

their soul's health. By hastiness of judgment and self-satisfied condemnation of all that does not at once commend itself to our preconceived ideas of how God will accomplish His work, we are found to be resisting God and mistaking good for evil. To make our own tastes and expectations the measure of the religious movements of our time is to secure that we get no good from the movements that engage the activities of other people and that we get all the harm, the self-righteous vanity and hardness of heart and blindness to the truth, which must result from opposing the work of God in our own generation. Triflers, playing at religion, may criticise all movements and support none: men will take care that their devoted support be given to one form or other of the work of God in their own time.

MARCUS DODS.

PROFESSOR F. BLASS ON THE TWO EDITIONS  
OF ACTS.

II.

THE process of comparing the two texts of *Acts* is a hopeless one, unless we start from the principle that in every case the more sensible and complete explanation is to be preferred. It is necessarily assumed in all other departments of literature that preference must be given to the interpretation which restores order, lucidity, and sanity to the work. Unluckily that principle is far from being admitted in the case of *Acts*. Even of those who admit the book to be composed by one author, many do not permit our assumption; and, in particular, the North-Galatian theorists avowedly base their view on the contrary assumption—that the most striking feature of the book is its gaps, and that therefore it is quite in the author's style to omit what we should expect and to shock our sense of historical

and literary order. In this paper, however, we apply to *Acts* the canons of interpretation that are used in studying the non-Christian works of the period.

Dr. Blass has argued with perfect propriety and great cogency that many "Western" readings bring out in a more complete and explicit way the meaning that is really latent in the "Eastern" readings, and yet, in several cases, the meaning lies so far beneath the surface of the Eastern Text that it was not admitted or even observed until the Western Text was compared. The most striking example of this is the one which he himself puts in the forefront of his case, xxi. 15, 16. Here the Eastern text reads, "We set about the journey up to Jerusalem; and there went with us also certain of the disciples from Cæsareia, bringing us to the house of one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge."<sup>1</sup> In this passage most readers, alike of the English and of the Greek, understand that Mnason lived at Jerusalem, and that Paul and his companions enjoyed his hospitality during their residence there.<sup>2</sup>

But, when one reflects, it seems most improbable that Paul should need the help of Cæsareah Christians to introduce him to a friend at Jerusalem, a city where he had lived many years, where he was well known, and which he had often visited since he had made Antioch his centre. Moreover the length of the journey from Cæsareia to Jerusalem, fully sixty-four miles by road,<sup>3</sup> makes it im-

<sup>1</sup> The Revised Version, "bringing *with them* one Mnason, with whom we should lodge," seems hardly defensible grammatically, and quite indefensible in sense, as Dr. Zöckler rightly holds in the revised edition of his *Kurzgef. Kommentar*.

<sup>2</sup> The mistranslation (for that, I think, is not too strong a term, considering how important the proper force of the tenses is in the style of the writer of *Acts*), which renders the imperfect ἀνεβήκαμεν in verse 15 by "we went up," suggests and almost compels this understanding of the English Version. Dr. Blass, as usual, has the proper note on the tense.

<sup>3</sup> In Roman miles, as Dr. Blass says, the number is sixty-eight. Measuring on the Map in Professor G. A. Smith's *Hist. Geogr. Palest.* one finds the same result.

probable that Cæsarean disciples should go so far merely to introduce Paul to Mnason: if they went to Jerusalem on the day before Pentecost,<sup>1</sup> they would go for the feast; and, if they went for the feast, it was hardly in Luke's style of thought to put the incidental service rendered to his companions as the one important fact.

Now take the proper sequence of thought into consideration. The company resided several days at Cæsareia, having time to do so before going up to Jerusalem for the feast. Then (*v.* 15), "they arranged their equipment and proceeded on their upward journey to Jerusalem": (*v.* 16), "they lodged with Mnason, on the introduction of the Cæsarean disciples": (*v.* 17), they reached Jerusalem. It becomes clear that the Eastern Text, when properly understood, implies (as Professor Rendel Harris has inferred)<sup>2</sup> that the journey to Jerusalem occupied two days, and that Mnason entertained the company on the evening of the first day.

The Western reading makes this sense explicit, "There went with us also certain of the disciples from Cæsareia, and these conducted us to them with whom we should find entertainment; and when we reached a certain village, we were (in lodging) at the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple: and going forth from thence, we came to Jerusalem." The question then is—does this reading originate from the first author, or is it the result of addition to and modification of the original text? Dr. Blass recognises here the original hand. I confess that, on ground of style, I do not like the Western reading; but, as our aim is to attend solely to external facts and neglect subjective

<sup>1</sup> I cannot see any reason to doubt that Paul arrived in time for the feast: it seems to lie in the style of Luke that *xx.* 16 is intended to convey this. If the intention there mentioned had been vain, the failure would have been made clear. Moreover reckoning is all on the side of success.

<sup>2</sup> So also Blass and Zückler; all however gathered this first from the Bezan reading.

opinion, we can at least see that, if the original author ever wrote as Dr. Blass makes him write, he was wise to cut down his sentence. On Dr. Blass's own principle (note on xxi. 3), the aorist "conducted us" (*ἤγαγον*) implies arrival at the point aimed at, viz., those with whom the company was to find entertainment: then there follows a statement, "we arrived at a certain village, and lived with Mnason." If we were to press this double statement, we should have two nights spent on the road, but probably no one will doubt that one night alone was spent on the road.

In short, the more closely we press the Western reading the more vague does it become: while the Eastern reading, though harsh and obscure in its superficial aspect, becomes sharper, and more definite and decisive as it is examined more minutely. It is an established rule of criticism *præstat lectio doctior*, and, if we had to choose one or other of the two texts, this rule would decide for the Eastern; but against the view that both texts are right the rule affords no argument. So far, then, we find no clear external reason against Dr. Blass.

Before we pass from this point, it is worth while noticing that Dr. Blass rejects the reading *ἐπισκευασάμενοι* in v. 15,<sup>1</sup> on the ground that (1) there are no other cases where this verb means "collecting one's baggage" (*sarcinis collectis*), and (2) it is strange that packing up should be mentioned here and nowhere else on the journey. But, on the contrary, it seems only natural that the equipment should be mentioned here and nowhere else. Dr. Blass has taken too narrow a view of the process of equipment. The company was changing from sea-voyage to landfaring. Equipment was needed to perform the journey of sixty-four miles to Jerusalem in two days, and this was provided in Cæsareia, and was brought back to Cæsareia by the disciples

<sup>1</sup> He proposes the conjecture *ἀσπασάμενοι*, but wisely refrains from putting it in the text.

from the night's halting-place. Let us look into this carefully and from the proper point of view, and not as travellers in trains or by Cook's excursions, for whom everything is arranged with the minimum of exertion on their part. The company had spent in Cæsareia the time during which they might have been making their journey quietly and easily to Jerusalem; yet they were pressed for time if they were anxious to arrive before a near day. If they waited till the last moment at Cæsareia, as they obviously did,<sup>1</sup> this implies that they were calculating their journey very nearly, and reckoning it to a matter of hours. Now it is an elementary principle of right living in southern countries that one must avoid those great exertions and strains which in northern lands we habitually take as an amusement. The customs of the modern people (whom we on superficial knowledge are apt to think lazy, but who are not so), show that this principle guides their whole life; and it may be taken for certain that in ancient time the same principle guided ordinary life. Moreover, Paul was accompanied by his physician, who fully realized the importance of the principle, and knew that Paul, subject as he was to attacks of illness and constantly exposed to great mental and emotional strains, *must* not begin his duties in Jerusalem by a hurried walk of sixty-four miles in two days.

In a word, ἐπισκευασάμενοι, they arranged for horses or conveyances to take them without fatigue over a great part of the long journey; and they had been able to stay so long in Cæsareia because it had been settled with the disciples there that this should be done. The whole journey must

<sup>1</sup> On the one hand it is clear that the fifty days had not elapsed between the start from Philippi and the arrival at Cæsareia, and that, after reaching Cæsareia, they had it in their power to reach Jerusalem in time for Pentecost. On the other hand, by waiting several days (πλειους ἡμέρας) at Cæsareia, it is equally clear that they were running it very fine, and were leaving themselves no margin.

have been discussed and planned; and it is just because the method was unusual for that company of travellers, and because it had therefore taken time to settle details, that it is so pointedly mentioned in the narrative.<sup>1</sup> The horses then conveyed the company rapidly along the level coast road to a point where the ascent to the highlands of Judæa began,<sup>2</sup> probably to Lydda, a distance of forty miles. The disciples returned to Cæsareia, taking the animals with them; and Paul's company could safely perform the twenty-four miles' walk to Jerusalem on the following day. So far, then, from ἐπισκευασάμενοι being used, as Dr. Blass thinks, in an unexampled sense here, it is probably used in its proper and commonest sense, "having equipped (animals)";<sup>3</sup> and, when we translate it in its ordinary sense in classical Greek, we find the journey described exactly as any common pagan traveller would have made it. But many people write and think about *Acts* as if the early Christians never could have lived or travelled like ordinary men.

Our next test case is found in xxi. 1. Here the Eastern Text has "and from thence (we came) unto Patara (κακέϊθεν εἰς Πάταρα); and having found a ship . . . , we went aboard," while the Western Text mentions both Patara and Myra before it alludes to the change of ship (κακέϊθεν εἰς Πάταρα καὶ Μύρα). In the first place we observe that the two Texts are contradictory. The Eastern Text makes the

<sup>1</sup> One other case occurs in which, as I think, Paul's disciples sent him on by horse or carriage, see *Church in Rom. Emp.*, p. 68, where the evidence is contained, not in *Acts*, which was written by one who had not been present, but in Paul's own words to his entertainers. In this case, also, the conveyance was, I doubt not, provided by the Cæsarean disciples, and not hired by Paul himself. They brought Paul to the village, and took home the horses.

<sup>2</sup> Every reader of Professor G. A. Smith's *Historical Geography* will recognise how much his lucid pictures help in conceiving this journey properly.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysostom clearly understood the word so. He explains it as τὰ πρὸς τὴν ὁδοπορίαν λαβόντες (i. e. ὑποζύγια); compare Pollux, x. 14, quoted by Wetstein (with a misprint), ἐπισκευασμένα ἦν τὰ ὑποζύγια, ὅσον ἐστρωματισμένα. The ellipsis of ὑποζύγια is natural, when we take the word, with Pollux, as "having saddled."

travellers change ship in Patara, but the Western Text cannot be understood in that sense. There is therefore in this case an easier and more objective problem before us, viz., to determine which of two contradictory accounts is correct.

In the second place, Dr. Blass's theory of two equally trustworthy texts written by the same hand can hardly be applicable here. It is in the last degree improbable that a writer who had himself been one of the travellers<sup>1</sup> would make a slip about a point like this in one of his texts (admitting that he wrote two), for such a fact is never forgotten by a real traveller. We must accept one of the two readings as original in this passage, and hold that the other is a corruption. Either the Western reading was written by the author, and all MSS. of the Eastern Texts have lost two words without a trace; or the Eastern reading was written by the author, and two words have been added in the Western Text by another hand. So much seems incontrovertible.

Next comes the question, Which reading is original, and which is the corruption? In this question we are helped by observing that one of the two Texts violates a principle of Luke's style. If we look at xvi. 1, we see there a precise parallel in meaning to the Western Text of xxi. 1: Paul came to Derbe and to Lystra, and there he found Timothy; and verse 2 refers only to Lystra, not to Derbe. So in xxi. 1, 2, "they came to Patara and Myra; and they found a vessel ready to sail across to Syria," verse 2 must refer only to Myra, not to Patara. But while the meaning is parallel, the expression is not parallel. In xvi. 1, the expression used marks that Derbe and Lystra are to be

<sup>1</sup> As Dr. Blass fully admits this, it is quite fair to use it in our argument against him. I hope, however, yet to demonstrate this beyond the reach of rational dispute, though to admit the possibility of it is sufficient, in the estimation of some of my friends, to stamp me as "an apologist of tradition."

kept separate, "He came to Derbe, and to Lystra"; whereas in xxi. 1, the form of expression used conjoins Patara and Myra as a pair, "we came to Patara and Myra."<sup>1</sup> The same writer who used *καὶ εἰς Λύστραν* in xvi. 1 to anticipate the reference of xvi. 2, and mark that reference as applying only to Lystra, would have used *καὶ εἰς Μύρα* in xxi. 1 to mark that xxi. 2 applied only to Myra.<sup>2</sup>

But, it may be replied, this only proves that the Western Text has been badly transmitted. *Codex Bezae* makes the same mistake in xvi. 1, as in xxi. 1, for it reads in the former place "to Derbe and Lystra" in place of "to Derbe and to Lystra." It may be urged therefore that the correct text in xxi. 1 is *εἰς Πάταρα καὶ εἰς Μύρα*. Let us admit, for argument's sake, that such was the original Western Text, still the Western Text is not as yet proved to be right.

It is most improbable that the words "to Myra" would have been added from mere impertinent lust for making changes; so far we must agree with Dr. Blass, and for a time I thought that his weighty and unanswerable argument was conclusive. But there is an almost equally weighty reason on the other side; the words, if originally written, are not likely to have dropped out from the Eastern Text, causing it to make a false statement.

Both these reasons are correct and good. If we were reduced to choose between them, then our judgment would be a mere subjective balancing of probabilities. But if we find a solution which justifies both and offends against neither, then the solution is not merely founded on subjec-

<sup>1</sup> The difference between *εἰς Πάταρα καὶ εἰς Μύρα* and *εἰς Πάταρα καὶ Μύρα* is very similar in character to that between *τὴν Ἀμφίπολιν καὶ τὴν Ἀπολλωνίαν* and *τὴν Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν*, it is the difference between two taken singly and separately, and two taken together as united for the writer's purpose at the moment. A whole chapter on Luke's style depends on this distinction, which is carried out by him thoroughly.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Blass, it must be said, holds that Timothy belonged to Derbe, which would elude our argument; but I shall, if space permits, return to that point.



tive preference, but stands on objective and real ground. There is probably only one way to do this; and that is by supposing that the Eastern Text is original and accurate, but not absolutely complete. The travellers came to Patara and there trans-shipped to a vessel bound for Syria by the over-sea route, as that Text has it; but the vessel touched at Myra by the way. The original author omitted Myra for some reason.<sup>1</sup>

But is this supposition probable or possible? As to the facts of the voyage, I believe that it may easily be shown to be probably true, for Myra was almost certainly the great harbour for the direct cross-sea traffic to the coasts of Syria and Egypt. From this reason it was the seat of the sailors' protecting god, who was christianized as St. Nicholas of Myra, the patron of sailors, to whom they offered their prayers before starting on the direct long course,<sup>2</sup> and paid their vows on their safe arrival. I learn from Dr. Tomaschek that Myra is styled by the pilgrim Saevulf "the harbour of the Adriatic Sea,"<sup>3</sup> as Constantinople is of the Ægean Sea," and this importance is hardly intelligible till we recognise its relation to the Syrian and Egyptian traffic.

Again, is it probable that the original author would have omitted the visit to Myra? I can see nothing improbable in the omission. A brief narrative like this involves many omissions; the narrator constantly finds himself face to face with the question as to what details of his voyage he shall omit and what he shall mention. After describing the trans-shipment to the direct-bound vessel, the narrator hurries on to the over-sea passage, and did not think that there

<sup>1</sup> On the reason for omitting Myra, see below.

<sup>2</sup> In estimating their conduct, we must of course bear in mind that the ancients rarely made "a long leg" across the sea, but worked on from point to point of the coast. Only in certain favourable cases they ventured across a long course, and when they did so they had a Zeus Ourios at the point of start (*e.g.* at the entrance to the Black Sea).

<sup>3</sup> Adriatic means Mediterranean, as in Acts xxvii. 27.

was any need to mention Myra, the visit to which was a mere incident of the passage.<sup>1</sup>

But, some one may say, it added a day to touch at Myra, and the omission affects the reckoning, which is in this passage of fundamental importance. This objection has a superficial plausibility, but no more. It did not add appreciably to the voyage to touch at Myra, for these coasting voyages of the ancients followed the same exact stages year after year; everything was mapped out, and every sailor knew exactly at what point in his voyage he should strike across the sea.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not the ship actually touched at the harbour of Myra on this occasion, it doubtless spent a day along the coast, and went close up to Myra before striking across to Syria, and the distance traversed from Patara to Tyre (the time of which, about three or four days, is not mentioned) remains much the same in either case.

In the Western Text the words "and Myra" are added, completing the record of the voyage. Did some glossator add these two words simply because he knew that Myra was on the regular line of voyage for Syrian traders? Dr. Blass thinks the supposition unnatural, and I cordially agree with him, as it seems hardly reconcilable with a rational view of the position of *Acts* among the early Christians. Many will think differently; many hold that no amount of stupidity and folly is too great to attribute to the originator of the "Western Text." There would be no more melancholy page in the history of human error than the origin of that Text if, for example, such a theory as that of Rev. F. H. Chase in his *Syriac Element in Codex Bezae* be right. I take on his authority all that relates to Syriac; but after doing so I find

<sup>1</sup> It may illustrate how such a call, though actually made, may become unimportant in some special case, if I mention that though I once called at Myra I did not see it or its harbour, and would probably omit it if I were giving a summary description of my voyage.

<sup>2</sup> Ernst Curtius describes them admirably in his paper on *die Griechen in der Diaspora*.

that, if one is free to attribute to the glossator and translators as much perversity, ignorance, and positive literary crime as he does, one may explain the origin of the Bezan Text quite as easily by the influence of an English or a Turkish translation, or of no translation at all. Ten parts of pure blunder to one part of Syriac influence would be a not exaggerated statement of the cause to which he attributes the Western Text. Belief in human intelligence and truth refuses to accept such a cause. If folly is admitted as a sufficient cause, anything can be explained by it. The *glossator* can have added these words only because he had independent trustworthy evidence that Myra had been touched at on the voyage; now such a fact is not likely to have persisted in general Christian tradition,<sup>1</sup> and it seems necessary, so far as I may judge, to suppose that it was learned from the mouth of one of the travellers. It would lead too far to go into this subject more deeply, but the words quoted from Papias by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 35, make it probable and almost certain that such enquiries were made before the death of the actors in these events for the purpose of recording the information gained.

Further, it is clear that the addition was made with the smallest possible change of the existing text. The words *καὶ Μύρα* were inserted, though this exposes the Western Text, if closely pressed, to the wrong interpretation that the trans-shipment took place in Myra. Dr. Blass holds that here and in xvi. 1-2, the second verse refers back only to the first of the two places mentioned; and, in order to justify his views that Timothy was a native of Derbe, he adopts (and prints in his text) a conjectural alteration of xx. 4. But, though there are some seductive arguments for his change in xx. 4, his view that Timothy lived at

<sup>1</sup> A special Myran legend is possible. A great harbour like Myra was likely to have a church very early in Christian history, and a legend would grow round it, but that carries us too late for the origin of the Western Text.

Derbe leads to the issue that in xvi. 2 Timothy stood in good repute in the cities where he did not reside and where he was least known.<sup>1</sup> This has a sarcastic innuendo; but is not in the style of *Acts*.

Let us now very briefly discuss xvi. 7 and xvii. 15, two readings which are clearly connected. In xvi. 7, Dr. Blass wholly discards the Eastern reading *παρελθόντες* and declares that Luke wrote only the Western reading *διελθόντες*. He argues correctly that Paul could not reach Troas without going through Mysia; but his inference that *παρελθόντες* is wrong does not follow. It is impossible here to read *διελθόντες*, because, as he rightly says on xvi. 6, that term implies preaching in the country traversed, whereas Paul was forbidden to preach in Asia, and Mysia was, as everyone knows, a part of Asia. Hence the original author wrote *παρελθόντες* in the sense of "neglecting," *i.e.* not taking as a sphere of missionary work. But the same reason that makes Dr. Blass prefer *διελθόντες* led a second century glossator to alter what seemed to him the inaccurate *παρελθόντες* (which he took, like Blass, as "passing by" or "alongside of") into *διελθόντες*. But the glossator was evidently unwilling to eject the thought absolutely from *Acts*, and therefore he re-introduced it in xvii. 15, where he inserted "he passed by Thessaly; for he was forbidden to preach the Word to them." The person who wrote this evidently thought that Paul, when he left Berea, had made an end of Macedonia, and was planning a new sphere of enterprise in Thessaly, but was diverted from this first plan to make an attempt at Athens. But it is clear from 1 *Thessalonians* ii. 17, iii. 1f.<sup>2</sup> and *Acts* xviii. 5 and 9 that

<sup>1</sup> Comparison of vi. 3, x. 22, xxii. 12, shows that *ἐμαρτυρεῖτο* indicates "good repute in the districts where he was known," and does not refer to formal enquiries instituted by Paul among Timothy's neighbours. Paul indubitably trusted his own judgment, and not "the clash o' the country," when he selected Timothy.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot accept the interpretation of 1 *Thess.* iii. 1f. which is given by

Paul still believed Macedonia to be his proper sphere, and that he was merely waiting on for the removal of certain obstacles. Finally he learned in a vision that Corinth was now to be his sphere. I might also argue that the mention of Thessaly offends against Luke's method of defining each intended sphere of missionary duty, and of distinguishing between spheres entered without premeditation and spheres which were definitely aimed at before entrance; but that is a wide subject. In short, the Western Text of *Acts* xvii. 15 contradicts Luke's practice, and arises out of the change in xvi. 7.<sup>1</sup>

In other cases also definite external reasons militate against the Western additions, and yet leave to those that concern the Asiatic provinces high value and interest.<sup>2</sup> But those examples must suffice. A volume would be needed to examine the Western readings accepted by Dr. Blass, and show their true character. How often is an awkward or obscure phrase changed in the Western Text! Take the first variation, i. 2: Dr. Blass calls the Eastern reading "*sententia paullo impeditior*," but the Western Text avoids the awkwardness. Let any one examine the Western Text in ch. xx., for example, and he must be struck with the number of difficulties that are smoothed over, and details that are added. Design, care, knowledge, and judgment, are all evident in the variations. But the spirit of *Acts*

Zöckler and most other commentators. Clemen rightly objects to it; but the contradiction which he finds between *Thess.* and *Acts* seems to me to lie in misapprehension of *Acts*. Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*, ch. ix. § 4, deserves to be read on this point, but the mutual agreement of *Acts* and *Thessalonians* is far more complete than he has observed. This, again, is a wide topic.

<sup>1</sup> In my *Ch. in R. Emp.*, p. 160, omit a sentence, ll. 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Δουβριος xx. 4 deserves a word. It is unique in literature, and yet bears obvious marks of first-hand knowledge. Doubra for Derbe belongs to a class of forms widely spread in Asia Minor, and described in many passages of my forthcoming *Local History of Phrygia*: the best parallel is Soublaion or Silbion or Seiblia. Such a form as Doubrios springs, not from ignorance or mistranslation, but from desire to use the exact form of local dialect. This obscure ethnic was corrupted into Douberios, etc. It may well be original.

evaporates in this handling; and we sometimes find ourselves in the second century rather than in the first. The Western Text is really a second century commentary on *Acts*, the work of one who had no respect for the words, but much for the facts, who wished to make the book complete and clear, who had spoken with some of the actors in the history, or, at least, with those who had seen some of the actors. It is therefore of priceless value. But the Eastern Text is the true text, apart from a certain number of corruptions that have affected it.

We have come to the same result as in my *Church in the Empire*; but in that work the point which most interested me was to show the knowledge of Asia Minor that underlies the Western readings. Dr. Blass confirms my main point, and perhaps this caused in my mind a slight and natural prejudice in favour of his view, which I am now opposing. My reason for first taking up this subject was simply to find trustworthy authorities for the study of Asia Minor; and it is by mere accident that I have appeared as a defender of the historical value of *Acts*. I want to found on its evidence many sections in my contemplated history of the country. In conclusion, let me say that Blass and Wetstein are the commentators on *Acts* from whom I have learned most.<sup>1</sup>

W. M. RAMSAY.

<sup>1</sup> I regret to find, after this article is in print, that I have omitted an Appendix to Edition VII. of Dr. Salmon's *Introduction to New Testament*, p. 595, discussing Dr. Blass's article on *Codex Bezae*. At present I have no opportunity of consulting that appendix, for it is not easy to keep pace with the rapid sequence of editions of that excellent book. I see also in the *Revue Critique* the statement that Dr. Blass's theory of *Codex Bezae* was maintained during last century by Leclerc.