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THE
CHURCHMAN

DECEMBER, 1882.

ART. I.—STUDY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IN THE
FIFTH CENTURY.

THE treatment of varied readings found in the copies of Holy Scripture, the importance of an accurate text, the interpretation of words and idioms were the care of Augustine in the second book of his "Christian Learning." In the third book he proposes to examine modes of solving the ambiguities of the Bible, which may arise either from the use of words of uncertain meaning, or from figurative language. It will tend to more confidence in our own methods if we discover that no greater certainty, no surer traditional authority were known to the great teacher of the Fifth Century than to ourselves. With yet greater satisfaction we may find that while on the essentials of Christianity there has been little variation, the patient study of devout minds—the cultivation of science and learning—and the teaching of the Holy Spirit through these many centuries, have made the light of the nineteenth century on the sacred page less wavering and more clear and stedfast than that of the fifth.

Following the guidance of our teacher, we are first warned (c. ii. 2) to be careful in matters of punctuation and pronunciation. We are so accustomed to the traditional punctuation of our Authorized Version that its divisions exercise great sway over minds not destitute of some tincture of scholarship, while the ordinary reader is in bondage to chapters and verses and even to commas. Yet, perhaps, most persons who have used Commentaries at all must be aware that many fallacies and many variations lurk round commas and periods. To go no further than the familiar instance in Heb. x. 12, shall we punctuate it thus: "This man after he had offered one sacrifice for sin for ever, sat down on the right hand of God," or thus: "This man

after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God?" The example Augustine gives is stigmatized by him as a heretical perversion of St. John i. 1. The order of the English words would not permit the arrangement he forbids, but there is nothing in the mere sequence of the Greek and Latin versions to prevent it. It runs thus, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was. This Word was in the beginning with God." Our interest in this chiefly lies in the comparison of methods. We should consider the grammatical exigencies of the sentence, the weight to be given to the position of nouns, verbs, and articles, the logical relation of the several words. We should also in differing degrees be influenced by the comment of former ages. To Augustine it is enough to say that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity excludes the punctuation in question. It is obvious that such a mode of arbitration is unsound and fallacious. We must not first settle what are the doctrines of Scripture, and then decide that the reading or the punctuation which to us seems most positively to set forth those doctrines is genuine. The first question is, What is the authentic Scripture? The second question is, What does that Scripture teach? But where no great doctrine is involved Augustine adopts the more grammatical process, which he illustrates from Phil. i. 22-24, where he deduces the right division of the clauses from a consideration of the connecting particles.

Akin to the question of punctuation is that of pronunciation, in cases where a difference of intonation or accent may change the force of a sentence or the meaning of a word. It is curious to observe that the nineteenth century and the fifth are precisely in the same position with respect to the familiar passage, Rom. viii. 33, 34, which is discussed by Augustine under this head. Our Authorized Version and the Revised are agreed in taking the responsive clauses in those verses without an interrogative:—

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth?

It is Christ that died.

But Alford and many others take the responses interrogatively, thus:—

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

Shall God who justifies them?

Who is he that condemns them?

Is it Christ who died?

In this question Augustine decides in favour of the interrogative response on the grounds both of doctrine and rhetorical correctness.

In our own day the educated hearer sometimes instinctively says to himself, as he listens to the reader of the lessons, "that man does not know his Greek Testament." In the Latin Church of old there seems to have been yet greater liability to blunder. For example, the reader comes to Ps. cxxxix. 15: "Non est absconditum a te *os* meum. [My bone, English version, *substance*, was not hid from thee.] He is perplexed. There are two Latin words either of which that *os* may be. He must betray by his pronunciation his idea of the word. Either he will read it short, *os*, a bone, or he will read it long, *ōs*, a mouth. Augustine sends him to the Septuagint to learn that the first of these two is right. He adds a curious remark. There was an ancient form *ossum* which in his day had become vulgar. He would prefer the vulgarism *ossum* to the usual form of the word, *os*, if thus the meaning of the passage might escape perversion. Another trap he notes into which the unfortunate Latin reader, unapt in his Greek Testament, has many a time fallen from that day to this. The word *prædico* comes full before him. Alas, there are two of them! There is *prædico*, I predict, and there is *prædico*, I preach or declare. Ignorance is hardly "bliss" to the reader in such a case as this. However, Augustine thinks that either the context or a reference to the original will clear away most of such uncertainties.

Leaving these verbal ambiguities which are discussed, no doubt, often enough in the Bible class, though they have little ground in one who is fairly versed in Hebrew and Greek originals, we are brought (c. v. 9) to more difficult and more important investigations.

The interpretation of the figurative language of Holy Scripture, or the preliminary inquiry whether a figurative meaning may be admitted, presents the most weighty anxieties. Here we are warned of the danger of taking literally that which is meant figuratively. "The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." "It may well be called the death of the soul," says Augustine:—

When the understanding which raises it above the brutes is subjected to the flesh by following the letter. If he who hears the word Sabbath can think of nothing beyond the mere weekly recurrence—if he who hears of a sacrifice cannot raise his thoughts beyond the material victim or the presentation of fruits—what a mental servitude is this! What a miserable slavery to take the signs for the realities, and to be unable to lift the mental eye above the corporeal, created thing to drink in the eternal light!

In some sense, doubtless (c. vi. 10), the patriarchs of old were in bondage, having the signs rather than the realities of heavenly things. Still (c. ix. 13), it was a bondage not without

spirituality and freedom, since there was an apprehension of something beyond the sign itself. But since our freedom has been sealed by the resurrection of our Lord we are no longer burdened by the observance of the ancient rites, though their meaning has been opened to us. "But instead of many signs, we have some few, most easy of performance, most august in significance, most holy in observance. These hath the Lord Himself and apostolical discipline delivered to us. Such is the sacrament of baptism, and the celebration of the body and blood of the Lord."

"To take signs for realities, then, is bondage. But to interpret signs unprofitably is to fall into error."

But these are only general remarks. Is the ancient teacher able to give us satisfactory rules for guiding us in the discrimination of a true spiritual interpretation? He thinks he can. Reduced to its elements, his reasoning (c. x. 14, 15, 16) seems to be this: Scripture gives to us precept and doctrine. In doctrine, it "asserts nothing but the Catholic faith," narrating the past, predicting the future, describing the present. But always so as to strengthen love, and to root out lust, to which end all its precepts are directed. Hence, if there be anything in the Word of God which in its literal sense cannot be referred to the verity of the faith, or to that which is moral and honourable in life, we may recognize it as figurative. Augustine forgets not to warn us here that defects of education, evil customs, or erroneous opinions, may so pervert our judgment that we may fail to draw this line truly, taking that to be figurative which is, in fact, literal, simply because it does not harmonize with our own standard. And here, indeed, seems the weakness of this supposed rule. Is it not, after all, rationalistic? Does it not come to this?—The reader of Scripture has the rule of life and doctrine in his mind—by that rule he is to judge the WORD. If the literal sense will agree with that rule, well, if not, a figurative sense must be sought. Scripture needs a sterner, closer, more rigorous treatment than this. It is the WORD of GOD. None but God may judge the things of God. Augustine himself has already in the former chapter given us the only trustworthy criterion (2 c. vi. 8): "The Holy Spirit has so arranged the Scriptures that the obscurity of one passage is explained by the clearness of another." Nor does he fail in the present book (c. xxviii. 39) to draw back from any merely rationalistic method of interpretation:—

When we have arrived at a meaning [says he] which presents uncertainties not soluble by sure testimonies of Holy Scripture, it remains for reason to do its part in making it clear, even if it be a sense perhaps unknown to the original writer. *But this method is perilous.* We walk much more safely by the divine Scriptures. When we would

search these darkened by metaphor, either that will be brought out which cannot be questioned, or if question arises it will be settled by testimony evolved from the same Scripture.

The diligent searcher into the harmonies of Scripture shall best learn the congruity and usefulness of some literal things at which beforetime he may have stumbled.

In years long afterwards this rule of Augustine, taken apart from the rest of this interesting treatise, was capable of a use which nullified the whole. When "the Catholic Faith," or "the Verity of the Faith," had been confused with the whole mass of mediæval teaching, it would become necessary to pronounce many very direct portions of Scripture figurative, as being opposed to the doctrine of the Schools. It may not be useless to notice in connection with this that little beyond the main doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation was understood when men spoke of "the Catholic Faith," in the fifth century. That venerable document, the Athanasian Creed, which reflects so strongly Augustine's teaching, illustrates this fact, whether the Creed belong to the fifth or to the eighth century: "This," it says with absolute explicitness, "this is the Catholic Faith." What? Not that which Trent, Augsburg, Geneva or Lambeth may have written. But the great mysteries of the Godhead in its Triune existence, and of God manifest in the flesh. "This is the Catholic Faith." Whatever else that creed may be, it is a perpetual witness to a faith greater and wider than any individual Church alone can ever testify. And when Augustine in this part of his treatise repudiates any interpretation of Scripture that will not cohere with "the Catholic Faith," he is thinking of nothing narrower than this.

The examples by which Augustine illustrates the working of his rule for classifying language as figurative, will not give more confidence in its accurate working than at first sight appeared. It seems rather to evade than to solve difficulties, which, to the modern inquirer, suggest moral hesitations. "Harshness or apparent cruelty in deed or word ascribed in Scripture to God or His saints (c. xi. 17), unless it be plain denunciation against sin, —or things said or done which seem sinful to the unskilled, whether attributed to God or to saintly men, are wholly figurative." It is an answer which would hardly satisfy modern objections to Jael's conduct, that it was simply to be understood as a figure illustrating the necessity for slaying every lust which finds entrance within the heart of a child of God. It would scarcely be admitted that Sisera could be reduced to an abstraction not much more substantial than Giant Despair in Castle Doubting. Nor, again, would Augustine's discussion of

the relations of David to his wives be thought very satisfactory either in detail or in the final result.

But is it not the true explanation of some confusion in this part of the treatise, that the *interpretation* and the *application* of a passage of Scripture are not clearly distinguished? Great strictness in interpretation, great, yet cautious and reverent, freedom in application seem to unite most accurately the varied uses of the Word of God. It has been observed in the former article, on this work of Augustine, how the revulsion from mediæval laxity led our venerable translator Tyndale to demand a close literal understanding of the Word of God. Yet he is careful not to narrow the application: For he tells us when the literal sense has been fully elucidated:—

Then go we, and as the Scripture borroweth similitudes of worldly things, even so we again borrow similitudes or allegories of the Scripture, and apply them to our purposes: which allegories are no sense of the Scripture, but free things beside the Scripture, and altogether in the liberty of the Spirit. Which allegories I must not make at all the wild adventures, but must keep me within the compass of the faith, and ever apply mine allegory to Christ and to the faith.

It is an acute observation of Waterland,¹ that “They who judge that the Fathers in general do interpret John vi. of the Eucharist, appear not to distinguish between interpreting and applying.” On considering the language of Augustine in the passage under review, it may be asked whether the Fathers themselves sufficiently made that distinction. It might also well be asked whether modern preachers are as careful as they ought to be in this matter. It is a very serious thing to assume that our own applications, however Scriptural in themselves, are really the meaning of the passage before us. Carelessness in this important matter may lead on the one hand to corruption of doctrine, as it did in the Middle Ages—or on the other hand it may lead by repulsion to the narrow dictum² of the Master of Balliol:—

It may be laid down that Scripture has one meaning—the meaning which it had to the mind of the prophet or evangelist who first uttered or wrote, to the hearers or readers who first received it.

Bishop Butler,³ by anticipation, answered this shallow assertion long ago:—

To say that the Scriptures and the things contained in them can have no other or further meaning, than those persons thought or had who first recited or wrote them; is evidently saying that those persons were the original, proper, and sole authors of those books, *i.e.*, that

¹ “Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist,” chap. vi.

² “Essays and Reviews,” p. 378.

³ “Analogy,” Part II. ch. 7.

they are not inspired; which is absurd, whilst the authority of those books is under examination; *i.e.* till you have determined they are of no divine authority at all. Till this be determined, it must in all reason be supposed, not indeed that they have, for this is taking for granted that they are inspired, but that they may have some further meaning than what the compilers saw or understood.

If an opinion may be ventured on so weighty a subject, and amidst the utterances of great and venerable men, it would be this: Granting that *interpretation*, properly speaking, has often been so unduly stretched as to rob Scripture of the glory of its definite message from God—granting, nevertheless, that the *application* of Scripture seems hardly to recognize bounds, embracing as readily the concerns of the nineteenth as of the first century.—Whence comes this extraordinary fecundity of the Bible? There is no other book or collection of books in the world capable of such wonderful development from year to year, in every language and among every people. Must it not be that it contains, sometimes on the surface, sometimes deeply concealed under the surface, the true principles of human nature and its relations to God and to eternity? If so, the only safe mode of handling a passage must be to penetrate, if we may, to the inner fundamental principle. Then may we safely branch out into the multiform applications to human and divine things, evermore distinguishing the central principle, which is divine, from the human application, which by its diversity shows its capacity of error. This seems to be the real meaning of what Tyndale wrote about one literal meaning of Scripture, as distinguished from Dr. Jowett's cramped limitation. The one sees God, the other sees man in the words. The one meaning of the Infinite Mind may have harmonies running through all the ages. The one meaning of man must find continual boundaries.

These distinctions, and the dangerous consequences of neglecting them, were not present to Augustine. It was enough for him to rejoice in the fruitfulness of Holy Scripture (c. xxvii. 38):—

When from the same words of Scripture, not one but two or more meanings are deduced, even if the meaning of the original writer be undiscovered, there is no danger, if it can be shown from other passages of Holy Scripture that such interpretations are in harmony with the truth. Perhaps the author saw in his own words the meaning we have given to them. Certainly the Spirit of God, Who wrought through him, foresaw that the idea would occur to the reader. Yea, He also provided that it should occur to him since it rests upon the truth. Could divine Providence have made a more abundant and fruitful supply in the Word than that the same passage might be understood in many ways, all approved by the attestation of other words not less divine?

This is pious reflection, but it is not philosophical discrimination, critical accuracy, or theological carefulness.

One more distinction (ch. xvi. 24) requires notice:—

If a passage be preceptive [says Augustine] forbidding crime or vice, or commanding a useful or beneficent deed, it is not figurative. But if it seem to command a crime or vice, or to forbid an act of utility or beneficence, it is figurative. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man," saith Christ, "and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." He seems¹ to command a crime or vice. Therefore it is a figure, teaching us that we must have communion with the passion of the Lord, and sweetly and usefully lay up in our memory that His flesh was crucified and wounded for us.

Perhaps, if we believed in transubstantiation, we might manage to put a meaning on these words which should not seem incompatible with our faith. Yet is not the stronghold of that dogma, at least as far as it claims any footing in Scripture, the demand for a literal interpretation of this passage, and of the words of institution: "This is my body?" Yet, says Augustine, of the one before us: "It is figurative, else the thing were a crime. The mental and spiritual fact is that which is intended."

We cannot pause much longer over this discourse on the figurative in Holy Scripture; but in justice to Augustine it must be noted that, while he rather evaded than answered difficulties in the conduct of Old Testament saints, by resolving them into a figurative mist, he was not unconscious that their platform of morality was beneath that of the New Testament standard. He says (c. xxii. 32):—

Though all, or nearly all, of the actions recorded in the Old Testament are to be taken not only literally but figuratively also, yet with regard to those which are to be read literally, if the actors are praised, while the acts themselves are not in accordance with Christian morality, let the reader strive to understand the figurative instruction, while he avoids the example in his own life. For many things in those days were matters of duty, which would now come of lust only.

How much more profound is the remark of Bishop Butler:²—

I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts which require, not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these

¹ "Facinus vel flagitium videtur jubere: figura est ergo, præcipiens passioni dominieri communicandum, et suaviter atque ubiliter reconddendum in memoria quod pro nobis caro ejus crucifixa et vulnerata sit."

² "Analogy," Part II. ch. ii.

precepts, but what arises from their being offences: *i.e.*, from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are, by wicked and designing men, to serve the most horrid purposes; and, perhaps, to mislead the weak and enthusiastic.

Our Lord has given the clue to the right interpretation of these things when he said of a part of the law of the Old Covenant, Moses, "for the hardness of your heart wrote you this precept." Many things of old time were adapted to an immature morality, and an undeveloped civilization. Revelation was *gradually* unfolded in all its parts. The key-note is always the same, but its modulations and harmonies swell upon the ear with even more full and richer chords as the ages pass. How should a full morality, any more than a full theology, stand forth before men until Christ was revealed? They cannot be severed now. They could not have existed before.

The lax ideas of interpretation entertained by Augustine lead to this very limited conclusion (ch. xxiv. 34):—

The principal matter for investigation is whether the passage be literal or figurative. Once ascertained to be figurative by the rules previously laid down, it is easy to turn it in every direction until we arrive at the true meaning, especially when experience strengthened by practical piety is brought to the task.

Surely our difficulties would begin to be felt most strongly where those of Augustine end. We should be anxious not to import our own ideas into Scripture. We should desire not to deal with it arbitrarily. This, as we have already seen, does not appear to trouble him, provided the meaning may be somehow extracted from the words, and does not run counter to Holy Scripture.

Finally, on a review of the subject, which has been discussed in two numbers of *THE CHURCHMAN*, can it be said that this great theologian and illustrious Father stood upon a platform of advantage unknown to ourselves? He was nearly 1,500 years nearer the fountain head than ourselves. Had he stronger grounds of certainty, more sure means of information, clearer knowledge of the truth than are open to us? His personal and doctrinal relation to Holy Scripture was manifestly identical with that enjoined in our Sixth Article. If we feel ourselves differing from him in this respect, it is always on a point of detail, never on a fundamental principle. These considerations may be reassuring to some minds, and to all must bring many satisfactory and thankful reflections. Above all we shall feel ourselves in harmony with the venerated author in his closing remarks (ch. xxxvii. 56):—

Students of these venerable books, who would learn the various kinds of expression in Holy Scripture, together with its usual modes

of utterance, should be warned watchfully to observe and mindfully to remember. But, furthermore, it is above all essential that they should be admonished to pray for the power of understanding. For in these very books, of which they are students, they read that, "the Lord giveth wisdom; out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." The very desire to know His Word, if it be united to piety, they have received from Him.

T. P. BOULTBEE.

ART. II.—THE MOZARABIC RITUAL.

ON the right hand of the west door of the great Gothic cathedral of Toledo stands a small square chapel, presenting, as regards architecture and general decoration, but little to attract the visitor's attention. It is true that it possesses a large fresco, representing various incidents in the Conquest of Oran in 1509, by the celebrated Cardinal Ximenes de Cisneros, which was painted a few years afterwards, in 1514, by a contemporary artist, Juan de Borgoña by name. The merit of the work is not of a very high order; it doubtless represents truthfully the dresses, arms, and accoutrements of the period, and is valuable on this account to the antiquarian as well as to the student of history. But the chief interest of the chapel lies in the fact that it was founded to preserve in all its purity the forms of the Gothic or Mozarabic ritual, which was used by the Mozarabs, or Goths, who, after the conquest of Spain by the Moors, in 711 A.D., agreed to live under Moslem rule, and were allowed to retain their own mode of Christian worship.

Many and various opinions have prevailed as to the origin of the word "Mozarabs," or "Muzarabs," by which name the Gothic Christians, living in subjection to the Moors, were called. Some have derived the term from *Mixti Arabes*, two Latin words signifying a mixture of the two peoples; while others say that *Muza*, in Arabic, means a Christian. Others again have sought for its etymology in the word *Mustarabá*, meaning thereby Arabs who were not so originally, but who, having adopted the Arab mode of life, became Arabs to all intents and purposes.

It will be remembered that, on the overthrow of the Gothic kingdom in Spain, the Christians who escaped the power of the victorious Tarik, took refuge in the secluded cavern of Covadonga in the mountains of the Asturias. They did not, however, all so escape. A considerable number were left behind; and their conquerors, setting an example of toleration, alas! too rare in history, were content only to exact a tribute from them, leaving