Mᵉpharrᵉshē and Mᵉphōrāsh.—BY Dr. CHARLES CUTLER TOR-
REY, Andover Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass.

The publication of the Lewis palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels
has called attention anew to the problematic ܡܟܪܒܐ, which has
so long been the subject of controversy. The word first came
prominently into notice when Cureton edited his "Antient Recen-
sion" of the four Gospels, in 1858. Prefixed to the First Gospel,
in his manuscript, was the title ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܐ ܡܬܝ. Cureton
confessed himself puzzled by this, but proposed to read ? before
ܡܦܪܫܐ,[1] and translate, "The distinct Gospel of Matthew." Con-
cerning this designation he said (Preface, p. vi): "It seems to
me that whatever meaning is to be given to the word ܡܦܪܫܐ, it
is intended to denote that, in some way or other, the Gospel of
St. Matthew is to be regarded as distinct from the other three
Gospels in this copy." He then argues that it *is* 'distinct' from
the others, inasmuch as its text is superior to theirs, being proba-
bly translated directly from the original Aramaic of St. Matthew.

As might be expected, this interpretation of ܡܦܪܫܐ did not
meet with favor. Aside from the objection to the reading ܡܦܪܫܐ?
(see note above), the theory of such a title of the First Gospel
was too improbable in itself. Bernstein, to whom Cureton sub-
mitted the problem, preferred to translate, "Evangelium per
anni circulum dispositum," i. e., divided into lections; appealing
in support of this to Assemani's rendering of the same expres-
sion, ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܐ, in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, ii. 230.
But to this Cureton replied, that in his manuscript there were no
traces of an original division into lections, and that therefore
Assemani's rendering would be quite inapplicable.[2] This objec-
tion was very hard to meet; still, Bernstein's explanation was
adopted by many, as being at any rate better than Cureton's.

The recently discovered Lewis palimpsest furnishes important
evidence at this point. At the end of the Gospel of John there

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[1] What seemed to furnish ground for the conjecture was the presence
of a small hole in the parchment at just this point, evidently made
after the writing was finished, as it destroyed part of the last letter of
the preceding word. But scholars since Cureton have been unanimous
in the opinion that the remaining space is too narrow to have con-
tained the letter ?. See Wright's *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS. in the
British Museum*, p. 74; and the fac-simile in Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*,
vol. i.

[2] For further notice of the passage in Assemani, see below.

is a colophon, beginning as follows : ܡܠܟܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܘܡܫܠܡ ܐܢܬܚܐ
ܣܘܦ., "Here ends the [...?...] Gospel, four books." This puts
an end at once to the theories of both Bernstein and Cureton;
for in this manuscript also there are no traces of an original
division into lections.   It is equally decisive against the theory
advocated by Gildemeister in the Z.D.M.G., xiii. 472 ff., that
the title in Cureton's recension should be translated, "Evan-
gelium des auserlesenen [Evangelisten] Matthaeus"; a designa-
tion which he explained by comparing Rom. i. 1, "set apart for
the Gospel," and supposed to have been especially applied to
the evangelist Matthew by the early Christian church.[1]

Some of the examples cited by Gildemeister in the course of
his argument showed that derivatives of the verb ܦܪܫ are fre-
quently used in titles of Syriac *lectionaries* (*l. c.*, p. 473).   A
manuscript containing the prescribed readings for the year, made
up of sections from the Gospels following one another in arbi-
trary order, is described in its title as ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܝܢ ܡܟܬܒ; or
ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܡܦܪܫܐ ܘܟܚ ܕܡܠܐ; or simply by the term ܦܪܫܐ, or
ܦܘܪܫ ܡܦܪܫ; and so on. On the other hand, Gildemeister recog-
nized the fact that in the case of a manuscript like Cureton's any
such explanation of the title is out of the question.

In the example cited from Assemani's *Bibl. Or.*, ii. 230, there
is nothing to indicate that a lectionary is intended.   The passage
is in a document, written at the end of the fifteenth century, in
which the writer narrates how he and his brethren had been
obliged to sell some of the books belonging to their convent,
among them an ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫ. In view of what we already
know of this singular expression, we can hardly doubt that he is
here designating the codex by its own written title, and that we
thus learn of a *third* copy of the Gospels bearing the same per-
plexing title as the Lewis palimpsest and the Curetonian manu-
script—for it is now generally agreed that in the last-named codex
the words in question formed the title of the whole book, not of
the first Gospel.

To these examples is to be added, further, the gloss in Bar
Bahlul, cited by Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, col. 579.   It reads:

ܩܡ ܐܢܐ . ܗ . ܩܡ ܩܝܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܢ ܠܐܠ ܩܡ ܐܠܐ . ܘܗܘ ܘܒܝ ܩܕܡ ܘܢ ܨܐܦܘܠܝܫܡ
ܘܡܟܬܒܐ . ܘܕܡܦܪܫ . ܘܡܟܬܒܐ ܩܠܘ ܣܘܩ ܣܗܕ . From this gloss we learn nothing
more than this, that at the time when it was written the reading
that inserts the name Jesus at this point was adopted in at least

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[1] His chief argument in support of this was the fact that in a few
Arabic codices Matthew is called منى المصطفى .

[2] Viz. in Matt. xxvii. 16.   See the Lewis palimpsest.   The reading is
also found in the Jerus. Syriac (ed. Erizzo, 1861, p. 393 ; also in vs. 17),
in the Armenian version, and in a few Greek minuscules.

one well-known Syriac recension of the Gospels. It is plain, moreover, that the explanations of the term ܡܚܠܛܐ above noticed cannot possibly be made to apply here.

One more attempted explanation of the term remains to be considered ; namely, that defended at length by Th. Zahn in his *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons,* 1881, p. 105–111 ;[1] also adopted, with some hesitation, in Wright's *Syriac Literature,* 1894, p. 8 f.[2] According to this view, ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܐ, 'separate (?) Gospels,' was employed as the opposite of ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܚܠܛܐ, '*mixed Gospels,*' a term used in describing Tatian's *Diatessaron* (see Zahn, *Forschungen,* p. 98–105). In support of this translation a single passage is cited, found in a code of church laws promulgated by Rabbūla of Edessa (412–435 A. D.).[3] A long series of commonplace regulations for the guidance of the clergy contains the following :. " Let the elders and deacons take care that there be in every church a copy of the ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܐ, and that it be read." This is interpreted as an utterance belonging to the reaction against the general use of Tatian's Harmony in the churches of that region, as though Rabbūla would say : ' See to it that *the separate Gospels* are not neglected for the Diatessaron."[4]

It should be noticed that this interpretation of the word in the passage quoted is not in any way suggested by the context. The rules immediately preceding and following are of the most commonplace character. If the word ܕܡܦܪܫܐ were omitted altogether, the passage would still read smoothly, and yield a sense well suited to its surroundings.

Moreover, ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܡܦܪܫܐ would be a singular way of expressing the idea ' *separate* Gospels.' For ' *separated* Gospels ' the expression might serve, though a little unusual. But there could

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[1] See also his *Geschichte des neutestl. Kanons,* 1888, i. 392 ff.

[2] Duval, in Brockelmann's *Lex. Syr.,* p. 507, cites as a supporter of this view Tixeront, *Les Origines de l' Église d' Édesse,* p. 131, a book which I have not seen.

[3] The text in Overbeck, *S. Ephraemi Syri aliorumque opera selecta,* p. 220.

[4] Zahn's theory of the Diatessaron and its importance for the history of the Syriac Gospels is much overworked by him. See for example his *Forschungen,* p. 108, note 1, where he refers to *Bibl. Or.,* ii. 225, ܡܠܦܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܪܒܥܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܙܥܘܪܐ, saying : "Ich weiss nicht, ob dieser befremdliche Ausdruck *quatuor parva evangelia* [Assemani's trans.], für welchen auch P. Smith nur dieses Beispiel hat, einen Gegensatz bilden soll zum Diatessaron." On the contrary, this is a very natural way of writing *quatuor tetraevangelia;* a combination that would very seldom occur, and for which the usual ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ could not be used, as it would certainly be misunderstood.

be no reason for speaking of the four Gospels as 'separated';
least of all if they were to be contrasted, *as the original form,*
with a mixture like the Diatessaron. The appeal to ܠܚܕ̈ܐ ܕ܂ 'ܕ
is not justified. The Syriac has its recognized ways of express-
ing the idea supposed to be intended here (the opposite of
' mixed '), and the phrase under discussion is not among them.

Finally, Zahn's interpretation is disposed of once for all by the
fact that *the Psalms,* as well as the Gospels, are given this same
perplexing title. In Wright's *Catalogue of the Syriac MSS. in
the British Museum,* No. 168, a copy of the Peshitto Psalms
(dated A. D. 600), bears this superscription : ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܙ̈ܡܝܪܐ ܕ؟؟ ܕܡܝܢ
ܕܡܦܪܫܐ؟, "Book of the [...?...] Psalms of David." Wright
translated, " of the Interpreters," or "of the Translators," but
added that this would be a very strange title.

In the superscription of the next following MS. (No. 169) in
this Catalogue, also a copy of the Peshitto Psalms, the word
appears again, used in precisely the same way.

This seems to defy translation. These copies of the Psalms
are not 'divided' into lections. They are not 'separated' or
'distinguished' from anything else. Wright's rendering, "of
the Interpreters, or Translators," is, as he confesses, only a make-
shift, lacking all external support or internal probability. Besides,
the *nomen agentis* of ܦ̇ܪ̣ܫ would be ܡܦܪ̈ܫܢܐ, not ܡܦܪ̈ܫܐ.

It must be beyond all question that the use of ܕܡܦܪ̈ܫܐ as here
applied to the Psalter is identical with that described above,
where it is applied to the four Gospels. The fact suggests what
is apparently the only solution, namely, that the troublesome
word is simply one form of the adjective '*sacred, holy,*' which
so often occupies this place in titles of books of the Bible. That
is, ܐܘ̈ܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕ̈ ܕܡܦܪ̈ܫܐ is equivalent to ܐܘ̈ܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕ̈ ܕܡܩܕ̈ܫܐ.[1] So far as
etymology is concerned, the hypothesis has everything in its
favor. In the speech of the Jews, the ' sacred ' thing was that
which was ' separated, set apart,' as the history of the root קָדַשׁ
illustrates. The root פָּרַשׁ also, in both Hebrew and Aramaic
usage, furnishes analogies of its own, as will be seen. The single
objection, which at once suggests itself, is this : If the participle
ܡܦܪ̈ܫܐ was thus fixed in usage, in the signification ' holy,' how is
it that so few examples of the usage have reached us ? And
why did tradition fail to preserve the meaning of the word ?

Before attempting to answer these questions, there is another
series of facts of which notice must be taken ; namely, those

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[1] Thus Cureton's MS. bears the former of these two titles in the
original hand ; the other is added in another place by a later hand.
See his edition, p. iv.

connected with the use of the Jewish word מְפוֹרָשׁ. This word,
which is in form the exact Hebrew counterpart of ܡܦ݂ܪܫܐ, pre-
sents also in the history of its use and interpretation a very strik-
ing parallel to the facts above stated. The root פרשׁ, in
Hebrew, and especially in Aramaic, is in common use in a variety
of significations corresponding in general to those belonging to
the Syriac root, being all more or less directly traceable to the
underlying idea of separating or dividing. In a single well
known phrase, found not infrequently in the early Jewish litera-
ture, the use of the root has remained obscure, no one of the
recognized meanings seeming to meet the requirements. How to
translate the phrase שֵׁם הַמְפוֹרָשׁ , has been a much discussed
question. Among modern German scholars, in particular, a good
many different renderings have been proposed and skilfully
defended, although no one of them has met with general approval.
Thus : 'der erklärte, ausgelegte Name,' a favorite rendering
since Martin Luther (see Buxtorf, *Lex. Chald.*, col. 1851); 'der
unerklärte Name' (see Z.D.M.G., xxxix. 543 f.); 'der ausdrück-
liche Name' (Geiger[1] and many others); 'der deutlich ausge-
sprochene Name' (Fürst,[2] Levy[3]); 'der nicht auszusprechende
Name' (Grünbaum[4]); 'der volle Gottesname' (Wünsche[5]); 'der
abgesonderte, ausgezeichnete Name' (Nestle[6]); 'der geheime
Name,' a rendering which has had many adherents since Bar
Bahlul's ܟܣܝܐ ܫܡܐ (see Bernstein in Z.D.M.G., iv. 200).

The two words מפרשׁ and ܡܦ݂ܪܫܐ coincide, then, in the fol-
lowing particulars : 1. In form ; 2. Each defies translation in a
single fixed expression, where it is used adjectively ; 3. The
Hebrew adjective is applied to the name of God ; the Syriac, to
the Scriptures ; 4. In the case of both words, the peculiar use
seems to belong chiefly to the early centuries of the Christian era,
after which it disappears, to be resurrected occasionally as an
antiquity whose original meaning can only be guessed at. These
coincidences are too many and too striking to be accidental. It
is plain that we have here Hebrew[7] and Syriac forms of the
same word in the same unusual signification. That the significa-
tion *is* an unusual one, may be inferred from a glance at the
partial list of attempted translations recorded above. Grün-
baum, in his exhaustive treatment of the subject, reaches the
correct conclusion, that מפורשׁ in this phrase is *an artificial
word*, coined for this particular use (*l. c.*, p. 556). He remarks

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[1] *Urschrift*, p. 264.
[2] Z.D.M.G., xxxiii. p. 297–301.
[3] *Neuhebr. u. chald. Wörterb.*, iv. p. 570.
[4] Z.D.M.G., xxxix. 543–616 ; xl. 234–304.
[5] *Der Midrasch Kohelet*, p. 47 f.
[6] Z.D.M.G., xxxii. 465–508.
[7] Also Aramaic, שְׁמָא מפרישׁא·

further, that it must have been intended to express the most
marked characteristic of the Name (*ibid.*, p. 545). But when he
adds, as the minor premise of his argument, "Nur mit Bezug
auf das Nichtaussprechen nimmt das Tetragrammaton einen
höheren Rang und eine gesonderte Stellung ein" (p. 560), he
seems to turn aside from the essential fact to follow what is only
incidental. The Tetragrammaton was absolutely unique, far
above all other names or words, because it was *the peculiar name
of the holy, unapproachable God.* It expressed Him, and was
invested with His own character. Above all else, it was קדוש.
Similarly, in the Christian church, the Scriptures, dictated by
God himself, were *holy* in a way, and to a degree, that could
apply to nothing else on earth.

That the Hebrew-Aramaic root פרש was not infrequently used
in designating that which was 'set apart, sacred, holy,' is a fact
that scarcely needs extended illustration. In the Midrash *Way-
yiqra R.*, sec. 24,[1] the words of Lev. xix. 2, קדשים תהיו כי
כשם are paraphrased as follows : קדוש אני יהוה אלהיכם
שאני פרוש כך תהיו פרושים כשם שאני קדוש כך תהיו
קדושים. Cf. also the name of the sect of the Pharisees,
פרושים (חסידים). Other examples are given by Grünbaum, p.
556. There are not wanting passages, moreover, in which the
Aramaic שמא מפרשא is used in such a way as to leave no
doubt that it is intended as an equivalent, or something more
than an equivalent, of שמא קדישא. Thus in the Palestinian
Targums on Ex. xxviii. 30, xxxii. 25, cited by Buxtorf, *Lex*,
col. 2438 f., שמא מפרשא is used interchangeably with שמא
רבא וקדישא (ויקרא). This is also the case in the Targums
on Lev. xxiv. 11.[2] Another most interesting illustration, of
a somewhat different character, is furnished by the Targ. on
Judges xiii. 18 : "Why dost thou ask my name, seeing that
it is מפרש?" The word here represents the Heb. פלאי, which
is used as in Ps. cxxxix. 6 for *that which is beyond the reach
of human comprehension, high above all earthly things.* Here,
again, the idea is closely akin to that underlying the word
קדוש. In this passage, מפרש could hardly be called a
translation of פלאי; it was probably suggested by שם המפרש;
still, the two adjectives cannot be far removed from each
other in signification, for the context, taken in connection
with the evident meaning of פלא, leaves small choice. In

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[1] Cited by Grünbaum, as are most of the other passages referred to
in the sequel.
[2] Cf. further, Targ. on Deut. xxviii. 58.

fact, this passage gives us unquestionably one of the best aids to determining just what the Jews meant by שֵׁם הַמְפוֹרָשׁ.[1] The word קָדוֹשׁ was applied to a great variety of beings, objects, and names. But the ineffable Name was more than קָדוֹשׁ, or at least, was קָדוֹשׁ in an especial sense; it was פִּלְאִי. Thus it came about most naturally that for the Name, separate and unapproachable in its sanctity,[2] incomprehensible to mortals, the special adjective מְפָרֵשׁ, Heb. מְפוֹרָשׁ, *holy*, was coined.

The borrowing of the word by the Syriac church, as a special designation of the Holy Scriptures, is one more striking illustration among many of the extent to which this branch of the early Christian church availed itself of Jewish instruction and Jewish training. This use of ܡܦܪܫܐ, however, seems to have been at least as short-lived as was the use of its original in Jewish literature. It was probably never very widely employed, and can have been actually current only during a comparatively brief period.

The disappearance of the word from usage and tradition, among both Jews and Christians, is easily accounted for. Being an artificial coinage, and belonging to a root employed in so many ways as פָּרַשׁ ܦܪܫ, its original signification easily became obscured, and it soon lost its hold. We have abundant illustration of the fact that the same form מְפָרֵשׁ, bearing meanings totally different from the above, can be used in connection with the name of God in a way that is most bewildering. Such passages as the Targums on Eccles. iii. 11; Cant. ii. 17; Lev. xxiv. 11, cf. *Sanhedr.* vii. 7; Jer. Targ. on Ex. xxxii. 25, &c., have often led investigators astray. In the case of some of these passages, it is difficult to avoid the impression that there is an intentional play upon the word. For illustration of similar possibilities of confusion in the use of the Syriac form ܡܦܪܫܐ, see the colophon to MS. Hunt. 109 in the Bodleian Library (Payne Smith, *Catal.*, no. 7, col. 42), and the examples collected by Gildemeister, cited above.

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[1] See Moore, *Judges*, p. 322.

[2] Cf. also the phrases שֵׁם הַמְיֻחָד, שֵׁם הַנִּבְדָּל (see references in Nestle, *l. c.*, p. 505; Buxtorf, col. 2433 f.).