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The Oxyrhynchus Fragment.

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT CAMBRIDGE, 29TH JULY 1897, TO THE SUMMER MEETING OF CLERGY.¹

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WHEN some months ago a report reached us here in Cambridge that a discovery in Egypt had brought to light either the work of Papias or the Logia of St. Matthew himself, the highest hopes were raised of a speedy solution of some of the problems connected with the literary history of the first century. These hopes have been disappointed by the publication of the single leaf which proves to be the measure of our gains. There is some risk that the disappointment may tempt us to undervalue what we have actually secured. Yet the value of the find is considerable, if it is very far less than what report led us to expect. It would be premature to attempt anything like a precise estimate. But it has been suggested to me that the members of this meeting may be glad to carry away with them some general ideas upon a subject which is exciting much interest, and I shall therefore endeavour simply to place before them the impressions which a first study of the

fragment has left upon my own mind. It must be understood that both the suggested restoration and the remarks which I shall offer upon the interpretation of the fragment are tentative only; fuller knowledge or consideration will doubtless lead to truer and better results.

Those among us who have been up the Nile will remember the town of Abû Girgeh on the right bank, 119 miles south of Cairo, and 30 or 40 north of Minyeh. A ride of 7 miles N.E. from Abû Girgeh brings the traveller to the wretched Arab town of Bêhnesa, which occupies the site of Oxyrhynchus. The Greek name of the old city reveals its antiquity; it was so called, as Strabo tells us (xvii. p. 812²), from the worship of a Nile fish of the sturgeon class, with pointed head (ὄξυρυγχος). In Christian times the place acquired a reputation as a stronghold of Egyptian monasticism. Ruffinus (*Hist. Monach.* c. v.) describes its monastic establishments in glowing colours. 'No one,' he writes, translating appar-

¹ A few paragraphs have been rewritten, and some passages slightly abridged.

² τιμῶσι δὲ τὸν ὄξυρυγχον.

ently the witness of some fervent pilgrim who had visited the city, 'can worthily depict the religious life of the place; it is so manifold and so delightful. The town is packed with monks, the neighbourhood teems with them. Such public buildings as they have, and the old pagan temples, are now in the hands of the monks, and in every part of the town the monastic cells far outnumber the private houses. The city, being a large and populous one, has twelve churches; but the monks, with their ceaseless hymns and lauds, which rise night and day to heaven, make it, in fact, all one Church of God. There is not a pagan or a heretic to be found there. All the citizens are Christians and Catholics.' He adds that the place had a population of 10,000 monks and 20,000 virgins. This was perhaps in the last years of the fourth century, but the history of Oxyrhynchus as a Christian city goes further back; a bishop of Oxyrhynchus signed the Seleucian Creed of 359, and other bishops preceded him in the see. There is no reason to doubt that Christianity was already active in this nome and town in the third, and even the second, century.¹

I will not go over ground which the editors of the fragment have covered in their preface; but I may remind you that they regard the leaf as considerably earlier than A.D. 300, and probably not much later than the beginning of the third century. Since it belongs to a codex, and not to a roll, it can hardly be earlier. Dr. Sanday, in *Studia Biblica*, iii. 234,² has collected interesting evidence as to the use of the book-form in the third century, adding, 'Yet we cannot go beyond the beginning of that century, for it is clear, from the language used by the Roman lawyers, that at that date papyrus rolls were still the rule, and anything else the exception.' Assuming the soundness of these conclusions, it will be safe to place the fragment provisionally in the first or second decade of the third century. It was written, let us say, while Origen was still a youthful catechist at Alexandria, perhaps while the persecution of Septimius Severus was still raging in Lower Egypt. Few Christian documents have reached us which can claim so hoary an antiquity.

The editors have called their book *Λόγια Ἰησοῦ*, which they translate 'Sayings of our

¹ Cf. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, ii. p. 577.

² Cf. Sir E. Maude Thompson's *Greek and Latin Palaeography*, pp. 60 ff.

Lord.' 'It is difficult (they write) to imagine a title better suited to a series of sayings, each introduced by the phrase *λέγει Ἰησοῦς*, than *Logia*.'

I fear that this sentence is likely to lead to misconception. The word *logia* has come into general use in connexion with two different works. Papias wrote five books, which bore the title, 'Exposition of the Lord's *Logia*.' In this work, now, alas, no longer extant, or, let us rather say, not yet rediscovered, Papias mentioned that 'Matthew wrote the *Logia* in the Hebrew tongue.' The word *λόγιον*, from Herodotus downwards, means an oracle, a Divine or inspired utterance. It maintains this meaning in the LXX, in Philo, and in the N.T. The appropriateness of the title *Λόγια Ἰησοῦ*, therefore, does not rest on the mere fact that the book consists of sayings. The *dicta* of a philosopher or a poet, e.g., could not properly be called his *λόγια*; they would be his *ἀποφθέγματα* or *ρήσεις*, or the like.³ The *Λόγια Ἰησοῦ* are the oracles of Jesus, or sayings in which He reveals the Divine will. The book bears, I think, manifest tokens of its claim to possess this character. It was written in the form of a codex, on leaves, not in successive columns on a roll—a form which seems to have been reserved among Christians for sacred or ecclesiastical books. Each saying begins with a formula which indicates its oracular authority. A writer in the *Guardian* of July 21 says that the use of *λέγει* in preference to *ἔλεγεν* or *εἶπεν* stamps the book as 'a collection of sayings having a present living force.' I assent to this; but I should like to add that the reason why *λέγει* is appropriate, is that we have before us a fragment of a collection of sayings which purport to be *λόγια ζῶντα*, living oracles of the living Lord. *Λέγει, λέγει ἢ γραφή* or *τὸ πνεῦμα*, or [*ὁ*] *Κύριος* is a regular formula for the citation of an inspired utterance. That the speaker is described simply as *Ἰησοῦς*, not as *ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς* or *ὁ Κύριος*, need not, I think, modify our conclusion; no Gospel uses the personal Name of our Lord so frequently as that of the *θεολόγος*.

We will now take the *logia* separately.

1. The first is part of a canonical saying reported by Matthew and Luke. Comparing what remains of the *logion* with the WH text of the Gospels, we

³ E.g. we read of the *ἀποφθέγματα Ἀναξαγόρου* and the *ρήσεις Εὐριπίδου*.

find that the new text approaches to that of Luke—

Matt. (WH).	Luke (WH).	Logion 1.
διαβλέψεις ἐκβα- λεῖν τὸ κάρφος ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.	διαβλέψεις τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκβα- λεῖν.	διαβλέψεις ἐκβα- λεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

The editors say that the *logion* agrees exactly with Luke. It does agree exactly with the R.T. of Luke, but not with WH, who, following B and some important cursives, place ἐκβαλεῖν at the end of the sentence; nor with the 'Western' text, which has ἐκ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ for τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ, and thus assimilates Luke to Matthew. This is a point of no little interest, and ought to be weighed before we infer a Lucan tendency in the new *logia*.

2. The second 'saying,' which is entirely new, presents at the outset a considerable difficulty. For the phrase *νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον* appears to be without parallel, and it is not easy to see what meaning it can have been intended to bear. When *νηστεύειν* is followed by an accusative in biblical Greek, it is either that of the cognate noun (*νηστεύειν νηστείαν*), or that of duration (*νηστεύειν . . . ἡμέρας*). It would seem that if τὸν κόσμον is to stand here, it must be taken in the latter sense. The fast which the Lord prescribes is world-long; while the present order lasts, with its temptations to sin, His disciples must practise a perpetual abstinence. In this connexion we should have expected (*εἰς*) τὸν αἰῶνα (cf. I Cor. viii. 13, οὐ μὴ φάγω κρέα εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα = οὐκ ἔσθω?); but there may have been reasons why τὸν κόσμον was preferred in the present context.

But, suspending judgment as to τὸν κόσμον, let us try to understand the saying as a whole. There is a fast, our Lord is reported to have said, which Christians must keep, and there is a Sabbath which they must observe, under pain of exclusion from the vision of the Father in His eternal kingdom. The saying may well have been an answer to a question of the Apostles. Staggered by our Lord's teaching as to the Jewish fasts and the traditional law of the Sabbath, they asked Him, as we may suppose, 'Shall we then not fast at all, neither keep Sabbath?' Such a question might have come quite naturally after the incidents of Mark ii. 18-iii. 6 = Luke v. 33-vi. 11. The

form of the answer is surely very characteristic; cf. Matt. v. 20, vi. 15, xviii. 3; Luke xiii. 3, 5; John iii. 3, 5, xiii. 8, xv. 4. Further, the earliest post-apostolic literature of the Church supplies interesting parallels which may suggest that some such answer was current in the second century. The editors aptly quote Justin, *Dial.* 12: σαββατίζειν ὑμᾶς ὁ καινὸς νόμος διαπαντὸς ἐθέλει, καὶ ὑμεῖς μίαν ἀργούντες ἡμέραν εὐσεβεῖν δοκεῖτε, μὴ νοοῦντες διὰ τί ὑμῖν προσετάγη. . . εἴ τις ἐν ὑμῖν ἐπιόρκος ἢ κλέπτης, παυσάσθω· εἴ τις μοιχός, μέτανοησάτω, καὶ σεσαββάτικε τὰ τρυφερὰ καὶ ἀληθινὰ σάββατα τοῦ θεοῦ. They might have added that in *Dial.* 15 Justin quotes Isa. lviii. 1 ff., and adds the comment: καὶ τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὖν τοῦ θεοῦ νηστείαν μάθετε νηστεύειν, ὡς Ἡσαίας φησὶν. The idea of a true Sabbath to be observed by Christians occurs frequently. Ignatius indeed writes, *Magn.* 9, οἱ ἐν παλαιοῖς πράγμασιν ἀναστραφέντες εἰς καινότητα ἐλπίδος ἦλθον μηκέτι σαββατίζοντες ἀλλὰ κατὰ κυριακὴν ζῶντες, but the interpolator has no doubt rightly interpreted his meaning when he makes him say: μηκέτι σαββατίζομεν Ἰουδαϊκῶς. . . ἀλλ' ἕκαστος ὑμῶν σαββατιζέτω πνευματικῶς. There are two ways in which this spiritual Sabbath can be kept,—either in the future life, or by living a new life here. The former is in view in Heb. iv. 9, ἀρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ; and in Barn. 15, τότε καλῶς καταπαυσάμενοι ἀγιάσομεν αὐτὴν [sc. τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐβδόμην], ὅτε δυνήσομεθα αὐτοὶ δικαιοθέντες καὶ ἀπολαβόντες τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν, μηκέτι οὕσης τῆς ἀνομίας. Both views occur together in Irenæus, who teaches, iv. 1, 'Sabbata autem perseverantiam totius diei erga deum desertionis edocebant. . . consecrati et ministrantes omni tempore fidei nostræ et perseverantes ei et abstinentes ab omni avaritia,' though he adds, 'manifestabatur autem et tanquam. . . requietio Dei hoc est regnum, in quo requiescens homo ille qui perseveraverit Deo adistere participabit de mensa Dei.'¹ On the whole, however, the thought of the present rest from worldliness and sin prevails in the patristic explanations of the true Sabbath; and it is this which seems to be prominent in the new saying: 'Keep the true Sabbath here, *i.e.* cease from evil and do good, if ye would attain to the sight of God hereafter.'

¹ Cf. Aug. *de Gen. ad Litt.* 13: 'Perpetuum sabbatum iam observat qui spe futuræ quietis operatur quiddam boni operatur. . . quiescit a pristinis operibus suis ut iam in novitate vitæ ambulans.'

The editors are perhaps scarcely justified in saying that *σαββατίζειν τὸ σάββατον* is the ordinary phrase in the LXX for observing the Sabbath. The normal phrase is *φυλάσσειν* or *φυλάσσεσθαι τὰ σάββατα*. *Σαββατίζειν σάββατα* occurs, however, in Lev. xxiii. 32 and 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21, and Aquila has *σαββατίζειν σάββατον* in Isa. xxv. 2. But *σαββατίζειν τὸ σάββατον* with the emphatic article is, I think, unique, and points directly to an ideal Sabbath, the 'Sabbath indeed' which Christ requires.

3. This *logion*, again, is new. It is imperfect at the end, and it is uncertain how much space intervened between the last decipherable letters and the first words on the other side of the leaf. The editors incline to the belief that a whole saying intervened, of which *τὴν πτωχίαν* was the end. But this hypothesis seems to be unnecessary, and a reviewer in the *Guardian* of July 21 suggests that the third *logion* ended *ἀμβλείς τῆ διανοίᾳ οὐκ οἶδασιν αὐτῶν τὴν πτωχίαν*, referring for illustration to Apoc. iii. 17 (*οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ . . . πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλός*). This is ingenious and not improbable; on the other hand, *ἀμβλύς* is not a biblical word, and such an ending as *οὐ βλέπουσιν οὐδὲ γινώσκουσιν τὴν ἑαυτῶν πτωχίαν* is perhaps slightly preferable.

In the first part of the saying the reference to Baruch iii. 38 may, I think, be regarded as highly probable. The words *μετὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὄφθη καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συναεστράφη* can hardly be without connexion with our *logion*. But the verse in Baruch belongs to the second part of that book, which is probably a later addition to the Hebrew Baruch; and this particular verse has been regarded by some recent scholars as a Christian interpolation. That is not perhaps a necessary inference from its apparent anticipation of the doctrine of the Incarnation. But it is clear that the use of this uncanonical work, in a saying attributed to our Lord, raises more than one question of some intricacy, and may suggest doubts as to the genuineness of the *logion*. The words of Baruch are quoted by a succession of Christian writers from Irenæus downwards in reference to the Incarnation, and would have formed a tempting basis for an imaginary utterance of Christ.

If, notwithstanding this somewhat suspicious element, we may refer the saying to our Lord, the question arises to what part of His life it

belongs. The aorists *ἔστην*, *ὄφθη*, *εἶρον* have been thought to suggest the forty days after the Resurrection, whilst *πονεῖ*, on the other hand, seems to point to the ministry. But if we accept the connexion with Baruch, the aorists may have been suggested by the prophecy; or they may be used in a sense hardly distinguishable from that of the English perfect. The difficulty will, however, be altogether overcome if we place this saying, where indeed it may well stand, among the utterances of the Holy Week. Both aorists and present will then have their natural force. The Lord looks back over His completed ministry, but His sorrows are as yet unhealed. Cf. John xvii. 4, 6, 12, *ἐδόξασα, ἐφάνερωσα, ἐφύλαξα*, for similarly retrospective aorists. *Πονεῖν* is not a N.T. word, but it occurs as an intrans. in 1 Regn. xxii. 8, *οὐκ ἔστιν πονῶν περὶ ἐμοῦ*, and as a trans. in Isa. xix. 10, *ληπηθήσονται καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς πονέσουσιν*. The reference to the Lord's human *ψυχὴ* is characteristic of the latter part of His ministry (John x. 15; Mark xiv. 34). For *μεθύοντες*, 'intoxicated with pleasure or business,' cf. Matt. xxiv. 49, Luke xxi. 34; for *διψᾶν*, 'to thirst after spiritual truth,' Apoc. xxi. 6, xxii. 17, and the *agraphon* in Origen on *Matt. i. xiii. 2*, *διὰ τοὺς διψῶντας ἐδάψων*. The striking *ἔστην ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ κόσμου* need, I think, create no difficulty; it is in the style of other genuine sayings, e.g. *ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν εἰμι*; cf. *αὐτὸς ἔστη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν* (Luke xxiv. 36) *μέσος ὑμῶν στήκει* (John i. 26). The thought is that of John i. 10, *ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν*.

Everything in this saying is appropriate and true, and the saying, as a whole, is one of great beauty; whether it is a genuine saying of our Lord, or the product of early meditation upon His true sayings and on the miracle of His life, we shall perhaps never know.

4 (= 5). It is not necessary at present to make good the broken line with which this *logion* begins. As a tentative restoration, I venture to place upon the black-board the words, *Λέγει Ἰησοῦς Ὅπου ἐὰν ᾧσιν πάντες μισόθει, καὶ πιστὸς εἰς ἔστιν ὁ μόνος, ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ εἰμι μετ' αὐτοῦ*. But *μισόθει* is far from probable in such a context. In any case the first sentence is a promise of Christ's Presence with a solitary believer under circumstances of difficulty or danger. We may assume that the believer is

represented as working alone amongst unbelievers and antagonists. Keeping this picture before us, let us look at the second clause, which is happily complete.

The words have been taken to suggest either a revelation of the immanence of God in nature, or (on the supposition that they are not genuine) a docetic doctrine of the Person of Christ. The editors quote from the Gnostic Gospel of Eve: "Ὅπου ἔαν ἦς, ἐγὼ ἐκεῖ εἰμι, καὶ ἐν ἅπασιν εἰμι ἐσπαρμένως, καὶ ὅθεν ἔαν θέλῃς, συλλέγεις με. But why is Christ to be found in particular under the stone, or in the heart of a block of wood? The LXX seems to me to supply a clue to the meaning. In Eccl. x. 9 we read—

Ἐξάιρων λίθους διαπονηθήσεται ἐν αὐτοῖς·
σχίζων ξύλα κινδυνεύσει ἐν αὐτοῖς.

The writer is dealing with the toils and dangers inherent in the arts of life, which are minimised by the gift of wisdom. In building, the raising of the great blocks of which the temple or palace is constructed is a work of much labour; the cleaving of the timber, a work of peril. The Lord, if this *logion* be really His, adapts the saying of Koheleth to the circumstances connected with the spiritual building of His Church. His Apostles, scattered over the world, alone amongst unbelievers, would incur much hard labour and many perils. But it was just in such toilsome and dangerous work that they might expect the promised Presence of Christ. 'Raise the stone, do the uphill work of the religious pioneer, and thou shalt find Me. Cleave the timber, face the danger that lies in the way of duty, and there am I.' The Wisdom of God (Eccl. x. 10) pledges Himself to be with the Christian builder, and never more so than when he builds alone, and with labour and peril. There is a true Christian *Gnosis* here, but no Gnosticism. It is a saying full of practical importance to the first generation, and one which may help us in the work of to-day.

5 (= 6). The first part of this *logion* appears to be another form of the saying recorded in Matt. xiii. 57 = Mark vi. 4, Luke iv. 24, John iv. 44. A comparison of the four forms reveals considerable differences—

(1) Mark. Matt.

Ὁὐκ ἔστιν προφήτης
ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ ἐν τῇ πατρίδι
αὐτοῦ.

(2) Luke.

Οὐδεὶς προφήτης δεκτός
ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ.

(3) John.

Προφήτης ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ
πατρίδι τιμὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

(4) Logion:

Ὁὐκ ἔστιν δεκτός προ-
φήτης ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτοῦ.

In form the new saying is cognate both to (1) and (2). Like (1), it begins οὐκ ἔστιν; like (2), it substitutes δεκτός for ἄτιμος εἰ μὴ. Δεκτός in the N.T. is used only by Luke and Paul, so that here, as perhaps in *logion* 1, we have a distinct inclination towards the form which our Lord's saying assumed in St. Luke. But there is, of course, nothing to show that the compiler took either saying from the third Gospel, nor does he follow exactly, in *logion* 5 at least, the Lucan text.

The second part of this *logion* is new. St. Luke, however, represents the Lord as saying in the same context: Πάντως ἐρεῖτέ μοι τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην Ἰατρέ, θεράπευσον σεαυτὸν ὅσα ἠκούσαμεν γενόμενα εἰς τὴν Καφαρναοὺμ ποίησον καὶ ὧδε. It seems quite likely that the words οὐδὲ ἱατρὸς ποιεῖ θεραπείας εἰς τοὺς γινώσκοντας αὐτόν are based on an imperfect report of this Lucan saying. Ποιεῖν θεραπείας is not a Lucan or a biblical phrase; St. Luke uses θεραπεία in this sense (ix. 11), but instead of ποιεῖν θ. he writes (xiii. 32) ἀποτελεῖν ἰάσεις. But ποιεῖν, it is worth observing, occurs in the saying of Luke iv. 23, in near proximity to the θεράπευσον, and in reference to the miraculous cures. Οἱ γινώσκοντες αὐτόν, 'His acquaintances,' is another unusual phrase; the N.T. prefers οἱ γνωστοί (Luke iv. 44, xxiii. 49). But compare Ps. lxxxvi. = lxxxvii. 4, τοῖς γνώσκουσίν με (ψ. 137). Have we not here a trace of the Aramaic origin of the *logion*?

6 (= 7). Here, again, is a saying which may be based upon an inexact report of a canonical saying. Let us place this *logion* side by side with Matt. v. 14, vii. 24, 25—

Matt.

Ὁὐ δύναται πόλις κρυβῆναι
ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη. . . ἠκοδόμησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν. . . καὶ οὐκ ἔπεσεν, τεθεμελιωτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν.

Logion.

Πόλις οἰκοδομημένη ἐπ' ἄκρον ὄρους ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐστηρυμένη οὕτε πεσεῖν δύναται οὕτε κρυβῆναι.

I am unable to see the force of the argument which the editors urge against the hypothesis of conflation, on the ground that there is no reference to the rock. The rock is implied in ἐστηρυμένη. The saying is, however, not so much a conflation as an abbreviation which labours to collect the ideas of two very distinct sayings, and

produces in its present detached form a somewhat confused result. At the same time, it is quite possible that such a saying as this might really have been addressed by our Lord to the Apostles who had heard the other two. One can imagine that some question or remark on their part may have called forth this brief reference to the two utterances.

Some details require notice. The editors remark that the Syriac versions and Tatian agree with our *logion* in substituting 'built' for 'set' is interesting; I may add that Hilary on Matthew has the same reading ('non potest civitas abscondi supra montem ædificata'). I must demur to *οικοδομημένη* being described as a serious error on the part of the scribe of the *λόγια*; the form is well supported by inscriptions, and occasionally occurs in good biblical MSS. (Winer-Schmiedel, p. 100).¹ **Opus ὑψηλόν* is a N.T. combination (Matt. iv. 8, xvii. 1, Mark ix. 2); *στηρίζειν*, which occurs in Luke, Cath., Paul, Apoc., is not used in the N.T. or apparently in the LXX of the foundation of a building, for which Matthew has the proper word *θεμελιῶν*. **Ἐπ' ἄκρον*, again, is not biblical; the LXX has *ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον* or *ἐπ' ἄκρον*, but not as the precise equivalent of *ἐπάνω*. The whole saying, notwithstanding its points of connexion with the Sermon on the Mount, stands apart from St. Matthew's Gospel in some important particulars; the words which it has in common with St. Matthew, *πόλις, δύναται, κρυβῆναι, ὄρους, πεσεῖν*, are such as could scarcely have been replaced without a periphrasis. Nor does it show any closer relation to Luke vi. 48 ff., where we have the Lucan account of the saying about the man who built on the rock.

7 (=8). The last of the *logia* in the new fragment is imperfect, and the loss is the more to be regretted because it seems to have been, like 2, 3, and 4, quite new. The first three words are fairly clear: *λέγει Ἰησοῦς Ἀκούεις*. For the next line the editors suggest *εἰς τὸ ἐνώπιόν σου τό . . . Ἀκούειν εἰς τὸ ἐνώπιον* is an almost inconceivable phrase, and, since the *π* is uncertain, it has been proposed to read ΕΙΣΤΟΕΝ-ΩΤΙΟΝΣΟΥ, *i.e.* *εἰς τὸ ἐν ὠτίον σου*, 'thou hearest in one of thine ears.' If this is accepted, we may proceed with some probability: *τὸ δὲ ἕτερον συνέκλεισας* (or *συνέσχεσ*), 'but the other thou hast closed,' or other words to the

¹ *Οικοδομηθῆναι* is edited by WH in Luke vi. 48.

like effect. **Ἀκούειν εἰς τὸ οὖς* is a N.T. phrase (Matt. x. 27),² and the saying has a partial parallel in Mark viii. 18, *ὅσα ἔχοντες οὐκ ἠκούετε*; and the frequent saying, *ὁ ἔχων ὅσα ἀκούειν ἀκούετω*. But the idea of a man hearing with one ear only, *i.e.* paying apparent but imperfect attention to the message, is peculiar to this new *logion*, and very striking.

We are now in a position to consider the character of this collection, so far as it can be judged by a single leaf.

Let me say a few words as to the linguistic features of the fragment. We have noticed that it does not keep strictly to N.T. or even biblical Greek. The phrases *νηστεύειν τὸν κόσμον* (if that is the true reading), *σαββατίζειν τὸ σάββατον, πονεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ, ἔγειρον λίθον, ποιεῖ θεραπείας, οἱ γινώσκοντες αὐτόν* for *οἱ γνωσταί, στηρίζεσθαι* for *θεμελιῶσθαι* are instances. There is no clear evidence of dependence on any of our present Gospels, even where the sayings approach to St. Matthew or St. Luke, if we except, perhaps, the first saying, which agrees verbally with the St. Luke of the R.T. Nevertheless, the Greek has, I think, the true ring of the evangelical style. It is marvellously simple and clear. Compare it with the Greek of the Pseudo-Peter, and you will feel the difference; or, since the Gospel of Peter has only one, or at the most, two sayings assigned to our Lord, place these sayings by the side of those in the Leucian Acts of John lately edited by Dr. James. Not only the vocabulary, but the style, is widely different. Everything in this present fragment points to the simple Palestinian Greek of bilingual Jews, accustomed to render word for word the memoirs of the original hearers of the Lord. I doubt if the second century or the soil of Egypt could have produced anything of the kind. It is not necessary to rush to the conclusion that all the sayings are genuine, still less that they preserve words uttered by our Lord in their present form. I could quite imagine, *e.g.*, that *logion* 3 might be a fragment of a primitive Christian hymn, putting words, as many of our own hymns do, into the mouth of Christ, which in a very short time would pass in the Church as His own. Again, it is quite possible, as I have already

² Cf. the LXX *ἀκούειν εἰς ἀκοήν ὠτιου*, 2 Regn. xxii. 45, Ps. xvii. (xviii.) 44. I owe the suggestion of *ὠτιον* to the Master of St. John's; I had thought of *ἐνώπιον* = *οὖς*.

hinted, that *logia* 5 and 6 (6 and 7) may be somewhat distorted reports of similar sayings which have reached us in a purer form through the Synoptic Gospels. But I find it difficult to believe, judging from the form in which they are cast, that any of these sayings are later in their origin than the first century, or that the collection which contained them was put together after our canonical Gospels came into general use.

Both St. Luke's preface and the postscript to St. John speak of books other than the Gospels which had been written, or might have been written, to contain the *Gesta Christi*. We have now for the first time distinct evidence of the existence of books which contained His sayings only, detached from the narrative. While it is perhaps a little premature to entitle this fragment *Δόγια Ἰησοῦ*, the probability is greatly increased that the *Δόγια* which St. Matthew wrote was a collection of this sort. As the editors observe, there is no reason for identifying this collection with St. Matthew's; it is slightly against such an hypothesis that two of the sayings seem to follow the Lucan rather than the Matthean tradition. But besides the *logia* of St. Matthew there may have been other collections of this kind compiled in the first age by believers who had received them orally from the hearers of our Lord. To the Palestinian Church more especially such compilations would have been suggested by the custom of treasuring up the *dicta* of the Rabbis. If it be asked why no collection of *λόγια* found its way into the canon of the N.T., or has survived as a whole to our own time, the answer may well be that the Church needed, above all things, histories of the Lord's Life and Passion and Resurrection, the facts upon which her faith was built, to which even His personal teaching was secondary. The sayings detached from the history were useful for the meditation of the faithful to whom the facts were known, but for ecclesiastical purposes the complete records were essential; and thus it may have come to pass that *εὐαγγέλια* only, and not *λόγια*, gained an entrance into the canon of the New Testament.

Thus the special interest of this discovery consists in the substantial proof it affords of the existence of a class of early Christian writings of which we have hitherto had no certain example. It encourages the hope that other portions of this collection or other collections may come to light

in the course of further explorations. It opens a new view of the literary activity, the devotion and faith, of the first generation of believers.

The direct gain to the Christian student from the new fragment is the addition of six or seven new sayings to our stock of uncanonical sayings attributed to our Lord. Most of us are aware that a considerable number of detached sayings of our Lord have been collected from the fathers and early writers, ecclesiastical or heretical. To this store our fragment contributes six new *agrapha*, of which four are unlike any sayings recorded in the New Testament. I am not prepared to say that these sayings are more important than certain of the *agrapha* which have long been before us, or that they have any better claim on our attention. Beyond the fact that the present sayings form part of an early collection, there seems to be no reason why the title *λόγια*—oracles—should be given to them, so long as it is withheld from such sayings as 'He that is near Me is near the fire,' or 'Prove yourselves expert changers of coin.' All that we can expect is that in future collections of the uncanonical sayings of Christ editors will place side by side with those time-honoured words the new sayings, 'Except ye keep the [true] Sabbath ye shall not see the Father'; 'Lift the stone, and there thou shalt find Me; cleave the wood, and there am I.' None of these detached sayings, however worthy, can ever perhaps acquire the full authority which belongs to those which are embedded in the historical setting of the Gospels, even though, as in the case of the new *logia*, they may be believed to have descended to us from the Church of the first century.

On the other hand, in proportion as such sayings seem to bear the characteristic stamp of the mind of Christ, they are of deep and living interest for all Christians. We cannot use them to establish new articles of faith or rules of conduct. But, in so far as we can satisfy ourselves that we hear in any of them the voice of the Master, they may be of practical value to us who are of the clergy, both for personal guidance and for the instruction of the Church. I venture to hope that the Oxyrhynchus 'sayings,' when they have been fully deciphered and interpreted, may be found to supply help in both these directions.

For the convenience of readers I give the provisional restoration of the Sayings to which reference is made in the Lecture. It will be found on page 568.