

FRAGMENTS OF EARLY GOSPELS, ETC.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE HEBREWS

THIS is on a different level from all the other books we have to deal with. It was a divergent yet not heretical form of our Gospel according to St. Matthew. Even to sketch the controversies which have raged about it is impracticable here. What may be regarded as established is that it existed in either Hebrew or Aramaic, and was used by a Jewish Christian sect who were known as Nazaraeans (Nazarenes), and that it resembled our *Matthew* closely enough to have been regarded as the original Hebrew of that Gospel. I believe few, if any, would now contend that it *was* that original. It is generally, and I believe rightly, looked upon as a secondary document. What was the extent of the additions to or omissions from *Matthew* we do not know: but two considerations must be mentioned bearing on this: (1) The Stichometry of Nicephorus assigns it 2,200 lines, 300 less than *Matthew*. This figure, if correct, means that a good deal was left out. (2) If the Oxyrhynchus Sayings (see *post*) are really, as competent scholars think, extracts from it, we must suppose a large quantity of additional matter: for we have but two rather brief fragments of that collection of sayings, and eight out of thirteen sayings are either not represented in the canonical text, or differ widely therefrom.

Jerome, who is our chief source of knowledge about this Gospel, says that he had made a Greek and a Latin version of it. The statement is wholly rejected by some, and by others thought to be an exaggeration. It is very difficult to accept it as it stands. Perhaps, as Lagrange suggests, the truth may be that Jerome took notes of the text in Greek and Latin. Schmidtke, it should be added, has tried to show that all Jerome's quotations from it are borrowed from an earlier writer, Apollinaris; but there is no positive evidence for this.

If the Oxyrhynchus Sayings do come from *Hebrews*, they seem to imply the existence of a Greek version before Jerome's time. This is also implied by the entry in the Stichometry.

I will translate the fragments as they appear in the most recent study on the subject, that of the Rev. Père Lagrange in the *Revue Biblique*, 1922.

He begins by giving the fragments quoted by Epiphanius from what is properly called the Gospel of the Ebionites. Then he gives those of our Gospel, arranging them in the chronological order of the writers and the works in which they are found. This entails some little repetition, but is otherwise historically interesting, and sound.

IRENÆUS *against Heresies*, i. 26. 2. But the *Ebionites* use only that Gospel which is according to Matthew, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, calling him an apostate from the Law.

iii. 11. 7. For the Ebionites, who use only that Gospel which is according to Matthew, are convicted out of that very book as not holding right views about the Lord.

The Ebionites mentioned here are a more primitive sect than those of whom Epiphanius speaks. See below.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA (*Stromateis*), i. 9. 45. Even (or also) in the Gospel according to the Hebrews is written *the saying*, 'he that wondereth shall reign, and he that reigneth shall rest'.

id. (*Strom.*) v. 14. 96. For those words have the same force as these: He shall not cease from seeking until he find, and having found, he will be amazed, and having been amazed will reign, and having reigned will rest.

This is identical with one of the Sayings from Oxyrhynchus: see below.

ORIGEN on *John*, ii. 12. And if any accept the Gospel according to the Hebrews, where the Saviour himself saith, 'Even now did my mother the Holy Spirit take me by one of mine hairs, and carried me away unto the great mountain Thabor', he will be perplexed, &c. . . .

On *Jeremiah*, homily xv. 4. And if any one receive that *saying*, 'Even now my mother the Holy Spirit took me and carried me up unto the great mountain Thabor', and the rest. . . .

The description of the Holy Spirit as 'my mother' is due to the fact that the Hebrew word for spirit is of the feminine gender. The saying, it is generally thought, refers to the Temptation.

EUSEBIUS, *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 39. 17, speaking of the early writer Papias, says: He has also set forth (or expounded) another story, about a woman accused of many sins before the Lord, which the Gospel according to the Hebrews also contains.

It is the obvious, and general, view that this story was that of the woman taken in adultery, which, as is well known, forms no part of the true text of St. John's Gospel, though it is inserted by most manuscripts at the beginning of the eighth chapter. A few manuscripts place it in St. Luke's Gospel. The description suggests that Papias's story, with its mention of *many* sins, differed from ours in detail.

id. iv. 22. 8. Hegesippus made use in his *Memoirs* of the Gospel according to the Hebrews.

id. iii. 25. 5 (in his list of *antilegomena*, writings whose canonicity was disputed): And among them some have placed the Gospel according to the Hebrews which is the especial delight of those of the Hebrews who have accepted Christ.

iii. 27. 4. (The Ebionites repudiated Paul) and used only the Gospel called according to the Hebrews, making but slight account of the others.

Theophany, iv. 12 (preserved in Syriac). As we have found somewhere in the Gospel which the Jews have in the Hebrew

tongue, where it is said: I choose for myself them that are good (or well pleasing): the good are they whom my Father which in heaven giveth (or hath given) me.

ibid. (A passage preserved in Greek also.) But since the Gospel written in Hebrew characters which has reached our hands turns the threat not against the man who hid *the talent*, but against him who had lived riotously (for it told of three servants, one who devoured his master's substance with harlots and flute-girls, another who multiplied it by trading, and another who hid the talent; and made the one to be accepted, another only rebuked, and another to be shut up in prison), the question occurs to me whether in Matthew, after the conclusion of the speech against the man who did nothing, the threat that follows may refer, not to him, but by *epanalepsis* (i.e. taking up a former subject again) be said of the first, who ate and drank with the drunken.

EPIPHANIUS, *Heresy* xxix. 9. 4 (Nazoraeans). They have the Gospel according to Matthew quite complete, in Hebrew: for this *Gospel* is certainly still preserved among them as it was first written, in Hebrew letters. I do not know if they have even removed the genealogy from Abraham to Christ.

Their Gospel was 'quite complete' as distinguished from the Ebionite Gospel, which was mutilated.

STICHOMETRY OF NICEPHORUS (of uncertain date, but much older than the ninth-century chronicle to which it is attached).

Antilegomena of the New Testament:

Apocalypse of John, Apocalypse of Peter, Epistle of Barnabas, and

Gospel according to the Hebrews, 2,200 lines (300 lines less than the canonical Matthew).

JEROME. He is our principal authority in this matter.

On Ephesians, v. 4. As also we read in the Hebrew Gospel: 'And never, saith he, be ye joyful, save when ye behold your brother with love.'

On Micah, vii. 6. (The quotation about the Holy Spirit given above under Origen. Jerome quotes it again several times, not always in full.)

Of illustrious men, 2 (on James the Lord's brother).

Also the Gospel called according to the Hebrews, lately translated by me into Greek and Latin speech, which Origen often uses, tells, after the resurrection of the Saviour: 'Now the Lord, when he had given the linen cloth unto the servant of the priest, went unto James and appeared to him (for James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour wherein he had drunk the Lord's cup until he should see him risen again from among them that sleep)', and again after a little, 'Bring ye, saith the Lord, a table and bread', and immediately it is added, 'He took bread

and blessed and brake and gave it unto James the Just and said unto him: My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep'.

This is a famous passage. One interesting clause is apt to escape notice, about the giving of the shroud to the servant of the (high) priest, which implies that the priests must have been apprised of the resurrection as soon as the apostles. Was the servant of the priest Malchus? Presumably the servant was at the sepulchre: if so, it was being guarded by the Jews as well as the Roman soldiers (as in the Gospel of Peter).

ibid. 3. Further, the Hebrew itself (*or* original) is preserved to this day in the library at Caesarea which was collected with such care by the martyr Pamphilus. I also had an opportunity of copying it afforded me by the Nazarenes who use the book, at Beroea, a city of Syria.

This Beroea is Aleppo. In later years Jerome ceased to regard this Hebrew Gospel as the original Matthew.

ibid. 16. Of the Epistle of Ignatius 'to Polycarp' (*really* to Smyrna). In it he also inserts a testimony about the person of Christ, from the Gospel which was lately translated by me; his words are: But I both saw him (*this is wrongly quoted*) in the flesh after the resurrection, and believe that he is *in the flesh*: and when he came to Peter and those who were with Peter, he said to them: Lo, feel me and see that I am not a bodiless spirit (demon). And forthwith they touched him and believed.

Ignatius, to the Smyrnaeans, iii. 1, really says: For I know, and I believe that he is in the flesh even after his resurrection.

Another citation of these words of Christ is given by Origen as from the Doctrine of Peter: see p. 18.

On Matt. ii. Bethlehem of Judaea. This is a mistake of the scribes: for I think it was originally expressed by the Evangelist as we read in the Hebrew, 'of Judah', not Judaea.

On Matt. vi. 11 (the Lord's prayer).

In the Gospel called according to the Hebrews for 'supersubstantial' bread I found *mahar*, which means 'of the morrow', so that the sense is: Our bread of the morrow, that is, of the future, give us this day.

The word supersubstantial is meant to render literally the difficult word *epiousios* which we translate 'daily'.

On Ps. cxxxv. In the Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew it is thus: Our bread of the morrow give us this day; that is, 'the bread which thou wilt give us in thy kingdom, give us this day'.

On Matt. xii. 13. In the Gospel which the Nazarenes and Ebionites use (which I have lately translated into Greek from the Hebrew, and which is called by many (*or* most) people the original of Matthew), this man who has the withered hand is

described as a mason, who prays for help in such words as these: 'I was a mason seeking a livelihood with my hands: I pray thee, Jesu, to restore me mine health, that I may not beg meanly for my food.'

The mention of the Ebionites here is gratuitous. Jerome nowhere else speaks of them as using the Gospel, and everything goes to show that, in his time, they did not.

Letter to Damasus (20) on Matt. xxi. 9. Matthew, who wrote his Gospel in the Hebrew speech, put it thus: *Osanna barrama*, i. e. *Osanna in the highest*.

On Matt. xxiii. 35. In the Gospel which the Nazarenes use, for 'son of Barachias' I find 'of Joiada' written.

This reading avoids an historical difficulty, and is doubtless secondary.

On Matt. xxvii. 16. This *Barabbas*, in the Gospel entitled (written) according to the Hebrews, is interpreted 'son of their master' (teacher).

By 'interpreted', says Lagrange, it is not meant that the Gospel translated the name, but that it used a form of it which suggested the meaning—*Bar-rabban*.

On Matt. xxvii. 51. In the Gospel I so often mention we read that a lintel of the temple of immense size was broken and divided.

Letter to Hedibia (ep. 120) 8. But in the Gospel that is written in Hebrew letters we read, not that the veil of the temple was rent, but that a lintel of the temple of wondrous size fell.

This was probably a change made under the influence of Isa. vi. 4, 'the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried'.

On Isa. xi. 2. (The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him) not partially as in the case of other holy men: but, according to the Gospel written in the Hebrew speech, which the Nazarenes read, 'There shall descend upon him the whole fount of the Holy Spirit'. . . . In the Gospel I mentioned above, I find this written: And it came to pass when the Lord was come up out of the water, the whole fount of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon him, and said unto him: My son, in all the prophets was I waiting for thee that thou shouldst come, and I might rest in thee. For thou art my rest, thou art my first begotten son, that reignest for ever.

On Isa. xi. 9, My mother the Holy Spirit.

On Isa., *preface to bk. xviii*. For when the Apostles thought him to be a spirit, or, in the words of the Gospel which is of the Hebrews which the Nazarenes are wont to read, 'a bodiless demon', he said to them (Luke xxiv. 38).

On Ezek. xvi. 13. My mother, the Holy Spirit.

On Ezek. xviii. 7. And in the Gospel according to the Hebrews which the Nazarenes are accustomed to read, it is placed among the greatest sins 'if a man have grieved the spirit of his brother'.

Dialogue against Pelagius, iii. 2. In the Gospel according to the Hebrews which is indeed in the Chaldaean and Syrian speech but is written in Hebrew letters, which the Nazarenes use to this day, called 'according to the apostles', or, as most term it, 'according to Matthew', which also is to be seen in the library of Caesarea, the story tells: Behold, the mother of the Lord and his brethren said unto him: John Baptist baptizeth unto the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized of him. But he said unto them: Wherein (what) have I sinned, that I should go and be baptized of him? unless peradventure this very thing that I have said is a sin of ignorance.

ibid. And in the same book: If thy brother (saith he) have sinned by a word and made thee amends, seven times in a day receive thou him. Simon his disciple said unto him: Seven times in a day? The Lord answered and said unto him: Yea, I say unto thee, unto seventy times seven times. For in the prophets also, after they were anointed by the Holy Spirit, the word of sin was found.

'Word of sin' is Hebraistic for 'somewhat of sin': similarly 'sinned by a word' means 'sinned in anything'.

Latin version of Origen on Matthew (now called Pseudo-Origen).

It is written in a certain Gospel which is called according to the Hebrews (if at least any one care to accept it, not as authoritative, but to throw light on the question before us):

The second of the rich men (*it saith*) said unto him: Master, what good thing can I do and live? He said unto him: O man, fulfil (do) the law and the prophets.

He answered him: I have kept them. He said unto him: Go, sell all that thou ownest, and distribute it unto the poor, and come, follow me. But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it pleased him not. And the Lord said unto him: How sayest thou: I have kept the law and the prophets? For it is written in the law: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and lo, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying for hunger, and thine house is full of many good things, and nought at all goeth out of it unto them.

And he turned and said unto Simon his disciple who was sitting by him: Simon, son of Joanna, it is easier for a camel to enter in by a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It is probable that this extract was found by the translator of Origen's commentary in some work of Jerome. It seems to be agreed that it was not in Origen's own commentary.

Some manuscripts of the Gospels have marginal notes recording readings of 'the Jewish' Gospel, by which our Gospel is evidently meant. Some of these were published by Tischendorf, others more recently by Schmidtke. According to the latter these notes were originally made between 370 and 500 by some one who did his work at Jerusalem.

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Matt. iv. 5. The Jewish *copy* has not 'unto the holy city' but 'in Jerusalem'.

Matt. v. 22. The word 'without cause' is not inserted in some copies, nor in the Jewish.

Matt. vii. 5. The Jewish has here: If ye be in my bosom and do not the will of my Father which is in heaven, out of my bosom will I cast you away.

(The 'Second Epistle of Clement', iv. 5, has: The Lord said: If ye be with me gathered together in my bosom and do not my commandments, I will cast you away and say unto you: Depart from me; I know you not whence ye are, ye workers of wickedness.)

Matt. x. 16. The Jewish *has* '(wise) more than serpents' instead of 'as serpents'.

Matt. xi. 12. (The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.) The Jewish has: 'is ravished (or plundered).'

Matt. xi. 25. (I thank thee (*lit.* confess unto thee), O Father.) The Jewish: 'I give thee thanks.'

Matt. xii. 40^b. The Jewish has not: three days and three nights (in the heart of the earth).

Matt. xv. 5. The Jewish: Corban by which ye shall be profited by us.

Probably it is meant that the verse ran: But ye say to your father and mother: Corban, &c.

Matt. xvi. 2, 3. Omitted by 'the Jewish' (as by many extant manuscripts).

Matt. xvi. 17. The Jewish: (Simon) son of John.

Matt. xviii. 22. The Jewish has, immediately after the seventy times seven: For in the prophets, after they were anointed with the Holy Spirit, there was found in them a word (matter) of sin.

This shows the identity of 'the Jewish' with Jerome's gospel.

Matt. xxvi. 74. The Jewish: and he denied and swore and cursed.

Matt. xxvii. 65. The Jewish: And he delivered unto them armed men, that they might sit over against the cave and keep it day and night.

A commentary on Isaiah (liii. 12) by Haimo of Auxerre (c. 850) has this apropos of the word 'Father forgive them':

For, as is contained in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, at this word of the Lord many thousands of Jews that stood round about the Cross believed.

A marginal note (thirteenth century) on a copy of the versified Bible called the Aurora (by Petrus de Riga), in a manuscript at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (one of a number of remarkable notes) is:

At the cleansing of the Temple:

In the books of the Gospels which the Nazarenes use it is read that

rays issued from his eyes whereby they were terrified and put to flight.

Jerome on *Matt.* xxi. 12 says that the people whom Jesus drove out did not resist him: 'For a certain fiery and starry *light* shone (radiated) from his eyes and the majesty of Godhead gleamed in his face.'

When I published the note, I took it that it was a reminiscence of Jerome's words: *ray* and *radiate* occur in both. But Dr. Zahn was of opinion that it might really represent something in the old Gospel: so I include it, though with hesitation.

One other mention of this Gospel has to be added.

In Budge's *Miscellaneous Coptic Texts* is a Discourse on Mary by Cyril of Jerusalem. Cyril (Pseudo-Cyril) relates that he had to send for a monk of Maiôma of Gaza who was teaching false doctrine. Called on for an account of his belief the monk (p. 637, Eng. trans.) said: It is written in the *Gospel* to the Hebrews that when Christ wished to come upon the earth to men, the Good Father called a mighty power in the heavens which was called Michael, and committed Christ to the care thereof. And the power came down into the world and it was called Mary, and *Christ* was in her womb seven months. Afterwards she gave birth to him, and he increased in stature, and he chose the apostles, ... 'was crucified, and taken up by the Father'. Cyril asked: Where in the Four Gospels is it said that the holy Virgin Mary the mother of God is a force? The monk said: In the *Gospel* to the Hebrews. Then, said Cyril, there are five Gospels? Where is the fifth? The monk said: It is *the Gospel* that was written to the Hebrews. (Cyril convinced him of his error and burned the books. No more is told of the Gospel, which, whatever it may have been, was certainly not the book we have been dealing with, but a writing of pronouncedly heretical (Docetic?) views. The last sentence of the monk's account of Christ, which I did not quote in full just now, is perhaps worth recording.) 'After they had raised him up on the cross, the Father took him up into heaven unto himself.' This, with its omission of all mention of the resurrection, might be construed as heretical: on the other hand, it may be merely a case of extreme compression of the narrative.

THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES

All our knowledge of this is derived from Epiphanius, and he uses very confusing language about it (as about many other things). The passages are as follows: all occur in his work against Heresies—no. xxx.

And they (the Ebionites) receive the Gospel according to Matthew. For this they too, like the followers of Cerinthus and Merinthus, use to the exclusion of others. And they call it according to the Hebrews, as the truth is, that Matthew alone of New Testament writers made his exposition and preaching of the Gospel in Hebrew and in Hebrew letters.

Epiphanius goes on to say that he had heard of Hebrew versions of *John* and *Acts* kept privately in the treasuries (Geniza ?) at Tiberias, and continues :

In the Gospel they have, called according to Matthew, but not wholly complete, but falsified and mutilated (they call it the Hebrew Gospel), it is contained that 'There was a certain man named Jesus, and he was about thirty years old, who chose us. And coming unto Capernaum he entered into the house of Simon who was surnamed Peter, and opened his mouth and said: As I passed by the lake of Tiberias, I chose John and James the sons of Zebedee, and Simon and Andrew and <Philip and Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus and Thomas> Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the Iscariot: and thee, Matthew, as thou satest at the receipt of custom I called, and thou followedst me. You therefore I will to be twelve apostles for a testimony unto (of) Israel.

And:

John was baptizing, and there went out unto him Pharisees and were baptized, and all Jerusalem. And John had raiment of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat (it saith) was wild honey, whereof the taste is the taste of manna, as a cake dipped in oil. That, forsooth, they may pervert the word of truth into a lie and for locusts put a cake dipped in honey (*sic*).

These Ebionites were vegetarians and objected to the idea of eating locusts. A locust in Greek is *akris*, and the word they used for cake is *enkris*, so the change is slight. We shall meet with this tendency again.

And the beginning of their Gospel says that: It came to pass in the days of Herod the king of Judaea <when Caiaphas was high priest> that there came <a certain man> John <by name>, baptizing with the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan, who was said to be of the lineage of Aaron the priest, child of Zacharias and Elisabeth, and all went out unto him.

The borrowing from St. Luke is very evident here. He goes on:

And after a good deal more it continues that:

After the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John; and as he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy Ghost in the likeness of a dove that descended and entered into him: and a voice from heaven saying: Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased: and again: This day have I begotten thee. And straightway there shone about the place a great light. Which when John saw (it saith) he saith unto him: Who art thou, Lord? and again *there was* a voice from heaven saying unto him: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And then (it saith) John fell down before him and said: I beseech thee, Lord, baptize thou me. But he prevented him saying: Suffer it (*or* let it go): for thus it behoveth that all things should be fulfilled.

And on this account they say that Jesus was begotten of the seed of a man, and was chosen; and so by the choice of *God* he was called the Son of God from the Christ that came into him from above in the likeness of a dove. And they deny that he was begotten of God the Father, but say that he was created, as one of the archangels, yet greater, and that he is Lord of angels and of all things made by the Almighty, and that he came and taught, as the Gospel (so called) current among them contains, that, 'I came to destroy the sacrifices, and if ye cease not from sacrificing, the wrath of *God* will not cease from you'.

(With reference to the Passover and the evasion of the idea that Jesus partook of flesh :)

They have changed the saying, as is plain to all from the combination of phrases, and have made the disciples say: Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the Passover? and him, forsooth, say: Have I desired with desire to eat this flesh of the Passover with you?

These fragments show clearly that the Gospel was designed to support a particular set of views. They enable us also to distinguish it from the Gospel according to the Hebrews, for, among other things, the accounts of the Baptism in the two are quite different. Epiphanius is only confusing the issue when he talks of it as the Hebrew Gospel—or rather, the Ebionites may be guilty of the confusion, for he attributes the name to them.

The Gospel according to the Twelve, or 'of the Twelve', mentioned by Origen (Ambrose and Jerome) is identified by Zahn with the Ebionite Gospel. He makes a good case for the identification. If the two are not identical, it can only be said that we know nothing of the Gospel according to the Twelve.

Revillout, indeed, claims the title for certain Coptic fragments of narratives of the Passion which are described in their proper place in this collection: but no one has been found to follow his lead.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIANS

Origen, in his first Homily on Luke, speaks of those who 'took in hand' or 'attempted' to write gospels (as Luke says in his prologue). These, he says, came to the task rashly, without the needful gifts of grace, unlike Matthew, Mark, John, and Luke himself. Such were those who composed the Gospel which is written 'according to the Egyptians' and the Gospel entitled 'of the Twelve'.

Apart from this there are but few mentions of the book. A series of passages from Clement of Alexandria is our chief source of knowledge. They are as follows:

CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* iii. 9. 64.

Whence it is with reason that after the Word had told about the End, Salome saith: Until when shall men *continue* to die?

(Now the Scripture speaks of man in two senses, the one that is seen, and the soul: and again, of him that is in a state of salvation, and him that is not: and sin is called the death of the soul) and it is advisedly that the Lord makes answer: So long as women bear *children*.

66. And why do not they who walk by anything rather than the true rule of the Gospel go on to quote the rest of that which was said to Salome: for when she had said, 'I have done well, then, in not bearing *children*?' (as if childbearing were not the right thing to accept) the Lord answers and says: Every plant eat thou, but that which hath bitterness eat not.

iii. 13. 92. When Salome inquired when the things concerning which she asked should be known, the Lord said: When ye have trampled on the garment of shame, and when the two become one and the male with the female *is* neither male nor female. In the first place, then, we have not this saying in the four Gospels that have been delivered to us, but in that according to the Egyptians.

(The so-called Second Epistle of Clement has this, in a slightly different form, c. xii. 2:

For the Lord himself being asked by some one when his kingdom should come, said: When the two shall be one, and the outside (that which is without) as the inside (that which is within), and the male with the female neither male nor female.)

There are allusions to the saying in the Apocryphal Acts, see pp. 335, 429, 450.

iii. 6. 45. The Lord said to Salome when she inquired: How long shall death prevail? 'As long as ye women bear *children*', not because life is an ill, and the creation evil: but as showing the sequence of nature: for in all cases birth is followed by decay.

Excerpts from Theodotus, 67. And when the Saviour says to Salome that there shall be death as long as women bear *children*, he did not say it as abusing birth, for that is necessary for the salvation of believers.

Strom. iii. 9. 63. But those who set themselves against God's creation because of continence, which has a fair-sounding name, quote also those words which were spoken to Salome, of which I made mention before. They are contained, I think (*or* I take it) in the Gospel according to the Egyptians. For they say that 'the Saviour himself said: I came to destroy the works of the female'. By *female* he means lust: by *works*, birth and decay.

HIPPOLYTUS *against Heresies*, v. 7. (The Naassenes) say that the soul is very hard to find and to perceive; for it does not continue in the same fashion or shape or in one emotion so that one can either describe it or comprehend it in essence. And they have these various changes *of the soul*, set forth in the Gospel entitled according to the Egyptians.

EPIPHANIUS, *Heresy* lxii. 2 (Sabellians). Their whole deceit (error) and the strength of it they draw from some apocryphal books, especially from what is called the Egyptian Gospel, to which some have given that name. For in it many suchlike things are recorded (or attributed) as from the person of the Saviour, said in a corner, purporting that he showed his disciples that the same person was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All this goes to show that this Gospel was a secondary work with a distinct doctrinal tendency. It resembles the later Gnostic books such as the *Pistis Sophia* in assigning an important rôle in the dialogues with Christ to the female disciples.

GOSPEL OF PHILIP

One mention and citation of this occurs in Epiphanius, *Heresy* xxvi. 13. Speaking of the 'Gnostics' of Egypt in his time (fourth century) he says :

They produce a Gospel forged in the name of Philip the holy disciple, which says :

'The Lord revealed unto me what the soul must say as it goeth up into heaven, and how it must answer each of the Powers above. 'I have taken knowledge (it saith) of myself, and have gathered myself together out of every quarter and have not begotten (sown) children unto the Ruler, but have rooted out his roots and gathered together the members that were scattered abroad. And I know thee who thou art, for I (it saith) am of them that are from above.'

A very leading Gnostic doctrine was that the soul contained sparks of the Divine, which were dispersed about among the world of matter, and must be collected, destined as they were some day to be removed out of the influence of matter and taken up into the higher world. This is enunciated here.

In the *Pistis Sophia* Philip is one of the disciples who are specially ordered to write the revelations uttered by Christ.

GOSPEL OR TRADITIONS OF MATTHIAS

Origen on *Luke* (*Hom.* 1) says that he knows of a Gospel according to Matthias. Ambrose and Jerome, it seems, repeat his statement. Eusebius also mentions the book: none of these give more than the bare name. In the Gelasian Decree it is condemned, which need not mean that it was known to the condemner. It also occurs in the Greek 'List of the Sixty Books'.

It is possible that this book was identical with the Traditions of Matthias, a writing of which Clement of Alexandria speaks in the following passages:

Strom. ii. 9. 45. The beginning (of truth) is to wonder at things, as Plato says in the *Theaetetus*, and Matthias in the

Traditions, advising us: Wonder thou at the things that are before thee: making this the first step to further knowledge.

iii. 4. 26. (The Gnostics) say that Matthias also taught thus: that we should fight with the flesh and abuse it, not yielding to it at all for licentious pleasure, but should make the soul grow by faith and knowledge.

vii. 13. 82. They say that in the Traditions Matthias the apostle said that on every occasion, if the neighbour of a chosen one sin, the chosen one hath sinned: for had he behaved himself as the word enjoins, the neighbour also would have been ashamed of his way of life, so as not to sin.

This, too, is thought by Zahn to be traceable to the same source:

Strom. iv. 6. 35. It is said that Zacchaeus (or, as some say, Matthias), the chief publican, when he had heard the Lord, who condescended to come to him, said: Behold, the half of my goods I give in alms, Lord: and if I have defrauded any man of ought, I restore it fourfold. Whereupon also the Saviour said: The Son of man is come to-day and hath found that which was lost.

Hippolytus tells us that the heretics Basilides and Isidorus (his son) asserted that Matthias had spoken unto them certain secret words which he had heard from the Saviour, being taught by him apart.

GOSPEL OF PETER

The two fragments which we possess of the text of this book will be found among the Passion narratives and the Apocalypses respectively. Here I place the notices of it that are found in the Church writers. There are but three.

ORIGEN on *Matthew*, x. 17. (They of Nazareth thought that Jesus) was the son of Joseph and Mary: but the brothers of Jesus some (founding on a tradition of the Gospel entitled according to Peter or of the Book of James) say were sons of Joseph by a former wife who had lived with him before Mary.

The Book of James is the so-called Protevangelium, given below.

EUSEBIUS, *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 12, treating of Serapion, bishop of Antioch about A.D. 190, says:

There is another treatise composed by him about the Gospel called 'according to Peter', which he drew up to expose the false statements contained in it, for the benefit of some members of the church at Rhossus, who by the means of the aforesaid book had succumbed to unorthodox doctrines. Of this it will be well to adduce some passages in which he states his view of the book, writing thus:

For we, brethren, accept Peter and the other apostles as *we would* Christ, but, as experienced men, we repudiate what is

falsely written under their name, knowing that we have not had any such things delivered to us. For I, when I was with you, supposed that all of you adhered to the right faith, and, not having gone through the Gospel which they produced under the name of Peter, I said: If this is all that seems to cause you scruples, let it be read. But now that I have learned from what has been told me, that somewhat of heresy was nesting in their mind (*lit.* their mind had its lair in a certain heresy), I will take care to come to you again: so, brethren, expect me soon.

But you, who have comprehended of what manner of heresy Marcion (*Gr.* Marcianus) was, and how he contradicted himself, not understanding what he uttered, will learn *the truth* from what has been written to you (in this treatise).

For we have been enabled to borrow this very Gospel from others who used it, namely, the successors of those who were its authors (*lit.* began it) whom we call Docetae (Seemers)—for most of their notions belong to that school—and to go through it, and to find that most of it is of the right teaching (word) of the Saviour, but some things are adventitious; a list of which we have drawn up for you.

EUSEBIUS (iii. 3. 2) also names the Gospel (with the Acts, Apocalypse, and Preaching of Peter) as a writing not handed down among the 'Catholic' Scriptures, and not used as testimony by ancient or modern church writers. (This, as regards the Apocalypse and Preaching, is an exaggeration.)

THEODORET (*of heretical Fables*, ii. 2) says: 'The Nazaraeans are Jews who know Christ as a righteous man, and use the Gospel called "according to Peter".' (What we know of the Gospel and of the Nazarenes forbids us to give credence to this statement.)

GOSPEL OF THOMAS

The Infancy Gospel current under the name of Thomas is also given below. The ancient testimonies, as in the case of *Peter*, are placed here. We are not absolutely certain that our Gospel of Thomas is a form of the older one, though the one quotation we have of the latter coincides curiously with the subject of the former. I have, myself, very little doubt that our Gospel is the skeleton of the old one—the stories retained and the unorthodox discourses cut out.¹

ORIGEN says (*Hom. 1 on Luke*): There is also current the Gospel according to Thomas.

¹ Indian influence has been suggested as a factor in these stories, and tales of the childhood of Krishna and of Buddha have been cited, which have a colourable resemblance to some of those in the Gospel. The thesis is not proved, but I have sometimes thought that the name given to Thomas in the Latin version, 'Ismaelite', might be the

HIPPOLYTUS *against Heresies*, v. 7. The Naassenes speak of a nature of man at once hidden and manifesting itself, which they say is within man, and is the kingdom of heaven that is sought after: and they deliver this concerning it, expressly, in the Gospel entitled according to Thomas, in these words: He that seeketh me will find me in children from seven years old and upwards: for there am I manifested, who am hidden in the fourteenth age (aeon).

Our Gospel of Thomas tells of the acts of Jesus at five, six, and eight years of age: the naming of the age may originally have been significant. The fragment seems to indicate that the years from seven to fourteen were a period of mystic importance.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM (A.D. 348) speaks of this book as a Manichaean production. Very likely the Manichaeans used it, but it was older than their sect. He says (*Catech.* iv. 36):

And of the New Testament read the four Gospels only. The others are apocryphal (pseudepigraphic) and harmful. The Manichaeans also wrote a Gospel according to Thomas, which, though coloured with the fragrance of a gospel-name, corrupts the souls of the simpler.

ib. vi. 31. Let no one read the Gospel according to Thomas, for it is not by one of the twelve apostles, but by one of the three wicked disciples of Manes.

Eusebius names it among undoubtedly spurious books.

The Stichometry of Nicphorus assigns it 1,300 lines.

IRENÆUS (i. 13. 1) says that the Marcosian sect support their doctrines by a vast number of apocryphal writings. 'They adduce, too, this false invention, that when the Lord as a child was learning the alphabet, and his teacher said, as the custom is: Say Alpha; he answered: Alpha. But when the teacher bade him say Beta, the Lord answered: First tell thou me what Alpha is, and then will I tell thee what Beta is. And this they interpret as meaning that he alone knew the unknown *mystery*, which he manifested in the form of Alpha.'

It seems probable from Irenaeus's language that the Marcosians took original reading, and that if so, it might be interpreted as suggesting a connexion with the further East.

The case stands thus. The Greek text A calls the writer 'Thomas the Israelite the *Philosopher*'. Greek B, 'the holy apostle Thomas'. Latin, 'Thomas the Israelite (or Ismaelite) the apostle of the Lord'. 'Israelite' is a curious and pointless designation, if the apostle is meant, and a very easy corruption of Ismaelite. 'Philosopher' is a strikingly unusual description. The combination of Ismaelite and Philosopher would serve to convey the idea of an Eastern sage.

From a somewhat different point of view, it is not to be forgotten that Thomas the apostle was connected with India by a tradition probably a good deal older than the Acts of Thomas.

this from an apocryphal writing. I have not much doubt that that was the Gospel of Thomas. The story occurs in text A, c. vi, and in all Infancy Gospels in some form. It is also told shortly in the Epistle of the Apostles, c. 4: see p. 486.

THE PREACHING OF PETER

Again our principal source of knowledge is Clement of Alexandria, who makes a series of quotations from it.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, *Strom.* i. 29. 182. And in the Preaching of Peter you may find the Lord called 'Law and Word'.

Twice again he quotes this phrase.

vi. 5. 39. But that the most approved of the Greeks do not know God by *direct* knowledge, but indirectly, Peter says in his Preaching: Know ye then that there is one God who made the beginning of all things and hath power over their end; and: The invisible who seeth all things, uncontainable, who containeth all, having need of nought, of whom all things stand in need and for whose sake they exist, incomprehensible, perpetual, incorruptible, uncreated, who made all things by the word of his power. . . . that is, the Son.¹

Then he goes on: This God worship ye, not after the manner of the Greeks . . . showing that we and the good (approved) Greeks worship the same God, though not according to *perfect* knowledge for they had not learned the tradition of the Son. 'Do not', he says, 'worship'—he does not say 'the God whom the Greeks worship', but 'not after the manner of the Greeks': he would change the method of worship of God, not proclaim another God. What, then, is meant by 'not after the manner of the Greeks'? Peter himself will explain, for he continues: Carried away by ignorance and not knowing God as we do, according to the perfect knowledge, *but* shaping those things over which he gave them power, for their use, *even* wood and stones, brass and iron, gold and silver (forgetting) their material and *proper* use, they set up things subservient to their existence and worship them; and what things God hath given them for food, the fowls of the air and the creatures that swim in the sea and creep upon the earth, wild beasts and fourfooted cattle of the field, weasels too and mice, cats and dogs and apes; yea, their own eatables do they sacrifice as offerings to eatable *gods*, and offering dead things to the dead

¹ In vi. 7. 58 he repeats a clause of this:

For there is in very deed one God, who made the beginning of all things: meaning his first begotten Son; thus Peter writes, understanding rightly the words: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The words *In the beginning* were interpreted as meaning 'By the Son'.

as to gods, they show ingratitude to God, by these practices denying that he exists. . . . He will continue again in this fashion: Neither worship ye him as do the Jews, for they, who suppose that they alone know God, do not know him, serving angels and archangels, the month and the moon: and if no moon be seen, they do not celebrate what is called the first sabbath, nor keep the new moon, nor the days of unleavened bread, nor the feast (of tabernacles?), nor the great day (of atonement).

Then he adds the finale (colophon) of what is required: So then do ye, learning in a holy and righteous sort that which we deliver unto you, observe it, worshipping God through Christ in a new way. For we have found in the Scriptures, how the Lord saith: Behold, I make with you a new covenant, not as the covenant with your fathers in mount Horeb. He hath made a new one with us: for the *ways* of the Greeks and Jews are old, but we are they that worship him in a new way in a third generation (or race), *even Christians*.¹

Shortly after this he cites Paul 'in addition to the Preaching of Peter' as referring to the Sibyl and Hystaspes. The passage is given below as a possible fragment of the Acts of Paul.

After his quotation from Paul, Clement continues:

Therefore Peter says that the Lord said to the apostles: If then any of Israel will repent, to believe in God through my name, his sins shall be forgiven him: (and) after twelve years go ye out into the world, lest any say: We did not hear.

In the next chapter (vi. 6) he has:

For example, in the Preaching of Peter the Lord says: I chose out you twelve, judging you to be disciples worthy of me, whom the Lord willed, and thinking you faithful apostles; sending you unto the world to preach the Gospel to men throughout the world, that they should know that there is one God; to declare by faith in me [the Christ] what shall be, that they that have heard and believed may be saved, and that they which have not believed may hear and bear witness, not having any defence *so as* to say 'We did not hear'.

¹ ORIGEN on *John*, xiii. 17, has part of the above passages:

It is too much to set forth now the quotations of Heracleon taken from the book entitled *The Preaching of Peter* and dwell on them, inquiring about the book whether it is genuine or spurious or compounded of *both elements*: so we willingly postpone that, and only note that according to him (Heracleon) Peter taught that we must not worship as do the Greeks, receiving the things of matter, and serving stocks and stones: nor worship God as do the Jews, since they, who suppose that they alone know God, are ignorant of him, and serve angels and the month and the moon.

After a few lines :

And to all reasonable souls it hath been said above: Whatsoever things any of you did in ignorance, not knowing God clearly, all his sins shall be forgiven him.

vi. 15. 128. Peter in the Preaching, speaking of the apostles, says: But we having opened the books of the prophets which we had, found, sometimes expressed by parables, sometimes by riddles, and sometimes directly (authentically) and in so many words naming Jesus Christ, both his coming and his death and the cross and all the other torments which the Jews inflicted on him, and his resurrection and assumption into the heavens before Jerusalem was founded (*MS.* judged), even all these things as they had been written, what he must suffer and what shall be after him. When, therefore, we took knowledge of these things, we believed in God through that which had been written of him.

And a little after he adds that the prophecies came by Divine providence, in these terms: For we know that God commanded them in very deed, and without the Scripture we say nothing.

The character of the heathen worship, with its mention of weasels, cats, &c., and the fact that our authorities are all Alexandrine, point to the Egyptian origin and currency of the Preaching. We see also that it was an orthodox book. Origen even faces the possibility of its being genuine in whole or in part. The earliest of the Greek apologists for Christianity whose work we have, Aristides, takes a very similar line to the Preaching, and is thought to have used it.

A Syriac Preaching of Simon Cephas in the city of Rome (to be found in Cureton's *Syriac Documents*) has nothing in common with our book. Its gist is, briefly, this: A great assembly gathers to hear Peter. He speaks to them of the life and death of Jesus, and the call of the apostles, exhorts them to shun idolatry: reverts to the signs at the crucifixion, and the report of Pilate to Caesar and the senate, and warns them against Simon Magus. We then have the incident of the dead man raised by Peter after Simon had failed. Peter's episcopate of twenty-five years, his martyrdom and that of Paul, Nero's death, and a famine which ensued after many years, are shortly told.

In the Clementine Recognitions, &c., a great deal is said about books of Preachings of Peter: but these are to a great extent imaginary, and, if ever they existed, must have belonged to the same peculiar school of thought as the rest of that literature.

There are certain other fragments of a 'Teaching of Peter' which may be another name for the Preaching. Opinion is divided. Probably the first, from Origen, is from the Preaching. The others are of a different complexion.

ORIGEN on *First Principles* i, prologue 8. But if any would produce to us from that book which is called The Doctrine of Peter, the passage where the Saviour is represented as saying (*lit.* seems to say) to the disciples: I am not a bodiless spirit (demon): he must be answered in the first place that that book is not reckoned among the books of the church: (and then) it must be shown that