

# THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

---

NO. 41.—JULY, 1897.

---

## I. PHILIP MELANCHTHON, SCHOLAR AND REFORMER.<sup>1</sup>

OF the many brief descriptions of the Reformation, none is more striking than that which represents it as the return of Christendom to a book. Of course, so continental, profound and complex a movement cannot be described in a single sentence. But with a rough kind of truth it may be said, that when the hour of the great religious revolution struck, the various lines on which its historical causes had for centuries been moving converged and terminated in the Holy Bible. If we were limited to a single statement as to what the Reformation, in its inmost essence, was, and what, as it perpetuates itself in the Protestant churches, it still is; after all our study of the historical events which preceded it as coöperating agents—the papal schism, the reforming councils, the struggles between Gallicanism and Ultramontanism, the classical revival, the destructive and constructive forces which tore down the mediæval and built up the modern society, as the inventions of printing, of gunpowder and of the mariner's compass and the great voyages of discovery, the religious labors of local and national reformers like Wicliff and Huss and Savonarola—if, I say, after all this study, we were called to select a single sentence in which to embody the idea of the Reformation, we could find no better sentence for the purpose than that of Wil-

---

<sup>1</sup>An address delivered in the chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary on the occasion of the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Philip Melanchthon. The Rev. Dr. Green, Chairman of the Faculty, presided; and the Rev. Dr. Jacobs, Dean of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, took part in the services. The hymns sung were written by Melanchthon and Luther.

#### IV. THE PUBLIC LANGUAGE OF OUR LORD.

It is plainly apparent that of all New Testament literary questions the synoptic problem is easily to the fore. It has been faithfully grappled with by many a brave soldier from Leclere and J. D. Michaelis down, but its solution appears no nearer than when the essential facts were first discovered, and the Ammonian sections and Eusebian Canons were added to the margins of Greek manuscripts in order to facilitate the comparative study of the Gospels. True, the church has always had what it conceived to be a satisfactory explanation of all the phenomena. It is based on the written evidence of competent witnesses, Luke, the physician, and Papias of Hierapolis, and asserts: 1st. That Matthew wrote down the *logia* in the *Hebrew* dialect, and that each one interpreted them as he was able; 2nd. That Mark was the interpreter of Peter, and wrote down accurately, *though not in order*, such things as he remembered which were said or done by Christ; 3rd. That Luke, who was not an apostle, but had nevertheless traced the course of all things accurately from the first, wrote unto Theophilus *in order* the essential facts of the gospel narrative; 4th. That last of these, John, even he that was surnamed Son of Thunder, when a very old man, at the time when fearful heresies were springing up, dictated his Gospel to his disciple, Papias of Hierapolis, as a *supplement* to the words of those who before him had preached the word to the nations in all the earth;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These original documents run as follows:

Ματθαῖος μὲν οὖν Ἐβραϊδὶ διαλέκτῳ τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο ἡρμημένους δ' αὐτὰ ὡς ἦν δυνατὸς ἕκαστος.

Μάρκος μὲν ἑρμηνευτῆς Πέτρου γενόμενος, ὅσα ἐμνημόνευσεν, ἀκριβῶς ἔγραψεν, ὅν μὲντοι τάξει, τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα.

Ὑστατος γὰρ τούτων Ἰωάννης ὁ τῆς βροντῆς υἱὸς μετακλιθεὶς, πάνυ γηραλέου αὐτοῦ γενομένου, κατ' ἐκείνου καιροῦ αἰρέσεων ἀναφυσισῶν δευνῶν ὑπηγόρευσε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῷ ἑαυτοῦ μαθητῇ Παπία ἐδριώτῳ τῷ Ἱεραπολίτῃ, πρὸς ἀναπλήρωσιν τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ κηρυξάντων τὸν λόγον τοῖς ἀνά πάσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἔθνεσιν.

These statements are cited from *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera* recensuerunt Gebhardt, Harnack, Zahn, editio minor repetita, pages 72-78. The statement about

5th. That Matthew's Gospel in the current Greek is the work of Matthew's own hands; 6th. And that these Gospels in the Greek in which—in their present form—they were originally written are inerrantly inspired of God to be an infallible rule of faith and

Luke is the well-known preface to his Gospel. It may be said here that the logia which Matthew compiled need not be his present Gospel, need not be discourses of our Lord, but may be (and the writer would almost say were) Old Testament prophecies relating to the Messiah. For *συνεγράφη* is a singular word to use of an original composition, and an Aramaic or Hebrew gospel, at all like the Greek Matthew, has never been in evidence; for it is the Greek Matthew of our canon which the ancient witnesses, from Papias to Eusebius and Jerome, accept whenever they mention it as the work of an apostle, and that without any doubt of its genuineness. All the ancients seem to know about a Hebrew or Aramaic Matthew, hark back to the statement of Papias, and the evidence stands or falls with the exegesis of this single line of dubious Greek. Now, Matthew's Gospel contains a catena of fulfilled prophecies, and it is not, therefore, hard to believe that what Matthew did was to draw up this collection of fulfilled prophecies; for his office as public tax-gatherer made him a ready scribe, and the work was much needed. It is no singular thing for the ancient fathers to follow "Indian file" in the tracks of any predecessor at all, without investigation. The student of patristic literature soon learns to be on the watch for that very thing. The legend about the LXX. translators is a case in point; it is a far cry from the simple narrative of Philo to the monstrous and miraculous yarn of Epiphanius. Yet it is the same tale improved and embellished in its transmission.

It was once my fortune to have a class-room dispute with Dr. H. C. Alexander, *ὁ μακάριος ἀνὴρ*, over the word *καθεξῆς* in the preface to Luke's Gospel. The doctor was prejudiced in favor of Gardiner's harmony, which follows, I believe, the order of Mark, and wished so to explain the word as to indicate that Luke's material came, in part at least, from those persons who had first taken in hand the composition of a gospel narrative. Now, I am not prepared to say that *καθεξῆς* cannot denote succession in time; but the translation "in order" is supported by both English versions, by nearly all the references given in Liddell and Scott, and by, I believe, the usual usage of the LXX. version. What Luke intended on the face of his preface was to make a scientific statement of the facts in regard to Jesus which should be differentiated from the narratives already in circulation by its accuracy, precision, and logical arrangement. From this scientific character, Matthew is excluded by the words *τὰ λόγια*, and the evidence of the book itself; and Mark is excluded by the direct testimony of Papias, whose *οὐ μέντοι τάξει* should be conclusive. Luke lends itself readily to the construction of a harmony, as can be seen (to cite an easy reference) from the one in the common *Oxford Helps*. Luke is also the writer whose precision in the Acts of the Apostles commands our admiration; the only writer who furnishes the data whereby to orient the times of the Messiah with the history of the nations, and we therefore should be ready to acquiesce when a precise writer makes precise statement of a precise aim.

practice. With these statements as to the origin and correlation of the four Gospels, sober-minded faith is content, in full assurance that in the wise providence of God the facts which alone could explain the difficulties of the question are totally unknown and irretrievably lost. Their agreement in minute particulars faith believes due to the use by the follower of the work of his predecessor; their discrepancies are the earmarks of independent and faithful witness. The very simplicity of the position is also believed to be a note of its trustworthiness, and devious complexness ever accompanies error.

Beyond these four documents the record does not go. Other writings were in early circulation, but not one scrap of evidence exists to show that these four ever existed in anything but their present shape, that they were ever composed by cutting and tearing, and patching, and making over the cloth of other men's weaving. They have borne the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ever since they became known at all. Only there are those who do not care to rest their case on the evidence of competent witnesses, but must perforce find some middle way by which to escape the church's unpalatable dogmas which inhere in the inspiration of the Greek text; and the noteworthy thing is, that while the traditional view of the matter with all its coherence is rejected, the most wearisome investigation fails to find a substitute which can gain general acquiescence, or outlast the generation that gave it birth. Attempts are thick as lie the leaves in Vallambrosa, but they fail to displace the general explanation offered by the church. Now, it is, by reason of this continual failure, that renewed prominence has recently been given to the language in which our Lord uttered his discourses; for the latest explanation of the synoptic problem is that our Lord used the Aramaic in his public utterances, and that the divergencies in the Gospels are due to mistranslation or misreading of the common Aramaic source.

The hypothesis of an Aramaic vernacular is, of course, not new; but the present form of its application is. Only it must be said at the outset, that the righteous endeavor to solve the synoptic problem has led into the discussion some of that clamant crowd

whose shibboleth is "Back to Christ," whose delight it is to hear the very accents of the Lord's own voice, while they spurn from them the words of the disciple the Lord sent his Spirit to inspire. For them, however, the establishment of the Semitic source is of no avail; they are in no whit better case; for there remaineth no criterion by which to decide what residual variant represents the very utterance of the Christ; no one to tell us whether the two women were "grinding in the mill" (בִּאֲדָרָא) or "grinding together" (בְּהִרְרָא). But for the orthodox student of the word, there is this to be said, viz.: That the task of New Testament interpretation becomes much more complicated if we have to reconstruct the original Aramaic in order to check our exegesis. We argue from the Greek words as from a document of last resort, beyond which there is no appeal. The case is somewhat different when we come to make allowance for the mistakes Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, and John may have made in the work of translation from this Aramaic original. This, however, we are calmly told must be done before we are in a situation rightly to appreciate the words of Jesus. "Until it has been proved that he spoke Greek, the Greek words of the evangelists must not be quoted as if they were his;" not even on the supposition that these same evangelists were inspired of God thus and so to write! The situation is, therefore, a critical one, and we need great boldness of face to meet it. But the battle is not always to the noisy, and the New Testament has been in the conflict before.

Neither is it the first time in the world that the Lord's vernacular has been the theme of fierce dispute. The revival of letters brought on a discussion which raged for more than a century as to whether the Greek of the New Testament was to be regarded as "good" Greek, or a bastard mongrel of Greek and Hebrew parentage, subject to no laws of language, and irreducible to exact principles of interpretation, in which Desiderius Erasmus, Theodore Beza, Henri Estienne, Heinsius, Gataker, and Leusden are the great names. This discussion was ended only by the interposition of the exact philologic science represented by the many-sided scholar, J. A. Ernesti, to whom the Bible and Greek and Latin classics are alike indebted. Syriac was

brought into play by the publication of the Gospels in Syriac by J. A. Widmanstadt (1555), of which the Maronite, George Amira, believed that they contained the very language of the Christ. In this opinion he was followed by the editors of the *Antwerp Polyglot* (1569–1571), Arias Montanus, Andreas Masias, Boderianus. Cardinal Bellarmine, Rome's greatest and fairest controversialist, saw whereunto this might grow, and opposed the contention with all the wealth of his keen researches. Joseph Justus Scaliger, however, pointed out that Syriac is to be distinguished from the Aramaic, in which parts of Ezra, and Daniel, and the Targums were written, and in which Jesus would have spoken, if he spake Semitic at all. The publication of the great Chaldee Lexicon of Buxtorf (1639), and the remarks of Grotius, served to keep the distinction in the mind of the public. Brian Walton, who edited the last and greatest of the Polyglots (London, 1657), is found as usual on the right side of the philologic distinction, and decides that the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan have the first right as the representatives of Christ's vernacular, while Lightfoot decides that the Hebrew had entirely died out in Babylon. Such, also, was the judgment of Huet and Maldonatus, whose commentaries are the authoritative exposition of the Scriptures for Catholics.<sup>1</sup>

But the Semitic did not gain entire possession of the field. The attack came from the Protestant side, and the discussion became entangled with party polemics. As Richard Simon published his *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament* (Rotterdam, 1685), with the express design of shattering the Protestant stronghold, viz.: The integrity of the original texts of Holy Scripture and the therein inherent dogma of inerrant inspiration; so Isaac Voss, in his

---

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ et Talmudicæ*, Cambridge, 1658–1674, is the great thesaurus of such rabbinical and Old Testament material as bears on New Testament interpretation; and scattered references to the use Aramaic might afford in New Testament exegesis are found in the many works of J. D. Michaelis and Eichhorn; but it was the Altona pastor, John Adrian Bolten, who first made any thorough, systematic use of it in consecutive exposition of New Testament books. He put forth a German version of the whole New Testament, accompanied by exegetical notes, the Matthew of which is almost a translation from a presupposed oriental original. And the motive which moved Bolten to invoke its use was exegetical embarrassment as Joseph Addison Alexander has already noticed.

various publications, defends the proposition that Jesus and his apostles spake Greek, and cited the version of the LXX. Only, Voss went so far in his zeal as to defend the inspiration of that hoary translation. Voss was followed by Dominic Diodati whose book, *De Christi Græce Loquente*, Neapoli, 1767, was based on Voss' *De Sibyllinis Oraculis* (1680), but increased the evidence by contributions from classic and rabbinic sources, from coins and inscriptions. Diodati, however, could not carry his Italian compeers with him, for the influence of the name of J. B. De Rossi, who disputed his deductions, has been too great. De Rossi and Kennicott are the two great names for the eighteenth century in the textual criticism of the Massoretic texts; and their names have not yet lost their weight. The Greek succession, however, was carried on by Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus, a man by no means in favor among the opponents of German rationalism. Paulus recognized the traces of Aramaic in the New Testament, but protested that while Christ used the Aramaic in private, it was Greek which formed the medium of his public utterances. Paulus' work appeared in 1803, and was followed in 1808 by the *Introduction to the Scriptures of the New Testament*, from the pen of the Roman Catholic scholar, John Leonhard Hug, who comes to the same result in the use of the same means. With him stands Karl Aug. Credner, whose *Einleitung in das N. T.*, Halle, 1836, still contains much that is valuable in New Testament literary criticism. Neither is Credner to be neglected in the study of the original manuscripts. The Greek succession continues to the present time in the various publications of Alexander Roberts, D. D., profes or at St. Andrews, whilom member of the English Revision Committee, and editor of the *Anti-Nicene Fathers* (T. and T. Clark). In four separate publications from 1859 to 1893 he has striven to maintain the thesis that "Christ spake for the most part in Greek, and only now and then in Aramaic," in order that there might be established a close connection between the Christ and the New Testament. The hypothesis that Christ made use only of the Aramaic continues its hold on biblical scholarship, however, and reached its utmost development in the work of Eduard Bohl (*Forschungen nach einer Volksbibel zur Zeit Jesu.*

Wien, 1873). Bohl advances the notion that Christ and the apostles quoted from a popular version of the Scriptures into Aramaic, which version was not made from the Hebrew but from the LXX., or was, at least, based upon it. Bohl's motive in the explanation given is the desire to escape the force of the argument from the use of the LXX. version; but it is plainly apparent that the solution raises more questions than it solves.

1. We come thus to the question: In what language were the discourses of the Christ uttered? And we can say at once that of the three languages inscribed over the Master's cross, it was surely in Latin that he did not speak. Time was, however, that men said he did use the Latin, and a like reason even to-day leads to similar statements. The Jesuit Melchior Inchofer (died 1648), of Vienna, who had asserted the genuineness of a letter purporting to be written by the Virgin Mary to the people of Messina also "*ad Ecclesie Latinæ exaltationem*," made the assertion that Jesus spoke Latin while on earth just as the saints do in heaven. Inchofer's theories found little audience, but he had one notable successor, Jean Hardouin, who was at once singularly learned and learnedly singular; for he contended that, with the exception of the works of Homer, Herodotus, and Cicero, the *Natural History* of Pliny, the *Georgics* of Virgil, and the *Satires* and *Epistles* of Horace, all the ancient classics of Greece and Rome were spurious, having been fabricated by monks of the thirteenth century. According to him the apostles had either written in Latin or else, at the least, had a Latin version of their works made at once; for the Greek text is an arbitrary private performance. The situation in the Gospels, however, demanded that Jesus should use the Vulgate of the Old Testament in his citations; and that had already been turned from Hebrew into Latin, *a laudatissimo interprete*. At the time of Jesus, only the scholars understood Hebrew; every man of quality, however, knew the Latin which was taught in the schools, of which mention is made in the Books of Maccabees. Christ preached in Latin in the temple and in the synagogue, and because he understood the Latin so well was Peter chosen to found the Church of Rome. For these propositions the proofs are: (1), The Roman overlordship of the whole known



world and the presumptive general use of Latin; (2), The obedience of Christ to the civil powers as shown by the payment of tribute; (3), The commercial dealings of the Jews; (4), The Latin on the cross was the nearest to the Christ. We learn also that Baronius, editor of the far-famed *Annales Ecclesiastici*, and Bellarmine, think it possible that Mark may have written his Gospel in Latin. In St. Mark's church in Venice, too, Meyer tells us there is a leaf from a Latin Gospel-codex shown to the faithful as part of Mark's own autograph.

2. It has been likewise contended that the Master and his disciples could not have spoken Hebrew; and the proof is supposed to be that Hebrew had entirely disappeared from the range of the common people, and was the solitary possession of the scribes; that it was not even read in the synagogues, though it may have been heard in the temple service; and we are referred to the sacred literature of the Hindoos and Persians, and the ecclesiastical Latin, as instances in point. There are those, however, who are not inclined to let such statements pass unchallenged. There was Franz Delitzsch, whose services to Hebrew scholarship were second to none in his day and generation, who was certainly called to the restoration of the Aramaic words of the Lord Jesus; but when he was asked to translate the New Testament into Aramaic, he held it a vain work, perhaps also a desecration of the sacred words. The words of Delitzsch are well worth further repetition, and few of my readers have access to Kautzsch's *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen*, whence I take them (page 5), or to the Hebrew New Testament, where they first appeared:

"One of my friends will not desist from the request that I would translate the New Testament into the Aramaic idiom, which was spoken in Palestine in the days of Christ and his apostles; that is, into the language of the Talmud and the Palestinian Targum. But this wish rests on an illusion. Even after the exile, the Hebrew remained the language of Jewish literature. The Ecclesiasticus of Jesus Sirach was written in Hebrew, as appears from the fragments in the Talmud. The original of the First Book of Maccabees and of the so-called Psalter of Solomon was Hebrew. The inscriptions on coins and gravestones, the

liturgical prayers, were Hebrew; the laws were composed in Hebrew, as appears from their codification in the Mishna. Even the book in which, as Papias says, Matthew has collected the Lord's discourses, was written *ἑβραϊῶν διαλέκτῳ*. It is true that in this time *ἑβραϊστί* and *χαλδαιστί* were not accurately distinguished, in spite of which it is QUITE IMPROBABLE THAT MATTHEW WROTE IN ARAMAIC. [Emphasis mine.] For the Palestinian Aramaic dialect—which is called in the Talmud *דְּבַר־שְׁמַיָא*—was the language of the daily life, the vulgar speech, in which the people and the cultured classes were accustomed to transact business and to discuss disputed questions; but *ἡ ἑβραῖς διάλεκτος*, in which Paul (Acts xxvi. 14) was addressed by the exalted Saviour, and in which he himself addresses himself to the people of Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 40; xxii. 2), was the sacred language, the language of the temple-cult, of the synagogal and domestic prayer, of all formulas of benediction, as well as of the transmission of the law. Not the less, also, are the parables, the fables, and the dirges in the Talmuds and Midrashes in large measure Hebrew. The sacred language continued to be the language of the higher modes of discourse; even the familiar saws of the people were only in part Aramaic. When Josephus, in the preface to his work on the Jewish war, says that his narrative was originally composed in their common vernacular for his countrymen in Asia, he certainly means the Hebrew, not the Aramaic. Knowledge of the Hebrew was at that time, as at present, generally disseminated among the cultured classes of the nation. The Aramaic, on the other hand, was understood only by a small part of the Diaspora. So it would be a useless undertaking to translate the New Testament into the Palestinian Sursi. The Semitic wrapper (*einschlag*) of New Testament Hellenism is Hebrew, not Aramaic. Our Lord and his apostles thought and spoke for the greater part in Hebrew."

Such is the judgment of the honored Delitzsch. Kautzsch, who adds an interrogation point to the word "spoke," seems to me also to admit that the reference to Targums in the Talmud does not prove their use in the time of Christ. Next to Delitzsch we may set Dr. Alfred Resch, who has in hand a monumental work, parts of which have appeared under the title *Aussercanonische*

*Paralleltexte zu den Evangelien*, in the series *Texte und Untersuchungen*, edited by Harnack and Gebhardt. His aim is to examine the whole range of patristic writings, and to extract therefrom such putative fragments of our Lord's discourses as are preserved in sources extra-canonical, as, for example, the parallel to Luke x. 16—"He that heareth you heareth me; *and he that heareth me heareth him that sent me*"—where the italicized words are not in the New Testament transmission, but are added by some father of the church. Resch's idea is that there was an *Urevangelium* in very wide circulation alongside the canonical Gospels, composed originally in Hebrew, but afterwards translated into Greek; and that from this document come the remarkable variants found in even the oldest New Testament codices. Now, Dr. Resch uses the Hebrew to explain such passages as Luke xvi. 16; Matthew xi. 12—"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force"—where there is a play on פָּרַץ. When Luke uses *ἐυαγγελίζεται* for Matthew's *βιάζεται*, he reads אֶתְפָּרֵץ for אֶתְפָּרֵץ. And Professor Marshall admits (in *The Critical Review*, Vol. VI., page 48, 1896) that were not פָּרַץ the same in both Hebrew and Aramaic, he would be obliged to admit the use of Hebrew in the source. Resch tells us, in the third part of his work, that his conviction of the sure character of his presupposition increases as he goes through his material; and that he is more sure of the Hebrew as the language in which our Lord uttered his discourses.

Besides Resch we have another notable man to support the theory of Hebrew as the language of our Lord. Professor Eberhard Nestle, of Ulm, stands second to none in the departments of Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Greek languages. He is the author of numerous works in Semitic philology, an indefatigable contributor to learned periodicals, a trained collator of manuscripts, and the editor of Tischendorf's text of the LXX. version.<sup>1</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> Various notes by Nestle are to be found in the current volume of *The Expository Times* (VIII.), but his pamphlet on the original shape of the Gospels contains his most complete exposition of his views. It is: *Philologica Sacra. Bemerkungen über die Urgestalt der Evangelien und Apostelgeschichte*, Berlin, 1896. Nestle, be it said, is the one great name in Germany that has given adherence to Blass' view as

past two years the world of scholarship has been receiving from him fruitful exegeses of Gospel texts, all in the method just illustrated, and all to prove that the present Greek text rests upon a written Semitic source. Only Nestle does not stop at one language, but compels Syriac, Aramaic and Hebrew alike to the service (may I say—for we remember Bolten) of his exegetical embarrassment. Only when pushed he has given a decisive answer. *The Expository Times*, December, 1896: "As to the general question, whether the original Gospel was Hebrew or Aramaic, I feel, *a priori*, much more inclined to suppose that it was Aramaic; but we must keep the possibilities open, not to run into a deadlock." Now, Nestle stands square on his feet, and he is not willing to base too large a structure on the evidence; for, in character, it is too precarious. As we have seen, the word פֶּרֶץ may be either Aramaic or Hebrew; and the evidence being all purely linguistic cannot decide. The only sure conclusion is: the background is Semitic. The character of the evidence will be more fully stated, but the names of these three men are sufficient to show what a case can be made for Hebrew if the need of a Semitic source can be proven.

Now, the case is made stronger by the recovery during the past year of ten leaves (20 pages) of the original Hebrew text of "The Wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach." A careful account of the discovery is given by the present writer in *The Union Seminary Magazine*, January–February number, 1897, to which reference may be made. It will suffice to say here that by reason of that discovery we know that a pure, idomatic, vivacious Hebrew, free

---

to the Book of Acts. Blass' idea is that the Greek text of the singular bilingual manuscript *Codex Bezae Cantabrigensis*, ordinarily denominated D, contains the first rough draft of Luke's second book addressed to Theophilus, and that in the current critical text of the Acts we have the fair copy Luke actually sent to his friend. If, now, D is the rough draft, and the traditional text critically revised the fair copy, it is Luke's own last revision which we want, and we may, therefore, do with D in glad assurance what we have hitherto done with more or less critical uneasiness, viz.: reject it and its readings altogether. For surely the author's own revision is to be preferred to the rough draft he himself laid aside. It is strange that neither Professor Blass nor Professor Nestle has seen or acted upon the logical outcome of the theory.

from any taint of the rabbinic farrago of phrases and particles and corrupted grammar, could be written in Jerusalem at 200 B. C.; and that by reason of the same discovery we cannot be so dogmatic as hitherto in our statements as to what was spoken or written when Jesus walked on earth. I have intimated in that article the opinion that it was possibly the overthrow of Jerusalem which occasioned the abandonment of the ancient Hebrew by the educated classes to the schools of professed devotion to the preservation and transmission of the Scriptures. It is a historic fact, too, that the very earliest notice of a written Aramaic Targum points to the middle of the first century A. D. It thus becomes increasingly probable that it was a Hebrew parchment our Lord read from that day in Nazareth, that it was in Hebrew that the early prayers of our Lord were lisped, and that Hebrew may yet have been understood by a "carpenter's son." Mind, now, the evidence does not warrant dogmatic statements, only the Ecclesiasticus discovery does measurably strengthen Delitzsch's position.

3. We come now to the consideration of the theory<sup>1</sup> that Christ spake Aramaic only, and that an Aramaic source thus lies behind the present Gospels. And, first, a word as to the term Aramaic,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The most careful and thorough work on the Aramaic theory has been done by Licentiate Arnold Meyer, Privat Docent of Theology in Bonn, and Professor J. T. Marshall, M. A., of Manchester, England. Meyer's book is *Jesu Muttersprache. Das galiläische Aramäisch in seiner Bedeutung für die Erklärung der Reden Jesu und der Evangelien überhaupt*. Friburg and Leipzig, 1896. Professor Marshall is the English head of "The American Institute of Sacred Literature"; and the most complete and satisfactory exposition of the theory is contained in his papers printed in *The Expositor* during 1890 and 1891, and in the summary statement he has given in *The Expository Times*, Volume IV., 1892-'93. This volume of *The Expository Times* is well worth purchase and study by students of the Gospels, as it contains the theories of recent date, in careful statement, by their originators, Professor Marshall, Professor Wright, and Rev. J. J. Halcombe, with the criticisms each has to make on the work of the others, and the originators' responses to such criticism. Professor Marshall defends the theory of an original Aramaic Gospel; Professor Alfred Wright, of Queen's College, Cambridge, maintains the oral transmission of our Lord's discourses, while Rev. Mr. Halcombe insists upon the view maintained by the present writer and set at the head of this paper, only he would reject the testimony of Papias altogether, and holds that John wrote first, and then Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in the order named.

<sup>2</sup>It was August Ludwig Schlözer in his article "Von den Chaldäern," printed

for even Mrs. Lewis herself, to whom Semitic scholarship owes such a debt, has mixed them up in the December, 1896, number of the *Century Magazine* past resolution by lay readers. Christ did not speak Syriac as one would gather from the article in question, "What language did Christ speak?" For Aramaic is not Syriac, and we must not lose sight of a distinction based on sober facts. Mrs. Lewis' pride in the Syriac Gospels is pardonable, but it is an injustice to the reader to endeavor to obliterate the distinctions two hundred and fifty years of Semitic scholarship have pronounced valid. Now, by geographical boundaries, the centres of Syriac culture were Edessa and Nisibis, cities at the headwaters of the Euphrates, at the extreme upper end of ancient Mesopotamia, the nearest some five hundred miles, as the crow flies, from Jerusalem. The lower limit of distinct Syriac seems to have been the mountain range against which the Orontes heads, the ancient boundary known as the "Entering in of Hamath." South of the Anti-Libanus, Syriac had no foothold; and not a document of the long list in Wright's *Syriac Literature* seems to have been composed in Palestine; certainly none of the writings of the early Christian centuries. From the Anti-Libanus southward, Aramaic held the field with Damascus as its earliest centre. As to linguistic phenomena, Aramaic and Syriac are as different from each other as each is from Hebrew, or nearly so. Both belong to the North-Semitic or Aramaean division of the Semitic languages, which is further sub-divided into East-Aramaean or Syriac, and West-Aramaean or Aramaic (sometimes called Chaldee or Syro-Chaldaic). By Syriac we mean the language of Upper Syria and Mesopotamia. By Aramaic we mean the language of Laban and his countrymen, which flourished in Palestine side by side with the Hebrew, and by reason thereof took on Jewish characteristics until what was originally North-Semitic came rather to resemble the Middle-Semitic, of which Hebrew and Phœnician are

---

in Eichhorn's *Repertorium für Biblische und Morgenländische Litteratur*, Eighth part, pages 113 to 176, Leipzig, 1781, who first used the designation "Aramaic," and pointed out the true signification of Chaldee. His paper covers the whole range of peoples to whom the latter designation has been applied, and is very valuable even yet. We do wrong to neglect these storehouses of eighteenth-century lore; for there is but little really new under the sun.

the great sub-divisions. The factual difference should not be obliterated.

The remains of the Aramaic literature are: (1), Daniel ii. 4 to vii. 28; Ezra iv. 8 to vi. 18, vii. 12-26; Jeremiah x. 11, in the Old Testament, with a few isolated words and sentences in the New Testament and Josephus; (2), The Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, etc., to the Old Testaments; (3), The Gemara of the Jerusalem Talmud and isolated portions of Mishna and Midrash; (4), The Samaritan Targum to the Pentateuch, which must not be confused with the Samaritan Recension of the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch; (5), Sundry inscriptions on coins and stones from Judea, Egypt, Palmyra, the Sinai peninsula, Idumæa, Hauran, especially valuable as indicative of geographical boundaries; (6), The so-called Jerusalem Evangelistary—which is a translation of the Gospels into an Aramaic, into which many Syriasm have been injected by the ignorance of transcribers—together with certain fragments of the Old Testament and Paul's epistles in a similar version. These are very valuable as representative of the translation of the Gospels for the early Palestine Christian. These are translations from the Greek, and bear the evident marks of being versions on their face. It is thus not a large body of Aramaic which has come down to us; and it is in this language we are told to believe the original Gospel was written; for as Mrs. Lewis graciously tells us, there are some who hold that the mother-tongue of Jesus was Greek, "because" forsooth "three out of the four Gospels are *supposed* to have been written in that language."<sup>1</sup>

Now as to the evidence that Jesus used Aramaic in his public discourses, we are not shown one scrap of testimony outside of certain considerations hinging on textual exegesis. There is the bare fact that Aramaic was in use in Palestine, which no one will dispute; but the early fathers of the church are silent or dumb. Not one scrap of evidence—historic evidence—has come to show that there ever was an original Aramaic Gospel or written

---

<sup>1</sup> Is the concurrent testimony of the whole history of the canon to be called supposition? Is there a scrap of evidence—testimony—anywhere to connect the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and John with any language but Greek? Are we to throw away the writings of the fathers and the transmission of the Greek text in favor of precarious exegetic expedients?

Aramaic collection of the discourses of Jesus. The vague sentence of Papias is the single source of all the fathers have to say on the subject, and the dubious ἐβραϊστὴ the sole point of attachment of the theory to the record. We hear it is true of a "Gospel according to the Hebrews," but any one who will turn up the first part of Eichhorn's *Repertorium für Biblische und Morgen, ländische Litteratur*, 1777, can readily satisfy himself that that is not what the theory requires. Now Papias may refer to something else than words of our Lord as is shown in the anonymous book, *The Oracles ascribed to Matthew, by Papias of Hierapolis*, whose author is now known to be the brilliant young scholar, F. C. Conybeare. And even if he means to speak of Matthew's Gospel, the words quoted from Delitzsch make it evident that we cannot incontinently claim it as Aramaic. Beyond this dubious scrap we have no record that can even be twisted to prove an Aramaic source; and the silence is inexplicable if such original Gospel there was. For even these fragments of the Palestinian version, of which we have just spoken, are translations from the Greek—universally admitted such—and no satisfactory explanation has been adduced to show why such a translation was made in the second century if our Lord's own Aramaic words were current in the original Gospel in the first. It is the Greek Gospels in their present form of which we hear in all the patristic documents; and the multifarious writings of the fathers never attempt to go behind the current text to the alleged original source. More, there seems not to have been a written Aramaic Targum in use in those days even. For the first reference to an Aramaic Targum is to one on Job whose use the elder Gamaliel prohibited, and it is not until towards 200 A. D. that we find positive reference to their use. All of which means, to those who know how curious Jerome and Origen were in such matters, that such things were not in existence.

A. Embedded in the Greek text of the New Testament, however, are found quite a number of singular expressions and short sentences which bear on their face the evidence of being transliterations from the Semitic, of which we may cite: the "*Talitha cumi*" of Jesus, and his cry on the cross, "*Eloi, Eloi lama sa-*



*bachthani*," together with such words as *Abba*, *Akeldama*, *Gabbatha*, *Golgotha*, *Ephphatha*, *Mammon*, *Messiah*, *Rabbi*, *Rabboni*, *Raca*, *Moreh*, *Satan*, *Corban*, *πασα* (Matt. xxvi. 2), *σικερα* (Luke i. 15), Paul's *Maranatha*, and the *Σαουλ Σαουλ* (elsewhere *Σαῦλος*) which converted the apostle to the Gentiles on the way to Damascus. Some of these show the form of the emphatic state, and are unquestionably Aramaic; others are as distinctly Hebrew. *Rabboni* is more than likely a Galilean provincialism; and still others may be either Hebrew or Aramaic, for the exact derivation in some cases rests on too narrow a basis for dogmatism.

*B.* Many of the names of persons and places in the New Testament go back to the earliest times of the Hebrew nation; many are distinctly Aramaic, many are Greek and some are Latin. All the names in the family tree of our Lord seem to be Hebrew, for he was of the seed royal in the line of David; but Barabbas, Barsabbas, Bartholomew, Barjesus, Barjona, Bartimæus (which are all compounds with *בַּר* Hebrew *בֵּן* 'son'), Cephas, Martha, Tabitha are Aramaic. But it is a mixed state of affairs which confronts us, and argument, thence, is of no avail. The Greek Timæus' son is known as Bartimæus; Tabitha, after her introduction, figures as Dorcas, which is Greek; the high priest's immediate family included the Hebrew father, Annas, the Aramaic son, Caiaphas, a Hebrew grandson, John (form Greek), and a Greek grandson, Alexander; the Greek Timothy had a Greek father, and his mother was a Jewess, but her name, Eunice, is the Greek *Εὐ—νική*; Zebedee had two sons, John and James, but it is singular that the second is not called *Ἰακωβ* but *Ἰακωβὸς*; the twelve were a motley set of Hebrews (John, Matthew, Simon, and Judas), Aramaeans (Thomas, Bartholomew, Cephas, Matthias), and Greeks (Andrew, Philip and two James), while the rash Peter associated with the fickle Mark (Latin), and when he came out of the prison and knocked on the door, it was that same fickle John Mark's Greek sweetheart, Rhoda, who came to hearken. Peter healed a man of Latin name, Aeneas, at Lydda, just as his Lord had cast the demons out of a man named Legion. The whole church at Jerusalem came together, Jews and Grecian Jews, and elected seven deacons who were residents of Jerusalem, and every

one of these seven Jews had Greek names. There was also a ruler of the Jews and a distinguished member of the sect of the Pharisees who came to Jesus by night, Nicodemus (*Νικη—δημος*) by name; and when Paul's accusers came and informed the governor against Paul it was the Latin Tertullus who was their spokesman; the "prince of the air" figures before us as Beelzeboul (Hebrew), Satanas (Aramaic), and the Devil, *διαβολος*, and the place of his abode as Sheol (Hebrew), Gehenna (Aramaic) and Hades (Greek), out of which chaos no sure argument can come; certainly none for the Aramaic. The Aramaic names are admitted, but the preponderance is not Aramaic, only it is but fair to say that the evident traces of Greek association and Greek intermarriage in all social circles is not without bearing on the use of Greek in every day intercourse. From the days of Isaiah down, Galilee—whose speech was the speech of the Christ—was "Galilee of the Gentiles" a land of mixed population whose chief cities in the time of Christ were Tiberias and Ptolemais, cities of Greek influence. The Jews were certainly in the minority, and being less acquainted with the law and less strict than the Jews of Judea were little esteemed by them. The chief peculiarity of Galilean by which Peter was bewrayed was the confusion of the gutturals א, ה, ח, and ע, so that we are told in the Talmud that when a Galilean asked who has "Emar" to sell it was necessary to ask, "Thou dumb Galilean, what *do* you want? An ass *המר* to ride, or wine *חמר* to drink, or wool *עמר* for clothes, or a lamb *אמר* to kill?" and it is an open question how it was that these Galileans came to know so little about Aramaic that they found it hard to make the Jews, who spoke it correctly, understand what they said. The writer has just the glimmer of an idea that it was non-use of the Aramaic or predominant use of something else (Hebrew or Latin, which, gentle reader?) that made them sloven in the articulation. Not to dwell longer on these names, it may be said that stress is not laid on them by the advocates of the Aramaic theory except as indicative of the presence of Aramaic in Galilee and Judea, which is not denied. The reason is, perhaps, not far to seek, viz.: that Jesus associated intimately from youth up with men whose Greek names assuredly

point to Greek business associations, and likely to Greek inter-marriage, and acquaintance with the Greek language. Only one name seems to deserve special notice, and perhaps may contribute something towards the question. It is the passage in Matt. xvi. 17, 18: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonah . . . thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." (In the Greek, *Συ εἰ πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρῳ.*) Now John gives us in i. 42: "Thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation Peter." Revised Version margin, "that is, rock or stone." Admit the possible paronomasia in both languages and we yet have to ask, if the words were uttered in Aramaic and the original Gospel was in Aramaic, how came Matthew, whose name alone is in any way connected with the Semitic source by the record, to give us that patent Greek paronomasia? The likelihood is that the ability thus and so to do carries with it knowledge of Greek of no mean order, especially if the pun is so far fetched as some commentators would have us believe.

*C.* When we compare the LXX. text and the Hebrew verity, we discover that the variations are, in large measure, due to, 1, The diverse vocalization of the same consonants; 2, Misreading of the same consonants; 3, Omission of a consonant; 4, Transposition of a consonant; and 5, Duplicate translation of the same word. And the central feature of the Aramaic theory is "the assumption which *seems* quite simple and reasonable that the same kinds of variations which occurred in different MSS. of the Hebrew Bible would find their way into MSS. of the Aramaic Gospel." The gist of the theory, then, is: If, when we translate the diverse Greek words into Aramaic we obtain Aramaic words bearing a very close resemblance to one another—such variations aside—we may be sure that we have the original source of the Gospels in the language of its original composition, and therefore the very words of the Lord Jesus in the language in which originally they were uttered.

Now, it is admitted that in many instances the retranslation into Aramaic is successful enough to shed light on the Gospel texts, just as it is admitted with Resch and Nestle that retranslation into Hebrew is of much service and great plausibility. The

whole evidence can be seen in the works cited; we may here cull a few specimens. In the "Lord's Prayer" we have (Matt. vi. 12), "forgive us our *debts*," (Luke x. 4), "forgive us our *sins*," where the Aramaic **חוב** may mean either *debt* or *sin*. How do we carry our cross? **λαμβάνω** (Matt. x. 38), **αιρω** (Mark viii. 34), or **βασταζω** (Luke xiv. 27), "take," "take up," or "carry." The Aramaic is **כָּטַל**. Was Christ "transfigured" (Matt. xvii. 2), or did he become "different" (Luke ix. 29)? **שָׁבִי** if the former; **שִׁבִי** the latter. In the parable of the sower (Matt. xiii. 4): "the fowls came" **דָּרְיָה** (Luke viii. 5): "It was trodden" **דָּרְיָה**. Is wisdom justified in her children (Luke v. 35) or in her works (Matt. v. 19)? If we say children of wisdom, doers of wisdom, we get **עוֹבְדָהָא** or **עֲבִידָהָא**. In the case of the demon-possessed boy, Mark says, "The spirit saw him" **אַדְרִיק**; Luke says, "the demon tore him" **אַדְרִיק**, where the words are similar but from different roots. We may now cite a few instances where the theory demands alterations in the original Aramaic gospel:

Matthew xiii. 6—They had no root. **שרש**.

Luke viii. 6—They had no moisture. **שרך**.

Matthew xvii. 1—Into a high mountain. **עלאה**.

Luke ix. 28—Into a mountain to pray. **צלאה**.

Mark x. 49—Said call ye him. **אתקראה**.

Luke xviii. 40—Ordered him to be brought. **אתקרבה**.

Matthew xxiv. 23—Believe it not. **תתרחצון**.

Luke xvii. 23—Go not away. **תתרחקין**.

Matthew vi. 20—Where thieves bore not through. **יִקְבוּ**.

Luke xii. 33—Where thieves do not draw near. **יִקְרְבוּ**.

Matthew xiii. 21—He stumbleth. **אתתקל**.

Luke viii. 13—They fall away. **אסתלק**.

Mark is supposed to give us a few cases of double translation; and the cases are usually considered as proof that the later writers

used the work of their predecessors. This singular occurrence we are told is due to the translator's failure to know the exact translation, and in his desire to get it right he is supposed to have set down whatever permissible translations were in his head:

Matthew viii. 16—And it was evening.

Luke iv. 40—And when the sun was setting.

Mark i. 32—And it was evening when the sun was setting. All of which are supposed to reproduce the same Aramaic phrase, רכב הרה עברית.

Matthew xvii. 1—A high mountain apart.

Mark ix. 2—A high mountain apart alone, where the Aramaic source has the solitary word בלחודרהונ or להוד.

Matthew viii. 3—His leprosy was cleansed.

Luke v. 13—His leprosy departed.

Mark i. 42—His leprosy departed and was cleansed. Here the original reading was, "his leprosy was cleansed," אתכבת. Luke reads this as אתכרת "departed"; and finally "some worthy progenitor of Lucian, when transcribing the Second Gospel (Professor Marshall will not say Mark!) combined them."

In the parable of the sower Luke says, "The devil taketh away the word; Matthew, "That which was sown": Mark, "The word that was sown." "Word" is דבורא or דברא; "that which was sown" is דרריא. Mark did not know which was right and so sets down both.

"Nor are other indications wanting that our Lord spoke in Syriac (read Aramaic). Semitic peoples delight in puns and in assonances or jingles of words. We need not go far to prove this. . . . Babylonian royal decrees and Arabic legal documents are all enlivened by it." When the people spake of the serpent Moses lifted up in the wilderness, "Nahash," Hezekiah said "Nehush-tan," and smashed the "piece of brass." John viii. 34: "He that doeth (עבדא) sin is the slave (עבדא) of sin"; with the same play on the same words in Luke vii. 8: "I say to my slave 'Do this' and he doeth it." Matthew iii. 9: I say unto you that God is able of these stones (אבניא Aramaic, אבנים Hebrew) to raise up children (בניא Aramaic, בנים Hebrew) unto Abra-

ham.<sup>1</sup> And the difference between Matthew v. 9,  $\delta\omicron\sigma\tilde{\xi}\eta\tau\epsilon\epsilon$ , and Luke iii. 8,  $\alpha\rho\tilde{\xi}\eta\sigma\theta\epsilon$ , vanishes when we consider that one is Aramaic תִּשְׁרוּן, the other תִּשְׂרוּן; while we hear the children's babble in Matthew xi. 17 "We piped unto you and ye did not dance (רַקְדַּתוֹן), we wailed and ye did not mourn (אֲרַקְדַּתוֹן)" —Rakedtun and arkedtun.

With this we complete our survey of the evidence in favor of Aramaic as the language in which our Lord uttered his discourses. It is not exhaustive, for all the cases of retranslation are by no means given; but the best are given, and no kind or head of argument is unrepresented. Indeed, in our endeavor after fair dealing, some things have been adduced which might point to Aramaic that are not given in the literature on which this paper is based. In criticism we have to say:

(a), There are three objections which are fatal to the theory of an original Aramaic Gospel with which the use of Aramaic by our Lord goes hand in hand: *First*, It postulates the existence of two, three, or more primitive documents which have perished and left no trace behind; perished so rapidly that they were unknown in the second century. Men cling to the ancient and original, and it is inconceivable that a written document wherein were the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ should be studied, copied, and destroyed. "The loss of the primitive Gospel would have been a standing disgrace to the churches of Judea and the East." *Second*, Our Lord was crucified in A. D. 29 or 30 by the latest, and by A. D. 50, or thereabouts, Matthew's Gospel is generally admitted to have been in circulation. Paul arrived in Rome in 63 A. D. at the latest, and the last statement in Luke's second book, the Acts, is dated two years after that event. The evidence seems to show that the last event cited and the completion of the book are to be dated together. Luke's first book, the Gospel, is, therefore, to be set before A. D. 65, as otherwise Luke's own statements are empty words. Now the theory requires us to believe that these men did not understand their own

<sup>1</sup> Nestle asserts that this assonance is possible only in the Hebrew. Boanerges is also unquestionably Hebrew.

language, and that they could make school-boy mistakes in reading it. For the double translations of Mark, and Luke's failure to read consonants aright, cannot be laid on some "progenitor of Lucian" forsooth. The transmission of the text is dead against it, and the Greek Gospels are now substantially in the words written by their authors; there is no trace or record of editorial redaction. What stands written in the Greek Testament as printed by Tischendorf or Westcott and Hort was there when the men whose names the books bear dried their pens. These men are the responsible parties in this failure to reproduce the original Aramaic Gospel, and not some convenient scribe. Of these men, two were apostles; two were their disciples; all were competent to qualify as witnesses of the things recorded, and to supplement this Aramaic Gospel by their own information. Resch is right when he claims that the central feature of the Aramaic theory is entirely erroneous; the cases are not parallel. The men of the LXX. used copies of MSS. corrupted by hundreds of years of transmission; we have not more than thirty years for the corruptions to have gathered in this Aramaic source. The matter of the Hebrew text was often unintelligible by reason of antiquity (the titles to the Psalms, if you like); the Gospel writers were in the presence of the living witnesses, were themselves a part of what they wrote. The theory is no adequate account of the divergencies in the text of the various writers. It compels us to assume—and Professor Marshall has not challenged the assumption—that the original Aramaic document was not only so rubbed and obscured in twenty to thirty years as to be often hardly legible, but that the Aramaic was so apt to be misread by reason of its lack of vowels, and the similarity of some of its consonants, that an Aramaic letter could be read differently by different people, not once or occasionally, but as a regular thing; which means, if Matthew's *λογια* were the original document, that that ready scribe could not recognize his own signs manual. *Third*, The hypothesis does not begin to account for the omissions. Why should Mark, when he had the Sermon on the Mount before him, insert only a few verses of it in his text, verse at a time as suited, and leave out the Lord's Prayer besides? Why does Luke alone

contain the great "Parables of the Lost"? These discourses of our Lord are the very things most expected in such a document, the very things that called it into existence. Sure these were cobblers and patchers who hacked and carved and abused the original Aramaic Gospel. They were not men of heart and conscience. Did they omit because they thought the matter useless (for Mark could not know, on the hypothesis, what Luke and Matthew had incorporated in their work)? Who were they to pass judgment on the Lord who uttered these words?

(b), It is admitted that our Lord was perfectly acquainted with the Aramaic; the evidence is too large to deny that. It is admitted also that, in private with his own disciples, he may have used it as the regular medium of communication; nay, more, that at times he deliberately preferred it in order that his words might produce a deeper impression. But it is not admitted that when our Lord had the large mixed multitudes to address—the Sermon on the Mount, for instance—he would chose a means of communication in all likelihood not understood by numbers of those he addressed. Especially would this be true if our Lord's pronunciation of Aramaic were faulty, as we are told it was in Galilee. Consider, now, that the Passover season drew crowds to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, so that Josephus can tell us that three millions were at times present, Parthians, Medes, Elamites . . . Cretes and Arabians, and that Jesus used these occasions for the utterance of very many of his discourses; it becomes, then, inconceivable that he should express the deep thoughts of God in a dialect whose use was circumscribed, especially when there was a language in use well known to almost all, to put it mildly, of his hearers. The passage of Josephus to which we are referred proves nothing. Josephus, indeed, confesses to the labor and delay experienced in rendering his *Jewish War* into Greek from the Aramaic in which it was first composed; and we are asked, "If a highly educated man as he was experienced this difficulty, how very unlikely is it that the fishermen of Bethsaida and the peasants of Galilee would have followed the Sermon on the Mount if addressed to them in Greek?" Well, it is conceivable that one can follow the simple Greek of the Master who



could not write the highly polished, sonorous, rhetorical, literary Greek of Josephus. My Greek testament I can read with my feet on the fender, but it is delay and a matter of Liddell and Scott when I tackle Philo of Alexandria or the comparatively easy Greek of the "Apostolic Fathers." But we must not forget another passage of Josephus which the Aramaic people do not care particularly to remember. He thus concludes his *Antiquities*: "Now, after having completed the work, I venture to say that no other person, whether he were a Jew or a foreigner, had he ever so great an inclination to do it, could so accurately deliver this history to the Greeks; for those of my own nation freely acknowledge that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to the Jews. I have also taken a great deal of pains to acquire the learning of the Greeks, and understand the elements of the Greek language, although on account of the habitual use of the paternal tongue I cannot pronounce Greek with sufficient accuracy; for with us those are not encouraged who learn the languages of many nations, and so adorn their discourses with the smoothness of their periods; *because this sort of accomplishment is regarded as common, not only to all sorts of freemen, but to as many of the servants as are inclined to learn them.*"

(c), The occasional use of Aramaic words and sentences in the Gospels does not in itself prove that the Gospels originally existed in Aramaic, or that our Lord uttered his discourses therein. The same line of argumentation would prove that the epistles of Paul are re-translations from the Aramaic, or that Josephus' *Antiquities* were composed therein; neither of which propositions can be proved. Neither, also, does the re-translation into Aramaic prove that our Lord habitually used that language. It is admitted that he did so occasionally. The New Testament lives and moves in a Semitic atmosphere, and the retranslation carries us into the atmosphere, nothing more; and the passages retranslated into Aramaic may be as successfully retranslated into Hebrew, as Nestle shows; for the only reason so large a number of cases has not been made out for Hebrew is the lack of such translations into Syriac and Aramaic as we have in our hands—the lack, in other words, of the needed lexical sources. In such an environment

the use of assonance is no more than the expected. In the story of "Susanna," appended to the original LXX. of Daniel, there is a double assonance which is only possible in the Greek, and was supposed by Porphyry to prove that the Greek was the original and the Hebrew the translation. So, also, Mark iv. 24 offers an assonance both in Greek and English, which reappears also in German: "With what measure ye measured, to you it shall be measured." Mark x. 38: "Baptized with the baptism I am baptized with." Many similar examples can be culled from the writings of Paul. It is not strange that he who turned the inscription on the Athenian altar into the text for a sermon should have given us many such expressions. Their use in the Gospels no more proves that Christ habitually spoke Aramaic than that Paul's epistles are translations. Any one who has associated with foreigners will know that the language in which one thinks does inevitably mould the choice of words in the language that is spoken. We submit, then, that it is sufficient explanation of all these several phenomena to recognize the Semitic environment, and to admit that on occasion our Lord used Aramaic in the circle of his intimate friends.

4. We thus align ourselves with Paulus, Hug, and Roberts in the belief that our Lord in his public discourses employed Greek, the language which was at that time the literary medium of the whole known world, the language in which the nation that then ruled the world transacted its business in the provinces, and to some extent in the capital itself. The considerations that point in that direction are numerous. Some have already been touched upon, and the deficiencies pointed out in the other hypotheses are all corroborative of this. Not to be tedious, we may mention: 1. The universal use of Greek throughout the whole known world is in itself presumption that when the time came for God to declare the universal gospel unto the nations, that language would be employed which was in general use among all the nations. 2. The known bilingual character of "Galilee of the Gentiles," a land of Greek cities and Greek influence, and the Greek associations which appear in the very names of the twelve, surely make it probable that our Lord was therewith acquainted. 3. When these

Galilean peasants and fishermen went forth to revolutionize the world, they were able to speak with every man they met without interpreters. The Master could speak at ease with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, with that woman that was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race, with the Greeks who came to see him by the hand of Philip, which same Philip could climb up into an Ethiopian's chariot, and with him read a common Greek Bible. And when the Master was on a trial, certainly conducted in Greek, John could go in to see and hear, while the soldiers about the gate could chaff the wretched Peter. 4. And when the wretched farce was over, and the innocent victim on that middle cross uttered the cry of anguish, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," the crowd that stood about—and we know it must have been a great one—in their ignorance of Hebrew or Aramaic thought he called Elijah. 5. When Paul stood on the castle stairs to make his defence to that mob that would rend him limb from limb, it was Greek they expected him to speak, and the unaccustomed words of their "Hebrew" tongue stilled them to greater silence than the presence of Rome's soldiers.

6. As to the prevalence of Greek, let us remember that from the days of Alexander down, Greek had been in the field. Under the Ptolemies and the Seleucid princes, an influence was exerted in the direct favor of Greek, and under that influence were produced quite a succession of Greek documents written by Palestinian Jews for Palestinian Jews. It was for their benefit that the "wisdom of Jesus, son of Sirach," was translated, expressly stated in the preface that the version was made in Palestine. All the other Old Testament Apocrypha were likewise written in Greek, except the First Book of Maccabees, Judith, part of Baruch, and probably Tobit. But there was another force in the field more powerful far than the influence of these books and commercial intercourse. That force was the translation of Holy Scripture into Greek made under the auspices of the Ptolemies, and known as the LXX. version. And the argument from that source as to the public language of our Lord, Professor Alexander Roberts regards so conclusive that he confidently rests the whole case on this one line of proof. The argument is fully drawn out

in *A Short Proof that Greek was the Language of Christ*, London, 1893, and may now be succinctly stated.<sup>1</sup>

(a), *A "People's Bible" Circulated in Palestine in the Time of Christ*.—In his ministry our Lord frequently and freely appeals to the Scriptures as to a book well known and used by the people, and the people are represented as following his references. Thus Mark xii. 35–37: "David himself said in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet'; and the common people heard him gladly." Here the people at large understood and followed Christ, when he quoted and commented on a passage from the Old Testament. Again, Luke xxiv. 27: He expounded to the two disciples at Emmaus "in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," where the words "in *all* the Scriptures" are especially noticeable, inasmuch as they imply that the disciples had the whole of the sacred volume at their command. They were not acquainted with random selections of Scripture, but with the prophecies in the various inspired books—ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς—from which our Lord could quote as he listed. The same intimate acquaintance is taken for granted in the oft-repeated question, "Have ye not read?" Matt. xii. 1–5 is an instance where two parts of the three divisions of the Hebrew canon are quoted, 'Have ye not read what David did?' "Have ye not read in the law?" and the express implication is that their knowledge of the Scriptures did not rest on synagogue reading and hearing. The people, for their part, were quite able and ready on occasion to quote from the Scriptures. Thus we are told, Luke xx. 27, 28: "Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, who asked him, Master, Moses *wrote* unto us," etc. Again, John ii. 17: "The disciples remembered that it was *written*, The zeal of thine house has eaten me up." Again, the common people introduce into their discourse with great naturalness a quotation from the Old Testament, John vi. 31: "As it is *written*, He gave them bread

---

<sup>1</sup> We follow Professor Roberts' order here closely. Only we have checked all the statements, added much new material of our own, and recast the argument into our own mould, so that we wish to assume complete responsibility for every and all statements made in the course of the argumentation.

out of heaven to eat." Paul, as we know well, possessed both books in papyrus and parchments. (2 Tim. iv. 13.) From all of which we rightly conclude that the sacred Scriptures were not in the exclusive possession of any one class. They were spread everywhere throughout the land, and could be appealed to by any public teacher with the assurance that they would be at once appreciated and understood. Every Jew had access to them in a written form, and could quote from them as occasion required, and it will be readily granted that the entire Scriptures of the Old Testament were then well known in Palestine. For the command, "Search the Scriptures," has no value if the men to whom it is addressed have no access thereto. Prof. F. A. Christie, of Meadville Seminary, Pennsylvania, has attempted to dispute the validity of the premise here established in *The Classical Review*, May, 1894, Vol. VIII., but it appears without success; for when Dr. Roberts replied to his criticism and pointed out that the argument of James in Acts xv. 6-21 depends entirely for its cogency on words that exist in the Greek version, but are not found in the Hebrew, he vouches the singular response, "I must add that some of us do not regard the fourth Gospel and the Book of Acts as accurate historical sources." Since, then, the conclusion can only be escaped by destruction of the documents that contain the evidence, we may regard it as proven that there was a people's Bible in circulation in Palestine at the time of Christ, a conclusion, be it said, which also forms the starting-point of Bohl's work.

(b), *The Hebrew Original was not the People's Bible in the Time of Christ.*—And was not for the very simple reason that the common people could not read it. That they could not, stands almost beyond doubt. Hebrew may have been used in literature, and perhaps read in the synagogues as it is read to-day; but it is generally agreed, and Professor Christie admits it, that Hebrew was not the vernacular. Ancient Hebrew was then a dead language so far as the people at large were concerned. It continued to be studied by experts as the tongue in which the Old Testament books had been composed, but beyond the circle of such scholars it was neither understood nor spoken. *The*

*Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach*, is likely one of the latest works written in Hebrew. Certainly by 100 B. C. it had ceased to be used in writing as it had much earlier ceased to be used in familiar speech. The concurrent testimony of Ewald, De Wette, Bleek, Winer, Deutsch, Gesenius and W. Robertson Smith, may be accepted as conclusive on that point. Josephus tells us further in the passage heretofore quoted that, "Those of my own nation freely acknowledge that I far exceed them in the learning belonging to the Jews"; and it is certain that his bombast is, in the main, true. He should thus have been well acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. And yet this same Josephus had but a sorry acquaintance therewith; for in his writings he depends more on the Greek translation than on the original text of the Old Testament, and "his etymological and other blunders are of the grossest conceivable character." If, now, such a scholar as Josephus had so imperfect a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, we may conclude that they were sealed books to the people at large. The cost of Hebrew manuscripts, moreover, put them out of the reach of ordinary purses; and the same is, in a measure, true of Aramaic. The enormous labor and care involved in their production made them very dear. We have a statement from the third or fourth century—and the statement would be about true in Jesus' day—that a copy of the Psalms, Job, and torn pieces of Proverbs were together valued at eighty-five dollars—five Greek minas. This would, of course, put Hebrew manuscript out of common reach. The people's Bible was not the original Hebrew text.

(c), *An Aramaic Version of the Hebrew Original was not the People's Bible in the Time of Christ.*—And was not for the very simple reason that there is no evidence that such a version ever existed, much less at that time. We do not say that there were no written Targums on various parts of the Old Testament, but we do say that there was no complete Aramaic version in existence. The Jews in our Lord's time had access to the entire Scriptures of the Old Testament in a written form—that was well understood; but all the evidence that any Aramaic version of any book of the Old Testament existed in Christ's time is a state-

ment that a written Targum (which is something different from a translation) on Job was highly disapproved of by the elder Gamaliel (middle of first century, A. D.), who caused it to be buried out of sight. It is not likely, then, that the people would have what the authorities disapproved; and, indeed, all the Targums now in existence have come into a written existence since the end of the second century. The Targum of Jonathan on the prophets is, perhaps, to be dated somewhere near that time; but owing to greater reverence for the law the Targums on the Pentateuch cannot be dated earlier than the sixth century. The Talmud makes ample provision for oral targumisation in the synagogues, but it seems clear that permission to write or use a written Targum was not given until about 150 A. D. We conclude, therefore, that the people's Bible is not here, not even if we can stretch our imagination to make the word cover the very paraphrastic commentary called Targum. Of a pure Aramaic translation there is no evidence.

(d), *The Greek Version of the Old Testament was the People's Bible in the time of Christ.*—And was so because by the process of exhaustion the LXX. version is all that can remain. This version originated in Alexandria, and thence encompassed the whole known world, driving out the original Hebrew, and becoming itself the original for the earliest translations into Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, and Gothic. Such was its use in Alexandria, that Philo, the great Jewish scholar of that place, seems to have known nothing else. Such was its use elsewhere, that men came to predicate inspiration of it. If our theory be correct, we shall find marks of the use of this version in the New Testament; and such there are. The argument of James in Acts xv. 6–21, as has been said, depends for its cogency on words that exist in this version, but are not found in the Hebrew text. The copy of Isaiah used by the Ethiopian as he rode in his chariot on the "desert road" from Jerusalem to Gaza has been very generally known to have been in the LXX. version, from the general agreement of the text with the words thereof, and by reason of the improbability of his reading Hebrew. Instances need not indefinitely be multiplied, nor need we thresh old straw. There

are two hundred and seventy-five cases of complete or partial quotation in the New Testament from the Old. One hundred and seventy-five of these are cases of quotation from memory, and agree neither with the original text nor with the LXX. version. Of the remainder, fifty-three agree with the Hebrew and with the LXX., which has rendered the passages with correctness; ten agree with the Hebrew against the incorrect LXX., while thirty-seven agree with the LXX. against the original text, which can certainly be counted as good evidence that the LXX. was the Bible of the men who wrote the New Testament. This evidence is the sounder because Acts xv. 6-21 is not the only place where the correctness of the argument depends on the words of the version, Romans iii. 10-18, for instance, a Scripture which once completely staggered the illustrious Jerome. The cost of Greek books can be added as further proof to the express testimony of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, who cite the version as common authority in their disputes with the Jews. Indeed, it was the very discovery that the LXX. which they used was an ally of the Christians in their disputes over Messianic prophecies which caused the Jews to neglect it, to have made the versions of Aquila and Symmachus, and finally to encamp behind the battlements of the Hebrew verity. Now, as to cost, we can get a fair idea of the cheapness of Greek manuscripts from the price of books at Rome about this time. One man dictated, hundreds of slaves wrote; large editions were published, and "it would be safe to compute that as much matter as would cover sixteen pages of small print might be sold at the rate of about six pence, and in that ratio." We may fairly conclude, then, that in the LXX. version we have the desired "People's Bible."

(e), *Greek then was the Public Language of our Lord, in which Ordinarily His Discourses were Uttered.*—If his Bible and their Bible was in Greek, there can be no reasonable doubt that in Greek he revealed to men the principles of the kingdom of God, and taught the way, the truth, and the life. The universal gospel was delivered to men in the universal language, and we now have it in the very language, and substantially in the words, of its first utterance. We do not have to see through the veil of a



translation darkly, but we do see face to face. We believe, therefore, that we have the right to argue from these words as from a document of last resort, and that the words as they stand written are the very words of the Lord Jesus, able to make us wise unto salvation.

R. B. WOODWORTH.

BURLINGTON, W. VA.