Contributions and Comments

Further 'Unknown Sayings of Jesus'

By way of footnote to the very interesting discussion of some *Agrapha* from Jeremias' *Unknown Sayings of Jesus* (The Expository Times, lxix. [January, 1958], 97 ff.), it may be observed that another collection of such *Agrapha* is now available, or soon will be. Among the documents of the Gnostic library of Nag Hammadi, discovered in 1945, is a text entitled *The Gospel of Thomas*, which Professor H. C. Puech has identified as nothing more or less than a complete collection of Logia, the beginning of which is identical with the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 654.[1] In point of fact this document contains all the sayings of the three famous fragments found at Oxyrhynchus.

Unfortunately, the text is for the present likely to be quite inaccessible to most readers, in the first place because it is in Coptic and in the second because the only edition to date is a photographic edition published in Cairo. The passages corresponding to the Oxyrhynchus fragments are however given in a Latin translation in an article by G. Garitte,[2] to which reference may be made for further details. Garitte reports that an edition with an English translation is in preparation, and it has recently been announced that an edition with complete references and a full bibliography will be published in the course of 1958.[3]

Some Logia from this *Gospel of Thomas* were discussed by Professor Quispel of Utrecht in a paper read at the recent Oxford Congress on the Gospels,[4] from which it would appear that numerous problems await the interpreter. For example, some of these sayings are clearly parallel to Synoptic sayings, yet present striking variants. The familiar sayings about patches and wineskins, to take one instance, appear in the form :

They do not put old wine in a new wineskin, lest
this spoil it.
They do not sew an old patch on a new garment,
because a rent will come.

Here Professor Quispel suggests that we may 'conjecturally restore a fine piece of Semitic poetry, with the parallelism that is so characteristic of it, just by filling the gaps left in the Logion of "Thomas" with some fragments from our Gospels' :

They do not put new wine in old wineskins, lest
they tear, and they do not put old wine in a
new wineskin, lest this spoil it ;
they do not sew an old patch on a new garment
(because that agreeth not with the new)
(and they do not sew a new patch on an old
garment) because a rent will come.

In this case the canonical Gospels have preserved one member, the apocryphal tradition the other. It may be added that this suggestion might serve to explain the peculiar form of Lk 5^{36} (cf. Mt 9^{16}, Mk 2^{21}).

Again, at Lk 11^{40} the peculiar reading of the *Codex Bezae* and some other MSS ('did not he who made the inside make the outside also ?') finds some confirmation in the new Gospel. Here also Quispel suggests that 'a more primitive form ran somewhat like this :

He who made the inside also made the outside ;
He who made the outside also made the inside.'

Here, however, questions must be raised : Which is to be reckoned the more authentic—the complete parallelism thus restored, or the 'truncated' version of the canonical Gospels ? Have we in these passages cases of partial preservation of sayings in the canonical tradition, or of amplification and completion of the parallelism in the apocryphal texts ? Only careful study of the actual text will make it possible to reach a conclusion, and it may well be that there will be some difference of opinion on the subject. Thus it may be felt that in the two examples quoted there is a point to the canonical saying which is blunted when the parallelism is completed. It is accordingly to be hoped that the provision of an adequate edition of a seemingly very important text will not be long delayed. It will clearly be relevant not only to the early history of Christian literature but also to the development of the Gospel tradition, and as it would seem to the problems of the Diatessaron and the Western Text.

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[1] See *The Jung Codex* (ed. F. L. Cross [1955]) 21 f. ; also in *Rev. Hist. Rel.*, cxlvii. [1955] 126 ff. Quispel (*Vigiliae Christianae*, xi. [1957] 202 n. 17) notes that J. H. A. Michelsen 'long ago observed the Oxyrhynchus "Sayings of Jesus" to be fragments of the Gospel of Thomas.' Cf. also the discussion in Grenfell and Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, iv. 1–22.

[2] *Le Muséon*, lxx. [1957] 59 ff.

[3] Quispel, *op. cit.*, 189 note ; according to Till (*BJRL*, xl. [1957] 252, note 6) this edition will be published by Brill of Leyden.

[4] Now published in *Vigiliae Christianae*, xi. [1957] 189 ff.