

ST. PAUL'S METHOD OF QUOTATION.

THERE is much in Mr. Bartlett's *Bampton Lectures* with which I entirely sympathise; it is therefore in no captious spirit that I venture to criticise his chapter on "Scripture Exegesis," in which he appears to me to do great injustice to St. Paul's method of quotation from the Old Testament.

The following extract is from Lecture III., p. 59.

"The New Testament writers, and in particular St. Paul, quote the words of the Old Testament in a sense quite independent of the original connexion, so that it has even been said of the quotations in St. Paul's epistles, that 'in no passage is there any certain evidence that the first connexion was present to the apostle's mind.'¹ For example, in 1 Corinthians xiv. St. Paul is speaking of the remarkable manifestation which had appeared in the Church of Corinth, the speaking with a tongue, by which persons under strong spiritual excitement uttered in the congregation sounds which, whether or not they were words of a foreign language, were at any rate unintelligible to the hearers; and he quotes and applies to this phenomenon the words of Isaiah, which in the Revised Version read, 'By men of strange lips [or, in the margin, 'with stammering lips'] and with another tongue will He speak to this people: to whom He said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.' It is incontestable that the prophet in this passage threatens the people that, as they despised and derided his teaching as being childishly simple—'It is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little,'—God will adopt a different method with them, and will speak to them in quite another language, bringing upon them the Assyrians, men of strange lips; and he adds that, though God had offered them rest and refreshing, yet they would not hear. This passage, of which the general meaning in the original is undoubted, St. Paul adapts to his own purpose, and applies to the Corinthians speaking with a tongue; and the concluding words, 'Yet they would not hear,' which in Isaiah refer to God's offer of rest, St. Paul, by omitting a clause, connects with the tongues. 'In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear Me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving.' Here the connexion is evidently purely verbal: there is no kind of spiritual analogy between the threatened invasion

¹ Jowett, *Epistles to Thessalonians, etc.*, i., p. 357.

of Judah by men of foreign tongue and the utterance in the Corinthian Church of speech unintelligible to the people. Are we to suppose that the prophet Isaiah, when threatening the Jewish people with punishment for the contempt of the Divine message, was supernaturally guided to use words which should be applicable in quite a different sense to a quite different set of circumstances? Surely not. But then the only alternative to this hypothesis is, that St. Paul made what we may call a purely literary use of the Old Testament, not scrupling to avail himself of it without any reference to its original meaning."

I shall show, on the contrary, that St. Paul had a particular section of Isaiah (against the scorers) in his mind, and that his quotations depend, not merely upon the words quoted, but upon the whole context.

To understand the argument of Isaiah, we must go back to chapter xxviii., with which this section against the scorers commences. The thought is as follows :

God Himself has laid in Zion "for a foundation a stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation" (xxviii. 16); "he that believeth will not make haste," "he that repositeth (on this foundation) will not slip."¹

This God-laid Foundation is the ideal Zion regarded as a Temple (Ariel) in which God dwells (chap. xxix. 1 ff), against which therefore it is vain to fight (cf. chap. xxx. 27-33). All who dwell in this Temple-City are not only safe, but "forgiven their iniquity" (xxxiii. 24); for the City is an Altar (Ariel).

But dwelling in an Altar-City means "everlasting burnings" to the impure. "Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" (xxxiii. 14.) Then, in language almost identical with Psalm xv., the prophet answers his own question :

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly ;
He that despiseth the gain of oppressions," etc.

(xxxiii. 15 ff.)

Such will "see the King in His beauty." In sharp con-

¹ The words in the original are intended to bear both significations.

trast with these the prophet places the "scorners"; *i.e.* those who repose on earthly wisdom and on earthly strength,¹ whose refuge is "a refuge of lies" (xxviii. 15). Such *cannot* see God. All His dealings are a "sealed book" to them (xxix. 1-12). Especially the "marvellous work" that He will work in Christ. If they fail to understand God's dealings *now*, so they will *then*.

"Forasmuch as this people draw nigh, and with their mouth and their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear of Me is a human tradition learned by rote: therefore, behold, I will again do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (xxix. 13, 14).

St. Paul quotes these words in such a way as to show that the whole argument of Isaiah was present to his mind.

"For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the prudence of the prudent will I reject."

(1 Cor. i. 18, 19, R.V.)

So completely is this section of Isaiah in the apostle's mind, that he keeps referring to it almost unconsciously in the two following chapters; thus:

1 Corinthians.	Isaiah.
i. 20. "Where is the wise? ² Where is the scribe?"	xxxiii. 18. Where is the scribe? etc.
i. 21. "The foolishness of the preaching . . ."	xxviii. 13. "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept," etc.; or "Manda re- manda," etc. (Jerome).

¹ In this particular case an Egyptian alliance (see chaps. xxx. 1-5 and xxxi. 1 ff).

² This quotation will be considered presently.

1 <i>Corinthians.</i>	<i>Isaiah.</i>
ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not: . . . neither can he know them."	xxix. 11, 12. The sealed book.
iii. 11. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid . . ."	xxviii. 16. "Behold it is I that have laid in Zion a stone, . . . a sure foundation."
iii. 12. The wood, hay, and stubble tested by a deluge of fire.	xxviii. 17. The "refuge of lies" swept away by the deluge of hail and waters.

We will now consider St. Paul's quotation of Isaiah xxxiii. 18.

1 <i>Corinthians</i> i. 20.	<i>Isaiah</i> xxxiii. 18.
<p>ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεὺς; ποῦ συζητητῆς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου; R. V.: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?"</p>	<p>אִיָּה סֹפֵר אִיָּה שֹׁקֵל אִיָּה סֹפֵר אֲתֵּימְנֵדִים R.V.: "Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed <i>the</i> <i>tribute</i>? where is he that counted the towers?"</p>

If the Revised Version be a correct translation of Isaiah, St. Paul's quotation is certainly very wide of the mark. But there is another alternative.

The Septuagint read:

ποῦ εἰσὶν οἱ γραμματικοί;
 ποῦ εἰσὶν οἱ συμβουλευόντες;
 ποῦ ἔστιν ὁ ἀριθμῶν τοὺς τρεφομένους . . . ;

Vulgate:

Ubi est litteratus? ubi legis verba ponderans?
 ubi doctor parvulorum.

Aquila reads the last words thus:

ὁ ψηφίζων τοὺς μεγαλυνομένους.

The Targum translates:

"Where are the scribes? Where are the great men?
 Where are the men of estimation? Let them come if they shall be able to estimate," etc.

All the ancient versions seem to have read, not מְגִדִּים
 "towers," but מְגִדִּים "grown up" (cf. Ps. cxliv. 12).

If therefore we rely upon ancient authority, we should translate,—

"Where is the instructor? ¹

Where is the counsellor?

Where is the instructor of the full-grown?"

The words would then answer to the words of the scoffers in chap. xxviii. 9 :

"Whom would He teach knowledge?

Whom would He make to understand His 'tidings'?

Those that are weaned from milk, separated from the breasts?"

This scoff is directed not against Isaiah, but against God. The scoffers mock at such piecemeal revelation, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; rule upon rule, rule upon rule; here a little, there a little" (ver. 10). Such teaching is only fit for babes. "Let Him hasten His work, that we may see it" (v. 19). They refuse "the waters of Shiloah that go softly" (viii. 6), therefore God will bring upon them the torrent; they refuse the gentle, restful speech of God, therefore God Himself will be to them a mocker. "Surely by men of strange lips and with another tongue will He

¹ The Talmudic use of the word סֹפֵר is thus explained by Buxtorf: "*Deinde apud eosdem סֹפֵר Scriba, sapissimè idem est quod מְלַמֵּד תַּינוּקוֹת Praceptor puerorum, qui docet eos legere et scribere.*"

The "babes" are of course opposed to the "full-grown." We observe therefore a gradation thus :

"Where is the teacher (of babes) ?

Where is the counsellor ?

Where is the teacher of the full-grown?"

There is a similar threefold arrangement in T.B. *Avodah Zarah* 5^a, where we read that God showed to the first Adam "each generation and its expositors, each generation and its wise men, each generation and its pastors." Cf. also Bereshith Rabbah 24 quoted by Lightfoot on 1 Cor. i. 20. St. Paul would almost seem to have had a Targum in his mind when, in ver. 26, he abruptly states, "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble." If so, we obtain another proof that the whole context and argument of Isaiah was present to the apostle's mind.

speak to this people: to whom He had said, This is the rest, give ye rest to the weary; and this is refreshing: yet they would not hear. So the word of the Lord becomes to them precept upon precept," etc. (xxviii. 11-13).

The "rest" here spoken of is the Divine method of revelation, ΠΟΛΥΜΕΡΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΥΤΡΟΠΩΣ, suited to faithful, childlike hearts.

With unbelievers God will try another way, yet from the nature of the case this way will be to them a snare.

St. Paul quotes these words (1 Cor. xiv. 20) to illustrate his argument that the faithful, childlike heart will hear the language of "prophecy," and not require the excitement of speaking with tongues.

"Brethren, be not children in mind: howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men. In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear Me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe."¹

Does not this quotation, which at first seems so far-fetched, prove that St. Paul was familiar, not merely with the language, but with the inner thought of Isaiah?

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¹ This quotation agrees with the version of Aquila.