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Diatessarica

PART X, SECTION III

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL
THE PROCLAMATION
OF THE NEW KINGDOM

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THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

SECTION III

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE NEW KINGDOM

BY

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"The kingdom of God is at hand."

St Mark i. 15

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PREFACE

PERHAPS the best Preface to this work might be found in a glance at the Section Headings collected in the Contents. If the title of the book may be said to indicate a high road, the Section Headings may be said to indicate cross roads. The cross roads represent investigations into words. The high road is a continuous investigation into thoughts—the thoughts of the Four Evangelists, severally—and, through these, into the thought of Jesus Himself in proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

Christ's authoritative calling of Simon Peter and the other fishermen; His authoritative acts of exorcism and healing; His authoritative claim to forgive sins; His assumption that He had authority to deal freely with certain precepts of the Law—all these things, related by Mark, are examined along with other things related by the other Evangelists but not by Mark. It is contended that Mark often meant, or assumed, these other things, though he did not express them, and that, when these other things are duly taken into account, they reveal the object of Jesus as being, from the first, not the establishment of what men would commonly call a Kingdom, but the diffusion of what we should rather call the atmosphere of a Family, a spiritual emanation spreading like a widening circle from a source within Himself as its centre, and passing into the hearts of all that were fitted to receive it, so as to give them something of His own power or

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“authority”—a term defined in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel as being “authority to become children of God.”

Although thus much may be said in deprecation of the charge that the work has no claim to unity, I do not venture to hope that any but a few specialists will read it consecutively. Pains have been taken to make consecutive reading unnecessary. The Contents at the beginning of the book, and the Indices at the end, will enable readers to ascertain what is said about a special subject, or a special text of Scripture, without a continuous study of the whole.

Let me give here a specimen of the way in which I have found myself, after taking one of the above-mentioned “cross roads” of verbal investigation, brought back again—not without some added knowledge of the surrounding country—into the continuous “high road.”

The subject of the investigation (Chap. I. § 27 foll.) is the miraculous Draught of Fishes in Luke compared with the corresponding miracle in John. The verbal portion of it deals with a Greek word, *neuein*. This, in various forms, may mean either (1) “nod” or (2) “swim.” A very ancient Gnostic work, called The Acts of John, describing the Calling of the Fishermen, makes Jesus speak to John about Jesus on the shore as “the child that is *nodding* (*neuein*) to us.” Luke, prefixing the preposition *kata*, says that Peter and his friends “*nodded for help*” to James and John because their ship was sinking. But in the whole of Greek literature *kata-neuein* apparently never has that meaning. It has never been proved to include in its meanings a *neutral* “nodding” (*pace* Liddell and Scott “generally, to make a sign by nodding the head”). When it means “nod,” it appears always to mean, in effect,

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“*nod-in-assent*.” How then are we to explain Luke’s use of it here?

To answer this question, we pass to the miracle in John. A poet of the fifth century (Nonnus) has paraphrased this. A commentator (Chrysostom) has explained it. Both of these writers use *neuein*, but with another prefix. They describe Peter and his friends not as “*noddng for help*,” but as “*noddng-in-dissent (ana-neuein)*” to Jesus on the shore. John himself, it is true, uses no form of *neuein*. But he describes Peter, in effect, as *swimming to the shore*. We have seen that *neuein* may mean “*swim*.” Now we have to add that “*swim to the shore*” (no less than “*nod in assent*”) is a correct rendering of *kata-neuein*, the word used by Luke.

It will be maintained that this—that is, “*swimming to the shore*” and not “*making signs of assent*”—was the meaning of some early and obscure tradition misinterpreted by Luke, who has also chronologically misplaced it, but who has had the honesty to preserve the difficult word that led him astray. The Preface to Luke’s Gospel states that he attempted to “write in [chronological] order,” as well as “accurately”; but it also implies that other evangelists had failed in this; and it is not to be expected that Luke would be always successful.

If in this instance Luke has made a mistake, we have at all events compensations. We are relieved from the necessity of supposing that Mark and Matthew omitted what (according to Luke) was a turning-point in Peter’s career. And in the Johannine substitute we find a narrative that gives us a peculiarly beautiful and (so to speak) natural account of the impression produced on Peter by the sympathetic insight, love, and regenerating power, of the risen Saviour.

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A similar compensation will be found (I believe) in almost all the numerous instances where John intervenes in the Synoptic tradition. He seems to do this mostly with a view to elucidating Mark where Luke omits, or alters, some Marcan tradition. Take one more instance, the last in this volume—where Jesus, in Mark, defines the family of God as “those that *do the thelēma*, or *will*, of God.” Luke substitutes “those that hear the word of God and do it.” It will be shewn that, in literary Greek, *thelēma*, if it were used at all, which it hardly ever is, would mean “desire of the flesh.” Probably this—but probably other reasons also, including a love of definiteness—induced Luke to alter the word.

What is John’s course? First, in his Prologue, he distinguishes the fleshly and the sexual *thelēma*, or “will,” from the corresponding act by which “the children of God” are “begotten.” Having thereby implied that there is something in God corresponding to the human *thelēma*, he does not hesitate to represent Jesus, later on, as repeatedly saying, in the words of the Psalmist, that He has come to “*do the will* (*thelēma*)” of the Father who sent Him (Jn i. 13, iv. 34, vi. 38, comp. Ps. xl. 8).

We lose something, it must be confessed, in arriving at the conclusion that Luke’s carefully arranged and attractive Gospel—where it attempts to clarify or correct the obscurities and abruptnesses of Mark, and, as in this last case, to extract definiteness out of indefiniteness—cannot always be relied on as bringing us nearer to the words of Christ. But, even here, may we not learn more from Luke and John together—on the supposition that Luke is wrongly correcting Mark, and John rightly explaining Mark—than we should have learned from John alone without the erroneous Luke?

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These considerations should bespeak respectful attention for Luke's Gospel even if it should appear, in the course of further investigation, that he is almost always in error where John intervenes to correct him. Luke, as has been shewn in the Introductory Volume (pp. 115—24), is fond of historical and external "proofs," and of a definite "word" followed by definite "doing." And it cannot be denied that this definiteness has tended to immediate and impressive success. Many of the Lucan "proofs" have helped not only to increase the number of those who call themselves Christians, but also to create a genuine Christianity among many of them. But the evidence of the Fourfold Gospel will be found to strengthen the growing conviction that a time must come, for all Christians conversant with the Scriptures, when they will have to dispense with some of these "proofs," and to give up expecting to find any definite "word," prescribing to us what we are to "do," either in the pages of the Bible, or in the interpretations of it by Christendom. The question will then arise as to the best modern substitute for these ancient definite "proofs" and definite "words." Almost all will agree that there must be developments—that the old must be developed into the new. But into what "new"?

Are we to accept, for our new "proof," the conviction that Christ is still with us on our altars, in the Bread consecrated by His appointed priests; and, for our new "word," the prescriptions of these appointed priests, to whom we can make our confession of sins, and from whom, after performing the acts of penitence prescribed by them, we can obtain a definite absolution?

Against this view it may be urged that official "priests" for Christians are not recognised in the New Testament,

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and that even in Revelation, which does mention Christian “priests,” not official priests but ideal priests are contemplated. For the context speaks of all Christians as destined to be “kings and priests.” But to this it may be replied that if, in spite of this idealisation, Christians find it expedient, and count it lawful, to have official “kings,” they may also find it expedient, and count it lawful, to have official “priests.”

This contention is reasonable. Only it must be remembered that it is a question of expediency, not of morality; and that it is a development, not an appointment by Christ. The English word “priest” is simply a shortened form of the Greek for “elder”—“*presbuteros*,” “*presbyter*,” “*prester*,” “*prestre*,” or “*prêtre*.” The Elder, at the confessional, in places where it is deemed expedient that there should be a confessional, must not obscure the One Priest through whom alone our confessions pass to heaven. The same Elder, even when he is celebrating the Eucharist, must still remember that, though he is representing the One Priest in a peculiarly priestly function, he would still be called no “priest” by Peter or Paul or James or John, but only an “Elder.”

The Fourth Gospel teaches us, at its outset, that in some sense every human being that has been converted by the Spirit of Christ, the One Priest, begins to partake of the priestly character, and tends to become himself a converter of others—like Andrew, the first convert mentioned by name, bringing his brother to Jesus. And at its close the same Gospel teaches us that Jesus breathed the power of forgiving sins not into the Apostles alone but into all the disciples present. No other Gospel teaches so distinctly that from every genuine Christian there must flow forth to other souls “rivers of living water.” No

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other Gospel so magnifies at once the dignity and the responsibility of the individual believer, who is to be no solitary anchorite, but to move among his brother men as a natural benefactor, prince and priest in one.

But this princedom and this priesthood in every Christian have their source in the One Prince and Priest whom Jesus promised to send as His other Self, the Paraclete, who is in us, and in whom we are. No earthly "elder" or "priest" is to come opaquely between our soul and that Holy Spirit of Christ which speaks in us as well as to us, through all the voices of nature, nature within us and nature without, nature animate and inanimate, testifying to us of the ultimate triumph of the love of the Father, through the revelation of the Son, overcoming and converting to good all powers of evil.

This teaching, if true, is not a merely theoretical truth. Never was there an age when it was more practically needed—an age that has been so far led astray by the impostures of false philosophy and false science as to dream that man's permanent welfare can be brought about by an appeal to enlightened self-interest, through the readjustment of social and political arrangements, with the aid of the marvellous discoveries of modern science.

Against this imposture all the Gospels in various ways protest. But the Fourth Gospel protests most clearly by bringing before us the Incarnation as a part of a Plan from the beginning, the Plan of the Father to conform mankind to His own image and likeness through the assimilating power of the revealed Son. This Gospel uncompromisingly teaches us that there is no hope of any permanent universal good except through a permanent universal change of heart, a regeneration, in all races, nations, and classes of mankind.

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Those who reject this hope as a dream will reject the Fourth Gospel. But those who accept the hope will accept the Gospel, also, as that one of the Four which best expresses or suggests it. It is a Gospel, so to speak, of Four Dimensions, incompatible with familiar facts, self-contradictory, sometimes recognising, sometimes ignoring, the existence of evil. Yet it suggests to us a world beyond expression—the length and breadth and depth and height of God’s regenerating love, a mystery beyond the experience of the senses and the understanding, yet somehow practical, one that comes home to the business and bosoms of the simplest of mankind. Alone among the Gospels the Fourth goes to the root of the hopefulness of Jesus by taking us to the root of all things, back to the Beginning, in which it calls upon us to discern the Word, the Word that was God, the Word that was at home with God, or in the bosom of God, the Person that was to become flesh as Jesus of Nazareth, in order to reveal the perfect Man.

It is here—in studying the necessarily illogical and inconsistent delineations of the personality of Christ—that the Fourth Evangelist may give us priceless help, if we can but overcome our objections to the indirectness of his method. “Indirect” is indeed too weak an epithet. “Tortuous” would hardly be too strong. Jesus is represented, for example, as saying, not only in effect but in word, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life,” and “I am the Light of the World” and “the Good Shepherd” and “the Resurrection.” Nothing can be more unlike the words attributed to Jesus by the Synoptists. Few certainties can be more certain than that Jesus did not utter these exact words. Why then does the Evangelist, thus repeatedly and with obviously deliberate iteration, impute them to Him?

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The best explanation is that he *knew* (or, as I should prefer to say, it was revealed to him) *that Jesus meant them*, and he did not know how otherwise to express the knowledge or revelation. He longed to impress upon his readers that this was their meaning; and by this longing he was induced to substitute, throughout his Gospel, the meaning instead of the word, and the spirit instead of the letter, and the Logos instead of Jesus. The Synoptic Gospels had hardly attempted to represent the “rivers of living water” that flowed forth from Jesus in His utterances of the unutterable love of the Father. Yet these utterances were, as Peter says, “words of eternal life.” In them the love of the Father streamed forth to mankind, and Jesus was both the channel and the stream. Jesus uses the word “I” in the Fourth Gospel more often than in the Three taken all together. Yet there is no such egotism as some have supposed. It is often a sign of non-egotism, as though He said “I, by myself, could do nothing, and should be nothing. I am wholly dependent on the Father. I am the Father’s Love. I am the Way for you to pass into His Love. Take me into your hearts. Strive to do as I did. By following in my path, and by loving one another with the love with which I have loved you, you will become the veritable children of God.”

The Fourth Gospel represents Christ as saying to His disciples that His words before the Resurrection were but “proverbs” or “dark sayings” as compared with the teaching that He would send to them afterwards, and that “greater works” would be done by them than those done by Himself. These words should lift up our hearts in hopeful readiness for the problems of the future. Paul of Tarsus, Francis of Assisi, and John Wesley—to speak but of a few—shew historically in what varied forms, and

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amid what diverse circumstances, the Spirit of Christ will now and then break out into those “greater works” when it finds a preëminently fit recipient of the constraining love of Christ.

But what we need is a recognition on the part of all Christians that this promise includes also those who are not “preëminently” fit. Christendom will not be true Christendom till the most commonplace Christian soul is expected to thank God for having given him a power, to some slight extent at all events, of forgiving sins like a priest, of diffusing the truths of the Gospel like an evangelist, and of reigning over his animal impulses like a king.

The Book of the Universe is full of illusions. Yet God reveals Himself through it. Not one of the heavenly bodies is where it appears to be. We see each in the place that it filled some seconds, minutes, years, or centuries ago. Yet “the heavens declare the glory of God.” So does the Fourth Gospel.

Let us turn, then, with fresh hope and faith to its teaching, to the letter as well as to the spirit, but always seeking the spirit through the letter. And let us especially meditate on its reasonable and seasonable doctrine about the Paraclete of Christ, how it has power to “teach” us “all things”—teaching us what to say and what to do in answer to the importunate questionings and clamorous demands thrust upon us by the social, political, and national problems of each generation—and teaching us all this, not through a lesson-book of rules for saving our own souls, but by bringing us into the circle of God’s Family, where each soul looks for instruction to the Father’s face and finds its weak self strengthened as well as enlightened by Him who gives Himself to His children.

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To the friends mentioned in the Prefaces of previous volumes of *Diatessarica*, Mr W. S. Aldis, Mr H. Candler, and the Rev. J. Hunter Smith, my thanks are again due for help in revising the proofs—help that must not be measured by this meagre acknowledgment of their labour and my benefit.

The Indices placed at the end of this volume, and covering the three volumes of *The Fourfold Gospel*, are the work of my daughter, who has also verified all the references in the text and in the notes. If, as I believe, both the references and the Indices are found almost invariably accurate, the merit will be hers.

EDWIN A. ABBOTT.

Wellside, Well Walk
Hampstead, N.W.
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THE KINGDOM OF GOD, A FAMILY

[Mark iii. 20—35]

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REFERENCES

- (i) a. References to the first nine Parts of Diatessarica (as to which see pp. 545—6) are by paragraphs in black Arabic numbers:—
- 1— 272 = *Clue*.
 273— 552 = *Corrections of Mark*.
 553—1149 = *From Letter to Spirit*.
 1150—1435 = *Paradosis*.
 1436—1885 = *Johannine Vocabulary*.
 1886—2799 = *Johannine Grammar*.
 2800—2999 = *Notes on New Testament Criticism*.
 3000—3635 = *The Son of Man*.
 3636—3999 = *Light on the Gospel from an ancient Poet*.
- (i) b. References to the Sections of the Tenth Part of Diatessarica, entitled *The Fourfold Gospel*, are by pages. The three Sections now completed are:—
- (Section 1) *Introduction*.
 (Section 2) *The Beginning*.
 (Section 3) *The Proclamation of the New Kingdom*.
- (ii) The Books of Scripture are referred to by the ordinary abbreviations, except where specified below. But when it is said that Samuel, Isaiah, Matthew, or any other writer, wrote this or that, it is to be understood as meaning *the writer, whoever he may be, of the words in question*, and not as meaning that the actual writer was Samuel, Isaiah, or Matthew.
- (iii) The principal Greek mss are denoted by \aleph , A, B, etc.; the Latin versions by *a*, *b*, etc., as usual. The Syriac version discovered by Mrs Lewis on Mount Sinai is referred to as SS, *i.e.* "Sinaitic Syrian." It is always quoted from Prof. Burkitt's translation. I regret that in the first three vols. of Diatessarica Mrs Lewis's name was omitted in connection with this version.
- (iv) The text of the Greek Old Testament adopted is that of B, edited by Prof. Swete; of the New, that of Westcott and Hort.
- (v) Modern works are referred to by the name of the work, or author, vol., and page, *e.g.* Levy iii. 343 *a*, *i.e.* vol. iii. p. 343, col. 1.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Aq. = Aquila's version of O.T.
 Brederek = Brederek's *Konkordanz zum Targum Onkelos*, Giessen, 1906.
 Burk. = Prof. F. C. Burkitt's *Evangelion Da-mepharreshe*, Cambridge University Press, 1904.
 Chr. = *Chronicles*.
 Clem. Alex. 42 = Clement of Alexandria in Potter's page 42.
 Dalman, *Words* = *Words of Jesus*, Eng. Transl. 1902; *Aram. G.* = *Grammatik des Jüdisch-Palästinischen Aramäisch*, 1894.
 En. = Enoch ed. Charles, Clarendon Press, 1893.
 Ency. = *Encyclopaedia Biblica*.
 Ephrem = Ephraemus Syrus, ed. Moesinger.
 Etheridge = Etheridge's translations of the Targums on the Pentateuch.
 Euseb. = the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius.
 Field = Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt, Oxford, 1875, also Otium Norvicense, 1881.
 Gesen. = the Oxford edition of Gesenius.
 Goldschm. = *Der Babylonische Talmud*, 1897—1912, ed. Goldschmidt.
 Goodspeed = Goodspeed's *Indices*, (i) *Patristicus*, Leipzig, 1907, (ii) *Apologeticus*, Leipzig, 1912.
 Hastings = Dictionary of the Bible, ed. Hastings (5 vols.).
 Hor. Heb. = *Horae Hebraicae*, by John Lightfoot, 1658—74, ed. Gandell, Oxf. 1859.
 Iren. = the treatise of Irenaeus against Heresies.
 Jer. Targ. or Targ. Jer. (abbrev. for Jerusalem Targum), or Jon. Targ. (*i.e.* Targum of Jonathan, abbrev. for the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan) = the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch, of which there are two recensions—both quoted (*Notes on N.T. Criticism*, Pref. p. viii) by ancient authorities under the name "Jerusalem Targum." The two recensions are severally denoted by Jer. I and Jer. II. On other books, the Targum is referred to as simply "Targ."
 Jon. Targ., see Jer. Targ.
 Justin = Justin Martyr (*Apol.* = his First Apology, *Tryph.* = the Dialogue with Trypho).
 K. = *Kings*.
 Krauss = Krauss's *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter* etc., Part II, Berlin, 1899.
 Levy = Levy's *Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, 4 vols., Leipzig, 1889; *Levy Ch.* = *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch*, 2 vols., 1881.

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- L.S. = Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon.
 Mechilta, see Wü(nsche).
 Onk. = the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch.
 Origen is referred to variously, e.g. *Hom. Exod.* ii. 25 = lib. ii. ch. 25 of *Hom. Exod.*, but Orig. on Exod. ii. 25 = the commentary *ad loc.*; Lomm. iii. 24 = vol. iii. p. 24 of Lommatzsch's edition.
 Oxf. Conc. = *The Oxford Concordance to the Septuagint*.
 Pec. = peculiar to the writer mentioned in the context.
 Pesikta, see Wü(nsche).
 Philo is referred to by Mangey's volume and page, e.g. Philo ii. 234, or, as to Latin treatises, by the Scripture text or Aucher's pages (P. A.).
 Pistis = *Pistis Sophia*, ed. Petermann (marginal pages).
 Ps. Sol. = *Psalms of Solomon*, ed. Ryle and James, Camb. 1891.
 R., after Gen., Exod., Lev. etc. means *Rabboth*, and refers to Wünsche's edition of the Midrash on the Pentateuch, e.g. *Gen. v.* (on Gen. xii. 2, Wü. p. 177).
 Rashi, sometimes quoted from Breithaupt's translation, 1714.
 S. = *Samuel*; s. = "see."
 Schöttg. = Schöttgen's *Horae Hebraicae*, Dresden and Leipzig, 1733.
 Sir. = the work of Ben Sira, i.e. the son of Sira. It is commonly called Ecclesiasticus (see *Clue 20 a*). The original Hebrew used in this work is that which has been edited, in part, by Cowley and Neubauer, Oxf. 1897; in part, by Schechter and Taylor, Camb. 1899; in part, by G. Margoliouth, *Jewish Quart. Rev.*, Oct. 1899 (also printed in *About Hebrew Manuscripts* (Frowde, 1905) by Mr E. N. Adler, who discovered the missing chapters).
 SS, see (iii) above.
 Steph. Thes. = Stephani *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae* (Didot).
 Sym. = Symmachus's version of O.T.
 Targ. (by itself) is used where only one Targum is extant on the passage quoted.
 Targ. Jer., Targ. Jon., and Targ. Onk., see Jer. Targ., Jon. Targ., and Onk., above.
 Tehillim = Midrash on Psalms, ed. Wünsche (2 vols.).
 Test. XII Patr. = Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs ed. Charles, 1908 (Gk., Clarendon Press, Eng., A. & C. Black).
 Theod. = Theodotion's version of O.T.
 Thes. Syr. = Payne Smith's *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Oxf. 1901.
 Tromm. = Trommius' *Concordance to the Septuagint*.
 Tryph. = the Dialogue between Justin Martyr and Trypho the Jew.
 Walton = *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta*, 1657.
 Wetst. = Wetstein's *Comm. on the New Testament*, Amsterdam, 1751.

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W.H. = Westcott and Hort's New Testament.

Wü. = Wünsche's translation of *Rabboth* etc., 1880—1909
(including *Mechilta*, *Pesikta Rab Kahana*, *Tehillim* etc.).

(a) A bracketed Arabic number, following Mk, Mt., etc., indicates the number of instances in which a word occurs in Mark, Matthew, etc., e.g. ἀγάπη Mk (ο), Mt. (ι), Lk. (ι), Jn (7).

(b) Where verses in Hebrew, Greek, and Revised Version, are numbered differently, the number of R.V. is given alone.

(c) In transliterating a Hebrew, Aramaic, or Syriac word, preference has often, but not invariably, been given to that form which best reveals the connection between the word in question and forms of it familiar to English readers. Where a word is not transliterated, it is often indicated (for the sake of experts) by a reference to Gesen., *Thes. Syr.*, Levy, or Levy *Ch.*