

**PARALIPOMENA;
REMAINS OF GOSPELS
AND SAYINGS OF CHRIST**

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Paralipomena; Remains of Gospels and Sayings of Christ by Bernhard Pick

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BERNHARD PICK

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PARALIPOMENA

REMAINS OF GOSPELS AND SAYINGS OF CHRIST

BY

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PREFACE

From the matter which is here presented, especially in the first part, we learn that numerous gospels circulated in the early Church. But we also know that toward the end of the second century, the same four gospels which we have still are found recognized in the Church, and are repeatedly quoted as the writings of the apostles, and disciples of the apostles, whose names they bear, by the three most ecclesiastical teachers— Irenæus, in Gaul, Clement in Alexandria, and Tertullian in Carthage. True, that gospels which were used by heretical parties, were sometimes appealed to also by orthodox teachers, but the four were, at that time, and from that time downward, considered as the peculiarly trustworthy foundation on which the Christian faith rested. The reasons assigned by Irenæus in his work against heresies, why there are exactly four gospels, neither more nor less, are these: "the gospel is the pillar of the Church; the church is spread over the whole world; the world has four quarters; therefore it is fitting there should also be four gospels. Again, the gospel is the divine breath, or wind of life for men; there are four chief winds, therefore four gospels." He builds another argument on the fourfold appear-

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ance of the cherubim. "The cherubim," he says, "are fourfold, and their faces are images of the activity of the Son of God. The first beast was like a lion, signifying his commanding and kingly dignity; the second like a calf, signifying his priestly office; the third like a man, denoting his incarnation; the fourth like an eagle, denoting the Holy Spirit, flying over the church. Like these are the gospels. John, who begins with the Godhead and descent from the Father, is the lion; Luke, who begins with the priesthood and sacrifice of Zacharias, is the calf; Matthew, who begins with his human genealogy, the man; Mark, the eagle, who commences with the announcement of the prophetic spirit—"The beginning of the gospel as it is written by Isaiah the prophet'" (III, 9-11).

But there can be no doubt that besides the canonical gospels others were also current, which contained an outline of the doctrine of Christianity. This can be inferred from Luke's prologue to his gospel (I, 1-4), and more especially from Origen's comment thereon. Says he: "The phrase 'have taken in hand' implies a tacit accusation of those who rushed hastily to write gospels without the grace of the Holy Spirit. Matthew and Mark and Luke and John did not 'take in hand' to write their gospels, but wrote them being full of the Holy Spirit. . . . The Church has four gospels, heresies very many, of which one is entitled 'according to the Egyptians,' another 'according to the twelve Apostles.' . . . Four gospels only

are approved, out of which we must bring forth points of teaching under the person of our Lord and Saviour. There is I know a gospel which is called 'according to Thomas,' and one 'according to Matthias'; and there are many others which we read, lest we should seem to be unacquainted with any point for the sake of those who think they possess some valuable knowledge if they are acquainted with them. But in all these we approve nothing else but that which the Church approves, that is four gospels only as proper to be received."

Now, some of the false gospels were probably only a true gospel altered to suit the views of a particular man or sect or party. We know that Marcion's gospel was an altered Luke, Basilides may perhaps have made Matthew his basis, and Apelles is said to have made similar use of John. Some of the gospels, themselves originally apocryphal, were certainly reissued with changes according to the ideas of successive editors. The numerous extant gospels of the Nativity are only recensions or editions of the Protevangel or "Gospel of James." There are several of those ancient gospels of which we know only the names, and it is supposed that many of them are the same book under different names. We know something of the Gospel of the Nazarenes and of the Gospel of the Ebionites, and we have reason to believe that those, as well as of the Gospels of Bartholomew, of Cerinthus, and of the Twelve Apostles were recensions of the gospel of the Hebrews.

Again it is probable that several of the so-called gospels were compilations from the canonical gospels. Tatian's Diatessaron was an avowed harmony, and it did not stand alone. The book which Serapion found in circulation in Rhossus, professing to be the Gospel of Peter, seems to have been a harmony of the gospel narratives, but with Docetic additions. Jerome, followed by the decree of Gelasius, condemns the codices of Hesychius and Lucian, which seem to have been some kind of harmony, with additions.

There can be no doubt that many facts about the Lord and sayings of Him which we meet with in patristic literature, were handed down by tradition, and if we had the lost five books of Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, which he is said to have written about the year 140 A. D., we should probably know more. But except the title and a few scraps in Irenæus and Eusebius, and in writers long after their time, we really know nothing about the books of this old chronicler. The title of his treatise was "An Exposition (or Expositions) of the Oracles of the Lord"; and it seems to have been a collection of our Lord's most important sayings and doings, with Papias's own commentary, and certain additions to corroborate the commentary—these additions being drawn from what Papias had collected as unwritten reminiscences. The importance of the book lies in the fact that Papias, like Polycarp, was a link between the apostolic age and that of Irenæus.

The first words of Papias (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* III, 39, 3ff.) are these: "I shall not scruple also to set down for you, along with my interpretations what things I well learned from the elders, and well recorded (or remembered), being well assured as of the truth concerning them. For I was not in the habit of taking delight, like the many, in those having much to say, but in those teaching the truth; nor in those recalling the precepts of strangers, but in those recalling the things given by the Lord to faith, and proceeding from the truth itself. And if anywhere there chanced also to come one who had been in company with the elders, I inquired into the words of the elders; what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip or what Thomas (said), or James; or what John or Matthew or some other one of the disciples of the Lord (said): which things Aristion and John the elder say. For I did not account myself so much indebted to the things which come from books as to those which come from the loving and abiding voice."

There can be no reasonable doubt that from a natural interpretation of his words we learn that at the time when Papias wrote Aristion and the presbyter John were living and adding to his stock of reminiscences. At a later period in his narrative Eusebius tells us that Papias had received a wonderful narrative from the daughters of Philip the apostle, that in their time a dead woman had been raised, namely, the mother of Manaimus

(Manaen, Acts XIII, 1), also that Justus Barsabas (Acts I, 23) drank a deadly thing, and it did not hurt him (see Mark XVI, 18).

Papias's work contained not only notices of the apostles about the Lord, but also much concerning the apostles. But when we compare the canonical with the extra-canonical gospels, it must be acknowledged that the Church of the second century acted in a very judicious manner in the selection of that which was appropriate for the divine service and for reading. The Church on the whole showed a good sense for the genuine and original. But when we meet in the extra-canonical gospels with traits which are homogeneous to the Christ-picture of the gospels, let us not disregard them, but rather look upon them, though cautiously, as an enrichment of the same.

The reader will now understand why we have prepared this collection. For in a certain sense we follow the injunction of Jesus: "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." (John VI, 12.) The fragments here presented are of sufficient interest, and their study no mere literary curiosity nor a barren study. For as the late Bishop Westcott said: "There are some fragments which appear to contain true and original traits of the Lord's teaching, and as such are invested with the greatest interest."

We turn now to that part of our work which contains the extra-canonical gospel sayings. There is no doubt that throughout the first century, and