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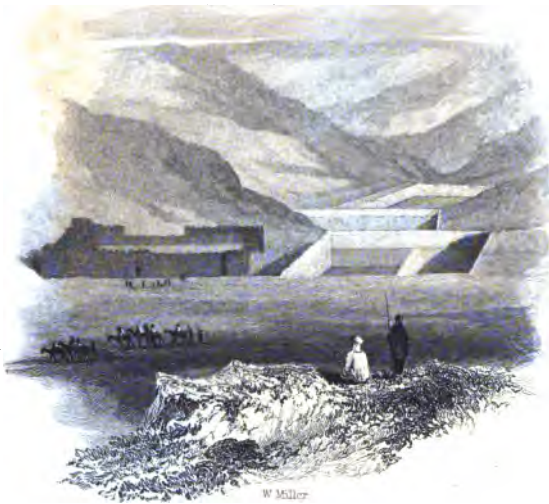
MOUNT ZION.

WILLIAM CLIPPANT AND COMPANY EDINBURGH, 1867

DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS

BY JOHN KITTO D.D.

JOE AND THE POETICAL BOOKS.



The Pools of Solomon.

WILLIAM OLEPHANT AND COMPANY EDINBURGH 1867

DAILY
BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

JOHN KITTO, D.D. F.S.A.,

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NEW EDITION REVISED AND ENLARGED BY

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EVENING SERIES.

JOB AND THE POETICAL BOOKS.

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P R E F A C E .



IN presenting to the Public the first Volume of an EVENING SERIES of the DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS, it is not necessary to remind the reader of the plan of the Work, which has already been fully explained and exemplified.

The successive Volumes of the former Series took much of their character from the nature of the subjects which they embraced ; but the prevailing tone of the whole was historical—dealing chiefly with material facts, and with men and nations in their acts, their characters, their sentiments, and their passions.

In like manner will the Volumes of the present Series derive their complexion from the portions of Scripture of which they treat. While, therefore, the main design has been kept closely in view, the present Volume will be found to differ considerably from those that have preceded it, as well as from those that are to follow.

This Volume relates to the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. These we call THE POETICAL BOOKS ; not because they are the only Poetical Books, but because, separately regarded, they are usually so distinguished, while the other Books which also contain poetry, and that of the highest order, come better under the designation of Prophetical Books.

The absence of historical, and (except in Job) of personal details, in this portion of Holy Writ, has dictated the necessity of a peculiar mode of treatment, and has afforded opportunity for the introduction of topics which are of especial interest in regard to these Books; and to which we feel the more satisfaction in inviting the attention of our readers, from the fact, that they are not usually found in books designed for popular use, though they tend greatly to promote an intelligent knowledge of the Sacred Volume. The construction of the several Books has thus been explained, their arguments have been stated, and various particulars concerning their history have been furnished.

The consideration of the Book of Job occupies the largest share of this Volume. In that Book, the main interest and instruction depend on understanding aright the arguments of the disputants. Accordingly, after explaining the nature of the Book, and entering fully into so much of the personal history of the Patriarch as it supplies, we have conducted the reader through the poem, not chapter by chapter, but speech by speech, showing the purport of each, and then illustrating some of its more remarkable passages.

The hundred and fifty Sacred Songs which compose the Book of Psalms, having no historical or logical coherence, were not open to this mode of treatment, nor could any other be devised which should fully bring *their contents* within the scope of our undertaking. It was, therefore, found best to limit attention to matters of general interest concerning them, and to give such an explanation as circumstances allowed of the Hebrew system of poetry. This seemed necessary in a Volume treating of the Poetical Books, and was especially appropriate to the Psalms, from which the illustrations are derived.

Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs are among the most aggrieved books of Scripture. We have endeavoured to set their claims in a proper light, and to vindicate them from injurious aspersions. In regard to Ecclesiastes, this has been attempted by stating, first of all (not consecutively, as in Job), the real design and the argument of the sacred writer, and we have then applied ourselves to the consideration of some of the more signal matters which the Book contains.

Upon the whole, although the present Volume comprises a large proportion of material facts and incidents, it has more of a literary cast than any of the others. This will, we trust, appear in the entire Series as an agreeable diversity, and we are without fear that this Volume will be regarded as less interesting than the others, because the writer has in some places made rather more than usual claim upon the reader's attention.

LONDON, *December* 1851.

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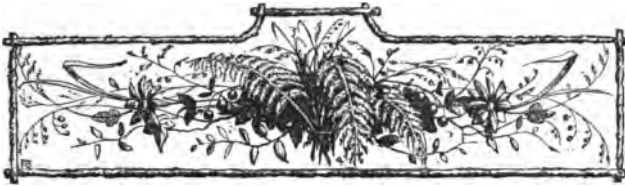
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DAILY BIBLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

First Week—First Day.

DESIGN OF THE BOOK OF JOB.



HE Book of Job is one of the most remarkable, not only in the Bible, but in all literature. As was said of Goliath's sword—'There is none like it;' none in ancient or in modern literature. Hence the difficulty of those who have laboured to define the class of compositions to which it belongs. It belongs to no class; it is a class by itself.

This day we limit our view to the *object* of this not merely singular, but perfectly unique book.

The design appears, at the first view, to be like that of the greatest of human poems, 'to justify the ways of God to man;' and this, in the largest sense, is the correct view of it. Yet the ways of God, so often, to man's imperfect view, 'puzzled with mazes,' cannot be said to be forensically vindicated therein. Much is stated to correct crude notions of the Lord's dealings with man in this state of life: but the result rather binds us up in the position, that the greatness and infinite wisdom of God being demonstrated by his marvellous works, the only satisfactory conclusion in which erring and feeble man can rest, is, that He doeth all things well; and that by reason of his perfections, which render wrong-doing impossible to Him, we are bound to believe that whatever tempts us to mistrust and mis-

giving must ultimately prove to be consistent with eternal justice.

The book is, in fact, engaged with the great problem regarding the distribution of good and evil in the world, especially as viewed in connection with the doctrine of a righteous retribution in the present life. It sets forth the struggle between faith in the perfect government of God, and the various doubts excited by what is seen and felt of human misery, and by what is known of the prosperity of many among those who are despisers of God. The subject thus appears to be one that comes home to men's business and bosoms. Even under the light of Christianity, there are, perhaps, few who have not at particular seasons felt the strife between faith in the perfect government of the world, and the various feelings excited in the mind by what they have experienced of human suffering. The pains of the innocent, of those who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, the protracted calamities which are often the lot of the righteous, and the prosperity which frequently crowns the designs of the wicked, have at times excited wonder, perplexity, and doubt in every thinking mind. We, as Christians, silence our doubts and confirm our faith, not only by what experience teaches of the general wisdom and benevolence of the Creator, and by the consideration that affliction comes from the same hand which is the source of all our blessings, but, by an enlightened perception of the moral and religious uses of adversity; by the assured hope of that joy in a better world, which belongs to those who endure to the end; and, above all, by the filial conviction which ought to become, and which often is, a principle of action in all the relations of life, that He who spared not his own Son to secure our redemption from the calamities of sin, cannot possibly, after such proof of his love, mean other than well and kindly to us, no less in the bitter than the sweet which He casts into our lot.

But to understand and appreciate the object of the Book of Job, and the discussion which it embraces, we are bound to overlook some of the sources of consolation which are open to us as Christians, and try to enter into the state of mind of

men upon whom the Sun of Righteousness had not yet risen, although there may have been indications in the warm flush of the distant horizon to tell that He was coming. It is surely not strange that the soul of a pious patriarch, or even of a pious Jew who lived before life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel, might have been sorely exercised by the conflict between such a faith in even-handed retribution here as his religion warranted him to expect, and the doubts and murmurs excited by what he felt and saw of the calamities of the righteous, and by what he witnessed of the prosperity of the wicked.

To this state of mind, and to the development of the great question, thus limited, the Book of Job is devoted. Its form is well suited to the subject. We have, first, an historical introduction, stating the circumstances which gave rise to the discussion; being the sudden calamity and worldly overthrow of a man eminent for integrity and righteousness, in such a manner as suggested that he was specially afflicted of God. The secret object of this, in the counsels of Heaven, is disclosed to us; and the lines of diverging error, through which the various parties, in the discussion that ensues, pass in their attempts to reconcile the astonishing event with their preconceived notions, frequently illustrate the fact that, in such dispensations, there are divine objects to be accomplished which man cannot discover or take into account; and the possible existence of which ought in all cases to prevent harsh judgment, and to shut the complaining mouth. In the case before us, the harsh judgment is represented in the various views which the friends of Job take of his sad condition; while Job himself opens the complaining mouth not very temperately. The true view of the case is hinted at eventually by a strange person, who comes in as a sort of voluntary umpire between the disputants. This is Elihu, who, although he appears abruptly at last, his presence not having been previously indicated, nevertheless declares himself to have been an attentive listener to the whole discussion. This view is further confirmed by the Lord himself, who finally appears, and who, in a strain of the most magnificent utterances ever delivered in the language of man, convicts the disputants on both sides of

ignorance and presumption, and brings Job himself to a right mind, which he expresses in the words: 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: *wherefore* I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

In the result Job is pardoned and restored; and the conclusion is such as to sanction the prevalent idea of the finally retributive character, even in this world, of the divine government; for 'the Lord blessed his latter end more than his beginning,' restoring double to him of all his prosperity and wealth. This, in fact, was the argument of the friends of Job; but the fault was, that they did not wait 'to see the end.' Even in their view of the divine government by temporal retribution, it is visibly impossible safely to pass such judgments as they were in haste to pronounce, until the end of all is seen, for there is no afflicted man whose prosperity may not be restored with large increase; and while that remains possible, no judgment upon his conduct can be founded upon his condition, which may be but temporary—may be but an incident in his career. But in truth, while we, to a certain extent, are ready enough to repudiate the principles upon which these men reasoned, their reasoning is practically that which prevails in the world to this day; for there has rarely yet been a man, fallen from prosperity into trouble, who has not found many friends, like those of Job, ready to lay all the blame of his misfortunes upon himself, and to trace his ruin to his misconduct, which *now* becomes apparent, or which is assumed even if no trace of it can be found. Oh, what a world were this, if man's happiness rested upon the judgment of his fellows, or if the troubled spirit had no appeal from man's judgment to One who judgeth righteously!

The Book of Job affords one of the most striking illustrations, and one of the most convincing proofs, of the great truth stated by the Apostle Paul: 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.' All things—the sorest trials, the bitterest persecutions, the private sorrows that sometimes wring the very heart, and seem calculated to surpass patience, and to quench hope—all these, under the

guidance of a God infinite in wisdom and in power, co-operate for the real, because the eternal, welfare of God's people. This is the grand lesson taught by the Book of Job.

Job himself failed at first to perceive it, because he was blinded by self-righteousness. He judged himself by a human instead of a divine standard. His three friends failed to perceive it, because their observations, though in one view searching and exhaustive, were confined within too limited a sphere. They had regard to time and temporal concerns alone; whereas the government of God extends to man's spiritual interests, and reaches away into eternity.

The book, as Eichhorn states, may be regarded as a dialogue between sages respecting the government of the world. The remarkable case of Job formed at once an occasion for the discussion, and an illustration of the arguments. Misunderstood by all parties, the question was finally and authoritatively settled by God himself; while a practical proof of the efficacy of the divine plan was afforded in the closing history of the patriarch. Here, as elsewhere in Scripture, the revelation of divine truth assumes the form of historical development, as contradistinguished from abstract statement or reasoning.

One great principle of the divine government Job and his opponents wholly overlooked. The training of God's people in this world is disciplinary. 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. . . . But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.' Job's final experience was a full realization of the Psalmist's remarkable declaration: 'Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.' This principle of God's disciplinary government is brought out with great clearness and force by Elihu, whose views were professedly enunciated under divine inspiration. Elihu's address is broken off, almost abruptly, by the Lord himself, who appears in the whirlwind and closes the debate. In His sublime discourse, there is no attempt to defend his government. That is not necessary now. He asserts his own infinite majesty, and the duty of implicit and profound submission under all the dispensations of providence. He shows that in his ordinary works in nature, there are many things far beyond man's finite power of comprehension. Such being the case, is it to be supposed that man could fully comprehend the working of His moral government? 'The general thought running through the discourse is, that God is supreme, that He has a right

to rule as He will ; that there are many things in his government inexplicable to human wisdom, but that it is presumptuous in man to sit in judgment on them.' Man's duty, under every dispensation of providence, is to bow before God with profound submission to his will, and faithful adoration of his wisdom and love.

First Week—Second Day.

THE BOOK OF JOB NOT A PARABLE.

THERE was a notion among the old Jewish writers that the Book of Job was not a real history, nor the man Job a real person, but that the book contained an imaginary narrative framed to teach a great moral truth. The Talmud distinctly declares the book to be a parable, and that the man Job never had any real existence. But it admits that all 'the wise' were not of this opinion. There is no objection of principle to this notion, if it could be sustained. There are parables in Scripture, and the teaching they impart is not the least valuable that the sacred books contain. If a book come to us by inspiration from God, its teachings equally demand our respect, in whatever shape they come—whether of history, of prophecy, of song, of discourse, of epistle, or of parable. It is not therefore from any essential repugnance to this hypothesis, or from any notion that the book would be discredited by it, but from internal evidence and from collateral circumstances, that we feel constrained to pronounce the position to be untenable, and to declare our belief that Job was a real person, and that the Book of Job is a real history.

As, however, ancient and modern names of eminence may be cited in favour of the opinion that the book is of the nature of a parable, it may be worth our while to look into this question.

There are certain rules which may at all times enable a person experienced in literary criticism to distinguish between a real narrative and a parable. Since these rules were indicated by Chrysostom in reference to another book, they have

often been produced by writers as bearing upon the argument involved in the present question. By no modern writer have they been more fully and ably stated than by Dr. Samuel Lee,¹ whose remarks, although in larger extent, are to the following effect :

Parables are necessarily short ; when lengthened out, they are termed allegories ; and as the characters introduced in each case are brought forward for some specific purpose, no more is usually said of them than is absolutely necessary to this end. We never have, for example, in this sort of writing, the genealogy, the circumstances of family, the particular recital of children, friends, wealth, age, etc., of the parties concerned dwelt upon. The events immediately connected with the discourse are solely mentioned ; and, as the narrative must be short in the case of parable, the conclusion is soon drawn ; and the narrative itself is never after referred to, although the doctrine which it was intended to illustrate and enforce may be and often is. The reason of such omissions is obvious. If a teacher were to dwell upon circumstances and events unconnected with his main object, the force of his doctrine would evaporate under them. If, for example, in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, we had the pedigree, the place of abode, the age, etc., of either or both these characters minutely detailed, we should have a mass of information which would be perfectly useless ; and what is more, the point intended by the parable would be greatly obscured. We may, however, have lengthened parables or *allegories*, and in these the descriptions may be more lengthy and more minute. In these cases, therefore, should such exist, all the particulars adverted to might possibly occur, yet it does not appear probable that they would. This may be illustrated by a reference to that most perfect as well as most protracted allegory, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the author of which, notwithstanding the ample scale on which his plan was cast, was led, by the native impulses of his almost inspired genius, to abstain from introducing any minute particulars respecting the hero or his connections. We know nothing of him or them

¹ *Book of the Patriarch Job*, 1837—Introduction.

but what grows out of the allegory, or is closely connected with its progress.

It is the fact, however, that the Scripture does not contain any such things as allegories, unless we allow this Book of Job, which does afford such details, to be one; and this would be to take for granted something unknown generally to the sacred writers, and consequently would be to beg the question in this particular instance. Thus the Book of Job cannot be a parable, and we have no reason to conclude that it is an allegory. Let us now see what characters of real history it exhibits.

In the first place, then, it is particular and very full on circumstances which have nothing whatever to do with the doctrines inculcated in the discussion. We are informed, for instance, at the very outset, that Job dwelt in 'the land of Uz,' which at the same time intimates that he must have been descended from an ancestor of that name. But why, it may be asked, are we told this, if the book, with all its declarations, was merely intended to teach the doctrines we yesterday described? And again, why are we told that Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite were his friends, if nothing more than these doctrines were intended to be illustrated and enforced? Surely these designations, Temanite, Shuhite, Naamathite, might have been spared, unless they were intended to intimate that these persons really had 'a local habitation and a name.'

Again, mention is made of the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, and the Wilderness. Now, the two former surely need not have been mentioned, as the term 'robbers' would much better have suited the context, had the subject been merely parabolic; but the introduction of the latter in conjunction with the names of those people, gives the whole description not more the air of historical narration than of geographical accuracy.

Then the feasting of the sons of Job, each in his day—that is, probably during the period of a week, these sons being seven in number; Job's sending for and admonishing them; his offering up a sacrifice at the same time for each of them,—

all this seems over-done and unnecessary if all that was wanted was to illustrate the doctrine that patient faith in God is a virtue acceptable to Him. For here we are led into particulars, which were not only not Jewish, and which never could have been countenanced by that nation, much less have recommended any doctrine, but which had nothing whatever to do with the lesson principally taught in the book; and, what is most remarkable, which appear to have been strictly historical truths, as regards the customs of the period in which the book is supposed to have been written.

These and many other points of the like nature we expect to find in an historical narrative, but not in a parable or allegory, where they would be superfluous and obstructive.

And then, more conclusively still, we have the testimony of the sacred writers themselves to the reality of Job's person and history. We are more than once told in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel, that though 'Noah, Daniel, and Job' were in such a place, 'they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness.' As far as we can judge, from the manner and context in which this is introduced, all the characters here named seem to be taken as real. For first, Job is joined with Noah and Daniel, who were without doubt real characters; and then they are all spoken of as real and living men, for it is said they should deliver but *their own souls* by their righteousness.

There is another direct allusion to the character of Job, found in the Epistle of James (v. 11): 'Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful.' No doubt, surely, can be entertained that Job is here cited as a real person. Had the character or Book of Job been parabolic, no such reference could reasonably have been made. It would have been contrary to all probability and scriptural usage, that the Holy Spirit should make reference to a feigned history for an example of faith and of its ultimate reward, the person proposed as a model, his patience, and its recompense being all alike unreal. Such a procedure would be unworthy of God, and useless to man.

Our constant experience teaches, that the minds of men are but faintly impressed by examples of ideal virtue, and we should not be very cogently urged to endurance by a view of the patience of a man who never existed.

First Week—Third Day.

THE BOOK OF JOB HISTORICAL.

THE opinion that the Book of Job is altogether a fiction or a parable, is, upon the whole, less generally entertained than another which was much in vogue during the last century, and is still held by some men of high learning, though its *existing* advocates are found rather on the Continent than in this country, where it may be said to have originated. This idea is, that the book is founded on true history, or rather, on the traditionary experience of a patriarch named Job; and was recorded, embellished, and wrought into the shape it now bears by the invention of the author. This notion was brought out in great force early in the last century by a most erudite and ingenious, but unsafe and whimsical writer, Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*. He made it to be an allegory, and supposed it was founded on an old story, and was moulded into its present shape during the captivity, in order to comfort the Jews in their affliction, and to assure them of final restoration. This idea found many eager advocates, both in this country and abroad; and it must be allowed that the view was produced and supported with a degree of ability and ingenuity, not in that age often witnessed in biblical discussions. But it was met, not perhaps with equal brilliancy of talent, yet certainly with more solid reasoning, by various learned divines, whose writings on the subject would, even at this day, reward perusal. Some contested the view as to the foundation of the book; while others admitted this view, but disputed the object and purpose of the composition. With one¹ it was an allegorical representation of the fall, the adversity, and the restoration

¹ DR. GARNETT, in his *Dissertation on the Book of Job*.

of the Jewish nation ; according to which its date would have been even later than the captivity. This idea of the book being an allegory, we alluded to yesterday, and stated considerations which bore against it. The notion was hinted at by Chrysostom, in one of his Homilies ; and it has lately been enforced by Dr. Washington, in his *Dissertation on the Book of Job*, who regards it as shadowing forth the fall and restoration of man. But the circumstances of the narrative require to be greatly tortured, to make them at all applicable to the history they are thus supposed to illustrate, and some very essential particulars are quite opposed to its details. It may be enough to point out, that although both Adam and Job were indeed tempted by their wives to sin against God, there is this essential difference, that Job repelled the temptation which his wife presented, while Adam yielded to the solicitations of Eve. Again, Adam's calamities came upon him as a punishment after he had fallen, whereas Job's afflictions constituted in themselves the temptation and trial to which he was subjected. It is curious, and yet melancholy, to witness the gifts and labour of the human understanding wasted on such abortive speculations as these.

The idea of the allegorical signification of the Book of Job is now generally abandoned ; but not so the Warburtonian notion as to the partially fictitious character of the book ; or, in other words, that it is 'a narrative *founded on facts*,' but moulded so as to fit it to become the vehicle of the argument. This seems, indeed, to be the general opinion among the scholars of Protestant Germany ; but we are not aware that any arguments have lately been advanced in favour of this idea, or any objections to the historical character of the work, which were not adduced in this country at the period we have referred to, and which were not then and since, as it seems to us, satisfactorily answered.

Some of the principal of these objections, and the answers to them, may be here stated.

Perhaps the strongest of these objections, is that founded on the introduction of Satan, and his interview with the Lord, in

the first chapter. But this is a point of so much importance that we must reserve it for separate consideration, and pass on to the others.

Much stress has been laid upon the artificial character of the statements about the possessions of Job, both before and after his trials. Such artificiality, it is urged, is not likely to occur in a simple narrative of facts, and seems as if *intended* to show that a case is supposed that would not be likely to occur in reality. Thus, we have only round numbers in the enumeration of Job's possessions: as 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, 500 she-asses—just half of the oxen. So, also, there is something artificial in the manner in which the assumed sacred numbers *three* and *seven* are used. Job had 7000 sheep; he had *seven* sons both before and after his trials; his *three* friends came and sat down with him *seven* days and *seven* nights, without saying a word to condole with him; and both before and after his trials he had *three* daughters. The same artificial and non-historical appearance is said to be traced in the fact, that after his recovery, Job's possessions are said to have been doubled; and he had again, in his old age, exactly the same number of sons and daughters that he had before his affliction.

In answer to this, it may be observed that statements in round numbers constantly occur in historical accounts. Nothing is more common in the enumerations of armies, of tribes, of local populations, and of herds and flocks. And with regard to Job's possessions being *doubled* after his recovery from his calamities, it is not necessary to suppose that this was exactly true to the letter. The statement is justified, if by the recapture of some of his possessions from the robbers, by the gifts of friends, and by remarkable prosperity in all his doings, his possessions were eventually brought to something nearly double what they were before his trials commenced. In the statement itself there is nothing improbable. Job lived one hundred and forty years after his trials. If he then had only the same measure of prosperity as before, with such assistances as we have indicated, to enable him to begin life again, what is there incredible in the idea of his possessions being doubled?

As to the number *seven*, we may have occasion to inquire concerning it hereafter. The completed creation of the world in seven days, with the consequent institution of weeks, certainly made this number more familiar than any other, and caused it to be often used for something more than a few, and something less than many, just in the sense in which we use the word 'several;' it being common in the eastern languages to express indeterminate quantities by positive numbers, which, by being used for this purpose, came to be of more frequent occurrence than any others. Hence the use of the number *seven*; but that it was a *sacred* or *mysterious* number, or in any way superstitiously regarded, has not been shown. Still less does it appear that *three* is such, in either the Old or the New Testament. It is, perhaps, a number that occurs less frequently than many others which confessedly have nothing *sacred* about them; nor is it anywhere so used as to indicate that other than the natural or literal sense belongs to it. Besides, if some of the numbers happen to fall in with those of *seven* and *three*, how is it that, supposing the whole to be fictitious, all the other numbers are not of this alleged *sacred* character? How is it that the oxen are *one thousand* in number, and the asses *five hundred*? It is useless to rest in such cases upon the ideas of modern Jews, and still less upon those of the heathen; for in doing this, we might find there is scarcely any simple number which has not had some superstitious or symbolical notions connected with it, and which might not therefore, under such views, be accounted *sacred*.

It has further been objected, in this connection, that the aged wife of Job is made the mother of a second family after his restoration; which is scarcely credible. But, in truth, there is no intimation that the second family was by the first wife; and, as nothing is said on this point, this family may quite as probably have been by a second wife. The first wife was of an evil temper, as we know, and a strong tie to her had been loosened by the death of their children. This alone would be sure in the East to make a man take another wife, if he had ceased to hope for further issue from the first. And if,

as usually supposed, Job belonged to the patriarchal age, there was nothing to prevent him from taking another wife while the first lived ; but, for aught we know, she may have died as well as her children.

Strong objections to the historical character of the book have been founded on its poetical character ; and the great improbability that a discussion of this kind should ever be carried on in the manner here represented. The successive addresses are of the highest order of poetry, and partake not of the character of extemporary effusions. They indicate profound and close thinking ; and, it is urged, must have required time in their preparation. We apprehend that this objection has been allowed undue weight, even by those who undertake to answer it. Nothing is more remarkable among the Shemitic nations of Western Asia, even at this day, than the readiness of their resources, the prevalence of the poetical imagination and form of expression, and the facility with which the nature of this group of languages allows all high and animated discourse to fall into rhythmical forms of expression, while the language even of common life and thought is replete with poetical sentiments and ideas. Take the Bible itself to witness ; where there are not any speeches or addresses introduced, even in the midst of history, which do not appear to us as poetical both in ideas and expressions. Look also at the Arabian romance of Antar, which is intended to be, and is, a picture of old Arabian manners ; and in which the hero, on all occasions, however unexpected, pours forth a high-wrought poetical address, almost in the style of this Book of Job ; and, if you answer that Antar was a poet, the reply is, that he was only a greater poet than other Arabians of his time, for most of those whom he encounters, and to whom his addresses are directed, answer him in the same style. The poetical form of expression being thus so natural, only the reasoning and argument remain to be accounted for. Surely the objection stated arose from those who think only with their pens. But there are men who think, and think well, with their tongues. This is true even among ourselves. There are men in the senate,

at the bar, and in the pulpit, who can pour forth eloquent and well-reasoned addresses almost or even quite extemporaneously, the ideas welling up from the deep fountains of the mind as fast as they can be poured forth. This faculty, among ourselves not unfrequent, though cramped by the habitual use of the pen, is common in the East, being cherished and rendered habitual by the essentially oral habits of all intellectual culture. In conformity with this, most of the poetry of the Bible is described as being uttered. All the grand poetical prophecies were utterances.

The most serious objection to the purely historical character of the Book of Job, is that last mentioned by Dr. Kitto, arising from the elaborate structure and lofty diction of the several speeches. Few thoughtful readers, even after making full allowance for great intellect and poetic genius, could believe that such discourses were extemporaneous. Every one of them bears the stamp of profound thought and laborious preparation. Dr. Kitto's reply to this objection is, in my mind, scarcely satisfactory. Can any other be given?

It would seem from a careful study of the narrative, that the interview between Job and his friends extended over a considerable period. A whole week passed ere a single word was spoken. We are not to suppose, therefore, that the discussion which followed was conducted in haste, or without any interval between speech and speech. It would rather seem that each speaker took time to think out his subject, and most probably to commit his thoughts to writing, before commencing his address. The arguments are arranged in perfect order; the sentences are framed with all the pointedness and beauty of eastern poetry; the speeches are long, and yet 'no matter how keen the invective, how torturing the reproaches, how bold and even blasphemous the statements, there is no interruption. Each speaker is heard patiently till he has said all that he designed to say.' Then a reply is given with equal order of argument, beauty of diction, and pointedness of irony or invective. This, in my opinion, shows that the discussion was one of long duration. For weeks, perhaps even for months, the mind of Job may have been exercised upon it, and thus in some measure mercifully relieved from brooding over his terrible bodily sufferings. Such a theory seems natural; it seems also to be in accordance with the spirit of

the narrative and with the habits of eastern society ; and if adopted, it entirely removes the difficulty suggested above.

First Week—Fourth Day.

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

THE considerations stated yesterday will naturally lead the reader to ask : ‘Who, then, wrote the Book of Job?’ This is a question much more easily asked than answered, as may be judged from the fact, that the range of conjectures on the subject runs over more than a thousand years ; some ascribing the authorship of the book to one of the parties concerned in the discussion—Job himself, or perhaps Elihu ; while others, as we have already hinted, suppose that it was written during or after the Babylonish captivity.

It will be seen that the question as to the *time* of Job himself, is very different from that as to the time of the author of the book which bears his name. Yet if the book be, as we have urged, historically true, and not parabolic, we should naturally, from the nature of the book, expect the author to have either been one of the parties engaged in the discussion, or to have lived in, or not considerably later than, the time of the event ; but if it be a parabolic composition, this point is no longer of the same consequence, for the circumstances not being essentially true, it matters little whether it were written one year or one thousand years after the time they purport to represent. We say ‘purport to represent,’ because it is now agreed very generally, even by those who believe the work to be a kind of poetical romance, that the author, in whatever age he lived, intended to represent the customs and ideas of the patriarchal age.

It is on this view that those who urge the historical truth of the Book of Job are also the advocates of its early authorship, while those who regard it as parabolic, or place it as only ‘*founded* on facts,’ like the historical plays of Shakspeare, or the

historical romances of Scott, generally seek for the author in a late age, and, on their view of the case, they are quite at liberty to do so.

That the author lived in or about the time of the Babylonish captivity, is a notion which has found no recent advocates in this country, but has the support of many high authorities abroad. We have already alluded to it as founded chiefly on the erroneous opinion, that the idea of Satan which the book presents had no anterior existence. It is also urged that it was likewise in this time of trouble, during the Babylonish exile, the disheartening view of human life first originated, and that then the great problem, to the solution of which the book is devoted, first engrossed the public mind. 'But the sense of misery, and of the nothingness of human life, is found among all nations, cultivated and uncultivated. Noah, Jacob, Moses, complain; and as old as suffering must be the question of the seeming disparity in the distribution of good and evil, and how this disparity can be reconciled with God's justice. It is frequently under consideration in the Psalms.'¹

Further, this late authorship of the book is disproved by the evidences of its anterior existence, which have been found in other books of Scripture. Ezekiel's reference to 'Noah, Daniel, and Job,' was given before the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and, notwithstanding the attempts which have been made to lessen its weight, remains conclusive against this view, especially with the support it derives from other testimony. Thus, Job's cursing the day of his birth, in the third chapter, is manifestly imitated by Jeremiah,² who uses not only the same sentiments, but the same words. Ay, but what is to prevent us from supposing that Job copied Jeremiah, rather than that Jeremiah copied Job? Simply this, that the mind of Jeremiah being filled with the Scriptures already in existence, he does habitually repeat scriptural thoughts and forms of expression, as religious writers would now; whereas the Book of Job is in this respect quite original and independent of other

¹ HENGSTENBERG in art. JOB: *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.*

² Jer. xx. 14.

books of Scripture ; and this alone supplies a strong argument for the remote antiquity of the book, going far to prove that no other books of Scripture, except perhaps Genesis, existed when it was written. The conclusion that Jeremiah was acquainted with the Book of Job, will probably be held to receive some corroboration from a comparison of Lam. ii. 16, with Job xvi. 9, 10 ; Lam. iii. 6–9, with Job xix. 7, 8.

Still earlier, references to the Book of Job may be found even in Isaiah. Thus, there is a Hebrew word TZABA, which usually means ‘warfare ;’ but in the Book of Job this word occurs repeatedly in the sense of a period of hard service, of calamity, or of affliction.¹ In this very peculiar sense it also occurs in Isaiah xl. 2 ; and that this is not a casual coincidence, but has a designed reference to the Book of Job, is clear from the fact that the very same verse of Isaiah closes with, ‘for she hath received of the Lord’s hand *double* for all her sins,’ which is a manifest allusion to the *double* which Job is described as having received at the end of his history. The value of this piece of evidence is very considerable, and will be appreciated by supposing the case that Spenser has a peculiar word, or uses a word in a sense peculiar to himself—both of which are cases of frequent occurrence with him. Suppose, also, that in a poet of our own day—say Wordsworth—we find not only this word, which has not in the same sense been intermediately used by any author, but such an allusion in the context as brings to mind a prominent circumstance in the very book in which the word thus occurs, we shall make no question that Wordsworth not only had Spenser in view, but intended to indicate the fact.

Some who are themselves averse to giving so late a date to the book, and have ably contended against it, are yet unwilling to acknowledge that it has claims to that degree of antiquity which we have assigned to it. Some ascribe it to the age of Samuel, David, or Solomon, but on grounds which are either inconclusive or capable of being disproved. Thus there is an arbitrary assumption, proved by modern researches to be

¹ Job vii. 1, x. 17, xiv. 14.

erroneous, that the art of writing was not known before the age of Moses. It is urged that there are marks of civilisation and refinement—of knowledge in science and art—which were true only of this later age ; but this is disproved by our enlarged acquaintance with the state of civilisation and of the arts in ancient Egypt and Assyria. The further allegation, that the refined poetical art, the regularity and the system that pervade the book, could not have existed in an earlier and ruder age, is purely gratuitous, and not in unison with experience. The masterpieces of poetry, and especially of eastern poetry, have been composed in ages and under conditions of life not less rude than, nor materially different from, those which prevailed in and before the age of the Exode ; and it is now capable of proof that in those remote ages more real refinement existed than has generally been supposed. In fact, every argument which attempts to give a later date to the book than the Exode, breaks down in some point or other, and only those which give to it an ante-Mosaic origin are throughout consistent. One great writer,¹ who ably argues against the *latest* date, yet stumbles in the attempt to prove that the book could not have been written before the age of Samuel and David. Of course, this or any other position which gives to it a later date than that of the Exode of the Israelites, assumes that the book is not a real history, seeing that its circumstances are laid in the patriarchal age. It further assumes that the author, living under a different dispensation, and in a different system of ideas and usages, was enabled so thoroughly to throw himself back into a distant age and foreign land, as completely to disguise his own very peculiar country and time, and to represent characters as living and acting in the supposed country and time, without, by the slightest allusion, betraying his own. The intrinsic difficulty of this is immense, and the object would scarcely be deemed worthy the aid of divine inspiration for its accomplishment. ‘It requires,’ as Barnes remarks, ‘rare genius for an author so to throw himself into past ages as to leave nothing that shall betray his age and country. We are never

¹ Hengstenberg.

so betrayed as to imagine that Shakspeare lived in the time of Coriolanus or of Cæsar ; that Johnson lived in the time and country of Rasselas ; or that Scott lived in the time of the Crusaders. Instances have been found, it is admitted, where the concealment has been effectual ; but they have been exceedingly rare. Another objection to this view is, that such a work would have been particularly impracticable for a Hebrew, who, of all men, would have been most liable to betray his time and country. The cast of the poem is highly philosophical. The argument is in many places exceedingly abstruse. The appeal is to close and long observation ; to the recorded experience of their ancestors ; to the observed effects of divine judgments in the world. A Hebrew in such circumstances would have appealed to the authority of God ; he would have referred to the terrible sanctions of the law, rather than to cold and abstract reasoning ; and he would hardly have refrained from some allusion to events in his own history that bore so remarkably on the case. It may be doubted whether any Hebrew ever had such versatility of genius and character as to divest himself wholly of the proper costume of his country, so as never, in a long argument, to express anything but such as became the assumed character of a foreigner.'

Then the peculiarly archaic character of the language of the book deserves a passing notice, though we cannot here enter into the consideration of it. The style is materially different from that of the later period, and includes words and forms of speech which afterwards become obsolete. To write in this antique style, to suppress so much that was known to the Hebrews after the law was given, and to enter so completely into the habits and ideas of an ancient time and foreign country, constitute a species of impersonation altogether alien to the genius and temper, not only of the Hebrews, but generally of the Orientals. There is nothing of the kind to be found even in the parables of Scripture, nor yet in any author of tales among the Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Samaritans, Chaldeans, Ethiopians, or Jews. The more thoroughly any one has studied this matter in all its bearings, the more completely

will he perceive that this is a supposition which cannot be entertained.

If we believe in the reality of the various speeches contained in the Book of Job, it becomes difficult to suppose other than that the book was written by one of the persons engaged in the discussion ; and as Job and Elihu appear to most advantage in it, they would seem to have been the most likely persons to perform this task. But it is then difficult to say when or wherefore a book relating wholly to the concerns of a stranger, and having no connection with the concerns of the Hebrews, was received by them into the number of their sacred books. It must have come to them on high authority. This gives great weight to the general opinion which assigns the authorship of the book to Moses. If Job or any of his friends lived so late as to have seen and conversed with Moses, or if the book be a fictitious composition, there would be little difficulty in this conclusion ; but if otherwise, it seems to us adequately to account both for the tradition which makes Moses the author of the book, and for its introduction into the sacred canon, to suppose that, during his long sojourn in Midian, Moses became acquainted with the report of this high controversy as transmitted from Job or his friends, either by writing or by oral tradition ; and, conceiving it to be well suited to justify the ways of God to man, and to comfort his afflicted brethren in Egypt, wrote it out in its present form, and communicated it to them on his return to Egypt, or during the sojourn in the wilderness. Whether written before the time of Moses, or by him, with or without previously existing documents, during his stay in Midian, it will necessarily follow that the Book of Job is the oldest in the Bible (perhaps excepting Genesis), and therefore the oldest in the world.

Having reached this result, it is time for us to look into the book itself.

First Week—Fifth Day.

WHEN JOB LIVED.—JOB I. I.

IN order to understand the Book of Job, it is very necessary to have some idea of the time in which Job lived. On this point very different and contradictory opinions have been entertained; though certainly the notion which has been at all times prevalent is, that his existence must be referred to the patriarchal age, or to the time between the birth of Abraham and the Exode of the Israelites from Egypt. In this view we concur; and shall state the grounds on which it has been entertained. It may still, indeed, be difficult to ascertain the precise portion of that long period in which he lived, though we think there are means for a proximate conclusion; and this is all which in such a case can be considered necessary. In the marginal notes to the common English Bibles, at the very commencement, there are marks of time together which remarkably contradict each other, although the contradiction seems to have escaped notice. The *date* of 1520 before Christ is given to Job's trial; that is, thirty years before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The first marginal note, however, states: 'Moses is thought to have wrote the Book of Job while he was among the Midianites.' But Moses went among the Midianites forty years before the Exode; and he must hence have been there ten years when Job underwent his affliction. There may be no essential objection to this; but at the end of the book it is recorded that Job lived 140 years after his affliction. If Moses, therefore, wrote the book at the latest possible moment before quitting the land of Midian, still he is by this computation made to record that which did not occur (the death of Job) until 110 years after his leaving the land of Midian, nor, indeed, until seventy years after his own death; for he died forty years after, at the age of 120. This oversight seems to have arisen from the feeling, that while it was necessary to give

to the trial of Job a date prior to the Exode, it was also desirable that, supposing Moses to be the author, it should bear such a date as would allow him to be contemporary with the circumstances which he relates. It is shown, however, that if Moses was really the author of the book, Job's trial must have taken place at *least* 140 years before he wrote it. And if, whoever wrote the book, the grounds be valid on which it is conceived, from internal evidence, that the discussion connected with Job's trial must have taken place before the establishment of the Mosaic institutions and before the Exode, it is certain that it must have been at least 140 years before these events; for Job, who so long survived his trial, was already dead when the book was written. This, therefore, constitutes the *lowest* date for the time of Job, on the supposition that the discussion which forms its substance was held before the Israelites departed from Egypt; for if at all before that event, it must have been not less than 140 years before. And even this low date goes on the notion that the book was written *immediately* after Job's death; and as it is by no means needful to insist on this, we are at liberty to go back as far into a remoter period as circumstances may require.

That Job lived before the departure of the Israelites from the house of their bondage in Egypt, is deduced from the fact that there is not throughout the book any direct allusion either to that remarkable event or to the series of wonders that accompanied it, or to the journey to the land of Canaan. This silence, it is alleged, is unaccountable but on the supposition that the disputants lived before it occurred. For it would have furnished the most striking illustration to be found in history of the Lord's interposition for the deliverance of those who trusted in Him, and for the punishment of wrong-doers; and was, therefore, exactly such an illustration as Job and his friends needed, and such as they could not fail to have adduced in support of their views, had it been known to them. This event is the great storehouse of argument and illustration for the sacred writers after its occurrence; and its absence in this book, where it would have lain in the direct course of the

argument, is most strange and unaccountable on any other hypothesis.

Job, at the time of his affliction, had children grown up and settled in their houses a good while ; he also speaks of his youth as a time long past ; indeed, no one supposes he was other than a man of mature years, bordering on what would be regarded as old age now. Suppose, however, that he was not more than forty ; as he lived 140 years afterwards, this would make his age at the time of his death to be no less than 180 years. This is an important element for an approximate determination of the age in which he lived. The duration of man's life underwent a gradual decline, the steps of which we are enabled clearly to trace through the years assigned to the post-diluvian patriarchs. Let us set down a few numbers in the line of Eber to make this plain :

Eber, 464		Reu, 239		Nahor, 148		Abraham, 175		Jacob, 147
Peleg, 239		Serug, 230		Terah, 205		Isaac, 180		Joseph, 110

By this it will appear probable that Job belonged to the age in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob flourished ; and it may be inferred, that although he may have been a little earlier than Abraham, he could not well have been later than Jacob. Many, indeed, contend for the earlier date, and urge that the discussion between Job and his friends must have taken place before the destruction of Sodom and the other Cities of the Plain ; because that great convulsion and overthrow must have been known far and wide throughout this region, must have excited the most profound attention, and was far too pertinent to the argument not to be cited. We are not so sure of this. It stands on different ground from the silence respecting the Exode of the Israelites ; and, in fact, being a matter in which the chosen race had no direct concern, it is but rarely alluded to by the sacred writers. Nevertheless, it may be taken among other proofs for the early date of Job's existence ; and there can be little difficulty in placing his trial before that event ; for the considerations which tend to make him the contemporary of Isaac and Jacob, will, for the most part, apply as well to a somewhat earlier, though not to a later date.

Let it also be noted, that the manners and customs described in this book entirely correspond to those of the age of the Hebrew patriarchs as described in the Book of Genesis, and the religion of Job was the same as theirs—without any allusion to the rites and observances of the Jewish system as established in the wilderness under Moses. It is a religion of sacrifices, but without any official priest; Job himself, as head of the family, presenting the offering on behalf of his children and his friends.¹ Job's riches, like those of the Hebrew patriarchs, are reckoned by cattle; and it is worthy of notice that the cattle are the same kinds as those given in the account of Abraham's wealth,² with the same remarkable absence of horses and mules. The daughters, also, of Job received an inheritance among their brethren, which was not the custom of later years. The most ancient kind of writing, by sculpture, is also mentioned by Job. It is, moreover, a circumstance of great importance that the only species of idolatry alluded to in the book is Sabeism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, which is universally allowed to be the most ancient of all idolatries; and not only is this alone mentioned, but it seems to be noticed as a recent innovation, then still liable to judicial punishment. To this we may add, that a very ingenious attempt had been made to fix the date of Job's trial by astronomical calculation, founded upon the mention of the constellations *Chimah* and *Chesil* in chaps. ix. 9, and xxxviii. 31, 32. These are supposed to have been Taurus and Scorpio, of which the principal stars are Aldebaran, the Bull's Eye; and Antares, the Scorpion's Heart. These were the cardinal constellations of Spring and Autumn in Job's time. Knowing, therefore, the longitude of these stars, and calculating from the precession of the equinoxes, Dr. Hales, assisted by the calculations of the late Bishop Brinkley, finds that this would carry us back to 2176 B.C., 184 years before the birth of Abraham, for the time when Taurus was the cardinal constellation of Spring, and Scorpio of Autumn. On the same datum, two learned Frenchmen, Gouget and Docoutant, had long before given the date of 2136 B.C. These

¹ Job i. 5.² Gen. xii. 16.

decisions, however, although coming with the authority of scientific conclusions, are **not implicit**, as these constellations must for several years have been the leaders of the Spring and Autumn ; and it is, after all, far from absolutely **certain** that Chimah and Chesil are the same as the constellations Taurus and Scorpio.

The Book of Job exhibits some characteristics, not perhaps apparent to the ordinary English reader, but sufficiently palpable to the accurate oriental scholar, which have an important bearing on the age and authorship. The language, though pure Hebrew, bears a closer resemblance to the ancient Arabic than any other book in the Bible. It contains idiomatic expressions and grammatical forms, such as are nowhere found in the later books of Scripture, but occasionally occur in Genesis, in a few of the earlier Psalms, and in some of the Proverbs of Solomon. They manifestly belong to a period antecedent to that in which Hebrew became the national language of the Jews. Again, the style is simple and occasionally rugged, the thoughts are concentrated, the sentences short and pointed ; and yet the whole narrative is graphic and even sublime. The great obscurity of some of the passages is acknowledged by the most accomplished scholars. This does not arise 'from confusion of thought, from carelessness and inaccuracy, or from studied involutions and artificial combination of metaphors, indicating a late age ;' but from the use of obsolete words, from 'intense concentration of thought and language, from incidental allusions to long-forgotten traditions,' and from other similar causes all equally pointing to remote antiquity. One other point may be noted. The historical introduction and conclusion appear to be slightly different in style from the speeches. This may arise in part from the difference in subject ; but it suggests, to say the least, a difference likewise in authorship, and perhaps in age.

From all these observed facts, I would venture to infer that the speeches may have been handed down from a primeval age in written documents, along with a traditional outline of the story ; that these fell into the hands of some Hebrew prophet, probably Moses, who, under divine inspiration, compiled the book as we now have it. The state of society, and the manners and customs depicted, together with the total absence of any allusion to the Law, or to Israelitish institutions, prove that it could not have been written subsequently to the Exodus. 'All critics concur in extolling the

fresh, antique simplicity of manners described in this book, the genuine air of the wild, free, vigorous life of the desert, the stamp of hoar antiquity, and the thorough consistency in the development of characters, equally remarkable for originality and force.'

First Week—Sixth Day.

THE LAND OF UZ.—JOB I. I.

It is very important to the right understanding of the book of Job, that we should, if possible, ascertain where the scene of it is laid. At first view this may not seem difficult, for we are plainly told that he dwelt 'in the land of Uz.' Yes; but where was this land of Uz?

The names of countries in the early books of Scripture are mostly the names of heads of the families or tribes by whom those lands were inhabited. This is so true, that the names in the long list of persons in the tenth chapter of Genesis can be identified as the names of countries. To find the locality of a country, otherwise obscure, we should therefore look for the corresponding name of the founder of a family, and then find out where that family was settled. The land of Uz is thus, in fact, the land of the tribe or family whose founder was Uz, and which bore his name. Now, in the present case, there is no difficulty in discovering a family head of the name of Uz. The difficulty lies in our finding so many of the name, that the critical judgment is perplexed as to the right choice between them. The first Uz is mentioned¹ as the grandson of Shem. Much later another Uz (given in the English Bible as Huz) is mentioned as the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham; and later still,² one more Uz occurs, as among the descendants of Esau. There has lately been a strong leaning towards the last Uz, and consequently a disposition to find the land of Uz in the country of Edom, and to make Job an Edomite. The *critical* grounds of this preference seem to be, that one of Job's

¹ Gen. x. 23.

² Gen. xxii. 21.

³ Gen. xxxvi. 28.

three friends was a Temanite, and Teman was of Edom ; and that 'the land of Uz' is mentioned by Jeremiah¹ as being in the land of Edom. This last point may seem at first conclusive ; but it is far from being so when closely examined. As there was a family chief named Uz among the Edomites, there might be a land of Uz in Edom ; yet, as the whole is greater than the part, it would be inexpressibly awkward to describe Edom, the nation, as dwelling in 'the land of Uz,' which, if Edomite at all, could only be a district of the same. The text is this : 'Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.' There is, therefore, much probability in the conjecture, that even this land of Uz was not in Edom, but that the Edomites had at that time gained possession of a country which did not originally belong to them. Thus understood, the text becomes more emphatic and significant—the prophet speaking of the Edomites as dwelling in a foreign country which did not originally belong to them, but of which they had somehow gained possession. To this it may be added, that the determination of the name to the remote descendant of Esau, as the founder of the family giving its name to the land, would make the time of the Book of Job considerably later than the other circumstances already indicated will allow.

This last consideration also applies, though in a somewhat less degree, to the Uz who was Abraham's nephew ; but this consideration is of less importance here, because it may be seen that any land to which Nahor's son may have given name, must have coincided with or lain in that land to which the more ancient grandson of Shem may have given his name. And here it may be remarked that, other things being equal, the most ancient possessor of a name is by far the most likely to have had a district or country called after him.

We are thus led back to the grandson of Shem. His father was Aram. This Aram gave his name to Syria, which clearly indicates that this region was settled by him, or the family of which he was the head. Syria is throughout the Scriptures

¹ Lam. iv. 21.

called Aram ; and so, indeed, is Upper Mesopotamia, which is simply distinguished as Aram-Naharaim, or 'Aram of the Rivers' (Euphrates and Tigris). The mere circumstance that Nahor's son was called by the same name, may furnish another ground of probability for the fact, that the regions were really one, and that the name of Uz predominated already in it. Indeed, the name of another of Nahor's sons, Buz, is a further indication of the prevalence of this name. It means 'in Uz;' and such a name was not likely to be given with reference to the previous son called Uz, but from the fact of his being, like him, born *in* that land of Uz to which the son of Aram had given his name. It is indeed a remarkable fact, that the two names, Uz and Buz, occur in the same connection in the Book of Job as they do in the account of Nahor's children. Job is in the land of Uz ; and present at the discussion carried on between him and his friends is a young man called Elihu, who is described as a Buzite, that is, a son or descendant of Buz ; and he is not one of the friends who came from a distance to condole with Job, but obviously appears as a neighbour who, probably with many others, had been an eager listener to this grand controversy, in which he eventually interposed.

From this it is obvious to infer, that the land of Uz was that land in Padan-aram where the elder branches of Abraham's family remained after his departure for Canaan, and many circumstances concerning which are known to us from the visit of old Eliezer to seek a wife for Isaac, and from Jacob's sojourn there with Laban ; and this amounts almost to a demonstration, when we find good reason to suppose that this very region was that which was settled by the grandson of Shem, and to which he gave his name. This personage is believed to have eventually founded Damascus, to which, perhaps, the name of the land of Uz may have reached ; but the next previous stage to which, in the Shemitic migration from the north-east (from Armenia) previously to crossing the Euphrates, may well have been in Padan-aram.

We find this opinion supported by Colonel Chesney in his

work on the *Expedition to the Euphrates*, by illustrations drawn from the physical condition of this region. His view is, that the land of Uz was in all probability in the neighbourhood of Orfah, where a brook and a well on the road to Diarbekir, with other localities, are ‘consecrated to the memory of the great patriarch.’

It is admitted that Teman, to which one of Job’s friends belonged, was in Edom; and the objection derivable from this to the assumed allocation of the land of Uz, is fairly met by the remark, that as a constant political intercourse appears to have been maintained between the central government of Assyria on the one hand, and the dependent provinces about the borders of Assyria on the other, it can scarcely be doubted that tribal, and still more strongly kindred ties, would be equally maintained between the descendants of Shem living in Mesopotamia, and those who occupied the borders of Syria and Arabia. And it may be observed, that agreeably to the prevailing customs of the East, such a journey as that from Idumea to the supposed rendezvous at Orfah, would only be an ordinary circumstance, willingly undertaken in order to mourn with and comfort the distinguished tribal chief who had fallen into this great affliction. Some distance is implied by the necessity of making an express appointment.

With reference to the localities mentioned in the book, it is evident that Job lived in a town in which active employments were carried on, and situated in a productive country, having wine-presses and oil-presses,¹ with mines of silver, brass, and iron in the neighbourhood.² The tract in question, we are told, was wet with the showers of the mountains,³ and it enjoyed the fertilizing effects of the small and great rain, having at other times its waters bound in thick clouds.⁴ Proximity to high mountains would cause these changes; and that the country was likewise exposed to an extreme climate, is manifest from the repeated allusions to the severity of the winter—such as treasures of snow and hail,⁵ cold from the north, snow

¹ Job xxiv. 11.

² Job xxviii. 1, 2.

³ Job xxiv. 8.

⁴ Job xxvi. 8.

⁵ Job xxxviii. 22.

on the earth, and ice straitening the breadth of the waters ;¹ and again, being hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep frozen.² Now, in consequence of lying at the foot of Taurus, this region, the ancient Osroëne, is subject to *all* these physical conditions, as is certainly not the case with Idumea, or with the country between Damascus and the Euphrates, where some seek 'the land of Uz.' It appears likewise to correspond with all the circumstances incidentally mentioned in the Book of Job. Here, in north latitude 37° 9' 44", the twilight³ is lengthened, and the clusters or constellations designated the Pleiades, Orion, Mazzaroth, and Arcturus, would be constantly in view.⁴ The idolaters of the day, too⁵—the Sabeans of Haran—were at hand to fall upon the oxen ploughing ;⁶ nor were the Chasdim ('Chaldeans'), whether those of the Taurus, or, more probably, another branch of the same people from the adjoining plains of Dura, too distant to carry off the camels from the neighbouring desert.⁷ The topaz of Asiatic Cush⁸ would likewise come within Job's knowledge ; moreover, he had extensive mines of native steel and iron near Marash on one side, and of copper, silver, and gold on the other, both at Kebban Maden and near Diarbekir.⁹

It appears to us that the view respecting the land of Uz, which we have thus endeavoured to enforce and illustrate, is well worthy of attention. Reasons against it may no doubt be found ; we are aware of them ; but they seem to us fewer than apply to any other locality ; and although there may be good arguments for other districts, they are also fewer and less various than may be produced in favour of Osroëne. The recent popularity of the Idumean hypothesis may, we apprehend, be in part ascribed to the interest awakened in favour of the region of Seir, by the discoveries of Burckhardt and Laborde, and the researches of later travellers ; for it is the habit of our minds to concentrate upon a locality which has recently become known to us, all the interests which wander unappro-

¹ Job xxxvii. 6–10.² Job xxxviii. 30.³ Job iii. 9.⁴ Job xxxviii. 31, 32.⁵ Job xxxi. 26, 27.⁶ Job i. 14, 15.⁷ Job i. 17. ⁸ Job xxviii. 19.⁹ Job xx. 24, xxviii. 2, xxii. 25, xxviii. 6.

priated, and which *may* by any possibility have once belonged to it.

I cannot agree with Dr. Kitto in locating 'the land of Uz' in the northern part of Mesopotamia, at the foot of Mount Taurus. All the arguments he employs to support his theory apply with much greater force to another, and I believe the true locality, on the borders of the ancient Edom. The opening words of the book prove that Uz was in Arabia, for Job is called 'the greatest of all the *men of the East*;' that is, the *Bene Kedem*, the most distinguished of the Arabian nations. And, besides, Jeremiah groups Uz with Egypt, Philistia, Edom, and Moab (xxv. 20); and even identifies a portion of it with Edom (Lam. iv. 21). From a careful study of ancient writers, combined with extensive researches in Bible lands, I have been led to the conclusion that the land of Uz was in Arabia, bordering on Edom and Trachonitis, and probably extending across the pasture lands of Arabia towards the Euphrates. Like some of the modern Arab chiefs, Job possessed an agricultural settlement, while his flocks and droves of camels roamed at large over the wide plateau of Arabia. His friends and associates were all Arabians, while every event, scene, and circumstance exhibits the characteristics of Arab life. It is a singular fact, that when I was travelling through the southern region of Trachonitis, I heard at various places, from intelligent natives, that Jebel Haurán, which borders Trachonitis on the east, was the country of the patriarch; and in passing over these mountains I found traditions of Job and his sufferings lingering still among the people.¹

First Week—Seventh Day.

JOB'S GREATNESS.—JOB I. 3.

THERE are five or six kinds of greatness: the greatness of high station—the greatness of high and heroic, but not necessarily good, exploits—the greatness which wealth confers—the greatness which high gifts of intellect or acquirement bestow—the greatness of high aims and generous purposes—and, lastly, the greatness of goodness, which may exist apart from all or any of

¹ See Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, Third edition, s. v. Uz.

these, or in combination with all or any of them, but without which no greatness bears the sterling mint-mark of Heaven.

Job is presented to us as a great man—'the greatest of all the men of the East.' Wherein lay his greatness? His rank was high—perhaps the highest in his state of life, being that of emir or patriarch of his clan or tribe. His wealth, of the same sort as that of the Hebrew patriarchs, was immense, particularly in various kinds of useful cattle, and in slaves. Nor was this all. He was less exclusively a pastoral man than they were; for, although it is too little noticed, he was *also* a cultivator of the ground, an owner or renter of land, adding the wealth of agriculture to that of pasturage. This is shown by the fact, that his oxen are numbered by *yokes*; and still more by the circumstance, that his servants are actually represented as 'ploughing in the field,' where one of his calamities fell upon him. Moreover, and it is important on other grounds to take notice of this, Job dwelt not in tents, but in a house,—not in camps, but in a town,—having a fixed, and not a moveable residence, though his shepherds doubtless went out afar with his flocks. This is the state of life depicted as that led by the elder branches of Abraham's family at Haran,—the state of life which that great father of the faithful quitted, relapsing into a more simply pastoral life, to meet the alteration of his circumstances when *he* was required to go into a strange country, 'not knowing whither he went.' This of course affords a corroboration to the opinion, that Job belonged not only to this state of life, but to this region. Those greatly err who set down his state of life as that of the Bedouin shepherd. He belonged to that condition which fluctuated between that of the wandering shepherd and that of the settled inhabitant of towns and cultivator of the ground; and this mixed condition of life, which is still to be witnessed in some parts of Western Asia, sufficiently accounts for the diversified character of the allusions and pictures which the book contains,—to the pastoral life, and the scenes and products of the wilderness; to the scenes and circumstances of agriculture; and to the arts and sciences of settled life and advancing civilisation.

What was the extent of Job's wealth from agricultural sources we do not know ; but his pastoral wealth is more calculable, the number of his cattle being stated ; and certainly that alone, even in the present state of things, and at the present rate of value, in south-western Asia, among persons in this form of life, would still place him among the greatest of the men of the East. He had 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, and 500 she-asses, and 'a very great household.' This is an immense property, according to the present wealth of the large pastoral chiefs, whether Arab or Turcoman. From all the information we possess, the cattle thus enumerated should be worth from £30,000 to £40,000,—nearer the latter sum than the former. In this we estimate the worth of a camel at ten pounds, the oxen at one pound each, and the sheep at three for one pound, which we apprehend to be about the average value in Western Asia. The value of the asses is more difficult to determine, as so much depends upon their breed and their use. Their comparatively small number seems to indicate the highest value ; and as they were probably used for riding, it may be that their value was scarcely less than that of the camels. But in all this calculation we are not to overlook the fact, that money is now, and especially was in ancient times, of greatly higher value in the East than it is with ourselves ; and that, therefore, such a sum as we have named would be in reality of much more worth than with us, seeing that it would go so much farther in exchange for the commodities purchasable with money,—particularly in a state of life resembling the patriarchal, in which, as at present existing, a sheikh or emir, with property worth only £5000 or £6000, is regarded as most wealthy, and really is such relatively to the circumstances of his people. By this it will appear that Job's wealth in cattle alone was indeed princely, without taking into account his means derived from agriculture,—that is, virtually, from the *employment* of his numerous servants, from the labour of the cattle, and from the usufruct of his lands. We should not be astonished were some one to calculate that the mere value of Job's cattle constituted scarcely half of his real wealth.

But Job had not only the greatness which station and wealth, in all ages and under all conditions of society, bestow, but he had the greatness of high gifts and noble aims. The former is evinced by the richness of his imagery in discourse, the cogency of his arguments, and the lofty poetry of his utterances; and the latter by his own declarations, and by the admission of his friends, who, in declaring what he had seemed to be, showed what he was,—for there was no hypocrisy in Job.

And all this was crowned and consummated by the supreme greatness of goodness, without which any human greatness is of most small account in the sight of God. For it is said most emphatically that this man ‘was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.’ This is the highest character ever given to man,—so high, that, compassed about with infirmity as the best of men are, we almost shrink from acknowledging its applicability to any man that ever lived—even to Job. This subject is one of interest and importance, and will form a most suitable subject for our contemplation on the approaching Lord’s day.



Second Week—First Day.

JOB'S CHARACTER—JOB I. I, 8.

WHEN we recollect several of Job's own declarations, it may excite some surprise that he should, at the outset, be described as a 'perfect man.' He says in one place very plainly, 'I have sinned,'¹—a declaration which he repeats with great emphasis after God had spoken ;² and in another place he avows, 'If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me ; if I say, I am perfect, it will prove me perverse.'³ Yet it is said of him, 'That man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.'

Of course, as this word 'perfect' is a translation of a Hebrew word, it is open to consideration whether it bears, in this case, the full meaning of our word perfect. The word is TAM, which has different shades of meaning, and is in different texts translated by different words. The leading sense is that of a thing being thoroughly complete or consistent, possessing the qualities or parts without which it would be left incomplete. It is whole, entire, full, complete. Our word 'perfect' contains this sense, but it is, in this sense, of less frequent occurrence now than it was at the time our translation of the Bible was made. But we sometimes hear it. Thus, some years ago, the *Athenæum* was in the habit of offering an enhanced price for certain specified back numbers, wanted for the purpose of completing sets of the journal ; and thus, from time to time, we would see the announcement, 'The publisher has succeeded in *making perfect* another set of this journal ;' or, 'The publisher has succeeded in *perfecting* another copy,' etc. In this sense, the character of Job was

¹ Job vii. 20.

² Job xlii. 6.

³ Job ix. 20.

complete in all its parts. In the case cited, the numbers deficient rendered the set imperfect, which was 'perfected' when these numbers were obtained; but the character of Job was already full or complete. No numbers were wanting to complete the set of qualities which constituted his character as a righteous man. He possessed temporal greatness, and therewith he manifested all the attributes which became him as a great lord, a master, a parent, a worshipper of God. He was complete, and that completeness constituted his *perfection*. He was complete in character, and 'upright' in thought and action. And the sense in which this is to be understood is defined by the addition, 'He feared God and eschewed evil;' for we take this clause, not as a statement of additional qualities, but as an explanation of those already set forth. 'He was perfect and upright,' for 'he feared God, and eschewed evil.' The same term, in the same sense, is used to describe the character of Noah, who is said to have been 'a just man, and perfect in his generations.' Gen. vi. 9. In a lower sense, derived from this higher, it is applied to Jacob; for where the authorized version has, that he was 'a plain man dwelling in tents,' the word translated 'plain' is the same in the original as that which stands as 'perfect' in the two other texts. It does, in fact, in this and other passages, mean simple, plain, or innocent—free from guile; and in regard to Jacob, appears to apply to his placid temper and quiet habits, as contrasted with the fierce temper and rough habits of his elder brother. Some would take the word in this sense even with regard to Job, supposing it to denote that he was a plain and true man; that his perfection was a perfection of sincerity; that he was one who did not act a part, or simulate religion, but was truly a religious person; one who was not gilded, but was gold. Or again, it may, in this lower but more definite sense, rest upon the *simplicity* of his character and walk—not 'simple' in the sense of weak and foolish, but as 'simple' is put for plain-hearted; one who was not what the Apostle James describes as 'a double-minded man,' but one who was single-minded; one who was not a compound character, speaking one thing

and meaning another, but altogether single in thought and purpose. This is that dove-like simplicity which our Lord recommended his disciples to hold along with 'the wisdom of the serpent.'

Nevertheless, having thus pointed out the possible senses in which Job is called 'a perfect man,' it may be proper to indicate the senses in which perfection may be, and is, in Scripture, ascribed to the children of God.

There is first a perfection of justification. This is a complete perfection; for to say that it is incomplete, were to disparage the Lord's work. The redeemed are complete in Christ; they are perfectly justified. There is not any sin left uncovered; not any guilt unwashed in the blood of Christ; not any spot left unremoved. His garment is large enough to cover all our nakedness, and to hide all our deformities and sores. In this respect, therefore, they may be called perfect, seeing that they are perfectly justified. 'By one offering, Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.' Heb. x. 14.

Then again, there is a perfection of holiness or sanctification; and it is so called, either in respect to the beginnings of, or in regard to the desires after, and the aims at, perfection. The people of God have, even in this life, *a perfect beginning* of holiness, because they have begun to be sanctified in every part—sanctified throughout in 'spirit, and soul, and body.' 1 Thess. v. 23. Though every part be not throughout sanctified, yet they are sanctified in every part throughout, and this is a perfection. When the work of sanctification has begun in all parts, this is a perfect work beginning, even as an infant is perfect as an infant, and yet grows on to the higher perfection of a man.

They are also perfect in regard to their desires and objects. Perfect holiness is the aim of the saints on earth, and is the reward of the saints in heaven. That which they aim at here is perfection—to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect; therefore they are called perfect. As God accepts the will for the deed, so He expresses the deed by the will. He esteems him to be a perfect man who strives after perfection; and He

calls that person perfect who longs to have all his imperfections cured.

We see, therefore, that Job might properly and fitly be described as 'a perfect man,' although it is clear, from what ensues, that many infirmities remained with him, and although he well knew himself to be a sinner.

The meaning of this statement, that Job was *perfect*, can only, as I believe, be fully or satisfactorily explained by assuming that he was judged by a human and not a divine standard, that he was regarded from an external rather than an internal or spiritual point of view. This is made clear by an examination of parallel passages. In the eighth verse of this chapter, where the expression is repeated, the Lord says to Satan: 'Hast thou considered my servant Job, *that there is none like him in the earth*, a perfect and an upright man?' He is compared with his fellow-men. So again, in chapter ix. 20, when Job judges himself by a divine standard, and looks at his character with the eye of conscience, he exclaims, 'If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me; if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.' In the eyes of his fellow-men Job was perfect and upright; but in the eye of conscience, and in the eye of God, he was a sinner. His perfection consisted in integrity in dealing, morality in character, benevolence in act, and a strict observance of all religious forms. These are sufficient to satisfy man; but they do not and they cannot satisfy God, and God's vicegerent in the soul, conscience. Hence every one, who, under divine illumination, arrives at a true knowledge of himself, must exclaim with the patriarch: 'Now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

Second Week—Second Day.

FAMILY MEETINGS.—JOB I. 4, 5.

AFTER the description of Job's prosperity, his greatness, and his goodness, there follows a remarkable passage regarding his intercourse with his sons, which invites our attention to-day. These sons had, it appears, separate establishments of their

own ; and the statement seems intended to show the harmony in which they lived, and the care that was taken to keep up a good understanding and social intercourse between them. It is said that 'his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day ; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and drink with them.'

It will seem strange to many that these words have been variously understood. To a man of plain understanding, undistracted by critical questions, it will, we apprehend, appear that the sons of Job were settled too far apart for the different members of the family to have daily intercourse with each other, yet near enough to be able to visit one another occasionally ; and that to render the advantage and pleasure of this intercourse a regular and calculable thing, as well as to equalize the incidental expenses, it soon became the custom of the family for each son to give an entertainment in rotation, at determined intervals of time, to parents, brothers, and sisters ; thus providing that all the family, notwithstanding their separation, should have the pleasure of meeting together in gratifying social intercourse, probably many times in the course of the year. It is a pleasing picture to imagine the several parties hastening from different quarters on the well-known day, mounted on their camels, the ladies shielded from the weather in their camel cots ; the beaming countenance with which, as they arrived, they were welcomed by their brother-host ; the eager gaze which they all sent in the direction of their native home, watching till their father's camel loomed in sight in the distance, and the respectful love with which they all hurried to meet their venerated parent on his arrival ; the officious care with which they assisted him to dismount ; the filial tenderness with which they received his embrace ; and the bent heads upon which he poured down the fulness of a father's blessing.

That the sisters were invited to take part in these entertainments—in fact, 'to eat and drink *with them*'—will strike most of our readers as quite a natural circumstance. Yet it excites some surprise in the minds of those who are aware of the present, and indeed very ancient, custom of the East in this respect,

—women and men taking their food separately, not only as regards strangers, but members of the same family; brothers not taking even their ordinary meals with their sisters, nor wives with their husbands. In the case of an entertainment, if women take part in it at all, it is by the women of the host-family feasting separately those of the guests, while the husband entertains the men. Except in Ruth's simple refection in the harvest-field, which was in some sort an exceptional case, and in the court usages of Babylon and Persia, there is not in Scripture any instance of men and women, even of the same family, eating together; although the usages of the ancient Hebrews, in regard to the treatment of women, are in many respects much and favourably distinguished from those we now find prevalent in Western Asia. Here, however, a still higher state of social consideration for the women of a family appears, resembling more than anything else the comparative freedom and ease of social intercourse between men and women, which appear to have prevailed in the elder branch of Abraham's family, which remained in Padan-aram, at the time of Eliezer's journey thither, and of Jacob's sojourn there. This, by the way, is a strong though incidental corroboration of the view which has been taken of the locality of the land of Uz. The same system of usages, with regard to the women, was doubtless brought by Abraham into Canaan; but the family seems to have soon found it necessary in some respects to modify it, from regard to the notions of the people of less pure and simple manners, among whom he had pitched his tent. The sarcastic rebuke which the king of Gerar administers to Sarah for going without a veil, contrary to the custom in that country, strongly bears on this case, and illustrates the sort of compulsion under which the patriarchs in Canaan found themselves, of adopting some of the restrictions which prevailed in the land of their sojourning.

Although a slighter matter, we must not refuse to point out that in the case before us, the reader has the earliest example of a custom which, among all the changes of time and country, has maintained its ground to this day among nearly all nations,

and in no nation flourishes more vigorously than our own, of making 'eating and drinking' together the medium of social intercourse, and of maintaining friendly relations, among different members of the same family. Say what men will, there must be some substantially good foundation for a custom so old and so universal. It must have been found in a great measure effectual for the intended object. It were difficult not to entertain kind and amicable feelings towards one who takes pains and incurs expense on your account, or to retain harsh judgments of one whose good cheer comforts your heart. This view of the matter may be safely expressed by a writer whose infirmity, by allowing him no place 'at good men's feasts,' frees him from all danger of misconception.

Doubtless the members of Job's family, foreknowing when they were thus to meet, went prepared for the intercommunication of their cares, their joys, and their griefs, as well as for the discussion of, and consultation upon, the matters that severally concerned them. Men did not in those days maintain correspondence by letters; and such reunions as these were therefore highly prized opportunities for reporting to each other all that had happened to interest any of them, or that they had heard of or noticed since they had last met. In our own age, the perfection of intercourse and intelligence by letters and newspapers, detracts from the value and importance of such personal interviews; as there need be little left to report or discuss of public or private matters when persons meet. But it was very different when such interviews were the sole means of intercommunication, and friends met together, after an interval of time, in complete ignorance of what had occurred to each other since they last parted. This gave to these family gatherings a degree of real interest and animation scarcely to be appreciated in these days of penny postage and steam presses; when the very perfection of our means of civilisation tends to lower the tone of our personal communications. All the larger matters of public or private life are already known, have already been abundantly discussed; and, except with those whose high intellect or playful fancy draws adequate materials, in a fit

audience, from the world of inner thought, it becomes difficult to sustain anything like the vital eagerness of old-world conversation, when every one of those who met together had something real to tell, of which the others had not read.

It has been thought by some that, in the present case, 'every one his day,' means that it was the birthday of every one of Job's sons that was thus celebrated. It may be so, and it is quite likely that birthdays were thus early celebrated as seasons of festivity. Still, unless the birthdays were at proper distances of time from each other, the observance would have been inconvenient, and not likely to be carried out. But when there are many children, any approach to a regular distribution of their birthdays over the year is unusual; on the contrary, they seem rather to run into groups, two or three near each other. In our own family, for instance, the birthdays of *all* the males (four) occur in December, and two of these on the same day of the month. Unless, therefore, it so happened that the birthdays of Job's sons occurred at more regular intervals than is at all usual, we should think these family gatherings were independent of that circumstance; and 'his day' probably means no more than the day previously determined as the one in this rotation of family entertainments, on which, according to previous arrangement, all the others were to meet at the house of him whose turn it was to give the feast.

Second Week—Third Day.

CURSING GOD.—JOB I. 5.

WE have assumed, what is so probable as to be almost beyond a question, that Job himself sometimes attended the entertainments given in turn by his sons. Indeed, we should have assumed that he was always present, did we not historically know that he was once absent; and the fact of his occasional absence being thus shown, we are in a more favourable condition for explaining the somewhat difficult text which gives the

account of these fraternal entertainments. 'When the days of their feasting were gone about, Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.'

We apprehend this to mean, that when the cycle of entertainments for the year, or other period over which the rotation ran, had been completed, Job customarily sent to invite them all to meet at his house, that they might be present at a solemn act of expiatory sacrifice, which, as the head of the family, it belonged to him, in the absence of a priesthood, to offer by way of atonement generally for the sins of the season gone by, and especially for any forgetfulness of God into which they might have fallen in the course of their festivities. The subsequent institution, under the law of Moses, of a great annual day of atonement, understood to be expiatory for the transgressions of the congregation during the past year, helps to corroborate this interpretation, as well as to illustrate the practice. This, therefore, in the course of the rotation of visits, was the time when all the family assembled in their father's house. It was *his* turn then to receive them, and his entertainment was solemn, paternal, and holy, as became his position and character.

As to sanctifying them in the strict spiritual sense—that is, of making them holy—Job could not do this, nor any man that lived. He could only take the means, by prayer and sacrifice, of advancing their sanctification. The word, however, is often in the Old Testament applied to the purifications usual before an act of sacrifice, such as ablutions and the like. We know these observances chiefly as parts of the Jewish ritual, but in principle they had, no doubt, a previous existence; and some rite or ceremony, symbolical of purification, is to this day an indispensable preliminary to every act of worship or sacrifice in the various religions of the East. It may, therefore, appear that Job, in inviting his sons to be present at the solemn sacrifice intended for their benefit, enjoined them to put themselves into a condition of personal purification, by certain ablutions,

fastings, prayers, or abstinences; and knowing or presuming that they had done this before they reached his abode, or after their arrival, he rose early the following morning to perform the solemn act of expiatory sacrifice which devolved upon him. Or it is quite as possible that the act of sanctification lay in the sacrifice itself, and had no reference to preliminary purification. This is possible, but not likely—not only from the nature of the thing, but from its being seemingly mentioned as a previous and separate matter.

But into what special evil did Job suspect that they had fallen (particularly, perhaps, at those times when he was absent from their festivals), when he said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and *cursed God in their hearts?*'

It is observed that the word here, and in a few other places, translated to *curse*, usually means just the contrary, namely, to *bless*, the sense in which it should be used being determined by the context. To many it has seemed so strange a thing for the same word to have directly opposite meanings, that they have hesitated to believe that a word, the common signification of which is 'bless,' can, in any case, mean 'curse,' and have laboured with great ingenuity to show that, even in the present text, it must be taken in the ordinary sense. But how, then, could it be a sin 'to bless God?' This is the difficulty which they undertake to solve, and we must try to explain their solution to the reader. First, then, it is observed that 'to bless' is the common salutation among friends at parting, as well as meeting. It was so among the Hebrews, and is so in most nations. Among ourselves, 'God bless you' is emphatically a *parting* salutation, equivalent to bidding farewell. Hence, as in blessing is found the sense of bidding farewell to, leaving, renouncing, abandoning, disregarding, the idiom of bidding adieu to things or objects good or bad, in the sense of renouncing or quitting them, is common to most languages, and is familiar in our own literature. So Shakspeare,—

'Bid farewell to your good life for ever;'

And,—

'Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness.'

So Waller,—

‘Treading the path to noble ends,
A long farewell to love I gave.’

Under this view, then, it results that to bless God, in the sense here intended, is to bid adieu as it were to God, and give up all regard to his worship and service ; or, as one writer on this side of the question¹ almost too strongly expresses it, ‘To shake hands with the very God that made them, and take leave of everything serious and sacred.’ Still, however, there is no clear instance *in Scripture*, in which bidding farewell to a person or thing is used in a bad sense, as of renunciation of a person or thing with dislike or unkindness. And, after all, the result of this explanation is to make the *sense* come very near to cursing, while the *word* ‘blessing’ is retained.

Another interpretation, reaching the same actual result by a different path, is founded on the undoubted fact, that there are in all languages many deeds and many things deemed so odious and abominable, that they are never named directly, but are expressed by other terms. Thus the Athenians felt a delicacy in using the word *prison*, and said *house* instead : so they forbore to name the *executioner*, but said *the public* ; and, in like manner, abstained from directly naming the *Furies*, but said the *Eumenides*. Hundreds of examples of this practice might be adduced, and there are many in our own language. The Hebrews, beyond all people of ancient times, felt this kind of modest reserve in the expression of hateful things. So in their imprecations or adjurations of themselves or others, we observe they avoid naming the specific evils, but say, ‘The Lord do so to me, and more also.’ So far, well. But those who take the view in question, go on to argue therefrom, that in the present case ‘to curse God,’ or blaspheme his holy Name, was an enormity deemed so unutterable, that it could not be directly expressed ; and, therefore, to avoid connecting such an idea with that venerable name, they said ‘to bless God,’ leaving the intended meaning to be gathered from the context. This is a plausible and pleasing idea, but it happens not to be true, as

¹ DR. GARNETT, in his *Dissertation on Job*.

there are numerous passages of Scripture in which blasphemy against God is very plainly expressed, showing that the Hebrews did not entertain the scruple that is ascribed to them. Some cases in which the expression of blasphemy against the Lord occurs, would, more strongly than this, have been deemed to call for suppression had any such rule prevailed. Here again, however, after all, we come to the essential fact of cursing, although the form of blessing is contended for.

There is, however, yet one other explanation which takes blessing in the plain literal sense, but makes a change in the object. No doubt all our readers know that the Hebrew word for God, ELOHIM, is plural—the plural of majesty. But being plural, it is exactly the same word which is employed to express really in the plural the *gods* of the heathen. As the Hebrews have no capital letters, there is no way of distinguishing the application of these words as we distinguish ‘Lord’ from ‘lord.’ The application can only be gathered from the context, and usually it may be so gathered correctly. Now, in the present case it is urged that the word Elohim should be translated not ‘God,’ but ‘gods,’—‘they blessed the gods,’—which would indicate that the subject of Job’s apprehension was lest his sons, in the midst of their festivities, had been led into any idolatrous actions or observances, at least to the extent of blessing in their hearts the hosts of heaven (particularly the sun), worshipped in that age, as the visible instruments of the blessings which in reality they owed to God only. The danger of this might be the greater, seeing that festivities were much connected with idolatry, and often led to it.

If this were the case—if it were to be feared that the danger of idolatry was involved in these family entertainments—how came it to pass, it may be asked, that a parent so pious and careful as Job did not use his effectual paternal influence against them altogether? We feel assured that he would have done so, had he suspected the danger of which he is thus supposed to be aware. Besides, this notion is founded on the idea, that the word (*barak*), usually signifying to bless, never does mean to curse. It seems to us that a sufficient answer to this is

found in 1 Kings xxi. 10–13, where the charge is made against Naboth, that he had ‘*blasphemed* God and the king.’ Here the word *blaspheme* is the very same that is now in question—the same which is twice in the present chapter translated *curse*. There are other passages where it is also rendered *blaspheme*; but as they are less conclusively distinct than this, we shall not produce them.¹

We take it, then, that the word does not mean *bless*. Yet perhaps *curse* is too strong a word whereby to translate the Hebrew in this place; or, at any rate, the word is not to be taken in its perfect sense. We are not to infer that Job’s children did deny, or that their father even supposed it probable they had denied, the being of God, or wished that there was none; or as little that they—persons piously brought up—had used blasphemous expressions against God, or had conceived blasphemous thoughts in their hearts. But as to bless God is to think and speak reverently of Him, and to ascribe to Him that which is his due; so to curse Him, is to think and speak irreverently, slightingly, or unregardfully of Him, and not to ascribe to Him that which belongs to Him,—and thus Job might fear that his sons amidst their feasting might have boasted of their plenty, of the increase of their substance, and have ascribed these blessings rather to their own skill and diligence, than to the providence of God, of which he feared they might have spoken unbecomingly, as persons in such circumstances are apt to do. And after all, it does not appear that they did even this; only Job feared that they might almost unconsciously have done so; and even he did not fear that they had carried the sentiment into uttered speech, but that they had perhaps thought too slightingly of God ‘in their hearts,’ and had not at all times, in the midst of their temporal blessings, been duly

¹ We are of course aware of the notion which presses the sense under notice in this text also, by substituting *Moloch* for *king* (the words being alike in Hebrew), so that the charge was, that *he blessed Moloch*. But how then about blessing God also, which was surely not a capital offence? This interpretation, however, is too forced, and we may say puerile, for closer examination here.

regardful of his honour. Though not literally correct as a translation, Mr. Broughton's rendering,—‘too little blessed. God in their hearts,’—meets almost exactly what we thus take to be the real meaning of the text. We observe, also, that this mitigated view is adopted by some of our early translators, who saw the word could not mean *bless*, yet shrank from using so strong a word as *curse*. So Rogers (1537), and Bishops' Bible (1572), have—‘been unthankful to God in their hertes.’

Second Week—Fourth Day.

THE SCENE IN HEAVEN.—JOB I. 6.

THE sacred writer abruptly takes us away from the land of Uz, and the contemplation of Job's prosperity and his goodness, and translates us to the court of heaven, and the councils of the Most High, that we may become acquainted with the cause of the sudden and lamentable change that is about to take place in the lot of this exemplary man.

A day has come round in which ‘the sons of God,’ his ministering angels, have returned from their thousand missions of mercy and judgment, to render an account of their proceedings. We behold them standing in reverent homage around the throne, high and lifted up, on which the Holy One appears. Thither also came, but as one apart and alien there, the great Adversary¹ of man, his Accuser¹—Satan, scowling aloof, as one there only by strong constraint, or as one hoping to work in that high place evil for man.

To him a voice from amid the glories of that throne speaks, and asks him whence he came? The answer of the Evil One is of awful significance to man: ‘From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.’ Knowing that the contemplation of human goodness and of human happiness was hateful to this being, and that he laboured night and day

¹ The meaning of the word *Satan*.

to spoil and blacken it all, the Lord deigned to speak to him of Job, as one eminently great and good ; and, as such, a living contradiction to the satanic theory of man, and a standing justification, if there were but one such, of the divine wisdom, in placing him upon the earth, and in preserving him from utter destruction, even when he had fallen.

But the devil, who appears to have been the first philosopher of the school of Rochefoucault, insinuates that all Job's goodness was mere selfishness—all his devotion but a quit-rent for the benefits which had been showered upon him. He was prosperous, therefore he was good. Who would not be good on such terms ? He had not been tried ; and what merit was there in that virtue which had sustained no proof ? Only try him, only afflict him, only turn his prosperity from him, 'and he will curse Thee to thy face.' Such is the meaning of Satan's suggestion ; and the Lord, to nullify his argument—to make it plain that goodness may have other foundations, and affliction other results—allows him to oppress for a season his righteous servant—to strip him of all—to bring him very low, his person only being withheld from the demon's power.

Let us learn from this that Satan has no independent power to distress mankind, except as the Lord permits, for the trial of our faith, and for the purification of our souls ; and, therefore, for ultimate good, if we but hold fast that which we have. It is only by our failure that the enemy gains any real power over us ; and this conviction, that whatever form our trials take, they are essentially from the Lord, should teach us to receive them all as from his hand—a Father's hand.

But the question will occur to the reader, Is this scene to be taken as real, or otherwise ? Having contended for the historical character of the Book of Job, in so far as regards the human circumstances, and the reality of the discussion, some will suppose that we are now bound to maintain the reality of this scene on high. But this by no means follows. A true history may contain a parable, an allegory, or a vision, and is not thereby rendered the less historical. Thus the First Book of Kings (xxii. 17-23) contains a vision of heaven very similar,

in some respects, to the present ; yet the book which contains it is not on that account rendered the less real or historical. That is set forth as a vision, and this may, from the analogy, be regarded as the same ; or it may be merely a parabolic representation, like that contained in our Lord's parable of Lazarus.

There is a work which few men possess, and which, we are assured, no man alive ever ventured to read through. It is in two mighty folios, containing together between 4000 and 5000 pages of closely-printed matter in double columns. The fathers of our grandfathers liked to write such books as these, and even liked to read them. With patient diligence the author returned from day to day, during half a life, to his task—slowly building, brick by brick, the vast monument of his industry, his learning, his fame, and, it may be, sometimes of his folly. But the readers were of like sort. They had none of the modern fancy for small books, which one may hold in the hand without wearying it, as he lounges in his easy chair. They liked to see a great book, which required an effort of strength to lift, and which, therefore, remained a fixture upon their tables for months or years, while, with strong powers of digestion, they returned, day by day, to take in a fresh morsel of the ponderous meal. There belongs to those days a story of this very book,—that the son of a reverend divine left his father engaged thereon when he departed on a voyage to India, and on his return found him still engaged on the first volume, though the pile of leaves to the left of the reader had, indeed, considerably increased, and that to the right diminished.

All this work is upon the Book of Job, whose patience the author seemed bent on affording the world an opportunity of exemplifying. It is by Joseph Caryl, 'sometime preacher to the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, and more lately of St. Magnus, near London Bridge.' It was published in 1672, 'Printed by Samuel Simmons, and to be sold at his house, next door to the Golden Lion in Aldergate Street.'

The sarcastic Warburton says, that Job was 'strangled by Caryl;' and Orme calls this process of exposition a mode of

treating the word of God, which partakes more of 'entombing' than of exhibiting it. Nevertheless, the patience which the work exacts, will in the end be rewarded, as well as was that of Job. It is not only an elaborate, but a most learned, sound, and pious work—a mine from which he who has courage to explore its depths, will come back laden with precious things.

As this is in one sense, and perhaps in two senses, the *greatest* of all the numerous commentaries on Job, we have been induced to mention it to our readers thus particularly, as few of them will ever find an opportunity of becoming acquainted with it, for it is both scarce and costly, or rather costly because it is scarce.¹ We also mention it as introductory to Caryl's view of the point before us, which seems to us well worthy of attention, and in which we are strongly inclined to concur.

'All this is here set forth and described unto us after the manner of men, by an *Anthropopathy*; which is, when God expresses himself in his actions and dispensations with and towards the world, as if He were a man. So God here: He presents himself in the business after the manner of some great king sitting upon his throne, having his servants attending him, and taking an account of them, what they have done, or giving instructions and commissions to them, what they shall do. This, I say, God doth here, after the manner of men; for, otherwise, we are not to conceive that God doth make certain days of session with his creatures, wherein He doth call the good and bad angels together about the affairs of the world. We must not have such gross conceits of God; for He needs receive no information from them, neither doth He give them or Satan any formal commission; neither is Satan admitted into the presence of God, to come so near God at any time; neither is God moved at all by the slanders of Satan, or by his accusations, to deliver up his children and servants into

¹ How is it that such books ever do become scarce? Why should not all the copies have lasted as well as the one before us, which is in a perfectly fresh and sound condition? People do not willingly destroy such books as these. What becomes of them?

his hands for a moment ; but only the Scripture speaks thus to teach us how God carries himself in the affairs of the world, even as if He sat upon his throne, and called every creature before Him, and gave each directions what, and when, and where to work, how far, and which way to move in every action.'

It would perhaps be rash to pronounce absolutely whether this remarkable passage is allegorical or historical. The way in which it is introduced in the midst of a true narrative, largely influencing and even moulding the leading events in the life of Job, without note or comment, would certainly seem to favour the latter opinion. Were it not for the extraordinary nature of the incident itself, no critic who admitted that the Book of Job is a real biography, would venture to call in question the reality of this episode.

And, after all, can any serious objections be brought against it as a real narrative? Is it not in harmony with the representations given in other parts of Scripture of the regal government of God? Is He not often described as seated upon a throne, surrounded by cherubim and seraphim, ministered to by thousands of angels, carrying on his government through the instrumentality of his heavenly hosts? Are not the angels said to be 'ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Such a statement, then, as that contained in this sixth verse is not inconsistent with the analogy of Scripture. And, besides, we read in Scripture that the Lord talked and reasoned with Abraham regarding the destruction of the cities of the plain; that He spake with Moses 'face to face,' and that He sent him down from Mount Sinai to 'charge the people.' We read, too, that Christ—'God manifest in the flesh'—permitted Satan to tempt Him verbally. Having these facts in view, there will be less difficulty in apprehending how this narrative may reveal and record a reality of the invisible, and not present a mere figurative emblem or allegory. I do not affirm positively that such is the case; but I maintain that such a view accords with the analogy of Scripture, and is most consistent with the scope of the context.

Second Week—Fifth Day.

SATAN.—JOB I. 7-12.

WE now come to the question which we have already touched on, and expressly reserved for separate consideration. This has regard to SATAN, whose appearance by name here, as the chief of man's spiritual enemies, in accordance with the views which, it is alleged, are developed in the later, but not in the earlier books of Scripture, has been urged as the chief objection to the early date of the book; and, indeed, as rendering it impossible that it could have been composed before the Babylonish exile, during which, it is contended, the Hebrews first acquired those distinct views respecting Satan which we have indicated. If it were admitted that the knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Evil One was obtained only at a period so late, the difficulty would be fully as great as is stated.

It assumes, in fact, that what the Hebrews eventually knew of Satan they learned from the Persians, who became their masters by the acquisition of the Babylonian empire; or, in short, that the Hebrew doctrine of Satan is borrowed from the Persian doctrine of Ahriman, the evil principle.

Now, before proceeding further, we may ask the pious reader how he likes this idea—an idea which represents the people chosen of God from among the nations of the world, as borrowing part of their religion, a part sanctioned by the prophets, by the apostles, and by Christ himself, from the heathen; which represents a people enlightened by a revelation directly from God, as having a very important and almost essential part of it left out, to be in a later age supplied by instruction from a people who had no revelation, and whose religion was but a cunningly devised fable, with only so much truth in it as might have been derived from those traditions of that primitive history, and of those primeval revelations, of which all the descendants of Noah partook, and of which the seed of Abraham, apart from their special revelations, inherited as large a share, at least, as

any other people? The notion seems to us no less absurd than shocking; the matter in question being not a mere rite or ceremony, but a religious doctrine of serious importance, which the nation instructed of God were not likely to be left to learn from any people. And, further, if they had to learn it from others, they need not have waited until the Captivity; for they could, ages before, have learned more in this matter than the Magians could teach, from the Egyptians, whose evil being, Typhon, bore more likeness to the Satan of Scripture than did the Ahriman of the Magian theology. In fact, there is a most essential *difference* between this Ahriman and Satan, which ought alone to preclude the idea of imitation. Satan is a creature, a fallen creature, powerless for more evil than the Lord, for eventual good, may, as in the case of Job, permit. But Ahriman is not an evil creature, but an evil *principle*, a co-ordinate power with the good principle Ormuzd; an evil god, waging a not unequal warfare with the good god, though destined to final defeat and overthrow. This is not only averse from, but abhorrent to, the Scripture idea of Satan; indeed, so much so, that a plain protest against it is recorded long before the Captivity, in the name of the Lord, by Isaiah, who, in his magnificent and extraordinary prophecy respecting Cyrus, king of Persia, a hundred years before he was born, declares to him, 'I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and CREATE EVIL. I, the Lord, do *all* these things.' A passage which, among other things, shows that the doctrine which they are alleged to have borrowed from the Persians during their captivity, was not only essentially different from theirs, but that it was known to them historically as a Persian doctrine, and was, as such, abhorred by them and protested against long before the Captivity.

This difference between the Evil One of Scripture and him of the eastern mythology, is of very essential importance; and the comparison which is inculcated by the allegation to which we have referred, will, if closely pressed, lead us to the conclusion exactly opposite to that for which it is advanced. If the Jews borrowed from the Chaldeans during the Captivity

certain ideas respecting the enemy of mankind, which, as is urged, are to be found in their writings; then the fact that the ideas which are developed in the Book of Job are altogether different from those which might have been so acquired, becomes a strong argument for the early antiquity of the book. And if we attempt to form a conception of such a being at all, what possible difference can be greater than between that view which makes him co-ordinate, if not coeval, with God, and the independent author of the actions he is represented as performing, and the view which exhibits him as a real though unwilling and rebellious bond-slave to the behests of the Most High, with a will most powerful for evil, but ever restrained, curbed, and controlled, in the exercise of that will, by the strong chain of inevitable subservience to the will and designs of the Almighty? There is nothing in common in the attributes, or even in the character, of the Evil One of the Chaldeans and of the Jews respectively.

But as thus there is no identity of character, so is there no identity of name. And this is an important consideration, when it is found that so much stress is laid upon the first occurrence of Satan *by name* in the present book. If the ideas of the Jews respecting this being were manifestly derived from the Chaldeans, how is it that they did not take the name as well as the character? Yet no one has urged that the name Satan was derived from the Magian religion, which possessed a very different name for the Evil One. If it be urged, as it is urged, that the Jews did not previously know the *name* or character of the evil being, what evidence is given of their then coming to know it, in a book which, in fact, gives him no name? For here, in the Book of Job, 'Satan' is not a name at all, but an appellation with the article prefixed—'the Adversary.'

We are not disposed to deny or to affirm that the Jews may have picked up certain notions respecting the devil from the Magian religion during the Captivity; for that is utterly beside the question. Nearly all the Old Testament was written before the Captivity; and our business is not with the notions of the Jews, but with what the Scripture teaches. That, and not the

opinions of the Jews, is to be our guide. The notions entertained by the Jews are often enough condemned in Scripture ; and we should as little care to be responsible for their opinions about Satan after the Captivity, as for their opinions about the golden calf in earlier times. All this is nothing to us. The Scripture view is consistent in itself, and we do not see that it is different in the books written after the Captivity from what it is in those written before.

It is clear that the doctrine concerning the evil spirit which this book contains, existed from the earliest times among the Hebrews ; and the belief in such an evil spirit must surely have been prevalent, to explain in any tolerable way the history of the Fall. Indeed, in the narrative of that event the *doctrine* involved clearly appears, although the *word* in the sense in question does not appear : 'I will put *enmity* between thee and the woman,' which virtually constituted the tempter an enemy ; a term synonymous with Satan, and occasionally used in the same sense. In the instance already referred to,¹ exactly the same view of his character appears historically in the time of Ahab. The word *Satan* is of very early occurrence in the sense of an adversary in war, or of one who in any way opposes or accuses another ;² and it was, therefore, natural to transfer this word to man's great adversary. In Zech. iii. 1, 2, the name Satan is used in the same sense as in Job, to denote the great adversary of God's people appearing before Him. Here Satan is introduced as one whose name and character are well known. We do not lay stress on this for antiquity, seeing that it was after the Captivity ; nor on 1 Chron. xxi. 1 (for the same reason) ; but it is important to note the correspondence with what by this time we may assume to have been the earlier books, as showing, that the Hebrew theology had not in this matter anything to learn from the mythology of the East.

¹ 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23.

² See particularly Num. xxii. 22.

Second Week—Sixth Day.**THE FIRST CALAMITY.—JOB I. 13-15.**

THERE are many who pride themselves on their deep 'knowledge of human nature,'—that is, being interpreted, on their keen appreciation of the dark things and the foul things of the human heart. The Lord preserve us from too much of this knowledge! He who has none of it is little better than a fool; and he who has most of it is much worse than a man. For we usually find among men the highest degree of this knowledge united to the lowest degree of appreciation of—a moral incapacity of apprehending—a total inability of feeling—that which, through the grace of God, is divine and spiritual, and therefore good and holy, in the soul of man. They know the guilty well, but ignore the heavenly. They grope the muck-heap which stands in the midst of the field, and are thoroughly acquainted with its contents; but they are blind to the noble trees by which the field is bordered; they see not the fair flowers which deck its surface, as the firmament is decked with stars—those flowers of heaven; and they are utterly unconscious of the nourishment for man and beast which its bosom bears. Now, we continually see that this deep knowledge of man's lower nature, which makes them seem the wisest of men, is, in its results and conclusions, continually baffled, foiled, and put wrong by their ignorance of, and their utter incapacity of sympathizing with, his better part.

The most perfect master of this learning is Satan; and he is at once the most consummate example and the most egregious dupe of that ignorance. It were difficult to find the man in whose soul some faint glimmering of faith in God or man does not linger. But Satan has none. He is the most finished pattern of knowledge without faith. This is his character: **HE HAS NO FAITH.** This is his weakness and his shame. In this possession and in this want he has reached heights and depths impossible to man. But his ignorance stultifies his knowledge,

and renders the feeblest of God's children, armed with 'the shield of faith,' no unequal match for him.

With Job this Satan has undertaken a great conflict; and he shows his consciousness of its importance, as well as his profound knowledge of human nature, by the care and skill with which he commences his operations.

We first observe that he is very particular in the choice of the day in which, as he hopes, to crush Job to the dust. He had all the days in the year to choose from, but he made choice of that one day in which affliction would be felt the most intensely—because it was a day of joy. He knew that the grief which comes unexpectedly in the midst of our gladness has its force doubled by the sudden contrast and revulsion, as it is when the heart is most open to gladness that it is least fitted to receive sorrow. The day was one of unusual festivity in the cheerful family of Job,—‘a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.’ In the rotation of feasts to which we have already referred, it is likely that the festival commencing the series was more distinguished than the others. But it is not clear whether *this* was one of those feasts, or an extraordinary one, apart from that arrangement. Whether such as in due rotation was held at the house of the elder brother, and therefore more distinguished as given by him who was the wealthiest and most considerable of the sons, or whether it was altogether a separate occasion, it is clear that it was a day of high festivity. This we gather not only from the designed indication that it was held in the eldest brother's house, but that it was a banquet of wine, by which, in Scripture, a high and extraordinary banquet is always indicated. It is noticeable that in the ordinary account of the festivals it is said that they met ‘to eat and drink;’ but here it is ‘to eat and *drink wine.*’ Very much, in our view of transactions recorded in Scripture, depends upon minute differences such as this, which are apt to escape ordinary notice. So Queen Esther, in a far later age, invites the king to ‘a banquet of wine,’—not that there was nothing but wine at the banquet, but the addition implies that it was a plentiful banquet, a

solemn banquet, a banquet at which nothing was wanting, seeing that it included wine for drink.

Job was not there. But no doubt his heart possessed a full share in the gladness which belonged to the occasion, while he contemplated the prosperity of his family, and the felicities which God had given to his children.

It was in such a day as this that the tidings of evil came upon him. A man from the not far-off fields came hastily in with the marks of strife and blood upon his body. As soon as he recovered breath, he says: 'The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them,'—or rather, 'at hand,' not afar off; and these particulars respecting the employments of the cattle are given by the man to show that the servants were not neglectful of their master's interests. There was nothing in their conduct that tended to produce the calamity he came to report. The cattle and the servants were properly occupied. But of the asses it may be asked, Had they nothing to do but to feed while the oxen laboured? Is not the ass as well as the ox a labouring beast? The answer to this is supplied by a circumstance undesignedly suppressed in our version. The original indicates that they were *she*-asses, as is distinctly marked in nearly all the versions but our own. The translators probably thought it a matter of no consequence. But female asses, on account of their milk, were at all times much more highly esteemed in the East than the males, a few only of which appear to have been kept for continuing the breed; and hence, perhaps, they are not noticed in the previous account of the live-stock belonging to our patriarch. She-asses, on account of their milk, were also greatly preferred even for travelling: for the ass which Balaam rode is expressly declared (in the original) to have been a female,¹ as is also that which Abraham rode.²

Upon this peaceful scene of labouring oxen and feeding she-asses, the desolating marauder intrudes, and sweeps away the cattle, slaughtering the servants who attempted to protect the property of their master. 'The Sabeans fell upon them, and

¹ Num. xxii. 21.

² Gen. xxii. 3.

have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped to tell thee.' In the Hebrew it is '*Sheba came*,'—the nation for the people; and this is an idiom familiar in most languages, as when we say, 'Spain made war,' or 'France made war.' There is, however, some question respecting the people thus designated, seeing that there are three Shebas in Scripture, founders of nations or families of the same name. There was one who was a grandson of Cush;¹ there was another who was a son of Joktan;² and there was a third who was a son of Jokshan, the son of Abraham, by Keturah.³ The one usually fixed upon as the progenitor of the present Sabæans is the second, whose descendants settled in southernmost Arabia, from which the queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon. This is founded on the idea that Job was an Arab, or Edomite; but as those who think so place him in northern Arabia, not far from the borders of Palestine, it were little likely that even a wandering tribe of this nation would be found at so immense a distance plundering Job. We use the word 'Arabia' so easily for a single country, as practically to forget the immense distance between its southern and northern parts. The distance was so great as to render the visit of the queen of Sheba a wonder in Israel, and our Lord describes her as having come 'from the uttermost parts of the earth.' A troop of Highlanders driving away the cattle of a Cornish farmer would be nothing to this. Of course, the objection from distance becomes increasingly forcible in the more northern position which we have been led to assign to Job.

Abraham's grandson settled in the country eastward of the Jordan, towards the Euphrates. There is not here the same, although there is some, objection from distance. But there is no evidence that this tribe ever assumed a predatory character,—nor is it likely that they would have assaulted the possessions of such a man as Job, probably nearly allied to them, as such aggressions usually take place between inimical tribes. Besides, a tribe founded by the grandson of Abraham is rather too recent for those conditions of the narrative which have been previously

¹ Gen. x. 7.² Gen. x. 28.³ Gen. xxv. 3.

indicated ; and more than all, we can find the other Sheba of Cush, of more ancient date, inimical, as belonging to the race of Ham, and dwelling with the Chaldeans in and on the borders of the very region which we have led our readers to regard as the land of Uz. Haran, in this region—the same that is mentioned in the history of the patriarchs—is noticed in oriental history as a city of the Sabeans, which is a circumstance of much importance in this age, where so many valuable identifications have resulted from the attention paid to the ancient names preserved among the natives of those regions. We thus and otherwise find the name of Sheba or Saba connected with this region, and, from the course of ancient historical migration, we are constrained to connect it with the Cushite Sabeans ; though, but for this consideration, and for the circumstances already suggested, the name as found here might well enough even be referred to the Keturian Sheba, as ‘ the east country ’ into which Abraham sent his sons applies generally to any countries lying towards and beyond the Euphrates, even though its due direction were more north or more south than east. Besides, even if the district into which the Keturian sons of Abraham went lay immediately beyond the Jordan towards the Euphrates, their sons may have spread north (as well as south) from this district ; and considerations may be imagined which would draw some of the extra-covenant branches of Abraham’s descendants towards the old seats of the family in Haran.

Upon the whole, then, it appears to us that the Sabeans, whom Satan made his instruments in afflicting Job, were Cushite Sabeans ; next to them, but at a wider distance in probability, stand the Keturian Sabeans ; and last of all—indeed so far last as to be out of the question—the Sabeans of Arabia Felix, although these, as having the most distinguished historical name, are usually thought of whenever the Sabeans are mentioned, just as when Memphis is mentioned, we think rather of the ancient metropolis of Egypt than of Memphis in the United States.

Second Week—Seventy Day.

THE FORAY.—JOB I. 16, 17.

THE first messenger of evil had scarcely finished his tale, when another came running with great affright, to tell that 'the fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.' 'The fire of God' is here probably the lightning—which is so distinguished in the poetry of many nations, sometimes even among the ancient Greeks. So Euripides—

'Alas! alas! may the fire of heaven
Strike through my head.'—*Medea*, 144.

This is indicated by its falling 'from heaven;' for had it been 'fire of God' alone, this might have been doubtful, seeing that the name of God is used to form the superlative, so that this, without the additional circumstance, might simply mean, 'a great fire,' as the marginal reading in the authorized version gives it. So 'cedars of God' are very great cedars; and 'mountains of God,' very high mountains. That lightning might destroy men and flocks of sheep, no one can doubt; but that they were actually burnt up and consumed, may be an exaggeration of the greatly terrified messenger—a hyperbole of fear. The previous account, taken in connection with this circumstance, may lead us to understand that these so-called 'natural' elements are in some way, and by the permission of God, under the control of Satan—seeing that this stroke came at his bidding, and at the time he wanted it; and his power here over the lightning, and presently over the winds, coincides with and illustrates the apostle's declaration, that he is 'the prince of the power of the air.' Eph. ii. 2.

This man had hardly ended his baleful message, when another hurried up, blood-stained and dusty. His tale is, 'The Chaldeans,' or Chasdim, 'made out three bands, and fell upon

the camels, and have carried them away, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.' This completes the ruin of Job's estate. The Sabceans had plundered the cattle of the homestead, the oxen and the asses; the fire had consumed the flocks of sheep in the pastures; and now the Chaldeans drive off the camels, which were at pasture in another and probably more distant quarter. And it is worthy of note that in all these cases the servants had lost their lives in defence of their master's property—the best proof that could be given that he had been a good master to them.

But who were these Chaldeans, whose familiar name we now hear for the first time? There is some confusion in the minds of uncritical readers, from the circumstance that the Chaldeans are diversely mentioned as a tribe, as a nation, and as a priestly caste. The name of Chaldea usually suggests the region about Babylon, which was the seat of the Chaldean empire in a later age, and we are apt hastily to conclude that the Chaldeans had come all the way from that quarter to plunder Job's camels. The truth is, however, that the acquisition of this territory by the Chaldeans belonged to a far later age; and that we here find them as a tribe, with Job's camels within their reach, agrees with the earliest traces of them we have been able to discover. It agrees also with the Book of Genesis, for there the very Ur, or Orfah, forth from which Abraham came, and not far from which Job appears to have lived, is named as 'Ur of the Chaldees.' The fact of their appearance here is therefore a strong argument for this allocation of the land of Uz; for in Arabia, or in the country east of the Jordan, the Chaldeans would have been little likely to come into aggressive contact with Job, from the position where we find them, and still less from that which they eventually occupied, and from which the cursory reader (if there be any cursory readers of the Bible) might suppose that Job's assailants came.

Knowing the little interest which all but a few of our readers would be likely to feel in purely geographical or rather ethnographical investigations, we abstain from producing in detail

the other besides this scriptural evidence, which goes to show that the Chaldeans were at this time a body of hardy mountaineers, who had gradually—as may be traced by subsisting names—come into these parts, some of them settling in the plains, while others remained in the neighbouring mountains, from which, as is still the wont of the mountaineers in that region, they occasionally descended to scour the plains and drive off the cattle of the inhabitants. Their former rude manners, predatory tastes, and hardy habits, remained among the mountaineers, long after those branches of the nation that had settled down in the plains had become a comparatively cultivated people.

The actual life, and the written histories, poems, or tales of tribes of this habit of life, whether tent-dwelling pastors in the plains, or rude mountaineers, are full of instances of the kind of aggression practised by the Sabeans and Chaldeans, especially in driving off cattle, and are regarded by them not as crimes, but as glorious exploits. The following is a notice of one of Antar's forays, in the Bedouin romance that bears his name: 'They then departed, traversing the wilds, and the wastes, and the plains, and the mountains, amounting in all to two hundred and fifty famed warriors, one hundred and fifty belonging to the Carad division, and one hundred forming the party of Oorwah. . . . The party proceeded till midnight, when Antar, Oorwah, and fifty horsemen alighted, saying to his father and his uncles, "Do you go ahead with the women." But he and Oorwah mounted at daylight and galloped over the plains till they came to the pastures of the tribe of Fazarah. The sun was just risen, and the cattle were grazing. Antar rushed upon them, and drove away all the he and she camels, and the high-paced horses that belonged to the tribes of Fazarah and Zead. And when they had launched into the desert, "Send on the plunder with thirty horsemen," said Antar to Oorwah; "but do thou stay with me, with these twenty men, that we may encounter the troops that will come upon us." Oorwah did so: and thirty went on with the plunder, Antar and Oorwah slowly following with the twenty.

'As soon as the intelligence of the seizure of their cattle reached the tribe of Fazarah, they all mounted, and hastened off in pursuit, to the number of five hundred. They went on until they overtook Antar, who, when he saw the horsemen and heard their shouts, turned upon them and met them, and in less than an hour he had slain numbers of them. Oorwah and his people also slew those who were destined to die that day, piercing their chests with the point of the spear. Extinction and perdition fell on the tribe of Fazarah. Antar smote off heads and skulls, and despatched the horsemen to the mansions of annihilation.'

The affliction of Job ended not with this catastrophe, which, from a man of surpassing wealth, made him a beggar. There was something dearer to him than all his substance; and that, too, he lost.

The next messenger came, pale with sorrow, to declare to the patriarch that *all* his children were dead—rent from him at one fell swoop. In the midst of their feast, 'a great wind from the wilderness came and smote the four corners of the house,' so that it fell, and destroyed all who were in it. This must have been a whirlwind, as it thus seemed to come from all points of the compass at once. Of the extreme violence and destructive effects of whirlwinds within the limited range in which they operate, in eastern and especially tropical countries, many instances are reported. But even in this country, where the sterner phenomena of nature are rarely witnessed in their strongest manifestations, whirlwinds have been observed fully adequate to produce the effect here recorded, especially when we bear in mind the *comparatively* frail construction of the houses which the people of Job's time and country appear to have inhabited.

The public prints of the time report that on May 12, 1811, at Hopton, in Derbyshire, a tremendous whirlwind began its destructive operations, and continued its course for the extent of five or six miles in length, and in a breadth of about four or five hundred yards. Its appearance was that of an immense cloud in the form of a balloon, whirled round with incredible

swiftness, in a circular direction, from S. by W. to N., having a kind of pipe or tail that reached to the ground. This irresistible tube darted up and down continually, tearing up plantations, levelling houses, walls, and miners' cots. It tore up large trees, carrying them twenty or even thirty yards; and it twisted the tops from the trunks of other trees, bearing them to the distance of fifty and a hundred yards. Cows were lifted from one field to another, and hay-stalks were moved to a considerable distance. In its progress it divided into two parts, one of which took a north-east, and the other a north-west direction; the consequence of which was, that Kirk-Ireton, part of Cowlow, and Hopton, were laid completely in a state of ruin.

Something similar occurred about two years before (July 1809), near Cirencester. On this occasion the whirlwind presented the appearance of a 'large conical hay-rick encompassed with smoke.' It moved slowly at first, but on nearing the town acquired a velocity almost incredible; and, making towards the basin of the canal, where it did considerable damage, skirted the town, and entering Lord Bathurst's park, there tore up from the very roots twelve trees measuring eight or ten feet in girth, while others were stripped of their branches or literally cut asunder. Eventually, after quitting the park, and doing serious damage to a neighbouring farm, it seemed gradually to dissolve into the air, and could no longer be traced by the eye.

The forays mentioned in the Book of Job, and other parts of Scripture, very closely resemble those which are still witnessed, year after year, in Western Asia. The Arab tribes pasture their flocks over a wide region, and extend their forays to a region wider still. I have seen a large troop of Shummâr Bedawîn from the neighbourhood of Babylon, sweeping away flocks from the gates of Hums. Scarcely a year passes during which the border of Syria is not ravaged by plundering parties from Mesopotamia, and sometimes even from the shores of the Persian Gulf. Distance seems to be nothing to the true Bedawy when the road is open, and when there is a fair prospect of rich booty. Bedawy raids are

now also, as they were in Job's days, sudden, rapid, and unexpected ; and that portion of Syria which is at present more exposed to them than any other, is the traditional, and, I believe, the real country of Job. Every Mohammedan village in the Haurân pays heavy *black mail* to the Bedawin to save flocks and crops. The Druzes refuse it, and consequently live in a state of unceasing watchfulness and warfare.



Third Week—First Day.

THE HEAVIEST LOSS.—JOB I. 18, 19.

THE apostle assumes that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices (2 Cor. ii. 11) ; and among the sources of our knowledge respecting them, the history of Job and his trials is most conspicuous. An attentive consideration of the whole matter, in that point of view, would be most instructive. To track his various windings, wiles, and manœuvres, for the purpose of circumventing Job, and of bringing peril upon his soul, might be made a study of surpassing interest and high edification.

Look, for instance, at his penetrating knowledge of man's heart, and his masterly generalship in working upon it, as evinced in the mere order and succession of his assaults upon Job. After having, as he supposed, weakened and dispirited this good man by his previous attacks, he comes with his most fierce and terrible charge last of all, confident that by this management, the last stroke must overwhelm and destroy him. This seems to be a favourite course of tactics with him—to come down upon us with his strongest assaults when he thinks we are at the weakest.

It is easy to perceive, that if Satan had suffered Job to hear first of the death of his children, all the rest would have been of small account to him. Little would he have cared for the loss of his cattle, *after* having heard that all his children had been crushed to death by the fall of the house. As, when some one great sorrow falls upon us, the heart can find no joy in the good that at other times bestows delight, so also does one great evil swallow up all sense and feeling of lesser troubles. Here, therefore, we behold the wiliness of Satan. Lest Job should lose any of the smart of the lesser afflictions, lest they should all have been swallowed up in the greater, he lays them out in

order, the lesser first, the greater last, that his victim may not lose one drop of the bitterness in the cup mixed by the lord of poisons for him. It reminds one of the continental executions of great criminals in the last age, when the condemned was tortured, maimed, and broken, before the *coup de grace* was given. Had this stroke been given at first, all else had been nothing. 'We observe in war,' says Caryl, but we cannot vouch for the exactness of his observation, 'that when once the great ordnance are discharged, the soldiers are not afraid of the muskets. So when a great battery is made by some thundering terrible judgment upon the soul, or upon the body or estate of any man, the noise and force of lesser evils are drowned and abated. Therefore, Satan keeps his greatest shot to the last, that the small might be heard and felt, and that the last, coming in greater strength, may find the least strength to resist it.'

The overwhelming intensity of *this* affliction beyond all the others, it needs no argument to show. Every heart feels it. A man's children are more to him than all else he has in the world—more than wealth, greatness, fame, or life. And these were all taken away from the patriarch of Uz at one stroke. To lose all one's children is surely as grievous as to lose an only child, which is described by the prophet as the highest and deepest sorrow known to man: 'They shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.' Zech. xii. 10. Further, all his children were lost to Job, under circumstances tending greatly to aggravate the deep distress which such a loss must have occasioned under any circumstances. They were all taken away suddenly. Had death sent them a summons by its usual messenger, sickness, even but a day or two before they departed, it had much sweetened the bitterness of this cup to the survivor. His mind would have been in some measure prepared, or rather not wholly unprepared, for the event; and he would have found comfort in the thought, that time to prepare their minds and his own for so great a change had not been altogether denied. But to hear that they were dead—all dead, before he knew that even one of them was sick—that they were dead when he deemed them to be rejoicing in the

gladness of their young spirits,—was enough well nigh to burst a father's heart.

Besides, they died a violent death. Had they died in their beds, although suddenly, there had been one pang the less. At the present time in the east, such a death as theirs is accounted martyrdom; but to the ancient mind, it bore the aspect of a judgment—a mark of the divine wrath; and this notion naturally grew out of systems which looked but little, if they looked at all, beyond the life that now is. Even in our land, with all its light, and in spite of the contrary declaration of our Saviour, there still lingers a disposition to regard sudden death in the light of a divine judgment; and this, which is here merely a leaning of the uninstructed mind, was an article of positive belief in the ancient world. Suspicion would thus arise, among better than 'barbarous people,' if positive censure passed not, when merely a viper was seen to hang upon the hand even of a Paul (Acts xxviii. 4); and from our Lord's question, it is more than probable that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, were supposed by the people, merely from their fate, to have been the greatest sinners in Jerusalem.

Considering the apprehension Job had previously entertained of some danger lurking in the feastings of his sons, it may well be supposed that it aggravated his distress to learn that his children had perished while engaged in those enjoyments which the high blood of youth often renders dangerous. Knowing the patriarch's great anxiety on this point, it was doubtless deemed by Satan his masterpiece in this day's work, to take them from him under circumstances which might suggest to their bereaved father that they had been really taken by the judgment of God, and to fill his mind with alarm for the safety of their souls, or at least with strong doubts as to their preparedness to meet their God. If Job saw cause to fear that his sons had died unreconciled to God, and with unrepented sins upon their heads, this would be the crowning grief, and was, as Satan reckoned, effectually calculated to shake his righteousness, by putting into his mind hard thoughts of the

Lord, who had been, as it seemed to him, so swift in judgment, and had taken his sons at such disadvantage.

This, then, was Job's greatest loss and severest trial.

In tracing the dark and blood-red cycle of Job's afflictions, we miss the purpose for which these things were written, if we do not learn to hold all our blessings with a loose hand. There could be no one whose estate was better gotten, better founded, or better managed, than Job's; yet in one short day all was gone. In the morning he had a fair estate, and numerous children in whom he saw the roots of his honours planted deep. In the things of this world, all was as great and good as the heart of man could desire. There was strength and lustre in and upon all that he had. But in the evening all had departed as a dream when one awaketh; and he stood among the ruins of his greatness, poor, childless, and desolate.

The way in which this last and crowning calamity was brought about is remarkable. There came 'a great wind from the wilderness' (literally, 'from across the desert'), 'and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell.' It was evidently a *whirlwind*. Such winds are common in the desert, and they sometimes sweep along with tremendous violence. I have often witnessed them. They occur when the air, at the distance of a mile or so, is perfectly still, when there is not a cloud in the sky, and when the sun's rays are pouring down on the parched earth like liquid fire. They tear up dust, withered herbage, and shrubs, as if by the power of a mighty hand, and shoot them high into the air in a spiral column. They pass along with a roar like a cataract, and can be both seen and heard at a great distance. Such a *tornado* would destroy a house exactly as here described, smiting it 'upon the four corners.'

Third Week—Second Day.

FAITH TRIUMPHANT.—JOB I. 20-22.

JOB received the first three assaults unmoved; but when the fourth came, he was moved. The depths of his soul were stirred within him. 'He arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved

his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Oh, victory! What were the conquest of a realm—what all that the earth calls glory, to this? The man has conquered himself; and in so doing, Satan is conquered too. Little knew Job the great conclusions that hung upon that issue. The 'sons of God' once more 'shouted for joy;' and the enemy for the time withdrew, crestfallen, defeated, but still unconvinced, and still implacable.

The rending of the garments is frequently mentioned in Scripture as an act of extreme grief or extreme indignation. It was not peculiar to the Jews, but was generally prevalent in the East as an expression of great agony of mind for public or private loss. It is indeed frequently noticed by the classical authors. It was one of the old primitive acts of mourning not forbidden by the law, except to the priests; and it may be doubted whether even they might not rend their private robes, although forbidden to rend their sacred dress. It became in time a regular and formal act of mourning among the Jews, and is still preserved by them in the modified shape of making a rent in a particular part of the dress, which may, however, be soon after mended. To a western imagination, tearing the robe looks more like an act of violent rage than of mourning. But it is to be recollected that there was no properly mourning dress, as with us, of different form or colour from that ordinarily worn. For this there might be two reasons—one, that the rapidity with which interment follows death in warm climates does not allow time for any such dress to be made; and the other, that it would be considered ominous to keep such a dress ready-made in the house. To mar the beauty of the ordinary dress by rending it, was a more summary and certainly not less significant process of producing a mourning attire; and the rent mantle became not less intelligibly indicative of the condition of a mourner than is a scarf or a hat-band with us.

That Job shaved his head as a mourner, has been adduced, among other proofs, to show that he was not a Jew, or at least that he lived before the giving of the law, by which this act of mourning was forbidden.¹ This is no doubt correct; yet having the prohibition in view, one is somewhat perplexed by the allusion found in the prophets to shaving the head as an existing custom, and in which indeed that custom seems to be sanctioned or even commanded. So, for instance, the prophet Isaiah, reproving the unseasonable mirth and desperate security of the Jews in a time of public trouble and humiliation, tells them, 'In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, *and to baldness*, and to girding with sackcloth.'² And so Micah: '*Make thee bald, enlarge thy baldness as the eagle*, for they are gone into captivity from thee.'³ It is hence inferred by some that the kind of shaving the head or clipping the hair forbidden by the law of Moses, is not to be taken in the absolute sense, but was designed only to preclude conformity to the customs of the heathen, who were, it seems, wont on such occasions to cut their hair in a peculiar fashion, and to offer their locks to their idols. Thus it would signify that the Jews were not to shave or cut theirs in like manner as the heathen.

It is possible, however, that, understood in the plain sense, the prohibition was one of a class of lesser regulations which, in the lapse of time, passed out of observance. But it may appear a better explanation, that although forbidden to shave their heads on the death of their friends, they were allowed or even expected to do so in cases of mourning for sin, and in times of public repentance and humiliation. To such, both the texts we have cited bear reference.

There has been some curious discussion respecting Job's pathetic declaration, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.' The last clause must clearly refer to the womb of man's common mother, the earth; and as he says to 'return *thither*,' it would seem as if the first clause also should have the same reference. This is urged by many;

¹ Lev. xxi. 5; Deut. xiv. 1.

² Isa. xxii. 12.

³ Micah i. 16.

and some find in it an allusion to the account in Genesis of man's creation from the dust of the ground. There is much, however, to urge in favour of the more usual notion, that notwithstanding the word 'thither,' the first clause refers to his natural mother, and the last to the earth. Such transition of antecedents is not unusual in Scripture. It would thus amount to saying, 'Naked came I out of one mother's womb, and naked shall I return to the womb of another'—the womb of his maternal earth.

The origin of man from the 'dust of the ground,' early introduced the usage of symbolically ascribing a maternal character to the earth; and this soon degenerated into a superstitious worship, under some title analogous to *Dameter*, or Mother-Goddess, a supposed Chaldean title from which the Greeks derived their *Dameter*, or, as they sometimes wrote it, Ge-Meter, or Mother-Earth, to whom they appropriated annually two festivals of great pomp and solemnity. Numerous passages illustrative of the maternal character ascribed to the earth, might be culled from the classical and eastern poets, as well as from the moderns.

The philosophical poet Lucretius has many such. Here is one :

' Whence, justly, Earth
Claims the dear name of MOTHER, since alone
Flowed from herself whate'er the sight surveys.'¹

In Chaucer we read :

' And on the ground, which is my MODRES gate,
I knocke with my staff erlich and late,
And say to hir, Leve,² Modre, let me in.'

Klopstock has a fine passage recognising the same idea in his Messiah :

' Once more I hail thee, once behold thee more,
EARTH, *soil maternal!* Thee whose womb of yore
Bore me ; and soon beneath whose gelid breast
These limbs shall sink, in soft and sacred rest.'

¹ ' Linqultur, ut merito maternum nomen adeptæ,
Terra sit, e terrâ quoniam sunt cuncta creata.'—v. 793.

² Open.

In a Sanscrit poem, quoted by Sir William Jones, occur the lines :

‘How soon are we born ! how soon dead !
How long lying in the mother’s womb !’

How long indeed ! Yet the imagination is oppressed by the effort to grasp an idea of the vastness of that mighty birth which the earth’s womb shall yield up at the last day.

The declaration of Job corresponds with that of the apostle : ‘ We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.’ 1 Tim. vi. 7.

This will rank among the noblest instances of the triumph of faith on record. It is told, too, with rare dramatic power. The few words—simple, graphic, sublime—set the patriarch before the mind’s eye, crushed to the very dust by calamity and heart-rending affliction ; and yet, from the dust, raising the eye of faith to God, seeing Him mighty, wise, and good, over all and in all that he had suffered. There was no stoical indifference to human grief, there was no unnatural attempt to quench or hide it ; but there was a power of wisdom to see the acts of a heavenly *Father* in all that had happened, and a power of faith to trust Him still, and say, ‘ Blessed be the name of the Lord.’

Third Week—Third Day.

SKIN FOR SKIN.—JOB II. 1-6.

ONCE more the sacred writer conducts us to the courts of heaven. Satan is there ; and the Voice from the throne speaks to him respecting Job, declaring emphatically, that there is ‘ none like him in the earth ;’ and, alluding to the late transactions, the Lord says : ‘ And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause.’ What can the enemy say to this ? Is he not dumb with shame and confusion ? Not he. He ventures to insinuate that Job had come forth with honour in his trial, only because he had not been touched *in his own person*. ‘ Skin for skin,’

said he, 'yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. . But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to thy face.' Upon this, the Lord, not seeing fit to leave the enemy such a subterfuge, and knowing that the faith of Job would bear yet further trial, allowed the adversary power over the body of this good man, but not unto death. 'Behold he is in thine hand ; but save his life.'

It may seem difficult, without some explanation, to attach an intelligible idea to the phrase, 'skin for skin,' apparently proverbial, which Satan employed. It is a phrase that passes smoothly over the tongue in the reading, and which most people have some vague impression that they do understand, so that they pass on without pausing to consider it. If they do pause, the more intently they regard it, the more difficult and unintelligible it seems, while there appears to be something in it which it were worth while to know. It is peculiarly the case of such proverbial expressions as this to pass out of intelligent knowledge. The reason is, that being established in use among a people, they continue to be employed in the correct traditional sense long after the custom to which they allude, or the knowledge of the circumstance in which they originated, has passed away. There are many such in our own language, correctly applied in current usage, but from one or both of these causes unintelligible, without antiquarian elucidation, in their primary aspect as a form of words. What meaning could any one attach, for instance, to such common English proverbs as these, if not taught to apply them with a traditional meaning and significance ?

'The black ox never yet trode on his feet.'

'Hang not all your bells upon one horse.'

'The grey mare is the better horse.'

'Paternoster built churches, and our Father pulled them down.'

'Blessed is the eye between Severn and Wye.'

'Make a pearl in your nail.'

Again, there is another set of such phrases which we meet with in old books in such connection as shows them to have been proverbial, but having passed out of ordinary use, they have

not even an intelligible meaning or application, unless so far as the context enables us to guess at it. At the first view this proverb of 'skin for skin' may seem to belong to this class. And so it would, were it an *English* proverb; or 'Job' an English book. But it is a literal translation of a most ancient book, written in a far-off land, and in a language and under a set of ideas and customs altogether different from our own. Besides, therefore, being obscure in its primary aspect and in its traditional significance, we have the further difficulty of its being probably founded on an idea or custom altogether foreign to us, and which for that reason alone, if the other causes had no existence, it would be difficult or impossible to discover. There are, at this day, in current use in the East, scores of proverbs which, both in their allusion and application, are perfectly intelligible to those who use them, but which would, from this cause alone, be utterly inexplicable to an Englishman.

Take a few examples of Arabic proverbs: 'Moonshine and oil are the ruin of a house.' How many would guess that this means that to light the lamp when the moon shines is an extravagance that will bring ruin upon a family; and is hence, by application, a general rebuke to wasteful extravagance?

'It is written upon the cucumber leaf,' is in Egypt a common phrase used in introducing some sage maxim. Few would suppose that this means no more than 'It is written where the meanest may read it;' and in this sense it would be inappropriate in a country where cucumbers are less abundant and cheap.

'He went away with the fat of the kidney.' This means that the person went away, taking even the smallest trifle of what was due to him; founded upon the usage that when a private person slays a sheep, one of the bystanders takes away the kidneys, or at least the fat of them, as due to the public, from him who slaughters the sheep.

'Who is Oweyshe in the market of cotton yarn?' This signifies that a person, however great or famous in his own neighbourhood, becomes of no account when he enters the great world. Oweyshe is a woman's name; and the allusion is to the custom for women to take in the morning, to a particular

market for sale, the cotton yarn which they have spun in their domestic retirement.

These are perhaps sufficient illustrations, and will serve to show that there are proverbs in the East, and quite intelligible there, which are to us altogether as obscure, from deficient knowledge, as this of 'skin for skin.'

We have entered into this matter somewhat fully, as there are other phrases, especially proverbial phrases, in the Scriptures, to which the same considerations will apply. That which has been stated will show the difficulty of supplying a satisfactory explanation of such passages. We shall not, however, quit the one before us without an attempt at an explanation. Of many that have been given, perhaps the best is that which refers its origin back to the time when trade was conducted by barter or exchange of goods, and when the skins of animals, being a most frequent and valuable commodity, were used in some sort to represent property, as is still the case in many parts of the world. Tributes, ransoms, and the like, used also to be often paid in skins. Under this view, it would seem that Satan, after this proverbial allusion to the principle of exchange or barter, makes application of it in the next clause, 'all that a man hath will he give for his life.' It will then express the necessity of submitting to one great evil to avoid incurring a greater, answering to the Turkish proverb,—'We must give our beards to save our heads.'

The meaning of this singular proverb has not, I think, been fully brought out by Dr. Kitto. The sense is, things which are equal in value can alone be fairly exchanged or compared; we exchange property for property; we value life against life. We would never give life for property. The application of the proverb seems to be this. Job acknowledged God to be the Giver of all he possessed; he also acknowledged Him to be the sole Author and Preserver of his life. God had already taken away his property; still, as his life was spared, he would not risk it by resenting the loss of all that he had. 'All that a man hath,' said Satan, 'will he give for his life.' But Satan argued, that if God would so afflict Job's body as either to make recovery hopeless, or life a burden, then Job

having nothing more to gain or hope for, would show his true nature—‘curse God to his face.’ Satan doubtless thought so. His own selfish, proud, vengeful spirit led him to think so. To show that there was a nobler spirit, a higher and holier principle in man, Job was put to the test ; and, weak though he was, he triumphed by divine grace.

Third Week—Fourth Day.

THE BLACK LEPROSY.—JOB II. 7.

HAVING received an extension of power over Job—over all short of his very life, Satan hastened to make use of it. He ‘smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.’ As his object was to abase and ulcerate the very soul of Job, through his body, we may be sure that the disease he made choice of for this purpose was not only painful, but most humbling and loathsome. The Hebrew word translated ‘boils,’ signifies an ulcer, a burning or inflamed ulcer. It is the same word which is used in Exodus ix. 10, where it is said that the Lord smote the Egyptians and their magicians with boils. It was, then, one of the plagues of Egypt that was inflicted upon Job. This alone would suffice to show that it was a most virulent disease, a most painful sore ; for it is added in the text just cited, that ‘the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils.’ But it was not only such a boil that Job was smitten with, but such in the most intense degree ; for it was not only a boil, but a ‘sore boil.’ There are many sorts of boils, some less painful than others. There is, for instance, the so-called Aleppo button, or *Mal d’Alep*, which afflicts and disfigures the inhabitants of, and visitors to, the towns of Upper Syria and Mesopotamia, but is not, we apprehend, known in Palestine. It attacks the faces of children and the joints of adults, and is incurable by medical art, but heals of itself in nine months. We have suffered from it for that time in Turkish Arabia. It gave but little pain after it began to suppurate, although it ate to the very

bone, and laid bare the arteries and veins. But Job's boil was not of this sort; for it was a *sore* boil. He who has known the pain which even one inflamed boil will give, may conceive the miserable case of the afflicted patriarch, who had not merely one such boil here and another there, but was covered with them from head to foot. His pain was the most *intensive*, for the boils which afflicted him were of the very worst kind; and it was most *extensive*, for his whole body was covered with them—there was no part free.

It may be desirable, however, to realize a more distinct notion of the disease with which Job was afflicted. The opinion entertained by the best scholars and physicians is, that it was the *elephantiasis* or *black* leprosy, so called to distinguish it from the *white* leprosy, which was that most frequently indicated in the laws of Moses bearing on the subject;¹ and was also the kind with which Miriam and Gehazi were smitten, for they are described as having become 'white as snow.'² The opinion that Job's disease was the black leprosy, is also of most ancient date. It is founded on the indications which the book contains, and which are observed to answer to this disease. These indications are afforded in the fact of his skin being so covered from head to foot, that he took a potsherd to scrape himself;³ in its being covered with putrefactions and crusts of earth, and being at one time stiff and hard, while at another it cracked and discharged fluid;⁴ in the offensive breath, which drove away the kindness of his attendants;⁵ in the restless nights, which were either sleepless, or scared with frightful dreams;⁶ in general emaciation of the body;⁷ and in so intense a loathing of the burden of life, that strangling and death were preferable to it.⁸

The black leprosy, which has been described as 'a universal ulcer,' is by some supposed to have received its current medical name of 'elephantiasis' from the Greeks, on account of its rendering the skin like that of an elephant, scabrous and dark-

¹ See Lev. xiii. *passim*.

³ Job ii. 8.

⁶ Job xxx. 17, vii. 13, 14.

² Num. xii. 10; 2 Kings v. 27.

⁴ Job vii. 5.

⁷ Job xvi. 8.

⁵ Job xix. 17.

⁸ Job vii. 15.

coloured, and furrowed all over with tubercles; but others rather trace the name to the resemblance which may be found in the patient's foot to that of the elephant, after the toes have been lost, the hollow of the foot filled up, and the ankle enlarged. Those who have seen persons thus diseased, will probably incline to the latter opinion, as this comparison arises spontaneously to the mind of those who have ever seen an elephant. There is a description of this disease, by a learned and accomplished physician, in the *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature* (art. Leprosy), of which we avail ourselves, adding our personal testimony that the description answers exactly to the cases of this disease which we have had occasion to witness in the East.

‘Elephantiasis first of all makes its appearance by spots of a reddish, yellowish, or livid hue, irregularly disseminated over the skin, and slightly raised above the surface. The spots are glossy, and appear oily, as if they were covered with varnish. After they have remained in this way for a longer or shorter time, they are succeeded by an eruption of tubercles. These are soft, roundish tumours, varying in size from that of a pea to that of an olive, and of a reddish or livid colour. They are principally developed in the face and ears, but in the course of years extend over the whole body. The face becomes frightfully deformed; the forehead is traversed with deep lines, and covered with numerous tubercles; the eyebrows become bald, swelled, furrowed by oblique lines, and covered with nipple-like elevations; the eyelashes fall out, and the eyes assume a fixed and staring look; the lips are enormously thickened and shining; the beard falls out; the chin and ears are enlarged and beset with tubercles; the lobe and alæ of the nose are frightfully enlarged and deformed; the nostrils are irregularly dilated, internally constricted and excoriated; the voice is hoarse and nasal; and the breath intolerably fetid. After some time, generally after some years, many of the tubercles ulcerate, and the matter which exudes from them dries to crusts of a brownish or blackish colour; but this process seldom terminates in cicatrization. The extremities are affected in the

same way as the face. The hollow of the foot is swelled out, so that the sole becomes flat; the sensibility of the skin is greatly impaired, and in the hands and feet often entirely lost; the joints of the toes ulcerate and fall off, one after the other; insupportable fœtor exhales from the whole body. The patient's general health is not affected for a considerable time, and his sufferings are not always of the same intensity as his external deformity. Often, however, his nights are sleepless, or disturbed by frightful dreams; he becomes morose and melancholy; he shuns the sight of the healthy, because he feels what an object of disgust he is to them, and life becomes a loathsome burden to him; or else he falls into a state of apathy, and after many years of such an existence, he sinks either from exhaustion or from the supervention of internal disease.'

The mere description of these symptoms will suffice to show with what infernal malice and skill such a disease was selected, by one who well knew the influence of the body upon the mind. It was chosen as the fittest of any to bring the patriarch into that state of mind which Satan's purposes, or rather his argument, required; and if the reader studies the utterances of Job attentively, he will be enabled, without difficulty, to trace the progressive influence of the disease upon his mind, and to measure the degrees by which his soul succumbed to its power.

Third Week—Fifth Day.

THE POTSHERD AND THE ASHES.—JOB II. 8.

It is related that, being reduced to the miserable and forlorn condition we have described, Job 'took a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and he sat down among the ashes.' The first of these circumstances vividly and painfully impresses us with a sense of the wretched condition to which Job's body was reduced by this awful and loathsome disorder. To say that his body was 'covered with sores,' would have been with many a sufficient indication; but the imagination is not suitably

affected by general statements, and requires to have the impression deepened by graphic incidents and circumstantial details ; hence the sacred writer, wishing we should *realize* to our minds the picture of Job in his humiliation, sets him visibly before us, seated in the ashes, and scraping himself with a potsherd. We read this, and never more forget the picture these simple words print upon the mind. Nothing can surpass or approach the utter forlornness which this picture indicates. He who had been erewhile the greatest man in the east country, seems to have been left to himself—forsaken of all. The disease was so horrible, and so much dreaded, that when its nature appeared, neighbours, wife, and servants fled from him as a pollution, and refused to render the usual offices of duty and affection. This species of leprosy has always been deemed contagious in the countries where it prevails, though learned physicians have doubted that it is so. This impression prevented even those most bound to him from coming near enough to attend his person or minister to his wants. The patient is here his own physician, the sick his own nurse. None would dress his sores,—he is obliged to do it himself ; no friend, no servant, no wife, will venture to touch his festering body ; and then, again, a potsherd is the only instrument of relief he finds. We read of no fine linen to bind up his sores, no oil to supple them, no salves to cool their burning heat. A hard potsherd is the only instrument, and scraping the only surgery. The use of this may intimate that Job's body had become so loathsome, that he abhorred to touch it even with his bare hands, but must take something, and, for want of better, a potsherd, with which to scrape himself ; or, it may be, that his sore disease so overspread and envenomed his hands to his very nails, that it was a pain for him to touch himself ; his fingers were so sore that he had scarcely any use of them, and he was therefore constrained to resort to this poor expedient. But this explanation is scarcely so good as the first ; for if his hands were so sore that it pained them to touch his own person with them, it would have pained them more to touch the hard potsherd.

But why did he go and sit among the ashes?

The frequency with which sitting down among the ashes is mentioned in Scripture, as an act expressive of repentance and humiliation, will, at the first view, suggest that it was a voluntary act on his part, not necessitated by his condition. Job himself expresses this so clearly, after the Lord had spoken, as to show that the custom existed in his time: 'I abhor myself, and repent *in dust and ashes.*'¹ So also, in a later age, the king of Nineveh, alarmed by the prophet's denunciation, 'rose from his throne, laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and *sat in ashes.*'² The heathen, also, in times of great mourning and affliction, used to sprinkle themselves with ashes, and sat down in them. This occurs several times in Homer. So, when Achilles mourns for the slain Patroclus:

'Then clouds of sorrow fell on Peleus' son,
And grasping with both hands the ashes, down
He poured them on his head, his graceful beard
Dishonouring; and thick the sooty shower
Descending, settled on his fragrant vest;
Then, stretched in ashes, at the vast extent
Of his whole length he lay, disordering wild
With his own hands, and rending off his hair.'

Iliad, xviii. 25-32.—COWPER.

So Laertes, in sorrow for his supposed lost son, Ulysses:

'Then sorrow, as a sable cloud,
Involved Laertes: gathering with both hands
The dust, he poured it on his reverend head
With many a piteous groan.'

Odyssey, xxiv. 373-375.—COWPER.

This, therefore, may well have been a voluntary act of grief and repentance on the part of Job, intended to express that he abased and humbled himself before the Lord.

It is, nevertheless, by no means certain that this act may not have been necessitated by his condition, and in some degree it heightens his misery to understand that this was the case. And here we may note, that the ancient Greek translation (the

¹ Job xlii. 6.

² Jonah iii. 6; see also Isa. lxi. 3, Matt. xi. 21.

Septuagint) interprets the text to mean that he sat down upon a dunghill. The poverty and want to which he was now (some time after he had lost all) reduced, may have been so extreme, that he had no longer a house to shelter him, nor any of the conveniences of life ; and as no neighbour would receive into their houses one thus loathsomely diseased, he had no choice but to go forth and sit among the ashes.

Or, his thus going forth may have been necessitated by the offensive nature of his disease, which filled the house with such noisome odours, that neither himself nor any in the house could endure it, so that he was constrained to go forth into the open air.

Or, yet further, he may have been constrained to go forth and separate himself as a leper—even as Miriam was compelled to go forth and remain without the camp, so long as the leprosy was upon her ;¹ and as Uzziah, although a king, was constrained to dwell apart when smitten with leprosy.² This was enjoined by the law of Moses ;³ but the custom probably did not originate with that law, which seems to have sanctioned and regulated an earlier usage, and to have had the tendency to mitigate the severities of previous usages, if we may judge of the much more rigid treatment of lepers in heathen countries at the present day, than was possible under the law of Moses. See, for instance, Mr. Malcolm's account of the condition of lepers in Burmah : 'Leprosy, in several forms, is seen at the great cities, where its victims collect in a separate quarter, and live chiefly by begging—the only beggars in the country. The general form is that which attacks the smaller joints. I saw many who had lost all their fingers and toes, and some both hands and feet. In some cases the nose also disappears. It does not seem much to shorten life, and is not very painful, except in its first stages. Those with whom I conversed, declared they had not felt any pain for years. In many cases it ceases to increase after a time ; the stumps of the limbs heal, and the disease is in fact cured. I could not hear of any effectual remedy—it seems to stop of itself. It can scarcely be considered contagious, although in-

¹ Num. xii. 14.

² 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.

³ Lev. xiii. 44-46.

stances are sometimes given to prove it so. Persons suffering from it are by law separated entirely from other society ; but their families generally retire with them, mingling and cohabiting for life. The majority of the children are sound and healthy, but it is said frequently to reappear in the second or third generation. Lepers, and those who consort with them, are obliged to wear a peculiar and conspicuous hat, made like a shallow conical basket. The children, whether leprous or not, are allowed to intermarry only with their own class.'

The chief interest in the above passage lies in this, that it enables us to discover the object and motive of the minute regulations respecting leprosy contained in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Leviticus. They are all framed upon the sacred principle, that none but such as were actually subject to a disease supposed to be contagious, should be placed under the disabilities and exclusion which it involved ; and that, for the benefit of society, none who really suffered under the malady should be allowed unrestricted intercourse with their fellow-citizens. This discrimination could only proceed upon a clear apprehension of the signs of complete recovery ; and these signs are accordingly pointed out, in the chapters to which we have referred, with remarkable precision and distinctness. The want of some such rules as were by the divine beneficence imparted to the Hebrew people, would among them, as in Burmah, have had the effect of excluding whole generations of men from the free intercourse of life, on account of a disease which may at one time have affected an ancestor ; and of preventing those who, from the impulse of natural affection, might place themselves in communication with a diseased relative, from ever more returning to the society of unafflicted men, although they may never, in their own persons, have known the leprous taint. How small, in comparison, would then have been the benefit conferred by our Lord upon the lepers whom He cured ! It would, indeed, have relieved them from the disease, but He could not, by that act, also have restored them to their place in the commonwealth, or have enabled them henceforth to walk the highways and the streets with freedom,

or to mingle with glad hearts with the multitudes that kept holiday in the courts of the Lord's house.

Third Week—Sixth Day.

JOB'S WIFE.—JOB II. 9, 10.

WE now learn that, amid all Job's afflictions, his wife had been spared to him. At this we begin to rejoice, and to take comfort for him. All is not lost. He is not yet utterly forlorn. This best of earthly friends, his truest comforter, his help-meet, is left to him. She is there, whose sympathy and encouragement were to him beyond all price. But, alas! he has them not. Satan did not overlook her; nor perhaps had he spared her, but that he hoped to make her the choicest arrow in his quiver against her husband. We do not know her name. The sacred writer has spared it an immortality of odium, by withholding the knowledge of it from us. The Jews imagine that she was no other than Jacob's frail daughter Dinah; a notion originating probably in the fact, that this is the only woman historically known in the age to which they rightly conclude that Job belonged. But there were thousands of women besides Jacob's daughter; and there is not the shadow of a foundation for the conjecture of this Rabbinical conceit.

To some, Job's wife appears a shrew. It may be so; but it is quite as well to suppose that whatever may have been her natural temper, her losses had turned her heart. She had lost all her children—all in one day, at one stroke; and in treating this as Job's greatest affliction, and his mastery over that mighty grief as his most glorious triumph, we must not suppose that the mother felt the loss less severely than the father. But she did *not* triumph over it; she did not, like her husband, rise from the dust victorious over the greatest calamity that could befall her—one such as few mothers besides her have been called to bear. Her heart rose, it would seem, in wrath against Him from whose hand the stroke appeared to come, and into whose

deep design, in thus allowing her life's hope to be cast down, she could not penetrate. To regard her as moved solely by the state of bodily disease to which her husband was reduced, were to take a narrow view of the case. It is merely a final consequence, the demonstrative result of that great and terrible antecedent. The loss of substance alone she might perhaps have borne as became Job's wife ; and had this been all, her name might have come down to us with honour. But the loss of all her children, from the eldest in his strength to the youngest in his tenderness, was too much for her, and moved her heart to rebelliousness against God. And how many maternal hearts have been so moved, avowedly or not, consciously or not, by losses far less awful than hers !

It must have seemed to her as if such sorrow could know no increase ; but when she beheld her husband smitten with a disease so distressing and terrible, she became desperate, and accused the justice and wisdom of the Almighty, in that He had suffered so much calamity to befall a man so good and so upright as her husband. Where was their God, she argued, who suffered this, if He did not inflict it ? Was there any God, since such things could be ? and if there was a God indeed, where was his justice, his mercy, his compassion, seeing that such calamities were imposed upon, or not averted from, the most devout of his worshippers ? Therefore, when she saw that her husband's faith was not shaken even by this sore distress, she cried, ' Dost thou still retain thine integrity ? Curse God and die.' Surely words so dreadful never before nor since came from a woman's lips. That they came from hers, may perhaps be explained by the process of feeling which we have endeavoured to trace, and by which our surprise, although not our sorrow, may be lessened.

Job's answer to this suggestion—in which we fail not to trace Satan's hand—is worthy of his faith and patience. ' Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What ! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ?' And here observe, in corroboration of the view we have taken, that Job does not say that his wife *was* a foolish

woman, which would have been a hard thing for him to say to his wife, but that she spoke *like* one of the foolish women, like one bereft of common sense and reason by the stress of her calamities.

There is, however, something more to be said respecting Job's wife. The phrase she uses, '*curse* God,' is the same we have already had occasion to consider ; and hence it is by some regarded in just the reverse sense,—namely, of '*bless* God, and die.' Those, however, who take the words in this acceptation, do not all regard them as used in a good sense. Those who do so, allege that the woman gave her husband wholesome advice, counselling him to humble himself before God, and pray Him to release him from an existence which had become so miserable that death seemed the only cure for his disease, the only remedy for all his troubles. It was telling him that death was his best friend ; that it were better for him to die, than to live a life like this. Such a life was a continual death ; and it were better to die at once, than to die daily.

Now, as many ladies are among our readers, we will at once ask them, if this is a true or probable explanation ? We feel assured that they will at once say it is not ; that this is not the language which any true-hearted wife would hold to her afflicted husband ; and that the advice is not '*wholesome*,' as this explanation supposes. It is the ingenious speculation of dry old scholars shut up among their books, and not of men knowing anything about the hearts of wives.

But it is possible to put even this view more favourably for the wife of Job. She may be understood to rebuke her husband for still holding fast to the proud boast of his own innocency ; telling him that he was indeed a sinner, and that it much better became him to bow himself very low in spirit before the Lord, confessing his sins, acknowledging his unworthiness before One in whose sight the very heavens are not clean, and so bringing himself into a fit state of mind for his death, that seemed to her inevitable and rapidly approaching.

A shade of still better meaning is involved in the explanation which supposes that Job's wife speaks in reference to the

words he had used on a recent occasion, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord ;' and means to suggest, that having already lost all, and being now deeply afflicted in bodily health, he had nothing further to expect but dissolution, and that, therefore, he could not do better now than reiterate his former declaration, and close his life by blessing the great Arbiter of human destiny.

This, we fear, is a forced explanation. Job's wife was not likely to be brought upon the scene to offer counsel exactly in accordance with his own spirit, and which there was nothing in his past conduct to show was needed. A good wife might render such advice ; but as, from its perfect accordance with the character of the man addressed, it leads to nothing, and contributes to nothing, no historian would be likely to record it. It is not as a harmony, but as a discord, that the incident acquires point and purpose. It was an aggravation to Job's calamities.

We wish we could believe this explanation. But every interpretation which strives to make this woman's counsel innocent, or kind, or wholesome, is met by Job's own reply, which treats it as a most evil suggestion, altogether opposed to that absolute and childlike trust in God, under all circumstances, which he felt himself bound to exemplify. If the counsel were so salutary, it had been very harsh in Job to tell her that she spoke like a foolish woman.

There is, however, another explanation which, acknowledging the force of this consideration, gives a bad sense to the advice of Job's wife, while retaining the sense of *blessing* instead of *cursing* God. This is accomplished by making her words ironical, as if she had said : 'Ay, do go on still, relying upon thine integrity, and blessing God, and yet dying ; for He will not save thee.' But surely of all things irony would be most misplaced here. Consider, that she was herself a most afflicted woman, and that the wickedness of rebellious thought and language under extreme sorrow is far more natural than irony.

There are other explanations of the words, both as taken in the sense of 'bless' and 'curse ;' but the reader has had a

sufficient variety. Upon the whole, the interpretation we have given seems best to meet all the circumstances. This, while taking the words in their worst sense, allows us to understand that Job's wife, although over-wrought to sinfulness of thought and intemperance of language by her affliction, and hence made an instrument of Satan in aggravating her husband's troubles, was not essentially a bad or wicked woman. Her husband's manifest surprise at hearing such language from *her*, signifies as much ; and stress ought to be laid on his own declaration that she spoke like a foolish woman, not that she was one. Her evil thought and language were enough to assimilate her to a foolish woman, but not to denominate her as such.

The Greek translators (the Seventy), astonished, perhaps, that an angry woman should express herself so briefly on such an occasion, had the hardihood to expand her words into a much longer speech. Some other versions have this passage ; but it is not of the least authority, not being found in any Hebrew copy. It is, however, curious, as showing the view which was at a very early period taken by learned Jews of the *purport* of her words, and of the condition to which Job was reduced. We therefore introduce it :

'After much time had passed, his wife said unto him, How long wilt thou persist, saying, Behold, I will wait a little longer in expectation of my deliverance? Behold, thy memorial is blotted out of the earth ; even the sons and daughters, the pains and toils of my womb, whom I have brought forth in vain. Even thou thyself sittest among loathsome worms, abiding all night in the open air ; while I, *a drudge and a wanderer* from house to house and from place to place, long for the setting of the sun that I may rest from the toils and sorrows I now endure. Utter some word against the Lord, and die.'

Third Week—Seventh Day.

THE VISIT.—JOB II. 11-13.

SUCH a man as Job could not but have had many friends ; and, ere long, the report of the extraordinary succession of calamities which had befallen one so renowned in all the east country for his possessions, and so eminent for his virtues, spread afar through all that region. It reached the ears of three of the most valued and important of his friends ; and although their homes were distant from his and from each other's, they agreed to pay him a visit of condolence, joining one another on the journey to the place of his abode.

One of these friends was Eliphaz the Temanite ; another, Bildad the Shuhite ; and the third, Zophar the Naamathite. There are some curious questions respecting these persons, and their tribes and places of abode ; but as the discussion of such matters, except in cases of primary interest, would be unsuited to this work, we pass them by, and shall take these persons as they stand in that individuality of character which transpires in the ensuing discussion.

Their demeanour first engages attention. They came to the land of Uz, and drew near to the place of their friend's abode. They then cast their looks forward to discover him, and they beheld a miserable object, who, though they knew him, from the circumstances and from the accounts of his condition they had received, to be their old friend Job, was so awfully changed and disfigured, that they could not, without this knowledge, have recognised in him the man they had known so well in former times. Much as they had heard of his misery, the reality far exceeded their expectations. They were beyond measure grieved and astonished ; and when they thought of his former high estate, when last they had seen him, and contrasted it with the doleful case in which they now saw him lie, 'they lifted up their voice, and wept, and rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.'

Nothing less, it appears, than the acts of mourning for the dead, was found sufficient to express the intensity of their concern and grief. All these acts of mourning, except the last, we have already had occasions of explaining. The last very remarkable custom is one of extreme antiquity, as we see from this place, as well as from its representation as an act of funereal mourning in the ancient Egyptian and Etruscan paintings. Like other such acts, it was not, however, confined to funeral occasions, but served as a mode of expressing any vehement emotion of sorrow, humiliation, compunction, or rage, as is still the case among the Orientals. In the Egyptian examples, the mourners stoop down to take up a handful of dust, and cast it back over their heads. In the East, at the present day, this is more an act of humiliation than of grief (unless so far as grief is involved



in humiliation), and the person who casts dust upon his head usually prostrates himself upon the ground, and throws up the dust in the manner shown in the engraving. It may be added, that it appears even from Scripture, that there were two modes of casting dust upon the head. In the first case, the dust was taken up and sprinkled upon the head; in the other, the dust was clutched up vehemently, cast up high into the air, and fell upon the head and shoulders of those who had thrown it up. So in Acts xxii. 23, where the expression is that of rage and indignation. Some have sought mythic meanings in this act, as if it expressed, in the commingling of adverse elements, the utmost confusion and dismay. But it seems quite sufficient to regard it as one of the most significant of those demonstrative and impulsive acts (eventually merging into a custom), by

which the Orientals strove to give forcible expression to their feelings.

We are further informed that these three old friends of Job did not intrude themselves upon the sacred privacy of his grief by greetings and condolences. Their conduct was such as would, in this our present age, be called 'gentlemanly'—which we take to mean, whether with reference to the present or any other age, and whether in the exalted or the lowly, whatever is courteous or considerate, whatever is involved in that tender regard for the feelings of others which shrinks with instinctive dread from the idea of giving offence or pain. Job's friends 'sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great.' This is one of those beautiful touches, true to natural feeling, which abound in the Bible, and which in any other book would be regarded as master-strokes of literary art. Young, in his well-known 'Paraphrase of the Book of Job,' has properly described this conduct of the friends as—

'A debt of reverence to distress so great.'

To the statement that the friends sat upon the ground seven days and seven nights in silence, it may be objected that it is scarcely credible that Job himself, weakened by disease and excessive grief, should be able to sit thus seven days successively without speech or motion; and at least equally so, that his friends, who were in perfect health, and just off a long and tiresome journey, should forego during all that time the natural uses and offices of life, to sit without speaking a single word. Knowing the capacity of the Orientals for remaining so long in one place, and even in one posture, as would be astonishing to Europeans, we are not quite so much impressed as some have been with this as a difficulty. Nevertheless, we may admit that such texts as these are not to be too stringently interpreted. We conceive that, rightly understood, it does not preclude them from sleeping, eating, and going about—not even from some slight expressions of sorrow and condolence,

but that it does mean that they constantly, during that period, returned to sit with him, spending, in fact, as much of their time with him as they possibly could ; during which, beholding his distress of mind, they made no attempt to enter into conversation, argument, or discussion with him. This is quite sufficient to meet the demands of the text, as we may see by other instances, in which the inspired penmen speak of a thing as being continually done, which was only done very frequently. Thus it is said that the disciples of our blessed Saviour were ‘continually in the temple, praising and blessing God,’¹ which clearly means that they frequented the temple ‘with only the least possible intermission.’ The same evangelist² describes the aged Anna, the prophetess, as one who ‘departed not from the temple, but served God night and day,’ not that she was there without intermission, but that she spent the greater part of her time there. And, not to multiply instances, we may refer to the very parallel instance to be found in St. Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders, wherein he calls them to witness, that for the space of three years successively, he ‘*ceased not* to warn every one night and day, with tears ;’³ not that it can be supposed he preached for three years together unintermittedly—for that, as an eminent commentator somewhat quaintly remarks, would have been to make a very long sermon indeed,—but the meaning is no more than that, during the space he mentions, he was constant, in season and out of season, in warning and exhorting the people.

¹ Luke xxiv. 53.² Luke ii. 37.³ Acts xx. 31.

Fourth Week—First Day.

THE PRAISE.—JOB II. 10.

As we now approach the great discussion between Job and his friends, we wish to direct the reader's attention to a significant matter, which seems of special interest for the right understanding of the controversy.

At the close of the account of Job's first trial, and of the manner in which he sustained it, the words occur: 'In all this Job sinned not, *nor charged God foolishly*;' that is, did not charge God with unreasonableness in so afflicting him. At the end of his second trial, the same words occur, with a variation, which is not without meaning: 'In all this did not Job sin *with his lips*.' Such declarations are not afterwards repeated, and seem to be purposely introduced to mark the tendency of his state of feeling, and to assist our comprehension of his character. As Samuel, after many victories and deliverances, sets up a stone or pillar with this inscription, EBEN EZER, *the stone of help*, saying, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' 1 Sam. vii. 12, so here the Holy Spirit erects, as it were, a pillar—sets up a monument of Job's glorious victories over Satan, inscribed, we may say, with the words, 'Hitherto Job sinned not;' and a good way on another, bearing the words, 'Hitherto Job sinned not with his lips.'

In the first case, it is said absolutely that Job had escaped altogether unscathed and victorious. He had not, even in thought, charged God with unreasonableness or injustice. But in the second case the words of approbation are more guarded. It is no longer said that he 'did not charge God foolishly,' no longer that he 'sinned not;' but only that he '*sinned not with his lips*.' From the comparison of these two declarations, it appears to us clearly designed that we should understand that Job's

mind had already, at the point last indicated, been touched with some hard thoughts of God ; but he had hitherto fought against them, and refused to give them utterance. Hence, although he has no longer the praise of being, even in thought, sinless in this matter, the lower praise is allowed him that he had not yet sinned with his lips. That this is at this point inserted, and is afterwards withheld, seems purposely intended to indicate that *afterwards* he did ‘charge God foolishly,’ and did ‘sin with his lips.’ At the end, after the Lord had spoken, he became deeply sensible of this himself, and confesses : ‘I uttered that I understood not. . . . I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ; but *now* mine eye seeth Thee. *Wherefore I abhor* myself, and repent in dust and ashes.’ It would seem that nothing can be plainer than this, as designedly indicating the estimate in which we are to hold many of Job’s complaints and some of his reasonings. Yet this has been very much overlooked, and there has been too much of a disposition to regard Job as triumphant in the controversy. The fact is, however, that all the parties to the controversy seem intended to be described as in the wrong ; and Job himself, his strong mind being at length affected by his afflictions, does not seldom ‘charge God foolishly,’ and ‘sin with his lips,’ until the speech of Elihu, followed by one of greater majesty, though to the same purport, from the Lord himself, draws from his revived heart the memorable words we have cited.

Let us not, however, understand that when Job uttered the words which precede the declaration, that he had not sinned with his lips—‘Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’—there was any hypocrisy in this good man, or that he glorified God with his mouth, while his heart entertained most different feelings. It is to his praise, not to his blame, that the fact is so stated. It is to show us that, strengthened by the Lord’s grace, he had still a strong mastery over that which was human and earthly in his own spirit. Although the calamities of Job were prodigious, there was nothing prodigious in the operations of his mind and spirit, which passed through the same processes which we have all, at

times and in various degrees, experienced. And it is therefore not by looking into the clouds, but by looking to what takes place in the souls of the Lord's servants in our own day, that we must hope to comprehend the trials of the saints of old. How often, then, does it not happen to us that one conceives evil imaginations, yet is enabled to hold them in, so that no evil words come from him? Thus the best of men may sometimes be tempted to be offended with God; and evil imaginations may pass through and rest for a moment in his mind, spurring him on to lift up himself against the Lord, and even to conceive blasphemies against Him. But, by the mighty grace which has been given to him, he is enabled to hold in 'the proud mind of the flesh,' and presently he 'comes to himself,' and rebukes the ungodly impulse, sorrowing most of all that the Spirit's temple has been defiled by thoughts of sin. We see, then, that in the midst of our temptations, God bestows upon us the grace to resist them, so that we come not to the extremity of openly blaspheming or reproaching Him. Yet let us not deem ourselves blameless for having conceived such thoughts, nor that we need not to condemn ourselves before God on account of them. But it is nevertheless permitted to us to find grounds of comfort in the assurance, that the Holy Spirit has wrought effectually in us, when we have not consented to any such temptations, nor cherished any liking for them. We may, therefore, well take the sentence under consideration in this sense—that Job, in not offending with his lips, came not, even for a moment, to extremities with God; but although he was sorely provoked to evil, he resisted, so that it overcame him not, and still stedfastly maintained the good fight of faith against it. In the first fight he was victorious, without a struggle; in the second, although still so far victorious, he had to fight hard for the victory.

There can be no doubt that thus far Job is still set forth to us as an example of patience. His mastering of the unruly tongue is the very quality which the Apostle James sets forth as a high point of Christian perfection; and we shall acquiesce, as we are bound to do, in this estimate, when we reflect how

over-swift the tongue is to clothe the evil thought in words, so that it will often happen that it has been uttered almost before we are fully conscious that it has been conceived or entertained. He, therefore, who is enabled so to hold himself in, that, under the severest trials, no ill-considered words—no words dishonouring God—fall from him, shows himself to be endowed with a grace of no mean account. Thus we see that Job is so far from showing any stout-heartedness against God, that even all his words are ordered well, and reflect no dishonour upon the Lord; and that where most men are apt to be light of speech, and unable to rule their tongues, Job has said nothing, in his great distress, but what becomes him well, and magnifies God in his servant. May the Lord grant to us also his grace, that no good or evil that may befall us in this house of our sojourning, may force us to cast forth words tending to the dishonour of his name or to the disparagement of his glory.

Fourth Week—Second Day.

THE FRIENDS.—JOB II. II.

ON the day before the last, our attention was directed to the circumstances attending the visit of the three friends of Job. To-day we may consider the character and temper of the men, so far as these can be collected from the language they employ in their discussions with Job.

Eliphaz the Temanite seems to have been the principal man among the three friends, and the oldest of them. Hence, perhaps, arises that air of dignity and self-restraint which distinguishes this person from those who come after him in the argument. He at first enters into the subject with address and mildness, and evinces considerable respect for the integrity of his friend. The appearance of cordial friendship with which he begins, is, however, lost as the debate proceeds, in consequence of Job's strenuous vindication of himself from the results of the conclusion which they all in common asserted—that

Job's afflictions were the punishment of guilt. Thus, in his second address, he rebukes his presumption ; but it is not until the third that he kindles into almost ferocious harshness. He expatiates with vehemence on the conduct of Job, describes his sins as if he had witnessed them with his own eyes, and exhorts him to repentance and conversion as the only means of deliverance open to him. Then, in his references to Job's loss of property, and the melancholy loss of his children, there are severities approaching to the unfeeling, the force and injustice of which wring the soul of the afflicted patriarch, who complains sadly of them in his reply. Eliphaz was one of a class of men not unfrequently met with : naturally mild, gentle, considerate, and right-minded, but dragged almost against their will into harshness and injustice by an unwarranted theory or system of belief. The most vehement *moral* persecutors in all ages have been men of this class and character.

The second of Job's friends, Bildad the Shuhite, is more harsh towards the sufferer, and assails him with more keenness than Eliphaz, though less bitterly than Zophar. It is he who distinctly broaches the theory that calamities are chastisements for sin—the theory which they all, even Eliphaz, who had only glanced at it in his initiatory address, subsequently maintain. His language is less eloquent than that of Eliphaz, and his treatment of his afflicted friend less delicate. He plainly tells Job, that after the death of his children, taken from the world on account of their guilt, the judgment of sin had come home to himself. His second address is full of imagery, and is wrought up to a high pitch of terror, in tracing the end reserved for the wicked, the traits of which he most invidiously borrows from the condition of his friend, whom he sharply rebukes for the uselessness of his complaints, and against whom he manifests, with taunting and provoking expressions, much anger for vindicating himself from their criminations. In his third address, however, Bildad acknowledges that sinners are sometimes prosperous, and is led to maintain that it is vain to dispute against God, before whom no one is pure. Upon the whole, the character evinced by his speeches is bitter, high, haughty,

intolerant, and satirical. His denunciations are furious and awful, yet he is more elevated than sublime, and more passionate than energetic.

Zophar the Naamathite shows a more rude and less cultivated, and proportionately a more heated, character than the other two. He is the most inveterate of Job's accusers, and he speaks wholly without sympathy or pity. In one place he has the gross cruelty of alluding to the effects of Job's disease upon his countenance (xi. 15). In substantial argument, he does little more than repeat what Bildad has already said; indeed, his speeches are made up rather of invectives and reproaches than of new ideas and reasonings. In his second speech—and he has one speech less than the others, probably because (as is intimated) he could find nothing more to say—he betrays manifest signs of exhaustion of matter, without any abatement of wrathfulness; he again repeats with exaggeration what had already been said; and he certainly does himself justice in being the first to give over speaking, for it was his turn to reply, when it is stated, in chap. xxxii. 1, that 'these three men ceased to answer Job.'

With all his faults, Zophar speaks nobly of the divine attributes, showing that any adequate inquiry into them is far beyond the grasp of the human mind. The hortatory part of the first of his discourses does bear some resemblance to that of Eliphaz, yet it is enlivened and diversified by the fine imagery which he employs.

Zophar seems to have had a full conviction of the providence of God in regulating and controlling the actions of mankind; but he limits all his reasonings to the present life, and makes no reference to a future world. This circumstance alone accounts for the weakness and fallacy of these men's judgments. In his second discourse there is much poetical beauty in the selection of images, and the general doctrine is founded on truth; its fallacy lies in its application to Job's particular case. The whole indicates great warmth of temper, inflamed by misapprehension of its object and by mistaken zeal.

Fourth Week—Third Day.**THE OUTBREAK.—JOB III.**

THE long silence is at last broken. It is Job that speaks. Hear him! Is this the man who but lately uttered, in his deep distress, words worthy of being engraven upon the rocks, and fit to be proclaimed over our graves? We may almost, at the first view, say with his friends, that we 'know him not' as the same man we knew before, so altered is the moral feeling which his utterances now indicate. Some profess to be greatly astonished at his passionate outbreak, overlooking the antecedent circumstances which we have pointed out as preparing for it, and leading us to look for it. The thoughts and feelings to which he now gives vent, had already been first passing through and then nestling in his mind. Hitherto he had laboured against them, and had refused to give them utterance. But they had gathered strength in silent brooding over his sorrows and humiliations, in the presence of friends from afar, to whom he had been wont to give a noble reception, killing for them the fatted calf, and from whom he had been used to receive a most different greeting. He probably perceived the bent of their thoughts; and to have sunk so low in the presence of these, his peers,—to have become to them an object of compassion, mingled with irrepressible disgust, and shaded by dark suspicions,—proved at length too much for him, and the torrent of his hard complaints gushed forth.

We have shown the change to be less abrupt than is usually supposed; it may be that it is also less complete. It is in fact rather a progression than a change. Calvin, so learned in all matters touching man's inner life, well remarks, that if we consider the case well, and examine thoroughly, we find a combat, wherein man's infirmity shows itself on the one hand, while, on the other, some strength to resist temptation still remains. Hitherto we have seen nothing but strength and constancy in Job; now there is a mixture, for the infirmity of his flesh so

overcomes him as to constrain him to murmur against the Lord, while yet he adheres to Him, and has no thoughts of departing from Him. Nevertheless, he gives utterance to hard words and evil thoughts, which cannot be justified, and proceeding from a heart no longer wholly right before God. The state to which this afflicted man has come, is, then, that in which he is less steadfast than he was before ; and in which he so far succumbs in this high conflict as to show that he is still a frail man, not able to sustain his temptation, as he fain would do, nor to submit himself to God with that resolute serenity which was required from him, and which he had before most nobly exemplified.

Again, this great master in Israel, vindicating Job from those who regard him as altogether an altered man, so as to have forgotten his former patience, as angry with God, and as no longer minded to glorify Him, observes that : ‘ It is certain Job has not come to such extremity as this. It is still his desire and purpose to obey God. Nevertheless, there is now a mixture and conflict of interests in his soul. In this conflict he fails not to be wounded, he seems to receive blows, he staggers, he steps awry. He has not so sound a perfection as before ; and yet, although his affliction pinched him sore, so that he was likely to faint in the midst of the way, he still held on his course, with a fixed purpose to obey God, although meanwhile he failed to realize all the good that he desired. There is a memorial text in which St. Paul confesses, that although all his desire was to give himself unto God, yet, notwithstanding, it came not so to pass ; for he was hindered by his own nature, which was over-weak. Now, if Paul acknowledged this much of himself, let it not be thought strange that the like should happen to Job, so as that he should be desirous to conform himself to the good-will of God, and yet that his affections should not be in all points so perfect but that he stooped and halted in his course.’

The language of Job’s opening address, is certainly that of bitter lamentation and despair. He curses the day in which he was born, using a great variety of strong, harsh, and, if literally

understood, reprehensible language, to show the deep detestation in which he regarded it, because it did not prevent his birth, and save him from sorrow and despair. He passionately asks why he did not die as soon as he was born—why any care was taken to preserve an existence doomed to be so wretched. He expatiates with much beauty upon the peace, the rest, in which he should have lain, had this happened to him; and then he breaks forth again into bitter complaint that life should be given to one who does not want it, but covets death beyond all precious things. In this he goes farther than hitherto, as it implies, if it does not express, a reflection upon the Lord, as one who had been less than just and merciful to him; and towards the close he divulges the interesting fact, that his life had been haunted by a vague fear and presentiment of an adverse change in his condition, and now, far more than the worst of all he had ever feared has come upon him.

Having thus stated the substance of Job's speech, we shall direct attention to some remarkable points in it. And this course we mean to follow throughout, as our plan does not admit of the same extended development of particulars, which it has allowed in the historical or introductory portion.

With regard to the mere fact of Job's cursing the day of his birth, this is much less offensive than some of his subsequent utterances. It is less offensive in poetry, which allows the boldest expression to strong emotion, than it would be in prose; and far less so to an Oriental than to a European imagination. The feelings of grief, of despair, of hate, of joy, which with us are vented in the simplest forms of expression, are in the East carried to the utmost limits of language and thought, and *applied* in all their possible circumstances. How often do we hear one say, under comparatively light afflictions or discontents, 'I wish I were dead!' or, 'I wish I had never been born!' and although we regard them as culpable expressions of discontent, they make no very strong impression upon the mind, and are scarcely regarded as outrageous, atrocious, or rebellious against God. Yet the idea conveyed in this not uncommon expression is neither more nor less than what the

Oriental means ; and the impression which his words make upon those who hear him, is scarcely stronger, when, in vehement and high language, he curses the day of his birth, and all connected with it, or under a multitude of pathetic and despairing images, invokes the rest of the grave. That this kind of language was not regarded as more heinous than such phrases in common use as we have produced, is shown by the fact that (not to mention other instances) the prophet Jeremiah curses his day in terms as hot and passionate, though 'less amplified,' as does our patriarch in this place, and for the very same reason too—because he came into the world to see labour and sorrow, and that his days were consumed with shame. Job is certainly not more to be blamed than Jeremiah, perhaps less, for the prophet possessed the light of a brighter revelation than was afforded to the patriarch. But both are more excusable in these their fervid utterances, than is the Christian in even the comparatively tame murmurings for death, or regrets for life, which he gives forth, seeing that to him have been granted far stronger consolations under afflictions, and supports in adversity, and far higher evidences of the divine love, than any of the ancient saints were permitted to enjoy.

The close connection between the end of the second and beginning of the third chapter, ought not to be overlooked. '*After this opened Job his mouth*'—after the seven days of silence and the pantomime that ushered them in. Could anything have been more trying to the temper, more crushing to the spirit, more harrowing to the feelings of the poor, bereaved, plague-stricken sufferer, than the conduct of these three men? They came professedly to mourn with and comfort him ; but justly has their heartless conduct been made the basis of the ironical proverb, 'Job's comforters.' The loud lamentation, the rending of their clothes, the throwing of dust on their heads, and the seven days and nights of blank silence, were all, by the wasted and heart-broken sufferer, interpreted, and, as the sequel shows, rightly interpreted, in the light of insults rather than sympathy. The visit of these three 'friends' was probably a part of Satan's work ; and, if so, it was surely his masterpiece. To assail the isolated, exhausted, agonized man with hypocritical professions of sympathy, with illogical arguments, and finally with

coarse and cruel invective, was enough to drive him to despair. We can scarcely wonder that, under such circumstances, even the patience of Job was exhausted, and that he broke forth into those passionate utterances, of which an example is given in this third chapter.

Hengstenberg has, I believe, taken a right view of this painful scene: 'His friends had not uttered a syllable; but they had clearly enough spoken to him with their looks. Job read in their countenances that their thoughts were busy with his righteousness; that they wished to deliver him a lecture of reproof; that they only waited the opportunity to enter on their work of advocacy of God. He read beforehand in their soul all that they afterwards uttered. . . . They waited to catch him in a mood favourable for such a reproofing lecture. Hence they held their tongues, until Job, irritated to the utmost by their long silence, himself began the conversation, and forced them to come forward with their view.'

Fourth Week—Fourth Day.

IMPRECATION.—JOB III. 3-12.

THE regions which might be expected to supply the most striking parallels to the lamentations of Job over his forlorn estate are far more wanting in them than is any ancient or modern pagan, or—we grieve to say—any Christian country. Those regions are under the Mohammedan law, which enjoins nothing more stringently than submission to the divine decrees, and represses as a high sin all complaint under the calamities of life. Hence they afford the most striking examples that have ever been witnessed in the world, of repressed feeling, and of real or affected resignation to all evil, among all classes. Our own law—the law of Christ—not less urgently enforces such submission; but the Moslems obey their false prophet better than we our true one. We can, indeed, produce *examples* of Christian resignation, more illustrious than any that Islam has yielded; but for a generally diffused and practically exemplified feeling of unconditional and uncomplaining submission to all

the dispensations of providence, no Christian nation comes near to these. There is a reason. Their system is one of self-righteousness—one of merits before God. It knows no Redeemer, nor feels the need of one. This implicit resignation stands high among the merits by which they expect to win heaven at last. It is to them a salvation. With us it is not so. It is a grace, a duty of our Christian profession ; but for salvation we rest not on any of these things, but solely on the most precious blood of Christ.

Nevertheless, although such examples are for this reason rare, and there is none that we remember of very recent date, they are sometimes to be found ; and when they are found, they assume a marked resemblance of form and substance to the lamenting outcries of Job. The most striking example occurs in the case of Malek en-Nasser Daoud, an emir of some Arab tribes in Palestine, from which he had been driven by the Crusaders, and who eventually died in a village near Damascus in the year 1258. He deplored his misfortunes in a poem, from which the following passage has been quoted by Abulfeda in his *Annals*, and was first cited to illustrate this chapter by Rosenmüller : ‘ O that my mother had remained unmarried all the days of her life ! That God had appointed no lord or consort for her ! Or that, when He had destined her to an excellent, gentle, and wise prince, she had been one of those whom He created barren, and never known the blessed tidings that she had borne a man or a woman ! Or that, when she had carried me under her heart,¹ I had lost my life at my birth ; and if I had been born, and had seen the light, that when the congratulating people hastened on their camels, I had been gathered to my fathers !’

It is well worthy of note, that in Job’s malediction, he (like this Arabian poet) only curses the day of his own birth, and wishes he had never been born. There is no trace of malignity or ill feeling against mankind or individuals ; nothing is invoked which could cause suffering to any living creature.

¹ Compare Spenser :—

‘ From the dear closet of her painful side.’

Indeed, anything of this sort seems to be studiously avoided. Nothing would seem more in his way than to curse the man who brought to his father the tidings of his birth ; but he turns aside from this more direct course to curse the night in which the important message was delivered. This is highly interesting and important, but is apt to escape notice ; for, from the force of the language employed, one is apt to suppose, at the first view, that a wide-spread destruction and ruin is invoked ; and it is only when we come to weigh the words that we discern that not the least harm to any one but himself is involved in his maledictions. This is very singular, and it were hard to find a parallel to it. Even the Arabian poet cannot manage the like subject without virtually cursing his mother—wishing that she had never been married, or that she had been altogether barren. It is wonderful, that in restricting himself from the harrowing denunciations, by which alone coarser maledictors are able to make their meaning strong, Job yet finds circumstances and images so various, materials of cursing so complete, and language of such torrent-like force. It was not for want of the ordinary human objects of malediction, that he thus averted the shafts of his curse from inflicting wounds on others, directly or indirectly. There were the Chaldeans and the Sabeans, who had rent away his substance and destroyed his servants ; there were the men who had brought him the evil tidings ; there were the friends of his prosperous days, who had, after the manner of men, as he subsequently intimates, turned from him in the day of his affliction. But there is not a word aimed at any of them, or even glancing towards them. This seems to us without parallel ; and we doubt whether any other instance of a long strain of malediction, without one shade of malignity, exists in all literature. Look at a few instances.

Shakspeare affords one in the second part of Henry iv. :

‘ Now, let not nature’s hand
Keep the wild flood confined : let order die ;
And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed contention in a lingering act ;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain

Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead !'

Otway, who was awful at imprecations, supplies another :

'Curst be the hour that gave me birth !
Confusion and disorder seize the world,
To spoil all trust and converse among men ;
'Twi'xt families engender endless feuds,
In countries endless fears, in cities factions,
In states rebellion, and in churches schism ;
Till all things move against the course of nature ;
Till forms dissolved, the chain of causes broken,
And the Original of being lost.'

To him also belongs the terrible exclamation :

'Oh for a curse

To kill with !'

There is one piece, however, that comes much nearer the mark of Job's lamentation in many of its touches, and also in the absence of *offensive* malediction. The groundwork is also more similar than might at first appear, as it rests upon a mother's affliction for the loss of her husband, and therewith of all prosperity for her young son. The reverse is in both cases sudden, from the highest flow of prosperity to the depth of distress, and in both the mourners commence by lamenting the day of their birth. Most of our readers guess that we allude to Andromache's lament for the death of her husband Hector. We almost hesitate to quote the passage, supposing it so well known ; but being reminded by one near us, that a quotation from Homer for an illustrative purpose is always interesting, even to those who know him well, and that many of those into whose hands this work will fall, are more familiar with his name than with his epics, we venture to give the passage in Cowper's translation :

'Hector ! I am undone ; we both were born
To misery, thou in Priam's house in Troy,
And I in Hypoplacian Thebes, wood-crowned,
Beneath Eëtion's roof. He, doomed himself
To sorrow, me, more sorrowfully doomed,

Sustained in helpless infancy, whom oh
That he had ne'er begotten ! Thou descend'st
To Pluto's subterraneous dwelling drear,
Leaving myself destitute, and thy boy,
Fruit of our hapless loves, an infant yet,
Never to be hereafter thy delight,
Nor love of thine to share, or kindness more ;
For should he safe survive this cruel war,
With the Achaians, penury and toil
Must be his lot, since strangers will remove
At will his landmarks, and possess his fields.
Thee lost, he loses all—of father, both,
And equal playmate in one day deprived.
To sad looks doomed, and never-ceasing tears,
He seeks, necessitous, his father's friends ;
One by his mantle pulls, one by his vest,
Whose utmost pity yields to his parched lips
A thirst-provoking drop, and grudges more.
Some happier child, as yet untaught to mourn
A parent's loss, shoves rudely from the board
My son, and, smiting him, reproachful cries—
' Away—thy father is no guest of ours.'
Then, weeping, to his widowed mother comes
Astyanax, who on his father's lap
Ate marrow only, once, and fat of lambs ;
And when sleep took him, and his crying fit
Had ceased, slept ever on the softest bed,
Warm in his nurse's arms, fed to his fill
With delicacies, and his heart at rest.
But now Astyanax (so named in Troy
For thy sake, guardian of her gates and towers),
His father lost, must many a pang endure.
And as for thee, cast naked forth among
Yon galleys, where no parent's eye of thine
Shall find thee, when the dogs have torn thee once
Till they are sated, worms shall eat thee next.
Meantime thy graceful raiment rich, prepared
By our own maidens, in thy palace lies ;
But I will burn it, burn it all, because
Useless to thee, who never, so adorned,
Shalt slumber more ; yet every eye in Troy
Shall see how glorious once was thy attire.'

Fourth Week—Fifth Day.

‘DESOLATE PLACES.’—JOB III. 13, 14.

IN the latter part of his discourse, Job, amid the torture of his afflictions, dwells upon ideas of rest—of that rest and immunity from all pain, which he would at this time have possessed, had he died in the early morning of his existence. This is, of course, a low idea of rest; a rest not consciously enjoyed, and on which no conscious refreshment follows; a rest consisting in the mere negation of existence. Job's expressions provoke the inquiry—What were his notions of death? But we shall not enter into this question now; nor, perhaps, is it right to press his words too strictly, inasmuch as similar views with respect to death are expressed in the popular language of all religions and nations. Indeed, it might be a curious speculation to inquire, how little popular expressions are to be taken as embodying the substantial views of those who employ them.

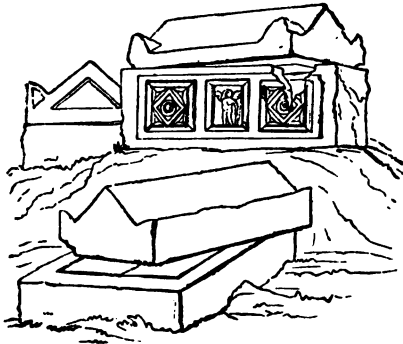
Among other things, Job indulges in the idea that had he then died, he would now have been at rest ‘with kings and counsellors of the earth, who built desolate places for themselves.’ What does he mean by *desolate places*? The meaning is doubtful. The term in Hebrew is *desolations* or *destructions*, and comes from a root that signifies to dry up; because dry or barren plains, or rocky and sandy mountains, are desolate places, unfit for the support of man or beast. Some conceive that Job means forests or parks, places which kings and great men frequently keep up in good order for their exercise and amusement. Others think that these ‘desolations’ must indicate houses erected in solitary groves; for princes and nobles are often desirous of such secluded retreats, where they may pass their time at ease, disburdened of their state, and relieved from the press of attendants and visitors. But this does not satisfy others, who take the meaning to be, that the great ones of the earth, in order to perpetuate and immortalize their names,

erect for themselves stately structures, at an immense cost, upon such places as are decayed and gone to ruin.

But all these explanations seem to want point and application to the idea on which the mind of Job is expatiating. There is no conceivable reason why any of these matters should be produced, more than any other act which princes might execute. We, therefore, greatly prefer that interpretation which has a clear bearing and signification, taken with the context. This is, that these 'desolate places' signify the magnificent tombs and sepulchres which the great are wont to build for the reception of themselves and their families, and which it was very much the custom of ancient times to prepare during one's lifetime; a custom which we see reviving in our own public cemeteries, some of the most costly tombs in which, at least in the cemeteries near London, were prepared during their lives by the persons who expected to occupy them. These might be called desolate, as being, in general, solitarily apart from towns, or as being destined for the habitation only of the dead. Or we might lay stress upon the signification 'destructions,' and say that it does not materially differ from the term *sarcophagi*, 'flesh-consumers,' which the Greeks applied to their tombs. The idea would then be, that these were places where the bodies of the dead were consumed or destroyed by mouldering into dust.

That the magnificence of sepulchral isolation is of extreme antiquity, and might well and naturally furnish this allusion to Job, is well known. There are even existing monuments to attest it. So much have men in all ages cared for the preservation of their remains, or for the perpetuation of their names, that among all the monuments of their pride, their tombs are the most enduring, whether reared above the ground or cut out of the rocks. Temples which seemed built for eternity have disappeared or are in ruins, while tombs of far earlier date remain in complete preservation; and of all the noble fabrics which the kings and great ones of the earth have in remote ages built for their living habitations, there are none, of which any trace remains above ground, that come within upwards of a

thousand years of the earliest existing tombs. The palaces of Nineveh even, are assuredly of very far later date than the pyramidal and excavated tombs of Egypt; and whatever their date be, they owe their preservation, not to the strength or skill of their construction, but to the accident of their being buried beneath the ground; while there are sepulchral monuments which have stood apart in the waste, confronting the sun for the space of nearly forty centuries, and which are still so far from decay that they are likely to stand as long as the world endures. The great ones of the world know that there will be always living men to rear up temples and palaces for their own day and generation; but they also know that the future will not



care so greatly for the remote past as to bestow enduring and costly monuments upon it; and not trusting, therefore, to its care the task of monumentally eternizing the memory of their greatness, they strive in their lifetime 'to build their desolate places for themselves.' But, alas for them! stones may last far longer than their names; and even the dried and drugged carcass may be preserved far beyond the time in which, great as they were in their day, and high as the place they took among the desclaters and masters of the earth, even the faintest trace of their name and memory has perished. There is the Mausoleum. Who reared it? Whose mortal part was it destined for? On whose memory was it destined to bestow an earthly

immortality? No one can answer. No one knows; and, unless as a matter of antiquarian curiosity, no one cares.

It may be, however, that the emphasis in the phrase, 'built desolate places *for themselves*,' which we have construed to mean in their own lifetime and by their personal care, may rather lie in the complete isolation and seclusion from the rest of the world which the great ones of the earth affected. That this is *involved* in the idea we have no doubt, when we recollect the great solicitude evinced by high families, even in Scripture, and so early as the time of Abraham, to have a sepulchre apart, which none but themselves and theirs might use. In connection with this subject, and with the apparent date of the Book of Job, it is interesting to recollect that the very tomb—the sepulchral cavern which Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite for a family sepulchre—the very tomb to which Jacob enjoined his sons to carry his remains, and of which he said, 'There they buried Abraham, and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac, and Rebekah his wife; *and there I buried Leah*'—is to this day known and honoured as theirs.

It was the master feeling of the Hebrew to desire to lie in the same tomb with his family, but apart from the rest of the world. To be 'gathered to his fathers' in the tomb, was with him almost a passion. Even in the open cemeteries (for all could not have rock sepulchres) this exclusive family gathering was, so far as possible, accomplished. This is still the case in the East, where separate families have often portions walled in like a garden, in which the bones of their ancestors have remained undisturbed for many generations; for in these enclosures the graves are all distinct and apart, each of them having a stone placed upright both at the head and feet, inscribed with the name and title of the deceased.

But in Egypt and some other countries, even this degree of isolation could not satisfy the pride of kings. They must be wholly alone and single. In Persia there are regal sepulchres singly apart from all others, cut out high up in the face of steep cliffs, inaccessible to ordinary enterprise, or unless by some such operation as swinging down from the top of the cliff.

Then there are the pyramids of Egypt, to which we have already referred ; the sepulchral chamber in the very chief of which is now destitute of every vestige of royal memorial, and void even of the corpse which such vast treasures and labours were expended to protect and preserve. Sadly does a recent traveller remark : ‘Whoever the proud mortal might be, who in life had probably commanded the homage, and perhaps provoked the enmity, of millions of his species, reasonably might he have hoped, when the eternal granite had closed upon him, and the secret of his hiding-place had been forgotten, that his chrysalis sleep would be undisturbed. And if mere high privilege of a



future existence depended on the conservation of the material form,¹ his confidence might well have been strong that this great object of his ambition would be attained ; but, alas for the vanity of all human expectations ! the fatal secret had been discovered, the embalmed corpse was scattered to the winds, and of all that infinite cost and pains, nothing now remains but an empty and dishonoured tomb.²

¹ Such was the notion of the Egyptians ; and in this originated the extraordinary pains taken by them to preserve the bodies of their dead.

² BELDAM'S *Italy and the East*, vol. i. p. 182.

I have often remarked, that the wildest and most secluded spots, around the cities and villages of Palestine, have always been selected as the places of sepulture. Here tombs are hewn in the rock, and are sometimes of great extent, and richly ornamented. The ravines of Hinnom and the Kidron at Jerusalem are filled with tombs; the cliffs of Quarantania formed the necropolis of Jericho; the rugged sides of Ebal and Gerizim are honey-combed with the sepulchres of the ancient Shechemites; and in some of the wildest glens of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, I have seen tombs high up in the face of rock or cliff. Another kind of tomb I found in Hauran, and at several places along the eastern border of Palestine and Syria, and more especially at Palmyra. It is a square building measuring from twenty to thirty feet on the side; sometimes only one, but generally two or three stories in height. In each story is a single chamber, with ranges of *loculi* for bodies along the walls. These tombs are usually at a distance from the towns—in glen, on mountain side, or out alone on the open plain. It may probably have been to some such structures as these Job referred, when he spake of ‘kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves.’ The tombs of Palmyra are now among the most interesting and beautiful of its remains.

Fourth Week—Sixth Day.

THE VISION.—JOB IV. 15-21.

THE reply to Job by Eliphaz occupies the fourth and fifth chapters of the book. It is not to be denied that his arguments are weighty, and are urged with much force of sentiment and beauty of language—wanting, indeed, nothing but correctness of application. It would appear as if one source of the silence maintained by the friends until Job had spoken, was, that they had, in their charity, hesitated to suppose that a man of such high repute for integrity and goodness could possibly be so great a sinner as the views in which they had been brought up required them to believe, that they might be able to account for the misery into which he had fallen. But the rash and intemperate language in which he had indulged, and his implied charges against God, seem to have removed all their doubts, to have convinced them that the theory usually

entertained was true, and that their friend, with all his fair seeming, could not be really a good man. It devolves on Eliphaz to open this view, which, as we hinted, he does with much tact and considerable delicacy.

He points out the inconsistency of a good man repining under calamity; and since he now so outrageously complained, who had often exhorted others to fortitude, it might well raise a doubt whether he were the good man he had appeared. He then advances the doctrine maintained by the friends throughout the book—that misery implies guilt, and insinuates that the sins of Job are the true cause of his affliction. This view he enforces, not only by his own observation and experience, but by a remarkable vision with which he had been favoured, but which is much less clearly applicable to his argument than he supposes. He admits that the wicked may seem for a time to be prosperous, but he contends that this is unstable and transitory, and that we have but to wait to see the end. It might well have been asked, *on his own ground*, why the afflictions of the apparently righteous might not also be transitory, and why not in their case also wait to see the end, before finally deciding? He has enforced notions of the justice of God, which he cannot reconcile with the sufferings of the righteous, and therefore he argues that all who suffer are wicked. Yet God is not inexorable; and if the sufferer confess the hidden guilt, and humble himself under the hand that smites, prosperity may yet be restored to him.

Returning to the vision, which may be regarded as the most observable matter in the address of Eliphaz, the question has been raised, Was it a real occurrence,—that is, did it actually so appear to him, or was it imagined by him to illustrate his argument? There are some who suppose it feigned for this purpose. But unless it were to be taken as a real vision, disclosing a truth, it could have no weight whatever as coming from Eliphaz: he must, therefore, have intended it to be taken as true; and, in the case supposed, his vision would thus have amounted to a 'pious fraud,' and a shockingly presumptuous one, which there is nothing in the character of this obviously

sincere and pious, though in some points mistaken man, to warrant us in laying to his charge. Some allow the vision to have been a real one, but conceive that it was an illusion of Satan, who thus desired to make him more zealous in opposition to Job. But Eliphaz does not intimate that the vision was of recent date ; and besides, it was not obviously suited to have this effect, for if he had understood it rightly, it was rather calculated to operate *against* his own view of the case : and that he understood and applies it wrongly, would alone indicate it to have been a truth, for when a man invents, he produces something to suit his argument. Men often mistake in applying a fact to illustrate a theory ; but an invention, being made for the purpose, seldom fails in its application. Besides, that the vision declares a positive truth, which all the friends were incapable of understanding, and which their argument did not in any way sustain, strongly testifies to its reality ; and its truly divine character appears to be evinced by its containing an awful truth, far above the reach of Eliphaz, and which he could not grasp even when unveiled to him. It appears to us to be one of those intimations which are dispersed through the book, with the view of keeping our minds alive to the real truth of the question, amidst the erroneous views and inconclusive arguments produced in the course of the discussion. One such intimation has passed under our notice, in the indication that *so far* Job had not sinned with his lips. Another appears here. More are seen in the great umpire speech of Elihu ; and the series is closed by the magnificent declaration from the Almighty which concludes the whole.

The vision asserts plainly enough, that all men are sinners ; that even the purest are far from being clean ; and affirms the absolute rectitude of God, and the impiety of arraiging his moral government of the world. The just deduction from this would have been, that, seeing all men are sinners, all are with equal justice open to punishment, without any imputation upon the justice of God ; and hence, the ground for the special condemnation of Job as a sinner, because he was a sufferer, would have been taken away. But Eliphaz, in eagerly availing him-

self of the statement that men are open to punishment for sin, as applicable to his argument against Job, puts out of view the correlative statement that all men are sinners. We need not be very severe upon Eliphaz for this, or suppose him to have been intentionally disingenuous. Men have not, even to this day, lost the habit of seeing only so much of an authoritative declaration as can be made to fall in with their preconceived opinions.

The account of this vision, as the description of a supernatural visitation, and of its effects upon the witness, is the most remarkable in the languages of men. There is nothing like it, or that comes near it. The reason is, that it is the description of a true vision by the man to whom it came; whereas other descriptions of this kind, the best of them, are ideal, painting from the imagination only, and describing what it is *supposed* that man ought to feel. Eliphaz describes, in that simplicity of eloquence which thrills the deepest, because it is beyond the reach of art, what he himself saw—what he himself felt; and, from the manner in which he speaks, we know that he did see, did feel, as he describes. We have numerous highly-wrought poetical descriptions of supernatural appearances, but they all fail in some point or other—all want ‘keeping.’ They are either obscure in the aim at a cloudy sublimity, or they are petty in the minuteness of their details. The vision of Eliphaz is in the highest degree sublime—unapproachably sublime, without being obscure, and circumstantial without being mean. ‘It is impossible,’ says Barnes, ‘to conceive anything more sublime than the whole description. It was midnight. There was silence and solitude all around. At that fearful hour the vision came, and a sentiment was communicated to Eliphaz of the utmost importance, and suited to make the deepest possible impression. The time; the quiet; the form of the image; its passing along, and then suddenly standing still; the silence; and then the deep and solemn voice,—all were fitted to produce the profoundest awe. So graphic and so powerful is this description, that it would be impossible to read it, and especially at midnight and alone,

without something of the awe and horror which Eliphaz says it produced on his mind.' Barnes and other writers quote various poetical descriptions of supernatural appearances, for the sake of comparison or contrast with that before us. The Ghost in 'Hamlet' is well known. Barnes cites Ossian's description of the appearance of the spirit of Loda, but this seems to be a generation too late for quoting Ossian. Gilfillan, in his recent work, *The Bards of the Bible*, points out Southey's description of Arvalan appearing to Kailyal, in that extraordinary poem, *The Curse of Kehama* (v. 11, 12). This had also attracted our own attention, and as it is, though far from satisfactory, really the best thing of the kind we know, we here introduce it:—

' A nearer horror met the maiden's view ;
 For right before her a dim form appeared—
 A human form in that black night,
 Distinctly shaped by its own lurid light—
 Such light as the sickly moon is seen to shed
 Through spell-raised fogs, a bloody, baleful red.

 That spectre fixed his eyes upon her full ;
 The light which shone in their accursed orbs
 Was like a light from hell,
 And it grew deeper, kindling with the view.
 She could not turn her sight
 From that infernal gaze, which, like a spell,
 Bound her, and held her rooted to the ground.
 It palsied every power.

Her limbs availed her not in that dread hour ;
 There was no moving thence,
 Thought, memory, sense, were gone :
 She heard not now the tiger's nearer cry ;
 She thought not on her father now ;
 Her cold heart's blood ran back ;
 Her hand lay senseless on the bough it clasped ;
 Her feet were motionless ;
 Her fascinated eyes,
 Like the stone eyeball of a statue, fixed,
 Yet conscious of the sight that blasted them.'

We must not suppose that Eliphaz was a prophet, or that he spake under the infallible guidance of the inspiring Spirit. Yet his

vision may have been real. The Lord for his own wise ends often spake, and sent divine messengers to those who were not his faithful servants. He may have done so here. The substance of the message is not inconsistent with a heavenly origin. It is true ; but unfortunately its meaning is clouded by our English translation. It should be rendered thus : 'Is mortal righteous before God ? or before his Maker is man pure ?'

Fourth Week—Seventh Day.

'MARVELLOUS THINGS.'—JOB V. 9.

IN the progress of his argument, the mind of Eliphaz is dilated with the strong conception of the greatness and wisdom of God, as evinced in his works of creation,—touching thus incidentally upon that branch of the great argument which is more adequately produced by the Lord himself towards the close. God, he says, 'doeth great things and unsearchable ; marvellous things without number.' That in these expressions he has the material creation in view, is shown by the context. The sense clearly is, that there is no possibility of computing—that the mind is wholly unable to grasp—the great and marvellous things which the universe contains. Now, if this were the case in the time of Eliphaz, whose impressions were founded on what was visible to the naked eye, what shall be said at the present day, when scientific research and astronomical exploration, assisted by instruments of sight unheard of in ancient times, have so vastly enlarged our ideas of the universe ? We can now *see* far more than it was possible for Eliphaz even to *imagine* of the marvellous works of God ; and from what we do see, we are enabled to conceive an infinitude beyond, more vast than even the distance between our own experience and that of the men who lived in the age of Job. Our reverence ought to be *proportionably* increased.

But it is not so. The minds of men in the old time were as strongly excited by a sense of infinitude, the largest conceptions of which fell far short of our actual knowledge, as are our own

minds by the broader conceptions founded upon that which we do know, and which our eyes have seen. Still it is a material benefit that the idea itself should be greatly enlarged, whatever be the limit to our capacity of being suitably affected by it, and of receiving adequate impressions from it.

The impression which might be made upon the mind, even in this earlier state of knowledge, by the view of the material universe, has been grandly imagined by an illustrious old heathen, Aristotle, in a lost work of his quoted by Cicero: 'If there were beings who lived in the depths of the earth, in dwellings adorned with statues and paintings, and everything that is possessed in rich abundance by those whom we esteem fortunate; and if these beings could receive tidings of the power and might of the gods, and could then emerge from their hidden dwellings, through the open fissures of the earth, to the places which we inhabit; if they could suddenly behold the earth, the sea, and the vault of heaven; could recognise the expanse of the cloudy firmament, and the might of the winds of heaven, and admire the sun in its majesty, beauty, and radiant effulgence; and lastly, when night veiled the earth in darkness, they could behold the starry heavens, the changing moon, and the stars rising and setting in the unvarying course ordained from eternity,—they would surely exclaim, "There are gods, and such great things must be the work of their hands."' Humboldt, who cites this in his *Cosmos*, well observes, that 'Such a testimony to the existence of the heavenly powers, drawn from the beauty and stupendous greatness of the works of creation, is rarely to be met with in the works of antiquity.' This is a profoundly true observation, there being, throughout the wide range of ancient literature, a strange insensibility to the sweet and powerful influences of natural objects, and even a lack of adequate references to them, and descriptions of them, *except in the Bible*, where only, as this great but somewhat sceptical natural philosopher acknowledges, anything commensurate to the importance of the subject can be found. We point out this with pleasure, since the prominence which modern writers give to the aspects of nature renders us less sensible than we

might otherwise be to this remarkable and significant peculiarity of the Hebrew Scriptures among *ancient* books. This distinctive feature of the sacred writings grew necessarily out of the religion—whether Patriarchal, Mosaic, or Christian—which taught every believer to regard the God he worshipped as the *Creator* of the heavens and the earth; whereby it became his privilege to ‘look abroad through nature,’ from the flowers of the field

‘To the range
Of planets, suns, and adamantine spheres;’

and, in doing so,

‘To lift to heaven an unpretentious eye,
And, smiling, say, My Father made them all.’

Eliphaz dwells emphatically on the fact that the works of God are not only marvellous, but ‘without number,’—a term to which the discoveries made within the last three centuries, by the microscope respecting animated life, and by the telescope in the wide fields of space, give an emphasis undreamt of in his time.

In our own day, indeed within these few years, the scope of the material universe visible to man has, through Lord Rosse’s great telescope, been enlarged, it is computed, no less than 125,000,000 times, and has brought to our view stars, worlds, systems, ‘without number, numberless,’ whose existence had scarcely been suspected before. By this marvellous instrument, it has been shown that those dim masses of light which float innumerable in space, like patches of cloud, and hence called *nebulæ*, are in fact clusters of stars—shining and rolling orbs—suns and centres of systems, hundreds of thousands in number, evolved as it were from small dusky spots, invisible to the unassisted eye. ‘To a common observer, a dim and almost undistinguishable spot in the heavens transformed by the telescope into a number of stars, may appear a matter of comparatively small moment; but it vastly extends our conceptions of the power and glory of the Eternal Mind, and the extent and grandeur of that empire over which the Almighty presides.

For several hundreds of nebulae have been observed throughout the heavens, and we have now reason to believe that each of them is composed of thousands of suns and systems.¹

The important discovery here referred to was made in the spring of 1846, when an observation resolved the remarkable nebula of Orion *into stars*.

The man who, more than any other in recent times, has identified his name with the nebular hypothesis,² and devoted his labours to its exposition and defence, is Dr. Nichol, the Professor of Astronomy in the University of Glasgow. He was eventually, however, led to stake the whole theory upon certain nebulae, the chief of which was the great one in the constellation of Orion. This nebula was his stronghold, and he allowed that if this should, by Lord Rosse's telescope, be resolved into stars, the theory could be maintained no longer. We may thus guess the feelings with which Dr. Nichol read a letter from his Lordship (dated March 19, 1846), announcing the resolvability of this nebula. It is a beautiful and interesting circumstance, that no sooner was this announcement made, than, in the true spirit of a Christian philosopher, careful only for truth, the Professor hastened to disenshrine his own scientific idol, and

¹ DICK'S *Celestial Scenery*, 7th Edition, Appendix, p. 398.

² The nebular theory, of which Dr. Nichol had been the most eminent supporter, owes its origin to Sir W. Herschel, and its theoretical elaboration to Laplace. According to this theory, such of the nebulae as could not, by the most powerful telescopes, be resolved into stars, were composed of chaotic matter—a hazy luminous fluid, like that occasionally thrown out by comets on their approach to the sun. In some of these chaotic masses evidences of condensation were thought to be discovered; and it was thence inferred that worlds and systems of worlds were yet in process of formation by the gradual condensation of this luminous fluid. It is right to add, that Herschel took up this theory after he had himself resolved hundreds of the nebulae into stars; and in presence of this fact, many will probably be backward to allow that the original reasons for the acceptance of the theory have been seriously affected by the resolvability of the particular nebula of Orion. But the argument is, that when so many nebulae had already been shown to be clusters of stars, and at length that of Orion, which had so long resisted the most powerful instruments, is now added to the number, the strong probability is, that all the others, as yet unresolved, are of the same nature.

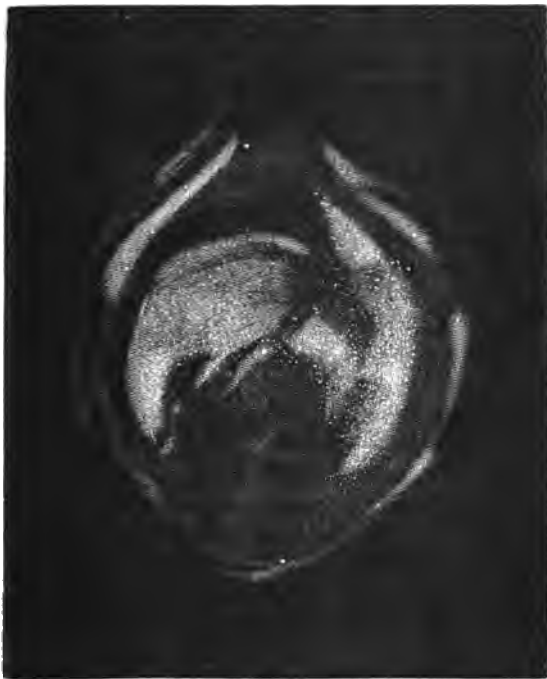
cast it to the moles and to the bats, proclaiming the cause to be lost to which his life's best labours had been devoted.

‘And thus doubt and speculation disappeared from this great subject for ever! The resolution of the nebula of Orion into stars, proved that to be **REAL**, which, with conceptions of creation enlarged even as Herschel's, we deemed **INCOMPREHENSIBLE**; and has shown that the laws and order of existence, on its grandest scale, cannot be safely imagined to be exhausted among the processes and phenomena around our homes. Yes, the infinites we build up after the fashion of what is familiar, shrink, as the ages advance, within limits again; **IDOLAS** sufficing for an epoch, but filling neither space nor time. And from inner adyta—the invisible shrine of what alone is and endures—ever and anon an appeal is heard, ‘Hast thou an arm like **GOD**, or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him? Gird up thy loins and declare! Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loosen the bands of **ORION**? Canst thou bring forth **MAZZAROTH** in his season, or bind **ARCTURUS** with his stars?’¹

Hitherto, however, as Dr. Nichol remarks, not much more is known than the fact that the mottled region, forming the brighter part of the mass of the nebula of Orion, is a very blaze of stars. ‘But that stellar creation, now that we are freed from all dubiety concerning the significance of those hazes that float numberless in space—how glorious, how endless!—behold amid that limitless ocean, every speck, however remote or dim, a noble galaxy! Lustrous they are too, in manifold instances, beyond all neighbouring reality; beyond the loftiest dream of even the exercised imagination. The great cluster in Hercules has long dazzled the heart with its splendours; but we have learned now, that among circular and compact galaxies, a class to which the nebulous stars belong, there are multitudes which infinitely surpass it; nay, that schemes of being rise above it, sun becoming nearer to sun, until their skies must be one blaze of light, a throng of burning activities! But far aloft stands Orion, the pre-eminent glory and wonder of the starry universe!

¹ *Architecture of the Heavens*, 9th Edition, 1851, pp. 143, 144.

Judged by the only criterion yet applicable, it is perhaps so remote, that its light does not reach us in less than fifty or sixty thousand years ; and as, at the same time, it occupies so large an apparent portion of the heavens, how stupendous must be the extent of the nebula ! It would seem almost, that if all other clusters, hitherto gaged, were collected and compressed into one, they would not surpass this mighty group, in which



every wisp, every wrinkle, is a SAND HEAP of stars. There are cases in which, though imagination has quailed, reason may still adventure inquiry, and prolong its speculations ; but at times we are brought to a limit, across which no human faculty has the strength to penetrate, and where, as if at the very foot-

stool of the secret THRONE, we can only bend our heads, and silently ADORE !'

These facts furnish a most impressive commentary upon the words of Eliphaz, and become the more significant from their connection with the constellation of ORION,¹ which is more than once mentioned in this Book of Job.²

¹ This remarkable nebula having not yet been satisfactorily sketched under this new aspect, we give, for an illustration, as that best suited for the purpose of *indicating* the resolvability of the nebulae into stars, what is called the Dumb Bell Nebula, as seen by Lord Rosse's six foot reflector.

² Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 31.



Fifth Week—First Day.

NIGHT TERRORS.—JOB VI. VII.

THE harsh censures and severe insinuations of Eliphaz seem to have opened Job's eyes to the fact, that his own previous language had been too bold and inconsiderate. It often happens that men do not feel the complete meaning and force of their own expressions, until they witness the effect produced by them upon the minds of others. In his reply, he therefore pleads in justification the severity of the afflictions which had extorted those complaints from him. He manifests a strong sense of the unkindness of his friends, in being so ready to declare him guilty because he was miserable ; and in coming to him with hard reproaches, instead of bringing the consolations he so much needed. He implores them to treat him with fairness, to examine his case in a friendly spirit, and not to condemn him merely because of his miserable condition. From this he passes, as men so afflicted are apt to do, to reflections upon the shortness and the miseries of life ; and then he reverts to his own condition, expostulating with the Almighty upon the greatness of his afflictions, and their long continuance. Substantially the same state of feeling is evinced as in his previous address, but a fresh element of distress is added in a sharp sense of the world's injustice, and in the consciousness of being misunderstood and misrepresented. This was a new trouble ; the harder to bear, as he could not but perceive that the judgment of the world at large could not be more favourable to him than that of friends, who had known him so long and so well. There is much force and beauty in this second speech of Job, and many workings of the human heart are therein laid open ; but although the tone is less violent than that of the former address, there is much in it that cannot be commended or approved.

What strikes us forcibly in reading this speech is, that in the midst of Job's impatient longing for death, which is now not less emphatically evinced than before, the idea of suicide seems never to have crossed his mind. It is not simply that he repelled the suggestion, but it seems never to have occurred to him as a conceivable or a possible thing. It may be doubted whether any instance of such an act had yet anywhere occurred. There is no allusion to it in all the complaints of the weariness of life, and the accounts of misery and trouble, which the Scriptures contain. Neither is there in the Old Testament any trace of the *fact*, unconnected with war, unless the case of Ahithophel be an exception; and the only case in the New Testament is that of Judas, which belongs to the time in which the suicidal Romans had rendered at least the idea of self-murder familiar to the Hebrews; as is also instanced in the intended suicide of the heathen jailer of Philippi.

The view which Job takes is clearly and very beautifully expressed in the first verse of the seventh chapter. 'Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?' That is, as the hireling has an appointed close to his day's labour, so has man an appointed time for the close of his labour and grief. He then argues further, that 'as a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work,' so may he as justifiably sigh for the close of his life's long and weary day. But there is this difference, that the hireling in the midst of all his toils can look forward with assured confidence to the precise hour at which they will close, and when his wages will be given to him; but Job knows not the appointed time for his release. Death seems his only refuge, it is his only hope; and although he knows that it must come at last, he knows not when. Meanwhile he says: 'Months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.' In the last clause, respecting the 'wearisome nights,' there is an apparent transition from the greater to the lesser sense of the comparison. The nights, which bring sound and healthful rest to the hireling, are to Job more wearisome and full of seeming horrors than even the days.

We have had occasion to point out this as one of the symptoms of his disease. But apart from this, every one knows that under mental trial the nights are far more terrible than the days. The mind no less than the body lies loose and relaxed ; and all the avenues of the soul are open to receive those impressions of grief, horror, and despair, against which the guarded mind might be able to stand up. The sleep, if unscared by dreams, is short and unrefreshing ; and that state, which is neither sleeping nor waking, although it seems more of wakefulness than sleep, has all the evil of both, and none of the good of either. There is a vague sense of dread, of weight, and of oppression under some impending horror. And then, when one fully rouses with a start from such sleep or slumber, and has not yet had time to put on the soul's armour, it will seem as if all is against him ; as if the uses of life are past, and that it has nothing more of hope or joy to offer. It is only when, like another Samson, the man ' goes forth and shakes himself,' that he finds there is any strength left in him ; that the trials which perplex his life may still be encountered, and the troubles which bow him down may still be borne. Hence it is that Job and other sacred poets speak so much of the terrors of the night ; and that the Psalmist, especially, so often dwells upon the blessedness of filling the mind with thoughts of God, and of his loving-kindness, when we lie down upon our beds.

As we have said, the idea, that from the weariness of toil the hireling should leave his work, before the shades of evening warned him that the time appointed of the master was come, had not entered Job's mind as among possible things ; and he says, in another place, ' All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.' Indeed, the fact that there *was* an appointed time, though he sometimes complains that it was so long in passing, seems to have been a great stay to his mind in all his afflictions. This, indeed, is ' a great fact' in the history of man's life, though he shows but little consciousness of it. As God hath set limits to the sea by a perpetual decree, ' Hitherto shalt thou come and no further,' so hath He set bounds and limits to the life of man, ' Thus far and no further shall the line

of thy life reach.' We live not by a 'peradventure.' All our care cannot lengthen our stature one cubit ; so can it not add one sand to the hour-glass of our lives. And as we cannot lengthen, so neither can we really shorten, our days in respect of this appointed time. Those who die in a time which God forbids, yet die when God appoints. They may cut their thread of life, but they cannot cut short the thread of God's decree. We live not—we cannot live, at our own will, but at the will of God ; and we are entirely tenants at his will in these houses of clay, holding the lease of our lives to what year He pleases.

'Our time is fixed, and all our days are numbered ;
 How long, how short, we know not : this we know,
 Duty requires we calmly wait the summons,
 Nor dare to stir till Heaven shall give permission,
 Like sentries that must keep their destined stand,
 And wait the appointed hour till they're relieved.'—BLAIR.

But although man's life is at God's appointment, man must not live upon that appointment. He must not say, 'God hath appointed how long I shall live ; then what need I care how I live, or trouble myself about the preservation of my life?' This is to walk contrary to one part of the Lord's appointment, while we are heedful to the other part. It is heathen or Moslem submission to inevitable fate ; but not Christian submission to a divine appointment. God, who appoints the term of man's life, also appoints the means for its preservation to that term ; and the appointment affords no warrant for any one to cast himself into needless dangers, or to forego the helps assigned for the sustentation of existence.

The fact that there is a time as surely appointed to us as to Hezekiah, although we are not allowed such knowledge as he possessed of the fact, ought to teach us patience in quiet waiting upon God. It is not in man, whatever be his rage, to take one hour of our appointed life from us, or to add one moment to the time of our sorrow. If our very hairs are all numbered, much more are all our days. Let us, therefore, honour God by having good thoughts of Him ; knowing that whether our times be short or long, calm or stormy, they are appointed times ;

appointed by One who loves us with exceeding love, and who well remembers that we are but dust.

This reply of Job to Eliphaz must be looked at in two aspects,—as an answer to charges preferred against him, and as an exposition of his views of God and providence. Viewed in the former aspect, it is triumphant; but viewed in the latter aspect, it is unsatisfactory and erroneous. His opponent had accused him of some grievous secret sin, and of a hypocritical concealment of it. Job knew in his heart that the accusation was false; he knew, and affirmed, that whatever might be the cause of his afflictions, it could not be secret sin and open hypocrisy. But then his indignation at an unjust charge led him to represent God in a wrong light, and bitterly to complain of his providential dealings. He murmurs that sorrow is so long continued, and that mercy is so long delayed. He seems even to imagine that, since he has set aside the false charge of Eliphaz, he has also to a large extent established his righteousness in the sight of God.

Fifth Week—Second Day.

ROOTS.—JOB VIII.

BILDAD the Shuhite now comes forward to rebuke his fallen friend, and to vindicate, as he supposes, the ways of God. 'There is,' as Chalmers remarks, 'sound general truth in Bildad's affirmation respecting the dealings of God with the upright and the evil;' but the application of this 'general truth' to Job in particular is his fault, and is unauthorized by anything that he knew or could charitably conjecture. If the application were justifiable, it presupposes that Job had been a most consummate hypocrite; and this is *assumed*, or at least the matter is so stated, as to show that Bildad and the others were in doubt respecting him, whether he were a worthless character or not. From their own knowledge, they should have concluded he was not; but their theory required them to suppose that he was. Yet even Bildad does not altogether reject the idea that he *may* have been sound at heart; and therefore he tells Job

that *if* he were the man he describes himself to be, the course that became him was to put confidence in God, in the belief that He would not eventually leave him destitute, but restore him to prosperity and peace.

What gives an appearance of savage harshness to Bildad's speech, is the cruel way in which he alludes to the loss of Job's children—quietly taking it for granted that they had sinned, and had *therefore* been cut off in the midst of their iniquity. This was well suited to cut poor Job to the quick; and one is somewhat astonished at the utter want of sympathy thus flagrantly evinced by the friends who had come so far to comfort him. They were, however, good and not essentially unkind men; but they no doubt thought that they were discharging their duty to God—perhaps regarded by themselves as a painful duty—in dealing thus 'faithfully,' even to harshness, with their afflicted friend.

In one part of his address, Bildad (verses 8–18) cites the experience of the ancients as bearing on the subject; and the passage which follows is usually regarded as a quotation, produced by him from some old poem. The reader will doubtless, therefore, re-examine with increased interest a passage which, considering the age of this controversy, must be the most ancient piece of postdiluvian poetry that remains to us. The reason which Bildad gives for this reference to the experience of former ages is curious: 'For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.' In thus urging that they had but few opportunities of observation, compared with the men of former ages, Bildad seems plainly enough to refer to the longevity of antecedent times, compared with the age of man at the time in which he lived. This is, therefore, among other passages, of importance as helping to fix the date of the book. It shows that in the time of Job the age of man was undergoing that shortening, from generation to generation, which we know took effect in the times immediately subsequent to the Deluge, and when it became so rapid as to strike the attention of even common observers, who were able to contrast the years at which men died in their own time with

the much longer duration of life in the time of their immediate ancestors. This consideration coincides with the inferences deducible from the duration of Job's own life, in identifying the time of Job with that in which the Hebrew patriarchs lived. The decline in man's life was then rapid, and must have appeared portentous, and old men would be continually reminded that they were but as children in years compared with their ancestors. In a later age this was less felt, as the decrease was more slow and by far shorter steps, so that it attracted less attention.

As to the passage itself, it consists of images taken from what is observed in nature. The rush and the flag come to nothing without moisture ; and so, without the favour of God, must the hope of the hypocrite perish. Next, the hypocrite is likened to a tree, whose roots are not in mire, but in stony ground, and whose branches lean upon the wall, and seem firmly supported; even as the hypocrite leans upon his house. Yet even this promising and goodly-looking tree may be cut off, and wither under the power of the sun ; and then the place which knows it now will know it no more.

This image, which is so obvious as to be found in the poetry of all nations, is yet so true and so impressive, that it always strikes the attention when it occurs, is always new, always touching. No poet has perhaps wrought it out with more of true pathos and effect than Shakspeare in the mouth of the fallen Wolsey :

'This is the state of man : to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope ; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him ;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And, when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls as I do.'

It is well remarked by Barnes, that 'the image here shows the author of this old fragment to have been a careful observer of nature, and the comparison is exceedingly pertinent and striking. What more beautiful illustration of a hypocrite can

there be? His roots do not strike into the earth, his piety is not planted in a rich soil. It is on the hard rock of the unconverted human heart. Yet it sends out its roots afar, seeming to flourish for a time; draws nutriment from remote objects; clings to a crag or a projecting rock, or to anything, for support, until a tempest sweeps it down to rise no more! No doubt the idea of Bildad was, that Job was just such a man.'

In this comparison there is the somewhat obscure phrase, 'His roots are wrapped about the heap' (verse 17), which, it seems to us, has been rightly interpreted to contain a reference



to the fact, that a tree or plant which springs up on a rock, or in the midst of rocks, will send its roots afar for nutriment, or will enwrap them around the projecting points of rocks in order to obtain support. From the frequency with which it has occurred to our own notice, we should suppose it not unusual for trees and shrubs, growing upon the tops of cliffs or walls, to send long roots down the sides to seek nourishment and strength among the soil at the base. We are indebted to Barnes for a reference to Silliman's (American) *Journal*

of *Science*, for 1840, for what seems the most remarkable instance of this kind.

'Upon the top of an immense boulder of limestone, some ten or twelve feet in diameter, a saplin elm was found growing. The stone was but slightly embedded in the earth; several of its sides were raised from four to six feet above the surface; but the top of the rock was rough with crevices, and its surface, which was sloping off on one side to the earth, was covered with a thin mould. From this mould the tree had sprung up, and having thrust its roots into the crevices of the rock, it had

succeeded in reaching the height of some twelve or fifteen feet. But about this period the roots on one side became loosened from their attachment, and the tree gradually declined to the opposite side, until its body was in a parallel line with the earth. The roots on the opposite side having obtained a firmer hold, afforded sufficient nourishment to sustain the plant, although they could not, alone, retain it in its vertical position. In this condition of things, the tree, as if conscious of its wants, adopted (if the term may be used) an ingenious process, in order to regain its former upright position. One of the most vigorous of the detached roots sent out a branch from its side, which, passing round a projection of the rock, again united with the parent stalk, and thus formed a perfect loop around this projection, which gave to the root an immovable attachment.

‘The tree now began to recover from its bent position. Obeying the natural tendency of all plants to grow erect, and sustained by this root, which increased with unwonted vigour, in a few years it had entirely regained its vertical position, elevated, as no one could doubt who saw it, by the aid of the root which had formed this singular attachment. But this was not the only power exhibited by this remarkable tree.

‘After its elevation, it flourished vigorously for several years. Some of its roots had traced the sloping side of the rock to the earth, and were buried in the soil below. Others having embedded themselves in its furrows, had completely filled these crevices with vegetable matter. The tree still continuing to grow, concentric layers of vegetable matter were annually deposited between the alburnum and liber, until, by the force of vegetable growth alone, the rock was split from top to bottom, into three nearly equal divisions; and branches of the roots were soon found extending down through the divisions into the earth below. On visiting the tree a few months since to take a drawing of it, we found that it had attained an altitude of fifty feet, and was four feet and a half in circumference at its base.’¹

¹ Silliman's *American Journal of Science*, vol. xxxviii. p. 59.

This is a remarkable example of something like an instinctive principle in seeking its proper good, which may be found even in the vegetable kingdom.

Dr. Duncan, in his very instructive work, called *The Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons*, produces several examples of this sort, which he does not hesitate to refer to 'the principle of instinct.' His instances are these :

'When a tree which requires much moisture has been planted in a dry soil, in the vicinity of water, it has been observed, that much the greater proportion of its roots have been directed towards the water.

'Trees which have sprung up on a bare rock, will send out their roots in every direction till they reach the soil below. Every one is familiar with this fact, who has frequented a wooded rocky district.

'A fact of a similar nature, which is noticed, I think, by Lord Kames, and which I have myself witnessed, occurred at the Abbey of Sweetheart, in Galloway, where an ash-tree, growing on the wall which surrounds the abbey, after exhausting the small quantity of soil which had collected on its site, stopped from growing for a time, and seemed to unite all its strength in sending down a root to the ground. As soon as this root had established itself in the soil, the tree began again to flourish and increase, till it grew to a considerable size.

'I have somewhere seen an account of a tree which grew in the valley of the Earn, in Perthshire, if I mistake not, on a scanty soil, by the bank of a stream, over which, in its immediate vicinity, a foot-bridge, covered with turf, had been erected. The tree, taking advantage of this circumstance, pushed its roots through the dead turf of the bridge, till they fastened in the fertile soil, which happened to lie on the other side of the stream ; and then, swelling and strengthening its new organ of communication, drew sufficient nourishment from this source to supply all the wants of its nature.'¹

These statements will remind many readers of the lines in Gray's *Elegy* :

¹ Duncan's *Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons* ; 'Winter,' pp. 175, 176.

'At the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high.'

Most people probably fancy that *branches* and not *roots* are here meant; but it is a remarkable peculiarity of the beech, after sending out its roots, to recall them, as it were, to assist in supporting the base.¹

Fifty Week—Third Day.

THE POST.—JOB IX.

JOB'S reply to Bildad is in terms more quiet than his previous utterances, but there is the same spirit essentially at work, which at length brings him to the very point of condemning God that he may justify himself. He does not directly call in question the truth or authority of the sayings of the ancients which Bildad had adduced, but remarks that the distance between him and God is so great that he cannot insist before Him on right and justice. Though fully conscious of his integrity—though he feels that the sins for which his friends deem him to be punished, cannot be laid to his charge, yet what would it avail him to contest the matter with One so high and so wise? and since God has, by this visitation of his judgment, passed, as his friends allege, sentence upon him, he could

¹ A remarkable instance of the same class of vegetable operations we find recorded in CARPENTER'S *Vegetable Physiology*. (Edition 1850, p. 83.) 'There is a tree peculiar to tropical climates, called the *Pandanus*, or Screw Pine, on which the roots are always formed in somewhat of this manner: The stem is smallest at its lowest part, and it enlarges considerably above; hence it would be very unsteady without some additional support; and this is provided for by the transmission of the roots, not only from the bottom of the stem, but at different parts of its ascent. These grow downwards in the air, and are provided at their extremities with a kind of cup, which catches the rain and dew, by which they are partly assisted in their elongation; when, however, they have reached the ground, this falls off, and their extremities become true spongioles. When they begin to absorb nourishment from the earth, they increase greatly in diameter, and seem like so many assistant stems.'

not dispute it with any effect. Job's answer, therefore, as a whole, although it finely sets forth the power and majesty of God, is still censurable, as it implies that the question between the afflicted and the Lord of providence, is not one of right, but of might. It seems to us that Job has by this time been so far touched by the arguments of his friends as to conceive that the rule of the divine government may indeed be such as they describe—that the Lord has, in fact, countersigned their judgment upon him ; but as he is still unconscious—somewhat self-righteously unconscious—of any cause in his own conduct for this judgment upon him, he inclines to regard the doom he suffers as an act of arbitrary power, if not of oppression, to which, certainly, he has not yet brought himself to submit with unmurmuring acquiescence.

It has been alleged that there are apparent inconsistencies in the language of Job, on this and other occasions. But the answer is, that he is represented as torn by contending emotions. Fear and hope, despair and confidence, the spirit of submission and of bold complaint, by turns have possession of his mind, and as one or other predominates, it gives, of course, a character to his language. Truth, in the exhibition of opposite feelings and passions, requires some inconsistencies in language and sentiment. Yet, perhaps, more inconsistency has been found than really exists. Here, for instance, he begins by acknowledging that no man can be just with God, yet ends by protesting his innocence. Here is an apparent, but no real, inconsistency. He knows that he is not free from sin, but he contends that he is innocent of the secret crime charged against him by his friends ; that he is free from the uncommon guilt which, as they suspect, can alone account for the uncommon judgments which have befallen him.

In the 25th and 26th verses of the ninth chapter, Job produces a curious set of comparisons in illustration of the rapidity with which the life of man passes away,—a subject calculated to engage special attention in an age when the duration of human life was so visibly shortening : ' My days are swifter than a post ; they flee away, they see no good. They are

passed away as the swift ships ; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.'

Some may be surprised to read of 'posts' in times so ancient. We must not, however, think of putting a letter into a hole at the post-office, and the person for whom it was destined receiving it a few hours after, hundreds of miles off. We must not even think of any organized plan for the regular transmission of *letters*, but simply of the speed with which a courier charged with a special message, oral or written, travels. We suppose that Job had in view the speed of a man mounted on a swift dromedary—the animal usually employed in such service in the regions where Job dwelt. The horse is, indeed, swifter than a dromedary, but it tires of its swift pace sooner, and hence can only be employed when arrangements can be made for change of horses at given distances—that is to say, where something like a regular system of posting has been established ; and *this* is only to be expected in settled countries and in large territories under one dominion. By exhausting the freshness of a succession of horses thus, a courier may perform a journey more swiftly than a man mounted on a dromedary ; but if only one animal is to be used throughout the journey, the dromedary beats the horse. The strength of the horse must be husbanded, he must not be put at his speed except at intervals, and he must even then have long and frequent rest and good food. But the dromedary keeps on steadily at a smart pace for days and nights together, with little rest and less food. The positive fleetness of the dromedary has been much exaggerated ; it is its extraordinary capacity of sustained exertion for a great length of time which constitutes its distinction and merit—fitting it admirably for transmission of intelligence in, and the performance of rapid journeys through, the regions it inhabits, and rendering it indeed the most fitting type of the patriarch's sentiment ; for it is the steady unintermitted march of time from hour to hour, without pause or relaxation, that constitutes its swiftness in regard to human life, rather than its rapid progress in a shorter interval. When urged to a gallop, the dromedary cannot maintain its pace for half an hour, and is

easily distanced by the horse ; but it can maintain a trot for several hours together—in some instances, as long as for twenty-four hours—at the rate of from six to eight miles an hour. A gentle amble of between five and six miles an hour is, however, the favourite quick pace of the dromedary ; and if allowed to persevere in it, the animal will carry its rider an uninterrupted journey of several days and nights. A common caravan journey of twenty-five days is sometimes performed in five days at this rate.

Of regular posts by relays of horses or other animals at regulated stations, allowing each animal to exhaust its utmost speed during the stage of its progress, we first read, both in sacred and profane history, in Persia. In the book of Esther, we are told that the royal letters to the provinces, issued by the influence of Mordecai, were despatched ‘by posts on horseback, and by riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries.’ Correspondingly, profane history informs us that Cyrus devised a plan of posts for facilitating the communications between the court and the provincial governments. After having ascertained, by experiment, how far a horse could go in a day with ease and expedition, he caused stables to be constructed, at the distances thus determined, throughout his dominions ; and furnished each of these stations with an adequate number of horses, and of men to take care of them. There was also a postmaster at every station, whose duty it was to receive every package of letters as it arrived, and immediately to despatch it on, with fresh horses and couriers. Thus the posts travelled day and night without intermission, and, of course, at a much greater rate than even the perseverance of a single dromedary could attain on the old system, still preserved in the unsettled countries of Western and Central Asia.

At present, under similar circumstances, in the wide realms of Turkey and Persia, there are no such regular postal establishments as these, and the journey is performed by one man throughout, but with frequent change of horses. At the towns or villages to which he comes, the head man is bound to provide him with a fresh horse, which he has authority to take or

'impress' for the service from any one that has it. The courier possesses the same power, and can compel a temporary change of horses, if he wants a fresh horse on the road when his own is nearly exhausted, or when he sees a horse he likes better than the one that has been assigned to him. The head man deducts the cost of this service from the taxes payable to the general



or provincial government. Considerable time is sometimes lost in squabbles about horses ; but by this process, rude as it is, long journeys are performed with extraordinary rapidity, especially when the courier rides express on government business, and hence refuses to encumber himself with the charge of passengers who may wish to travel under his protection.

Fifty Week—Fourth Day.

THE WILD ASS.—JOB XI.

ZOPHAR, the Naamathite, is the next to take up the lance against the unhappy Job, and he seems to us to exhibit, at the outset, more of personal exasperation against him than any of the other parties in this great tournament of talk. It must be

allowed, however, that delicacy of imputation has never been much regarded in the East. People say at once, bluntly and broadly, what they think of the conduct of others, restrained only by prudential considerations, and not much by them, as, from usage, the strong language employed gives less offence than the more guarded speech which custom exacts from ourselves. For instance, to say or to suggest that a man lies, is with us enough to kindle the meekest spirit, and is with many a murderous affront ; while an Oriental will listen to the coarsest imputations of falsehood with an undisturbed countenance. We think this consideration important, as showing that the broad imputations of Job's friends were not intended, and were not taken in that degree of personal offence which the same, or even much milder, language would occasion among ourselves. In fact much is said which, with us, would at once put a stop to all further discussion. But here, a personal charge only becomes a new matter of debate, and in some degree of recrimination.

So Zophar falls upon Job open-mouthed, with censures still less veiled than those of his predecessors. He sneers at him for his loquaciousness, denounces him for his lies, and explicitly charges him with the renunciation of God, or at least with gross impiety, in daring to assert his own innocence, when the Lord's righteous judgments so plainly declare what he really is. They had heard enough of Job's estimate of his own character ; and Zophar much wishes that the Lord would disclose to him his estimate of it. But, indeed, He had already done so, by these his judgments, and doubtless God had exacted far less from him than his iniquity deserved.

Zophar then launches forth into a very noble declaration of the greatness of God, and the unsearchable wisdom of all his ways, whence he argues not only the folly, but the inexpressible presumption, of questioning his dealings with man, or of refusing to acquiesce in his appointments. This portion of Zophar's discourse 'forms one of the most noted Bible passages for reference and repetition in all ages.'¹ It will be observed, that in

¹ Chalmers.

it Zophâr makes no attempt to *explain* the equity of the Lord's dealings with man, but he dwells on the greatness and sovereignty of God, and hence deduces the duty of man to submit with humbleness to his decrees. And certain it is, that the more any one is enabled to realize to his own soul a sense of the divine perfections, the less possible it will be for him to allow a rebellious sigh to arise, even under the severest pressure of the Lord's afflictive dispensations.

Zophar seems to soften a little towards the close of his speech, and pours in a little oil to allay the irritation that the gall and vinegar which he had in the first instance administered were well fitted to produce. He still treats Job as wicked, but lets it appear that he does not regard him as hopelessly reprobate, and assures him, that by repentance and prayer he may yet reconcile himself to God, and, through his blessing, be restored to a prosperous state. *Then*, he says, 'Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away'—forget it, or have that unpainful recollection of it, which is a species of forgetfulness. This comparison of the passage of life to that of a stream is poetically very fine, and is not unfrequent with the sacred writers. Young may seem almost to have paraphrased this text in the following admirable passage in his *Night Thoughts*:

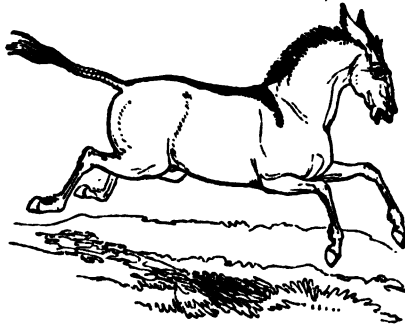
.. ' Life glides away, Lorenzo, like a brook !
 For ever changing, unperceived the change.
 In the same brook none ever bathed him twice ;
 To the same life none ever twice awoke.
 We call the brook the same ; the same we think
 Our life, tho' still more rapid in its flow,
 Nor mark the much irrevocably lapsed,
 And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say
 (Retaining still the brook to bear us on)
 That life is like a vessel on the stream ?
 In life embarked, we smoothly down the tide
 Of time descend, but not on time intent ;
 Amused, unconscious of the gliding wave,
 Till on a sudden we perceive a shock ;
 We start, awake, look out : what see we there ?—
 Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.'

In one place Zophar says: 'For vain man would be wise, though man be born a wild ass's colt.' We have omitted the word of comparison ('like'), which does not exist in the original, for the omission of it renders the figure more emphatic. Yet it may surprise the reader to see such an animal as the ass quoted as the type of what is by nature untamed, rebellious, and unsubdued. An occidental writer would certainly have chosen some other creature for such a comparison. But it occurs frequently in Scripture. So the wild and restless character of Ishmael is indicated by his being 'a wild ass man,' not simply 'a wild man,' as in the common version.¹ Farther on in this book,² and in the prophecy of Jeremiah,³ the 'wild ass' is described in conformity with these intimations. That an animal known to us chiefly for its stupidity, dulness, obstinacy, and sluggish movements, should thus be noted for the very opposite qualities—for velocity, wildness, and unsubdued spirit, may indeed well excite surprise. But in these places it is the wild ass of which the sacred writers speak, and not the tame one. Between these there is a great difference. The difference is, however, far greater between it and the domestic ass of Europe, than between it and the tame ass of Asia. Indeed, in the region traversed by the Tigris and Euphrates, we have seen tame asses that made near approaches to the wild ass in shape, colour, and spirit.

From the differences in the descriptions of travellers, there would seem to be several varieties of the wild ass, caused perhaps by diversity of climate. But it is likely these differences may, in many cases, arise from variations in the age of the animals, and in the time of the year at which the observation was made. Without, therefore, attempting to define these variations, we may state that the wild ass is to this day common in many parts of Central Asia. Large herds are found about the Lake Aral in summer, whence they migrate southward in winter, and return northward in spring. The Persians and Tartars hold their flesh in high esteem, and hunt them in preference to any other kind of game. The animal is found

¹ Gen. xvi. 12.² Job xxxix. 5.³ Jer. ii. 24.

west of the Euphrates. Indeed, the species improves as it comes westward, the wild asses of Syria being finer than those of Persia, and those about the Bahar-el-Abaid in Africa being the finest of all. Burckhardt informs us that wild asses are found in great numbers in Arabia Petræa, about the Gulf of Akaba, where the Arabs hunt them, and eat their flesh, but not before strangers. They sell their skins and hoofs to the inhabitants of Damascus, and to the people of the Hauran. The hoofs furnish materials for rings, which are worn by the peasants on their thumbs, or fastened under their arm-pits, as amulets



against rheumatism. It is said that the wild ass never drinks. The allusion to it, therefore, in Jer. xiv. 6, most forcibly depicts the scarcity of food, when animals inured to the desert, and to want of water, are made the prominent examples of suffering. It does not appear that any wild ass has ever been secured alive, and brought to Europe; a fact which singularly corroborates both its fleetness and its intractable character. The best account of an interview with a wild ass is that of Sir Robert Ker Porter, and we transcribe it for the reader's entertainment.

'The sun was just rising over the summits of the eastern mountains, when my greyhound suddenly started off in pursuit of an animal, which my Persians said, from the glimpse they had of it, was an antelope. I instantly put spurs to my horse,

and, with my attendants, gave chase. After an unrelaxed gallop of three miles, we came up with the dog, who was then within a short stretch of the animal he pursued; and to my surprise, and at first vexation, I saw it to be an ass. Upon a moment's reflection, however, judging from its fleetness that it must be a wild one, a creature little known in Europe, but which the Persians prize above all other animals as an object of chase, I determined to approach as near to it as the very swift Arab I was on would carry me. But the single instant of checking my horse to consider, had given our game such a head of us, that notwithstanding all our speed, we could not recover our ground on him. I, however, happened to be considerably before my companions, when, at a certain distance, the animal in his turn made a pause, and allowed me to approach within pistol-shot of him. He then darted off again with the quickness of thought, capering, kicking, and sporting in his flight, as if he was not blown in the least, and the chase was his pastime. When my followers of the country came up, they regretted that I had not shot the creature when he was within my aim, telling me that his flesh is one of the greatest delicacies in Persia. The prodigious swiftness and peculiar manner in which he fled across the plain, coincided exactly with the description that Xenophon gives of the same animal in Arabia; but, above all, it reminded me of the striking portrait drawn by the author of the Book of Job. I was informed by the Mehmandar, who had been in the desert when making a pilgrimage to the shrine of Ali, that the wild ass of Irak Arabi differs in nothing from the one I had just seen. He had observed them often for a short time in the possession of the Arabs, who told him the creature was perfectly untameable. A few days after this discussion, we saw another of these animals, and, pursuing it determinedly, had the good fortune to kill it.'

The true spirit of Job's three 'friends' becomes more and more fully developed as the controversy proceeds. Eliphaz is dignified and polite, but yet administers undeserved reproof instead of com-

fort. Bildad is rougher and ruder, and vainly attempts to cover invective under a quotation from some ancient sage. Zophar is positively insulting. It will be observed that there is an element of truth running through the speeches of all three—it is that sin and suffering are necessarily connected. But this sound principle is unwarrantably exaggerated in application. They seem to affirm that a man's piety must be estimated by his temporal prosperity and personal comfort. Consequently, Job being a great sufferer, must of necessity be a great sinner. With unrelenting severity they press this their favourite dogma upon the poor sufferer before them. They do not mingle a particle of love with their stern censure. 'They make no effort to enter into his position and feelings; they talk at him without intermission. He only can exercise compassion to his fellow-man, who has himself received compassion from God, and to this belongs a recognition of our own sins. All Pharisaism, where it is not a question of phrases, alms, and other external matters, is at the bottom unmerciful, uncompassionate. Had the friends had any true pitiful love, they would have corrected their view by means of the very case before them.' But they were the representatives of the stern, narrow-minded bigots of that age—indeed of every age.

Fifth Week—Fifth Day.

THE TREE.—JOB XIV. 7-12.

JOB's reply to Zophar's short address extends through three chapters. It is highly animated, and almost exhaustive of the argument he maintains. He enters more keenly into the spirit of the debate as an argument, and is hence drawn somewhat more out of himself than hitherto, and goes farther afield in thought and illustration. He is also more bold, as well as more keen, in recrimination, indulging occasionally in biting sarcasm, and at times displaying a little personal exasperation.

He begins, indeed, with a sarcastic remark upon the intense appreciation of their own wisdom which his friends evince; and ventures to distrust the quality of that wisdom, seeing that it had not led them to show manly pity for a friend in severe distress. Deriding their pretensions, he declares, somewhat

proudly, that he had no need to come to them for instruction, but had at least as much knowledge of the matters in debate as they had. This is somewhat idly said ; for a really wise man may and does receive much instruction from those who are not superior, or are even inferior, to himself in wisdom and knowledge. He declares that all they had said upon the wisdom and power of God was, however true, merely trite and obvious ; and then, as if to prove that they could boast no superiority of view in this respect, he breaks out into a most eloquent discourse on the same subject—the power and providence of God, —a discourse certainly not inferior to theirs in matter, while it exceeds them in *freshness* of sentiment and illustration, and was altogether well calculated to make them ashamed of their airs of superior intelligence. In this discourse, he, with great ability, takes up the very doctrine of God's sovereignty, which Zophar had so forcibly set forth, and urged as a ground of submission, and presses it into the support of his own view, arguing that this sovereignty was shown by God's acting from his own absolute will in the government of the world, far more than by his being bound by the conditions of merit or demerit in man, as they affirmed.

Nothing, therefore, which the friends could advance on the subject of the divine power and greatness, could prove him guilty, or make out that he was subjected to punishment for his sins.

This is certainly one of the most masterly strokes of argument that occur in the whole course of the discussion.

Job then assures them that God cannot be pleased at vindications of his providence and power based on erroneous doctrines. And so satisfied is he of the perfect knowledge and absolute wisdom of God, and so assured that he is not himself punished for special sins, that he desires nothing more earnestly than that it were possible for him, as Zophar had suggested, to submit the whole question to the divine judgment, feeling quite confident of the result. This, it will be noted by careful readers, is one of those incidental touches which occur in the course of the book, preparing our minds for the ultimate appearance of

the Lord, as judge and umpire in the high controversy. This appeal, these protestations of innocence, lead Job back to the contemplation of his own miserable condition ; and from this he starts into a most affecting view of the miseries of human life, and especially insists upon the shortness of it, as a reason why man should be exempted from constant and extraordinary sufferings. He adverts with deep feeling to the fact, that a man when once dead will not be suffered to live again. A tree when it is cut down will spring up again ; and were this so with man, he might well bear to be afflicted. But he has no hope of a second life, and therefore he implores the Lord to grant him a trial ; and he closes by earnestly expostulating with the Almighty respecting his dealings with him. With this language of mingled complaint, remonstrance, despondency, and doubt, Job closes the first series of the controversy. He is evidently in deep perplexity. He knows not what to do or what to think ; but, on the whole, his language is that of one who feels that God and man are alike against him, and that he has no comforter.

The image towards the close, to which we have slightly referred in the above summary of Job's argument, is one that never fails to arrest the attention of the reader by its exquisite beauty and most touching pathos. 'There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. . . . But man dieth, and wasteth away : Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he ? . . . Man lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.'

The images drawn in poetry from nature, and applied by contrast (as here) or by comparison, are seldom pathetic ; but this one is eminently so, even to tears. A passage in the mournful *Elegy on Man*, by MOSCHUS, offers perhaps the nearest parallel to it. It is thus translated by Gisborne :

'The meanest herb we trample in the field,
Or in the garden's nurture, when its leaf
At winter's touch is blasted, and its place
Forgotten, soon its vernal bud renews,

And from short slumber wakes to life again.
 Man wakes no more !—man, valiant, glorious, wise,
 When death once chills him, sinks in sleep profound,—
 A long, unconscious, never-ending sleep.'

One might say, at the first view, that the similarity is greater than might be expected to exist between a scriptural and a pagan poet. From the image they employ, and from the expressions used, both seem to say that death is a sleep from which there is no awakening. But this is *not* true. So much is it the reverse, that the same image is, not, as here, by contrast, but really by comparison, beautifully applicable to the actual state of the case—which is, that although a man, as a tree, be cut down, or as an herb is smitten to the ground by the cold of winter, yet he shall, as the tree or the herb, rise again to a more vigorous life. Indeed, what is this but a modification of the sublime image of the corn sown in the ground, which St. Paul employs to illustrate the very contrary doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? The question involved in this passage is, however, not so much that of the resurrection of the dead, as that of a future life in any shape. It is to be remembered that the special nature of the Book of Job, as a theological document, is that it is the only existing source, from which anything like a systematic account can be drawn of that old patriarchal religion which the law and the gospel successively superseded. To this book, therefore, we look for a solution of the question: Whether the patriarchs had any knowledge of a life to come? as it is admitted that the only other patriarchal book, that of Genesis, affords no decisive evidence on this subject. The result of the search has been very differently estimated—some finding very clear evidence of this belief in the book, and others seeing with equal clearness that the evidence is most conclusive for the non-existence of such belief. As we shall soon have occasion to look into the matter more fully, we shall now confine ourselves to the present text. The question here then is, not whether this knowledge existed, but whether the present passage affords evidence of it. It must be admitted that the image drawn from the contrast of

man's life to that of a tree, is, as much in Job as in Moschus, adverse to the idea of a future state. But it is urged by some that the image has respect only to this present life, and that it amounts to saying, that man cannot live this mortal life on earth over again. The identity of the life which the tree leads after its revival is in favour of this notion ; for any such precise identity of being is not provided for by any doctrine of future existence—not even by that of the resurrection of the body, in which an essential and important change is enforced by the imagery of vegetation which St. Paul employs. It must therefore, on this text alone, we apprehend, be admitted in strictness, that a second life in this world is what Job intends to deny. But this leaves the question open, whether he had any idea of a desirable state of existence hereafter or anywhere. It has been forcibly urged, that so far as his argument goes, he had it not ; *because* if, as he asserts, the hope of living again in this world would have afforded him support and consolation under his affliction, then surely these would have been afforded him, in a still higher degree, by the hope of a happier state of being than this present life. Upon the whole, nothing seems determined from this passage, and we must see whether what follows supplies clearer evidence. The remarkable passage, 'So man lieth down, and riseth not : till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep,' is regarded by some as a clear intimation, that this awakening, this raising, will *then* take place—that is, when the heavens are no more. Others regard it as the strongest possible declaration that this never shall take place. The heavens, or firmament, was the strongest image of duration, the idea of utmost permanence, which the Hebrews possessed ; and to say that a thing shall not take place till the heavens are no more, is as much as to say that it never shall take place. If so, this must still be understood only in the same connection as the antecedent image ; and the two passages taken together will mean the same thing—first stated in the imagery as a fact negatively, and then with stronger emphasis affirmatively—that man should not be restored to a second life on earth—never, never be restored to a second life on earth.

We incline to this view. We firmly believe, for reasons formerly advanced,¹ that the doctrine of a future existence, and consequently of the immortality of the soul, was known to the Old Testament saints, though we apprehend that it was held with a dimness and uncertainty, in comparison with which the light of the gospel is as perfect day. The question, then, will be asked, Why it was not produced here? Assuming that it is not, it may be answered, that the essential argument of the book, regarding the moral government of this world, would not admit of any reference to the world to come; and besides, we may add, that the dispensation was yet to come which should direct man's chief attention to spiritual and to future sanctions, as motives of action and sufferance. There is much in this; but there is still more in the certain fact, that men's actual speech, especially under the influence of sorrow, passion, or suffering, is usually no index to the real state of their knowledge. Many persons, with the full knowledge of what the gospel teaches, will express themselves respecting death in very much the same way as Job does—unconsciously limiting their view to this present life. We in fact hear language of corresponding import every day—language which, if literally interpreted, might satisfy us that few persons in this Christian country had any belief in the resurrection of the dead, or in the immortality of the soul. We conclude, therefore, that Job, in the passion of his spirit, and in the heat of argument, was virtually led to leave out of consideration, as people are apt to do, such knowledge as he actually possessed of the life to come.

Fifth Week—Sixth Day.

HEAPS.—JOB XV.—XXI.

ALL the three friends have now spoken, and Job has replied to them all in turn. The first series of the discussion may there-

¹ First Series : Tenth Week—First Day.

fore be considered to have closed with the last chapter, and the second to commence with the fifteenth. In this the friends have but little to say, and add scarcely anything to what they had already urged, betraying manifest signs of exhaustion. The speeches are of equal number as before, but so much shorter, that this section of the debate, extending through seven chapters (xv.–xxi.), occupies much less space than the former, which required eleven chapters (iv.–xiv.).

It has now become the turn of Eliphaz, who opened the former debate, to speak again. His speech is well suited to carry on the design of the poem, by irritating the passions of Job, and inflaming his discontent at the ways of providence. His tone is less mild and polite than in his former speech; for he begins with bitter sarcasms and reproaches, and strongly censures Job's doctrine of the indiscriminate distribution of happiness and misery, as tending to undermine religion, and to discourage prayer. He materially exaggerates and misrepresents Job's positions; but the difficulty which he indicates is scarcely surmountable, if we have regard only to this present life. *In that case*, unless God evinced, in his government of this world, that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, the wicked would have little to fear, and the righteous less to hope; and all prayer to a Being so regardless of his votaries would be neglected. There is, in fact, no possibility of clearly understanding this discussion without bearing distinctly in mind the fact, that neither Job nor his friends had any such knowledge of a future state of rewards and punishments *as could avail for the purposes of this debate*. That they believed dimly in a future existence, and in the immortality of the soul, we make no question; but that they had any distinct ideas of that future existence as one of full and final retribution, there is no evidence to show. Indeed, it is clear that they had not; for this would at once have removed all the difficulties under which they laboured, and cut away the ground of the whole controversy. It has often occurred to us, that this book, with its exhibition of the contracted views which even good men held of the divine plans, and the difficulties under which they

laboured, before our Lord brought in a 'better hope,' may have been preserved to us, for the very purpose of teaching us duly to appreciate the fuller and clearer view of the spiritual kingdom, which the gospel has enabled us to realize.

Eliphaz, considering the assertion of such heretical opinions as Job advanced a sufficient evidence of his guilt, lashes him severely for the contempt with which he had received the exhortation of those who were his elders, as well as for his passionate complaints respecting God's dealings with him. He asserts, as he had already done, that, notwithstanding the ungodly may seem for a time prosperous and successful, yet even their prosperity is troubled, and their successes marred, by the stings of an evil conscience, which haunts them like an apparition wherever they go, and is alone sufficient for their punishment. He closes with a highly-wrought description, which seems to be quoted from an ancient poem, of the miseries which pursue the wicked man. The drift of the whole speech is to vindicate providence, to condemn Job as a manifest object of the divine wrath on account of his wickedness, and to terrify him, if possible, into a confession of his guilt.

In the description quoted from the old poem, respecting the ultimate lot of bad men and tyrannical oppressors, they are described as driven forth from among men, and compelled to dwell 'in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, *which are ready to become heaps.*' Such forsaken old towns, like Palmyra, Petra, and many others in Syria and Asia Minor at this day, become the retreats of outcasts and robbers, and the temporary resort of caravans and travellers, who, however, approach them with much caution, and under strong consciousness of danger.

But the phrase to which our special attention is drawn, is that in which these old and abandoned sites are described as 'ready to become heaps.' This is an emphatic description of the condition of many sites of ancient renown which we have examined in the East, and which are literally heaps—nothing but heaps, covered with soil, and appearing like natural hillocks, but which are known to cover blocks of ancient building. The

houses mentioned in the Book of Job are 'houses of clay,' or of sun-dried brick, and such are the houses which are especially liable to become heaps. The recent descriptions of such mounds or heaps at Nineveh, by Layard and others, and the discoveries which their exploration has afforded, have rendered this condition of ancient cities—so different from that of *stony* ruins in various lands—familiar to the minds of our readers. Yet it may require explanation, in the proportion in which it excites our wonder, that piles of originally rectangular buildings, sometimes of great extent and imposing structure, should ever be moulded into such shapely rounded hills. This is mainly owing to the nature of the materials employed. The sun-dried bricks, though quite suitable for the construction of large buildings in a dry climate, will not stand much moisture. An inundation, therefore, commits great havoc; and such is likely to occur when a town or building near a river has been once forsaken, and when there are, consequently, no people to maintain the safeguards against its encroachments. But even without this, a forsaken building quickly becomes unroofed, and the walls being thus exposed to the heavy periodical rains, soon crumble down, and the building speedily loses all trace of its original shape and destination. It is not only a fallen, but a *dissolved* ruin. The mouldered walls having become a heap of clay, successive rains soon deprive it of all regularity of shape; and when, in addition to this, it is borne in mind that, during the hot winds of summer, the air is filled with clouds of the finest dust, which is arrested by and deposited on any prominent mass, and consolidated by subsequent rains, it is easily understood that an abandoned mansion will ere long be covered with a layer of soil, and the plough may eventually trace its furrows over the banqueting halls of mighty kings.

It is to this kind of 'heaps,' and not to such as are caused by the confusedly accumulated ruins of stone buildings, that we apprehend Eliphaz to refer as the ultimate condition of 'desolate cities.' We shall not readily forget the surprise, nearly akin to disappointment, with which we regarded the first ancient site of this sort that came under our personal notice,

when, instead of broken walls, and towers, and columns of stone, nothing appeared but a confused wilderness of rounded 'heaps'—a sea of solid billows.¹

'He dwelleth in desolate cities, in houses which no man inhabiteth.' These words seem strange to us in this land; but I have seen most remarkable illustrations of them in Job's own country. Many of the old cities of Bashan are 'desolate, without inhabitant,' and yet the houses are habitable. Some of them are quite perfect. In Salcah, though it has been deserted for centuries, there are still five hundred houses standing, and from three to four hundred families might settle in it at any moment without laying a stone, or expending an hour's labour on repairs. The view from the top of its ancient castle is wonderfully interesting. It commands the plain of Bashan on the west, Moab on the south, and Arabia on the east. Wherever I turned my eyes, towns and villages were seen. Bozrah was there, twelve miles distant. The towers of Beth-gamul were seen far away on the horizon. In the vale immediately to the south of Salcah are several deserted towns. Three miles off, in the same direction, is a large deserted town on the side of a hill. To the south-east an ancient road runs straight across the plain far as the eye can see. About six miles along it, on the top of a hill, is the deserted town of Maleh. On the section of the plain between south and east, I counted fourteen towns, all of them, so far as I could see with my telescope, habitable like Salcah, but entirely deserted. From this one spot I saw upwards of thirty deserted towns.

That enterprising and daring traveller, Mr. Cyril Graham, made a long journey into the hitherto unexplored country east of the mountains of Bashan. There he found ancient cities, and roads, and vast numbers of inscriptions in unknown characters, but not a single inhabitant. The towns and villages east of the mountain range are all deserted, the soil is uncultivated, and 'the highways lie waste.' In the whole of those vast plains, north and south, east and west, DESOLATION reigns supreme. The cities, the highways, the vineyards, the fields, are all alike silent as the grave, except during the periodical migrations of the Bedawin, whose flocks and herds trample down and waste all before them.

¹ This happened to be Seleucia on the Tigris, sometimes called Babylon.

Fifth Week—Seventh Day.

HORNS.—JOB XVI. 15.

THE speech of Eliphaz has the effect of lashing Job into renewed vigour of defence. With considerable warmth and resentment, he says, what in substance amounts to the homely phrase used by ourselves in the like circumstances, that 'it is easy to talk.' He himself could be no less sage, were their respective situations interchanged; but he is sure that, in this case, he should have been more humane and considerate than such 'miserable comforters,' and 'physicians of no value,' as they had shown themselves to be. He gives a moving account of his condition, with the view of making them feel that their treatment of him was at least barbarous, if not unjust. But he protests that it was unjust, and much of their talk irrelevant. The picture which Eliphaz had given of a tyrannous oppressor, he treats as altogether foreign to the points in debate, unless he could prove that any part of the description applied to him, or that he had been guilty of the like atrocities. This he defies Eliphaz to do; and then he makes new and warm protestations of his correct and blameless deportment towards his fellow-creatures, and of his sincere affection, as well as reverential regard, for his Maker. He takes comfort, however, in the thought that God knows the truth of his assertion, and once more he appeals from their partial judgments to his awful tribunal for acquittance. This occupies the sixteenth chapter; in the seventeenth, he goes over nearly the same points, though in a somewhat different order, and closes his speech with very strong expressions of grief and despair.

It is in this speech of Job that we find the first allusion to 'the horn' as a symbol of dignity and honour: 'I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.' If, as some not unreasonably suppose, this comprises an allusion to the custom of wearing a horn on the forehead, the custom, which still subsists, must be reckoned among the most ancient

usages of adornment in the world. Generally, the horn appears in the Bible as a symbol of strength and power. The figure is undoubtedly taken from horned animals, whose power in attack or defence rests in their horns; and hence the word came to be used to denote the qualities which confer greatness on man—his honour, dignity, and strength. At length the horn itself, commuted eventually for a representation of it, came to be worn as a sign of power; and as such it appears in the most ancient figures of gods and spiritual existences, and was also worn by princes and leaders of men. Of this there is *now* no question, for the representation of two, and often four horns, two on each side, enfolds the turbans or crowns of the most exalted beings represented in the sculptures of Nineveh.

· This distinguishing and symbolic ornament is still in use as a mark of power among the military chiefs or leaders of the



Abyssinians, in the shape of a conical spike projecting from the front of a circlet of metal worn around the head. These horns attracted the attention of Bruce, who observed that in a cavalcade the governors of provinces were distinguished by this head-dress. It consisted of a large broad fillet tied behind, from the centre of which projected a horn or conical piece of silver, gilt, and about four inches high, having in general

appearance much resemblance, as he ignobly represents, to a candle-extinguisher! In Western Asia, it is now chiefly known as in use among the women of Lebanon, especially of the Druses. There is no indication in the Bible of this use of the horn by women; and it would seem in the nature of things that it could only have come into use among women, after men had ceased to wear it as an honorary distinction. The horn is of silver, sometimes studded with jewels; and being worn on the head in different positions, so as to distinguish the condi-

tion of the wearers, it so far serves the ancient purpose of this appendage. A married woman has it affixed to the right side of the head, a widow to the left, and a virgin is indicated by its being worn on the crown. It is used to support the long veil with which, when out of doors, females so completely conceal their faces, that seldom more than one eye is visible. It is not always of silver. Ladies of distinction have it of gold, and the poorer sort of tin. It is usually about twelve inches long, and of the size of a common post-horn. It is not confined to Lebanon; being also in use among the Christian women in the towns of the coast, and, although more rarely, in Damascus. Indeed, something of the same sort, and in



like manner used to support the veil, may be found in remote places; and we remember many years ago to have been much astonished to witness it in general use in one of the principal towns in the heart of Russia.¹ Among the Lebanon women this singular appendage, from its height, and from its own weight, as well as that of the veil it is designed to support, needs as many backstays and forestays to keep it in position as the mainmast of a seventy-four. It is worn by day and even by night, being taken off only once in every week or ten days, in order that the hair may be combed. An ornament

¹ At Tver; not commonly in any other town; but, if memory fail not, we saw it occasionally in Moscow.

so ambitious is not attained but at the expense of bodily pain and detriment. It is a fruitful source of ophthalmic complaints. The pressure being chiefly over one eye, relaxes the palpebral nerves, and causes that eye to appear smaller than its fellow. Those who wear the horn are continually complaining of headaches and colds. One of the fastenings of the horn passes under the chin, and necessarily limits the motion of the jaw. Dr. Van Dyck¹ mentions the case of a woman who could not open her mouth more than an eighth of an inch; and, upon examination, it was found that the band alluded to, where it pressed upon the lower jaw, had formed a groove in the bone capable of containing the little finger. After merely laying aside the horn for a few days, the woman could open her mouth more than an inch.

¹ *On the Present Condition of the Medical Profession in Syria*, in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Reprinted in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, No. xi.



Sixth Week—first Day.

CLEAN HANDS.—JOB XVII. 9.

We met with a little anecdote the other day, which contains internal evidence of being derived from an American publication, and which we repeat for the entertainment of our more juvenile readers.

‘A little boy (whose name I shall call John) was observed to wash his hands many times in a day—a most praiseworthy exercise. The unusual frequency with which he repaired to the hollow stone by the well, led his elder brother Henry to ask him why he washed his hands so often.

“Because I wish to be strong.”

“Do you think that washing your hands will make you strong?”

“Yes.”

‘At evening, as the two brothers were sitting in the porch of the farm-house, listening to the notes of the Whip-poor-Will,¹ Henry asked John why he thought that washing his hands would give him strength.

“Because I read it in the Bible,” was the reply.

“Where did you find that passage?”

“I will show you.”

‘He got the Bible, and read the latter part of the ninth

¹ *Whip-poor-Will*—a name imitating the note of the American bird it indicates (the *Caprimulgus vociferus*). It is curious that the Indians, also imitating the note, give it the very different name of *Muck-a-wiss*; a remarkable instance how differently the same word or name may strike the ear of different peoples, or how differently they may represent the sounds they hear. This accounts for the exceedingly different account which an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a German will give of the name of a foreign place or person.—J. K.

verse of the seventeenth chapter of Job: "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." John was very confident that his position was the right one, for it had the support of Scripture. Henry proceeded to explain to him the meaning of the passage, and convinced him that he had taken in a literal that which was intended to be taken in a figurative sense—that the passage taught, that those who do right shall increase in strength to do right.'

This is the passage which we have chosen for consideration this day.

The hand is the instrument of action, and 'clean hands' hence become the symbol of holy things, and of the absence of any appearance of unholy conduct. It is not the same as uprightness of heart, but something supplemental to it, and needful to constitute the character fairly complete in living grace. There must be cleanness of hands, as well as cleanness of heart. The cleanness of heart is expressed in preceding verses; and now 'cleanness of hands' is added to complete the whole; and it is declared that he who, besides uprightness of heart, and the general innocency and righteousness of his way, is also careful to keep himself free from every spot that might stain his hands, shall wax stronger and stronger. Without doubt, a man's general uprightness will powerfully restrain him in the main current of his actions; yet if there appear upon his hand any stain or defilement, in his conversation or dealings with men, this will be a damp upon his spirit and a deadening to his heart, although the bent of his heart be towards God. Let none say, when taxed with uncleanness of hands, that their hearts are nevertheless right; that although they fail often, and would be better and do better, yet they have good meanings, and feel that they are upright before God. This is self-delusion. It is easier to keep the hands right than the heart right; and he whose hand is foul may depend upon it that his heart is fouler still. Where there is a clean heart, there will be clean hands. Many have clean hands who have unclean hearts; but no man ever yet had a clean heart whose hands remained unclean. As, therefore, the clean heart makes

the hand also clean, the clean hand becomes a probable evidence of the cleanness of the heart.

It is of these two things taken together—the clean heart and the clean hand—as forming the perfection of godliness, that Job speaks when he says, that the man thus complete in his character ‘shall wax stronger and stronger,’ or, as the original has it, ‘shall add strength,’ especially in time of trial and affliction. This is ‘spiritual strength.’ It is the same strength which the apostle had in view when he said (2 Cor. iv. 16), ‘Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.’ It cannot be otherwise. The man thus endowed is in a state of grace before God; and grace is a living thing, and while it lives must grow, even as the grain of mustard-seed must increase to a large tree.

It is in a time of trouble that this progress from strength to strength is most active, and is most sensibly discerned; and we cannot doubt that it was this which Job had especially in view. It is affliction that, beyond all things else, gives proof of godliness—whether it be true or not. That which is untrue—that which has no firm foundation—cannot abide this test; but he whose heart is well established in grace, not only does not fall off in time of trouble, but grows and increases in grace; thereby ‘he addeth strength.’ It is said of the Lacedemonian republic, that whereas all other states were undone by war, Sparta alone grew rich and was bettered by it; and we may say, that whereas all hypocrites and worldly men are undone by affliction, true believers thrive under it, and are advantaged by it. He who possesses, through the grace of the Divine Spirit, the upright heart and the clean hands, grows stronger and stronger. His inward man increases as his outward man decays. It is said of the Israelites, that the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. This was in things temporal; but so it is in spiritual things with all who are Israelites indeed. This was known of old; and from the deep conviction of this truth, the ancient saints learned to *rejoice* in tribulation as a sure means of spiritual advancement. The apostles rejoiced when they were threatened; and although

their shrinking flesh might for the moment complain, they were emboldened by scourging. It is said of the suffering saints, that 'they took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods ;'¹ and Paul tells us that 'many waxed confident by'—by what, think you? By his preaching? by his successes in high places? by the power with which he silenced the gainsayers? Nay, but by 'HIS BONDS.'

But how can these things be? It is not natural in man to be strengthened by affliction, but rather to be weakened. It is not inherent in affliction to make a man better, but to harden him, to make him worse. It is, therefore, not from any spontaneous quality in us of being improved by affliction, or from any innate tendency of affliction to improve us, but from the fresh anointings of the Spirit, 'that we are strengthened with might in the inner man ;'² from that only 'we are strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.'⁴ The increase of strength comes from the same fountain whence we had our first strength. All is from God.

It is, therefore, only by compelling us to go out of our own strength to seek the strength of God, that even under affliction we wax stronger and stronger. Only so, Paul could avouch that noble paradox, 'When I am weak, then I am strong ;' and it was only when he was brought to the conviction that his own strength was wholly insufficient that he heard the comfortable words, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

Sixth Week—Second Day.

JOB'S TRUST.—JOB XIX. 25-27.

BILDAD the Shuhite is the next to speak. Scott, in the sensible remarks appended to his metrical version of the Book of Job, says: 'I cannot call this speech *oratio morata*—a speech that marks the peculiar temper of the speaker. It

¹ Heb. x. 34. ² Phil. i. 14. ³ Eph. iii. 16. ⁴ Col. i. 11.

might, for all I can see, have come with equal propriety from the mouth of Zophar. It expresseth, however, very strongly, the progress and effect of anger. The course of this debate has heated this phlegmatic man. His introduction is full of high resentment; and the rest of his discourse shows that his passion greatly elevates his poetry.' Bildad reasserts the favourite proposition of all the friends—that *destructive* calamities are the portion of the wicked, and of such only. This he confirms and illustrates by a new example, after the manner of Eliphaz; but he has so varied his choice of images, so heightened the colouring, and adapted some particulars so closely to the case of Job, and wrought up the echo to so high a pitch of tragic terror, that no reader of taste fails to pause with admiration over his speech.

In replying to Bildad's harsh and passionate invective, Job indirectly rebukes the hardness of his friends towards him, by a pathetic account of his deplorable condition, in which he introduces some humiliating and painful circumstances which have not before appeared. He contends that his sufferings were not to be ascribed to himself, but to God, who had overwhelmed him with calamities, though he had done nothing to deserve them, and though he had often desired to be brought to trial. Perceiving, however, that he has made no impression upon them, the afflicted patriarch suddenly raises his voice, and with great elevation of spirit expresses his ardent desire that the words he had uttered in his own defence should be recorded in some enduring memorial. It is clear that the loss of character is involved in the imputations which the friends shower upon him. All other evils are in his view light compared with this; and what he desires is not so much deliverance from his misery, as the vindication of his integrity. And thus he practically refutes the, to him unknown, insinuations of Satan, that his piety was founded on selfish motives. So now, not satisfied with the tardy vindication which he has previously indicated, he kindles to higher inspirations, and declares his assured conviction, that low, miserable, and despised as he now is, he shall yet live to see the Lord himself appear to justify

him from these aspersions. He also warns his friends that a time will come when they shall be put to shame for their behaviour towards him: 'Know ye that judgment cometh.' This is therefore one of several passages dispersed through the book, which show that the sacred writer kept the final interposition of the Lord in view, and desired, by such intimations, to prepare our minds for it.

From this statement the reader will perceive the view we have been led to entertain of this celebrated text: 'I know *that* my Redeemer liveth, and *that* He shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: and *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' The words in *italics* do not exist in the original, but are *supplied* by the translator to complete the sense he supposed the declaration to convey.

It is well known that the popular view of this passage is, that it declares Job's belief in a future Redeemer—that is, in Christ; and in the resurrection from the dead. We have carefully weighed every word of this text, and explored every shade of opinion with reference to each, and we feel constrained, not without pain, though without reluctance—for no one ought to be reluctant to entertain the truth—to follow the general tendency of modern (yet not wholly modern) interpretation, which shows that this view is founded on mistranslation or misconception, and that the words describe only an expectation, which the close of the book declares to have been fulfilled.

The translation, as it stands, undoubtedly affords ground for, and was intended to express, the popular interpretation. The translators entertained that view, and without doing intentional or actual violence to the passage, or designing to make a forced translation, they have allowed their feelings to give to the passage a complexion, which the original does not necessarily convey. Yet, if one picks out the words which they have introduced to complete that sense, as *day*, *worms*, and *body*; and if he exchanges for other terms the words 'Redeemer,' and 'latter day,' which have, from the Gospel, acquired a definite theological sense which did not in the Old Testament belong to them, he will find the apparent distinct-

ness of the allusion to our Lord and to the resurrection fade away. The word 'Redeemer,' which is now technically always used to denote the Messiah, has in the original a much wider signification, and might be, and is in other versions, rendered by different terms. The Hebrew word is GOEL, and is applied to one who redeems a field or lands, by paying back the calculated value ; to the avenger of blood, as the redeemer or vindicator of violated rights ; to a kinsman, as one on whom these rights devolved. So Ruth calls Boaz her *Goel*, translated 'near kinsman ;' and it is applied to God himself, as the vindicator and deliverer of his people, and especially as their redeemer from the bondage of Egypt and the captivity of Babylon. Hence, although 'Redeemer' is a proper rendering, yet, seeing the technical sense it has in later times acquired in reference to Christ, misconception would be prevented in such cases as this by the use of equivalent terms, such as 'vindicator' or 'avenger,'—which are, in fact, usually adopted in recent versions. So of 'the latter *day*:' this phrase has acquired a distinct signification in Christian theology, which ought to have precluded its insertion here. Besides, *day* does not exist in the original, and the word means no more than *hereafter*, or *after this*. Thus, therefore, the first of the two verses plainly means no more than 'I know that my vindicator (or avenger) liveth, and shall hereafter appear upon the earth ;' and the precise determination of the sense of this must result from the interpretation given to the ensuing verse ; for if in that verse Job speaks of his death and future resurrection, then the vindicator or redeemer may be our Lord, and the hereafter the day of judgment.

But here we have the 'worms' and 'body,' which do not exist in the Hebrew, the former of which at least serves to fix the idea of the death and decomposition of the body, without which it could not be made to appear that the subsequent restoration was a resurrection from the dead. In fact, no modern translator has preserved the word 'worms,' or has used any other word which fixes the idea of death to the terms employed. Nothing of this occurs even in versions made by those who believe death and the resurrection of the dead to be

intended. We introduce some modern English translations below, by which it will be seen that the translators substantially agree in their versions, although the first is the only one who sees death and the resurrection to be denoted.¹

Let it be remembered that Job's was a painful and disgusting cutaneous disease, and that he frequently alludes to the state of his skin. Indeed, he had just before said that he had escaped only with 'the skin of his teeth.' What therefore more natural than for him to say, that although after his skin his very body were wasted away to a mere skeleton, yet he would entertain the assured conviction that in his flesh—that is, before he died, or else, in flesh restored to soundness—he should see God interposing in his behalf, and taking his side in the controversy?

'And though this skin of mine is thus corroded,
Yet in my flesh shall I see God.'—WEMYSS.

'And though with my skin this body be wasted away,
Yet in my flesh shall I see God.'—NOYES.

'And though after my skin this [flesh] be destroyed,
Yet even without my flesh shall I see God.'—BARNES.

Remembering that the expectation thus defined was realized, it is difficult to resist—and why should we resist?—the conviction, that the sacred writer intended the whole passage to have a relation to the concluding part of the poem, where the Almighty is represented as appearing and vindicating the character of Job, by calling him four times 'my servant;' by rebuking his calumniators, and pardoning them through his intercession; by declaring that he, and not his friends, had spoken of Him what was right (in regard to the question whether misery was a proof of guilt); and by giving him temporal blessings in twofold greater abundance than before his affliction.

We should be sorry to deprive the book of the *unity* which this view of the present passage conveys. At the beginning, the Lord appears as Job's vindicator from the aspersions of

¹ 'And that after this my skin shall have been pierced through, still in my flesh shall I see God.'—LEE.

Satan. Job knows not this; but here, about the middle of the poem, he declares his conviction that God would at length appear as his vindicator from the aspersions of his friends—his redeemer from dishonour and reproach; and in the end the Lord accordingly does so appear, justifying the expectation of his servant, and bringing the book to the close of which that expectation so emphatically forewarned us. The poem is thus rendered complete in all its parts. It has a distinct beginning, middle, and end. But the middle, which seems so essential to its completeness, is taken out, if we refer the passage before us to any expectation which the book itself does not declare to have been eventually realized.

Most of the reasons lately produced,¹ from the nature of the argument, and the like, against the probability of the doctrine of the resurrection being produced, apply equally here. Those reasons appear to show the improbability that this doctrine should be produced in any argument like this, even if it were known and believed. Many have questioned whether, in the early age to which the book belongs, there existed any knowledge of a life to come, or of an atonement for sin. That the former knowledge was then enjoyed, we are firmly persuaded, and shall soon have further occasion to show; and that it was scarcely possible for the latter to have been unknown then, we have had opportunities of declaring.² It is customary to confound the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead with that of the immortality of the soul. But they are quite distinct, and multitudes have in all ages believed in a future state who had no notion of a resurrection. Job might, and we apprehend that he did, believe in a future state, without knowing of a resurrection. It is only in the later Scriptures of the Old Testament that we find the latter doctrine produced; but it was reserved for our Lord and his apostles to open it fully, and give to it, under the new dispensation, that fundamental importance, and essential illustration which it derived from our

¹ Fifth Week—Fifth Day.

² *First Series*: Third Week, Sixth Day; Eighth Week, First Day; Ninth Week, Third Day.

Lord's own resurrection, and which it could not possibly have possessed before.

I cannot at all concur in Dr. Kitto's interpretation of this passage. In my opinion it neither agrees with the grammatical structure, nor with the scope of the context. In the previous part of his speech, Job complains bitterly of the injustice and cruelty of his friends. Worn by their reproaches and accusations, and crushed to the dust by his own terrible sufferings, he despairs altogether of relief or mercy from God in this world: 'Know ye not that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me about with his net? Behold I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard.' He looks only for death as the end of his troubles: 'He hath removed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope hath He removed like a tree.' To terminate such a speech in the manner represented by Dr. Kitto, would make the patriarch contradict himself; for while in the first part he gives way to despair, and looks for death as the only relief, it would make him at the close express a firm conviction in a complete cure and final justification before his friends. Job does not seem ever to have thought of this. Had he known it—had it been revealed to him, it would have taken the sting out of his trials, and thus counteracted their whole aim and object.

The scope of the speech shows that, in the very depths of his sorrow and suffering, Job's faith suddenly triumphs over and rises above the afflictions of this life. He sees—dimly it may be, but he still sees, and glories in a future DELIVERER. The eye of faith recognises Him standing upon the earth. The disease which had already eaten away his skin, might also destroy his whole body; yet in some form, incorruptible, he would yet behold *Eloah*, the God of power. Such I believe to be the sense of this difficult passage. The words may be thus translated:

'And I know :—My Redeemer liveth ;
 And at last upon the earth He shall arise.
 And after my skin they shall destroy this *body*,
 Yet in my flesh shall I behold *Eloah* :
 Whom I shall behold for myself,
 And my eyes shall see, and not another.'

I thus agree with the view of Delitzsch, that 'the character of Job's present state of mind is, that he looks for certain death, and will hear nothing of the consolation of recovery, which sounds to him as a mere mockery (chap. xvii. 10-16); that he, however, notwith-

standing, does not despair of God, but, by the consciousness of his innocence and the uncharitableness of his friends, is more and more impelled from the God of wrath and caprice to the God of love, his future Redeemer.'

Sixth Week—Third Day.

WRITTEN ROCKS.—JOB XIX. 24.

LET us to-day return to the passage in which Job desires for his words some enduring monument. He says, 'Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!'

In an antiquarian point of view, this is a deeply interesting passage, being the earliest existing reference to the most ancient modes of writing—not to one of them, but to several,—to all, in fact, that appear to have been known at the time this book was written.

The strange blunder of the translators about *printing* in a book, is calculated to provoke a smile, and is on that ground alone censurable. We knew a man by no means ill-informed or unintelligent, who contended from this that printing was but the revival of an ancient invention known in the time of Job, with the only alternative that Job predicted the invention, and declared his conviction that his words would hereafter be printed in a book—'And this has really come to pass,' he triumphantly added, deeming that his acumen had added one more to the long list of fulfilled prophecies. This carelessness is the less excusable, as the earlier versions are free from this fault. In them we have, 'O that they were put in a boke;'¹ 'O that they were written in 'a booke.'²

Still there might be something to mislead in the words 'written' and 'book;,' not that they are absolutely incorrect, but that they have acquired more restricted signification than they anciently possessed. Not, however, to enter into questions

¹ ROGER'S *Bible*, and BISHOPS' *Bible*.

² *Geneva Bible*.

as to the meaning of words, we shall give the translation which seems to us preferable :

‘O that my words were now recorded !
O that they were engraven on a tablet !
With an iron graver upon lead ;
That they were graven in a rock for ever.’

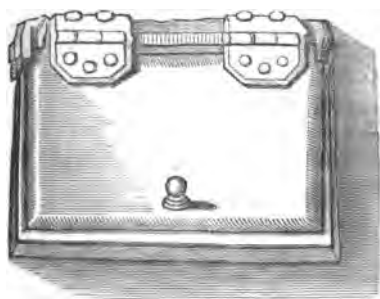
The careful reader will here find four ideas, rising to a climax in the grandest and most durable form of writing.

Job first expresses a wish that his words were simply written down or recorded in the ordinary mode, without specifying any ; neither shall we now, as there will be a future occasion to do so. But we cannot help pointing out the error of those who contend, from the text before us, that graving on metal or stone was the only mode of writing known in the time of Job, and consequently, that there were no such things as books, or rather rolls (which was the ancient form of books), in existence. But why not? The world was already 2200 years old at the very earliest date ascribed to the history of Job, and men inherited, through Noah’s family, the knowledge and accumulated improvements of the antediluvians. And as this is urged by those who insist upon the most ancient date of the history and the Book of Job, it may well be asked, How, in the alleged absence of the means of copious writing, in the shape of books of leaves or bark, or rolls of skins (not parchment, which was later), linen, or papyrus, the Book of Job itself came to be written and preserved? No one will surely contend that a volume so large was engraven on stone, or even on metal. Further, in the time of Moses, materials for large rolls of writing existed, or how else were the books of the Pentateuch written, for only the ten commandments were engraven upon stone? Lastly, we have actual possession of Egyptian papyrus rolls of the most remote Pharaonic age ; and through the sculptures we are enabled to ascertain that this mode of writing was common in the age of Suphis, or Cheops, the builder of the great pyramid, more than 2000 years before Christ, and therefore anterior to the age of Job.

The patriarch then goes on to engraving or writing on tablets.

These tablets may have been of wood, earthenware, or bone. Waxed tablets we take to be of a later age, not well suited to a warm climate, and never used but for temporary memoranda, like our slates. We mention *bone*, in the recollection that the shoulder-blades of sheep were, in ancient times, and especially among pastoral tribes, the representatives of our ivory tablets.

Then Job comes to the process of writing on tablets of soft metal with a pen or stylus of harder metal—with a pen of iron on tablets of lead. Tablets for the purpose of writing, were composed of plates of lead, copper, brass, and other metals. These, as also tablets of wood, mentioned before, were either single, or frequently from two to five leaves were done up into a sort of book, something like our slate books. Lead, from its



comparative cheapness and softness, and from the facility of beating out or melting down writing no longer useful, was much used, and was probably first employed for this purpose, though the prominent mention of it by Job does not imply that no other metals were used. It is stated by Pliny that sheets of lead were still in his time used for important public documents. A zealous antiquary of the seventeenth century, Montfaucon, states that he purchased in 1699, at Rome, an ancient book entirely composed of lead. It was about four inches long and three inches wide; and not only were the two pieces that formed the cover and the leaves, six in number, of lead, but also the pin inserted through the rings to hold the leaves

together, as well as the hinges and the nails. Each of the twelve pages was charged with a gnostic symbolical figure, and underneath each of the first four are inscriptions, in Greek and Etruscan characters, unintelligible to him, but which might probably now be deciphered. The characters inscribed on every leaf are copied in Montfaucon's work. He also gives from Father Bonanni's *Museum Kircherianum*, the representation and description of another leaden book, which had been taken from an ancient tomb, containing seven leaves inscribed with Greek, Hebrew, Etruscan, and Latin characters; all of which are declared (perhaps too summarily) to have been unintelligible. Both these books are probably not older than the early



ages of the Christian era; but they adequately represent a custom of more ancient date.

Brass, as a more durable metal, was used for inscriptions designed to last very long; such as laws, treaties, and alliances. These were, however, usually written on large tablets of the metal. The ornamental brasses in our own churches, some of which are in good preservation, though many centuries old, illustrate this still more ancient use of tablets of brass. The stylus or pen for writing on metal tablets was sometimes tipped with a diamond; a circumstance to which there is an allusion in Jer. xvii. 1.

It was certainly a grand idea for man to think of committing to the living rock, and of thus giving a magnificent perma-

nency to, the record of his history and his thoughts. There are rocks presenting cliffs so smooth, with stone of texture so soft, as absolutely to tempt the idle saunterer to write or to scrawl unmeaning figures on them. In time this would suggest the desirableness of inscribing harder rocks with memorials designed to last; and where a smooth surface was not naturally presented, the face of the rock would be levelled for the purpose.

Many such monuments of the most ancient date have been found in various countries, but none more extensive or remarkable than those in the Written Mountains of Sinai, which also derive especial interest from the locality in which they are found, so memorable in Jewish history, and not so remote from the place of Job's abode—some, indeed, making it much nearer than we do—but that he might have known of them had they then been thus sculptured. It is not, however, likely that they were, though this passage shows that his view was directed to such monuments.

These inscriptions are found in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai; or, to speak more accurately, in the hills and valleys which, branching out from its roots, run towards the north-west to the vicinity of the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez; inasmuch that travellers now-a-days, from the monastery of Mount Sinai to the town of Suez, whatever route they take (for there are many), will see these inscriptions upon the rocks of most of the valleys through which they pass, to within half a day's journey, or a little more, of the coast. Besides these localities, similar inscriptions are met with, and these in great numbers, on Mount Serbal, lying to the south of the above-mentioned routes; as also, but more rarely, in some valleys to the south of Mount Serbal itself. But the valley which, beyond all the rest, claims especial notice, is that which stretches from the neighbourhood of the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez for the space of three hours' journey in a southern direction. Here, to the left of the road, the traveller finds a chain of steep sandstone rocks, perpendicular as walls, which afford shelter at mid-day, and in the afternoon, from the burning rays of the sun.

These, beyond all besides, contain a vast multitude of tolerably well-preserved inscriptions; whence this valley has obtained the name of Wady Mokatteb, or the Written Valley. Adjoining to it is a hill, where stones in like manner are covered with writing, and which bears the name of Djebel Mokatteb, or the Written Mountain. Intermingled with the inscriptions, images and figures of men and animals are of frequent occurrence, all executed in so rude a style, as may be well supposed to have belonged to the time when men first began to inscribe upon



the rocks their abiding memorials, and evidently with the same instruments and by the same hands as those which formed the inscriptions. Indeed, they who have taken the pains to copy portions of these, declare that it was often difficult to distinguish the figures from the letters. This suggests that the writers sometimes employed images as parts of letters, and *vice versa*, images for groups of letters. The letters are in an alphabetical character, not otherwise known to palæographers; and many

attempts have been made to decipher them, but not until lately with any degree of success. The inscriptions were first noticed by the traveller Cosmas in A.D. 535, and the character was even then unknown. He supposed they were the work of the ancient Hebrews ; and says, that certain Jews who had read them, explained them to him as the journey of such a one, of such a tribe, in such a year and month. This explanation might be understood to intimate that the inscriptions were made by members of the successive generations of ancient Israelites in visits which they paid to a place so memorable in their history, and does not coincide with the more prevalent and lately revived notion, that this work employed the leisure hours of the Israelites during their sojourn in this quarter.

Passing by abortive speculations, we may mention the result of the investigations of Professor Beer of Leipsic, who made these inscriptions the object of special study. It is his opinion that they afford the only remains of the language and character once peculiar to the Nabathæans of Arabia Petræa ; and he supposed that if, at any future time, stones with the writing of the country should be found among the ruins of Petra, the characters would prove to be the same with those of the inscriptions of Sinai. He did not know that the fact of this resemblance had been substantiated. But we can point out that in the (then unpublished, though printed) *Travels of Irby and Mangles*, mention is made of a tomb in Petra, with an oblong tablet, containing an inscription in five long lines, and immediately underneath a single figure on a large scale, probably the date. 'The characters were such as none of the party had seen before, excepting Mr. Banks, who stated them to be precisely similar to those he had seen scratched on the rocks in the Wady Mokatteb and about the foot of Sinai.' This testimony, from so accurate an antiquarian observer as Mr. Banks, is of more conclusive value than even that of the two gallant travellers themselves could have been ; as the inexperienced eye fancies resemblance, where the experienced one finds large difference.

According to this view, the inscriptions will probably be found to have been made by the native inhabitants of these

mountains. They are, as Mr. Banks well defines, rather 'scratched' than engraven, and certainly present a very rude appearance. The contents of the inscriptions, as made out by Professor Beer, and so far as he has proceeded, consist only of proper names, preceded by a word signifying 'peace;' but sometimes *memoriatus sit*, and sometimes 'blessed.' Before the names the word *bar* or *ben*, that is, 'son,' occasionally occurs; and they are sometimes followed by one or two words at the end—thus the word 'priest' appears twice as a title. In one or two instances the name is followed by a phrase or sentence, which has not yet been deciphered. Among the names some Jewish or Christian ones have been found; and the words which are not proper names seem to belong to the Aramæan dialect. A language of this kind the Professor conceives to have been spoken by the Nabathæans before the Arabic language prevailed in those parts, and of that language and writing he regards these as the only monuments now known to exist.

This somewhat disappointing theory seemed at one time likely to receive general acceptance; but it has now been given up, even in Germany, where the very learned Professor Tuch has argued for a date some centuries earlier than Beer's explanation will allow; and the Rev. Charles Forster has just set forth a claim to the discovery of a new key to the reading and interpretation, by which he finds that they were the work of the Israelites during their sojourn in this wilderness.¹ According to him, the nation, during its various wanderings after the passage of the Red Sea, and before the publication of the Pentateuch,² not in accordance with any public decree, but in its private capacity as represented by individuals, recorded upon the rocks among which it temporarily sojourned, the various miracles it witnessed, the suffering and adventures it underwent. This is in itself not improbable. The Hebrews

¹ *The One Primeval Language traced fundamentally through Ancient Inscriptions: including the Voice of Israel from the Rocks of Sinai.* By the Rev. Charles Forster, B.D. London, 1851.

² This is inferred from the absence of any quotations therefrom, which would have been certain to appear in any inscriptions of posterior date.

came from a country possessed in all its members, high and low, with a rage for turning mountains into books—from a country which is covered with inscriptions of every degree of magnitude, wherever there is a rock to receive the chisel; and this familiarity with the practice might easily suggest to many of them the fitness of employing their abundant leisure in giving the like enduring memorial to the signal events which had marked their pilgrimage. As rendered by Mr. Forster, these records comprise, besides the healing of the waters of Marah, the passage of the Red Sea, with the introduction of Pharaoh twice by name, and two notices of a vain attempt of the Egyptian tyrant to save himself by flight on horseback from the returning waters; together with hieroglyphical representations of himself and his horse. They comprise, further, the miraculous supplies of manna and of flesh, the battle of Rephidim, with the mention of Moses by his office, and of Aaron and others by their names; the same inscription repeated, describing the holding up of Moses' hands by Aaron and Hur, and their supporting him with a stone, illustrated by a drawing apparently of the stone, containing within it the inscription, and over it the figure of Moses with uplifted hands; and lastly, the plague of fiery serpents, with the representation of a serpent in the act of coming down, as if from heaven, upon a prostrate Israelite.

These references to the recorded events of the Exode, compose, however, but a small part of the Sinaite inscriptions as yet in our possession, the great mass of which, Mr. Forster informs us, consists of descriptions of rebellious Israel, under the figures of kicking asses, restive camels, rampant goats, sluggish tortoises, and lizards of the desert.

Among the objections which may be urged against the interpretation thus furnished, one is, that a people not enjoined to this work, but (as this author supposes) doing it spontaneously as a sort of labour of love, would be little likely thus to work to perpetuate the memory of their misdeeds and unbelief under such degrading images. The theory is open to other objections of even more weight than this; but, in the face of all these, the

evidence produced is very strong, if not, as yet, altogether so conclusive as to be implicitly received, that, as we were formerly taught to believe, we have in these inscriptions the autographic memorials of Israel's sojourn in the wilderness.

The following are a few specimens of Mr. Forster's translations of these inscriptions :

'The red geese rise from the sea ;
Lusting, the people eat of them.'

'The hard stone the people satiates with water thirsting.'

'Prayeth unto God the prophet [upon] a hard great stone, [his] hands sustaining Aaron, Hur.'

'The people Moses provoketh to anger, kicking like an ass.'

'[At] the water springs muster the people, railleth against Jehovah crying out.'

'The people at Marah drinketh like a wild ass.'

'The people of the Hebrews biddeth begone Jehovah.'

The traditional country of Job, eastern Bashan and the adjoining plain of Arabia, has more ancient inscribed tablets than perhaps any other province of the same extent in the world. Not only has every town and village numbers of inscriptions, in Latin, Greek, or Palmyrene, on its old houses, but in many places, away out on the desolate plain eastward, rocks and stones are actually covered with inscribed characters. Mr. Cyril Graham, who explored that wild region a few years ago, says : 'Riding along the eastern border of es-Safâh, I suddenly noticed a stone lying on the ground which had some marks on it ; I looked at it rather carelessly, but soon after, finding a stone similarly marked, I examined it, and immediately discovered that they were distinct characters. I copied them, and looked about anxiously for more. . . . I went more to the east, and then I came upon a place in the desert *where every stone was covered with inscriptions*. I found subsequently several such places, where every stone within a given space bore the mark of some beast or other figure, with an accompanying inscription. Frequently these spots were not near the remains of any town, although in many cases ruins of houses, and in some instances well-preserved houses of stone, were found near them. Of the inscriptions, I copied a great number, some of which are given in the plates at the end of this memoir. I likewise have copied carefully the figures of camels and other representations, in order to show the style in which they

are done. I should remark that I discovered an ancient road leading directly through el-Hârrah, and which appears to have been the highway between Basrah and Tadmor.'

As to the authors of these inscriptions, and the languages which they represent, he says: 'Who then could the people have been who built these cities? and were the authors of these inscriptions the original settlers, or of another race? I have elsewhere stated, that from the style of the houses and of the towns, I believe them to have been the work of the old Rephaim, who were the founders of the cities of Bashan. But the inscriptions I believe to have been the work of another race, and of a much later period. For some time I was strongly of opinion that they might be of the same class of writing as the well-known Sinaitic inscriptions. . . . But on comparing the two sets of inscriptions, no analogy sufficiently strong could be traced to encourage one in the hope that they might be of the same class.'

After a careful scrutiny, he concludes that the language is *Himyaritic*, a branch of the Semitic, which was spoken in former times by a people of southern Arabia, who had a character of their own, and whose language and writings were still extant in the time of Mohammed. The characters bear a close resemblance to the old Ethiopic, and may have been the original type of the latter.

Mr. Graham's researches are of the greatest interest, alike to the philologist and the geographer. I have thought it well to insert these few extracts here as a supplement to Dr. Kitto's remarks on the Sinaitic inscriptions. The reader may see Mr. Graham's memoirs in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1861; and *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, vol. xxviii.

Sixth Week—Fourth Day.

TRAVELLERS' TOKENS.—JOB XXI. 29.

THE reply to Job this time devolved on Zophar, who, although he had nothing essentially new to advance, rose up to answer the afflicted man in such a manner as plainly showed too much warmth and resentment, notwithstanding that he makes some endeavour to conceal his passion. He goes over the old ground, and reproduces the old arguments, which it is useless to repeat in a summary that must necessarily divest them of the

circumstantial imagery, by which they are varied in the mouths of the different interlocutors. Some readers, indeed, of not very discerning taste, may be apt to weary at these repeated declamations on the transient prosperity and fearful catastrophe of great oppressors. But it will be borne in mind, that these three men have the same ideas of the course of the Lord's providence, and of the case of their unhappy friend, and therefore must needs speak with a certain general uniformity on the subject. Meanwhile, these very iterations have the important effect of carrying on the main design of the poem. They tease and exasperate the good man's spirit, and carry him further into those excesses of complaint and self-justification, which, being subsequently represented to him in a proper light, draw from him the memorable expressions of his conviction and repentance. The subject, however, in this second speech of Zophar, is placed in so many different points of view, and illustrated by emblems and images so entirely his own, that these at least have the attraction of freshness. Upon the whole, there is great poetical merit in his speech. It is a torrent of Oriental eloquence, rushing on with the vehemence of a fiery temper, inflamed by resentment and mistaken zeal.

Job's reply to Zophar is essentially argumentative. The friends had alleged, that destructive calamities were the portion of the wicked only, and that the seeming prosperity with which they were indulged soon passed away. This he denies, by showing that, so far as appeared, their prosperity was as durable as that of the righteous, as proved by instances of irreligious men, who are not only favoured with welfare and affluence, but leave the world by easy deaths, and are borne down to the grave with honour. But although this is reasoning, it is not calm and cool reasoning. It is the reasoning of a man under great emotion of mind, and is mixed up with a sort of indignation at the miserable lot which lays him open to injurious imputations.

The careful reader will notice an interesting and very natural circumstance towards the close of this speech. Job seems to have closed his argument with chap. xxi. 26; but perceiving,

by their interchange of looks, that his friends were not satisfied, he resumes with, 'Behold I know your thoughts ;' and goes on to produce a new species of testimony in favour of his conclusions, 'Have ye not asked them that go by the way, and do ye not know their tokens?'

Perhaps not many uncritical readers attach very distinct ideas to these words. Who are those 'that go by the way,' and what are 'their tokens?' The former were undoubtedly travellers, especially such as came from distant journeys in caravans,—a mode of travel which is shown, by chap. vi. 19, to have existed in the time of Job, and which first historically appears as an established custom in the time of Jacob, when Joseph was sold for a slave to a travelling company of merchants. Such travellers, in the absence of newspapers, and in the paucity of written knowledge, as well as of epistolary communications between distant parts, were the chief sources of information respecting the circumstances of foreign countries. This is still the case in a very important degree, although other sources of information have, in the lapse of ages, become more open, but yet to a far less extent than one might be apt to suppose. We can well remember the anxiety felt in the East in times of public distress or excitement, to learn the intelligence which the travellers by any newly arrived caravan brought respecting the movements of hostile armies, or the progress of the cholera or plague. They may bring letters, but these are addressed to individuals, and the contents, even if of public importance, transpire but slowly. The travellers themselves are the popular intelligencers ; and very soon all that they know, and often a great deal more, is speedily extracted from them by eager inquirers. Those also who are known to have travelled much, become the oracles of their respective circles, and their information is constantly appealed to in discussion, for the settlement of points in dispute. And it frequently happens that one who has returned from a long or unusual journey, is sent for by the king or local governor, to answer such questions as may be put to him respecting what he has seen and heard in foreign parts.

The idea of Job clearly is, that if the friends urged that his observation was too limited to justify the conclusions which he had reached, they could resort to the testimony of travellers as to what they had observed of God's dealings with men, and what they had heard of the sayings of the wise in other lands.

As to the 'tokens,' the reference appears to be to the memorials of persons and events which they had seen in their travels, and the evidence afforded by which, he doubted not, would give support to the positions he advanced. Hence some translations have 'monuments' instead of 'tokens;' and it is certain that such memorials as Job appears to have had in view existed in his time, for he repeatedly alludes to them, and indeed we can trace them up to the earliest historical time.

A very ingenious and learned writer¹ takes the key to the allusion to be this: 'It was the custom of the ancients to bury near the high roads, and in the most public and conspicuous places, and to erect a pillar or monument over the dead to preserve his memory. These pillars, if they had any inscription at all upon them, recorded, no doubt, the name and titles of the person, and perhaps some of the happiest circumstances of his life, or what was more remarkable in his life or death. And, moreover, these inscriptions usually bespoke the [attention of the] travellers with *siste viator*, or to that purpose. These then, I apprehend, are the marks or tokens to which Job directs his friends; and which he would have them either consult themselves, or to ask the travellers about them. . . . To strengthen this exposition, I might observe that the tombs or monuments erected for the dead are, in Homer, the most ancient writer next to the sacred, called *Σήματα*, marks or tokens. *Σῆμα τέ μοι χεῖναι*, etc.—says the ghost of poor Elpenor to Ulysses (*Od.* xi. 75)—"Erect a tomb for me on the sea-shore, and set up the oar with which I rowed on the top of it; that it may be a monument to posterity of an unfortunate man."

¹ CHARLES PETERS, A.M., in his *Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job*, 1751; a work levelled at the views advanced by WARBURTON in his *Divine Legation of Moses*.

This is better given by Cowper :

‘ Burn me, and raise
A kind memorial of me on the coast
Heaped high with earth : that an unhappy man
May yet enjoy an unforgotten name.
This do at my request, and on my hill
Funereal, plant the oar with which I rowed
While yet I lived a mariner of thine.’

This writer further refers, in a note, to the speech of Bildad,¹ as plainly pointing at this custom. ‘ Speaking of the calamities that befall the wicked, he says : “ His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street,”—that is, he shall have no monument erected for him, to preserve his name or memory. The Hebrew is very expressive : “ And there shall not be a name to him upon the face of the street or public place.” This shows that it cannot be meant of his name tossed upon the tongues of the people (as some explain it), but rather perpetuated by some public inscription.’

It may be added, that some learned men have supposed that when Job desires that his words should be engraven on the rock,² he means to express a wish that the memorable declaration which he then made should be inscribed upon his monument.

Sixth Week—fifty Day.

THE NORTH.—JOB XXIII. 8—10.

WE now come to the third series of our great controversy (xxii.—xxx.), when it again becomes the turn of Eliphaz to speak. Good man as he is, and intelligent and accomplished, he fairly loses temper now. Feeling himself unable to find a satisfactory answer to the attack which Job had made upon the main position of the friends, and that he seemed as incorrigible as ever, and as little as ever disposed to acknowledge

¹ Job xviii. 17.

² Job xix. 24.

the enormities they imputed to him, he proceeds, in the true spirit of a baffled disputant, to misrepresent Job's sentiments, and, heaping up some of the worst curses he could think of, to fling them at his devoted head. He goes further, and charges him with the practical atheism of maintaining that God holds himself too high apart to take cognizance of the affairs of this low earth; and warns him that, in adopting the impieties of those who in old time perished by a flood, he also exposes himself to their doom. In the end, however, Eliphaz somewhat softens towards his friend, and declines to regard his case as hopeless; but advises him that, by repentance and submission, the road to the divine favour still lies open to him.

From this point forward, and with the exception of a few truisms advanced by Bildad the Shuhite, but which are quite inapplicable to the matter in debate, the next nine chapters are wholly devoted to the self-justification into which Job enters against the charges of his friends, interspersed with musings on the ways of providence, which are always applicable to the questions in dispute. That he goes on thus uninterruptedly, is to be ascribed to the friends declining to answer him any further. Indeed, there is an indication that, after Job had replied to Bildad in the twenty-sixth chapter, he made a pause, as if expecting the reply of Zophar, whose turn it then was to speak; but finding that he made no sign to avail himself of the opportunity, he proceeded. Thus, at the commencement of the twenty-seventh chapter, we find the unusual introduction: 'Moreover, Job continued his parable, and said.'

In going through these nine chapters, we have selected some points for consideration and remark.

There is a fine and much admired passage in the twenty-third chapter (8-10): 'Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.'

Very beautiful as this is, the effect is much heightened when

it is recollected that these references are really to the cardinal points of the compass, and should have been so rendered, as is indeed usual in recent versions. Noyes, for instance, gives it thus :

‘But behold I go eastward, and He is not there ;
 And westward, but I cannot perceive Him ;
 To the north, where He worketh, but I cannot behold Him ;
 He hideth himself in the south, and I cannot see Him.
 But He knoweth the way which is in my heart.
 When He trieth me, I shall come forth as gold.’

The Hebrews, in common with other Orientals, regarded themselves as facing the east, instead of the north, as we do. Then, of course, the west was behind them, the south on the right hand, and on the left the north. This might seem a more obvious position than ours, as it is natural to turn the face to the rising sun ; and we might be at a loss for a good reason for our maps supposing us to face the north, did we not recollect that the north is, in regard to the course of the sun, a fixed point, whereas the application of the terms ‘east’ and ‘west’ varies with the longitude ; so that a country which one people will describe as lying east of them, will by another be described as lying to the west,—as, for instance, India, which is east to us, but west to the Americans. But to the ancients these considerations had no weight, as they were unacquainted with the real extent of the world, and scarcely knew that it was spherical. Among the Hebrews, the west, although usually designated as behind, is sometimes called ‘the sea,’ because the Mediterranean lay in that direction.

The expressions applied to the north and to the south are especially worthy of consideration. ‘On the left hand, *where He doth work.*’ Whence this special designation of the Lord’s working to the north? Does He not equally work in all parts? The phrase, however, does not so much signify his working, as the manifestations of his working, which in the north are here supposed to be more conspicuous than in any other quarter. It is thought by many that Job here, and the sacred writers generally, in naming the north with peculiar

emphasis, have in view the Aurora Borealis, by which the north is so often lighted up in the night season, and which, from the contrast afforded by the darkness shrouding the other parts of the heavens, might well suggest that the north was eminently the seat of the divine power and greatness. Under this view, it is asked by Barnes, in reference to Job's expression, 'May he not have felt that there was some special reason why he might hope to meet with God in that quarter, or to see Him manifest himself among the brilliant lights that play along the sky, as if to precede or accompany Him? And when he had looked to the splendour of the rising sun, and the glory of his setting, in vain, was it not natural to turn his eye to the *next* remarkable manifestations, as he supposed, of God, in the glories of the northern lights, and to expect to find Him there?' It is not improbable that the northern lights, shining and playing in that quarter of the heavens, as they often do, with peculiar magnificence, may have led to the belief, which generally prevailed in ancient times, that the peculiar abode of the gods was in the north. Unable as they were, and as indeed we still are, satisfactorily to explain this peculiar and magnificent light in the north, it accorded with the poetical and mythological fancy of the ancients to suppose that these brilliant lights were destined to play around and adorn the habitations of the gods; and hence we recognise among most ancient eastern nations the notion of a high mountain, corresponding to the Olympus of the Greeks, far away in the remote regions of the north, which was the seat or the peculiar residence of God, or of the gods. To this there may possibly be some sort of allusion here, as to a prevalent notion of the time; and, in the later Scriptures, there is a manifest appropriation of this view to the Babylonian king, who is described as boasting—'I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, upon the [mountain] sides of the north;'¹ meaning that he aspired to equality with the gods—indeed, to be their master—to be supreme in their high assembly in the north. This arrogant language is very appropriately put into the mouth of this vain-

¹ Isa. xiv. 13.

glorious prince, and we must be careful to distinguish the real sentiments of the sacred writers from those they assign to the various personages and characters whom they bring before us. Indeed, it would be a very great error and serious mistake to regard the Holy Spirit as endorsing all the utterances even of Job, which, along with those of his friends, are sometimes quoted as conveying the mind of the Spirit, notwithstanding the care which has been taken to guard us from any such impression.

The sacred writers, however, who designed to teach, not philosophy, but religion, usually express themselves in conformity with the notions which prevailed in the ages in which they wrote. Hence those references to the north, of which we have already spoken, as to a most distinguished point in the heavens. It is often mentioned as the seat of the whirlwind, the storm, and especially as the residence of the cherubim. Thus in Ezekiel's vision of the cherubim, the whole magnificent scene is described as coming from the north: 'I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north.'¹ And so in Zechariah's vision, the horses that came out of the mountains are represented as going, or returning, to the north as their place of rest, after having gone through the earth.² These passages, with others of the like purport, show that the northern regions, and especially the mountains in the north, were regarded as the seat of striking and peculiar manifestations of the divine glory.

But as the north is the quarter of manifestation, so the south is the quarter of concealment. In the north God *works*, in the south He *hides* himself. To apprehend this in the fulness of its meaning, it is necessary to bear in mind that the south was to the ancients an unknown region. The deserts of Arabia indeed stretched away in that direction, and they were partially known, and there was some knowledge that the sea was beyond. But the regions farther to the south, if any land were there, were deemed to be entirely uninhabitable, as well as impassable, on account of the heat. To these hidden and

¹ Ezek. i. 4.

² Zech. vi. 1-8.

unknown quarters, Job says that he now turned, after he had in vain explored every other quarter of the heavens in search of some manifestations of God. Yet here also his search was vain. God hid or concealed himself in the remote and inaccessible south, so that he could not approach Him.

Sixth Week—Sixth Day.

BURGLARY.—JOB XXIV. 16.

BURGLARY seems to have been one of the most ancient of the arts, but not one in which much improvement has been made. The Book of Job furnishes the earliest description in existence of a house-robbery. In this we have no account of bolts and locks being forced or picked by crowbars and jemmys, or of door-panels being cut out, but of the burglars *digging through the walls of the house*. 'In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time.' This implies that the houses in Job's time and country were of such light structure or penetrable materials, as we still find in some countries, and which render the making of an opening in the wall the most easy mode of access to persons with evil intentions. The houses were probably of clay or mud, simply dried by the sun in the process of construction, and, therefore, easily dug through, although affording to the inmates adequate security from the weather. This was the type of a common eastern dwelling in the mind of a Roman. Hence the elder Pliny speculates that the Oriental took his first idea of an abode for himself and his family from the swallow, and, in imitation of his feathered instructor, made his first attempts with mud. Whatever we think of this, it is certain that the dwellings of the mass of the population, that is, of the poorer people, throughout Asia are still, as they have always been, of clay or mud. The dwellings which come within this class are of three principal sorts. The first, and frailest, is a framework of wicker hurdles thickly daubed over with mud. In a second and more

enduring structure, the walls are composed of successive layers of mud, each layer being left to dry before another is laid on. A still superior house frame is made with sun-dried bricks; that is, with cakes of trodden clay or mud, shaped in a mould and dried in the sun. Broken straw is usually mixed with these bricks in order to strengthen them; but the poorer people have little straw, if any, in their bricks or earthen mud-cakes, which they employ for this purpose. It would be too expensive, straw being the provender of cattle.

There can be little doubt as to the fitness of this interpretation, for in the fourth chapter Eliphaz expressly alludes to 'houses of clay.'



Cottages of this construction are not peculiar to the East, though perhaps derived from thence. In Devon and Cornwall many very comfortable cottages are built of mud, after the very process which we have seen in use in the East. These are called 'cob-walls;' and many years ago there appeared in the *Quarterly Review* an ingenious paper tracing them to the Phœnicians. Inferior examples of the same kind of wall may be seen in the mud huts of the Irish cottier; and so near to London as Woking Common, there are many examples of huts built with mud by 'squatters,' and roofed with turf cut from the Common.

Not only the same kind of dwellings, but the same mode of breaking into them for plunder, still exists in the East,

especially in India. The following passage from a work now but little known,¹ will interest the reader. The cottages described are not exactly of the construction indicated ; but the mud-built dwellings in India are penetrated in the same manner.

‘The huts of the Bengalees afford no security against the attacks of robbers. They are built with light bamboo frames, covered with a kind of reed, bruised flat, and plaited into mats. The floors are generally raised about a foot or two from the ground by layers of clay beaten down. The thieves, who are denominated Sindeals or hole-cutters, easily undermine these floors from without, or cut holes through the mats, sufficiently large to admit their entering, and by these means carry away



property, generally to a very small amount. . . . In the earthen floor it is not uncommon for the Bengalee to bury in a clay vessel the little money or jewels he may possess ; and sometimes the servants of the house give information of this to the dacoits. There are many instances of the dacoits having tortured the poor natives till they gave information of the place where the money was concealed. In one village in particular, which I entered immediately after a dacoity² had been com-

¹ *Observations on the Present Political State of India.* By ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER. 2 vols. London, 1815.

² *Dacoity.* A species of robbery practised by large armed gangs during the nights.

mitted, I recollect being shown two stakes, with a shallow pit dug between them, over which they had suspended the master of the house, and had actually roasted him over a slow fire until he pointed out the place where his little treasure was hid. He persisted so long in concealing it, that very little life remained. He was only released on showing them a small hole in the wall, neatly plastered over with clay; from this they took all that he possessed, and he died the next day.'

Mr. Tytler adds, that 'so frequent in former times were the visits of these miscreants, that very few of the lower classes thought it worth their while to amass a little money; and even at the present day, all their little gains are immediately spent in *poojahs* (the worship of their idols), and other ostentatious ceremonies. This disposition has grown upon them; and it will be long before a sufficient confidence in our protection, and an encouragement to industry, will induce them to become independent, or to live otherwise than from day to day.'

We thus see how the insecurity of their little property may prevent a people from bettering their condition, by the careful conservation and use of their earnings. If they cannot with reasonable certainty calculate on the future enjoyment of their means, they will recklessly expend them as they accrue, upon the objects which please them most. This will occur from whatever cause such insecurity arises; but it is well to note that in this case it arises in a great measure from their dwellings being such as robbers can 'dig through in the night.'

Sixth Week—Seventh Day.

PROSPERITY REMEMBERED.—JOB XXIX.

It seems that, when Job had brought his discourse to the point which forms the close of the twenty-eighth chapter, he again paused to see if any of the friends were disposed to speak. But as none answered, he proceeded; for, at the beginning of the

twenty-ninth chapter, we again meet with the unusual formula : 'Moreover, Job continued his parable.'

The interval may have been of some duration, during which he appears to have been musing deeply on his former prosperity, and on the contrast to it which his present condition offered. The influence of these thoughts is seen when he again speaks. His speech is full of lingering regrets over the pleasant memories of his past estate, of which he gives a most eloquent description, replete with natural touches of pathos and tenderness. It marks the character of the man, that, so far from being alienated from loving sympathies with his kind by the miseries he had suffered, and the injurious treatment to which he had been exposed, he looks back with peculiar pleasure upon the good which, in better days, his wealth and influence enabled him to accomplish.

We must look into some of the circumstances of the engaging picture, which, in the form of a lamentation for what he had lost, Job draws of his former condition.

He begins : 'Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me ; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness !' For 'candle' read 'lamp,' candles being even now little used in the East, and never for the purpose of burning through the night, which appears to be the source of the illustration. It is usual in the East to have a lamp burning all night in every occupied apartment. For this we never heard any reason, save that it was the custom, or that the light kept off evil spirits ; but certain it is, that, in most parts of Western Asia, a person would sooner dispense with something far more necessary than with a light in his chamber during the night season. To obviate danger from fire, and that the light may be more equally diffused, the lamp is usually placed high up in a recess of the wall, or on a kind of bracket, or is even suspended from the ceiling,—hence shining *upon the heads* of those who repose below upon the floors or divans. Lanterns are sometimes hung up so as to throw their light upon the bed of a person of rank ; and then, certainly, the lamp shines, in a very literal sense, 'over the

head' of the person lying there. The Orientals rarely do anything by artificial light—there is no reading or working. Hence they are satisfied with very little of it; and as they sit upon the floor, the lamp usually *shines upon their heads*, even when not at rest. It is further possible that, in the ensuing clause, which describes light given to one in motion—'When by his light I walked through darkness'—there is an allusion to the torches or cressets carried aloft in the night-marches of large caravans, such as we formerly had occasion to notice.¹

Again, Job craves: 'Oh that I were as in the days of my



youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.' The word 'youth' is ill put in the translation for a Hebrew word signifying ripeness or maturity; and certainly the happiness which the patriarch describes, and the renewal of which he solicits, is that of mature age, and not of youth. But what does he mean by the secret of God being upon (or in) his tabernacle? The word rendered 'secret,' means a couch or cushion upon which one reclines, and also a divan or circle of friends sitting together in consultation. The idea intended to be ex-

¹ First Series, Sixteenth Week—Fourth Day.

pressed is, therefore, probably that God came, as it were, to his abode as a friend, and admitted him to the secrecy of his friendship, and to an acquaintance with his plans.¹ This idea is continually presented to us by the sacred writers. Thus the Psalmist expresses the Lord's friendship towards his people by the phrase, 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them his covenant.'² So likewise in the patriarchal history, we find the Lord's remarkable question, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?'³ The translations vary, but they generally convey this idea.

We soon come to a touching allusion to the days when, as he says, 'My children were about me.' He must be made of hard stuff who hears not in these words the echo of a sigh. The sentiment is exquisitely tender. He could not bear to dwell upon it: nor need we do so; it is a most intelligible stroke of natural emotion.

He says that, in those happy days, he 'washed his steps with butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil.' The first clause, doubtless, alludes to the abundance with which his flocks afforded butter; but whether it bears reference to any actual custom of anointing the feet with butter is not clear. The feet of Oriental pastors being much exposed to the parching air, it is an agreeable refreshment to mollify them with oil or ointment, after they have been washed. That butter is sometimes employed for this purpose, we know; and this was probably among the uses of it known in the time of Job. We should little hesitate about this, but for the abundance of oil mentioned in the next clause, for, when oil is abundant, it is usually preferred for anointing both the head and the feet. But how is it that oil is said to be poured out in streams from the

¹ 'When God watched over my house.'—LXX. 'When God prospered my house.'—*Rogers, Coverdale, and Bishops' Bible*. 'When God's providence was on my tabernacle.'—*Geneva Translation*. 'When God remained cordially in my tent.'—*Umbreit*. 'When God took counsel with me in my tent.'—*Herder*. 'When God was the friend of my tent.'—*Noyes*. 'When God abode in my tent as a friend.'—*Barnes*. 'When God guarded my tabernacle.'—*Wemyss*.

² Ps. xxv. 14. ³ Gen. xviii. 17.—Compare John xv. 15; Jas. ii. 23.

rock? Some think that the word rendered 'rock' should here be taken for an oil-press. But it seems to us more probable that he has rather in view the kind of rocky soil in which the olive delights. Then, to describe the rock as pouring forth streams of oil, becomes a bold and forcible metaphor, quite in character with the poetry of the book; whereas, to represent an oil-press as doing this, were comparatively tame and prosaic indeed.

Job then goes on to describe the honour in which he had been held in the very town which now witnessed his humiliation, where, it would appear from this account, he performed the duties, and received the consideration rendered to the principal magistrate or chief elder, or rather, perhaps, the emir or sheikh; for it is clear that he was not merely one of the principal inhabitants, but the chief of them. The picture thus presented is very interesting, and quite in accordance with the existing usages of such a state of society as that which the book describes. In the discharge of his public functions, he represents himself as proceeding to the town-gate, the usual place of judicature and public business, and at or near it, 'preparing' (or taking) his seat in the street. Seats thus set in the open air, are ordinarily prepared by a servant laying a mat or carpet upon the ground, or upon a stone bench, in some shady spot under a tree or a wall. Whether Job sat in this fashion cannot be known; but it is so simple, and so peculiarly Oriental, as to render it probable. Accordingly, some recent translators render the clause by 'I prepared my carpet in the street.' But this is interpretation, not translation.

He says further, that, when he appeared, the young men hid themselves, the aged rose and stood up, and the chiefs restrained from talking, and 'laid their hand upon their mouths.' The same marks of respect would be at this time shown to a person holding the same high place and character, and the mention of them would strongly impress an Oriental with an idea of the eminent consideration in which Job was held. Mere boys never appear in society, or at meetings. Young men may be present, but must not speak: when grown to manhood, they

may take part in conversation ; but when the sheikh begins to speak, they cease, and attentively listen. That the aged should not only rise, but remain standing, as we apprehend it, till Job was seated, is a very strong evidence of respect to his position and character ; for, being his seniors, and themselves objects of respect to others, this would not, in any ordinary circumstances, be expected from them or rendered by them. Scarcely more emphatic is the bated breath of the chiefs, whose attitude, with hand upon their lips, is graphically indicative of the hushed attention and respect with which the great man was received.



Seventh Week—First Day.

GOD'S SECRETS.—JOB XXVIII.

LET us to-day turn back to the twenty-eighth chapter, in which Job launches out into an admirable discourse on man's search after that wisdom which consists in the knowledge of the ways of the Lord.

It ought not to escape notice, that he virtually divides this wisdom into two classes, and defines carefully the degrees in which we may have access to them.

First, there is the wisdom in natural things, in which he allows that man may make great advances; and he illustrates this by referring to the skill with which man discovers the metals hid in the earth, and the power and ingenuity he evinces in bringing them forth from their secret caves, and adapting them to use. In fact there is nothing in which the power of the human intellect is more *palpably* manifested, than in its researches into the laws and the mysteries of the material creation. Of this we had but a year or two ago a more striking example than could be known in the time of Job, or than has, perhaps, been offered in any former age, in the discovery of a planet, not by observation, but by mathematical calculations based upon the knowledge man has been suffered to acquire of those laws which God has established for the government of his universe. Whenever our thoughts are turned to this great event in the history of science, we are astonished, much less at the discovery itself, than at the evidence it offers of the depths to which man has been allowed to penetrate—or rather, of the heights to which he has been permitted to soar—in his search into this part of the divine wisdom.

But although man has, for the glory of God, been allowed to make large advances in the knowledge of what must in early

ages have appeared the secret and mysterious things of nature ; although he can trace the hidden ‘vein of silver,’ and mark out the place of the unseen stars, ‘Where shall he find the place of wisdom?’—of that higher wisdom which consists in the knowledge of the secrets of God’s throne—the goings forth of his providence and his grace !

To this latter branch of the subject, Job turns at the 12th verse, and pursues it to the end of the chapter. In the first or natural branch, he concedes to man some knowledge, but in the latter he depones to his utter ignorance. There may be ‘doctors of knowledge,’¹ but of this knowledge no man is doctor. God may be pleased sometimes to discover parts of it to some particular man ; but there is none who can claim to be master of it. It is lodged in the breast of God, and locked up among his hidden counsels. Man knows nothing of it till the Lord reveals it ; and He reveals it to very few, though many unwisely, vainly, or presumptuously seek after it, and would, if it were possible, seize by storm the secrets of the inner sanctuary.

There is nothing in which the vanity of man more appears, than his dull neglect of the things that are revealed, in the eager pursuit of those which are locked up and hidden from him. There are many instances of this in Scripture, and they are always met by stern rebuke, especially from our Saviour. ‘What is that to thee ? follow thou me,’ was the answer given to one of them, and which well applies to all of them.

Usually such seekers after God’s hidden things are most apt to disregard the things that are revealed, treating them as ‘milk for babes,’ and regarding themselves as those who seek ‘strong meat.’ We follow our first parents in our hunger for the forbidden fruit of ‘the tree of knowledge,’—not so much because it is luscious, as because it is forbidden. Our Lord rebuked the lawyers of his day for taking away the key of knowledge. But here is a knowledge, the key of which God himself has taken away ; and yet, although the key be gone,

¹ In a recent report of a ‘Peace Congress’ in the *Times* newspaper, one of the foreign delegates is described as ‘Doctor of Knowledge.’

and we know who holds it in possession, rash men continually torture their ingenuity to pick the lock, or, failing in that, go very far astray in wild fancies as to the secrets which lie within. In the keen thirst for hidden knowledge, and in their fretful or proud impatience of the bar which God has set against them, they forget that it is no ignorance not to know the things which God has hidden ; but it is a great proof of ignorance to harass the mind and wear out the soul in the search after them. It is ignorance not to know that which we may know, or ought to know, or are required to know ; but not to know that which lies far beyond our sphere, and which we have no means of knowing, is not ignorance. No one calls a classical scholar ignorant because he knows nothing of engineering, although that is useful and practical knowledge ; still less is any one to be deemed ignorant for not knowing that which is purposely hidden from him, which he cannot know, and which would not be of practical value to him.¹

Some, however, will ask, Why should God wrap up anything from us, and hide it in darkness? Is it not for the glory of his great name that the deep things of his wisdom should be known? Is it not for man's honour to know much ; and the more he knows, is he not the better qualified to serve and honour God?

But this reasoning, if carried fully out, would imply that we had a right to the highest degree of possible knowledge—stopping not short of the knowledge possessed by God himself. If He impart to us less than He himself knows—which is inevitable, seeing that He alone is all-knowing,—the line of withheld knowledge must be drawn somewhere ; and who shall complain that it is drawn where it is? Knowledge must be of various degrees, suited to the various states of God's creatures. We know there are beings higher than ourselves in our present state—angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. They have necessarily a higher measure of knowledge than has been given to us, though not higher than we may hereafter

¹ Our language wants a word for that species of not knowing which is not ignorance. Some old writers propose *Nescience*.

attain to. It is one of the privileges of their condition, and one of the sources of their perfected happiness. That which *we* so crave to know, is doubtless part of *their* familiar knowledge; but if none of the secrets of the divine wisdom were hidden from *us*, what would be the privileges of *their* condition? We should be in this respect equal to them; and, being so, the future would lose some of its brightness, while we have no reason to suppose that the present would lose any of its grief.

Besides, if we are already so much puffed up by the little we do know, what would become of us, if these our mortal tabernacles were made the receptacles of angelic knowledge? God knows that we could not stand it. It is, therefore, in his fatherly care to keep us humble—to prevent us from being exalted above measure, that He veils many most high things from our knowledge. If Paul himself was not free from this peril—if, with added knowledge, an added ‘thorn in the flesh’ was needful to avert the danger and to keep down his mind—how would it fare with us? Let us understand that the knowledge of even the best and holiest things does not of itself make us better or more holy; while the knowledge of some things is very apt to make us more and more unholy. It is certain that the Lord will keep nothing from us—no knowledge, no wisdom—which has any natural tendency to make us more holy, or more humble, or which will render us more fit for communion with Him; but when He sees that we should only damage ourselves by the possession of certain kinds and measures of knowledge, even though that knowledge be in itself good, He will be careful to hide it from us. A razor is in itself a good thing, especially if it be a good one; yet we had a little daughter who slashed her visage sadly with one she had seen her father use and put away. The instrument was the same in her hand as in her father’s; but while it was safe in his hands, in hers it was full of danger; and therefore, though good in itself, it was, from regard to her safety, henceforth hidden from her—placed beyond her reach. So does God deal with us, as we with our children. He bestows most freely all that is good

for us, and suited to our condition ; but He keeps back all that would wound us, all that is unsuited to our present state.

Although the Lord is ever ready to satisfy our real wants, and to impart to us all the knowledge we really need, He will not satisfy the idle curiosity and vain aspirings of our intellect. Our faith is more precious in his eyes than our knowledge. By being left unacquainted with the secrets of the divine wisdom in some things, we are in the better position for glorifying his wisdom in all things. If we cannot see the reason of his doings, we are yet enabled, from what we do know, to conclude that the Lord is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works ; and in this confidence can rest content, happy, waiting in the posture that best becomes a believer, and which honours Him more than any amount of knowledge of his high secrets which He could bestow upon us.

We know the whole counsel of God concerning faith and repentance ; concerning eternal life, and the way into it ; concerning the mystery of Christ crucified. All this—all that concerns our salvation, has been made open and plain to us. Is not this enough? What more do we want? Let us be content. Let us be patient: Let us wait.

Seventh Week—Second Day.

CONTUMELY.—JOB XXX.

WE might naturally suppose that by this time we are perfectly acquainted with Job's lamentable condition. But we are undeceived when we come to read the contrast which he draws in the thirtieth chapter, between his existing state and the circumstances of happiness and honour set forth in the previous chapter ; for we have here several new particulars which disclose to us that his social condition was even more deplorable than we had previously imagined. Essentially the treatment of a fallen man by his acquaintance, and by the unthinking multitude, has been the same in all ages and in all countries ;

varied only, and not varied much, by local habits and usages. But while knowing this, we are scarcely prepared for the malignancy of active persecution and insult to which, by this account, he was subjected in the very place where he had, not long since, been held in so high honour. The neglect of those who were once attentive, the coldness of those who once were warm, is what those who have been brought low have most to complain of; but we are unable to account for the positive maltreatment to which Job was exposed, unless by concluding that—as, indeed, we have reason to suppose was the case—the doctrine of the friends, that Job could not have been thus signally afflicted but for the punishment of great though hidden crimes, was the common notion of the time, and was generally entertained by the people among whom Job dwelt. In fact, in the rapid and extraordinary succession of tremendous calamities which had befallen this man, there is that which would in almost any age—and would, perhaps, even in ours—suggest to common minds, that he was thus pursued and branded by the divine anger, for some atrocious crimes which human justice could not reach. The general popular sentiment in this matter is conveyed in the account which the familiar old ballad gives of the judgments which befell the cruel uncle for the hidden murder of the ‘Babes in the Wood.’

‘ And now the heavy wrathe of God
 Upon their uncle fell ;
 Yea, fearfull fiends did haunt his house,
 His conscience felt an hell :
 His barnes were fir’d, his goods consum’d,
 His landes were barren made,
 His cattle dyed within the field,
 And nothing with him stayd.
 And in the voyage of Portugal,
 Two of his sonnes did dye ;
 And to conclude, himself was brought
 Unto much miserye.’

When this idea had once got afloat, a thousand circumstances would, as is usual in such cases, be found to confirm it, and his best conduct, and his most innocent and noble acts, would be

tortured into new aspects, and would be seen to indicate deep design, hypocrisy, and a troubled conscience. Men are often as fatally misjudged by after-lights as by fore-lights.

If Job's nearest friends so grievously misjudged him as they did, it is no marvel that the inconsiderate multitude should do the same; or that, so misjudging, they should evince, in overt acts of insult and contumely, the same convictions, which the more grave and guarded friends set forth in biting speeches and cruel imputations.

He keenly feels, he sharply complains, that he who was once the honoured chief among men, was now an object of insult to even the most abject and worthless, whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock. But now he says: 'I am their song; yea, I am their by-word. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.' They made him and his sufferings the subject of their low jests, and treated him with contempt; they even introduced his name and sufferings into their scurrilous songs, in mockery of the reduced condition of one formerly so much above them. Nothing to us here in the West can come near to, or give an idea of, the shocking and indecent scurrilities which the Orientals put into their satirical, or rather abusive songs; for much as personal and political liberty is restrained in the East, the liberty of the tongue has no check, and the street or bazaar mob may utter with impunity the most outrageously insulting and disgraceful language, against even the actual rulers of the land. It was the same formerly; for complaints of this occur repeatedly in the Bible. So the Psalmist says: 'I was the song of the drunkards;'¹ and Jeremiah complains: 'I was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day.'²

Of having become 'a by-word among the people,' Job had already complained.³ To be a jest and laughing-stock to all around him, touched him sorely. Then, perhaps, were heard such words as these: 'As foul as Job;' 'As bad as Job;' 'As deceitful as Job.' He was at first a by-word in the way of

¹ Psalm lxxix. 12.

² Lam. iii. 14.

³ Job xvii. 6.

reflection and insult ; but the Lord in his own good time made his name a by-word or proverb of veneration and esteem, so that to this day, 'As patient as Job,' 'As poor as Job,' 'As pious as Job,' are similitudes which commemorate his high virtues and his great afflictions.

But while they thus insulted him, they took care to keep at a safe distance from the person of one tainted with leprosy. And to feel that he was personally abominable and loathsome to even the dirty rabble, was an aggravation to his many humiliations. But if they kept from coming near him, how could they 'spit *in* his face?' The original may just as well mean that they spat '*before his face,*' a well-known phrase to express a thing being done in the presence of any one. To spit in the presence of another is, in the East, nearly as much an insult as to spit upon him. No insult can, indeed, be greater. That the Orientals are great smokers at the present day, may suggest to most persons that they must necessarily spit. But the long pipes which they use, whereby the smoke is brought cool to the mouth, together with the mildness of the tobacco, prevent any unusual secretion of saliva, and the need for its emission ; and they never in fact spit, unless for the purpose of insult, and the comparative rarity of the act therefore renders it the more pungently injurious. In inflicting this insult, it is much more frequent to spit on the ground before a person than at him or upon him ; perhaps, because it is safest to keep beyond the arm's length of a person thus insulted, as few would hesitate at a quick and fatal retaliation, if, at the moment, in their power to inflict it. The Rev. Vere Munro, in his *Summer Ramble in Syria*, states, that when insulted by the people of Hebron on account of his Frank dress, he found that spitting was among their modes of insult, although none of them came near enough to reach him. 'This mode of maligning,' he adds, 'is still common in the East, as it was eighteen [thirty] centuries ago ; and I once witnessed it curiously applied. When travelling in the Faioum, one of the dromedaries did something which displeased the Bedouin who had the care of him, and instead of beating the offender he spat in his face.'

Job says, that people thus dealt with him 'because He [God] hath loosed my cord ;' an expression which has somewhat perplexed commentators. It appears to be a proverbial expression derived from nomade life, and referring to the overwhelming downfall which ensues when the cords of a tent are cut or broken. The image is used in the same sense by Jeremiah (x. 20) : ' My tabernacle [tent] is spoiled, and all my cords are broken.'

Scott, in his metrical version of the book, renders the passage we have had under notice with considerable force and spirit :

'A herd of varlets, vagrants, without name,
Flayed by the lash, the spurious brood of shame,
Now their lewd doggrel jests my name profane ;
They stare aloof as if my breath were bane ;
They hoot, they spit, for God hath cast me down :
Hence their contempt of my once dreaded frown.'

Seventh Week—Third Day.

ELIHU.—JOB XXXII.

WITH Job's speech the debate between him and his friends is virtually at an end. At the proper time Bildad had spoken a few inapplicable words ; but, when an opportunity was afforded, Zophar, who should have spoken, held his peace ; and when another occasion was presented, Eliphaz spoke not, perhaps not only because he had nothing to say, or despaired of making any impression upon Job, but because he would not commit the indecorum of seeming to speak instead of Zophar. So, when Job had finished, there was a general silence. The three friends looked upon each other, but declined to make any answer to the sufferer. This brings a new personage upon the scene. If our judgment of the locality of the land of Uz be correct, this person must have lived in the neighbourhood, and appears to have been present, as probably were many others, during the

whole debate. His youth had held him silent, though burning to take part in the discussion ; the etiquette of the East—such as we have lately described it—constraining him to silence until these venerable seniors had exhausted their arguments, and clearly had no more to say. He then, with all the ardour of youth, and all the eagerness of long-suppressed desire, leaps abruptly into the arena, and, with a becoming apology for the interference of one so young, undertakes to explain in what respects, as it appeared to him, both parties in the debate had erred, and to state where the truth of the question lay.

This speaker was 'Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram.' It is remarkable that he is the only one of the persons introduced in the poem whose genealogy is thus carefully given. From this and other circumstances, some have thought that Elihu was the author of the book ; but others have only been able to deduce the conclusion that he was a comparatively obscure and unknown person, so that these marks of identification became necessary. None, about the time in which the book was written, needed to be told who such eminent persons as Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were, but they might have been at a loss respecting Elihu, had not these particulars concerning his family been given.

We, in this remote age, can gather little more from the genealogy than that Elihu belonged to a branch of the family of Abraham. His brother Nahor had two sons, Uz and Buz. Job, it would seem, was descended from the former, and Elihu appears to have been descended from the latter ; and the circumstance of his belonging to the family of Buz, was doubtless thus pointedly mentioned by the sacred writer to draw respectful attention to him, notwithstanding his youth, on account of his relationship to Abraham. Indeed, this may be even more emphatically indicated than at first view appears. It is said he was 'of the kindred of Ram.' Who was this Ram ? None knows ; but what if it should be Abraham, or rather AB-RAM, by which, his older name, he probably continued to be mentioned in the land from which he went ? Many solid writers, including several Jewish commentators, are of this opinion ;

and it must be allowed that there is much probability in favour of it.

More than this we can hardly know respecting Elihu ; but conjectures have not been wanting. We have before us a goodly volume¹ by a writer of some note in his day, which is devoted to the argument that ‘a representative character of the Messiah is herein exhibited, who was God himself, the Son of the blessed God, of the kindred of Ram, or the holy line.’ He of course supposes Ram to have been AB-RAM. Again, this writer asks, ‘May it not deserve consideration, whether the human nature, as it was afterwards to be united to the divine, was not typified and represented in the person of Elihu?—as that person who was to assume our nature, speaks in that principally in the following chapters. Upon this supposition, and no other that I have met with, the great things that are said of Elihu—his success in ending this dispute, and the silence concerning him in the conclusion—may be accounted for. It is likewise observable that the definitive sentence of God and Elihu turns upon the same point, and the three friends are censured alike by both, after speaking to much the same purpose. . . . As Job had wished that he could approach the Deity, to speak all his mind, as a man talks with his neighbour, Elihu presents himself ; “I am such a one,” says he, expressly to gratify his desire, herein aptly setting forth the mediatorial office as fulfilled and exemplified in the incarnation of the Son of God. “I am formed out of the clay,” says he, “as thou art,” from whence one would guess that there appeared something more than man in this excellent personage, to make such a declaration necessary, to take off the awe of his presence. Job being hereby made easy, and gradually and graciously led to hear and love the divine converse, the divinity alone then continues the discourse, and, after enlarging upon the same topics, concludes the whole. Unless Elihu be intended to represent the humanity of our Lord, as it was to be united to the

¹ *Elihu : or an Inquiry into the Principal Scope and Design of the Book of Job.* By WALTER HODGES, D.D., Provost of Oriel College, Oxford. 1750.

Second Person in the Essence, and so one with Him who speaks out of the whirlwind, he will appear to be an insignificant character, as being passed over without notice, or any mention of him in the conclusion of the book. But supposing the two natures in Christ to be here represented, everything is consistent.'

In support of this opinion, Dr. Hodges leans much upon the etymology and significance of the name Elihu. He is also disposed to insist upon the words in which Job expresses his repentance: 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.' He contends that something more than a metaphorical view is meant in this passage, and a clearer sight of the divine presence than could be taken by the eye of the mind or by the eye of faith. It can, on this principle, hardly refer to the manifestation from the whirlwind, for it is not said that aught was *seen*, but only that a voice was *heard* therefrom.

This exposition was not new when thus produced. Authorities ancient and modern might be cited in favour of it, or as more or less leaning towards it.

If this view could be sustained, there do not appear any essential objections to it, nor is it contrary to Scripture analogies. But although the learned author has guarded his interpretation by all the means in his power, he has still left it open to serious exceptions. For example, it is *not only* said that Elihu was 'of the family of Ram,' supposed to be Abraham, but that he was '*the son of Barachel the Buzite,*' which seems to overturn the whole, unless it is meant—and it is not—that a mere man of known parentage was, for the occasion, made the representative of the Saviour.

Other writers have grossly misunderstood this person in quite the opposite direction, declaiming about his pertness, affected modesty, self-sufficiency, and similar bad qualities. But we apprehend that he assumes the office of umpire in no unbecoming spirit, and decides the question between the disputants justly and well: the best proof of which is found in the fact, that his tone of argument and his virtual decision are in all

essential respects the same which the Voice from the whirlwind afterwards declares. He also is exempted from the censures passed upon the arguments of the three friends, nor is Job required to present an expiatory offering on *his* account. These are manifest though tacit tokens that the reasonings and decision of the son of Barachel were approved by God.

Elihu is unquestionably the most remarkable character introduced in the Book of Job. His wisdom is far more profound than that of either Job himself or his friends. In language of great beauty and loftiness of imagery, he sets forth his views on the subject under discussion. He shows with great clearness wherein both sides had erred; and he explains satisfactorily the nature of God's dealings with man. Elihu appears to lay claim to divine inspiration; he represents his explanations and judgments as authoritative; and there is nothing in the discourse to invalidate the claim. But it does seem to me strange how any critic could believe that Elihu was the Son of God. The preface to his speech, when honestly and fairly interpreted, sets aside such an idea. His father, his country, and his kindred are distinctly mentioned. Then his own statements regarding his youth, and his fear to speak in the presence of his seniors, seem to me to render the idea of his divinity impossible. And what is more convincing than all, he uses the following expressions: 'My *Maker* would soon take me away;' 'The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty *hath given me life*;' 'I also am formed out of the clay.' Could these be the words of the Son of God?

Seventy Week—Fourth Day.

ELIHU'S ARGUMENT.—JOB XXXII.—XXXVII.

A VERY large number of persons who have taken up the notion that all which Job says is right, and that all, or nearly all, which his three friends say is wrong, feel surprised that Elihu is dissatisfied, not only with the arguments of the latter, but with those of Job himself. They sympathize in his anger at the friends, and are prepared to take part with him as the champion on the

side of Job against them. But when it appears that Job has some share of his displeasure, they turn against Elihu, and regard him as a forward young man, thrusting himself needlessly into the controversy, arrogantly undertaking to decide it; and, as some urge, being himself as much in the wrong as any of the disputants.

If this were correct—if the sacred writer did not mean to set Elihu forth as a fair, an enlightened, and true umpire of the dispute,—it is difficult to see why he should have been introduced at all. Otherwise his appearance would be anomalous, and a hindrance to the progress of the poem; but if he be right, his appearance is perfectly harmonious with the design, falls in at the proper place, and importantly advances the conclusion.

It remains, therefore, to show that Elihu is right in his condemnation of Job, as well as of the three friends, and is also right in the solution which he himself produces. For this purpose it is necessary to recapitulate the argument.

The proposition to be solved is, How the sufferings of the righteous may be reconciled with the perfect justice of God.

The solution of this problem is not to be found in the speeches of Job. Indeed, he is as clearly as possible described by the sacred writer himself as having been in grievous error. It is only after he had humbled himself that he found favour with God. We have already pointed out the implication from chaps. i. 22, ii. 10, compared with iii. 1, that Job is represented as charging God foolishly, and sinning with his lips; and if we go on to chap. xxxii. 1, 2, we shall see that this consisted in the fact that 'he was righteous in his own eyes, and justified himself rather than God.' No one who reads his words with attention can fail to see that, in the midst of much sound matter and correct views, the temper thus indicated pervades his utterances. There is also great contradiction in his views at different times, in which we trace the varying feelings and impressions natural to a man under extreme affliction, and who was not in possession of any fixed principle on which he could himself with confidence rely for the solution of the difficulty.

He is embarrassed by it to the last, and the only point of which he feels assured is, that his friends are in the wrong. Job erred chiefly in not acknowledging the sin inherent in him, notwithstanding his integrity and sincere piety; and this prevented him from apprehending the object of the calamities inflicted on him, led him to regard God's punishments as arbitrary, and made him despair of better days. The greatness of his sufferings was in some measure the cause of his misconception, by exciting his feelings and preventing him from calmly considering his case. He had also received much provocation from his friends; and from these concurrent excitements he is tempted into harsh assertions, the subsequent endeavour to soften which repeatedly leads him into apparent, and indeed real contradictions; such as must needs occur in the thoughts, if not in the utterances, of all who have been greatly tempted. But he is loud in acknowledging the wisdom of God, and at times allows himself to indulge in cheering hopes for the future. All this much excuses, but cannot justify him; and it is, therefore, greatly to his praise that, when the true state of the case is set before him by Elihu, he remains silent, and ultimately acknowledges his fundamental error of justifying himself rather than God.

Still less shall we find the true solution in the words of the three friends, good and well-meaning, though somewhat obstinate men, as they were. Their demeanour is distinctly reprobated by the Lord himself, and is represented as involving such positive sin as to require a propitiatory sacrifice, which Job offered on their behalf. Their arguments were even more unsound than those of Job, while their backwardness in the acknowledgment of error—an acknowledgment which he so readily made—evinced such sinful obduracy as demanded this expiation. But we have now to do only with their arguments. The notions which the friends entertained of the nature of sin were even more crude than those of Job. They saw only its external aspects; and inferring its existence from the presence of calamity, they were hence led to conclude that Job was guilty of crimes heinous in proportion to his afflictions. The

moral use of suffering was unknown to them ; and this proved that they were themselves not yet purged and free from guilt. If they had been duly sensible of the fallen nature of man, if they had understood themselves, they would have been led, on seeing the misery of Job, not to fall thus furiously upon him, but rather to smite upon their own breasts, and cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' They are right in the general perception of the connection there is between misery and sin ; but they fail and stumble in the application of this central truth. In fact, the essential errors of both parties resolve themselves into the same source—the want of a sound insight into the nature of sin. Job conceives himself righteous, and not deserving such afflictions as had fallen upon him, because he had not committed any *heinous* crimes ; and his friends can only account for his great misery by assuming that he was greatly criminal.

Elihu was, therefore, justified in his censure of both parties.

The leading principle of Elihu's own statement is—that calamity, in the shape of trial, is inflicted on the best of men ; but that God allows a favourable turn to take place as soon as its object has been realized. This view we have so often enforced in our progress through the book, that we shall not now further develop it. 'It affords,' as Hengstenberg¹ remarks, 'the key to the events of Job's life.' Though a pious and righteous man, he is tried by severe afflictions. He knows not for what purpose he is smitten, and his calamity continues. But when he learns that purpose from the addresses of Elihu and of God, and humbles himself, he is relieved from the burden which oppresses him, and ample prosperity compensates for the afflictions he has sustained. Add to this, that the remaining portion of Elihu's speech, in which he points to God's infinite majesty as including his justice, is substantially

¹ We have, with some modification, followed here the view which Hengstenberg has given of the argument ; and we have done so with the more satisfaction, from having been obliged, in the preceding pages, to dissent from some of his conclusions, and to produce views different from those which this great writer has taken.

contained in the addresses of God ; that Elihu foretells God's appearance ; that he is not rebuked by God, as are the friends of Job ; and, in fine, that Job by his very silence acknowledges the problem to have been solved by Elihu ; and his silence is the more significant because Elihu had urged him to defend himself (xxxiii. 32), and because Job had repeatedly declared, that he would hold his peace if it were shown him 'wherein he had erred' (vi. 24).

The following excellent analysis of Elihu's address has been given by a recent acute writer : 'He shows that they had accused Job upon false or insufficient grounds, and failed to convict him, or to vindicate God's justice. Job again had assumed his entire innocence, and had arraigned that justice. These errors he traces to their both overlooking one main object of all suffering. God speaks to man by chastisement—warns him, teaches him self-knowledge and humility, and prepares him by the mediation of a spiritual interpreter (the angel Jehovah of Genesis) to implore and obtain pardon, renewal of life, perfect access, and restoration. This statement does not involve any charge of special guilt, such as the friends had alleged and Job had repudiated. Since the warning and suffering are preventive as well as remedial, the visitation anticipates the commission of sin ; it saves man from pride, and other temptations of wealth and power, and it effects the real object of all divine interpositions, the entire submission to God's will. Again, Elihu argues that any charge of injustice, direct or implicit, against God, involves a contradiction in terms. God is the only source of justice ; the very idea of justice is derived from his governance of the universe, the principle of which is love. In his absolute knowledge God sees all secrets, in his absolute power He controls all events, and that for the one end of bringing righteousness to light. Man has, of course, no claim upon God ; what he receives is purely a matter of grace. The occasional appearance of unanswered prayer, when evil seems to get the upper hand, is owing merely to the fact that man prays in a proud and insolent spirit. Elihu proceeds to show that the almightiness of God is not, as Job seems to assert, associated with any contempt or neglect of his creatures. Job, by ignoring this truth, had been led into grave error and terrible danger ; but God is still drawing him, and if he yields and follows, he will yet be delivered.'¹

¹ Rev. F. C. Cook, in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. JOB.

Seventh Week—Fifth Day.

THE LORD SPEAKS.—JOB XXXVIII.

THERE are interesting circumstances towards the close of Elihu's address, which the reader must not overlook.

Every one has admired the description of a thunder-storm which he gives at the commencement of the thirty-seventh chapter. Many descriptions of such storms have been given, but this excels them all, and is itself surpassed only by that of another sacred writer in the eighteenth Psalm. But it does not perhaps occur to many readers that it is a storm then actually raging that Elihu describes, although the expressions of personal emotion which are interspersed might suffice to indicate the fact that Elihu, while he speaks, is witnessing the progress of the awful storm, ending in 'the whirlwind,' out of which the voice of the Lord is heard. After this description, Elihu begins to touch on other manifestations of God's presence and power in the phenomena of the natural world, the storm still continuing, and increasing in a degree so peculiar and awful, that he begins to see in it the signs of the Lord's immediate approach; and although he still speaks, he is agitated, and his language becomes abrupt and confused, such as one would use whose mind is filled and overawed by the approach of God. It is solemn and full of reverence, but not connected, and is much less calm than his ordinary discourse, until at last, overwhelmed by the awful symbols of the divine presence, he subsides abruptly into silence; and then, after a solemn pause, the voice of the Lord himself is heard from the whirlwind.

The speech itself is no less sublime than the circumstances by which it is introduced. 'It is,' says Dr. Young, who has given a vigorous paraphrase of this portion of the book, 'by much the finest part of this, the noblest and most ancient poem in the world.' Bishop Patrick declares that its grandeur is as much above all other poetry, as thunder is louder than a

whisper. 'I imagine,' says Scott, 'it will be easily granted, that, for majesty of sentiment and strength of expression, this speech has nothing equal to it in the most admired productions of Greece and Rome.' A recent writer¹ well remarks that, 'To put suitable language in the mouth of the Deity, has generally tasked to straining or crushed to feebleness the genius of poets. Homer, indeed, at times nobly ventriloquizes from the top of Olympus; but it is ventriloquism: Homer's thunder, not Jove's. Milton, while impersonating God, falls flat; he peeps and mutters from the dust; he shrinks from seeking to fill up the compass of the Eternal's voice. Adequately to represent God speaking, required not only the highest inspiration, but that the poet had heard, or thought that he heard, his very voice, shaping articulate sounds from midnight torrents, from the voices of the wind, from the chambers of thunder, from the rush of the whirlwind, from the hush of night, and from the breeze of day. And, doubtless, the author of the Book of Job had this experience. . . . Some poems have voices to the note of the flute, and others to the swell of the organ; but this highest reach of poetry rose to the music of the mightiest and oldest elements of nature, combining to form the various parts in the one voice of God. And how this whirlwind of poetry, once aroused, storms along—how it ruffles the foundations of the earth—how it churns up the ocean into spray—how it unveils the old treasures of the hail and the snow—how it soars up to the stars—how the lightnings say to it, "Here we are"—how, stooping from this pitch, it sweeps over the various noble or terrible creatures of the bard's country, raising the mane of the lion, stirring the wild horror of the raven's wing, racing with the wild ass into the wilderness, flying with the eagle and the hawk, shortening speed with the lazy vastness of behemoth, awakening the thunder of the horse's neck, and daring to open "the doors of the fire," with the teeth "terrible round about" of leviathan himself! The truth, the literal exactness, the freshness, fire, and rapidity of the figures

¹ REV. G. GILFILLAN in his *Bards of the Bible*. Edinburgh, 1851. This author is of those who take the Book of Job to be an allegory.

presented, resemble less the slow, elaborate work of a painter, than a succession of pictures taken instantaneously by the finger of the sun, and true to the smallest articulation of the burning life.'

It is remarkable also of this great speech, that it is entirely composed of a series of interrogatory sentences or clauses. Here, more than in any other portion of Scripture, do we perceive the use, value, and effective application of this form of address, in exalting our ideas of the Deity; while every question awes into silence, and inspires with the humblest views of our own insufficiency and weakness. The writer last cited describes, in his own sparkling manner, the speech as 'a series of questions following each other like claps of thunder.'

Although many writers, ancient and modern, have used this form of address with ability and effect—and its use in oratory is well known—there are no instances on record which so strongly manifest how the sense may be strengthened, adorned, and exalted, as those furnished in the prophetic and poetical books of Scripture. Numberless instances might be produced; and amid the large variety, the choice is perplexed in any attempt at selection. One or two may, however, be indicated. Deborah's words, in the person of Sisera's mother, supply a noble instance of this use of interrogations: 'The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her; yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two? to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?'¹ Mark also the skilful use of this form of speech in Paul's transfer of his address from Festus to Agrippa. First he speaks of him in the third person. 'The king,' he says, 'knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely.' Then, turning short upon him, he asks: 'King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?' and immediately answers

¹ Judges v. 28-30.

his own question, 'I KNOW that thou believest!'¹ The smoothest eloquence, the most insinuating complaisance, could never have made such an impression upon Agrippa as this most unexpected and pointed address.

Seventh Week—Sixth Day.

THE UNICORN.—JOB XXXIX. 9-12.

'UNICORN' means 'one-horned;' but it would be difficult to find this meaning in the Hebrew name of the animal denoted. The notion that a unicorn—that is, a one-horned animal—is meant where some creature, called in the Hebrew REEM, is mentioned, is, however, old, for we can trace it back to the Septuagint, where *monoceros*, which is the same as *unicorn*, is given as the translation of that name. Still, whatever animal the Seventy meant to indicate by the name, they certainly could not have in view our heraldic unicorn, which, according to the analogies of nature, is simply an impossible creature, made of the parts of different animals, and which never had any but an imaginary existence.

It may be necessary, therefore, first to look to the texts in which the animal is mentioned, and observe what information may be gathered from them. The word REEM first occurs in Deut. xxxiii. 17: 'His horns are like the horns of the REEM;' which clearly implies that the reem had more than one horn, for the name is singular, not plural, although our translators make it here 'unicorns,' because it would have been absurd to say 'the horns of the unicorn,'—that is, the horns of the one-horned beast. This text, therefore, seems clearly to express that the animal had more than one horn. Another passage in Psalm xxii. 21, 'The horns of the unicorns,' affords no information on the subject, both the nouns being really plural in the original. The text of Psalm xcii. 10 seems, at first view, in favour of the common notion. It is literally, 'Thou shalt exalt, as the reem, my horn.' If 'horn' be supplied in the

¹ Acts xxvi. 27.

parallel clause, as it is in the authorized version—‘as the horn of the unicorn,’—there would here be exactly the same amount, not more, of evidence for one horn, as the text first cited affords for two. That text, however, cannot be explained so as to be made consistent with the animal having but one horn, whereas this can be explained consistently with its having more than one. It is quite usual, poetically, or in common discourse, to speak in the singular of those members of men and animals which are really dual or plural. What is more common than to hear of the eye, the ear, the leg, the hand, the lip? But we never do hear the plural used when the organ, member, or part is but one. Hence ‘the horn of the reem’ (supposing that were the phrase, which it is not, unless by implication) would not imply that it was one-horned, so strongly as ‘the horns of the reem’ would declare it to be not one-horned.

The sort of animal which our own and still older translators had in view, when they turned the Hebrew *reem* into a ‘unicorn,’ is adequately represented by the heraldic animal of that name, which seems to have been drawn from the description of Pliny. He gives it the general shape and body of a horse, the head of an antelope, the feet of an elephant, and the tail of a boar; and states that from the middle of its forehead grew a black horn two cubits long, which, say other old authorities, was not smooth, but wreathed and somewhat rugged, being at the extreme point exceedingly sharp. Pliny adds that it was so fierce and wild a creature, that it could not be taken alive. He admits that he had never seen it, and speaks only from hearsay. This alone might throw doubt upon its existence, for in the shows of Rome all the rarest animals of the known world were wont to be exhibited to public view. There were not only such as might be found within the large limits of the Roman empire, but others procured at immense cost and labour from the empire of the Parthians, and from the remotest parts of India and Ethiopia. To omit many other wild beasts, such as tigers, elephants, and others, not inhabiting the Roman empire, Rome often saw rhinoceroses, which were obtained from India—South Africa being then unknown and inaccessible. The

old author (Aristides) spoke not untruly, when, in his encomium upon Rome, he said: 'All things meet here, whatsoever lives or is made; and whatsoever is not seen here, is to be reckoned among those things that are not, and never were.' Seeing, then, that the unicorn was never seen at Rome, during the many ages in which the custom continued of showing there the strangest beasts that could be found throughout the world, this fact is a strong argument that it had no real existence. It is ascribed to India, a country now familiarly known throughout its whole extent, and no animal answering to the common accounts of the unicorn has been found there. A learned writer, Arnoldus Bootius, who has written on this matter,¹ is sure that 'the father of this story' about the unicorn, is Ctesias, whom he calls 'a most vain man, who, moved only by a love to lying, has brought out many monstrous figments in his book on the Indians;' and from him it seems that both Pliny and Ælian derived their accounts.

It is indeed remarkable, that of all who have described this wonderful animal, no one pretends to have seen it himself. Yes; there is one—the Venetian traveller Luigi Barthema, otherwise Ludovicus Vartomanus, otherwise Vertomanus, whose account, as translated in Purchas's *Pilgrims*, reads thus—he is speaking of the Moslem temple (the Kaaba) at Mecca: 'In the other part of the temple are parkes or places inclosed, where are seene two Vnicornes, and are there shewed to the people for a wonder. The one of them, which is much higher than the other, is not much vnlike to a colt of thirtie moneths of age; in the forehead groweth only one horne, in manner right forth, of the length of three cubits. The other is much younger, and like a young colt of the age of one yeare; the horne of this is of the length of four spannes. The beast is of the colour of a horse of weesell colour, and hath the head like a hart, but no long necke, a thinne mane hanging only on the one side. Their legs are thin and slender, like a fawne or hind; the hoofes of the fore feet are divided into two, much like the feet of a goat, and the outer part of the hinder feet is very full of

¹ In his *Animadversiones Sacræ ad textum Hebr. Vet. Test.* Lond. 1644.

haire. The beast, doubtlesse, seemeth wild and fierce, yet tempereth that fiercenesse with a certaine comelinesse. These Vnicornes one gave to the Sultan of Mecha, as a most precious and rare gift. They were sent him out of Ethiopia by a king of that countrey, who desired by that means to gratifie the Sultan of Mecha.'

But Vartomanus is a writer of little credit, known to be given to the telling of travellers' tales, and it would be dangerous to rely upon his unsupported testimony. We imagine that he did see such animals as he describes, *with two horns*, and thinking they offered much resemblance to the fabled unicorn, he took the liberty of giving them but one horn each, to complete the likeness.

After this, we may dismiss all care about the unicorn, and may proceed with a perfectly free judgment to the highly-wrought description of the animal which the text before us offers, and in which it is curious to observe that there is not any mention of that very part by which most discussion has been excited; its wildness and its strength being the points chiefly produced in this picture :

Will the REEM submit to serve thee ?

Will he go to rest at thy stall ?

Canst thou make the harness bind him in thy furrow ?

Will he plough up the valleys after thee ?

Wilt thou rely upon him because his strength is great ?

Wilt thou leave thy labour to him ?

Wilt thou trust him to carry out thy seed,

And to bring home thy threshed grain ?

Does this description answer to the rhinoceros, which many ancient and modern writers substitute for, or rather identify with, the unicorn? It seems to us that no one would recognise the rhinoceros in these lines, as they are not more applicable to it than to many other very strong and very wild animals. In fact, people were driven to the rhinoceros by the unfounded notion that it was necessary to find a one-horned animal, and this appeared to be the only quadruped, authentically known, to which this description could apply. If even it were proved, which it is not, that the rhinoceros is the animal on which the

ancients founded their accounts of the unicorn, it would not hence follow that it is the reem of Scripture, seeing that this does not appear to have been one-horned. Pennant is very confident that 'the unicorn of Scripture' (he should have said 'of antiquity,' for the Scripture has no unicorn) is the Indian rhinoceros, chiefly, as it appears, because in this species the horn is single, whereas in that of South Africa it is double. But, since his time, an African species (*Rhinoceros simus*) has been found, with a horn much larger, more shapely, and more erect, than that of the Asiatic species, and, in fact, considerably resembling that which is ascribed to the unicorn. It has become very rare. A head was brought to this country by the Rev. John Campbell, and is now preserved in the museum of the London Missionary Society; and the whole animal has since been fully figured and described by Dr. Smith. But as to the rhinoceros being the unicorn of the ancients, we may say that it is difficult to find any resemblance, except in the single horn; and it also happens that its horn is not in the brow, but on the snout—whence, indeed, its name. Further, the REEM of Scripture, it is clear, was an animal well known to the sacred writers, which could not have been the case with the rhinoceros of India, or with that of South Africa; and it is certain that no species of rhinoceros inhabits, or ever did, within historical times, inhabit, any region of Asia or Africa with which the Hebrews were acquainted. Upon the whole, therefore, we feel bound to reject this notion, notwithstanding its prevalence and its antiquity, and the respectable authority by which it is supported. One of the Greek translators renders the Hebrew word by rhinoceros,¹ as does the Latin Vulgate; and even the authorized version, in one place, puts 'rhinoceroses' on the margin, though it has 'unicorns' in the text.

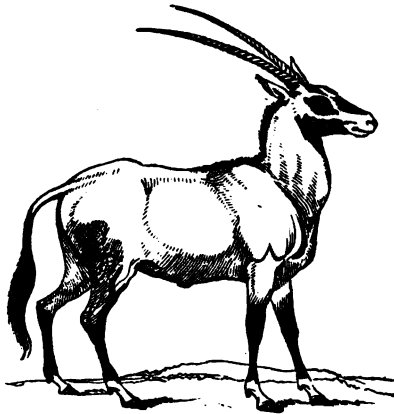
Sensible of the objections to the rhinoceros, and aware of our freedom from any need of seeking a one-horned animal, some have fixed upon the buffalo, or at least upon some wild and tameless animal of the bovine family. But the buffalo, so far from being untameable, is frequently tamed, and is con-

¹ Aquila, *ρίνόκερος*.

² Isa. xxxiv. 7.

stantly employed in the very labours of which it is here described as incapable. The bison, of which some have thought, was not known to the ancients, being an inhabitant of the New World; and the so-called wild ox, which has occurred to others, is no ox at all, but a species of antelope.

Nevertheless, it seems to us that the noble animal, erroneously called the wild ox, is, more probably than any other animal that has been suggested, the reem of Scripture—the more so, as *rim* or *reem* is one of the names by which it is still known in Arabia. It also still subsists in the wilder regions of Syria and Arabia; and that this was the case anciently, is



shown by the monuments of Egypt, which represent it as a favourite object of the chase. This animal, the *oryx leucoryx* of naturalists, and the *oryx* or *urus* of the ancients, is, for one of its genus, a large and powerful animal, exceedingly swift in flight, of a singularly fierce and savage nature, and seems to answer all the conditions required by the Hebrew reem. And although we cannot allow of any connection between the reem of Scripture and the unicorn of heraldry and ancient fable, it may serve to recommend this oryx to many, and to account for the Septuagint translation (*monoceros*), from which all this dis-

cussion has arisen, if we point out that the figure of the animal offers a strong resemblance to that of the fabled unicorn. From the form of its head, and from the manner in which the horns spring close to each other from the middle of the forehead, it is clear that if one of the horns happened to be broken off near the root, and the fracture to be covered by the white hair that grows around it, most common observers would suppose that they beheld an animal naturally one-horned. It is indeed a curiously corroborative fact, that this species is usually so figured as to show only one horn in the Egyptian monuments; but it is doubtful whether the artist meant to represent the animal as one-horned, or to convey the impression that the farther horn was perspectively hidden from view by the nearer.

Seventh Week—Seventh Day.

THE WAR-HORSE.—JOB XXXIX. 19-25.

THE description given of the war-horse in the early part of the Lord's address, has been greatly admired, as far surpassing all others, even by those who are indifferent to the sacred claims of the blessed volume in which the poem containing it is found. It has attracted more attention, perhaps, than any of the other magnificent descriptions in these chapters, because it refers to an animal so well known, that the force of every point in the description can be recognised, and so often described by poets, that the materials for comparison are abundant.

The reader will, of course, peruse the passage in the authorized version; and, therefore, instead of copying it, we present one which we have constructed mainly out of the best parts of several modern versions:

'Hast thou given the horse strength?
Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?'¹

¹ Noyes' version of this line is an *interpretation*; and, *as such*, is good:

'Hast thou clothed his neck with his quivering mane?'

Hast thou taught him to bound like the locust ?¹
 How terrible is the glory of his nostrils !
 He paweth in the valley, and exulteth in his strength :
 He rusheth forth to meet the armed host ;
 He laugheth at fear ; he trembleth not,
 Nor turneth he back from the sword.
 Against him rattleth the quiver,
 The glittering spear, and the lance.
 In his rage and fury he devoureth the ground ;
 And will not tarry when the trumpet soundeth.
 Among the trumpets he saith ‘ Aha ! Aha !’²
 And snuffeth the battle afar off—
 The thunder of the captains, and the war-shout.’

Perhaps it is not quite fair to Homer to cite in comparison with this, that which is rather an incidental figure than a description. It is, however, his best passage having reference to this animal :

‘ As some stalled horse, high-fed, his stable cord
 Snapt short, beats under foot the sounding plain,
 Accustomed in smooth-sliding streams to lave,
 Exulting ; high he bears his head ; his mane
 Undulates o’er his shoulders ; pleased he eyes
 His glossy sides ; and, borne on pliant knees,
 Shoots to the meadow where his fellows graze.’

Iliad, vi. 506.—COWPER, 617.

But in Virgil there is a more studied and elaborate description, which is allowed on all hands to be the best that Pagan antiquity can offer. It occurs in the *Georgics* (lib. iii. 83) ; and, for the more exact comparison, is also a description of the war-horse. Dryden’s translation is fine, but we prefer that of Sotheby as more literally exact :

‘ But at the clash of arms, his ear afar
 Drinks the deep sound and vibrates to the war ;
 Flames from each nostril roll in gathered stream ;
 His quivering limbs with restless motion gleam ;

¹ Some make it ‘to *leap* like the locust ;’ others, ‘to *rush on* like the locust ;’ but those who have experience of locusts, will feel that ‘to *bound* like the locust,’ is the term conveying the exact shade of meaning.

² That is, his impatient neighing mingles with the sound of the trumpet.

O'er his right shoulder, floating free and fair,
Sweeps his thick mane, and spreads his pomp of hair ;
Swift works his double spine ; and earth around
Rings to the solid hoof that wears the ground.'

Blackmore, whom nobody now reads, being as much depreciated in our day as he was unduly exalted in his own, has some fine descriptions of the horse, which, however, were written with a manifest recollection of this one in Job. This is very animated :

'Wanton with life, and bold with native heat,
With thundering feet he paws the trembling ground,
He strikes out fire, and spurns the sand around ;
Does, with loud neighings, make the valleys ring :
And, with becoming pride, his foam around him fling ;
So light he treads, he leaves no mark behind,
As if indeed descended from the wind ;
And yet so strong, he does his rider bear,
As if he felt no burden but the air.
A cloud of smoke from his wide nostrils flies,
And his hot spirits brighten in his eyes.
At the shrill trumpet's sound he pricks his ears,
With brave delight surveys the glittering spears,
And, covetous of war, upbraids the coward's fears.'

Still more spirited is the following by the same writer in another place :

'The trembling ground the outrageous coursers tear,
And, snorting, blow their foam into the air ;
Their fervid nostrils breathe out clouds of smoke,
And flames of fire from their hot eyeballs broke ;
With furious hoofs o'er slaughtered heaps they fly,
And dash up bloody rain amidst the sky ;
Reeking in sweat, and smeared with dust and gore,
They spurn the sand, and through the battle roar.'

With the best of these, the following description of an Arabian horse, by a recent Scottish poet, sustains no disadvantageous comparison. Some of the touches are very fine indeed :

“Bring forth my battle-horse,” the chieftain cried ;
High-towering, swelling in his large-souled pride,
Forth came the steed ; from Araby a gift,
White as the snows, and as the breezes swift.

In youth on Yemen's golden barley fed,
 In size and beauty grew the desert-bred,
 Fit present for Zemberbo. Ne'er at rest,
 High beat the muscles of his groaning chest ;
 His thin red nostrils, as from scornful thought,
 Restless dilate, and smoke like seething pot ;
 And, lo ! as if he tarried at the wine,
 His fierce eyes, like sun-kindled rubies, shine.'—AIRD.

Arabian descriptions of the horse would afford still more interesting parallels, not only from the proximity of language and country, but because there is no other region in which the appreciation of the high qualities of the animal is so intense, nor any other language in which the praise of its beauty, swiftness, strength, and pride, has been so frequently and earnestly set forth with all the force of a most noble diction, and all the vigour of Oriental imagination. In the Bedouin romance of Antar, the mare of Shedad is thus noticed : 'Shedad's mare was called Jirwet, whose like was unknown. Kings negotiated with him for her, but he would not part with her, and would accept no offer or bribe for her ; and thus he used to talk of her in his verses : Seek not to purchase my horse, for Jirwet is not to be bought or borrowed. I am a strong castle on her back, and in her bound are glory and greatness. I would not part with her were strings of camels to come unto me with their drivers following them. She flies with the wind without wings, and tears up the waste and the desert. I will keep her for the day of calamities, and she will rescue me when the battle dust rises.' There are many touches in a similar spirit in the account of the horse Dakis, which was the occasion of a war among the Arabian tribes. At a great feast, when the conversation turned on celebrated horses, one said of Dakis : 'He startles every one that looks at him ; he is the antidote to grief to every one that beholds him ; and he is a strong tower to every one that mounts him.' Again : 'He is a horse, when a night of dust sheds its obscurity, you may see his hoofs like a firebrand ;' and finally, in a race between this horse and another : 'They started forth like lightning when it blasts the sight with its flash ; or a gust of wind when it becomes a hurricane in its

course. . . . When they came to the mead, Dakis bounded forth like a giant when he stretches himself out, and he left his dust behind. He appeared as if without legs or feet, and in a twinkling of an eye he was ahead of Ghabara.'

A celebrated German commentator of the last century thinks that none but a military man can fully understand this description of the war-horse, or thoroughly appreciate it. 'I have myself,' he says, 'perhaps rode more horses than many who have become authors and illustrators of the Bible; but one part of the description, namely, the behaviour of the horse on the approach of a hostile army, I only understood rightly from what old officers have related to me; and as to the proper meaning of the two lines—"Hast thou clothed his neck with ire?" ['with thunder' in the Authorized Version,] and "The grandeur of his neighing is terror" ['The glory of his nostrils is terrible'—*Author. Vers.*]—it had escaped me; indeed, the latter I had not understood, until a person who had had an opportunity of seeing several stallions together instructed me, and then I recollected that, in my eighteenth year, I had seen their bristled-up necks, and heard their fierce cries when rushing to attack each other.'



Eighty Week—First Day.

JOB TAUGHT OF GOD.—JOB XL. 1-7.

THE controversy in which the Lord himself is now represented as taking part, as the judge to whom Job had so often appealed, comes to a point at the commencement of the fortieth chapter, which the reader will note with special interest.

The Lord *has* spoken. His first object has been to bring Job into a proper state of mind, by beating down the boldness and presumption which he had repeatedly evinced in speaking of the divine dealings with mankind, and with himself in particular. This is effected by showing him, by many examples drawn from the visible creation, his utter incompetence to judge of the ways of God. The argument, as we have already stated it, is—that since in these, his outer works, the Lord has evinced such power and wisdom, and since, even in these, there is so much that surpasses man's comprehension, He is entitled to claim implicit trust in his moral government of the world; and that whatever He does, whether immediately comprehensible or not, whatever He gives or takes, the only proper feeling for man is, that He does, and, from the essential attributes of his being, even as evinced in his works of creation, must do, all things wisely, justly, and well; so that it is the height of ignorant presumption to arraign any part of his doings at the bar of human judgment. This touched the core of Job's offence; and he felt it.

At the point we have indicated, the Lord seems to have made a pause, as if to afford the patriarch the opportunity he had so earnestly desired of pleading his own cause before the Almighty. But the perception that he had in this matter so heinously offended, and so justly rendered himself obnoxious to the divine displeasure, appalled the man who had so often in-

sisted upon his uprightness. He perceived now that there was an uprightness of judgment towards God no less needful than uprightness of conduct towards man. He felt that there were sins of the mind not less blameworthy, and often more blameworthy, than sins of the life and conversation. He perceived that herein he had failed—had sinned in the midst of the great trials to which he had been subjected. This conviction had its proper effect. His habitually conscientious and reverent mind was shocked at the perception of the sin into which he had fallen; and his heart was now thoroughly humbled. This kept him silent. But an answer was expected—was demanded from him. The Lord said, ‘Will he who disputes with the Almighty now instruct him? Will the reprover of God now answer?’ To this Job could not but reply; and his answer is that of a man heart-smitten—of one shaken where he had deemed himself most secure: ‘Behold, I am vile: what shall I answer *Thee*? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea twice; but I will proceed no further.’ It is marvellous, in the face of this plain confession and deep contrition, and of the fact that the Lord’s address is mainly intended for his conviction, that Job’s part in the controversy has been deemed all but perfect and blameless. Job himself knew better. He confesses that repeatedly, in the endeavour to vindicate himself, he had spoken of God in an irreverent and improper manner; and declares he will not repeat what he said, or attempt any further vindication of himself. He felt in his very heart that the Lord was right; that he had often indulged in a most unbecoming spirit towards God, and that all which became him was a humble and penitent acknowledgment in the fewest possible words. These words were the best that could be chosen under the circumstances. ‘Behold, I am vile!’ was ample and all-sufficient. Remorse is never wordy. And the real penitence of any one is open to distrust who finds it needful to say much more than can be comprised in such simple phrases as ‘Behold, I am vile’—‘God be merciful to me, a sinner!’

The Lord, then, to strengthen this salutary impression upon

Job's mind, resumed the argument which had been interrupted, to afford him the opportunity of speaking. The sequel of the divine address is precisely of the same purport with the previous portion. It is an extension of the argument, and an enforcement of it by new illustrations.

It must be seen that this sublime argument, although perfectly suited to the state of knowledge and the measure of light which existed in the time of Job, and therefore the only effectual one that could be given, is not of the kind which would now be given, under the later and higher teachings of the Holy Spirit, which have disclosed to us things 'hidden from ages and from generations.' The discourse is not so conducted as to explain or remove the difficulties under which Job and his friends laboured, but to overpower them by the divine sovereignty and prerogative.

Job is not informed why the wicked are often allowed to live in this world prosperously, or why the righteous are often overwhelmed with afflictions. The Lord does not show how the sufferings of the upright are consistent with his approbation of their conduct; and far less does He anywhere refer to the retributions of the world to come. He does not say that the inequalities of this life will all be adjusted there; that the wicked, however much they may have prospered here, will there meet their just doom; or that the righteous, however much they may have suffered here, shall there find abundant compensation for all their trials. Most of us might have anticipated, when the Lord, with such imposing grandeur, appeared to give his high decision, that this would be the line of argument taken—as it is the one to which we should now, under the like circumstances, resort. But a little reflection will suffice to show us that nothing like this was to be expected. It would have been too far in advance of the knowledge then possessed in the world, and would have been an untimely anticipation of the great and consoling truths which it was reserved for Christianity to open. God's teaching of men had been from the first progressive; and while yet in the infancy of sacred knowledge, He saw not fit to set before them the high matters reserved for their manhood.

God has in all time fed his children with milk, and given his strong meat to men of full age. He could doubtless have imparted the fullest knowledge at first. The question is not what He can do, but what He has seen best to do. No doubt He might have made the sun's light rise every morning in noontide glory, instead of gradually rising to the perfect day. He could have ordained that every plant should at once yield forth its seed, without the slow process of bud, and blossom, and fruit. He could have decreed that man should be born in maturity of strength and intellect, instead of first passing through many years of immaturity and weakness. He could have sent his well-beloved Son into the world—He could have poured down the Pentecostal Spirit, as easily in the time of Abraham, of David, of Hezekiah, of Daniel, as in that of Tiberius Cæsar. It suffices that He has not done so—that He has seen fit to make all things progressive. So was it with religious truth, until Christ came to set his seal—the seal of his blood, to all that patriarchs had hoped, all that priests had shadowed forth, and all that prophets had uttered. This is not a speculation. It is a fact; and we ought to be satisfied with it. If we are not, we sin as Job sinned, and lay ourselves open to more severe rebuke, seeing that our light is greater than his.

But although the considerations presented to the mind of Job are not such as would *alone* be presented to ourselves under the like circumstances, they form no mean part of what might be advanced for our satisfaction and comfort under severe trial and affliction. That the Lord has a right to reign over us; and that we are bound to a cheerful submission to his dispensations, not because we see the reasons of them, but because they are his will concerning us, and we know that He cannot but will our essential good,—these still form proper grounds of argument with the afflicted, and sometimes amount to nearly all that can be urged.

Eighth Week—Second Day.

BEHEMOTH.—JOB XL. 15-24.

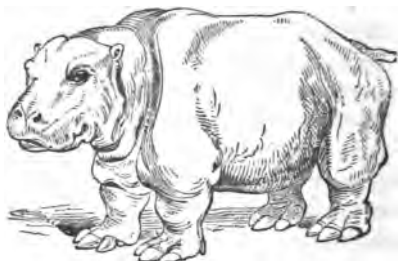
ALTHOUGH, in following the bent of our later tastes—which has diminished the interest once taken in some departments of biblical knowledge, and proportionally enlarged it in others—we have not in this work bestowed much attention on natural history; the concluding chapters of the Book of Job are so much occupied with the description of and allusions to some of the noblest of the Lord's works in animated nature, that our attention is enforced to a few of the more prominent and remarkable subjects; and our younger readers in particular would probably be little satisfied if we forbore to tell them something of the unicorn, of behemoth, and of the leviathan. Of the unicorn and of the war-horse we have already spoken; and now the others demand our notice.

It is well known that the identity of both the behemoth and the leviathan is open to question, and has been largely discussed. It is a curious fact that the name BEHEMOTH, which is plural in Hebrew, is here used in the singular sense, as the name of a single animal, or rather species of animals; while the same word, when it occurs in the singular, which it often does, BEHEMA, has a plural sense, or rather is a noun of multitude, and is properly translated by 'cattle,' or 'beasts.' It is, therefore, probably a plural name of excellence, applied to the chief and most powerful of the known animals belonging to the herbivorous order. We say 'known,' in the sense of known to Job. It was obviously necessary that the appeal should be throughout to animals of which Job had some knowledge. God knew that in remote regions of the earth there were animals more strongly manifesting his wisdom and power; but the very purpose of the argument required that these should not be named, because Job knew them not. It is not enough to say that God might select from all creation the objects suited to his great discourse; for we are to take into account not only

the infinite knowledge of God, but the finite knowledge of the man to whom God spoke. In the present day there is scarcely any prominent animal that can be named, existing in any part of the world, the leading characteristics of which would not be recognised, appreciated, and understood by an ordinarily intelligent person. But it was not so in those remote patriarchal times, when people had little knowledge of the creatures which existed beyond the limits of their own region, or those of the adjacent regions with which there was easy intercourse. This is an important consideration, as it goes to evince that the creatures of which we inquire must have, or may anciently have had, their habitat in the part of the world in which Job had his abode, and with the natural products of which he manifests a familiar knowledge.

Now, as to the behemoth, it is generally admitted that the animal must be sought among those tribes of large animals which Cuvier arranged in one class called *pachydermata*, by reason of the thickness of their skins, to which belong equally the elephant, the river-horse, and some extinct species of enormous animals, such as the mastodon, or mammoth, and others. For the particular animal in this class, opinions are pretty equally divided between the hippopotamus and the elephant, or with something of a preponderance in favour of the former. Perhaps all the details of the description may be found in the two together, but we apprehend that *all* the particulars of the description cannot be made to apply to either, separately taken. The characteristics of the hippopotamus, or river-horse, predominate; but there are some of the circumstances which apply better to the elephant. Hence some have thought that the behemoth is really some extinct species of mastodon, in which the predominant characteristics of the river-horse and the elephant were combined. Otherwise it may be supposed, that the name does not denote any one species of these larger animals in particular, but is a poetical personification of the larger pachydermata generally. The plural form of the name may be cited in favour of this opinion, to which we strongly incline; and, as to the characteristics of the hippopotamus pre-

dominating over those of the elephant in the description, it may be observed, that although so remarkable a creature as the elephant may have been known in Western Asia, in this age, from report and description, or even from not very remote tradition of it as among the most wonderful of the animals preserved in the ark, and as having (with others) passed through or even lingered in this region in proceeding to its final habitat, there must have been a much better actual knowledge of the river-horse, which once abounded in the Lower Nile, although it has now become comparatively scarce. The presence, for the first time in this country, of a living specimen of the river-horse, which we examined this morning, together with the elephants, in the London Zoological Gardens, gives a peculiar



interest to even this limited identification ; and we shall therefore note the particulars of the description, to see how far they apply.

It is said that the behemoth 'eateth grass as an ox,' which is true of all this class of animals ; but seeing that the river-horse lives chiefly in the water, it would be likely to be mentioned of it with special admiration. It amounts to saying—There is a creature that lives in the water, yet seeks its food on the land !

We then learn that the strength of the behemoth is 'in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.' This latter circumstance does not apply to the elephant, in which the belly is the weakest and most vulnerable part, owing to the comparative thinness and softness of the skin. But in the river-horse the skin of the belly is as thick as in the other parts, and is in

some measure rendered callous by being dragged over rough stones at the bottom of the rivers which it inhabits.

There is a great poverty of tail in both the elephant and the river-horse ; and 'he moveth his tail like a cedar,' seems so little applicable to either, that some have from this questioned that either animal is denoted by the description, while others have doubted that the original word does mean a tail, and have asked whether it may not rather denote the proboscis of the elephant. This question we cannot undertake to decide ; and shall only observe, that if the tail be intended, that of the river-horse is of somewhat more consequence than that of the elephant. It is thicker and firmer ; and so far as mere appearance is concerned, admits of a better comparison to the cedar. But it may be remarked, that the comparison is not founded on the size or form of the tail, but on its action. It is not said that the tail is like a cedar, but that its movements are like those of a cedar ; and the river-horse, certainly, no less than the elephant, has a perfect command over its tail, moving and twisting it at pleasure.

The verse which has reference to the bones of the behemoth, is well applicable, figuratively, to all or any of this class of creatures. But what shall we say to, 'He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him?' This is certainly obscure, if not unintelligible. 'He that made him hath given him his weapon,' seems to convey a more correct interpretation ; and it may then be applied to the sharp-pointed and projecting tusks either of the river-horse or the elephant, and does very probably apply to both.

The singularity of the land habits of our aquatic animals might account for its being noticed as a matter of admiration, that 'the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.' It seems more likely to be noticed when an extraordinary circumstance, as in the case of the hippopotamus, than when an ordinary one, as in the case of the elephant. Still the circumstance is equally applicable to the latter animal, and justifies the impression, that there is a kind of poetical reference to the prominent characteristics of both.

That 'he lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens,' seems at the first view distinctly referable to the river-horse, as this animal sleeps and reposes on the shore, in reedy places near the water. But the elephant also delights in watery places as much as any non-aquatic animal can do; and it is often found under the shady trees, and among the willows of the great rivers.

The next circumstance in the description is highly poetical. 'Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.' We cannot doubt the application of this to the river-horse, and it would seem, to any one who had beheld this large animal swimming against a stream with only its head above the water, a perfectly natural image. The wave driven before him would suggest the idea of his drinking up the stream in immense quantities. The mention of the Jordan must not be taken to intimate that the behemoth lived in or on that river. The reference is to such a river as the creature might suppose itself capable of drinking up. Hence some have translated, 'he trusteth that he can draw up a Jordan into his mouth.' The river-horse is confined to great rivers. A river so small as the Jordan, must in all times have been wholly unsuited to the habits of the animal.

Some will cry: 'But here at last we have the elephant, for it is said that "his nose pierceth through snares;"—this nose must be the elephant's proboscis, and may well describe its delicacy of scent and touch, always cautiously applied, and can have no relation to the obtuse perceptions of the river-horse.' We sincerely wish we could find the proboscis of the elephant here; the impossibility of discovering that most essential and curious organ in the description being, indeed, the great difficulty in the way of identifying the behemoth with the elephant. But the real meaning of this clause seems to be, 'Who can take him before his eyes (*i.e.* openly), or pierce his nose with a ring?' This question, which implies the almost insuperable difficulty of capturing the behemoth, and of rendering its vast strength useful, is wholly inapplicable to the elephant, which is constantly captured and trained to various useful services. But it is strik-

ingly true of the hippopotamus, which is so hard to capture that it required the exertions of a small army to acquire the young specimen which London possesses, and the sluggish and aquatic habits of which render it wholly unsuited to any kind of employment in man's service. This text is, moreover, of antiquarian interest, as the earliest indication of the practice of running a ring through the nose of certain animals employed in domestic service, especially of such as have been reclaimed from a wild state. This treatment of animals is often shown in the Egyptian sculptures of most ancient date; and in the Assyrian sculptures, even human captives are represented as brought before the king by ropes fastened to rings passed through the lips and nose—a striking illustration of 2 Kings xix. 28: 'I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips.'

The fantastical Jewish Rabbins have preserved, through the Talmud, the notion that the behemoth was the largest four-footed creature that God made. At the beginning He created two, male and female; but lest the earth should be unable to sustain their progeny, the female was slain, and is preserved in salt for a great feast, which is to be holden when the Messiah comes. The male, which has thus existed solitary since the creation, eats up every day the grass of a thousand hills, and at each draught takes in as much water as the Jordan yields in six months. He also, the legend informs us, is reserved to be fattened for that time, when he will be slaughtered, and given to the Israelites, who shall then rise from the dead. An ox roasted whole is nothing to this. It is said that the Jews are so fully possessed with these extravagant notions, that it is not unusual with them to swear by the share they are to have of behemoth.

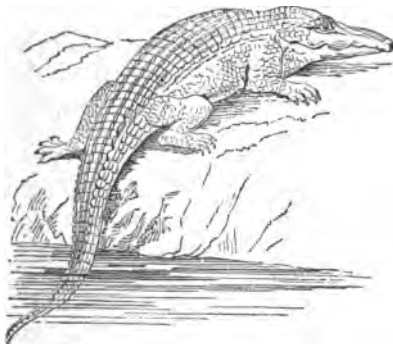
Talmudical Judaism is replete with such legends, which, however, the more enlightened Jews are now inclining to dismiss from their belief.

Eighth Week—Third Day.

THE LEVIATHAN.—JOB XLI.

ABOUT the leviathan there is nearly as much question as regarding the behemoth. It is met with oftener in the Bible than appears in our version, the term being sometimes *translated*. The idea given by the name is that of some creature wreathed, or gathering itself up in folds; and in this general signification it seems to be applied to various creatures, in the same general sense as our English word 'monster.' In some places it seems to denote a monstrous serpent, as in chap. iii. 8 of this book, where the word rendered 'mourning' is 'leviathan;' and still more distinctly in Isaiah xxvii. 1, where indeed it is twice distinctly so called, 'Leviathan, the piercing [fleet] serpent—leviathan, that crooked [coiling or convolved] serpent.' In other places it denotes a great sea-monster, particularly perhaps the whale, but not excluding any other of the large and monstrous forms inhabiting the great deep, especially such as, when seen in the water, or rather with parts of their bodies above the surface, exhibit that wreathed or convolved appearance in which have originated the various reports and traditions respecting the 'sea serpent.' It is distinctly a marine animal in Psalm civ. 26: 'This great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that leviathan whom Thou hast made to play therein.' In short, we take the word to be, as nearly as possible, equivalent to our word 'monster' in its use, being sometimes employed generally and indeterminately, and sometimes with regard to particular animals, which may or may not be, but commonly are, recognisable, from the context. It is generally admitted, that whatever be the animals specially referred to in other places, in this place it does mean, and can mean no other than the CROCODILE. This is so evident, that no one would have attempted to show that it was any other creature, but for the necessity presumed to be imposed by other

texts, such as those we have cited, of showing that the leviathan must be something else than a crocodile. All difficulty from this source is obviated by the explanation which has just been given; and we can, without any misgiving arising from other texts, conclude that the word does here denote a crocodile. Those generally who have questioned this conclusion, have conceived that it must be a whale, not because they denied that the present passage more obviously refers to the crocodile, but because they perceived that in some other places, where the name occurs, the whale was more clearly denoted, and thought that therefore it must bear the same meaning in this place. But surely these two points—the strong armour of the animal described, and his formidable rows of teeth—are almost



peculiar to the crocodile among the aquatic animals, and are wholly inapplicable to the whale, which has neither scales nor teeth, and which is, in fact, ordinarily taken with 'fish-spears' or harpoons, the very mode against which the leviathan is here declared to be invulnerable.

'Do men in company lay snares for him?
Do they divide him among the merchants?
Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons,
Or his head with fish-spears?'—*verses 6, 7.*

Perhaps the real meaning of this passage may be, that it cannot be taken by snares on land, like most of the land animals, nor in the water by harpoons, like most of the merely aquatic

animals. This is obviously the case, for no one ever heard of a crocodile being snared on land, or harpooned in the water. The latter is, indeed, nearly impossible, as in the water the animal presents above the surface only its least vulnerable parts. But the crocodile may be harpooned on the land, and therefore out of the element in which it has its chief power. Indeed, this is the mode in which it is captured in Angola, where it is taken by the natives for the sake of its flesh. We abridge the description of Rüppell, who often witnessed this procedure. He says that the most favourable season is winter, when the animal often sleeps on the sand-banks, luxuriating in the rays of the sun, or spring, after the pairing time, when the female regularly watches the sand-islands, where she has buried her eggs. The native finds out the place, and to leeward of it he digs a hole, throwing up the sand on the side which he expects the animal to take. Here he conceals himself, and the crocodile comes to the accustomed spot, and falls asleep. The huntsman then darts his harpoon at it with all his force. The wounded crocodile rushes to the water, and the man retreats to a canoe, with which a companion hastens to his assistance. A piece of wood, attached to the harpoon by a long cord, floats in the water, and shows the direction in which the crocodile is moving. Pulling at this cord, the huntsmen drag the animal to the surface of the water, where it is pierced by a second harpoon. The skill of the huntsman consists in giving the harpoon sufficient impulse to pierce through the protecting coat of mail. When the animal is struck, it by no means remains inactive; on the contrary, it lashes the water into foam with its tail. Then, indeed, 'He maketh the deep to boil like a pot; he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.' It endeavours to bite the rope asunder. This might be done with an ordinary rope; but to prevent it, the rope is made of a great number of thin strands, not twisted together, but placed in juxtaposition, and bound round at intervals of two feet. These it cannot bite through at once, and the thin lines get between the teeth, or become entangled among them. Sometimes, by the pulling of the men, and the resistance of the prey, the harpoon breaks out

of the crocodile's body, and it escapes. It is taken for the sake of the flesh, which the natives relish highly, but it has an odour of musk distasteful to Europeans. In North-East Africa this quality of the flesh is not mentioned. Thevenot, who partook of it in Egypt, found it good, but rather insipid.

In some of the rivers of Africa, the natives are bold enough and skilful enough to combat the crocodile in his own element. Armed only with a short dagger, they dive beneath him, and plunge the weapon into his belly. It often happens, however, that the combat is fatal to the man, and frequently his only chance of escape is to thrust his dagger, or, if this be lost, his thumbs, into the animal's eyes with all his might, so as to produce great pain and blindness.

The crocodile could, however, only be described to Job as existing in the Nile, and there these practices of West Africa were unknown. It was formerly found in the Delta of that river, from which it has long since disappeared; but it is still abundant in the Thebaid, in the Upper Nile, and in the tributary branches throughout Nubia and Abyssinia.

One mode of taking this creature, practised by the ancient Egyptians, is described by Herodotus.¹ There was no harpooning in this case, and one would suspect, indeed, that the crocodile of Western must be more vulnerable than that of Eastern Africa. A difference in this respect is quite possible. A hook was baited with a chine of pork, while the attention of the monster was attracted by the cries of a living pig, which the hunters had with them on the shore. In anticipation of prey, he dashed into the river, and meeting the baited hook, instantly seized and swallowed it, and was then dragged ashore. The men next endeavoured to blind his eyes with sand, and when this was accomplished, his destruction was easy; but if not, so violent were his struggles, and so dangerous was it to approach him, that it was not without difficulty that he was despatched. To this mode of taking the leviathan, there seems to be an allusion in the first verse: 'Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook?' while the next clause, 'Or his tongue

¹ EUTERPE, cap. lxx.

with a cord that thou lettest down,' or rather, 'Canst thou bind his jaws with a cord (or noose)?' reminds one of a mode of capturing crocodiles which was in use in the time of Thevenot. They were taken in pitfalls, in the usual manner, and left there for several days to be weakened by hunger, when the hunters let down ropes with running nooses, wherewith they fastened their jaws and dragged them up.

The statement of Herodotus, showing that it was necessary to draw near in order to smite the animal, implies that it was not possible, or not supposed possible, to slay him with missiles, such as harpoons. Indeed, this point is strongly insisted upon in the text: 'Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.' It is also said that 'He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood;' a remarkable instance of which is reported to have occurred not long since in Ceylon, where a party of naval officers, hunting elephants, were assailed by an alligator. One of the persons, in self-defence, thrust his gun into the open mouth of his assailant, and it was afterwards found that the barrel was completely bitten in two in one place, and deeply indented by the teeth of the animal in another.

The formidably-armed jaws of the crocodile, and its well-jointed and strong armour, are clearly indicated in the description of the leviathan, and can apply to no other creature of the habits stated.

The remarkable clause, 'Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?' has been thought by some to represent the leviathan as untameable, and this has been urged as an objection against its identification with the crocodile, which has undoubtedly been tamed. It is not very certain, however, whether the text points at the actual processes of taking and taming the crocodile, or declares the difficulty, not impossibility, of so dealing with him. It cannot be taken to declare these things impossible, for we have the same high authority of God's word for declaring that 'Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.' James iii. 7. The crocodile certainly was occasionally tamed in Egypt. In some cities of that country, individuals of the

species were kept in a tame state, and held in high veneration ; and in other parts, even divine honours were paid to them. Strabo mentions one that he saw at Arsinœ, and which was carefully fed on what would have been good cheer for a man, but was probably only indifferent fare to a crocodile. 'Our host,' says Strabo, 'who was a person of consequence, and our guide to all sacred things, went with us to the pond, taking with him from table a small cake, some roasted meat, and a cup of mulled wine. We found the crocodile lying on the margin. The priest immediately went up to him, and while some of them opened his mouth, another put in the cake, crammed down the flesh, and finished by pouring down the wine. The crocodile then jumped into the pond, and swam to the opposite side.'

In further evidence of crocodiles being kept tame, we may refer to one of the marbles in the Townley Collection at the British Museum, which is taken to represent an Egyptian tumbler exercising his feats upon the back of one of these animals. Nor is modern testimony wanting. The Sieur Andre Brüe,¹ speaking of the Rio San Domingo (West Africa), says : 'What is most remarkable is, that the caymans, or crocodiles, such formidable animals elsewhere, are here so tame that they hurt nobody. It is certain that children play with them, riding upon their backs, and sometimes beating them, without their showing the least resentment. This may be owing to the care which the inhabitants take to feed them and use them well.'

We have no space for all the curious illustrative matter in our hands respecting the crocodile ; but the remarkable and finely poetical figure, '*His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning,*' reminds us that the Egyptians employed the eye of the crocodile to denote the rising sun, which has been accounted for by the alleged fact, that the eyes of the animal become first visible when it rises out of the water.

¹ In Labat's *Nouvelle Relation de l'Afrique Occidentale*. Paris, 1728.

Eighth Week—Fourth Day.

THE DECISION.—JOB XLII. 1-9.

THE Lord's further address materially strengthened the convictions which Job had already expressed, and which he now repeats somewhat more largely and with still stronger emphasis: 'I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no purpose of thine can be hindered.' The Lord had asked (Job xxxviii. 2), 'Who is he that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?' This question had confounded Job. He repeats it, and pleads guilty to the charge it implies, saying virtually, 'I am the man!'—confessing that he had spoken of things he did not understand, and had undertaken to decide matters too high for him. Indeed, he is shut up to the conclusion: 'Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.' He declares that he had grievously erred in arraigning the ways of God so boldly, and in so clamorously appealing to his tribunal that he might there plead the justice of his cause before Him. Far—far be this from him now. Rather, he craves to be permitted to sit down in docile humbleness before his throne, and receive into his heart the words of judgment and truth: 'Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak. I will ask of Thee, and do Thou instruct me.' He admits that his former views of God and of his dealings with man were obscure and dark, comparable to the faint impressions which one receives from being told by others of that which they have seen. But now his views were firmer, clearer, and more distinct, like to those of one who sees with his own eyes what he had only heard of before. 'I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee.' And what was the result of this nearer view? 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

In fact, Job now first perceives his true position as a sinner before God, his uncertain views upon which point had been the real source of all his mistakes, and especially of his too

broad declarations of his own integrity and well-deservings, and of his incapacity to reconcile his sufferings with the justice of God. This was the object to be realized ; and no sooner was it accomplished than he was pardoned and restored.

But how of the three friends? They had heard all this. But the address had been pointedly made to Job, and they seem to have considered it as intended only for him. Failing to perceive that it was as fully applicable to their view of the matter as to Job's, and even more applicable to their main argument, it is quite possible that they imagined the Lord to be taking their side against their friend, and that they looked upon his confession of his sinfulness as a crowning triumph on their side of the argument, and as realizing the conviction they had all along laboured to produce. Awfully was the complacency with which they stroked their beards disturbed, when the Voice from the whirlwind addressed them in the words of displeasure and condemnation. Job had been brought to self-conviction. The friends might also, and ought to have been brought to something of the same state of mind by what they had heard, from which, like him, they should have imbibed clearer views of the nature of sin. As this was not the case, as they gave no sign of conviction or repentance, it was left for the Judge to declare that which they had failed to perceive, and to pronounce his estimate of their conduct and their arguments. This was plainly done. 'My wrath,' said the Lord to Eliphaz, 'is kindled against thee and against thy two friends : for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.' They are then ordered to bring seven bullocks and seven rams as an expiatory offering *for themselves*—and Job is made an intercessor for them. 'And my servant Job shall pray for you ; for him will I accept ; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.'

But how, it may be asked, is this declaration that Job had spoken right, consistent with the rebuke he had received for that which he had spoken, and with his own confession and remorse? The answer is less difficult than it seems. It may

be, and many think it is so, that these expressions are only to be understood as applying to those later convictions which Job had so forcibly expressed. This is no doubt included in the expression of approbation ; but it must appear plain that it comprehends also a reference to his share in the previous argument with the friends, and is designed to express a comparative preference of the views he had set forth in that argument. This will appear the more clearly, when it is borne in mind that the arguments and illustrations adduced by the Lord himself, do not really convey any rebuke of Job's main positions, but refer only to the incidents of temper and character—the impatience, the recklessness, and the presumption, which had been manifested by him in the course of the debate.

Still this praise is to be taken rather as comparative than as absolute. Both sides had almost equally erred in their views as to the nature of sin ; but Job had put this part of the charge against him out of court by his penitent confession. The removal of this fault in his argument, seeing he had expressly recalled it, while it remained in theirs, would alone have given the balance in his favour had all else been equal. But, in fact, the main position which Job had defended was correct, though he was unable to grasp all its bearings, and, more than that which the friends had upheld, tended to vindicate the divine government. Our repeated indications of the drift of the arguments as they were advanced, render it needless to show this in detail. It is clear that inasmuch as Job had an essentially good case, but marred it by many vain and unseemly utterances ; so the friends had an essentially wrong case, although they supported it by many goodly reasons, and by words out of which much holy doctrine may be gathered.

The effects of the divine teaching upon Job are most striking. A complete change, a thorough transformation, is accomplished. In intellect, in heart, in feeling, Job becomes a new man. The eyes of his understanding are opened, and he, in a moment, sees God to be infinite in power, in wisdom, and in love. A complete view of God's wise and merciful working, in providence and in redemption, is for the first time given to him. He is made by divine teaching

to comprehend what he never knew before, what he never could know of himself—that, by the wise and loving government of the Divine Ruler, ‘*all things* work together for good to them that love God.’ The character and completeness of this heavenly illumination, and its overwhelming influence upon Job, are set forth in these graphic words:—

‘ With the hearing of the ear I had heard of Thee ;
But now mine eyes have seen Thee :
Wherefore I abhor myself and repent,
In dust and ashes.’

Eighty Week—fifty Day.

THE KESITAH.—JOB XLII. I I.

JOB’S trials are at length over. He has been convinced, pardoned, vindicated, and accepted. Nor is this all : he was healed of his sore disease, and restored to a prosperous estate. And, yet more—for the Lord is very bountiful to his servants—he was not merely restored to what he had before possessed, but all things were given back in double measure to him ; all except children, of whom he eventually gained the same number he had lost. *How* the restoration of his wealth was effected, we are not told, nor are we required to suppose that it took place all at once. We know that in the case of his new family, for instance, the restoration must have been gradual, and so it was probably of the rest ; and as he lived a hundred and forty years after these events, there was ample time during which, with the Lord’s blessing upon him and all that belonged to him, his latter end might become more blessed than his beginning. It is possible that a portion of his cattle, or their value, might be recovered from those who had driven them away ; some of whom appear to have been near enough to be open to retaliatory proceedings. Looking to what often happens in similar cases, it is exceedingly likely that when the public sympathy was restored to Job, strong indignation would be aroused against those who had been the instruments of his

impoverishment. In fact, it was a common cause against a common enemy, for all who had anything to lose were liable to the same injurious assaults. We can conceive all the young and bold spirits of the locality banding together, and forming a strong body to march off for a night attack on the encampment of the depredators. Three or four days' journey would be as nothing to them in such a case. In due time we see them returning laden with spoil of flocks and herds, and other goods, including much that had once been Job's; and they would give to him the whole they had taken, and retire to their houses amid the applause of their people, with the satisfaction of having discharged a public duty and avenged a public wrong.

Another source was open, in the gifts of the friends who now flocked around him. And this is not conjecture, for it is expressly stated that every one gave him 'a *kesitah* and an earring of gold.' What this *kesitah* was we shall presently see. Meanwhile, the statement that 'then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house,' might afford an opportunity of expatiating on the readiness of friends to abandon the afflicted, and flock around the prosperous, and to declare of such friends, how

'In prosperous days

They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,

Not to be found, though sought.'

But we must neglect it. It seems to us that, such as men are, these behaved not badly. Of Job's adversities, the loss of friends was *last*; of his prosperities, the return of friends was *first*. This is something. They forsook him not until his presence carried with it the danger of leprous taint, nor until they, in conformity with the notions of the age, had been led to suppose that his extraordinary succession of calamities evinced that the justice of God had visited him for heinous crimes. If this was the opinion of the *three* friends, men of cultivated thought, much more would it be that of the general body of Job's acquaintance, and still more of the unthinking crowd. The alacrity of his friends and relations in returning to him as

soon as his character was vindicated, is therefore much to their credit. It is unjust to say that they waited till he was again prosperous. If one carefully reads the text, he will see that it was not so. 'The first budding or spring of Job's felicity, after so sharp a winter of sorrow as he had gone through, was the putting forth of fresh and fragrant acts of love from his ancient friends, who had of late forsaken him, and left him in the hour of his temptation.'¹

Even this is somewhat less than full justice to them. It appears that they gathered around him before his prosperity commenced, and that they materially contributed to it by their generous contributions. Had he become prosperous, it would have been said that they came to congratulate with him, to rejoice with him. But no: 'they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.' What can more clearly show that God inclined their hearts to sympathy with him, and to pity for him, while yet he stood, justified indeed in his integrity, and happy in his mind, but still bereft of all that once made him great, strong, and honoured among men? And theirs was not barren sympathy. Their hearts were inclined to render him real and effectual assistance, for 'every man also gave him a *kesitah*, and every one an earring of gold.'

Now, what was this *kesitah*?

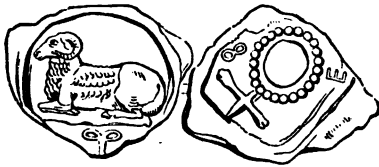
In the authorized version it is 'a piece of money.' But a very old and different view, to which modern interpreters incline to return, is that conveyed in Rogers' translation (1537): 'Every man gave him a shepe and a jewell of gold.' In fact, most of the old versions in different languages render the word by 'sheep' or 'lamb.' It is observable that the word in question occurs in only two other places, both having reference to the age in which Job appears to have lived, and therefore affording incidental support to the conclusion formerly exhibited respecting that age; for if we find the same peculiar archaic words in two books, we have one ground for concluding that these books belong to the same period. The first of

¹ Caryl.

these texts is Gen. xxxiii. 19, where it is said that Jacob gave a hundred kesitah to the children of Hamor for a piece of ground near Shechem ; and the other is Josh. xxiv. 32, which is, however, merely a retrospective notice of the same transaction, or rather a quotation of the text in which it occurs. In the present text the kesitah might very well be a lamb, not only because a lamb or sheep is a frequent and acceptable present in the condition of life which the book describes, but because this would seem a very proper and delicate mode of making a beginning for the re-establishment of that pastoral prosperity for which Job had once been distinguished. But in the place in Genesis, the *kesitah*, whatever it be, is clearly a measure of value, and a medium of exchange. Still it is not unlikely that a lamb or sheep might be intended. In the early history of all peoples, sales and purchases were managed by exchanges ; a person giving that which he could spare from his own possessions in return for that which he wanted of another's. Under this arrangement, certain common articles soon became established measures of value. A hunting people would speak of a certain commodity as being worth so many skins ; while a pastoral people would appraise it at the value of so many sheep ; and an agricultural people as being worth so many measures of corn. Thus Jacob, who was rich in flocks and herds, may certainly, without improbability, be supposed to have given a hundred lambs in exchange for the piece of land he required. We have, however, ground for supposing that he did not, for we are told in Acts vii. 16, that he gave '*a sum of money*;' although even this is not perfectly conclusive, as lambs thus employed would virtually become money. We will take it, however, to have been what we understand by money ; and then we have to ask how the piece of money came to be called a *lamb*—for that, it is admitted, is the meaning of the word *kesitah*. We know that silver had already become the current medium of exchange in the time of Abraham ; and we know also that when the precious metals became the representative of value, they continued for a long time to be weighed. This was the case when Abraham bought a sepulchre of Ephron the Hittite ; and

also when Joseph's brethren found their money returned to them 'full weight' in their sacks. As, however, money, even when *coined*, is at the present day still weighed in the East, this does not militate against the probability that the piece of money in question formed a first step towards coinage, by being impressed with the figure of a lamb; probably because it was such a piece of silver as experience had shown to be equivalent to the ordinary value of a lamb, and as would be accepted instead of one. Here then would be a twofold reason why this piece of money should be called a lamb: because it was of the same value, and because, being of the value of a lamb, it bore a rude figure of the animal.

There is no question about the process. The only doubt is as to the time, and as to its application to the case in view. It is well known to have been an ancient custom to impress



pieces of metal with the figures of the animals they were considered to equal in value, and for them to be called by the names of the animals whose figures they bore. Thus the most ancient coins of the Phœnicians bore the impress of a sheep, and those of the Greeks and Romans the figure of an ox. The former of these instances is very remarkable, from the vicinity of the Phœnician people to the scenes of Scripture history, and we therefore give a representation of it. Yet we are obliged to consider that the most early traces of coined money are long, very long, posterior to the time of the patriarchs; and its existence at so early a date, when even the Egyptians had it not, cannot safely be assumed on the precarious evidence which may be deduced from this interpretation. We are, therefore, content to suppose that the kesitah was simply a piece of silver of such weight as was considered

equivalent to a lamb, and which was for this reason called kesitah, but which was not impressed with the figure of a lamb, or any other figure to denote its value. Perhaps all the *pieces* of money mentioned by tale in the early Scriptures were of this description.

Eighth Week—Sixth Day.

JOB'S DAUGHTERS.—JOB XLII. 14, 15.

WE are informed in the close that Job, eventually, had not only his substance doubled to him, but had seven sons and three daughters, the same number that he had lost—no more. That loss was the least remediable of any. He could be bettered as to his worldly substance; but all that could be done for him in regard to his children, was to afford him compensating substitutes. The mere doubling of the number lost would have availed little. Nor is it to be doubted that his affectionate heart often ached, even in the presence of his young children, when he thought of the fair family of grown-up sons and daughters, the object of many years' care and tenderness, who would, by this time, have been strength to his arms, and through whom his branches would, ere this, have spread far around. But he had learned the duty of submission to the will of the Lord, and even this sole grief could not, we may be sure, lead him to indulge in repinings, or to undervalue what had been done to comfort and restore him.

But although Job was not, and could not, be compensated by any increase in the number of his children beyond those he had before, he might be so by the higher qualities of their minds and persons. And there is reason to think that this satisfaction was granted to him, for it is said, that 'in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job;' and perhaps the same superiority extended also to the sons, though the daughters only are particularly mentioned; or it

was the purpose of the sacred writer to notice the singular fact concerning them, that their father 'gave them an inheritance among their brethren.' Indeed, considering how little is said of women in Scripture, the particularity with which these daughters of Job are introduced is very remarkable, when nothing beside the number of the sons is given. We are not only informed of the personal qualities of the daughters, and the distinguished portion allowed them in the inheritance; we are even furnished with their names, which are striking and significant. 'He called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.' These names are *translated* into assumed significance in Rogers' translation, as they are in the Septuagint, Vulgate, and other old versions: 'The first called Daye; the second, Poverte; the third, All-plenteousness.' That the meaning of Jemima is 'Day' is generally agreed, and this is the interpretation given by the ancient versions. Perhaps this girl was the first of Job's ten children, for it is easy to conceive that the name commemorates her father's re-emergence into the bright and sunny day, from the dark night of anguish and tribulation through which he had passed. Names significant of change of condition in the parents, and especially of returning prosperity, or of hope of what would happen in the children's time, are frequent in the East, and several such, which will readily occur to the reader's recollection, are found in the Bible. Instances of both are presented near the commencement of the history of man, in Genesis iv. 25, and v. 29.

The second name, Kezia, is very erroneously rendered 'Poverty' by Rogers; indeed, we hardly know how he could get at such an interpretation, unless in reference to the etymology of the word, which indicates something stripped off. Nearly all interpreters are agreed that it means Cassia, and it is, in fact, so translated in Psalm xlv. 8. This is a bark something like cinnamon, but less aromatic. It was much used in ancient times. Its Hebrew name, Kezia, or Ketziah, is derived from its being, as bark, stripped off the trees. In the

East, and especially in Persia, it is still common to give names to daughters derived from spices, unguents, pearls, precious stones, or anything of special beauty or value. The pleasantness and value of the perfume was, doubtless, the reason why Job gave it as a name to his daughter. He meant to declare that she was as pleasant and precious as cassia in the estimation of her father.

The name of the third daughter is very curious. Kerenhappuch means literally 'Paint-horn,' or 'a horn or vessel of such paint or stibium as was used for colouring the eyes. The custom of painting the eyes has already passed under our notice,¹ and the explanation there given need not be repeated. The present instance is, however, interesting, as showing the antiquity of the custom, even among a people of simple habits. What may most strike the reader is, that such implements of the toilet should be thus reproduced in proper names. We do not give our daughters such names as Pomatum-Pot, Macassar Oil, Kalydor, Honey-Soap, or the like. But, in fact, it is one of the characteristics of the Orientals, that they do not keep in the background the materials and implements of personal adornment, but obtrude them on every available occasion, as objects calculated to suggest agreeable ideas. Hence the vessels containing paints, unguents, and perfumes give names to females, and supply images to poetry; and painted representations of them, with their names inscribed, are seen, equally with flowers, on the walls of palaces. This was also the case among the ancient Egyptians.

The particular manner in which it is noted that Job gave to these daughters 'an inheritance among their brethren,' shows that this was a special and uncommon mark of his regard. Probably the rule in the patriarchal age was the same that we find afterwards existing in the Hebrew law (Num. xxvii. 8), under which daughters inherited only when there were no sons. When there were any sons, they divided the whole property among them, the eldest taking two shares. Here, however, we see the father had the power of altering the arrangement,

¹ First Series, Forty-ninth Week—Sixth Day.

and of including the daughters among the sharers of the inheritance. But the very manner in which it is mentioned, shows that this power was rarely exercised. More freedom, in this respect, probably existed in the patriarchal usage, than under the Hebrew law. That law was designed for a nation of landed proprietors, and was framed to determine the succession to permanent landed property on certain absolute conditions, necessarily more stringent than are required in respect of the succession to pastoral wealth; this having merely the character of what we call personal property, which we ourselves, like most other nations, subject to less strict conditions than the inheritance of land. It expresses incidentally the great wealth to which Job eventually attained, that he was enabled to deal thus bountifully with his daughters, without any serious detriment to the heritage of his sons; for the notions of the time as to the preference due to sons over daughters were such, that public opinion would not have justified Job in the course he took had there not been abundantly enough for all.

Eighth Week—Seventh Day.

HEBREW POETRY.

WE now come to a book of Hebrew poetry of an entirely different character from the book we have quitted. But that which constitutes the charm of the Psalms—their deeply spiritual character—supplies fewer materials than the Book of Job for the species of illustration to which our work is mainly appropriated. If, moreover, we departed from our own line of illustration to meet the circumstances of the present book, the topics which it offers are so various and so unconnected with each other, that they could only be touched here and there, within the limits to which the general plan and scale of this work necessarily confine us. We purpose, therefore, not to touch on the *contents* of the Psalms, but in a general way,

choosing rather to consider some matters connected with them and belonging to their history. This we shall the more willingly do, being aware that while such matters are really of great interest to most readers, they yet are but little noticed in works designed for general use. We may invite the reader to look first at the general character of Hebrew poetry, and then at the poetry of the Psalms in particular.

It may be seen, even in translations from the Hebrew, that the character of the language is eminently poetical. Indeed, to read some modern writers on the subject, one might suppose it difficult to find any prose in the Old Testament, or even in the New. But it is not so; and the tendency of the writers referred to is merely one more illustration of what often happens when favourite notions are pressed to extremes. In point of fact, the language of poetry in the Hebrew is very distinct, and easily distinguishable from that of prose.

One who studies the subject soon discovers that the poetry, in common with the whole literature of the Hebrews, is of an altogether primitive origin and formation, and has passed, *without any foreign influence* whatever, through all the stages and changes of which it was capable. It is thus peculiarly original; and this originality renders it of great interest as an object of investigation, even to those who have but small regard for its spiritual character. Moreover, ancient Hebrew poetry, if it be not so rich and varied as that of the Indians and the Greeks, yet possesses a simplicity and transparency hardly to be found elsewhere; a sublime naturalness, which as yet knows little of strict art, and which suffers art, even where its influence is exerted, to appear unconscious and careless. When compared with the poetry of other ancient nations, it appears to belong to a still simpler, more youthful period of humanity, to gush forth from an inward fulness of emotion and sentiment, and to be little concerned about external ornament and strict rules of art.

But this wonderful ease, this apparent disregard of external attractions, in a poetry otherwise surpassingly noble, is only possible when the thoughts which present themselves to the

mind of the poet are of such sublimity, dignity, intensity, and strength, that they abundantly suffice of themselves, and are best seen in their own simple majesty. In such cases, the height of the argument, joined to the corresponding mood of the poet, very far transcends the necessity of those auxiliary embellishments of art, which a poetry inferior in essential strength requires, to lift it up and render it attractive;—just as no one would require an external image of the divine object of his meditation, at the very moment when he is absorbed in the vision of the Lord.

From this it will appear that the peculiar dignity of the Hebrew poetry arises from its being animated by those sublime conceptions, which are nowhere else to be found in such purity, power, and persistency, as in Israel. Where such mighty efforts after the highest spiritual attainments, and such pure truths, are once impressed on the hearts of a people, and move a whole nation for centuries, there they necessarily exert a manifold influence upon the poets also, and pour themselves forth in full streams from their lips. This poetry is, therefore, only one of the many utterances of that which was unique in itself, and peculiar to ancient Israel. And just as all the noblest powers and contests of this chosen people were chiefly directed to the one object of striving for the true God and the true religion, in like manner their poetry had no other way of becoming great and unique than in this sole tendency to the sublime, or of developing all its powers than in this movement after God.

It is not urged that poetry among the Hebrews did not penetrate into other provinces. We have scriptural evidence that it did; and it entirely accords with the nature of poetry to take its rise in every part of human life, and to pervade all its provinces. We see by the Song of Songs, and by Psalm xlv., that it did not disdain to glorify the nobler situations of human life; and we find references to songs of common life, nay, in part, even to culpable ones.¹ Nevertheless, all kinds of poetry that did not flow from that higher tendency, or upon which

¹ Isa. v. 12; Amos vi. 5; Rev. xviii. 22.

that peculiarly lofty aim of the nation was not able to obtain any important influence, were obliged to continue imperfect. Ancient Hebrew poetry remained, as to its essence, an interpreter of those high thoughts and sublime conceptions which never in antiquity exercised such an influence anywhere else; and, as to its form, preserving that wonderful simplicity and ease which flowed from this very sublimity, it is a poetry unequalled in all respects by any other.

We see, then, that the Hebrew poesy is chiefly distinguished by the magnitude and importance of its objects and by the weight of its thoughts. We find that its end is less to please than to instruct the mind and elevate the soul; that it aims to express the breathings of man's spirit in its intercourse with God; to celebrate the praises of the Creator; to set forth his divine perfections, and to retrace his benefits and the mysteries of his grace and providence, especially as exemplified in the history of his people.

Finding, then, that the main characteristic and the glory of Hebrew poetry lies in the *thought*, of which it is the exponent, it remains to be seen how the form of words is made subservient to the adequate production and strong enforcement of that thought.



Ninth Week—First Day.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE PSALMS.

WE now reach what must without hesitation be pronounced the most *spiritual* portion of the Old Testament—that which, more entirely than any other single portion, is occupied with the hopes, fears, and conflicts of man's spirit, in its intercourse with God.

The Book of God is like the perfectly organized human frame in this—that no part necessary to vital function is wanting; while nothing is redundant, every part having an essential and important use. And it is not too much to say, that the human body would be less sorely marred by the loss of any one of its parts, than this volume would be by the excision of any one portion of it. Point out any part of it which you think might be spared, and we will furnish twenty reasons proving that we cannot do without it, that it is most essential to the completeness and harmony of the whole. What, for instance, would the Bible be without the Book of Psalms? It seems, at first view, a very separable portion—a part that might be taken out without destroying the symmetry of the whole. But it is not so. Should the experiment be made, it would be seen that a man with his arm shorn off at the shoulder-blade is less maimed and disfigured, than would be a Bible deprived of this book of groans, and sighs, and tears, and smiles, and triumphant shouts.

In fact, a Bible without a Book of Psalms is simply an inconceivable thing. That book is part not only of our rich heritage, but of ourselves. It is our voice—the voice in which the Church, in all her members of every sect, country, and clime, has for three thousand years poured forth her soul before God.

We may say of the Psalms with safety, that it is the most entirely *religious* book in the Old Testament. There may

indeed be other books—as the Pentateuch and the Prophets—that furnish more materials for positive views of religion, for theological doctrine, and for right principles of worship. But the Book of Psalms is the great source and foundation of religious experience—of religion as manifesting its true life and character in the soul of man. What an exhaustless variety of religious thought and feeling pervades this precious book! On this point there are some fine remarks of Luther in his preface to the Psalter. ‘Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the holy, as into a beautiful garden—as into heaven itself. What delicate, fragrant, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts towards God and his goodness! On the other hand, where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow, than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look into the heart of all the holy, but as into death, nay, as into the very pit of despair. How dark and gloomy is everything there, arising from all manner of melancholy apprehension of God’s displeasure! I hold that there has never appeared on earth, and that there never can appear, a more precious book of examples and legends of saints than the Psalter is. For here we find out not merely what one or two holy men have done, but what the Head himself of all the holy has done, and what all the holy do still—how they stand affected towards God, towards friends and enemies; how they behave in all dangers, and sustain themselves in all sufferings. Besides that, all manner of divine and salutary instructions and commands are contained therein. Hence, too, it comes that the Psalter forms, as it were, a little book for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone, so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find, nor even wish them better than they are.’

One might fill a volume—and it would be a volume of great interest—with the testimonials which different ages and countries

have produced to the use, importance, and value of the Psalms.

Calvin, in the preface to his Commentary on the Psalms, declares : ' I have been accustomed to call this book, not inappropriately, an Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul ; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious, that is not there represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions by which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. The other parts of Scripture contain the commandments which God enjoined his servants to announce to us. But here the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God, and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, call, or rather draw, each of us to the examination of himself in particular, in order that none of the many infirmities to which we are subject, and of the many vices with which we abound, may remain concealed. It is by perusing these inspired compositions that men will be effectually awakened to a sense of their maladies, and at the same time instructed in seeking remedies for their cure. In a word, whatever may serve to encourage us when we are about to pray to God, is taught us in this book.'

Hooker says : ' The choice and flower of all things profitable in other books, the Psalms do both more briefly contain, and more movingly express, by reason of the poetical form in which they are written. The ancients, when they speak of the Psalms, use to fall into large discourses, showing how this part, above the rest, doth of purpose set forth and celebrate all the considerations and operations which belong to God ; it magnifieth the holy meditations and actions of divine men ; it is of things heavenly an universal declaration, working in them whose hearts God inspireth, an habit or disposition of mind whereby they are made fit vessels for receipt and for delivery of whatsoever spiritual perfection. All good necessary to be known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident to the soul of man, any wound

or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found.'

Luther called the Book of Psalms 'a small Bible;' and similarly Bishop Horne, in the preface to his well-known Commentary on the Psalms, designates it 'An epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purpose of devotion. . . . This little volume (he adds), like the Paradise of Eden, affords us in perfection, though in miniature, everything that groweth elsewhere, "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food;" and, above all, what was there lost, but is here restored, "the tree of life in the midst of the garden." That which we read, as matter of speculation, in the other Scriptures, is reduced to practice, when we recite it in the Psalms: in those, repentance and faith are described, but in these, they are acted; by a perusal of the former, we learn how others served God, but by using the latter, we serve Him ourselves.' Merrick describes them as 'a treasury, abounding with every kind of valuable doctrine and instruction.' Chalmers speaks of them as 'this rich and precious department of Scripture.' Horsley forcibly points out their important fitness for Christian use, not only from the considerations already advanced, but from the belief, shared by Augustine (whose commentary is founded upon the principle), and by many writers of ancient and modern date, that not only are there what are called Messianic Psalms, but that *all* the Psalms refer in their secondary application to the Messiah; that, in short, 'there is not a page in the Book of Psalms in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with the view of finding Him.' 'It is true,' adds this learned writer, 'that many of the Psalms are commemorative of the miraculous interpositions of God in behalf of his chosen people; for, indeed, the history of the Jews is a fundamental part of revealed religion. Many were probably composed upon the occasion of remarkable passages in David's life, his dangers, his afflictions, his deliverances. Of those which relate to the public history of the natural Israel, there are few in which the fortunes of the mystical Israel, the Christian church, are not adumbrated; and of those which allude to the life of David,

there is none in which the Son of David is not the principal and immediate subject. David's complaints against his enemies are Messiah's complaints, first of the unbelieving Jews, then of the heathen persecutors, and the apostate faction in later ages. David's afflictions are the Messiah's sufferings. David's penitential supplications are the supplications of the Messiah in agony, under the burden of the imputed guilt of sin. David's songs of triumph and thanksgiving, are Messiah's songs of triumph and thanksgiving for his victory over sin, and death, and hell.'

To this extent in the application of the Psalms we are scarcely prepared to go. It is, however, a question of extent; for that very many of the Psalms apply to Christ, is avouched in the New Testament; and the *principle* of this application being thus established beyond all controversy, the more extensively one is enabled fairly to carry it out, the more nutritive, edifying, and profitable the Psalms become to him, and the more essentially they contribute to establish his heart in faith and love.

The veneration for the Psalms has in all ages of the church been very great. The fathers assure us that in the earlier times the Book of Psalms was generally learned by heart, and that ministers were expected to be able to repeat them from memory; that psalmody was a constant attendant at meals and in business; that it enlivened the social hours and softened the fatigues of life. The Psalms were much in use at the Reformation; and they have, as Lord Clarendon observes, been ever thought to contain something extraordinary for the instruction and reformation of mankind. It is indeed remarked by Dr. Gray, that this Book of Psalms is exactly the kind of work which Plato wished for the instruction of youth, but conceived it impossible to execute, as being above the reach of human abilities: 'But this must be the work of a god or some divine person.'¹

The grand distinguishing characteristic of the Psalms is their spirituality. In them the soul holds direct and immediate communion with God. Forms and ceremonies are cast aside, times and places are forgotten, and the earnest spirit of the creature goes

¹ Τούτο δὲ θεῶ ἢ θείῳ οἶος ἂν εἴη.—*De Legibus*, ii. 657.

into the immediate presence of the Creator. There is no restraint but that arising from conscious guilt ; there is no veiling of the soul's real state. Every sin, every fear, every doubt, every want, every difficulty, every hope, every aspiration, is laid fully before God. He and He alone is praised as the source of all past mercies ; He and He alone is appealed to for all needful, present and future, mercies. 'Alike in the persecutions of his enemies and the desertions of his friends, in wretchedness of body and in the agonies of inward repentance, in the hour of impending danger and in the hour of apparent despair, it is direct to God that the Psalmist utters forth his supplications. Connected with this is the faith by which he everywhere lives in God rather than in himself. God's mercies, God's greatness, form the sphere in which his thoughts are ever moving ; even when, through excess of affliction, reason is rendered powerless, the naked contemplation of God's wonders of old forms his effectual support.'

As the Psalms are the natural addresses of the awakened and enlightened spirit to a present spiritual God, they are universal in their applicability. In whatever state the soul is, it will in them find appropriate language to express its feelings or wants. The whole church therefore—the church in every age, in every land, under every circumstance—has this precious book as its heaven-given liturgy. The old and the new meet and blend gloriously in the Psalms : the old, with its pompous but instructive ritual, and its gorgeous but suggestive imagery ; and the new, with its simple but sublime truths. Thus, standing midway between both covenants, and serving equally to the members of each as the handmaid of a living piety, the Book of Psalms is a witness of the essential identity of their primary and fundamental ideas.

Ninth Week—Second Day.

PARALLELISM.

Two days ago our attention was called to the general character of Hebrew poetry, and we may now proceed to explore its forms.

Some of the older writers persuaded themselves that they could find, in the Hebrew poetry, hexameter, pentameter,

alcaic, and other metres ; and some of later date have entertained us with their discoveries as to the rhythm of Hebrew verse. Lowth, although he derides these pretensions, yet admits the existence of something like measures in the Hebrew poetry, and endeavours to prove it, by pointing to certain licences of poetry which he thinks that only the existence of metre could authorize or exact—such as the equal dimensions of the verses in the alphabetic Psalms and poems ; the introduction of foreign words, and words little in ordinary use ; and the peculiar employment of certain poetical particles. But it will be observed, that Lowth does not suppose we can discover the Hebrew metre or rhythm, but only argues from these indications, that, although now lost, it once existed. How the knowledge of this might come to be lost, may be *felt* by any one who attempts, in reading aloud an old English poem—say one of Chaucer's—to give it the rhythm and metre which he knows it to possess ; and still greater becomes the difficulty of preserving these more transitory qualities of poetry, when, like the Hebrew, it was originally *written* without the vowels, which, in the usage of pronunciation, determine the rhythm and metre of any poetry,—such vowels as we now find in the Hebrew, and which declare to us the pronunciation of the words, having been inserted in a later and comparatively modern age.

But this opinion, that the Hebrew verse ever did possess metre, has to some good judges seemed extremely hazardous. The late celebrated French orientalist, M. de Sacy—than whom there could not perhaps be a better authority on a question of this nature—has produced various considerations, which he regards as rendering it most certain that the poetical books of Scripture never contained any metre properly so called ; but that the words only presented to the ear certain propositions, cadenced and harmonious, in which noun answered to noun, and verb to verb, so that these grammatical forms being reproduced in the same places, presented the sense under a regular parallelism. This appears to be also the view of Herder, who may be regarded as the greatest of the German writers on this subject. He does not find in the Hebrew poetry cadenced

and measured syllables, but simply periods artificially constructed and balanced, resembling a well-tressed garland, or a row of pearls arranged in just proportions.

We may conclude, then, that under the circumstances we have described, it would be impossible to re-establish the metre, and still less the rhythm, of the Hebrew verse, if it ever had either. And without absolutely denying that the Hebrew verse had some kind of metre, it is tolerably certain that such metre could not have been very rigorous, and consisted rather in a certain proportion and symmetry of equal sentences than in anything analogous to the regular measures of Greek and Latin verse.

Our great poems in blank verse, the Ossianic poetry, and such as the *Thalaba* of Southey—with the absence of anything like rhyme in those portions of Scripture which strike even the dullest sense as far other than prose—render us more familiar than many European nations with the idea of poetry without rhyme. Nevertheless there are some who may find it difficult to recognise the poetical character of a kind of verse, which has neither syllabic metre, rhyme, nor even verbal rhythm; and who reconcile the matter to their own understandings, by assuming the probability that the original possessed these common qualities of poetry, but has become divested of them in the process of translation. But it is not so. Ancient Hebrew had too much simple majesty, and too much gravity, for the jingling play of rhyme. Rhyme is in fact entirely foreign to the genius of ancient Hebrew poetry; and although a rhyme may here and there be met with, it may safely be pronounced to be the result of accident rather than design, or any part of poetical contrivance. It is of the more consequence to notice this, because later Hebrew poetry has both rhyme and metre—simply because the power in the use of the language, and the vigour of poetical conception, had so much waned, that the Spanish Jews of the middle ages resorted to these props to give to their effusions a poetical character.

We have thus indicated the characteristics which are *not* to be sought in Hebrew poetry, and have also pointed out

wherein its true distinction lies, namely, in the form in which the thoughts themselves are produced.

This form has usually in this country, since the time of Lowth, been called PARALLELISM, or the PARALLELISM OF MEMBERS—that is, the parallelism or juxtaposition of several parts of the verse or sentiment in relation to each other. But recent continental writers seem more disposed to use the very significant designation of THOUGHT-RHYTHM, which we take to be much better, as well as more intelligible.

Into the curious subject of this thought-rhythm, which constitutes the distinguishing characteristic of Hebrew poesy, it is not our purpose to enter fully, but it may be satisfactory to the reader to indicate its general nature by examples, as well as to define the different kinds into which it has been resolved.

First, there are what Bishop Lowth distinguished as *Synonymous Parallels*, being those in which the parallel lines correspond to each other by expressing the same sentiment in different, but nearly equivalent, terms. Bishop Jebb, who wrote a very interesting book on parallelism, under the title of *Sacred Literature*, objects to this designation, and calls them *Cognate Parallels*; while Dr. T. H. Horne, in his turn, adopts the title of *Parallel Lines Gradational*, from a periodical publication. One celebrated German writer¹ would rather call this *Original Parallelism*; while another of equal name² distinguishes it by the name of *Iterative*. We know not but that Horne's designation may be most exactly correct, but it is cumbersome; and we incline to prefer Jebb's, as, in this species of parallelism, the parallel members, although closely allied, are seldom more than in part synonymous, or even iterative. 'The fact appears to be,' says Jebb, 'that (with the exception of those rare instances, where, for the sake of emphasis, not only the *same sense* is repeated, but the *same words*) in the parallels commonly termed synonymous, the second or respon-

¹ DE WETTE, *Commentar über die Psalmen*. Heidelberg, 1836.

² EWALD, *Die Poetischen Bücher*. Gottingen, 1839. The large introduction on Hebrew Poetry is translated in Vol. i. of the *Journal of Sacred Literature*.

sive clause invariably diversifies the preceding clause, and generally so as to rise above it, forming a sort of climax to the sense.'

Speaking of this class of parallels or rhyme-thoughts, Ewald says, 'The most powerful and beautiful concord is that produced by the *echo of the whole sense*, where the same sense which has been poured forth as a complete proposition in the first member, mounts up again in the second in order to exhaust itself more thoroughly.' This is so far from being an empty repetition, that, on the contrary, the sense itself is always poured forth with greater completeness and force.

We may not enter into the precise classification of the different species of parallelisms under each genus, which some recent writers have proposed, but only indicate their general aspect. Bishop Jebb has clearly shown how the idea acquires strength, in the process of what some have regarded as iterative, or synonymous expression; and that even by reference to Lowth's own examples of synonymous couplets.

'O Jehovah, in thy strength the king shall rejoice;
And in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult!
The desire of his heart Thou hast granted him;
And the request of his lips Thou hast not denied.'

Here, certainly, the rise of the sense is undeniable. 'Salvation' is an advance upon 'strength,' and 'how greatly shall he exult!' an advance upon 'he shall rejoice.' Again, 'the request of his lips' is something beyond 'the desire of his heart'—it is desire brought into act. The gradation in the last members of the last two lines may not seem so plain, but is not less certain, it being a received canon of Biblical criticism, that a negative so expressed becomes a most strong affirmative. So 'Thou hast not denied,' is much stronger than simply 'Thou hast granted.' It means, 'Thou hast most abundantly or most assuredly granted.' It is an emphatic affirmative, just as 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless' means that He will assuredly hold him guilty.

The same principle of progress in the sense, under what, at the first view, may appear to be iterative expression, is instanced

in each of the couples of parallel lines which compose the celebrated passage, Isaiah lv. 6, 7 :

‘Seek ye Jehovah while He may be found ;
 Call ye upon Him while He is near :
 Let the wicked forsake his way,
 And the unrighteous man his thoughts :
 And let him return to Jehovah, and He will compassionate him ;
 And to our God, for He aboundeth in forgiveness.’

Here we perceive that men are invited to seek Jehovah, not knowing where He is, and on the bare intelligence that He may be *found* ; in the second line, having found Jehovah, they are encouraged to call upon *Him*, by the assurance that He is *NEAR* ; in the third line, ‘the wicked,’ the positive and presumptuous sinner, is warned to forsake his *way*, or habitual course of iniquity ; in the fourth line, ‘the unrighteous,’ the negatively wicked, is called to renounce the *very thought of sinning* ; while, in the last line, the appropriate and encouraging title of *OUR GOD* is substituted for the awful name of *JEHOVAH*, and simple *compassion* is heightened into *overflowing mercy and forgiveness*.

The very commencement of the Book of Psalms affords a striking example of this process of composition in Hebrew poesy :

‘O, the happiness of that man,
 Who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly ;
 And hath not stood in the way of sinners ;
 -And hath not sat in the seat of the scornful.’

In this instance, the exclamation with which the Psalm opens belongs equally to each line of the succeeding triplet. In the triplet itself, each line consists of three members ; and the lines gradually rise, one above the other, not only in the general sense, but specially throughout the correspondent members. To *walk*, implies no more than casual intercourse ; to *stand*, closer intimacy ; to *sit*, fixed and permanent connection ;—the *counsel*, the ordinary place of meeting or public resort ; the *way*, the select and chosen footpath ; the *seat*, the habitual and fixed resting-place ;—the *ungodly*, negatively wicked ; *sinners*, the

positively wicked ; the *scornful*, scoffers at the very name or notion of piety and goodness.

The sequel of the same Psalm is a further and equally striking illustration of this process. The reader may find numerous instances which evince the rise of the sense, or rather its enforcement and development, in even very simple propositions, where the sense is completed in two members, the second of which may seem, at the first view, to be merely iterative. Such abound in the Proverbs. For instance :

‘ My son, hear thy father’s reproof,
And forsake not thy mother’s law,’—i. 8 ;

where, in prose, father and mother would be more concisely mentioned together, in some such comparatively frigid sentence as, ‘ My son, take heed to the instructions of thy father and mother.’

Ninth Week—Third Day.

VARIETIES OF PARALLELISM.

ANOTHER form of parallelism in Hebrew sacred poetry is that in which the parallel members of the sentence are not synonymous, or even cognate, but *antithetic*. They frequently correspond to each other in a direct opposition both of expression and sense, but sometimes of sense only. This is not confined to any particular form ; hence the degrees of antithesis are various. Sometimes it is so exquisitely complete as to delight the imagination by the exact contraposition of word to word, singulars to singulars, and plurals to plurals, through the whole sentence ; while there are other instances of almost every kind of antithesis, down to merely a general disparity, with something of a contrariety between the two propositions. Instances of this species of parallelism abound in the Book of Proverbs, it being peculiarly adapted to adages, aphorisms, and detached sentences. The following may be quoted :

‘ Faithful are the wounds of a friend ;
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.’—xxvii. 6.

'A wise son rejoiceth his father ;
But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.'—x. 1.

Here the exact correspondence of the antithesis, in contra-
position of words, is as obvious to the eye as that of the sense
is to the ear. Every word has its opposite ; 'father' and
'mother' in the last being relatively opposite. The following
are of the same kind :

'The lip of truth shall be established for ever ;
But the lying tongue is but for a moment.'—xii. 19.

'The house of the wicked shall be overthrown ;
But the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish.'—xiv. 11.

Here the antithesis is very beautiful and effective. The
most substantial structure—the *house* of the wicked, shall be
thrown down ; but the frailest tenement—the *tabernacle*, the
booth or shed, of the righteous, shall endure.

In the following the antithesis is mainly in the sense, for
there are only two strictly antithetic *expressions*, 'memory' and
'name' being synonymous :

'The memory of the just is a blessing ;
But the name of the wicked shall rot.'—x. 7.

Although this species of parallelism is not so frequent in any
other book of Scripture as in Proverbs, many striking examples
may be found. A beautiful one occurs in Hannah's thanks-
giving song :

'The bow of the mighty is broken ;
But they who stumbled are girded with strength.
The full have hired themselves for bread ;
But the hungry have ceased to hunger ;
The barren also has born seven ;
But she who had many children has become fruitless.'

I Sam. ii. 4, 5.

The following are good instances from the Psalms :

'These in chariots, those in horses ;
But we in the name of Jehovah, will be strong.
They are bowed down and fallen ;
But we are risen, and stand upright.'—xx. 7, 8.

‘ For his anger endureth but for a moment ;
 But in his favour is life.
 Weeping may endure for a night ;
 But joy cometh in the morning.’—xxx. 5.

This kind of parallelism is also employed with great force and advantage by the Prophets. In both the following instances from Isaiah, the lines are clearly contrasted in the expression as well as sentiment. We forbear to point out the details, that the reader may have the pleasure of tracing them for himself ; and he will find it a very pleasant and profitable exercise to make collections of instances similar to those which we here and throughout adduce :

‘ In a little anger have I forsaken thee ;
 But with great kindness will I receive thee again.
 In a short wrath, I hid my face for a moment from thee ;
 But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.’
 Isa. liv. 7, 8.

‘ Behold, my servants shall eat ;
 But ye shall be famished.
 Behold, my servants shall drink ;
 But ye shall be thirsty.
 Behold, my servants shall rejoice ;
 But ye shall be confounded.’—lxv. 13.

In this antithetic parallelism there are several beautiful varieties, which we should learn to discriminate. There is sometimes such a contraposition of parts in the same line, as produces a double antithesis :

‘ There is that maketh himself rich, yet wanteth all things ;
 There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.’
 Prov. xiii. 7.

‘ I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
 As the tents of Kedar, as the pavilions of Solomon.’
 Song i. 5.

The last line is to be divided, and separately applied to the preceding : ‘ Black as the tents of Kedar, comely as the pavilions of Solomon.’

Another variety of this form of thought-rhythm requires a

part of the first line to be supplied in the second to complete the sentence :

‘ Only with pride cometh contention ;
But with the well-advised [cometh] wisdom.’—Prov. xiii. 10.

There are some instances of a kind of triplet in which the second and third lines are antithetical to the first, but cognate to each other :

‘ Behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart ;
But ye shall cry aloud for grief of heart ;
And in the anguish of a broken spirit shall ye howl.’—Isa. lxxv. 14.

There are also stanzas (so to call them) of four lines, in which the antithetical opposition lies between the parts, the latter distich being as a whole opposed to the former :

‘ Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be ;
Thou shalt look for his place, and it shall not be found.
But the meek shall possess the land,
And delight themselves in abundant prosperity.’
Ps. xxxvii. 10, 11.

This kind of antithetical stanza is sometimes extended even to five lines :

‘ Verily, the heavens shall vanish like smoke,
And the earth shall decay like a garment,
And its inhabitants in like manner shall die ;
But my salvation shall endure for ever,
And my righteousness shall not decay.’—Isa. li. 6.

There is another kind of thought-rhythm which Lowth called the Synthetic Parallel. In this, word does not answer to word, or sentence to sentence, as equivalent or opposite, but there is a correspondence or equality between the several propositions, in respect of the shape or turn of the whole sentence and of the constructive parts, such as noun answering to noun, verb to verb, negative to negative, interrogative to interrogative, member to member :

‘ He that putteth not his money out to usury,
And taketh not a bribe against the innocent,
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.’—Ps. xv. 5.

In the following instance the bi-membral construction occurs, each line comprising two distinct but corresponding propositions :

‘ Woe to them who call evil good, and good evil ;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness ;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter !’—Isa. v. 20.

Ninth Week—Fourth Day.

INTROVERTED PARALLELISM.

THERE is another kind of thought-rhythm in Hebrew poetry, the first discrimination of which is due to Bishop Jebb, who calls it introverted parallelism. In this the stanzas are so constructed, that whatever be the number of lines, the first line will be parallel to the last, the second to the penultimate, or last but one, and so on throughout, in an order that looks inward, or, to use a military phrase, from flanks to centre :

‘ Unto Thee do I lift up mine eyes, O Thou that dwellest in the heavens :
Behold, as the eyes of servants to the hands of their masters ;
And as the eyes of a maiden to the hands of her mistress ;
Even so look our eyes to Jehovah our God, until He have mercy upon us.’
Ps. cxxiii. 1, 2.

‘ I will ransom them from the power of the grave ;
I will redeem them from death ;
O death, I will be thy plague ;
O grave, I will be thy destruction.’—Hos. xiii. 14.

‘ And I saw as the colour of amber ;
As the appearance of fire round about within it ;
From the appearance of his loins even upward ;
And from the appearance of his loins even downward
I saw as the appearance of fire ;
And it had brightness round about.’—Ezek. i. 27.

Attentively regarded, many simple couplets may be so divided as to resolve themselves into this arrangement, and under this operation their significance is often brought out with increased force and plainness. Thus Psalm xviii. 20 :

'The Lord hath rewarded me according to my righteousness ;
According to the cleanness of my hand, hath He recompensed me,'

may be read thus :

'The Lord hath rewarded me
According to my righteousness ;
According to the cleanness of my hands
Hath He recompensed me.'

And so in the following :

'Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to thy loving-kindness ;
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies
Blot out my transgression.'—Ps. li. 1.

A very remarkable example, in which this introversion is carried out to considerable length, is cited and illustrated by Bishop Jebb :

'The idols of the heathen are silver and gold :
The work of men's hands ;
They have mouths, but they speak not ;
They have eyes, but they see not ;
They have ears, but they hear not ;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths ;
They who make them are like unto them ;
So are all they who put their trust in them.'

Ps. cxxxv. 15-18.

Here the parallelisms are easily marked out :

In the first line, we have the idols of the heathen ;

In the eighth, those that put their trust in idols :

In the second line, the fabrication ;

In the seventh, the fabricators :

In the third line, mouths without articulation ;

In the sixth, mouths without breath :

In the fourth line, eyes without vision ;

And in the fifth, ears without the sense of hearing.

This parallelism of the extreme members may be rendered yet more apparent by adjusting the lines themselves in quatrains, in the order of thought thus indicated :

'The idols of the heathen are silver and gold ;
The work of men's hand :

They who make them are like unto them ;
So are all they who put their trust in them.

They have mouths, but they speak not ;
They have eyes, but they see not ;
They have ears, but they hear not ;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.'

There is a remarkable form of Hebrew poetical thought-rhythm, coming, we suppose, within the class of cognate parallelism, and which is exemplified in what are called the Psalms of Degrees. This title some have thought they derived from being used at the *stations* in going up to Jerusalem at the festivals ; but more probably from the peculiarity of their construction—the *rhythm by gradation*—where the thought or expression of the preceding verse is renewed and carried on in the next :

1. I lift up my eyes unto the hills ;
From whence *cometh my help* :
2. *My help cometh* from Jehovah,
The Creator of heaven and earth.
3. He suffereth not my feet to be moved :
Thy keeper slumbereth not.
4. Lo, He *slumbereth not*, nor sleepeth,
The *keeper* of Israel.
5. *Jehovah* is thy *keeper* :
Jehovah, thy shade on thy right hand.
6. The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
7. Jehovah *preserveth* thee from all evil,
Preserveth thy soul.
8. Jehovah *preserveth* thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth for evermore.'—Ps. cxxi.

This kind of arrangement is not confined to the Psalms. A very early example of it may be detected in the song of Deborah (Judg. v.) ; and a later in Isa. xxvi., where verses 5, 6, read thus :

'The lofty city He *hath laid low*,
Hath laid it low to the ground.
The foot hath trodden it down—
The foot of the poor, the steps of the needy.'

It may be mentioned, among the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, that the pieces are occasionally alphabetical—a circumstance not capable of preservation in translation, though it is *indicated* in the names given to the parts or divisions of the 119th Psalm. The Hebrew alphabet has twenty-two letters; and certain of the Psalms are divided into twenty-two lines, or periods, or stanzas, each of which begins with a word whose initial letter answers to the corresponding letter in the series composing the Hebrew alphabet. Thus the word of the first member (whether line or stanza) of the poem will begin with א (A), the second with ב (B), and so on to ט (T), which is the last letter of the alphabet. There are extant in the Hebrew Bible twelve of these alphabetical odes;¹ of which four only² are *perfectly* alphabetical, every line in them being marked by the initial *letter*; while in the other eight, only every stanza is so distinguished. Two of the perfectly alphabetical Psalms are divided into ten stanzas of two lines each, except the last, which has three lines. Another, Lam. iii., has twenty-two stanzas of three lines each, and in this the same initial letter is repeated in each of the three lines that compose every stanza. In the fourth (Psalm cxix.), each of the twenty-two letters of the alphabet has assigned to it eight verses, each of which begins with the same letter. In all these four poems, the pauses required by the sense coincide with the pauses of the lines, as marked by the repetition of the initial letters, and of the stanzas as indicated by the change of initial letters. We need not point out how important this circumstance is for proving that Hebrew lyric poetry was divided into lines and stanzas—a fact which, without this unanswerable evidence, might have been open to question. These alphabetical or acrostical Psalms have subserved an important use. The general opinion is that of Lowth, that the plan was devised to assist the memory, and was thus confined to those compositions which consist of detached maxims or sentences without

¹ Ps. xxxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. 10-31. Lam. i. ii. iii. iv.

² Ps. cxi. cxii. cxix. Lam. iii.

any expressed order or connection. The same practice is said to have been prevalent, and does still prevail in some degree, among the Syrians, the Persians, and the Arabs.

As far as we know, the only translator who has attempted to give an idea of this usage is Mr. Montague, in his recent new metrical version of the Psalms.¹ This, however, is not in one of the proper alphabetical Psalms, but in another, the 100th, which the translator seems to have found best suited to his purpose. As a curiosity, we transcribe it here :

‘ All ye lands now come in throng,
 Ye ye joyful in the Lord :
 Come before Him with a song,
 Do Him homage, in accord.
 Earth’s all nations ! Him adore,
 Fear and serve Him evermore.

God provides for all our needs :
 He ’twas made us ; his we are :
 In his pastures Jah us feeds,
 Keeps us with a shepherd’s care.
 Paud to Him, raise every voice ;
 Mirthful, in the Lord rejoice.

Now Him in his temples sue :
 Offer up your thanks and praise ;
 Pay Him your oblations due.
 Quickening ye, your voices raise ;
 Raising high, his praise’s frame ;
 Singing, bless his holy name.

Truth and mercy are the Lord’s,
 Unto everlastingness ;
 Fast his works are, Wise his words,
 ’Fcellent Him all confess.
 Yield Him homage, and adore ;
 Zealous serve Him evermore.’

In closing these necessarily brief explanations respecting the

¹ Since the above was written there has appeared a new version, entitled ‘The Ancient Psalms,’ in which the author has attempted to convey the peculiarity of all the alphabetical Psalms in his translation. 1867. Edinburgh : Oliphants.

thought-rhythm which constitutes, in its various forms, the most peculiar characteristic of Hebrew poetry, it is important to remember, that this is a quality which *is not lost in translation*—is indeed scarcely affected by it, and is manifested in a book designed to be translated into all the languages of the earth. 'While the metrical arrangements of the Greeks and Latins, as depending solely on the language, are quite lost by translation into another tongue, the rhythmical structure of the Hebrew poem is unimpaired by translation, the most literal rendering of the words preserving best the beauty of their poetic arrangement.'¹

The thoughtful student of Scripture may take advantage of parallelism in his attempts to solve the meaning of some very difficult passages. On closely examining the structure of some portions of the poetical and prophetic books, he observes that each period, or sentence, usually consists of two members, between which there is such a close relation in meaning and mode of expression, that they throw light upon each other. The meaning of the two members is not always, perhaps it might be said is never, absolutely identical; but there is always such a close resemblance in both structure and meaning, that obscure and rare words are often explained thereby. The same idea usually lies at the foundation of both members. Sometimes the one expresses the idea negatively, the other positively; or the one in obscure phraseology, the other in plain; or the one figuratively, the other literally. The importance of parallelism to the interpreter is thus apparent. It gives him a general apprehension of the meaning which a word must bear; and enables him to select from several possible significations that which is appropriate to the particular place. Thus, in Ps. xi. 4: 'His *eyes behold*, his *eyelids try* the children of men.' The two members are not strictly identical in meaning; yet the former illustrates the sense of the obscure terms 'eyelids' and 'try.' So in the seventh verse of the same Psalm: 'For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: His *countenance doth behold* the upright.' The two members are not identical in meaning here either; but the former shows what signification we must attach to the terms 'countenance' and 'behold.' They must mean that God 'regards with approbation.' His face is turned toward them as a token of

¹ *Journal of Sacred Literature*, vi. 186.

pleasure and reconciliation. A remarkable example of the use of parallelism in explaining an obscure term, occurs in Isa. xli. 11 : 'Calling a ravenous bird from the east ; the man that executeth my counsel from a far country.' The word translated 'ravenous bird' is rare, and the meaning could not be ascertained were it not for the second member, from which we learn that it corresponds to 'the man that executeth my counsel,' that is, Cyrus. Parallelism is not uncommon in the New Testament. Examples may be seen in the following passages : John i. 12, vi. 35 ; Luke i. 20 ; 2 Tim. ii. 13, etc.

Ninth Week—Fifth Day.

TITLES OF THE PSALMS.

THERE are only thirty-four of the Psalms that want a title, and these thirty-four are called by the Jews, 'Orphan Psalms.' The titles indicate either their authors, or the superintendents of their music, or their historical occasions, or their class of poetry, or their class of music.

From the important and curious information which these titles contain, most readers of the Bible are desirous of knowing on what authority they rest,—in short, whether or not they are of the same authority as the sacred text itself. The use of summaries, which are known to be of no authority, at the head of the different chapters in many editions of the common Bible, has led many to place the titles in the same rank, and perhaps not a few suppose that these also were added by translators or editors ; while, on the other hand, the occurrence in them of the Hebrew words, together with the knowledge that, as this fact implies, the titles exist in the Hebrew copies, has led many to regard them as of the same authority with the text itself. The results of critical investigation have led to similar conclusions. Some support their authority absolutely ; others declare them to be unconditionally spurious ; while many, who allow their general authority and correctness, admit that some of them cannot be relied upon. We apprehend this last to be the general opinion ; but the reader will probably like to see the principal reasons on both sides of the question.

In behalf of the titles, the evidence of their antiquity is much pressed. The translators (the Septuagint) of the Old Testament into Greek, about 250 years before Christ, found the titles as we have them; but they were even then so ancient that the tradition of the real signification of some of them had been lost, as we may judge from the translations which they furnish being often destitute of meaning. If, however, the translators were Egyptian Jews, their remoteness from the temple and its services, producing a comparative unacquaintance with many matters respecting the devotional and musical services of the temple, may adequately account for their being sometimes at a loss in regard to the titles—distance of place having often in such matters the same effect as distance of time.

It is also alleged to have been always customary with the poets of the East to affix their names to their songs; and to show that this was an ancient custom among the Hebrews, we are referred to Exod. xv., Deut. xxxii. xxxiii., and Judges v. But although the poets are in these instances named, the name is historically produced in the narrative, and cannot be said to be exhibited in a title. It is, however, allowed that the inscription, Isa. xxxviii. 9, to Hezekiah's song of praise—'The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness'—is in favour of this opinion, as is also the practice among the prophets of designating their predictions by their names.

Many of the titles agree very well with the subject-matter of the Psalms to which they are prefixed. The number of those, however, in which no such accordance can be traced, is considerably greater.

It is the belief of many, that the titles were inserted from probable conjecture, or from tradition, by later hands; but those who contend for the high and original authority of the titles, ask how it happens, if this were the case, that all the Psalms were not provided with titles? If the titles were so supplied, they might as easily have been provided for those that have them not, as for those that have them; and hence this is urged as proof that nothing has been transmitted to us

but what was found already existing. Closely considered, however, this argument on the one side, has not more weight than that of the advocates for the late and conjectural insertion on the other, who simply remark, that with regard to the Psalms that want inscriptions, the authors of the titles had no conjectures to offer.

The most powerful argument against the titles is, that many of them are undoubtedly incorrect. Sometimes the author is incorrectly specified—as when several Psalms are ascribed to David or to Asaph, which undeniably belong to a later age. The reader who compares, for instance, the titles with the contents of Psalms xxxiv. liv. lvi. lvii. lix. lx., will be satisfied of this. Many of these titles are taken from the historical books, from which they are sometimes literally transcribed; yet why Psalm lvi. should be referred to the time ‘when the Philistines took him (David) in Gath,’ or the next Psalm to the time ‘when he fled from Saul in the cave,’ is not very apparent from the contents of these Psalms. The author of these titles seems to have somewhat blindly followed the course of the narrative in the First Book of Samuel. If, then, several of the titles can be proved to be false, who shall answer for the genuineness of the rest? This circumstance exposes them all to the suspicion of being spurious.

Most of the recent writers and expositors who have given heed to this curious and not unimportant subject, have been inclined to take a middle course. They suppose that to the ancient genuine titles of some of the Psalms, additions were in the course of time made of others, conjectural and often wrong, by means of marginal glosses and interpolations. The difficulty of distinguishing the genuine from the spurious titles still, however, remains; though to those experienced in critical inquiries, it is not altogether so great as might be supposed. Some good authorities regard all the titles that relate to music as being, without exception, of late origin. This we doubt; but there seems some probability in the notion, that the erroneous titles sprung from particular collections of Psalms, bearing the names ‘The Psalms of David,’ ‘Psalms of the sons of Korah,’ etc., as

being principally by them, but also containing Psalms by other writers ; and when these different portions were combined in the present grand collection, each sacred song was ascribed to the author after whom the whole of the portion to which it belonged was named—just as in the Chronicles and in the New Testament, the anonymous Psalms are ascribed generally to David.

Upon the whole, while so much obscurity hangs over the subject, while it is certain that many of the titles are incorrect, and while it is impossible in all cases to distinguish the genuine titles from the spurious, it may not be safe to rely upon the titles as of any canonical authority or value, though the indications which they offer are in many cases probable, and in some undoubtedly true.

I do not at all concur in the opinion expressed by Dr. Kitto, that many of the titles attached to the Psalms are incorrect, and consequently spurious. The point is no doubt a difficult one ; but I can confidently affirm that, to my mind, the arguments in favour of the genuineness of the titles are far stronger than those against them. They have antiquity in their favour, for we find them in the Septuagint version, which was made more than 250 years B.C. They have the all but unanimous opinion of the fathers of the church in their favour. They have great variety of form and mode of expression in their favour. I may also state that, after a very careful scrutiny, I have not been able to find a single case in which the objections urged against a title may not be satisfactorily met. The genuineness of the titles has been maintained by some of the ablest critics of modern times.

Ninth Week—Sixth Day.

EXPLANATIONS OF TITLES.

HAVING yesterday entered into general considerations regarding the titles of the Psalms, we may to-day invite attention to some of the most remarkable or least intelligible of the particular titles.

The title of the twenty-second Psalm exhibits two words which look somewhat rough to the eye, but which pass melli-

fluously over the tongue which pronounces them. Try. The words are AIJELETH SHAHAR. The signification is still more pleasant than the sound: 'The Hind of the Morning.' But there is nothing about the 'hind' or the 'morning' in the Psalm; nor even about the sun, which the Arabian poets sometimes designate by the analogous name of the Gazelle. The title cannot therefore refer to the subject-matter of the Psalm. Some, consequently, suppose it to be merely an indication of time; others imagine it to be the name of some musical instrument; while many conclude that it is the name of some other song, to the tune or melody of which this Psalm was to be sung. We usually designate our hymns and songs from their first words; this has led some to suppose by analogy that this and the like titles are derived from the words with which such songs commenced. But this is an unnecessary limitation. It would be sufficient to designate the piece, if 'the hind of the morning' were one of the first or principal things mentioned in it. An example of this may be found in David's elegy upon Jonathan, which is called 'The Song of the Bow,' simply because it contains the mention of a bow.¹ The same practice in the designation of their lyrical compositions exists among the Arabians.

Still more remarkable is the title of the fifty-sixth Psalm—JONATH-ELEM-RECHOKIM, which may be translated 'Dove of the distant Terebinth trees.' As in the previous instance, there is nothing in the Psalm itself to suggest a reason for this title; and we may therefore be led to conclude that the words formed the commencement or leading point of another song, the tune of which was well known, and according to which this was to be sung. The title, as translated, would indeed form a striking line of poetry by itself; and one feels some regret that nothing of those ancient songs remains, save the simple but expressive indications to be found in the titles of the Psalms. It should be added, however, that the interpretation of these words is very uncertain. The Vulgate makes it, 'The Dove of Dumbness (*i.e.* The Mute Dove) among strangers,' or 'in distant places,' by which David is understood. One interpreter

¹ See First Series, Thirty-fifth Week—Sixth Day.

contrives to make out a connection between the title and subject of the Psalm by constraining the former to mean, 'On the subjugation of foreign princes.' The reader may ask, how such different senses can be extracted from the same words. This we cannot explain without entering into philological details unsuited to these pages; but the mere presence of such material differences may enable the reader to realize some idea of the obscurities of the question.

In the title to the forty-sixth Psalm, we find the word ALAMOTH—which any one may guess, from the sound, means something pleasant. It does mean a 'maiden' or 'virgin.' There is, however, again, nothing about virgins in the Psalm, and it is therefore not thought that the title has any connection with the subject. Many have deemed it to be the name of some musical instrument, the nature of which we are now unable to discover. But some able writers on the point are inclined to refer this, and the other titles supposed to denote musical instruments, to the same class we have been indicating—that is, they are intended to refer to some melody or tune. The ablest German writer on this subject (Förkel), forcibly urges that, considering the simple state of Hebrew music, it is not likely that each song had its separate musical accompaniment. He appeals, very pertinently, to the custom of the old German Meister-singers (master-singers), who gave similar titles to their songs, such as *Jungfrau weiss* (Virgin mode); *Grund weiss* (Ground mode); and the like. It is certainly also a weighty objection to the interpretation of these titles as referring to musical instruments, that in this way we give to the Hebrews a far greater number of musical instruments than they were at all likely to possess—more than we find mentioned in the historical books or in the Psalms themselves. Many of the instruments thus specially denoted, may however have been only varieties of the common ones—particularly, it may be supposed, of the *kinnur*, 'harp,' or rather 'lyre.'

When the probabilities in such cases are nearly equal, it is well to adhere to the general opinion; but in the case before us the probabilities are scarcely equal, seeing that in 1 Chron.

xv. 20, the word *alamoth* is in such a manner connected with instruments of music, as to show that it could not itself have been a musical instrument. 'Psalteries (or harps) upon *alamoth*,' would be unintelligible if *alamoth* meant a musical instrument, but becomes very intelligible if understood of a particular tune so called.

That, however, some of the titles do denote musical instruments, appears to us abundantly clear—expressing doubtless the kind of instrument to which the Psalm was to be used as a musical accompaniment. Such is *NEGINAH* OR *NEGINOTH*, which occurs in the titles of several of the Psalms,¹ and which is commonly supposed to be a general term for all kinds of stringed instruments. Of these there were several varieties,



as we know from the Egyptian monuments, which furnish representations of instruments existing in the times of the Old Testament. Such instruments could not well have been unknown to the Israelites while in Egypt, among whom some of them may be supposed to have continued in use in after ages. They may, indeed, possibly have had some special instruments nationally their own, although even these probably bore a general resemblance to the Egyptian examples.

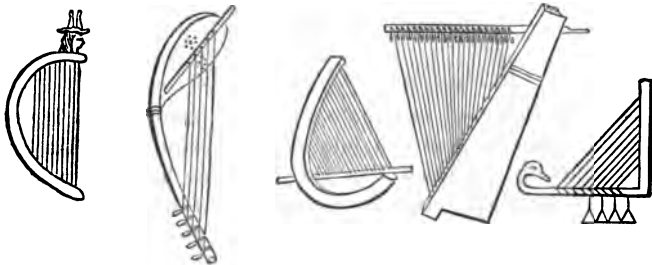
The variety of instruments of this kind in use among the Israelites, and employed in the temple service, is shown by the names employed to denote them, such as the *KINNUR*, the 'harp' of the authorized version, which seems to have been

¹ Psalms iv. vi. liv. lv. lxi. lxxvi.

a kind of lyre. This is much oftener mentioned in the Bible than any other musical instrument, and is known historically, as well as from the Psalms, to have been the favourite instrument of David, both when he fed his father's flock, and when



he sat upon the throne. There was also the NEBEL, which is generally taken to have been a kind of triangular harp, such as we see among the Egyptian examples; but which seems to



have comprehended the largest kinds of harp, such as we find also among the Egyptians. It is usually rendered by 'psaltery' in the authorized version. The ASOR, which occurs in Psalms xxxiii. 2, xcii. 3, and cxliv. 9, seems to have been a ten-stringed

nebel, and is translated 'an instrument of ten strings.' The GITTITH, which occurs in the title of three Psalms,¹ is generally conceived to be a musical instrument; and one would like to know something of it, as its name seems to suggest some connection with the city of Gath. It may be that when David was in that city, it attracted his eye—curious in such matters—and that he introduced it into his own country; and it is so mentioned by one of the prophets,² as to suggest that it was in particular use at the season of vintage. Some good authorities, however, doubt whether this gittith was any musical instrument, but conceive that it denotes a song composed for the vintage or for the Feast of Tabernacles, to the melody of which the Psalms which bear the name in their titles were to be played or sung.

The MAHALATH, which occurs in the titles of two Psalms,³



is generally supposed to denote a musical instrument. It was probably something of the lute or guitar kind. It has not been generally supposed that the Israelites had instruments of this description. But the prevalence of such instruments throughout the East, would alone suggest the probability that the Hebrews were not without them; and this probability is very materially strengthened by the evidence which the Egyptian monuments offer, that they were equally common in remotely ancient times among the near neighbours of the Jews. These

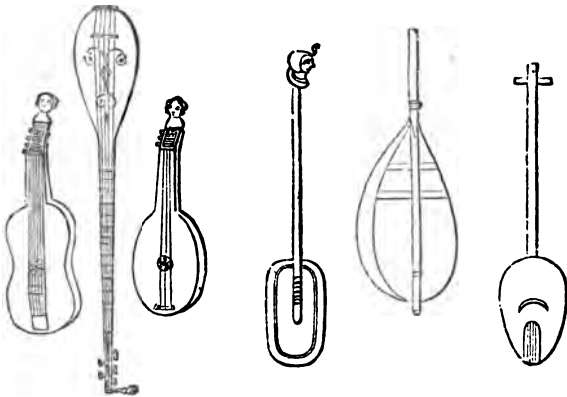
¹ Ps. viii. lxxxi. lxxxiv.

² Isa. xvi. 10.

³ Ps. liii. and lxxxviii.

ancient instruments are very similar to those now in use in Egypt, Arabia, and Syria; a fact which furnishes a strong corroboration of their illustrative value.

With a single exception, all the instruments of music that occur in the titles of the Psalms, are stringed instruments. This exception occurs in the title of the fifth Psalm, where the word NEHILOTH (or more properly NECHILOTH) probably denotes instruments of the flute or pipe kind, and would therefore signify 'to the music of pipes.' Instruments of this sort are repeatedly mentioned both in the Old Testament and in the New. The first instance occurs in 1 Sam. x. 5, which would imply that it came rather late into use, as nearly all the

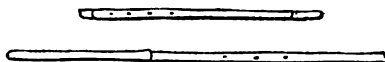


other principal instruments of music are named at much earlier dates. We may suppose that it was of foreign origin. From the texts in which this class of instruments is named, it appears they were chiefly employed on occasions of joy and pleasure. So much was this the case, that, under the oppression of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Jews complained that 'joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased.'¹ It was particularly used to enliven the periodical journeys to Jerusalem, to attend the great festivals;² and this practice of enlivening travelling companies with music, is at the present day common

¹ 1 Mac. iii. 45.

² Isa. xxx. 29.

in the East. There was, we are told on classical authority,¹ a kind of *plaintive* pipe in use among the Phœnician neighbours of the Jews; that they also had it, is probable from the use of such an instrument at solemnities of mourning. In Matt. ix. 23, our Saviour, finding the pipers present at the mourning for the ruler's daughter, orders them away, because the damsel is 'not dead.' To this also refers the regulation of the Jews, that



every one, however poor he might be, should have at least *two* pipes at the death of his wife. The use of this instrument is better known than its form. But we may probably regard it as an approximation to those of ancient Egypt, which, again, were very similar to those still used in Western Asia. These are seen to be single and double, as among the ancient Greeks. In the latter, the left pipe, having fewer holes, and emitting a



deeper sound than the other, served as a bass. This double pipe is still used in Palestine. The Scottish Missionary Deputation overtook, among the hills of Judah, 'an Arab playing with all his might upon a shepherd's pipe, made of two reeds.'

¹ ATHENÆUS, *Dicpnos*, iv. 174.

Ninth Week—Seventh Day.

AUTHORS OF THE PSALMS.

IF you stop the first ten persons you see coming out of church, and ask them 'Who wrote the Psalms?' it is likely that nine, and it is possible that all the ten, would answer, 'David.' The 'wise' may smile at this as 'a vulgar error.' An 'error' it doubtless is, yet not altogether a 'vulgar' one; for it is upheld by the Talmud, by many of the Fathers, and by some modern writers of good repute. Yet how can this be, seeing that the titles give the names of several other authors than David? Respecting the authority of the titles, we have already expressed our opinion; but even those who submit to that supposed authority find no difficulty in meeting this objection, by urging that the other names are not those of authors, but of persons to whom the compositions were sent or addressed by David for use in the temple services. So, for instance, when we read, 'Psalm *of* Asaph,' or '*of* the sons of Korah,' we should read, '*to* or *for* Asaph,' '*to* or *for* the sons of Korah,' simply indicating that the Psalms in question were addressed to them as masters and leaders of the choral services of the temple. There is no denying that the prefixed particle may denote *to*, *for*, or *of*; but in that case, as it is the same which is used when a Psalm is ascribed to David, it is plain that in such cases we may say 'a Psalm of David,' not '*to* David;' because there is no reason why Psalms should be addressed to him, and because any other interpretation would take from him even the Psalms to which his name is prefixed; and if it must be taken to mean *of* in his case, we have no right to make it signify something else in all other cases. Others who entertain this opinion as to the general authorship of David, surmount in another way the difficulty created by the presence in the titles of other names than his. This they do by the supposition, that the names belong not to the authors, but to persons whom

David, in composing these Psalms, prophetically represented. The Talmud, which is in favour of this view, particularly explains that David wrote these Psalms by tradition from, or in the succession of, or after the manner of, Moses, Heman, Jeduthun, Asaph, the children of Korah, and others still earlier—even up to Adam himself.

The general opinion does not, however, concede this exclusive authorship of the Psalms to David; but affirms that the titles denote authorship, and must be taken as furnishing the names of the authors. To this we assent, subject to the remarks already made upon the authority of these titles. In other words, we apprehend that the titles are intended to indicate as the authors the persons whose names they furnish. This must, however, be subject to one qualification, which is, that when we see a Psalm ascribed to 'the children of Korah,' it must be understood as the composition of one of that body; but as the name of the individual was unknown to the writer of the titles, he was content to ascribe it in a general way to the Korahites.

We must also qualify a remark lately made, by admitting, that in a very few instances the name is not that of the author, but of the subject. Looking at the contents, nothing can be plainer than that Psalm xxii. is not *by* David, but *of* or *concerning* David; and that Psalm lxxii. is not *by*, but *of* or *concerning* Solomon.

To Moses the titles ascribe only one Psalm—the ninetieth. But the Rabbis give to him also the ten Psalms that follow it, under the operation of a fantastic critical dogma laid down in the Talmud. This is, that all the pieces without names, must be regarded as belonging to the author whose name last occurred; and as the ten Psalms that follow the ninetieth are anonymous, they must necessarily belong to Moses. Many Christian interpreters have assented to this rule; but it is not now regarded as tenable. It is doubted if even this one Psalm should be ascribed to Moses. But the objections are of little weight. There is about it an antique air, which only those who read it in the original can appreciate. It is grave and full of

majesty and authority ; and both in thought and in language it stands more by itself than any other Psalm, while there is in it a series of allusions to the Pentateuch, particularly to the poetical passages, and especially to Deut. xxxii.

But, after all deductions, it is David who stamps his individuality on the Book of Psalms, as the most distinguished and fruitful contributor to the collection. Seventy-four—being only one less than half of the whole number of the Psalms—are in the titles ascribed to him. The ancient Greek Translation gives him ten more ;¹ and it is likely that the authors of that translation found his name in the Hebrew copies from which they translated. Besides this, some authorities assign to him a large portion of the thirty-four anonymous Psalms. It is, however, clear that several of the Psalms which bear the name of David cannot have been written by him, as they contain allusions to the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, to the Babylonish captivity, and to other events of a later age, besides occasional Chaldaisms which point to the same periods.² These palpable misapplications of David's name are, as already urged, calculated to shake our confidence in the correctness even of those appropriations, to which the like objections from the contents of the Psalms cannot be produced. Yet, doubtless, the great bulk of the Psalms refer to David ; and probably not a few of those not ascribed to him, or assigned to others, are his composition. Indeed, very many of them can with certainty be detected as his, by the style in which they are written, by the spirit which they breathe, or by the circumstances to which they refer. We hold it quite possible for one who has thoroughly studied the character, history, and mind of 'the man after God's own heart,' to fix with very little hesitation—we had almost said, with unerring certainty—upon the Psalms which really belong to David. They are distinguished by their sweetness, elegance, and grace ; by their depth of feeling, and tenderness of spirit. Sublimity has by some Biblical critics

¹ Psalms xxxiii. xliii. xci. xciv. xcix. civ.

² To this number belong Psalms xiv. lxix. ciii. cxii. and other 'Psalms of Degrees,' with cxxxix., and others.

been denied to him ; but if such Psalms as xviii. xix. lx. lxxv. be not sublime, where is sublimity to be found ?

Twelve of the Psalms are ascribed to Asaph.¹ This Asaph is doubtless the same who appears in history as David's master of sacred song, and as a poet, with the honourable title of seer.² Of these Psalms, however, it does not seem as if more than two (the fiftieth, and perhaps the seventy-third) are rightly given to him, as all but these bear marks of a later time. Judging from these two, Asaph excelled in didactic poetry, and the style and sentiments are equally admirable. If it were needful to contend for the authority of the titles, it might be urged, that the other Psalms bearing Asaph's name are not necessarily indicated as being by the man so called, but that they were composed in later days by the musical choir formed by his descendants, by whom it was considered a sufficient distinction to affix to them their ancestor's name, as a family mark.

But with respect to those Psalms which bear the name of Asaph, yet obviously belong to a later age, as well as to those which, in the same case, exhibit the name of David, we must not conceal from the reader that all difficulty has by some been met by the allegation, that such Psalms were written in the spirit of prophecy. Undoubtedly these and the other psalmists were endowed with the prophetic spirit ; and if we conceived ourselves bound by the authority of the titles, this would be a very reasonable and proper solution of the difficulty : but since we are not so bound, and cannot depend upon that authority, we cannot safely neglect the marks of time which the Psalms themselves afford.

The Psalter contains no Psalms more beautiful than the eleven ascribed to the sons of Korah³—a Levitical family set apart for the choral services of the temple. Their Psalms are distinguished for animated feeling, rapidity of movement, and loftiness of conception. Some, however, deny their claim to

¹ Psalms l. lxxiii.-lxxxiii.

² 1 Chron. vi. 39, xv. 17, xvi. 5 ; 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

³ Psalms xlii. xliv.-xlix. lxxxiv. lxxxv. lxxxvi. lxxxviii.

the authorship of these Psalms, and contend that they were only committed to them for the purpose of being set to music. But we have already expressed the grounds of our conviction, that the inscriptions are *intended* to denote authorship. That most of the Psalms belong to the period of the exile and restoration, is no argument against the claims of the Korahites, as the Levitical orders established by David were maintained even to the time of the second temple.

It appears from 1 Chron. vi. 33, 44, that among the Levitical singers of the time of David were two men named Heman and Ethan; and these are, doubtless, the same persons to whom the authorship of the eighty-eighth and eighty-ninth Psalms is ascribed. They are, perhaps, also the same persons who in another place are celebrated for their wisdom. ⁴ It is thought, however, that both these Psalms, or at least the eighty-ninth, belong to a much later age, and could not have been written by contemporaries of David.

The great name of Solomon appears at the head of two Psalms; ³ but he can hardly have been the author of either of them: of the first he may have been the subject, but not the author; and the title may be considered so to indicate him.

These are all the authors named in the titles of the Psalms. The old Greek translation, the Septuagint, has more names of authors; and it receives much attention in such matters, from the probability, that the particulars which it preserves were found in the old Hebrew copies used in its preparation. The names of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah, are those that thus occur.

Attempts have been made to determine, chiefly from internal evidence, the authorship of the Psalms that bear no name; but the result of such endeavours must always remain uncertain. In this way, for example, the forty-fifth Psalm has been assigned to Mordecai, and the forty-sixth to Hezekiah. The first of these appropriations, which would make the contents of the Psalm refer to the Persian king and to Esther, may, in a rapid glance over the Psalm, bear an aspect of probability; but on

¹ 1 Kings iv. 31.

² Psalms lxxii. and cxxvii.

a closer view, expressions appear which could not be applied to either of these personages, and it is, besides, unlikely that so rigid a Jew as Mordecai would use the terms employed in this Psalm with regard to any heathen king, not excepting such a king as Ahasuerus.

After all, it is well to remember that 'it is of less consequence to determine precisely by whom the Holy Spirit delivered these oracles, since we have indubitable evidence of the sacred character of the whole book; for it is collectively cited in Scripture (generally by the name of David), and is prophetic in almost every part; and several of the persons who are supposed to have contributed to the composition of the book, are expressly represented as prophets in Scripture.'¹

¹ GRAY'S *Key to the Old Testament.*



Tenth Week—First Day.

THE LONGEST PSALM.—PSALM CXIX.

WE desire this day to select one Psalm for particular notice ; and that there may be no reason to complain of its being but one, we take the longest of all—one that is as long as a dozen others of average length. This is the hundred and nineteenth.

We have already noticed it as one of the alphabetical Psalms, being divided into as many equal parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and the first word of all the verses in every one of these parts commencing with the same letter. We shall not dwell on this remarkable arrangement, further than to notice the evidence it furnishes of the care which has been taken to preserve the sacred text of God's word undisturbed ; for here, in a divine poem of considerable length, and of such antiquity as to be older by many ages than the celebrated writings of the Greeks and Romans, the alphabetic structure has been so preserved that not one of the initial letters has been lost or displaced.

The remarkable perfection of the several parts of this Psalm, and yet their connection with each other, is well entitled to our admiration. 'Wherever we begin, we seem to be at the commencement ; and wherever we stop, the sense is complete ; and yet the poem does not consist of detached sentences, but is a whole, consisting of many parts, all of which seem necessary to its perfection.'¹

It is another peculiarity of this Psalm, that long as it is, and various as it is, the uniform and consistent object is to extol and magnify the law—the word of God. There are in the entire 176 verses not more than two or three in which there is not some word or other signifying the law of God. Ten differ-

¹ Note to the translation of CALVIN'S *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. v. p. 51.

ent terms, correctly represented in our authorized version, are employed for the purpose,—the *law*, the *testimonies*, the *statutes*, the *commandments*, the *judgments*, the *precepts*, the *righteousness*, the *ordinances*, the *word*, and the *truth* of God ; and sometimes two of these terms present themselves in the same verse. These terms partly apply to, or rather they comprise, that intercourse between God and the soul of the believer, which gives to it a law of spiritual life. But there is doubtless a primary reference in them to the written law—the word of God. And what was that at the time this Psalm was written? It could have comprised little more than the five Books of Moses. These to a pious Jew might be, and were, when rightly understood, full of heavenly instruction. This portion, however, comprises not quite one-fifth of the word of God as we have it in our possession. We have, besides it, the Historical and Poetical Books, the Prophecies, the Gospels, the Epistles ; and if the Psalmist, knowing only so small a portion of the Sacred Scripture, was so deeply impressed with a sense of its incalculable value, with what intensity of appreciation—with what strong emotions of thankfulness—should not we regard our richer treasure in the completed word ! It may not be that the expressions of our reverence should surpass those of the Psalmist, or our feelings of joy and love be more intense than his. It is enough if, with far greater, or at least with far riper cause, we can but come near him in his sense of the unutterable value of the Lord's testimonies, if they become to ourselves, as they were to him, 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path ;' and if we can but say with him, 'O how love I thy law ! it is my meditation all the day.' But we are left without excuse, if, with the greater blessing, our thankfulness is less than his ; and if, with our higher obligations, our emotions, in presence of the completed manifestations of God's will and way, are but faint compared with his.

There is, perhaps, no equal portion of the Old Testament which is more *nourishing* than this noble Psalm, a quality it derives from the striking manner in which it sets forth the workings of true godliness in the regenerated soul. This was

perceived by Jonathan Edwards, who, in his work on the *Religious Affections*, says: 'I know no part of the Holy Scriptures in which the nature and evidence of true godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated as in the 119th Psalm. The Psalmist declares his design in the first verse of the Psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellence of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law—that great expression and emanation of holiness to the creature—is all along represented as the object of the love, the complacence, and the rejoicings of the gracious nature which prizes God's command "above gold, yea, the finest gold," and to which they are "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb."'

It is this quality of the Psalm which so frequently leads us to pause in the perusal of it, that we may ponder over some sacred maxim, treasure up some golden sentence, or try our own heart by some holy rule. We have been particularly interested in noting this process in Dr. Chalmers's exercises upon this Psalm, some sentences selected from which afford us a most desirable opportunity of illustrating the statement.

'Verse 18¹ is among the most precious of our scriptural notabilia. I indeed feel myself a stranger, and have marvellously little sympathy with my fellows; but hide not from me the knowledge of thy will, nor suffer me to hide myself from those of my own flesh. I have long fixed on verse 20² as the most descriptive of my own state and experience of any in the Bible. What straining have I had after a right understanding of God and his ways, more especially the way of salvation!'

'Verses 25³ and 32⁴ I mark as eminent among the notabilia

¹ 'Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.'

² 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.'

³ 'My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken Thou me according to thy word.'

⁴ 'I will run the way of thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart.'

of Scripture. How strikingly descriptive of myself, and I believe of every natural man, that "my soul cleaveth unto the dust," unto the things of sight, and sense, and materialism—so as to be dead unto God and the things of faith! Quicken and make me alive unto thyself, O God.'

'Verse 37¹ has long been one of my notabilia. Let me shrink from the first beginnings of evil, by shutting or turning away the inlets of temptation; and O that, instead of being so alive unto sin, I were made alive unto God, and to the righteousness which He loves! Let me dedicate myself unto Thee, and be established in every good word and work, that I may see my way clearly before me.'

'I should rank verse 54² among the notable sayings of Scripture. Give me, O Lord, to delight in thy commandments, and let my meditations of Thee and of thy statutes be sweet to my soul. Let my relish for the law of God, and my practical observance thereof, keep pace the one with the other. They have a reciprocal influence. If I have pleasure in thinking of God's law in the night watches, it is because I keep God's precepts.'

'The first clause of verse 68³ is a notable. Let not the provocations of calumny draw me from thy good word and way. . . . The first clause of verse 73⁴ is also a notable. O that I felt as I ought the subordination and dependence of myself, as a thing formed, on Him who formed and fashioned me! . . . What a noble text is verse 83⁵ and let it henceforth be one of my notanda. My God, in the midst of injustice and hostile machinations, let me adhere to Thee with firm trust and purpose of heart.'

'Verse 105⁶ is one of the notables of Scripture. Let me

¹ 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken Thou me in thy way.'

² 'Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.'

³ 'Thou art good, and doest good.'

⁴ 'Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me.'

⁵ 'For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.'

⁶ 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'

dedicate myself to thy service ; and bind me to that covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure. . . . Verse 130¹ ranks high among the notanda of Scripture. We have here the self-evidencing power of the Bible. Give me through it, O Lord, of that wisdom which Thou revealest unto babes. Truly I long for brighter assurances and larger manifestations. Let me read and pray for them. . . . Verse 133² is also one of the Scripture notanda. Deliver me, O God, from the injustice which I fear ; but however this may be, let nothing so offend me as that I shall lose my hold of thy statutes. . . . I would make a notable of verse 162.³

‘What a high place belongs to verse 165⁴ among the notabilia or memorabilia of Scripture ! and verse 166⁵ is one of the most important that can be adduced for the theology which advocates the inseparable alliance of faith and works, *ab initio*, or from the very commencement of the Christian life.’

Any earnest reader of the Psalm will make to himself an equally copious, but probably different list of notabilia, and when he returns to it again, another different still ; for, according to the state of the mind and spirit at the time we read, texts which impressed us but lightly yesterday, will to-day strike home to the heart ; and others which to-day scarcely detain our thoughts, shall to-morrow arrest our minds with a giant’s grasp. This is true, indeed, of all Scripture, but is more perceptible in a piece like this, composed of sentences that seem but loosely connected with each other. And it is this quality which gives Scripture its exhaustless variety, and always freshening interest. We may read it continually, we may even learn it by heart, and yet always find something new, something very precious, that has before escaped our notice.

¹ ‘The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple.’

² ‘Order my steps in thy word : and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.’

³ ‘I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.’

⁴ ‘Great peace have they which love thy law ; and nothing shall offend them.’

⁵ ‘Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.’

Those who dig this mine always come away with gold; and with more the last day than the first. We knew one who proposed to mark the Scripture notabilia with different inks at each reading through the sacred volume: but in the course of time almost every verse became thus marked; the different colours of the ink serving to denote the impressions he had received at each reading, from texts which he had at previous readings passed over.

Tenth Week—Second Day.

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.—STATEMENT.

THERE are many awful things in the Psalms. Among these are the very strong expressions of wrath and imprecation against the enemies of God and his people which some of them contain. The most remarkable instances are Psalms lix. lxxix. cix. The objections taken, on this ground, to the inspiration of Scripture, are, to some minds, more formidable than any other, or are at least attended with some peculiar difficulties. They are felt alike by all classes of readers; and if they do not absolutely unsettle the faith of any believer in the Bible, they occasion misgivings and painful doubts, and create a pain in reading aloud, or even privately, and a disposition to pass over the portions of Scripture in question. A circumstance which increases the perplexity, is that the imprecation is often found in close connection with language which indicates the firmest trust in God, or a high state of devotional feeling. It cannot easily be detached from things which seem to have no possible affinity with it. How can feelings so opposite co-exist?

The imprecation of calamity upon another is, again, apparently at war with some of the better feelings of our nature, and runs counter to some of the common sentiments of compassion within us. It would seem to be opposed to the

dictates of even natural religion; for we see that God sends his rain upon the just and the unjust, and that He is continually doing good to those who deny his authority or blaspheme his name. But, above all, it would seem to be wholly adverse to the spirit of the New Testament, which teaches the most comprehensive charity—love to enemies, forgiveness of injuries, and blessing in return for cursing. How are we to reconcile this loving spirit of the New Testament with the fearful imprecations of the Old? When there is such a want of harmony in the different parts of the Scriptures, how can the whole be from that perfect Being, whose precepts must be always self-consistent?

The perception of these difficulties has given occasion to much discussion respecting the 'Imprecatory Psalms,' and has induced various attempts to soften or to explain away their literal significance. It cannot be said that any of these well-meant but mistaken endeavours has been successful.

The most plausible is that which suggests that many of the passages which appear in the English version as imprecatory, or as expressing a wish for the infliction of evil, should be regarded merely as declaratory of what will certainly take place in regard to the wicked. This proceeds chiefly on the ground that, in the original, the verbs are in the future tense, whereas our translation has given an optative or imprecatory signification,—the Hebrew language having, it is urged, no peculiar form to express the various senses of the optative. But what, then, shall be said of the numerous passages where the verb is in the imperative? For example, 'Pour out thine indignation upon them; let thy wrathful anger take hold upon them.' Psa. lxi. 24, 25, also lv. 9. What shall be affirmed in relation to those texts where they are pronounced blessed who take vengeance upon an enemy? 'Happy shall he be who rewardeth thee as thou hast served us! Happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!' Again, in what manner shall we explain or vindicate those passages where the righteous are described as looking with complacency, feasting their eyes, as it were, upon the

calamities of their oppressors? ‘The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.’

From such instances, we see that the difficulty would remain elsewhere in its full extent, even if we were permitted to render such passages in a declaratory or prophetic sense, which are now rendered as expressing a wish or desire. But the affirmation itself, in regard to the Hebrew language, on which this explanation is founded, is untenable; for there *are* forms of the verb in Hebrew, and there are connected particles, which oblige us to translate by the terms *let, may,* and others, expressive of wish or desire; and it is often, indeed, the case that the context will admit of no other rendering.

Another mode in which it has been attempted to remove the difficulty, is to consider this as a peculiarity of the old dispensation—as one of the things engrafted upon the Mosaic economy, which the Christian dispensation does not recognise; as being, indeed, consonant with the general spirit of the Hebrew theocracy, but which a clearer revelation would annul.

We must confess that we long satisfied ourselves with this argument, and retain a lingering inclination towards it. But we must admit that the difficulty is more efficiently and boldly grappled with by a living American divine,¹ whom we shall mainly follow in this investigation. He argues that God is the Author of both dispensations, and the general spirit of the two must be the same. We ought not to vindicate one Testament at the expense of another. What is essentially bad at one period, must be so at all times. It is not less wrong for Joshua to indulge in malice towards the Canaanites, than it is for the Apostle Paul towards Nero. Cruelty is no more tolerated in the Pentateuch than it is in the Epistles. He has not been a careful reader of the Book of Deuteronomy who has failed to observe the special care which God took to impress upon the hearts of the Israelites the importance of treating

¹ Professor B. B. EDWARDS, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for February 1844. See also HENGSTENBERG on the subject, in the Appendix to his *Commentary on the Psalms*.

kindly, not only the widow and the orphan, but the stranger, the Egyptian, the hired servant, who was not of their own nation. No small part of the Levitical law is taken up with commands and appeals, designed to counteract the narrow and selfish spirit of the Hebrews.

Besides, the principle questioned runs through the entire Scriptures, the New Testament as well as the Old. 'Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil. May the Lord reward him according to his works.' It is not easy to see how this differs materially from the imprecations in the Book of Psalms.

It has, however, been supposed by some that the passages in question are to be understood in a spiritual sense; that the reference to individuals is not real but imaginary, or assumed for the time being, and for an ultimate purpose wholly different from what lies on the face of them—that is, that we are to apply these various maledictions to our spiritual foes, imprecating on them the terrible calamities which were apparently, but only apparently, intended for the personal enemies of the sacred writers. This theory can scarcely be deemed to need refutation. Whither would such a principle of interpretation carry us? And if Doeg, Ahithophel, and Alexander the coppersmith were not real persons, what were they?

Others are content to take the imprecations as they stand, but they are reluctant to allow that any other than temporal calamities are contemplated, or that there is any allusion to such as may affect the soul in a future state. We would willingly go with those persons—willingly stop where they do. But we are unable to perceive how the principle in the one case differs from that in the other. If we pray that a particular person may 'go down alive and instantly into the grave,' and that the direst plagues may fall upon his family, until his very name and memory be blotted out, do we not necessarily include those heavier evils to which the soul is exposed hereafter? It seems to be a distinction without a difference. Many passages, too, are general in their character, and do not appear to be limited to punishments which are specific in their nature, or temporary in their duration.

This seems a plain *statement* of the case ; to-morrow we may look for the *justification*.

Tenth Week—Third Day.

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.—JUSTIFICATION.

It is now necessary to produce the considerations which justify, or which go in a great measure, if not wholly, to explain and account for the strong language occasionally used by the sacred writers, which yesterday engaged our attention.

The principle on which this must be done, may be best exhibited by two or three illustrations.

Doeg, an Edomite herdsman in the time of Saul, slew eighty-five unarmed, helpless priests, whom he knew to be wholly innocent of the charge made against them, and when no one else dared to lay hand upon these consecrated servants of the Lord. And with this he was not satisfied ; every woman and child, every breathing thing, fell under his murderous knife. Does not the very mention of this atrocity stir up feelings which cannot be repressed, and which are only rendered more poignant by reflection upon the attendant circumstances ?

The slaughter of the children of Bethlehem by Herod, another Edomite, was an act of gratuitous cruelty which the imagination utterly refuses to carry out into the details. The shriek of the frantic Rachel in every dwelling where there was a little child to be struck down, is all that the heart can hear. Towards the author of this massacre, every reader of the history, from that day down to this, has had but one feeling. The horrors of conscience which, as stated by Josephus, Herod suffered on account of his wife, Mariamne, and which almost antedated the pains that know no end, do not awaken the least sympathy for him. A happy end to that turbulent and blood-stained life, would have shocked our sense of right and justice.

The woman who wished the head of the revered forerunner of our Lord to be brought to her in a dish, who desired to glut

her cruel and adulterous eyes with a sight which would have curdled the blood of any one else, has excited a feeling in every reader's breast, that no lapse of time has in any degree diminished. The simple words of the gospel narrative are enough. We need no word of commentary. Every right-minded man has one in the living fibres of his heart.

The striking of a great bell at midnight in Paris, was the signal of a deed at which men shudder now, at the distance of nearly three hundred years. It is a night long to be remembered. It needs no record in the page of history. It is engraven in ineffaceable characters upon the moral sense of all Protestant Christendom. It was an outrage upon the nature which God has given to his creatures—an outrage which admits of no apology, and which necessarily demanded an atonement. And there were those who, in the horrors of the French Revolution, beheld the cup of retribution pressed to the lips of the nation stained with this blood; and when they saw her compelled to drink the very dregs, they felt that a debt to divine justice had been paid, God's moral government had been vindicated, and his word had come to pass: 'They who sowed the wind *had* reaped the whirlwind.' The distance of time made no difference in their view. The respite was scarcely so long as that afforded to the doomed Canaanites. Centuries are but years in the life of a nation.

Now, what is the character of the principle manifested? what the nature of the emotions with which such transactions as these are regarded?

A primary element in this state of feeling is *indignation*. Before we have had time to reflect, there is an instant, a spontaneous burst of anger towards the wrong-doer. We cannot prevent it if we would. It is prior to all deliberation. In its first outbreak it is beyond control. It is outraged nature, and will have vent. Another element is *compassion* towards the injured party. We have an intuitive pity for weakness crushed to the dust, for innocence betrayed and violated. The wailing cry of infancy is in our ears; the white locks of age, dragging in the dust, are in our sight. Another principal ingredient is

the sense of *justice*. When a crime of extraordinary atrocity goes unpunished, we feel that justice is defrauded of its due. We are indignant that so great a wrong should go unredressed. While the crime is unatoned, we have a feeling not only of insecurity, but of justice having been violated. Public order is disturbed. A shock has been given to that sense of rectitude which is common to man. *This* is not of momentary duration, as the indignant or compassionate feeling may be. It grows stronger with the lapse of time, and reflection only adds to its intensity. When a great wrong has been committed, nothing suffices to calm the perturbation of our moral nature until the grievance has been redressed. A voice within us calls imperatively for reparation, whether we or others are the authors of the deed. We secretly desire the speedy infliction of the just penalty upon ourselves if we are conscious of guilt, and on others, if they are the evil-doers. And what we thus claim by an irrepressible instinct of our moral nature, may we not, on suitable occasions, *express in language?*

This, reason as we may, is an original principle of our nature; a simple and ultimate fact. Of being such, it has all the marks that can be affirmed in regard to any attribute of our nature. It is instantaneous in its manifestations; its movements are rapid as the light. It gives no notice of its coming, neither can it be stayed. It is also universal. It has shown itself in all ages, in every state of society, and in every period of human life, among the rudest and the most refined. Whenever the voice of a brother's blood has cried from the ground, it has found an answering echo in every bosom, no matter whether in the midst of the most polished society or in the remotest outskirts of barbarism.

This feeling is, however, not necessarily accompanied by any ill-will or malice towards the offender. An atrocious crime has been perpetrated in our neighbourhood. We have the strongest sympathy for the injured party, and indignation towards the wrong-doer. We unite in all proper measures to bring him to condign punishment. If we do not in so many words imprecate calamities upon him, we feel and we perform what amounts to

the same thing. We rejoice to hear that he is apprehended, and that justice will have its course. If he is proved to be guilty, we are disappointed if he escape; and we strongly desire that he may suffer the punishment of his deeds. But all this is without any desire to witness the sufferings of any human being, or that these sufferings in themselves should be felt. We have no malice or private revenge to gratify. The absorbing emotion is for the good of society. We have the persuasion that, if the criminal escape, the bonds that hold men together will be weakened, if not destroyed. That there may be this entire freedom from personal ill-will, is shown by the fact that feelings precisely similar—at least in kind—are awakened towards an offending contemporary or neighbour, and towards a notorious culprit who lived ages ago, or who may now be living in the uttermost parts of the earth, and whose punishment or escape from it cannot be of the least personal concernment to us.

Shall we say that such a feeling is sinful? May it not rather be the evidence of a generous sympathy with mankind, of a finely educated conscience? Not to possess this moral sympathy may indicate a slow, or cold, or pusillanimous spirit, a dulness of spiritual apprehension, and the absence of any keen desire that the disorders in God's kingdom should be rectified.

The connection of these considerations with the imprecations in the Psalms, will be by this time clear to the reader. If it does not account for them all, it lies at the foundation of a large portion of them, by showing that these imprecatory passages are justified by a primary and essentially innocent feeling of our nature. If we were placed in the position of the sacred writers, we should feel, and properly feel, as they felt. The sight of the shameless cruelty of an Edomite herdsman, if it did not dictate an imprecatory poem, would assuredly awaken the feelings on which that poem is founded. The impartial spectator, as he stood upon the smoking ashes of Jerusalem, and saw the Edomites as they stimulated the fierce Chaldeans to 'raze' the Holy City to its foundations, and heard them suggest new and ingenious methods of cruelty, would join in the emotions that called forth, if he did not in the words that

express, the maledictions of the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm.

Let any right-minded reader look at the lives of Antiochus Epiphanes, of the first Herod, of some of the Roman Emperors, of the Fouquier Tinville and the Carriers of the French Revolution, and fail if he can to rejoice, yea exult, when the same cup is poured out to them which they had mingled for others. The feeling in the minds of those who penned the fifty-fifth and sixty-ninth Psalms was not malice. It was the indignation excited by cruelty and injustice, and the desire that crime should be punished. They doubtless followed the precept, 'Be ye angry, and sin not.' If we were acquainted with the circumstances which called forth the imprecatory Psalms, we should doubtless find, as the cause or occasion, striking cases of treachery, practised villany, and unblushing violation of law.

The truth seems to be, then, that it is only a morbid benevolence, a mistaken philanthropy, which takes offence at these Psalms; for in reality they are not opposed to the spirit of the gospel, or to that love of enemies which our Lord enjoined. Resentment against evil-doers is so far from being sinful, that we find it exemplified in the meek and spotless Redeemer himself, as when He looked around upon the Pharisees 'with *anger*, being *grieved* for the hardness of their hearts.'¹ If the emotion and its utterance were essentially sinful, how could Paul wish the enemy of Christ to be accursed;² or say of his own enemy, 'The Lord reward him according to his works?' How then could he say to the high priest, 'God shall smite thee, thou whited wall?'³ or how could Peter say to Simon the sorcerer, 'Thy money perish with thee?'⁴ Above all, how then could the spirits of the just in heaven be represented as calling upon God for vengeance upon their enemies and persecutors?⁵ Assuredly it is not in the Old Testament only that God is set forth not only as a Father, but as a Judge and Vindicator—as one 'angry with the wicked every day.' The God of the New Testament is also 'a consuming fire';⁶ and it is still

¹ Mark iii. 5.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

³ Acts xxiii. 3.

⁴ Acts viii. 20.

⁵ Rev. vi. 10.

⁶ Heb. xii. 29.

‘dreadful to fall into the hands of the living God;’¹ and to those who fall away after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is ‘a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to consume the adversaries.’ The divine righteousness has indeed lost so little of its rigour under the new covenant, that he who despises the far richer means of grace offered under it, becomes the heir of a much sorer punishment than he who perished under the old law.²

Let us be satisfied. The Bible, even here, where many have deemed it most vulnerable, most open to attack, does not stand in need of any apology.

Tenth Week—Fourth Day.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

OF King Solomon—his glory and his shame, his greatness and his littleness, his wisdom and his foolishness—we have already had full occasion to speak. That which we read in the sacred book of his marvellous sagacity, and his high and varied attainments, creates a strong desire to possess some specimens of his writings or utterances; and were these altogether wanting, a feeling of disappointment might reasonably be entertained. It is, therefore, a matter of satisfaction that we do possess several very important portions of his works, although we may regret that, as we know from the account given in 1 Kings iv. 32, 33, some very interesting portions, chiefly those on natural history and in song, have been irrecoverably lost.

The most important and extensive portion of the writings of Solomon which remains to us, is contained in the Book of Proverbs,—a book which enables us to test the quality of his wisdom, and to find that it is in all respects equal to the high report which has been given to us. It is a book of priceless value to those who know how to use it aright; and these must be nearly all that read it with becoming care, for most of that which is here written, is so plainly set down, that he may run

¹ Heb. x. 31.

² Heb. x. 28, 29.

who reads. The sage rules which it offers for the improvement of the heart and spirit, and for the guidance of the life and manners, are so justly founded on the principles of nature, and so adapted to the permanent interest of man, that they are applicable to all times, all conditions, and all countries; and may be studied with fully as much benefit and interest by men who are here, in the nineteenth century, 'in populous cities pent,' amid the whirl of chariots, the clang of machinery, and the hiss of steam, as by the plain men who, thirty centuries ago, rode quietly about on asses, and sat in peace under their vines and fig-trees.

A wealthy-minded expositor on Proverbs¹ thus commences his work: 'Of Augustus Cæsar it is said, that when he read the works of men of learning and genius, he used to extract such precepts as might prove useful to him in his government. This part of his conduct manifested wisdom; the precepts thus collected served to assist him and his ministers in managing the affairs of the empire. But the necessity of our imitating this part of his conduct has been, in a great measure, superseded by that Spirit of truth, under whose guidance Solomon wrote his Proverbs, and transmitted them to future ages for their instruction in righteousness. In this little book there appears more wisdom than in the combined monuments of Greek and Roman learning. The wisest of men wrote it, and its effect is to make us wise: but a greater than Solomon is here, for Wisdom speaks in her own person.' From this book we learn, as is indeed declared in the history, that the wisdom of the royal sage was often promulgated to the people in short aphorisms and sententious maxims, expressed, for the most part, in that sort of thought-rhythm or parallelism, which characterized the poetry of the Hebrews. In this form, the effusions of his wisdom would be more easily remembered, and be more practically useful to the great mass of the people, than abstruse arguments and methodical discourses. Short and pithy sentences have, from the most remote times, been em-

¹ *Exposition of the Book of Proverbs.* By the Rev. GEORGE LAWSON, D.D. Edinburgh: Oliphant. 1829.

ployed as the vehicle of moral instruction, and were peculiarly adapted to the simplicity of early ages. When writings were few, and the reasonings of systematic philosophy almost unknown, just observations on life and manners, and useful moral precepts, delivered in concise language, and often in verse, would form a body of the most valuable practical wisdom, which, by its influence upon the conduct, could not fail to contribute largely to the peace and wellbeing of society. But, in every age, such maxims of life and conduct are well suited to impress the minds of the young and uninformed; and as they are most valuable guides in the affairs of life, when we are called upon not to deliberate but to act, not to unfold a circuitous argument but to transact business, all must find it highly advantageous to retain in their memories the maxims of proverbial wisdom. Aphorisms excite attention by elegance of diction, or the beauty of rhetorical figures; they command respect by their oracular brevity; and the smart and poignant truths contained in them, penetrate deeply into the mind, and infix themselves in the memory. But, indeed, what more can be required to recommend this kind of composition to our notice, than its adoption by the Holy Spirit as the means of disseminating inspired knowledge?¹

It is, however, to be observed, that although there is no nation which has not resorted to this kind of moral teaching, it seems peculiarly adapted to the genius of the Orientals. The Gymnosophists of India delivered their philosophy in brief enigmatic sentences—a practice adopted and carried to a great extent by the ancient Egyptians. The mode of conveying instruction by compendious maxims, obtained footing among the Hebrews from the first dawn of their literature, and was still familiar to the inhabitants of Syria and Palestine in the time of Jerome.² The eloquence of Arabia was mostly exhibited in detached and unconnected sentences, which, like so many loose gems, attracted attention by the fulness of the periods,

¹ See HOLDEN on *Proverbs*. Liverpool, 1819. Preliminary Dissertation.

² *Comment. in Matt.* xviii. 23. 'Familiare est Syris, et maxime Pales-tinis, ad omnem sermonem suum parabolas jungere.'

the elegance of the phraseology, and the acuteness of proverbial sayings.

The Asiatics of the present day do not differ in this respect from their ancestors, as numerous *Amthâl*, or moral sentences, are in circulation throughout the regions of the East. Many of these have been collected and published by different European orientalists, and we have seen very large collections in manuscript in the East. To-morrow we will present the reader with a small selection, which he may find some pleasure in comparing with those of Solomon. Meanwhile, we may proceed to remark that the ingenious, disputatious, and loquacious Greeks were indebted to the same means for their earliest instruction in wisdom. The sayings of the Seven Wise Men ; the golden verses of Pythagoras ; the remains of Theognis and Phocylides, if genuine ; and the Gnomai of the elder poets, testify to the prevalence of aphorisms in ancient Greece. . Indeed, had no specimens of Hellenic proverbs remained, we might have concluded this to be the case ; for the Greeks borrowed the rudiments, if not the material parts, of their knowledge from those whom they arrogantly termed barbarians ; and it is only through the medium of compendious maxims and brief sentences, that traditionary knowledge can be preserved. This mode of communicating moral and practical wisdom was found to be equally accordant with the sedate and deliberative character of the Romans ; and, in truth, from its influence over the mind, and its fitness for popular instruction, proverbial expression exists in all ages and in all languages.

It is right to state, that the exclusive claim of Solomon to be regarded as the author of the Book of Proverbs, has been held open to some question. An eminent commentator¹ finds his doubt of this on his inability to conceive that experience so extensive and varied, as the work embodies, could possibly be possessed by one man ; and he therefore concludes that the book is really a collection of the finest proverbs of the age, perfected from various other collections in the time of Hezekiah. He forgot that the inspiration of the book adequately accounts

¹GROTIUS.

for all the wisdom it embodies, whether it be the work of one man or of many; but apart from this, the notion, founded partly on rabbinical accounts, cannot be allowed to invalidate the exclusive claim of Solomon to what is usually ascribed to him. The work might comprise the best of the 3000 proverbs which Solomon is recorded to have uttered, being probably digested, as far as the twenty-fifth chapter, by that monarch himself, and afterwards received into the canon of Scripture, with some additions. The proverbs between the twenty-fifth and thirtieth chapters, appear to have been selected from a much larger number, by 'the men of Hezekiah.' These proverbs, indeed, bear internal evidence of having been collected after the age of Solomon, as they repeat some which had already been introduced in the former part of the book. The thirtieth chapter is occupied with the prudent counsels which Agur, the son of Jakeh, delivered to his pupils, Ithiel and Ucal; and this is followed, in the thirty-first chapter, by the precepts which the mother of Lemuel delivered to her son. Respecting these personages there has been some difference of opinion. Most of the elder commentators conceived that Solomon himself is indicated by the name of Agur; but no satisfactory reason has been assigned for his assuming this name; and it is now very generally understood that Agur was an inspired writer, whose moral and proverbial sentences were, 'by the men of Hezekiah,' added to those of the wisest of men, on account of the general conformity of their matter. By the Lemuel of the thirty-first chapter, we are probably to understand Solomon; and, in that case, the wise and prudent counsels he is represented as receiving from his mother, enable us to realize a most satisfactory impression of her sense and worth. The description of a virtuous woman and good wife which she gives is unequalled in all literature; and the woman who exhibits such keen and accurate perceptions of what belonged to these characters, shows that she must have realized them in her own experience, and that, although a deep stain rests on her early life, she proved a good wife to David, and an admirable mother to Solomon.

If, however, we find any difficulty in identifying Lemuel with Solomon, the dignity and authority of the book are not in any way affected by our supposing its last chapter to have been the work of a different hand, and the mother of Lemuel to have been a Jewish lady, married to some neighbouring prince; or, as some think, Abiah, the daughter of the high priest Zechariah, and mother of Hezekiah. But there hardly appears any better reason why Hezekiah should be called Lemuel, than why Solomon should bear that name.

The general structure of the Book of Proverbs it may be well to note. It is made up of three main sections and two appendices. The *first section* embraces chapters i.-ix., and consists principally of one connected parable, of which wisdom is the subject. The *second section* has three divisions: 1. a collection of detached proverbs, chapters x. 1-xxii. 16; 2. a discourse upon temperance and some other private and social duties, chapters xxii. 17-xxiv. 22; 3. a few detached maxims attached to the preceding discourse, xxiv. 23-34. The *third section* consists of a further collection of Solomon's proverbs 'copied out by the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah,' chapters xxv.-xxix. So far Solomon is the author of the book. The *first appendix* contains the proverbial sayings of Agur the son of Jakeh; and the *second*, the words of king Lemuel, 'the prophecy that his mother taught him.'

It is manifest, therefore, that the book as it now stands was not all written in the time of Solomon; or, at least, that its several sections were not united in one volume till the time of Hezekiah, and probably even later.

Tenth Week—Fifth Day.

EASTERN PROVERBS.

WE now present the reader with a collection of Eastern Proverbs, which we apprehend may be useful for comparison or illustration with those of Solomon. They are selected from a large number, not as the best or most striking, but because they are such as require no explanation. Except a few from

Burckhardt's *Arabic Proverbs*, none of them have before appeared in English.

ARABIC PROVERBS.

The sage in his native place is like gold in the mine.

Better to have a wise enemy than a foolish friend.

The beginning of anger is foolishness, and its end repentance.

Temperance is a tree whose root is contentment with little, and whose feast is calmness and peace.

Wisdom is better than riches : wisdom guards thee, but thou hast to guard thy riches. Riches diminish in the using : but wisdom increases in the use of it.

Every day of thy life is a leaf of thy history.

Life is like unto a fire : it begins in smoke and ends in ashes.

One single day of a wise man, is worth more than the whole life of a fool.

There are two kinds of intelligence : That which nature gives, and that which education confers ; without the former, the latter is useless. What avails the light of the sun to him whose eyes are shut up ?

If any one tells you that a mountain has changed its place, believe it : But if any one says that a man has changed his character, believe it not.

Measure the water's depth before you plunge into it.

Vinegar given is better than honey bought.

Experience is the key of knowledge : as credulity is the gate of error.

If the moon be with thee, what needest thou care about the stars ?

The beetle is a beauty in the eyes of its mother.

Throw not a stone into the well from which thou drinkest.

A borrowed cloak imparts no warmth.

A well is not to be filled with dew.

The dirt of labour is better than the saffron of indolence.

Take me by the hand to-day, I will take thee by the foot to-morrow.

That is thy world wherein thou findest thyself.

They prepared me, they girded me, but I have not strength for war.

A tree that yieldeth thee shade, do not order it to be cut down.

Who seeks for wealth without (previous) wealth, is like him who carries water in a sieve.

When the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve.

The value of every man consists in what he does well.

Be diligent, and God will send profit.

The day blots out the word of the night.

How many are the roads that lead not to the heart !

On the day of victory no weariness is felt.

A day that is not thine own, do not reckon it as of thy life.

Him whom good cannot mend, evil will not mend.

In every head is some wisdom.

If thou canst not take things by the head, take them by the tail.

A scholar of bad life is like a blind man holding a torch, by which he gives others light, but cannot himself see.

Riches increase in proportion as we give to those that need.

White hairs are death's harbingers.

All things were difficult before they were easy.

Ignorance is injustice to the world.

Fear those who fear thee.

To be rich is to be content with little.

The more you hope, the more you suffer.

Three things are only known on three occasions—valour in war, wisdom in wrath, and friendship in need.

TURKISH PROVERBS.

Those who sow thorns can reap only prickles.

There are two things which no man can fixedly regard : the sun and death.

That which the pen of destiny has written, all the arts of men cannot efface. God alone is above all.

A thousand robbers are not able to strip an honest man naked.

The hand that gives is always above that which receives.

Is it ill with thee in life? Imitate the traveller who, amid the discomforts of a bad khan, reflects that he has only to pass the night there.

An egg to-day is better than a chicken to-morrow.

It is easier to be wise for others than for ourselves. We have all sufficient strength to bear the evils which befall others.

Speak not of stones to a fool, lest thou remind him to throw them at thy head.

A good man carries his heart on his tongue; a prudent man carries his tongue in his heart.

When the chariot is broken, there are always men to point out the right road.

There are no accidents so unfortunate that discreet men may not turn to advantage; nor any so fortunate that imprudent men may not turn to their prejudice.

PERSIAN PROVERBS.

The man who returns good for evil, is as a tree which renders its shade and its fruit even to those who cast stones at it.

A man passes for a sage when he seeks for wisdom; but if he think he has found it, he is a fool.

The diamond fallen into the dunghill, is not the less precious; and the dust raised by high winds to heaven, is not the less vile.

An ass which bears its burden, is of more worth than a lion which devours men.

Patience is a tree whose roots are bitter, but the fruit is very sweet.

The ignorant man in the midst of riches, is like an earthen vessel covered with gold: the learned man in the midst of poverty, is like a precious stone enchased in vile metal.

Ten poor men can sleep tranquilly upon a mat: but two kings are not able to live at peace in a quarter of the world.

INDIAN PROVERBS.

The heavens give rain to the earth; but the earth returns only dust to the heavens.

Men of evil character resemble earthen vessels, easy to break and hard to mend ; but good men are like golden vases, broken with difficulty and easily repaired.

A diamond with some flaws, is still more precious than a pebble that has none.

Contemn no one. Regard him who is above thee as thy father ; him who is thine equal as thy brother ; and him who is below thee as thy son.

Interested friends are like the dogs in public places, which like the bones, but care little for those who throw them.

The bread stolen by the wicked changes to ashes in his mouth.

The familiarity of the great is dangerous ; it is a fire by which many have been burned.

CHINESE PROVERBS.

He who can govern himself, is fit to govern the world.

A bushel of pearls is of less [real] worth than a pint of rice.

A hut of reeds with mirth therein, is better than a palace wherein there is grief.

Happiness is like a sunbeam, which the least shadow intercepts, while adversity is often as the rain of spring.

The hearts of the wise have seven ventricles.

The water that bears the ship is the same that engulfs it.

The doctrine which enters only into the eye or the ear, is like the repast that one takes in a dream.

Set a seal upon thy lips, and guard thy heart with the same watchfulness as the ramparts of a city.

All the virtues are in peril when filial piety gives way.

The tree dies not for want of branches and leaves, but for lack of nourishment to its roots.

The industrious woman arranges continually her moveables ; the industrious scholar deranges continually his books.

Tenth Week—Sixth Day.

MINGLED WINE.—PROV. IX. 2, 3.

As it does not consist with the object of this work to proceed regularly through a book, made up for the most part of detached aphorisms on an endless variety of subjects, we shall bring together in a few of the Daily Illustrations such of them as bear on particular classes of subjects, and most require the sort of illustration it is our object to furnish. The Proverbs are very rich in allusions to habits of life and material circumstances; and as these are matters which especially require elucidation, our attention will be mainly confined to them.

For a day or two we shall look to those passages which have reference to food and feasting, of which there is perhaps more frequent mention in Proverbs than in any other single book of Scripture.

At the commencement of the ninth chapter, there is a remarkable passage, in which Wisdom is described as preparing a feast for the ignorant: 'She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city.' Some question has arisen respecting this mingling of wine, which is more than once mentioned in Scripture. Harmer thinks that it 'means the opening of the jars of old, and consequently strong wine, which opening makes the wine somewhat turbid by mixing the lees with it; they, it seems, having no way of drawing it off fine from those earthen vessels in which it is kept, which we may learn from D'Arvieux's complaint relating to the wine near Mount Carmel; and so this *mingled wine* stands in opposition to *new wine*, which is to the eye of a uniform colour. In other words, Harmer takes mingled wine to be wine of the strongest kind. Bishop Lowth concurs in that point; but holds that it was wine 'made stronger and more inebriating by the addition of higher and more powerful ingredients, such as honey, spices,' etc. So the anonymous author of a note on Psalm

lxxv. 8, in Merrick's *Annotations*, refers to this and other passages in Proverbs, as well as to Isaiah v. 22, as showing that 'they seem to have mixed ingredients in their wine just before they drank it, to make it more agreeable, or perhaps more heady.' He adds further on: 'Probably they mixed several sorts of wine.'

That these things might not sometimes be done, and that they may not sometimes be indicated by the 'mingled wine' of Scripture, we shall neither deny nor affirm. But in Isaiah i. 22, 'wine mixed with water' is expressly mentioned; and this is what we believe to be intended in the present case, as well as in most, if not all, others in which the term occurs. This impression is confirmed to our mind by the distinct knowledge we possess that the ancients were greatly in the habit of mixing water with their wine, and that pure wine was seldom taken, except in the feasts of drunkenness, when it might even be mixed with stronger ingredients, as suggested. But under all ordinary circumstances, the wine was mixed with water, so as to form a table drink, refreshing, and but slightly exciting, unless taken in very large quantities. The quantity of water was usually proportioned to the strength of the wine; sometimes three, and at other times five, parts of water were added to one of wine. Pliny¹ the elder speaks, after Homer, of certain wines which were only used mixed with five parts of water. The Scholiast in Aristophanes² says, that the best way of mixing was to put three parts of water to two of wine. In general, it was regarded as a mark of intemperance to drink pure wine, and characteristic of the Scythians and other 'barbarians,' but unbecoming civilised men. An exception was made in behalf of the gods, the libations to whom were poured out in pure wine. In Aristophanes,³ Mercury is introduced as complaining that people put half water to his wine, whereas they offered pure wine to the other gods. These facts are important; for ancient usage must necessarily have much weight in determining the sense in which such allusions are to be taken. It is not to be supposed that the Hebrews, who were essentially a temperate

¹ *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 4.

² Scholiast in *Equit.* p. 356.

³ In *Plut.* v. 1.

people, had less restrained habits in this respect than the Greeks and Romans, who were by no means celebrated for temperance. We shall hardly venture to class the Jews with the 'Scythians and other barbarians,' who drank pure wine.

The clause which describes Wisdom as sending forth her maidens to invite people to her feast, is well worthy of our passing notice. At first view, it may seem to imply that female domestics were more numerous, proportionably to males, than is now the case in the East, and that they were employed in services scarcely consistent with modern Eastern notions. Both conclusions would be erroneous. Wisdom being represented as a female, it was necessary to represent her attendants as maidens, not as men; and their employment in calling the guests may receive some illustration from a custom which was noticed by Hasselquist in Egypt, and which appears to have been ancient in that country. That it has scarcely been noticed by other travellers, may arise from the fact, that although they may have seen the women on their way, they had no means of learning on what errand they were bound. Hasselquist says, that he saw a great number of women, who went about inviting people to a banquet 'in a singular, and no doubt very ancient, manner. There were about ten or twelve of them, covered with black veils, as is now customary in Egypt. They were preceded by four eunuchs; and after them were Moors, with their usual walking staves. As they walked along, they all joined in making a noise, which we were told signified their joy, but which we could not find resembled a joyful or pleasing sound.' The sound was so singular, that the traveller found himself at a loss to give an idea of it to those who had never heard it. 'It was shrill, but had a peculiar quivering, which they learned by long practice.' This female cry was doubtless the *ziraleet*¹ which is heard on various occasions of rejoicing in Egypt and other eastern countries, and is produced by a sharp utterance of the voice, accompanied by a quick, tremulous motion of the tongue. The whole of this incident is curiously illustrative, especially as

¹ See First Series : Tenth Week—Sixth Day.

it clearly shows that, through these her maidens, whom she sends forth, Wisdom 'crieth upon the highest places of the city.'

Tenth Week—Seventh Day.

CAROUSALS.—PROV. XIX. 24; XXIII. 30.

STILL seeking indications of usages and ideas connected with meals, we pause at the 24th verse of the nineteenth chapter, where we read, 'A slothful man hideth his hand in the dish, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.' In the authorized version it is 'bosom' instead of 'dish;' but this is an error, as the context alone would suffice to show. It is well known that the modern Orientals use neither knives, forks, nor



(except for liquids) spoons, in eating; and we know that this was the same in old times, not only from the indications in ancient literature, but from the representations of banquets, in all of which, whether Egyptian, Greek, Roman, or Syrian,

the persons are represented as taking their meat from the dish with their fingers. From this absence of instruments, it is necessary, in eating of certain dishes, such as rice or stews, not merely to *pick up*, or *tear off* a morsel, but to collect and detain it with the hand until it is conveyed to the mouth. He, however, is considered a coarse and vulgar feeder, who introduces much of his hand into the dish; the proper mode being to gather and take up the mouthful with *three* fingers only. With this explanation, we apprehend the present text to mean that the slothful man will be guilty of the gross indecorum of *hiding his hand in the dish*, for the purpose of taking up a large handful, rather than be at the trouble of repeating the action between the dish and the mouth so frequently as a becoming adherence to the rules of decorum would exact. For a man to 'hide his hand in the dish,' is among the Orientals nearly as gross an

impropriety, as it would be among ourselves for a man to put his hand into the dish at all.

But some will ask, 'If it be true that no knives were used in eating, what is the meaning of the passage in chap. xxiii. 2, where a knife is expressly named in connection with eating?' The passage is, 'When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee; and put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite.' It is nevertheless certain that the ancient Hebrews did not use knives at their meals; and if this text be carefully regarded, it has no more to do with the use of the knife in eating than the sword of Damocles had. It appears to mean, that on the occasion indicated, a man should eat as guardedly and circumspectly as if a knife were at his throat to destroy him—partly, we may suppose, out of regard to the august and dangerous presence in which he sits, and partly from the peril of being seduced into intemperance by the unusual dainties to be found at such a table. We have, however, some suspicion that the real point of the intended allusion is lost to us, from its being founded upon some conventional use of terms, now forgotten, or upon some once well-known incident, the memory of which is lost.¹

In the same chapter (xxiii. 30) there is a strong rebuke of those who 'tarry long at the wine:' another indication that, as Solomon himself says, 'there is nothing new under the sun,' for this is exactly what the Orientals are prone to do in their computations. They have no notion of any enjoyment of wine apart from the exhilarating inebriety it produces; and hence when they do get drink, they usually indulge in it to the last degree of excess. Wine, as we all know, is forbidden to the Moslems, who now rule in Western Asia; but it is really much used, more or less secretly, by persons in easy circumstances. The consciousness of transgressing a law in even tasting wine may, in some degree, promote excess; as when they have, as they consider, incurred the sin by drinking at all, they are apt to argue, perversely, that they may as well have the pleasure of drinking much, on the principle indicated in the vulgar

¹ See Third Week—Third Day.

adage, that it is as well to be hanged 'for a sheep as a lamb,' a principle which, in one application or another, has almost universal prevalence. So it is, however, that when a man wishes to entertain his friends with wine, they generally meet early, and continue at their work the whole day, or a day and night together, with intervals of eating, and with the accompaniment of songs, dances, and recitations. D'Arvieux relates that, during his sojourn among the Arabs, near Mount Carmel, a wreck took place on the coast, from which one of the emirs secured two large casks of wine, and thereupon sent to the neighbouring emirs, inviting them to come and help him to drink it. They gladly came, and continued drinking for two days and two nights, until not a drop of the wine was left. During this time they never quitted the table, except to rest in some corner of the tent, after which they resumed their places. When all was gone, they deliberated how to obtain a fresh supply of the pleasant bane; but seeing no prospect of success, they dispersed reluctantly to their several camps. This may remind us of the verse, 'When I shall awake, *I will seek it yet again.*'

The curious old French traveller Tavernier relates that, when he was in Persia, the king sent for him *early one morning* to the palace, where, with other favoured persons, he was obliged to sit all the day, and till late at night, drinking wine with the Shah; but at last, he says, 'the king growing sleepy, gave us leave to depart, which we did very willingly, having had hard labour *for seventeen hours together!*'

These are tolerably strong instances of 'tarrying long at the wine.' In the last, the summons 'early in the morning' is well worthy of notice, as corroborating a custom so adverse to European habits, to which there is a distinct allusion by the prophet Isaiah (v. 11): 'Woe to them that rise up *early in the morning*, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!' The instance we have quoted is not a solitary one, for the Persians habitually, when they have determined upon a debauch, as they too often do—though not now so often as formerly—commence early, re-

garding the morning as the best time for beginning to drink wine, and seldom leave off till night. This often takes place in gardens and orchards, in pavilions, or under the shade of trees, with fruits at hand, and amid the perfume of flowers.

In the 'Thousand and One Nights,' we often read of removing 'the table of viands,' and bringing in 'the table of wine.' This is not usually the case now, the forbidden beverage being seldom introduced in general society either during or after meals, or at other times. Select parties are rather made up, as seems to have been frequently the case in Biblical times, for the express purpose of drinking wine. In modern Egypt, as Mr. Lane tells us, 'the table of wine is thus prepared: A round japanned tray, or a glass dish, is placed on a low stool-like table. On this are generally arranged two cut-glass jugs, one containing wine, and the other *rocoglio*, and sometimes two or more bottles besides; several small glasses are placed with these, and glass saucers of fresh and dried fruits, and perhaps pickles; lastly, two candles, and often a bunch of flowers stuck in a candlestick, are put upon the tray.'

In one place (xxv. 13), 'the cold of snow in the time of harvest' is named as 'a very pleasant thing.' This has suggested that the Hebrews, during their warm summers, were accustomed to cool their drinks with snow or ice. The supposition is highly probable, as the practice referred to is of great antiquity, and still prevails in the East wherever snow or ice can be obtained. The Persians, for instance, consume great quantities during summer, preserving it for the purpose in pits in the way particularly described by Chardin.¹ Snow is also preserved when it can be procured, as they are of opinion that drinks cooled with snow are colder and more agreeable than those into which ice is put. They know, in fact, and have known for ages, as probably did the Israelites, —what we, with all our parade of science, have only lately discovered,—that snow, stored away in mass, consolidates into an ice, colder and less easily melted than common ice, and

¹ *Voyages*, iv. 15. Edit. Langles.

therefore preferable not only for convenience in storing, but for actual use. Here, then, we have a reason why *snow* rather than *ice* is mentioned in this proverb. We make no question that this snow, frozen or unfrozen, was used in *substance* like our own ices, as well as for mixing with drinks. We read the other day 'a tale of the Holy City,' entitled 'Zillah,' the author of which, although he falls into many strange errors, evinces generally a more extensive and accurate knowledge of ancient Jewish customs than many would think. In one place he describes refreshments as being served round in the palace of king Antigonus, some of which consisted of 'snow from Lebanon, preserved since the winter, and flavoured with perfumes, so that it bore a pretty close resemblance to our modern ices.' We have not been able to trace the authority for this statement, but the facts we have already stated leave us in no doubt of its accuracy.

Shortly after, in the same chapter (verse 27), we read with surprise that 'it is not good to eat much honey.' We must remark that honey was of far more importance formerly than it is now. There was no sugar, and honey had to supply its place, besides being eaten in its primary state. Vast quantities of it must therefore have been consumed; and thus the importance assigned to it in Scripture becomes intelligible. The injuriousness of excessive indulgence in honey, and that the honey of Palestine, is, however, historically attested. The English who attended Edward I. into the Holy Land, died in great numbers, as they ventured, in the month of June, to attack a fortified place. This destruction is ascribed by the historian partly to the excessive heat, and partly to their inordinate indulgence in fruits *and honey*.

These facts, taken together, will be found to explain or illustrate many of the feasting usages to which the sacred writers refer.

Ice is almost unknown in Palestine and Syria; and yet there is no country in the world, perhaps, in which ice and iced drinks are more commonly used during the hot summer months. Itinerant

vendors of ices are never absent from the streets of Damascus. Snow is used instead of ice. During the winter, when it falls thickly on Hermon and Anti-Lebanon, it is thrown together in vast quantities in pits and caves, where it remains during the summer. A fresh supply is brought from the mountain reservoirs to the city every day. There are two or three villages in Anti-Lebanon whose inhabitants are exempted from taxation, on condition of their supplying the city with snow at a fixed tariff during the summer. I have often seen in the early morning the long file of donkeys, laden with bags of baked snow, entering the gates of Damascus. They go to the mountains in the evening, make up their loads during the night, and travel so as to reach the city before sunrise. The distance is from six to seven hours.



Eleventh Week—First Day.

APPLES OF GOLD IN PICTURES OF SILVER.—PROV. XXV. 11.

WHAT are we to conceive of the ‘apples of gold in pictures of silver,’ of which one of the Proverbs speaks? It is impossible to affix any distinct idea to these words, a circumstance which is alone sufficient to show that they have been misunderstood. Many other translations have been proposed. One¹ renders the words ‘an apple of gold in a sardina (cornelian) collar;’ another,² ‘apples of gold in beds of silver;’ suggesting that ‘apples of gold’ were fixed upon the columns of a bed of silver, or else suspended ornamentally in some way from beds of the latter metal. The Scripture certainly mentions beds of gold and silver;³ and ancient history states that Sardanapalus had a large number of them, and the Parthian kings slept on beds of gold. Beds of brass are mentioned in the Trojan war; and the king of Bashan had a bed of iron. It is therefore not intrinsically improbable, that in the reign of Solomon, when the precious metals were so plentiful in his realm, there should have been beds of silver; and if so, we may conceive that ‘apples of gold’ might be applied ornamentally with good effect. But as we are not allowed to think of high four-post bedsteads in connection with the East, the explanation to which we have referred so far lacks verisimilitude, as to lead instinctively to its rejection by those who have made the ancient and modern East their study. We do not find quite the same objection to the explanation which assumes that the apples of gold were figures of apples in gold upon a silver ground, and who translate: ‘Apples of gold enchased in silver,’ or ‘among figures of silver.’ Considering that the Hebrews, in their highest style of costly ornamentation, and notably in the time of Solomon,

¹ The Septuagint.

² The Vulgate.

³ Esther i. 6.

employed figures of fruits in precious metals, we incline very favourably to this explanation, or slightly prefer to it another which is more generally received, and is in itself both beautiful and probable. This is, that the 'apples of gold' were oranges or lemons in *baskets* of silver, or of silver net-work, through which the golden yellow of the fruit appeared.

In either case we are clear, that, whether real or imitated, *apples* are not intended. For one reason, the apple is of small value in Palestine, or anywhere else in the Levant; except, perhaps, in some parts of the mountainous country south-east of the Black Sea, where we have found that the elevation, by neutralizing the effect of latitude, produces a climate so far favourable to the apple-tree as to enable it to yield a fruit which might not disgrace our own orchards. But, upon the whole, the apples of the Levant, where any are found, are execrable, and held in no esteem whatever. It is somewhat different with regard to oranges; but the climate of Palestine is not favourable to that fruit, and it is neither very abundant nor very good. On the other hand, the variety of fragrant lemon called the 'citron,' attains its highest perfection in that country, and is very abundant; and by the consent of the Jewish writers themselves, as well as from the probability of the case, we apprehend that 'citron' is always to be understood by the word translated 'apple' in the common version. In the present text it is peculiarly and beautifully appropriate. That the citron was well known to the Hebrews we learn from Josephus, who mentions, that on one occasion, at the Feast of Tabernacles, King Alexander Janneus was pelted in the temple with citrons, which the Jews had in their hands—for which he assigns the reason, that the law required that at that feast every one should have bunches of the palm-tree and the citron-tree. The Jews still thus understand the injunction, and as the fruit is not produced in this country, they import large quantities for the occasion.

Now, then, we are enabled to understand the sacred writer to mean, that 'a word fitly spoken,' that is, spoken at the fit or proper time, is like placing an apple of gold, or a citron, in a

basket of silver ; and we thus obtain a most appropriate and elegant similitude out of that which seems not at the first very intelligible or remarkably suitable.

A favourite author of our earlier days, and to whom we still often turn with pleasure and advantage, is a Puritan divine, the Rev. Thomas Brook, whose writings abound in racy anecdotes and precious sentences—in ‘apples of gold,’ which he does well who places in the ‘silver basket’ of his mind. Indeed, one of his best books bears the title, ‘*Apples of Gold.*’¹ We take down our own well-used copy, and find it scored throughout with old marks—each of which is to us a memorial of old times and thoughts ; and we know not that we can give a better turn to the reader’s reflections on this day, than by setting before him a few of these passages.

In his preface, Brook says : ‘I have never found greater and choicer blessings attend any of my poor weak labours, than those that have been brought into the world through the greatest straits and difficulties.’

‘Love to Christ and souls, will make a man willing to spend and be spent. He that prays himself to death, that preaches himself to death, that studies himself to death, that sweats himself to death, for the honour of Christ and the good of souls, shall be no loser in the end. Love knows no difficulties. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand that he shall never faint or be weary. Divine love is very operative ; if it do not work, it is an argument that it is not at all. Divine love, like fire, is not idle but active : he that loves cannot be barren. . . . The very heathen have observed that God doth not love his children with a weak womanish affection, but with a strong masculine love ; and certainly, they that love the Lord strongly—that love Him with a masculine love, they cannot but lay out their little all for Him and for his glory.’

‘Two things make good Christians : good actions and good aims ; and though a good aim does not make a bad action

¹ *Apples of Gold for Young Men and Women, and a Crown of Glory for Old Men and Women*, etc. 26th Edition. London, 1812.

good (as in Uzzah), yet a bad aim makes a good action bad (as in Jehu), whose justice was approved, but his policy punished.'

Alluding to the text, Eccles. xii. 1, 'Remember *now* thy Creator,' Brook says: '*Now* is an atom will puzzle the wisdom of a philosopher, the skill of an angel, to divide. *Now* is a monosyllable in all learned languages.'

'Most young men in these days do as the heathen: when their gods called for a man, they offered a candle.'

'As a copy is then safest from blotting when dust is put upon it; so are we, when, in the time of our youth, we remember that we are but dust.'

'I have heard of a devout man, who, when he heard a clock strike, would say, "There is an hour past that I have to answer for."' "

'It was a brave magnanimous speech of Luther, when dangers from opposers did threaten him and his associates: 'Come,' said he, 'let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm, and let them do their worst.'

'As Hilary said to his soul: "Soul, thou hast served Christ this seventy years, and art thou afraid of death? Go out, soul, go out."' "

'The ancients were wont to call the days of their death *Natalia*—not dying-days, but birth-days.'

'The ancients did picture Youth like a young man naked, with a veil over his face, his right hand bound behind him, his left hand loose, and Time behind him, pulling one thread out of his veil every day; intimating that young men are void of knowledge, and blind, unfit to do good, ready to do evil, till time, by little and little, makes them wiser.'

'There was but one young man came to Christ, and he came not aright; and all the good that was in him was but some moral good, and yet Christ loved him with a love of pity and compassion.'

'St. Jerome tells us of one Mepotiamus, who, by long and studious meditation on the Holy Scriptures, had made his mind the library of Jesus Christ.'

Eleventh Week—Second Day.

A DINNER OF HERBS.—PROV. XV. 17, XXIII. 20.

'BETTER is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith,' is a sentence whose natural truth every heart feels and acknowledges. It has not, however, we apprehend, been noticed that there is an evident intention in this text to place in marked opposition the commonest repasts of the people, with the most luxurious entertainments of the great.

The inference derivable from this text, that the substantial diet of the great body of the people was vegetable, is confirmed by many other passages, as well as by existing facts. In the East, and, indeed, throughout Southern Europe, the great mass of the people very rarely taste any kind of animal food; and, in the season of fruits, even dispense with dressed vegetables, and live almost entirely on bread and fruit, especially grapes. But we need scarcely go farther than to our nearest neighbours to find satisfactory illustrations of this. In the north we have the Scotch peasant, to whom oatmeal porridge is the staff of life, as the potato is to the Irishman on the other side the western channel, and as vegetable soups are to the Frenchman beyond the channel on the south. This diet of the French peasantry may offer more real illustration than would be readily supposed. In Scripture we seldom read of meat being used except on somewhat extraordinary occasions, such as high festivals, or for the entertainment of strangers; whereas the few indications of the preparation of ordinary meals, point to vegetable soups or pottages. It was a mess of lentile pottage that Jacob prepared for his own supper, and for which Esau sold his birth-right; and it was a pottage of *field* herbs which was prepared in the great crock for the ordinary dinner of the sons of the prophets at Jericho. By this last instance we learn that for such 'a dinner of herbs,' not only cultivated but wild herbs were used; for the young man who collected them for this meal, gathered a noxious plant by mistake, and people do not culti-

vate unwholesome things in their gardens. Under such circumstances, numerous plants are known to be good for food, the useful properties of which are unknown or forgotten among those with whom a different rule of diet prevails. We are apt to think much of the large variety of our culinary vegetables ; but in fact the variety is very small in comparison with those that are used for food in the different countries where vegetable diet prevails. And even in these, only a small proportion of the plants, really fit for food, are used. Indeed the probability is, that by far the greater part of the plants of every country (including even the leaves of many trees) would form excellent food when suitably prepared ; even many plants and roots, unpleasant or unwholesome in their crude state, would become nutritive and pleasant when boiled in a pottage. It has long been our own opinion, confirmed by all the experience which observation, travel, and reading have enabled us to acquire, that no one need hunger, far less starve, were the useful properties of many common vegetables generally known. As it is, many do perish in the midst of available plenty, literally 'for lack of knowledge.'

Meat doubtless made its appearance, and that largely too, at the tables of persons in flourishing circumstances ; and this fact, indeed, gives point to the contrast intended in the present proverb,—a dinner of meat being clearly signified as a mark of high prosperity, if not luxury. But animal food is not at all recognised in the East as a daily necessary, though often indulged in beyond all reasonable bounds when it can be obtained.

And this leads us to another text further on (xxiii. 20), where 'riotous eaters of flesh' are classed with 'wine-bibbers.' This expression, which seems strange to us, could hardly apply but in a country where flesh meat does not enter into the ordinary diet of the people,—where, in short, it is counted a luxury, and as a luxury is extravagantly indulged in, when it can be had, by those not in the constant habit of using it. We have often had occasion to witness a meal of meat indulged in, under such circumstances, to a degree of inconceivable intemperance, and

enjoyed with a degree of hilarity very much like that which attends the consumption of strong drink in our northern climates. We have the Arabs more especially, but not exclusively, in view ; for it is in connection with this people that the present expression, 'riotous eaters of flesh,' has been brought most forcibly to our mind, on beholding the strong and irrepressible satisfaction with which a party of them would receive the present of a live sheep, and on witnessing the haste with which it was slaughtered and dressed, the voracity with which it was devoured, and the high glee, not unattended with dance and song, which seasoned the feast. We are almost afraid to say how much an unstinted Arab will eat when the opportunity is given. It is commonly considered that an Arab can dispose of the entire quarter of a sheep without inconvenience ; and we have certainly seen half a dozen of them pick the bones of a large sheep very clean.

Perhaps, however, the sacred writer, under that feeling with respect to the use of animal food which has been explained, means here to indicate the *frequent* eating of flesh as a wasteful extravagance.

Let us add, that in eastern travel we have come to many considerable places—small towns and extensive villages—where no meat but poultry could be procured. As meat will not keep, it is not killed where there is not enough of certain demand to ensure an immediate sale, and the one or two in such places who might wish for meat at their tables, will not incur the extravagance of killing a sheep every time they want a meal. They also, therefore, dispense with it, or content themselves with a fowl—only providing a sheep or lamb when special occasions occur. In fact, it is only in large towns that meat—and that always mutton—is to be found in the markets, or that the trade of the butcher exists.

Eleventh Week—Third Day.

THE ANTS.—PROV. VI. 6-8, XXX. 25.

IN a remarkable passage of this book, Solomon refers the sluggard to the ant for an example of prudence and industry : 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard ; consider her ways and be wise : which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.' The wise Agur, the son of Jakeh, also, speaking of 'four things which are little upon earth, but they are exceeding wise,' tells us, that although 'the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer.'

These texts have been thought to be in conformity with, and to give their sanction to, the popular opinion respecting the ant, which is indeed old, and frequently cited by ancient writers,—the opinion, namely, that these insects lay up corn against the winter, depositing it in suitable cells or storehouses, which the wet cannot easily reach ; and that, as a further measure of precaution, they destroy the vegetative powers of the corn by nipping off the end of every grain. This is so interesting—is so pleasant a belief, that one will scarcely regard with good-will those who attempt to overturn our faith in it. Yet the alleged facts have of late years been much questioned by naturalists. We are assured that ants do not store away any food against the winter, for the sufficient reason that they do not need it, as during that season they become torpid ; that the corn which they are sometimes seen to carry, is used by them for building materials, for which purpose almost any substance which is near their homes, and conveniently portable, is made to serve their turn. Ay, but have we not seen them bring out the grains of corn, somewhat swollen by damp, to dry in the sun ? No ; these seeming grains of corn are their own eggs.

All this is doubtless true. How, then, are we to reconcile it with the assertion of Solomon ? The task is less difficult than it seems. In the first place, it is not clear that his words

have been rightly understood, or that they do afford the alleged sanction to the popular opinion thus affirmed to be erroneous. Ants do not lay up *grain* for food. Well: Solomon does not say that they do; there is not a word about grain in his statement. Again, ants do not store up food for *winter*. Neither, again, does Solomon say this; there is nothing concerning winter in his words. It may be, therefore, that the common opinion has been carelessly and uncritically fastened upon his words, against his consent. Attentively read, what he does say is, that the ant, with considerable prudence and forethought, prepares her bread and gathers her food—that is, such food as is suited to her—in the proper seasons, in summer and harvest, when it is most plentiful; and thus shows a wisdom and prudence worthy of imitation, in making the best and most timely use of the advantages offered to her.

But taking the words of Solomon and Agur in the sense usually understood, why might they not refer to the common opinion respecting any creature, when it afforded the moral lesson which they desired to inculcate? The sacred writers generally regard it as no part of their duty to set right all the popular notions of common things, but use them as poets and moralists have done in all ages, to enforce their teachings and illustrate their arguments.

Still further, and once more, supposing that this is the meaning of Solomon, it cannot be safely affirmed that his words, as understood, are not true. The observation of the naturalist is founded upon the habits of these insects in our own latitudes. The habits of ants in other countries, where the same conditions do not exist, may be, and probably are, different; and until we possess more exact information respecting the habits of foreign ants, it would be very rash to affirm that they do not make any stores of provisions. Although, during the cold of our winter, they remain in a state of torpidity, and have no need of food; yet we have no reason to suppose that, in warmer climates, they, or indeed any other creatures, become torpid during winter. The cold which brings them into that condition with us, does not there exist; yet, as during the rainy

season they will be prevented from seeking their food abroad, an apparent necessity exists for their laying up some stores of food against that season, and this their nature and habits well enable them to do. Even in our northern climates, it is thought that they may and do, against wet seasons, provide in this way for their own sustenance and that of their young brood, which are exceedingly voracious, and cannot bear to be long deprived of their food. Else, why do ants carry worms, living insects, and many such things, to their nests? Solomon's assertion, therefore, even taken in the broadest significance, can only be regarded as referring to the species of a different and warmer climate, in respect to which the statement may be perfectly correct, while inapplicable to the indigenous ants of our own colder clime.

We thus find that the present proverb is not really committed to any of the opinions which have been disputed; and that, even were it so, in that single point to which it has seemed more particularly to tend, it may still be a fact, and not merely an allowable accommodation to popular notions, in a matter wherein no essential interest is involved.

It is noteworthy that the opinion of the ant storing its *food* (not *corn* in particular), seems to have come from the East, and from *thence* we have no information which disproves it. There it still prevails, and in Egypt it is preserved in the proverb (quoted by Burckhardt), 'What the ant collects in the course of a whole year, the monk eats up in one night.'

Solomon's recommendation to 'consider the ways' of the ants, seems, however, to have had a larger reference than to the mere question before us. He, who knew these things so well, must have been aware that there was much in the habits and manners of this creature, which would richly reward attentive consideration, by revealing to us the wisdom of God, as manifested in even the least of his creatures, and by furnishing important lessons, which the humbleness of the teacher should lead us to despise not, but to value all the more. The researches of Rëaumur, Huber, Kirby, Spence, and other naturalists, into the habits and pursuits of these wonderful little

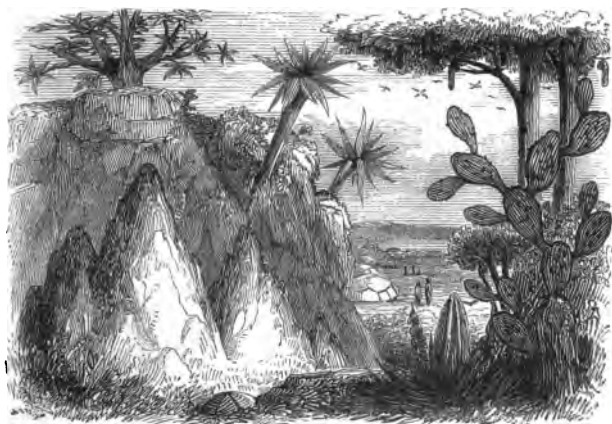
creatures, enable us, much better than was possible formerly, to appreciate the fitness of the wise king's recommendation, whether taken in regard to the industry, the skill, or the economy, which their communities exhibit.

The skill, industry, and labour, with which, for instance, the domiciles of the different kinds of ants are constructed, are in all respects admirable; and when regarded in relation to the dimensions and resources of the tiny architects, far exceed many of those greatest results of human ingenuity and labour, by which the world has in successive ages been astonished. Whether as masons, carpenters, or carvers of wood, they offer examples which the most ingenious of men cannot refuse to admire, and by which the wisest of men may be instructed.



Among the different kinds of ants, such constructions are various, and there are none undeserving attention. The mason-ant offers to our contemplation its earthen hillocks, the interior of which consists of a labyrinth of lodges, vaults, and galleries, skilful in their construction, and as to their situation, chosen with judgment. Such nests are sometimes constructed with twenty storeys above, and as many below the ground, by which means the ants are easily enabled to regulate the temperature of their abode, withdrawing (as we have often done ourselves) to the underground apartments, when those above become too warm, and proceeding upwards when the lower rooms become too cold. With no less skill, and perhaps

with greater labour, do the carpenter-ants chisel their storeys, chambers, galleries, and colonnades, in the bodies or roots of growing trees. Other species construct their nests upon or among the branches of trees—nests various in their kinds and dimensions, but all wonderful examples of the results obtainable by the skill and industry of co-operating numbers, even among creatures so small that myriads may be crushed unregarded beneath the careless foot. Some of these nests are as large as a hogshead, others from the size of a human head to that of a fist ; the latter being formed by the powerful bending of large leaves, and the gluing of the parts together, so as to form a sort of purse.



But all this is as nothing to what we behold, when we look at the buildings constructed by the white ants of tropical climes. Their industry appears greatly to surpass that of our own ants and bees, and they are certainly more skilful in architectural contrivances. The elevation, also, of their edifices is more than 500 times the height of the builders ; so that, were our own houses built according to the same proportions, they would be twelve or fourteen times higher than the London monument, and four or five times higher than the largest of the Egyptian pyramids, with corresponding dimensions in the

basement of the edifice. These nests are often twelve feet high, and have sometimes been seen as high as twenty feet, and large enough to contain twelve men. They consist of an exterior shell, containing an interior apartment, in which are formed a vast number of chambers, galleries, and magazines. In the same regions, the smaller white ant rears its house in the form of a pillar with an overhanging dome, presenting as a whole, but on a greatly enlarged scale, the appearance of a species of mushroom, which one may often find in the woods. These constructions are about three feet high, and the interior is divided into numerous angular cells, which furnish lodgings for the industrious little beings that raise this curious monument.



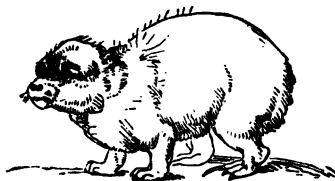
Besides all this, there is much in the internal economy and management of these insects not less worthy of admiration. Their unwearied industry and indomitable perseverance; the arduous and sincere exertions of every individual for the common welfare; their well-regulated labour; the sagacious judgment with which they avail themselves of favouring circumstances; and the striking evidence which, notwithstanding their minuteness of form, they are enabled to furnish, of the important results which may be produced by the co-operation of large numbers in good and useful objects, are all incentives

which strongly enforce and illustrate the injunction of the wisest of kings: 'Go to the ant; . . . consider her ways.'

Eleventh Week—Fourth Day.

THE SHAPHAN AND THE RAVENS.—PROVERBS XXX. 17, 26.

THE wise son of Jakeh names, next to the ants, 'the coney,' among the four things which, although 'little upon the earth,' are 'exceeding wise.' Most of us know that 'coney' are rabbits, though the word has now, as a name for that animal, almost gone out of use. No doubt our translators did suppose that rabbits were meant by the original Hebrew word, which is SHAPHAN. Yet it does not seem to us that they are right.



Among other reasons, there is this very good one, that no rabbits are found in the Levant.

This animal, the shaphan (always translated by 'coney'), is mentioned in several other places,¹ and in the law is included among unclean animals, on the ground that although 'he cheweth the cud, he divideth not the hoof.' Apart from the consideration just stated, the particulars indicated in these texts do not agree well with the rabbit; but they do agree most perfectly with another animal, that has its especial home in the regions in which the Israelites abode, and indeed derives from Syria the designation by which it is known among naturalists. This is the Hyrax Syriacus, known among the Arabs by the name of *Wabber*. Externally this animal is something of the size, figure, and brownish colour of the rabbit; and although

¹ Lev. xi. 5; Deut. xiv. 7; Ps. civ. 18.

it has small roundish ears instead of long ones, it is quite possible for cursory and inexact observers to take the one for the other. It is remarkable, however, that, comparatively small as the animal is, its whole internal construction and skeleton have the greatest possible resemblance, not to a rabbit, but to a rhinoceros! It is, in fact, a somewhat anomalous animal, more closely allied to the pachydermata in essential structure than to any other class. It is of clumsier structure than the rabbit, is without a tail, and has long bristly hairs scattered over the general fur. From the structure of its foot, it cannot dig, and is hence not fitted to reside in burrows like the rabbit, but in the clefts of the rock, in conformity with the intimation here and in Psalm civ. 18. Their timid, gregarious habits well mark out the wabbers as the wise and feeble folk of the present text. They live in colonies in the crevices of stony places; and in every locality that they inhabit, they are timid gentle creatures, loving much to bask in the sun, never stirring from their retreats, moving with caution, and shrinking from the shadow of a passing bird, as they are often the prey of eagles and hawks. Their habits are altogether diurnal, and they feed on reeds and vegetables.

It is remarkable that the single chapter of Proverbs ascribed to Agur contains more allusions to objects of natural history than are found in any other equal portion of the book, though one would expect them to be more abundant with a naturalist so great as Solomon.

We must not pass by another passage in this chapter (verse 17), embodying what some have been disposed (as in the case of the ant) to regard as a popular superstition. It is this: 'The eye that mocketh his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.' To many this has presented the aspect of a piece of rustic lore. But it is now very well ascertained that, in point of fact, ravens, which feed on carrion, do commence their repast by picking out the eyes of the animal whose carcass they have discovered. It is equally true, that eagles and falcons, which take living prey, do, when the game is large and powerful, aim

their stroke at the eyes, which instinct teaches them to be the readiest way of disabling their victim. This is a matter of familiar knowledge in Persia, where falconry, which has almost been discontinued in Europe, is still maintained with greater spirit than in any other country. Different kinds of fierce and powerful falcons are there employed in taking small game, as well as in giving active and very effective assistance to the hunters in the capture of large wild animals. This they do by fixing on the prey, planting their talons in its flesh, and pecking its eyes with their beaks or beating them out with their wings, till the poor creature, utterly confused and distracted with pain, is overtaken and slain by the hunters. Chardin was informed that, down to the early part of the seventeenth century, fierce falcons from the Caucasian mountains were trained to fly at men, and treat them in the manner just described; and he understood that some such birds were still kept in the royal bird-house. He adds: 'I never saw any of them myself, but I heard that Ali Kouli Khan, the governor of Tauris, with whom I had been particularly acquainted, could not refrain from diverting himself with this dangerous and cruel sport, even at the expense of his friends. It happened one day that one of these birds was let fly at a gentleman, and not being called off in time, put out his eyes, so that he died from the fright and the agony. The king, when he heard of this, was so incensed, that he soon after withdrew his favour from the khan.'¹

Eleventh Week—Fifty Day.

THE FINGERS.—PROV. VI. 13.

THERE is a passage in the sixth chapter describing 'a naughty person,' of whom it is said that 'he winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers.' Compare this with Psalm cxxiii. 2: 'As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the

¹ *Voyages*, iii. 396. Edit. Langles.

hand of her mistress.' Taking these two passages together, we have much reason to conclude that the Hebrews possessed some mode of inaudibly expressing their meaning or of conveying their orders by manual signs. They had at least, we apprehend, as much of this as we still find in the East, where motions of the hands are often employed in one form or another as substitutes for oral expression. Let us therefore see what practices, in illustration of these texts, the East can furnish. In regard to the one quoted from the Psalms, it may suffice to observe, that it is the custom in the East to convey orders to watchful attendants and officers by slight, and, except to those who watch for them, scarcely observable, but well understood, movements of the hands and fingers. A person, while in appearance entirely engaged in entertaining his visitors, will give directions to his servants in a way that usually escapes the notice of other persons present, as he does not suspend his conversation, or make any marked movement, not even so much as to cast a glance towards the person to whom the order is given, so sure is he that the servant has not for an instant withdrawn his eyes from the hands of his master. Thus, a despot has been known, while in company, to give a silent and unobserved order, by a slight movement of his hand, for the decapitation of a large number of persons. The hands are also employed, by clapping them together, to summon the servant who may be in waiting outside, as bells are not in use for such purposes in the East.

But with especial regard to the proverb before us, it may be observed that the Orientals are wonderfully proficient in making communications to each other by means of signs and gestures with the eyes, the hands, and the feet. The number of signs of this sort which have a wide and most extensively understood significance, and which are, in fact, in current use among the people, is very large. Having seldom any *natural* significance, few of them are at once intelligible to Europeans; but in the East a large proportion of the same signs are common to many different nations, forming, for ordinary purposes, a tolerably adequate means of communication between those who do not comprehend each other's oral speech. In this way many a

question is put and answered, and many an intimation conveyed, even by children, who learn this language of signs sooner than they learn their mother tongue. Thus the universal sign of invitation, or of beckoning one *to come*, is given by the rapid movement of the entire fingers of the right hand; in short, the same as our own sign of beckoning, except that the palm, and consequently the fingers, are held downward instead of upward. Then the equally universal sign for money is to slip the thumb repeatedly and quickly over the forefinger, as one does in telling out money—a very good sign, but not obviously intelligible until it has been explained.

In regard to the feet being mentioned here as well as the hands, the Rev. W. Jowett, in his *Christian Researches*, suggests that the allusion is to be understood in connection with the Oriental habit of sitting on the ground, which brings the feet into view nearly in the same line with the hands, the whole body crouching down together, and the hands, in fact, often resting upon the feet.

But apart from such common movements or signs, it is a fact that artificial systems of signs, by which any kind of communication may be made without the interchange of a word, and by means of which even the deaf and dumb may receive instruction, and communicate with others, existed in the East long before such systems were devised in Europe for the education of persons so afflicted; and it seems to us far from impossible that something of the kind may be alluded to in the proverb, as employed by nefarious persons in making their communications to one another. In confirmation of these observations, we may refer to the employment of mutes in the seraglio of the Turkish sultan at Constantinople. The plan there followed is thus described by one 'Master Robert Withers,' in an account published upwards of two centuries ago in Purchas's *Pilgrims*. 'In the seraglio,' says this writer, 'there are many dumb men, both old and young, who have liberty to go in and out, with leave of the Capee Agha. And this is worthy of observation, that in the seraglio, both the king and others can reason and discourse of anything as well and as distinctly, *alla mutesca*, by


















nods or signs, as they can with words—a thing well befitting the gravity of the better sort of Turks, who care not much for babbling. The same is also used among the sultanas and other of the king's women; for with them likewise there are divers dumb women, both old and young. And this hath been an ancient custom in the seraglio; wherefore they get as many mutes as they can possibly find, and chiefly for this one reason, that they hold it a thing not befitting the Grand Signior, neither stands it with his greatness, to speak to any about him familiarly; but he may, in that manner, more tractably and domestically jest and sport with the mutes than with others that are about him.' The public officers and governors, who acquire the knowledge of this mode of communication when young, in the seraglio, for the sake of communicating with the mutes, employ it afterwards among themselves in their secret transactions and communications.

Add to this, that the ancients had another and an analogous use for their fingers in a very complete and compendious mode of expressing numbers upon them. This art did not originate with the Romans, but it seems to have acquired its ultimate perfection among them, and there are various allusions to it among the poets. Passing an old book shop the other day, our eye was attracted by a worm-eaten book in the window, open at a plate, exhibiting what appeared, at the first view, very like the one-handed finger alphabet. On closer inspection, the work proved to be a translation of Juvenal, 'illustrated as well with Sculptures as Notes,' by 'Barton Holyday, D.D., and late Archdeacon of Oxon.' Oxford, 1673. The notes are very copious, learned, and curious. The engraving which attracted our attention is designed to illustrate one of great length upon that passage of the tenth satire in which the poet, alluding to Nestor, represents him as reaching such great age, that he 'counted his years *on his right hand.*'¹ 'In this passage,' says Holyday, 'the poet intimates a point of antiquitie, concerning the art of numbering upon the hands; but the interpreters telling us only that there was such a custome, but not

¹ 'Atque suos jam dextrâ computat annos.'—*Sat.* x. 249.

FINGER NUMERATION.

The Positions Denote, on the

Left Hand	Right Hand	Left Hand	Right Hand
1 	1000	10 	100
2 	2000	20 	200
3 	3000	30 	300
4 	4000	40 	400
5 	5000	50 	500
6 	6000	60 	600
7 	7000	70 	700
8 	8000	80 	800
		90 	900

z

searching out the manner (excepting only that they say, that they reckoned on the left hand unto a hundred, and afterwards on the right unto a thousand), it will be neither unpleasant nor unprofitable to clear this obscuritie, divers passages in ancient authors, both Greek and Latin, intimating it, and some places in St. Jerom not being to be understood without it.' He then names the authors who have more or less touched upon the subject, and states that he means chiefly to follow Nicolus Smyranæus Astabasdas and Lylius Gyraldus, 'these two being the most diligent in this argument.' He then first deduces the names by which the several fingers were distinguished by the ancients, from which, among other things, we learn that the fourth finger of the right hand was called *medicus* and *medicinalis*, 'because Physitians commonly stirr'd their compositions with that finger.' The annotator then proceeds, with great pains and ingenuity, to collect from these authorities the combinations of the fingers by which numbers were progressively expressed; but as these conclusions are more intelligibly represented to the eye in the engraving in which he embodies his conclusions, and which we have caused to be copied, we shall not follow the details. Of this engraving, Dr. Holyday says: 'For the quicker apprehension and delight of the ingenuous reader, I have expressed here in picture the summe of this art. A table of the ancient hand-arithmetick, so far as I have described it; doing it without pattern, yet by the precedent descriptions, as well as in such an obscuritie, my guess could direct me to give directions for the performance.'

It may be added that Dr. Holyday indicates, as a divine, his knowledge of the application of his researches to the texts we have before us, for he says: 'And as the ancients did thus number up on their hands, so by the hands' gesticulation they did express their commands unto their servants; and hither some do draw that of the Psalm cxxii. 2: "As the eies of servants look unto the hand of their masters."'

Eleventh Week—Sixth Day.

THE HEBREW MATRON.—PROV. XXXI. 10—31.

THE writers who, from imperfect knowledge of the matter, or from too much reliance on modern Oriental analogies, and these not well understood, have presented us with low and degraded pictures of the condition of woman among the Hebrews, must have overlooked the beautiful, dignified, and engaging picture of a Hebrew matron with which the Book of Proverbs closes. Yet it ought to be the chief authority, as it is by much the most complete description which the Bible contains; and it is to us deeply interesting, as showing that the wise and benevolent institutions of the Mosaic law, tending to elevate the position of woman in the social system, had, in the course of time, their just and designed effect, in giving to her a place in the Hebrew community far more advantageous than that which she held in any ancient nation whose domestic usages are known to us, or than she now enjoys among any eastern people.

What can be more emphatically appreciative of a virtuous and prudent wife's value, than the declaration that, 'Her price is far above rubies; the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her: she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life?'

The description of her conduct and course of daily life is deeply interesting, and highly instructive as to the domestic customs and economy of the Hebrews, admitting of far more consideration, and of more ample illustration, than we are now able to give to it.

The family to which she belongs is clearly intended for one in good circumstances, to the prosperity of which her wise management materially contributes. Her place in the family is no indolent sinecure, such as most people conceive Oriental matrons to enjoy, but is full of useful activities, generous cares, and refreshing duties.

First, she is represented as 'seeking wool and flax, and working willingly with her hands.' Mark the 'willingly;' there is a volume in that word. She is no household drudge, but works cheerily with her maidens in preparing the clothing of her family. In the state of society to which the description belongs, every kind of drapery for the person, the tent, or the house, is manufactured at home by the women, who make it a pride to be able to boast that their husbands and children are entirely clad by the labour of their hands; and the man's robe clings the more sweetly to him—is warmer in the cold, and cooler in the heat—from his knowledge of the dear hands by which every thread has been prepared. In this state of life, ladies of high place and rank take the sole charge of this and other branches of domestic economy, and work busily with their damsels; and in most cases, the usage is kept up, with respect at least to the finer and more delicate kinds of work, long after commerce, and the facilities it affords for the interchange of commodities, have rendered it more really economical to obtain the articles required by purchase, than by domestic manufacture. Illustrations of this usage might be culled from all quarters, Greek, Roman, and ancient and modern Oriental. Even the Emperor Augustus usually wore no other garments than such as were made at home by his wife, sister, or daughter. We might also refer to the analogous employment of women in the highest walks of life, during the middle ages, if not at a period comparatively recent; and, at the present day, we need but cross the water into Normandy, to witness many striking analogies to this and some of the other domestic usages here described or indicated.

It would seem that enough of these domestic manufactures were produced not only for the use of the family, but for profitable sale or exchange for other commodities. As ships voyage forth laden with home manufactures, and bring back in return the products of distant lands, so the virtuous wife exchanges the things her hands have wrought, for the products of foreign countries, and for such articles as were needful for domestic uses—seeking the best markets, and studious of proper

economy. Hence, 'she is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar.'

Intent on her domestic duties, 'she riseth while it is yet night.' Early rising is, indeed, constantly indicated in Scripture, in conformity with the universal custom of the East; to his adoption of which custom in those regions, and his subsequent retention of it, the author of this work may say that he owes much of his power of executing the large, though humble, labours whose fruits the public has been willing to receive kindly at his hands. The Orientals generally rise very early in the morning. To be 'up with the sun,' is not in the East regarded as early rising. Every one who is not prevented by infirmity or sickness, from the ruler to the meanest of his subjects, is usually up and dressed by the morning dawn; and even in royal courts, the most important public business is transacted at a very early hour, before, in this country, the workman rises to his labour. The women almost invariably rise even sooner than the men, often a good while before day; especially when to their numerous duties of domestic management, is added, as in this case, the manufacture of stuffs for household use or sale, giving them incessant occupation, and leaving the day too short for their labours.

When she is up, 'she giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens;' that is, after attending to their necessary food, she gives out to each of her maidens the portion of work she is to do—her labour for the day.

Nor are her duties wholly domestic. Even the works of the field and the vineyard are under her management, and that not as a drudge, but as a free and intelligent agent, acting as a man acts in regulating his own property. She even purchases land, and determines how it shall be laid out, whether in arable, pasture, or vineyard; and, in this case, she decides it shall be a vineyard, and so, accordingly, it is planted.¹ All these high responsibilities, and in-door and out-door duties, necessarily gave to the Hebrew matron a much higher social position than

¹ 'She considereth a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard;' *verse 16.*

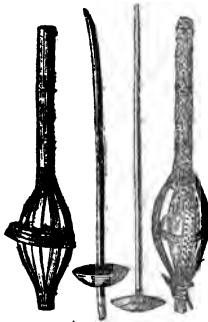
a woman does, or can, under existing institutions, occupy in the East.

All the time of this good woman is well occupied, for at every hour that can be spared from her other duties, 'she layeth her



hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.' Some difficulty has been felt with regard to the words translated 'spindle' and 'distaff,' and our information with regard to this class of operations is scarcely precise enough to enable us to fix the terms with certainty, but the probability is that they are rightly translated. Spinning by the spindle is certainly the

most ancient mode, and we find no other exhibited on the sculptures and paintings of Egypt, or of classical antiquity. From the latter source, the annexed representation of the use of the distaff and spindle is derived. Those of Egypt do not afford the distaff, though it was probably in some partial use, the reel comprising yarn already spun, resting upon the ground, usually in a basket, and sometimes with an intermediate prop which enabled the spinner to work in the favourite posture of



sitting on the ground. In that country, spinning was principally the occupation of women, though men also used the

spindle, and were engaged in the loom. Several actual specimens of Egyptian spindles have been found, and are preserved in European museums. They are generally small, commonly of wood, and, to increase their impetus in turning, the circular head was occasionally of gypsum or composition; some, however, are of light plaited work, made of rushes or palm leaves stained various colours, and furnished with a hoop of the same material, for securing the twine after it was wound. These modes of spinning have not yet been wholly superseded in the East; and sometimes, as in ancient Egypt, the spindle is used without the distaff, the matter to be spun being attached to the waist, and drawn out with one hand, while the other twirls the spindle. It excites some surprise that so simple and easy a contrivance as the spinning-wheel should not have been known to the ancients, but certainly no trace of it has been discovered.

A Hebrew matron is not so engrossed in her household cares and duties, as to be unmindful of those in a less prosperous state. The charitable injunctions of the law find a response in her own kind heart, and she is every ready to 'stretch out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands (*both* her hands) to the needy.'

The next piece of information concerning this worthy dame, will surprise some who entertain exaggerated ideas of the *warmth* of the climate of Palestine. 'She is not afraid of the snow for her household,' since she keeps them so well and so warmly clad. There is winter snow, then, in Palestine? Certainly. This might be inferred from the fact, that there are as many as *twenty-three* allusions to snow in the Scriptures. In the more elevated parts of the land, the winter cold is sometimes rather severe. At Jerusalem, which stands high, snow often falls to the depth of a foot or more, in January and February, but it does not lie long on the ground. The ground never freezes, but the pools of water are sometimes covered with thin ice for a day or two. There are also occasionally some snow and a little frost in the more open plains; and generally there is quite enough of cold in winter to render

warm clothing necessary, and the people look more to this than to fuel for maintaining warmth about their persons during the winter season.

Then there is a more particular account of her domestic manufactures, into the details of which we cannot now go: 'She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. She maketh fine linen and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant.' By this it appears that it was only after a liberal expenditure of her products upon her family, that she disposed of the surplus to the merchants—to those who required them. It may be doubted whether, in the state of society to which this description belongs, there were any manufactures of household stuffs but such as were thus produced in families, and the demand, having no other source of supply, stimulated domestic production to an extent of which we can hardly have any adequate conception. It would also often happen that the members and dependents of a family were so numerous, that their united labour would produce a larger quantity of useful products than could be consumed at home; and as there was always a demand, and profitable remuneration, for such products, there was every inducement to keep all hands constantly employed in providing a surplus available for sale; and when it was found that certain articles, as the 'fine linen' (perhaps shirts and girdles in the present instance), were in especial demand, and met with a particularly ready sale, the power of production beyond the wants of the family would be chiefly directed to the manufacture of these articles. We thus learn how those who had no such manufactures in their own houses, or none sufficient for their wants, were supplied with what they required from the surplus production of other families. The 'merchants' were doubtless the traders or shopkeepers who bought up these products of female domestic labour, and resold them at a profit. At the present day, we see offered for sale in eastern towns, either at first or second hand, the outer garments spun and woven by the Arab females in their tents, the admired carpets made by the Eelaut women of Persia, and even the rich embroideries and other elegant

productions of the needle, which are prepared by the town ladies in their harems.

And with the burden of all these responsibilities and cares upon her, and with all this work upon her hands, this excellent lady is not a mere domineering, autocratic, and testy housewife. No; 'She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.' Well, therefore, may 'her children arise up and call her blessed!' Well may her husband 'praise her,' and cry in the fulness of his heart, and in the deep consciousness of the blessing she has been to him, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but THOU excellest them all.' And well may the prophet add, 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, *she* shall be praised.'

Eleventh Week—Seventh Day.

ECCLESIASTES.—ECCLESIASTES I. I.

WAS Solomon the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes? Who doubts it? Is not this patent on the very face of it? Throughout, it contains circumstances applicable only to Solomon; and at the outset the writer introduces himself as 'the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.' No other son of David than Solomon was king of Jerusalem, or as he afterwards says more fully, 'king over Israel in Jerusalem.'

Nevertheless there have been few questions regarding the authorship of the sacred books more strongly contested than Solomon's authorship of Ecclesiastes; and the nature and number of the objections which have been advanced, form a monument of microscopic ingenuity in criticism. As the reasons thus advanced appear to us to have been satisfactorily disposed of by Mr. Holden and others, and the old and generally received notion seems to remain substantially unshaken, we shall not enter into the objections. The one to which we might most desire to direct attention, as in itself undoubtedly the weightiest, is not suited for satisfactory discussion in these

pages. We may just state, however, that it rests mainly on the alleged striking difference between the language of this book and that of Solomon's acknowledged work, the Book of Proverbs. It is admitted that this difference would prove very little, if the two books belonged to two entirely different classes of literature; that is, if Ecclesiastes bore the same relation to Proverbs as the Song of Solomon does; but since Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, it is affirmed, belong essentially to the same class, the argument derived from the difference of style must be taken to be perfectly conclusive. Accepting this admission, we are disposed to contend that there *is* quite sufficient dissimilarity between the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to account for the difference of style; and we think we could undertake to point out works of well-known English authors, exhibiting far greater disparities of style than exist between these two books. Besides, the style of the same author often becomes materially different after an interval of years; and assuming Solomon to be the author of both these books, there is good reason to suppose that the Book of Proverbs was produced much earlier than Ecclesiastes, which bears throughout the tone of an aged and 'used up' man's experience.

Such as rest upon this argument, are yet willing to admit that it could not stand in the presence of any weighty reasons for believing Solomon to be the author of the book. Those who say this, of course, conceive there are no such reasons; but we believe there are—including the positive assertion to that effect with which the book opens—and therefore we claim the benefit of this admission. Indeed, the admission itself, that this strongest argument against Solomon's authorship could not stand against any positive evidence in its favour, seems to us quite sufficient to demonstrate how little stress can with safety be laid upon it.

Some reader will ask how such a position, as against Solomon's claims to the authorship of the book, can be maintained in the face of the declaration with which it commences? Why, it is not denied, at least not generally denied, by the objectors,

that the words in view do denote Solomon ; but this is accounted for by the supposition, that the author intended to be understood as representing or writing in the person of Solomon, without meaning to be taken for Solomon himself. If this be the case, it is a pity that he did not take more pains to indicate his meaning, and thereby prevent that misapprehension which he might have foreseen, and which has all but universally prevailed. It is said, indeed, that he has taken this precaution, by introducing Solomon, not by his proper name, but by that of KOHELETH, or, 'the Preacher,' signifying that Solomon is introduced, not in his personal character, but as the representative of wisdom. But this falls to the ground, if we can show, as we think we can, that this title was perfectly proper to Solomon in his individual capacity. To illustrate this position, we are reminded that the author of the clever apocryphal book called 'The Wisdom of Solomon,' does in like manner personate the wise son of David. But 'The Wisdom of Solomon' is of no canonical authority, and ought not to be brought into the comparison. The argument might be good with those who put both books on the same level as to authority : on the one hand, by regarding them as equally human, like the Rationalists ; or, on the other, by holding them to be equally divine, like the Romanists. To us, who believe Ecclesiastes to be divine, and the 'Wisdom' human, this analogy has no force ; and, indeed, we can conceive it possible, that had the author of the book been regarded as thus merely assuming the character of Solomon, this alone might have been regarded as a serious obstacle to its admission into the canon of Scripture. If any canonical book could be shown in which such an assumption takes place, the argument might be of weight, but not else.

Now, let us see with what degree of propriety the title of 'the Preacher' can be given to Solomon. The original word is KOHELETH, which is also the Hebrew title of the book. The English word scarcely conveys its exact meaning, but comes nearer to it, perhaps, than any other that our language affords. Literally, it means one who assembles or gathers people to-

gether ; but as, more specially, it denotes one who so assembles them in order to address them or to give them instruction, the meaning of Preacher is nearly enough borne out. The title was probably assumed by Solomon, in consequence of his delivering his sage maxims and admonitions to assemblages of persons who wished to profit by his instructions, and who may have resorted on stated occasions to his palace. This is not mere conjecture. In chapter xii. 9, his practice of teaching the people is clearly indicated : ‘ Because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge ;’ while from 1 Kings iv. 34 we learn that kings and people from surrounding nations resorted to Jerusalem to *hear* his wisdom. That all these were instructed in private audiences is far less likely than that they heard him at meetings held periodically or occasionally for the purpose. A custom like this would be in entire conformity with eastern usages. Perhaps the practice of the Wahabee sultan, Ibn Saoud, in our own time, may help us to some ideas on this matter. ‘ After supper, he regularly assembled in the great room all his sons who happened to be at Derayeh, and all who were desirous of paying their court to him joined this family circle. One of the ulemas then read a few pages of the Koran, or of the traditions of Mohammed, and explained the text according to the commentaries of the best writers. After him other ulemas delivered lectures in the same manner, and the Saoud himself always closed the meeting by taking the book and explaining every difficult passage. It is said that he equalled, or perhaps excelled, many of the ulemas in the knowledge of religious controversy, and of the law in general. His eloquence was universally admired ; his voice was remarkably sweet and sonorous at the same time, which made the Arabs say that his words all reached the heart.’¹

¹ BURCKHARDT’S *Materials for a History of the Wahabees*, p. 290.



Twelfth Week—First Day.

DESIGN OF ECCLESIASTES.

THE Book of Ecclesiastes is allowed to be one of the most difficult—perhaps the most difficult—in the Old Testament. This pervading difficulty is evinced by the exceedingly various views which have been taken of its design and scope, and by the essentially different estimates of its value. No book of Scripture has had warmer friends or sterner enemies; nor can it be said that the controversy concerning it has yet ceased, or has been brought to any conclusion commanding general concurrence.

The difficulty of the book was early felt; and it is related by old authorities that the Jews themselves, being unable to grasp its real scope, had serious doubts concerning it, and contemplated its degradation from their canonical Scripture, but eventually concluded that the divine authority of the book was saved by its conclusion, which is indeed such as to suggest, that every view which induces a disparaging estimate of its contents must be founded on an imperfect apprehension of its design, or on too strong reference to particular passages, without regard to the place they bear in the argument. The fact seems to be, that it requires close attention and careful thought to follow the writer's argument, and apprehend the bearing of all its parts upon each other; and as there are many who cannot think, and many others who are disinclined to the labour of thought, it is not wonderful how greatly the book has been misapprehended, and how variously it has been understood. Thus, from the apparently contradictory nature of its contents, the book has been looked upon by some as the gloomy imaginings of a melancholy misanthrope, and by others as the licentious suggestions of an Epicurean profligate; by

some as the disputation of a wavering sceptic, and by others as a justification of God's providence in ruling the world. Some, again, with the view of freeing it from objections to which it has appeared to them obnoxious, have even gone so far as to convert it into a dialogue, in which the Preacher is made to speak as a learner, the bold tone of whose language is rebuked and softened down by the calm and soothing voice of his instructor.

All the doubt and disparagement cast upon Ecclesiastes have, however, been most completely and satisfactorily met by various writers who have joined in vindicating the book, and in bearing witness to its high value, while they have differed in the interpretation of its contents. 'I do not know,' says one,¹ 'any book in the Old Testament that describes more fully, more convincingly, or more concisely, the whole sum of human life, with all its changes and vanities, its occupations, its plans, its speculations, and pleasures; and, at the same time, that which alone is real, lasting, progressive, and rewarding.' Another² testifies: 'There blows throughout this book a piercing chill against every earthly aim, and every vain endeavour; a contempt, which changes into a bitter sneer against everything which, in the usual proceedings of men, is one-sided and perverse; an indefatigable penetration in the discovery of all human vanities and fooleries. In no earlier³ writing has all cause of pride and vain imagination so decidedly and comprehensively been taken from man; and no book is pervaded by such an outcry of noble indignation against all that is vain in the world.' Another⁴ describes it as 'that precious fragment of sacred oriental philosophy, the Book of Ecclesiastes, through the whole of which is shadowed forth the sentiment contained in the concluding words: Fear God, and keep his commandments.' Another⁵ perceives that 'a deep religious sense pervades the whole book.' Another⁶ says: 'I enjoyed much pleasure in the study and exposition

¹ Herder.² Ewald.³ This author is one of those who contend for the later date of the book.⁴ Nordheimer.⁵ Hengstenberg.⁶ Wardlaw.

of this portion of the word of God.' Another declares that 'the much-complained-of obscurity of the Book of Ecclesiastes is entirely owing to the interpreters generally neglecting, rather than being unable to discover, the design of the book, which, besides being sufficiently declared by the author, is obvious enough of itself.'

Now, as to the view of the book that seems to us most entitled to attention, we must acknowledge that we were formerly inclined to acquiesce in the conclusion, that its general scope amounted to an inquiry after the CHIEF GOOD—that very same inquiry after the *summum bonum* which so much engaged the attention of the old pagan philosophers. They, however, only sought to know what was the precise happiness of this life; whereas, under this view, the chief inquiry of the author of Ecclesiastes is after that which is ultimately good—that which, in all its bearings and relations, is most conducive to the best interests of man. Pursuing this inquiry, the Preacher, after discussing various erroneous opinions and pursuits, determines in favour of TRUE WISDOM. The scope of the whole argument then becomes—the praise and recommendation of wisdom, as the supreme good of creatures responsible for their actions. But in this wisdom there is nothing worldly or carnal; it is the wisdom from above—holy, spiritual, undefiled, and which, in the writings of Solomon, is but another name for RELIGION.

There is much to recommend this view to attention; but on renewed and more deliberate consideration, another explanation appears more satisfactory, and calculated to give the book a higher place in the progressive teaching, which prepared the way for those better and clearer revelations of life and immortality, which the gospel finally bestowed. The real object of the Preacher seems to be, by showing the emptiness of all things earthly, to force those who follow his argument to deduce the absolute necessity of a future and better existence, as the only solution of the otherwise inscrutable phenomena which the course of man's life presents. The practical result of the argument is to show man that, if in this life only he has hope, he is

¹ Desvœux.

of all beings the most unhappy. In some respects the argument is the same as that of the Book of Job; only in that book the argument is founded upon actual sufferings, whereas in this it is wrought out by calm reasoning, founded on long and careful observation. In neither book is this practical and inevitable conclusion broadly and fully stated, the time for authoritative and plain disclosure on the subject not being yet come. As a guide conducts the bewildered traveller to the home he seeks, and leaves him when he comes within sight of it, and can no longer mistake his way, so here the sacred writers lead us up to the very gates of the future life, and leave us there to knock and wait till the portals are flung open to us. In both these books, however, intimations of the real conclusion of the matter, of the writer's real purpose, are suffered to transpire: and, as the advancing lateness of time required, these intimations are more frequent and distinct in the Book of Ecclesiastes than in that of Job, and indeed are such, and are so interspersed, as to afford to the attentive reader a sufficient clue to the meaning of the writer.

The view of the book which we have thus indicated, is not a novelty. It was set forth about ninety years ago, by the learned and ingenious Desvœux, and has more recently been taken up and very ably enforced by an accomplished German writer, Dr. Nordheimer, who perhaps drew the hint from Desvœux, whose work was translated into the German language soon after it appeared.¹

The former writer affirms, that 'the whole discourse may be reduced to three propositions, every one of which, when properly reflected on, yields a strong proof of a future state of rewards and punishments. First, no labour or trouble of men in this world can ever be so profitable as to produce in them a lasting contentment and thorough satisfaction of mind. Secondly,

¹ *A Philosophical and Critical Essay on Ecclesiastes, wherein the Author's design is stated*, etc. By A. V. Desvœux. London, 1762. 4to. The Essay of Dr. Nordheimer (a late German Professor in an American University) appeared in the *American Biblical Repository* for 1838, as translated by W. M. Turner, from the German MS. of the author, and revised by him.

earthly goods, and whatever we can acquire by our utmost trouble and labour in this world, are so far from making us lastingly happy, that they may be even looked upon as real obstacles to our ease, quiet, and tranquillity. Thirdly, men know not what is, or is not, truly advantageous to them; because they are either ignorant or unmindful of that which must come to pass after they are dead; therefore any one may conclude that there must be a state of true and solid happiness for men; unless God, who is allowed to have made them what they are, to have implanted in their hearts that strong desire of happiness which often makes them unhappy in this world, and to have the absolute command of their fate, be absurdly supposed to have acted whimsically in their formation, and to act so still in the dispensations of providence. Thus, from all these propositions, but especially the last, the Preacher infers, that we must seek for happiness beyond the grave.'

This is better thought than expressed. But as we are anxious that the reader should understand this matter well, we will, to-morrow, endeavour to condense within our limit the large analysis which Dr. Nordheimer has given of the whole book. By making this a separate Reading, those who 'don't care' will be enabled to keep holiday; while those who *do* care will labour the more diligently on that day in comparing the book with the analysis.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has given rise to more and wider differences of opinion, as to its design and real meaning, than any other book in the Bible. In commencing a thoughtful and thorough study of it, I would most earnestly recommend the reader to cast aside every preconceived opinion and every theory, and in a spirit of prayer, and humble dependence on the enlightening grace of God, to endeavour to ascertain, from the words before him, those divine truths which they were intended to set forth. He may not be able at once to solve all the mysteries, or to clear away all the difficulties; but he will assuredly be adopting the best means for doing so, and he will in the end succeed.

The note of a recent acute writer appears to me worthy of careful consideration. The more closely I have examined the book, the

more convinced have I become of its truth. 'Another source of its obscurity,' he says, 'may be found in the principle of interpretation ordinarily adopted. A principle neither warranted by anything in the book itself, nor by authority of any other book of Holy Scripture. This principle is the assumption that the book was written by Solomon in his old age, after he had repented of his sinful practices; and when, having seen and observed much, as well as having enjoyed everything that he could wish, he was fully convinced of the vanity of everything but piety towards God. Now, that Solomon wrote the book at an advanced period of his reign, is obvious from chap. ii. 4-11; but, though all his recorded labours terminate in 'vexation,' there is not one single reference to any *sinfulness* in his pursuits—an omission totally inconsistent with the genius of Scripture, which never fails in the most direct acknowledgment and condemnation of the sins of its chiefest characters. Had the book, therefore, been a confession of sin and retraction of error, these must have furnished its most plain and prominent statements. Sin would have been called sin, and not mere 'vanity and vexation of spirit;' for these words, however strong and expressive, come far short of that self-abasement and abhorrence which the consciousness of sin against God must produce, whenever his Spirit leads the sinner to repentance. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable: Ecclesiastes is neither an acknowledgment nor retraction of sin in the inspired author, but an illustration of the insufficiency of all "treasures on earth," for the purpose of inducing men to "lay up their treasures in heaven," to "set their affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

'The chief sources of obscurity may be detected in two principles that would reduce light itself into darkness: the first, taking words in a sense the writer never intended; the second, interpreting by figures of speech that he never employed. Examples of the first may be found in the meaning attached to the "good" in chap. ii. 24, and iii. 13, etc., where the real good intended is commonly referred to unlimited sensual indulgence; and the second is exemplified (chap. xi. 9), where a plain and godly admonition is commonly interpreted as a bitter irony.'

Twelfth Week—Second Day.

THE ARGUMENT OF ECCLESIASTES.

TOUCHED by many deep experiences of human life, and contrite for many errors, the author of Ecclesiastes resolves on devoting his energies to the composition of a work which should point out to his fellows wherein true happiness does, and wherein it does not lie. In the very outset, he warns his readers against forming too exalted an idea of life, since here no permanent and substantial good is to be obtained.

Having taken (chap. i.) this part upon himself, and having stated in the eleven introductory verses the main design of the ensuing chapters, which is, to prove that all the solicitude which mankind give themselves for the acquisition of real earthly good must for ever remain unrequited, he proceeds to demonstrate the truth of his position from the events of his own history. He commences his inquiries by a strict self-examination; and before he has cast a glance upon the world without, he comes to the conclusion¹ that physical enjoyment is unworthy the pursuit of a rational being. This he was perfectly warranted in affirming; for all the appliances of luxury stood at his command; he had tested them well, and had found them all equally worthless. He does not, however, stop at this stage of his researches; for he had resolved on ascertaining all for himself, on exploring every path of human activity, to the end that his want of success in the search after real earthly good might not be ascribed to the incompleteness of his investigation. Accordingly, he next inquires² into the value of intellectual attainments, and also into the nature of the mind itself: but here likewise he meets with nothing satisfactory; for although wisdom is certainly preferable to folly, they are still both subject to the common lot. Proceeding in this manner with his self-examination, he encounters nothing but disappointment, and is already induced³ to express himself as disgusted with life.

¹ Eccles. ii.² Eccles. ii. 12-16.³ Eccles. ii. 17.

Such is the result of his inquiries as directed towards himself, from which he now passes¹ to the external world; and thus he comes to a consideration of time, and of mankind as existing in time. He investigates all that relates to the subject, and finds that indeed God has ordered everything beautifully in time, and that everything is dependent upon God; but he sees that men act unjustly towards each other, and mutually embitter each other's lives. He perceives that the just are often wrongfully dealt with by human tribunals,² while the unjust are permitted to escape with impunity; and thus the pious do not meet with their equitable reward in this life, nor the wicked with their proper punishment. From this he draws the conclusion,³ that God will judge them both, and assign to the just their true reward, and to the unjust their deserved doom. In this manner the Preacher shows, that the grand argument for the belief in a system of rewards and punishments after death, lies in the unjust treatment which men experience at one another's hands. Having thus arrived at the idea of God, the Preacher next endeavours to ascertain⁴ the nature of the relation existing between man and the Deity, with the view of discovering in what the superiority of man over all other creatures consists. He examines life in its various aspects, but cannot perceive that man enjoys any essential superiority in his birth, his life, or his death, in each of which the lot of every created being is in all important respects the same. He therefore concludes⁵ that the superiority is to be sought for in the future, after death, when the spirit of man rises to abide with God, while that of the brute sinks into annihilation. In this consists the Preacher's second argument for the existence of a future state; so that he has already *twice* surmounted those formidable barriers which oppose the progress of the adventurous inquirer, and threaten to hurl him from their summits into the dark abyss of infidelity. Having thus rescued his belief in the justice of God from the mazy labyrinths of speculation, he is enabled to guide into the right path all those who venture, in spite of his warnings, to

¹ Eccles. iii.² Eccles. iii. 16.³ Eccles. iii. 17.⁴ Eccles. iii. 18.⁵ Eccles. iii. 21.

explore by the glimmering light of human reason, the dark and hidden things of God and nature, and are thus drawn into imminent danger of perishing in its tortuous windings.

Again,¹ the Preacher enters upon the world's wide stage, to view the life of man as exhibited in society. And here a sad spectacle presents itself before his eyes. He beholds man weeping disconsolately for the wrongs inflicted by his brother man; and, touched with pity and grief, he exclaims,² 'Happier are the dead, because they are already dead, than the living, because they are yet alive.'³ He proceeds still further, and finds that all the labour and turmoil of men owe their origin to a mutual envy; and that this frequently assumes the hateful form of avarice, causing them to hoard up treasures merely to the end that they may be richer than their neighbours, while themselves totally unable to enjoy any of the fruits of their parsimony. This sad experience suggests to him some reflections,⁴ which he delivers in the shape of maxims, till he comes to consider the conduct to be observed in drawing near to God,⁵ respecting which he gives this advice: 'Be on thy guard when thou enterest the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools.'

Being thus brought to an immediate consideration of the Deity, the Preacher goes on further to set forth the conduct which it behoves man to pursue towards his Creator,—his discourse being mainly on sins of the tongue, to which men are so prone, that they often fall into them through sheer inadvertence. He warns⁶ against wordiness in prayers, and strongly insists on the due performance of vows.⁷

Having laid down his precepts on the subject of our duty to God in regard to language, the Preacher returns to a consideration of the manifold evils which follow in the train of insatiable avarice; and these he places before the view of the covetous

¹ Eccles. iv.

² Eccles. iv. 2.

³ The texts are quoted as translated or paraphrased in Dr. Nordheimer's Essay.

⁴ Eccles. iv. 9.

⁵ Eccles. v. 1.

⁶ Eccles. v. 2.

⁷ Eccles. v. 5.

man,¹ with the intention of checking his thirst of gain, and advises him to enjoy with moderation the gifts of providence, instead of striving incessantly to increase his store. The evils of avarice gather upon his mind as he surveys them, and he proceeds² to describe the wretchedness of inordinate greed ; and ends with setting forth the folly of the miser in allowing himself no enjoyment in this life, which he permits to pass from him like a shadow, without knowing what the future is to bring forth.

The Preacher now³ pauses in his course, to lay down a number of additional maxims, the fruit of his preceding investigations. From the censure of folly, he naturally passes to the praise of wisdom, by which he is led back⁴ to his main argument, that man cannot penetrate the designs of God. From this he deduces⁵ the general principle of a medium in all things, which he seeks to impress upon the minds of men as their safest guide through the intricate paths of life ; for he says,⁶ ‘All this have I tried by wisdom. I said I shall become wise ; but it remained far from me.’ And again,⁷ ‘I applied with heart and soul to the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom ; but I found at last that the fruits of this anxious desire to investigate all things were more bitter than death ; and that he alone who trusts stedfastly in God, and to whom God is gracious, can escape with safety from the labyrinth in which such an undertaking must involve him.’

We thus find that it is the design of the sacred writer to warn mankind against every species of ill-regulated desire, by pointing out its evil consequences.

Having now completed his inquiries into the obligations of man to himself, the Preacher proceeds⁸ to consider those which he owes to his fellow-men. He begins by prescribing the conduct to be observed towards the sovereign, as the highest individual in human societies ; fidelity to whom⁹ he enjoins as a primary duty ; but then proceeds to treat of the punishments

¹ Eccles. v. 9–17.

² Eccles. vi.

³ Eccles. vii.

⁴ Eccles. vii. 13.

⁵ Eccles. vii. 16.

⁶ Eccles. vii. 23.

⁷ Eccles. vii. 25.

⁸ Eccles. viii.

⁹ Eccles. viii. 3.

that await evil rulers. In this chapter, be it observed, he abandons the sceptical mode of arguing with which he set out, and merely proposes questions to himself, in order to show the manner in which he reaches his conclusions ; having done this, he proceeds to lay them down in the manner of a teacher. As already observed, he advises unshaken obedience to the king, even should his reign be tyrannical, on the ground that the tyranny can be of no long duration, and punishment must overtake it in the end. He conducts the reader, in imagination,¹ to the tombs of the tyrannous great ones, and represents them as consigned to eternal oblivion, which is in the East accounted the most severe of all inflictions, and then breaks out into the joyous exclamation :² ‘ Though the sinner do evil a hundred times, and carry it on long, sure I am that in the end it will be well with them that fear God.’ Yet to this pleasing conviction is immediately opposed³ the sad experience which seems to contradict it, that it frequently goes well with the wicked and ill with the good. This threatens to draw him once more into the vortex of materialism ; but, says the Preacher,⁴ as I endeavoured with the greatest anxiety to find out the reason of all this, I became convinced that it is not in the power of man thoroughly to explore the works of God. And so this reflection again occurs to him as a delivering angel, to guide once more out of the dark labyrinth into which he had wandered.

Being thus led anew to the conviction that it is not possible for man to estimate the doings of God, the Preacher proceeds (chap. ix.) to exert all his powers in vindicating the ways of the Most High. He asserts that all is under the control of God ; that each individual thing is but a portion of the whole to which it belongs ; and that nothing exists for itself alone, or can rise independently above the rest of creation. Everything, therefore, to be judged of correctly, must be viewed in the relations it bears to other existences ; but as this is frequently beyond the power of man, he should ever guard against suffering him-

¹ Eccles. viii. 10.

² Eccles. viii. 12.

³ Eccles. viii. 14.

⁴ Eccles. viii. 16, 17.

self to be misled by those isolated facts that are above his comprehension. But it is still,¹ he says, the greatest evil under the sun that one and the same lot seems to happen to all ; for, through their ignorance on the one hand, and their presumption on the other, this leads men to the commission of crime, by allowing them to entertain the idea, that the condition of a living dog is better than that of a dead lion, since with death everything is at an end. This doctrine would lead to the conclusion, that physical enjoyment is to be followed as the greatest good ; for, says the deluded one, if during life there is no distinction made between the righteous and the wicked, how much less is distinction to be expected after death ? The Preacher expresses his pity for mankind in this respect,² and then leaves the reader to his own reflections.

The value of that practical wisdom which knows the limits of its own resources, and which had thus far guided him through his difficulties, the Preacher illustrates by a striking example,³ from which he draws the conclusion, that wisdom is better than material power. He then, in the tenth chapter, proceeds to lay down the maxims which his conviction of the supreme excellence of wisdom suggests. He had already recommended submission to the powers that be, and he now describes the blessing which a good ruler, and the curse which an evil ruler, may be to a state ; concluding with the advice, not to conspire against the latter, however secretly, as it is impossible to tell how soon it may come to his knowledge.

Having thus completed his inquiries into the obligations of man to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God, and having stated the results in the shape of maxims for the conduct of life, the Preacher proceeds, in chapter eleventh, in the form of a peroration, to draw his subject to a close. He reverts once more to the duties which man owes to himself, and instructs him in what manner to make use of his possessions, and enjoy the blessings of this life. He counsels him not to strive incessantly after riches, or selfishly to appropriate his advantages to his own exclusive use ; neither should he pass his days in

¹ Eccles. ix. 3.

² Eccles. ix. 12.

³ Eccles. ix. 14.

apathetic indolence, but with cheerfulness and moderation enjoy the blooming season of his youth. He then pronounces, in chapter twelfth, the noble precept which crowns the entire production : 'Remember thy Creator even in thy youth ; before the evil days come on, or the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.'

The work closes with a description of man's latter end, in which is depicted in faithful colours, and with a master hand, the gradual approach of old age, and, finally, of death. On reaching the grave, he suggests¹ the consoling thought of an after-life to be spent in the presence of God : 'Then shall the dust of the body return to the earth from which it came ; and the spirit shall ascend to dwell with its Giver on high.'

Twelfth Week—Third Day.

THE GARDEN AND THE POOL.—ECCLESIASTES II. 5, 6.

KING SOLOMON tells us, referring to the various undertakings and pursuits in which he had sought happiness, 'I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits : I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.'

The manner of this statement suggests that the pleasure grounds and pools of water, or reservoirs, were situated together—the reservoirs in or near, and for the use of, the pleasure grounds. It is accordingly observable that certain important reservoirs, which have been from remote times ascribed to Solomon, and regarded as those which he mentions here and in the Song of Songs, are found in connection with a proper situation for a pleasure ground at an easy distance from Jerusalem, and corresponding very closely to the intimation which Josephus affords respecting the favourite country retreat of Solomon. The historian says : 'There was, about fifty stadia from Jerusalem, a certain place called Ethan, very pleasant in

¹ Eccles. xii. 7.

fine gardens, and abounding in rivulets of water, whither he [Solomon] was wont to go every morning, sitting on high in his chariot.'

The reservoirs regarded as marking this site, and known as 'The Pools of Solomon,' lie south of Bethlehem, upon the usual route from Hebron to Jerusalem, and about six miles from the Holy City. They lie at the south end of a small valley, and below them is another valley, narrow and rocky, about two miles in length, terminating in a close ravine, and shut in by high hills which rise as straight as palisades. The cultivable soil in the bottom of this valley varies in width, but rarely exceeds a hundred yards, and the rocks rise abruptly on each side. At somewhat more than a quarter of a mile occurs the lower portion of a quadrangular building of rough stonework, thirty feet by twenty-one, the walls of which are six feet thick, and a small pipe, three inches in diameter, passes out on the side next the pools, but no other passage out can be discovered. A short distance beyond this, the valley is planted with fig-trees, vines, and olives, the proprietors of which inhabit some rude huts on the left, where are also some ruined arches of stone. The rock below these ruins is cut into various forms, and from its foot issues a transparent spring, which, passing onward in a copious stream, winds through the valley, irrigating and fertilizing it in its course.

This valley is conceived to be the site of the gardens here mentioned, and more especially of the 'enclosed garden' of Solomon's Song (iv. 12); whence, indeed, the valley got from Latin travellers and monks the name of Hortus Conclusus.

Travellers are less agreed as to the probability that this valley was Solomon's than that the pools were his. But if the pools were his, surely the gardens were likely to be in their near neighbourhood; and, considering how much the Oriental princes affect complete seclusion in their retreats, the remarkable manner in which this valley is shut in, would have been likely to recommend the site, in spite of the natural disadvantages which some ascribe to it; but they, indeed, are scarcely qualified to form an opinion, after the place has passed through

so many ages of neglect. Maundrell, one of those who adhere to the pools, but distrust the gardens, says : 'One may safely affirm, that if Solomon made them in the rocky ground which is now assigned for them, he demonstrated greater power and wealth in finishing his design, than he did wisdom in choosing the place for it.' But a far better judge, the Swedish naturalist Hasselquist, declares : 'The place will admit that Solomon might have formed a garden here, though it is not by nature an agreeable situation, being in a bottom ; but perhaps this great prince might choose to improve nature by art, as many other potentates have done. The fact, however, is, that a valley kept always verdant by an abundant supply of water from living springs, and enclosed by a rocky fence, offered peculiar advantages which could hardly elsewhere be found, within an easy distance from Jerusalem.' Apart from the confined situation, which, in an Oriental point of view, would be an advantage, the spot really possessed peculiar fitness for a pleasure ground, especially with one who was likely, as Solomon was, to take an interest in the culture of exotic plants, the seeds of which might have been brought to him by his ships. Mariti says : 'Nature has still preserved its original fertility in the valley of Hortus Conclusus. Although but little cultivated, the soil still produces a tolerable supply of cotton and various kinds of grain ; there are also fine plantations of fruit-trees, affording the most juicy fruits in the country. Various flowers and many fragrant plants grow there naturally at all seasons, among which are thyme, rosemary, marjoram, salvius, persil, rue, ranunculuses, and anemones.' An older traveller (De Breves), who looked about as a philosopher, bears similar testimony, and though he was there in the heat of summer, he describes the valley as 'always green ;' and besides the plants just named as reared by nature's own kindly hand, he mentions oranges, citrons, and pomegranates as fruits that grow there. To this it is interesting to add, that here may be found various rare plants not to be found elsewhere in Palestine, and which, as an old traveller (Zuallart) suggests, may not impossibly have been self-propagated from exotic plants which Solomon introduced into

his gardens. This is a point of considerable interest, well worth the investigation of some traveller acquainted with botany. He might make a full list of all the plants he found there, and strike out such as he afterwards met with in other places.

In regard to the pools, they are sunk in the side of a sloping ground, so that they are on a distinct level, one above another, and capable of containing a large body of water. They are so constructed, both by conduits leading from the one to the other, and by what may be termed anastomosing branches, that when the water in the upper one has reached a certain height, the surplus flows into the one below, and so on to the third. They are all lined with a thick layer of hard whitish cement, and a flight of steps leads to the bottom of each. The lowermost pool is considerably the largest, measuring 589 feet by 169, and 47 deep to the water's edge. The water escapes by passages worn in the hill, and below the conduits intended for it, into the gush beneath. Above the highest of the three pools, the water is supplied from a small chamber of masonry, which is supposed to be the 'spring shut up,' the 'fountain sealed,' of the Song of Solomon. It has a narrow entrance, and has the appearance of having been once closed by a stone door. Into this building rush several streams, conducted from springs that rise among different neighbouring hills, and flowing still in probably as much abundance as when the conduits were first made.

The artificial pools thus receiving their supply of water from natural springs, send it forth through stone channels. The intention of them, therefore, obviously is, to hoard up and reserve this natural supply, so that, when conveyed through its conduits to Jerusalem, it should be equable in quality, as well as free from the sediment which the three pools in succession, ranging one above another, would detain. A well-laid canal carried this supply, in a tortuous course, to the reservoirs at Jerusalem; it passed on the northern slope of the Hill of Evil Counsel, into the valley of Hinnom, to its exit in the Upper Pool of Gihon. Originally, the natural springs which furnish

this supply of water, seem to have been collected into one stream, which must then have formed a considerable rivulet, running through this valley, and finally discharging itself into the Dead Sea.

The road from this place, as far as Bethlehem, follows the track of the aqueduct which conveys the water to Jerusalem, and afterwards crosses it in several places. The channel is small, but the water runs in it with considerable rapidity, though, from the winding course which it takes in following the different sinuosities of the ground, sometimes above, and sometimes below the surface, it is difficult to feel assured that it does not go up-hill, as some have supposed.

Recent explorations have shown that the water from the pools of Solomon was conducted by the long aqueduct into immense reservoirs hewn in the rock beneath the temple area. One of these, called the *Royal Cistern*, is thus described by Dr. Barclay: 'During our exploration of the Haram, we observed, on removing a half-buried marble capital, a rude subterranean passage, leading to a long flight of steps. Descending the steps cut in the native rock, we reached a beautiful sheet of water. This is, without doubt, the 'sea' of which the son of Sirach and the commissioner of king Ptolemy speak in such rapturous terms. It is now, however, quite a rude piece of work; the massive metal-covered pillars have given place to ill-shaped piers, apparently of unhewn rocks, badly plastered. It is 736 feet in circuit and 42 in depth; and, according to the best estimate I could make, its capacity falls but little short of two millions of gallons.'

The object of this immense reservoir is now known. By an ingenious and complicated system of subterranean tunnels and valves, its abundant waters could be used whenever necessary for flushing the cess-pools and sewers connected with the temple, and for carrying off all blood and filth down through a long tunnel to the bottom of the Kidron.

Twelfth Week—Fourth Day.

BIRD-MESSENGERS.—ECCLESIASTES X. 20.

IN the tenth chapter of Ecclesiastes, there is a remarkable verse (20th) over which we have often mused : ‘Curse not the king, no not in thy thought ; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.’ This reminds one strongly of that marvellous ‘little bird’ whose mythic existence perplexes infancy by the reports it bears to our mothers, grandmothers, and nurses, concerning our young misdoings. From the text before us it would almost seem that this mysterious ‘bird,’ which fills so important a place in our infant lore, came to us from the East, and was as well known to the Hebrews as to us, performing nearly the same functions for them as for ourselves. If the existence of this famous little bird was known in the time of Solomon, it would not be improper that he should allude to it—not of course as a fact, but as a popular expression—to illustrate the almost certainty with which, in spite of all precaution, conspiracies against the head of the state transpire.

It has, however, often struck us, that there may be an allusion to a real fact—the use of birds, that is, of carrier-pigeons, in conveying intelligence. That it is said ‘the bird of the air shall *carry* the voice,’ favours this notion ; and the more we have looked into the matter, the more probable it has appeared, this use of these birds being traceable back to very ancient times ; for although the earlier instances are mostly European, it is admitted that the bird itself, and this employment of it, were derived from the East, where its services are still highly valued. Formerly, relays of these birds were kept in constant readiness to carry expresses to all parts of the country, where they had been purposely bred. It is related that when the governor of Damietta heard of the death of Orilio, he let fly a pigeon, under whose wing he had fastened a letter, to Cairo, whence another was despatched to another place, and so on,

until, in a few hours, the event was known all over Egypt. But the native use of the carrier-pigeon was known in much earlier times. Anacreon informs us that he held a correspondence with his lovely Bathyllus by means of a dove. Tauros-thenes, by means of a pigeon, which he caused to be decked with purple, sent to his father, who lived in the isle of Ægina, the news of his victory in the Olympic games, on the very day he had gained it. When Mutina was besieged, Brutus, within the walls, kept up an uninterrupted intercourse with Hirtius by the assistance of pigeons, setting at naught every stratagem of the besieger, Anthony, to stop or retard these aerial couriers. In the time of the Crusades, there were many instances of these birds being also made useful in the service of war. Tasso relates one during the siege of Jerusalem, and Joinville another during the Crusade of St. Louis. The purposes for which they were generally reared were—to be sent from governors of besieged cities to generals who were coming to their assistance; from princes to their subjects, to apprise them of some important event; from governors to their sovereigns, apprising them of distant conspiracies or insurrections; from military commanders, announcing victories or losses; or from love-sick heroes to their distant and desponding fair ones.

Dr. Russell, in his *Natural History of Aleppo*, gives a particular account of this matter; and the process, as described by him, is doubtless the same that anciently prevailed, as there can be but little variation in the mode of reducing to man's service the natural though marvellous instincts of a bird. Russell says that the carrier-pigeon was in former times employed to bring intelligence to Aleppo of the arrival of ships at Scanderoon. The name of the ship, the hour of her arrival, and whatever other particulars could be comprised in a small compass, were written on a slip of paper, and secured under the pigeon's wing in such a manner as not to impede her flight; and her feet were bathed in vinegar with the view of keeping them cool, that the sight of water might not tempt her to alight, by which the journey would have been prolonged or the billet lost. 'The practice,' says Russell, 'has been disused

for many years ; but I heard it asserted by an English gentleman, in whose time it still subsisted, that he had known pigeons perform the journey in two hours and a half. The messenger had a young brood at Aleppo, and was sent down in an uncovered cage to Scanderoon, from whence, as soon as at liberty, she returned with all expedition to her nest.' Russell's brother adds, from subsequent information, that, when let loose at Scanderoon, instead of bending their course towards the high mountains surrounding the plain, they mounted at once directly up, soaring still, almost perpendicularly, until out of sight, as if to surmount at once the obstacles intercepting the view of their place of destination.



Pigeons were also sent from and to Aleppo on far more distant journeys in opposite directions. The old traveller Lithgow says that one of them ' would carry a letter between Babylon [Baghdad] and Aleppo, which is thirty days' journey,' in forty-eight hours. It is recorded that a gentleman of Cologne, having business to transact in Paris, took with him two carrier-pigeons, which had young at the time, and, on arriving in Paris at ten o'clock in the morning, he tied a letter to each of his pigeons, and despatched them at eleven precisely. One of them arrived in Cologne at five minutes past one o'clock, the other nine minutes later ; and consequently they had performed nearly 150 miles in an hour, reckoning their flight to have been in a

direct line. The ordinary flight of the bird is about a mile in a minute.

In our own country, these birds seem to have been first and mostly used for the purpose of announcing to distant friends the death of some unhappy criminal; reminding one of the custom among the Romans of letting fly an eagle from the funeral pile, to render the apotheosis of the deceased complete. More lately they have been used to convey intelligence of political movements, of the state of the public funds, of the result of races, and the like; though for all these purposes their use has been in a great measure, and will soon be wholly, superseded by express trains and electric telegraphs,—the use of the birds, when other means are available, being much discouraged by the necessity of previously conveying them *from* the same place *to* which their message is to be borne.

It would seem that somewhat too much stress has been laid upon the bird having young ones at home; for birds will do this that have no young ones. It is its accustomed *home* the bird seeks, whether it has young there or not. It is influenced by an instinctive nostalgia, which in old birds can scarcely be eradicated by time. Confined for weeks or months, on gaining their liberty, off they fly to the 'old familiar spot,' and if taken away again, still return on the first opportunity. But how do they find their way? how do they even discern the direction in which their home lies? That in these unclear climes they are sometimes dispersed and lost in foggy weather, shows that they use their sight in pursuing their homeward course; but still the difficulty remains, How is that course determined? Naturalists have not succeeded in solving this difficulty. They confess that it is one of the mysteries which they are unable to fathom, and must be content to leave unexplained. We can only say, that these creatures have received from God a powerful instinct—inscrutable to man in its operations, though beautifully intelligible in its results—from God, through whose similar endowment 'the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming.' Jer. viii. 7.

Twelfth Week—Fifth Day.

OLD AGE.—ECCLESIASTES XII. 1-5.

THERE is perhaps no portion of this remarkable book which has attracted more attention than the description of old age, under a variety of appropriate and striking figures, contained in the twelfth chapter. It has probably received more illustration, variously applied, than any other portion of Scripture of equal extent. It has often been regarded as furnishing a complete and connected allegorical description of old age, and its final close in death. But an allegory is the representation of one thing intended to suggest the representation of another thing, as where the vine is chosen by the Psalmist to depict the condition of the Hebrew people: whereas, in the present chapter, no ruling and predominant object is taken for the comparison, but a variety of images are mingled together to form a vivid description of venerable but complaining old age. It is not, therefore, properly speaking, an allegory, and cannot, without great caution, be subjected to the rules of allegorical interpretation. It is best to consider it as a highly figurative and poetical description of old age, in which the various infirmities and imbecilities of that period of life are portrayed in a variety of images, in themselves unconnected, but all tending to identify the prototype. It scarcely affords any adequate foundation for the very elaborate scientific and anatomical illustration to which it has been by some writers subjected, or for the elucidation by the light of modern medical science of a poetical description, which requires rather a popular illustration derived from Asiatic customs and the use of figurative language. It is, indeed, not easy to apply every particular of the description to the special circumstances of human infirmity which Solomon intended it should represent; for, as it depends much upon the notions which that prince entertained of the inward structure of the human frame, and of the office of each part, no one can be

adequately qualified to explain it who has not such a knowledge of *ancient* anatomy as few, even among skilful modern physiologists, possess. We say ancient, because it is not to be supposed that Solomon, if he meant his comparisons to be understood, would allude to discoveries whereby he must then have been unintelligible; and Hippocrates himself is but a modern in comparison with him. Still, many particulars may be made out; and in rapidly running through the description, we shall endeavour to indicate them.

When the Preacher speaks of 'the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars being darkened,' he probably means this as a general and introductory statement of the pains and miseries of age. But others suppose him to refer to the general decay of the powers and faculties of the mind—the understanding being obscured, the memory debilitated, and the will feeble, languid, and cold. And when he says that the clouds then 'return after the rain,' he must be taken to refer first to the winter season, as there is no rain in summer in Palestine, and to use this as indicating, probably, the succession of infirmities and pains which attend the winter of man's life.

'The keepers of the house,' which then 'tremble,' are probably the arms and hands, which are to the human frame what guards and keepers are to a palace; or these members may be so called as those which provide for the sustentation of the house or body. Some have fancied the ribs to be intended; but these do not 'tremble,'—they become more fixed in age than in youth.

'The strong men' that then 'bow themselves,' appear to be the lower limbs, which bend forward and totter in advanced age. But some have thought that it rather applies to the spine, the incurvation of which is so frequently connected with old age. All, however, are relaxed or bowed down by age, and plainly foretell the approaching downfall of the superstructure.

At this time of life's decline 'the grinders cease, because they are few.' As it happens that the term 'grinder' is, in our language, applied to certain of the teeth, the meaning is here at once perceived. Indeed, it is too literally perceived to reflect the image found in the original. Not one in ten thinks that

there is any figure, but takes the passage as indicative of a literal fact. If so, it would differ from the other intimations, which are all manifestly figurative. In truth, however, this is as figurative as the rest. In the original the term means, indeed, the grinders, that is, those who grind corn; but that term not being, as with us, applied to the teeth, it has only one sense, which is thus at once seen to be figuratively applied. Indeed, our own translators, overlooking or disregarding the erroneous impression which the double signification of the English word might create, must have meant the word 'grinders.' It is to be observed, that in the first part of the description the human frame is represented as a house, and that the active powers are represented as so many men and women employed in its various offices. We have had the keepers of the house; now we have the grinders—the women that daily grind the corn, whose diminution in a decayed and impoverished house sets forth the decay of the teeth, all the more aptly, in that the action and result of the millstones which grind, is greatly similar to that of the teeth in mastication. Similarly, the eyes are represented as the windows of the decayed old house, because foul and opaque, so that one cannot any longer see through them. It is the sight, *looking through the eyes*; and this is a most truly poetical representation. How the visual power becomes impaired in old age, no one needs be told.

That 'the doors shall be shut in the streets when the sound of the grinding is low,' is first a statement of the fact, that in old and decayed mansions, in which much of the activities of life has ceased, the outer door towards the street is seldom opened, and there the song of the women as they grind the corn is seldom or but faintly heard. This is so clear that some have rendered the latter clause, 'the voice of the grinding maids is low.' Again, in all houses the outer gates are closed as the night approaches. The closing of the gates is obviously applied to the compression of the lips induced by the want of teeth; and this is specially observable in eating, when the sound of the mastication is necessarily low, partly from the closed

lips, and partly from the operation being performed with the gums and no longer with the teeth.

At this point the Preacher drops the comparison of the human frame to a house, and the points to which he wishes to call attention are set forth more directly or by single images.

That the aged 'shall rise up at the voice of the bird,' is scarcely a figure, but a simple fact. Some have thought the crowing of the cock to be denoted, and suppose it to indicate that old persons sleep so unsoundly that they are awakened and rise at the crowing of the cock. This we doubt, as the aged are not distinguished for early rising, and to be awakened by the crowing of cocks is not peculiar to them. We apprehend that the term 'bird' must be taken in its usual meaning of a sparrow or any small bird; and then the application will be, that the aged sleep so unsoundly that they are aroused from their sleep even by the twittering of a small bird. This seems a much more expressive sense than the other.

That 'the daughters of music shall be brought low,' is conceived by some to denote the incapacity of old age for the enjoyment of music—the decay of the power of hearing, as alluded to by old Barzillai in his answer to David: 'Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?' But we are more inclined to suppose that the reference is to the decline of the organs employed in the production of music in old age, when the

' Big manly voice,
Turning again to childish treble, pipes
And whistles in the sound.'

The verse which describes the aged man as 'afraid of that which is high, and his fears shall be in the way,' applies clearly to the difficulty which he experiences in making any ascents, as well as to the timidity which the consciousness of his infirm condition compels him to exhibit when he walks abroad into the public ways, which is particularly the case in the narrow streets of the East, where the comparative security of raised footpaths is not afforded.

The whitened hair of age is very eloquently compared to the

flowering of the almond-tree. The flowers of this tree being white, and appearing before the leaves, it necessarily presents the appearance of one mass of whiteness. This reminds one of the name which the Arabs give Mount Hermon—Old Man's Mountain, because of the resemblance formed between its snow-capped head, and the white hair and beard of an aged man. The application may also remind us of the fine thought of an American poet :

'Fair was she and young, when in hope she began the long journey ;
Faded was she and old, when in disappointment it ended.
Each succeeding year stole something away from her beauty,
Leaving behind it, broader and deeper, the gloom and the shadow.
Then there appeared, and spread faint streaks of gray o'er her forehead,
Dawn of another life, that broke o'er her earthly horizon,
As in the eastern sky the first faint streaks of the morning.'

LONGFELLOW'S *Evangeline*.

The extreme feebleness of advanced age is strikingly expressed by the declaration, that 'the grasshopper shall be a burden,'—a fine poetical exaggeration of the fact, that a small weight, or a light labour, becomes burdensome to the old man. A kind of locust is designated ; and the comparison may have been suggested by the fact, that these creatures, when not on the wing, frequently in their springs alight upon one's person, which is hyperbolically represented as enough to oppress an old man, if not to overturn him. The fact also that the locust was the smallest creature used among the Jews for food, may help to explain why this insect should be selected for the purpose of indicating that the least weight is burdensome to an old man. Another interpretation, however, declares it to be the intention of the Preacher to compare the aged man himself to a grasshopper or locust, translating 'The grasshopper shall be a burden to itself.' Dr. Smith, in his curious work, 'Solomon's Portraiture of Old Age,' enforces this idea, that 'The dry, shrunk, shrivelled, complaining, scraggy old man, his backbone sticking out, his knees projecting forwards, his arms backward, his head downwards, and the apophyses, or bunching parts of the bones, in general enlarged, is very aptly de-

scribed by that insect. And from this exact likeness, without all doubt, arose the fable of Tithonus, who, living to extreme old age, was changed into a grasshopper.' In the Florentine collection of ancient gems, there is one that curiously illustrates this idea, by exhibiting an aged man (probably Tithonus) under the figure of a grasshopper; and the aptness of the similitude we can ourselves avouch, having often spontaneously made out this analogy in regard to locusts, before we became acquainted with the fact that any such notion existed, or was applicable to the illustration of the present text.



All these signs indicate the approach of the time 'when man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets,' which is a manifest allusion to the ancient custom of employing hired mourners to attend the funeral obsequies, and to celebrate the virtues of the deceased in elegiac strains, accompanied with soft and plaintive music.

Twelfth Week—Sixth Day.

ANIMAL HYDRAULICS.—ECCLES. XII. 6.

THERE is one verse in Solomon's description of man's decline, which has attracted more attention and obtained larger illustra-

tion than any other part of it, and is well entitled to our separate consideration: 'Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.' The *silver cord* is supposed to denote that resplendent white cord (the spinal marrow) which passes through the entire length of the backbone, and which, medical writers inform us, is very liable to be relaxed and weakened in old age, or even to be partially broken and thus unfitted for its functions; producing those paralytic affections, those tremors and debilities to which the aged are particularly exposed. The *golden bowl* is thought to be the skull. But whence the epithet 'golden?' This, let it be noticed, does not always denote colour, but is often used as a term of excellence, to express extreme importance and value. Thus it appropriately indicates here the exceeding preciousness of the 'bowl' and its contents. Some, however, would rather refer us to the fact that there are two integuments which envelop the brain—the one, firm and opaque, surrounding the whole mass, yet, though in contact, not properly connected with it, but rather lining the skull; the other, soft, delicate, and transparent, closely attached to the brain, insinuating itself between all its convolutions, compacting and lubricating the whole. The golden bowl might be the common anatomical name for the integument, not only from its globular shape, but from its yellowish colour, which bears a nearer resemblance to gold than does any other part of the body. The name, as thus understood, would certainly, as Dr. Wardlaw remarks, exhibit much less of fancy and metaphor than those of *severe* and *affectionate mother*,¹ which modern anatomy applies to these integuments.

The terms that follow—the pitcher at the fountain, the wheel at the cistern—if not also the two preceding terms, have been regarded by many, through a larger reference to modern anatomical discoveries than we are quite prepared to admit, as involving a knowledge of the circulation of the blood. We know that this modern discovery has been claimed for the

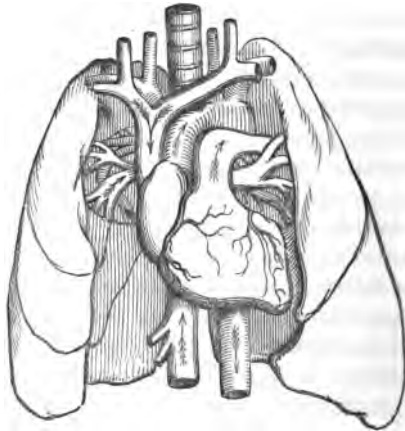
¹ *Dura mater* and *pia mater*.

ancients, and is declared to have been known to Hippocrates and some other physicians and philosophers. But the passages adduced from their writings in proof of this, will not bear out the interpretation given to them ; and there never was yet any great invention or discovery, of which it has not been possible, by *after*-light, to discover some trace in ancient authors. We are not willing to fix the limit of Solomon's knowledge. The question here is, not what Solomon knew, but what was so well known to the people he designed to instruct, as to be intelligible through the veil of highly figurative language ; and not even those who contend that the circulation of the blood was known, will affirm that this great fact was a matter of common knowledge. It was the custom of the sacred writers to speak in general conformity with the prevailing notions of their age on subjects of this kind ; and we do not suppose that any departure was made from that rule, for the indication of recondite and hidden truths, in a popular and poetical description, intended to suggest only general ideas, the accuracy of which has never been questioned.

Apart from any considerations respecting the circulation of the blood, the internal economy of the animal frame in regard to the instruments for the diffusion of blood through the body could not but be known in a place where animals were continually slaughtered for sacrifice, and their internal organization exposed to the notice of educated and intelligent men. We are, therefore, disposed to assent to the conclusion, that the three large canals which proceed from the heart, and receive, like pitchers at a well, the contents of this spring, are denoted by the *pitcher*. In elderly men those grand conduits, that take the blood from the heart in order to diffuse it through the lungs, the liver, and all the organs and members of the body, become rigid, bony, and inflexible, whereby they are disabled from acting efficiently upon the blood by driving it into all the distant pipes of the system. Hence those languors, faintings, and sudden changes that usually occur in persons advanced in years.

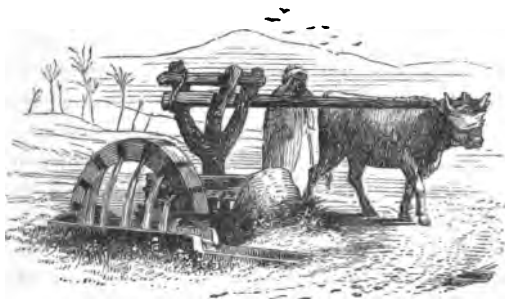
Under this view, the heart itself becomes the *cistern*, which

receives and dispenses to the most distant extremities every particle of blood belonging to the body. This is rendered by old age unfit for service. Part of its substance, like the great canals just mentioned, degenerates into bony fibres, which are unable to execute their due action. For the heart propels the blood to the extremities by a *contractile* force: if this contractile power be abated by the hardness and inflexibility of the heart's substance, the diffusion of the blood cannot properly be carried on; but momentary stagnations, sinking of spirits, and universal weakness must ensue, because this power of contraction,



like the *wheel* of a water engine, is the grand and principal cause of the diffusion of the vital fluid through all the numerous canals of the system. Indeed, from the very terms employed, it needs but little penetration to perceive, that the whole of these details are founded on, and illustrated by, one of the hydraulic machines in use in the time of the writer; and as these appear to have been substantially the same as those that are now in use in the East, it may not be impossible to discover the one which is intended. On carefully reflecting upon all the machines of the sort which we have seen in different parts in operation for the purpose of raising water,

the Sackiyeh, or Persian wheel, which is in use in South-Western Asia, appears to us to be the most illustrative of the terms employed. This machine consists of a vertical wheel, which raises the water in earthen pots, or leathern buckets, attached to cords, and forming a continuous series; of a second vertical wheel with cogs, fixed to the same axis; and of a large horizontal cogged wheel, which, being turned by a pair of oxen, or by a single beast, puts in motion the former wheels and pots. We have seen a machine of this sort at work every morning, nearly in front of a house in which we long dwelt on the banks of the Tigris, and were continually reminded by it of the passage now before us. The machine is usually of rude construction, and is said to produce a disagreeable creaking noise. The only other machine that can be supposed in any degree to correspond to the suggestions which this text affords, is the *taboot*, which is used only



when the water is raised but a few feet. In some respects it resembles the Persian wheel, the chief difference being that the pots are not used, but the water is raised up *in* a large wheel with hollow joints or fellies. Both these machines afford illustrative suggestions, which will be obvious to the reader; but the *taboot* scarcely seems so clearly applicable as the *sackiyeh*.

Twelfth Week—Seventh Day.

THE SONG OF SONGS.

WE now come to that remarkable book, The Song of Solomon ; which, although it consists of but eight short chapters, has probably occasioned more discussion, and has had a larger number of translations, commentaries, and dissertations, than any single book of the Old Testament.

The external aspect which it presents, is that of ‘A Song of Love,’ which appears to have been composed on occasion of some distinguished espousals, and to set forth the strong human affections naturally connected therewith. The two lovers, or the bridegroom and the bride, appear throughout, expressing their feelings in highly impassioned, but in very beautiful, and in strongly figurative, but truthful language, to and of each other. The bridegroom is a king bearing the name of *Shelomoh* (the peaceful, or prince of peace), and the other a lady who becomes his queen, and who bears the corresponding name of *Shelomith*, which is but the feminine form of his own, and bears the same relation to it as Julia does to Julius. Besides these leading characters, there appears through the whole a kind of chorus, as in the Greek drama, composed of ‘the daughters of Jerusalem ;’ and towards the close two brothers of Shelomith appear, who each speak once only. Besides these, other characters are introduced or alluded to, such as shepherds, watchmen, gardeners ; but they are mutes, and do not speak.

It has been doubted by some whether the poem has any *historical* foundation. It is, however, generally supposed that it expresses the circumstances and sentiments connected with Solomon’s marriage to a lady, by most writers conceived to have been the king of Egypt’s daughter ; but some modern commentators have produced arguments to show that the bride must have been a daughter of Israel and a native of Palestine. We formerly thought this question one of much interest ; but

latterly it and other external points connected with it have appeared to us in greatly reduced importance, in our search after the inner meaning, which, under a figurative aspect, the book presents—the nutritive kernel which this outer husk contains, and *to which it is adapted.*

Does it contain any inner meaning? On this question there has been large debate. Some regard it as a song of human affection, and see in it nothing beyond this. They who hold this opinion, consistently lament the presence of such a book in the Bible; and certainly, if we entertained their view as to the nature of the composition, we should agree with them, and say that it ought not to be in the sacred volume. We say more, that it never would have been there if this were the view intended to be taken of the book; and the mere fact of its being there, among the holy writings which existed in the time of our Lord, and to which He collectively bore testimony, is in itself a proof that this is not the true estimate of the Song of Songs, or rather, is a view that falls far short of the whole truth.

It is incredible that those who settled the canon of the Old Testament should have admitted this book into the sacred volume, had they regarded it as a mere song of human passion. In fact, so familiar were their minds with the practice of representing spiritual conditions under the symbols of human affections, and so much was this, as they knew, the practice of all Oriental nations, that it probably never seemed to them possible that its true inner meaning—or, at least, that it was meant to represent spiritual things, however the meaning might be interpreted—should ever be called in question. ‘Far be it! far be it!’ says Aben Ezra, in the Preface to his Exposition of this book, ‘that the Song of Songs should treat of carnal affections; but all things in it are figuratively spoken. Yea, unless its excellence had been great, it would have had no place among the sacred writings; nor is there any controversy as to that.’

In taking this poem, as they did, to shadow forth the union which subsists between the Lord and his people, they were abundantly justified by many other passages of Scripture, in which that relation is similarly described by the most endearing

of all earthly relations, that between the husband and the wife, or the bridegroom and the bride ; and from which grew other figures drawn from the circumstances of the same condition. Thus, when the heart of the wedded church becomes alienated, the Lord is described as *jealous* ; and when she persists in her evil ways, He threatens her with a *bill of divorcement*. There are, in fact, many passages, some of considerable length, as distinct as the Song of Songs in this external aspect, but which no one ever thought of interpreting in any other than the allegorical sense. It might have been anticipated that such a relationship, alluded to as it is in various scriptures, would be more fully and circumstantially treated of in some particular portion of the inspired volume. Neither is it difficult to conceive that an entire book should be devoted by the Holy Spirit to a subject so important and precious to every spiritual mind. To set it forth with vividness, and so present it, that instead of being a mere abstraction, it might appeal to the heart and affections, the sort of dramatic form selected has an evident advantage over other modes of representation, and gives room for the adornment of the subject with all the beautiful imagery which nature and art can afford.

In fact, this mode of expression is, at the present day, so familiar in the East, that an Oriental, on first becoming acquainted with this book, would read it with rapture, and recognise it as full of edifying spiritual expression, the general purport of which he would be at no loss to gather ; and greatly would he be astonished to learn, that in the cold regions of the north, there were many who questioned that it had any spiritual significance. Mr. Lane, in his very interesting work on the *Modern Egyptians*, after correctly pointing out that the odes sung by the Moslems at their religious festivals are of the same nature as the Song of Solomon, generally alluding to their prophet as the object of love and praise, gives a specimen of one of them ; but it is too long for this place. He thus goes on : ‘I must translate a few more lines, to show more strongly the similarity of those songs to that of Solomon ; and lest it should be thought that I have varied the expression, I shall not attempt

to render them into verse. In the small collection of poems sung at zikrs, is one that begins with these lines :

“ O gazelle, from among the gazelles of El-Yemen !
 I am thy slave without cost ;
 O thou small of age and fresh of skin ;
 O thou who art scarce past the time of drinking milk !”

In the first of these verses, we have a comparison exactly agreeing with the concluding verses of Solomon's Song, for the word which in our Bible is translated a “roe,” is used in Arabic as synonymous with *ghazal* (or a gazelle) ; and the mountains of El-Yemen are the “mountains of spices.” This poem ends in the following lines :

“ The phantom of thy form visited me in my slumber ;
 I said, ‘ O phantom of slumber, who sent thee ?’
 He said, ‘ He sent me whom thou knowest ;
 He whose love occupies thee.’
 The beloved of my heart visited me in the darkness of the night.
 I stood to show him honour until he sat down.
 I said, ‘ O thou, my petition and all my desire !
 Hast thou come at midnight and not feared the watchman ?’
 He said to me, ‘ I feared, but, however, love
 Had taken from me my soul and my breath.’”

Compare the above with the second and five following verses of the fifth chapter of Solomon's Song. Finding that songs of this description are exceedingly numerous, and almost the only poems sung at zikrs, *that they are composed for the purpose*, and intended only to have a spiritual sense (though certainly not understood in that sense by the generality of the vulgar), I cannot entertain any doubt as to the design of Solomon's Song. The specimens I have given of the religious love-songs of the Moslems have not been selected, in preference to others, as most agreeing with that of Solomon, but as being in frequent use.’

The passage thus cited certainly furnishes a most valuable illustrative testimony to the spiritual sense of Solomon's Song ; and we trust that none of our readers will hereafter rest upon the mere literal aspect of this divine Song, at the peril of being counted among ‘the generality of the vulgar,’ to whom alone,

as Mr. Lane admits, the spiritual sense of such songs is not apparent.

This practice is, however, far from being confined to the Arabian countries. We find it in Persia, in India, and among the Rabbinical Hebrews. We shall confine our further remarks, however, to Persia—the most poetical country of the East. In that country the glowing poems of the native bards are firmly believed by the Soofees, and by many others, to have a mystical significance, and are so explained and employed. ‘The Persians insist,’ says Major Scott Waring, ‘that we should give them the credit of understanding their own language; that all the odes of their celebrated poets are mystical, and breathe a fervent spirit of adoration towards the Supreme Being. They maintain that the poets, being generally Soofees, profess eager desire without carnal affection, and circulate the cup, but no material goblet, since all is spiritual to them, all is mystery within mystery. In fact, they regard the poetry as of the same nature as Solomon’s Song; and, indeed, the fact that so large a proportion of the poetry of Western Asia, that is, of Arabia and Persia, is employed in the expression of religious emotions mystically under the same image that we find there, is a very strong argument for the general opinion that the Canticles form a mystical or allegorical religious poem, the details of which, although they seem to us hard to be understood, are perfectly intelligible in a sacred sense to the Persian and Arabian of the present day, as they were to the ancient Hebrew.’

The principle of this poetical mysticism is clearly announced by the poet Jamee, who tells us that he addresses the Almighty by no particular name, for that everything in the universe declares his presence and existence :

‘Sometimes the wine, sometimes the cup, I call Thee; sometimes the lure,
sometimes the net, I call Thee.

Excepting thy name, there is not another letter in the tablet of the universe.

Say by what appellation shall I call Thee?’

Another passage, avowedly of the same mystical character, we copy from Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hazin, as the most charac-

teristic specimen of this kind of verse on which we can lay our hands :

‘Cup-bearer of orthodox wine,¹ from among us
Which carries away the darkness of idolatry—
Which, to our gloomy hearts, is like a flame of fire,
On the midnight illumination of Mount Sinai ;—
Give us goblets that we may move aside from ourselves,
And, out of ourselves, in ecstasy, take our way towards the Incomparable.

Musician, put thy heart-attracting breath to the reed,
And shorten this dark night of separation ;
Raise the curtain from the morning of conjunction ;
Convert into the dawn of day the eve of our painful banishment,
That I may be freed at length from this disunion,
And may gain the presence of the object of my love.²

Cup-bearer, a cup of Magian wine,
Fresh drawn from the jar of the wine-house,
Pour into the palate of the dry-lipped Hazin,
As a libation to his fiery heat.

Musician, thy breath gives brightness to the soul ;
For the dead of heart, it is the inspiration of the Messiah.
We are shrunk as stagnant blood in the darkened cuticle ;
A lancet is good for a congealed vein.
For the dead heart the cold body is a grave.
The sound of thy reed is the voice of the last trumpet.’

The deep spiritual meaning of the ‘Song of Songs’ will be easily recognised by every pious and thoughtful reader of Scripture. In this respect it does not stand alone in the Bible. We find many detached passages containing figures identical with that which is so gorgeously and beautifully developed here. Thus in Isa. liv. 5 : ‘Thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of

¹ Literally, *wine of the acknowledgment of the Divine Unity*, opposed to the dry dulness and gloomy distraction of Polytheism.

² This may be more intelligible, when it is understood that the Soofees suppose the cause of love to be an anxious desire of the soul for union. Thus they compare the soul to a bird confined in a cage, panting for liberty, and pining at its separation from the divine essence.

youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God,' etc. So again in chap. lxii. 5 : 'For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee ; and *as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.*' In the parable of the ten virgins we have a similar picture drawn by Christ himself. In fact, it runs through the whole imagery of the Bible : Hos. ii. 19, 20 ; Matt. iii. 9 ; Rom. vii. 4 ; 2 Cor. xi. 2 ; Eph. v. 32 ; Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2, 9.

The book is a dialogue, in which the speakers are—(1) *Jehovah* who appeared to patriarchs and prophets, and who became 'God manifest in the flesh,' under the New Testament dispensation ; (2) the *Church*, which is 'the bride, the Lamb's wife ;' and (3) the daughters of Jerusalem, who may represent, perhaps, nominal professors. The great object of the dialogue is to celebrate the glory and love of the Lord, the devotion and purity of the church, and their mutual esteem for, and delight in, each other. Viewed in this light, the 'Song of Songs' is one of the most sublime, and one of the most cheering books in the whole Bible.



Thirteenth Week—First Day.

SPIRITUALITY OF THE SONG OF SONGS.

WE do think that the reasons produced yesterday ought to be satisfactory in showing that the allegorical or spiritual interpretation of the Song of Songs is not only the right one, but the only possible one. In this sense the Jewish writers, from the earliest time, have always understood it; and we must allow them to know something of their own literature. Without this interpretation, it is hardly possible that, with their views, they would have received it into their sacred canon. We possess, indeed, in the Chaldee Targum or paraphrase, an allegorical interpretation of this book, made several centuries before the time of Christ, and probably before the traditionary interpretation from the author himself was entirely lost. In the same sense it has been understood by the Jewish interpreters, as well as by almost every one of the early Christian writers. Finding, therefore, this Oriental poem in an Oriental collection of religious books, and attended with an unbroken tradition respecting its meaning, which is, further, in perfect conformity with the poetical usages of the East, the presumption is entirely in favour of the allegorical interpretation. Indeed, it is not difficult to perceive, that if the poem have any historical basis, the circumstances are so modified as to suit the spiritual purposes of the allegory, but would have been most unsuitable in a real history. This has been shown by an able American scholar,¹ whose words we produce :

‘ 1. The names of the two principal characters, namely, Shelomoh and Shulamith, are in the original quite as signifi-

¹ Professor C. STOWE, D.D., in a paper on Solomon's Song, in the *American Biblical Repository* for 1847: Reprinted in the *Journal of Sacred Literature* for January 1852.

cant as John Bunyan's Christian and Christiana, Obstinate and Pliable, Faithful and Hopeful, etc.

'2. The sudden changes from the singular to the plural number in the part of the dialogue sustained by Shulamith, indicate that her name is to be taken in a collective sense. *Draw me, we will run after thee. The king has brought me into his chambers; we will be glad,* etc. Chap. i. 4, and many other places.

'3. Shulamith is put in situations, and made to utter expressions, which, if literally understood, are so entirely abhorrent to Oriental manners, that no sane writer, certainly no writer so skilful as the author of this poem shows himself to be, would ever put them into a literal love-song, though they are all very beautiful and appropriate when understood allegorically. Such are chaps. iii. 1-4, v. 7, viii. 1, 2. Similar scenes and expressions are not uncommon in the allegorical poetry of the East, but in their strictly amatory songs they never can occur. Literally understood, they would doom their heroines to everlasting infamy, and certainly no poet ever thus treats his favourites.

'4. The entire absence of everything like jealousy, in situations where that passion must appear in a literal love-song, is proof of the allegorical character of the piece. See chaps. i. 4, v. 1, vi. 8, 9.

'5. The dreamy and fanciful, and even impossible, character of many of the scenes, shows that they cannot be understood literally. Chap. ii. 14-16. Shulamith is in the cleft of the rocks, in the concealment of the precipices, and Shelomoh wishes to see her, and hear her speak. He is in the garden at night, and she tells him to catch the jackalls that are destroying the vines. She sees him feeding his flocks in a distant field of anemones. She sees him beyond the mountains which separate them, and calls upon him to leap over them like the gazelle and the fleeting fawn, to rejoin her at evening. All these things occur together. In chap. iv. 8, Shelomoh calls Shulamith to go with him to the snowy peaks of Lebanon and Hermon, among the lions' dens and the leopards' lairs, and enjoy the fine prospect over the plains of Damascus.

‘Numerous impossibilities of this kind will occur to every intelligent reader of the poem.

‘There are people who take up Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, and read it all through as a delightful story, without once suspecting that it is an allegory, who scarcely allow themselves to suspect that it is not all literally true, and who would think rather meanly of so extensive a traveller as Mr. Buckingham, if he had never seen the Hill Difficulty, or the Delectable Mountain—had never visited the Palace Beautiful, or Vanity Fair. The indications of allegory in that beautiful story of the Pilgrim, considering the lapse of time, and the comparative length of the two pieces, are scarcely more conspicuous than in the exquisite Song of Israel’s wisest king. How do we know the *Pilgrim’s Progress* to be an allegory any more than *Robinson Crusoe*? Because we have the tradition from the author, the names of the characters, the circumstances, and the aptness of the application. The same evidence we have in respect to the Canticles: only, as the work is shorter, more ancient, and more remote, the evidence is less obvious at first sight.’

It appears from all that has been said, that there is a state of mind and feeling which enables men to appropriate to themselves strong spiritual nutriment from such writings as these—seizing with a sharply apprehensive sense the spiritual which is set forth to them under carnal symbols, so that the carnal is lost sight of and forgotten in the spiritual. This faculty is very strong among the Orientals; and, although less vigorous among the Occidentals (as the doubts respecting this book too clearly show), it is not entirely wanting to them, and has been evinced by the relish with which men of eminent holiness and spiritual feeling have extracted refreshment to their souls from the Song of Songs. It is because the sensuous is in general more vigorous than the spiritual apprehension, that the purport of this book has ever been doubted, or its real value questioned; and it is only those who are greatly experienced in the mysteries of man’s inner life, and whose souls have been tried by passing through many fires, who can truly *feel* all that this book means, and feeling, are enabled to under-

stand it. This may be seen in the *Sion's Sonnets* of Quarles—
of which take this specimen :

' My faith, not merits, hath assured Thee mine :
Thy love, not my deserts, hath made me thine ;
Unworthy I, whose drowsy soul rejected
Thy precious favours, and (secure) neglected
Thy glorious presence, how am I become
A Bride befitting so divine a groom ?
It is no merit, no desert of mine,
Thy love, thy love alone, hath made me thine.'

And this, from the close :

' Most glorious love, and honourable Lord,
My heart's the vowed servant of thy word ;
But I am weak, and as a tender vine
Shall fall, unpropt by that dear hand of thine :
Assist me, therefore, that I may fulfil
What Thou command'st, and then command thy will ;
O leave thy sacred Spirit in my breast,
As earnest of an everlasting rest.'

Dr. Watts also manifested the same apprehensive spiritual
faculty with regard to this song of love, in some of his hymns,
especially the one beginning,

' The voice of my beloved sounds
Over the rocks and rising grounds—
O'er hills of guilt and seas of grief
He leaps, He flies to my relief ;—'

and in the one which begins,

' We are a garden, walled around,
Chosen, and made peculiar ground.'

A writer, already cited (Professor Stowe), points out Jonathan
Edwards, ' who, although the driest and most astute of scho-
lastic theologians, had a heart and imagination of Oriental
richness and fervour.' In the account which he gives of his
religious experience, he says : ' The whole book of Canticles
used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading
it about that time, and found from time to time an increased
sweetness, that would carry me away in my contemplations.
This I know not how to express otherwise than by a calm

delightful abstraction of the soul from all the concerns of the world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations—of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up in God. The sense I had of divine things often would, of a sudden, kindle up an ardour in my soul that I knew not how to express. . . . While thus engaged, it seemed natural to me to sing and chaunt forth my meditations; or to speak my thoughts in solitude with a singing voice.'

The writer to whom we owe this indication, well adds: 'The soft, rich, glowing, all-absorbing devotional feeling of Jonathan Edwards, would soon cure people of all their scruples in respect to the SONG OF SONGS, WHICH IS SOLOMON'S.'

Take, again, the instance of Dr. Chalmers, who, when he comes to this book in his *Horæ Biblicæ Quotidianæ*, at once throws himself unreservedly upon the spiritual sense of the Song, and finds in it such refreshment and enjoyment, that the few pages he allows to it form the most exclusively devotional part of his entire work. Thus he begins: 'My God, spiritualize my affections. Give me to know what it is to have the intense and passionate love of Christ. Let me find of this love that it is better than all earthly desires and gratifications. Draw me, O God, to Christ. (Song of Solomon i. 4; and John vi. 44.) . . . The church is black, sometimes with misfortune, as when persecuted; at others, with corruption, as when tempted. My God, have I not kept other vineyards than thine? gone over to the cause of secular interest and secular management, to the neglect of spiritualities? O may I seek first thy kingdom, and thy righteousness. Let me seek now unto it, and not turn aside from Him unto other causes that may appear cognate with his, but which, as far as they are good, are best promoted by the direct work of christianizing and spiritualizing the souls of men. Direct me aright, O God.'

What think you of a book which awakens thoughts, and exerts influences, such as these?

It will be observed that most persons who once come upon the spiritual sense, whatever view they take of that sense, fall

practically into the habit of treating it as a representation of their own soul's history, and of its intercourse with God. And this is right; for if it represents the union between the Lord and his church, every member of that church will find that it suits his case, and he has full right to take to himself what he finds suited to his wants and condition. Like the Psalms, the book belongs essentially to experimental—that is, personal—religion, and it is this which constitutes its peculiar charm; and it is thus also that, like the Psalms, it becomes no less suited to religious use and application under the new dispensation than under the old,—*perhaps even more suited*, viewing it through Christ. Beholding Him in it, and making Him its object—He the Bridegroom, and his Church the Bride—gives to many portions of it a fulness of meaning, and a richness of significance, scarcely attainable under the more limited views that the old law allowed. 'If Solomon,' says a recent writer,¹ 'searched what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify, when he spake this beautiful song; it was probably revealed to him, that not unto himself, but unto us, he did minister these things. To no period do they appear so fitly to belong, as to the present dispensation.'

With a few more remarks from this pious and learned writer, we may suitably close this humble endeavour to vindicate the Song of Solomon from disesteem.

'Probably there has never been very considerable diversity of thought among really spiritual minds as to the subject of this book. Its deeply experimental character accounts for the misapprehension of the mere critic, while it finds many a response in the hearts of the faithful, who perceive in it a mirror of their varied spiritual conflicts and exercises, a rich treasure of privileges, and a spring of freshest and fullest joys. Perhaps no book in Scripture affords a more searching test of the state of the heart; or is more calculated to revive the abated ardour of the affections, and direct them to Him, on whom alone, of all other objects, love may be set without danger of excess or disproportion.

¹ *Meditations on the Song of Solomon.* London, 1848.

‘When a religious activity, and a zealous contention for certain points of truth, have outlived the early warmth of love, and the mind is busied while the heart is cold; or when anxious and restless longings, the early rising and the late repose, with only the “bread of carefulness” as the result, have been permitted to disquiet the soul,—what scripture affords a better remedy for either than this? Where is attachment to the *person of Christ* more commended and enforced? what other more sweetly and emphatically declares, “Lo, He giveth his beloved sleep?”

‘If it be both comforting and strengthening to the believer to contemplate a picture of his failings and infirmities, drawn by Him who alone thoroughly knows their character and extent; when at the same time He reveals a love which, unquenched by many waters, tenderly wins back the spoiler of his own peace to lost yet longed-for happiness,—such a picture and such a love are exhibited in the Song of Solomon. Variable-ness, and more or less of unfaithfulness, mark the path of the best and holiest of the Lord’s people; but Jesus is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; and He is presented to us here in the exercise of unwearied grace. The bride may leave her first love; her spikenard may no longer send forth the smell thereof; she may forsake the retreats where alone her Beloved is to be found, and vainly expect to meet Him in worldly scenes, never countenanced or gladdened by his presence; the spirit of slumbering may cause her to miss many a happy season of communion; she may so act, that though ever able to say, “Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee,” the reality of her love, appreciable indeed to Him who knows all things, might at times be questioned, if her outward conduct were the sole criterion. But although her course be strangely diversified by intense love and forgetfulness, faithfulness and inconstancy, she finds *Him* ever unaltered, always indulgent to her failings, ever courting her love. However many her wanderings and mistakes, and however humiliating the results of her folly, He never ceases to be the admirer of her person, the sharer of her joys, the guardian of her rest. She can say, “I am my Beloved’s, and my Be-

loved is mine," even when she has wilfully wandered far from the lilies where He feeds.'

Thirteenth Week—Second Day.

THE CURTAINS OF SOLOMON.—SOLOMON'S SONG I. 1-6.

IN its external aspect, the Song of Solomon is peculiarly rich in its allusions to regal customs, especially to such as are connected with marriage, and is replete with images of various kinds, the adequate development of which might furnish matter for an illustrative commentary, larger than the entire volume which the reader holds in his hands.

At the beginning of the poem, Shulamith is introduced expressing her ardent admiration of Shelomoh. She then turns to the daughters, and deprecates their contempt of her foreign, or else rustic, character and appearance, saying, 'I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the pavilions of Solomon.' That is, black as the Arab tents, yet comely as Solomon's royal pavilions.

The contrast here intended, clearly indicates the possession by Solomon of very rich tents, and probably of one pre-eminently magnificent state-tent, which formed a most remarkable contrast to the plain dark tents of the Arabs.

Harmer¹ considers that Shelomoh had, according to the custom of the East, gone forth in much state to meet his bride on the road; which had been especially proper, if, as most suppose, this lady was the princess of Egypt. If such were the case, any one acquainted with the customs of the East, will find it probable that a proper number of tents—those of the king and the attending nobles—were set up in all the pomp of royal magnificence, at the place where he was to receive the bride. This

¹ HARMER, *Outlines of a Commentary on Solomon's Song*,—a work much less known than his *Observations on Passages of Scripture*, but containing much curious matter, which it is, however, difficult to make of any use, by reason of the singularly confused arrangement.

might very possibly be *necessary* where this ceremony took place ; but even if the spot were well inhabited, an encampment would still probably have been formed, it being customary now, as it likely was then, for great personages, when they are upon a journey, to make use of their own commodious and splendid tents, rather than the houses of others. Indeed, they sometimes choose them for celebrating transactions of consequence, even when their own palaces are near enough to be available, if that were desired. Thus the presentation of a dress of honour to the governor of a province in Persia, usually takes place in a tent at some distance from the chief town, to which the governor repairs to meet the royal commissioners sent to invest him. So Van Egmond and Heyman inform us that the rejoicings and entertainments, when they were at Constantinople, on account of the circumcising of the children of the Grand Signior, were held in a camp pitched for the purpose in the neighbourhood of that great city.

Under this point of view, there appears a peculiar energy, as well as beauty, in the bride comparing herself to the pavilions of Shelomoh ; and the mention of the pastoral tents, and, presently, of flocks, is very lively and poetical, as it is highly probable that a pastoral encampment, perhaps of an Arabian or Kenite tribe, would, under such circumstances, be in view, to suggest and emphasize the allusion.

But the magnificence of royal state-tents, such as excited the admiration of the bride, affords ground for further observation. Most of the eastern kings possess one or more such tents, to be used as occasion requires. 'It must be owned,' say the travellers last named, 'that the Turks spare nothing in rendering their tents convenient and magnificent. Those belonging to the Grand Signior are exceedingly splendid, and covered entirely with silk ; and one of them lined with a rich silk stuff, the right side of which was the apartment for the eunuchs. But even this was exceeded by another which, I was informed, cost 25,000 piastres.¹ It was made in Persia, and intended as

¹ This would not *now* be a very extraordinary sum ; but the piastre was then of much higher value, both absolutely and relatively, than at present.

a present to the Grand Signior, and was not finished in less than three or four years. The outside of this tent was not remarkable; but it was lined with a single piece, made of camel's hair, and beautifully decorated with festoons and sentences in the Turkish language.' Persia was, indeed, early celebrated for magnificent tents. In the old Arabian romance of 'Antar,' the hero, *on occasion of his marriage with Ibla*, pitches a tent which he had received as a gift from the Persian king Khosru. 'When spread out, it occupied half the land of Shurebah, for it was the load of forty camels, and there was an awning at the door of the pavilion, under which 4000 of the Arabian horse could skirmish. It was embroidered with burnished gold, studded with precious stones and diamonds, interspersed with rubies and emeralds, set with rows of pearls. And there was painted thereon a specimen of every created thing—birds and trees, towns and cities, seas and continents, beasts and reptiles; and whoever looked at it was confounded by the variety of the representations, and by the brilliancy of the silver and gold; and so magnificent was the whole, that when the pavilion was pitched, the land of Shurebah and Mount Saadi were illuminated by its splendour.' This is, of course, an exaggerated poetical description, particularly as to the size of the pavilion; but even in that respect, the exaggeration is not so great as might be supposed, for the sober accounts of travellers as to tents they actually saw, excite scarcely less surprise. Marco Polo describes the tent of Kubblai Khan as being so large that ten thousand soldiers might be drawn up in it without incommoding the nobles at the audience; and other tents capable of containing two thousand persons are mentioned. But, in fact, such statements as this, which might have seemed astonishing last year, if not incredible, excite little if any surprise in those who have just seen, with their own eyes, a host of persons equal in number to the mighty armies which have fought the battles of empires, shut up in a house of glass!

History has recorded, that at the famous marriage feast held by Timur Beg (Tamerlane) at Kanighul, the royal tents were gilded and adorned with precious stones. Each tent had twelve

columns of silver, inlaid with gold ; the outside was scarlet and seven other colours, and the inside was lined with satin of all colours. The curtains were of velvet and the ropes of silk. At the encampment of the same conqueror in the plain of Ourtaupa, the pavilions were richly ornamented, and hung with curtains of brocade covered with golden flowers. At other times we read of tents 'covered with tartaries full nobly ;' and at the great encampment at Minecgheul the tent of Timur himself was under a canopy supported by forty pillars, and was as spacious as a palace. In the middle of it was a throne, so ornamented with precious stones that it resembled a sun.¹ The contrast between such glorious pavilions as these and the sombre tents of the pastoral tribes, is great indeed.

In speaking of herself as black, or rather *dark*, and deprecating the scorn of the daughters of Jerusalem on that account, we are to recollect that the women of Syria and Palestine, and indeed of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and North Africa, are not naturally darker than those of Spain, and that among them there are many quite fair. Those in easy circumstances, kept at home from the influence of the sun and air, maintain this comparative freshness of complexion, while the female peasantry acquire a very dusky hue, which is consequently looked upon as the mark of an inferior condition, as the fairer complexion is of gentility. On the other hand, it is clear that the Egyptians were a *naturally* dark people, even in the highest and most secluded classes. Their painted representations of themselves gave them a sort of brick-red colour, probably representing a complexion somewhat analogous to that of the North American Indians. We thus see how the fair daughters of Jerusalem would be apt to look down upon a dark-hued bride, whether she were a rustic woman, as some suppose, or an Egyptian princess. In the latter they would despise it, simply because they had been accustomed to look upon the deep dusky aspect as a mark of inferiority among their own people. We know how female fancies and antipathies

¹ These examples of Tartar tents are gleaned from Rankin's *Historical*

run in such matters; and as they run now, so ran they of old.

Thirteenth Week—Third Day.

THE KING'S MARE.—SOLOMON'S SONG I. 9-11.

IN our progress through the Song of Songs, we come next to a dialogue between Shelomoh and Shulamith, in which the character and position of each are described.

In Shelomoh's part of this conversation occurs the extraordinary comparison: 'I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.' This has been characterized by some as an 'unpolished' or an 'uncouth' simile, ranking, as some would say, with the comparison of women to their favourite 'fillies,' which used to be in vogue among our own hunting and racing squires in the last century, but which we should suppose to be seldom heard in our own day. The author of a 'new translation,' quoted by Harmer, but which we have not seen, says that the word literally signifies, 'to my mare,' which is no doubt more correct than taking it for a collective noun, 'a company of horses.' This also greatly simplifies the figure. The same author remarks with great propriety, that 'the learned have observed that Theocritus, in a Greek epithalamium, has made use of the very same image to express the agreeableness of Helen, comparing her to a Thessalian animal of that kind in a chariot. If Grecian elegance admitted this, it is no wonder that a song, composed in more ancient times, had made use of this simile.'

Remembering the 'ox-eyed Juno,' and other enormities of the like nature, we care not to say much of 'Grecian elegance,' or to accept that as a standard of taste. But the observation is otherwise good.

Upon this passage, Harmer himself observes, on the authority of Maillet, that the horses of Egypt are remarkable for their beauty and stateliness, and are sent as presents of high

value to the great men of Constantinople ; but that strangers cannot procure them, and that he himself, though consul-general for France in Egypt, could obtain permission to transport only two of them. It appears from the Old Testament, that they were not less valued anciently, being eagerly sought for by Solomon himself and the Syrian kings.

It is further remarked, that the people of the East are almost passionately attached to their horses, especially the Arabs, who deal with them much as if they were their own children. They never beat them, but treat them with great tenderness, caress them, kiss them, speak to them, and reason with them, as if they were creatures capable of reasoning, and conscious of speech. The Chevalier D'Arvieux, who has an interesting chapter on Arabian horses,¹ says that there are frequent partnerships in valuable and highly-descended mares ; and he relates that a French merchant at Rama held such a partnership with an Arab called Ibrahim Alee Vouasses, in a mare of the first noble race. Ibrahim frequently came to Rama to see the mare, which he loved most tenderly. 'I have often,' says D'Arvieux, 'seen him cry with tenderness while he was kissing and caressing her. He would embrace her ; he would wipe her eyes with his handkerchief, would rub her with his shirt-sleeves, and would give her a thousand blessings during whole hours that he would be talking to her. "My eyes!" would he say to her, "my soul! my heart! must I be so unhappy as to have thee sold to so many masters, and not be able to keep thee to myself? I am poor, my gazelle! You know well enough, my darling, that I have brought thee up like my child. I never beat thee ; I never chid thee ; but I did cherish thee as the apple of mine eye. God preserve thee, my dearest! Thou art beautiful, thou art sweet, thou art lovely! God defend thee from the evil eye!" And so he

¹ In *Memoires du Chevalier D'Arvieux*. Paris, 1735. In six vols. 12mo. This work is but little known in this country, save from HARMER'S references to it in his *Observations*. A portion of it was translated into English. The chapter 'Des Cheveaux des Arabes' occurs in the third volume of the original.

would go on, saying a thousand things like these. He then embraced her, kissed her eyes, and went backward, bidding her the most tender adieu.' This story reminds its relater of an Arab of Tunis, who could not be got to deliver up a mare that had been purchased for the stud of the king of France. 'When he had put the money in his bag, he looked wistfully upon his mare and began to weep. "Shall it be possible," said he, "that after having reared thee up in my house with so much care, and after having had so much service from thee, I should be delivering thee up into slavery to the Franks, for thy reward? No, I never will do it, my darling!" and with that he threw down the money upon the table, embraced and kissed his mare, and took her home with him again.'

Considering that the chariot-horses of Pharaoh were beyond all doubt the most stately and beautiful that could be found, and looking to the admiration and affectionate regard in which these animals are held, we perceive how a woman might, under such notions, be compared to a mare, not only without disparagement, but with the purpose and effect of extolling her perfections.

It is worthy of note, however, that the comparison is not, strictly speaking, to the chariot-horse in the possession of the Egyptian king, but to one in the hands of Solomon himself—probably the most illustrious and beautiful of all the horses he had obtained from Egypt, and very possibly presented to him



from the royal stud of Pharaoh, with chariot and trappings all complete. Properly, the text reads, 'To my Pharaoh's chariot-horse [mare], do I compare thee, my love.'

Still, after all, it is doubtful that there is any intended reference to the form, action, speed, or docility of the horse. Does not what immediately follows—'Thy cheeks [or rather brows] are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold,'—seem as if intended to indicate wherein the comparison lay; not to the horse itself, but

to its trappings—that is, rather, the horse with its trappings, and in particular its rich head-stall? What that was we know from the Egyptian paintings and sculptures; and if we examine



the head-gear of a royal chariot-horse, we shall be at no loss for the source of the comparison.

The favourite Oriental fancy of decorating the brows or head-dress of females with 'rows of jewels,' is, by the text just



cited, shown to have been of very early date. This is corroborated by the ancient Egyptian paintings, and is illustrated by the existing usages of the East. In the farther East the practice

is common to both men and women, and the Nepaulese ambassador has made the idea of it more familiar in this country than even the common portraits of the Mogul emperors. In Western Asia men rather eschew such fineries, and leave them to the women, who indulge in them without stint. Here is a representation of the jewelled head-band in use among the



ladies of modern Egypt. It is stated by Olearius (and his statement is still applicable), that all the head-dress that the Persian ladies make use of is two or three rows of pearls, which are worn around the head, beginning at the forehead and descending down the cheeks, and under the chin, so *that their faces seem to be set in pearls*. This head-dress seemed to Olearius to be very ancient; for he says (alluding to this passage), 'mention is made of it in Solomon's Song.' The Sultana Hafitan is described by Lady Mary W. Montagu as wearing around her talpache or head-dress 'four strings of pearls, the finest and whitest in the world.' And if, as some suppose, it was only as a royal bride that **Shulamith** wore these rows of jewels, this also is illustrated by the later usages of the East; for it is recorded in the *Tarikh-el-Abbas*, that when the Khalif el-Maimun went to take home his bride, Touran Dokht, he found that princess 'seated upon a throne, her head laden with a thousand pearls, every one of them as large as a pigeon's egg or large nut; and this rich coiffure the khalif resolved should be assigned to her for a dowry.'

Thirteenth Week—Fourth Day.

NOTES OF TIME.

IT seems that during the interview between Shelomoh and Shulamith, the latter, overcome by the strength of her emotions, falls into a slumber and has an ecstatic dream. Shelomoh, both at the commencement and at the close of the dream, charges the daughters of Jerusalem not to awaken her; and these injunctions are most skilfully interposed to mark out the visionary from the waking scenes. It begins in chap. ii. 7, and ends in chap. iii. 5; but the perception of the meaning is unhappily obscured to the English reader, by the rendering in both places, 'Wake not my love till *he* please,' whereas in the original the pronoun is feminine—'till *she* please.' By not overlooking a circumstance so plainly and carefully marked out, but viewing the whole passage as the recital of a dream, we clear away a multitude of difficulties and apparent incongruities, which commentators have found in taking it as part of the primary recital of the poem.

We shall confine our attention to-day to the notes of time which the poem furnishes, from which, we apprehend, it will appear that the scene is laid in spring, or perhaps we should say, with regard to Palestine, early in summer—that is, in the early part of May; and so much attention is paid to this, that all the circumstances are made to refer to that time of the year.

The first and leading sign of the season is, that the vine is in blossom, or rather has begun to furnish its first tender grapes. It appears that in Palestine, although the vintage does not begin before September, small quantities of grapes are gathered from certain kinds of vines, from the end of May until that season, at the same time that other kinds have not ceased to blossom. The early grapes thus supplied were accounted great delicacies by the Hebrews, and are doubtless among 'the first ripe fruits' which the bride so earnestly desired; and well might she do so if she were of Egypt, the grapes of that country being

altogether inferior to those of Palestine. The allusions to this, as one of the signs of early summer, are of repeated occurrence in this Song. Here we have, 'The vines with the tender grape give a good smell;' and just after, 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.' And that 'tender grapes,' and not merely 'blossoms,' as some suppose, are really meant, is clear from this, that blossoms would offer small temptation to the little foxes. The love these animals bear to grapes is proverbial; but no one ever heard of their appetite for blossoms. Again, towards the close of the poem, the bridegroom says: 'I went down to the garden of nuts, to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.' Upon the whole we seem to find that we can resolve all the circumstances alluded to in the book, which afford any indications of season, into a few weeks—from about the middle of April to the middle of May, and in the southern parts of Palestine they may all be brought into April. The blossoming of the pomegranate coincides with this aspect of the vine; and at the season indicated, the country is in fullest bloom. In beautiful accordance with nature, therefore, it represents the time of the blossoming of the vines and the pomegranates, of the singing of the birds, and of the cooing of the turtles, as the time of flowers too—it is the time when they are in the greatest abundance.

Let us look at the leading passage again. 'Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of *birds* is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!' Here is a charming spring picture, with more exact and accumulated allusions to the beauties of nature than often occur together in the sacred books. It is the more engaging, from the strict coincident fitness of all of them to express the time of the year. Addison observes in one of the *Spectators* (No. 418), that a poet is not obliged to attend nature 'in the slow advance she makes

from one season to another, or to observe her conduct in the successive production of plants and flowers. He may draw into his description all the beauties of the spring and autumn, and make the whole year contribute something to render it more agreeable.' But the Hebrew poet has not taken this liberty: he has followed nature more closely, and with results most gratifying to the taste and imagination. We can see something of this; but how much stronger must have been the aspect of natural truth thus imparted to the poem, in the eyes of those whose personal observation and periodical experience made them intuitively conscious of the truthfulness of all these details!

Harmer finds an incongruity in the passage which describes the fig-tree as putting forth her green figs, seeing that figs are not ripe till August, and scarcely begin to be formed at the time in view. He therefore contends that the meaning must be, that 'the fig-tree then beginneth to make her figs spicy or palatable, which, however, requires a long time to make them perfectly so;' and it is under this view, apparently, that Dr. Stowe translates the passage: 'The fig-tree is sweetening her green figs.' But, after all, there is no real force in the objection. The early figs, both black and white, are ripe in June. They fall off as soon as they are ripe; or, according to the allusion of the prophet Nahum (chap. iii. 12), 'fall into the mouth of the eater upon being shaken.' It is when this *boccore*, or early fig, draws near to perfection, that the *kermous*, which is the summer fig, or proper *carica*, begins to be formed, not ripening until August.

The passage relating to the singing of birds is highly interesting, being, with a single exception, the only allusion to the songs of birds in the whole Bible. That exception occurs in Psalm civ. 12: 'By them (the streams) shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.' This scantiness of allusion has made some suppose, either that birds of song were very few in Palestine, or that the Hebrews were a people not very sensible to the charms of this natural music. All suspicion of the kind ought, however, to be at

once dissipated by the rapturous burst with which the poet here hails the return of the time of song: 'The time of the singing of birds is come!' We cannot think that formerly, when the land was richly cultivated and abounded in woods, orchards, and gardens, the songs of birds were unfrequent; although in the present forlorn condition of the land, this is now the case. There are still a few favourite localities frequented by birds of song, and where their sweet voices are heard; but speaking generally, according to the testimony of a traveller who paid attention to such matters: 'The singing of birds is not often heard in Palestine. There are a few species of birds with a gaudy plumage, but their notes are not melodious. The sweet plaintive nightingale is sometimes heard, but oftener the harsh cawing of the crow.'¹

This mention of the nightingale may remind us that Harmer conceives the Hebrew poet to have here especially the song of that bird in view, because, as he makes out from Lady Mary W. Montagu—at Constantinople, however,—the season of vine blossoming and the singing of the nightingale are coincident. He would have rejoiced to have his notion supported by the positive fact, that in Palestine the voice of the nightingale is heard during the greater part of this garden season, singing delightfully in the day-time from amid the pomegranate groves, and from trees of loftier growth in the night season. In the larger towns there are persons who keep these birds in cages, and hire them out at a small rate to nocturnal assemblies; so that most entertainments of note during the spring have a concert of nightingales. This may seem an incongruous employment of a bird so proverbially 'plaintive' and 'mournful.' But the Orientals do not regard the song of this bird as at all melancholy; and those who have studied the bird well, begin now, even among ourselves, to tell us that he is rather

'The merry nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,
With fast thick warble, his delicious notes,

¹ Rev. John Paxton, an American traveller—not to be confounded with the Rev. Dr. Paxton, author of *Scripture Illustrations*.

As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music.'—COLERIDGE.

Thirteenth Week—Fifty Day.

THE PALANQUIN.—SOLOMON'S SONG III. 6—II.

THE scene next changes to a royal nuptial procession, that of Solomon, which is described in very poetical language by the chorus of 'the daughters of Jerusalem.'

The most prominent matter in this is the splendid palanquin of the royal bridegroom. In our translation, the sense is unhappily marred by its being called a 'bed.' The following is Stowe's version of the passage: 'Behold the palanquin, the palanquin of Shelomoh! Sixty heroes surround it, of the heroes of Israel. All, with sword in hand, skilful in war; every one girt with a sword on account of the dangers of the night. A royal palanquin did king Shelomoh make for himself, of the wood of Lebanon; its poles of silver, its columns of gold, its hangings of purple, its couch worked with love, by the daughters of Jerusalem.'

We are quite sure that such of our readers as have been at the 'Crystal Palace,' will, on reading this, at once call to mind the gorgeous howdahs and palanquins, rich in ivory, gold, and silver, which they saw in the Indian Court, and which had been given by an eastern prince to the Queen. The suggestion of resemblance thus spontaneously presented to the mind will be correct. Something of the kind—something, indeed, closely similar—is no doubt intended: either a howdah, to be borne on the back of a camel instead of an elephant, or a palanquin to be carried on the shoulders of men, or to be borne as a litter between two camels, horses, or mules. In fact, the description and figure which Mandelslo gives of the pompous vehicle of this sort in which he saw an eastern prince conveyed, long ago, suggested the same comparison to Harmer.

‘I will not,’ he says, ‘take upon me positively to affirm that Solomon’s “bed” was precisely the same; but I think I may venture to say, that if its top and bottom had been made of cedar of Lebanon, if this top had afterwards been covered with purple, if the pillars had been of silver, the carpet underneath of cloth of gold, and the furniture on which this East India viceroy sat had been needlework wrought by the daughters of Jerusalem, and presented as a token of duty and love, no words could have given a more lively description of this



vehicle, in short, than this passage of the prophetic poet. All that is wanting is the transferring it from an elephant, which it seems this East Indian used, to a camel, which would better suit, I presume, the state of things in Judea in the days of Solomon. The magnificence of this chariot was a natural subject for poetry, and the more so if such a sort of chariot was then first seen in Jerusalem.¹ The last suggestion is not unlikely. It is not very probable that the conveyances of this kind which the Hebrews previously had, were anything better,

¹ *Outlines*, p. 127.

if so good, as those which we find among the Arabs at the present day, and to which we formerly had occasion to refer.¹ Solomon, who studied magnificence so greatly in his palaces and thrones, would not be likely to neglect it in regard to his public appearances abroad and royal progresses; and by obvious improvements upon the old camel and mule litters, he would produce a conveyance approaching to the Indian howdahs and palanquins. Indeed, it is quite possible that the present palanquin might have been actually formed in imitation of an Indian model. The men who voyaged to Ophir, or travellers from India by the overland route—for there *was* an overland route to India in those days—might easily bring reports and descriptions of these splendid and luxurious vehicles; and but that we are told the framework of this palanquin was of ‘cedar of Lebanon,’ we might conceive that King Solomon had, like Queen Victoria, obtained from India, or its isles, an actual specimen of the howdah or palanquin. Perhaps, after all, he had; but as it was adapted to an elephant, and he had no such animals, he would not be able to use it, but could cause one to be constructed like it, fitted to be borne by camels or horses, or by men. Solomon had plenty of ivory; but it is not to be supposed that his people had the skill of working it up in such fashion as we have seen in the Crystal Palace; and, in the case supposed, it would, even with the distinct intention of imitating the Indian vehicles, have been necessary to substitute wood, and in this case it was the wood of the cedar of Lebanon.

We are reminded by these particulars of a passage in ‘Master Robert Fitch’s *Voyage*; begun in the year of our Lord 1583, and ended 1591’—not the less curious from the intimation, that high regal magnificence consists with much poverty among the people; a fact which, it would seem, wanted not illustration in the time of the prosperous Solomon. Fitch is speaking of the kingdom of Pegu, of whose sovereign he says: ‘The king keepeth great state. . . . When hee goeth forth to warre, hee goeth very strong. At my being there, hee went to Odia, in the countrie of Siam, with three hundred thousand men, and

¹ First Series, Tenth Week—Sixth Day.

five thousand elephants. Thirtie thousand men were his guard. The people doe eate roots, herbs, leaues, dogs, cats, rats, serpents, and snakes; they refuse almost nothing. When the king rideth abroad, he rideth with a great guard and many noblemen; oftentimes vpon an elephant with a fine castle vpon him, very fairely gilded with gold; and sometimes vpon a great frame like a horse-liter, which hath a little house vpon it, couered ouerhead, but open on the sides, which is all gilded with gold, and set with many rubies and sapphires, whereof hee hath infinite store in his countrie, and is carried vpon sixteene or eighteene men's shoulders. This coach, in their language, is called *serrión*.¹

It behoves us to add to this, however, that palanquins borne on the shoulders of men, were in use among the ancient



Egyptians, as shown by their paintings and sculptures, though we do not find anything of the sort among them borne on the backs of animals. This to them was not necessary, as they had abundant use of wheel-carriages. The Egyptian gentry seem to have used these palanquins, much as sedan-chairs were used in this country, for short distances, and for going to parties, not upon journeys as in India. At Beni-Hassan is a representation of a person of distinction, carried in an open palanquin by four bearers, closely followed by an attendant with a sort of umbrella, which he holds, or is in readiness to hold, so as to

¹ Purchas his Pilgrimes, p. 1638.

shield his master from the sun. This appears to be of leather, stretched over a light frame, and ought to set at rest the question respecting the antiquity of umbrellas, which has lately been undergoing discussion in some public papers. The palanquin itself is highly enriched with painting and carving, and may have been of costly material. As, however, it has no canopy or curtain, and wants pillars, it suggests less resemblance to Solomon's palanquin than do those of India.

Thirteenth Week—Sixth Day.

THE GARDEN ENCLOSED AND THE DEW.—SOLOMON'S
SONG IV. I—VI. 3.

IN the dialogue which next ensues between Shelomoh and Shulamith, occurs the expression, on one of the presumed applications of which we had recent occasion to dilate,¹ 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.' These metaphors may very possibly apply to the comparative seclusion in which the wives of princes, and of persons of high distinction, are kept. We have already² expressed our strong persuasion, that the women among the Hebrews enjoyed very considerably greater freedom of movement than is now allowed to females in Western Asia. It is, however, clear, that the wives of men of high rank lived in what we should consider great retirement and seclusion, bearing more analogy than the condition of women generally offered, to what has now become the rule of treatment in the East. We are apt to deplore this as an evil suffered by Oriental women, and a wrong inflicted upon them. Doubtless, from our point of view, and indeed in any view that rightly estimates the relative social position of men and women, this is the case. Still, we must not labour under erroneous impressions as to the view which women, so dealt with, take of their own condition; and it is certain that the eastern ladies are very far from regarding themselves as objects of our compas-

¹ Twelfth Week—Third Day.

² Eleventh Week—Sixth Day.

sion, or the condition of our own women as in any way enviable in comparison with theirs. Mr. Addison has a passage on this point, in his *Damascus and Palmyra*, which we quote chiefly for the sake of the distinct illustration of our text, with which it closes. He says: 'I have heard many instances of the strong affection of women in this part of the world to their husbands. The most erroneous notions are prevalent among us as to the grievous bondage in which, as it is called, they are held, and as to the way in which they pass their lives. From inquiries I have made of different Levantine and Frank ladies, in the habit of visiting the harems of the East, I understand that the fair inmates of them by no means covet the liberty claimed and enjoyed by our European ladies, and think that a married woman should enjoy no other male society than that of her husband; that her whole time should be employed in studying to amuse him, and in the nursing and educating of his children, which pleasing task they never delegate to another. They seem, it is said, to look upon the very restraint in which they are kept, and the watchfulness with which they are guarded, with a feeling of pride and satisfaction, thinking it a proof of the estimation in which they are held, and the value attached to them by their husbands. Thus, the most flattering epithet that can be applied to an eastern lady, is said to be that of "*the concealed treasure*," "*the guarded jewel*," "*the well-watched angel*."'

Then follows in the Song of Songs, a night-scene, which occupies the whole of the fifth chapter, and the beginning of the sixth. In this, Shulamith addresses the daughters of Jerusalem, whom she meets in her search after Shelomoh, and tells them what has happened to her, and why she is in search of him; and then follows a dialogue between herself and the daughters of Jerusalem.

In this passage occurs the expression, 'My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' This gives an idea of the climate of Palestine not in accordance with the general impression, but fully substantiated by facts. It also accords with the other notes of time, for the dews cease to be

heavy or injurious from the early part to the end of summer ; though, until the early part of May, the dews throughout Palestine and Syria are most copious. But towards the close of that month, people begin to sup upon the house-tops, and to sleep there at night without any fear of dews ; and this continues till about the end of August, when they are driven under cover, less from the coldness of the night air, than from apprehensions of the dew, which they regard as highly injurious. Some, however, dare the dew for the sake of the coolness, and it seems they suffer for it, as Dr. Russell ascribes the disorders in the eyes to which the people are subject, to their lying exposed to the dews which begin to fall at the end of summer. We remember a passage to the point, in the letter of ' Master William Biddulph,' to which we lately referred. He was at Jerusalem in the early part of April, and says : ' We found it exceeding hot, and hotter than it is usually at Midsummer in England. It seemed strange unto mee, how it should once bee so cold, that Peter should creepe to the fire, and now (at the same season) so hot that wee could not endure the heate of the sunne. But after I had beene there a few dayes, the very place resolved that doubt, for *there fell great deawes*, and before the sunne have dried it up, it is cold, and in the night season (about that time of the year) somewhat cold, as I felt by experience when I slept in the fields all night. And Peter having watched with Christ in the night, might well be cold in the morning, before the heat of the sunne had expelled cold.'

In the portion we are now considering, occurs the famous description of Shelomoh by Shulamith, as in the seventh chapter we have a corresponding one of Shulamith by Shelomoh. We believe it was Harmer who first suggested that much of these descriptions which appears (in our translation especially) to refer to the person, is really descriptive of the dress. That for the most part this is true, we have not the least doubt ; and it would be well that the reader of the Song should bear this in mind, as it gives quite a different and more agreeable tone to many passages. Dr. Stowe, whom we have already quoted, skilfully shows that the passage in the fifth chapter (10-16),

which is usually taken to describe the unclothed person, cannot be so understood ; for, as he says, ‘nothing can be more absurd, or less in accordance with the language itself. Those parts of the person which custom exposes to view, are indeed described ; but as to those parts which custom conceals, it is the dress and not the skin which is described. For example, “His head is as the most fine gold, and his hair is curled, and black as the raven.” What is this but the turban, gold-coloured or ornamented with gold, and the raven-black ringlets appearing below it ? How else could his head be yellow and his hair black ?—unless, indeed, he were a bald-headed mulatto ; and that surely would be a curious subject for amorous eulogy, besides being directly contrary to the context, for his complexion is just before described as white and ruddy, verse 10. Again, in verse 14, “His belly is as bright ivory girded with sapphires.” How admirably this corresponds with the snow-white robe, and girdle set full of jewels, as we see it in Sir Robert Ker Porter’s portrait of the late king of Persia ! But what is there, I pray you, in the unclothed body that looks like a girdle of sapphires ?’

The same writer, in reference to the companion portrait in the seventh chapter, justly lays to the score of changing manners, another portion of the indelicacy which has been ascribed to this poem. Remarking on the allusion to the bride’s bosom, which *now* and *here* may read somewhat painfully, he lays down the position, that there can be no impropriety in describing those parts of the person which are always exposed to view, as the face and hands. Now, all the monuments and pictures of ancient Egypt show us that the ancient Oriental ladies dressed so as to leave the bust fully open to view ; and of course there could then be no impropriety in alluding to or describing that part of the person. It may be added, that this is the custom of modern Oriental as well as of ancient Oriental dress ; and we ourselves have seen women who would sooner die than allow the face to be viewed by strangers, and sooner be flayed alive than be seen with the top of the head uncovered, who would, at the same time, be perfectly indifferent as to displaying a part of

the person which is in Europe more carefully veiled. Yet, even in this respect, the customs of the East and West were not so different a few generations ago as they are at present ; and hence there are expressions in our own poets parallel to those of Solomon, but which excited not the least uneasiness, even in the most delicate minds, in the age when they were produced. In such an age our translation of the Bible was made ; and thus it contains some expressions unsuited to the higher standard of Christian refinement which we have now reached. These, however, might be altered not only with safety, but with advantage to the sense ; for in this particular book of Solomon, it is allowed by all good scholars, that even to those who look only to the first or literal, and whose eyes are shut to the spiritual meaning, the Song of Songs is in the original a much more *readable* book than the authorized version represents it to be.

Thirteenth Week—Seventh Day.

EASTERN POETRY.—SOLOMON'S SONG VI.—VIII.

IN the sixth and seventh chapters of the Song of Songs, we have chiefly a morning scene in the garden. Shelomoh goes down into his garden early in the morning, and there unexpectedly sees Shulamith, and a very animated conversation ensues between them, enriched with many allusions to, and images drawn from, the agreeable objects around.

In the course of this dialogue, there occurs (vii. 1-9) the noted description of Shulamith by Shelomoh, by which some of the considerations offered yesterday were in part suggested ; and we wish now to show how much the *colour* of that description, as indeed of the poem generally, strong and peculiar though it may appear to our subdued impressions, is in harmony with that which belongs to Oriental poetry of the same class, and which is received with admiration and delight.

Here, first, from the Persian, is a description of the patriarch

Joseph, which offers many points of comparison with the picture of Shelomoh by Shulamith :

‘A beauteous youth, who eclipses the charms and graces of the hours of paradise.

‘His form, polished as the box-tree, erect as the cypress.

‘His locks, falling in ringlets, sealing the mouth of wisdom and arresting the feet of discretion.

‘His forehead shining with immortal beams, surpassing both the sun and the moon.

‘His eyebrows arched, and his eyelashes shading his sleepy eyes.

‘His eyes beaming mildness, his eyelashes darting arrows.

‘His lips smiling and shedding sweets, his lips dropping honey.

‘His pearly teeth between his ruby lips, like the lightning playing upon a western sky.

‘Laughing, he eclipses the Pleiades ; smiles and jests dance upon his lips.

‘Pearly drops hang upon his double chin ; upon his rosy countenance a mole, as the dark ash in the midst of a garden.

‘His arms like silver, and well proportioned (*rich*) ; but the waist, for want of silver, slender (*poor*).’

Major Scott Waring, to whom we owe this, says, ‘I have interpreted these two couplets literally as a specimen of Persian conceits. Solomon’s Song, either in a simple or mystic sense, is full of similar metaphors, some of which have been esteemed inimitably beautiful.’

For the description of a lady by her lover, we cannot do better than turn to the numerous songs of Antar, in praise of his beloved Ibla, which occur in the old Arabian romance that bears his name. From these we cull the following passages :

‘The lovely virgin has struck my heart with the arrow of a glance, for which there is no cure. Sometimes she wishes for a feast in the sand-hills, like a gazelle, whose eyes are full of magic. She moves : I should say it was the branch of the tamarisk, that waves its branches to the southern breeze. She approaches : I should say it was a frightened gazelle, when a

calamity alarms it in the waste. She walks away: I should say her face was truly the sun, when its lustre dazzles the beholders. She gazes: I should say it was the full moon of night, when Orion girds it with stars. She smiles: and the pearls of her teeth sparkle.

'The sun, as it sets, turns towards her, and says: "Darkness obscures the land; do thou rise in my absence." And the brilliant moon calls unto her: "Come forth, for thy face is like me when I am at the full, and in all my glory." The tamarisk-trees complain of her in the morning and in the evening, and cry: "Away thou waving beauty, thou form of the laurel." She turns away abashed, and throws aside her veil, and roses are scattered from her soft fresh cheek. She draws her sword from the glances of her eyelashes, sharp as the sword of her forefathers; and with it, though sheathed, her eyes do slay. Graceful is every limb, slender her waist. Love-bearing are her glances, waving is her form. The damsel passes the night with musk under her veil, which draws inward fragrance from the fresher essence of her breath. The lustre of day sparkles from her brow, and by the dark shade of her curling ringlets night itself is driven away. When she smiles, between her teeth is a moisture composed of wine, of rain, and of honey. Her throat complains of the darkness of her necklaces (of pearl).'

'Musk spreads a delicious fragrance from her, and her breath exceeds the oil of roses. In her I grasped the branch of the tamarisk steeped in clouds of beauty from the distilling rain. When she stirs, her graceful movements resemble the branch waving with its green leaves.'

India supplies illustrations of this style of poetry, no less striking than those of Persia and Arabia. The *Gitagovinda*, or the *Songs of Jayadeva*, translated by Sir W. Jones in the *Asiatic Researches* (vol. iii.), supply copious analogies, from which we can present only a few examples. It is necessary to add, that these songs are avowedly mystical, expressing spiritual emotions under far stronger images of human passion than can be found in the Song of Songs.

‘Her face is like a water-lily, veiled in the dew of tears ; and her eyes appear as moons eclipsed, which let fall their gathered meteors, through pain caused by the look of the furious dragon.¹

‘She fixes white blossoms on her dark locks, where they gleam like flashes of lightning among the curled clouds. On her breasts, like two firmaments, she places a string of gems, like a radiant constellation. She binds upon her arms, graceful as the stalks of the water-lily, and adorned with bands glowing like the petal of its flower, a bracelet of sapphires, which resemble a cluster of bees.

‘Abandon thy wrath, but abandon not a lover, who surpasses in beauty the sons of men, and who kneels before thee, O thou most beautiful among women. Thy lips are a Bandhujiva-flower ; the lustre of the Madhuca beams on thy cheek ; thine eye outshines the blue lotus ; thy nose is a bud of the Tila ; the Cunda blossom yields to thy teeth.

‘Place a circlet of music on this breast, which resembles a vase of sacred water crowned with fresh leaves, and fixed near a vernal bower. Place the glossy powder, which would make the blackest bee envious, upon this eye, whose glances are keener than arrows. Fix the two gems, which form part of love’s chain, in these ears, whence the antelopes of thine eyes may run and sport at pleasure. Place now a fresh circle of musk, black as the lunar spots, on the moon of my forehead, and mix gay flowers on my tresses with a peacock’s feathers, in graceful order, that they may wave like the banners of Cama.’

In some of these passages the dress is distinctly referred to as the subject of the metaphorical allusion, thus confirming the impression that several parts of the descriptions in this song, and especially in the seventh chapter, where Shulamith is described by her lover or husband, which have been supposed to refer to the person, really apply to its vestures and ornaments.

Towards the close, the brothers of Shulamith appear upon

¹ Alluding, we suppose, to the dragon attempting to swallow the moon, as accounting for its eclipses.

the scene, consulting, as it seems, respecting the disposal of their sister (chap. viii. 8, 9), now that she is addressed by Shelomoh, pretending that she is yet too young to receive such addresses. She replies to them indignantly, and then follows the concluding dialogue between her and Shelomoh.

At first sight, the Song of Songs seems to close abruptly in the verse: 'Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' But the allegorical interpretation, which is the only possible one, gives to this verse great emphasis and beauty, and renders it a most fitting termination of this high discourse. It is an aspiration on the part of the Church, or of the individual soul, that the Lord will come soon, and make good all the things that have been represented in these raptures of heavenly love. The book closes, in fact, like the last book of the New Testament: 'He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

The close resemblance in structure and thought between the Song of Songs and the forty-fifth Psalm, ought not to be overlooked by the student of God's word. This Psalm might almost be regarded as a poem epitomizing the first part of the book. The leading points of resemblance will strike every reader: the king who is 'fairest among the children of men' (Ps. xlv. 3), the 'chiefest among ten thousand . . . altogether lovely' (Song v. 10, 16); the bride 'all glorious within' (Ps. xlv. 13), surpassing in beauty (v. 11, compare Song ii. 1, iv. 1, vii. 1); the descriptions of might and majesty (Ps. xlv. 4-6; cf. Song v. 11-15); the similitudes, etc. Both these compositions are prophetic as well as descriptive, and can only be regarded as having their complete fulfilment in the final glory of Messiah's kingdom, and the final and eternal union of a triumphant Redeemer and a triumphant church.

END OF VOL. I.

