

with the whole old world—under them as He was under the law. Whether such a view is taught anywhere in the Epistle remains to be seen. It certainly cannot be said to be taught here.

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NOTES ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

(I.—VII.)

THE history of the early Christian Church has been studied of late years with special care, and the unique importance of the record transmitted to us in the Acts of the Apostles has in consequence been more distinctly recognised than before. But its language has not received from scholars and critics the same minute attention that has been bestowed upon the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John. Men persuade themselves perhaps that the study of historians' language has little bearing on the facts which they detail. But this view does not apply at all events to a history which recorded language, sentiments, and actions while they were still fresh in the memory of living men. Even in purely narrative sections graphic touches of truth and rich colouring of facts are often lost to the English reader. I propose then to point out some details, which can only be gathered from study of the Greek text. It is doubtless disappointing, after all the ability and industry recently devoted to the Revised Version, to turn still to the Greek text as a treasure house of knowledge, not to be found in either English Version, valuable as both are. But the position of an independent student is more favourable to minute criticism of language than that of a revision committee; and if I am not mistaken, individual criticism

has still work left to do in the Acts of the Apostles. I proceed then to give my readers some of my own gleanings in this field for whatever they may be worth.

i. 3. The extent and nature of the intercourse which our risen Lord maintained with His disciples during the forty days is of the deepest interest, both by reason of its own spiritual significance, and on account of the variation of different narratives. Now a singularly clear and expressive summary of His visits is given in the words *ὄπτανόμενος δι' ἡμερῶν τεσσ.*, reminding us a little of 1 Corinthians xv. 5-7. The unusual part. pres. *ὄπτανόμενος* (corresponding to a substantive *ὄπτασία* elsewhere used for a heavenly vision) sets exactly before us the visible manifestations by which He, from time to time, revealed to His disciples His unseen presence: during forty days He showed Himself to their bodily sight. Now the older version "*being seen of them*" fails to express the occasional nature of these visits; the Revised loses the distinctness of actual sight in the less definite term *appearing*, and introduces an incorrect scriptural phrase *by the space*, which always expresses continuous action or duration throughout certain limits of time or space, and not occasional occurrences.

i. 6. Both versions suggest the idea of a fresh assembly and reappearance of our Lord by the words, *when they were come together*, as if the Greek had been *συνεληλυθότες*. But it is really *συνελθόντες ἡρώτων*, *they coming together began to ask*, and intimates apparently that immediately on hearing their Lord's charge they came together, perhaps gathered round Him, to inquire His will concerning the future.

i. 10. We gather naturally from the statement, that *two men stood by them in white apparel*, in the description of the Ascension, that these heavenly visitants stood beside the disciples on earth; but *παρειστήκεισαν* states merely that they presented themselves, or *stood before them*, apparently

in the heavens into which they were intently gazing, much as Moses and Elijah are represented on the mount of transfiguration.

i. 14. The words *with the women* suggest that a definite congregation of believing women had already been formed; but the Gospels never speak of *the women*, except where certain women have been mentioned immediately before, and the Greek *σὺν γυναῖξίν* indicates merely the presence of women headed by the mother of Jesus.

i. 17-20. It is obvious to every reader that the rhetorical account of Judas' fate, and the local references to the people of Jerusalem and their language, cannot form part of the speech of Peter, but that *vv.* 18, 19 must be placed in a parenthesis, as due to the historian. But this lands us in a further difficulty; for *v.* 20 is obviously not a continuation of the speech from *v.* 17, but a scriptural quotation, referring to the death of Judas related in the two previous verses. And an examination of the passages themselves confirms this view that they were quoted by the subsequent historian; for the words *ἑπαυλις* and *ἐπισκοπήν* refer to pastoral and episcopal functions of an Apostle, which could not be fully realised till after the foundation of the Christian Church. The parenthesis must therefore be extended to embrace *v.* 20, and the speech of Peter is resumed at *v.* 21, with the appropriate words *δεῖ οὖν*, answering to *ἔδει* in *v.* 16. What then is to become of the reference to the Book of Psalms in *v.* 16? A careful examination of *v.* 17 in the Greek solves the difficulty. The opening word *ὅτι* has been mistranslated. For *ὅτι* in the language of St. Luke means *that* or *because*, and connects together two clauses of a double sentence. It is often rightly rendered *for* in a strictly causal sense (= because), but cannot introduce a separate explanatory sentence, like that before us in our versions. In this place *ὅτι* means *that*, and the two verses form one sentence, as follows: *It was needful that the Scripture*

should be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost forewarned us by the mouth of David concerning Judas, which became guide to them that took Jesus, that he had been numbered among us and received a portion in this ministry. It appears from this that the language of the Book of Psalms, to which the Apostle is referring, is the warning of Psalm xli. 9, that one who had been numbered among them was to be a traitor. He does not quote the words; but all his hearers knew them well, for Christ's warning, followed by Judas' treachery, had imprinted them on all their hearts: "I know whom I have chosen, but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against Me." It was only natural for Peter to shrink at that time from more precise repetition of the words; but his thought is quite distinct.

i. 18. Our versions read "*with the reward,*" but the Greek is *ἐκ μισθοῦ*, *out of the price*, and suggests at once Zechariah xi. 12, "So they weighed for my *price* (*μισθόν*, LXX.) thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly *price* that I was prized at of them." The same term *μισθὸν ἀδικίας* recurs in 2 Peter ii. 15.

i. 25. The spirit of the assembly in regard to their lost brother is misrepresented in our versions, for they imply a special purpose in his fall, "*that he might go,*" whereas the Greek *πορευθῆναι*, *to go*, merely states its result.

i. 23-26. We come next to the election of Matthias. The Revised Version is almost painfully literal in rendering the words of prayer, *show of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen*, but seems to me to miss the spirit by retaining the word *show*. For the Greek is *ἀνάδειξον*, as in the case of the *appointment* of the seventy: and the prayer is not that God would *show* to them the one whom He had chosen, but that He would *declare* him through the medium of the lot. The assembly had already *appointed* (*ἔστησαν*) Joseph

Barsabbas and Matthias (not *put forward*) ; and did not now *give lots for them*, but *gave them lots*, *i.e.* they handed lots to the two selected candidates to place in some sort of balloting urn ; and the lot which first leapt out on its being shaken determined the successful candidate. This decision of the lot, following on their prayer, was accepted as the declaration of God's will ; and Matthias was accordingly selected the twelfth Apostle (*συγκατεψηφίσθη*), not simply *numbered with the eleven*, which suggests some inferiority to the original eleven.

ii. 3-6. The second chapter brings us to the day of Pentecost. The Greek presents to me a more graphic picture of the scene than I find in our versions, *ᾠφθησαν . . . πυρός*, tongues like as of fire were seen of them to divide, and it sat upon each one of them. After the account in *v. 4* of the *different* (*ἑτέραις*) tongues in which the Spirit gave them utterance, the Greek says in *v. 6* *γενομένης τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης*, *when this voice came*. I cannot think *φωνῆς* (*voice*) can mean merely the hearing of a sound, as the Revised Version translates it.

ii. 23. The Revised Version writes here *by the hand of lawless men*. The word *ἀνόμων*, applied here to Pilate and his soldiers, is no doubt invidious ; it regards them from an Israelite point of view as *men without law* because they did not obey their law, and so had committed the great sin of crucifying the Messiah, but they could scarcely be called lawless.

ii. 37. The people had been excited by the miraculous gift of tongues, and Peter had pressed home upon them their guilt and danger for their share in the crucifixion of the Messiah. The effect is heard in the despairing appeal of his conscience-stricken hearers, *What are we to do, brethren ! τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί* ; whereas their words as given in our versions read more like a request for advice. In like manner the council in anxious perplexity how to

deal with prisoners so dangerous as the Apostles, exclaim, "What are we to do with these men!" (iv. 16.)

ii. 47. The same subject is pursued in the following verses, and the burden of Peter's exhortation is given in the words, "save yourselves" (ii. 40). Here then we have the key to the meaning of τ. σωζομένους: it means those that would be saved, rather than those that *should be saved*,—those who were *saving themselves* by fleeing to the shelter of the Church from the wrath to come.

ii. 42. The older version records that Christians *continued stedfast* believers in the apostles' doctrine: it is not quite clear what the Revised Version means by their *continuing stedfastly in the apostles' teaching*; but διδαχῆ seems to mean *teaching*, not *doctrine*, and προσκαρτεροῦντες τ. διδαχῆ to denote their continual attendance on the Apostles' teaching in the temple; the following words add to this their stedfast adherence to the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers of the Church.

ii. 44, 45. The community of goods in the Church of Jerusalem is continually quoted as an authority for socialist theories; but I see no trace in the Greek text of any but genuine Christian socialism. We are told that they *kept selling* (ἐπίπρασκον) their property and distributing to the necessities of the poor, as every man had need. So in iv. 34 it is said that possessors of lands or houses kept selling them and bringing the prices (πωλοῦντες ἔφερον) to lay at the Apostles' feet for distribution, according as any one had need. Barnabas' sale of land is mentioned as exceptional, and Ananias' retention of his property as perfectly consistent with his Christian profession. Clearly therefore the Christians retained private property; and εἶχον ἅπαντα κοινά means simply that *they held all things common*; that is to say, in the enthusiasm of Christian charity they treated their property as the property of their brethren, rather than their own, and devoted it freely to any necessary demand

of Christian love, choosing to impoverish themselves rather than let a brother want bread.

ii. 47. Our versions speak of the Christians *having favour with all the people*, as if the Greek were *χάριμ ἔχοντες παρ' ὅλῳ τ. λαῶ* (compare Luke i. 30; ii. 52). But it is *ἔχοντες χάριμ πρὸς ὅλον τ. λαόν* "*giving Him thanks before all the people.*" *ἔχειν χάριμ* always means to *give thanks*, though once wrongly translated (Heb. xii. 28).

iii. 13. Our versions speak of God *having glorified Jesus*, as though the reference were to His *present* glory in heaven; but in the Greek text (*ἐδόξασεν*) the glory which God gave His servant Jesus *on earth* is mentioned as an aggravation of His people's guilt in rejecting Him. "God glorified Him, but ye denied Him."

iii. 15, v. 31. Our versions speak of Jesus as a *prince* and carry the thoughts of the reader to the kingly office of the Messiah. But the Greek word *ἀρχηγός* does not mean *prince*, but either captain or first founder. Joshua and the spies were chosen from amidst the *captains* of their tribes; the Persian captains who escorted Nehemiah to Jerusalem bore the same title. It is here used with significant allusion to the name Jesus. The earlier Jesus (Joshua) was God's first captain, to lead His people into their promised inheritance; in this he was type of the second Jesus, who first led His people into the inheritance of eternal life. The meaning of the name Jesus is still further developed in v. 31 by the addition "a Captain and a Saviour": for it was said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

iv. 5. The words "in Jerusalem" are clearly out of place in a narrative of events that took place entirely at Jerusalem, and in the mention of a council that met regularly at Jerusalem. A glance at the Greek text shows that the words belong really to *τοὺς γραμματεῖς*, and describe "*the scribes that were in Jerusalem,*" by way of distinction from

those scattered about the cities of Israel. The same construction occurs in vii. 44, 45 ; and is common in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

v. 14. *μᾶλλον* seems to mean, not *the more*, but *more and more* ; i.e. in ever-increasing number.

v. 38, 39. Gamaliel's peroration loses to my mind much of its pithy force by a mistranslation of *ὅτι* as *for*, whereas it depends, I think, on a second *λέγω* understood ; and by the unfortunate translation of *μήποτε* as *lest haply*, which the Revisers have adopted throughout the New Testament. I should give the following as a literal translation : " I say that if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown : but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them. Never be found actually fighting against God." The addition of *ποτε* to *μή*, either in interrogation or in negation, gives additional emphasis.

v. 9. Ananias and his wife are charged with agreeing together to *tempt the Spirit of the Lord*. The Greek word *πειράσαι* is clear enough as including, besides temptation to evil, any kind of trial of the spirit within a man (compare 2 Cor. xiii. 5, Rev. ii. 2). So here Ananias and his wife are charged with having conspired together to *try* whether the Spirit, that was in the Apostles, could be deceived by their false statements. But this is not expressed with equal clearness in the English versions.

v. 16. The English versions give the impression of a general restoration of all that had unclean spirits in the cities round Jerusalem, for they say that they brought *them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one* : but the literal rendering of the Greek *ὄχλουμένους* . . . (not *τοὺς ὄχλουμένους*) is "*men vexed with unclean spirits, who were all healed.*"

vii. 13. *Ἐγνωρισθη* has the same force of the middle voice as *ἀνεγνωρίζετο* in Genesis xlv. 1. (LXX.), from which this passage is quoted ; and should be similarly translated, "made



himself known." In the same verse the Revised Version changes *kindred* into *race*—wrongly, as I think, for it was not Joseph's race in the distant East, but his family in Palestine that became manifest to Pharaoh. The translation "kindred" in Acts iv. 6 for γένος, strongly supports the same here.

vii. 17. The Revised Version speaks of the promise which God *vouchsafed*; but δμολογεῖν, when it does not mean confession or thanksgiving, denotes a distinct agreement (Matt. xiv. 7); and God's promise to Abraham was of the nature of a covenant, that if he forsook his country at God's word, God would make of him a great nation.

vii. 19. Pharaoh is said in our versions to have *dealt subtilly with* the Israelites. The same expression recurs in 1 Samuel xxiii. 22, where the LXX. use πανουργεῖσθαι; and in Psalm cv. 25, where the LXX. use δολιουῖσθαι. But κατασοφίζεσθαι, which is quoted from Exodus i. 10, appears from etymology and usage to signify, rather, to bring low by subtilty. In the same verse the exposure of the Hebrew children by their own fathers is represented in the older version as the result, in the Revised as the object, of Pharaoh's oppression. But the Greek τοῦ ποιεῖν conveys to me the meaning that his evil device and evil treatment of Israel specially consisted in his *having their babes cast out*: and this agrees with the history in Exodus.

vii. 21. Our versions say that Pharaoh's daughter *nourished* Moses for her own son. The Greek is ἀνεθρέψατο αὐτῇ εἰς υἱόν. The same verb is used by St. Paul when describing himself as *brought up* at the feet of Gamaliel, and implies here apparently that Pharaoh's daughter brought up Moses to manhood; she *brought him up to be a son to her*.

vii. 24. ἠμύνατο (aor. mid.) cannot mean that he *defended* the Israelite. Its true meaning is, he retaliated on the Egyptian oppressor, which is in accordance with the history.

vii. 44, 45. We owe to the Revised Version a correct rendering of *διαδεξάμενοι*, "in their turn," but it is unintelligible for want of a further correction. The Greek distinguishes two successive generations: *our fathers in the wilderness*, who had the tabernacle of the testimony; and our fathers that were with Joshua, who in their turn brought it into the possession of the Gentiles. I am disposed to think the older version is right in taking *κατάσχεσις* to mean simply *a possession*, as in *v. 5*, and not *entering upon a possession*: *εἰσάγειν* had probably acquired a technical meaning of installing a prince or an heir in his inheritance, and so takes *ἐν* instead of *εἰς* after it.

viii. 46. The word *tabernacle* in the older version introduces a confusion with the former tabernacle; the word *habitation* in the Revised does not express so distinctly as *σκήνωμα*, the temporary nature of this dwelling place which David asked for, as contrasted with the *house* which Solomon built. The later prayer of David for a house is not here alluded to, because it did not receive fulfilment till his son's time.

vii. 51. Our versions read "*uncircumcised in heart and ears.*" I suspect that *καρδίας* is the true reading, and that it was changed into *καρδίαις* in some MSS. with a view to so rendering the passage. But, supposing the dative to be genuine, it would be as inelegant to write this sentence as it stands in Greek, as to write in English "*uncircumcised in heart and in your ears.*" The stop must surely be placed after *καρδίαις*, and *καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν* be taken as the beginning of the next clause: "*Even with your ears ye do always . . .*" Their fathers had refused to listen to Moses, and they were now stopping their ears against the voice of the Spirit, and setting themselves to silence it by violence; they had reached herein a climax of stubborn unbelief, even beyond what was expressed in an uncircumcised heart.

I miss in many places the graphic touch of Greek present

and imperfect tenses. iii. 2 (ἐβαστάζετο) The lame man *was being carried* as Peter and John were going up. iv. 2 (διὰ τὸ διδάσκειν . . .) The rulers were sore troubled that *they were teaching the people and proclaiming . . .*; the special trouble consisted in the persistent continuance of the Apostles' teaching. iv. 21 (ἐδόξαζον) The rulers could find no way to punish the Apostles for fear of the people, because *all were glorifying God . . .* v. 5 (ἀκούων) Ananias was struck down before Peter had done speaking; *as he heard*, he fell down. Again, τ. ἀκούοντας must be the actual hearers of the words, "*all them that heard*," not those *that heard it* afterwards. vii. 41 (εὐφραίνοντο) The people *were rejoicing* in their idol, when Moses appeared to interrupt their festival.

Many valuable amendments, required to bring the English version into accordance with the Greek text, must be sought in the margin of the Revised Version.

ii. 28. μετὰ τ. προσώπου σου, *in Thy presence.*

προσώπου clearly implies that the gladness will consist in standing in God's presence.

ii. 33, iii. 15. οὗ must obviously be masculine, "*of whom.*"

iv. 9. ἐν τίνι, *in whom.*

The two questions asked were, in what power, and in what name, they had wrought; both pointed distinctly to a person in whom the healing virtue resided, and the answer takes full advantage of this opening to preach Jesus Christ.

iii. 22, vii. 37. ὡς ἐμέ, *as He raised me up.*

The Greek can scarcely bear any other translation.

iv. 24. σὺ ὁ ποιήσας, *thou art he that made.*

vi. 2. διακονεῖν τραπέζαις, *minister to tables.*

διακονεῖν has a special significance in this chapter, and conveys an obvious contrast between the daily ministrations of food and the ministry of the Word.