

Study of St. Luke xxii. 35=38.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR WRIGHT, M.A., FELLOW AND TUTOR OF QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

CONTEMPORANEOUSLY with, or soon after, the publication of my essay on the "Composition of the Four Gospels" (Macmillan, 1890), there appeared several other treatises dealing with the same subject. Most of these, attracted too strongly, as I think, by opinion on the Continent, were in favour of the documentary rather than the oral hypothesis of the origin of the Synoptic Gospels.

There are three objections, which I consider fatal to the documentary hypothesis. First, it postulates the existence of two, three, or more primitive documents which have perished and left no trace behind. So rapidly does it suppose them to have disappeared, that they were unknown in the second century. *Litera scripta manet*. If these supposed documents were so widely circulated that the evangelists made use of one or more of them, it is incredible that they should in a few years have been forgotten. Men—at least some men—cling to the ancient and original. I cannot believe that if St. Peter and St. Matthew were known to have left any written records of Christ's words and deeds behind, those records would have been studied, copied, and then consigned, every single copy, to the flames.

Secondly, the documentary hypothesis may account for the similarities of the Gospels; it does not account for their divergences. We do not believe that our evangelists, when making use of apostolical documents, had so little respect for them as to alter them capriciously in a thousand minute particulars, in a way that was generally merely irritating, but occasionally amounted to a contradiction.

Nor does the supposition, true in itself, that the primitive documents, if there were any, must have been, at least some of them, in Aramaic, altogether meet this objection. Translation will produce certain changes, but by no means all the changes which we find in our Gospels. The idea that the original documents were in Aramaic has therefore been supplemented by the incredible contention that they were not only so rubbed and obscured as to be often hardly legible, but that Aramaic itself was so apt to be misread in consequence of the absence of vowels, the similarity of some of the

consonants to each other, and continuous writing (in spite of the frequent use of final letters of a special form), that an Aramaic letter could, not once or twice, but constantly, be read by different people in different ways. Such is the suggestion of Professor J. T. Marshall (*The Expositor*, 1892), and it only needs to be stated to be refuted. He himself is compelled to admit the existence of an oral Greek version of the *Logia*, existing simultaneously with the Aramaic document, and surely making his supposed corruptions and misreadings of the latter still more improbable. Let him allow—(1) that St. Peter's memoirs, as well as St. Matthew's *Logia*, were originally in Aramaic, as they must have been; (2) that the Aramaic original, as well as the Greek version, were both oral, and he will come to my position, that the Greek has in many places, but not nearly so many as he supposes, been modified from time to time by changes in the Aramaic, the two existing side by side in the same city of Jerusalem, and many of the catechists being bilingual. At present he ignores the convincing argument of the Rev. F. H. Woods (*Studia Biblica*, vol. ii.), who has shown that the order of St. Mark's Gospel has so thoroughly governed the other two Gospels throughout, that, either in an oral or a written form, St. Mark's Gospel in its entirety must have been the chronological guide. The unity of St. Mark, which Professor Marshall denies, has been fully established by Mr. Woods.

Thirdly, the documentary hypothesis does not account for the omissions. If St. Mark had before him in a written form the Sermon on the Mount, was he worthy to be an evangelist if he deliberately selected about half a dozen verses out of it, inserted them, a verse at a time, in different parts of his Gospel, and rejected the whole of the rest, including the Lord's Prayer?

For these reasons and many others, I cling fast to the oral hypothesis. I have shown how it accounts for the facts. It is supported by certain statements in St. Paul's Epistles about the work of the catechists. It accords with Rabbinic usage and prejudice, which objected to commit anything to writing. It requires no theory of omissions. For each evangelist has given us the whole of what

was known to him as having been current in the Church in which he laboured. It shows the early date at which the Gospels must have originated in their oral form. It proves that the three Synoptic Gospels are not the product of individual thought, so much as the tradition of three separate Churches, one of which was neutral, one Jewish, and one Gentile.

After these preliminary remarks, let us turn to the examination of the passage before us. It will illustrate and justify much of what we have said, and in itself it will repay the closest examination, for it is one of the most important of those sections which are found in St. Luke's Gospel only.

It runs thus: "And He said, When I sent you forth without purse or wallet or shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. And He said to them, But now let him that hath a purse take it, likewise also a wallet; and let him that hath no money sell his cloak and buy a sword; for I say unto you that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And He was numbered with lawless men; for my course is drawing to a close. And they said, Sir, behold, here are two swords. And He said, It is enough."

I. The section is introduced by the phrase, "And He said," not "Then said He," nor "After these things said He," nor by any of those longer prefaces which form quite a feature in St. Luke's Gospel.

I infer from this that St. Luke wished us to understand that he was not quite sure that the paragraph belonged to the place where he has put it.

St. Luke, I hold, began to work as a catechist—probably at Philippi—at so early a date, that his first lessons did not contain even the whole of St. Peter's memoirs. Indeed, the greater part of the latest portion of these memoirs, lying chiefly between St. Mark vi. 14 and viii. 10, never reached him at all. And the second cycle of oral teaching, commonly called St. Matthew's *Logia*, was as yet scarcely begun. In his distant Gentile home St. Luke received from time to time, either by letter from friends or by word of mouth from travellers, detached parts of it, as well as a few narratives like this, which were no part of it, but he seldom had any other clue to the chronology of these new sections than was contained in the passages themselves. It was St. Luke's task, I maintain, upon

receiving a contribution to find a suitable place for it in that ever-expanding course of oral instruction which he gave to his pupils and finally stereotyped in his written Gospel. By this simple explanation, and by no other, we can account for the extraordinary difference between St. Luke's arrangement of conversations and St. Matthew's. The conversations are the same, though with varying degrees of divergence according to the precision with which they were reported, but the context is widely different. And St. Luke's chronology is far less likely to be correct than St. Matthew's.

Suppose then that this paragraph is one of those jewels, if I may so call them, which came to St. Luke broken loose from its original setting. He must make a new setting for it, if it was to add its lustre to his Gospel. And on proceeding to examine it, he could have little doubt to which year of our Lord's ministry it belonged. A time of persecution is indicated. Hospitable homes were no longer open to Christ's emissaries. Henceforth the disciples must take with them a purse to buy bread and a wallet to carry it. A sadness pervades the passage, a melancholy, almost a despair. The shadow of the cross rests upon it. The evangelist, therefore, has put it between the prediction of St. Peter's denials and the account of the agony in Gethsemane. In no other place would its meaning have been so heightened.

To us, however, who have four Gospels before us, teeming with words spoken and deeds done on that last overwhelming night, it is a task of no small difficulty to piece them harmoniously together, and find the right place for each. And it is a relief to the historical critic to find that he is under no obligation to do so. The Gospel narratives are seldom presented to us in their true order. Even "straightway," "then," or "after these things," cannot always be pressed. Much less can a plain "And He said" be decisive of the date. Many words assigned by one or other of the evangelists to that supreme night may have been spoken at some other time during the preceding week. St. Luke's paragraph would suit any stage in the last journey. From its mournful tone we are disposed to refer it to that time of anxiety when our Lord first set out for Jerusalem. The student of the Gospels will be saved many hours of anxious labour if he learns how unchronological the Synoptic Gospels are. How could St. Luke, arranging detached narratives at Philippi for the immediate

need of his pupils, have discovered the true order? Why should he have thought it of any great importance to do so?

II. "When I sent you forth without purse or wallet or shoes, lacked ye anything?" There is an allusion to the first mission of the Twelve, when Christ "sent them forth two by two into every city and village into which He himself would come." An account of this mission was given in St. Peter's memoirs, for it was an important epoch in that apostle's life. And as St. Peter's narrative is reproduced in each of the Synoptic Gospels, it is interesting to observe the variations which have been made in it by the catechists. These variations are so curious, that no hypothesis of copying from a written document, whether Greek or Aramaic, can account for them. The changes must be due to the unconscious working of human memory during a long period of oral transmission.

St. Mark, preserving as usual St. Peter's words with much precision, writes, "Take nothing for your journey save a staff only, not bread, not a wallet, not copper for your belt, but be shod with sandals, and do not put on two tunics" (vi. 8). St. Matthew, with more than his customary changes, gives, "Provide no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, not a wallet for the road, nor two tunics, nor shoes, nor a staff" (x. 9, 10). St. Luke, with unwonted brevity, has, "Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor wallet, nor bread, nor silver coin, nor two tunics to wear" (ix. 3).

The only coins minted in Palestine during the Roman period were of copper. Being of small value, and free from idolatrous symbols, they circulated freely amongst the poor. St. Mark's "Take no copper" is probably the original precept. But to prevent mistake St. Matthew has expanded it into "no gold nor silver nor copper." St. Luke has altered it into "no silver coin," because silver in classical times was the only legal tender at Athens, until "silver," like the Scotch "siller," became the ordinary expression for "money."

Here then we have examples of changes made by the catechists in the wording of St. Peter's memoirs, either to prevent misunderstanding or to suit the different environment of their pupils.

A more serious difficulty arises about the shoes and the staff. St. Mark enjoins the use of both, St. Matthew prohibits both, St. Luke prohibits the staff, and says nothing about the shoes. In his

instructions, however, to the Seventy in the next chapter he bids them go forth "without purse or wallet or shoes" (x. 4).

This discrepancy was observed in very early times. The first harmonist with whose works we are acquainted is Tatian, who wrote about A.D. 160. In his *Diatessaron*, written in Syriac, but translated into Arabic, of which version a copy has been recently discovered, he undertook to construct a complete Life of Christ by piecing our four Gospels together into one continuous narrative. In this way he produced a book of considerable interest, but dull and heavy, overloaded with words, and possessing none of the literary charm which characterises our Gospels. It became, however, so popular that the Bishop Theodoret was obliged to prohibit its use in the churches of his diocese, because it was actually superseding the Gospels.

Tatian deals with the passage thus: "Provide not gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, not a wallet for the road, not bread, nor shoes, nor a staff but a cane only; be shod with sandals, and do not put on two tunics." Tatian evidently assumes (as later commentators have strangely done) that there was such a difference between sandals and shoes that the one must be forbidden as a luxury, the other enjoined as necessary; and although the Greek word for a "staff" (*ῥάβδος*) is the same, he seems to think that the original Aramaic must have been different. A staff to walk with would be an unwarranted indulgence to the flesh, a stick to chase away the dogs which encompass the traveller's path in an Eastern village must be conceded.

All honour to Tatian for his conscientious attempt to serve his day and generation, but when a Scotch writer in the present year, working on similar lines, suggests that *ῥάβδος* in St. Mark means a "staff," but in St. Matthew a "tent-pole," we must protest against such trifling with sacred records. It is true that *ῥάβδος*, like "stick," may have many meanings, but, as in English, if you told a man who was setting out on a journey to take a stick, he could only understand you to mean a walking-stick, so also in Greek the context is decisive. It would be absurd to speak of a tent-pole without mention of a tent. And the divergence in narrative could only be accounted for in this way, if St. Peter's memoirs had originally a double sentence, "Go shod with sandals, but not with shoes, and take a cane, but not a

staff," of which St. Mark in each case has preserved the first member and the other evangelists the second. Such a supposition is altogether improbable. Rather, therefore, must we admit that oral tradition is not always to be trusted in preserving these complex regulations. There is a tendency towards severity. The priests in the temple went bare-foot when performing their sacred duties, why should not Christ's servants do the same? Mankind are fond of imposing irksome rules on those who are engaged in specially sacred work.

III. It is further to be noticed as an indication of the light esteem in which St. Luke held verbal precision that, although he has exactly reproduced the three words, "purse, wallet, shoes," from his own Gospel, he has not taken them from our Lord's instructions to the Twelve, but from His instructions to the Seventy.

St. Luke could easily have turned back his own pages and verified the reference, correcting either the one passage or the other until he made them agree, but he has not done so. The self-contradiction remains, as in several passages in the Acts of the Apostles (ix. 3-9 = xxii. 6-11 = xxvi. 12-18, x. 1-48 = xi. 1-18).

If what we have advanced above is a true account of the matter, it evidently follows that the two words, "or shoes," were no authentic part of our Lord's saying on this occasion, but are one of those parasitical accretions which are common in oral tradition. And that they really are so is seen on a close examination of the passage; for not only do they destroy the balance of the sentence, but there is nothing corresponding to them in the next clause, which is constructed with precise parallelism: "But now let him that hath a purse take it, likewise also a wallet."

Lastly, the word "purse" is another adaptation to local requirements. St. Peter had said, "Take no copper for your *belt*," a phrase which St. Mark and St. Matthew retain, because the tunic of a Jew was fastened round the body with a belt (Acts xii. 8), which, whether made of leather or raw hide (Mark i. 6), was doubled and stitched till the hollow thus produced formed an excellent purse. But this custom, though known to Roman soldiers (Hor. *Ep.* ii. 2. 40), does not seem to have prevailed in the civil life of Gentiles. They carried their coins (which were of silver) in their mouth or in a pouch. Hence St. Luke's alteration.

I venture to press these facts upon the student, because most commentators take pains to obscure them. Yet surely they are full of significance. They teach us to value the general sense more than the words, the spiritual lesson more than the picturesque surroundings.

IV. "And let him that hath no money sell his cloak and buy a sword." No doubt this precept means that every Christian missionary must provide himself with a sword, even though it be at the cost of parting with his cloak.

The extreme urgency of the order will be seen if we remember how important a part the cloak played in the dress of a Jew. It was not indeed a necessity. It was laid aside during the hours of work. But if the climate of Palestine, a country the main ridge of which on an average is 2500 feet above the sea-level, made it necessary for the aged and infirm to wear two tunics in cold weather ("Then the high priest rent his tunics," Mark xiv. 63), much more was a cloak needful for every one in the winter evenings. By the poor it was also used as a blanket. And the humane legislation of the Old Testament enjoined upon even the money-lender that he should in any case restore it at sunset when it had been given as a pledge, for else "wherein was its owner to sleep?" (Ex. xxii. 26, 27).

But Christ's messengers must not think of bodily comfort. "If they have no money, they must sell their cloak and buy a sword."

Three notable interpretations are offered of this startling paradox—the mystical, the allegorical, the literal.

The mystics said that the "two swords" which the disciples produced in reply are the temporal and the spiritual power, without which the Church is not perfect. According to this explanation, our Lord's rejoinder, "It is enough," signifies His approval, whereas any other explanation requires that it should signify disapproval, as though He had said, "I will say no more: you have not understood me."

Mystical interpretation was once universal in dealing with the Old Testament and common in dealing with the New. It is the glory of our age to have thrown discredit on so fanciful and phantastic a device, which we would not tolerate in the interpretation of any except sacred books. Few persons now would admit it here.

The allegoriser says that the sword in Christ's thought was not of steel, but referred rather to intellectual weapons. The missionary of the future would have to face antagonists, and must be prepared to do battle with them on their own ground. Education was henceforth essential for him. Rhetoric, oratory, philosophy, could not be dispensed with. A St. Paul would succeed where a St. Peter might fail to secure a hearing.

This is true, and contains a useful lesson for those who are preparing for holy orders. Let them as a matter of duty do their utmost to acquire the best possible training. Especially let them investigate the pressing questions of the day.

But this interpretation does not lie on the surface. It is an extension rather than the original meaning. We come therefore to the literal sense.

In the quiet easy times of prosperity Christ's messengers had had a simple task. Their glad tidings had found a way to ready minds and hearts. Loving disciples had vied with one another in supplying their bodily needs. But a different day was dawning now. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which says of the Messiah, "He was numbered with lawless men," and goes on to speak of death and burial, would soon be fulfilled. And "if they persecute me, they will also persecute you." You must take nothing from them. You must earn your own money and provide your own food. You will be brought before kings and

rulers. You will encounter brigands and assassins. For your defence you must learn to wield a sword.

This is the only interpretation which satisfies the context. It was when the disciples understood Him too literally that He cut them short. Oriental figures of speech were not to be taken in their strict sense. No servant of Christ could really go forth with a sword. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Rather he must go expecting opposition, with the martyr spirit, but as a good soldier of the cross.

Does any one think it impossible that Christ could thus positively have made a command and then immediately on second thoughts explained it away by a kind of recantation? Let him beware of denying the reality of the Incarnation. That our Lord should have had a human mind is an essential part of that inexplicable mystery. And impossible though it be for us to understand the union of so finite and limited a thing with the fulness of the Godhead, we must not on that account deny it. And we have at least one, and that a more striking example of its presence, when Christ said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," that is, "It is absolutely impossible for a rich man to be saved," and yet presently added, "With men this is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible" (Mark x. 27).

Professor Bruce's "Apologetics."¹

BY ALFRED E. GARVIE, M.A. (GLAS.), B.A. (OXON.).

THE force and the freshness of all the writings that Dr. Bruce has hitherto published have doubtless led many to look forward with eager hope to this work; and there need not be any fear of disappointment. It has all the characteristics of the author's personality. Geniality in the conception of the truth to be defended, generosity towards opponents (except the self-satisfied and the dogmatic), and candour in the statement of objections and difficulties—these are here. The title of the work suggests what is the author's view of the task of Apologetics, and we are prepared for the formal

¹ *Apologetics; or, Christianity Defensively Stated.* By A. B. Bruce, D.D. T. & T. Clark. 1892.

statement of his purpose by the brief sketch of the history of Apologetics, with which the book opens. The definition of Apologetics as Christianity defensively stated, raises two questions—(1) What is the Christianity to be defended? and (2) How is it to be defended? The author's answer to the first question will seem to some doubtless rather subjective. He may appear to be limiting Christianity to those elements that have commended themselves to him as essential and vital in his own religious experience. This danger he himself recognises; but inasmuch as he conceives the function of Apologetics to be not the gratification of a speculative interest, but the satisfaction