The Princeton Theological Review

JEREMIAH'S PLAINT AND ITS ANSWER

In the third verse of the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah we have a prophet's report of divine speech heard in a revelation-sleep. The content of what was related after the awakening holds a peculiar place among the prophecies of Jeremiah: "Jehovah appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn out long lovingkindness unto thee." Whilst a large part of the discourses of this prophet is given to rebuke of sin and prediction of judgment, the message here is one of promise. It transports us into the final world-order, when the chaos and ruin, the sin and the sorrow shall have been overpast, nay changed into their opposites. No wonder that one, who had had to deliver so many prophecies of woe and destruction, should have delighted in seeing and reproducing this vision of restoration and blessedness, that after having been so long employed in rooting up and plucking out, he should have rejoiced more than ordinarily in this planting of new hopes, a pause of rest and healing also for his own weary and distracted soul.

In taking the comfort of the prophetic promises to our hearts we do not, perhaps, always realize what after the tempest and tumults, in the brief seasons of clear shining which God interposed, such relief must have meant to the prophets themselves. For they had not merely to pass through the distress of the present; besides this they were not allowed to avert their eyes from the terrifying vision of the latter days. In anticipation they drank from the cup "with wine of reeling" filled by Jehovah's hand. Nor did the prophets see only the turbulent surface, the foaming upper waves of the

THE ALLEGED ARAMAIC ORIGIN OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

In his article on "The Approach to the New Testament"
which appeared in the *New Standard Bible Dictionary,*[1]
Dr. James Moffatt mentions as the two outstanding ques-
tions of today: "(*a*) the original language of the Gospels,
including the Fourth Gospel, and (*b*) the relation of Paul's
theology to contemporary cults in the sphere of pagan reli-
gion"; and he adds, "The former is important, as it suggests
the possibility that here and there the passage of the tradi-
tion from Aramaic or Hebrew into Greek may have altered
the sense of a saying." The significance of this statement is
obvious. It means that if this theory is adopted, our authority
can no longer be the Gospels in Greek, but the hypothetical
Aramaic (or Hebrew) original supposed to lie back of the
Greek text which has come down to us. In other words the
New Testament scholar would have to ask himself not merely
whether he had the correct Greek text of a given passage
and was interpreting it correctly, but the further question
whether this Greek text correctly represented a non-exist-
ent, non-Greek original. The one question is mainly objec-
tive; the other is decidedly speculative. The one deals with
documentary, the other with conjectural evidence. And what
is most important of all the alleged Aramaic original is of
little more than academic interest unless it can be used to
improve or correct the Greek text, which is equivalent to
asserting that this text which Christians have for centuries
believed to be the divinely inspired original, is to be regarded
not merely as a translation but in some respects a poor and
even incorrect translation from an original for the existence
of which there is no manuscript evidence whatsoever.

In view of the important bearing of this theory upon the
trustworthiness of the Greek text of the Gospel we are en-
titled to ask for convincing proof of its correctness. In the
Introduction to his *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gos-*

[1] P. 12.

pel[2] Dr. Burney tells us that in a sermon preached in June 1920 before the University of Oxford he "put forward the possibility that in the future a Semitic scholar might arise who, examining the language of the Fourth Gospel in detail, would prove beyond the range of reasonable doubt that it was based upon an Aramaic original." He then goes on to say that in making this "somewhat bold prophecy" he had at the time no thought of undertaking the task himself. But the short interval which elapsed between the delivery of the sermon and the appearance of the volume would seem to indicate that the decision to do this was reached comparatively soon after the prophecy was made.

The aim of Dr. Burney's book is clearly set forth in the words which we have quoted. It is to prove beyond "reasonable doubt" that the Fourth Gospel is based upon an Aramaic original, and this is to be accomplished by "examining the language of the Fourth Gospel in detail." It is to be particularly noted that Dr. Burney himself declares that to establish his contention he must prove beyond *reasonable doubt* the existence of this Aramaic original. This means that the burden of proof rests with those who accept the theory of an Aramaic original of the Fourth Gospel. It is for them to prove this thesis. It is not the duty of the objector to disprove it. This should be clearly understood. And since this question is one which is attracting considerable attention in the theological world we shall now devote ourselves to a somewhat belated examination of Dr. Burney's thesis and the arguments with which he supports it. It is not our purpose to examine all the evidence advanced by Dr. Burney. This would require the writing of a book as long if not longer than his own. Our purpose is the more restricted one of examining the strongest proofs which he cites and considering the bearing of his theory as a whole.

---

[2] *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel,* by Rev. C. F. Burney, M.A., D.Litt., Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford, Fellow of Oriel and St. John's College, Oxford, Canon of Rochester. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922. 8vo. Pp. 176.

The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel consists of nine chapters, which are preceded by an Introduction and followed by an Appendix. In the first chapter Dr. Burney presents a "Preliminary Testing of the Theory by Examination of the Prologue." The five chapters which follow deal in a systematic way with certain grammatical phenomena which Dr. Burney regards as typically Aramaic. They are entitled: The Sentence, Conjunctions, Pronouns, The Verb, Negatives. Chapter VII gathers together a number of what Dr. Burney claims to be "Mistranslations of the Original Aramaic of the Gospel," many of which have already been discussed in the preceding chapters. Chapter VIII deals with "Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel." Chapter IX, styled "Epilogue," deals with the authorship and date of the Gospel.[3] In the following discussion attention will be directed almost entirely to the chapters which deal with the grammatical problems (Chapters II-VI) and with the question of mistranslations (Chapter VII). One example or more will be taken from each of the former. But the question of *mistranslations* will be dealt with in more detail since it constitutes as Dr. Burney truly says the strongest evidence which can be produced in support of the theory that the Fourth Gospel is a translation from an Aramaic original.

Asyndeton

The discussion of "Asyndeton"[4] illustrates quite clearly the precariousness of some of the arguments advanced by Dr. Burney in support of his thesis. In the opening paragraph he points out that it is "highly characteristic of Aramaic to open its sentences abruptly without the use of a connective particle" and that this is in marked contrast with the Hebrew where the use of "and" is very frequent. This dif-

---

[3] In this Chapter Dr. Burney argues that the Fourth Gospel was written probably about A.D. 75-80 and at Antioch, that its author was a young priestly disciple of the Lord but not an Apostle, and that he was also the author of the Apocalypse and the Epistles.

[4] Pp. 49ff.

ference is illustrated by comparing passages from the Book of Daniel, the Aramaic passages illustrating the asyndetic or periodic style, the Hebrew passages illustrating the connective. Then Dr. Burney proceeds to argue that the fact of a much more frequent use of asyndeton in John than in the Synoptists supports the thesis which he is endeavoring to establish. It should be noted, therefore, that Dr. Burney is looking at the question too exclusively from the Semitic angle. The Greek side of the question should also be presented. Thus in Blass-Debrunner[5] it is pointed out that these two types of sentences, the connective and the disjunctive or periodic, were clearly distinguished by Aristotle. The following statement is important for its bearing upon Dr. Burney's argument: "The periodic style is that of the developed, artistic prose, the connective style is that of the simple, popular speech of all periods and so also of the earliest Greek prose and in general also of the narrative of the New Testament, which in this respect agrees with the Semitic languages; with the first topic, which is complete in itself, there connects itself a second similar one, usually joined by means of καί (Heb. ו) then a third and so on in an endless series, a sameness of usage (*Einformigkeit*) which has impressed itself especially upon the narrative of Mark, but also appears frequently in Matthew, Luke and John."[6] Elsewhere the frequent use of the "and" is described as "unattractive and vulgar."[7] Consequently it would seem that the greater frequency of asyndeton in John may find a natural explanation in the better quality of its Greek without having recourse to the Aramaic theory. It would be different if Dr. Burney could point to something more distinctively Aramaic, like the *waw of the apodosis* in Hebrew (cf. Lk. ii. 21). How precarious is the argument from asyndeton is illustrated for example by so familiar a passage as I Cor. xiii. There in the first three verses "and" or "and if" occurs six

---

[5] *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 4te Auflage, 1913.

[6] Blass-Debrunner, § 458.

[7] *Ibid.*, § 442.

times. But in the remaining ten verses "and" is used only twice in all, and only once to connect clauses. Especially noteworthy is vs. 4, where the AV inserts "and" once and if it were strictly consistent, would do so twice. Yet surely no one will argue that Paul is influenced here by the Aramaic, or claim an Aramaic original of this passage.

The weakness of this argument from asyndeton is further illustrated by Dr. Burney's discussion of οὖν. This particle occurs he tells us "some two hundred times" in John[8] or more than twice as frequently as in the three Synoptics taken together. And he assures us that in "literally scores of verses" in John οὖν with the Greek aorist is equivalent to Hebrew *waw consecutive* with the imperfect.[9] This need not mean, he tells us, that John or Mark (whose use of εὐθύς Dr. Burney like Dr. Burkitt regards as the equivalent of *waw consecutive*) is "a translation from the Hebrew," but may be due simply to the fact that "if the authors of these Gospels were familiar with the Old Testament otherwise than through the awkward medium of the LXX they might well have felt themselves in need of something to correspond to the Hebrew idiom." What is this if not an admission that "scores of times" John far from following the periodic style of the Aramaic uses a construction which corresponds to and is in a sense the equivalent of the connective style so characteristic of Hebrew, and of the Greek of the Synoptists?

Casus Pendens

In his Introduction Dr. Burney criticises quite severely the failure of some scholars to make a clear distinction between Aramaisms and Hebraisms.[10] Yet Dr. Burney does not always make the distinction himself, or rather he claims as an argument for his thesis of the *Aramaic* original what is at most an illustration of Semitic, i.e., Hebrew or Aramaic influence. Thus, in discussing the emphatic use of the

[8] P. 66.

[9] P. 68, *n.*

[10] P. 7.

personal pronoun as subject or object (the "casus pendens" as he calls it),[11] he begins by citing examples to prove that this is found in both the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament. Furthermore in the last paragraph of this section he admits that this construction is not even "specifically a Semitism," but may be found in English or Greek. Yet he concludes the discussion by remarking: "An adequate answer is forthcoming in the assumption that a common Aramaic construction has been exactly reproduced in translation." While cautiously stated, this is, to say the least, a case of basing a rather narrow inference on a very general premise.

ἵνα as a "mistranslation" of dᵉ relative, "who," "which"

The frequency of ἵνα in John is, according to Dr. Burney, "one of the most remarkable phenomena in this Gospel. The approximate number of occurrences is 127; whereas in Mt. we find 33, in Mk. 60, in Lk. 40."[12] As far as the telic use of the conjunction is concerned he is impressed only by "the use of ἵνα μή to the exclusion of μήποτε."[13] He admits that "the use of ἵνα = conjunctive *that,* followed by a finite verb where in classical Greek we should expect an Infinitive, is a well-ascertained characteristic of Κοινή Greek. . . ." He is impressed only by the "extreme frequency" of this idiom which he feels may be due to the fact that the writers of Mk. and still more of John "were accustomed *to think in Aramaic.*" And he points out that in the Pal. Syr., Pesh.,[14] etc., we find dᵉ or dî used in these senses. There is as far as we can see no objection to such a view, since no one denies that Aramaic was certainly familiar to the Apostles and was used by the Lord Himself. But Dr. Burney goes further than

---

[11] P. 63f.

[12] P. 69.

[13] *Vide infra.,* pp. 560 ff.

[14] The following abbreviations of frequently occurring words are used in the course of this article: Palestinian Syriac (Pal. Syr.), Curetonian (Cur.), Sinaitic (Sin.), Peshitto (Pesh.), Septuagint (LXX), Westcott and Hort (WH).

this. He holds that there are passages in John where ἵνα represents the Aramaic d^e or $dî$ used in the sense of "who," "which," a meaning which is distinctly foreign to ἵνα. This he believes "can hardly be explained except by the hypothesis of actual *mistranslation* of an original Aramaic document."[15]

Since this can only mean that the alleged translator of the Fourth Gospel into Greek was such a bungler that he rendered the Aramaic d^e by ἵνα even where ἵνα could not possibly have the meaning of d^e, these instances of alleged mistranslation must be very carefully tested. If true they will not merely constitute a serious reflection upon the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel, but will also go a long way toward proving the correctness of Dr. Burney's thesis. For, as he well says, "The most weighty form of evidence in proof that a document is a translation from another language is the existence of difficulties or peculiarities of language which can be shown to find their solution [we should prefer to say "their *only* solution"] in the theory of mistranslation from the assumed original language."[16]

The passages to be considered are these:

i. 8, "He was not the light but (was sent) to bear witness (ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ) of the light." It is generally supposed that we have here a simple ellipsis, "was sent" being supplied from the "sent from God" of the preceding verse. Such ellipses are not rare in New Testament Greek (e.g. Gal. ii. 9, where "should go" is clearly required by the context). But to confine ourselves strictly to the case in point, we observe that after ἀλλά such an ellipsis would not be at all un-

---

[15] P. 75. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the Aramaic it may be well to point out that the charge of mistranslation discussed in the following paragraphs rests upon the fact that the d^e of the Aramaic is used much more broadly than the Greek ἵνα. The particle d^e is primarily a *relative* (originally demonstrative) pronoun which corresponds closely to the Hebrew relative אשר. But just as in Hebrew the אשר has acquired most of the uses of כי (that, because, etc.) so in Aramaic the d^e has become a relative conjunction which may have causal or even telic force.

[16] P. 101.

natural,[17] and that it occurs repeatedly in John. Thus in i. 31 we read "and I knew him not: but (I knew) that he should be made manifest to Israel"; iii. 17 "For God sent not his son unto the world to condemn the world; but (he sent his son) that the world through him might be saved" (cf. ix. 3, xi. 52, xii. 9, 47, xiii. 18, xiv. 31, xv. 25 and xvii. 15). These passages show clearly that an ellipsis between the ἀλλά and the ἵνα resulting in the justaposition of the two words is quite natural,[18] although a phrase often separates them.[19]

Now it is Dr. Burney's contention that ἵνα should be taken as a mistranslation of the relative d^e and that the passage should be rendered "but *one who* was to bear witness of the light." It may be admitted that the writer or translator of the Fourth Gospel might have said this. But Dr. Burney has furnished us no proof that he actually did say it. It is not sufficient to remark that if his view is accepted "no such ellipse is required." Dr. Burney must first show that there is the slightest reason for objecting to the ellipsis.

v. 7, "I have no man ἵνα . . . βάλῃ me into the pool." Here Dr. Burney would render "I have not a man *who* . . . shall put me into the pool." The Pal. Syr. has "quite literally" d^e with imperfect for the ἵνα of the Greek. "The obvious meaning of this in Aramaic is," he tells us, "I have no man *who* . . . shall put me into the pool." But unless Dr. Burney is prepared to deny that in New Testament Greek the ἵνα clause may be used to express the infinitive,[20] he must admit that "I have no man to put me into the pool" is a perfectly natural and proper rendering of the Greek. And we have seen above that he describes it as a "well-ascertained characteristic of Κοινή Greek."

vi. 30, "What sign doest thou then, that (ἵνα) we may

---

[17] Cf. Blass-Debrunner, § 480. 5; Winer (Eng. ed. 1897), p. 587.

[18] For ἀλλά and ὅτι, cf. iii. 28, vi. 26, xii. 6, xix. 21.

[19] Cf. v. 34, xi. 4, 11, 42, xii. 42, xv. 16, xvi. 2, 4, 7, xvii. 20, xix. 24. For ὅτι cf. v. 42, xi. 51, xv. 21, also x. 26, 33, xi. 22(?).

[20] Blass-Debrunner, § 369.

see and believe thee?" Here the telic force of the *ἵνα* is per-
fectly proper to the context. There is no necessity for cor-
recting this to read "What sign then doest thou *which* we
may see?"[21] This change is certainly not an improvement
either in clearness or in force, upon the Greek. That Jesus
had a purpose in performing His signs is plainly taught in
the Scriptures. All that Dr. Burney succeeds in doing is to
weaken the force of this declaration. In fact he tells us that
"since the final force of *d*[e] would here be appropriate in
Aramaic as in the Greek *ἵνα* the evidence of this passage
is not pressed."[22] We note that Burkitt renders the *d*[e] of
Cur., Sin. by "that."[23]

vi. 50, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven,
that (*ἵνα*) a man may eat thereof and not die." Here also
the telic force of *ἵνα* is quite suitable. There is no necessity
for substituting "*which, if.*" Dr. Burney assures us that the
Pal. Syr. is "naturally" to be rendered in this way. This we
deny. דיאכול אנש מנה can equally well be rendered "that"
as Dr. Burney would readily admit were it not that he has
a thesis to maintain. Burkitt renders it "that" in the case
of Cur., Sin.[24]

ix. 36, "And who is he, Lord, that (*ἵνα*) I may believe on
him?" Dr. Burney describes the Pal. Syr. as "quite literal";
and holds that ומן הו מרי דיהימין בה "means without a doubt,
'and who is he, Lord, on whom I should believe?'" In view
of this confident statement as to the meaning of this phrase

---

[21] Dr. Burney says "Pal. Syr. quite literally, מא אית את עבד דנחמא."
(Aramaic when cited will be given, as here, in unpointed Hebrew char-
acters, except the particle ד which is transliterated "*d*[e].") It is to be noted
that the text of the Pal. Syr. is uncertain, the three MSS. all differing.
Dr. Burney apparently takes אית as the word for "sign." It seems more
proper to regard it as the substantive verb, and to render "what art thou
doing?"

[22] If Dr. Burney finds any support for his rendering in the fact that *d*[e]
is followed by אנון (them), which might be regarded as completing the
relative it is to be noted that this is the reading of Cod. B only. The
pronoun אנון is not found in A or C.

[23] Cf. *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe* (Cambridge, 1904), Vol. I in loco.

[24] Cf. *op. cit.* in loco.

in Pal. Syr. it will be well to note that Burkitt renders these identical words "Who is he, my Lord, that I should believe in him?" without even commenting on the ambiguity of the phrase in Syriac.[25] This is sufficient proof we think that when Dr. Burney uses the words "without a doubt" they are to be taken as an expression of Dr. Burney's conviction and not as a statement of fact. As far as the Syriac is concerned either rendering is perfectly possible. Furthermore the interpretive value which Dr Burney assigns to this rendering is, we think, singularly weak: "This meaning is surely much more natural and appropriate than is the final sense given to ἵνα by A.V., R.V., 'that I may believe on him,' which can hardly fail to make us discount the quality of the man's faith, suggesting, as it does, that his gratitude to our Lord made him willing to believe on any one whom He named." We are frank to confess that the distinction which Dr. Burney draws so confidently is not clear to us. The "that" seems clearly to imply that the healed man recognized that the Son of man must be one whom he ought to worship but about whom he wished to know more. The "on whom" seems to indicate that he was not clear in his own mind what Jesus meant when he spoke of the "Son of man." The one indicates both knowledge and intention on the part of the healed man. The other indicates uncertainty and perhaps indecision. For ourselves we prefer the former; and we fail to see why Dr. Burney should regard the other as "surely" preferable to it. Certainly it cannot be said to be raised above "reasonable doubt."

xiv. 16, "He will give you another Comforter, that (ἵνα) he may abide with you forever." Here also Dr. Burney finds the Pal. Syr. (דיהא עמר עמכון) "quite literal" and he assures us that "the natural meaning" is: "He shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you forever." It is to be noted that Pesh. has d^e (דנהוא) which Burkitt renders by "that," which shows that in both Pal. Syr. and Pesh. this d^e

may properly be regarded as representing ἵνα. Furthermore, the telic force of ἵνα seems very appropriate here. Our Lord is preparing the disciples for His own departure. With a view to doing this He promises to send them the Comforter that He may abide with them always. The purpose is clearly that they may never be left alone. Or, if this explanation seems forced, the ἵνα can be regarded as standing for the infinitive: "to abide with you."

After citing these six passages, one of which (the third) he himself regards as inconclusive, Dr. Burney remarks: "If the fact that ἵνα in these passages is a mistranslation of d^e relative be thought to need further evidence to clinch it, this may be found in the variation between Mk. iv. 22 and the parallel passages Mt. x. 26, Lk. viii. 17 already noted." The passages read as follows: Mt. x. 26, "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed" (ὃ οὐκ ἀποκαλυφθήσεται) ; Mk. iv. 22, "for nothing is secret if not that it may be manifested" (ἐὰν μὴ ἵνα φανερωθῇ) ; Lk. viii. 17, "for nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest" (ὃ οὐ φανερὸν γενήσεται). Only the third is given in Pal. Syr., where we read דלא relative. Mk. iv. 22 is wanting in Sin., Cur. The Pesh. has דלא in all three passages. But this does not prove that they are identical. It is to be noted that in Mk. the idea of purpose is strongly emphasized. Vs. 21 reads: "And he said unto them, Is a candle brought that (ἵνα) it may be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not that (ἵνα) it may be set on a candlestick?" On this follows naturally vs. 22 "For there is nothing hid, but that (ἐὰν μὴ ἵνα) it may be manifested," etc. In Mt. x. 26 there is nothing to suggest the idea of purpose. In Lk. viii. 17 the idea of purpose is present in the preceding context "that (ἵνα) they which enter in may see the light," so that the use of "that" would be justifiable; but the relative is used instead. We cannot see that Dr. Burney can find any cogent evidence of mistranslation in this difference between these three passages. Were the three in all other respects strictly identical, there would be more

warrant for his use of them. But such is not the case as a careful comparison will convince the reader.

ὅτι as a "mistranslation" of dᵉ relative

Dr. Burney now goes on to examine several passages in which he regards ὅτι as a mistranslation of dᵉ relative.

ix. 17, "What sayest thou of him, that (ὅτι) he opened thine eyes?" The AV apparently regards the clause "that he opened thine eyes" as standing in apposition to the "what" (τί). This would imply that the Pharisees after the man had twice told them *how* he was healed and having failed to shake his testimony as to this, now raise the question as to whether Jesus was actually the author of the cure. What sayest thou of him?—that he opened thine eyes? Grammatically this rendering is quite suitable. Cf. "What think ye?—that he will not come to the feast?" (xi. 56); "What say I then? that the idol is anything?" (1 Cor. x. 19); "What shall we say then? that the Gentiles . . . have attained to righteousness?" (Rom. ix. 30). It will be objected perhaps that the answer given by the beggar, "He is a prophet," does not suit this interpretation, that we would then expect him to affirm his belief that Jesus was directly responsible for the cure. But when we remember that the healed man has, already, twice expressly and explicitly ascribed his healing to Jesus, it is not too much to suppose that he regarded the question of the Pharisees as superfluous and a reflection on his previous testimony and therefore answered it by making a statement regarding Jesus which would account for the cure wrought upon him by Jesus—"He is a prophet." Dr. Burney would render the verse: "What sayest thou of him *who* opened thine eyes?" He cites in its favor the fact that it is supported by the Arabic version of the Diatessaron. But this proves only that the translator of the Diatessaron into Arabic was led astray by the ambiguity of the Syriac dᵉ, which would be a natural rendering of the ὅτι of the Greek text. He also points out that the Old Latin reads "qui aperuit." On the other hand it is to be noted that unless

Dr. Burney's rendering "What sayest thou of him *who* opened thine eyes?" is to be regarded as ironical, or as a leading question designed to entrap the witness, this apparent acceptance of the view that Jesus opened the eyes of the beggar stands in direct conflict with the statement which immediately follows: "But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of him that had received his sight." It is further to be noted that the τί may also be rendered "why" ("Why sayest thou of him that he opened thine eyes?"). This would make as good if not better sense than Dr. Burney's proposed rendering; and certainly no objection could be made to "that" (ὅτι) in such a connection.

The other examples cited by Dr. Burney are no more convincing. In viii. 45, ἐγὼ δὲ ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω, the ὅτι seems to be clearly intentional: "but I because the truth I speak." It is just *because* the Lord speaks the *truth* that the children of lies do not believe him. To say that "I *who* speak the truth" which we are told is the natural meaning of the Pal. Syr. "offers a superior antithesis to 'he is a liar' of the preceding verse" is clearly incorrect. It is decidedly weaker. The ambiguity of the Syriac is no proof that the Greek should have a weaker sense than it has. In i. 16 "*for* of his fulness," etc., Dr. Burney wishes to read "full of grace and truth was He *of whose* fulness we have all received." But it is to be noted that this rendering involves the transfer of vs. 15 to follow vs. 19, a change for which Dr. Burney cites no textual evidence; and that while Pal. Syr. has the d^e which Dr. Burney renders by "he who," both Cur. and Pesh. have "and" which may be regarded as a weakening of ὅτι, but does not favor the view that the original text had the d^e. In Mk. iv. 41 "What manner of man is this *for* (ὅτι) even the wind and the sea obey him," Dr. Burney would read "whom even the wind and the sea obey." The passage is not found in Pal. Syr. nor in Sin. or Cur. That the Aramaic would naturally use d^e is proved by Pesh. But the fact remains that the reading with ὅτι makes good sense, since it clearly aims to give the

reason for the question. The rendering "whom" does not improve the sense and if anything weakens the force of the question. Similarly in Mk. viii. 24 "I behold men, for (ὅτι) I see them as trees walking," the "for" seems to explain how the partly healed man knew these tree-like beings were men: he saw them walking about. Why Dr. Burney should regard the ὅτι as "difficult" is not clear. To read "whom I see," etc., does not improve the sense materially if at all. Dr. Burney is evidently himself rather doubtful of this passage. He tells us that an example of d^e relative "may very possibly be seen here." In the case of Mt. xiii. 16, "blessed are your eyes for (ὅτι) they see," etc., Dr. Burney points out that the d^e of Sin., Cur., Pesh. "may mean 'because they see, &c' or '*which* see, &c.'" This is perfectly true, but it is singular that Dr. Burney should be at pains to state this here when the same or a similar ambiguity is present in all the passages which he cites.

As regards the passages, John i. 4, 13, where Dr. Burney thinks that the relative (ὅ, οἵ) of the Greek is a misrendering of the d^e which he would take as causal (ὅτι), it should be noted that the Syriac versions clearly support the reading of the Greek, except that the uncertainty as to the point of division between vss. 3 and 4 makes the Peshitto ambiguous. Dr. Burney claims finally that this ambiguity of d^e is responsible for the reading "for (ὅτι) he died" (viii. 53) in Cod. D instead of the "who (ὅστις) died" of the Westcott-Hort text. But the "who" may be simply a copyist's error, due to the similarity of the words.

ἵνα as a "mistranslation" of d^e = "when"

Dr. Burney cites four passages (xii. 23, xiii. 1, xvi. 2, 32) in which he thinks that the ἵνα of the Greek is a mistranslation of d^e in the sense of "when." They are all passages in which the ἵνα follows the words, "the hour cometh (came, has come)," and in which consequently the sense of temporal sequence is strongly emphasized. Dr. Burney finds support for this in the fact that in iv. 21, 23; v. 25; xvi. 25, ὅτε

is used in place of ἵνα, while in v. 28 we read ἐν ᾗ (cf. iv. 52, 53). But the fact that in this Gospel ἵνα and ὅτε occur in this construction with equal frequency and apparently without appreciable difference in meaning favors the view that the ἵνα clause is used here as the equivalent of an infinitive clause,[26] and that consequently if the ὅτε clauses are to be regarded as showing Aramaic influence, the ἵνα clauses, instead of being taken as instances of mistranslation of an Aramaic original, should be explained as Hebraisms.

ὅτι as a "mistranslation" of d^e = "when"

In ix. 8, Dr. Burney finds, as he thinks, ὅτι in the sense of "when." He jumps to the conclusion that this is a mis-translation of d^e. But in "they which before had seen him *that* he was a beggar," the ὅτι is simply the equivalent of an accusative with the infinitive, "who had formerly seen him to be a beggar."[27] Dr. Burney calls xii. 41 "another clear in-stance of the same mistranslation," because he thinks the sense "demanded" is "when (ὅτε) he saw His glory." Dr. Burney fails to tell us what his objection is to the perfectly natural "because" of the RV. Clearly the only reason "when" is *demanded* is that it furnishes Dr. Burney another in-stance of mistranslation.

An Inconsistency in Dr. Burney's Argument

The reader will have noticed that in the instances of alleged mistranslation which we have just been considering the testimony of the *Palestinian Syriac*[28] is frequently cited by Dr. Burney in support of the reading which he favors. Thus in five or six instances he claims that the d^e of the Aramaic which represents the ἵνα of the Greek is to be re-garded as the relative "who, which." Yet while assuring us that the Aramaic d^e is "naturally," "without doubt" to be rendered as a relative, he also describes the rendering as

---

[26] Blass-Debrunner, §§ 369, 382.

[27] *Ibid.*, § 408.

[28] *The Palestinian Syriac Lectionary of the Gospels,* by Agnes Smith Lewis, M.R.A.S., and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, M.R.A.S., London, 1899.

literal. This is significant in view of what Dr. Burney else-
where tells us about this Lectionary. We quote in full: "The
Palestinian Syriac Lectionary, of unknown date, exhibits
an Aramaic dialect akin to that of the Palestinian Talmud
and Midrashim. As offering us the text of a great part of the
Gospels translated into Palestinian Aramaic this Lectionary
is of considerable interest. Like the Targums, however, in
relation to the Hebrew text, it shows a certain tendency to
adapt its language to its Greek original." [29]

There are two points to be noted in the statement just
quoted. The first is that Dr. Burney clearly regards this Lec-
tionary as a *version* and a version from the Greek. It is not
the Aramaic original of which he is in quest. The second
point is that it "shows a certain tendency to adapt its lan-
guage to its Greek original." In other words the Aramaic
of this Lectionary has a Greek flavor. Let us apply this, for
example, to the passages we have been considering, which
have ἵνα in the Greek. The Lectionary renders this ἵνα by d^e.
If the rendering is *literal,* as Dr. Burney is at pains to assure
us, this should mean that the d^e is to be regarded as the equiva-
lent of ἵνα and so rendered. Yet while insisting on the literal-
ness of the rendering Dr. Burney insists also on rendering
the d^e as a relative, a meaning which the ἵνα cannot possibly
have, and he refuses to render the d^e as a final particle, al-
though he would never dream of denying that the Aramaic
d^e may be and often is so used. We have here a rather glar-
ing inconsistency. Dr. Burney assures us that the Aramaic
is a literal rendering of the Greek and yet insists on attach-
ing to it a meaning which is impossible to the Greek which
it renders. It would be different if he were to say that the
Aramaic is ambiguous, that the d^e could be rendered both by
the relative and by "in order that," "that," and that in the
Aramaic the former rendering would be more natural. But
Dr. Burney is so concerned to prove his theory of *mistrans-
lations,* that he does not do this, [30] and consequently confuses

---

[29] P. 25.

[30] For an exception cf. p. 544 *supra.*

the reader and involves himself, as we have said, in a glaring inconsistency.

It will be objected, perhaps, that we have overstated the case, that Dr. Burney is correct in speaking of the Aramaic rendering as *literal* and of the d^e as *naturally* to be taken as the relative, and that he has simply failed to stress the fact which lies at the basis of this whole discussion, that d^e is ambiguous. There is we admit an element of truth in this. But we insist all the same that it is *not correct* to say that d^e in the sense of "who" is a *literal* rendering of ἵνα. Furthermore, if d^e is a correct rendering of ἵνα, then ἵνα can be a correct rendering of d^e—the reader will please observe that we do not say must be, since the scope of the two particles is not the same—and Dr. Burney would not be entitled to use the word "mistranslation" with regard to the ἵνα unless he could prove that the d^e, not of the Pal. Syr. Lectionary, but of his alleged Aramaic original, could not properly be rendered by ἵνα. We do not think he has proved or can prove this. But if he could, he would first of all convict himself of serious misrepresentation in speaking of the d^e (relative) as the *literal* rendering of ἵνα (final). The same applies to most if not all of the other instances of alleged mistranslation cited above where the testimony of Pal. Syr., and not only of Pal. Syr. but of any other Aramaic *versions,* is used to prove the charge of mistranslation. In so far as they are admitted to give *literal* renderings of the Greek they cannot be said to prove mistranslation by the Greek.

The Frequency of the Pronouns

Dr. Burney finds further confirmation of his thesis in the "great frequency" of the pronouns of the first and second persons in John. While recognizing that in some cases the use of the pronoun as subject of the finite verb is for the purpose of emphasis, he believes that in a large number of instances there is no special emphasis apparent. This he regards as a Semitism. He remarks: "In Hebrew and still more in Aramaic, the Participle is used with great freedom

to describe an event as in process of continuance, whether in the past or present, or as in process of coming into being (*Futurum instans*). In such cases, the subject being unexpressed in the verbal form, it is of course necessary to mark it, when it is pronominal, by the Pronoun."[31] The first example given of such a usage is Gen. vii, 4 where אנכי ממטיר is rendered in LXX by ἐγὼ ὑπάγω ὑετόν. Particular attention is directed to the cases where the pronoun follows the verb, which as Dr. Burney points out may occur in either Hebrew or Aramaic. Yet he concludes that John's use of both orders "looks much like a close reproduction of an Aramaic original."[32] Here again Dr. Burney is seeking to draw a specific inference from a general premise. This phenomenon may be regarded as a Hebraism,[33] or simply as a Semitism. It is not, as he himself admits, distinctive of Aramaic.

Pronominal Construction peculiar to Aramaic

Under this head Dr. Burney cites: "the tendency to anticipate a genitive by use of a possessive pronominal suffix attached to the antecedent." After giving several examples of this construction from the Aramaic of Daniel and from the Pal. Syr. of John i. (e.g. "*His* name of God" literally, "the name of Him who is God," Dan. ii. 20), he goes on to say:

There appears to be but one instance of this in the Greek of Jn., but this is so striking that it should surely count for much in estimating the theory of translation from Aramaic. In ix. 18 we read τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος, '*his* parents of him that had received sight.' This appears naturally in Pal. Syr. as אנשותה דהרן דחמא. Cf. Mk. vi. 22 εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ (v.l. αὐτῆς) τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος, which is clearly an attempt to reproduce the Aramaic construction ברתה דהרודיס '*her* daughter of Herodias,' i.e. '*the* daughter of H.' (noted by Allen, *St. Mark, ad loc.*).[34]

Since Dr. Burney believes that in John ix. 18 we have an example of the Aramaic circumlocution for the genitive

---

[31] P. 80.

[32] P. 82.

[33] Cf. Blass-Debrunner, § 277, where copyist's gloss is given as a possible alternative.

[34] P. 85f.

which is so "striking" that it should "count for much" in estimating the correctness of his theory, we shall examine this question in some detail, and begin with a brief survey of the genitive in Semitics.

In the Semitic as in the Indo-European languages the genitive was early and apparently originally distinguished by means of a case ending, the vowels *u, i,* and *a* being used to denote the nominative, genitive and accusative respectively. Along with this differentiation by means of the vowel ending, there was also a tendency to shorten the word which precedes and is modified by the genitive, and which is said to be in the construct state. This was done either by shortening the ending or dropping it entirely, or else by a modification of the vowels in the body of the word. An example of the former is the dropping of the mimmation in the construct state in the Assyrian: e.g. *bîtum is* "house" or "the house," but "the house of the king" is *bîtu* (or *bît*) *šarrim.* An example of the latter would be the "construct state" in Hebrew: e.g. *dāvār* (word), but *dᵉvăr hammelekh* (the word of the king). When, as in the Hebrew, the case endings almost entirely disappear, the modification of the changeable vowels in the preceding word may become the only outward indication of the presence of the genitive. Consequently the student who is beginning the study of Hebrew is struck by what seems to him a decided *anomaly* due to the fact that it is not the *genitive* noun but the noun which *precedes* the genitive that is modified.

But while the use of the "construct" is characteristic of the Semitic languages as a group, this construction has certain very marked limitations;[35] and there are other ways of expressing the genitive. One of these is by means of the preposition ל (to), "a house to the king" being equivalent to

---

[35] Most important is the rule that the construct, although it cannot be itself definite, is regarded as having the same definiteness or indefiniteness as the following genitive. Thus, we may say: "the house of the king" or "a house of a king," but not "the house of a king" or "a house of the king."

"a house of the king." The other is the use of a demonstrative or relative pronoun, such as the d^e or $d\hat{\imath}$ in Aramaic and the *sha* in Babylonian. Thus in Aramaic we find such expressions as *mawhabto da'loho,* "the gift of God" (literally, "the gift, that of God"). And when both words are definite a pronoun is frequently added to the first: e.g. *mawhabteh da'loho* which is literally "his gift (the gift of him) who is God." This construction with the original demonstrative is widely used in the Aramaic dialects as a periphrasis for the genitive; and the use of the pronominal suffix which then really becomes the antecedent of the d^e (used as a relative) is also quite common. In fact this latter form of expression *"his* gift *who* is God" (*mawhabteh da'loho*) may be regarded as a characteristic of Aramaic and Assyrian[36] as distinguished from Hebrew and Arabic.

Now it is this latter construction which Dr. Burney believes he has discovered in John ix. 18 and to which he appeals as a striking support of the theory of an Aramaic original. He would in short treat the αὐτοῦ of τοὺς γονεῖς αὐτοῦ as the demonstrative pronoun used as the possessive, *"his* parents" (literally the parents of *him*), which is inserted just as in *mawhabteh da'loho* between the noun and its genitive, while the τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος would represent the demonstrative or relative clause which we would have in the Aramaic: "the parents of him the one who saw" being equivalent to "the gift of him who is God." Is this interpretation correct? We believe that this is not, and for the following reasons:

1. It should hardly be necessary to remind the reader that we are dealing here with one of the commonest syntactical forms of the Fourth Gospel, indeed of the New Testament as a whole, the genitive relation. The genitive case occurs a very large number of times in John. Thus, there are nearly

---

[36] Such expressions as *apil-šu ša šarri,* "the son of the king" (lit. "the son of him who is king") are strictly parallel to the Aramaic construction, which is consequently "peculiarly idiomatic" of the Aramaic only as compared with the other *West* Semitic languages.

forty cases where the word "God" appears as a genitive. That in the Aramaic these genitives would frequently be represented by the periphrastic expression described above would seem to be probable, in view of the frequency of this idiom in the Aramaic dialects; and when we turn to the Syriac versions, we find that this is actually the case. E.g., this construction occurs 14 times in the Pesh. of John i, and 16 times in the Pal. Syr. of the same same chapter.

Since, then, in Aramaic documents the periphrasis for the genitive occurs so frequently we would expect that if the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel were a translation from the Aramaic prepared by a man who was not sufficiently master of Greek to render this construction idiomatically, instances of this pleonastic use of the $a\dot{v}\tau\acute{o}s$, as we may call it, would be quite numerous, or at least sufficiently numerous to be a characteristic of the literary form of this Gospel. But such is not the case. This is the only instance which Dr. Burney is able to find in the Fourth Gospel.[37] This means that despite its frequency in Aramaic we have according to Dr. Burney only a single example of this alleged Aramaism in the Fourth Gospel. We are consequently able to draw one inference at the outset: viz. that the alleged translator was perfectly able to render this alleged Aramaic construction into correct Greek and that he did this according to Dr. Burney in every case but one. We must conclude then either that he blundered in this *one* instance, which hardly seems probable, or else that in this particular instance he had a special reason for using a phrase which seems to Dr. Burney to follow the Aramaic style.

That the supposed translator was competent to render this idiom into correct Greek, appears not merely from the fact that as has been said Dr. Burney finds no other example of this construction in the Gospel, but still more clearly from the fact that in a number of passages which are closely parallel to this one in form the offensive $a\dot{v}\tau o\hat{v}$ does not

---

[37] His only other example is Mk. vi. 22 (see below).

appear. Thus we read in iv. 34 "my meat and my drink is to do the will of Him that sent me" (τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με, cf. v. 30, vi. 38, 39, vii. 18, ix. 4). This expression is strictly parallel to the one we are examining, since in each the genitive is represented by the aorist participle. If the alleged translator left out the αὐτοῦ in the one case, why did he insert it in the other? Are we justified in regarding it as a blunder or should we not rather seek for some adequate explanation of the different usage?

2. It is to be noted that while αὐτός is frequently used in the New Testament to express the personal pronoun of the third person, so that αὐτοῦ very often means "his," it is also used as a demonstrative, in which case it may have intensive force. The nominative, αὐτὸς ὁ, occurs twice in John[38] and about fifteen times elsewhere in the New Testament usually in Paul.[39] The dative does not occur in John, but we meet it a dozen times in Luke, twice in Acts and once in 1 Cor.[40] The accusative is found once in John and three times in Hebrews.[41] In most of these instances it is quite evident that the demonstrative cannot be regarded as the personal pronoun, and thus represent the Aramaic pronoun but is to be regarded as intensive or emphatic: αὐτὸς ὁ Ἰησοῦς (Math. iii. 4) "Jesus Himself"; αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ (Lk. ii. 38) "in that very hour"; οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα (Heb. x. 1) "not the very image (of the things)." Furthermore the use of such expressions in the writings of Paul militates against the view that it is an Aramaic form of expression.

Turning now to the genitive αὐτοῦ τοῦ we have the following examples to compare: 3 John 12, "(Demetrius hath good report of all men) and of the truth itself" (καὶ ὑπὸ αὐτῆς τῆς

---

[38] v. 36, xvi. 27; cf. ii. 24, iv. 44 where the article is omitted.

[39] Mt. iii. 4, Mk. vi. 17, Lk. xxiv. 15-Rom. viii. 16, 21, 26, 1 Cor. xi. 14(?), xv. 28, 2 Cor. xi. 14, 1 Thess. iii. 11, iv. 16, v. 23, 2 Thess. ii. 16, iii. 16, Rev. xxi. 3.

[40] [Mk. xvi. 14], Lk. i. 36, ii. 38, iii. 23(?), vii. 21, x. 7, 21, xii. 12, xiii. 1, xiii. 31, xx. 19, xxiii. 12, xxiv. 13, 33, Acts xvi. 18, xxi. 13, 1 Cor. i. 24.

[41] John xxi. 25, Heb. ix. 19, 23, 24.

ἀληθείας). Here the αὐτῆς cannot be the possessive pronoun, but is clearly the demonstrative used for emphasis. In 2 Cor. viii. 19 the reading is unfortunately open to question. If we read with Tischendorf πρὸς τὴν αὐτοῦ τοῦ κυρίου δόξαν ("to the glory of the Lord Himself") we have another good example of the emphatic use of the demonstrative. But the αὐτοῦ is omitted by WH. If in Mk. vi. 22 to which Dr. Burney refers as "clearly an attempt to reproduce the Aramaic construction" we read αὐτῆς the natural rendering of τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς Ἡρωδιάδος would be "the daughter of Herodias herself." There is no need to assume that we have here a clumsy attempt to render the Aramaic phrase ברתה דהרודים, which Dr. Burney renders by "*her* daughter of Herodias."[42]

While these examples are not numerous they are sufficient to prove that αὐτός ὁ is used in the New Testament in the genitive as in the nominative, dative and accusative. There is no reason why this should not be the case. It is interesting to observe that the genitive of ἐκεῖνος ὁ while less frequent than the other cases is also found in the New Testament (Matt. xxii. 46, Jn. xi. 53, xix. 27, 31). Consequently the expression may be appropriately rendered: "the parents of that (very) one who saw."

3. It is to be noted further that it would be quite possible to explain the τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος as simply an explanatory or emphatic apposition or parenthesis, epexegetical of the αὐτοῦ which would then stand for the personal pronoun: "the parents of him (the man who saw)." Such parentheses are by no means rare in the New Testament. Thus we may find it following a nominative, as, "but when that one (ἐκεῖνος)—the Spirit of truth—shall come" (John xvi. 13); a genitive, as "the greeting with the hand of me, Paul"

---

[42] Dr. Burney apparently feels that his theory would account for the various reading αὐτοῦ which is the better attested of the two, since the unpointed Aramaic could be read either as masculine or feminine. But this does not help us very much. For certainly a translator who was acquainted with Aramaic would have read the alleged Aramaic as feminine. It is better to regard the reading αὐτοῦ as a transcriptional error, due to the fact that αὐτοῦ occurs twice in the preceding verse.

(literally, "with my hand, Paul," [ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου] which stands for τῇ χειρὶ ἐμοῦ Παύλου 1 Cor. xvi. 21, Col. iv. 18, 2 Thess. iii. 17) ; or an accusative "unto us, the believing (ones)" (εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας, Eph. i. 19).

4. It is to be noted further that in estimating Dr. Burney's interpretation of this passage we are concerned not merely with the pronoun "his" (αὐτοῦ), but also with the words which follow; and the question arises whether the simple τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος is really equivalent to the Pal. Syr.[43] which Dr. Burney quotes, and which is literally "the parents of him who is this one that saw." It is of course true that in Greek the participle with article is often used as the equivalent of a relative clause. But it is certainly questionable whether a translator who *ex hypothesi* failed to render so common an Aramaic expression as this into correct Greek would have contented himself with the simple τοῦ ἀναβλέψαντος as a rendering of the more complicated Aramaic idiom.

We submit that there is in this passage nothing to prove beyond *reasonable doubt* that we have here an Aramaic phrase embedded in the Greek. We see no reason to deny that the expression itself is good Greek and we have offered several explanations of it, either one of which seems to be reasonable. But even if we were to admit that the phrase is Aramaic, this would not prove that we are dealing with a translation from the Aramaic. It would merely prove at most that the author knew Aramaic well, perhaps better than he knew Greek and in a single instance had allowed this to color his use of the Greek language.

The Historic Present

According to Dr. Burney the historic present is "extremely frequent in John." He lists 164 occurrences of which 120, or nearly three-fourths, are cases of the verb "say" (λέγει, λέγουσιν). This feature, he points out, "strongly resembles a common Aramaic idiom in which in a description of past events the participle is employed to

---

[43] Pesh. has practically same construction.

represent the action described as in process of taking place.[44]
In the Aramaic of Daniel he finds "no less than 99 in-
stances" of this usage of which "23 are found with the verb
'answer' and no less than 36 with the verb 'say.' " He con-
siders it obvious to the Aramaic scholar that this usage
"naturally lends itself to representation in Greek by the His-
toric Present or Imperfect." And his conclusion is that the
theory of Aramaic influence offers an adequate explanation
of this phenomenon of the Fourth Gospel.[45]

Pausing only to note that Aramaic influence need not
mean or imply an Aramaic original for the Fourth Gospel,
attention may be called to the following considerations.

It is to be noted at the outset that the historic present is
not uncommon in Classical and New Testament Greek.[46] It
may be regarded as a colloquialism; but it is admittedly so
natural an idiom that strong reason must be adduced in
support of the theory that its occurrence in John is indicative
of foreign, i.e. Aramaic, influence. Two things impress Dr.
Burney particularly: the fact that in Daniel the participle,
in John the present indicative, is frequently used in the
"historic" sense; and that in both documents the majority
of the occurrences are of the verb "say" or "answer."

Looking first at the Aramaic side of the argument, we
observe first of all that it may be questioned whether the
occurrences of the participle in the Aramaic of Daniel, are
either so remarkable or so numerous as Dr. Burney's figures
would seem to indicate. The statement that "in the 199½
Aramaic verses of Daniel we find no less than 99 instances
of this participial usage" loses something of its impressive-
ness, when we take it in connection with the fact, not men-
tioned by Dr. Burney, that in these same verses the perfect

---

[44] Pp. 87ff.

[45] He points out that this explanation has already been given by Allen
and by Wellhausen to account for the similar phenomena in Mark.

[46] Kühner, *Ausführliche Grammatik der Griechischen Sprache*, 3te
Aufl. (1898), II. I. 132; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New
Testament*, pp. 866ff.; Blass-Debrunner, *Gram. d. N.T. Griechischen*,
§ 321.

occurs about three hundred times, i.e., about three times as often as the participle.

Again, it is to be noted that in most of the 99 or more instances cited by Dr. Burney, the warrant for treating the verb as participle rather than as perfect is simply the vowel pointings. Thus ענה ואמר can be pronounced 'ânê w^e'âmar "(is) answering and saying" (ptcs.) or '^anâ wa'^amar "he answered and said" (pfs.) or '^anâ w^e'âmar "he answered and says" (pf. + ptc.). In favor of the first we have the Massoretic pointing which Dr. Burney apparently accepts without question in making up his total, although he later points out that there is an element of uncertainty as to its correctness. An argument for the second (both perfects) lies in the fact that this construction is actually found in Daniel. Thus, in iii. 24, we read, "Then Nebuchadnezzar, the king, was astonished (pf.) and rose up (pf.) in haste, (and) answers (ptc.) and says (ptc.)," etc. It is hard to see why the last two verbs must both be pointed as participle, if the first two are pointed as perfect. For in v. 10, "the queen answered (pf.) and said (pf.)" the very phrase is used which is so often found on the lips of the king, but here the fact that the speaker is a woman makes the words (ענת ואמרת) unambiguous. In favor of the third (perfect + participle) it is to be noted that the plural of the phrase ענה ואמר is usually not "(they) are answering and saying" but "they answered (ענו, pf.; not ענין, ptc.)[47] and are saying (אמרין, ptc.)," a fact which has led Dr. Burney himself to raise the question whether when the verb "answer" is used in the singular it should likewise be pointed as perfect.[48]

But even if the correctness of the pointing be admitted, it does not follow that the use of the participle as historic present is as characteristically Aramaic as Dr. Burney ap-

[47] The perfect occurs five times (ii. 7, 10, iii. 9, 16, vi. 14), the participle only once (iii. 24).

[48] Cf. Dan. vi. 13, 16 where "saying" follows the perfect of a verb other than "answer."

parently believes. He tells us himself that "In Syriac the use of the participle under discussion is practically confined to the verb אֲמַר 'say.' "[49] And in speaking of Daniel he points out, as we have seen, that of the 99 examples "no less than 36" are of the verb "say," while "23" represent its cognate "answer," which means that about 60 per cent of all occurrences are "answer" or "say." This suggests that in Biblical Aramaic as in Syriac this use of the participle is especially marked in verbs of speaking. Yet it is a fact which should not be overlooked that there are 20 occurrences of the perfect of "say" in these same chapters of Daniel.

Having considered the frequency of the participle in the Aramaic of Daniel, we now turn to the question whether this participle, assuming the pointing as participle to be correct, would be rendered into Greek by the historic present. We are fortunately in a position to test this by the Greek versions of the Aramaic of Daniel. If it were a fact, as Dr Burney claims, that the historic present in John renders the participle of an alleged Aramaic original, we should expect to find this to hold true of such known versions of the Aramaic of Daniel into Greek as those of Theodotion and the LXX. But that such is not the case the phrase "answer and say" seems clearly to indicate. This phrase is the outstanding example of the participle in Daniel, and occurs 30 times.[50] How is it rendered by Theodotion? The singular is rendered 5 times by κ. ἀπεκρίθη κ. εἶπεν (ii. 8, iii. 14, 28, iv. 16, 27), 10 times by (καὶ) εἶπεν (ii. 20, iii. 19, 24, 26, v. 7, 10,[51] 13, 17, vi. 13, 17), once by ἀπεκρίθη (ii. 5), twice by ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν (ii. 26, 47),

[49] Cf. Nöldeke, *Syriac Grammar*, § 274: "Narration scarcely ever employs the Active Participle (as historical present) except in the case of אמר; but this . . . is very common."

[50] These words are found in masc. sing. and pointed as participles 23 times (ii. 5, 8, 15, 20, 26, 27, 47, iii. 14, 19, 24, 25, 26, 28, iv. 16 *bis*, 27, v. 7, 13, 17, vi. 13, 17, 21, vii. 2) ; they are masc. plur. 6 times, in only one of which both verbs are participles (iii. 24) while in 5 (ii. 7, 10, iii. 9, 16, vi. 14) we find the perfect followed by the participle ; in the one case where the verbs are in the fem. sing. (v. 10) both are in the perfect tense.

[51] Here as we have seen both verbs are perfects in the Aramaic.

5 times it is omitted (ii. 15, iii. 25, iv. 16, vi. 21, vii. 2).
Only once (ii. 27) is the present tense used in the Greek
and even there it follows an aorist (κ. ἀπεκρίθη κ. λέγει).
In the 6 cases where the plural is used, it is rendered as
follows: ἀπεκρίθησαν κ. εἶπαν (ii. 7), ἀπεκρίθησαν κ.
λέγουσιν (ii. 10, vi. 14), ἀπεκρίθησαν λέγοντες (iii. 16);
in iii. 9 the phrase is wanting in the Greek; in iii. 24 where
both verbs are participles in Aramaic, the Greek simply has
εἶπαν. Of these thirty occurrences of the phrase "answer
and say" in Aramaic, Dr. Burney cites only 4 instances
(ii. 10, 27, vi. 13, 14) of the rendering of the participle by
the historic present and he fails to take account of the fact
that in all of them the present is preceded in the Greek by
an aorist.[52] The case is even stronger where other verbs
than "say" are rendered into Greek by Theodotion. For
Dr. Burney apparently can cite only one case (iii. 27) where
the Aramaic participle is rendered by the present indicative.
Dr. Burney has made no express allusion to the LXX; but
as far as the expression "answer and say" is concerned, the
use of the aorist indicative is fully as frequent as in Theo-
dotion. This testimony of the Greek versions would seem
to mean either that the translators did not point the Ara-
maic forms as participle as often as is done by the Mas-
soretes, which would be an argument against the frequent
use of the participle as historic present in Daniel, or else
that, while recognizing the forms as participles, they never-
theless preferred as a rule to render them into Greek by the
aorist indicative and not by the historic present.

We turn now to the testimony of the Fourth Gospel itself.
We have seen that Dr. Burney stresses two points: the fre-
quency of the historic present (164 times) and the fact
that so many of these instances are of the verb "say" (120
times). This he considers especially significant because in
the Aramaic of Daniel the participle occurs frequently, and
especially often in the case of the words "answer" and "say."

---

[52] Dr. Burney cites one other example of the present (vi. 16). There
the Greek omits a perfect ("assembled" or "rushed") which precedes.

It is to be regretted that Dr. Burney does not tell us how the 164 instances of the historic present compare in general with the use of the aorist indicative nor even what the proportion is in the case of "answer" and "say." It is noteworthy that there are at least as many examples of "said" (aor. ind.) as of "say" (hist. pres.).[53] In the case of the expressions "answer" and "answer and say" the figures are very striking. In his list of the historic presents, Dr. Burney gives but *three* occurrences of "answer" (ἀποκρίνεται xii. 23, xiii. 26, 38). Yet everyone knows that this verb occurs frequently in John. What are the facts? They are these: "answered" (aor. ind.) occurs 36 times;[54] "answered and said" (both aor. ind.) occurs 32 times; "answered saying" (aor. ind. + pres. ptc.) occurs 2 times; "answered and says" (aor. ind. + pres. ind.) occurs once; "answered and was saying" (aor. ind.[55] + imperf.) occurs once; "answers" (pres. ind.) occurs only three times.[56] In other words out of 75 occurrences of "answer," in 36 of which it is followed by "say," the former is in the present tense only *three* times out of 75, the latter is present (or imperfect) only *four* times out of 36. It would be difficult, we think, to find more conclusive proof that the historic present in the Fourth Gospel has little or no connection with the participle of Daniel; for in the very phrase which is common to both and which might be expected to exhibit the correspondence with the greatest clearness, if such correspondence really exists, the difference is very marked.

The facts which have just been cited are especially noteworthy because they illustrate so clearly the dangerous onesidedness of the method which Dr. Burney not seldom em-

---

[53] We have counted about 130 instances of the aorist indicative where we believe the historic present would be equally suitable.

[54] The aorist passive (ἀπεκρίθη κ.τ.λ.) is regularly used; but in v. 17 the WH text has aorist middle (ἀπεκρίνατο) which is also given by some MSS. in xviii. 34.

[55] v. 19; here the aorist middle (ἀπεκρίνατο) is used.

[56] In two of them (xii. 23 and xiii. 38) some MSS. give the aorist (mid. or pass.).

ploys in his quest for confirmation of his theory: he cites only
the data which support, but makes no mention of the evi-
dence which refutes, the theory he is trying to establish.
It is often said that statistics are very misleading, that you
can prove or disprove anything by the skilful use of statis-
tics. This is, unfortunately, all too true. But it is true only
when the statistics are incomplete or are selected and ar-
ranged with a view to proving the opinions held by the
statistician. Three instances of "answer" (hist. pres.) con-
stitute an argument in favor of Dr. Burney's theory; but
the force of this argument is more than offset by the seventy-
two instances of "answered" (aor. ind.) which he does not
even mention. Dr. Burney is entitled to call attention to the
three instances; he is not justified in ignoring the seventy-
two. We do not profess to have made anything approaching
an exhaustive investigation of either the Aramaic participle
or the Greek historic present. But we believe that enough
has been said to prove that the theory of Aramaic influence
(we have already noted that Dr. Burney does not say Ara-
maic original) rests here on very shaky foundations.[57]

Negatives

In this chapter Dr. Burney begins by pointing out that
"The Semitic languages do not for the most part possess

---

[57] A further indication that the Aramaic participle and the Greek
historic present cannot be regarded as so closely related that one can be
justly treated as derived from the other is furnished by the Aramaic
versions of the Greek New Testament. It is a significant fact that of the
120 instances cited by Dr. Burney of λέγει, λέγουσιν in the Greek of John
almost 40 per cent are rendered in the Peshitto (accepting the pointings
as correct) by the perfect. Dr. Robertson (*Grammar*, p. 868) cites John
xx. 1-18 as a typical instance of the occurrence of the historic present. It
is interesting to note that of the 23 occurrences of this idiom in these
verses, 10 appear in the Peshitto as perfects. Besides this the participles
παρακύψας (vs. 4) εἰποῦσα (vs. 14), δοκοῦσα (vs. 15), ἀγγέλλουσα (vs. 18),
are rendered by the perfect; and in vs. 16 where we read στραφεῖσα . . .
λέγει (ptc. + pres.) the Peshitto has a perfect followed by a participle.
In the case of the Palestinian Syriac the absence of vowel points makes
it at times uncertain whether the Greek present is there rendered by
participle or by perfect. It is safe to say that in this passage this version
has nearly if not quite as many perfects as does the Peshitto.

negative expressions such as *none, never,* but expressed
them by using the corresponding positives coupled with the
simple negative *not."* [58] After citing a number of instances of
this usage in the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testa-
ment, he proceeds to call attention to two passages in John
(vi. 39, xii. 46) [59] where a similar construction occurs, the
first of which reads thus: "That (of) *all* which He has
given me I should *not* lose (anything)" (ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέν
μοι μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ). To these Dr. Burney adds a number
of examples from other New Testament books, several of
which are from Paul. This presentation of the case is mis-
leading because Dr. Burney presents only one side of the
case. For if this idiom is Semitic, as Dr. Burney claims, it
is to be noted that in John and elsewhere in the New Testa-
ment another idiom occurs that is even more distinctively
Greek. We refer to the "double negative." Not merely does
οὐδείς occur almost as frequently in John as πᾶς; but in six-
teen of its sixty-four occurrences it is accompanied by a
negative particle. Whereas of the sixty-six occurrences of
πᾶς there are as we have seen only four (Dr. Burney has
cited but two) which clearly illustrate the usage which Dr.
Burney regards as Semitic. [60] The evidence clearly shows a
preference for the Greek mode of expression.

μήποτε.

Dr. Burney makes much of John's failure to use μήποτε
in the sense of "lest"; and he is particularly impressed by
the fact that in citing from Isa. vi. 10 "lest (פֶּן) he see with
his eyes," John does not use the LXX (μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς
ὀφθαλμοῖς) as does Mt., but "departs from the Hebrew and
LXX phrases in order to use an Aramaic phrase which is
actually employed in the rendering of Pesh." [61] And he con-
cludes, "What evidence could prove more cogently that his

---

[58] P. 98.

[59] He seems to have overlooked two other passages (iii. 16, xi. 26)
where this construction also occurs.

[60] Such passages as iii. 20, xiii. 10, 11, 18 and xv. 2 are hardly in point.

[61] P. 100.

Greek translates an Aramaic original?" But on what ground does Dr. Burney accuse John of "departing" from the Hebrew? His rendering ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς differs from the LXX, it is true; but unless Dr. Burney is prepared to maintain that פן cannot be correctly rendered by ἵνα μή, where is the departure from the Hebrew? Elsewhere he tells us that the author of the Fourth Gospel knows his Old Testament, not through the medium of the LXX, but in the original language.[62] Grant that ἵνα μή is the exact equivalent of the דלא of the Peshitto. Grant that μήποτε is not used by John, while ἵνα μή occurs eighteen times. If this proves an Aramaic original for the Fourth Gospel, how shall we account for the fact that μήποτε is likewise absent from the Pauline Epistles while ἵνα μή is found twice as often in them as in John? Were the Pauline Epistles originally written in Aramaic also? How hard pressed Dr. Burney is for proof of his theory is shown by his statement that while Mt. quotes the LXX verbatim "Mk. iv. 12 quoting more freely yet has the μήποτε of LXX." It is true that Mk. iv. 12 and the LXX both have μήποτε as the rendering of the "lest" (פן) of Isa. vi. 10, while John has ἵνα μή. But on the other hand there are indications that in both Mk. and John the citation is based on the Hebrew. Does this word μήποτε prove that Mk. follows the LXX and that John has an Aramaic original? It is to be noted that while μήποτε is used in the LXX at Isa. vi. 10, this cannot be said to be a characteristic of that version as such. In the Pentateuch, for example, "lest" (פן) is rendered by ἵνα μή eleven times or about half as often as by μήποτε. If ἵνα μή is "an Aramaic phrase" in John which proves it to be a translation from the Aramaic, how are we to explain the occurrence of this phrase eleven times in the LXX in the Pentateuch? Obviously Dr. Burney proves too much and so proves nothing. The simple fact is that both μήποτε and ἵνα μή are good Greek and correct renderings of the Hebrew "lest." Why the writer of the Fourth Gospel preferred the phrase ἵνα μή we do not pro-

---

[62] P. 127.

fess to know. But it is at least clear that its use lends no support to Dr. Burney's theory.

Mistranslations

The five chapters from which we have cited examples all deal with Grammar—the Sentence, Conjunctions, Pronouns, the Verb, Negatives. In them Dr. Burney cites as we have seen examples of various constructions which he thinks prove the Greek text of the Fourth Gospel to be a translation of an Aramaic original. These examples fall into two classes: those in which the Greek may be regarded as a correct though unidiomatic rendering of the Aramaic, and those in which it is held to be incorrect, a "mistranslation" of the alleged original. These latter are found chiefly in the chapter on "Conjunctions" and constitute those cases where Dr. Burney thinks the d^e of the original Aramaic has been incorrectly rendered by ἵνα, ὅτι, ὅτε. These examples we have already examined. The seventh chapter is entitled "Mistranslations of the Original Aramaic of the Gospel." It is an important chapter. For as Dr. Burney correctly tells us: "The most weighty form of evidence in proof that a document is a translation from another language is the existence of difficulties or peculiarities of language which can be shown to find their solution in the theory of mistranslation from the assumed original language."[63]

After reminding his readers of the "mistranslations of d^e," which we have examined, Dr. Burney goes on to cite other examples which he believes he has discovered.

i. 5, xii. 35, "καταλαμβάνειν = קְבֵל 'take, receive,' a misunderstanding of אַקְבֵּל 'darken.'" It is to be noted that here we are dealing not with grammatical form but with the subject matter of the narrative. i. 5, "and the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness did not receive (οὐ κατέλαβεν) it" makes perfectly good sense. It stresses the hostility between darkness and light as symbols of ethical values. The darkness did not welcome the light, as it might

---

[63] P. 101.

have been expected to do; it resisted it. In John iii. 19-21 we have a very clear interpretation of the meaning of this passage, if such is really needed. It would also be true to fact to say: "and the darkness did not obscure it," if the statement is taken in a relative sense and with express reference to the final outcome of this irrepressible conflict. But there are a great many correct statements which might appear in the Fourth Gospel that do not appear there. We are not concerned with what the writer might have said but with what he did say. The same is true of xii. 35. "That the darkness shroud you not" would make good sense. But what proof is there that it is better than "that darkness overtake (seize) you not"? Dr. Burney has assured us that he recognizes that the advocate of translation from the Aramaic must prove beyond "reasonable doubt" the correctness of this theory. Here he furnishes the reader with no proof that any Aramaic version or any other version for that matter, or any MS of the Greek supports the reading "obscure." It is pure conjecture. Yet Dr. Burney does not hesitate to bring it forward as a possible "mistranslation" of the Greek. Either Dr. Burney does not realize how serious a charge is involved in the word "mistranslation" or else he has scant respect for the Fourth Gospel, and has forgotten the test, beyond "reasonable doubt," which he has himself proposed.[64]

i. 9, "He was ($\mathring{\eta}\nu$) in the world" also arouses Dr. Burney's suspicion; and since the substantive verb "he was" ($h^e w\bar{a}'$) and the pronoun "he" ($h\hat{u}$) would both be written הוא in Aramaic, he proposes that the former be regarded as a "misreading" of the latter which he thinks should have been rendered by ἐκεῖνος. Now the question is not as to whether ἐκεῖνος $\mathring{\eta}\nu$ κτλ, would have made good sense (we have οὖτος

---

[64] Dr. Burney does not even tell us what Greek word he would use for "obscure." Σκοτίζω , for example, does not resemble καταλαμβάνω Dr. Burney is not primarily interested in objective textual criticism. His theoretical Aramaic original makes such questions of secondary interest.

ἦν in vs. 2, cf. ix. 33; and ἐκεῖνος ἦν in v. 35, cf. i. 8), but whether ἦν τὸ φῶς is incorrect. If it is, then "he was naked" (ἦν γύμνος, xxi. 7) and "and it was written" (καὶ ἦν γεγραμμένον, xix. 20) must also be incorrect (cf. Acts vii. 22, xi. 24). We have seen that elsewhere Dr. Burney insists that the "excessive" use of the independent pronoun as subject is Aramaic. Here conversely he argues that its absence is suspicious. Dr. Burney is clearly a somewhat captious critic of the Greek text which he is investigating.

Dr. Burney believes that instances of *incongruence* in the use of the relative pronoun in the Fourth Gospel are a proof that it is a translation from the Aramaic. Thus in the difficult passage ὁ πατήρ μου ὃ δέδωκέν μοι πάντων μεῖζόν ἐστιν (x. 29) he would explain the ὅ as standing incorrectly for ὅς. He would account for the incongruous use of the relative here and in several other passages as due to "the ambiguity of the particle *d*e," which he thinks "caused difficulty to the translator." We shall not attempt to discuss the intricate problem of the use of the relative in New Testament Greek, but merely call attention to an obvious fact. It is true that the Aramaic *d*e is indeclinable and therefore often ambiguous. But Dr. Burney fails to mention that this ambiguity of the relative is not peculiar to Aramaic but is characteristic of the Semitic languages in general, of Hebrew, Arabic and Babylonian as well as of Aramaic. Consequently the most that Dr. Burney would be entitled to argue would be for Semitic influence, not an Aramaic original. Once again he draws a very specific conclusion from a very general premise.

The extent to which the charge of "mistranslation" from a hypothetical non-Greek original can be carried is well illustrated by the treatment of i. 29, "Behold the lamb (ἀμνός) of God that taketh away the sin of the world." Dr. Burney feels that the Baptist's words show familiarity with Isaiah liii. and that therefore the genuineness of the words, "that taketh away the sin of the world," cannot justly be questioned. But he is impressed with the fact that in Isa. liii. 7 the Servant is not called the lamb of God, but it is simply

stated that he was "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter."
He feels that the designation can be accounted for with the
help of Gen. xxii. 8, Isa. liii. 7, 10, 11. But he prefers another
explanation. Since in Aramaic the word *ṭalyā* may be
used in the sense of "young man," "servant" (cf. *talitha,
cumi,* "maid, arise") as well as "lamb," he would have us
substitute "behold the Servant of God" for the familiar "be-
hold the Lamb of God." Such a use of the word "lamb"
would not be impossible (cf. Ps. lxxiv. 1, Jer. xxiii. 1, l. 6,
etc.). But if "lamb" only means "servant" it is hard to see
why the usual word for servant (עֶבֶד) should not be used
(Isa. liii. is one of the Servant Passages) or, since this ser-
vant is clearly a preeminent one, the word "shepherd" which
is applied to kings and prophets (Isa. xliv. 28, lvi. 11, lxiii.
11, Jer. xlix. 19, Ezek. xxxiv. 2). "Lamb" certainly accords
best with the words "that taketh away the sin of the world"
which follow, and seem to explain it. And unless Dr. Burney
is prepared, which he is not, to reject these words as spurious
and stigmatize the sacrificial explanation as inherently false,
we do not see how he can defend his charge of mistranslation.
Even if it were proved that the ἄμνος of the Greek repre-
sented *ṭalya* in Aramaic we would still be entitled to call it a
"correct" translation and interpret it in sacrificial terms. But
it should be noted that neither in the Aramaic versions of
Isaiah (cf. Targ. of Jonathan, and Pesh.) nor in those of
John (cf. Sin., Pal. Syr., Pesh.) does the word *ṭalyā* occur.
Dr. Burney's "mistranslation" seems therefore to be purely
conjectural and to rest on nothing more substantial than the
well-known ambiguity of the word *ṭalyā*.

ii. 22 "When therefore he was risen from the dead, his
disciples remembered that he was saying (ἔλεγεν) this unto
them." Dr. Burney thinks that the pluperfect would be more
natural ("he had said"). He intimates that the translator
mistook the Aramaic perfect (followed by the substantive
verb) for the participle, which would simply involve a dif-
ference in the pointing. But it is to be remembered that the
Greek imperfect may be used in past time both as frequenta-

tive and conative. That Jesus *tried* and tried *more than once*
to prepare His disciples for His death is a fact clearly taught
in Scripture. This may account for the use of the imperfect.
If, as Dr. Burney suggests, the pluperfect would be so much
more natural, is it not strange that his alleged translator made
such an obvious blunder?

vi. 22 "The words (ῥήματα) which I have spoken unto
you." For "words," Dr. Burney prefers to render "things."
Since דבר in Hebrew and מלה in Aramaic both have this
double meaning, he includes this passage among his "mis-
translations." Yet, surely to use "words" in the sense of "the
content of the words" is a very natural metonomy which
does not warrant so serious a charge. Dr. Burney seems to
forget that the usage which he regards as Aramaic is found
in the LXX, and can therefore properly be regarded as a
Hebraism. Thus, in Genesis, alone, there are 23 instances
where דבר is rendered in the AV by "things." In all but three
of these the LXX has ῥῆμα. Is Dr. Burney prepared to assert
that an Aramaic original must be posited for the LXX ver-
sion of Genesis?

One of the most interesting passages adduced by Dr. Bur-
ney in proof of his theory is vii. 37f.: "In the last day, that
great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any
man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth
on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow
rivers of living water." He connects the words, "he that
believeth on me," with what precedes and not with what fol-
lows, and renders this part of the passage thus:

> "He that thirsteth, let him come unto Me;
> And let him drink that believeth on Me."

This is, of course, possible, but it is well to remember that so
distinguished a commentator as Godet has spoken of it as a
"desperate expedient." Then, since the words "belly" (Heb.
מעים) and "fountain" (Heb. מעין) would both be written מעין
in Aramaic he would change what follows to read, " 'As the
Scripture hath said, Rivers shall flow forth from the foun-

tain of living waters' " (נחלין מן מעין דמיין נבעין יהון נגדין)‎.‏

But it is to be noted that this conjectural reading does not succeed in what should be its primary purpose: it does not make it possible to discover an Old Testament passage with which these words can be directly connected. All that Dr. Burney can say for his reading "fountain" is this: "The reference to Scripture which follows the parallel couplet summarizes the main conceptions of Ezekiel, Joel, and Zechariah." Furthermore it is not at all clear that Dr. Burney's conjectural reading is any real improvement. Godet's view that the reference is to the incident of the smiting of the rock at Horeb is certainly worthy of consideration. Godet connects the words "out of his belly" with the "from within it (*mimmenou*)" of Exod. xvii. 6; and the phrase "rivers of living water" with the "and abundant waters came forth" of Num. xx. 11. The rock consequently typifies Christ directly (cf. 1 Cor. x. 4) and indirectly the Christian who becomes like his Master a source of blessing to humanity. Much can be said in favor of this interpretation. Or it may be that we should see in this passage a reference to the Blessing of Abraham (Gen. xii. 2, 3). According to Gen. xv. 4, this blessing was to come out of the "bowels" (מעיך) of Abraham. Abraham was the great "believer" and the blessing which came from his "loins" in the person of the promised Seed, might, under a change of figure, be referred to as "living water," adopting the figure of Ezekiel, Joel and Zechariah. Certainly Dr. Burney cannot be said to have established the correctness of his hypothetical original beyond "reasonable doubt."

viii. 56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." According to Dr. Burney, "No extension of the use of ἵνα seems adequate to explain ἠγαλλιάσατο ἵνα ἴδῃ, and moreover, if we grant that 'rejoiced to see' is the sense intended, the following clause καὶ εἶδεν καὶ ἐχάρη, instead of forming a climax, makes mere tautology." Dr. Burney thinks that the sense requires "longed," and since in Syriac the verb סוח has both of these meanings, he

believes that the original Aramaic was given "a wrong meaning" by the translator, who should have rendered it "longed" instead of "rejoiced." Several points may be noted: (1) Dr. Burney admits that the Aramaic verb which has the double meaning he needs "is not known to occur in Western Aramaic." It would be simpler to turn to the Hebrew where the well-known root חפץ has this double meaning. (2) In Hebrew the verb שׂמח may be construed with the infinitive (cf. 1 Sam. vi. 13). This construction as we have seen is frequently rendered in Greek by the ἵνα clause. (3) Dr. Burney thinks the second part of the verse becomes tautological if the meaning "rejoiced" is retained. He seems to overlook the fact that repetition frequently serves both in the Old Testament and the New Testament to produce emphasis. A good illustration of such repetition—in this instance *identical* repetition—is John iii. 15, 16, where the second part of vs. 16 is an exact repetition of vs. 15.

As another example of "mistranslation" Dr. Burney adduces ix. 25 ἓν οἶδα "one thing I know," alleging that the translator may have confused הדא (this) with חדא (one), which he describes as "merely the difference between ח and ה which are very easily confused." Yet he tells us: "It cannot be urged, however, that ἓν οἶδα yields an unsuitable sense." This is a very grudging admission. "*One* thing I know" makes a very suitable sense. It is much stronger than Dr. Burney's "this I know"; and no valid objection can be raised against it. The healed man knew *one* thing beyond all peradventure: "whereas I was blind, now I see." If Dr. Burney must prove beyond "reasonable doubt," his theory of an Aramaic original, this alleged mistranslation shows quite clearly how meagre is the evidence which he can adduce in its support.

In xx. 2 Dr. Burney refers to "the strange use of οὐκ οἴδαμεν." He thinks Mary Magdalene should have said, "and not do *I* know where they have laid him." The "we" he would explain as a "misreading," לא ידענא having been read by the translator as perfect, instead of as fem. sing. ptc. combined

with the pron. of the first pers. sing. But Dr. Burney's correction of the Greek text is quite superfluous. The parallel
passages (Mt. xxviii. 1, Mk. xvi. 1; cf. Lk. xxiv. 1) state
clearly that Mary did not go alone to the sepulchre. The use
of the "we" in John confirms this. In making her startling
report Mary includes her companions, partly as a simple
statement of fact, more likely, perhaps, to give added weight
to her words. The Apostles doubtless knew that several of
the women intended to go to the tomb with spices. Furthermore, the reading which Dr. Burney proposes is open to
question. In Pal. Syr. which Dr. Burney often cites: "I
(fem.) know" is correctly written as ידעא אנה (John xi. 22,
24). Dr. Burney seems to overlook the fact that the participle
should be feminine while as he has written it, there would be
no difference between the feminine and masculine. That he
has thus confused the forms is indicated by his reference to
the Targ. of Onk. on Num. xxii. 6 where the subject (Balak)
of course requires the masculine of the participle. He tells us
further that the οἴδαμεν of iii. 2 is possibly to be explained
in similar fashion. As to this we observe simply that Pal. Syr.,
Sin. and Pesh. are all opposed to this conjecture.

In xx. 18 Dr. Burney is troubled by the words "I have
found the Lord." He thinks "the change from direct to
oblique oration is strange and awkward." Since in Aramaic
"I saw" and "she saw" are exactly alike in the unpointed
text, he sees here another example of "mistranslation." It
should be noted on the contrary that "much the most usual
complement of Verbs of saying is direct discourse introduced by ὅτι recitativum,"[64] and that direct discourse readily
passes over into indirect and vice versa.[65] Furthermore if the
reading in Greek is as awkward as Dr. Burney would have
us believe, it is surprising that an at all competent translator
should make such a simple and obvious blunder. This would
seem to be a case where the more difficult reading is inherently
more probable.

---

[64] Cf. Blass-Debrunner § 397, 5.

[65] *Ibid.*, § 470.

Would time and space permit we might examine more of the data cited by Dr. Burney in support of the theory that the Fourth Gospel is a version of a lost Aramaic original. However, two conclusions seem to be clearly warranted by the investigation which we have conducted, incomplete though it is. The first of these conclusions is that Dr. Burney has not kept in mind the standard which he himself proposed. He tells his readers in the preface that the task is to prove "beyond the range of reasonable doubt" that the Fourth Gospel is based on an Aramaic original. It is clear, we think, that again and again Dr. Burney renders the verdict in favor of his theory where there is *very reasonable doubt* of its correctness, where the most that can be said is that the phenomena he cites *might* be explained in this way. We have paid special attention to the data given in the chapter on "Mistranslations" since there we should find the strongest evidence in favor of this theory. We have found no case where the "might" has to be exchanged for "must." We have found instances where the conclusion drawn is improbable and some cases where it is clearly wrong. The second conclusion we are justified in reaching is that Dr. Burney's presentation of the case is dangerously one-sided. He states the evidence in favor of his theory. He does not state the evidence against it. His rôle is that of advocate and special pleader. He is concerned to discover and state the "pros"; he leaves it to the reader to discover the "cons." The consequence is that the reader who has neither the time nor the specialized training to investigate the question for himself is almost certain to form as mistaken an impression of the real merits of the question, as a man who leaves the hall of debate when only one side has been presented.

A significant feature in Dr. Burney's presentation of his argument is the frequency and apparent readiness with which he uses the word "mistranslation" and its equivalent. Dr. Burney is "Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture" at Oxford University. Yet he is so eager to prove this theory of an Aramaic original for the Fourth Gospel that

he seems to care little for the effect which it will have upon the reliability and authority of the only text of the Gospel which we know historically, the *Greek* text. He does not hesitate to charge the Greek text with being a mistranslation even where he is forced to admit that it is at least as good as the reading he favors. If he could prove his thesis, the only Fourth Gospel which we really know would lose greatly in prestige and authority. The Greek original would be reduced to the level of a bungling translation. It is this as was pointed out at the outset which constitutes the real seriousness of the issue raised by the theory of Aramaic originals. And the fact that Dr. Burney's argument is so unconvincing is calculated to vindicate the historic faith of the Christian Church in the trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel in Greek.

Princeton.   OSWALD T. ALLIS.