

## NOTES AND STUDIES

## THE PERAEAN MINISTRY: A REPLY.

THE interesting paper of the Bishop of Barrow in the January number of this JOURNAL called *The Peraean Ministry* raises some questions about the Gospel history, to which I am in duty bound to reply. Dr West-Watson, in fact, criticizes a theory of my own and puts another in its place: the main object of this paper is to consider what the Bishop's theory involves.

But first let me make a very few remarks upon my own theory, or rather conjecture, that St Luke may after all be historically accurate in bringing our Lord from Galilee to His final Passover at Jerusalem through Samaritan country without crossing the Jordan at all. I want to draw a distinction between defending this conjecture, and attacking Dr West-Watson's theory that Mk. ix 30-xi 1 is a description of two or three separate journeys, separated by visits to Jerusalem. Neither my conjecture nor Dr West-Watson's theory lies on the surface of the Marcan narrative; but whereas I still think that my conjecture can be read into the Marcan narrative without doing violence to it, I think that the Bishop's theory does do violence to the Marcan narrative. If the Bishop's theory be historically true, it means that the narrative in Mark is worthless as an authority for reconstructing the course of events.

I have little to add in defence of my own theory beyond what is set down in my book.<sup>1</sup> It may, however, be remarked that *πέραν* is elsewhere used in Mark of the side opposite to the narrator, so that whereas in Mk. v 1 *εἰς τὸ πέραν* means the east side of the Sea of Galilee, in Mk. v 21 it means the west side. As for the internal textual probabilities in Mk. x 1, whether we are to read τὰ ὄρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου with *κ* B or to drop the *καὶ* with D and other good Greek MSS, and with the Latin and Syriac versions, I should have thought that the presence of *καὶ* in *κ* B was quite easy to explain. Surely 'the borders of Judaea beyond Jordan' is geographically a difficult phrase; and though I should not be so very much surprised in finding 'a careless error' of this magnitude in *κ* B, I think it far more likely that their inserted *καὶ* is a clever emendation of the Western text than a mere piece of carelessness. The text of *κ* B at this point is not free from suspicion otherwise. Is it not likely that the hand which inserted *καὶ* in *ver.* 1 also inserted *προσελθόντες Φαρισαῖοι* in *ver.* 2?

At the same time I am quite willing to admit that the section Mk.

<sup>1</sup> *Gospel History and its Transmission* pp. 96, 97, note.

x 1-31 may very well refer to incidents during a more or less leisurely journey through part of 'Peraea', or to a short stay in that region. The inadmissible Byzantine text, which has *εἰς τὰ ὅρια τῆς Ἰουδαίας διὰ τοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου*, definitely implies a journey to Judaea *via* Peraea, but the text of  $\aleph$  B (i.e. *καί* instead of *διὰ τοῦ*) rather suggests a journey to Peraea *via* 'the borders of Judaea'. This might of course be combined with the Lucan route by supposing that our Lord came through Samaritan territory to Jericho, and crossed the Jordan by the fords there, returning presently to the same place, or that He crossed further north, nearer Scythopolis, having only skirted the country of the Samaritans. The summary fashion in which St Mark brings his *dramatis personae* from one scene to another makes all these routes possible, and any particular one of them conjectural.

But whatever the route may have been, and whatever halts may have been made upon the road, it is to me impossible to believe that Mk. ix 30-xi 1 is not intended to describe a practically continuous journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, the journey so dramatically announced in Mk. viii 31 ff. Let us look at the actual links. Mark says:—

Mk. ix 30 'And from thence (i.e. from the scene of the Transfiguration and the first announcement of the Passion) they  
31 went forth and journeyed through Galilee, and He  
would not that any should know, for He was teaching  
His disciples and saying to them, "The Son of Man is  
33 betrayed", &c. . . . And they came to Capernaum, and  
in the house He asked them, "What did ye dispute on  
the way?" . . .

x 1 'And from thence He arose and cometh into the bor-  
ders of Judaea [and] beyond Jordan, and crowds journey  
together again to Him, and as He was wont He was  
2 ff teaching them again. *A question is asked about Divorce*  
*and in the house (ver. 10) the disciples are further*  
17 ff *instructed. Children are brought to Jesus.* And as He  
was journeying on the way *the Rich Young Man came up.*

32 'Now they were in the way going up to Jerusalem;  
and Jesus was going before them and they were in great  
excitement, but some as they followed were afraid. And  
taking the Twelve aside again He began to say to them  
33 what was about to befall Him: "Lo, we go up to  
46 Jerusalem, and the Son of Man is betrayed," &c. And  
they came to Jericho. And as He was going forth from  
47 ff Jericho *Bartimaeus was healed*, and he was following  
Him in the way.

xi 1 'And when they draw nigh to Jerusalem . . .'

This is surely 'a coherent and reasonable account' of a journey to Jerusalem. Dr West-Watson calls Joh. vii-xii 'a coherent and reasonable account of a winter season devoted to a last attempt to win over the heart of the Jewish nation', according to which Jesus went to Jerusalem soon after Tabernacles in the autumn, and again at the Dedication Feast in December. Then He retires to Peraea, leaving it for yet another visit to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, when Lazarus is raised at Bethany, a visit followed by another retirement 'into the country near the desert' (Joh. xi 54),<sup>1</sup> which lasts till the final entry. No doubt 'Mark' and 'John' are more or less coherent with themselves. But can it reasonably be asserted that they are coherent with each other? If Joh. vii-xii gives the historical sequence of events, is it not playing with words to say of the Marcan narrative, as Dr West-Watson does (p. 272): 'St Peter, remembering that in that winter of rapid movements, Judaea was first visited, may have expressed the events compendiously.' If Joh. vii-xii gives the historical sequence of events and Mk. ix 30-xi 1 preserves St Peter's reminiscences, then it would be better to assert that St Peter had forgotten all about it. I cannot understand how any one in the same page on which he discusses the reasons that may have led St Peter to leave the story of Lazarus untold can nevertheless say, 'St Peter's chief interest was evidently in our Lord's miracles' (p. 273). And it is beside the point to suggest that perhaps St Peter was not present at the raising of Lazarus. 'On such a perilous expedition, our Lord may well have taken with Him only one or two personal companions, among them Thomas. A small party would be less likely to attract hostile notice.' Here is rationalism indeed! And is it so certain that 'St Peter' in the Gospel of Mark only relates what he himself saw? Was he present at the Baptism in Jordan, or at the Temptation in the Wilderness? Or at the execution of John the Baptist? Was the execution of the Baptist 'one of the turning-points in his own faith', which we are to suppose he 'pressed in his preaching'?

The discrepancy between the course of events as narrated by 'Mark' and by 'John' is too deep to be bridged over by well-chosen phrases.

In conclusion I must demur to Dr West-Watson's statement that 'value is put nowadays on the Marcan account' because it is 'vivid and practical' (p. 273). The Marcan account, of course, is often vivid, and some of the vivid touches may very well be held to suggest that the narrative is based on the reminiscences of an eyewitness. But this is not the fundamental thing. The Gospel according to Mark has won

<sup>1</sup> 'Ephraim' apparently is somewhere near Bethel. If Mk. x 32 describes, as the Bishop suggests, the last journey to Jerusalem from the city Ephraim (p. 272), what brings the company to Jericho (*ver.* 46)?

its way to recognition by modern historical students as a document of first-rate importance for two reasons. The first is, that literary analysis shews that it forms the base and foundation of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, works which themselves belong to a very early stage of Christianity, so that any document upon which they are founded must be in still closer contact with the underlying historical facts. The second is, that the Gospel of Mark, while in many ways out of touch with the interests and the tendencies of the Church in the second century, is permeated by ideas and expectations that belong to the first century. It is coloured by Jewish apocalyptic expectations; it is not coloured by the presuppositions and philosophizings of later Christian theology. The problem is, how such a work could survive at all. If we must add to the problem the supposition that the actual course of events at all resembled what is narrated in the Fourth Gospel, it becomes impossible to imagine how St Mark's Gospel ever came to be composed. What on the other hand the Fourth Gospel signified for the generation in which it was written may be seen in Dr Inge's contribution to *Cambridge Biblical Essays*.

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### PSALM LXVIII *EXURGAT DEUS*.

IN attempting to determine the date and purport of this ode, of which Dr Cheyne once remarked, with entire truth, that 'there is no greater in Hebrew literature', our first consideration must, of course, be the internal evidence of the Psalm itself. The clue afforded by this evidence appears to me to be stronger than is the case with most other Psalms. Indeed, to my mind it is decisive.

The author is profoundly acquainted with the earlier literature of his people; but his piece is no mere cento of borrowed phrases, no mere poetical exercise or scholar's ingenious imitation of an ancient model. In spite of repeated echoes of the voices of the past, the whole is unquestionably inspired by the rush and stir of contemporary life.

It will be admitted that the Hebrew Scriptures alone have not supplied any sufficient explanation of this ode; for, upon any natural construction, it contains references to incidents certainly historical, about which those Scriptures are as certainly silent. If we had only to deal with obvious poetical allusions to the great Deliverances of the past, such as the Exodus and the passage of the Red Sea, or Joshua's victories, or the triumph of Deborah and Barak, or the conquests of David, we might well despair of ascertaining the age, occasion, and real significance of this noble hymn. Fortunately, when every allowance