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BLASS'S PHILOLOGY OF THE GOSPELS.

Philology of the Gospels, by F. BLASS. Pp. 250. Macmillan, 1898. 4s. 6d. net.

THE title does not give a very clear idea of the contents of this interesting volume. It consists of twelve chapters, eight of which treat of the writings of St. Luke, especially upholding the theory of a double edition of the Gospel and Acts, while the remaining chapters are concerned with the general method of textual criticism in the N.T. and with the textual condition of the other Gospels. With regard to the date of St. Luke's Gospel, Blass takes the common-sense view that it must be determined by that of the Acts, which he considers to have been certainly written at the end of the 2nd year of St. Paul's imprisonment in Rome, i.e. in 59. He strongly controverts what he calls 'the vulgar axiom, *omne vaticinium post eventum*,' which has been held to prove that the prophecy contained in ch. xxi. vv. 20-24, could not have been written before the year 71; and shows that we have undoubted instances of *vaticinia ante eventum* not only in the O.T. but even in later history, as in the case of Savonarola's very definite prediction of the storming of Rome, printed thirty years before its accomplishment in 1527. He further points out that the preaching of the Gospel by St. Paul and the Twelve must have been speedily followed by the appearance of written narratives to give permanence to their teaching, and that it is to such narratives that allusion is made in the preface to St. Luke's Gospel.

Speaking of the authority of MSS. he gives several instances of readings, wrongly adopted in our R.V. from the MSS. of highest repute, e.g. in Luke ix. 54 foll., where the A.V. was 'Lord wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, *even as Elias did*?' But he turned and rebuked them *and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them;*' while the R.V. omits the words in italics, so losing all that gives point and interest to the passage. The omission, as he points out, is easily explained by the fear of giving a sanction to the Marcionite heresy, which opposed the spirit of the New to that of the Old Testament. Among other passages in which he advocates readings having a very slight

support from MSS. may be mentioned Acts vi. 9, 'There arose certain of the synagogue which is called the synagogue of the Libertines and Cyrenians and Alexandrians,' where, for the unintelligible *Λιβερτίνων*, he has happily restored *Λιβυστίνων*. More doubtful are the following, Luke iii. 23 *αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὡσεὶ ἑτῶν τριάκοντα ἀρχόμενος*, where he reads *ἐρχόμενος* 'when he came (to the baptism);' and John ii. 4 *τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι*; where he follows the paraphrase of Nonnus in reading *ἡ* for *καί*, translating 'What is that to me or to you?'¹ But can we imagine our Lord thus repudiating all interest in the marriage-feast in which his mother was evidently much concerned? Would this have been consistent with his subsequent action? Whereas the check given to his mother's attempt to direct how he should act is quite in accordance with what we read in Luke ii. 49 and Mark iii. 33 foll.

About seventy pages of the volume are taken up in the defence of the position that there were two editions of St. Luke's writings, one intended for Theophilus and the Churches of the East, the other for the use of the Romans. Our received text, (α) which is mainly Alexandrian, has preserved the corrected and more concise edition of the Acts, and the earlier and more diffuse edition of the Gospel. The Western text (β), as preserved in Codex D and the Philoxenian version, and supported by the quotations in the early Latin Fathers, has the opposite characteristics.² In order to prove that the variations contained in the β form of the Acts proceed from Luke himself and are not due to the carelessness or the invention of a copyist, Blass examines the language of

¹ Prof. Ramsay, in the book entitled *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* p. 84, suggests that the same sense may be obtained from the ordinary reading; but the formula is too well established to admit of such an interpretation, which would rather be expressed by *τί πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ σέ*; or *τί πρὸς ἡμᾶς*; as in John xxi. 22 and Matt. xxvii. 4. It is true Blass refers to 1 Cor. v. 12, *τί μοι καὶ τοὺς ἑξω κρίνειν*; but that use is different from this, and it would be unintelligible without the infinitival subject.

² Observe that Blass here remodels his original hypothesis, which was that β (the Western text) was a rough draft, and that α (the accepted Eastern text) represents the corrected final copy. He now holds that Luke kept his original rough draft for himself and made from this two successive copies, the older following more closely the first sketch, while the later departed from it with more freedom and frequently gave an abridged text.

these interpolations and comes to the result that their style is absolutely identical with Luke's known style. He further points out that the interpolations sometimes contain information which could only have come from St. Luke, and that the Eastern text (α)

α

καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν
καὶ ἐπιρίψαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια
ἐπὶ τὸν πῶλον ἐπεβίβασαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

In other cases the advantage is with the unabridged form as in xii. 19, where β has only 'I will say to my soul: thou hast much goods, be merry' which is certainly less striking than the α form 'soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' But in either case can we conceive that a mere copyist could have ventured on such changes? There are however occasional *additions* in the western text of the Gospel, such as the famous interpolation of vi. 5, in reference to work done on the Sabbath. Blass regards this as genuine, but thinks it was intentionally omitted in the edition designed for Eastern congregations, as likely to be misunderstood there, while there was no reason for its omission in the West. Another and still more important interpolation is the section on the woman taken in adultery which is wrongly placed in John viii. 1-11. On the authority of the late Ferrar MSS. Blass would insert this at the end of Luke xxi. He explains its omission in α on the same grounds as the omission of the paragraph on the Sabbath, and thinks it may have been left out of β by the Roman Church early in the second century to avoid the charge of having an unauthenticated Gospel. For proof that the style is Lucan he refers to his edition of the Gospel.

So far, I think, it may be allowed that Blass does not go beyond the limit of legitimate hypothesis: in what follows he seems to me to be rather carried away by his imagination. Starting with the fact that Mark and Luke were both occupied with the history of the foundation of Christianity, and must frequently have been in each other's company, and that for the early

sometime suffers from excessive abbreviation. Turning to the converse case of the Gospel, where the β or Western edition is the abridged form, Blass cites cases where the abridgment is an improvement, as in xix. 35.

β

καὶ ἀγαγόντες τὸν πῶλον ἐπέριψαν τὰ
ἱμάτια αὐτῶν ἐπ' αὐτὸν καὶ ἐπεβίβασαν
τὸν Ἰησοῦν.

chapters of the Acts, Luke must have been indebted to some other authority, he suggests that this authority was Mark, who had probably written a continuation of his Gospel, and whose name is markedly introduced in Acts xii. 12. But, as we gather from the Aramaisms which are found in these early chapters, Luke's authority must have been Aramaic: Mark therefore wrote in Aramaic. Turning now to the Gospel of Mark, we find many expressions, either in the text or in various readings, which remind us of Luke, e.g. *ἦλθεν εἰ ἄρα τι εὔρησει, τὸ ἱκανὸν ποιεῖν, τιθέναί τὰ γόνατα*, etc. How are we to explain this? The answer is that Luke, among others, translated for his own use Mark's Aramaic Gospel, and that our present text contains a number of conflate readings which arose by the collating of the different translations. Considering, however, that the best established tradition about St. Mark is that he acted as interpreter to St. Peter, and that we nowhere find a hint of his Gospel being written in any language but Greek, it cannot be said that the chances are in favour of Blass's hypothesis.

I may notice in conclusion that some confusion is caused in pp. 199 and 201 by the use of the capitals A and B¹ instead of the Greek letters α and β , apparently to denote the different forms of St. Mark's Gospel. If I am not mistaken, there is a further confusion in the former page of A for β and *v.v.* However, I do not feel at all certain of the writer's meaning here.

J. B. MAYOR.

¹ Not A (Antiochena) and R (Romana) as in p. 107.