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A Lost Verse of St. John's Gospel.

BY J. RENDEL HARRIS, LITT.D., LL.D., D.D., BIRMINGHAM.

WE are accustomed to the experience of finding that the received texts of ancient authors have been subject to accretion in the course of time, and it is one of the commonest results of critical study that a well-known passage is relieved of its cumbrous additions and presented in an attenuated form. This is especially noticeable in the text of the New Testament when it has passed through the hands of expert editors; sometimes whole verses disappear, such as the story of the angel troubling the pool, or the last twelve verses of Mark, or the series of glosses in the last chapters of Luke. It is not necessary to explore in this article the causes which have led to textual excess, nor, even if we concede the existence of such causes, are we disposed always to follow the conclusions of the editors who make allowance for them. Nothing, in our judgment, can be more fallacious than the too rigid application of a series of supposed canons of criticism, such as the preference for the harder reading, the shorter reading, and the like. In the present article we are going to affirm that not only is it sometimes true that the longer reading is correct, but we are going also to suggest that, in a particular case, a whole verse ought to be added to the text which does not appear in any existing known MS. or quoted version.

All modern students of the New Testament are familiar with the central position which is now occupied by the *Diatessaron of Tatian*, and especially by the commentary upon the same which was made in the fourth century by Ephrem, the great Syrian father. This commentary is at present only known by its Armenian translation, of which the Latin equivalent was published by the fathers of the Convent of St. Lazaro at Venice, and which is generally quoted under the name of its last editor, Dr. George Mösinger, of Salzburg. In this text, the distinction between the passages of the *Diatessaron* and Ephrem's commentary upon it is made by the use of special type for the Biblical matter and ordinary type for the interpretation. The careful student soon finds out that he cannot always be sure of the points where Ephrem moves from text to commentary or conversely. For example, in the seventeenth chapter of Matthew, where Jesus discusses with Peter the problem of the payment of tribute, we have a sequence like the follow-

ing in which we give the spacing of the text as in the edition of Mösinger :

Et addidit: *Vade ad mare et mitte ibi rete.* Quia me putarunt alienum, doceat se mare, me non solum sacerdotem esse, sed et regem. Vade ergo et tu quoque da, quasi unus ex alienis.

It was my good fortune to show that the whole of the last sentence ought to have been italicised; for I found it in a single Greek MS., known as Codex Algerinæ Peckover, as well as in the Arabic Harmony of Tatian, from which it was certain that the sentence, whatever it means, was a part of Tatian's text. It is a question to be reserved whether it is a part of the original text of Matthew or not. We only refer to it here in illustration of our statement that the transitions from one kind of type to the other in Mösinger are sometimes insecure.

Now let us turn to another passage in Ephrem's commentary, where again we will follow the editor and his MSS. in the selection of type. In the fourth chapter of John we find the following sequence :

Si scires eum qui dixit tibi, Da mihi de aqua ista ad bibendum, tu petiisses ab eo. Dicit ad eum mulier: Tibi non est situla et puteus profundus est. Dicit ei: Mea aqua e coelo descendit. Doctrina nempe est rerum sublimium, potus coelestis, ex quo qui bibunt, amplius non sitiunt.

Now if we examine carefully the unitalicised matter before us, we can hardly fail to conclude that it is composed both of text and commentary. The water that comes from heaven is explained to be the heavenly draught which Jesus gives. It is evident that the words, 'He saith to her, My water comes down from heaven,' are a part of the dialogue between Jesus and the woman, and follow naturally on the allusion to the water that comes up from beneath. They are an answer to the question, Whence hast Thou that living water? This sentence, then, belongs to Tatian's text of John. It is reasonable to believe also that the words were in his copy of the Gospel, and that they are not the work of an ordinary transcriber or interpreter. We infer, then, that the sentence

should be restored to the text of the Gospel, as well as to the spaced matter in Ephrem's commentary. They form an excellent parallel to those other sentences in which Jesus speaks of Himself as the living bread which came down from heaven. The existing text of John is in defect, by loss of an important sentence. It does not, however, appear that any other of the great Harmonies, such as the Liège Harmony of Dr. Plooiij, has anything to suggest the omission of the passage. Its restoration is due to the Syriac Diatessaron, and, as far as the present inquiry goes, to that only.

It is no slight satisfaction to have restored even a single sentence to the discourse of our Lord in the Fourth Gospel. Nor need we refrain from putting

the passage into the Film of a Commentary. The well into which the woman is peering downwards is *Tradition*; she says so; our father Jacob drank of this well and gave it to us: the well was what St. Peter calls *πατροπαρόδος*. The heaven toward which the Redeemer is pointing is *Illumination*; He says so. Here ends the commentary; I hope it has not obscured the text.

At this point I was touched on the sleeve by another writer who says that he also has commented on the lost verse, in the words:

An endless fountain of immortal drink
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

His comment is truly Johannine, and he says his name is John Keats.

The Messiahship of Jesus.

I.

The Evidence of St. Mark.

BY THE REVEREND J. O. F. MURRAY, D.D., SELWYN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN a paper¹ on 'The Witness of the Baptist,' I examined the first of the objections which Wendt brings against the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. Wendt's second objection turns on the difference between St. Mark and St. John with regard to the publication of the Messiahship of Jesus. This objection is urged afresh by Lord Charnwood in his vigorous and welcome contribution to the discussion of the Johannine problem in *According to Saint John*. An account, in which all public reference to Messiahship is strictly repressed until the final visit to Jerusalem, stands, no doubt, in startling contrast to an account, in which the first disciple to follow Jesus goes at once to call his brother saying, 'We have found the Messiah.' It is difficult to resist the assumption that the contrast amounts in fact to an irreconcilable contradiction.

The issue, however, is by no means as simple as this. We cannot, as Foakes-Jackson and Lake rightly insist, treat the term 'Messiah' as if it possessed a fixed and universally recognized content. It clearly meant one thing to the Jew and another to the Samaritan. The hopes that it

aroused in the heart of the aged Symeon in Jerusalem had very little in common with the hopes of Judas of Galilee. There is therefore no *a priori* objection to the hypothesis that the conditions were such as to make an indiscriminate use of the title in Galilee extremely dangerous. At the same time the Office or Offices connoted by it stood in an organic relation to 'the Kingdom of God.' And, if the title meant so much to Jesus that, as Lord Charnwood admits, He was ready to die rather than forgo His claim to it, it is incredible that He sprang His claim to the title on the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, in the last week of His ministry, entirely without preparation. 'The clear-cut sequence of facts, as St. Mark conceives them, concerning His declaration of Himself whether as "Messiah" or as "Son of God,"' which appeals so strongly to Lord Charnwood (p. 122) cannot be a complete account of this matter. There is room for an inquiry whether here again, as in regard to the witness of the Baptist, the accounts of St. Mark and St. John, so far from being in direct contradiction, are in fact complementary.

The issue is at once too deep and too wide to be limited to the discussion of the meaning and use of a

¹ THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, December 1925.