

## CHAPTER XII.

## ST LUKE.—I.

ALTHOUGH the attestation of the Third Gospel in the Early Fathers is not so widespread as that of the First, nor so early as that of the Second, there never was a question raised in early Christian antiquity as to its genuineness and credibility. From Irenæus, who is the first explicitly to name St Luke as the author, and the Muratorian Canon, in which the Gospel is given the third place, St Luke has been acknowledged as the writer. Eusebius, who had command of all the references to the New Testament books in the Christian literature before his day, and who includes the Third Gospel among his "acknowledged" books, says of its author:<sup>1</sup> "Luke, who was of Antiochian parentage and a physician by profession, and who was specially intimate with St Paul, and in no ordinary way associated with the rest of the Apostles, has left us in two in-

<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 4. 7.

spired books proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of the books is the Gospel which he testifies that he wrote, as those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles, which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself. And they say that Paul meant to refer to Luke's Gospel whenever, as if speaking of some Gospel of his own, he used the words, 'according to my Gospel.'" In another passage, where he deals with the order of the Gospels, Eusebius<sup>1</sup> has a notable reference to St Luke's preface: "Luke, in the beginning of his Gospel, states himself the reasons which led him to write his narrative. He states that since many others had more rashly undertaken to compose a narrative of the events of which he had acquired perfect knowledge, he himself feeling the necessity of freeing us from their uncertain opinions, delivered in his own Gospel an accurate account of those events in regard to which he had learned the full truth, being aided by his intimacy and his stay with Paul, and by his association with the rest of the Apostles." Eusebius here reads into St Luke's opening

<sup>1</sup> H. E., III. 24. 15.

words strictures upon the motives and methods of his predecessors in the Gospel collections which they put together,—strictures neither expressed nor implied by the Evangelist. The view that St Luke was “aided by his intimacy and his stay with St Paul and by his association with the rest of the Apostles,” is a stroke of the higher criticism on the part of Eusebius, and, though perfectly correct, is not warranted by anything which the Evangelist says in the preface to his Gospel.

We have already seen the views of Irenæus on the subject of a collection of Gospels. His references to the Four Gospels are copious, explicit, and unhesitating, as if there was no doubt as to their authorship and never had been. In his argument against Marcion he contends that it was the same God who made heaven and earth, and whom the prophets declared, that was set forth in the Gospel, and he adduces proofs of his contention from our Four Gospels, attributing them to the authors whom we recognise. From St Luke, whom he<sup>1</sup> designates “the follower and disciple of Apostles” (*sectator et discipulus apostolorum*), and notably of St Paul (*Λουκᾶς ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου*), he quotes largely, referring to the annunciation and birth of the Forerunner, the annunciation to Mary, the appearance of the

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 10, iii. 1.

angel to the shepherds, the multitude of the heavenly host, the presentation in the Temple, and other incidents peculiar to St Luke's Gospel. For the refutation of the opinion that St Paul was the only Apostle who had knowledge of the truth, he appeals to the intimacy of St Luke, who was his constant companion and fellow-traveller, showing that if St Paul had known mysteries unrevealed to the other Apostles, St Luke could not have been ignorant of them. "That this Luke was inseparable from Paul," he says,<sup>1</sup> "and his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, he himself clearly evinces, not as a matter of boasting, but as bound to do so by the truth itself. For he says that when Barnabas and John, who was called Mark, had parted company from Paul and sailed to Cyprus, 'we came to Troas,' and when Paul beheld in a dream a man of Macedonia saying, 'Come over into Macedonia, Paul, and help us,' 'immediately,' he says, 'we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, understanding that the Lord had called us to preach the Gospel unto them.' . . . But surely if Luke, who always preached in company with Paul, and is called by him 'his beloved,' and with him performed the work of an evangelist, and was entrusted to hand down to us a Gospel, learned nothing different from him, as has been pointed out from his words,

<sup>1</sup> iii. 14. 1, 2.

how can these men, who were never attached to Paul, boast that they have learned hidden and unspeakable mysteries?"

Irenæus proceeds to show that St Paul and the Apostles kept back nothing of all they had learned from the Lord. "Thus also does Luke," he continues, "without respect of persons, deliver to us what he had learned from them, as he has himself testified, saying, 'Even as they delivered them unto us who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word from the beginning.' Now if any man will set Luke aside, as one who did not know the truth, he will by so acting manifestly reject the Gospel of which he claims to be a disciple. For through him we have become acquainted with very many and important parts of the Gospel; for instance, the generation of John, the history of Zacharias, the coming of the angel to Mary, the exclamation of Elisabeth, the descent of the angels to the shepherds, the words spoken by them, the testimony of Simeon and Anna with regard to Christ, and that at twelve years of age He was left behind at Jerusalem; also the baptism of John, the number of the Lord's years when He was baptized, and that this occurred in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar. And in His office of teacher this is what He has said to the rich: 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received

your consolation,' and 'Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger, and ye who laugh now, for ye shall weep,' and 'Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did your fathers to the false prophets.'" And so Irenæus goes through a tolerably complete summary of the contents of the Third Gospel. "There are also," he says, "many other particulars to be found mentioned by Luke alone, which are made use of both by Marcion and Valentinus. And besides all these he records what Christ said to His disciples in the way after the resurrection, and how they recognised Him in the breaking of bread." The uncritical character of the early Fathers is a favourite topic with certain writers, but here Irenæus shows himself a critic of no mean order. He has no hesitation or doubt as to St Luke being the author both of the Third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, and he has in his mind's eye the very elements which go to determine the questions raised by modern criticism—the unity of authorship, the We-sections, and the Pauline cast of the two writings.

We pass on now to the testimony of Marcion himself to the Gospel according to St Luke. It is unfortunate that no work of Marcion or any of his followers survives, but we can collect his views from Hippolytus, Irenæus, Tertullian, Epiphanius, and others who set themselves to refute his

arguments. It was in a series of propositions called 'Antitheses' that Marcion set forth the superiority of the New Testament to the Old, the God of the Christians to the God of the Jews, the Gospel to the Law, and the Apostles to the ancient Prophets. We have seen in the quotation made above how Irenæus exposes the inconsistency of those who accept the Gospels as genuine and yet refuse to acknowledge the doctrines they set forth. Marcion is not guilty of this inconsistency to the same extent as others, for he accepts this one Gospel only. Marcion of Pontus came to Rome about 135 A.D., and established himself there as one of the most dangerous heretics. It gives us some conception of the detestation in which he was held that Polycarp, when Marcion once met him in Rome and said, "Recognisest thou us?" replied to the heretic, "I recognise the first-born of Satan."<sup>1</sup> He founded a church of his own, as we have already seen, and the Marcionites subsisted as a sect down into the fifth century quite separate from the Catholic Church. He was, we may say, the father of all those who in our day regard the historical element in the Gospels as of no account and their ethical and spiritual teaching as everything. He held that the God of the Old Testament was quite different from the God of

<sup>1</sup> H. E., IV. 14. 7.

the New Testament, revealed to us by Jesus, and he could not believe that the Gospel came from the God of the Old Testament at all. He denied accordingly that Christianity had any root in the Old Testament, but regarded it as something absolutely new upon the earth,—with the result of making Christ and Christianity incomprehensible and unreal. Having cut Christianity away entirely from its Old Testament connection, and having rejected the Old Testament itself so decisively, he required some basis on which to rear the doctrinal fabric connected with his name. From the Judaism which he hated he took the conception of a canon of Scripture, and over against the body of Scripture accepted by the Jews he set up a new body of Scripture, comprising a mutilated Gospel of St Luke and ten Epistles of St Paul, with excisions to suit his scheme of doctrine. “Wherefore also,” says Irenæus,<sup>1</sup> “Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the Epistles of Paul, they assert that these are alone authentic, which they have themselves thus shortened.” The procedure of the heretic is described elsewhere:<sup>2</sup> “He mutilates the Gospel

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, iii. 14, 12; cf. iii. 11. 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Adversus Hæreses*, i. 27. 2.

which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most clearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. . . . In like manner, too, he dismembered the Epistles of St Paul, removing all that is said by the Apostle regarding that God Who made the world, to the effect that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and also those passages from the prophetic writings which the Apostle quotes in order to teach us that they announced beforehand the coming of the Lord."

It is Tertullian who gives the most complete account of Marcion's treatment of St Luke's Gospel. In his treatise against Marcion, especially in the Fourth Book, he proceeds to expose the system of the Pontic heretic on the basis of his acceptance of this Gospel alone. He goes through the Gospel chapter by chapter, letting us see what Marcion rejected and what he received, and how he manipulated it to serve his own ends. "We lay it down as our first position," says Tertullian,<sup>1</sup> "that the evangelical testament has Apostles for its authors, to whom was assigned by the Lord Himself the office of publishing the Gospel. Since, however, there are

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 2.

apostolic men also associated in the authorship, they are not alone, but with Apostles and after Apostles, because the preaching of disciples might be open to the suspicion of an affectation of glory if there did not accompany it the authority of the masters, which means that of Christ; for it was that which made the Apostles their masters. . . . Never mind if there does occur some variation in the order of the narratives, provided that there be agreement in the essential matter of the faith, in which there is disagreement with Marcion. Marcion, on the other hand, you must know, ascribes no author to his Gospel, as if it could not be allowed him to affix a title to that from which it was no crime, in his eyes, to subvert the very body. . . . Now of the authors whom we possess, Marcion seems to have singled out Luke for his mutilating process. Luke, however, was not an Apostle, but only an apostolic man; not a master but a disciple—at least as far behind him as the Apostle whom he followed—and that, no doubt, was St Paul—was behind the others; so that had Marcion even published his Gospel in the name of St Paul himself, the single authority of the document, destitute of all support from preceding authorities, would not be a sufficient basis for our faith.” Tertullian then proceeds with what is at once a commentary on St Luke’s Gospel and a vigorous refutation of

Marcion from the heretic's own presuppositions. Marcion's Gospel<sup>1</sup> begins with the words, "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar God came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath Day" (Luke iii. 1, with iv. 31 taken in). Marcion follows this up with the case of the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue (iv. 32-39) and the healing of all who were brought to Jesus afflicted with various diseases at sunset of the same day (iv. 40-44), mutilating the narrative, however, so that it cannot be shown how far he had the Evangelist's words before him. It is noticeable that the first two chapters of St Luke are omitted entirely. It would have been altogether contrary to Marcion's system to admit that Christ came in the flesh and that He had anything to do with the fathers of the Old Testament dispensation. So he could take no notice of John the Baptist's ministry, and the Temptation of Christ lay equally outside the scope of his principles. He omits the parable of the Prodigal Son, because it represents the Supreme God as the Father of both Jews and Gentiles; he alters a well-known saying of Jesus (xvi. 17), "It is easier

<sup>1</sup> See the references very fully given, with explanatory notes woven in, 'Canonicity,' pp. 400-408; and for an elaborate restoration of Marcion's Bible—both Gospel and Epistles—see Zahn, GK. ii. 455-529. See also Roensch, *Das neue Testament Tertullian's*,

for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail" to "It is easier . . . for one tittle of my words to fail," where he refuses to acknowledge any reference to the Law. In his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, Tertullian<sup>1</sup> quotes the golden rule as it is given in St Luke: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke vi. 31). And it is just possible that it is with his eye upon Marcion that he adds the negative form of it, saying, "In this command is no doubt implied its counterpart: And as ye would *not* that men should do to you, so should ye also *not* do to them likewise." In another passage (xviii. 19) he makes an addition to the text of the Gospel to serve his purpose: "Call me not good; one is good, God the Father,"—where "the Father" is added to distinguish the Supreme God from the demiurge, who, though God, was not Father. The testimony of Tertullian is to the same effect as that of Irenæus, and we might pursue the inquiry with the same result through Hippolytus and Epiphanius, the conclusion being that those learned Fathers all held the Gospel adopted by Marcion to be none other, in spite of excisions and interpolations, than our Gospel according to St Luke.

This verdict of early Christian antiquity was

<sup>1</sup> *Adversus Marcionem*, iv. 16,

challenged by the rationalistic criticism of Germany, and it is interesting now to recall that Ritschl began his literary career with a work intended to prove that Marcion's Gospel was the work of a Pauline Christian of the last decades of the first century, which a less genuine Paulinist worked up, about 140-145 A.D., into a gospel of his own by interpolations especially from St Matthew, and which is now known as our Gospel according to St Luke. Ritschl was then a follower of Baur, and Baur gave the work his approval. By-and-by Hilgenfeld and Volkmar, from within the Tübingen camp, attacked the new hypothesis, and with such success that Baur withdrew his approval. Ritschl himself in a short time recanted and withdrew from the Tübingen camp. The view thus represented has not been left without champions in more recent times. But they have not been able to rehabilitate the theory in the estimation of the learned world. In his early 'Gospels in the Second Century' Professor Sanday has a brilliant and convincing chapter on Marcion's Gospel. He showed that out of fifty-three sections peculiar to St Luke, from the point where the thread of the narrative is taken up by Marcion, all but eight are to be found also in Marcion's Gospel. "Curious and intricate," says Dr Sanday,<sup>1</sup> "as

<sup>1</sup> Gospels in Second Century, p. 214.

is the mosaic work of the Third Gospel, all the intricacies of the pattern are reproduced in the Gospel of Marcion. Where St Luke makes an insertion in the ground-stock of the narrative, Marcion makes an insertion also; where St Luke omits part of the narrative, Marcion does the same." In fact, he seems to have treated it exactly as he is known to have treated the Epistles of St Paul, cutting out portions and omitting whole passages where the teaching of the only Apostle he acknowledged ran counter to his own.

The case for the traditional view has been made still stronger by the elaborate studies which Professor Zahn has made on the text of Marcion. There are many charges of falsification and corruption of the text imputed to Marcion by Tertullian and others of which he has to be acquitted. Tertullian is unnecessarily severe, for example, when he imputes a corrupt motive to Marcion and his followers in calling the canonical Epistle to the Ephesians the Epistle to the Laodiceans. Marcion had good reason so to call it. In the Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 16), St Paul speaks of an Epistle to Laodicea, which is now generally believed to be the circular letter called "To the Ephesians." The words destining it to Ephesus (*ἐν Ἐφέσῳ*, Eph. i. 1) were unknown to Marcion, as they

were to Origen, having been omitted in what is now believed to have been a circular letter. This illustration suggests that the falsifications and alterations which Tertullian and others impute to Marcion in his treatment of St Luke may be really nothing more than various readings. Professor Zahn has proved this. Where Tertullian and Marcion are entirely agreed as to the Greek text of any passage of the Gospel under reference, and have it, so far as we can gather, word for word the same, we may be tolerably certain of the precise reading of Marcion in quoting St Luke. It is well known that there are two types of text in the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, both (if we accept the theory of the late Professor Blass) from St Luke himself, the one representing the original draft and the other the fair copy of the author. The manuscripts copied from the one or the other respectively reproduce their characteristics, and the Western authorities—whether manuscripts like Codex Bezae, or versions like the Old Latin, or Fathers like Irenæus—exhibit these peculiar readings most prominently. Marcion's text, where we can be sure of it, belongs to this type. And although Tertullian's use of the same type of text should have saved him from falling into the mistake of accusing Marcion of falsification when he deviated from the Catholic text of his

day, he may have been misled by trusting to his memory, and so have cast the blame upon the heretic.

We have, therefore, not only the testimony of Marcion to St Luke's Gospel, but evidence derived from the number and character of the textual variations that it had been circulated and copied for a long time before. There is good reason to believe that he used a text of St Luke assimilated to that of St Matthew and St Mark, so that he not only knew these Gospels but lived at a time when the three had already circulated so long together that copyists had begun to be influenced in the transcription of one by the habitual knowledge of the others. There are also indications that he had acquaintance with our Fourth Gospel.

"Only in very insignificant measure," says Zahn,<sup>1</sup> "has Marcion, according to the witnesses available, used for his own the three Gospels directly or indirectly ascribed to Apostles, so that the judgment of his opponents that he gave to his Church a mutilated Luke appears on this side to be fully warranted. But he has nevertheless used these Gospels so far that the answer to the question obtained on another line, What Gospels has he found up to that time used in public worship? appears now to

<sup>1</sup> GK. i. 680.

be fully ascertained. They are the same of which we have already heard from Justin, that they were the staple of Christian edification in the ordinary services of the Catholic Church, and which Tatian, two decades later, worked up into his Diatessaron. Only there are to be found in Marcion none of those small apocryphal additions which Justin and Tatian have introduced into our Gospels. For some few harmless enlargements which he took over from an ecclesiastical text of the Gospels can scarcely be compared with additions drawn from a written or oral source circulating alongside of our Gospels."

On the question of the Canon of Scripture Marcion may have anticipated the Church as a whole. While the Church combined Old Testament books and New Testament books in a unity as equally sacred writings, and suitable for use in Divine worship, Marcion rejected the Old Testament as a source of revelation with which Christianity had nothing to do. While the Church did not yet possess a fixed and generally accepted canon of New Testament Scripture, but exhibited differences in different provinces, Marcion gave to his adherents a fixed canon. Whilst the Catholic collections embraced at least thirteen Pauline Epistles, and exhibited essentially the same text as we read, Marcion had only ten,

and these in a text considerably shorter. Instead of the Fourfold Gospel of Catholic Christianity, Marcion gave to his adherents a single Gospel, which appeared so like to none of the canonical Gospels as to that of St Luke. Even in Marcion's Gospel, as we have seen, there is no uncanonical matter, and no appearance of it in any of his writings, so that he is a witness not only to St Luke but also to the fact that no more than our Four were then accepted within the Roman Church, for which he is a witness.