

On the whole, then, it seems that the true verdict as to the style and diction of the Pastorals in relation to Pauline authorship should be simply *Nil obstat*: the issue must be settled on other grounds. This is very much Dr. Peake's attitude in his *Introduction to the New Testament*. He feels the linguistic difficulties to be about equal against "Ephesians" and against the Pastorals (especially if "Ephesians" be Pauline); and if on the whole he sums up *pro* in the former case and *con.* in the latter, the difference turns for him on those other grounds. To this attitude I have no objection in principle; but I hope to be able to change the balance on the remaining grounds, as he conceives it, by what now follows.

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#### AN ORACLE OF THE LORD IN ISAIAH XXXII.

THE words and deeds of the Lord Jesus will be more clearly understood when the origin of the four Gospels is more clearly understood. For this purpose it is much to be desired that students of the question should fairly consider whether Papias did not put us all on the right track while we ever since have declined to understand his meaning. It is here to be suggested that Papias, in speaking of the *Oracles of the Lord* of which he wrote an *Exposition*, meant select and precious words and passages of the Greek Bible which foreshadowed the earthly life of Christ the Lord: that, in fact, he made a collection such as that which "Matthew" had made before him, of prophecies concerning Jesus as Messiah, and that *Dominical* (κυριακά) Oracles are those concerning Christ and only in a distant and secondary way were, or contained, Sayings of Christ, while any lengthy discourses found no place whatever in his collection. And a single instance of these Oracles is presently to be treated.

This idea was propounded by the anonymous writer of *The Oracles ascribed to Matthew by Papias of Hierapolis, a Contribution to the Criticism of the New Testament, with Appendices on the authorship of the De vita contemplativa, the date of the Crucifixion, and the date of the Martyrdom of Polycarp*, London, 1894, pp. 274. The author is the late John Burslem Gregory, LL.D. The volume is the result of a sound and thorough investigation that well repays study. The present writer had written *The Oracles in the New Testament*, so far as the question of Papias was concerned, before the anonymous work was brought to his notice by the present Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. No doubt the idea is "revolutionary," as it has been called by Dr. Moffatt. But other revolutionary ideas have from time to time emerged in the Christian Church, and in the realm of discovery. The Christian faith was itself revolutionary. St. Paul was revolutionary when he said: *This one thing—forgetting the things that are behind*, by which he meant especially the Covenant of Circumcision and the Sacrificial System, to which he had just before made reference (Phil. iii. 3, 10, 14), two things that a Jew would never forget. It is just possible, I believe it is certain, that those who regard the title of Papias's work as throwing light upon the discourses of Jesus are quite on the wrong track. In any case, it is a matter well worth considering. Neither Lightfoot nor his antagonist, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, had any idea of it thirty-five years ago. They both assumed that the *Dominical Oracles* of Papias's title were sayings of Jesus. Yet the assumption was on the whole barren of result. At least, it did not result in bringing the world to a clearer understanding of the origin of the Gospels or of portions of them.

Since that time the Septuagint has been made far more available by the labours of Dr. Swete and his collaborators at Cambridge, and has naturally been far more widely and

profitably studied than before. The time is not far distant when it will be seen that the Greek Bible was the cradle of the Christian faith. When this is seen, it will be easy to admit that the Hebrew Bible never could have nursed it. It will further be seen that the Massoretic text was intended not to nurse it. The Hebrew authorities held with Aeschylus,

οὐ χρὴ λέοντος σκύμνον ἐν πόλει τρέφειν,  
ἦν δ' ἐκτραφῆ τις, τοῖς τρόποις ὑπηρετεῖν—(Ar. Ran. 1431),<sup>1</sup>

especially when the whelp was of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." It will be seen, in fact, that some slight alterations were made in the Hebrew authorised text at the Synod of Jamnia about 90 A.D. for the purpose of upsetting the Argument from Prophecy, which was then a weapon handled so powerfully and easily by the Christian controversialist against the Jewish defender.

The discovery of traces of the Argument from Prophecy at work is a fascinating pursuit. Some of these traces are provided for us in the apostolic statements: *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying*, and very numerous they are in most of the New Testament books. Every one of them is an invitation to look further, and when we have understood these to find more. Between the Greek Bible (assisted occasionally by the Hebrew) and the Greek Testament with Papias' statements to guide the track, it is probable that students will be able to go far in this quest which is only just beginning.

Two salient points of interest can here be mentioned: the former directly affects our belief in the mental attitude of the Master-prophet Himself. Was He conscious of being the Messiah? or did He resolve to be the Messiah? Which is the right conception of His mind? In recent times if we take

<sup>1</sup> "Nurse not the lion's whelp within the city: Nurs'd up, thou must comply with all his ways."

up a religious or a theological work we shall probably see the term "Messianic consciousness" employed. What does this *mean*? is the first question to be asked. What *does* it mean? is the last. For the mind is utterly baffled. Was He born with this consciousness? was it implanted in Him in childhood, or at the Baptism, or when? Was it superior to Him, or interior to Him, or exterior to Him? Did it descend upon Him, as the Gnostics thought, at Baptism and depart from Him in a moment on the Cross? Was it a descending rain, or was it a haze that crept upon His coloured view, or was it a haunting spell that hung round Him, or was it a phase of thought that now and then bathed Him in light, or was it an endowment that passed to Him before or after birth? Is this the sort of consciousness that a Messianic purpose assumes or in which it is invested? Or, on the other hand, is consciousness a hopelessly false, futile, and improper term altogether? Is not every one of the above notions untrue to the written word of the Epistles and the Gospels? Is not the sphere of His Messiahship that of the will, not that of the intellect or that of the emotion? Should we not speak of His "Messianic will," "Messianic resolution," "Messianic purpose," and abolish "Messianic consciousness" for ever? If so, we should then be in line with the hallowed words of the Psalmist, *Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God,* and with *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* The moral effort was not a work of less unflinching determination than is here expressed, nor was it an easier exertion of the will that must continue until *it is finished.*

Now suppose that we find by searching that the Lord Jesus set Himself, so long as He was a free agent, and not either an infant or a prisoner, deliberately to fulfil that which He read in the Psalms, and in Zechariah, and in 2 Samuel, concerning David and Jesus and the Lord—for this is actu-

ally what we find—then we have a most important and convincing confirmation of His purpose. It begins to shine with a clearer outline than before, while the shadows cast by it are darker and blacker. Even the fulfilments by Judas of the prophecies concerning him under the name of Judas or Judah become clearer, or shall we not say, more flagrant : for Judas begins to appear as a disciple whose intelligence is only equalled by that of Peter among the Twelve, and as one who was in the secret place of prophecy.

The other point is related to this and is fascinating by reason of its difficulty in contrast with the clearness of the former. When the Master is not a free agent, but an infant or a prisoner, we find that His doings and sufferings are also reported as fulfilments, and the question now is how far we are to say that the actions which His followers attributed to Him as fulfilments were real actions at all. This is a very large question which does not at present admit of a clear general answer. Probably for some time to come the only answer possible will be that the apostolic writers embroidered real history with details from prophecy which they treated as evidence of fact, but how far these details extend is just what cannot easily be determined. We can see that there were wide tracts of which they have told little, vaguely, variously ; for instance, as regards Joseph, the names of the Twelve, the locality of incidents, the numbers of individuals involved ; while, on the other hand, we cannot be blind to the possibilities that even coincidences with the word of prophecy may both consist with and consist of facts of history, and that some of these coincidences may be unintentional on the part of the evangelists. Still the first thing to be done is to ascertain and set forth the precise amount of coincidence between the phraseology of the Gospels and that of the Greek Bible. There are abundant encouragements to the quest of this Holy Grail. When, after trying to pursue

the movements of Jesus from place to place in obedience to the prophecies of the Psalmist, we find such an astonishing coincidence as ἀντάλλαγμα, *recompense, exchange*, in Mark viii. 37 with *the recompense of thy Christ* in Psalm lxxxix. 51, it will take much convincing to make us doubt that the coincidence was intentional on the part of the evangelist or to doubt that the Psalm was then in Greek before the Master's eye and mind.

These questions, however, are far too wide for the present paper, which aims at nothing more than to treat of a point which the Gospels repeatedly make concerning the secrecy and retirement of Jesus, and to show that this was due to His deliberate fulfilment of prophecy. The oracle was Isaiah xxxii. 1 ff. : "For behold a king, a righteous [king], shall be king, and rulers with judgment shall rule. And THE MAN shall be hiding his words, and he shall be hidden as from rushing water ; and he shall appear in Sion as a river rushing gloriously (ἐνδοξος) in a thirsty land. And no longer shall they be confident (πεποιθότες) upon men, but they shall give their ears to hear, and the heart of them that are feeble (τῶν ἀσθενούντων) shall come near to hear, and the tongues that stammer shall quickly learn to speak peace."

After the Greek Bible has been tested in scores of passages as the guide of the Master's action, it is too late to pretend that it was nothing of the sort ; the assumption made in this paper is that it was His guide here as elsewhere. At the Baptism He became the Elect of God, the Son of God, THE MAN. He resolved to do the will of God, as it was written of Him, of THE MAN. It therefore became His duty to do what none would have expected of Him, to *hide His words*, and to *be hidden*. This He did ; He hid His words in parables, and He hid Himself from time to time in seclusion. He also endeavoured to seal the lips of those whom He healed because they *were feeble*, but so much the more they published it.

I. Let us take one of the points in the last line first. The Alexandrine MS. of the Greek Bible is that which I have found in almost every instance of a very great number to represent the form of text that was in the hands of the Lord and the apostles. This MS. (A) has two slight variations of its own, ἀσθενῶν, which is unimportant, for ἀσθενούντων, and προσέξει, which is more important, for προσήξει (*shall come to him*). Now προσέξει τοῦ ἀκούειν means *shall attend* (sc. τὸν νοῦν) *in order to hear*. This is remarkable, for it represents the sick as being more anxious to hear than to be healed, or at least as anxious to hear. Now we observe the way in which Luke introduces his Sermon on the level place: “a great multitude of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were troubled of unclean spirits were being healed (ἐθεραπεύοντο) and all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came forth from him and healed them all.” This looks as if Luke was working on the oracle, but perhaps rather with the reading προσήξει. Luke then proceeds with the Sermon, but before he has gone eight verses in the report of it (Luke vi. 27) we have, “But I say unto you *that hear*” (τοῖς ἀκ.). Now it was not necessary to add the words *that hear*. Matthew does not add them. And they might be easily passed over as meaningless. But in the light of the oracle they shine with meaning: here were the people that *had come to hear* or *gave heed to hear*. And there is nothing but the oracle to give them meaning.

A somewhat different turn has been given to the same idea of the oracle in Mark vi. 55. “They ran round . . . and began to carry round in beds those that were sick (τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας), where they *heard* he was (ὅπου ἤκουον ὅτι ἔστιν). And whithersoever he entered into villages . . . they laid *the sick* (τοὺς ἀσθενούντας) in the marketplaces and besought

him. . . ." This seems to rest upon the previous words of the oracle, "*They shall no longer be confident on men, but on THE MAN, and shall give (turn) their ears to hear*"—where He is, in order to obtain His healing. The next words in Mark, *touch him*, etc., look very much like a reference to *προσῆξει, come near*.

It may well be asked why, if this is so remarkable a fulfilment, does Mark not say so. The answer is, first, that he was so beset in his Gospel with fulfilments that he was unable to specify them all, and had to be content with a few as typical of the rest. But secondly, he has, in fact, cited another verse of Isaiah upon this subject immediately after (Mark vii. 6 = Isa. xxix. 13). "*This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. . . .*" What a contrast to *the heart of them that are sick!* *These gave their ears to hear*: they included many Gentiles: *the people of Israel gave the service of their lips*.

But we have only to look a few verses further in the same chapter and we see that the order of events in Mark is the order of events in Isaiah xxxii., *and the tongues that stammer shall quickly learn to speak peace*. For unto the *stammerer* (*μογιλάλον*) whom they bring to Him Jesus says, *Ephratha*, and the bond of *his tongue* was loosed and *he spake* plain. Now, as Alford shows, this particular Hebrew word is found in Isaiah xxxv. 6 (close neighbour of xxxii.), where the Greek is *and clear shall be the tongue of the stammerers* (*τρανή . . . γλώσσα μογιλάλων*). Considering that *μογιλάλος* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and nowhere else in the Old Testament, it is quite certain that Mark took the word from Isaiah xxxv. Nor is there much doubt that he took the order from Isaiah xxxii. For no sooner is the miracle performed than the Lord enjoins silence; *He hides His words*: but again in vain.

In my opinion there is every reason to suppose that this



miracle of healing took place : I see no reason to doubt it. But the question may be raised whether the time and the place and the details were as described in Mark, and this we cannot solve.

II. But we must pass on to the earlier part of Isaiah xxxii., though there is much more to be said concerning the hiding of the words and of Himself. There is a verse, John ii. 25, which has escaped notice generally and has never, I think, been rightly understood. “ *Many trusted (ἐπίστευσαν) in his name* when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not trust (ἐπίστευεν) himself to them, for that he knew all [men], and because he needed not that any should testify concerning THE MAN (τοῦ ἀνθ.); for he knew (ἐγίνωσκεν) what was in THE MAN (τί ἦν ἐν τῷ ἀνθ.).” The R.V. came halfway to expressing the pointed antithesis *trusted . . . trusted*, but only halfway. This then should be restored. Now the underlying idea is manifest when we refer to Isaiah xxxii. But, although we all know that ὁ ἀνθ., *the man*, can stand for the individual and does so elsewhere, we may very easily see that in this verse it conveys more. Let any one refer to Westcott’s note and ask if it satisfies him. What is the point of Jesus not needing that any should bear witness concerning man generically ? And what is the point of the evangelist in saying that Jesus (as does elsewhere Jehovah, Jer. xvii. 10) *was coming to discover* what was in the individual with whom He dealt ? The insuperable objection is that there is no individual in question. Therefore, 25b is useless ; but John does not waste words : he would not have said of the supposed individual what he had just said of mankind in the most comprehensive terms. There is therefore not enough to satisfy us here in Westcott’s note.

Now if we open the door to Isaiah xxxii. we see daylight. Many trusted in His name, which has been already described as *Messiah*, Christ, the Son of God, *King* of Israel. Here,

then, is a trace of Isaiah xxxii. underlying the narrative. They trusted in His name but without the deeper trust in Him, because they saw His miracles. The Argument from His Miracles is sometimes an inadequate ground of trust or faith, implies the evangelist, and this is noteworthy. He would not say this of the Argument from the Moral Character, nor of the Argument from Prophecy. But Jesus did not meet this inadequate trust of theirs by a similar trust on His part, for that He was by way of discerning all men, in the course of His experience, and particularly because He had no need that any one should for the present resolve to bear witness in public that Jesus was THE MAN of Isaiah's prophecy, for He Himself was by way of discerning the full meaning of that prophecy of THE MAN.

John here recognises what he does not often recognise, the gradual growth of the Lord's resolution, or rather, the gradual confirmation of it, since it can only "grow" by contact with events and experience. "He learned his obedience by the things that he suffered." This being so, he proceeds to say in other words—what Jesus had just said twenty verses before—that His hour was not yet come. The hour for any one to stand forth among the Jews generally and say, "This is the Christ, *the King*, THE MAN," was not yet. Even Nicodemus was about to visit Him only by night. He should hide even His conversations (λόγους). Not yet should He appear in Sion as a river rushing gloriously. The aorist μαρτυρήσῃ implies, as usual, an act of resolution by the witness whoever he should be. Jesus had no need of such a witness whether to declare Him or to confirm His resolution. It may even be that He was Himself surprised at His own miracles. Even later, in the thanksgiving over Lazarus (John xi. 41 f.) there is a trace of this feeling. But what is manifest is that this was too soon, not for any one to tell Him—the idea of *bearing witness* on such a subject is really

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absurd—but for any one to tell the world of Him, to bear witness of Him in the usual and natural sense (John i. 7, 8, 15, iii. 26, v. 31 ff., viii. 13 ff., x. 25, xv. 26, etc.) Thence it follows that He is THE MAN, as Isaiah said. For He was coming to see, to realise (if we may use the word) the full meaning of THE MAN.

Thus the meaning is exceedingly simple and exceedingly clear, when once the point of view is seized. The whole of St. John is the same. It has only been made difficult by being overlaid with ponderous commentaries. That the evangelist had his own point of view is no peculiarity of his. We moderns are to blame for not endeavouring to discover it. Instead of going to him for sympathy after we have made him a Sphinx that cannot sympathise we should take blame for our own poverty of sympathy, for our inability to see what he saw. The whole perplexity concerning the Messianic Secret, about which so much has been written in recent years, finds its solution in the understanding of this oracle, of which the evangelists saw the fulfilment to be part of the deliberate purpose of the Lord.

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