



RECTO

ARTICLE X.

THE NEW "SAYINGS OF JESUS."¹

BY PROFESSOR G. FREDERICK WRIGHT.

HIGH expectations were raised a few months ago by the announcement that Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, laboring under the patronage of the Egypt Exploration Fund, had discovered at Oxyrhynchus, on the edge of the Libyan desert, one hundred and twenty miles south of Cairo, among other Greek papyri some fragments from a "collection of Logia or Sayings of our Lord." The publication and discussion of the document forms one of the most important literary events of the year.

The fragment consists of a single leaf of papyrus $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ inches in present dimension, which has been somewhat abbreviated by the breaking-off of fragments from the bottom and from one side. Opposite is a facsimile of one of the pages; while below is a reproduction of the text as it stands in the original. Restorations are inclosed in square brackets, and dots inside the latter indicate the approximate number of letters lost. Dots outside brackets represent letters of which only illegible traces remain.

¹ ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ, Sayings of our Lord, Discovered and Edited by Bernard P. Grenfell, M.A., and Arthur S. Hunt, M.A. With collotypes. Pp. 20. New York: Henry Frowde. 1897. 50 cents.

Verso.

1A

ΚΑΙ ΤΟΤΕ ΔΙΑΒΛΕΨΕΙΣ
 ΕΚΒΑΛΕΙΝ ΤΟ ΚΑΡΦΟΣ
 ΤΟ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΟΦΘΑΛΜΩ 7
 ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ ΣΟΥ ΛΕΓΕΙ
 5 Ἰ̅C ΕΑΝ ΜΗ ΝΗCΤΕΥCΗ
 ΤΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΚΟCΜΟΝ ΟΥ ΜΗ
 ΕΥΡΗΤΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΒΑCΙΛΕΙ
 ΑΝ ΤΟΥ ΘΥ̅ ΚΑΙ ΕΑΝ ΜΗ
 CΑΒΒΑΤΙCΗΤΕ ΤΟ CΑΒ 7
 10 ΒΑΤΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΟΥCΕΘΕ ΤῸ
 ΠΡ̅Α ΛΕΓΕΙ Ἰ̅C Ε[Ι]C]ΤΗΝ
 ΕΝ ΜΕCΩ ΤΟΥ ΚΟCΜΟΥ
 ΚΑΙ ΕΝ CΑΡΚΕΙ ΩΦΘΗΝ
 ΑΥΤΟΙC ΚΑΙ ΕΥΡΟΝ ΠΑΝ
 15 ΤΑC ΜΕΘΥΟΝΤΑC ΚΑΙ
 ΟΥΔΕΝΑ ΕΥΡΟΝ ΔΕΙΨῶ
 ΤΑ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΙC ΚΑΙ ΠΟ 7
 ΝΕΙ Η ΨΥΧΗ ΜΟΥ ΕΠΙ 7
 ΤΟΙC ΎΙΟΙC ΤΩΝ ΑΝῶΝ
 20 ΟΤΙ ΤΥΦΛΟΙ ΕΙCΙΝ ΤΗ ΚΑΡ
 ΔΙΑ ΑΥΤῶ[Ν] ΚΑΙ . . ΒΛΕΙC

.

Recto.

- 22 [...].. [Τ]ΗΝ ΠΤΩΧΙΑ
 ΛΕΓ]ΕΙ [Γ̄ ΟΠ]ΟΥ ΕΑΝ ΩΣΙΝ
 [...]Ε[...]. . ΘΕΟΙ ΚΑΙ
- 25 [.]Σ̄Φ̄ . Ε[.] ΕΣΤΙΝ ΜΟΝΟΣ
 [.]Τ̄Ω ΕΓΩ ΕΙΜΙ ΜΕΤ̄ ΑΥ
 Τ[ΟΥ] ΕΓΕΙ[Ρ]ΟΝ ΤΟΝ -ΑΙΘ̄
 ΚΑΚΕΙ ΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣ ΜΕ
 ΣΧΙΣΟΝ ΤΟ ΞΥΛΟΝ ΚΑΓΩ
- 30 ΕΚΕΙ ΕΙΜΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ Γ̄ ΟΥ
 Κ̄ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΔΕΚΤΟΣ ΠΡΟ
 ΦΗΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΤΗ ΠΡΙΔῙ ΑΥ
 Τ[ΟΥ] ΟΥΔΕ ΙΑΤΡΟΣ ΠΟΙΕΙ
 ΘΕΡΑΠΕΙΑΣ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ
- 35 ΓΕΙΝΩΣΚΟΝΤΑΣ ΑΥΤ̄
 ΛΕΓΕΙ Γ̄ ΠΟΛΙΣ ΟΙΚΟΔΟ
 ΜΗΜΕΝΗ ΕΠ̄ ΑΚΡΟΝ
 [Ο]ΡΟΥΣ ΥΨΗΛΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΣ
 ΤΗΡΙΓΜΕΝΗ ΟΥΤΕ ΠΕ
- 40 [C]ΕΙΝ ΔΥΝΑΤΑΙ ΟΥΤΕ ΚΡΥ
 [Β]ΗΝΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ Γ̄ ΑΚΟΥΕΙΣ
 [.]Σ̄Τ̄ΟΞ̄ . . Τ̄ΙΟΝ ΣΟΥ Τ̄Ο
-

1.] καὶ τότε διαβλέψεις ἐκβαλεῖν τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου.

" . . . and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

2 Λέγει Ἰησοῦς, ἐὰν μὴ νηστεύσητε τὸν κόσμον οὐ μὴ εὔρητε τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ· καὶ ἐὰν μὴ σαββατίσητε τὸ σάββατον οὐκ ὄψεσθε τὸν πατέρα.

" Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye keep the Sabbath, ye shall not see the Father."

3. Λέγει Ἰησοῦς, ἔ[σ]την ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ ὠφθην αὐτοῖς, καὶ εὔρον πάντας μεθύοντας, καὶ οὐδένα εὔρον διψῶντα ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ πονεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι τυφλοὶ εἰσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῷ[ν]. . .

" Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart. . . ."

4. [. . . .] . . . [. τ] ἣν πτωχείαν.

" poverty"

5. [λέγει] [Ἰησοῦς, ὅπ]ου ἐὰν ὦσιν [. . . .] ε [. . .] . . . θεοὶ καὶ [. .] σο . ε [. .] ἐστὶν μόνος [. .] τῷ ἐγὼ εἰμι μετ' αὐτ[οῦ]· ἔγει[ρ]ον τὸν ἑλίθον κακεῖ εὐρήσεις με, σχίσον τὸ ξύλον καγὰ ἐκεῖ εἰμί.

" Jesus saith, Wherever there are . . . and there is one . . . alone, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I."

6. Λέγει Ἰησοῦς, οὐκ ἔστιν δεκτὸς προφήτης ἐν τῇ πατρίδι αὐτ[οῦ], οὐδὲ ἰατρὸς ποιεῖ θεραπείας εἰς τοὺς γινώσκοντας αὐτόν.

" Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him."

7. Λέγει Ἰησοῦς, πόλις ἠκοδομημένη ἐπ' ἄκρον [δ]ρους ὑψηλοῦ καὶ ἐστηριμένη οὔτε πε[σ]εῖν δύναται οὔτε κρυ[β]ῆναι.

" Jesus saith, A city built upon the top of a high hill, and stablished, can neither fall nor be hid."

The papyrus was in book form, and was found in "a mound which produced a great number of papyri belonging to the first three centuries of our era, those in the immediate vicinity of the fragment belonging to the second and third centuries. This fact, together with the evidence of the handwriting, which has a characteristically Roman aspect, fixes with certainty 300 A.D. as the lowest limit for the date at which the papyrus was written. The general probabilities of the case, the presence of the usual contractions found in biblical MSS., and the fact that the papyrus was in book, not roll, form, put the first century out of the question, and make the first half of the second unlikely. The date therefore probably falls within the period 150-300 A.D. More than that cannot be said with any approach to certainty. Any attempt to distinguish between second and third century uncials is, in the present paucity of dated material, extremely precarious."¹

In reference to the title given to the fragment by the discoverers, it should be noted that this is not a part of the document itself, but is an interpretation which they impose upon it. Each section does indeed begin with "Jesus says" (λέγει Ἰησοῦς); but it is by no means certain that the word λόγιον, either in the New Testament or in the early church fathers, was limited to mere sayings of Christ. For them λόγοι would have been more appropriate. The classical meaning of *Logion* is "oracle," having a much broader reference than to the simple words proceeding from a teacher's mouth; and such seems to be its meaning in the four passages in the New Testament where it occurs, namely, Acts vii. 38; Rom. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12; 1 Pet. iv. 11. Romans iii. 2 is especially significant, where the apostle speaks of it as one of the special privileges of the Jews that to them "were committed the oracles [λογία] of God." It cannot well be maintained that the word oracle here refers

¹ Sayings of our Lord, p. 5.

simply to the direct sayings of God. It must include the whole Old Testament literature, including the history. Among other things which make this evident is, as pointed out by Salmond, the abundant use of the history by Paul.

It is probable, therefore, that Papias used the word in its comprehensive, classical, and New Testament significance; as did the apostolic fathers in general and other Jewish writers like Philo. Hence it seems most likely that when Papias says, that "Matthew wrote the oracles [*τὰ λόγια*] in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as he could,"¹ he was referring to the entire Gospel of Matthew, which he recognized as on an equality with the sacred books of the Old Testament. Our authors, however, are careful to say that they do not suppose this fragment to have "any actual connection either with the Hebrew Logia of St. Matthew or the *λόγια κυριακά* of Papias,"² upon which he is said to have commented. All that they feel free to suppose is that the fragment belongs to one of the many independent collections of our Lord's sayings which they believe to have been current from the beginning.

That there were numerous attempts to write partial or complete biographies of Jesus while his contemporaries were still living, is altogether probable. Indeed, the fact is clearly stated in the introduction to the third Gospel, which informs us that "many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us." The same writer in his introduction to the Acts refers to the former treatise as relating to "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach," which might seem to imply that there had been a distinction between the narratives relating to his acts and those recounting the words of our Lord.

The most important question respecting the present fragment concerns its relation to the canonical Gospels. Does

¹ Eusebius, H. E. iii. 39. ² Sayings of our Lord, p. 18.

it bear marks of an independent origin, or is it an expansion and modification of material already incorporated in the Gospels? Upon this question there is much to be said upon both sides. The fact that these Sayings are introduced by the recurring phrase "Jesus says" certainly is in favor of their having been collected at a very early date; for it seems to have been very rarely the case that in later times our Lord was designated by the simple word "Jesus," while the present tense is more natural in a contemporary document. A fruitful suggestion is made by Rev. Henry A. Redpath, in the *Expositor* for September, to the effect, that this fragment may be from "some apocryphal Gospel claiming to give a sort of *procès verbal* of the indictment or evidence used at the trial of Christ before the Jewish authorities, in much the same way as the trials of the early Christians before the heathen tribunal were officially recorded. . . . We know that the last witnesses called at the trial misrepresented what our Lord had said, but did not actually invent charges against him. This fragment might then be taken to represent some of the previous evidence" (pp. 228-229). Color is given to this view from the facts pointed out by Professor Redpath, that the Sayings of the fragment are all in some way connected with utterances in the four canonical Gospels, and that the Sayings in general are such as would irritate the Jewish authorities. The Second Saying contains the offensive phrase "the Father." The Third Saying would make an impression clearly in the line of John vii. 37 and ix. 41. The Fifth Saying, on Harnack's interpretation and reference given below, would have seemed to the Jews a misquotation from their canonical Scriptures; while the Sixth Saying would irritate their pride in the highest degree by its exaltation of the disciples of Jesus. But the general question can be best discussed as we consider the sections in detail.

The First Saying agrees exactly with Luke vi. 42, and so has no bearing upon the question.

The Second Saying is new and peculiar, and, unless a bold, figurative sense can be given to it, is decidedly out of analogy with the general teaching of our Lord and of his apostles. The reasoning of Professor Thayer upon this point must commend itself to the final judgment of all. After remarking that in its mystical cast the Saying bears clear marks of its derivative and secondary character, he goes on to say:—

"The unexplained use of bold phraseology, such as appears in this Second Saying, implies an anterior educative process in the readers. The accredited teaching of Jesus respecting fasting and the Sabbath, corroborated as that teaching is by the very genius of primitive Christianity as set forth in the apostolical writings, excludes the supposition that the fasting and Sabbath-keeping here enjoined are to be understood literally. The Saying, therefore, in both its parts is doubtless to be taken spiritually. The term 'world' in its ethical sense of 'that which is antagonistic to God' became current early, as the writings of John, Paul, James, Peter show. But the novel phrases 'Fast [i. e., abstain from] the world,' 'sabbatize the Sabbath' [i. e., make it a veritable spiritual rest-day] imply a somewhat general antecedent training to warrant their employment as a summary of the teaching of Christ, or even to render them quite intelligible. Furthermore, according to usage in Jewish circles, the second phrase would primarily suggest the outward observance of the Sabbath, and even the circle of Christians for whom Ignatius speaks, early in the second century, could say, 'We do not sabbatize.'"¹

The Third Saying has the appearance, also, of a late adaptation, rather than of an original saying, especially in

¹ See the *Independent* for August 12, 1897, p. 16.

the use of the past tenses in the first half. In the last half, however, the present tenses appear, as would be more appropriate in a contemporary document. But some of the phrases appear, as Professor Thayer points out, to be again, mere "verbal echoes" from various portions of the New Testament. "Was seen in the flesh" is identical with 1 Tim. iii. 10; "drunken," with Matt. xxiv. 49; "thirst," with Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17, etc. The general tenor of the Saying is like that of John i. 10. The authors, however, suggest that the beginning of the first clause of the Saying was "probably suggested by Baruch iii. 38—a passage which was applied by several of the early fathers to Christ's supposed sojourn upon the earth. Cf. Irenæus, *adv. Haer.* iv. 20; Cyprian, *Testim.* ii. 6" (p. 12).

Saying 4 is too defective to be of any value.

Saying 5 in its first and defective part seems clearly to have been parallel with Matt. xviii. 20. Whether the last clause gives expression to the pantheistic Gnosticism which connected itself with some sections of Christianity at an early date, or whether it is a genuine saying involving a bold figurative use of sacrificial ceremonies, admits of question. If the latter view be correct, it would point rather to modification by Jewish Christians. Perhaps, however, it is simply an echo of some of the fantastic applications of prophecy which abounded in the second century. In Hab. ii. 11, 19, we are told that the stones shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it," and "Woe unto him who sayeth unto wood, Awake, and to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach." A natural enough meaning, however, is found when we take it as glorifying the homely duties of life. As Christ ennobles the gift of a cup of cold water only, so here it may be said he ennobles the work of those who hew wood and draw water. Thus viewed, there is nothing in it out of harmony with the general teachings of Jesus, nor is there any substantial ad-

dition in it to what we already have. This accords with the suggestion of Harnack,¹ that the source of the latter part of this Saying is Eccl. x. 9, "Whoso heweth out (or moveth) stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood is endangered thereby." In this case the work of Christ in hallowing everyday employments would constitute a part of the striking contrast between the law and the gospel.

Some light is perhaps shed on the origin of this Saying by a fact pointed out by Mr. H. C. Leonard in the *London Guardian* that Ephraem Syrus, in his Commentary upon Tatian's Diatessaron,² expands Matt. xviii. 20 into a form something like that which appears in this Saying. Ephraem says that he (Jesus) comforted them in his saying, "Where one is, there I also am; and where two are, there will I also be." In the Diatessaron, however, the passage corresponds with that in Matthew. Still, the correspondence in Ephraem's commentaries lends some countenance to Mr. Leonard's suggestion that this fragment may be from some of Tatian's lost works whose views are known to be strikingly like some of the most peculiar of those found in this fragment. Tatian, for example, was ascetic, abstaining from meat and wine, and denouncing marriage, of which we are reminded in the exhortation of the Second Saying to fast to the world. For in the eleventh chapter of Tatian's address to the Greeks he exclaims, "Why are you fated to grasp at things often and often to die? *Die to the world*, repudiating the madness that is in it. Live to God, and by apprehending him lay aside your old nature." In all this, however, we have but another form of expressing the idea put forth by Paul when he tells us to crucify the flesh, to put off the old man, and represents

¹Über die jüngst entdeckten Sprüche Jesu.

²See Moesinger, 165.

himself and believers as having died to sin, and as reckoning themselves to be dead unto sin.

In the Sixth Saying we have, in addition to the familiar passage in Luke, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country" (with Luke's peculiar *δεκτός* instead of Matthew's *ἀξιμος*), the parallel clause "Neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him." While there certainly is nothing intrinsically improbable in this having been uttered by Christ, neither is there anything particularly valuable in the addition. The compilers of the Gospels did not show bad sense in omitting it if they had it before them.

The Seventh Saying certainly obscures the figure in Matt. v. 14 by mixing two diverse conceptions. That a city set on a hill cannot be hid is forcible enough, but that a city established on the top of a high hill cannot fall does not so forcibly express the idea as does the conception of a house builded on a rock. The passage is certainly out of analogy with the corresponding passages in the canonical Gospels. It has the weakness of a secondary modification.

Upon the all-important question, whether from such discoveries as this of Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt, light is likely to break forth in sufficient abundance materially to modify the conception of Christ and his teachings which we already have, we can do no better than commend the careful words of Professor J. H. Ropes, of Harvard Divinity School, whose recent studies concerning the so-called *agrapha*, or Sayings of Christ found outside of the canonical Gospels, give special weight to his conclusions:—

"The question that springs to the mind of every one, especially when such a discovery as these 'Logia Jesu' is put into one's hands, is whether new light is about to break on the gospel traditions, whether the little region of our knowledge is to be enlarged by new traditions carried by missionaries to Egypt and there loyally repeated and at last written down, or from books brought perhaps from remote spots in Palestine or Asia Minor by Egyptian travelers and kept as doubtful treasures in some dusty

library in a city up the Nile. If Papias should be found, the direct tradition that he preserved would probably be found to have been excerpted by Eusebius, who was in the habit of substantially exhausting the information of his authorities. His value would come from the more searching methods of our historical science, which draws inferences where the ancients only extracted positive statements. But such a discovery as this leaf of words which 'Jesus saith' opens larger possibilities. Perhaps these are genuine, perhaps some of the ten preceding leaves of the mutilated book may contain more and may yet be found. May it be that the Gospels are in danger of being superseded by these newcomers, or, to put it more reasonably, that our idea of our Lord could be considerably modified by some new knowledge?

"It may be confidently replied that this is wholly unlikely. It is probable that the canonical Gospels have preserved practically all the tradition of the evangelical history which came beyond the borders of Palestine at all. The writers of the second, third, and fourth centuries were profoundly interested in all that could be learned of the life of Christ. They occasionally mention extra-canonical sayings that they have picked up here and there, and reverence for the Gospels does not prevent them from transmitting such. But of these all that can possibly be thought genuine do not amount to twenty, and no one of them is sure enough or important enough to change our conception of Jesus and his teaching. One gets strongly the impression from studying these remains that the work of the writers of our Gospels, the laboriousness of which we seldom realize, was done with a thoroughness which practically exhausted the sources of knowledge at their disposal. We have, doubtless, not indeed a complete account of Jesus' teaching, but yet a complete account of the topics on which he taught and of the ideas which he most emphasized.

"And it is further to be noted that outside tradition can seldom or never have such certainty as that contained in the Gospels of the New Testament. Our reliance on them depends partly on their early date, now well ascertained, but also on the guarantee of the Catholic Church. They contain the history as those churches which had heard the apostles preach received it. They were accepted because they offered not new tradition but old, and the writers were in a sense the agents of the churches. The perpetual tradition of the church accredits them as it does not any other documents whatever. But the final test must be the consistency and intelligibility of the account of Jesus and his teaching which the Gospels furnish. The real difficulty with all such tradition as these Logia, or the other extra-canonical sayings of Jesus that have been collected, is that they lack the support which in a large mass of material the several parts give to one another, and that they have no context to make them intelligible. No one can tell what surprises may be in store, but of rivals to the Gospels there can be no question, and of valuable direct light on the life of our Lord there can be comparatively little hope. Indirect light, ancient documents which will make clearer to us the conditions in which our Gospels were written and how they were collected, and information about the complex life of the early church, we may hope for in considerable abundance."¹

¹ See *The Congregationalist* for August 19, 1897, pp. 253-254.