

*THE PROMISE OF SLEEP, AND TWO OTHER
PASSAGES, RECONSIDERED.*

CONTROVERSY is sometimes a painful necessity, but no controversy is, I trust, necessary between myself and Prof. Robertson. To love the psalms as the works of self-effacing, devout, and, in a finer sense perhaps than the old one, inspired men, and to love not only the psalms, but even the interpretations and applications of them that have suggested themselves to the minds of believers in God, should constitute a bond between students who, on purely technical points of scholarship, may differ. Moreover, I so constantly find that critics exaggerate differences and minimize points of contact that I am quite unwilling to criticise Prof. Robertson, even though some of his remarks on Psalm cxxvii. give me a slight shock. I do not think that "So He giveth His beloved sleep" is what the psalmist meant to say, nor yet that Grätz is right in simply altering שָׁנָה (usually rendered "sleep," which, however, in Hebrew is שָׁנָה) into שֹׁנִים, "sleeping," *i.e.* "while they sleep." Nor does it help us sufficiently to change כֵּן, "so," into כַּלְכַּל, "surely," a change which I made in my translation of the Psalms, following that sober-minded critic, Kamphausen. I quite agree with Prof. Robertson that it is rather odd to adopt a translation which in your commentary you pronounce "quite inadmissible," even if in the text you enclose the words between two delicately printed notes of interrogation. I am really surprised at Prof. Wellhausen's peace of mind. How can he rest at nights, think-

ing of the uncertainty in which he has left the closing words of a most beautiful passage?

It would, I think, be best to have two distinct kinds of commentaries. One might be based on one or the other of our two most prized old English versions; the other on the most critical text of the Psalms that we can find or produce. Dr. Ker and Mr. Marson have both made contributions to a commentary of the former class; Prof. Wellhausen (with all his incompleteness as an editor) is foremost among those who have aimed at a commentary on the Psalms of a critical and yet popular order. Considering how dear the Psalm, as it stands in our old versions, has been to countless souls, I think it perfectly justifiable to preach upon it. Those who are in friendship with God, whether they sleep or wake, have no anxiety, nor do they regard bodily rest as loss of time, because it is God, not man, who "gives the increase," and overwork will not bring success any nearer. "Ambrosial sleep" is indeed one of God's best gifts, and Mohammed is before many Christians in his appreciation of this. Still, though not impossible in another context (sleeplessness, says another so-called Psalm of Solomon,¹ is the portion of the wicked), I do not think the antithesis between the pious who sleep, and the worldly who are sleepless, is natural in Psalm cxxvii. God's first gift to His beloved, who are elsewhere called "the poor and afflicted," is—bread. A contrast between the "distressful bread" (Shakespeare, *Henry V.*) of the worldly and the "quiet morsel" of the pious would be natural, but not that which has become familiar to simple readers of the Authorised Version.

I would venture to remark that in the Septuagint, and in Jerome's own Latin version, the beautiful antithesis found in the Authorised Version is much less prominent. The respective renderings are:

¹ Psalms of Solomon, iv. 18.

“It is vain for you . . . when He gives to His beloved sleep”¹ (LXX.).

“After ye have sat down, who eat the bread of sorrows, so He will give to those who love Him sleep”² (Jerome).

This will perhaps suggest that there really is something odd about the form of the Hebrew phrase, and its connection with the context, apart from the unusual **א** at the end of **שָׁנָא** (sleep?). And now for the indispensable correction of the text. Let him who can produce a better one throw the first stone at me. **אֶתְּאֵלֵי** should be **אֶתְּאֵלֵי לִי**, somewhat as **אֶתְּאֵלֵי** in Psalm xxii. 30 should be **אֶתְּאֵלֵי לִי** (Grätz, Wellhausen, etc.). **וְעַצְבֵיכֶם כֹּן** should be **וְעַצְבֵיכֶם לִי**, and **שָׁנָא**, which has sprung from **שָׁנָא**,³ should be omitted. Thus the line becomes quite symmetrical; it is divided by a cæsura into two parts, one with three, the other with two beats. I will give it in combination with the preceding line:

“It is all in vain, ye who rise up early, | and late sit down;
Surely not your distressful bread | giveth He to His beloved.”

Bread, not sleep, was the preoccupation of the pious psalmist and his companions. The friend of God may work less hard than the worldly, but “bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure” (Isa. xxxiii. 16). “Give us this day our daily bread.” Have we really lost much? If any other scholar has preceded me, I hope he will understand that I willingly acknowledge his priority.

The next passage is rendered in the Authorised Version:

“Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”

Delitzsch agrees so far as the second part of the verse is concerned, but in the first part he thinks “reins” prefer-

¹ *ὅταν δῶ τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς αὐτοῦ ὕπνον.*

² Postquam sederitis, qui manducatis panem dolorum, sic dabit diligentibus se somnum.

³ The idea is that the scribe began to write the next distich with **שָׁנָא**, on the model of *v.* 2, and omitted to delete the wrongly written word.

able to "inward parts." And certainly, if the generally received view of the sense of *v.* 6 is correct, both **בַּטְחוֹת** and **בְּסִתָּם** should be designations of two of the inner parts of the body; they should be equivalent to **בְּכַלְיֹת**, "in the reins," and **בְּלֵב**, "in the heart." But I maintain that there are no philological means of proving this. It is mere Rabbinical trifling to say that the "reins" are called **טְחוֹת** because "smeared over" with fat, and in Job xxxviii. 36, to which the Rabbins refer, the text (see below) is corrupt. The sense "hidden part" = "heart," for **סִתָּם**, is less arbitrary, but still not probable. The word occurs once elsewhere in the sense of "secret" (Dan. xii. 9, participle), and then **סִתְּמִים** (properly, "stopped up") is explained by **חֲתָמִים**, "sealed" (cf. Dan. viii. 26, xii. 4); **כָּל-סִתּוֹם** in Ezekiel xxviii. 3 is a corruption of **חֲרָטְמִים** (Cornill). Now let us turn for a suggestion to the Septuagint. This version makes sense by disregarding the two **ב** in **בַּטְחוֹת** and **בְּסִתָּם**—*ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἀλήθειαν ἠγάπησας, τὰ ἄδηλα καὶ τὰ κρύφια τῆς σοφίας σου ἐδήλωσάς μοι*. Apart from the wrong tense, this gives probably the right meaning of the second half of the verse. But there is no reason to offer for ignoring the two **ב**, and our experience elsewhere, both with **טְחוֹת** and with **סִתָּם**, warns us to look out for corruption of the text. Let us begin with **סִתָּם**. There is, I believe, only one word in the dictionary from which **סִתָּם** can have sprung; it is **תַּעֲלָמוֹת** (Ps. xlv. 22, LXX. *τὰ κρύφια*; Job xi. 6, xxviii. 11), which LXX. probably read. And how shall we correct **בַּטְחוֹת**? With sound linguistic perception the Massoretic editors recognise in the initial **ב** a preposition. But evidently the most natural preposition is **כִּן**. The sense should be, "Thou carest for sincerity" (**אֱמֶת**; A.V., "truth") more than for "anything which can be done with formal accuracy without sincerity." Now surely we can see what is required—in short, what the psalmist wrote. Comparing Psalm li. 16, 17, xl. 7, and especially

Hosea vi. 6b, we may with confidence restore *בְּמִנְחֹת*; the corruptions and the omission implied were easy. The distich will then read thus :

“For Thou carest for sincerity more than for offerings;
Make me then to know the secrets of wisdom.”

The first proof of sincerity a sinner can give is a free and full confession of guilt. In order that he may continue in the same path, the speaker (who is the pious community personified) asks that God would teach him the “secrets of wisdom,” *i.e.* how to conform his conduct to the will of God. True wisdom is the knowledge of the ways that are pleasing to God, and ability to walk in those ways. The community has failed sadly in the past; it longs now for the fulfilment of those great prophecies in Jeremiah and Ezekiel which point to a more steady walk in the ways of God as reserved for the Israel of the future.

3. It was stated above that Job xxxviii. 36 is corrupt. I believe, or rather, am certain, that I can point out the right correction, at any rate for the first part of the verse. It runs thus in the Revised Version,—

“Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts,
Or who hath given understanding to the mind?”

“Inward parts” is the rendering of *טְהוֹת*; “mind,” of *שְׂכוֹי*. Marginal renderings are given—“dark clouds” for the one, “meteor” for the other. “Meteor” is really a good suggestion; “dark clouds” is not, nor would it make a good parallel to “meteor.” The clue to the original of *טְהוֹת* is to be found in Job xli. 21, where *תִּרְתָּח* should rather be *תִּרְתָּח*, as has been seen by Barth and Budde, except that Budde renders “club,” whereas the Assyrian *tartahu* (which is the original of *תִּרְתָּח*) means “javelin” (Delitzsch) or “lance” (Jensen). There are no more frequent sources of error than the transposition and the confusion of letters. *טְהוֹת* comes from *תוֹתח*, and *תוֹתח* is a

corruption of תרתח. But it is no ordinary lance of which the poet speaks—it is the “lance-star,” *i.e.*, according to Jensen, Antares, the heliacal setting of which heralds the autumnal equinox, but, according to Hommel, Procyon. Thus we get a beautiful supplement to the questions of verses 31 and 32 relative to Orion and other constellations. In the second line I am almost, but not quite, sure that שִׁכְנִי should rather be קֶשֶׁת, “bow,” *i.e.* the *kakkab kashti* = Sirius. Thus the distich becomes:

“Who hath put wisdom into the Lance-star,
Or given understanding to the Bow-star?”

I have also, as I believe, been able to restore תרתח in two other places in the Old Testament. For these passages I refer the reader to an article on “Textual Criticism,” which has appeared in the *Jewish Quarterly Review* for July, where I have also mentioned what I believe to be the discovery of these new star-names in Job.

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HARNACK, JÜLICHER, AND SPITTA ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

II.

WE come now to Spitta. His contribution to the discussion is contained in his article, “The Early Christian Traditions concerning the Origin and Meaning of the Lord's Supper” (*Zur Geschichte und Litteratur des Urchristentums*, Bd. i., pp. 205–337, 1893). In a previous work he had reached conclusions which appear to have met with considerable acceptance. The view he had formerly held was this—that Jesus had invested the Jewish Passover with a deeper significance, and transformed it into a Christian celebration; and that in this form the celebration had at first been repeated yearly, until the transplantation of Christianity to Gentile soil