

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON ROMANS IX. 5.

As the Editor kindly permits me to return to this subject, I will begin with an admission somewhat to my own disadvantage. On second thoughts, I agree very much with Dr. Sanday in thinking that my previous paper attributed too much weight to the stop, as found in the three or four Manuscripts,—ancient and important as these unquestionably are. I may add, however, that I could not have really intended to claim the stop as in itself sufficient “to settle the question of punctuation;” for, indeed, I spoke of it expressly as only a contributing witness, and as of decisive weight when “taken along with other evidence.” So that I shall probably be acquitted of any very unpardonable exaggeration in the terms I employed.

Nevertheless, the presence of the stop in the Manuscripts referred to is an interesting circumstance, and one which should not have been left so much out of sight in the critical editions.<sup>1</sup> I venture to add that Dr. Sanday appears to me to underestimate its value. Does it not, at all events, serve to refute the assertion sometimes made, that this punctuation is *new*, that it is nothing but a modern innovation? Such is the substance of Dr. Liddon’s objection, to which, perhaps too hastily, I assumed that Canon Farrar assented. It is, of course, very largely a matter of opinion how much or how little the stop is in itself worth. But what cannot, I suppose, be disputed is this, that there were copyists so early as the fifth century, perhaps the fourth, men whose native tongue most probably was Greek, who saw no impropriety or incorrectness in dividing the sentence at *σάρκα*, and commencing a new sentence with the words, *ὃ ὦν ἐπὶ πάντων θεός*. All, accordingly, that I now wish to contend for is that the Verse *may* be properly, *i.e.*, grammatically, so divided and so interpreted. I think, too, that I may now call attention to the fact, as one of interest in connection with the Verse, that neither Canon Farrar nor Dr. Sanday has denied, or said anything that involves a denial of this position. On the contrary, and a little to my surprise, they both seem prepared to accept it, even though somewhat doubtfully and with hesitation. They neither of them speak with confidence of the Authorized punctuation. The one observes: “Lastly, I had come to the very same conclusion as that which Dr. Smith approves in Dr. Sanday, only that I had said that I personally believed the reference of the clause to be

<sup>1</sup> Woide has marked it in his edition of the Alexandrine, and Lachmann and Tischendorf have the stop in their respective *texts*.

to Christ, while Dr. Sanday says that the 'application to our Lord appears perhaps a little the more probable of the two.'" And the other repeats his previous acknowledgment of the doubtfulness of the Verse, writing in THE EXPOSITOR, "Nor, in fact, can I be convinced by the arguments on either side that the passage is one on which it is possible to have a very strong and decided opinion. There is much to be said on both sides, but nothing quite conclusive."

But further, let me ask, in the presence of this hesitation on the part of both my critics, what is the value of that unanimity of the Fathers to which Canon Farrar so triumphantly points? Is their testimony to be so unceremoniously put aside, as only warranting a slight probability after all? I cannot but think that those who so readily follow the Fathers in their doctrine of the incarnate Logos might have shewn a little more reliance upon them in regard to the construction of this Verse.

I notice that Dr. Sanday speaks almost as if he doubted the correctness of my report as to the presence of the point in the Alexandrine manuscript, while Canon Farrar quotes my words, "evidently *a prima manu*," used in reference to the same Manuscript, very much as if he too intended to suggest the same doubt. May I beg the two doubters (if they are such) to take the first opportunity of going to the British Museum to look at the Manuscript for themselves? They will easily gain access to it; and, if their eyesight be tolerably good, I venture to say they will be perfectly satisfied (from the colour of the ink and from the existence of the space) that the stop is a real stop, and from the first hand. The same will be found in the Ephraim Manuscript (C), so far, at least, as the *space* is concerned; although it may be uncertain whether the little cross which serves for a stop is as old as the writing. But the important thing is the *space* and about this there can be no doubt whatever.

In regard to the Vatican (B), I readily admit, the age of the stop may be fairly considered doubtful. Cardinal Pitra, by whom on one occasion the Manuscript was shewn to me, and to whom I pointed it out, observed at once that it might be of later date than the writing. On the other hand, Tischendorf holds that many of the stops in B are *a prima manu*; and I do not know of any good reason why this particular point should not be one of them.

I agree, then, with my critics that the presence of this stop in the Manuscripts does not actually determine the construction of the Verse. For this, as I observed before, we must look to the analogy of St. Paul's Epistles in his use of the word *θεός*; and that analogy

ought, I submit, to have the greatest weight in deciding the question. St. Paul, then, as I pointed out, although he uses the word *θεός* more than five hundred times, has never applied it to Christ, unless it be in this doubtful case, and in another which is equally disputable (Tit. ii. 13). It is *not*, then, I venture to say, the most natural to think that he has so applied the word here. Nor can I withhold the expression of my surprise that any one should be satisfied to rest in the conclusion that Christ was represented by the Apostle as "God over all," on the small amount of probability which it appears, on the shewing of Canon Farrar and Dr. Sanday themselves, is all that can be claimed for that proposition, so far as this Verse is concerned.

In reply to this serious objection, however, Canon Farrar, referring to several passages in St. Paul's Epistles, asks the question, Whether any one, with these before him, "can have one moment's doubt that St Paul would . . . speak of Christ as God?" I must not here discuss the passages referred to; but I may say that I have looked carefully at them all, and that I entirely fail to find in them any indication that the Apostle (who does not appear to have held the Logos doctrine) could or would have applied the term in question in the way supposed. At any rate, the fact remains in all its weight that he has never done so in any passage which does not fairly and grammatically admit of a different interpretation.

My last-named criticizer has entered into various details in defence of the Authorized punctuation. Into these I must not attempt to follow him in this place. One only I may perhaps be allowed to notice. He asks the question, "Why this abrupt doxology at the very threshold of the argument, bursting into praise in the midst of a most sad argument, changing an elegy into a hymn?" The question is one which scarcely needs an answer, beyond the remark that such a sentence is in accordance with the Apostle's style. But I may note there is a similar ascription of praise in the midst of an argument equally sad, or, indeed, more so, in Romans i. 25. The words are surely very appropriate in their connection, following as they do an enumeration of the privileges of Israel, culminating in the gift of the Christ. The paragraph seems quite naturally to draw to a climax, almost as if it had said, These and these are the great honours and advantages of my brethren, God be praised for them. "He who is God over all is [or be] blessed for ever. Amen."

G. VANCE SMITH.

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