

CHAPTER XI.

ST MARK.

IF St Matthew's Gospel has left the most numerous traces of its existence and influence in the earliest Christian literature, that of St Mark has left the fewest. This Gospel, now recognised as possessing strongly marked characteristics of its own, and generally acknowledged to be the earliest of the Four, was held in early Church history of least account among them. Even although it was considered to be, in a certain sense, the Gospel of the foremost of the Twelve Apostles, the impression which it made upon the early Church was comparatively insignificant. This is clear from the place which it occupies in many of the ancient manuscripts, notably in those which represent the Western type of text, where it is placed last in order. The textual peculiarities connected with the last twelve verses of St Mark have suggested to scholars that there was a time considerably later than the time of

its composition when this Gospel existed in no more than one copy, which shows that it had not been largely copied and circulated.

It is not difficult to explain the comparative paucity of references in early Christian writings. Our Second Gospel was not directly the work of an Apostle, but of one who was only a follower of Apostles. Its contents, as a study of the Synoptic problem has shown, were already almost wholly incorporated in the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke. The sections of St Mark which have no parallel in the other two Synoptics are less than a twentieth of the whole Gospel, although throughout his Gospel the Evangelist excels the others in the minute and lifelike representation of facts. It may have been prejudiced by the fact, for which Irenæus¹ is our authority, that some early Gnostics used it in the interest of their view which separated Jesus from the Christ, declaring Christ to be incapable of suffering and Jesus to be the sufferer. It was, moreover, the shortest of the Four, and the literary characteristics which have made it so precious to scholars of modern days, and the tokens that it is really the earliest of them all, were not discerned by the great Biblical critics of the third and fourth centuries. We can understand their attitude from the remarks of Augustine

¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 11. 10.

in his 'De Consensu Evangelistarum':¹ "He has nothing in his Gospel which he shares with John alone. He has very little that is peculiar to himself. He has still less in common with Luke alone. But he has very much in common with Matthew, often expressed too in just so many, and indeed the very same, words. In these instances he sometimes agrees with Matthew alone and sometimes with the other Gospels when they run parallel with Matthew." But as long as the view prevailed that St Mark was simply, as Augustine called him, the *pedissequus et breviator* of St Matthew, its position could not but be subordinate and its influence less widely marked. Harnack² has said that but for its admission to the Canon it would have perished, and we see how near it actually came to such a fate. "By its inclusion in the Canon we are to-day," says Professor Burkitt,³ "in possession of a document in warp and woof far more primitive than the Churches which adopted it. The fine instinct which reserved a place for the Gospel of Mark among the books of the New Testament shows the Catholic Church to have been wiser than her own writers, wiser than the heretics, wiser, finally, than most Biblical critics from St Augustine to Ferdinand Christian Baur. It is only in the last

¹ De Cons., i. 2.

² See above, p. 127.

³ Gospel History, p. 261.

half century that scholars have come to recognise the pre-eminent historical value of the Gospel which once survived only in a single tattered copy."

That St Mark wrote his Gospel under the influence of St Peter is one of the best attested traditions of early Christian antiquity, and the internal characteristics of the Gospel support the tradition. Of the Four Gospels, "the second," says Origen,¹ "is by Mark, who composed it according to the instructions of Peter." Clement of Alexandria, in his account of the origin of the Gospels, says: "As regards Mark, they said this was the plan: Peter having preached the Word publicly in Rome, and having spoken forth the Gospel by the Spirit, many of those who were then in Rome requested Mark, as one who had attended Him for long and remembered what had been said, to commit to writing what had been spoken; and that having composed his Gospel he committed it to them at their request. This becoming known to Peter, he neither forbade it nor encouraged it."² The testimony of Tertullian³ has already been quoted. "Of the Apostles, therefore, John and Matthew first instil faith into us; whilst of Apostolic men, Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. . . . That which

¹ Euseb. H. E., VI. 25.

² Euseb. H. E., VI. 14.

³ *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 2. 5. See above, p. 51.

Mark published may be affirmed to be Peter's, whose interpreter Mark was. For even Luke's form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul." "Mark, the interpreter and follower of Peter," say Irenæus,¹ "thus commences his Gospel narrative: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Although the critical instinct of those great Fathers may have sometimes been at fault, they may be accepted as accurate reporters of primitive tradition, in which capacity they are of the highest service to us.

We do not require to quote Irenæus in detail in support of the Second Gospel after having recorded his declaration as to the acceptance and authority of Four, and only Four, Gospels, of which without a doubt our St Mark was one. Although it is not quoted in Irenæus by any means so often as the other Gospels, the quotations show that it is the Canonical Gospel which is before the writer. Irenæus vouches for the commencement in the language of our St Mark, and he is a witness also to the last twelve verses. These are lacking in the Sinaitic and Vatican Manuscripts and in Mrs Lewis's Syriac, are found in a shorter form in some manuscripts and versions, and are either omitted or inserted with notes of doubt by most modern editors of the New Testament. The words of Irenæus are: "Also, towards the

¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 10. 6.

conclusion of his Gospel, Mark says: So then after the Lord Jesus had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God; confirming what had been spoken by the prophet: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." The use of St Mark's ending, as it has come down to us, by the larger number, though not the greater weight, of authorities, and, among others, especially by a writer of such wide knowledge as Irenæus, without any question and with no suspicion of its genuineness, is a point in its favour not easily overcome. There are indications¹ in Justin Martyr, the Shepherd of Hermas, Barnabas, and even Clement of Rome, of possible acquaintance with the ordinary ending, which corroborate Irenæus. The verses have been found in an Armenian manuscript of the Gospels written in 986 A.D., with the rubric attached "Of the Presbyter Ariston," and the inference has been drawn that Ariston, possibly Aristion, the friend of Papias and "a disciple of the Lord," was the author, who added them to remedy the abrupt ending of St Mark xvi. 8, and bring the Gospel to a proper conclusion.² There is no question of the

¹ See Dr Chas. Taylor, 'Hermas and the Four Gospels,' p. 57, and 'Expositor,' 1893, p. 77 ff.

² F. C. Conybeare, 'Expositor,' 1893, p. 240 ff.

antiquity of the verses. It has even been suggested by the late Dr Salmon¹ that if they are not the first conclusion written by St Mark, they may be a second written later.

As we have already seen,² the MURATORIAN FRAGMENTIST may safely be inferred to be speaking of St Mark when in the now mutilated opening of the Fragment we read, "aliquibus tamen interfuit et ita posuit,"—"but at some he was present, and so set down what he had heard."

That JUSTIN MARTYR was acquainted with St Mark has been shown in our discussion of his 'Memoirs,' and we have just seen that he may have been acquainted with the traditional ending. In a significant passage³ he calls the 'Memoirs,' from which he gives a quotation, Peter's: "The mention of the fact that Christ changed the name of Peter, one of the Apostles, and that the event has been written down in his (Peter's) Memoirs (*ἐν τοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν αὐτοῦ*), together with His having changed the name of two other brothers, sons of Zebedee, to Boanerges, which is, sons of thunder (Mark iii. 16, 17), tended to signify that He was the same through whom the surname Israel was given to Jacob and Joshua to Hoshea." The expression "his Memoirs"

¹ Introduction, p. 151. Cf. 'Human Element in the Gospels,' pp. 530, 531.

² See above, p. 82.

³ Dial., c. 106.

here might be interpreted as *Memoirs of Christ*, but such a subjective interpretation is quite out of accord with the invariable usage of Justin, who calls his authorities *Memoirs of the Apostles*—that is, *Memoirs* composed by the Apostles or others. Another allusion of Justin to St Mark's narrative has an interest of its own. Describing, for the benefit of Trypho the Jew, the baptism of Jesus, he tells how He was reputed to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, and a carpenter Himself. "For," says Justin,¹ "He worked at the trade of a carpenter, making ploughs and yokes, thereby teaching the emblems of righteousness and exemplifying an active life." From St Matthew we learn that He was accounted the carpenter's son; it is St Mark alone who records the question, "Is not this the carpenter?" (vi. 3). Celsus seized upon this, calling Jesus a carpenter to trade (*τεκτονικῆν τέχνην*), and framing from it one of his proofs of the discreditable origin of Christianity. Although Justin does not allude to the Second Gospel with the frequency with which he alludes to the First and the Third, he does this sufficiently often to make it clear that it was one of the 'Memoirs' which were his authorities for the Life and Teaching of Christ, and the sacred books of the first Christians in their worship.

¹ Dial., c. 88.

It is PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS who is again the earliest writer to bring explicit testimony to St Mark's authorship of the Second Gospel. The testimony which he records in his 'Expositions,' and which has been preserved by Eusebius, is represented as coming from the lips of the Presbyter John. This personage, about whom there has been such an amount of speculation, we believe to be none other than the Apostle John himself. That John the Apostle should bear testimony to St Mark's Gospel is rendered easy of credit by the words of Eusebius (iii. 24. 7): "When Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who had employed all his time in proclaiming the Gospel orally, finally proceeded to write for the following reason: the three Gospels already mentioned having come into the hands of all, *and into his own too*, they say that he accepted them and bore witness to their truthfulness." Testimony from such a quarter to the origin and character of one of the Synoptic Gospels must be of unique value, and it is necessary to examine with the greatest care the extract of Papias which is the foundation of this view. It will be convenient to place in direct sequence the statement of Papias and the comments of Eusebius containing the sole references in early Christian literature to the Presbyter John, and then the statement attributed to the Presbyter regarding

St Mark. It is the earlier statement which supplies the references to the Presbyter which we interpret as pointing to the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee.

“But Papias himself, in the preface to his discourses,” says Eusebius,¹ “by no means declares that he was himself a hearer and eyewitness of the holy Apostles, but he shows by the words which he uses that he received the doctrines of the faith from those who were their friends. He says: ‘But I shall not hesitate also to set down for you, along with my interpretations (*ἐρμηνείαις*), whatsoever things I learned carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the elders, guaranteeing their truth. For, unlike most people, I did not take pleasure in those who have much to say (*τοῖς τὰ πολλὰ λέγουσιν*), but in those who teach what is true; nor in those who relate the precepts of others (*τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἐντολάς*), but in those who relate such as have been given by the Lord to faith and are derived from the Truth itself. But if ever any one came in my way who had been a close follower of the elders (*παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις*), I was wont to put questions (*ἀνέκρινον*) regarding the words of the elders—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew, or any other [one] of the disciples of the Lord said (*εἶπεν*), as well as regarding the things which Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciple of the Lord, have to say (*ἅ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης . . . λέγουσιν*). For I did not think that what was to be

¹ H. E., III. 39. 2.

obtained from books would profit me so much as that which came from a living and abiding voice.' It is worth while observing here that he counts the name of John twice, in the first case classing him with Peter and James and Matthew and the other Apostles, plainly meaning the Evangelist; in the other case, mentioning John again after an interval, and ranking him outside the number of the Apostles, putting Aristion before him, and distinctly calling him Presbyter, the inference being that they are right who say there were two persons in Asia bearing the same name, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, both of which even to the present day are called John's. It is necessary to pay attention to this, for it is probable that it was the second, if one does not care to admit that it was the first, who saw the Revelation which is by name attributed to John. And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he received the words of the Apostles from those who followed them, but says that he himself had been a hearer of Aristion and the Presbyter John. At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. . . .

Papias gives also¹ in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord on the authority of Aristion mentioned above, and traditions as handed down by the Presbyter John, to which we refer those who are fond of learning. But now we must add to the words of his which we have already quoted a tradition which has been circulated concerning Mark, who wrote the Gospel, as follows: 'This also the Presbyter used to say (ἔλεγε)—Mark having become the inter-

¹ III. 39. 14, 15.

preter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ (*τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα*). For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him as a disciple, but afterwards, as I said, he followed Peter, who was wont to adapt his instructions to the requirements of his hearers, though not with any intention of giving a consecutive record of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark made no mistake in thus writing down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care to omit nothing of the things which he heard, and to set down nothing in them falsely.'"

We have given the two extracts in their context, so that the important statements of Papias, with the scarcely less important comments of Eusebius, may be in the judgment of the reader. It is not to be wondered at that on the right hand and on the left, by scholars of conservative views and by the very advanced critics, emendations of the text have been proposed, but these have been rendered futile by the absolute unanimity of the manuscript authorities of Eusebius.¹ It is from the words of Papias as they stand that we are to interpret his references to the Presbyter John.

1. Papias intimates, in the very first words quoted by Eusebius, that he had himself been a learner from the elders, and had used the materials he had received from them to strengthen or illus-

¹ Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, p. 350 ff.

trate his interpretations of the Gospel narrative. But he was not content with what he had learned from them directly; if any one had come in his way who had been in days gone by a close companion of those elders, he was in the habit of questioning him to ascertain the words which those elders spoke and set them down in his collections. But who were those elders from whom he was himself a learner, and from whom and from whose companions he obtained words of theirs which he treasured beyond the written narratives put in circulation by others? It can scarcely be doubted that they were the men of the first generation after Christ. In all three places where "the elders" (*οἱ πρεσβύτεροι*) occurs it means "the men of an earlier generation." Irenæus frequently has occasion to use the term when speaking of his authorities, and to him Ignatius, Polycarp, and Papias were "elders." To Papias "the elders" were the men of the generation between Christ and his own day, and he enumerates them here: Andrew, Peter, Philip, Thomas, James, John, Matthew, and even Aristion, all of them described as disciples, and, with the exception of the last, known to us to be disciples—that is, personal followers of the Lord. The Elder John, mentioned along with Aristion, and ranked with him as a disciple of the Lord, if we are to give to the title (*ὁ πρεσ-*

βύτερος) the meaning which it has throughout the extract, is a man of that generation, a personal disciple of Jesus, like those honoured Apostles and teachers who had, when Papias was making his collections, already passed away.

2. The question at once arises, Can this Elder or Presbyter John, who is mentioned along with Aristion, be the same who has already been mentioned along with Andrew and Peter and Matthew, Apostles of the Lord, John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee? It seems to militate against this view that he is only called, as Aristion is, "a disciple," and not "an Apostle," of the Lord. It is to be noticed, however, that the others—Andrew, Peter, and the rest—are not called by Papias "Apostles," but only "disciples" of the Lord. And when Irenæus¹ mentions John he designates him also "the disciple of the Lord," although without question the John of Irenæus is the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee.² Papias does not call even Andrew and Peter "Apostles," because their significance for him had nothing to do with their Apostolic office. He was in search of trustworthy traditions concerning Jesus to incorporate with his expositions of the Gospel narratives. Aristion, who was not one of the Apostles, was just as important a

¹ *Adversus Hæreses*, ii. 22. 5; iii. 3. 4.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 1. 1; ii. 22. 5.

witness as the Apostle Thomas, or indeed more so, since Papias had had no opportunity to cross-examine Thomas as he had Aristion. He thinks, therefore, of no distinction between those who were Apostles and those who were not, but designates those who had seen and heard and followed Jesus "disciples of the Lord" (*μαθηταὶ τοῦ κυρίου*), or elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*), according as he connects them with Jesus, or with himself and the generation to which he belonged.¹ There is no objection whatever to interpreting the designation as belonging to the Apostle John on the ground that he is called only a "disciple of the Lord."

3. There still remains the crucial question why John should be mentioned among the elders and ranked with Apostles early in the statement of Papias, and farther on should be spoken of as the Elder John, as if he were another of the same name and of a later generation. Did Papias really have in his mind two Johns, or does he speak of the one John whom alone primitive Christian antiquity knows, in two different relations? The latter alternative is suggested by the grammatical construction of the words of Papias. We have an indirect question referring to past time (*τί εἶπεν*), and a co-ordinate

¹ Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, p. 352 n.; Zahn, *Einleitung*, ii. 437 (Eng. trans.)

relative clause containing a verb in present time (*ἃ τε λέγουσιν*). Papias tells us that he asked those who had learned from the Apostles of the Lord for utterances of theirs illustrative of the Gospel narratives, and particularly of the Lord's discourses. He mentions Andrew and Peter and Matthew, who had not survived to a later day, and asked what they had said (*εἶπον*), while the informants (*παρηκολουθηκώς τις*) were still in a position to learn from them. These informants might have lived in Palestine for a length of time, and had opportunities long before Papias met them in Asia to hear many Apostles and other disciples of Jesus. In the case of Aristion and of John, who evidently outlived the rest of their generation, he asked, for the purposes of his collection, at a time when they were yet alive, when others as well as himself had opportunities of learning from them what they had to say (*ἃ τε λέγουσιν*). The Apostle John belonged to both groups of the disciples of Jesus, whose words Papias desired to ascertain from their own disciples. That the expression "The Elder" was applicable to him we know. He called himself by that name in addressing the readers of his Second and Third Epistles, using it as if to reciprocate the affectionate veneration in which he was held, both as a spiritual father and an Apostle of Christ, in his

closing years at Ephesus. We hold, therefore, that the passage of Papias, which at first sight seems to have in view two Johns, really speaks of one only, in the two different relations which we have described.¹

4. It is the comments of Eusebius which have given any substance that there is to the separate personality of the Presbyter John. He by no means exhibits the lucidity and consistency which usually mark his narratives and criticisms in his treatment of this extract of Papias. He really introduces the extract to show that Irenæus² was wrong in calling Papias a hearer of John the Apostle, and he says that Papias, in the extract given above, by no means declares himself a hearer and eyewitness of the holy Apostles. In carrying out this contention he seems to contradict himself. For he refuses to allow that the elders, from whom Papias says he learned, were Apostles, and yet a few sentences later he speaks of "the words of the elders" as being "the words of the Apostles," which Papias received from their disciples. "He suppresses the obvious fact that Papias spoke first of such traditions as he received from the elders directly (or from the Apostles, as

¹ Cf. Leimbach, Herzog, Art. "Papias," xiii. 645; Zahn, Einleit., ii. 453 (Eng. trans.)

² *Adversus Hæreses*, v. 33. 4.

Eusebius puts it), before saying that he also inquired concerning the words of the elders (Apostles), in case he fell in with others who, like him, had been their disciples."¹

It is the reference to the Apocalypse which perhaps gives us the clue to the procedure of Eusebius in connection with the extract from Papias. Eusebius did not care for the Book of Revelation, which he placed among the spurious books, although he had to admit that it was largely received in the Church.² He disliked it because it spoke of the millennial reign of Christ, and he had a poor opinion of Papias also because he held millenarian views. He did not care to attribute the Apocalypse to so honoured an Apostle as John, and here, in the Elder John, the teacher of the millenarian Papias, seemed to be a possible author of the Apocalypse. Dionysius of Alexandria had already noted the difference in style between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, and had expressed the view that if there had been two Johns at Ephesus, even as there were two monuments each bearing the name of John, a solution of the literary difficulty would be found in assigning the Gospel to the one and the Apocalypse to the other. Dionysius, however, did not get beyond the reach of conjecture: if he knew the words of

¹ Zahn, *ubi supra*.

² H. E., III. 25.

Papias, he did not interpret them as witnessing to two Johns, for he knew only of John the Apostle.¹ Eusebius is more venturesome, and assuming, on the strength of this extract of Papias, that there was a second John at Ephesus, he improves upon the position of Dionysius and gives his friend a choice in the one or the other of an author of the Apocalypse.²

5. The unanimous tradition of the Church of the first three centuries knows of only one person bearing the name of John who during the last decades of the first century was in any way distinguished in the Churches of Asia Minor — John, the Apostle of the Lord, the son of Zebedee, the teacher of Polycarp and of Papias. So far as we can gather, Eusebius, though he mentions the critical views of Dionysius and says Papias refers by name frequently to Aristion and the Elder John, has no tradition on the point to guide him. Throughout his history, except in the chapter dealing with Papias, the only John of Ephesus whom he knows, and he refers to him often, is John the Apostle. He ascribes to him without question the Fourth Gospel and the

¹ H. E., VII. 24, 25.

² "Perhaps no conjecture presented by an ancient writer has been so widely adopted in modern times. A conjecture it still remains, for no fresh light has been thrown on the enigmatic figure of John the Elder."—Swete, *Apocalypse*, p. clxxii.

First Epistle. "Nevertheless," he says,¹ "of all the disciples of the Lord, only Matthew and John have left us written memorials, and they, tradition says, were led to write under the pressure of necessity. . . . But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his Epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times." He has only, so far as we can gather, the passage of Papias, which he has preserved to us, to go upon, and so his Elder John is, in the words of the late Dr Salmon,² "a doubtful interpretation of an ambiguous word in an isolated extract from a lost book." Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (180-190), recalling the great lights of the early Church in Asia now departed, mentions one John, but not two. Irenæus knows the five books of 'Expositions' of Papias and quotes from them,³ but he never mentions such a personage as the Presbyter, and does not consider it necessary to put his readers upon their guard against confusing between him and the Apostle. Dionysius, as we have seen—though the fact of another John having lived in Ephesus would have suited his conjecture as to

¹ H. E., III. 24. 5.

² Human Element in the Gospels, p. 29, referring, however, to the Logia in Papias.

³ Adversus Hæreses, v. 33. 4.

the authorship of Revelation—knows of no such person.

The silence of Christian antiquity is remarkable, if there ever was such a person. It is dangerous, of course, to argue from silence, and a single unequivocal and explicit statement by a veracious witness must outweigh the silence of any number of authorities. The testimony of Papias, commented upon by Eusebius, cannot be called such a statement, and it can be naturally and reasonably interpreted without supposing that he mentions two different persons at all. The resuscitation of the conjecture of Eusebius in the interest of a criticism adverse to the Apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel has led to a variety of theories and speculations which can only be termed fantastic and extravagant. Of these we shall have to speak when we come to consider the separate testimonies to the Fourth Gospel. There are scholars, on the other hand, like the late Bishops Lightfoot and Westcott, Professor Charteris, Professor Sanday, Professor Stanton, Professor Swete, Principal Drummond,¹ and others who think a separate personality, the

¹ In his 'Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel' Dr Drummond devotes a whole chapter to the subject of "Papias and the Presbyter John," and makes out a very strong case for the view which he supports.

Elder John, sufficiently vouched for by the fragment of Papias, while they attribute both the Gospel and the Apocalypse to John the Apostle. The Elder is to them, however, a figure totally devoid of personal characteristics,—“without father, without mother, without descent,”—and his appearance on the stage of the Apostolic history, on their view, is without influence and without notice in any other ecclesiastical record. The view that John the Apostle and the Elder John are one and the same was elaborately worked out by the late Professor Milligan¹ forty years ago, and is maintained by Zahn, Funk, Leimbach, the late Dr Schaff, and the late Dr Salmon of Dublin, and others. It is the view which, I venture to think, has the greatest amount of evidence in its favour.

We come now to the testimony of Papias to St Mark's Gospel, which is of unique interest as giving us the judgment of the Apostle John. “Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, all that he remembered of the things said or done by Christ.” These are the words of the Elder, as I believe, the Apostle John; the remainder is comment by Papias, as appears from the interjected expression, “As I said.” And

¹ *Journal of Sacred Literature*, 1867.

both text and comment describe the circumstances under which St Mark's Gospel was composed. The scope thus assigned to the work of St Mark accords well with the Gospel which bears his name; for it combines in due proportions things said and things done by Christ, although in St Mark it is mighty works rather than long discourses which bulk most in the eye of the reader. Whatever may be said by critics like Schmiedel and Wellhausen¹ as to the transformation of the original tradition regarding Christ before it came even to St Mark, the view which Bishop Lightfoot so strenuously combated in his 'Essays on Supernatural Religion' has now ceased to be held, that the Second Gospel was recast between Papias and Irenæus, and that the Gospel which Papias knew was a different Mark altogether. Nor is there any doubt in the mind of Papias as to the identity of St Mark's book, of which he had heard his teacher speak, with that used in the Church of Asia Minor at the time when he wrote. It seems as if complaint had been made in the time of Papias of the manner of St Mark's presentation of the Lord's words and works. Apparently exception was taken to its want of completeness and to its deviation from strict chronological order. The dependence of

¹ *Einleitung*, p. 53.

the Gospel upon the Apostle Peter explains both. St Mark in large measure reproduced St Peter's discourses, which, as we learn from Papias and can well understand, had in view the practical requirements of the audiences whom he addressed, and must have varied from time to time. He added no inventions of his own to these discourses, but was scrupulously careful to omit nothing which he had heard and still remembered, and to adhere strictly to the facts. As regards the lack of order, it cannot be said that there is no observance of chronological order, for this Gospel, in its own way, is as orderly as the others. But order is to be estimated by the conception of the speaker; and when it is the Apostle John who speaks, we can understand him to mean that St Mark's Gospel diverged from the order of his oral instructions, which later became stereotyped in the Fourth Gospel. This is undoubtedly the case. And even St Luke, who incorporates in his Gospel about three-fourths of the Second Gospel, treats his source as if he recognised the peculiarities noted by the Elder.¹

Whether the word "interpreter" (*ἐρμηνευτής*), applied to St Mark in relation to St Peter, is used literally or figuratively—that is, in the sense of imparting the teaching of a master

¹ Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, p. 158 n.

—has been largely debated.¹ The latter seems to be most probable. St Mark wrote not as an Apostle, but as an apostolic man, and was dependent on the Apostle Peter for the main body of his materials. In thus giving to the world in his Gospel the teachings of St Peter, St Mark was his “interpreter.”

The Second Gospel is thus, by the testimony presented by Papias, traced up to the closing years of the first century. At that time, when Papias was gathering collections of tradition and anecdote, which he recorded in his ‘Expositions,’ a book written by a follower of St Peter, and narrating the things said or done by Christ, was circulating in Asia, and had attracted the attention of Christians there. It had even come under the notice of the Beloved Disciple at Ephesus, whose judgment regarding it has been handed down to us in the work of Papias.

When we go back beyond Papias to the APOSTOLIC FATHERS, proofs of the early circulation and use of the Second Gospel are still forthcoming. If they be somewhat slender and uncertain, they are nevertheless enough to show the continuity of the tradition. HERMAS, as we

¹ See Swete, *St Mark*, p. xx; Zahn, *Einleitung*, ii. 454-456 (Eng. trans.)

genuine Gospel of St Mark as it left the author's hands would follow the lines of the conclusion of St Matthew. We should expect it to tell how the eleven disciples went away into Galilee and saw the Lord on a mountain there, when He would give them His last commands. Now this is the line which is followed in the Gospel of Peter, and there are coincidences which appear to support the suggestion of Professor Burkitt. The whole subject, however, alike in its textual aspects and in its historical, is so complicated that this suggestion cannot be taken for more than a surmise.

It was after the departure (*τὴν ἔξοδον*) of St Peter and St Paul, says Irenæus, that St Mark committed to writing what had been communicated concerning Jesus in the preaching of the foremost of the Apostles. That his Gospel was first given to the Church of Rome is the testimony of antiquity, and is borne out by the references, slight as they are, in the Shepherd and the Epistle of Clement. Its connection with St Peter is to be gathered from the Gospel itself. "From the Gospel itself," says Jülicher, "we derive but one impression concerning its author: that he was a born Jew, familiar with the circle of the original Apostles, and specially interested in Peter, but also a much-travelled personage, rejoicing in the fact that the Gospel was to be preached

unto all nations.”¹ The public ministry of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel begins with the calling of St Peter. Other events of the early ministry have St Peter for their centre. The house and the boat of which Jesus availed Himself were Simon’s. Both in the account of the scene at Cæsarea-Philippi, and in the narrative of the denial, in which St Peter figures so largely, we can see that he is St Mark’s source. There was one incident which lived in St Peter’s memory to the end of his days, and was cherished with peculiar fondness, the Transfiguration, upon which he dwells in his Second Epistle with special emphasis and tenderness. St Mark records it with touches which are peculiar to him, and when we consider the fulness of detail with which he has recorded that event we can easily trace it to the foremost Apostle. The vividness, circumstantiality, and realism which pervade St Mark’s Gospel bear witness to the influence of St Peter, and fully bear out the tradition of his connection with its record.²

¹ Introduction to the New Testament, p. 321.

² “St Mark’s Gospel is most readily accounted for as the product of two factors: the narrative of a Galilean eyewitness, and the interpretation of that narrative in a Greek form for Roman readers. Tradition points to St Peter, the Galilean fisherman, as the source of the narrative, and to St Mark, his interpreter at Rome, as the writer of the book. Everything in the scope and style of the work is in harmony with this view of its origin.”—The Dean of Westminster, ‘The Study of the Gospels,’ p. 47.

St Mark, which is so meagrely attested by Patristic witnesses in comparison with St Matthew, has an authentication more weighty than these. It has been incidentally noticed that St Mark's narrative is largely reproduced, with slight alterations and with occasional divergences in the order and setting of his materials, in St Matthew and St Luke. These Evangelists thus became primary witnesses for St Mark as a reliable and trustworthy Gospel history. With St Luke, the companion and fellow-labourer of St Paul, on the one hand, and the Presbyter John, whom we take to be the Apostle of the Lord, on the other, as witnesses for his Gospel, St Mark is an Evangelist whose credit is unassailable.