalem. According to an ancient tradition, the apostles were commanded by our Lord to remain for twelve years in Jerusalem. Thus Apollonius, who wrote in the second century, states that it was handed down by tradition, that our Saviour commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem for twelve years.² And the same tradition is recorded in an apocryphal work, quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus, entitled, *The Preaching of Peter*. “The Lord said to His apostles, ‘If anyone therefore of Israel repent, and through My name be willing to believe in God, his sins shall be forgiven him. After twelve years, go ye out into the world, lest any say, We have not heard.’”³ This period coincides with the persecution by Herod Agrippa. As, however, Peter, John, and James were present at the council of Jerusalem, A.D. 51, the final dispersion of the apostles must have taken place some years later. According to this view, we fix the date of Matthew’s Gospel between A.D. 55–60.

There are several presumptive reasons in favour of this date. So long as the apostles remained in Jerusalem, and

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 24.

² *Ibid.* v. 18.

³ Clemens Alexandrinus, *Strom.* vi. 5.

the disciples were privileged with their instructions, the oral Gospel was sufficient. But when the apostles left, and the Church was unprovided with qualified teachers,—with those who were personally cognisant of the life of Jesus, and were the eye-witnesses of His actions and the hearers of His discourses,—a written Gospel was indispensable. And especially would this be the case when we consider that in a short time Christianity overstepped the boundaries of Judæa, the Gospel was diffused throughout the adjacent countries, the Gentiles were admitted into the Church of Christ, and before A.D. 50 Paul had founded Churches in Phœnicia, Syria, Cyprus, and Pisidia. The apostles could no longer supply the wants of the times: it was essential that the actions and discourses of Christ should be committed to writing. We cannot suppose that no Gospel was written until thirty years after the death of Christ, and that the life of Christ, His words and actions, were left to the uncertainties of tradition. Early Gospel fragments would be dispersed throughout the Churches,—probably different in different Churches and localities,—and many of them would be collected and authenticated by apostolic men. And we know, as a matter of fact, that authoritative Gospels were at an early period recognised by the Church.

The later date, after A.D. 60, appears not so probable; but nevertheless it is the one that has been adopted by the majority of modern critics. It is the opinion of Eichhorn, Credner, Hug, Michaelis, Lardner, Bertholdt, Bleek, Davidson (3rd ed.), and Weiss. Those who fix upon it have the support of Irenæus. "Matthew," observes that Father, "issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect while Peter and Paul were preaching the gospel at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church."¹ As Paul did not reach Rome until A.D. 61, the date here assigned must have been after A.D. 60. It is argued that there are in the Gospel of Matthew itself intimations of a late date. Thus we read that the field purchased by the treason money of Judas is called the field of blood *unto this day* (Matt. xxvii. 8); that the report of the soldiers about the stealing of the

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* iii. 1. 1; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* v. 8.

body of Jesus was spread abroad among the Jews and continued *until this day* (Matt. xxviii. 15),—a phrase which implies that there must have been an interval between the occurrence of these events and the writing of the Gospel. But, so far as we can see, an interval of fifteen years is sufficient to answer the requirement.

Another argument on which some critics ground the later date of Matthew's Gospel, is the mention of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, who is said to have been slain between the sanctuary and the altar (Matt. xxiii. 35). Hug, Credner, Eichhorn, and apparently Weiss,¹ suppose that this Zachariah is Zachariah the son of Baruch, whose murder at the commencement of the Jewish war by the Idumeans in the temple is mentioned by Josephus;² and hence they argue that the Gospel was not written until after this event; that it was an assertion put into the mouth of our Lord by the writer of this Gospel. Hug attempts to escape the objection drawn from this anachronism by supposing that our Lord spoke of the death of Zachariah in a prophetic spirit, although in the Gospel it is mentioned as a past event (*ὅν ἐφρονεύσατε*).³ But the supposition is wholly fanciful. The Zachariah of Josephus is the son of Baruch, not of Barachiah. There is indeed a difficulty in identifying the person of whom our Lord speaks with any prophet mentioned in the Old Testament; but the common opinion is probably correct, that the allusion is to Zachariah the son of Jehoiada, who was murdered in the court of the temple by order of King Joash.⁴ (2 Chron. xxiv. 20–22).

The statement of Irenæus, which has given rise to this opinion of the later date, is of doubtful credibility. He speaks of Matthew's Gospel being written when Peter and

¹ Weiss, *Einleitung in das N.T.* § 47, trans. vol. ii. p. 288.

² Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* iv. 5. 4.

³ Hug's *Introduction to the N.T.* vol. ii. p. 12, Eng. trans.

⁴ The difference of name, Jehoiada instead of Barachiah, is a difficulty. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews, Zachariah is called, not the son of Barachiah, but the son of Joiada. Ebrard, taking into account the extreme age of Jehoiada, supposes that Zachariah was his grandson. Is it not possible that it might have been the prophet Zechariah who is called the son of Barachiah? (Zech. i. 1).

Paul were in Rome preaching and founding the Church.¹ But the Roman Church was not founded by Peter and Paul: it was in existence long before either Peter or Paul arrived in that city. Paul, when he came to Rome, found Christians already there, and had several years before written an Epistle to them. It is very doubtful whether Paul and Peter were ever in Rome together; indeed it is a question whether Rome was ever visited by the Apostle Peter. His first Epistle is written from Babylon (1 Pet. v. 13), and the fact of his residence in Rome greatly depends upon the answer to the question, whether by Babylon is meant the renowned city on the Euphrates, or whether it is a metaphorical name for Rome.²

Some critics endeavour to reconcile these two dates—the earlier and the later—by the supposition that two editions of Matthew's Gospel were written, the one in Aramaic and the other in Greek, and that these editions were written at different times. The Aramaic Gospel, being at first the most requisite, was written earliest, about A.D. 44, on the departure of the apostle from Judæa. Afterwards, when the disciples became more numerous, and were composed for the most part of Greeks, it became necessary that it should be translated into Greek; and this was done, either by Matthew himself or some other person, about A.D. 60. "I can," says Michaelis, "see no impropriety in believing that both the early and the later date, assigned to St. Matthew's Gospel, are consistent with truth; that it was originally written in Hebrew in the beginning of the year 41, before Herod Agrippa was appointed king of Judæa, but that the Greek translation of it was not made until the year 61 or later."³ That there were two such editions, an Aramaic and a Greek Gospel, is a supposition perfectly admissible, indeed has presumptive evidence in its favour.

The place of composition was most probably Jerusalem

¹ τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

² See Gloag's *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 144–161: Dissertation, "Peter's residence in Rome."

³ Marsh's *Michaelis*, vol. iv. p. 112, 2nd ed.

or some part of Judæa. Everything in the Gospel points to this: the references to the customs of the Jews, the mention of localities, the Hebrew garb of the narrative, are all reconcilable with the supposition that it was written in Palestine. In Judæa also Matthew would find his authorities and the sources of his narrative.

VIII. CONTENTS OF THE GOSPEL.

It is unnecessary to give a table of the contents of the Gospel of Matthew; this is given in every commentary, and may be easily gathered from a survey of the Gospel. At the same time, the Gospel can only be studied in connection with the other Gospels in the form of a harmony, as they mutually supplement each other.

The Gospel of Matthew may be conveniently divided into six unequal parts.

1. The birth of Christ (i., ii.). This part contains the genealogy of our Lord and the narrative of His birth.

2. The preparation for His ministry (iii.—iv. 11). This part includes the ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, the descent of the Spirit upon Him, His inauguration as the Son of God, and the temptation in the wilderness.

3. The Galilean ministry (iv. 12—xviii. 35). This part, which forms the main body of the Gospel, contains the call of the apostles and the first missionary journey in Galilee, the Sermon on the Mount, a narrative of several miracles performed by Christ, instructions given to the apostles when sending them forth to preach the gospel, the deputation from the Baptist, our Lord's dispute with the Pharisees, a series of miracles, the fate of the Baptist, the twofold feeding of the multitude, the confession of the Messiahship of Jesus by His disciples, the transfiguration, various instructions imparted to the disciples.

4. The journey to Jerusalem and residence there (xix. 1—xxv. 46). This part contains His departure from Galilee, His gradual progress to Jerusalem and His triumphal entrance, the denunciations pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees,

the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, and a series of parables delivered toward the close of His ministry.

5. The Passion (xxvi., xxvii.). This part includes the anointing of our Lord at Bethany, the institution of the Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, the examination of Jesus before Caiaphas, the trial before Pilate, the crucifixion, death, and burial.

6. The Resurrection (xxviii.).

Perhaps the most characteristic portions of this Gospel are the Sermon on the Mount (v.-vii.), and the two series of parables on the nature of the kingdom of heaven, the one delivered about the middle of our Lord's ministry (xiii.), and the other toward its close (xxv.).

DISSERTATION.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE consideration of the quotations made by the writers of the New Testament from the Old Testament is a very wide subject, and can only be touched upon in this dissertation. It is complicated by the fact that there are two sources from which these quotations have been derived,—the original Hebrew and the Septuagint or Greek translation,—and these often differ from each other. In general the difference is trivial, but sometimes it is important, and alters the sense. The subject has been carefully examined by the late Dr. Turpie in his book, entitled, *The Old Testament in the New*,¹ a work of much learning and labour. He arrives at the following results. There are 275 undoubted quotations from the Old Testament by writers of the New. These are arranged under five divisions. 1. Those passages in which the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the New Testament all agree, of which there are fifty-three. 2. Those in which the New Testament agrees with the Hebrew, but differs from the Septuagint, of which there are ten. 3. Those in which the Hebrew and the Septuagint agree, but differ from the New Testament, of which there are seventy-six. 4. Those in which the New Testament agrees with the Septuagint, but differs from the Hebrew, of which there are thirty-seven. 5. Those in

¹ “A contribution to Biblical Criticism and Interpretation. The quotations from the Old Testament in the New classified according to their agreement with, or variation from, the original.” London, 1868. This was followed by a companion volume, entitled, *The New Testament View of the Old*. London, 1872.

which all three—the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the New Testament—differ, of which there are ninety-nine. To those have to be added three passages (John vii. 38, 42; Eph. v. 14) which are only doubtful quotations.¹

The Gospel of Matthew has, in proportion to its length, a greater number of quotations from the Old Testament than any other New Testament writing, with the exception of the Epistle to the Romans. The reason is obvious, because the special design of this Gospel was to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, and for this purpose the evangelist had to draw his proofs from the Old Testament. The number of quotations has been variously estimated. Dr. Davidson, who includes a number of coincidences which are not strictly citations, gives the number at sixty-one;² whilst Dr. Turpie, restricting himself to undoubted citations, reduces it to forty-one. Taking Dr. Turpie's book as guide, though not strictly following it, we give the list of quotations in Matthew's Gospel with the following distinctive marks: α , denoting those which agree both with the Hebrew and the Septuagint; β , those which agree with the Hebrew, but differ from the Septuagint; γ , those which agree with the Septuagint, but differ from the Hebrew; and δ , those which differ both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

N.T.	O.T.
δ Matt. i. 23	Isa. vii. 14.
δ „ ii. 6	Mic. v. 1, 2.
β „ ii. 15	Hos. xi. 1.
δ „ ii. 18	Jer. xxxi. 15.
δ „ ii. 23	Isa. xi. 1 ?
δ „ iii. 3	Isa. xl. 3.
δ „ iv. 4	Deut. viii. 3.
δ „ iv. 6	Ps. xci. 11, 12.
α „ iv. 7	Deut. vi. 16.
δ „ iv. 10	Deut. vi. 13.
δ „ iv. 15, 16	Isa. ix. 1, 2.

¹ Turpie's *Old Testament in the New*, p. 267. See also Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 483 f.

² Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the N.T.* 3rd ed. vol. i. pp. 375, 376. See also Davidson's *Hermeneutics*, pp. 334 ff.

N.T.				O.T.			
δ	Matt.	viii.	17	.	.	.	Isa. liii. 4.
δ	„	ix.	13	.	.	.	Hos. vi. 6.
δ	„	xi.	10	.	.	.	Mal. iii. 1.
δ	„	xii.	7	.	.	.	Hos. vi. 6.
δ	„	xii.	18-21	.	.	.	Isa. xlii. 1-4.
γ	„	xiii.	14, 15	.	.	.	Isa. vi. 9, 10.
δ	„	xiii.	35	.	.	.	Ps. lxxviii. 2.
δ	„	xv.	4	.	.	.	Ex. xx. 12.
δ	„	xv.	8, 9	.	.	.	Isa. xxix. 13.
δ	„	xviii.	16	.	.	.	Deut. xix. 15.
δ	„	xix.	4	.	.	.	Gen. i. 27.
δ	„	xix.	5	.	.	.	Gen. ii. 24.
α	„	xix.	18, 19	.	.	.	Ex. xx. 12-16.
δ	„	xxi.	5	.	.	.	Zech. ix. 9.
δ	„	xxi.	13	.	.	.	Isa. lvi. 7.
α	„	xxi.	16	.	.	.	Ps. viii. 2.
α	„	xxi.	42	.	.	.	Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.
δ	„	xxii.	24	.	.	.	Deut. xxv. 5.
δ	„	xxii.	32	.	.	.	Ex. iii. 6.
δ	„	xxii.	37	.	.	.	Deut. vi. 5.
α	„	xxii.	39	.	.	.	Lev. xix. 18.
α	„	xxii.	44	.	.	.	Ps. cx. 1.
δ	„	xxvi.	31	.	.	.	Zech. xiii. 7.
δ	„	xxvii.	9, 10	.	.	.	Zech. xi. 13.
α	„	xxvii.	35	.	.	.	Ps. xxii. 18. ¹
β	„	xxvii.	46	.	.	.	Ps. xxii. 1, 2.

From this list of quotations it appears that there are six in which the Hebrew, Septuagint, and New Testament agree (iv. 7, xix. 18, xxi. 16, 42, xxii. 39, 44); two which are taken from the Hebrew original, but which differ materially from the Septuagint (ii. 15, xxvii. 46); and one which agrees *verbatim* with the Septuagint and differs from the Hebrew (xiii. 14, 15).² By far the larger number, amounting to twenty-seven, differ both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint. These differences are, however, in general immaterial. They consist in a different arrangement of the words, in the

¹ This passage is not considered genuine, and is omitted in the R.V.

² In this class also iv. 7 and xxi. 42 are placed by Dr. Turpie, but the difference from the Hebrew is very slight.

omission or insertion of connecting particles, and in the change of tenses; the meaning remains in general unaltered. It would appear that the New Testament writers frequently quoted from memory, without examining either the Hebrew original or the Septuagint. In the same manner the early Fathers quoted from the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments, as is seen in the numerous quotations in the writings of Justin Martyr and Clemens Alexandrinus, in which there are many deviations from Scripture. The same is the case in the present day: theologians often do not quote accurately; they give the sense of a passage, without using the precise words.

Different opinions have been adopted regarding the quotations from the Old Testament in general. Some hold that the New Testament writers quoted always from the Hebrew, giving their own free translation; others, that they made use of the Septuagint, quoting from it in a free and general manner; and others, that they adhered uniformly to neither, but frequently quoted from memory, and made a free use of their sources.¹ Bleek asserts, with special reference to the Gospel of Matthew, that in the citations which occur in the body of the narrative the Septuagint was used, whilst in those which the evangelist introduces in his own reflections, the Hebrew original is employed. But this statement is not borne out by fact, as may be seen by an examination of the passages. It would rather appear that the Septuagint lies at the root of most of the quotations, even of those which differ from it.

The extent to which the Septuagint was used in the days of our Lord is a matter of dispute. Some affirm that it had superseded the Hebrew original, and was used in the Jewish synagogues.² Hebrew was then a dead

¹ Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the N.T.* 3rd ed. vol. i. pp. 375, 376; *Speaker's Commentary*, "Introduction to the Gospels," by Archbishop Thomson, p. xxviii; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Appendix A, "On the Quotations in the Gospels"; Bleek's *Introduction to the N.T.* vol. i. p. 295; Davidson's *Hermeneutics*, pp. 334-516.

² "Every available source of evidence," observes Professor Roberts, "which is worth anything, points to the conclusion that the Greek transla-

language, and was not understood by ordinary Jews, and, so far as we know, there was no Aramaic translation. Besides, copies of the Hebrew Bible would be exceedingly expensive, whereas copies of the Septuagint would be more easily procured, owing to the abundance of Greek slave labour employed in transcription. Most probably in the synagogues the original Hebrew, being the sacred language, would be used, even as in the present day; whilst Jews, for their own private reading and edification, would possess copies of the Septuagint, owing to its comparative inexpensiveness. When our Lord appeared in the synagogue of Nazareth, there was delivered to Him the roll of the prophet Isaiah, most probably in the original Hebrew. The passage which He read, as quoted in the New Testament: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"¹ (Luke iv. 18, 19), differs both from the Hebrew and the Septuagint. The difference is immaterial, but we cannot say from which source the quotation is made; so that no inference can be drawn from it as to the comparative use of the Hebrew or the Septuagint in the Jewish synagogues. On the other hand, the quotations made by the New Testament writers are in general pervaded by the spirit of the Septuagint, whilst the Hebrew is very seldom literally translated. Dr. Turpie mentions only ten passages which agree with the Hebrew but differ from the Septuagint,² and thirty-seven which agree with the Septuagint but differ from the Hebrew. All those far more numerous passages, amounting to 175, which differ alike from the Hebrew and the Septuagint, in general approach more nearly to the Septuagint; so that there appears reason for Professor Roberts' remark: "The use of the Old Testament Scriptures was then regularly used in the synagogues of Palestine," *Greek, the Language of Christ and His Apostles*, p. 453.

¹ Revised Version. The words *ἰάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῇ καρδίᾳ*, "to heal the broken-hearted," are omitted, as not found in the best manuscripts.

² These passages are Matt. ii. 15, xxvii. 46; Mark ii. 29, 30, xv. 28, 34; Luke xxii. 37; 1 Cor. iii. 19; 2 Cor. viii. 15; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Heb. v. 12.

"In the vast majority of these quotations the Septuagint is either exactly followed, or the resemblance is so close as to be virtually identical."¹

There is little variation in the formulae of quotation used by Matthew. In general it is *ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν*, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken"; to which is added, *ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*, "by the Lord, through the prophet" (i. 22, ii. 15), or simply *διὰ τοῦ προφήτου*, "through the prophet" (xiii. 35, xxi. 4), or *διὰ τῶν προφητῶν*, "by the prophets," or *διὰ Ἡσαίου*, *διὰ Ἰερεμίου*, "by Isaiah," "by Jeremiah" (ii. 17, iv. 14, viii. 17, xii. 17, xxvii. 9); or the simple *γέγραπται*, "it is written," is used (iv. 4, 6, 7, 10, xi. 10, xxi. 13, xxvi. 31). This last form is generally employed by our Lord in His quotations from the Old Testament. In general the quotations are given as direct proofs, stating that the prophecies were fulfilled in the events recorded. Sometimes the connection between the prediction and its fulfilment is not clearly discernible, and in these cases it has been supposed that the evangelist quotes the words of the prophet by way of accommodation or illustration.² And sometimes words are given in the form of a citation, which are not to be found in these precise terms in the Old Testament, so that there is a difficulty in knowing to what prophecy the evangelist refers.³

In the Gospel of Matthew there are four quotations which in themselves are either of doubtful application or obscure in meaning.

I. The first is Matt. ii. 15: *ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου*: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call My Son."

The words are quoted with special reference to the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt, and are stated as a prediction of that event. The quotation is from Hos. xi. 1, and is taken from the Hebrew, with which it literally agrees. It differs from the Septuagint, which reads: "Out of Egypt

¹ Roberts' *Greek, the Language of Christ*, p. 135.

² See Matt. ii. 15, 17, 18.

³ See Matt. ii. 23.

did I call His children.”¹ Some suppose that the difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint arose from the difference in the Hebrew vowel pointing; but it would rather appear that the Septuagint translators must have read לְבָנַי instead of בְּנֵי. The allusion by the prophet Hosea was probably to the message of Moses to Pharaoh, being the only passage where Israel is called the son of God: “Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, My firstborn: and I have said unto thee, Let My son go, that he may serve Me” (Ex. iv. 22, 23). The nation of Israel was God’s adopted son, chosen from among the nations of the world.

The words of the prophet are rather a historical statement than a prediction. They refer to a past transaction rather than to a future event.² The deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is evidently the event alluded to. Hence it is asked, How can this historical event, which refers to the nation of Israel, possibly be a prediction which has received its fulfilment in our Lord’s sojourn in and return from the land of Egypt?

The solutions which have been given of this difficulty are manifold. Dr. Lindsay Alexander supposes that the passage is not a citation from the Old Testament, but one of the traditions of the elders handed down among the Jews, namely, that the Messiah should sojourn in Egypt.³ Others think that it is used by way of illustration, being a proverbial expression to denote deliverance from any impending danger.⁴ And others suppose that the words are spoken by way of accommodation: that as Israel was brought out of Egypt, so was the Messiah.⁵ But it seems more correct to regard it as a secondary or typical prophecy.⁶ Israel was a type of Christ: he is called God’s son, because the Messiah, God’s true Son, was to spring from him. In God’s dealings

¹ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετεκάλεσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ.

² ἐκάλεσα, did I call, or I called.

³ *Connexion of the Old and New Testaments*, p. 486.

⁴ Chandler’s *Defence of Christianity*.

⁵ Hill’s *Divinity Lectures*, vol. i. p. 177.

⁶ Matthew was a strict Hebrew, deeply imbued with Jewish notions, and saw in the incidents of Jewish history types and foreshadowings of the Gospel.

with Israel there is a typical reference to Christ: the Old Testament is but a prediction of the New:¹ Christ is the Alpha and Omega of revelation. As all the sacrifices under the law were but types and emblems of the great sacrifice of Christ for sin, as the Levitical ritual prefigured the gospel dispensation, so the dealings of God with Israel had a spiritual reference, and were fulfilled in Christ. There are what have been termed secondary prophecies: predictions which are capable of a twofold application, which receive a primary but partial fulfilment in some person or event in Jewish history, and a secondary and more complete fulfilment in the Messiah: prophecies which, as Lord Bacon says, "are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinating accomplishment."² Of course this infusion of a spiritual meaning into the Old Testament quotations must be made with the greatest caution; and perhaps it is only justifiable when such a meaning is given by the inspired writers themselves.

II. Another quotation, which has given rise to much dispute, is from a prophecy of Jeremiah, which is said to have received its fulfilment in the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem: τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμᾷ ἠκούσθη, κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμὸς πολὺς· Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children: and she would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matt. ii. 17, 18).

This quotation, taken from Jer. xxxi. 15, differs from the Hebrew and the Septuagint; but the variations are of no importance. It is impossible to say from which of the two sources it has been taken. In all probability the words are quoted from memory; for there is no reason to assert, with certain critics, that they are taken from some other translation.

This is also one of those prophecies which admit of a

¹ "In the Old Testament, the New Testament lies concealed; in the New, the Old lies revealed." Augustine.

² Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*.

twofold application: a primary application to the event which occurred at the time when it was uttered, and a secondary application to the Messiah. In its primary sense it is not a prediction, but a historical statement. It has been referred to two events in the history of Israel. Some suppose that the reference is to the captivity of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, when the Israelite captives were assembled at Ramah, where a number were put to death, and the rest led captive to Nineveh. But there is no mention of this fact in history. Others, with more probability, refer it to the assembling of the Jewish captives by Nebuzaradan, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, at Ramah, from which they were led bound in chains to Babylon (Jer. xl. 1). It refers to the lamentation which was then made on account of the destruction and captivity of the nation. Rachel is by a bold personification represented as rising from her tomb,¹ deploring with bitter wailing the great calamity which had befallen her offspring.

But whilst the words may have a primary application to the deportation of the Jewish captives from Ramah to Babylon (Jer. xl. 1), it received, according to the evangelist, a secondary application in the slaughter by Herod of the infants at Bethlehem. In its first application it is a historical statement; in its secondary application it is a prediction which has received its fulfilment. There are, undoubtedly, difficulties connected with this view. Bethlehem was a town of Judæa, and the Jews were the direct offspring of Leah, not of Rachel; on the other hand, the Benjamites, who were her descendants, were identified and bound up with the Jews so as to become one nation, and thus the nation, as a whole, might well be considered as the descendants of Rachel; and a certain allowance must be made for a bold poetical personification. Nor was Ramah the same as Bethlehem, but a village a short distance from it;² but the slaughter of the infants might have extended to it, as we read that Herod slew all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof (Matt. ii. 16).

¹ Rachel was buried at Bethlehem, Gen. xxxv. 19.

² Only about a mile distant.

The question which here meets us is, How can that which refers to the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar be applied to the massacre of the children of Bethlehem? It has been shown that the Jews refer the prophecy to a much later period than the Babylonish captivity, and apply it to the disasters which befell their country under Vespasian and Hadrian.¹ Josephus refers the prophecies of Jeremiah, not only to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but to the similar destruction by Titus.² The Babylonish captivity was a striking incident in Jewish history, and made such a deep and lasting impression on the nation, as to be often referred to by them, and applied to other similar calamities. In this way, according to many commentators, it has been applied to the massacre of the children of Bethlehem. Thus Calvin says: "The prediction of Jeremiah having been accomplished at that time (the time when it was given), Matthew does not mean that it foretold what Herod would do, but that the coming of Christ occasioned a renewal of that mourning which had been experienced many centuries before by the tribe of Benjamin."³ We consider this, then, as a secondary prophecy; and if we admit the inspiration of the evangelist, we must also admit the propriety of this application.

III. The next passage which claims attention is Matt. ii. 23: ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν, ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, that He should be called a Nazarene."⁴

The reference here is to our Lord's residence in the town or village of Nazareth. This is said to be in accordance with the predictions of the prophets. But these words are to be found *verbatim* in no prophetic writing of the Old Testament. Nor does the evangelist refer to any particular

¹ Marsh's *Michaëlis*, vol. i. pp. 210, 211.

² Josephus, *Antiquities*, x. 5. 1.

³ Calvin's *Commentary on the Gospels*, *in loco*.

⁴ The Christians were at an early period called Nazarenes, as in the address of the orator Tertullus (Acts xxiv. 5). Most probably in this instance the name is taken from the town of Nazareth.

prophet or prophecy; the word is in the plural (*προφητῶν*), as if the statement referred to the general consensus of the prophets.

Chrysostom and Theophylact suppose that it is a lost prophecy, either handed down by tradition, or contained in some prophetic work which is no longer in existence. This view has been adopted by Bengel.¹ Nor is there anything unreasonable in such a supposition. We learn from the Old Testament that many prophetic writings have perished: what remains may be a mere fragment of what was written. But it is improbable that Matthew would appeal to a lost prophecy, because in his time the canon of the Old Testament had been fixed. Besides, the words *διὰ τῶν προφητῶν* would seem to have a wider reference than to a single prophecy.

Another hypothesis is that the reference is to the lowly condition of the Messiah—that He was a despised person (Isa. liii. 3). The allusion was to the suffering character of the Messiah, in opposition to the view then prevalent among the Jews of an exalted Messiah. The whole province of Galilee was looked upon by the Jews in a depreciatory light. “Search, and see: that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet” (John vii. 52). And Nazareth was the despised town of a despised province: it appears to have become a proverbial expression: “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John i. 47). Hence it is supposed that when it is said, “He shall be called a Nazarene,” that is, an inhabitant of Nazareth, the reference is to His despised condition. Such is the interpretation adopted by Michaelis, Kuinoel, Olshausen, Ebrard, Lange, Horne. But it does not appear that the inhabitants of Nazareth as such were pre-eminently despised: the above-mentioned words of Nathanael may refer, not to the inhabitants, but to the obscurity and smallness of the town. Nazareth was a poor town: it is mentioned neither in the Old Testament nor by Josephus. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Can such an obscure town give rise to such an exalted person as the great Messiah?

¹ Bengel's *Gnomon*, *in loco*, trans. vol. i. p. 135.

A third explanation refers the term Nazarene, not to the town of Nazareth, but to the order of the Nazarites. Thus it was said of Samson: "The child shall be a Nazarite unto God" (Judg. xiii. 5). In the Septuagint the words are *Ναζῖρ θεοῦ*, or, according to the reading of the Alexandrian manuscript, *Ναζιραῖον τῷ θεῷ*. This is the view adopted by Tertullian, Jerome, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Hilgenfeld, and others. Thus Calvin says: "Matthew does not derive Nazarene from Nazareth, as if this were its strict and proper etymology, but only makes an allusion (a play upon the word). The word נָזִיר or Nazarite signifies holy and devoted to God, derived from נָזַר, to separate."¹ The Nazarites were men separated or consecrated to God. Thus, among the Jews, Samson and Samuel were Nazarites, and so also was John the Baptist. Those who hold this view refer this prophecy to the consecration of the Messiah. But our Lord was not a Nazarite in the strict sense of the term. He did not take upon Himself any Nazarite vows: His character and conduct were in this respect a contrast to the Nazarite John the Baptist. He was not an ascetic: "the Son of Man came eating and drinking" (Matt. xi. 19). He did not, like His forerunner, withdraw into the desert, and live the life of a recluse; but He mingled freely in human society, and thus could not be regarded as a true Nazarite.²

The majority of expositors see in the appellation Nazarene an allusion to נֶזֶר (*Nezer*), a Branch, the title conferred by the prophets on the Messiah. Thus Isaiah says: "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a Branch (נֶזֶר) out of his roots shall bear fruit" (Isa. xi. 1).³ And a similar title is applied to the Messiah in other prophecies (Isa. iv. 2; Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12), though in these prophecies the word employed is זֶמַח (*Zemach*). This hypothesis is adopted by Gieseler, Bleek, De Wette, Meyer,⁴

¹ *In loco*.

² The term *Ναζωραῖος* is not identical with Nazarite.

³ In the Septuagint the word is *ἄνθος*.

⁴ Thus Meyer observes: "In Isa. xi. 1 the Messiah, as the offspring of David, is called נֶזֶר, *shoot*, with which in the representation of the evangelist this designation was identified."

Hengstenberg, Davidson, Schaff, and Mansel¹ According to this view we have a direct reference to the prophecy of Isaiah. But it is to be observed that נָצַר is only used by Isaiah, and the references to the Branch in the other prophecies cannot be employed, as it is an entirely different word that is used, which has no resemblance to Nazarene.

IV. The fourth example of a doubtful quotation is still more difficult, as it would seem that Matthew makes an erroneous quotation, giving the name of one prophet, whilst he quotes from another: τότε ἐπληρώθη τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Καὶ ἔλαβον τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια, τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου, ὃν ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ· καὶ ἔδωκαν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν ἀγρὸν τοῦ κεραμέως· καθὰ συνέταξέν μοι κύριος: "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took² the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was priced, whom *certain* of the children of Israel did price: and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me" (Matt. xxvii. 9, 10).

The first thing to attend to is the criticism of the passage. The word Ἱερεμίου is omitted in the cursive manuscript 33 (the Codex Colbertinus), which is considered as the most valuable cursive manuscript extant, and in 157, a manuscript which belonged to the ducal library in Urbino, but now lodged in the Vatican. Ζαχαρίου is contained in the cursive manuscript 22. Among the Fathers, Tatian omits Ἱερεμίου. With regard to the Versions, we must take into account the statement of Augustine: "This ascription of the passage to Jeremiah is not contained in all the codices of the Gospels, but some of them state simply that it was spoken by the prophet." The codices to which he refers are those of the Old Latin: and in two important manuscripts of that Version—the Codex Vercellensis (*a*) and the Codex Veronensis (*b*)—the word Jeremiah is wanting. It is also omitted in the

¹ *Speaker's Commentary*: the Gospel of Matthew, *in loco*. The first part of this commentary to ch. xxvi. was by Dean Mansel; the remainder was by Canon Cook.

² Ἐλάβον may be either the first person singular, *I took*, or the third person plural, *they took*.

Peshito Syriac and in the Persic Version. On the other hand, *Ἱερεμίου* is the reading of all the uncial manuscripts, of the cursive manuscripts except those above mentioned, of all the Fathers who refer to the passage, as Origen, Jerome, Eusebius, and of all the Versions except the Peshito and the Persic. Thus, then, the undoubted preponderance of authorities is in favour of the retention of *Ἱερεμίου*. At the same time, if conjectural emendation is at all admissible, here would be a fit occasion for its application, and accordingly Origen and Eusebius conjecture that *Ζαχαρίου* was the original reading. But when we take into account the multiplicity of critical authorities and their variety, conjectural emendation in the criticism of the New Testament must be regarded as wholly inadmissible.

It is generally admitted that Matthew does not quote from the prophecy of Jeremiah, in which the words are not found, but from Zech. xi. 12, 13, where words somewhat similar occur. When, however, we compare the words in Matthew's Gospel with the Hebrew and the Septuagint, we find not only a variation from both, but such a material difference as does not usually occur in the quotations by the sacred writers from the Old Testament. The passage in the Hebrew is thus translated in the Revised Version: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty *pieces* of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: the goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty *pieces* of silver, and cast them unto the potter in the house of the Lord." The passage in the Septuagint¹ may be thus translated: "And I will say to them: If it be good in your eyes, give *me* my price, or refuse it. And they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Put them into the furnace, and I will see whether it is

¹ The passage in the Septuagint is: καὶ ἐρῶ πρὸς αὐτούς· εἰ καλὸν ἐνώπιον ὑμῶν ἐστί, δότε τὸν μισθόν μου ἢ ἀπείπασθε· καὶ ἔστησαν τὸν μισθόν μου τριάκοντα ἀργυροῦς. Καὶ εἶπε κύριος πρὸς μέ, Κάθεσ αὐτούς εἰς τὸ χωνευτήριον καὶ σκέψομαι εἰ δόκιμὸν ἐστὶν ὃν τρόπον ἐδοκιμάσθην ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἔλαβον τοὺς τριάκοντα ἀργυροῦς καὶ ἐνέβαλον αὐτούς εἰς τὸν οἶκον κυρίου εἰς τὸ χωνευτήριον.

tested, as I have been tested for their sakes. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord, into the furnace." The words in Matthew are different from both. Neither in the Hebrew nor in the Septuagint is there any mention of the field which was purchased by money. The clause, "And they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me," is found in neither of these sources. According to the Septuagint, the money is cast into the furnace for the purpose of being tested; according to the Hebrew, it is given to the potter; and according to both, it is cast into the house of the Lord: none of which particulars is contained in the quotation as given by Matthew.—The explanations given of this difficult passage are very numerous. We only mention the most plausible.

It is maintained that in the original the word Jeremiah is omitted and that Matthew wrote simply: "That which was spoken by the prophet." This is the explanation adopted by Bengel, Beza, Dr. Adam Clarke, and Dr. Doddridge. We have already considered the critical reading of the passage, and have found that the overwhelming preponderance of evidence is in favour of the retention of Jeremiah, and that in the case of the New Testament conjectural emendation is inadmissible. We are consequently precluded from adopting this explanation.

It is supposed that there is in the passage no reference to the prophecy of Zechariah, but that it is a lost prophecy of Jeremiah. The words, it is affirmed, are so different from those of Zechariah, as found, whether in the Hebrew or in the Septuagint, that they cannot be considered as a quotation from it.¹ Jerome affirms that he had seen the passage in an apocryphal Book of Jeremiah written in Hebrew in the hands of the Nazarenes;² and hence it is inferred that it is from

¹ Thus Dean Burgon says: "Matthew is charged with a bad memory, because he ascribes to Jeremy the prophet words which are said to be found in Zechariah. Strange that men should be heard to differ about a plain matter of fact! I have never been able to find these words in Zechariah yet."

² The words of Jerome are: *Legi nuper in quodam Hebraico volumine, quod Nazarenæ sectæ mihi Hebræus obtulit, Hieremiæ Apocryphum in quo hæc ad verbum scripta reperi. Commentary on Matthew.*

this apocryphal book that Matthew quotes. Thus Michaelis remarks: "As far as I am able to judge, the only mode of solving the difficulty is to suppose that Matthew has borrowed the quotation from some fragment of Jeremiah which is no longer extant."¹ This is, however, an improbable solution, as the language of Jerome is indefinite, no such apocryphal Book of Jeremiah being elsewhere mentioned, and as similar words, though certainly not identical, are to be found in Zechariah.²

A much more plausible solution is that the passage contained in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Zechariah did not originally constitute a part of that prophetic book, but was written by Jeremiah, and inserted into the prophecy of Zechariah, just as the words of Agur are attached to the Proverbs of Solomon. This hypothesis was first suggested by Mede, and afterwards adopted with various modifications by Bishop Kidder, Archbishop Newcome, Lowth, Whiston, Dr. Pye Smith, and Dr. Samuel Davidson in his *Hermeneutics*. So also Bertholdt, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Knobel, Hitzig, Ewald, and Bleek, who, although they do not go the length of asserting that these chapters were written by Jeremiah, yet maintain that they were not the composition of Zechariah. The references in these chapters, it is said, relate, not to the time of Zechariah, but to the time of Jeremiah. Thus it is predicted that the pride of Assyria shall be brought down (Zech. x. 11), which was an accomplished fact in the time of Zechariah, but might form the subject of prediction in the time of Jeremiah. So also Gaza is threatened with destruction (Zech. ix. 5), which occurred under Nebuchadnezzar, in the time of Jeremiah, long before the days of Zechariah. There is also a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem (Zech. xi. 1), which has been referred to the time of the Romans under Titus, but which would hardly have been

¹ Marsh's *Michaelis*, vol. i. p. 242. Similarly M'Clellan: "Matthew cited a prophecy *spoken by Jeremiah*, not *written in his book*; and several *spoken* prophecies of Jeremiah, as doubtless of other prophets, are not recorded." M'Clellan, *New Testament*, p. 606; Whitby, *in loco*.

² Eusebius supposes that the Jews designedly removed the words from the prophecy of Jeremiah. See Sanday's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 47.

given in the time of Zechariah, when the Jews were to be encouraged to rebuild their temple, and which is therefore more suitable as a prediction of the destruction of the city by Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Jeremiah. The prediction regarding the prosperity of Tyre and its subsequent destruction (Zech. ix. 3, 4), though it might apply to the capture of that city by Alexander the Great, receives a better interpretation by referring it to its prosperity and subsequent destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Jeremiah.¹ But admitting the plausibility of this hypothesis, it cannot be the true solution. The prophecy of Zechariah was as complete in the time of Matthew as now: there were no divisions in it: and Matthew could not suppose that what he quoted from that prophecy were not the words of Zechariah, but of Jeremiah. The division of the prophecy under different authors, whether justifiable or not, is the result of a higher criticism unknown in the days of the evangelist.²

It has been affirmed that this prediction is given under the name of Jeremiah, because the prophecy of Jeremiah was the first book of the prophets. The Old Testament received a threefold division—the law, the prophets, and the psalms; and the first book of the division of the prophets is said to have been Jeremiah. The order in the time of Matthew was Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, the twelve minor prophets. The same is still the order in the Talmud and in the manuscripts of the French and German Jews. Thus it is supposed that Jeremiah gave his name to the division of the prophets, just as David gave his name to the division of the Psalms, and Solomon to the Book of Proverbs. When, then, Matthew uses the name Jeremiah, he does not allude to the Book of Jeremiah, but to the volume of the prophets. “I do confidently assert,” observes Dr. John Lightfoot, “that Matthew wrote Jeremiah as we read it, and that it was very readily understood and

¹ This hypothesis is stated with great fulness and supported by very ingenious and plausible arguments by Bishop Kidder, *Demonstration of the Messiah*, vol. ii. pp. 196–217. See also Davidson's *Hermeneutics*, pp. 463–465.

² See a valuable note by Dr. Turpie in his *New Testament View of the Old*, pp. 153–157.

received by his countrymen," because Jeremiah of old had the first place among the prophets. "When, therefore, Matthew produced a text of Zechariah under the name of Jeremiah, he only cites the volume of the prophets under his name who stood first among the prophets."¹ This opinion has been adopted by Scrivener, Dr. David Brown, and Canon Cook in the *Speaker's Bible*. The evidence, however, is insufficient to prove that Jeremiah, and not Isaiah, stood at the head of the division "the prophets."

Some maintain that the statement in St. Matthew's Gospel is not a mistake, but a correct assertion, and that in reality the quotation is from Jeremiah and not from Zechariah. This is certainly a bold assertion, as only by the most forced interpretation, and by a defiance of all the laws of exegesis, can the passage be considered as a prophecy of Jeremiah. The passage in Jeremiah which has been fixed upon is xxxii. 6-9, where Jeremiah is told to purchase from his uncle a field in Anathoth. The only resemblance here is the purchase of a field by the commandment of the Lord. This is supposed to be implied in the words, "and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me." But the resemblance is very faint. All the other parts of the prediction, the price, the thirty pieces of silver, the value set upon the Messiah, are considered as parenthetical clauses. Of course, if we are thus permitted to cut and carve the prophecy, we can make it agree with any prediction which has a few similar words, but we destroy its whole value as a prediction.

Somewhat similar to this last solution, or at least connected with it, is the supposition that the quotation is a conjoint prophecy from Zechariah and Jeremiah: that the prediction concerning the particular price, namely, the thirty pieces of silver, is taken from Zechariah; and that the other part of the prediction, concerning the buying of the field, is from Jeremiah. This opinion is adopted by Elsner, Hofmann, Lange, and Dr. Patrick Fairbairn.² Elsner would supply a connecting particle: "That was fulfilled which was spoken by

¹ Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*: Exercitationes upon St. Matthew, vol. xi. p. 345, Pitman's edition.

² Fairbairn's *Hermeneutic Manual*, pp. 440-448.

Jeremiah *and* the prophet," an improbable form of expression. Still there is some plausibility in the above explanation. There are examples of such conjunct prophecies in the New Testament. Mark i. 2, 3, although quoted as a prediction of Isaiah, is in reality taken both from Malachi and Isaiah (Mal. iii. 1; Isa. xl. 3); and if Matthew quoted from memory, he might easily have included two prophecies in one. But the reference to the purchase of the field in Anathoth, mentioned in Jeremiah, is too vague and remote to be regarded as part of the prophecy.

Another hypothesis is that Jeremiah is designedly mentioned by the Spirit, in order to show the unity of prophecy. No doubt the prophecy is from Zechariah; but Jeremiah is named because both prophets were inspired by the same Spirit, both were penmen of the same Author. This strange solution is advanced by Augustine: "It may have been the case," he observes, "that when Matthew was engaged in composing his Gospel, the word Jeremiah occurred to his mind instead of Zechariah. Such an inaccuracy he would most undoubtedly have corrected, had he not reflected that it was not without a purpose that the name of one prophet had been suggested instead of another. . . . This might fitly suggest the duty of accepting unhesitatingly whatever the Holy Spirit has given expression to through the agency of these prophets, and of looking upon their individual communications as those of the whole body, and their collective communications as those of each separately. If, then, it is the case that words spoken by Jeremiah are really as much Zechariah's as Jeremiah's, and, on the other hand, that words spoken by Zechariah are really as much Jeremiah's as they are Zechariah's, what necessity was there for Matthew to correct his text when he read over what he had written, and found that the one name had occurred to him instead of the other?"¹ It is singular that this most improbable, we might almost say extravagant, solution, wherein the Holy Spirit is regarded as justifying an inaccuracy, has been adopted by Bishop Wordsworth: "By referring here, not to Zechariah, where we read the passage, but to Jeremiah, where we do not read it, the

¹ *Consensus Evv.* iii. 7. 30.

Holy Spirit teaches us not to regard the prophets as the authors of their prophecies, but to trace their prophecies, flowing down through them, in different channels from age to age, until we see them all at length springing forth from the one living Fountain of wisdom in the Godhead itself."

Others at once admit that Matthew has committed a mistake in attributing a prophecy of Zechariah to Jeremiah. They do not suppose that the inspiration of the sacred writers is inconsistent with slight errors in their writings.¹ This opinion, first suggested by Origen, has been adopted by Calvin, Mill, Griesbach, De Wette, Meyer,² and Alford. Thus Calvin passes over the error with the remark: "How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess that I do not know, nor do I give myself the trouble to inquire. The passage itself plainly shows that the name Jeremiah has been put down by mistake instead of Zechariah; for in Jeremiah we find nothing of this sort, nor anything that even approaches to it."³ And Alford observes: "The citation is not from Jeremiah, and is probably quoted from memory, and inaccurately; we have similar mistakes in two places in the apology of Stephen—Acts vii. 4, 16, and in Mark ii. 26. Various means of evading this have been resorted to, which are not worth recounting."⁴ Such a solution certainly cuts the knot, but must only be resorted to as a last expedient.

The mistake, for mistake we believe there is, need not necessarily be referred to the author, but to the copyist. Some think that the error originated in the translation of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew into Greek.⁵ This, of course, assumes that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, which, though probable, has not been demonstrated. If, however, there were a Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, it is a possible solution. But it might also

¹ See Wright's *Bampton Lectures* for 1878, p. 336, note.

² "The passage here quoted is a very free adaptation of Zech. xi. 12, 13, 'Ἰερεμίου' being a slip of the memory." Meyer's *Commentary on Matthew*, *in loco*.

³ Calvin, *in loco*.

⁴ Alford's *Greek Testament* on Matt. xxvii. 9.

⁵ Some suppose that the mistake may have arisen from the translator mistaking יר (a contraction for Jeremiah) for יד (hand). Henderson, *Com. on Zech.*

have arisen from the earliest copyist of Matthew's Gospel. "It is," says Dr. Morison, "a *graphical erratum*. And it would appear to have crept into the original edition of the Gospel, the first published edition. Hence its universal diffusion and its persistence from age to age. There is nothing wonderful in such an occurrence. It is precisely paralleled by the expression 'which strain *at* a gnat,' instead of 'which strain *out* a gnat,' in our English authorised translation of the Bible."¹ There is another example in 1 Tim. iv. 9, where the word *shamefacedness* is a typographical error for *shamefastness*, and is so read in the Revised Version. The word Jeremiah being found in the earliest copies of the Gospel would remain uncorrected, especially as it would be considered wrong to alter the scriptural manuscripts, and as the mistake admitted of various explanations. In some manuscripts, and in the Peshito Syriac, as we have seen, it was corrected. A mistake has been committed, and it is more justifiable to ascribe it to the copyist than to the author, or at least equally justifiable.

¹ Morison's *Commentary on Matthew*. Note on Matt. xxvii. 9. Dr. Morison gives a long and exhaustive list of the various hypotheses which have been advanced, to which list we have been indebted.