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Pindar and St. Paul.

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IT is becoming constantly clearer that in the study of the New Testament we are dealing, in the main, with a fundamentally Hellenized product, and that, as regards St. Paul in particular, neither his philosophy nor his language will be finally intelligible to us until we have taken off from him his Rabbinic robe, and moved him away from the feet of Gamaliel. He has been in that position of affected Semitism long enough. He does not, indeed, tell us of his attendance upon other University Professors, but his writings tell us, and they sparkle with genuine Greek quotations and allusions. Nor is it only St. Paul that is under the spell and magic of Greek learning and literature; we know now, what appears to have been hidden from a number of generations, that the Fourth Gospel is based upon Greek antecedents and is not, in its Prologue, a transcript of Hebrew meditations; if we are to understand it, we must find a Stoic teacher to take us by the hand, and explain to us the terms and read to us the riddle of its composition. If this sounds somewhat revolutionary, it is a wholesome revolution, and will result in a more stable theology than the schools have sometimes offered us.

But we were speaking of St. Paul in the first instance, and we recall the fact of his using occasionally quotations from Greek poets. The expositors, ancient and modern, detected for us a number of them, such as the Menander quotation in 1 Co 15, the Epimenides extract in the Epistle to Titus, and the Cleanthes-Aratus doctrine in Ac 17, whereby our kinship to the All-Father is expounded. Then there is the further discovery of an extended extract from the *Minos* of Epimenides, in Ac 17, over and above what is found in the Epistle to Titus, and the proof that it is to this author that we must refer the words, 'In Him we live, and move, and are.'¹ And what are we to say of St. Paul describing his conversion, where the Lord speaks to him in Hebrew, and promptly translating out of this hypothetical Hebrew into a corresponding Greek proverb, which may have come to him from Pindar or from Æschylus?

¹ See *Expositor*, Oct. 1906, Ap. 1907, Oct. 1912, and Jan. 1915.

The case of a possible dependence upon Pindar is of peculiar interest. It would mean scholarship of a higher order than was necessary to quote the *Ion* of Euripides, as we have shown him to have done in the observation that Tarsus was 'no mean city,'² and was, in fact, a modern Athens. In the present article I propose to go in search of another Pindar quotation in the New Testament. Without committing ourselves prematurely to a Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, and using the name Paul in a general sense, we propose to show that there is a thinly disguised Pindaric quotation in the Second Epistle to Timothy.

In chap. 2⁷ we have the injunction of the Apostle to his favourite disciple:

νόει ὃ λέγω

('Mind what I am saying to you').

It will raise an incredulous smile on the face of the critic to be told that this is a quotation from Pindar. Cannot one person call the attention of another without straying into Greek literature? So simple an appeal must surely be at home in every language and every literature. Let us look into the matter a little more closely. The writer repeats his appeal; he says, 'God give you understanding in all things'; we note the word *σύνεσις* for 'understanding,' and by means of it restore the proverbial form *σύνες ὃ σοι λέγω*. We are to show that this is Pindar, and that it is commonly introduced as such. For example, in one of the charming letters of Gregory of Nazianzus, so full of the spoils of the Egypt which he is supposed to have left,³ we find it in the form *ὡς φησὶν Πίνδαρος*, and the only thing wrong about the reference is that either Gregory or his copyists have dropped the Doric form: it should be

σύνες ὃ τοι λέγω.

When we turn to Plato we shall find evidence of the currency of the quotation; for example, in the *Meno*⁴ where Socrates and Meno are having a dialogue on form and colour, we find as follows:

² THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, Oct. 1919.

³ Patr. Gr. 37, col. 211.

⁴ P. 76 D.

SOC. Then there is such a thing as sight?

MENO. Yes.

SOC. And now, as Pindar says, 'read my meaning'; *σύνες ὁ τοι λέγω*—colour is an effluence of form, commensurate with sight, and sensible.

MENO. That, Socrates, appears to me to be an admirable answer.

In the *Phædrus*¹ we have the same quotation, though it is not commonly recognized, because Pindar is not mentioned. Phædrus is trying to make Socrates deliver a discourse; he says:

'I would have you consider that from this place we stir not till you have unbosomed yourself of the speech; for here are we all one, and I am stronger, remember, and younger than you; therefore perpend (*σύνες ὁ τοι λέγω*) and do not compel me to use violence.'

So far the quotation has been employed in a colourless manner; but enough has been said to show that Pindar is really involved, and that the Pindaric formula underlies the language of the Pauline Epistle; we must now try to get closer to the original, and, if possible, find out more about the sense in which the words were originally used.

Our next guide will be Aristophanes. When the *Birds*, in the play of that name, have succeeded in building a town in the air, to be called Cloud-Cuckoo-bury, there appears on the scene a lean and hungry poet, who wishes to celebrate the occasion, and to be paid for the verses which he sings. He proceeds to quote Pindar, we may say he is Pindar. He is doing what Pindar is said to have done at the court of Hieron, the tyrant of Syracuse. Here is the passage as rendered in Rogers' translation:

POET. Ætna's Founder, father mine
Whose name is the same as the holy altar flame,
Give to me what thy bounty chooses
To give me willingly of thine.

¹ 236 D.

The poet is promptly rewarded with a jerkin stripped from the attendant sacrificing priest. But he is not satisfied; he says:

This little kindly gift the Muse
Accepts with willing condescension;
But let me to an apt remark
Of Pindar call my lord's attention.

Out among the Scythians yonder
See poor Straton wander, wander,
Poor, poor Straton, not possessed of a whirly-woven
vest,

All inglorious comes, I trow, leather jerkin, if below
No soft tunic it can show.
Conceive my drift, I pray.

(*ξύνες ὁ τοι λέγω.*)

Whereupon the priest is stripped of his tunic also, and poor Tom, who was a-cold, goes away happy. Now the meaning of all this, as the Scholiasts explain, is that on a certain occasion Hieron had rewarded Pindar with a team of mules, and Pindar had asked for more, almost in the very terms which the poet uses in the *Birds*. He had asked in verse for a carriage to go with the mules; lo! Straton, the poor Scythian, lives in a wagon, and is thought little of if he doesn't possess one.

Apparently Pindar got his carriage, and is caricatured as a mendicant poet by Aristophanes, begging first for a jacket and then for a shirt. Here, then, we see the origin of the proverb that we went in search of. Was there a special motive in the use of the quotation which we have shown to be in the mind of the writer of the Epistle? We cannot be sure of this; there seems to be no special meaning in its use by Gregory or by Plato. If there is any such it arises out of the advice given to Timothy in the previous verse, to live at other people's charges, and to claim the first place in the distribution of a harvest. In that case it would be a broad hint to reintroduce the practice of assigning the first fruits to the spiritual men. The *Teaching of the Apostles* does the same, on the ground that 'the prophets are your high priests.'