

children, so that I would sacrifice my eternal salvation for them, He certainly did not make me capable of more love, more disinterestedness than He has Himself. He invented mothers' hearts, and He certainly has the pattern in His own, and my poor weak rush-light of love is enough to show me that some things can and some things cannot be done. Mr. Stowe said in his sermon last Sunday that the mysteries of God's ways with us must be swallowed up by the greater mystery of the love of Christ, even as Aaron's rod swallowed up the rod of the magicians.'

#### How much more.

List to the river hasting to the sea,  
Boundless beyond the wave-lapped shore,  
It murmurs ever, 'How much more?'

List to the lark that fadeth in the blue,  
And would the mists of earth outsoar,  
It singeth ever, 'How much more?'

List to the heart that love itself hath taught  
The holy secret of heaven's blissful love,  
It sayeth ever, 'How much more?'

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## The Origin and Character of our Gospels.

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### V.

SUCH is the account, as it appears to me, of the origin of our four Gospels. It is just as unquestionable that there were others besides them, as that these others, probably very short and defective, could not long maintain themselves, so that there is no hope of any possible recovery of them. Matthew and John had direct Apostolic authority, and along with them there was no other Gospel of an Apostle. For it was easy to see that the Gospel of Peter, of which important remains have lately been discovered, was spurious and of no value. It is compiled from our Gospel with the addition of some coarse fiction. Peter relates in the first person, singular and plural, and even calls himself, 'I, Simon Peter.'

Luke recommended himself by his completeness and his relation to Paul; Mark by his connexion with Peter. These two were as good as Gospels of Paul and Peter. Therefore the choice of these four and the limitation to them was not difficult, and was made naturally amongst the Christian communities, without council or Church court.

The Gospel of the Hebrews, the only one which, to our knowledge, could come into further consideration, was, in the first place, without the name of any author ('the Gospel according to the Hebrews'); in the second place, composed in Aramaic, and not translated for some time. It imputes the saying to Christ: 'My mother the Holy Spirit took me by one of my hairs and carried me to the great mountain of Tabor.' This Gospel, or a part of it, might very well be rediscovered with an ephemeral interest.

In the second century, the experiment was made to fuse into one the four Gospels, which have so much in common, after the Old Testament pattern of Genesis, etc. Perhaps Justin Martyr had already done this with the Greek original; but, at any rate, his pupil Tatian did it in a Syriac translation. But not even in Syria did this Gospel harmony hold its ground, but the 'separate Gospels' took its place. Had it turned out otherwise, we should have had a problem like that of Genesis, a very insoluble one, and one leading to false conclusions. Would not every

one ascribe Mt 11<sup>25ff.</sup> = Lk 10<sup>21ff.</sup> to the authorship of John?

The Englishman<sup>1</sup> J. P. Mahaffy has lately written very sensibly about the whole literary *character* of the Gospels in a book called *The Silver Age of the Greek World*.

'There was, indeed, another literary work going on, during this century, of the first magnitude, as the result has amply proved; but it was in a remote corner of Hellenism, unknown, moreover, to the most learned and curious of the Greeks, to Dion and to Plutarch. For there, where Hellenism had to struggle with the force and ability of Judaism, teaching and learning with the interest of hate and the relish of antagonism, there, among the common people, were springing up those books on the life of Jesus which touch the hearts of men with a directness and force very foreign to the flowery and rhetorical arguments of a Philo or a Josephus. The simplicity, the natural vigour, the unconscious picturesqueness of these narratives are so remarkable that, even had they never laid any claim to inspiration, sound judges must have condoned their faulty grammar and poor vocabulary, and acknowledged in them at least the voice of honest men speaking from the heart, and thus endowed with one of the highest literary qualities. Whether these writers were indeed "Israelites" or not, they were, as writers, "without guile," and the fact that they all chose Greek for their medium has been one great cause of the persistence of Greek studies to this day. . . . What was more obvious, what more certain, than that such pictures as the opening scenes of St. Luke's Gospel or the Sermon on the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Blass is here unconsciously furnishing an illustration to his argument about 'the Jews,' as Dr. Mahaffy, we believe, is an Irishman.—M. D. G.

Mount would be despised by the critics as the work of late-learning and self-taught people, who knew nothing of the art of expression or of the laws of composition? And yet the world has judged differently; the idyll of Bethlehem lives, while the idyll of Euboea lies buried in Dion; Herod the tyrant lives, while as the polished Hellenist he is forgotten; the metaphors on the mount, the parables by the way, have outlived the paradoxes of the Stoic, the rhetoric of the schools.'

This expresses powerfully what is true and weighty. The ignorance and neglect of the civilized world with regard to Judæa and Judaism was really surprising, and, behold, what was despised and contemptibly small has become world-renowned and gigantic, so that all that then seemed great, even Imperial Rome with its glory, has become small in comparison. There is not a village in Europe where Peter and John are unknown, and their names, the names of humble fishermen, are given to children as their best names. But why should I speak of Europe? All broad America must be added, and Australia, and much more. Even three centuries after the appearance of these books the contrast between former and present times was enormous. It is also remarkable what a mountain of literature has been heaped up over these small writings; first, their translation into 300 languages and dialects; then the expository and critical writings, the former from many centuries. It would be interesting, but not very easy, to estimate its extent here and there, and verify its proportion. There is nothing else like it in the whole world, and whoever does not know that, and has no eye for it, is decidedly wanting in education.

## The Pilgrim's Progress.

BY THE REV. JOHN KELMAN, M.A., D.D., EDINBURGH.

### Vanity Fair—The Persecution.

'THEY that were appointed to examine' the pilgrims began their examination by beating them and besmearing them with dirt. This auspicious beginning was an excellent prophecy of the end.

Evidently this examination would not largely contribute to the world's information upon any subject except the state of the examiners' minds. An ancient Board of Examiners began their investigation into a case of reported resurrection from the dead by a resolution 'to put Lazarus to death.'