

ASPECTS OF PAUL'S USE OF THE PSALMS

ALLAN M. HARMON

CONTINUING study is being given to the importance of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, and several significant works have appeared in recent years.¹ On the Pauline use of the Old Testament the fullest study in recent times is that of E. E. Ellis, who concludes that the significance of the Old Testament for Paul's theology "can hardly be overestimated."² While studies such as Ellis', which consider the Pauline usage in its totality, must be prosecuted, yet detailed work requires to be carried out by following a more selective approach. This can be done by concentrating attention on a particular section of the Pauline writings or by an examination of the way in which Paul employed quotations from a particular Old Testament book. For this present study³ the second method has been adopted, and attention will be directed to some limited aspects of the use of Psalter quotations by Paul. Approximately one-third of all the New Testament quotations of the Old Testament are made by Paul, and of these about one-fifth are from the Psalter. Only the prophecy of Isaiah is used more frequently by him.

The impact of C. H. Dodd's study⁴ on the use of the Old Testament in the New is easily discernible on subsequent

¹ E. g., E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, Edinburgh, 1957; S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Amsterdam, 1961; E. D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, Leiden, 1965; R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel with Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, Leiden, 1967.

² Op. cit., p. 149.

³ In this article I am utilizing considerable material which is included in my doctoral dissertation, *Paul's Use of the Psalms*, submitted to the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, 1968. The conclusions drawn here are based on the detailed examination of the individual quotations in that dissertation.

⁴ C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology*, London, 1952.

studies. When the Pauline Psalter quotations are reviewed, there is the opportunity to test Dodd's thesis that the New Testament writers selected whole portions of the Old Testament and that it is not the detached words, which serve as a pointer, but the total context that forms the basis of their argumentation. If Dodd's contention is correct, it is of considerable importance for a correct understanding of many of the quotations from the Psalms, which are often held to be taken arbitrarily out of their context by Paul.

Qumranic studies have also added significance to a study such as the present one, and in this connection the impetus created by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is along several lines. First, the claim is made that the exegetical method practiced at Qumran, which has come to be called *midrash peshet*, is very similar in many cases to New Testament methods. Stendahl⁵ has applied this comparison to the formula quotations in Matthew, while both Ellis and Kistemaker do so for the Pauline quotations.⁶ Secondly, discovery of the fragmentary manuscripts 4Q Testimonia and 4Q Florilegium, when considered along with a Greek manuscript which seems most probably to be a list of testimonies,⁷ has influenced the reopening of the testimony-book hypothesis associated with the name of J. Rendel Harris. Thirdly, the manner in which the Old Testament is employed in several of the Dead Sea Scrolls adds weight to other evidence which suggests that we must question the legitimacy of those definitions of quotation in the New Testament which would restrict it to passages from the Old Testament formally acknowledged as quotations by the presence of an introductory formula.

The accumulated evidence indicates that in the literary world in New Testament times it was the practice of authors to interweave with their own words quotations from other writers without any acknowledgment of the source, the readers being expected to recognize them as quotations. In defining what is meant by "quotation" in the New Testament, con-

⁵ K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament*, Uppsala, 1954.

⁶ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 146; Kistemaker, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

⁷ P. Ry1. Gk. 460. See C. H. Roberts, *Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester*, Manchester, 1936, pp. 47--62.

temporary literary practice must not be allowed so to dominate our thinking that we fail to do justice to the much broader concept of quotation prevailing in the ancient world. For the New Testament Swete's definition does not go beyond the evidence relating to literary practice in that period and is to be accepted as satisfactory: "By passages formally cited we understand (1) those which are cited with an introductory formula ... ; (2) those which, though not announced by a formula, appear from the context to be intended as quotations or agree verbatim with some context in the O.T."⁸ In the present study the attempt has been made to adhere to Swete's definition, and thus, where the context or wording of the passage suggests that it is a quotation from the Psalter, it has been included in the assessment of Paul's use of the Psalms.

The Pauline usage of the Psalter has been examined in the speeches attributed to Paul in the book of Acts and in the thirteen epistles traditionally ascribed to him (thus including the Pastorals but excluding Hebrews). However, the quotations from the Psalms are distributed unevenly over the Pauline speeches and epistles, being found only in Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, and Ephesians, as well as in the speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41). Of these quotations the majority occurs in Romans. This is evidently not because the Psalter was unknown among other Christians, but because the quotations from it suited Paul's purpose admirably when he was writing to the Roman church and blended harmoniously into the teaching he was seeking to impart to the Christians there. Moreover, they added the authority of the Old Testament scriptures to that teaching.

A. THE PSALTER QUOTATIONS AND SCRIPTURE

1. *The Text of the Psalter*

Paul's quotations from the book of Psalms cannot be traced back to a sole textual source, though the predominant influence was clearly the LXX Psalter.⁹ Out of twenty-seven

⁸ H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 2nd ed.; Cambridge, 1914, p. 382.

⁹ A list of the quotations, together with a textual classification, is given in the appendix to this article.

quotations, ten are in agreement with the LXX and the Hebrew, and three in agreement with the LXX against the Hebrew. To these must be added six quotations where the variation from the LXX is slight, being; due mainly to the necessity to adapt a quotation in order to fit a new context. When these facts are observed, together with the absence of any quotations agreeing with the Hebrew against the LXX, then it is obvious how strong the influence of the LXX Psalter has been upon him.

In seeking to ascertain the source of particular quotations, we must bear in mind Paul's trilingual background. His familiarity with the LXX, which is patent, would doubtless go back to childhood days. This would probably be true whether he was brought up in Tarsus, or, as van Unnik claims,¹⁰ in Jerusalem itself, for the evidence for the circulation of the LXX among the Jews in Palestine has been strengthened by the recent finds of portions of the LXX at Muraba'at.¹¹ But when we speak of the LXX as the source of so many of Paul's quotations we should bear in mind that in pre-Christian times the Pentateuch was the only part of the LXX which possessed a more or less stereotyped text, for the Greek text of other sections of the Old Testament was very fluid.

Because of its place in the worship of the Greek Diaspora and in the Christian church, the text of the LXX, it appears, has been subjected to a number of recensions, and "the possibility of variant readings is more obvious here than anywhere else owing to the need of copying and recopying the Psalter for use in the synagogue and church liturgy."¹² However, on

¹⁰ See his *Tarsus or Jerusalem: The City of Paul's Youth*, London, 1962.

¹¹ A. C. Sundberg, "The Old Testament of the Early Church," *Harvard Theological Review*, LI (1958), 213. On the trilingual milieu in first century Palestine, cf. R. H. Gundry, "The Language Milieu of First Century Palestine: Its Bearing on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXIII (1964), 404—408; and for a full discussion on the dissemination of a knowledge of Greek among all strata of Palestinian Jews in New Testament times, J. N. Sevenster, *Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known?*, Leiden, 1968.

¹³ B. J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions: The Hebrew Text in Transmission and the History of the Ancient Versions*, Cardiff, 1951, pp. 184 f.

the occasions when Paul deviates from the LXX in quoting from the Psalter, it does not seem that this is due to the use of variant LXX renderings, for none of his variations agrees with any known LXX manuscript. Even though manuscript evidence is lacking at present, the fact that recensional variations had commenced prior to New Testament times makes this a possible solution.

The employment by Paul of targums is another possible explanation for variations both from the LXX and the MT. Wilcox has rightly warned against treating any "aberrant" Old Testament quotation as a casual use of Scripture "without first attempting to determine whether its form can be traced in other textual traditions of the Old Testament, such as the Palestinian Targumim."¹³ The Targum on the Psalms (along with that of Job) contains many more variants from the MT than other Targums,¹⁴ while its style suggests that it is really "an eclectic combination of a number of Targumim."¹⁵ There is only one case among Paul's quotations from the Psalter where there may possibly be targumic influence, this being in Ephesians 4:8. Because of the widespread support for the contention that Paul is here citing the Targum, a fuller discussion of this point is apposite.

In quoting from Psalm 68:18 Paul deviates from the MT in that he substitutes the verb "gave" for "received": "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Repeatedly the statement is made that Paul is here simply adopting the rendering of the Aramaic Targum. For example, F. F. Bruce says: "The change . . . is intentional; Paul adopts this reading because it alone fits his context; but where did he get it from? The answer is — from a Targum, or traditional paraphrase of the Hebrew Old Testament in the Aramaic vernacular."¹⁶

¹³ M. Wilcox, *The Semitisms of Acts*, Oxford, 1965, p. 205.

¹⁴ W. Bacher, "Targum," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, XII, New York, 1906, 62.

¹⁵ B. J. Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

¹⁶ F. F. Bruce, in comments on a paper by B. F. C. Atkinson, "The Textual Background of the Use of the Old Testament by the New," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, LXXIX (1947), 60. More recently Bruce has said that "if this secondary reading [i. e., the

A very fanciful interpretation is given to Psalm 68:18 in the Targum, which refers it to Moses in his ascent to Mount Sinai to receive the Law. S. R. Driver's translation of the Targum rendering is as follows: "Thou didst ascend to the firmament, O Moses the prophet; thou didst take captivity captive; thou didst teach the words of the Law; thou didst give gifts to the children of men: but the rebellious ones who become proselytes, and repent, upon them resteth the Shekinah of the glory of the LORD God."¹⁷ A similar rendering of the verse, though more literal, is found in the Syriac Peshitta Old Testament. Driver was inclined to accept the view that the Peshitta had come under Jewish influence at this point,¹⁸ but it is more likely that the Peshitta reading arose under the influence of the New Testament version of the Psalm, or else independently. Recently Lindars has asserted that it is precarious to cite the Peshitta as supporting the Targum, and has pointed out how easily in Syriac, especially in the Estrangela script, the alteration could have occurred.¹⁹

When a comparison is made between the Targum rendering and Ephesians 4:8, it is apparent that a completely different interpretation of the passage is given in the two places. The only thing that is identical is the use of the verb "gave." It seems doubtful, therefore, that the claim that Paul was citing from the Targum version can be substantiated. The admission must be made that Paul may have been acquainted with the Jewish interpretation of the verse, but it would seem to be coincidental that the word "gave" occurs in both, in view of the essential difference in meaning and lack of other close verbal affinity. It is best to regard this as an instance of deliberate alteration by Paul in order to bring out the full meaning of the passage.

Despite widespread support for the contention that Paul

Targum] had not been available to him the first [the rendering of Ps. 68:18] would not have been unsuitable . . .": *The Epistle to the Ephesians: A Verse-by-Verse Exposition*, London, 1961, p. 82.

¹⁷ S. R. Driver, "Notes on Three Passages in St. Paul's Epistles," *Expositor*, IX, Third Series (1889), 22.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, London, 1961, p. 53, note.

has been influenced by the Targum in Ephesians 4:8, it cannot be substantiated that he was citing from it, and as this is the only case where there is any resemblance between the variations from the MT in his Psalter quotations and the Aramaic Targums, the conclusion must be drawn that the influence of these upon the text of Paul's quotations was negligible. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that Greek Targums were employed by Paul, though the possibility of the existence of such Targums must not be overlooked.²⁰

Quotation from memory is an explanation which is often advanced to explain variations from the MT and the LXX in quotations. It must have been difficult to find readily a reference in a papyrus roll,²¹ and though the use of codices doubtless facilitated the finding of particular passages, yet it seems likely that the widespread use of codices by the Christian church did not come until after the New Testament period.²² Thus it is most probable that many of the quotations in the New Testament were made from memory. The fact that the quotations from the Psalms in the New Testament have a tendency to be cited most accurately of all is by no means inconsistent with quotation from memory.²³ In that era memory was practiced and relied upon to a great extent, especially among the Jews,²⁴ and it would not be surprising if Paul and the other New Testament writers followed the common practice. Literary customs of that period should not be judged by those of the present day.

The application of this explanation to Paul's Psalter quotations faces certain difficulties. One is that at times accurate quotations from the LXX stand alongside ones with significant

²⁰ Cf. L. L. Morris, *The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries*, London, 1964, p. 32; Gundry, *op. cit.*, pp. 166 ff.

²¹ F. G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Oxford, 1932, p. 66.

²² C. C. McCown, "Codex and Roll in the New Testament," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXXIV (1941), 235; B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Oxford, 1964, p. 6.

²³ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁴ Cf. B. Gerhardson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, Uppsala, 1961, pp. 71ff.

variations (e. g., Rom. 3:13-14, where the quotations in verse 13 are accurate, but that in verse 14 is a variant text). Another is that on at least one occasion Paul quotes two consecutive verses, the first of which contains several alterations from the LXX, but the subsequent verse is a completely accurate citation of the LXX (Rom. 11:9-10). While alterations in word order and other minor variations may be explained by memory citation, yet it is difficult to believe that many of the major variations are to be explained in this way.

Another factor to which due weight must be given is that Paul often combined the functions of appellant and interpreter of Scripture. G. T. Purves, in his inaugural lecture at Princeton, expressed himself in this way with reference to Paul:

"He is ever bent on letting the light of the gospel on the Scripture, as well as on supporting the gospel by the Scripture. He never pretended that he had derived his doctrine from the Scripture. He always claimed that he had derived it by revelation from Jesus Christ. Then, however, he saw the meaning of Scripture, and could both appeal to it and explain it. His exegetical method therefore was determined by his practical purpose.... When quoting, he is often interpreting. Hence some of his striking combinations of passages. Hence his change of phraseology when occasion required. Hence his attitude now of reverence for its letter, and now of apparent disregard of its letter and attention solely to its essential meaning."²⁵

This factor appears to be the most satisfactory explanation of the variations in I Corinthians 3:20 and Ephesians 4:8, and may also explain those in Romans 3:14 and Romans 11:9. The remaining quotations, apart from those cases where the text has been altered to fit a new context²⁶ or perhaps to quotation from memory,²⁷ may have had their origin in another textual tradition, either in a recension of the LXX or possibly in a Greek Targum. The variations, then, which are manifested in Paul's quotations as compared with the LXX Psalter appear to be accounted for by a combination of factors rather than a single one.

²⁵ G. T. Purves, "St. Paul and Inspiration," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, XIII (1893), 19.

²⁶ Cf. Acts 13:35; Rom. 3:11; Rom. 3:18.

²⁷ Cf. Rom. 3:20; Rom. 15:9; Rom. 15:11; I Cor. 15:25; Gal. 2:16.

2. *The Testimony-Book Hypothesis*

Comment is necessary on the current discussion of the testimony-book hypothesis when dealing with Paul's Psalter quotations, for Rendel Harris, who developed this theory postulated in germ form by Hatch, appealed to several sections in the Pauline epistles involving quotations from the Psalter as proof of his theory. Many have criticized the theory as originally formulated, but at present the whole question is being reconsidered. This reconsideration rests largely on the basis of the papyrus fragment P. Ryl. Gk. 460, which could well be a fourth-century copy of a much earlier list of Old Testament prophetic passages, and the Qumran manuscripts 4Q Testimonia and 4Q Florilegium. The former of these manuscripts consists of Old Testament texts strung together without comment, while the latter comprises at least two Old Testament passages with an interpretative comment after the first one.

It is often maintained that the Psalter quotations in Romans 3:10 ff. are drawn, not directly from the Psalter itself, but from a selection already in existence. While it is true that some of the same texts, though in different order, are found later in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*,²⁸ yet it is more likely that Justin is dependent on Paul, rather than that both are drawing upon a testimony book. There is no other evidence to substantiate Paul's alleged dependence on another document at this point.

Rendel Harris himself cited²⁹ the evidence from Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* in his attempt to prove that in making his quotations in Romans 10-15 ff. Paul was depending upon written testimonies. In that passage Isaiah 53:1 is closely associated with Psalm 19.4. He also linked the use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 with the citation of the same passage by Justin Martyr.³⁰ The unconvincing nature of Harris' observations is shown by the fact that in the latter case he alleges that the variations in Justin Martyr are too

²⁸ *Dialogue*, XXVII.

²⁹ J. R. Harris, *Testimonies*, II, Cambridge, 1920, 25.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

striking to allow that he was quoting from Ephesians. If this were correct, it should follow that the variations are too great to allow for the use by both Paul and Justin Martyr of a single written source, but this is precisely what Harris contends took place.

A number of the Pauline quotations from the Psalms occur in other New Testament books. This shows the currency of the quotations, but the textual variations among them render it extremely difficult to see them as coming from one testimony-book source. If we take, for example, Psalm 110:1, which is quoted frequently in the New Testament, we find that it appears in five different forms. Admittedly, Paul replaces the LXX **εἰς δεξιῶν** on three occasions by **ἐν δεξιῶν**, which also appears in Hebrews alongside an accurate citation of the LXX text of the verse. However, the existence of a testimony book containing the quotation in this form is not the only solution which could be advanced to explain this form of the text. It is one thing to assert that Paul is following a tradition of exegesis; it is another to maintain that this tradition must of necessity have been *written*. Substantial evidence to support the testimony-book hypothesis is still lacking. For the present it is much more satisfactory to agree with T. W. Manson's observation that "the earliest form of the 'Testimony Book' was determined by the form of the primitive preaching and the book itself was written on the 'fleshy tablets' of the preacher's heart."³¹

That some portions of the Psalter had an important place in the apostolic preaching is patent, and the fact that Paul and John can quote different parts of the same verse is by no means accidental.³² The same applies to the use of Psalm 16:10 by both Peter and Paul.³³ These facts are not surprising considering that Paul claimed that the gospel he preached was the same as that proclaimed by the other apostles (I Cor. 15:11), and therefore common interdependent exegesis of Old

³¹ T. W. Manson, "The Argument from Prophecy," *Journal of Theological Studies*, XLVI (1945), 132.

³² Jn. 2:17; Rom. 15:3.

³³ Acts 2:27; 13:35.

Testament passages is only to be expected. In the case of Psalm 69 it is most probable that Paul and John were giving expression to such a common exegetical tradition in regard to this Psalm, especially when it is borne in mind that other verses from the same Psalm occur in Matthew, Mark, John, Acts, and Romans;³⁴ but this exegetical tradition appears on the face of present evidence to have been oral. Moreover, the fact that so many of Paul's quotations from the Psalms do not occur in any of the non-Pauline books of the New Testament is a pertinent reminder that the hypothesis of a written testimony book or of an unwritten exegetical tradition in regard to certain Old Testament texts fails to account for many of the Pauline quotations. If all, or at least most, of his quotations were drawn from a testimony book, it is surprising that other New Testament writers do not make use of more of these passages than they do. Therefore Hunter is correct when, in reference to an anthology of *testimonia*, he maintains: "Paul was too fully saturated in the Old Testament to be wholly dependent upon such a collection. The words and phrases of the Old Testament had become so much a part of his mental furniture that he could pick and choose quotations to suit his purpose."³⁵ Consequently, it is not difficult to believe that Paul himself first selected the catena in Romans 3:10 if, when his evident deep knowledge of the Psalter and width of selection from it is observed.

It is clear that so far as the Pauline Psalter quotations are concerned the testimony book hypothesis cannot adequately account for them. The textual variations in quotations of the same passage shed doubt on the theory, and by it the reason for Paul's choice from such a range of Psalms cannot be explained. As it is often presented, the hypothesis fails to take sufficiently into consideration the fact that Paul was deeply versed in the Psalter and was able to apply particular passages with penetrating understanding to the truths he was enunciating.

³⁴ Mt. 27:48; Mk. 15:36; Jn. 15:25; Acts 1:20a; Rom. 11:9 f.

³⁵ A. M. Hunter, *Paul and His Predecessors*, 2nd ed.; London, 1961; pp. 63 f.

3. *The Introductory Formulae*

The Pauline Psalter quotations are introduced by the same range of formulae as is employed in the New Testament in general and as Paul uses in regard to passages from other Old Testament books. While not all the Psalter quotations are introduced by formulae, yet there are some significant features in respect to those that are used. It is hardly surprising that the verb **graf w** is used most frequently, often in the perfect tense, so that the emphasis falls not just on a past divine action, but on the continuing results of that action.

The use of **gegraptai** in this connection is highly significant, for it is employed in the case of the Psalms, in which the element of subjective experience enters more fully than in most other sections of the Old Testament where revelation is from God to man *ab extra*. Vos has commented on this "subjective revelation" in the following way: "By this is meant the inward activity of the Spirit upon the depths of human sub-consciousness causing certain God-intended thoughts to well up therefrom. . . . Although brought up through a subjective channel, we none the less must claim for it absolute divine authority; otherwise it could not properly be called revelation. In this subjective form revelation and inspiration coalesce."³⁶ Thus revelation which was given by God in this manner is placed on exactly the same level as objective revelation, and the authority of the Psalmic passages is in no way less than that of the remainder of the Old Testament. It should also be remembered that quotations drawn in the main from the Psalter can be designated as "law" by Paul in Romans 3:19. In the catena of quotations in the preceding verses of that chapter there is none from the "law" in the strict sense, the Pentateuch.³⁷ This again shows that the intrinsic authority of revelation is not affected by the channel through which it was mediated.

³⁶ G. Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, Grand Rapids, 1959, p. 21.

³⁷ The Mishnah also employs the word "law" to refer to the Scriptures as a whole. Cf. B. M. Metzger, "The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXX (1951), 302.

On four occasions Paul uses **legw** to introduce Psalter quotations. In the first of these (Acts 13:35) God is the subject of the verb, yet in Psalm 16, from which the citation is made, the words are addressed to God. Clearly they can be considered as God's words because they form part of the text of the Old Testament.³⁸ In two other cases (Rom. 4:6; 11:9) David is mentioned as the subject of the verb, though this does not in any way diminish the authority of the quotation. From Romans 15:9ff., where a variety of formulae is employed, it is apparent that the authority of an Old Testament passage was in no way lessened when the human author was specified.

The other Pauline Psalter quotations are either introduced by an exceedingly brief formula (e. g., **menouñ ge**, Rom. 10:18; **kai>pañ in**, Rom. 15:11) or cited without any introductory formula at all. The brevity of formula in the Pauline usage can be compared with a similar usage in the Mishnah, though in general the Pauline and New Testament usage have closer affinity to Qumranic literature in this respect than to the later Mishnaic.³⁹

B. PAULINE HERMENEUTICS AND THE PSALTER

1. *Paul and Jewish Exegetical Methods*

It is instructive to make a comparison between Paul's interpretation of the Psalter and that represented in Jewish teaching, both rabbinic and Qumranic. If attention is directed first to the rabbinic interpretation, it is noticeable that Paul deviates from rabbinic method as well as from rabbinic exegesis. The claim has frequently been made that in certain instances, such as Acts 13.34 f. and Romans 4:6ff., Paul can use a quotation from the Psalter only by employing the second of Hillel's rules, namely, analogy of expressions. In

³⁸ Cf. on this point our Lord's attribution of words to God which in the Old Testament are not spoken by him (Matt. 19:5).

³⁹ Cf. Metzger, "The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the NT and the Mishnah," *op. cit.*, p. 305; J. A. Fitzmeyer, "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran Literature and in the New Testament," *New Testament Studies*, VII (1960-61), 305.

the former of the cases just mentioned, Paul, after quoting from Isaiah 55:3b, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David," proceeds to cite Psalm 15(16):10b, "Thou wilt not let thy holy one see corruption." There are certainly verbal connections between the two passages (**dwsw** in both verses, and **ton osion** with **taxosia**), but although *prima facie* it may appear that Paul was indulging in rabbinic practice by linking two passages with the same catchword,⁴⁰ yet a closer examination of the passage suggests otherwise. The Isaianic passage is a reflection on the original promise in II Samuel 7:16, and the adjectival form **taxista** in the LXX recalls the verb **pistow** used in the Samuel passage. In Isaiah 55:3 the promise is stated in general terms only, and in his speech Paul proceeds to show that this promise could not have been fulfilled were it not for the fact that the Messiah rose from the dead. The eternal covenant would not be an eternal one if the Messiah was subject to corruption. The citation from Psalm 16 is not only then to show the general connection of the promise to David with Jesus, but also probably to demonstrate how the incorruptibility of Jesus following his resurrection fulfills the promised prolongation of a reigning heir in II Samuel 7.⁴¹ Hence, the linking of Psalm 16 with the preceding quotation is not merely because of a formal, verbal connection but because the one of whom the Psalm speaks was raised from the dead as a signal demonstration of the fact that he was the Messiah, the one in whom the sure promises of the Davidic covenant were fulfilled.

The other passage involving a quotation from the Psalter concerning which the allegation is made that Paul is following rabbinic exegetical practice is Romans 4:6 ff. Having spoken of Abraham's faith as being reckoned for righteousness Paul adduces also David's position to show that Abraham's case was by no means an isolated one. Among other writers Barrett, while admitting that Paul's argument is "more than exegetical quibbling and playing with words," claims that

⁴⁰ Cf. the comments of K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, IV, London, 1933, 155, and C. S. C. Williams, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, London, 1957, pp. 164 f.

⁴¹ Cf. D. Goldsmith, "Acts 13 33—37: A Peshet on II Samuel 7," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXVII (1968), 321—324.

Paul proceeds by the word "reckon" (**logizesqai**) from Genesis 15:6 to Psalm 32:1 f., and that "too much is made to hang upon verbal links."⁴² Such an approach fails to recognize how deeply Paul has penetrated to the meaning of this whole Psalm, for it is permeated with expressions of confession, the blessedness of free pardon, and the consequent joy of the forgiven sinner. F. F. Bruce rightly notes: ". . . the link is not a merely formal one: the non-imputation of sin, in which the psalmist rejoices, amounts to the positive imputation of righteousness or pronouncement of acquittal, for there can be no verdict of 'not proven' in God's law court."⁴³

Rabbinic methodology, which connects passages having only a verbal link, is nowhere in evidence in Paul's use of the Old Testament. In other ways too, such as his use of merged quotations as in Romans 3:10 ff., Paul's methodology deviates from rabbinic practice, while the teaching he draws from various passages stands often in marked contrast to that found in rabbinic sources. In respect to a few citations there is some superficial similarity between Paul's interpretation and that of the Jewish teachers. However, in the majority of the Pauline quotations from the Psalter there is a marked dissimilarity. Oesterley, after a careful study of the way in which the Psalter was expounded by the Jews, came to the following conclusion: "There is no getting away from the fact that, in the main, Jewish exegesis of the Psalms is often artificial, sometimes trivial."⁴⁴ For the passages for which we also have the Pauline exposition, this conclusion is undoubtedly valid. In contrast to the forced and arbitrary exegesis which characterizes the work of the Jewish interpreters Paul's understanding of the Psalter quotations is marked by an assessment of each passage within its immediate context and in the light of progressive revelation.

The question of Qumranic influence on Paul's interpreta-

⁴² C. K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology*, London, 1962, pp. 32 f. See also his *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, London, 1962, p. 89.

⁴³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, London, 1963, pp. 115 f.

⁴⁴ W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms in the Jewish Church*, London, 1910, p. 197.

tion of the Psalter must also be faced. From the eleven caves of Qumran have come twenty-seven Psalter texts and fragmentary commentaries on a few Psalms. There are four of these ancient commentaries presently available for study. Taking them in their numerical order there is first the commentary on portions of Psalms 1 and 2 in 4Q Florilegium, published by Allegro.⁴⁵ Much more extensive is the commentary on Psalm 37 (4Q p Ps 37), parts of which were published originally by Allegro, and a reconstructed text of which Stegemann has issued more recently.⁴⁶ Two other fragmentary commentaries were found in Cave 1 at Qumran and published by Barthelemy and Milik in 1955,⁴⁷ consisting of some brief comments on Psalm 57 and a somewhat fuller interpretation of Psalm 68.

It is impossible to say whether the Qumran commentaries discovered so far are portions of exegesis covering the whole Psalter, or merely commentaries on a few isolated Psalms. What is clear, however, is that these portions are very similar in style to the other Qumran commentaries on the prophetic books and display the same approach to the text. The use of the same forced interpretative methods as used in rabbinic literature suggested to Brownlee the designation "midrash," with the term "pesher" added in order to distinguish it from other types of Jewish midrash.⁴⁸ Since Stendahl took up the term "midrash pesher" in his discussion of the Old Testament formula quotations in Matthew,⁴⁹ it has become common to

⁴⁵ J. M. Allegro, "Fragments of a Qumran Scroll of Eschatological MIDRAMM," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXVII (1958), 350—354.

⁴⁶ J. M. Allegro, "A Newly Discovered Fragment of a Commentary on Psalm XXXVII from Qumran," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 86 (1954), 69—75; "Further Light on the History of the Qumran Sect," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXV (1956), 89—95; H. Stegemann, "Der Pegser Psalm 37 aus Hohle 4 von Qumran (4 Q p Ps 37)," *Revue de Qumran*, IV (1963), 235—270.

⁴⁷ D. Barthelemy and J. T. Milik, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, I, Oxford, 1955, 81 f.

⁴⁸ W. H. Brownlee, "Biblical Interpretation among the Sectaries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Biblical Archeologist*, XIV (1951), 62; *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible with Special Attention to the Book of Isaiah*, New York, 1964, pp. 63 f.

⁴⁹ Stendahl, *op. cit.*

apply this term to the exegetical method of the New Testament writers in their treatment of the Old Testament.

Several points emerge from a study of the Pauline Psalter quotations in the light of Qumranic methodology. The first thing to be observed is that whereas the Qumranic commentaries neglect the sense and context of the original, this is not a feature of Paul's use of the Psalter. On the contrary, the context is heeded and often reflected in his writing, and it is obvious that the apostle is not imposing an arbitrary interpretation on the passage but seeking to expound and apply the principles that are clearly taught in it. Secondly, whereas there is considerable manipulation of texts by the Qumranic commentators, this procedure is absent from Paul's use of the Psalms. It is true that there are some variations from the MT and the LXX in his quotations, but most of these are of minor significance. Even in passages such as I Corinthians 3:20 and Ephesians 4:8 the word introduced into the text in each case is suggested in the immediate context in the Psalter. Thirdly, the Qumranic commentaries, including the fragmentary ones on the Psalms, re-interpret the text and apply it to an end-time situation introduced by the ministry of the Teacher of Righteousness. The Pauline treatment of the Psalter stands in striking contrast to this, for one cannot but be impressed by the literal exegesis displayed by Paul, over against the forced eschatological method of Qumran. Paul does apply passages to his own day, but the teaching contained in them was as true for the day in which they were written as for New Testament days. The apostle quotes them because of the permanent validity of their content, not because he was forcing an arbitrary meaning, with relevance exclusively to his own day, upon them. There are quotations from several Psalms which Paul applies to the Messiah. However, these are the words not just of a human commentator on the Scripture, but an inspired interpreter of it, who was applying prophetic teaching of the Psalms to the divine Messiah.

The Psalter quotation most often identified as a case of *midrash pesher* is undoubtedly Ephesians 4:8. Admittedly there is a superficial resemblance between Paul's procedure there and the *midrash pesher*, though it is apparent that Paul respects the context in Psalm 68 from which the quotation is

taken. His application of this verse to the ascension of Christ must be seen in the light of his exegetical principles as a whole, and cannot be compared with the forced manner in which the Qumran commentaries apply passages to the Teacher of Righteousness. In these circumstances it is much more satisfactory to avoid referring to Paul's use of the Psalter as exemplifying the *midrash pesher* type of exegesis, when, in spite of some similarities, his method differs so radically from that practiced at Qumran. Fitzmeyer's conclusion, that the similarities between Pauline and Qumranic exegetical practices affect only the periphery of their theologies,⁵⁰ is certainly valid for the comparison of the Pauline and Qumranic interpretation of the Psalter. The differences are so great between Paul's use of the Psalms and that of the Qumran covenanters that it can only be concluded that Paul has certainly not borrowed his exegetical principles from Qumran. Any superficial similarities between the two methods are due to the common background and not to direct influence.

2. Contextual Quotation

Strong indictments have often been brought against Paul for his alleged failure to heed the context of the Old Testament passages which he cites.⁵¹ An assessment must be made whether any claim in this direction insofar as the Pauline Psalter quotations are concerned can be substantiated. There is also the further question to which an answer is required, namely, whether the passages are cited solely for the teaching contained in them, or whether they are pointers to their whole context.

A careful analysis of the Psalter quotations fails to confirm the charge concerning neglect of context. In contrast to the manner in which quotations in rabbinic literature and in the Dead Sea Scrolls are isolated from their context, Paul constantly shows that heed has been paid to the context from which his quotations come. This is true even of those from the Psalter in Romans 3:10 ff., which Edgar claims do

⁵⁰ Fitzmeyer, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

⁵¹ Cf., as representative of more recent writers, S. L. Edgar, "Respect for Context in Quotations from the Old Testament," *New Testament Studies*, IX (1962-63), 56.

not prove the universality of sin as in most cases they refer only to the enemies of Israel.⁵² This passage is perhaps the most significant one to take in order to see whether the claim made by Edgar and others can be substantiated. The list of citations commences with words from the opening of Psalm 14, which depict vividly the sinful condition of the whole world, and such a statement includes all to whom it is applicable. Following this general assertion Paul adduces passages which show that depravity is manifested in concrete ways by various parts of the body, with special emphasis on the way in which the sinful character of man reveals itself most pointedly in his speech. The source of all this diverse disclosure of sin is traced finally to the heart (Rom. 3:18). Gifford's comment on this catena is most apt: ". . . the passages cited would bear all that is laid upon them, even if they were less explicit as to universality of sin than some of them are."⁵³

The universal application of these quotations is made explicit in the words of Romans 3:19: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God" (ARV). The law does not only condemn the Jews who possessed it, but the Gentiles as well, for clearly Paul regards the latter as well as the former as being "under the law." While without the Old Testament law, yet the Gentiles "were not outside the sphere of the judgment which the Old Testament pronounced. This is saying that the descriptions given in those passages quoted were characteristic of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews and the corresponding judgment rested upon them to the end that they all might be without excuse and be condemned in the sight of God."⁵⁴ Hence, a true appreciation of the force of this verse leads one to a recognition of the invalid nature of many of the criticisms levelled against the Pauline use of the Old Testament in this section of his epistles. Moreover, when Paul's purpose in adducing this list of Old Testament verses is seen,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ E. H. Gifford, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: With Notes and Introduction*, London, 1886, p. 87.

⁵⁴ J. Murray, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, I, London, 1960, 106 f.

much criticism of the way in which he is alleged to have taken these verses out of their contexts in the Psalms is also negated. Paul has not arbitrarily selected phrases regardless of context, for in every case the context is consonant with his purpose.

When each quotation is seen in its original setting, it is apparent that the passage as a whole contains the teaching which is often expressed in condensed form in the words actually chosen by Paul. In many cases other verses from the same passage could conceivably have been chosen which would have had the same effect in the argument. No charge against the apostle Paul of arbitrarily selecting Psalter quotations and abstracting them from their contexts can be substantiated. Repeatedly a single verse of a Psalm aptly sums up the significance of the context from which it is drawn, and many of the quotations can be explained adequately only when viewed in their original setting.

The closely related question whether a text is cited to draw attention to the whole context has been brought to the fore by C. H. Dodd, though the assertion he makes was known to, and expressed by, earlier writers.⁵⁵ Speaking of the New Testament writers, Dodd says: "We have seen reason to suppose that they often quoted a single phrase or sentence not merely for its own sake, but as a pointer to a whole context — a practice by no means uncommon among contemporary Jewish teachers, as they are reported in the rabbinic literature."⁵⁶ In general Dodd believes that this is evidenced by the fact that frequently the same Old Testament passage is cited by more than one New Testament writer, and often adjacent sentences from the same context are quoted. This thesis has been challenged by Sundberg,⁵⁷ who denies that the citation of contiguous Old Testament passages by more than one New Testament writer necessarily indicates that a wider

⁵⁵ Cf. E. C. S. Gibson, "The Sources of St. Paul's Teaching: II, The Old Testament," *Expositor*, IV, Second Series (1882), 127; E. G. King, "St. Paul's Method of Quotation," *Expositor*, X, Third Series (1889), 234; A. Carr, "The Eclectic Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," *Expositor*, XI, Sixth Series (1905), 346.

⁵⁶ C. H. Dodd, *The Old Testament in the New*, Philadelphia, 1963, p. 20. Cf. also his *According to the Scriptures*, p. 126.

⁵⁷ A. C. Sundberg, "On Testimonies," *Novum Testamentum*, III (1959), 270 ff.

context is in view. Up to a point Sundberg's criticism of Dodd's position is valid, but the fact that repeatedly quotations are drawn from adjacent sentences in the Old Testament or from detached sentences within the same chapter does show that the context was well known to the early Christian writers. This renders Dodd's hypothesis plausible, especially when we consider that many of the early readers of the New Testament were extremely well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures, so that a single key verse could easily recall for them the context from which it came.

An evaluation of Dodd's thesis can be made only on the basis of a detailed examination of the individual quotations. Some observations can be made with respect to the Pauline quotations from the Psalter. In quite a few cases, such as the use of Psalm 36:1 in Romans 3:18 or that of Psalm 32:1 in Romans 4:7-8, the remainder of the Psalm from which the verse comes is extremely relevant to Paul's argument, and there are often connections in thought and language between the context in Paul's writing and the particular Psalm. One must at least allow for the possibility that in these cases a single verse may be intended as a pointer to its whole context. More definite grounds for supporting Dodd's position come from the citation of verses whose application to the point in question is inexplicable without an understanding of the context. It is difficult to conceive that Paul would employ such a verse unless he intended his readers to recall the complete Psalm and thus appreciate the significance of the citation. An illustration of this may be given. In Romans 10:18 Paul quotes the words of Psalm 19:4, "Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." This quotation is applied to the hearing by Israel of the message of salvation. To appreciate the significance of the quotation the parallelism in the Psalm must be borne in mind. The first part of the Psalm (verses 1-6) is concerned with general revelation, while the second part (verses 7-14) deals with special revelation.⁵⁸ When Paul takes over verse 4 of the Psalm and applies it to the extent to which the Gospel has been proclaimed abroad, he is not doing violence to the context but rather respecting it. He has chosen the verse

⁵⁸ Cf. the discussion on this verse in Murray, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 61.

from the Psalm which most graphically expresses the universal character of God's revelation. Paul's use of this verse is explicable only to a reader aware of the context in Psalm 19 and the parallelism inherent in it. In a case such as this it seems most probable that Paul intended the one verse to recall the whole Psalm to the mind of the reader.

In three other passages in the Pauline epistles involving Psalter quotations there is more definite evidence to suggest that Paul had in mind the fuller context. The first verse of Psalm 117 is quoted in Romans 15:11 in connection with the thought that Christ came to minister in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. The only other verse in that Psalm seems to lie behind the use by Paul of the thoughts of truth and mercy in verses 8–9 of the same chapter. Then in I Corinthians 3:20 the alteration of **twñ aḥqrwpwn** to **twñ sof wñ** in the quotation of Psalm 94:11 appears to be Paul's summing up of the character of the worldly wise, and so reflects the context in the Psalm, where the emphasis is placed on the contrast between the ways of God and the ways of men. Finally, the knowledge of more of the context of Psalm 4 seems to be implied by Paul in Ephesians 4:26 than just the few words he quotes, for the second part of verse 26 is most probably a reflection of further words in that Psalm.

The conclusion to which this evidence points is that in some instances of Psalter quotations Paul does intend to draw attention to the whole context and not just to a few isolated words. It is difficult to be certain that this is so, hence it is wise to approach the question with more caution than Dodd has done in stating his position. The Psalter quotations taken as a whole do not appear to be mere "proof texts," but when seen in their wider setting add point and significance to Paul's arguments. To readers, the majority of whom would be well versed in the LXX Psalter, such quotations would serve as a pointer to the larger passage. There is sufficient evidence to regard at least some of his quotations as being indicative of the fact that the wider context was before the apostle's mind as he wrote and that he also wished his readers to recall the whole context and apply it to the question under discussion.

APPENDIX
PAULINE PSALTER QUOTATIONS

Classification:⁵⁹

- 1 — in agreement with the LXX and the Hebrew
- 2 — in agreement with the LXX against the Hebrew
- 3 — in agreement with the Hebrew against the LXX
- 4 — at variance with the LXX and the Hebrew where they agree
- 5 — at variance with the LXX and the Hebrew where they vary
- * — indicates only a slight variation from the LXX

NT	OT	Classification
Acts 13:22	Ps. 89:20	1
13:33	2:7	1
13:35	16:10	4*
Rom. 3:4b	51:4	2
3:11–12	14:2–3	4
3:13a	5:10	1
3:13b	140:4	2
3:14	10:7	5
3:18	36:1	4*
3:20	143:2	4
4:7–8	32:1	2
8:36	44:22	1
10:18	19:4	1
11:9–10	69:22–23	5
15:3	69:9	1
15:9	Ps. 18:49	4*
15:11	117:1	4*
I Cor. 3:20	94:11	4*
10:26	24:1	1
15:25	110:1	4
15:27	8:6	4
II Cor. 4:13	116:10	1
9:9	112:9	1
Gal. 2:16	143:2	4
Eph. 1:22	8:6	4
4:8	68:18	4*
4:26	4:4	1

⁵⁹ This classification is that of Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

This material is cited with gracious permission from:

Westminster Theological Seminary
Chestnut Hill
Philadelphia, PA 19118
www.wts.edu

Please report any errors to Ted Hildebrandt at: thildebrandt@gordon.edu

Psalm 23 King James Bible 1611 Poem Text Poem Summary Themes Style Historical Context Critical Overview Criticism Sources For Further Study Source for information on Psalm 23: Poetry for Students dictionary. Psalm 23 is perhaps the most universally recognized of the psalms. Its popularity over the centuries stems from both the beauty of its poetry and the intensity with which the psalmist expresses trust in God. Its power derives from the crisp use of metaphor—the assumed, rather than directly stated, comparison between God and a shepherd. The nature of this comparison must have been evident to ancient Hebrews who meditated upon this poem.