

familiar Authorized Version is to change 'Then *cometh* the end' (*ver.* 24) into 'Then at the end', and to alter the punctuation by putting a semi-colon instead of a full-stop at the end of *ver.* 23, and commas instead of full-stops at the ends of *vs.* 24, 25, and 26.

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## TEXTUAL CRITICISM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE subject treated in my note in the January number of the JOURNAL is of so great importance that I am glad that Mr McLean's rejoinder in the April number gives me the opportunity of returning to it. I think there is a difference as to the principles of textual criticism between Mr McLean and myself, and I should like to state quite clearly what my own principles are.

There is, indeed, nothing new in them; they are familiar to every student of the New Testament, but they apply (I believe) equally well to the Old.

(i) In the case which I discussed in January (Ps. xcvi 11) two of these principles are specially applicable. They are (1) Parallel passages are specially liable to corruption by assimilation; (2) The difficult reading is generally to be preferred to the easier. I need not say that both these principles are amply illustrated in the text (e.g.) of the Synoptic Gospels. The state of the Lucan text of the Lord's Prayer illustrates (1); while several rugged passages in the Second Gospel illustrate (2).

But are not these principles to be applied also to the textual criticism of the Psalms? I say without hesitation that it is just, simply just, to keep in mind in the study of the text of the O. T. the danger of textual assimilation of parallel passages. Here is an undeniable case of a near coincidence in language which a scribe would be tempted consciously or unconsciously to make more complete.

Ps. xcvi 11 אור זרע (v. l. זרוע) לצדיק  
ולישרי לב שמחה:

Ps. cxii 4 זרה בחשך אור לישרים

The first of these two parallel passages is afflicted with a (presumed) various reading (זרה) which in fact coincides with the reading of the second. When such a case occurs in the New Testament, critics give careful consideration to the possibility that an attempt has been made to assimilate one passage to the other.

The second principle, that of giving preference generally to the harder reading, also applies to Ps. xcvi 11. I think no one will deny

that אור זרע is the harder reading, which a scribe or a translator would be tempted to change into the dangerously easy emendation אור זרה. On the other hand, the harder reading is in accordance with Hebrew thought<sup>1</sup>: 'Light is sown and gladness (harvest gladness) for the upright in heart.'

The corollary may be added that while it is easy to see a reason why זרע should be corrupted into זרה, it is not easy to see why זרה (with אור standing next to it!) should be corrupted into זרע.

(ii) When Mr McLean goes on to criticize my suggestion about the original reading of the Peshitta he overlooks the existence of the parallel passage, and also the existence of the Syro-Hexaplar. I need not defend at length a view which was put forward as a suggestion only, but it is at least worthy of something better than ridicule. (1) ܐܘܪܝܢ is an actual Syriac rendering used in this passage, not a fancy of my own brain; (2) it could easily be confused by a scribe reading a worn MS with ܐܘܪܝܢ the present reading of the Peshitta, especially since (3) the easy reading ܐܘܪܝܢ already existed in the parallel passage (Ps. cxii 4) to help the scribe to go wrong.

(iii) The Targum gives דנה ומיטמר, a double rendering, the first word corresponding to זרה, the second to זרע; but Wellhausen contents himself with citing דנה as the rendering of the Targum, ignoring the second word altogether. This, I contend, is unfair, but Mr McLean would justify Wellhausen by maintaining that ומיטמר can only be 'due to revision of the more primitive Targum-text on the basis of the later Massoretic'. I think that Mr McLean has been misled by the mere order of the words, which is by no means decisive as to the priority in time of the first word. Once more it is necessary to remember the disturbing influence of the parallel passage. The Targumist is more than a word-for-word translator; he adds a touch of comment from time to time. Here he remembers two slightly varying promises or assurances and he reconciles them, blending them into one. 'For the righteous and upright', he says, 'light is sometimes spreading its rays, sometimes hiding them', but let the righteous none the less 'rejoice in the Word of יהוה'. I hope it is not necessary to assure Mr McLean that I am 'serious' in thinking that the double rendering of the Targum is due to the double reading of the Hebrew, one in Ps. xcvi 11, the other in Ps. cxii 4.

(iv) In one respect I acknowledge that Mr McLean has caught me. I did not realize the fact that Wellhausen in his critical edition of the Book of Psalms *nowhere* gives more than the evidence for readings

<sup>1</sup> See *Journal*, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> The Heb. שמחה is a common word, but it is not without significance that it is applied to *harvest joy* (Isa. ix 2; xvi 10).

differing from MT. It is an unpleasant shock to one's feeling of what is due to scholarship to realize that this is Wellhausen's method. To my mind few tasks are more difficult than the task of stating fairly *one side* only of the evidence in a textual problem. When one side only is stated, the statement can hardly fail to give a false impression. It is often difficult to extract a simple *Yes* or *No* from a textual authority, particularly if that authority be a version. Wellhausen's curt note with its 'G S T I' certainly gives one the impression that there is practically no evidence to be alleged for the MT of Ps. xcvi 11 (beyond the MT itself), and that the evidence for  $\text{וְרַחֵם}$ , the supposed reading of the LXX, is overwhelming. But this is a false impression. The witness of  $\text{י}$ , certainly here in the Psalter, is more probably an echo of G than a piece of independent evidence. T's reading, *which Wellhausen has mis-stated*, tells at least as much in favour of MT as against it. S (on comparison with the parallel place) lies under a textual doubt, slight perhaps, but real, and not to be simply blown aside. Lastly, as regards G itself, it must be remembered that the rendering  $\text{ἀνέτειλεν}$  is no conclusive proof that the Seventy found the reading  $\text{וְרַחֵם}$  in the Hebrew copy or copies from which they translated. The existence of a parallel passage has influenced the Alexandrine translators in other places, notably in one discussed briefly below (Zech. i 8). That the Seventy themselves felt that Ps. xcvi 11 and Ps. cxii 4 are kindred passages is sufficiently shewn by their renderings:

(a)  $\text{φῶς ἀνέτειλεν τῷ δικαίῳ}$   
 $\text{καὶ τοῖς εὐθέσι τῇ καρδίᾳ εὐφροσύνη}$

(Ps. xcvi 11; Swete following B).

(b)  $\text{ἐξανέτειλεν ἐν σκότει φῶς τοῖς εὐθέσι}$  (Ps. cxii 4; Swete following A).

In the light of this close parallelism it cannot safely be asserted that the LXX read  $\text{וְרַחֵם}$  in Ps. xcvi 11. If they had had before them the reading found in all but all of our Hebrew MSS (an entirely probable assumption), they would nevertheless have been sorely tempted to emend this harder reading ( $\text{וְרַחֵם}$ ) into the easier reading of the parallel passage. Their business was to make a popular and readable translation.

A similar case of the corrupting influence of a parallel passage is found in Zech. i 8, 10, 11. Here Wellhausen does *not* go with LXX, at least in the book before me (*Skizzen*, fünftes Heft, 1892, § 39). The prophet narrates eight visions, the first (i 7 ff) and the eighth (vi 1-8) being somewhat similar in imagery. In the first a mysterious horseman, behind whom were horses of different colours, stood 'among the myrtle trees' ( $\text{הַדְרִים}$ ). In the eighth four chariots drawn by horses of different

colours, representing the winds of heaven, were seen coming out 'from between two mountains' (הרים). The two different notes of place are thus kept distinct for the two visions in MT, but the distinction is obliterated in the LXX. In the Greek the mysterious horseman of the first vision stands ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν (+ δύο cod. A in v. 8) ὀρέων (i 8, 10, 11); the chariots of the eighth vision proceed ἐκ μέσον δύο ὀρέων. *Mountains* are more common than *myrtles* in the imagery of O. T. visions, and the Hebrew equivalent of the former occurs some hundred times as against three occurrences of the latter in O. T. So the Greek translators again follow the line of least resistance. They submit to the disturbing influence of a parallel passage, and once more they give their preference to the more 'ordinary' reading.

Looking back over the points of our discussion I feel that I have very little to withdraw: that little is the assumption that Wellhausen's statement of the evidence was intended to be in some sense complete. I learn from Mr McLean that it was intended to be *ex parte*. Looking back again at my own presentation of the textual facts (JOURNAL, p. 156) I see nothing to change, though I should be glad to add ⚡ (for Jerome's *Psalterium iuxta Heb.*) within brackets to the authorities quoted for זרה. But the brackets must not be omitted, for the reading is word for word that of the Gallican Psalter, which is only a revision of an Old Latin version of the LXX. Jerome, therefore, may be only echoing the Seventy in this passage.

Mr McLean and I are 'out', I gather, on three matters of principle. I hold (1) that in the O. T. as in the N. T. the danger of corruption from a parallel passage is very great; (2) that the *prima facie* case is in favour of a harder reading; (3) that the reading of the MT counts as a reading, while *prima facie* the 'reading' of the LXX is only an interpretation or an emendation. Interpreters are more likely to change what they see than scribes, so evidence is needed to raise a rendering of the Greek to the position of a witness to a various reading of the underlying Hebrew text. Mere suspicion of the MT cannot be counted as evidence. Mr McLean passes very lightly over these considerations. Finally we differ on a matter of degree. By all means let the evidence (or supposed evidence) of the LXX be received and tested. But let the facts as to the origin of the version and its transmission in early days be duly weighed. Something can be learned from an ignorant witness and even from one who has been 'handled' by an Origen or a Lucian, but his evidence must be severely sifted. The bulk of it will dwindle sorely in the process, and we may be thankful if out of ten passages of the MT which seem to us to need emendation, the LXX gives us trustworthy help in one.

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