

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Journal of Biblical Literature* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jbl-01.php

The Lost Ussher Manuscript.

BY PROF. ISAAC H. HALL, PH.D.

UNTIL lately no trace of this MS. had appeared since it was in Louis de Dieu's hands, whose last mention of it was in 1634. The manuscript has recently been re-discovered and identified by the Very Rev. John Gwynn, D.D. It had been returned, but nobody knows when or how, and placed in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, where it has remained for more than two centuries, and is catalogued as "B. 5. 16." The account of its discovery and identification is given by Dr. Gwynn in a paper "*On a Syriac MS. belonging to the Collection of Archbishop Ussher,*" in The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. XXVII. The MS. proves, as Dr. Hall had maintained in his articles in this Journal, to contain no more than the *Pericope de Adulterâ*, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, the Apocalypse, a small tractate of Ephrem Syrus; and *not* the whole New Testament, as maintained by Tregelles, Scrivener, and others, who followed the lead of Bishop Marsh in the erroneous supposition.

The *Pericope de Adulterâ* is demonstrated beyond all doubt to be not only (as we knew before) to be the original which De Dieu printed in his *Commentarius in Johannem*, but also that followed in Walton's Polyglott; while Dr. Gwynn shows that the MS. could never itself have been in Walton's hands [and consequently the passage was taken from De Dieu's work just referred to, or else from private communications]. A striking bit of the proof that this is *the* missing MS., is that all the points and abbreviations of the *Pericope* are exactly copied by De Dieu, and the word for "not" is wanting in the last verse of the *Pericope*, as De Dieu stated, and therefore bracketed by him and Walton in the printed texts.

Much labor is expended by Dr. Gwynn in proving this Trinity College MS. to be *the* lost Ussher MS., with the result not only of absolute demonstration (far more than one needs who is familiar with the facts at hand before), but of giving a pretty complete history of the MS. It was obtained by Ussher through Thomas Davies, a British merchant of Aleppo (who obtained sundry other MSS. for Ussher), and sent by the ship *Patience* of London, in January, 1625/6; the Scriptural portions having been written in November, 1625, and the tractate of Ephrem in January, 1625/6, doubtless just in time to be sent as stated. It reached Ussher's hands about four or five

months later. It was copied, by one Joseph, son of David, doubtless from an original in the monastery of Kenobin (*Cænobium*) on Mt. Lebanon, by a scribe employed by Davies to copy a number of other MSS. for Ussher, and whose handwriting is still to be seen in sundry of them, in Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Bodleian.

According to Dr. Gwynn's account the Epistles in this MS. are its least valuable portion; the Apocalypse much more so. Dr. Gwynn had not seen Dr. Hall's articles in the Journal, above referred to, in which a number of his conclusions are anticipated, as, for example, considering it as pretty well proved that the ordinarily printed version of the Antilegomena Epistles is a portion of the original Philoxenian of Polycarp. In his discussion of the Syriac Apocalypse he uses, as if a final and irresistible argument, the fact that the Leyden MS. contains the Origenian (and Harklensian) asterisks and obeli, to show that the version is a bit of the Harklensian, apparently unaware that Eichhorn had used the same fact in the same way sixty years ago, but had not convinced all the critics. In discussing the Antilegomena Epistles, Dr. Gwynn does justice to the value of the Williams Manuscript, and its Antilegomena Epistles as published by Dr. Hall; but some of his criticisms would have been omitted, as mistaken, had he noted that Dr. Hall expressly spoke of MSS. of those Epistles in the *commonly printed version*. Dr. Hall was aware of the existence of the other copies of those Epistles *in the Harklensian version*; but Dr. Gwynn more than once confounds MSS. of the two versions, and in this respect he does the same. His further criticisms of that publication would likewise have been omitted, had his search through the catalogues of the European libraries been only a little more extended. But Dr. Gwynn's article is a noble and thorough one, and a most valuable addition to our stock of knowledge. It is to be hoped that the common text of the Apocalypse may be corrected from this Ussher MS., where possible.

One important bit of textual criticism, already foreshadowed by the Williams MS., has been established completely by Dr. Gwynn's researches in the British Museum MSS. In 2 Peter iii. 10, the reading *εὐπεθήσεται*, adopted by the best critics, has been considered as qualified in this Syriac version by a "not," which the Pococke edition has, as well as the Ussher MS. and one of the Nitrian MSS. in the Brit. Mus. But the "not" is not found in the Williams MS. nor the more ancient Brit. Mus. MS.; and thus the Syriac testimony for that false reading is shown to be of no account; the actual Syriac testimony being against it. (The Harklensian "not" was an interpola-

tion by White, being not found in his MS.) This reduces the testimony for the "not" to an inappreciable quantity, and renders the true reading still clearer in the light of the testimony.

Dr. Hall also remarked that for the new edition of the American Bible Society's Ancient Syriac New Testament and Psalms, the plates had been corrected in cases of errors discovered at Oroomiah, and here by himself, and in Europe by Dr. Nestle. But more important than this, the Society's Committee on Versions had consented that the text of the Antilegomena Epistles should be corrected from the Williams Manuscript in cases of *obvious error*; and, in consequence, this new edition presents the first instance of a printed New Testament with a tolerably correct copy of those Epistles. This permission could not, of course, be made to include all that would seem desirable to a critic; the "not" in 2 Pet. iii. 10, for instance, being not an "obvious error," though now proved a real one.

Dr. Hall also gave an extended notice of *The (Syriac) Book of the Bee*, of the bishop Shêlêmôn (Solomon) of Khilât in Armenia, edited by Ernest A. Wallis Bridge, with preface, notes, English translation, &c., and published by the Clarendon Press as Vol. I, Part II of the Semitic Series of the *Anecdota Oxoniensia*. Also a brief notice of Dr. Richard J. H. Gottheil's *A List of Plants and their Properties, from the M^cnârat^h Kud^hšê* of Gregorius Bar 'Eb^hrâyâ; the Syriac text and other matter being in autograph-lithograph. Also of the same editor's work on the Syriac Grammar of Elias of Soba; of Dr. Richard Baethgen's Syriac text of the *Vision (or Revelation) of Ezra*, from a Sachau MS., which was evidently a copy of the same archetype as the Union Theological Seminary's MS., of which a translation was published by Dr. Hall in *The Presbyterian Quarterly*, about a year since.

The Phrase "Children of Wrath."

BY REV. T. W. CHAMBERS, D.D., LL.D.

DR. SAMUEL COX in the first volume of his "Expositions" (1885) makes the following remark (pp. 48, 49) upon the phrase in Ephesians ii. 3, *children of wrath*: "It means simply men who give way to wrath, just as 'sons of disobedience,' in the previous verse, means 'disobedient men.' Or, if we take the connotations of the Greek phrase, children of wrath means men who abandon themselves to their natural impulses, cravings, lusts, just as the initiated Asiatics and