

a notable variation from the more familiar thesis of the "sublime" and "unique" figure of current polemic. Looking for the alleged details, we find Jesus calling the fifth disciple: "He saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him"—another touch of "freedom and variety." Then, after a series of Messianic utterances, including a pronouncement against Sabbatarianism of the extremer sort, comes the story of the healing of the withered hand, with its indignant allocution to "them" in the synagogue: "Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" Here, in a miracle story, we have an intelligible protest against Sabbatarianism: is it the protest or the indignation that vouches for the actuality of the protesting figure? Nay, if we are to elide the miraculous, how are we to let the allocution stand?

These protests against Sabbatarianism, as it happens, are the first approximations to actuality in the document; and as such they raise questions of which the "instinctive" school appear to have no glimpse, but which we shall later have to consider closely. In the present connection, it may suffice to ask the question: Was anti-Sabbatarianism, or was it not, the first concrete issue raised by the alleged Teacher? In the case put, is it likely to have been? Were the miraculous healing of disease, and the necessity of feeding the disciples, with the corollary that the Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath, salient features in a popular gospel of repentance in view of the coming of the Kingdom

of God? If so, it is in flat negation of the insistence on the maintenance of the law in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. v, 17-20), which thus becomes for us a later imposition on the cultus of a purely Judaic principle, in antagonism to the other. That is to say, a movement which *began* with anti-Sabbatarianism was after a time joined or directed by Sabbatarian Judaists, for whom the complete apparatus of the law was vital. If, on the other hand, recognizing that anti-Sabbatarianism, in the terms of the case, was not likely to be a primary element in the new teaching, that its first obtrusion in the alleged earliest Gospel is in an expressly Messianic deliverance, and its second in a miracle-story, we proceed to "strike out" both items upon Mr. Sinclair's ostensible principles, we are deprived of the first touch of "indignation" and "anger" which would otherwise serve to support his very simple thesis.

CHAPTER V

SCHMIEDEL AND DEROGATORY MYTH

FROM this point onwards, every step in the investigation will be found to convict the Unitarian thesis of absolute nullity. It is indeed, on the face of it, an ignorant pronouncement. The characteristics of "anger, pity, indignation, despondency, exultation," are all present in the myth of Herakles, of whom Diodorus Siculus, expressly distinguishing between mythology and history, declares (i, 2) that "by the confession of all, during his whole life he freely undertook great and continual labours and dangers, in order that by doing good to the race of men he might win immortal fame." Herakles was, in fact, a Saviour who "went about doing good."¹ The historicity of Herakles is not on that score accepted by instructed men; though I have known divinity students no less contemptuous over the description of the cognate Samson saga as a sun myth than is Mr. Sinclair over the denial of the historicity of Jesus.

So common a feature of a hundred myths, indeed, is the set of characteristics founded on, that we may at once come to the basis of his argument, a blundering reiteration of the famous thesis of

¹ Note the identity of terms, *εὐεργετῶν* in Acts (x, 38), *εὐεργετήσας* in Diodorus.

Professor Schmiedel, who is the sole source of Mr. Sinclair's latent erudition. "The line of inquiry here suggested," he explains, "has been worked out in a pamphlet of Schmiedel, which will be found in the Fellowship library." But the dialectic which broadly avails for the Bible class will not serve their instructor here. The essence of the argument which Professor Schmiedel urges with scholarlike sobriety is thus put by Mr. Sinclair with the extravagance natural to his species:—

Many [compare Schmiedel!] of the stories represent him [Jesus] in a light which, from the point of view of conventional hero-worship, is even derogatory; his friends come to seize him as a madman; he is estranged from his own mother; he can do no mighty work in the unsympathetic atmosphere of his own native place.

The traditionalist is here unconsciously substituting a new and different argument for the first. Hitherto the thesis has been that of the "vividness" of the record, the "human touches," the "speaking and feeling like a real man," the "freedom and variety of life." Apparently he has had a shadow of misgiving over these simple criteria. If, indeed, he had given an hour to the perusal of Albert Kalthoff's *RISE OF CHRISTIANITY*, instead of proceeding to vilipend a literature of which he had read nothing, he would have learned that his preliminary thesis is there anticipated and demolished. Kalthoff meets it by the simple observation that the books of *RUTH* and *JONAH* supply "human touches" and "freedom and variety of life" to a far greater degree than does the Gospel

story considered as a life of Jesus; though practically all scholars are now agreed that both of the former books are deliberately planned fictions, or early "novels with a purpose." RUTH is skilfully framed to contend against the Jewish bigotry of race; and JONAH to substitute a humane ideal for the ferocious one embalmed in so much of the sacred literature. Yet so "vividly" are the central personages portrayed that down till the other day all the generations of Christendom, educated and uneducated alike, accepted them unquestioningly as real records, whatever might be thought by the judicious few of the miracle element in JONAH.

It is thus ostensibly quite expedient to substitute for the simple thesis of "vividness" in regard to the second Gospel the quite different argument that some of the details exclude the notion that "the author" regarded Jesus as a supernatural person. But this thesis instantly involves the defence in fresh trouble, besides breaking down utterly on its own merits. In the early chapters of Mark, Jesus is emphatically presented as a supernormal person—the deity's "beloved Son," "the Holy One of God," who has the divine power of forgiving sins, is "lord even of the sabbath," and is hailed by the defeated spirits of evil as "the Son of God," and the "Son of the Most High God." Either the conception of Jesus in Mark vi is compatible with all this or it is not. If *not*, the case collapses, for the "derogatory" episode must be at once branded as an interpolation. And if it be argued that even as an interpolation it

testifies at once to a non-supernaturalist view of the Founder's function and a real knowledge of his life and actions, we have only to give a list of more or less mythical names in rebuttal. To claim that the episode in Mark vi, 1-6, is "derogatory from the point of view of *conventional* hero-worship," and therefore presumptively historical, is to ignore alike Jewish and Gentile hero-worship. In the Old Testament Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Judah, Moses, Aaron, Samson, David, and Solomon are all successively placed in "derogatory" positions; and the Pagan hero-worshippers of antiquity are equally with the Jewish recalcitrant to Mr. Sinclair's conviction of what they ought to do.

Professor Schmiedel is aware, though Mr. Sinclair apparently is not, that Herakles in the myth is repeatedly placed in "derogatory" positions, and is not only seized as a madman but actually driven mad. The reader who will further extend Mr. Sinclair's brief curriculum to a perusal of the *BACCHÆ* of Euripides will find that the God, who in another story is temporarily driven mad by Juno, is there subjected to even greater indignities than those so triumphantly specified by our hierologist. Herakles and Dionysos, we may be told, were only demigods, not Gods. But Professor Schmiedel's thesis is that for the writer of Mark or of his original document Jesus was only a holy man. On the other hand—to say nothing of the myths of Zeus and Hêrê, Arês and Aphroditê, Hephaistos and Poseidon—Apollo, certainly a God for the framers of *his* myth, is there actually represented

as being banished from heaven and living in a state of servitude to Admetus for nine years. A God, then, could be conceived in civilized antiquity as undergoing many and serious indignities. These simple *à priori* arguments are apt to miscarry even in the hands of careful and scrupulous scholars like Professor Schmiedel, who have failed to realize that no amount of textual scholarship can suffice to settle problems which in their very nature involve fundamental issues of anthropology, mythology, and hierology. As Professor Schmiedel is never guilty of browbeating, I make no disparagement of his solid work on the score that he has not taken account of these fields in his argument; but when his untenable thesis is brandished by men who have neither his form of scholarship nor any other, it is apt to incur summary handling.

Elsewhere I have examined Professor Schmiedel's thesis in detail.¹ Here it may suffice to point out (1) as aforesaid, that the argument from derogatory treatment is not in the least a proof that in an ancient narrative a personage is not regarded as superhuman; (2) that a *suffering* Messiah was expressly formulated in Jewish literature in the pre-Christian period;² and (3) that there are extremely strong grounds for inferring purposive invention—of that naïf kind which marks the whole mass of early hierology—in the very episodes upon which

¹ *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. p. 441 sq.; *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 229–236. A notably effective criticism is passed on the thesis in Prof. W. B. Smith's *Ecce Deus*, p. 177 sq. Mr. Sinclair, of course, does not dream of meeting such replies.

² What else is signified by Acts iii, 18; xvii, 3?

he founds. The first concrete details of the Founder's propaganda in Mark, as we have seen, exhibit him as clashing with the Judaic environment. In later episodes he clashes with it yet further. The "derogatory" episodes exhibit him as clashing with his personal environment, his family and kin, concerning whom there has been no mention whatever at the outset, where we should expect to find it. All this is in line with the anti-Judaic element of the Gospel. If at early stages in the larger Jesuine movement there were reasons why the Founder should be represented as detaching himself from the Mosaic law; as being misunderstood and deserted by his disciples; and as disparaging even the listening Jewish multitude (concerning whom Mark, iv, 10 sq., makes him say that "unto them that are without, all things are done in parables, that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, *lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them*"), is there anything unlikely in his being inventively represented as meeting antipathetic treatment from his family?¹ At a time when so-called "brothers of the Lord" ostensibly claimed authority in the Judæo-Gentile community, an invented tale of original domestic hostility to the Teacher would be as likely as the presence of authorities so styled is unlikely on the assumption that the story in Mark was all along current. The very fact that allusions to the family of the Lord suddenly appear in a

¹ Dr. W. B. Smith sees in the story a mere symbolizing of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. This may very well be the case.

record which had introduced him as a heavenly messenger, without mention of home or kindred or preparation, tells wholly against the originality of the later details, which in the case of the naming of "the carpenter" and his mother have a polemic purpose.¹

¹ Dr. Flinders Petrie even infers a "late" reference to the Virgin-Birth. *The Growth of the Gospels*, 1910, p. 86. This Loisy rejects.

CHAPTER VI

THE VISIONARY EVANGEL

ALL this applies, of course, to the "Primitive Gospel" held to underlie all of the synoptics, Mark included—a datum which reduces to comparative unimportance the question of priority among these. As collected by the school of Bernhard Weiss,¹ the primitive Gospel, like Mark, set out with a non-historical introduction of the Messiah to be baptized by John. It then gives the temptation myth in full; and immediately afterwards the Teacher is made to address to disciples (who have not previously been mentioned or in any way accounted for) the Sermon on the Mount, with variations, and without any mount. In this place we have the uncompromising insistence on the Mosaic law; and soon, after some miracles of healing and some Messianic discourses, including the liturgical "Come unto me all ye that labour," we have the Sabbatarian question raised on the miracle of the healing of the man with the dropsy, but without the argument from the Davidic eating of the shewbread.²

¹ See the useful work of Mr. A. J. Jolley, *The Synoptic Problem for English Readers*, 1893.

² Yet B. Weiss had contended (*Manual*, Eng. tr. ii, 224) that Mark ii, 24 ff., 28, "must be taken from a larger collection of sayings in which the utterances of Jesus respecting the keeping of the Sabbath were put together (Matt. xii, 2-8)."

There is no more of the colour of history here than in Mark: so obviously is it wanting in both that the really considerate exegetes are driven to explain that history was not the object in either writing. In both "the twelve" are suddenly sent—in the case of Mark, after a list of twelve had been inserted without any reference to the first specified five; in the reconstructed "primitive" document without any list whatever—to preach the blank gospel, "The kingdom of God is at hand," with menaces for the non-recipient, the allocutions to Chorazin and Bethsaida being here made part of the instructions to the apostles.

What, then, are the disciples supposed to have preached? What had the Teacher preached as an evangel of "the Kingdom"? The record has expressly represented that his parables were incomprehensible to his own disciples; and when they ask for an explanation they are told that the parables are expressly meant to be unintelligible, but that to *them* an explanation is vouchsafed. It is to the effect that "the seed is the word." What word? The "Kingdom"? The mystic allegories on that head are avowedly not for the multitude: they could not have been. Yet those allegories are the sole explanations ever afforded in the Gospels of the formula of "the Kingdom" which was to be the purport of the evangel of the apostles to the multitude. They themselves had failed to understand the parables; and they were forbidden to convey the explanation. What, then, had they to convey?

And that issue raises another. Why were there disciples at all? Disciples are understood to be prepared as participants in or propagandists of somebody's teaching—a lore either exoteric or esoteric. But no intelligible view has ever been given of the purpose of the Gospel Jesus in creating his group of Twelve. If we ask what he taught them, the only answer given by the documents is: (1) Casting out devils; (2) The meaning of parables which were meant to be unintelligible to the people: that is, either sheer thaumaturgy or a teaching which was never to be passed on. On the economic life of the group not one gleam of light is cast. Judas carried a "bag," but as to whence came its contents there is no hint. The whole concept hangs in the air, a baseless dream. The myth-makers have not even tried to make it plausible.

The problems thus raised are not only not faced by the orthodox exegetes; they are not *seen* by them. They take the most laudable pains to ascertain what the primitive Gospel was like, and, having settled it to the satisfaction of a certain number, they rest from their labours. Yet we are only at the beginning of the main, the historic problem, from which Baur recalled Strauss to the documentary, with the virtual promise that its solution would clear up the other.

A "higher" criticism than that so-called, it is clear, must set about the task; and its first conclusion, I suggest, must be that there never was any Christian evangel by the Christ and the Twelve. These allegories of the Kingdom are

framed to conceal the fact that the gospel-makers had no evangel to describe; though it may be claimed as a proof of their forensic simplicity that they actually represent the Founder as vetoing all popular explanation of the very formula which they say he sent his disciples to preach to the populace. An idea of the Kingdom of God, it may be argued, was already current among the Jews: the documents assert that that was the theme of the Baptist. Precisely, but was the evangel of Jesus then simply the evangel of John, which it was to supersede? And was the evangel of John only the old evangel, preached by Pharisees and others from the time of the Maccabees onwards?¹ Whatever it was, what is the meaning of the repeated Gospel declaration that the nature of the Kingdom must *not* be explained to the people? There is only one inference. The story of the sending forth of the twelve is as plainly mythical as is Luke's story of the sending forth of the seventy, which even the orthodox exegetes abandon as a "symmetrical" myth; though they retain the allocution embodied in it. What is in theory the supreme episode in the early propaganda of the cult is found to have neither historical content nor moral significance. Not only is there not a word of explanation of the formula of the evangel, there is not a word of description of the apostles' experience, but simply the usual negation of knowledge:—

And the disciples returned and told him *all that they had done*, saying, Lord, *even the devils are*

¹ Cp. Dr. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 1902, p. xiv.

subject unto us through thy name. And he said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven; behold I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.....(Luke x, 17-20, with "the disciples" for "the seventy").

And this is history, or what the early Christian leaders thought fit to put in place of history, for Christian edification. The disciples, be it observed, had exorcized *in the name of Jesus* where Jesus had never been, a detail accepted by the faithful unsuspectingly, and temporized over no less unsuspectingly by the "liberal" school, but serving for the critical student to raise the question: *Was there, then, an older cult of a Jesus-God in Palestine?* Leaving that problem for the present, we can but note that the report in effect tells that there was no evangel to preach. To any reflecting mind, it is the utterance of men who had nothing to relate, but are inserting an empty framework, wholly mythical, in a void past. Themselves ruled by the crudest superstition, they do but make the Divine Teacher talk on their own level, babbling of Satan falling from heaven, and of treading on serpents. All the labours of the generations of laborious scholars who have striven to get to the foundations of their documents have resulted in a pastiche which only the more clearly reveals the total absence of a historic basis such as the Gospels more circumstantially suggest. In the end we have neither history nor biography, but an absolutely

enigmatic evangel, set in a miscellany of miracles and of discourses which are but devices to disguise the fact that there had been no original evangel to preach. If the early church had any creed, it was not this. It originated in a *rite*, not in an evangel.

One hypothesis might, indeed, be hazarded to save the possibility of an actual evangel by the Founder. If, taking him to be historical, we assume him to have preached a political doctrine subversive of the Roman rule, and to have thereby met his death, we could understand that, in a later period in which the writers connected with the movement were much concerned to conciliate the Romans, it might have been felt expedient, and indeed imperative, to suppress the facts. They would not specify the evangel, because they dared not. On this view the Founder was a Messiah of the ordinary Jewish type, aiming at the restoration of the Jewish State. But such a Jesus would not be the "Jesus of the Gospels" at all. He would merely be a personage of the same (common) name, who in no way answered to the Gospel figure, but had been wholly denaturalized to make him a cult-centre. On this hypothesis there has been no escape from the "myth-theory," but merely a restatement of it. A Jesus put to death by the Romans as a rebel Mahdi refuses to compose with the Teacher who sends out his apostles to preach his evangel; who proclaims, if anything, a purely spiritual kingdom; and who is put to death as seeking to subvert the Jewish faith, the Roman governor giving only a passive and reluctant assent.

On the political hypothesis, as on the myth-theory here put, the whole Gospel narrative of the Tragedy which establishes the cult remains mythical. We have but to proceed, then, with the analysis which reveals the manner of its composition and of its inclusion in the record.

It is admitted by the reconstructors that the primitive Gospel had no conclusion, telling nothing of Last Supper, Agony, Betrayal, Crucifixion, or Resurrection. It did not even name Judas as the betrayer. And they explain that it was because of lacking these details that it passed out of use, superseded by the Gospels which gave them. As if the conclusion, were it compiled in the same fashion, could not have been added to the original document, which *ex hypothesi* had the prestige of priority. Why the composer of the original did not add the required chapters is a question to which we get only the most futile answers, as is natural when the exegetes have not critically scrutinized the later matter. Thus even Mr. Jolley is content to say:—

The omission of any account of the Passion or Resurrection is natural enough in a writing primarily intended for the Christians of Judæa, *some of them* witnesses of the Crucifixion, and *all*, probably, familiar with the incidents of the Saviour's Judæan ministry, as well as with the events preceding and following the Passion, especially when we remember that the author had no intention (!) of writing a biography.¹

Here the alleged fact that only *some* had seen the

¹ Work cited, p. 94.

Crucifixion, while *all* knew all about the ministry, is given as a reason why the ministry should be described and the Crucifixion left undescribed and unmentioned!

The problem thus impossibly disposed of is really of capital importance. Any complete solution must remain hypothetical in the nature of the case; but at least we are bound to recognize that the Primitive Gospel may have had a *different* conclusion, as it may further have contained matter not preserved in the synoptics. *That* might well be a sufficient ground for its abandonment by the Christian community; and some such suspicion simply cannot be excluded, though it cannot be proved. But whatever we may surmise as to what may have been in the original document, we can offer a decisive reason why the existing conclusion should not have been part of it. That conclusion is primarily extraneous to any gospel, and is not originally a piece of narrative at all.

Bernhard Weiss ascribes to Mark the original narrative of the closing events, making Matthew a simple copyist—a matter of no ultimate importance, seeing that it is the same impossible and un-historical narrative in both documents. Like all the other professional exegetes, Bernhard Weiss and his school have failed to discern that the document reveals not only that it is not an original narrative at all, but that it could not possibly be a narrative. “It was only in the history of the passion,” writes Weiss, “that Mark could give a somewhat connected account partly of what he him-

self had seen and partly of what he gathered from those who witnessed the crucifixion.”¹ Whether “passion” here includes the Agony in the Garden is not clear: as it is expressly distinguished from the crucifixion, which Mark by implication had not seen, the meaning remains obscure. Like the ordinary traditionalists, Weiss assumes that “after Peter’s death Mark began to note down his recollections of what the Apostle had told him of the *acts and discourses* of Jesus.” Supposing this to include the record of the night of the Betrayal, what were Mark’s possible sources for the description of the Agony, with its prayers, its entrances and exits, when the only disciples present are alleged to have been asleep?

It is the inconceivable omission of the exegetes to face such problems that forces us finally to insist on their serious inadequacy in this regard. They laboriously conduct an investigation up to the point at which it leaves us, more certainly than ever, facing the incredible, and there they leave it. Their work is done. That the story of the Last Night was never framed as a narrative, but is primarily a drama, which the Gospel simply transcribes, is manifest in every section, and is definitely proved by the verses (Mk. xiv, 41-42) in which, without an intervening exit, Jesus says: “*Sleep on* now, and take your rest.....*Arise*, let us be going.” The moment the document is realized to be a transcript of a drama it becomes clear that the “*Sleep on*

¹ *Manual of Introd. to the N. T.*, Eng. tr. 1888, ii, 261.

now, and take your rest" should be inserted before the otherwise speechless exit in verse 40, where the text says that "they wist not what to answer him." Two divergent speeches have by an oversight in transcription been fused into one.

That the story of the tragedy is a separate composition has been partly perceived by critics of different schools without drawing any elucidating inference. Wellhausen pronounces that the Passion cannot be excepted from the verdict that Mark as a whole lacks the character of history. "Nothing is motivated and explained by preliminaries."¹ But "*we learn as much about the week in Jerusalem as about the year in Galilee.*"² And the Rev. Mr. Wright gets further, though following a wrong track:—

The very fact that S. Mark devotes six chapters out of sixteen to events which took place in the precincts of Jerusalem makes me suspicious. Important though the passion was, *it seems to be narrated at undue length. The proportions of the history are destroyed.*³

Precisely. The story of the events in Jerusalem is no proper part either of a primary document or of the first or second Gospel. In its detail it has no congruity with the scanty and incoherent narrative of Mark. It is of another *provenance*, although, as Wellhausen notes, quite as unhistorical as the rest. The non-historicity of the entire action is as plain as in the case of any episode in the Gospels. Judas

¹ *Einleitung*, p. 51.

² *Id.* p. 49.

³ *Some N. T. Problems*, 1898, p. 176.

is paid to betray a man who could easily have been arrested without any process of betrayal; and the conducting of the trial immediately upon the arrest, *throughout the night*, the very witnesses being "sought for" in the darkness, is plain fiction, explicable only by the dramatic obligation to continuous action.

CHAPTER VII

THE ALLEGED CONSENSUS OF SCHOLARS

SUCH is the historical *impasse* at which open-minded students find themselves when they would finally frame a reasoned conception of the origin of the Christian religion. The documentary analysis having yielded results which absolutely repel the accepted tradition, however denuded of supernaturalism, we are driven to seek a solution which shall be compatible with the data. And some of us, after spending many years in shaping a sequence which should retain the figure of the Founder and his twelve disciples, have found ourselves forced step by step to the conclusion that these are all alike products of myth, intelligible and explicable only as such. And when, in absolute loyalty to all the clues, with no foregone conclusions to support—unless the rejection of supernaturalism be counted such—we tentatively frame for ourselves a hypothesis of a remote origin in a sacramental cult of human sacrifice, with a probable Jesus-*God* for its centre in Palestine, we are not surprised at being met by the kind of explosion that has met every step in the disintegration of traditional beliefs from Copernicus to Darwin. The compendious Mr. Sinclair, who makes no pre-

tension to have read any of the works setting forth the new theories, thus describes them :—

The arguments of Baconians *and* mythomaniacs are alike made up of the merest blunders as to fact and the sheerest misunderstanding of the meaning of facts. Grotesque etymologies,¹ arbitrary and tasteless emendations of texts, forced parallels, unrestrained license of conjecture, the setting of conjecture above reasonably established fact, chains of argument in which every link is of straw, appeals to anti-theological bias and to the miserable egotism which sees heroes with the eyes of the valet—these are some of the formidable “evidences” in deference to which we are asked to reverse the verdicts of tradition, scholarship, and common sense. They have never imposed on anyone fairly conversant with the facts. Those who have not such knowledge may either simply appeal to the authority of scholars, OR, BETTER STILL, SUPPORT that authority by exercising their own IMAGINATION AND COMMON SENSE.

That tirade has seemed to me worth preserving. It is perhaps a monition to scholars, whose function is something higher than vituperation, to note how their inadequacies are sought to be eked out by zeal without either scholarship or judgment, and, finally, without intellectual sincerity. The publicist who alternately tells the unread that they ought to accept the verdict of scholars, and that it is “better still”

¹ I have wasted a good deal of time in reading and in confuting the Baconians, but only in one or two of them have I met with any etymologies. Their doctrine had no such origin, and in no way rests on etymologies. Not once have I seen in their books an appeal to anti-theological bias, and hardly ever an emendation, though there are plenty of “forced parallels.” Nor are etymologies primary elements in any form of the myth theory. Mr. Sinclair seems to “unpack his mouth with words” in terms of a Shakespearean formula.

to "support" that verdict by unaided "imagination and common sense," has given us once for all his moral measure.

Dismissing him as having served his turn in illustrating compendiously the temper which survives in Unitarian as in Trinitarian traditionalism, we may conclude this preliminary survey with a comment on the proposition that we should take the "verdict of scholars." It has been put by men, themselves scholars in other fields, whom to bracket with Mr. Sinclair would be an impertinence. But I have always been puzzled by their attitude. They proceed upon three assumptions, which are all alike delusions. The first is that there is a consensus of scholars on the details of this problem. The second is that the professional scholars have a command of a quite recondite knowledge as regards the central issue. The third is that there is such a thing as professional *expertise* in the diagnosis of Gods, Demi-gods, and real Founders in religious history. Once more, the nature of the problem has not been realized.

Let us take first the case of a real scholar in the strictest sense of the term, Professor Gustaf Dalman, of Leipzig, author of "THE WORDS OF JESUS, considered in the light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language."¹ To me, Professor Dalman appears to be an expert of high competence, alike in Hebrew and Aramaic—a double qualification possessed by very few of those to whose "verdict"

¹ Eng. trans. by Prof. D. M. Kay, 1902.

we are told to bow. By his account few previous experts in the same field have escaped bad mis-carriages, as a handful of excerpts will show:—

M. Friedmann, *Onkelos und Akylas*, 1896, still holds fast to the traditional opinion that even Ezra had an Aramaic version of the Tora. In this he is mistaken.

H. Laible, in Dalman-Laible's *Jesus Christ in the Talmud*, etc., incorrectly refers it [the phrase "bastard of a wedded wife"] to Jesus. The discussion treats merely of the definition of the term "bastard."

Adequate proof for all three parts of this assertion [A. Neubauer's as to the use of Aramaic in parts of Palestine] is wanting.

F. Blass.....characterizes as Aramaisms idioms which in some cases are equally good Hebraisms, and in others are pure Hebraisms and not Aramaisms at all.

P. W. Schmiedel.....does not succeed in reaching any really tenable separation of Aramaisms and Hebraisms.

Resch entirely abandons the region of what is linguistically admissible.....And the statement of the same writer that this....."belongs very specially to the epic style of narration in the Old Testament" is incomprehensible.

The idioms discussed above.....show at once the incorrectness of Schmiedel's contention that the narrative style of the Gospels and the Acts is the best witness of the Greek that was spoken among the Jews. *The fact is that the narrative sections of the Synoptists have more Hebrew features than the discourses of Jesus communicated by them.*

Such a book as Wünsche's *Neue Beiträge*, by reason of quite superficial and inaccurate assertions and faulty translations, must even be characterized as directly misleading and confusing.

The want of due precaution in the use made of

[the Jerusalem Targums of the Pentateuch] by J. T. Marshall is one of the things which were bound to render his efforts to reproduce the "Aramaic Gospel" a failure.

Harnack supposes it to be an ancient Jewish conception that "everything of genuine value which successively appears upon earth has its existence in heaven—*i.e.*, it exists with God—meaning in the cognition of God, and therefore really." But this idea must be pronounced thoroughly un-Jewish, at all events un-Palestinian, although the medieval Kabbala certainly harbours notions of this sort.

Holtzmann.....thereby evinces merely his own ignorance of Jewish legal processes.

Especially must his [R. H. Charles's] attempts at retranslation [of the *Assumptio Mosis*] be pronounced almost throughout a failure.

[Even in the pertinent observations of Wellhausen and Nestle] we feel the absence of a careful separation of Hebrew and Aramaic possibilities.....He [Wellhausen] must be reminded that the Jewish literature to this day is still mainly composed in Hebrew.

These may suffice to illustrate the point. Few of the other experts escape Dalman's Ithuriel spear; and as he frankly confesses past blunders of his own, it is not to be doubted that some of the others have returned his thrusts.¹ Supposing then that this body of experts, so many of them deep in Aramaic, so opposed to each other on so many issues clearly within the field of their special studies, were to unite in affirming the historicity of the Gospel

¹ Wellhausen notably does—*Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, 1905, pp. 39-41. Dr. R. H. Charles, who in his masterly introduction to the *Assumption of Moses* indicates so many blunders of German scholars, may be reckoned quite able to criticize Dalman in his turn.

Jesus, what would their consensus signify? Simply that they were agreed in affirming the unknown, the improbable, and the unprovable, while they disputed over the known. Their special studies do not give them the slightest special authority to pronounce upon such an issue. It is one of historic inference upon a mass of data which they among them have made common property so far as it was not so already, in the main documents and in previous literature. Dalman, who takes for granted the historicity of Jesus and apparently of the tradition in general, pronounces (p. 9) that

the actual discourses of Jesus in no way give the impression that He had grown up in rural solitude and seclusion. *It is true only* that He, like the Galileans generally in that region, *would have* little contact with literary erudition.

If Professor Dalman cannot see that the proposition in the first sentence is extremely disturbing to the traditional belief in its Unitarian form, and that the second is a mere *petitio principii* which cannot save the situation, other people can see it. His scholarship gives him no "eminent domain" over logic; and it does not require a knowledge of Aramaic to detect the weakness of his reasoning. Fifty experts in Aramaic carry no weight for a thinking man on such a non-linguistic issue; and he who defers to them as if they did is but throwing away his birthright. When again Dalman writes (p. 60) that "Peter *must* have appeared (Acts x, 24) from a very early date as a preacher in the Greek language," he again raises an insoluble problem for

the traditionalists of all schools, and his scholarly status is quite irrelevant to that.

When, yet again, he writes (p. 71) that "what is firmly established is only the *fact* that Jesus spoke in Aramaic to the Jews," his mastery of Aramaic has nothing to do with the case. He is merely taking for granted the historicity of the main tradition; and until he faces the problems he has ignored (having, as he may fairly claim, been occupied with others), and repelled the criticisms which that tradition incurs, his vote on the unconsidered issue has no more value to a rational judgment than any other. I have seldom read a scholarly treatise more satisfying than his within its special field, or more provocative of astonishment at the extent to which specialism can close men's eyes to the problems which overlap or underlie theirs.

And *that* is the consideration that has to be realized by those who talk of scholarship (meaning simply what is called New Testament scholarship) settling a historical problem which turns upon anthropology, mythology, hierology, psychology, and literary and historical science in general. On these sides the scholars in question, "*Wir Gelehrten vom Fach*," as the German specialists call themselves in the German manner, are not experts at all, not even amateurs, inasmuch as they have never even realized that those other sciences are involved. They have fallen into the *rôle* of the pedant, properly so-called, who presumes to regulate life by inapplicable knowledge. And even those who are wholly free of this presumptuous pedantry, the sober, courteous,

and sane scholars like Professor Schmiedel, whose candour enables him to contribute a preface to such a book as Professor W. B. Smith's *DER VORCHRISTLICHE JESUS*, to whose thesis he does not assent—even these, as we have seen, can fail to realize the scope of the problem to the discussion of which they have contributed.

Professor Schmiedel's careful argument from "derogatory" episodes in the gospel of Mark, be it repeated, is not merely inconclusive; it elicits a rebuttal which turns it into a defeat. Inadequate even on the textual side, it is wholly fallacious on the hierological and the mythological; and no more than the ordinary conservative polemic does it recognize the sociological problem involved. For those who seek to study history comprehensively and comprehendingly, the residuum of the conservative case is a blank incredibility. Even Dalman, after the closest linguistic and literary analysis, has left the meaning of "the Kingdom of God" a conundrum;¹ and the conservative case finally consists in asserting that Christianity as a public movement arose in the simple *announcement* of that conundrum—the mere utterance of the formula—throughout Palestine by a body of twelve apostles, who for the rest "cast out devils," as instructed by their Teacher. The "scholarship" which contentedly rests facing that vacuous conception is a scholarship not qualified finally to handle a great historical problem as such. It conducts itself

¹ Cp. Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, 1909, pp. 65-66.

exactly as did Biblical scholarship so long in face of the revelations of geology, and as did Hebrew scholarship so long over the problem of the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

Deeply learned men, in the latter case, went on for generations solemnly re-writing history in the terms of the re-arranged documents, when all the while the history was historic myth—perceptible as such to a Zulu who *had* lived in a desert. And when the Zulu's teacher proved the case by simple arithmetic, he met at the hands alike of pedants and of pietists a volley of malignant vituperation, the "religious" expert Maurice excelling many of the most orthodox in the virulence of his scorn; while the pontifical Arnold, from the Olympian height of his amateurism, severely lectured Colenso for not having written in Latin.

Until the scholars and the amateurs alike renounce their own presumption, their thrice stultified airs of finality, their estimate of their prejudice and their personal equation as a revelation from within, and their sacerdotal conviction that their science is *the* science of every case, they will have to be unkindly reminded that they are but blunderers like other men, that in their own specialties they convict each other of errors without number, and that the only path to truth is that of the eternal free play and clash of all manner of criticism. It is an exceptionally candid orthodox scholar who writes: "It is a law of the human mind that combating error is the best way to advance knowledge. They who have never joined in controversy have no firm grasp of

truth. Hateful and unchristian as theological disputes are apt to become, they have this merit, that they open our eyes."¹ Let the conservative disputants then be content to put their theses and their arguments like other men, to meet argument with argument when they can, and to hold their peace when they have nothing better to add than boasts and declamation.

Before the end of the nineteenth century the very school which we are asked to regard as endowed with quasi-papal powers in matters of historical criticism was declared by one of its leading representatives in Germany to have been on a wrong track for fifty years. In the words of Professor Blass:—

Professor Harnack, in his most recent publication, even while stating that now the tide has turned, and that theology, after having strayed in the darkness and led others into darkness (see Matt. xv, 14) for about fifty years, has now got a better insight into things, and has come to a truer appreciation of the real trustworthiness of tradition, still puts Mark's gospel between 65 and 70 A.D., Matthew's between 70 and 75, but Luke's much later, about 78-93.²

And Blass, who dates Luke 56 or 60, goes on:—

Has that confessedly untrustworthy guide of laymen, scientific theology, after so many errors committed during fifty years, now of a sudden become a trustworthy one? Or have we good reason to mistrust it as much, or even more than we had before? *In ordinary life no sane person would follow a guide who confessed to having grossly misled him during the whole former part of the journey. Evidently that guide was either utterly*

¹ Rev. A. Wright, *Some New Testament Problems*, p. 212.

² Blass, *Philology of the Gospels*, 1898, p. 35.

ignorant of the way, or he had some views and aims of his own, of which the traveller was unaware, and he cannot be assumed now to have acquired a full knowledge, or to have laid those views and aims wholly aside.

Thus does one *Gelehrter vom Fach* estimate the pretensions of a whole sanhedrim of another *Fach*. Blass is a philologist; and incidentally we have seen how another philologist, Dalman, handles him in that capacity. Elsewhere, after another fling at the theological scholars—with a salvo of praise to Harnack for his *LUKAS DER ARZT*—and a comment on the fashion in which every German critic swears by his master, he avows that “we classical philologists.....have seen similar follies among ourselves in fair number.”¹ It is most true; and the philologists are as much divided as the theologians.

Of course, it is not by philology that Blass has reached the standpoint from which he can contemn the professional theologians. He is really on the same ground as they, making the same primary assumptions of historicity: the only difference is that while they, following the same historical tradition, yet scruple to accept prophecies as having been actually made at the time assigned to them, and feel bound to date the prophecy after the event, the consistent philologist recognizes no such obligation in the present instance, and puts a rather adroit but very unscholarly argument on the subject, with which we shall have to deal later. But for those to whom the exact dating of the

¹ *Die Entstehung und der Charakter unserer Evangelien*, 1907, p. 9.

Gospels is a subsidiary problem, his argument has only a subsidiary interest; and the fact that he unquestioningly agrees with his flouted theological colleagues in accepting the historicity of Jesus gives no importance to their consensus.

If, as he says, they are in the mass utterly untrustworthy guides on *any* historical issue (an extravagance to which, as a layman, I do not subscribe), their agreement can be of no value to him where he and they coincide. After telling Harnack that men who have confessedly been astray for fifty years have no right to expect to be listened to, he makes much of Harnack's support as to the historicity of the Acts—a course which will not impose upon thoughtful readers. All the while, of course, Professor Blass is simply applying a revised historical criticism to a single issue or set of issues, and even if he chance to be right on these he has set up no new historical method. No more than the others has he recognized the central historical problem; and he must be well aware that that reversion to tradition announced by Harnack, and at this point acquiesced in by him, cannot for a moment be maintained as a general critical principle in regard to the New Testament any more than in regard to the Old. All that he can claim is that many theologians have confessedly blundered seriously on historical problems. But that is quite enough to justify us in admonishing the mere middlemen and the experts alike to change the tone of absurd assurance with which they meet further innovations of historical theory.

CHAPTER VIII

CONSERVATIVE POSITIONS

It is only just to confess that the conservatives are already learning to employ some prudential expedients. Met by the challenge to their own nakedly untenable positions, and offered a constructive hypothesis, diversely elaborated from various quarters, they mostly evade the discussion at nearly every point where the impossible tradition is concretely confronted by a thinkable substitute, and spend themselves over the remoter issues of universal mythology. Habitually misrepresenting every argument from comparative mythology as an assertion of a historical sequence in the compared data, they expatiate over questions of etymology, and are loud in their outcry over a suggestion that a given historical sequence may be surmised from data more or less obscure. But to the question how the evangel could possibly have begun as the record represents, or how the consummation could possibly have taken place as described, they either attempt no answer whatever or offer answers which are worse than evasions. One professional disputant, dealing with the proposition that such a judicial and police procedure as the systematic search for witnesses described in the Gospel story of the Trial *could not* take place by night, "when an Eastern

city is as a city of the dead," did not scruple to say that the thesis amounted to saying that in an Eastern city nothing could happen by night. This controversialist is an instructor of youth, and claims to be an instructed scholar. And his is the only answer that I have seen to the challenge with which it professes to deal. Loisy agrees that the challenge cannot be met.

To the hypothesis that there was a pre-Christian cult of a Jesus-God, the traditionalist—above all, the Unitarian, who seems to feel the pinch here most acutely—retorts with a volley of indignant contempt. *He* can see no sign of any such cult. In the mind's eye he can see, as a historic process, twelve Apostles creating a Christian community by simply crying aloud that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, excommunicating for the after life those who will not listen, and all the while assiduously casting out devils. His records baldly tell him that this happened; and "we believe in baptism because we have seen it done." But whereas, in the nature of the case, the reconstruction of the real historic process must be by tentative inference from a variety of data which for the most part the records as a matter of course obscured, he makes loud play with the simple fact that the records lack the required clear mention, and brands as "unsupported conjecture" the theorem offered in place of the plain untruth with which he has so long been satisfied.

In his own sifted and "primitive" records we have the narration of the carrying of the Divine

Man to a height ("pinnacle of the temple" *only* in the supposed primitive Gospel) by Satan for purposes of temptation. For a mythologist this myth easily falls into line as a variant of the series of Pan and the young Zeus at the altar on the mountain top, Pan and Apollo competing on the top of Mount Tmolus, Apollo and Marsyas, all deriving from the Babylonian figures of the Goat-God (Capricorn) and the Sun-God on the Mountain of the World, representing the starting of the sun on his yearly course. That assignment explains at once the Pagan myths and the Christian, which is thus shown to have borrowed from the myth material of the Greco-Oriental world in an early documentary stage. Challenged to evade that solution, he mentions only the Pan-Zeus story, says nothing of the series of variants or of the Babylonian original, and replies that he is

unable to trace any real and fundamental connection between the stories. In the Buddhist narrative [which had been cited as an analogue¹] the "temptation" to satisfy the cravings of hunger, the promptings of ambition, and the doubts as to the overruling Providence of God, are all wanting. In the Roman story, too, Pan, as representing in satyr-form the

¹ With the customary bad faith of the orthodox apologist, Dr. Thorburn represents as a sudden change of thesis the proposition that "the Christian narrative is merely an ethical adaptation of the Greek story," because that proposition follows on the remark that the Christian myth "*might* fairly be regarded" [as it actually has been] "as a later sophistication" of the Buddhist myth. On this "*might*" there had actually followed, in the text quoted, the statement: "There are fairly decisive reasons, however, for concluding that the Christian story was evolved on another line." This sentence Dr. Thorburn conceals from his readers. There had been no change of thesis whatever.

lower and animal propensities of man, *is a very different being to the Hebrew Satan*; moreover, there is no tempting of Jupiter, as there is of Jesus. Jupiter, likewise, is wholly a god; *Jesus is a sorely bested Man, although divine*. There is, in short, not the least affinity between any of these narratives beyond the general idea of trial.¹

And this figures as a refutation. For our traditionalist, comparative mythology does not and cannot exist; for him there can be no fundamental connection between any two nominal myths unless they are absolutely identical in all their details; and the goat-footed Pan and the goat-footed Satan (certainly descended from the Goat-God Azazel) are merely "very different beings," though Satan for the later Jews and Jesuists actually corresponded to Pan (who is *not* a mere satyr for the Greeks) not only in being the spirit of concupiscence² but in being "the God of this world," as the Gospel myth in effect shows him to be. And this exhibition of ignorance of every principle of mythology passes for "scholarship," and will be duly so certificated by Sir William Robertson Nicoll, who undertakes to preside in that department, as in politics, with about equal qualifications.

By way of constructive solution of the problem we have from the apologist this:—

If a conjecture may be hazarded here, we should be inclined to say that the Christian narrative

¹ Rev. Dr. T. J. Thorburn, *Jesus the Christ: Historical or Mythical?*, p. 231.

² Dr. Thorburn appears to be wholly unaware of this fact of Jewish theology. See Dr. Schechter's *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, 1909, ch. xv; Kalisch, *Comm. on Leviticus*, ii, 304.

largely presents, in picturesque and symbolic form, the subjective experiences and doubts of Jesus—*whether* these were of internal origin merely, or were suggested externally by *some* malignant spiritual being—as to His capacities and power for the great work which He had undertaken.

The thoroughly orthodox, it would appear, must still be catered for, albeit only by the concession of the possibility of “some” malignant spiritual being, which seems a gratuitous slight to the canonical Satan, whose moral dignity had immediately before been acclaimed. But, after expressly insisting on the elements of “temptation” and “ambition” in the story, with the apparent implication that the young Teacher may have had a passing ambition to become a world conqueror, our exegete, in conclusion, collapses to the position of the German exegetes who, the other day, were still debating on the spiritual interpretation of what they could not perceive to be a pure myth of art.

At this stage of enlightenment we hear allusions to “psychology,” though I have not yet met with any explicit pretence that the traditionalist scholars know anything about psychology that is not known to the rest of us. In any case, the suggestion may be hazarded that the first researches they make into psychology might usefully be directed to their own, which is a distressing illustration of the survival of the intellectual methods of the ancient apologists for the Vedas and for the mythology of the Greeks.

A severe scrutiny of psychic processes is indeed highly necessary in this as in so many other disputes in which the affections wrestle with the reason.

Such a process of analysis gives us the real causation of the testimony borne by Mill, which is so widely typical. For non-religious as for religious minds the conception they form of the Gospel Jesus is commonly a resultant of a few dominant impressions, varying in each case but all cognate. Jesus is figured first to the recipient spirit as a blessed babe in the arms of an idealized mother, and last as dying on the cross, cruelly tortured for no crime—the supreme example of the martyred philanthropist. In the interim he figures as commanding his dull disciples to “Suffer little children to come unto me,” and as “going about doing good,” all the while preaching forgiveness and brotherly love. No knowledge of the impossibility of most of the particularized cures will withhold even instructed men from soothing their sensibilities by crediting the favourite figure with some vague “healing power” and talking of the possibilities of “faith healing,” even as they loosely accredit some elevating quality, some practical purport, to the visionary evangel, so absolutely mythical that the Gospel writers can tell us not a word of its matter.

Even Professor Schmiedel, expressly applying the tests of naturalism, negates those tests at the outset by taking for granted the Teacher's possession of unquantified “psychic” healing powers, though the narratives twenty times tell of cures which cannot possibly be described as cases of faith-healing.¹ If for the sane inquirer the absolute

¹ The Nemesis of this uncritical method appears in its development at the hands of Dr. Conybeare: “That Jesus was a *successful*

miracle stories are false, and *these* stories are false, by what right does he allot evidential value to wholesale allegations of multitudinous cures from the same sources? By the sole right of his predilections. The measure which he metes to the thousand prodigies in Livy is never meted to those of the Gospels. For him, these are different things, being seen in another atmosphere.

In men concerned to be intellectually law-abiding, these dialectic divagations are decently veiled; by others they are passionately flaunted. No recollection of the anger of Plato at those who denied that the Sun and Planets were divine and blessed beings can withhold certain professed scholars from the same angry folly in a similar predicament. But even where theological animus has been in a manner disciplined by the long professional battle over documentary problems, the sheer lack of logical challenge on fundamental issues has left all the disputants alike, down till the other day, taking for granted data to which they had no critical right.

Throughout the whole debate, even in the case of scholars who profess to be loyal to induction, we find that there is a presupposition upon which induction has no effect. Bernhard Weiss, quoting from Holtzmann the profoundly subversive proposition that "Christianity has been 'book-learning' from the beginning," in reply "can only say, God

exorcist we need not doubt, nor that he worked innumerable faith cures" (*Myth, Magic, and Morals*, 2nd. ed., p. 142). Such a writer "need not doubt" anything he wants to believe. In particular he "need not doubt" that the disciples were "successful exorcists" also.

be praised that it is not so." Yet the real effect of his own research is to show us much—to show that there was no oral evangel, that the formula of "the kingdom of heaven" is but a phrase to fill a blank. Even candid inquirers who see the difficulty, like Samuel Davidson, leave it unsolved. Says Davidson:—

When we try to form a correct view of Jesus's utterances regarding this Kingdom of God, we find they have much vagueness and ambiguity. Their differences also in the Synoptic Gospels and the fourth are so apparent that the latter must be left out of account in any attempt to get a proper sketch of Jesus's hopes. His apostles and other early reporters misunderstood some of His sayings, making them crasser. Oral tradition marred their original form. This is specially the case with respect to the enthusiastic hopes about the kingdom He looked for. But as the ideal did not become actual we must rest in the great fact that the Christianity He introduced was the nucleus of a perfect system adapted to universal humanity.¹

"We must" do no such thing. We "must" draw a licit inference. The alleged great fact is morally a chimera, and historically a hallucination. To admit that all the evidence collapses, and then to posit the visionary gospel with a "must," is to abandon critical principle. The "must" is simply the eternal presupposition. And the choice of the sincere student "must" be between that negation of science and a fresh scientific search, from which the presupposition, as such, is excluded. If it can reappear as a licit conclusion, so be it. But it has never yet so arisen.

¹ *Introd. to the N. T.*, 3rd. ed., i, 4.

CHAPTER IX

BLASS AND FLINDERS PETRIE

A VERY interesting attempt to bring the synoptic problem to a new critical test has latterly been made by Dr. Flinders Petrie in his work, *THE GROWTH OF THE GOSPELS AS SHOWN BY STRUCTURAL CRITICISM* (1910). His starting point is the likelihood that *logia*, analogous to the non-canonical fragments discovered in recent years, were the original material from which the Gospels were built up. The hypothesis is *prima facie* quite legitimate, there being nothing to repel it. As he contends, there is now evidence that writing was in much more common use in some periods of antiquity than scholars had formerly supposed; and scraps of writing by non-scholarly persons, he argues, may have been widely current in the environment with which we are concerned. All the while he is founding on data from the Egypt of the third century for a Palestinian environment of the first; and he is obliged to stress the point that Matthew the tax-gatherer was a "professional scribe," while his argument runs that Matthew used the detached jottings of other people, not his own. But let us follow out his thesis:—

We cannot doubt [writes Dr. Petrie] that such was the course of growth when we look at the

logia. Those collections of brief sayings could hardly have come into existence if full narratives and sufficient standards of information in the Gospels were already circulating. They belong essentially to a preparatory age, when records were in course of compilation. But, once written out, they naturally survived side by side with the Gospels, which had only used a portion of their material.¹

It is not quite clear whether Dr. Petrie meant here to claim not only that the so-called LOGIA IESOU published in 1897 and 1904 are anterior to and independent of the Gospels (though found only in third-century MSS.), but that they are on the same footing of credibility with the Gospels. This, however, seems inevitably to follow from his position, though it appears to suggest to him no difficulty about the general historicity of the Gospel story, which he too takes for granted. Let us then note the problems raised.

A main feature of Dr. Petrie's inquiry is that, following Professor Blass, he insists on making the predictions of the fall of Jerusalem part of the early documentary matter collected in the "Nucleus" which for him is the equivalent of Weiss's Primitive Gospel. The argument of Blass² is drawn from the case of Savonarola, who in 1496 predicted that Rome would be sacked, and that horses would be stabled in the churches, as actually happened in the year 1527. If such a prophecy could be made and

¹ Work cited, p. 7.

² Put in the *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1896, p. 964 sq.; and *Philology of the Gospels*, 1898, pp. 41-43. Professor Blass has worked this argument diligently. See his *Die Entstehung und der Charakter unserer Evangelien*, 1907, p. 24.

fulfilled in one case, urges Blass, it might be in another; hence there can be no rigorous application of the canon, *Omne vaticinium post eventum*, which has been relied on by the modern school of critical theologians. Dr. Petrie appears to have made no investigation of his own, being content to quote and support Blass; and the point is well worth critical consideration.

Let us premise that scientific criticism, which has no concern with Unitarian predilections, stands quite impartially towards the question of Gospel dates. The modern tendency to carry down those dates, either for the whole or for any parts of the Gospels, towards or into the second century, is originally part of the general "liberal" inclination to put a Man in place of a God, though some believers in the God acquiesce as to the lateness of the act of writing. Those who have carried on the movement have always presupposed the general historicity of the Teacher, and have been concerned, however unconsciously, to find a historical solution which saved that presupposition. The rational critic, making only the naturalist presupposition, is committed to no set of documentary dates. And he is not at all committed to the denial that an inductive historic prediction, as distinguished from a supernaturalist prophecy, may be made and fulfilled. Many have been. Much has been said of the "marvellous prescience" of Burke in predicting that the anarchy of the French Revolution would end in a tyranny. He was in fact merely inferring, as he well might, that what had happened in the

history of ancient Rome and in the history of England would happen in France. By a similar historical method several French and other writers in the eighteenth century reached the forecast of the revolt of the American colonies from Britain without getting any credit for divine inspiration. And so, perhaps, might Savonarola at the end of the fifteenth century predict a sack of Rome, and a Jew in the first century a sack of Jerusalem.

But let us see what Savonarola actually did. He was, so to speak, a professional prophet, and while he predicted not only a sack of Rome but his own death by violence, he also, by the admission of sympathetic biographers, put forth many vaticinations of an entirely fantastic character. Here again he might very well have a Jewish prototype. For us the first question is, What did he actually predict in history, and how and why did he predict it? In 1494 he seems to have predicted the French invasion which took place in that year. Villari asserts that he did so in the sermons he preached in Lent, but admits that "it is impossible to ascertain the precise nature" of the sermons in question.¹ Father Lucas goes further, and points out that there is no trace in them of the alleged prophecy² which Savonarola in his *Compendium Revelationum* (1495) claims to have made but does not date. Villari further admits that the sermons of that year are so badly reported

¹ Villari, *Life of Savonarola*, Eng. trans. 1-vol. ed. p. 185.

² Herbert Lucas, S.J., *Fra Girolamo Savonarola*, 2nd ed. 1906, p. 116. Father Lucas does not deny that such a sermon might possibly have been preached late in 1493. Cp. p. 118.

as to have lost almost every characteristic of Savonarola's style. Their reporter, unable to keep pace with the preacher's words, only jotted down rough and fragmentary notes. These were afterwards translated into barbarous dog-Latin—by way of giving them a more literary form—and published in Venice. For this reason Quétif and some other writers entertained doubts of their authenticity.¹

Villari nevertheless is satisfied of it on internal grounds, and we may accept his estimate. The main allegation is that in 1494 Savonarola, who had for years been preaching that national sin would elicit divine chastisement,

in those Lenten discourses, *and also in some others*, foretold the coming of a new Cyrus, who would march through Italy in triumph, without encountering any obstacles, and without breaking a single lance. We find numerous records of these predictions, and the terrors excited by them, in the historians and biographers of the period; and Fra Benedetto reports his master's words in the following verses [thus literally translated]:—

Soon shalt thou see each tyrant overthrown,
 And all Italy shalt thou see vanquished,
 To her shame, disgrace, and harm.
 Thou, Rome, shalt soon be captured:
 I see the blade of wrath come upon thee;
 The time is short, each day flies past:

.

My Lord will *renovate the Church*,
 And convert every barbarian people.
 There will be but one fold and one shepherd.
 But first Italy will have to mourn,
 And so much of her blood will be shed
 That her people shall everywhere be thinned.

Here there is obvious confusion, apart from the fact that the predicted regeneration and unification of the church never took place. The invader is to do no fighting, and yet so much blood will be shed that everywhere the people of Italy will be thinned. Are we, then, to believe that the "Cyrus" prediction was made at the same time? Is there not ground for suspicion that it was interpolated *post eventum*, in the Latin report? The only alternative solution seems to be that Villari or the Italian compiler has mixed prophecies of different years. In his sermon of November 1, 1494, Savonarola speaks of the French invasion as the "scourge" he had predicted¹—an odd way of speaking of one promised before as "the Lord's anointed," even though the French host is said to be "led by the Lord." In any case his own claim to have predicted of "Cyrus" is unsupported by evidence, and, even if accepted, does not involve a date earlier than 1493-4.²

To predict the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII of France in Lent of 1494, or even late in 1493, was easy enough.³ The invasion had been fully prepared, and was expected, even as was the Armada in the England of 1588. Savonarola was very likely to have inside knowledge of the scheme, and the Pope positively charged him with having helped to engineer it. Florence in effect received

¹ Villari, p. 214.

² See the investigation of Father Lucas, pp. 114-18.

³ I had written this, and the confutation of Villari, before reading the work of Father Lucas.

Charles as a friend. There had been, further, abundant discussion of the expedition both in France and Italy long before it set out. Guicciardini tells that wise Frenchmen were very apprehensive about it, and that Ferdinand of Naples reckoned that it must fail. Fail it finally did. Savonarola might even predict that the invader would not be resisted, for there was no force ready in Italy to repel that led by Charles, with its great train of artillery. It is an extreme oversight of Villari's to allege¹ that in the autumn, "unexpectedly as a thunderclap from a clear sky, came the news that a flood of foreign soldiery was pouring down from the Alps to the conquest of Italy.....All felt taken unawares." This assertion is completely exploded by the record of Guicciardini, and no historian will now endorse it. Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, had incited Charles to the invasion; the preparations had been open and extensive; and they had been abundantly discussed both in France and Italy.² The statement that "the Friar alone had foreseen the future" is absolute myth.

The fact remains that the invasion was not resisted, and that Rome was "captured" in the sense of being entered by Charles, who did no military damage and marched out again. But when Charles proceeded to withdraw from Italy,

¹ As cited, p. 189. Father Lucas comments more mildly on the misstatement; but it is really a grave departure from historical truth.

² Cp. Lucas, p. 117 *note*.

having effected nothing, a battle was fought and won by him. It was two years later that Savonarola, acting on his standing doctrine that sin in high places must elicit divine vengeance, resumed his predictions of disaster to Rome, whose Pope was his enemy. As it happened, 1496 was again a year of expected invasions. Charles, now the ally of Florence, was announced to be preparing for a second inroad, and the apprehensive Sforza invited and furthered the intervention of the emperor Maximilian as he had before invited Charles. Predictions were again to be expected; at Bologna at least one was actually made; and the prophet, one Raffaele da Firenzuola, was tortured and banished.¹ Charles gave up his plan, but Maximilian came, albeit with a small force, and was welcomed by the Pisans.

It was before the coming of Maximilian² that Savonarola resumed his prophecy of the coming scourge in a series of sermons, in one of which he announces that Italy will be overwhelmed because she is full of sanguinary deeds; that Rome will be besieged and trampled down; and that because her churches have been full of harlots they will be made "stables for horses and swine, the which will be less displeasing to God than seeing them made haunts of prostitutes.....Then, O Italy, trouble after

¹ Lucas, p. 129 *note*.

² This, again, he might well expect, as he avows that he had correspondents in Germany who applauded his attitude towards the Papacy. Villari, pp. 439, 519, 609. But Maximilian was invited by Sforza in the name of the Papal League, by way of forestalling Charles. *Id.* p. 458.

trouble shall befall thee; troubles of war after famine, troubles of pestilence after war." Again, in another sermon: "There will not be enough men left to bury the dead; nor means enough to dig graves.....The dead will be heaped in carts and on horses; they will be piled up and burnt.....And the people shall be so thinned that few shall remain."¹ At the same time he repeatedly predicted his own death by violence.

On the latter head he had abundant reason for his forecast. On the former it is very certain that he was not thinking of something that was not to happen for thirty years. Again and again he assured his hearers and his correspondents that his predictions were to be fulfilled "in our time." Towards the end of 1496 he described himself as "The servant of Christ Jesus, sent by him to the city of Florence to announce the great scourge which is to come upon Italy, and especially upon Rome, *and which is to extend itself over all the world in our days and quickly.*"² In 1497, in a letter to Lodovico Pittorio, chancellor to d'Este, after speaking of the Lord's prediction of the fall of Jerusalem, he writes: "Great tribulations are always [*i.e.* in the Scriptures] predicted many years before they come. Yet I do not say that the tribulations which I have foretold will be so long in coming; *nay, they will come soon; indeed I say that the tribulation has already commenced.*"³

¹ Villari, pp. 411-13. Cp. Perrens's *Jérôme Savonarole*, 1854, ii, 88 sq., 95 sq.; Lucas, p. 201.

² Manifesto *A tutti li Christiani*; Lucas, p. 236. ³ *Id.* p. 256.

Yet again, in 1498, he claims in a sermon that "a part has come to pass," noting that "in Rome one has lost a son"—a reference to the murder of the Duke of Gandia, son of the Pope; and adding that "you have seen who has died here, and I could tell you, an I would, who is in hell"—supposed to be a reference to Bernardo del Nero.¹ All this was in terms of Savonarola's theological and Biblical conception of things, the ruling political philosophy of his age, as of many before. Wickedness and injustice, fraud and oppression, were dominant in high places, and God must of necessity punish, in the fashion in which he was constantly described as doing so in the Sacred Books, from the Deluge downwards. In Savonarola's view the cup of Rome's abominations was full, and punishment had been earned by the men then living, in particular by Pope Alexander.

Within two years Savonarola had been put to death, after many tortures; and Alexander died in 1503 (not by poison, as the tradition goes) without having seen the predicted desolation. It was under the more respectable of the two Medicean Popes that Rome was twice sacked in 1527 by the forces of Charles V; and though there had been infinite slaughter and pestilence in Italy, the regeneration and reunion of Christendom predicted by Savonarola did not follow. When no reform whatever had followed on the French invasion he had explained that his prediction in that case was subject to

¹ *Id.* p. 278.

conditions. Yet he announced that his prophecy of the conversion of the Turks was unconditional, declaring at the close of the *Compendium Revelationum* that it would be fulfilled in fifteen years, and assuring his hearers in 1495 that some of them would live to see the fulfilment.¹

¹ Lucas, p. 70.

CHAPTER X

THE SAVONAROLA FALLACY

OUR business, of course, is not to expose the prophetic miscarriages of Savonarola, but simply to make clear what manner of thing his prophesying was.¹ It was an instance of a kind of vaticination as old as Troy and Jerusalem, which had gone on in Christendom for centuries. Long before his day religious men had predicted wars, pestilences, famines, and the conversion of the Turks.² The wars and plagues and famines were very safe prognostications: they came in every decade. And when we come to his alleged prediction of the sack of Rome we realize immediately, not only that the one detail of coincidence is wholly fortuitous, but that, like his predecessors, he was simply predicting a return of common evils already experienced a hundred times.³

The argument of Blass and others on this topic, confidently accepted and endorsed by Dr. Petrie, works out as sheer mystification. They lay special

¹ Nor are we here concerned with the question of Savonarola's "sincerity." On that head it may be noted that Perrens the Rationalist and Lucas the sympathetic and moderate Catholic are very much at one.

² Lucas, p. 69 *note*. Compare the references of Lucas and those of Villari (p. 317) for researches on the subject.

³ Cp. Perrens, as cited, ii, 94.

stress on the fact that in the sack of 1527 horses were stabled in the churches. It is likely enough: the same thing has been done a thousand times in the wars of Christendom. But the argument has been very negligently conducted. In the first place, though he tells of infinitely worse things, such as the wholesale violation of women, including nuns, the historian Guicciardini does not give the detail about the horses. That occurs in the document *Il Sacco di Roma*, ascribed latterly to his brother Luigi, which was first printed in 1664. Still, let us assume that the printing was faithful. If an interpolator had meant to vindicate Savonarola he would presumably have noted that the prophet specified not only horses but pigs, whereas the narrative says nothing of the latter. We are thus left with the item of the stabling of horses in the churches.

Here we have to note that as regards the main event Savonarola is predicting a thing that had repeatedly happened in Catholic times, and that as regards the minor details he is speaking with his eye on Jewish history. It was not the mere presence of horses and pigs in churches that he meant to stress, but the defilement that they brought. In the case of the Jewish Temple the "abomination of desolation" had been understood to include the defiling of the altar with swine's flesh.¹ This, in all likelihood, was the origin of Savonarola's prediction as to the bringing of pigs

¹ 1 Mac. i, 47, 54, 59.

into the sanctuary at Rome, which, as we have seen, was not fulfilled.

But there was nothing new about a Catholic sack of Rome. The city had been hideously sacked and in large part destroyed under Gregory VII (1084) by Robert Guiscard, *the Pope's ally*, after having been captured without sacking by the German Emperor. It just missed being sacked by Frederick II in 1239. In 1413 it was captured by Ladislaus of Naples, who gave all Florentine property in the city to pillage. No question of heresy arose in these episodes; nor did the forces of the Church itself blench at either sack or sacrilege. Faenza was foully sacked in 1376 by Hawkwood, called in for its defence by the bishop of Ostia; and in 1377 the same *condottiere* massacred the population of Cesena under the express and continuous orders of Robert, Cardinal of Geneva, the papal legate, afterwards the "anti-pope" Clement VII. No more bestial massacre took place in the pandemonium of the fourteenth century; and the sacking of the churches and the violation of the nuns was on the scale of the bloodshed.¹ In view of the endless atrocities of the wars of the Church and of Christendom there is a certain ripe absurdity about the exegetical comments on the subject of the sack of Rome in 1527. Says Blass:—

Especially remarkable is this, that he [Savonarola] extends the devastation to the churches of Rome, which in any *ordinary capture* (!) by a Catholic army would have been spared, but in this case were

¹ Refs. in De Potter, *L'Esprit de l'Église*, 1821, iv, 95-98.

not at all respected, because a great part of the conquering army consisted of German Lutherans, for whom the Roman Catholic churches were rather objects of hatred and contempt than of veneration. Now Lutheranism did not exist in 1496.¹

And Dr. Petrie adds: "Such a detail seemed excessively unlikely before the rise of Lutheranism; yet it came to pass."² It is interesting to realize the notions held by scholars of such standing in regard to European history after a century signalized by so much historic research; and to find that such an ignorant proposition as that just cited should for Dr. Petrie "explode the dogma" that really fulfilled prophecies³ have been framed *post eventum*.

For centuries before Luther the desecration of churches was a regular feature in every Christian war of any extent. It is arguable, perhaps, that in the sack of Rome the German troops might have made a special display of that mania for ordure as an instrument of war of which we have had such circumstantial accounts from Belgium of late, and of which similar details have been preserved in the domestic history of Paris since 1870.⁴ But the stabling of horses in churches was a familiar act of warfare, often explicable by the simple fact that the horses of an army could not otherwise be accommodated. The clerical chroniclers mention such

¹ *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 43.

² *Growth of the Gospels*, p. 45.

³ Professed prophecies, that is, not political calculations.

⁴ The systematic deposition of ordure in the drawers of *commodes* in 1870, in beds and rooms and on piles of food in 1914, is a historical fact. As to the sack of Rome, Cantù's account is: "Delle bolle papali stabbiano i cavalli" (*Istoria degli Italiani*, ed. 1876, ix, 372).

things when they can tell a tale of the divine vengeance. Thus Spelman tells how "Richard, Robert, and Anesgot, sons of William Sorenge, in the time of William Duke of Normandy, wasting the country about Say, invaded the church of St. Gervase, lodging their soldiers there, and making it a stable for their horses. God deferred not the revenge."¹ In 1098 "the Earl of Shrewsbury made a dog-kennel of the church of St. Fridank, laying his hounds in it for the night-time; but in the morning he found them mad."² The putting of cattle in churches was sometimes a necessity of defensive warfare. In 1358, according to Jean de Venette, many unfortified villages in France made citadels of their churches to defend themselves from brigands;³ and in such cases the animals would be taken indoors. Fine churches, on the other hand, were often burned in the wars of that period.⁴ And when the Turks invaded Friuli in 1477 and 1478, burning and ravaging,⁵ they were likely enough to have stabled their horses in churches. It was probably of the Turks that Savonarola was thinking, predicting as he so constantly did their speedy conversion to Christianity.

Lutheranism can have had very little to do with the matter: the brutality of the German *Lanzknechts* was notorious long before Luther was heard of. But there was nothing specially German

¹ *History of Sacrilege*, 1698, p. 113.

² *Id.* p. 122.

³ Zeller, *L'histoire de France racontée par les contemporains*, vol. 21, p. 102.

⁴ *Id.* vol. 22, p. 17.

⁵ Sismondi-Tocagni, *Storia delle repub. ital.*, 1852, iv, 123.

in the matter either. The Italian *condottieri* in general were "full of contempt for all sacred things."¹ It is instructive to note that Savonarola predicts nothing of the wholesale violation of nuns and other women which was to take place at Rome as it had done in a hundred other sacks of cities: he must have known that these things happened; but the thing that appealed to his imagination was the theological pollution resulting from putting horses and pigs in churches. He was not predicting: he was remembering. Long before his time, besides, Church Councils had to pass edicts against the use of churches as barns in time of peace.

It will be remembered that his main items are slaughters, famines, and pestilences. There was famine and pestilence in Florence when he was prophesying in 1496; there was more in 1497;² and a terrible pestilence had visited Venice during the Turkish invasions of 1477 and 1478. The preacher's description of a plague in a city is an account of what had happened a dozen times in the history of Florence, before and after *the* Plague which figures in the forefront of Boccaccio's DECAMERON. Preaching from the text of Amos, he arraigns Italy and Rome as Amos arraigns Israel and Judah; and his menaces are the menaces of the Hebrew prophet, immeasurable slaughters, famine, pestilence, and captivity, with the old corollary of regeneration and restoration, in the case of Italy and the Church as in the case of

¹ Burckhardt, *Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr., ed. 1892, p. 23.

² Villari, pp. 463, 532, 554-55.

Israel. And his added detail of church desecration is at once a Biblical idea and a familiar item from Christian history.

In the historic crusade against the Albigenses in 1209, when Béziers was captured and every human being therein slain, seven thousand were, by the famous order of the Papal Legate,¹ put to the sword in the great church of St. Mary Magdalene, to which they had fled for sanctuary; and the whole city, with its churches, was burned to the ground. During the Hundred Years' War between England and France, says a social historian, a cleric—

in the rural districts of France the passage of the ravagers was traced by blackened ruins, by *desecrated churches*, by devastated fields, by the mutilated bodies of women and children.....Strange forms of disease which the chroniclers of those times sum up in the names of "black death," or plague, were born of hunger and overleapt the highest barriers.....and ran riot within the overcrowded cities.²

In the wars of Burgundy and France in the fifteenth century Catholics habitually plundered Catholic churches. At the siege of Saint-Denis in 1411 "the Germans, the Bretons, and the Gascons promised themselves the pillage of the church and the treasures of the abbey."³ Later "the English, the Picards, and the Parisians.....entered the

¹ "Slay all! God will know his own!"

² Rev. W. Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 1888, pp. 81-82.

³ Barante, *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne*, ed. 7ième, iii, 234.

monastery.....pillaged the apartments of the inmates, and carried away the cups, the utensils, all the furniture."¹ At Soissons, in 1414,

the Germans, the Bretons, and the Gascons were as so many wild beasts. The Comte d'Armagnac himself could not restrain them. After having pillaged the houses they set upon the convents and the churches, where the women had taken refuge. They could not escape the brutality of the men of war; the holy ornaments, the reliquaries, all was seized without respect; the *hostia*, the bones of the martyr, trodden under foot. Never had an army of Christians, commanded by such great seignors and formed of so many noble chevaliers, committed such horrors within the memory of man.²

The historian is quite mistaken; the same horrors had been many times enacted, and even on a greater scale. At the sack of Constantinople by the Christian crusaders in 1204,

the three Western bishops had strictly charged the crusaders to respect the churches and the persons of the clergy, the monks, and the nuns. They were talking to the winds. In the frantic excitement of victory all restraint was flung aside, and the warriors of the cross abandoned themselves with ferocious greed to their insatiable and filthy lewdness. With disgusting gestures and in shameless attire an abandoned woman screamed out a drunken song from the patriarchal chair in the church of Sancta Sophia.....Wretches blind with fury drained off draughts of wine from the vessels of the altar; the table of oblation, famed for its exquisite and costly workmanship, was shattered; the splendid pulpit with its silver ornaments utterly defaced. *Mules and horses were driven into the churches*³ to bear

¹ *Id. ib.* p. 248.

² *Id. id.* p. 416.

³ This detail, from Niketas, is also given by Gibbon, ch. lx, near

away the sacred treasures; if they fell they were lashed and goaded till their blood streamed upon the pavement. While the savages were employed upon these appropriate tasks, the more devout were busy in ransacking the receptacles of holy relics and laying up a goodly store of wonder-working bones or teeth to be carried away to the churches of the great cities on the Rhine, the Loire, or the Seine.¹

Savonarola was simply predicting for Rome, perhaps with his eye on the Turks, such a fate as befell Constantinople at Christian hands, regarding both as acts of divine vengeance, and expecting the capture of Rome to come soon. He pointed to the French invasion—he well might—as showing what was likely to happen.² The practice of church desecration had never ceased in Christendom for a single generation. In 1315 Edward Bruce, in his raid in Ireland, is reported to have burned churches and abbeys with all the people in them, and to have wrecked and defaced other churches, with their tombs and monuments. During the centuries between the battle of Bannockburn and the union of the English and Scottish crowns, churches, cathedrals, or abbeys were plundered or burned on both sides in nearly every great border raid. Frenchmen and Burgundians wrecked each other's churches. In his thirteenth chapter Philip de Commines tells "Of the storming, taking, and

end, and by Michaud, *Hist. des Croisades*, iii (1817), 154-55. Mills omits it. Michaud, like Cantù, stresses the point of *ordure*. So does Fleury, *Hist. eccles.*, xvi, 149.

¹ Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, *The Crusades*, 8th ed. p. 157.

² Perrens, ii, 95.

plundering the city of Liège; together with the ruin and destruction of the very churches." The Duke of Burgundy set a battalion of his guards to defend them, and killed one soldier of those who tried to enter; but later the soldiers forced an entrance, and all were completely plundered. "I myself," says Commynes, "was in none but the great church, but I was told so, and saw the marks of it, for which a long time after the Pope excommunicated all such as had any goods belonging to the churches in that city unless they restored them; and the duke appointed certain officers to go up and down his country to see the Pope's sentence put in execution."¹ As late as 1524, in the course of the campaign of Henry VIII in France, two churches were held and defended as fortresses on the French side, and captured by the invaders;² and in 1487 Perugia "became a beleaguered fortress under the absolute despotism of the Baglioni, *who used even the cathedrals as barracks.*"³ Savonarola could not have missed hearing of that.

If there was anything astonishing for Italians in the desecration of churches at the sack of Rome, they must have had short memories. The conspiracy of the Pazzi in 1478, in which Giuliano de' Medici was slain during high mass in the cathedral church of Florence, had been backed by the Pope; and the sacrilege of the planned deed was reckoned so horrible that one of the first appointed assassins,

¹ *Memoirs of Philip de Commynes*, Bohn trans. i, 158.

² Hall's Chronicle, Hen. VIII, ed. 1550, fol. 112.

³ Burckhardt, *Renaissance in Italy*, Eng. tr. ed. 1892, p. 29.

who blenched at it, had to be replaced by priests, who had transcended such scruples.¹ On the capture of Brescia by the French under Gaston de Foix in 1512, "things sacred and profane, the goods, the honour, and the life of the inhabitants were for seven days delivered up to the greed, the lust, and the cruelty of the soldier," only the nuns being spared.² In 1526 the Milanese told the Constable Bourbon, the general of their ally :—

Frederick Barbarossa anciently desolated this city; his vengeance spared neither the inhabitants, nor the edifices, nor the walls; but that was nothing in comparison with the evils we now suffer. The barbarism of an enemy is less insupportable than the unjust cruelty of a friend.....our miseries have endured more than a month; they increase every hour; and, like the damned, we suffer, without hope, evils which before this time of calamity we believed to be beyond human endurance.³

Guicciardini testifies that the Spaniards of the emperor's forces had been more cruel than the Germans,⁴ violating the women and reducing to rags the men of their own allies.

¹ Perrens, *Hist. de Florence, 1434-1531*, i, 385.

² Guicciardini, lib. x, c. 4.

³ *Id.* xvii, 3.

⁴ Though in reporting the sack of Rome he makes the Germans behave the more brutally as regards the cardinals.

CHAPTER XI

THE LOGIA THEORY AND THE HISTORICAL TEXT

So much for the "especially remarkable" fact that churches were desecrated in the sack of Rome in 1527, and that Savonarola should in 1496 have predicted such things for his own day. We have seen that his prediction was not a forecast of the event, that he had no idea of the causation of the ultimate sack of Rome, that he really prophesied an early event, and that he was simply announcing speedy divine vengeance after the manner of the Hebrew and many previous Christian prophets. What ground for argument, then, does his case furnish for an inference as to the date of the quasi-prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem in the third Gospel? Blass, despite his "especially remarkable" argument, puts his case pretty low:—

Accidentally, you will say, the event [in 1527] corresponded with the prophecy. But that is not my point, whether it was accidental, or the prophet had really foreseen the event; for in the case of the prophecies recorded by Luke you may raise the same controversy if you like.¹

What then were the manner and the matter of the

¹ *Philology of the Gospels*, p. 41.

prophecy in Luke? The Messiah expressly grounds his prediction upon the non-acceptance by Jerusalem of him and his mission:—

If thou [Jerusalem] hadst only known in this day the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee when thine enemies *shall cast up a bank about thee*, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and *they shall not leave in thee one stone on another* (Luke xix, 42-44).

But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judæa flee unto the mountains.....For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars..... And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh (*id.* xxi, 20-28).

“I do not think,” says Blass, “that either the former or the latter of these foretellings is very distinct, since there are neither names given nor peculiar circumstances indicated; only the common order of events is described.....” That will certainly not hold in respect of the “shall not leave in thee one stone on another,” or the “cast up a bank about thee,” which is a distinct specification of the Roman siege method of 70.

But let us follow up the implication, which is that a Jewish vaticinator, mindful of Daniel, might about the year 30 so predict the events of the year 70, and a world of other events which never happened, without astonishing us more than does Savonarola.

As we shall see, not only the circumstantial details but the remainder of the prediction completely exclude the idea of fortuitous real vaticination, even if it be argued that prophecies of quite visionary prodigies may conceivably have been made at any date. As to the prophecy of the fall of the temple, which is common to the three synoptics, the Professor leaves it "out of the present discussion," seeing that the liberal theologians are willing to let it stand as a prophecy *ante eventum*. Certainly he may well contemn such a critical method. The prophecy as to the temple, and that in Matthew (xxiv, 3-31) and Mark (xiii, 3-27) as to the sequence of war, persecution, dissension, false prophets, evangelization of the whole world, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, false Christs (twice specified), signs and wonders, and the final cosmic catastrophe—all this is certainly on all fours, critically considered, with the presages in Luke. But how shall rational criticism be induced to take the whole mass of quasi-vaticination as the utterance of a wandering thaumaturg of the year 30? It is idle for Professor Blass to explain to us that when Luke makes Jesus say "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles," with mere reminiscence of the Septuagint Daniel, and Matthew

and Mark make him speak with exact reference to Sept. Dan. ix, end, they are citing independently from their original. Their original may just have been the cited passage in Daniel, with no intervening document. "It is self-evident," says the Professor,¹ "that the real speech of Christ *must* have been longer than we read it now in any Gospel." That thesis cannot be self-evident of which the subject invites and admits a wholly different explanation; and the "must" is a sample of the Professor's critical ethic.

Similarly Dr. Petrie assumes that there were any number of logia current, all genuine, and that the gospel-makers simply cite from them wherever they are found appropriate to the circumstances of the moment. "These episodes, thus brought into prominence by the conditions of the time, were therefore incorporated in the Nucleus, or in the gospels which grew upon that."² It now behoves us to consider that interesting development of traditionalist theory.

The Nucleus, be it explained, is Dr. Petrie's substitute for the Primitive Gospel of the school of B. Weiss, and is constructed by the simple and certainly quite objective process of selecting "everything that is common to all three synoptics in a parallel text"—that is, occurring in all three in the same order. This is the "structural" test, and it yields a document which does not, like the Weiss selection, end before the Last Supper, but goes on

¹ As cited, p. 46.

² Work cited, p. 34.