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## The Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels.

BY THE REVEREND PROFESSOR W. F. HOWARD, M.A., D.D., HANDSWORTH COLLEGE, BIRMINGHAM.

AT the close of the year 1935 a new edition of Huck's invaluable *Synopsis of the First Three Gospels* appeared. This revision, undertaken by Professor Hans Lietzmann, brought the book for the first time into the full possession of English students who know no German, for Dr. F. L. Cross has translated all the German portion into English. One of the features that immediately struck those readers who are familiar with the earlier editions is a new section under the general heading, 'The Earliest Witnesses to the Synoptic Gospels.' Immediately after the well-known sentences of Papias, cited from Eusebius, comes a new section, 'The Oldest Anti-Marcionite Gospel Prologues.' There is no extant Prologue to Matthew, but we have a brief Marcan Prologue in Latin, a long Lucan Prologue in Greek, and a fairly short Johannine Prologue in Latin.

No new discovery is published by the printing of these Prologues. They have been known to scholars for many years. What is new is the prominence given to them as early witnesses to the Gospels, and in the title *Anti-Marcionite Prologues*.

Early in the new year *The Times* gave a report of a lecture delivered by Dr. Robert Eisler in London in which some rather extravagant views were expressed regarding the Fourth Gospel. This led to a most interesting correspondence in the course of which Dr. Eisler claimed that our knowledge of the authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been entirely altered by recent investigation of the Johannine Prologue. He himself offers a new interpretation of this passage by means of a repunctuation of the text. This was followed by a letter from Dr. F. L. Cross summarizing the results of recent studies and offering a new interpretation of the Johannine Prologue by means of an emended text.

Many who take an interest in Biblical studies are asking what is the meaning of this newly published evidence, and why it is that if the material has been known to the great scholars of the last century they failed to appreciate its significance. In this article we must limit ourselves to the shortest and simplest statement of the position.

I. (1) It has long been known that in many old Latin manuscripts there are 'Prologues,' or prefatory statements about the authorship or place of origin of various books in the New Testament, with a short summary of the writer's purpose and the occasion that has called them forth. The best

known examples relate to the Pauline Epistles. Thirty years ago it was established that these originated in Marcion's canon of 'the Apostle.' The most convenient form of which the general reader can study these Latin Marcionite Prologues to the Pauline Epistles is to be found in Professor Souter's *Text and Canon of the N.T.* (205 ff.), in Duckworth's 'Studies in Theology' series. Dr. Souter prints them in the order in which they would appear in a Marcionite copy of the Apostle, and shows that 'thus and thus only are they intelligible.' He also prints as an appendix the Catholic additions, and thus provides us with material for a most interesting study of the significance of the conflict with Marcion. Reference must also be made to the interesting account given by Harnack in *The Origin of the N.T.* (Appendix i.), in the 'Crown Theological Library.'

(2) Ten years before De Bruyne had established the Marcionite origin of the Prologues to the ten Pauline Epistles, Corsen had proved that the Prologues to the Latin Gospels found in many MSS were Monarchian in character, coming from one and the same pen, and had been intended originally for an edition of the Gospels. They bear clear traces of a modalistic-monarchian doctrine. Harnack argued that Rome was the most likely place during the pontificate of Zephyrinus (A.D. 198-217). They were afterwards worked over in an orthodox interest, and were of such high repute that they were incorporated in the Vulgate.

(3) Quite distinct from these were a few Gospel Prologues of a different sort. That to Matthew is not extant, but it was known that in a few scattered MSS Prologues to Mark, Luke, and John were to be found. In 1928 Dom Donatien de Bruyne added to his earlier settlement of the problem of the Marcionite Prologues to the Pauline Epistles a remarkable study of the Gospel Prologues. His essay in the July number of the *Revue Bénédictine* for that year opened a new chapter in the history of this subject, and as he gained the assent of Harnack—the greatest authority on the history of early Christian literature—his arguments may be taken as of convincing force (Harnack's essay, 'Die ältesten Evangelien-Prologe und die Bildung des NTs,' was reprinted from the *Sitzungsberichten der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 1928, xxiv). De Bruyne, by an exhaustive search through the libraries of Europe

showed that so far from being three erratic, disconnected Prologues of a late date, found in a mere handful of MSS, they are unitary, are early, and are represented in at least thirty-eight different MSS from the fifth to the tenth century. In addition to the Latin Prologues, that to Luke is also extant in a Greek form, which has been found in a tenth-century MS. at Athens and an eleventh-century MS. in the Bodleian. The Greek Prologue to Luke was first printed in 1749, and has been generally available since Zahn published it in his commentary on Luke in 1913. The Latin Prologue to John was published by Cardinal Thomasius in 1688 from a MS. in the Vatican. It was discussed by Lightfoot in *Essays on Supernatural Religion* (1889), 210 ff. Further light was thrown on the history of this curious Prologue by F. C. Burkitt in *Two Lectures on the Gospels* (1901), 90 ff. He called attention to the presence of a second Prologue to John in a Spanish MS. of the tenth century (Codex Toletanus). The first part of this forms the beginning of the article on St. John in Jerome's book, *De Viris Illustribus*, whilst the last part is the very Prologue to which our attention has now been directed. Needless to say, vol. i. of Wordsworth's and White's great edition of the Vulgate gives all the material that was available at the end of last century.

II. To appreciate the significance of De Bruyne's thesis we must now look at the texts themselves. We take the text from De Bruyne's edition, adding in brackets any modification which Harnack has made in taking over the text.

*The Marcan Prologue.*—Marcus adseruit, qui colobodactylus est nominatus, ideo quod ad ceteram corporis proceritatem digitos minores habuisset. Iste interpres fuit Petri. Post excessionem ipsius Petri descripsit idem hoc in partibus Italiae evangelium.

*The Lucan Prologue.*—Est quidem Lucas Antiochenus Syrus, arte medicus, discipulus apostolorum; postea vero Paulum secutus est usque ad confessionem eius, serviens domino (H. deo) sine crimine. Uxorem numquam habuit, filios numquam procreavit, octoginta quattuor annorum obiit in Boeotia, plenus spiritu sancto. Igitur cum iam descripta essent evangelia, per Mattheum quidem in Iudaea, per Marcum autem in Italia, sancto instigatus spiritu, in Achaiae partibus hoc descripsit evangelium, significans per principium ante suum alia esse descripta, sed et sibi maximam necessitatem incumbere Graecis fidelibus cum summa diligentia omnem dispositionem narratione sua exponere, propterea ne Iudaicis fabulis desiderio tenerentur, neve hereticis fabulis et stultis sollici-

tationibus seducti excederent a veritate. Itaque perquam necessariam statim in principio sumpsit ab Iohannis nativitate, quae est initium evangelii, praemissus domini nostri Iesu Christi, et fuit socius ad perfectionem populi, item inductionem baptismi atque passionis socius. Cuius profecto dispositionis exemplum meminit Malachiel propheta, unus de duodecim. Et tamen postremo scripsit idem Lucas Actus Apostolorum. Postmodum Iohannes apostolus scripsit Apocalypsin in insula Pathmos, deinde Evangelium in Asia.

(This is very clearly a translation of the Greek Prologue, which happily survives.)

Ἔστιν ὁ Λουκᾶς Ἀντιοχεὺς Σύρος, ἰατρὸς τῆ τέχνη, μαθητὴς ἀποστόλων γενόμενος καὶ ὕστερον Παύλῳ παρακολουθήσας μέχρι τοῦ μαρτυρίου αὐτοῦ, δουλεύσας τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπερισπάστως, ἀγύναιος, ἄτεκνος, ἐτῶν ὀγδοήκοντα τεσσάρων ἐκοιμήθη ἐν τῇ Βοιωτίᾳ, πλήρης πνεύματος ἁγίου, οὗτος προπαρχόντων ἤδη εὐαγγελίων, τοῦ μὲν κατὰ Ματθαίου ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀναγραφέντος· τοῦ δὲ κατὰ Μάρκον ἐν τῇ Ἰταλίᾳ, οὗτος πραλοτραπεὺς (H. προτραπεὺς) ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὴν Ἀχαίαν τὸ πᾶν τοῦτο συνεγράψατο εὐαγγέλιον, δηλῶν διὰ τοῦ προομίου τοῦτο αὐτὸ ὅτι πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἄλλα ἐστὶ γεγραμμένα καὶ ὅτι ἀνάγκαιον ἦν τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν πιστοῖς τὴν ἀκριβῆ τῆς οἰκονομίας ἐκθέσθαι διήγησιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ ταῖς Ἰουδαϊκαῖς μυθολογίαις περισπᾶσθαι αὐτοὺς, μήτε ταῖς αἰρετικαῖς καὶ κεναῖς φαντασίαις ἀπατωμένους ἀστοχῆσαι τῆς ἀληθείας. ὡς ἀναγκαιοτάτην οὖν οὖσαν εὐθὺς ἐν ἀρχῇ παρελήφαμεν τὴν τοῦ Ἰωάννου γέννησιν, ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, πρόδρομος τοῦ κυρίου γενόμενος καὶ κοινωνὸς ἔν τε τῷ καταρτισμῷ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου καὶ τῇ τοῦ βαπτίσματος διαγωγῇ καὶ τῇ τοῦ πνεύματος κοινωνίᾳ. ταύτης τῆς οἰκονομίας μέμνηται προφήτης ἐν τοῖς δώδεκα. καὶ δὴ μετέπειτα ἔγραψεν ὁ αὐτὸς Λουκᾶς Πράξεις Ἀποστόλων· ὕστερον δὲ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀπόστολος ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα ἔγραψεν τὴν Ἀποκάλυψιν ἐν τῇ νήσῳ Πάτμῳ καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ Εὐαγγέλιον.

*The Johannine Prologue.*—Evangelium Iohannis manifestum et datum est ecclesiis ab Iohanne adhuc in corpore constituto, sicut Papias nomine Hieropolitanus, discipulus Iohannis carus, in exotericis, id est in extremis quinque libris retulit. Descripsit vero evangelium, dictante Iohanne recte. Verum Marcion hereticus, cum ab eo fuisset inprobatus eo quod contraria sentiebat, abiectus est ab Iohanne. Is vero scripta vel epistulas ad eum pertulerat a fratribus qui in Ponto fuerunt.

Dom de Bruyne draws three general conclusions from these texts:

1. There is strong evidence that the Latin is a translation from the Greek.

(a) In the Marcan Prologue the word *colobodactylus*, unknown in Latin, is obviously a transliteration of the Greek *κολοβοδάκτυλος*.

(b) Can there be any doubt which is the original form of the Lucan Prologue? If something more than linguistic feeling is called for, we may find further evidence in a statement by Irenæus: *plurima et magis necessaria Evangelii per hunc cognovimus, sicut Iohannis nativitatem*. On other grounds, de Bruyne has shown how probable it is that Irenæus was acquainted with these Prologues. His *cognovimus* corresponds to *παρειλήφαμεν* rather than to *sumpsit*.

(c) Internal evidence points strongly to a Greek origin of the Johannine Prologue. As Lightfoot observed (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, 213), the phrase *adhuc in corpore constituto* is obviously a translation of *ἔτι ἐν τῷ σώματι καθεστῶτος*, and *exotericis* so baffled a scribe that he hazarded the futile explanation *id est in extremis*. Originally the text must have read *ἐξηγητικοῖς*, for the well-known statement in Eusebius (*H.E.* III. xxxix) tells us that 'of Papias five treatises are extant which have also the title of "Interpretation (*ἐξήγησις*) of the Oracles of the Lord.'" *Ἐξηγητικοῖς* would be transliterated *exegeticis*, and Lightfoot may be right in his assumption that a scribal error is responsible for the change into *exotericis*.

2. The Monarchian Prologues are an expansion of these shorter Prologues, and are based, as we can see clearly in the case of the Lucan Prologue, upon the Latin rendering rather than upon the Greek original. We have no space to enter upon this here, but the reader can test the matter by comparing the texts given above with the longer Prologue printed with an English translation in Jackson and Lake's *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii. 242 ff. The argument will be found in Zahn's *Kommentar*; Lucas, 739 ff.; and still more fully in Dom Chapman's *Early History of the Vulgate Gospels*.

3. The three Prologues form a unity.

(a) They are found together in both the main branches of the manuscript tradition so carefully set forth by de Bruyne.

(b) The Marcan and Lucan Prologues use the same phraseology. Compare '*descripsit idem hoc in partibus Italiae evangelium*' and '*in Achaia partibus hoc descripsit evangelium*.'

(c) The Priscillianist redactor of the Monarchian Prologues in the fourth century made the

same use of the Marcan and of the Lucan Prologues.

(d) The same anti-Marcionite tendency appears in the Lucan and the Johannine Prologues. In Luke the beginning of the Gospel is found in the baptism by John in fulfilment of O.T. prophecy. In John the condemnation of Marcion is expressly stated.

III. The reason why a new importance has lately been found in these Prologues is that de Bruyne convinced the great Harnack that their date lies between the years A.D. 160 and 180. De Bruyne emphasizes the following points:

(a) It was only in Rome that Mark was known by the nickname *colobodactylus*, and these Prologues were written when Greek was still the language of the Roman Church. (b) The Johannine Prologue considers heresy from the standpoint of Rome, not of Asia Minor, for it says nothing about Cerinthus or Ebionism, but makes an unexpected reference to Marcion, and probably to events which took place in Rome rather than in Asia. (c) They were written when the Marcionite crisis was over, but was still fresh in the memory. (d) Papias is used, but neither Tertullian nor Eusebius. There seems to be a literary connexion with Irenæus, but Irenæus seems to be the borrower. The Prologue is independent in its mention of Mark's nickname, the place where Mark and Luke wrote, and the celibacy of Luke. (e) There is good reason to place the Latin translation of these Prologues in Africa at the end of the third century.

Harnack offers some additional observations.

(a) It is very significant that the Lucan Prologue expressly emphasizes the Lucan authorship of Acts and the Johannine and apostolic authorship of Revelation. For we know from both Tertullian and Hippolytus that Marcion coupled Acts and Revelation in his condemnation as both false.

(b) The reference to the author of Revelation as *Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀπόστολος ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα*, whilst Luke and Paul are introduced without any indication of their rank, seems to imply distinction from another John enjoying apostolic rank in a wider sense. Harnack's inference would seem to be that here we are closer to the Papias tradition of two Johns and farther from Irenæus.

(c) The statement in the Prologue of Luke's relationship to Paul can be paralleled very closely from the Latin writings of Irenæus (see Cadbury's citations, *Beginnings of Christianity*, ii. 212 ff.). But Irenæus makes the relationship of Luke to the Apostles and to Paul much closer, and even describes his Gospel as that which was preached by Paul. The Prologue shows no sign of this. Where

close similarity of phraseology points to borrowing, it is therefore more likely that Irenæus is the borrower.

IV. For most readers the centre of interest lies in the Johannine Prologue. If de Bruyne and Harnack are correct in their dating of this, we have a statement from the third quarter of the second century telling us (a) that Papias in his lost *Expositions* asserted that the Fourth Gospel was written in the lifetime of John, and taken down at his dictation by Papias; (b) that Marcion the heretic, after being censured by Papias for holding contrary opinions, was cast off by John; (c) that Marcion had brought to John commendatory letters from the brethren in Pontus.

It is hardly to be wondered at that, at a time when the Prologue rested upon only one ninth-century MS., Lightfoot dismissed as untrustworthy 'a passage which contains such obvious anachronisms and other inaccuracies.' But how could any one who had Papias's *Exposition* before him attribute such a statement to him as that he had taken down this Gospel at the dictation of John? Lightfoot's suggestion is just as valuable now that we have good reason to date the Prologue as pre-Irenæan. 'Papias may have quoted the Gospel "delivered by John to the Churches, which they wrote down from his lips" (ὁ ἀπέγραφον ἀπὸ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ); and some later writer, mistaking the ambiguous ἀπέγραφον, interpreted it, "I wrote down," thus making Papias himself the amanuensis' (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, 214).

B. W. Bacon (*Journal of Theological Studies*, xxiii. [1921-22] 134-160) writing in 1922 when Harnack's massive work on Marcion had appeared, but before Harnack had been converted by de Bruyne to the early date of the Prologue, took another line of treatment. He regarded the statement about the Johannine authorship of the Gospel as a misunderstanding of Papias's assertion that Revelation was apostolic. For Bacon believed that the authorship of the Gospel was not a burning question in the time of Papias, whereas his millenarian views were sharply contested and could best be defended by claiming Johannine authorship for the Apocalypse. The reference to the condemnation of Marcion's heresy Bacon explained in a most ingenious way. We know from Tertullian that Marcion for a long time after his arrival at Rome was zealous in his devotion to the orthodox faith, which seems to rule out a previous condemnation in Asia. But there are certain passages in Tertullian's own writings in which Bacon found the source of the strange statement in our Prologue.

(a) 'If thou hadst not rejected the Scriptures which were contrary to thine own opinions, the Gospel of John would have confounded thee' (*De Carne Christi*, iii, where Tertullian is reproaching Marcion for resorting to inferior sources while rejecting apostolic authority). (b) 'He has erased everything that was contrary to his own opinion, while everything that agreed with his own opinion he has retained' (*Adv. Marc.* iv. vi, with reference to Marcion's arbitrary excisions from the Gospel). Just before these words Tertullian had referred to the letter which Marcion had delivered to the Church authorities at Rome after his arrival from Pontus. In more than one passage Tertullian says that Marcion is the heretic designated Antichrist by John in his Epistle (1 Jn 4<sup>2-3</sup>). Thus the prophetic condemnation of Marcion by John which Tertullian finds in the Epistle has become in the Prologue an actual rejection of Marcion in Asia. Ingenious as this argument is, it deserves, in my opinion, more careful treatment than either de Bruyne or Harnack has given to it. Is their argument that the Prologue is pre-Irenæan quite water-tight? In all fresh discussions of the problem Bacon's thesis must be fully considered.

Two recent attempts to throw light upon the date and authorship of the Fourth Gospel by means of this Prologue must be mentioned, as the letters by these two scholars in *The Times*, already referred to, have done much to bring the anti-Marcionite Prologues into the public interest.

(a) Dr. Robert Eisler has argued in his book, *Das Rätsel des Johannesevangeliums* (Zürich, 1936—Sonderdruck Eranos-Jahrbuch 1935), 325-65, that the original text read: *Evangelium Iohannis manifestum est ab Iohanne adhuc in corpore constituto sicut Papias nomine Hieropolitanus in exegeticis quinque libris retulit, descripsit vero evangelium, dictante Iohanne recte verum, Marcion haereticus. Cum ab eo fuisset improbatus, eo quod contraria sentiebat, abiectus est ab Iohanne. Is vero scripta vel epistulas ad eum pertulerat a fratribus qui in Ponto fuerunt. By this punctuation of a reconstructed text Dr. Eisler arrives at the astonishing result that Marcion was the scribe to whom the author dictated the Gospel. As we are not here concerned with Dr. Eisler's theories about the authorship and Gnostic character of the Fourth Gospel, we add no comment.*

(b) Dr. F. L. Cross in a letter to *The Times* (February 10th, 1936) wrote: 'My own reading of the Prologue, if I may set it down dogmatically, is that in its original form it asserted that the Fourth Gospel was written by John the Elder at the dicta-

tion of John the Apostle when the latter had reached a very great age.' We must wait for his own statement and the reasons which seem to him to support such a reconstruction of the text. Presumably it involves a transference of the words *discipulus Iohannis carus* from where it stands to a position immediately following the words *descripsit vero*.

Finally, may I express my own view that no such drastic reconstruction of the text as either of these attempts is called for? That the statement about Papias is, as Lightfoot suspected, due to a misunderstanding of a casual remark in Papias's *Exposition* seems most probable. I also suspect

that the statement in Papias itself was based upon Jn 21. It seems extremely probable that the apparently irrelevant reference to Marcion supplies the key to the date of the Prologues. This comprehensive introduction to the fourfold Gospel arose at the time when the Roman Church was just recovering from the controversy with the arbitrary subjectivism of Marcion and his followers. At that time no introduction to the Canon could be silent about that heresiarch, as the Muratorian Canon bears witness. The problem, however, that seems to deserve most careful investigation at present is the relation between this Prologue and Tertullian. What is the connecting link?

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## The Sixth Commandment.

BY THE REVEREND CANON STUART D. MORRIS, M.A., VICAR OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S, BIRMINGHAM.

SEEN in their true proportions, the commandments are the laws of the good life—not so much negative restrictions hedging off ground which must not be trodden as sign-posts which, if they deny a right-of-way in one direction, imply it in another. It has been said that a man never makes up his mind what he is going to do until he has made up his mind what he is not going to do. The negative attitude is the necessary prelude to the positive. To see life in terms of the attitude which is forbidden leads to a consideration of the alternative attitude which is commanded. This is essentially true of the Ten Commandments, which are used and fulfilled by Christ precisely in this way. Moreover, these laws are not only not negative, they are also not isolated. They are positive in their content and connected in their sequence.

God is one. Man is to be one—at one with himself, at one with his fellow-men. Salvation is to be seen in terms of saneness, a balanced personality, possible only when man learns how to bring all his powers under one control and direct all his ways to one end. The unity of God assures him that this is possible. The worship of God shows him the way by which it is to be achieved. So, too, life is to be one. Unity is an essential characteristic of God, of man, and of all else that comes within the eternal act of His creation.

When, then, the laws of right relationship between man and God lead on to those of right relationship between him and his fellows, it is the first class within the school of life with which they are concerned. The smallest sphere is dealt with

first, and right relations have to be established with a man's first neighbours—his father and mother. It is within the home that man first learns that he is one of many, but that the many are one. Nevertheless, if charity is to begin at home it is only that it may flow out thence and cover the world. Indeed, once man is brought into right relationships with God, he finds himself involved in an ever-widening series of relationships. In word and deed he has to express the honour due to God's name. He must find his true dignity as a workman whose work honours both God and man, and in order that he himself may be honoured he must himself be honourable, 'true and just in all his dealings, hurting no one by word or deed, bearing no malice or hatred in his heart.' As the sphere of relationships widens, so he has to learn the principles which govern the larger life, and the first of these is thrown into the form 'Thou shalt not kill.'

Here, perhaps, in a recitation of the commandments a note of unreality creeps in. A man may well recognize the need of being on his guard against dishonouring God or breaking up his home, but the temptation to kill seems to him to be so remote as to make his prayer, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law' a mere formula. Yet once the full implications of this commandment are realized, no prayer has more significance to-day or is more necessary. For how does Christ expound this law? 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that