

readers are as well acquainted with the Gospel narrative, as with the Law and the Prophets, an important fact that cannot otherwise be accounted for, than by the certainty that as these communities had copies of the one, so also they possessed copies of the other. And it is very probable that as soon as an Ecclesia was organized under its appointed elders, and other servants, that each was furnished or took care to provide themselves, with copies of "The Word of God," and "The Testimony of Jesus the Messiah," or as Matthew's Original Gospel seemed to have been called among some of the early Nazarene writers, "The Oracles of the Lord."

When James, the brother of Jesus, and the first elder of the organized ecclesia of Jerusalem, about A. D. 60, wrote his epistle to the believers of the twelve tribes in dispersion, he makes more than a dozen references to the discourses of Jesus on the Mount, which masterpiece of Gospel truths is found only in Matthew's Gospel; and though James himself was among those who listened to that immortal sermon, yet in writing to many who had no personal knowledge of Jesus, or his teachings, he would not have quoted the sayings of the "Master" in conjunction with those scriptures held sacred by the Hebrew nation, if those sayings had not already been committed to writing, and well known to his fellow believers through the media of common documents, and these were undoubtedly Matthew's Hebrew Gospel, which must at that time have been in circulation among the Hebrew Naza-

renes, for more than twenty years. And when James in the same epistle refers to the patience of Job, and the end (*i. e.* death) of the Lord, he intimates that the account of the patient suffering of their Master was as familiar to them as that of the upright man of Uz; and as history of the one was embodied in their sacred writings, it is also evident that the record of the other was likewise current among them. And the teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Hebrew Gospel, he there designates as the "Royal Law, and the "Law of Liberty," because proclaimed by a scion of the family of David, and under the direct inspiration of Israel's Jehovah, and liberating the minds of all enlightened believers from sacrificial ceremonies and priestly mediations, and directing the attention of all to the author of righteousness and peace.

And when John, the exile of Patmos, penned the Revelation about A. D. 68, he frequently speaks of "the testimony of Jesus" in connection with, yet distinct from, the "Word of God" by which he doubtless intimates that the record of the life and teaching of Jesus as delineated in Matthew's Gospel was then, as well as the scriptures of Israel common among the ecclesias. And when he says that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, he intimates that the great and glorious theme of a coming Messiah, which forms the central figure in so many of their ancient prophecies, had the beginning of its fulfilment in the life work of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, and would be wholly accomplished