

A Probable Error in the Text of James ii. 18.

PROF. E. Y. HINCKS.

ANDOVER, MASS.

THE second part of this much-discussed passage seems to contradict the first; it assumes that the $\tau\iota\varsigma$ of the former is a man of faith, and his opponent a man of works; whereas his own words are, "Thou hast faith and I have works."

Various exegetical expedients have been adopted to remove the contradiction. (See the German literature of the passage in Holtzmann's *N. T. Theol.* ii. 333.)

I will briefly examine several of these. 1. Hilgenfeld (in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 1873), and Mayor (*Commentary on James*, 1892). The speaker in ^{18a} is not an objector, but the author; who (Hilg.) introduces his own sharper attack on the 'faith' man with the words $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda' \acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota \tau\iota\varsigma$; or (Mayor) from modesty speaks of himself, the man of works, in the third person. Beyschlag (Meyer's *Kommentar*, 15te Abth.) advances a slightly diverging view. The speaker is an imaginary friend of the author, who speaks for him. All these interpreters regard the person represented by $\tau\iota\varsigma$ as speaking throughout the remainder of the verse. Vs.^{18b} is not, then, a reply to ^{18a}; but, on the contrary, the two clauses make together a challenge to the 'faith' man: "You have faith and I have works. Very well; show me your faith which is without works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

But these interpretations rob the $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ of its meaning. Vs.¹⁸ so construed would have been more naturally connected with ¹⁷ by $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$. The words $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda' \acute{\epsilon}\rho\epsilon\iota \tau\iota\varsigma$, in controversial discourse such as we are now dealing with, seem intended to introduce an imaginary objection. They are so used in 1 Cor. 15³³ (an important consideration to those who believe that our author is familiar with Paul's letters). Besides, ^{18b} seems to be an answer to ^{18a}. It seems intended to show the groundlessness of a claim made in ^{18a}, 'Show me your faith, on which you rely, a faith separate from works, and I will show you (as giving a valid claim for acceptance with God) my faith manifested in

my works.' Moreover (as against Hilgenfeld and Mayor), if the author speaks in ^{18a}, why does he adopt the third person? He is the last person whom we should expect to express his sentiments in a round-about way. Mayor's suggestion that he adopts this form because he is too modest to say 'I have works,' is trivial. If modesty guides his pen, why does it allow him to claim in any fashion the possession of works?

2. Weiffenbach (*Exegetisch-theologische Studie über Jak. 2. 14-26*, 1871). The $\tau\iota\varsigma$, it is here urged, is a middleman, who says, 'One of you holds that faith is the single condition of salvation; the other, that works is that condition. I will suggest another view of the matter. *Suum cuique*. You, the putative man of faith, have faith as your title to salvation. I (assuming myself to be the man of works) have works as mine. Very well. I have in these works faith's equivalent. Show me your single jewel, faith, and I will show you evinced in my works my faith, *i.e.* what I deem such.'

But ^{18b} does not teach that it is all the same whether we have faith or works; it says, on the contrary, that works are the superior possession, since they hold faith, and that of the true kind. Besides, as Holtzmann says (*N. T. Theol.* ii. 334), if ¹⁸ is the utterance of a mediating man, why not ^{19, 20}, and ²¹? No transition to another speaker is suggested by the language.

Can we then suppose the middleman to have uttered ^{18a}, and James to have replied in ^{18b}?

No, for (1) the utterance attributed to the mediator then becomes impenetrably obscure, and (2) the closing words of ^{18b}, "I will show thee my faith by my works," lose their point.

3. Klöpffer (in *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie*, 1885) advances another hypothesis. The $\tau\iota\varsigma$ who speaks in ^{18a} is one of those 'faith' men against whom James's polemic is directed. He takes a conciliatory tone. 'You who criticise my faith, and my estimate of it, have, I am glad to allow, faith yourself; I, on the other hand, have the works by which you set such store.' James, not accepting the offered olive branch, replies, 'Show me your faith without works (*i.e.* the faith you so readily concede to me, which to you seems to have no connection with good works), and I will show you by my works my faith' (the genuine $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ which I have been speaking of). Plainly this interpretation tries to connect ^{18a} with ^{18b}, by doing violence to the language of the former. The words, "Show me thy faith which is unaccompanied by works," evidently refer to the faith which the speaker believes the person

addressed to have, not something which he is calling 'faith,' as appears from the following clause, "and I will show thee my faith by my works." Besides, the words spoken by James's interlocutor, when given this interpretation, have no bearing on the discussion.

4. Von Soden (in the *Hand-Commentar zum N. T.*, ad loc.) urges that the $\tau\iota\varsigma$ is an objector, that his utterance includes only $\sigma\upsilon\ \pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma\ \epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, and that these words are to be regarded as an interrogation. 'O depreciator of faith, have you faith yourself? Do you know from experience its value?' James answers, 'And I have works,' etc. This interpretation makes the $\kappa\alpha\iota$ of $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\lambda\omega\ \epsilon\pi\omicron\rho\gamma\alpha$ intrusive. It does not do justice to the author's evident intention of making ^{18b} antithetical to ^{18a}, and is artificial and impossible.

5. Eric Haupt, in an article published in the *Studien und Kritiken*, 1883, expresses the opinion that $\tau\iota\varsigma$ is a heathen, who speaks through ^{18. 19.} and ^{20.} From the point of view of non-Christian theism he speaks for morality, and so supports James's polemic. This is surely a wild conjecture. Why should James lug a heathen into his polemic with the 'faith' people? "Non tali auxilio," etc. And would James have attributed to his heathen assistant his own sentiment, that faith without works is a worthless thing (vs.²⁰, cf. vs.¹⁷)?

The failure of the above attempts to link ^{18b} to ^{18a} in a self-consistent and intelligible interpretation seems to show that the task undertaken cannot be performed. If this inference is correct, the text is corrupt. We do not, indeed, find in the ancient Mss. reasons for attributing to it such a degree of corruption as to hide its meaning. The Corbey Ms. (ff¹) reads, *Tu operam habes, ego fidem habeo*; but this reading, which is unsupported by that of any other version or of any Greek uncial, is probably a correction. But we may not ascribe perfect accuracy to our oldest Mss., even when they are supported by the versions. Those who would do so will (to borrow words of Gebhardt, printed in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 1881, p. 541) "have difficulty in dealing with these facts; that from the second and third centuries evidence comes of readings of which not a trace exists either in the manuscripts which we have, or in any of the ancient versions; and that, moreover, in the judgment of the most learned church fathers, the original text of several passages was not preserved in the manuscripts." Two emendations of the text of James 2¹⁸ have been suggested.

1. Pfeleiderer in his *Urchristenthum* (1887), p. 874, suggests the reading of the Corbey Ms. (without, however, referring to that reading), *i.e.* the transposition of $\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma$ and $\epsilon\pi\omicron\rho\gamma\alpha$ in ^{18a}.

2. Spitta in his *Urchristenthum* (1896) ii. 79, objects to the above emendation, (*a*) that the transposition it assumes is not an error into which a scribe might easily fall, and (*b*) that it does not give a good text. The remark it attributes to the objector, Spitta says, is flat: 'You have works, I have faith.' Besides, James's criticism of faith unaccompanied by works as 'dead' is not met.

Spitta believes that all of the objection introduced by ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις has dropped from the text; that it was a superficial remark to the effect that the absence of positive good works does not show that faith is a dead thing, and that the works which James exalts cannot compensate for a lack of faith. Holtzmann prefers Spitta's emendation to Pfeiderer's (*N. T. Theologie* ii. 334).

I venture to remark: 1. Spitta does not do justice to Pfeiderer's emendation in respect to the meaning it assigns to ^{18a}. The objector's words, 'Thou hast works, and I have faith,' suggest the ἐὰν πίστιν λέγει τις ἔχειν of vs.¹⁴, and in connection with that clause mean, 'Thou hast works as the ground of thy claim to acceptance with God; I have faith as mine.' This is a plausible objection. While it passes over James's criticism of a faith unaccompanied by works as a dead and profitless thing, it meets the criticism passed on the faith men's religious standing. James promptly meets it by declaring that the faith which gives acceptance with God is that which is seen in good works, and that the faith which is not accompanied by works is not really faith, and therefore cannot save. This statement is enlarged upon in the following verses.

2. It is easier to believe that a scribe transposed ἔργα and πίστις in the two clauses of ^{18a} than that he omitted as much of the text as Spitta believes him to have done.

3. Spitta's emendation makes all of vs.¹⁸ after ἀλλ' ἐρεῖ τις James's answer to the (lost) objection of the 'faith' men. But the σὺ πίστιν ἔχεις is not naturally introduced by the objection which he supposes to have dropped from the text. And, as has been already said, the verse has more vigor if ^{18b} be taken as a reply to an objection made in ^{18a}.

For these reasons Pfeiderer's emendation seems preferable.