

THE ROLE OF THE NOTE-TAKING HISTORIAN AND HIS EMPHASIS ON THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

W. HAROLD MARE, PH.D.*

As he speaks of the secretaries the prophets had, E. J. Goodspeed in his stimulating book, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, raises the interesting question as to whether Jesus also had one. Goodspeed further comments:

Jesus looked to his disciples—his apostles—to carry his memory and message past his murderers and into the future. Think of the Last Supper! That is the keynote. Paul strikes it in I Corinthians 11:24, "Do this in memory of me!"¹

It is this question we want to refine and also we want to ask the further question as to whether there are indications in the New Testament text that Jesus developed in the minds and hearts of his Apostolic band and their associates, aided by the *sitz im leben*—that whole surrounding Jewish and Hellenistic culture and environment—such a mentality for careful preservation of the words and works of Christ and the importance of his person, that they carefully mentally recorded and wrote down these important events and sayings. If this is true, this strengthens the proposition that what we have in the New Testament text is an accurate credible account of the words and works of Jesus and of the early church.

This kind of a proposition also fits in with the following view of the Apostolic Church and its handling of the New Testament material: 1) that the early church was interested in the historical Jesus as is evidenced by its desire to preach the redemptive history of *this Jesus*; 2) that with eyewitnesses and apostles present, the church would act with restraint in presenting the proper facts about this historical Jesus; 3) that an adequate psychological basis for the disciples being willing to risk their lives even to death is seen on the view that they counted the words and works of Christ as historically valid and pointing to the supernaturalness of the Savior; and 4) that the Christian Church was attempting to preserve, not invent, the core facts about Jesus is seen in the way the Gospels avoid the use of "Pauline terminology" and the way Paul

*Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

1. E. J. Goodspeed, *Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1959), p. 111.

distinguishes his teaching from that of Christ, compared with the unregulated tradition in the *Agrapha* and the apocalyptic literature.²

As we develop our thesis, we presuppose the following: that the New Testament text of scripture is true and accurate history; and that the Holy Spirit was vitally active in inspiring and guiding the writers of the New Testament in their writing of this inerrant history.

But to return again to our original question: Did Jesus have a secretary? He had a treasurer (*e.g.*, to keep the money for the poor, John 12:6; 13:29). Rather, did he really have in fact several secretaries who, while carefully recording mentally what happened, also wrote down the important facts concerning the life and words of Christ. Did not their synagogue worship and training subconsciously help this Jewish apostolic band to be particularly attentive to every action of Christ and every word he spoke to make certain they could transmit³ the very nature of Jesus' teaching, with its poetic style, parallelisms, vivid agricultural illustrations, and frequent repetitions?⁴ Did not this style of teaching subconsciously lend itself to ease of memorization and bring stimulation to write down this important material at the time it was being given?

Gerhardsson has argued effectively that pedagogics in antiquity were remarkably conservative by nature when he says:

Reverence—often determined by religious considerations—for the religious and cultural heritage from the fathers, and for the fathers and teachers personally, left little room for pedagogical revolution. As far as Pharisaism and Rabbinism are concerned, we must also remember that it was part of their conscious program to preserve the words and customs of the fathers inviolate. Reformers have little scope in a group of this kind. It is possible, with boldness and skill to alter—for better or for worse—but this can only take place on the basis of what is already there; ostensibly at least it must conform to tradition.⁵

We maintain that the New Testament demonstrates this same attitude on the part of the disciples to the person, work and words of Christ. Therefore, the early church, in regarding Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ, the only teacher, "had special cause to note, gather and keep what he said and did—he and no other."⁶

Gerhardsson goes on to argue that memory of the sacred and revered in these ancient times was stressed and its effectiveness sharpened. He

2. Compare Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 189-192.
3. Compare Paul's injunction to Timothy (II Tim. 2:2) to pass on to faithful men what he had heard from Paul that they in turn might teach still others.
4. Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1961), pp. 178, 9.
5. Birger Gerhardsson, *Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* (Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1964), pp. 14, 15.
6. Gerhardsson, *Tradition* . . . , p. 44.

says that "the Rabbis⁷ waged a conscious and energetic war against forgetfulness. The traditional literature contains many words of warning and many sayings which stress the importance of keeping alive one's knowledge of the sacred Torah written as well as oral. We shall quote only one such saying, the words of R. Meir in Ab. III.9:

'Every man who forgets a single word of his mishnah (*i.e.*, what he has learned), Scripture accounts it unto him as if he had forfeited his soul."⁸

In addition to the conservative and the rabbinic emphasis on careful memorization, there should be mentioned the influence of the early schools in Hellenistic times and the early centuries of the Christian era. Stendahl has argued for the existence of a Matthaean school⁹ and calls attention to the Hellenistic and Jewish setting for the Gospel story.¹⁰

It is to be rightly concluded that such Hellenistic and Jewish influence would be spread through the various schools in ancient times. I Macc 1:13 and 2 Macc. 4:9-12 testify to the fact that there were Hellenistic schools in Palestine, centuries before Christ. In this connection Gerhardsson comments that "every Jew who could read Greek must have had contact, direct or indirect, with the simple pedagogics of the Hellenistic elementary school teacher-pedagogics based on memorization."¹¹ He says further that at the beginning of the Christian era, there were two types of Torah schools in Judaism, one in elementary instruction in the written Torah, and the other in a more advanced study of the oral and written Torah.¹² All of this may have developed through the intense desire of Jewish priests and Levites to be faithful to Deuteronomy 6:7ff., and so they taught their own sons and then began to teach the sons of others. The process would then result in the establishment of small schools.¹³ At another place, Gerhardsson comments that although early Christianity did not have any academy similar to the Rabbinic kind following A.D. 132-135, "there is evidence which seems to show that at least some branches of the early church had leading *collegia*, similar to those in contemporary Pharisaism, the Qumran sect, and probably other groups as well."¹⁴

Besides the influence of the ancient school in its more formal organization, there were other elements in the ancient *sitz im leben* which undoubtedly contributed to the desire on the part of the apostolic band to preserve the words and works of the one they counted as their only

7. That the Rabbi-teacher position goes back into the first century. See the article by W. Harold Mare, "Prophet and Teacher in the New Testament Period," *Bulletin of the ETS*, IX, No. 3 (Summer, 1966), 139-145.

8. Gerhardsson, *Memory . . .*, p. 168.

9. Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), pp. 11-35.

10. *Op. cit.*, p. xiii.

11. Gerhardsson, *Tradition . . .*, pp. 15, 16.

12. Gerhardsson, *Memory . . .*, pp. 57, 58.

13. Gerhardsson, *Memory . . .*, p. 57.

14. Gerhardsson, *Tradition . . .*, pp. 35, 36.

teacher. The trilingual character of first century Palestine¹⁵ made it possible for men, with greater variety and facility of speech, to communicate their thoughts more fluently and carefully and commit them to writing. The personal closeness in the Rabbi-discipline relationship,¹⁶ an institution which had grown up by the first century A.D. and which is exemplified in the Gospels in the ministry of Jesus and his disciples (Mark 9:5; John 4:31, etc.), developed an intimacy between Christ and these disciples that would lend itself to a desire for the preservation of the very words and works of their revered teacher. Furthermore, the instructions from the Old Testament to teach and preserve carefully the law and the prophets would have caused these Scripture-minded Jews to preserve carefully both the Old Testament quotations and the deeds and words of Jesus as they used the latter to illustrate the fulfillment of the former.

The tools for careful recording were at hand for these Messiah-conscious Jews of the apostolic company. In the New Testament itself, there is reference to paper and ink (2 John 12) and to the roll used for writing (Rev. 5:1-9; 6:14; 10:2-10). For writing briefer reports and for notes, there was the tablet, the *pinakidion*, like the one Zachariah used to write down the name to be given to his son (Luke 1:63). This term was used to indicate a little wooden tablet, especially a writing tablet. Evidently it was in common use in the first century A.D., for when Zachariah requested such a tablet, it was readily available (Luke 1:63). This art of note taking was well known in ancient times. Gerhardsson reminds us that from Hellenism we know "how the pupils of a philosopher or a rhetor occasionally published written works, consisting of *hypomnemata*: materials which they had memorized or had copied into their notebooks from their teacher's lessons."¹⁷ Kenyon also points to the importance of books and of school books in the Roman culture even before the beginning of the Christian era,¹⁸ and McDermott points out the influence of the rhetorical schools of Rome on Suetonius, the Roman historian who lived at the time of the early second century A.D.¹⁹ As a matter of fact, there had developed a technique of writing Greek shorthand which would, of course, facilitate note taking. In evidence of such a technique, Milne has shown the existence of Greek shorthand manuals and of shorthand teachers. It is to be noted that although the evidence only shows these coming from the second through the fifth centuries

15. Compare R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), pp. 174-178, and M. Bobichon, "Grec arameen et hebreu: le langues de Palestine au premier siecle chretien," *Bible et Terre Sainte* 58 (1963), p. 4f.
16. Compare also John the Baptist and his disciples.
17. Gerhardsson, *Memory...*, p. 196. See Quint, *Instit. Orat.* 1, praef. 7-8; Arrianos, *Epict.*, *Diatrib.* praef. 7-8; Galenos, *De libris propriis*, praef.; and S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950).
18. F. G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1951), pp. 75-80.
19. William C. McDermott, "Pliny the Younger and Inscriptions," *Class. World*, Vol. 65, 3 (November, 1971), p. 93.

A.D., they do demonstrate the development in process in the centuries before of a system that could aid secretaries and school disciples in their note taking.²⁰

So it is plausible to conclude that at the beginning of the Christian church, this same practice was followed of writing notes and studying written materials gained in a school situation. Gerhardtsson comments, "Just as the Rabbis' pupils had their own private notes, their written *hpomnemata*, written on tablets, in notebooks of various kinds, in haggadah books and scrolls of secrets, so they began within the church to write down parts of the tradition concerning Christ in the same way."²¹ In Palestine undoubtedly the synagogue and its developing school contributed to the desire to preserve carefully the sacred events and words of their Rabbi, as well as preserve the ancient Old Testament literature given to them.

Further, we get the distinct indication from the book of Revelation, that Jesus encouraged his disciples to write down what he said and what they saw (Rev. 1:17-19; cf. 3:12), and that his disciples, as John, were in the habit of writing and were expected to write down from the Lord what they heard and saw (Rev. 10:4).

From another area of the first century A.D. comes evidence regarding the writing down of materials in a type of school atmosphere. This is to be seen in the Qumran community and its writers who copied the Old Testament scriptures and also wrote down the rules for their community life, the latter possibly being constructed from notes taken on material given to them by their Teacher of Righteousness.²² The study of the Torah was important to them (compare I QS II, 3, IV, 2, V, 11, 21, 23), and the sect's own community material reveals the extent of the people's knowledge of the scripture and shows how easily scripture words and ideas were used.²³ In the same way, the Rabbi-Messiah minded apostolic band used the words of the Old Testament and the words and works of Christ as they wrote down portions of both of them at the time when they lived in the Rabbi-disciple relationship with Jesus.

EMPHASIS ON KEEPING THE WORDS AND WORKS OF CHRIST

It is now well to observe the emphasis in other statements of the New Testament on preserving the words and works of Christ, this emphasis being the same as that seen in early Judaism in which the Jews

20. H. J. M. Milne, *Greek Shorthand Manuals* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1934). See also Goodspeed, *Matthew* . . . , pp. 108, 9.
21. Gerhardtsson, *Memory* . . . , p. 202. See also C. H. Roberts, *The Codex in Proceed. of the British Academy*, 40 (1954), pp. 169-204, and C. H. Roberts, "The Christian Book," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 50 (1949), pp. 155-158.
22. Gaster says that this term "in Jewish usage is a common designation for a Rabbi." T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1964), p. 399.
23. Gerhardtsson, *Memory* . . . , p. 58, footnote 5.

remembered the teachings of the scriptures of the Old Testament,²⁴ scriptures they made certain were kept in written form.

This emphasis is seen in Jesus' own statement recorded in Matthew 7:24 regarding the necessity that his true followers adhere to the teaching of his Sermon on the Mount. For he states, as Matthew probably carefully took it down, that "every one who hears these words and practices them is like a wise man who built his house on firm foundation." Also by introducing Christ's message of condemnation on Chorazin and Bethsaida with the statement that the Savior upbraided these cities for not repenting at his miraculous works (Matt. 11:20-24), Matthew implies the seriousness with which he took Christ's miracles and statements, a seriousness which may have prompted him to have recorded the message in detail. Peter (1 Peter 2:18-25) gives the same impression when he challenges the Christians on the basis of the example left by Christ, to follow in the steps of Jesus. Then he records briefly but specifically important points in the historical record of Christ's life, interweaving a two-line quotation and parts of other verses of Isaiah 53:5-9 (close in wording to the Septuagint) to substantiate the accuracy of the record. Again, in his second letter, Peter assures the Christian community that they had not followed cleverly devised fables or legends in the story the Apostles have given about the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In support of this, he describes rather vividly the glory and majesty of Christ at the transfiguration. Then he quotes the message given by God the Father on the occasion in a form quite similar to that found in the Synoptics, especially that wording given by Matthew—"This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased" (2 Peter 1:16-18). He or his amanuensis may have been citing Peter's own notes which, as taken by an eyewitness, were the same as those taken down by Matthew.

Luke interestingly sets forth the fact that Paul takes seriously words given by Jesus when he records the Apostle as citing for the Ephesian elders this word from Christ: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), a quotation which seems similar to the thought expressed by the Lord himself in Matthew 10:8. At any rate Paul thinks that these words are so important that he calls on all to *remember*²⁵ them, and Luke is so impressed that he writes them down as given. Paul likewise stresses the words and commands of Christ. An example of this is found in 1 Corinthians 9:14, where he gives the same authority to the words of Christ on the subject of the right of the Christian worker to be supported by the Gospel as he does to the words of Moses in the law (Deut. 25:4). In fact, as the Apostle cites the written mosaic command (1 Cor. 9:9) and also an illustration on the subject from the Old Testament (1 Cor. 9:13), so he carefully writes down this teaching from the Lord

24. Gerhardsson, *Memory* . . . , p. 58.

25. *Sesophismenoi muthoi*; see Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), "*Muthos*."

26. *Mimneskomai*, to remember, in contrast to forget.

indicating that it is also to be thought of as in the same category of **divine instruction** (1 Cor. 9:14). Then Paul gives two quotations, one from this same Deuteronomy 25:4 and the other from the Lord (that is, Christ), both relating to the same subject of financial support for the ministry and both cited as having equal authority. The quotation from Christ is identical with the thought in the words of the Lord given in Luke 10:7,²⁷ "The workman deserves his pay." We can observe in regard to Luke 10:7 that Luke is following Paul in the same careful recording of the words of Christ, words which he and Paul, no doubt, obtained from earlier notes taken by eyewitnesses to whom he refers in Luke 1:2. So important to Paul is adherence to the explicit instructions regarding salvation which he had received from Christ (Acts 26:15-18) and which he no doubt had Luke write down, and so important to him was the example of Christ's life which he had learned about and carefully followed that the Apostle can say "I imitate Christ; you imitate me" (1 Cor. 11:1; cf. Phil. 3:8-10, 17).

INDICATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS' MESSAGES FOR HIS DISCIPLES

There are indications in the context within which the Gospel writers place the sayings of Christ that these messages were to be carefully listened to and obeyed. Therefore it is logical that they were accurately recorded in writing, presumably at the time they were given, or as near the time as possible, so that others would also have the opportunity to read and obey them. When Matthew says, as he does in several places (Matt. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), that "Jesus finished all these sayings," this Gospel writer not only seems to be referring to the completion of a section of notes he had taken previously, but also seems to be saying that these messages from Jesus just given are very important. We note in each case in which the extended teaching material is concluded with the formula something like, "when Jesus finished all these sayings," that the section is followed with something somewhat different—a narrative-dialogue section.

Also when the New Testament writers emphasize the personal involvement of the teacher, Jesus, with his pupils, by saying that Jesus called his disciples to him (Matt. 10:1; 15:10) and, further, by stating that the Savior commanded them to keep his words (cf. Matt. 17:9), the writers seem to be drawing attention to the fact that they had recorded, when with him, what Jesus actually said and did. It is carefully reported that Jesus called on men to do what God or Moses commanded in the Old Testament (Matt. 15:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14), just as he himself did what his Father commanded (John 14:31). Then it is just as carefully recorded with the same definiteness that Jesus calls on his disciples to do what he commands them (Matt. 17:9; 28:20; Luke 9:21). Also a number of times in his messages the Lord draws attention to the

27. The words in Matthew 10:10 are almost the same.

importance of keeping and observing what he says by using the term *amen*. This term carried with it the idea of solemn declaration regarding the importance of what was heard and an affirmation that the message given was true and was to be acted upon. It is to be presumed that this kind of important material was immediately written down in the disciples' tablets or note books at the time when they heard it (Matt. 5:18; John 1:51, etc., and compare I Chron. 16:36).

It is interesting to conjecture that immediate effective note taking of such messages and events was made by the use of some sort of shorthand, at least on the part of the more cosmopolitan Matthew. Evidence for Greek shorthand seems to go back as far as fourth century B.C. Athens and also to Xenophon as well, but such evidence is on more solid ground by the time of Cicero.²⁸

LUKE AND PAUL ON PRESERVING THE WORD AND WORKS OF CHRIST

In some passages in the writings of Luke and Paul respectively, the inference is given that the core facts of the works and words of Christ are important enough to be carefully preserved and written down. Luke 24:18-23 tells how the two on the way to Emmaus reportedly carefully the important facts about Christ's life—that he came from Nazareth, was a prophet and was one who distinguished himself in his work and message. They also told about Christ's trial, judgment and death by crucifixion, and about the report that they had heard from the women that he was alive. Then Luke carefully records how Christ at this point emphasizes the accuracy of these historical events by asserting the necessity of his death, resurrection and glory (v. 26). This assertion he supports by stating that these events had already been prophesied in the Old Testament scriptures (v. 27). We may infer, then, that Luke feels that the Old Testament written scriptures verified the accuracy of the historical accounts of Christ's work, and we may further infer that he also counts this current material about Christ and what he said here as accurate. Thus it is plausible to hold that Luke must have obtained some accurate written records about these detailed events—see his statement on his procedure in Luke 1:1-4—which he used in order to give his accurate written account of what happened. In Luke's giving this account of Christ's clear explanation that his life and work were a fulfillment of the Old Testament, it is to be noted that Luke is following the same pattern followed by Jews (which we have already observed) of preserving the events of their sacred history, in this case, the words and works of Christ, their only teacher.

Again, Luke 24:44-49 shows great interest in Christ's message about his life, death and resurrection being a fulfillment of the written Old Testament and interest also in the Lord's assertion that the accurate account of these events was to be the basis of the message of repentance

28. H. J. M. Milne, *Greek Shorthand Manuals* (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1934), p. 1.

and remission of sins that was to be preached by the disciples. Through his interest in writing these details down, Luke shows his consciousness of the necessity of having in hand the very words of the Savior and the works that he did. This viewpoint, therefore, must have made this writer search not only for accurate verbal reports, but also more particularly for accurate written notes and records taken down by the eyewitnesses he mentions in Luke 1:2.

Paul himself, who undoubtedly helped instill in Luke this Jewish frame of mind, stresses the need for the careful preservation of that core of facts about Christ's death and resurrection. He shows this concern when in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 he says there had been handed over to him a body of material about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He identifies this material with the Greek neuter singular relative pronoun, *ho*, thus emphasizing that this was a collected corpus of facts obtained from the Old Testament as well as personally from the Savior, and probably also from some of the same written sources Luke had. It is this body of material that Paul says he had in turn given over to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15:3). Then he proceeds to write down as he had done elsewhere (*cf.* Rom. 1:2-4) the salient points again. He also verifies the fact of the resurrection by giving his list of witnesses (1 Cor. 15:3b-9) (which he had probably written up already). In all of this, the Apostle is following the same pattern of careful recording as practiced by the other disciples.

THE TITLE ON THE CROSS

That the Gospel writers were interested in and practiced in keeping records on written material connected with historical events in Christ's life can be seen, for example, in the fact that each of the four Gospels gives a record of the written title that Pilate had placed on the cross.

It is to be admitted that not one of the Gospels includes all of the details of the title, a fact which can be explained by positing that variation occurred in the wording of the title in the three different languages²⁹ in which the title was given. However, all of the Gospels (Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19) have the central thought, "the King of the Jews."

THE STRUCTURED BEGINNING OF THE FOUR GOSPELS

The beginning of each of the four Gospels is different in its specific material and style, yet each one is the same in its beginning in relating Christ to history and to the Old Testament. This similarity suggests that in the tradition of the Old Testament a structured pattern, possibly such as was used by the "school of the prophets" was in the mind of each writer as he took notes and as he consciously thought of how to start writing his history of the life of Christ.

29. It is John (19:20) who mentions that the title was given in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

Matthew before he tells about the historical events leading up to the actual birth of Christ (1:18-25) begins with the statement, "The history of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," and proceeds in good Jewish fashion to lay out the genealogy based on the written records of the Old Testament. That Matthew's written genealogy was preconceived and carefully executed as he wrote is seen in the pattern of the three sets of the fourteen in the genealogy. This systematic approach suggests record keeping, and like that which a tax-collector might use. Goodspeed sees a helpful comparison between the Egyptian tax-collectors of New Testament times with their duodecimal system of computation (as illustrated by Egyptian papyri) and Matthew the Galilean tax-collector with his use of a slightly different sequence of three fourteens.³⁰

Mark for his part introduces his Gospel with a statement about a beginning but he words it differently: "The beginning of the Gospel (or good news) about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Then he relates this beginning to the Old Testament, only in his case by quoting and quite accurately, from the Septuagint of Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3,³¹ with the evident purpose of identifying this Jesus with the Lord whose way was to be prepared. Compare Mark 1:4 and Luke 1:76 where John the Baptist is identified as the one to prepare the way. This procedure shows definite knowledge available and careful research based on written notes and records.

Luke (1:1-4) in his beginning describes his methodology in carefully researching the materials which, according to Luke 1:2, 3, seem to have been at least in part written records of the eyewitness and ministers of the word. These materials he needed for writing his life of Christ in order that Theophilus, as he states in verse 4, would have certainty in his knowledge of the things in which he had been instructed. Having discussed this methodology, Luke then brings in the birth of John the Baptist and uses it to set the stage for the birth and childhood narratives of Jesus, and the ministry of John the Baptist, which he introduces with the same quotation from Isaiah 40 (verses 3 to 5). He also adds a genealogy of Jesus (Luke 3:23-38) but from a different side of the family. All this Lukan material suggests a methodological approach and a determination to write an historically connected story once the research with its note taking and sorting of the material had been done. According to Luke 1:1-3, the beloved Physician knew that others were writing accounts too.

John also in structured fashion starts his Gospel with a section on beginning (1:1-18), but in this case he gives a two-fold emphasis, one beginning at the time before creation (1:1-5) and the other at the time of the incarnation (1:6-18) both of which he relates to Jesus, the Logos, the incarnate expression of the Father. Like Matthew, Mark and Luke,

30. Goodspeed, *Matthew . . .*, pp. 75, 76.

31. Compare also Exodus 23:20.

John the Apostle introduces John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus (1:6-8). John too brings to bear the Old Testament, not in the form of a formal quotation, but through a comparison: "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." This structured pattern also suggests a plan for writing and is really too elaborate to be thought of as coming from oral tradition.

We have only to turn to Paul's beginning of Romans to see this same early Jewish mentality for structure, accuracy and relating the story of Jesus to the Old Testament, as well as to the actual historical events. Paul says (Rom. 1:2-4) that the Gospel of God was preached in the Old Testament through the prophets in what he calls the Holy Scriptures, and that this Gospel concerns itself with Jesus Christ who became incarnate and was declared to be the Son of God through the resurrection from the dead.

THE POETIC CHARACTER OF THE MATERIAL

The poetic character of much of Jesus' teaching and of materials given by others, such as Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, who was steeped in the Old Testament and its material, would lend itself to easy mental retention and would certainly aid in producing accurate written notes. These notes could have been taken down at the time the messages were given as, for example, notes on the Sermon on the Mount. Such notes Matthew could well have taken at the time when Jesus made the address, and then incorporated them by himself into his own Gospel. Or, material taken down or mentally retained at the time given could have at a later time been taken and used by a different writer, such as Luke. This latter procedure was probably followed in obtaining and incorporating the poetic material and accompanying narratives given by and about Zachariah (Luke 1:57-80) and by Mary (Luke 1:39-56) which Luke no doubt got from Mary or from some other person intimate with the family, when he was in Palestine with Paul (Acts 21:16, 17). That Mary, for example, had such material thought through and retained is observed in Luke 2:19, where Luke shows that he realized that there was a great store of material to be received from Mary for she had "kept all these words and thought them through in her mind."

LINGUISTIC, HISTORICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL TAGS OF THE GOSPELS

The Gospels are structured with linguistic, historical and chronological tags, and these can help show that these documents do not present disconnected sayings of Jesus haphazardly put together, as does the Gospel of Thomas. On the contrary, each of the Gospels has its own indications of an ordered history of Christ based on accurate memory and careful notes that seem to come from the very time the disciples were walking with Jesus.

A study of the beginning of the paragraphs of thought of each of

the four Gospels, following the paragraphing arrangement presented in *The Greek New Testament*, edited by Aland, Metzger, etc.,³² shows such an ordered structure that seems to presuppose that meaningfully written notes on the works and sayings of Jesus were taken by the Gospel writers and others at the time that they walked with Jesus. The validity for looking for such key words and catch words can be seen when it is realized that pupils of Rabbis in that early period seem to have employed such catch-words that came out of the *sitz im leben* and came from their association with the rabbis. Gerhardsson remarks:

We may suppose that the notebooks belonging to the Rabbis' pupils contained in general such key-words and catch-words (simannim) and also summarizing memory-texts. . . . Nor is it impossible that such catch-words were written in the margins of personal copies of the Torah. But there were also "scrolls of secrets" with more comprehensive summaries of text material from the oral Torah. Haggadah texts in particular seem to have been copied out in this simple and unofficial way. . . .³³

Matthew's structure shows a methodological approach in preparing for writing as he ends certain sections of his Gospel with words like "when Jesus finished these sayings" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1 and 26:1).³⁴ Again, Matthew shows his note taking ability throughout his writing, as he seems to have employed the adverbial Greek particle *tote*, then, to identify sections of his material he had written down and later had put together.

For example, two parts of the events of Herod's dealing with the wise men and with the boy children of Bethlehem are connected with *tote* (Matt. 2:7, 16); and the succeeding parts of the temptation narrative are likewise connected together with this same word (Matt. 4:1, 5, 11). The same pattern is followed in the passion narrative (Matt. 26:14, 31, 36, 38, 45) and in many other places. In addition, Matthew's using the genitive absolute and plain circumstantial participles at the beginning of paragraphs of thought seems to be an indication of the author's endeavor to put together in logical and chronological order materials he had written down earlier.

Mark indicates pre-meditated care and possible note taking on his part and probably on the part of Peter from whom he received the material, by the use of his well-known *euthus*, *immediately*, which he often employs to show the shift in his notes from one event or place to another, as in Mark 1:12, 29; 6:45, etc. Occasionally, for this purpose of showing connection in his narrative episodes, he uses the words *palin*, *again* (5:21; 7:14, etc.) and *ekeithen* (6:1; 9:30, etc.). Similar to Matthew, Mark likes to use as introductory to his paragraphs of thought, as

32. Second edition (Stuttgart: Wurttemberg Bible Society for the United Bible Societies, 1968).

33. Gerhardsson, *Memory*, p. 161.

34. See above page.

he connects them together, the genitive absolute (4:35; 6:54) and the circumstantial participle (1:29; 7:31; 10:32).

Luke for his part shows evidence of his own individual research and distinctive style by beginning many of his sections with the more classical construction *en to* with the infinitive, a Greek prepositional phrase which in English translation must be introduced with an adverbial *when* or *while* (3:21; 5:1; 9:18; 10:38). It is to be noted that Luke's distinctive Perea ministry section begins with this construction introduced by the Semitic *egeneto*: "*And it happened that when the days were completed for his ascension (or, death)*" (Luke 9:51). Then, part way through this Lukan section (17:11) the thought of getting Jesus on toward Jerusalem is helped along by the use of this same construction: "*And it happened as he was journeying toward Jerusalem that he went through the area of Samaria and Galilee.*" Finally the end of this Perea section is indicated by the first sentence of the narrative at Jericho beginning with this same kind of construction: "*And it happened that as Jesus was coming into Jericho there was a blind man sitting by the road begging,*" (Luke 18:35). These examples may well be indications of connectives Luke is using to put together sections of notes he had received from others or had taken down himself. Luke also likes to use the genitive absolute (3:15; 4:42; 19:37, etc.), and the circumstantial participle (1:39; 6:20; 21:1, etc.). He has a preference, too, for the use of the graphic imperfect tense (1:21; 7:36; 14:25; 23:32, etc.) as though he was trying in the note taking stage to make vivid the events of the stories he read about and was told from the eyewitnesses. In addition, Luke begins a number of sections with the Greek *idou*, *behold* (compare the Hebrew *hinneh*, *behold*), a word which calls special attention to the material (2:25; 5:12; 10:25; 24:13, etc.); he may well have done this to indicate individual sections of his written material he was going to fit into his narrative. It is to be noted that in some of the messages of Jesus he records, he also includes this same expression, *idou* (Luke 6:23; 15:29; 17:21; 17:23; 18:31; 19:20; 24:49). The question may be asked, Had he gotten this expression from the speech material of Jesus, as well as from the Old Testament pattern with its use of *hinneh* and then used it to call attention to, and connect, sections of his own written material?

The Gospel of John also shows linguistic tags at the beginning of paragraphs of thought that would seem to indicate pre-meditated note taking he did at the time he walked with Jesus. Note that John is conscious of the writing of books and makes reference to the jotting down of material in such books: in John 20:30 he speaks of "the things written in *this book*" and in 21:25 he says that if all the things that Jesus did were *written down over a period of time* (*graphetai*, present durative time) *one by one* he conceives it hard for the world to hold such books. In these expressions, there may be implied the writing down of segments of the story as he saw and heard them from the Savior himself. Again in 3 John 13 he shows his impulse to write down what he thinks are impor-

tant spiritual messages. John's reference in his Gospel to the passover at important sections of his material³⁵ may indicate that these were reference points in his notes to guide him in connecting the parts of his story of Jesus. Also, as he took notes, John from time to time seems to have put in references to succession of days separating one event from those that went before, as: "on the next day," 1:29, 35, 43; "on the third day," 2:1; "after two days," 4:43; "on the next day," 6:22; "on the last day," 7:37; "four days since he died," 11:17; "six days before the passover," 12:1; and "on the first day after the sabbath," 20:1, 19.

Also, the adverbial tags such as *palin oun, then again* (John 8:12, 21; 10:7) or *palin, again* (10:19, 40; 11:38), or *oun, then* (18:12, 19, 28; 19:1, 8; 20:19; 21:15, etc) seem to indicate John's deliberate attempt to connect together various events he had written down in his notes.

John's recording in a rather distinctive way the double use of *amen* in Jesus' messages (as in John 3:3, 5; 5:25; 6:47; 10:1, 7; 21:18, etc.) may be an indication of the apostle's eyewitness account of what he actually heard Jesus say as he spoke in Aramaic and which John translated into Greek.

CONCLUSIONS

It has been observed that the New Testament writers of Scripture had the tools—tablets, paper, pen, ink, etc.—to facilitate the easy recording of the words and works of Christ. Further, it has been noted that this apostolic band had precedent for encouragement in the habit of carefully memorizing what they considered as sacred material (as the Old Testament) and the urge to record the messages of their teachers. This encouragement came from the surrounding *sitz im leben*, the Rabbi-disciple pattern, the Hellenistic school and the developing synagogue schools. In line with this thought Gerhardsson has observed:

Influence from the Hellenistic schools of rhetoric and philosophy was presumably stronger in *Eres Jisrael* than in Mesopotamia, and it is known that pupils in Hellenistic schools made good use of their skill in writing, copying down their *hypomnemata*, *hyposemeioseis*, *scholai*, *chreiai*, *progymnasmata*, etc.³⁶

The reverence of the disciples for Jesus as their only teacher no doubt encouraged them in their desire to memorize carefully and also record the very words and works of Christ. Just as Isaiah had his disciples with whom he sealed his teaching (Isa. 8:16), so Christ had his disciples³⁷ on whom he so impressed his message and deeds that they in the Rabbi-disciple frame of mind accurately took them to heart and quickly wrote them down that they might be passed on to others (Luke

35. John 2:13; possibly 4:35, although neither the words passover nor feast occur; possibly 5:1; 6:4; and 11:55.

36. Gerhardsson, *Memory . . .*, p. 162.

37. Compare Goodspeed, *Matthew . . .*, p. 54.

1:1-4; 2 Tim. 2:2). They wanted to get down accurately what Jesus said and did. As Paul had his amanuenses, so Christ had his in his group of apostolic followers.

Further, it has been noted that the various New Testament writers showed their preference for individual linguistic constructions and distinctive key-words and catch-words that they used to help them in identifying the individual segments and emphases noted in the story of Jesus. Those who traveled with Jesus and were eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4) memorized and jotted down notes on these materials and later put them together into accounts of the life of Jesus themselves, or passed on these notes and memorized materials to others, such as Luke and Mark, who then wrote them out in full in Gospel form.