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QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

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THE quotation in the New Testament of passages from the Old Testament is thought to present one of the most difficult problems with which Biblical scholarship has to deal. How to adjust the manifest difficulties, how to resolve the seeming discrepancies, consistently with any view of inspiration that shall preserve the integrity and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, is a problem that some have thought to be insolvable.

New Testament writers have been accused of misquoting, of misunderstanding quotations, of accommodation, of quoting from memory and memory playing false, etc. Tholuck says: "In very many, in most, cases, in consequence of quoting from memory, the passage, so far as the words are concerned, is altered sometimes to such an extent that the deviation has caused the supposition that the citation belonged to some apocryphal book."

Professor Howard Osgood, a member of the Old Testament Revision Committee, has issued a pamphlet entitled "Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament," in which is the entire embodiment of the Old Testament, so far as it has been embodied, in the New, giving every quotation with the formula, "God said," "it is written," "that it might be fulfilled," etc.; every quotation without a formula; every direct reference; and every similarity of word or thought. We find Genesis quoted 19 times, and in 9 New Testament books; Exodus 24 times, and in 12 books; Leviticus 12 times, and in 9 books; Deuteronomy 26 times, and in 13 books; the Psalms 59 times, and in 12 books; Isaiah 50 times, and in 11 books. But the list need not be extended.

The quotations in the New, from the Old, may be dis-

tributed into three classes: (1) Those agreeing verbatim with the Hebrew; (2) Those agreeing verbatim with the Septuagint where it differs from the Hebrew; (3) Those differing from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, of which, according to Horne, there are nineteen.

We must of course assume that the Old Testament is inspired of God, since we are told that in old times "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21), and that "all Scripture [i.e. the Old Testament writings, for when Paul made this affirmation there was no New Testament] is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16). And we are also entitled to assume the inspiration of the New Testament, in accordance with Christ's promise: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John xiv. 26); "Howbeit, when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and he will show you things to come" (xvi. 13). See also Matt. x. 19, 20; Mark xiii. 11; Luke xii. 11, 12; xxi. 14, 15. Such is, in part, our warrant for believing in the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments.

Now, the verbs in 2 Pet. i. 21, "spake" (active voice), and "were moved" (passive voice), show that the "holy men" were passive before they were active: passive with respect to the Holy Ghost moving upon or in them, active in giving expression to his moving. The in-breathing was the act of God, the out-breathing the *concurrent* act of man. The logical and unavoidable conclusion therefore is: the Holy Ghost was the responsible author of what they spoke, whatever may have been their part in the proceeding. Laying aside, then, all preconceived notions and all theories—which surely have no place in an open-minded, honest search for truth—it is to just this conclusion that the simple, obvious grammatical principles conduct us. By the same token, manifestly there should also be charged to the Holy Ghost like authorship of the

New Testament. The Holy Spirit, then, is the primal author of both the Old and New Testaments.

Now we are ready for a proposition which is so very plain and simple that, when once stated, it seems to go without saying, viz. *that an author has the right to quote in one place what he has said in another, and if, in quoting he finds it needful, for the accomplishment of his purpose, to make any change in the quotation, he certainly has the right to make the change.* Applying this obvious principle to the case in hand, we must say that while the Holy Spirit is responsible for the original writing in the Old Testament, the same Holy Spirit is responsible for the changed quotation in the New.

The reasonableness and sufficiency of this solution may appear in the examination of some passages in which changes are made.

Let us take Ps. xl. 6, "*Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened*"; and Heb. x. 5, "*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*"

Ears opened, or "digged" as the margin has it, with reference to Ex. xxi. 6, where the bond-slave through love for his master is not willing to leave him and so has his ear bored through with an awl in token of perpetual sacrifice of service and obedience, is the idea of the original Hebrew. But "a body hast thou prepared me" is the differing rendering of the Septuagint, which the New Testament writer adopts and on which he builds his argument.

Says Lee: "Commentators of the most opposite schools are singularly unanimous in regarding the New Testament form of exhibiting this passage as a strictly correct representation of *the sense* of the original."

But the change in form is to be accounted for. The teaching here is, that personal obedience to the will of God rather than presenting animal offerings is the true sacrifice. And how could the Son of God, coming into the world, best show his obedience except through a prepared

body? To show his absolute and unreserved subjection of himself to his Father's pleasure as a servant (John iv. 34; v. 30; vi. 38; Luke xxii. 42), he took upon himself the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men (Phil. ii. 7), and in this prepared body he made obedient and serving sacrifice. Thus, in the New Testament quotation, the Holy Spirit gives a significant exposition of the idea veiled in the first writing. Manifestly, a divine wisdom is in the change.

Take Isa. lxiv. 4, "*God hath prepared for him that waiteth for him*"; and 1 Cor. ii. 9, "*God hath prepared for them that love him.*"

Both prophet and apostle are speaking of God's redemptive provision for mankind through the Messiah. But the Messiah for whom the saints of the old dispensation "waited" in hope, has come; and to the saints of the new dispensation, He is the personal object of "love," both as they look back at his coming to earth and as they look forward to his coming again. Hope has been changed to love; and so it was needful that just this change should be made in the quoting. The Holy Spirit is simply making an advance in revelation, casting new light on the way of truth and life.

Take also Isa. xxix. 14, "*And the wisdom of the wise shall perish*"; and 1 Cor. i. 19, "*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.*"

The insufficiency of human reason to lead to salvation is taught over and over again in Scripture, and here the Holy Spirit is making clear, by a second and further revelation, that the cause of their wisdom perishing is God. This is both pertinent and pat.

Again, take Ps. lxxviii. 18, "*Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men*"; and Eph. iv. 8, "*Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.*"

The line of thought is this: Christ, in his humiliation and fitting for his priestly office, must of necessity have

somewhat also to offer, even as every high-priest was ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices (Heb. viii. 3). He therefore "received gifts for men," and, in due time, ascended to dispense them, which he is constantly doing through this dispensation. Accordingly, as high-priest and head of the Church, he "gives gifts unto men." As Hengstenberg well observes, the giving presupposes the receiving, and the receiving is succeeded by the giving as a consequence. In this change in the quotation, the Holy Spirit made not only a fitting, but a logical, advance in revelation, carrying on, through the New Testament, the work which he had begun in the Old Testament.

Such is our solution of this problem which has been thought to be insolvable.

The rationale of the changes in the four cases examined, it is trusted, will be deemed valid and sufficient; and it is submitted that the assumption is therefore not unwarranted that a valid reason exists in every case of difference. If so, then the whole question of difficulty is settled. All we have to do is to go on, if we care to, and seek the rationale in the other cases.