

ordinary passenger could keep alive for fourteen days on fruit and vegetable fare but that he would be very weak, unless it was supplemented with farinaceous food. Hence as long as the wheat could not be got at, it was no use for St Paul to invite the people to take a solid meal; but on the last night, when there are reasons for thinking that the wind had lulled, and the waves were no longer breaking over the deck, and the hatches could be opened, then he could encourage them to make a good meal, represented by the word τροφή. They had access to wheat and bread. There is about 90 per cent. of water in fresh fruit and vegetables, and about 75 per cent. of solid matter in dry bread; and consequently a very satisfactory meaning is given to the words κορεσθέντες τροφῆς (v. 38). If this hypothesis will hold good, it would seem that every difficulty is cleared up, as far as the condition and health of those on board are concerned. There are one or two difficulties with regard to the navigation, which it will be best to deal with separately.

PS. The Rev. Dr Moulton has been so kind as to hunt out an instance of ἀσιτέω, meaning 'abstinence from food owing to illness' in the Egyptian Papyri, Kenyon's edition, No. 144, a first-century letter.

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## MARK THE 'CURT-FINGERED' EVANGELIST.

IN a paper on 'The Early Church and the Synoptic Gospels', printed in this JOURNAL (v 330 ff), Mr Burkitt has called special attention to the causes leading to the very subordinate place once occupied by Mark's Gospel, as compared with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. With his general position that this was due largely to 'the frankly biographical element' predominating in it over the formally didactic element, which is so marked a feature of Matthew in particular, I fully concur. But when he proceeds to explain how it was that, in spite of this drawback to the general acceptance and appreciation of the more purely historical Gospel, it did actually win its way at length to equal honour with its fuller and more didactic fellows, I cannot but think that he overlooks the most important factor of all, viz. the sheer weight of a strong and definite historical tradition connecting that Gospel with the witness of an apostle, to wit Peter. It was not 'an ethical instinct' or 'a historical instinct'; for, as Mr Burkitt points out, the Church at large was not much alive to the historic interest of 'the story of the ministry', while it preferred the explicit ethics embodied in sayings

to the ethical ideal implicit in the concrete Life. It was something else which turned the scale in favour of Mark's narrative, when it became a question of its being coordinated in honour with the other members of the Quaternity of canonical Gospels. The matter is one of considerable interest and importance, and will bear looking into a little, especially as it may lead us to a proper understanding of the strange tradition that Mark the Evangelist was *ὁ κολοβοδάκτυλος*, an epithet variously explained in the Latin prefaces to his Gospel.

We observe, then, that down to the time of Papias' apologetic reference, as we may fairly style it, there is no trace of Mark's Gospel—beyond its early use in Matthew<sup>1</sup> and Luke—outside the Roman Church. There the signs of its presence in Clement's Epistle are disputable, but hardly so the evidence afforded by Hermas (see Swete's *St Mark*, xxiv f). And more interesting still, Justin Martyr, our first explicit witness, and writing probably in Rome, refers to it under the description 'memoirs of Peter' (*Dial.* 106, cf. 88). This shews the light in which the Roman Church regarded a Gospel which early and seemingly trustworthy tradition tells us was compiled by its author specially in response to a local demand in Rome. It also explains, at one and the same time, two facts tending in different directions, namely, the gradualness with which this narrative took its place *as a canonical Gospel*, and the firmness of its hold on that place, once it had gained it. 'Peter's Memoirs' might not at once be regarded exactly as a Gospel of the type created by Matthew, and to which Luke fairly readily conformed; but once it was classed with these at all, it was bound to occupy its place of honour without dispute, as being virtually the oral Gospel of the great apostle Peter (as Luke was believed to be that of the great apostle Paul). Yet we have evidence that it had to overcome no little prejudice in passing from its original position as the local Gospel book of the Roman Church, to the canonical position of general use throughout the churches of the Empire. When exactly it began to attain wider circulation, such as is involved in Papias' reference to it, is uncertain. If Mr Burkitt's view be correct, that the phenomena of the lost ending point to a time when 'no more than a single mutilated copy was in existence, or at least available' for copying—at the request, it may be, of foreign churches—then it is natural to suppose that it was not earlier than the end of the first century (when the end of the unique copy in the archives of the Roman Church had already perished by frequent use). But in any case, when it

<sup>1</sup> The author of our Matthew may have used Mark's own copy. This Mark would naturally carry back with him to the East, whither he probably returned some time before his death. Luke would have access to the work in Rome, where his Gospel, as well as Acts, was most likely written.

reached Asia Minor it probably found the Matthew Gospel firmly entrenched in general use and regard.

Compared with the full and comprehensive contents of such a Gospel, especially as regards Christ's sayings, Mark's brief and less artificially symmetrical narrative, would naturally awaken a good deal of criticism as an unsatisfying and, as it were, curtailed account of the Lord's words and ministry. To meet this feeling, Papias seems to have inserted (in his preface?) the history of its origin as derived from 'the Elder' whose traditions he largely relies on. That history tended to establish the authentic nature and value of Mark's narrative as far as it goes, on the ground that it was a faithful account of what Peter had actually taught in his hearing, in the course of his practical ministry of the Word. Thus Papias seems to have silenced objection in Asia, where the missing ending soon found a substitute in the present 'longer ending'.

Our next witness to the regretful feeling with which Mark's 'meagre' contents, as they were thought, were regarded even by those who accepted it for the sake of its apostolic origin, comes from Rome itself. Hippolytus, in arguing against Marcion's dualism, writes (*Philos.* vii 30) as follows: 'Whenever, then, Marcion or any one of his dogs barks against the Demiurge, putting forward the doctrines springing from the contraposition of Good and Evil, one must say to them that neither Paul the Apostle nor Mark ὁ κολοβοδάκτυλος reported such doctrines—for none of these things are written in the Gospel according to Mark—but Empedocles of Agrigentum.'

As to the conjunction of Mark with Paul as an authority which even a Marcionite must accept as conclusive, the note in the edition of Duncker and Schneidewin is almost certainly right. 'Videtur autem Hippolytus hac appellatione [ὁ κολοβοδάκτυλος] ideo usus esse, ut simul alluderet ad mutilatum quo Marcion uteretur evangelium, quod, cum Lucae esset, Hippolytus prave Marco adscribebat. Idem, cum Paulum Marco consociet, Marcioneum Novi Foederis canonem complectitur universum.' But even so, it does not seem to have occurred to Duncker, to whom we owe the note, to question the literal meaning of the epithet altogether; he simply treats the metaphorical allusion to the 'curtailed', or more exactly 'curt-fingered', character of Mark's Gospel, as secondary (*ut simul alluderet*). Yet surely, when we reflect on it for a moment, Hippolytus cannot have meant in such a solemn, argumentative context to introduce suddenly and without explanation a reference to 'a personal peculiarity which had impressed itself on the memory of the Roman Church' (Swete, *op. cit.* p. xxii). The very persistence of such a detail in the local tradition down to Hippolytus' day is not very likely; nor would it in any case be introduced in this

passing way into a treatise meant also for circulation beyond Rome. Surely the term is meant in a self-explanatory sense, obvious to all who knew Mark's Gospel, transferring to the Evangelist himself an epithet proper to his work, which seemed but a 'curtailed' account of Christ's ministry, when compared with the fuller Matthew and Luke—curtailed especially at the extremities, the beginning and the end. That this is the true view is further shewn by the divergent stories found in different prefaces to the Vulgate, as to the exact sense in which Mark was literally 'curt-fingered'. Such divergence betrays their nature as glosses upon the simple epithet, the ultimate origin of which may well be the passage in Hippolytus. Thus I think we may bid good-bye to these stories as to Mark's physical peculiarity, while we gain instead fresh evidence as to how hard a fight Mark's Gospel had to wage with religious *praejudicia*. At the same time we are made to realize afresh the strength of the historical tradition which carried it to victory, and the deference paid by the Church of the second century to genuine tradition, even when not quite in a line with its current notions. Mr Burkitt speaks of 'the fine instinct—may we not say *inspiration*?—which prompted the inclusion of the Gospel according to St Mark among the books of the New Testament'. I would rather speak of the fine loyalty to a genuine tradition, and to an apostle's witness, even where its full value and significance were but dimly appreciated.

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