

proximity of the words in chap. xlvii. 31 to those in chap. xlviii. 2 makes it almost certain, one would say, that *עַל הַמִּטָּה* has the same meaning in both passages. Besides, had it been desired to express "worshipped *towards* the head of the staff," then the proper preposition to use is not *עַל*, but *לְ* or *לְפָנָיו*, as is found in xlviii. 12, *וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְפָנָיו*, "and bowed himself to his face, before his face."

It is observable also that *עַל־רִאשׁוֹ* is found several times in chap. xlviii., and always in the sense "upon the head." We seem shut up to "bowed himself upon the bed's head" as the only meaning warranted both by the passage itself and by the context.

JOHN RUTHERFURD.

Rothsay.

The Gospels and Modern Criticism.

BY THE REV. J. J. HALCOMBE, M.A., CAMBRIDGE.

My contention is not what Mr. Wright supposes. It is—

1. That the attempt to discuss the Gospel problem with St. John's Gospel left out, is alike uncritical and unscientific.

2. That the external evidences of the subject neither explain nor justify such an attempt.

An examination of the Synoptic problem is simply an inquiry into the causes of certain peculiarities which the Synoptic Gospels present. The causes of these peculiarities certainly may, and as I maintain certainly do, lie outside the purely arbitrary area which the so-called Synoptic problem covers—*i.e.* the causes may have to be sought in the excluded Gospel of St. John.

Thus "the modern critic," when confining his attention to the Synoptic problem, may be, and, as I contend, is, simply in the position of a man who separates a tree from its roots, assumes that it never had any roots, and then seeks to ascertain how, consistently with the ordinary laws of nature, it could ever have grown without roots.

But apart from the extent to which it ignores my main contention, Mr. Wright's article seems to me to lie open to the following objections:—

1. He mixes up and colours the evidences with his own assumption that the written gospel was a direct outcome of a so-called oral gospel.

2. He fails to point out that, with one exception, all the evidences prior to A.D. 200 support my view of the case, whilst the later evidences, by which alone his view is supported, are subject to at least six exceptions, which make in my favour.

3. He does not show that from their contradictory character the evidences on which he relies are essentially in the position of a house divided

against itself—*i.e.* that they practically neutralise each other.

It has never been shown more clearly than by Mr. Wright himself what the assumption about oral tradition logically implies.

Not only must the state of things which it involved have been as remarkable as it clearly was unnecessary, but it must have prevailed very widely, and must, during a very considerable period of time, have exercised the greatest possible influence upon the whole history of the Early Church. Under such circumstances, it is practically impossible that the system which Mr. Wright postulates should not have left numberless traces behind it. Yet, so far as I know, there is not the very smallest fragment of evidence, either external or internal, which necessarily, or I should say even apparently, supports Mr. Wright's contention.

It is true that the idea has taken what seems to many an inexplicable hold upon the imagination of a large section of the critical world. But none the less the idea is essentially conjectural.

I am quite prepared to admit that the balance of evidence subsequent to A.D. 200, whether of fathers, of councils, or of manuscripts, is in favour of placing St. John last. Nay, my case is that from about that time a distinct change of opinion set in; and that whilst Irenæus stands alone before that date in giving a premonitory note of that change, there is not a single item of evidence earlier than A.D. 200 which lends any sort of support to his statement.

With the following exceptions, therefore, I resign the whole of the later evidence to Mr. Wright:—

1. The Gothic Version (fourth century), Matthew, John, Luke, Mark.

2. The Codex Vercellensis, attributed to a Bishop of Vercellæ, martyred A.D. 371 (same order).
3. The Codex Bezae (same order).
4. The Codex Claramontanus (Matthew, John, Mark, Luke).
5. Codex Fabri (John, Luke, Matthew, Mark).
6. Codex 399 (John, Luke, Matthew).

IRENÆUS.

As it forms a connecting link between the earlier and later evidences, I will first deal with the testimony of Irenæus.

Irenæus tells us that when a boy he remembered Polycarp, himself a disciple of St. John, having told him that St. John wrote his Gospel at Ephesus.

The only *certain* value of this testimony is to prove that, when Irenæus wrote, the Gospel of St. John was already so old that its origin was lost in obscurity. Clearly, unless it had been, as we should say, "news" to his cotemporaries, there would have been no object in Irenæus mentioning such a reminiscence. Thus his opinion in no way reflects, whilst it may have been entirely opposed to, the prevailing opinion of his day.

Again, having regard to the stir which St. John's Gospel must have made (if really so born out of due time as Irenæus suggests), may we not fairly argue that the only condition on which the story could have been told at all was that it was untrue? Almost as well might a historian, writing twenty years ago, have informed us that, when he was a boy, he was told on good authority that the French Revolution took place at the end of the last century!!

Having regard to the far smaller area from which the earliest evidence is obtainable, it seems not a little remarkable that the same period, which yields the solitary testimony of Irenæus as to the late date of St. John, should supply all the following fourteen items of evidence in favour of the priority of the Apostolic Gospels.

1. The Apostolic Constitutions (see below).
2. The evidence of Papias (see below).
3. The wording of the Muratorian Canon (see THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for April, p. 314).
4. The Synopsis of Scripture (see below).
5. The Eastern Lectionaries (see Mr. Wright's article).
6. The Western order placing St. Matthew and St. John first (see same).
7. Tatian's Harmony (see same).

8. The vocabularies of the Memphitic Version. Here Dr. Scrivener writes: "It is remarkable that in the vocabularies St. John frequently stands first, and that we get the order John, Matthew, Mark, Luke."

9. The vocabularies of the Thebaic Version. Here Bishop Lightfoot writes: "In the Thebaic vocabulary the sequence is John, Matthew, Mark, Luke. And this order is also preserved in the Balcarras MS. Thus there is reason for supposing that *at one time St. John stood first.*"

10. The repeated statements of Tertullian as to the priority of the Apostolic to the non-Apostolic Gospels (see Mr. Wright's article).

Mr. Wright's ample and emphatic recognition of the scope of Tertullian's argument is as unexampled as it is refreshing. To myself personally it more than counterbalances the regret, which he gives me an opportunity of expressing, for the inexcusable carelessness which led me so to fix my attention on Tertullian's first permutation in the conventional order of the Gospels as entirely to overlook the second.

11. The universally prevalent division of "the gospel" into Gospels by Apostles and Gospels by disciples of Apostles, and the equally universal recognition of the superiority of the testimony of eye-witnesses to that of hearsay witnesses.

12. The number of passages in the Epistles which are commonly quoted to prove (a) the previous existence of St. John's Gospel in a traditional form, or (b) that many parts of St. John's Gospel were based upon the Epistles (see that most interesting of recent works, *The Witness of the Epistles*, by the Vice-Principal of King's College).

13. The fact that St. John's is essentially the creed-material Gospel, and that throughout the New Testament the existence of some creed "once for all delivered to the saints" is constantly assumed.

14. The often-repeated tradition that the Apostles composed a creed sentence by sentence.

If the Gospels really constituted this creed, the tradition would not only tally with the manner in which, to a great extent, they are composed, but would at once enable us to account for the references to some generally accepted code of instruction which are so characteristic of the Epistles. Though Mr. Wright is all along speaking of an "oral gospel," when he essays to answer the question what the catechists taught, he answers, "St. Paul calls it 'the word' [*i.e.* the same expres-

sion which in Acts i. 1 defines St. Luke's Gospel], which in his mouth can only mean distinctly Christian teaching of some kind or other. A work like our Church Catechism, or the Westminster Confession, might satisfy his language. *But few persons will give the precedence to such compositions over gospel narrative.* And we may with considerable confidence affirm that they taught "the facts concerning the Lord Jesus" (*Composition of the Gospels*, p. 94). Why should not the written Gospels have been the catechism or confession which Mr. Wright postulates? Can any one imagine that any document so widely used, as Mr. Wright supposes, could really have altogether disappeared?

THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS.

The Apostolic Constitutions, included by Euphrasianus in a list of the Scriptures, though he elsewhere speaks of their scriptural authority as doubtful (see Bampton Lectures, 1890, p. 117), has the following passage:—

"Let a deacon or elder read the Gospels which we, I, Matthew and John, have delivered to you, and which the fellow-labourers of Paul, Mark and Luke, having received by hearsay, left to you."

This passage assumes as an indisputable fact that not only the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, but St. John's also, existed in St. Matthew's lifetime.

If it was universally known that this was not the case, how is it possible to conceive that such a clause could have found its way into a document of quasi-scriptural character, or indeed into any document?

PAPIAS.

The evidence of Papias taken in its plain literal sense is equally conclusive.

Bishop Lightfoot leaves no room to doubt that his work was a commentary on all four Gospels, and written some forty years after the last of them (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, chap. v.).

Papias prides himself on deriving all his information, not from books, but either directly or indirectly from the "elders." This information, he tells us, came from three separate sources:—

1. "Elders" or disciples, with whom he had himself had personal intercourse.

2. Those who like himself had in the past been followers of this or that "elder" or "disciple."

3. Those who were acquainted with Aristion and John, both "disciples," and one the elder

or Apostle John, and both of whom were still living.

As to the date of Papias' birth.

Eusebius speaks of him as a cotemporary of one whom he describes as "an intimate disciple of the Apostles," and mentions him before, but in close connexion with Ignatius (*E. H.*, Bk. iii. chap. 36).

The mere existence of the tradition, which supposes that the name Theophoros was given to Ignatius to commemorate the fact of his being the child set by our Lord in the midst of the Apostles, thus leads us to infer that Papias was born somewhere about A.D. 30. As a man does not usually put off writing a work, for which he states that he had been preparing for many years, till much, if any, after sixty, he may well have written about A.D. 90 or 95.

Thus, if the internal evidences prove what I suppose them to do,—*i.e.* if St. Luke completed the Gospel Canon about the middle of the first century, St. John's Gospel having then been many years in existence,—it would be impossible to find any external evidence which fits in more exactly with the internal than that of Papias.

Bishop Lightfoot seeks to make the evidence of Papias square with the idea that Irenæus' Ephesian story is certainly true.

To do this he suggests—

1. That in three consecutive statements Eusebius uses the term "elder" in three different senses.

2. That Aristion and John were not still living, and that the change of tense only implies the use of a historic present used for the sake of variety; and

3. That Papias may have been born A.D. 60, and so may have written as late as A.D. 130-140, "or later."

The obvious objections to these explanations are—

1. That they strain the evidence very nearly, if not quite, to the breaking point:

2. That they reduce the three sources of information to a single source, *i.e.* the second.

3. That the theory of a historic present fails to account for the expression, "a living and abiding voice," which Papias connects immediately with Aristion and John, and which was unlikely to have suggested itself, if referred to a large group of persons, all of whom would, according to the Bishop's computation, have been dead for at least half a century.

4. The fact that the Apostle John certainly was living at the time, which the evidence naturally points to, cannot reasonably be treated as a mere coincidence.

THE SYNOPSIS OF SCRIPTURE.

The Synopsis of Scripture recently found bound up with the Didaché and the Epistles of Clement, Barnabas, and Ignatius has the following clause :—

“The Gospels, the four, two of the disciples of Christ, John and Matthew, and two of Luke and Mark, of whom one was a disciple of Peter, the other of Paul. For the former were eye-witnesses and closely associated with the Christ; but the latter, having received from them the teaching emanating from them, conveyed it to others.”

The reader will not fail to observe how strikingly this corroborates alike the evidence of the Apostolic Constitutions and of Tertullian.

The position then is simply this :—

So far as the first two centuries are concerned, we have fifteen items of evidence, only one of which points to St. John's having been the last written Gospel, whilst fourteen not only do not give the smallest countenance to this idea, but all point, and some very emphatically, in a diametrically opposite direction.

When St. John was successively deposed from the first, and then from the second place, Mr. Wright supposes that no arguments were used except those derived from chronology. I do not think that the evidence bears out this assumption. For instance, when Ammonius early in the third century placed St. Matthew first, he manifestly did so merely for purposes of harmony, and the extent to which his arrangement was followed in later times may well have given it a fictitious value.

Nor must we forget the following facts :—

1. That whilst a large proportion of the later authorities simply re-echo the statement of Irenæus, an equally large proportion, whilst placing St. John last, place him *before the destruction of Jerusalem*.

2. That Chrysostom bears witness that nothing was known as to where the Gospels were written.

3. That a single writer (Maldonatus) is able to quote no fewer than five late-early authorities who place St. John some thirty-two years after the Ascension.

4. That the Codex Cyprius, supposed to be a

copy of a very early manuscript, has a subscription which gives the date of St. John's writing as thirty years after the Ascension.

5. That the six authorities, reserved as on my side, bear additional testimony to the conflicting character of the later evidence.

My view is that when fairly examined the external evidences will practically prove the following points :—

1. That, in the early days of the Church, the catechists were quite as busy as Mr. Wright supposes, but that they dealt with written, not with oral, Gospels.

2. That “the form of sound words” referred to the exact “form,” *i.e.* the constructive facts of the “sound Gospels” (2 Tim. i. 13).

3. That the form or constructive facts of the Gospels represented one of the first principles of the “oracles of God,” and that, as Bishop Lightfoot has shown was the case in the time of Papias, the expression “oracles of God” was a synonym for the Gospels (see Heb. v. 12).

4. That a knowledge of the form or constructive facts of the first three Gospels had been a main subject of the original catechetical teaching of Theophilus.

5. That after the publication of St. Luke's Gospel, a knowledge of “the form” of the Gospels was as universal as a knowledge of reading and writing among ourselves.

6. That, as time went on, the effect of an exaggerated view of inspiration was to lead to the idea that the Evangelists had never seen each other's writings, and so to confuse all early traditions as to their origin, and to give rise to the idea that each Evangelist wrote anywhere but at Jerusalem, where, of course, they *would* have seen each other's writings.

7. That the late-early Church thought that the inspired character of the Gospels was greatly magnified by supposing that the Synoptic writers everywhere accurately adjusted their histories to a document which was yet in the womb of time, *i.e.* to the Gospel of St. John.

This last was certainly the view taken by Eusebius when he explains the reciprocal one-sidedness of the Synoptic Gospels, and of the Gospel of St. John, by saying that everything related by St. John “was reserved for him by the Divine Spirit as for a superior.”

This, also, I understand to be the view of

Irenæus, when he says that any one who destroys the form of the Gospel is "an empty-headed and impertinent ignoramus" (*vani et indocti et insuper audaces*), and then explains his meaning by saying that all who reject St. John's Gospel "set aside at

once both the Gospel and the prophetic spirit" (*Against Heresies*, iii. xi. 9).

If this latter view be correct, we at once obtain an adequate explanation of the one discordant testimony which we have found to exist prior to A.D. 200.

Exposition of the First Epistle of St. John.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR ROTHE, D.D.

CHAPTER III. 13-18.

"Marvel not, brethren, if the world hateth you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue; but in deed and truth."

VER. 13. What John means is this: you and the world are related in precisely the same way as were Abel and Cain. Therefore, marvel not if the world, whose works are evil, hates you (because of your righteous works, *i.e.* because of your living in brotherly love). For the thought, cf. John xv. 18, xvi. 1 ff., xvii. 14, and 1 John iii. 1. In the expression "marvel not," there is implied the collateral idea of not letting themselves be led astray. The Christian must count upon the hatred of the world. If he takes offence at this, he cannot, in opposition to it, maintain himself in the way of his Master. This hatred, it is true, surprises the Christian, who is full of brotherly love. When the world experiences hatred, it is no surprise to it; for hatred is the characteristic spirit of the world. But among Christians it is otherwise.

Ver. 14. The apostle proceeds: No, we do not let ourselves be led astray (in the matter of loving the brethren) by the hatred of the unloving world, which befalls us simply on account of our brotherly love. We know (experimentally) what (how much) we possess in this brotherly love. Nothing less, to wit, than the *life*, into which we know ourselves to have been translated out of the former condition of death. Thus our brotherly love gives us the consciousness of standing in life. He who knows that through brotherly love he stands in eternal life cannot let himself be moved by the hatred of the world to answer it with hatred. For he knows this eternal life as a life that cannot be touched by

the hostility of the world; and he knows also that by ceasing to love even this hostile world, he would pass out of eternal life. The clause, "because we love the brethren," states the ground of the consciousness of having passed out of death into life. It does not do so, however, in the sense that from the fact of our cherishing brotherly love we merely infer this transition (so that the life spoken of would really be something yet future), but in the sense that we are experimentally conscious of our brotherly love as a state of life, and therefore, in comparison with our former state of hatred, as a having passed out of death into life. We have the absolute certainty, first, that we were in death; and secondly, that we have passed out of it, and have already really entered into the state of life. The peculiar consciousness of the Christian is the outcome of this twofold consciousness; it is the result of the reduction of this dissonance into full harmony. In comparison with the life of the Christian, the ordinary life of humanity is tame and languid; and the Christian life is strong because of this peculiar consciousness. The life in which the Christian is conscious of actually standing, he knows more precisely as a life of brotherly love. In the fact that he loves the brethren, he has an immediate experience of the fact that he lives; for the notions of life and of love are, for the personal creature, identical. Only in the passing of the individual out of his own narrow limits; only in this communicating of himself to others, and there-