

GOSPEL PARALLELS FROM PALI TEXTS.

Translated from the Originals by ALBERT J. EDMUNDS.

(Seventh Series.)

THE GOSPEL PREACHED IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

WITH OBSERVATIONS ON THE POST-RESURRECTION MISSIONARY CHARGE.

Matthew xxviii. 18. All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

1 Peter iii. 18, 19. Christ also suffered for sins once. . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

iv. 6. Unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead.

NUMERICAL COLLECTION IV. 33.

WHEN a Tathâgato arises in the world, an Arahât, a Buddha supreme, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe, a matchless charioteer of men who are tamed, a Master of angels and mortals, a Blessed Buddha, he preaches his religion, to wit, Personality (*Sakkâyo*), the origin of personality, and the cessation thereof, and the path that unto that cessation goes. And, monks, those angels of long life, self-radiant, happy beings, abiding in the lofty mansions long, when they hear the preaching of the Tathâgato's religion, are everywhere seized with fear, astonishment, and trembling, saying: "Impermanent, alas! are we, O friend, 'tis said; and we thought we were permanent; unstable, and we deemed we were stable; non-eternal, who thought ourselves eternal. 'Tis said, O friend, that we are impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, hedged about with personality!"

Such, O monks, is the spiritual power of the Tathâgato over the angel-world; such his great authority and mystic might.¹

[In the Middling Collection, Sutta 49, Gotamo transports himself to the heaven of Brahmâ, to convert an angel from the heresy that his blest abode was

¹It is this paragraph which led us to adduce the parallel in Matthew xxviii. 18.

everlasting. There is also a story, found in the Sanskrit Divyâvadâna and other uncanonical sources,¹ of Buddha going to the other world to preach the Gospel to his mother. It is alluded to in the Pâli of Jâtaka 29, and is told in full in No. 483, but only in the commentary, not in the text. I will thank any scholar to find it in the Canon.]

Dr. Carus has pointed out to me the significant fact that the preaching of the Gospel to the nations is a later addition to the New Testament. This is borne out by the archaic oracle in Matthew :

"Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come." (The Missionary Charge in Matth. 5, 6 and 23.)

It is Luke alone who invents the mission of the Seventy (i. e., to the seventy nations of the world, according to Jewish geography). As we pointed out in April, 1900, there is a parallel here with the sixty-one Arahats sent forth by Gotamo. That Luke invented the story of the Seventy is betrayed by himself, for, in xxii. 35, he agrees with the Petrine and Matthæan tradition, in ascribing certain words to the Charge to the Twelve from which he has wrested them to make up his ideal Charge to the Seventy :

"When I sent you forth without purse and wallet and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing."

Luke puts the words, "no purse, no wallet, no shoes," into the Charge to the Seventy (x. 4), while in the Charge to the Twelve he reads: "nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; neither have two coats." But there is no mention of shoes. (Luke ix. 3.)

In the Gospel tradition generally the great Missionary Charge is the one given after the resurrection :

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." (Matth. xxviii. 19.)

The Trinitarian formula betrays the lateness of the redaction, but the passage is older than the redaction, for the substance of it is found in the Fourth Gospel: "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John xx. 21.) I have little doubt that the Matthæan charge read originally: "baptising them into my name," simply; to which Rendel Harris assented when I once pointed this out to him.

¹ I do not call the Divyâvadâna uncanonical merely because it is not in the Pâli Canon, but because it is post-Asokan. However, it doubtless contains a nucleus which we may call semi-canonical, for the Avadânas were classed by several sects in the Miscellaneous Pitaka, outside the great Collections of Agamas.

As a Christian believer (though attached to no sect or Church whatever) I personally maintain that the post-resurrection missionary charge is no mere fiction introduced to imitate Buddhism (granting that even the catholic Luke knew thereof), but a reality. It is my conviction, after long research and thinking, that the Lord Jesus was vividly present, in some guise—whether palpable or visionary matters little—to his disciples after death, and especially to Peter. I believe too that he impressed their minds with his wishes, which had expanded since the days when he forbade ministrations to Samaritans and pagans. Unfortunately the account of the great appearance to Peter has been lost, if not suppressed by the Church. It probably contained the charge to Peter (misplaced in Matth. xvi.) and some matter relating to the descent into Hades mentioned in Peter's Epistle. But this leads us to the question of the lost ending of Mark, and is food for another article. I will only quote the proof-texts for an apparition to Peter:

Mark xvi. 7: "Go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him."

(Cf. also Mark xiv. 28, fortified by the parallel in Matthew, but weakened by its omission in the Vienna Gospel-fragment from Egypt.)

1 Cor. xv. 5. "He appeared to Cephas."

Luke xxiv. 34. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."

Eusebius, H. E. II. 1. Clement [of Alexandria] . . . in the seventh book of [his Institutions] writes also thus:

"The Lord transmitted the Gnosis unto James the Just, John and Peter after his resurrection."

Shahrastâni of Persia, A. D. 1150,

"After he was dead and crucified, he returned, and Simon Peter saw him and He spake with him, and transmitted to him the power. Then he left the world and ascended into heaven, and Simon Peter was his representative." (Haarbrücker, Vol. I., p. 261.)