

outer life. He has vindicated the "Other-worldliness" of the Gospels, for He has made the foresight of the Kingdom of God, in its loftiest ambition as well as its minutest calculation, identical with the unsparing and self-forgetful service of man.

JOHN WATSON.

PROFESSOR F. BLASS ON THE TWO EDITIONS
OF ACTS.¹

ONE of the most important contributions to the textual criticism and the interpretation of *Acts* that have appeared in this century is the new edition by the veteran Greek scholar, Dr. F. Blass, of Halle. Dr. Blass leads a conservative reaction in Germany. He accepts the Lucan authorship and the unity of *Acts* unhesitatingly; and occasionally makes rather discontented allusions to the "critical views" on this subject. But he is not disposed to worship the "Eastern Text" (what we may call the "Approved Text") of *Acts*, and to reject the "Western Text" wherever it varies, according to the general (though happily not the universal) opinion of modern scholars. He considers that the Eastern and the Western Text are both original, both written by Luke himself; and his views on this point are probably the feature of his book that will attract most attention. They had been stated already in an article in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, 1894, p. 86 f., and are here repeated in a fuller form. In at least one detail the book improves on the view stated in the article. In the article he held that the text of Codex Bezae, in XIV. 2, "the *archisynagogoi* of the Jews and the rulers of the synagogue" resulted from a union of two different readings; but

¹ *Acta Apostolorum sive Lucae ad Theophilum Liber alter*: editio philologica, etc., auctore Friderico Blass, Göttingen, 1895.

now he rightly says that the *archisynagogoi* are not the same as the rulers,¹ and retains both in the text which he believes to be Lucan (omitting only "of the synagogue").

Dr. Blass proceeds to edit and explain the book as he would a Greek classic. He starts, not with the fixed idea that the book is a second-century compilation, but with the simple and straightforward desire to determine the exact words written by the author, and to understand what he intended to say; and therefore he has succeeded in doing far more for the interpretation of his author than if he had essayed the insoluble problem of dissecting him. No previous edition has done so much in the way of analysing the exact meaning of words. For example, he has devoted especial care to observing the author's intention in varying between the imperfect and the aorist—a variation which is always carefully planned, and gives the key to many misinterpreted passages—and this alone would give the edition a high rank. That single point, the use of the tenses, is by itself sufficient, as I believe, to prove to any man of literary feeling that the book is a real book, planned throughout by a writer of considerable literary power and of marked individuality. Unfortunately some excellent scholars have had their attention withdrawn from the literary quality of the book, and concentrated on cutting it up into scraps, which, when taken as scraps, are necessarily misinterpreted into incongruity with each other. This author requires to be read as a whole, and studied with a microscope. There is no historical narrative known to me which will bear such minute examination as *Acts*, none which requires to be pressed so close before its meaning is caught. The author depends for his effect on many minute points of style, and

¹ A similar observation (though, as I think, more exact in expression) was made on this passage in my *Church in the Rom. Emp.*, pp. 46, 480: naturally Dr. Blass's agreement in this matter is gratifying, especially as it is arrived at independently (for he evidently has not seen my book).

demands from his readers so much knowledge and such constant effort to recreate the picture which the writer had before him, that his work has been—I do not hesitate to say—misunderstood and undervalued to an extraordinary degree; and his most delicate and telling points have been often misinterpreted as proofs of ignorance or inaccuracy.¹

This edition is full of good remarks on the language and style of the author, and quotation cannot give a fair idea of its wealth in this respect. Still I will quote one or two which (all unknown to the author) have some bearing on subjects familiar to readers of the EXPOSITOR. He repeatedly points out that *μὲν οὖν* is used without a following *δέ*, *ut sæpissime* i. 18, cp. the notes on i. 6, ii. 41, v. 41, xi. 19, xiii. 4, xvii. 17, xxiii. 18, etc. He shows the fondness of Luke for participles; and points out (p. 20) that an aorist participle does not necessarily denote an anterior action, or a present participle a coincident action.² He remarks on the *mirus error* of those who have fancied that *διήλθον* in xvi. 6 could be used here in the sense of travelling without preaching in the country traversed;³ and, comparing *Galatians* iv. 13, he goes on to show that the theory which maintains that Paul, travelling idly in Galatia, became ill, and in gratitude for the nursing given by the natives, proceeded to evangelize them, is contrary to the plain force of the words of *Acts*. He will, however, have nothing to do with the South-Galatian theory; but, after thus cutting away the interpretation on which Lightfoot

¹ The great superiority in vivid style and local accuracy of Acts xiii.-xxviii. over Acts i.-xii. and the Third Gospel, is due to the author's intimate knowledge of persons and places and events in xiii.-xxviii. as compared with his dependence on transmitted information in the earlier chapters and the Gospel.

² He however rejects *ἀσπασόμενοι* in spite of the general consensus of Greek MSS. in xxv. 13, printing *ἀσπασόμενοι* in his text.

³ After reading this remark, one can only wonder that Dr. Blass has introduced *διήλθον* into even the Eastern Text in xvi. 8, where it is a manifest error of the Western Text. Mysia was a part of Asia; and the travellers, on Dr. Blass's own principle, could not *διελλθεῖν*, but only *παρελλθεῖν* (*i.e.* neglect it).

and other recent scholars have based the North-Galatian theory, he *alters the text of Galatians* iv. 13, and thus gets a foundation for the North-Galatian theory.¹ This bold solution brings us to one of the weaknesses of this edition—viz., Dr. Blass's fondness for introducing conjectures into the text. That was the fault of the old-fashioned scholars; but we did not expect that he would have been guilty of it. According to the principles of modern scholarship, it is simply not permissible to introduce conjectural emendations in a case where textual authority exists of such abundance and high character as the MSS. of *Acts*. It is therefore not surprising that Dr. Blass's conjectures are far from convincing; it was impossible that they should be convincing. For example, in xvi. 13 he gives the text *οὐ ἐνόμιζον ἐν προσευχῇ εἶναι*, "where they were wont to engage in prayer," in place of *ἐνομίζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι*. That this reading is impossible becomes obvious at once when we ask what is the nominative to *ἐνόμιζον*? With Dr. Blass's text the narrative states that "we reached Philippi; and on the sabbath went to a place where they were wont to engage in prayer." A vague third person plural of this kind can, in Luke, refer only to the whole body of residents in Philippi.² But obviously the subject here must be "the Jews who resided at Philippi," and such a sudden introduction of a new idea as unexpressed nominative is an unjustifiable conjecture. Dr. Blass's reason, in dependence on Schürer's

¹ I need not comment on the extraordinary error in l. 10 from the bottom of p. 176, where he seems to think that the inhabitants of Galatia were called *Galli*. They were of course called *Galatæ*. Dr. Blass also, while he often praises Luke's accuracy of expression, makes him, in xvi. 6, guilty of the solecism of using *Γαλατικὴ χώρα* in the sense of *Γαλατία*. No person who had any knowledge of the country, or had spoken to persons that had such knowledge, could be guilty of such an error, which is similar to the use of "the British Territory" in the sense of "Great Britain." Dr. Blass also takes *Φρυγίαν* in xvi. 6 as a noun, which is of course necessary for the North-Galatian theory.

² Compare, e.g., xiii. 3, where after the Church at Antioch has been spoken of, the third plural is used of "the whole body of adherents."

Gesch. d. Jüd. Volkes, ii. p. 373, is that "it cannot be proved that open places where meetings for prayer were held were distinguished from synagogues by the name *προσευχή*, as was inferred wrongly from this passage." But Dr. Schürer does not give exactly what Dr. Blass gathers from him; he says that *προσευχή* is equivalent to *συναγωγή*.¹ Whether Schürer is right or wrong is not here the question.² The fact remains that *προσευχή* on his view, as on that of others, can be used (and was used by Philo) in the sense of "a place of prayer"; and so the text says, "where we thought that there was a place for the Jews to pray." This place is, according to Schürer, simply a synagogue; but more probably Luke means, "whether or not the praying-place was precisely a synagogue." That *proseucha* denoted a praying-place of some kind or other is familiar to every reader of Juvenal iii. 296, where one man insults another by insinuating that he is a Jew or a proselyte in the question, "In what *proseucha* shall I look for you?"

Take as an example of wrong text xiii. 14: he reads *Ἀντιόχειαν τῆς Πισιδίας*, with the note "*cum adj. Πισιδίος non exstet, lectio τὴν Πισιδίαν reicienda est.*" The agreement of *ABC* is nothing to Dr. Blass; the Lexicons do not recognise an adjective *Πισιδίος*, and therefore the MSS. must give way. The few who have tried to understand the place-names of Asia Minor and have appreciated the depths of ignorance and error in which these names are buried, will recognise at once the inadequacy of this reason; for the very name Pisidia is strictly *ἡ Πισιδία* (*γῆ*), and implies the former existence of an adjective *Πισιδίος*. I would in such a case take the evidence of *NB*, even without *AC*, as suffi-

¹ Schurer, p. 373. "*So wird überhaupt zwischen beiden Ausdrücken kein sachlicher Unterschied zu statuiren sein.*"

² I hardly dare to hope that he is right; but, if he is, the view which I entertain about this incident and expect soon to publish would be strengthened very greatly. But Luke would not use *προσευχή*, unless he meant to indicate something different from *συναγωγή*.

cient to prove that the adjective continued in use. But further, the adjective occurs in Ptolemy v. 5, 4, where "Pisidian Phrygia" is spoken of.¹ No defence is needed for the consensus of these four MSS.; and had not Dr. Blass been a little too eager to justify the Western Text (D has *Πισιδίας* as a noun), he would not have felt any need for defence; but since he will not follow the MSS. without some warrant, we give him Ptolemy. Nor is this a small matter: so admirable is the art of Luke that nothing can be safely said to be a small matter in his text. A whole chapter of instruction in Luke's method as a historian hangs on that adjective *Πισιδίαν* in xiii. 14, and the contrast with the genitive of the noun in xiii. 13, *τῆς Παμφυλίας*. One cannot wonder that the critics, whose attention is monopolized by the task of cutting *Acts* into fragments by different authors, have missed the point of that delicate distinction; but I marvel that Dr. Blass has not observed it with all that follows from it.

The error of judgment in this case is due to deficient acquaintance with the antiquities of the country; and in general we notice that Prof. Blass, while he is admirable as an expounder of the language of Luke, shows not infrequently an inadequate knowledge where *Realien* (to borrow a convenient German term) are concerned. For example, he has quite a good note (though founded on a rather incomplete list of authorities)² on xiii. 51 (p. 156);

¹ Dr. Blass may perhaps say that Ptolemy's words *Φρυγία Πισιδία* mean "Phrygian Pisidia;" but Ptolemy's regular custom in his *headings* is to put the noun first and the epithet afterwards: cp. e.g., the heading of v. 15 *Συρίας Κοίλης* (though *ἡ Κοίλη Συρία* was almost an established name), but in the text v. 15, 22, *Κοίλης Συρίας Δεκαπόλεως πόλεις αἶδε*. Similarly *Πόντος Γαλατικός*, *Πόντος Καππαδοκικός*, *Κιλικίας Τραχείας* (v. 5, 3), etc., occur in the headings of sections.

² But he adds from Stephanus, a native Iconian legend (omitted by me), in which the inhabitants of Iconium style themselves Phrygians. The additional instance strengthens most satisfactorily my argument that the conception which is implied in xiv. 6 of Iconium as being outside of Lycaonia

but when, in his *Addenda*, p. x., we find him quoting with approval a contradictory and extraordinarily inaccurate remark on the same passage (one of the few blots on the excellent English work whence Dr. Blass quotes it), we must suppose that his original note was right by mere accident. Nor is it only in the heart of Asia Minor (where hardly any one except Bishop Lightfoot ever takes the trouble to be right), that Dr. Blass is disappointing; he is just as little at home on the open Levant, or in the Athenian Agora¹ (in spite of Dörpfeld's skilled help, see on xvii. 19). It would require a whole article to examine Dr. Blass's commentary on the narrative of Paul's visit to Athens, where we have an excellent specimen both of his strength and (as I venture to maintain) of his weakness.² But let us take an example of his commentary on the open sea.

On xxvii. 4, Dr. Blass remarks that sailors were in the habit of making a straight course from Syria to Lycia keeping west of Cyprus. But, with the steady and persistent westerly breezes of the Levant, such a voyage was rarely possible; and there can be no doubt that the Adramyttian ship took the usual course.³ A study of James

rests on familiarity with the local circumstances, viz., the pride of the Iconians in their Phrygian nationality.—*Vide Church in Rom. Empire*, p. 46.

¹ I do not mean to imply that Dr. Blass has not visited Athens or the Levant, as to which I have no knowledge.

² One truth I must quote. On *σπερμολόγος* (a word of Athenian slang) he says *sine dubio hoc ex ipso ore Atheniensium auctor exceptit*. One serious error shall be set alongside of it. He rejects Ernst Curtius's admirable and convincing exposition of the scene at Athens on the ground that "non dicitur *Ἄρειος πάγος* nisi de loco." One of my pupils, Mr. A. Souther, when he saw this statement, at once remarked that Dr. Blass had evidently not studied Cicero, who says to Atticus I. 14, 5, "Senatus *Ἄρειος πάγος*," Our senate is a veritable (court of) Areopagus. Cicero had learned that phrase during the six months he spent in Athens; and here again, if we begin by understanding Luke, we shall say, "hoc exceptit ex ipso ore Atheniensium." After beginning so well with *σπερμολόγος*, Dr. Blass should have applied Curtius's theory; and kept in mind that the scene is described in Athenian slang as it occurred.

³ The same steady westerly winds which carried many ships every year from Myra to Tyre (see xxi. 2-4), would prevent the return voyage from Tyre

Smith's *Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul* would have saved Dr. Blass from this error. But, it may be urged, Luke when he states so carefully the reason why they sailed east of Cyprus, implies that their course was exceptional. If he implies this, he is wrong; but, in truth, this is one of many little touches which show that Luke was not familiar with the Levant and its navigation, as he was with the Ægean Sea. The reason why he introduces this statement (and he is an author who rarely mentions causes, and contents himself with recording facts) is purely literary; the same writer who mentioned in xxi. 3 that he had come by the west side of Cyprus now felt bound to explain why he did not go back the same way. Here we have a slight mark of unity of authorship.

Again, the note on xxvii. 6 shows singular want of acquaintance with ships and voyages; and the inferences drawn from Lucian's *Navigium seu Vota* are utterly vitiated thereby. With the prevailing westerly breezes, the Alexandrian corn-ships going to Rome could often make a straight run across to Myra¹ (*Acts* xxvii. 6), but when the winds were north-westerly, the ships were driven towards the Syrian coast (Lucian, *loc. cit.*), whence they had to keep along the Karamanian coast to Myra (*Acts* xxvii. 4-5; Lucian, *loc. cit.*). From Myra the ships hugged the coast for some way, and then ran down to keep south of Crete (*Acts* xxvii. 7). Occasionally a ship might try to run from opposite Cnidos across to Malea; but, with the winds that

to Myra. Compare the admirable account of Barnabas's voyage to Cyprus in the *Periodoi Barnabe*.

¹ To any one that has sailed a boat, or knows anything about "the way of a ship in the sea," a glance at the map would prove that this was their ideally best course, as soon as he learns what are the prevailing winds in the Levant, and, until he learns that, he will make no assertion at all in the matter; but the thorough landsman can rarely quite disabuse himself of the idea that a line drawn with a ruler on a map from Alexandria to the south point of Italy is the course which a ship would naturally aim at.

prevail in the *Ægean* Sea, this could not have been common, for ships dreaded lest a north wind might run them on the harbourless north coast of Crete.¹ Lucian's ship is, for the purposes of the author, supposed to have tried to run across, but to have been forced by south-westerly gales to take refuge in the Piræus. It is strange how dark all this is to the commentators on Acts xxvii., and yet James Smith cleared up the whole subject (nearly but not quite faultlessly) about fifty years ago.²

It has long been recognised that the MSS. of *Acts* are divided into two classes, which cannot be traced to a common original text; but there has been general agreement that the class to which the overwhelming majority of MSS. (including the oldest and best) belong represents the original text, as written by the author, and that the other text is not original; but as to the way in which this other text (commonly called the Western³ Text) came into existence, no agreement exists. The Accepted Text, commonly called the Eastern, can be determined, and has been determined with very considerable accuracy, in the form which it had in the early part of the fourth century, and which Westcott and Hort's edition probably gives more correctly than any of the other great modern editions. For my own part I venture to think that there are decidedly more corruptions in that text than Westcott and Hort admit; but still they and all other scholars admit that it does contain corruptions, and does not give us the exact text as it was written by the author. It follows

¹ "Harbourless" of course means "possessing very few harbours." Suda Bay is an excellent harbour on the north coast.

² I have not seen Smith's second edition, where probably he may have made all the needful corrections.

³ Prof. Blass justly objects to this name, which conveys a false idea of the relation between the two texts; but, as it has become customary, and as every one recognises its wrong character (which prevents its doing harm), we shall use it in this article.

that we must try to get behind the MSS. of the Eastern Text in order to reach the true Lucan Text. Does the so-called Western Text help us in this difficulty?

In studying and trying to restore the Western Text there are two entirely different problems which ought to be kept quite distinct, but are not always kept distinct. (1) What is the genesis of the text contained in *Codex Bezae*? (2) What is the "Western Text"?¹ *Codex Bezae* is the best representative—but a bad representative—of the "Western Text," containing a great amount of corruption pure and simple. Further, supposing that we have solved these two problems, and have got the "Western Text" as it existed about 160 A.D. or 180 A.D. (not to name too early a date for fear of rousing controversy at this stage), there still remains a double problem, (a) Does the Western Text enable us to get behind the Eastern Text and reach the original source of some of the corruptions that have affected all MSS. of the latter? (b) What is the origin and authority of those readings in the Western Text which obviously go back to a different original from the Eastern? I have elsewhere attempted to show, as to (a), that by means of the primitive text, which is embodied (along with much else) in *Codex Bezae*, we can reach back to the correct text of various corrupt passages in the Eastern Text,² and Prof. Blass has carried this process much further.³ As to question (b) Prof. Blass maintains that Luke wrote two divergent copies, and that the Eastern Text springs from

¹ Prof. Rendel Harris in his *Study of Codex Bezae* quite recognises the existence of two separate problems (see, e.g., p. 223 § 1), though I doubt whether he has always kept them sufficiently apart in actual handling. It is, however, hardly fair to criticise a book which the author now declares not to represent his maturer opinion; see his *Lectures on the Western Text*, 1894. It is right to wait his full statement of his views.

² *Church in Rom. Emp.*, pp. 36, 46, 52, 87, 94, 128, 140, 151 f., 167.

³ It is interesting to observe that several of those readings in *Cod. Bez.* which I have defended are rejected as corruptions by Prof. Blass, e.g., xix. 28, 34; xiv. 13.

one, the Western from the other, of the two Lucan copies ; both texts, then, have equal authority, provided that we can recover their original form amid the corruptions (more or less numerous) which have affected them.

The only satisfactory method of establishing such a theory is to restore the Western Text, and let it justify itself. No systematic attempt has hitherto been made, but now Dr. Blass has essayed it. He fully admits (p. 25 f.) that the task cannot be properly completed with our accessible material ; and his attempt therefore is confessedly only provisional. But if Dr. Blass, with his consummate scholarship, training, and experience, cannot perform the task, no one can. He has picked his steps along the slippery path with marvellous care and success, and has given us a fair approximate idea of what the Western Text must have been ;¹ and we shall not, for the purpose of this inquiry, go beyond the limits he has marked out for it. I may say that I had no prejudice against his theory when it first appeared in the article quoted above ; but on the contrary have been, in a humble way, a defender of the real value of that text against the great MSS. of the Eastern Text. I pondered for months over the theory, and at last actually adopted it for a time ; but during a nine days' voyage in September, with full leisure to think over the problem as a whole, I seemed to see more clearly its real character ; and now the contemplation of the text as settled by Dr. Blass only confirms the opinion I then reached. This text is not Lucan ; it has a superficial smoothness, which is fatal ; it loses much of the rather harsh but intensely individual style of Luke ; and it neglects some of the literary forms which Luke created.

¹ At the same time I must express dissent about details ; he has rejected as corruptions some readings which seem to me to belong to the Western Text, and he has introduced even into the Eastern Text some readings which seem to be corruptions.

But it has a distinct and independent value (1) as preserving amid corruptions an independent second century witness to aid us where the great uncials are all at fault, (2) as giving the idea entertained as to the meaning of the text during the first half of the second century in the churches that lay along the great line of connexion between Antioch and Ephesus, and (3) as recording on trustworthy independent evidence certain facts which were omitted by Luke.

If this view be right, the Western Text retains a high value even for the words of Luke (quite apart from the cases where it preserves the true text). For example, it shows in xvi. 12 what was the text which the schools of Asia Minor and North Syria were commenting on during the second century, and thus vindicates the accuracy of the Eastern Text against the conjecture even of Dr. Hort himself.¹ It is one of the few authorities which help us to get at the ways and thoughts of the Eastern Churches and Christians during the period between 80 and 150 A.D. It enables us, *e.g.* in xiv. 2, to observe the genesis of the "Pauline Legends," as yet barely distinguishable from history; and in this respect it stands on much the same level as the original text of the "Acta of Paul and Thekla," which I have elsewhere tried to disentangle from the later accretions by which it is overlaid: there also it is hardly possible to distinguish where history ends and historical romance begins. With the help of these two authorities, combined with the early Christian inscriptions (for, although they begin only about 190, they give retrospective evidence), we realize that there was in the churches of North Syria² and Asia Minor a considerable amount of intellectual life

¹ See *Church in Rom. Emp.*, p. 158 note.

² Perhaps I should say "Greek Syria" rather than "North Syria," *i.e.*, this intellectual life was found where the Greek or rather Græco-Roman education and civilization dominated the tone of the churches of Syria.

during that obscure but most interesting period. How then has almost all trace of that intellectual life disappeared? Simply because it was so different from and so repugnant to the spirit of the Christianity which was the ruling element in the fourth century and even earlier. Christianity, as struggling to establish itself in the life of pagan society and as gradually transforming that society, was not to the taste of those who ruled (or were almost ready to rule) with a rod of iron the civilized world and to crush all difference, all dissent, all individuality, beneath the centralized despotism of the Christian Empire. But to the historian and many Christians of the present day the second century spirit is by far the more interesting study, and presents the more vigorous and invigorating form of religious thought.

In arguing against the too high character which Dr. Blass claims for the Western Text, it is fair to take the text at its best. Doubtless every one will agree that the most distinctive and important Western variants lie in that "group of bold and startling expansions of the narrative, the major part of which certainly proceeded from a common hand," as Prof. Rendel Harris says.¹ It is about this class of readings probably that Dr. Hort remarks,² "an incautious student may be easily tempted by the freshness of the matter to assume that it must have come from the hand of the writer of the book before him." An additional advantage in dealing with readings of this kind is that we can select cases where objective and external criteria are applicable, and mere individual subjective opinion has less scope. I think that a dispassionate consideration of the best and

¹ *Study of Codex Bezae*, p. 223.

² *New Testament in Greek*, II. p. 174, though he there speaks especially of the Western Text of the Gospels, and more hesitatingly of *Acts*. Dr. Blass, on the other hand, maintained in his article that his theory applies only to *Acts* and not to the Gospels.

most vivid additions made in the Western Text of Acts will lead us on purely archæological evidence to the unavoidable conclusion that they are, as a rule, subsequent appendages to an already existing narrative. But this argument requires a special article.

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(To be concluded.)