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Christ himself is not only the chief theme of Scripture, but the guarantee of its authority, the interpreter of its meaning. The Gospels rightly form the principal subject of youthful study in Sunday Schools, but the most intellectual, cultivated and truly wise will also find the Gospels in the highest degree interesting, convincing and instructive.

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Contributed Notes.

Genesis XIV. 20; XV. 1.—"And blessed be the Most High God, who hath *delivered* thine enemies into thy hand." [A. V.]

"And blessed be God, Most High, which hath *delivered* thine enemies into thine hand." [R. V.]

"Fear not Abram, I am thy *shield* and thy exceeding great reward." [A. V. and R. V.]

The critical word in these two passages is *Miggen*. It is pointed as a verb in the first passage and in the *Piel* form. In the second passage it is pointed as a noun. The Authorized Version and the Revised Version translate the verb by "hath delivered" and the noun by "shield." Luther's translation renders the verb "beschlossen hat" and the noun "schild," while Martin's French Version renders the verb "à livre," and the noun "bouclier." It is thus evident, that the most common modern versions are alike in the rendering of the word or words.

Quite hazardous, then, does it seem to proffer any different understanding of this word as used in the two passages, or rather a single signification for them both. Yet the Vulgate translation might naturally awaken inquiry. The verb is there represented by the absolute construction "quo protegente:" and the noun is expressed by "protector." The figure of a shield is omitted, or if at all present, it is in the idea of "hiding," "covering," found in the verb "protego." The bold metaphor "scutum" is carefully avoided by the translator of the Vulgate. Yet there can be no doubt but that he knew the employment of this figure, as an epithet of God in the Psalms. Turning to the LXX., we find a similar avoidance of the use of this bold metaphor, found in modern versions. The verb is translated by "*paradoke*" and the noun by "*huperaspizo*." The translation of the noun, although by a verb, reflects the idea of "shield," since it means "to place a shield over one." Yet it still stands true, that the translator of these passages, in the LXX. also would not allow here the boldness in metaphor, which we find in modern versions.

There are certain reasons, deducible from the narrative, why the metaphor would probably not have been employed. In that wonderful victory of Abram over the conquering kings, chief among whom was Chedorlaomer, the patriarch was the aggressor. He would attack, not they. His enemies would need the shield. He needed some power to deliver them into his hands. Hence the word *Magen* as a verb is correctly translated. It would also be difficult

to trace any suggestion in the narrative which would unite the word "shield" and "reward," with which it is joined in coordinate relation. The student is also surprised, that in a time so early, before perhaps the shield figured prominently in conflicts, at least with the Hebrews, the word should be turned into metaphor and dignified by so noble a use.

Such reasons, however, are not conclusive. Still they are sufficiently strong to lead one to attempt either to refute them or else to establish on stronger grounds the conclusion they make probable. Assuming that the signification given to the verb is the only one for both passages, that *Magen* as a verb means "to deliver some one or something" into another's power, let us see what is the result.

We must change the Massoretic pointing in the second passage from the noun form to the Poel participle, a Qal form. The translation would then be:

"I am the One, delivering (enemies) unto thee and the One, rewarding thee very greatly."

The first objection to this translation would be, that the word *Magen*, when used as a verb, is in the Piel form. If we take as authority the lexicon statements, the matter is settled. But it would not be difficult to trace the reasons, that led lexicographers to adopt this Piel form. But omitting this, the fact is that there are but three places, including this place, where the consonants of this word must be pointed as a verb. And there is no reason why it must be Piel any more than a Qal form. If so the reasons are not apparent.

Again, it may be urged, that the change is of so little importance that it is waste of words to discuss the matter. Yet it may be found that the accepted view is in opposition to the mode of belief and expression of Abraham's time. This, then, would give another to the many plausible arguments that are urged to place this writing in an age much later than the chronology of the traditional view. But the chiefest reason for considering whether the translation suggested is not the most fitting is to be found in the import the verse assumes by this change. However, before considering this result, let us see the philological and grammatical reasons to support the proposed correction of the text.

It may first be assumed as undoubted, that "shield" cannot be the meaning in the first passage, and that "deliver" must be there the signification. Secondly, it must be admitted that "deliver" is permissible in the second passage. Choice must be made between it and the rendering "shield." Thirdly, the Qal Participle form is as good a Hebrew word as the Hebrew noun "Shield." No valid reason can be given why one word-form may not be used here as well as the other. Philology cannot settle the question.

From the standpoint of Grammar, it must be conceded also that the syntax of both sentences, whether we point *mogen* or *magen* is equally good and furnish equally familiar Hebrew constructions. Yet the symmetry gained by pointing both words, *mogen* and *sokar* as Qal participles, would lead the grammarian to prefer this pointing. If this be not sufficient to determine choice, we can find no ground in Grammar.

On exegetical grounds, not on those of Philology or Grammar, are we to find the surest motive to induce the change proposed. First, we are surprised that Abram, immediately after he is blessed by Melchizedek in the name of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, makes Jehovah, and God Most High synonymous. Such is the case in his word to the king of Sodom. These are the words: "I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, the Most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth." There was danger here for Abram.

His statement to the king of Sodom was tribute to the God of Sodom, God Most High. The making this overture to this king was to place the Jehovah faith in peril. It opened a way for Abram to become affiliated to the faiths of the land. Whereas he was separated to Jehovah. The danger is averted by a vision from Jehovah. This is the account; "After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying; Fear not Abram; I am thy *mogen* and thy exceeding great *sokar*," Jehovah uses no synonym. He is not the Most High God. Melchizedek had said, that the one delivering his enemies into his (Abram's) hand was God Most High. Abram had accepted the statement. But Jehovah comes in a vision and settles the matter. The one delivering into his (Abram's) hand enemies, the one rewarding him very greatly is Jehovah. Jehovah thus claims for himself what Melchizedek claimed for God Most High. Revelation becomes thus harmonious. And we are charmed by the loving care of Jehovah over his chosen one, evidenced by a revelation by vision which insured Abram against fatal error.

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PROF. W. W. MARTIN.

Exposition of 2 Cor. VIII. and IX. These two chapters form one grand division of the Epistle, and treat of one subject. They afford, therefore, a convenient passage for continuous exposition. Dr. Marvin R. Vincent, in his excellent little book, "The Expositor in the Pulpit," gives the points of a sermon upon this passage, by the late Dr. Candlish, of Edinburgh. It may seem rash to offer any other arrangement than that of the great Scotch preacher, but the following is my own division of the two chapters, for homiletic use.

Introduction. Justification of the subject as appropriate for the Christian pulpit. The Apostle gives up an entire section of the Epistle to it. In the First Epistle he turns abruptly from the discussion of the high theme of the Resurrection, to this matter of giving. Here his object to urge a liberal offering for the saints in anticipation of the arrival of Titus and two other brethren, sent to receive it. He sets before them

I. *The Example of the Macedonian churches.* 8: 1-5. They gave:—

1. "Of their own accord." 8: 4.
2. "According to their power." 8: 3.
3. Out of "their deep poverty." 8: 2.
4. As a privilege. 8: 4.
5. "Their own selves first to the Lord." 8: 5.

II. *He then makes his request for gifts.* 8: 7-12.

1. Not of commandment. 8: 8-10.
2. According to ability. 8: 12.

III. *He urges these motives.*

1. The credit of the church and himself. 8: 10; 8: 24; 9: 2-5.
2. As a proof of love, and faith, leading to thanksgiving by others, and to glory of God. 8: 8; 9: 2; 9: 11-13.
3. As a privilege of fellowship. 8: 13-15; 9: 13.
4. As the completion of Christian character. 8: 7.
5. As bringing blessed return. 9: 6; 9: 8-11.
6. Because of example of Christ, and from gratitude to Him. 8: 9; 9: 15.

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