

As to Christ Himself: inevitably—or at least more than probably—He would inherit the poetical gifts of His race, immemorially poetical both in thought and speech. Moreover, He was a scion of the "House of David", and the poetical traditions of His remote ancestors would be, it is *a priori* probable, part of His home or family education. Further, conscious, as He was, from His childhood, even before that day when His mother, the Blessed Virgin, discovered the Child Jesus "disputing" with the Doctors in the Temple, and He answered her with, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—conscious from earliest childhood that He had a special and paramount Mission, as Prophet, Priest and King, inevitably Christ would diligently acquaint Himself with the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the Messianic literature, the prophecies and the psalms; and thus, as it were, from childhood breathing the very breath of the poetry of the Hebrew Scriptures, would, when He Himself spoke, not only reproduce the thought or matter of the Hebraic prophets and lyrists but also clothe His own words in the very form of the great masters of prophetic and lyrical literature. Finally, it is highly probable, *a priori*—indeed it is altogether likely—that when Christ essayed explicitly to train His disciples and to teach the people, instinctively He would adopt the method of the great Hebraic teachers of morals, the great preachers and prophets of His race, who were also poets, or would be acute psychologist enough independently to apply a method of teaching and preaching that would impress the minds and imaginations of His disciples and the people who heard Him. That is to say, it is to be expected that Christ would deliver His message and doctrine in a form and manner that would compel what He said to impress the minds and hearts of His hearers so as to make it all as readily retained as it was attentively heard and received; and this form would, for the most part, naturally be gnomic, rhythmical

and poetical, after the manner of the heightened and impassioned expression of the Hebrew moralists, seers, prophets, and lyrists. In short, the *a priori* probability is that Christ, by inheritance of racial genius, by training in family tradition, by self-cultivation in "the classics" of ancient Hebrew literature, prophecy and poetry, and by pedagogical instinct or acumen, as well as by realizing the value of the traditional method of the great teachers of the Hebrew people, would necessarily become, and express Himself, as a Poet. Nature, racial history, education, and unique and holy spiritual office would combine to compel Christ to speak with the beauty and impassioned utterance which is the essential manner of the supreme Poet.

As to St. Matthew or the author of the Matthæan Gospel: internal evidences from the text go to prove that he was most passionately Hebraic in his sense of the Messianic character and function of Christ; that he was "a close student" of the Hebrew Scriptures, especially of the Messianic literature; that he had his mind and heart packed with "the beauties" of Hebraic prophecy and poetry; that more than any other of the Evangelists, not even excepting James, the so-called "brother" of Christ, and St. John (of the Apocalypse), both of whom had the imaginative gifts of poets, St. Matthew had a distinct sense of poetical beauty and form and the gift of poetical expression; and that more than any other of the Evangelists, he had an "enthusiasm" for the literary form, and for the *ipsissima verba*, of Christ's discourses and sayings—an enthusiasm which, at any rate in impulse and degree, has its parallel in modern times in Boswell's *verbatim* appreciations of the substance and form of Johnson's utterances. The *a priori* probability is, therefore, that St. Matthew, or the author of the Matthæan Gospel, though writing in Greek, was, by racial genius, innate gift, scriptural erudition, and reverence for literary