

sacrificia haec quae tibi ob sacramenta divini corporis offeruntur, tam acceptabilia tibi nostro facias obsequio, quam sunt divino instituta mysterio?.

F. E. BRIGHTMAN.

## THE WATERS OF SHILOAH THAT GO SOFTLY: A NOTE ON ISAIAH VIII 6.

WE read in Isaiah viii 6 ff: 'Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, *and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son*; Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and he shall pass through Judah.' The greater part of this is perfectly intelligible; the language of the A. V., which I have quoted, is a little stiff and old-fashioned, but it does not need a learned commentary to discover that the Prophet wishes to tell his countrymen that since they have not learnt their lesson from their recent comparatively light calamities they will be exposed to the immeasurably greater calamity of an Assyrian invasion. The recent calamity had been the invasion of Judah by Israel and Damascus; this Isaiah speaks of as the little stream of Shiloah, perhaps already conducted in an artificial channel; the coming invasion would be like an inundation of a mighty river.<sup>1</sup> But all this does not explain why the people of Judah should *rejoice in* (or *with*) Rezin. A foreign invasion is never pleasant: even Mr Keir Hardie or Mr Redmond would hardly 'rejoice with' the Germans, if they landed in this country. It is evident that something is wrong with the text, or with our interpretation of it.

It has long been noticed that two marginal glosses or foot-notes have been incorporated into the text of Isaiah vii. From the time of Gesenius and Hitzig the words *את מלך אשור* in vii 17 and *במלך אשור* in vii 20 have been regarded as 'interpolations'. These words ('even the king of Assyria', 'by the king of Assyria') break the construction and spoil the rhythm, if regarded as part of the actual discourse. 'Interpolation' is, however, rather a hard word for them. They are rather of the nature of explanatory notes which have got incorporated with the text; for aught that appears to the contrary they may have been set down in the margin by Isaiah himself, or whoever first wrote down the discourse. Now in viii 6, 7, we have another pair of notes of the same kind; we

<sup>1</sup> Compare Jeremiah xlvii 2.

may safely relegate to the margin **את רצין וכן רמליהו** in verse 6, and also **את מלך אשור ואת כל כבודו** in verse 7. This leaves in the most difficult word **ומשוש**, out of which all the ideas of 'rejoicing' come. Let us omit that also for the present, and see how the passage runs without it. We get (modernizing the A. V.):

'Seeing that this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently . . . , therefore, lo, Adonai will bring upon them the waters of the River mighty and great, and it will rise . . . and sweep onward through Judah.'

This is quite clear and satisfactory. What, then, are we to conclude about the missing word **ומשוש**? Not, I venture to suggest, that it is not genuine, but that its meaning should be something that does not materially alter the picture we have formed. It may fill up the sense: it must not change it.

Now **משוש** is usually parsed as the construct state of **משוש** 'rejoicing', from the root **שוש**. Why should we not take it as equivalent to **מסס** in Isaiah x 18, and derive it from **משש = מסס**? The root **מסס**, generally used in Niphal, means to drip, to become liquid, like wax in the fire, &c.; it might therefore be used here of the trickling waters of an intermittent or slow-flowing spring, as opposed to the rush of a great river in flood. As for the spelling with **ש**, the Arabic evidence tends to shew that this is the correct spelling. The corresponding root in Arabic is **مش**, the derivatives from which all have to do with moisture and soft marrow; in fact *mushāsha* is said to mean a stratum of ground in which water percolates and from which you can gradually fill a bucket with water.

I therefore suggest that **משוש** here means 'oozing' or 'trickling', the construction being an Infinitive Construct like **שחוח** in Isaiah lx 14. The whole passage (with its elucidatory marginal notes) will then run as follows:

Seeing that this people has refused

<sup>a</sup> the waters of Shiloah

that flow gently and trickling <sup>a</sup>,

therefore, lo, Adonai will bring upon them

<sup>b</sup> the waters of the River

mighty and great <sup>b</sup>,

and it will rise over all its channels

and flow over all its banks,

and sweep onward through Judah.

<sup>a . . . a</sup> Rezin and Ben Remaliah.

<sup>b . . . b</sup> The king of Assyria and all his glory.

F. C. BURKITT.

<sup>1</sup> Notice the absence of a repeated **את** before **כן**—quite in the style of a note.