

understood Syriac, calls Paul *σκυτοτόμος*,⁸ which some have wrongly interpreted "tent-maker." How did the Syriac translators come to render *σκηνοποιός* by *lorarius*? I can explain this only by supposing that they read, or misread, *ἡμισοποιός*, instead of *σκηνοποιός*.

Many interesting questions are raised by this word: How did the Latin word *lorarius* come into use among the Syrians? Has the Syriac version — supposing it to represent *ἡμισοποιός* — preserved the true reading? How are the Latin, Greek, and Syriac forms of the legend of the Holy Cross related to one another? It must suffice here to call attention to a word which must be taken into consideration by the critic of the New Testament text as well as by the student of St. Paul's life.

The Use of מִשְׁפָּט.

PROF. L. W. BATTEN.

PHILADELPHIA DIVINITY SCHOOL.

THE translators of our English Bible have imposed pretty severe tasks on certain English words, but none perhaps has been subjected to a severer strain than "judgment," which is the well-nigh universal rendering of the Hebrew מִשְׁפָּט. A language with a small vocabulary, such as the Hebrew, may well represent different ideas by the same word; but why such a word should be uniformly rendered into another language with a more ample vocabulary, without any regard to sense or reason, it is hard to see.

That I do not exaggerate in my statement is apparent from a glance at, say Worcester's Dictionary. There are given no less than ten different meanings of the word "judgment" as used in the Scriptures, and these do not cover all the cases if we take into account the various finer shades of meaning which appear in certain passages.

⁸ [*In 2 ep. ad Tim.*, Hom. iv. (Opp. ed. Montfaucon, XI. 682); cf. *de laud. S. Pauli*, Hom. iv. (II. 494). Chrysostom and other Fathers occasionally accept and use this contemptuous designation of the apostle (as they do *ἀλιεύς* in the case of others); this use is especially frequent in Theodoret, e.g. Opp. ed. Schulze, IV. 692, 837, 943, etc.; cf. 936; less frequently we find *σκηνοποιός* (I. 125; IV. 931) and *σκηνογράφος* (III. 297) employed in the same way. See Suicer, *Thesaur. Eccles.* ii. 981 f. *Edd.*]

While I am fully persuaded that the uniform rendering of מִשְׁפֵּט by "judgment" is a serious blunder, which obscures the meaning in scores of passages, I am free to confess that it is not always easy to select an English word that brings out the meaning fully. The translators of the LXX understood something of the variety of ideas associated with this word, inasmuch as they have rendered it by more than twenty different words, chiefly, however, derivatives and compounds of the three words κρίσις, δίκη, and τάξις, though other words are not lacking.

The noun מִשְׁפֵּט is used in the Old Testament nearly five hundred times. It appears to the casual reader to be one of the commonest of Hebrew words, because it is found in the literature of every period, and is used alike in history, law, prophecy, and poetry. I have examined nearly all of these cases, and while the results are not startling, they may be of some interest.

In the first place, let me say that there are comparatively few cases in which the English word "judgment" is a happy rendering. It is a comprehensive word and may be forced into large service; but its general employment in our version is a great misfortune, especially as it teaches unworthy ideas of God and of the Hebrew people.

In a large majority of cases מִשְׁפֵּט denotes a moral quality, and in general I know of no better rendering in such instances than "justice." This is its almost uniform meaning in the Prophets, the Psalms, and Proverbs. On *a priori* grounds we should expect this, and the results of our inductive study justify our expectation. It is used in synonymous parallelism with צִדְקָה in scores of cases; it is also found with תְּמִים (Dt. xxxii. 4), תֹּסֵף (Ps. ci. 1), אֱמֶת (Ps. cxi. 7); it is found in antithetic parallelism with מִרְמָה (Prov. xii. 5), in which case even the R. V. renders "justice." Preceded by לֹא it means in Prov. xvi. 8, "injustice,"—"A little is better with righteousness (צִדְקָה) than large increase with injustice."

It is true that the Hebrews looked upon Jahveh as a great judge, who would bring their enemies to punishment; but they also had a true conception of his justice. Thus Is. xxx. 18, "For Jahveh is a God of מִשְׁפֵּט," must mean "justice" or some similar moral attribute, as the context shows: "And therefore Jahveh will wait, that he may have mercy upon you; and therefore will he be exalted that he may have compassion on you; for Jahveh is a God of justice (a just God); blessed are all that trust in him." So also in the cases in which it is said Jahveh loves מִשְׁפֵּט, the context is invariably in favor of "justice"; see Ps. xxxvii. 28, 30; Is. lxi. 8.

The noun is very often used as the object of **עָשָׂה**. In many of these cases certainly it has a moral sense, as in the beautiful passage in Micah vi. 8, "What doth Jahveh require of thee, but to do **מִשְׁפָּט**, to love **חֶסֶד**, and to walk humbly with thy God."

In Job xxxiv. 17 it is the object of **שָׁנָא**; as the passage applies to God, it must be a moral quality, and the R. V. renders well, "Shall even one that hateth right govern?"

מִשְׁפָּט is even used of persons: in Prov. ii. 8 it is parallel with **חֶסֶד**, "To guard the paths of the just, and the way of the merciful thou shalt keep." In Prov. xiii. 23 it is parallel with **רָאשִׁים** and with the negative means the unjust: "There is much food in the fallow ground of the poor; but there is waste in that of the unjust." Some such sense is required, for the context is made up of antithetic parallelisms. The same interpretation may be right in Prov. xvii. 23.

It is also used in an adverbial sense. Thus in Jer. xxi. 12, "O, house of David, thus saith Jahveh, judge justly (**מִשְׁפָּט**) each morning, and deliver the spoiled from the hand of the oppressor" (cf. Jer. xxii. 3); also Ez. xxii. 29, "And the stranger they oppress unjustly" (R.V. "wrongfully").

The word is often used, however, in senses which savor of the law courts, and this is particularly so in the legal portions of the Pentateuch, in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. In Deuteronomy the plural is used a great deal in connection with **חֻקִּים**, "statutes," and that in the introductory portion, as well as in the middle of the book. In these books **מִשְׁפָּט** very seldom, if ever, has the meaning of justice. The common meaning is law, ordinance, edict, or custom which has the binding force of law. It is frequently parallel with **תּוֹרָה**,¹ much oftener with **חֹק**. There is one interesting case in which it is followed by **כָּתוּב**, and with it means written law, Ps. cxlix. 9; "to execute against them the written law."

In several cases it means the sentence imposed by a judge, and sometimes more definitely an adverse sentence, *i.e.* punishment.² It is used often in the sense of suit, a case in court:³ thus Job expresses his confidence in his cause by appealing for a chance to join in a suit with Jahveh (Job ix. 32). Followed by **מָוֶת** it means an offence worthy of death. I have noticed this sense only in Deuteronomy (xix. 6; xxi. 22), and in Jeremiah, where it might come from

¹ Even in Hab. i. 4.

² Sentence: 2 Ki. xxv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 21. Punishment: Ps. cxix. 84; Hos. x. 4.

³ Job ix. 32; xxii. 4; Ps. cxii. 5; 2 S. xv. 4; Ex. xxiii. 6.

the use in Deuteronomy. In Jeremiah's trial (xxvi. 11, 16) the accusers make their charge, מִשְׁפֵּט מִוֹת לְאִישׁ הָזֶה. In Deut. xxi. 17 we find the expression מִשְׁפֵּט הַבְּכֹרָה, "right or lawful portion, of the first-born."

The word is often used in the sense of custom which has the authority of law, especially with the preposition כִּי; but it is also used of customs which are illegal or wrong, as in the abuses of Eli's sons (1 S. ii. 13), "And the custom of the priests with the people," etc.; 1 S. xxvii. 11, David's custom was to kill every prisoner in his raids so that they could not tell the king what mischief he had wrought.

The word also has the sense of manner. Not, however, in Judg. xiii. 12, where it is rendered by R. V., "Manoah asked the angel, What shall be the manner of the child?" The context shows the meaning to be law or rules, "What rules shall be observed respecting the child?" A good case is that of 2 K. i. 7, where Ahab asks the messengers who had been sent back by Elijah, "What kind of a man was it who went up to meet you?" and by their description the king recognized his enemy.

Perhaps one of its most singular senses is that of religion. The colonists of Samaria send word to the king of Assyria, "We do not know the מִשְׁפֵּט of the god of the land," 2 K. xvii. 26. This might perhaps be rendered by custom, law, or religion. In Jer. v. 4 we read, "for they do not know the way of Jahveh, the מִשְׁפֵּט of their God." Religion seems to be the idea in the mind of the writer in each case.

There remain a few cases in which the meaning is not so clear. In Zeph. iii. 8 we read, "for my מִשְׁפֵּט is to gather the nations, . . . to pour my wrath upon them." R. V. well renders here "determination." Some such a word as that, or perhaps "purpose," is required by the context.

What does it mean in Is. xlii. 3, where it is said that the servant shall bring out מִשְׁפֵּט in truth, or for truth? Cheyne renders, "truthfully shall he cause *the law* to go forth." It may be the law as a light to the nations, or the darker judgment which heralds their overthrow; the former fits in better with the character of the gentle and meek servant, and the use in the following verse favors the sense of law or justice, or perhaps religion.

In Mic. iii. 8 we read, "And truly I am full of power, by (or with) the spirit of Jahveh, and מִשְׁפֵּט, and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin. "Judgment" does not cover

the case, justice is scarcely suitable; as the word stands between **בָּרַח** and **גְּבַהֵרָהּ**, it would naturally have an allied meaning, but there is no parallel to this use.

There is an interesting case in Amos v. 15, in which the two senses judgment and justice seem to blend, so that the real meaning is "just judgment." The passage reads, "Hate evil and love good, and set up **מִשְׁפָּט** in the gate; so that Jahveh may have mercy on the remnant of Jacob." As the gate was a common place for holding court, "judgment" might at first sight seem to fit in very well; but there was no need for Amos to ask the people to try suits at law,—that was already done,—but justice was administered oppressively, and the prophet appeals for a more righteous method of judging. That he associates the idea of justice with the word is clear from vs. 24 of the same chapter, "Let **מִשְׁפָּט** roll down like the waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream."

It would be interesting to try to determine the primitive meaning of this word from these various uses. Of course the verb would have to be studied in the same way to get a satisfactory result.⁴ Some Assyriologists claim that *šapatu* originally meant to rule, and there is a case in Hosea v. 11 where that sense may be still seen in **מִשְׁפָּט**. Besides the Assyrian, the word is only used in the Phœnician, and has there the sense of "judging." This is the only sense which I have found in Assyrian. Gesenius, with a too great fondness for tracing things back so as to allow room for development, assigns as the original meaning *setzen, festsetzen*, but does not adduce any evidence to justify his conclusion. It seems to me very likely that we do not need to search for any more primitive meaning than "decide" or "judge." Perhaps the word was first used in a participial form as the title of an officer whose functions were largely judicial. All the other meanings could easily grow out of this. The noun then would primarily mean "decision."

⁴ [See the article by Professor Henry Ferguson on *The Verb מִשַׁפ*, JOURNAL, VIII. (1888), 130-136. *Edd.*]