



## The Last Twelve Verses of Mark

John W Burgon

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No quicker evaluation of the textual criticism being practiced today can be found than the study of their treatment of The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of Mark. It is the fashion these days to accept a halfdozen ancient Egyptian manuscripts as determiners of what is, and what is not, genuine scripture. Since no ancestor of these Egyptian manuscripts can be found, and no manuscript copied from them, the elevation of them is beyond reason. Mere opinion, subjective assertions, and circular reasoning are substituted for undeniable objective external evidence. In his extensive examination of such reasoning, Dean John W. Burgon remarks: "It is a known rule in the Law of Evidence that the burden of proof lies on the party who asserts the affirmative of the issue . . . But the case is altogether different, as all must see, when it is proposed to get rid of twelve verses which for 1,700 years and upwards have formed the conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel, . . . . This assumption that a work which has held to be a complete work for seventeen centuries and upwards was originally incomplete, of course requires proof. . . . I can only imagine one other thing which could induce us to entertain such an opinion [to brand Mark 16:9-20 as spurious] and that would be the general consent of MSS., Fathers, and Versions" Then Burgon proceeds .to prove that these verses have the full support of the early Fathers and Versions, and that only three MSS (a, B, 304) do not have these verses. Codex B strangely leaves a space large enough to contain the verses (the only blank space left in that MS.). Codex a, on the other hand, is marred by a sudden increase in size of the letters used to cover the space which would be occupied by these verses. Tischendorf admits these lines appear to be spurious. In this book Burgon considers every scintilla of supposed evidence produced against these verses. He proves some false, misconstrued, and none of any force in proving the verses anything but genuine. No one has ever dared to answer Burgon point by point. The critics are content to sneer and jeer, and pronounce unsupported judgments. Burgon poses stubborn fact. Critics offer subjective opinions, circular reasonings, but no facts.



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