

that soars upward from its lowly bed with its song of praise, in the eagle, mountain-throned, in the lonely, timid ostrich of the desert. This holy and affectionate inter-communion between man and nature, this endowment of the brute with human feelings, and the giving to even inanimate objects a share in our joys and sorrows was one of the essential characteristics of Hebrew poetry, and is one of its chief beauties.

Very gladly would I extend my remarks, such as they are, to the Psalms, the writings of Solomon and the Prophets. But it would be mere presumption and folly to attempt such extension. Every psalm is, in itself, worthy of an essay—or of a volume. How many commentaries have been written upon them and yet how much might still be said! They have been the comfort and support of thousands upon thousands of lonely, saddened, suffering hearts, and they are so still. There is hardly a region of the earth which their beauty has not made glad and they have still a long and lofty mission to fulfil. In joy and sorrow, in wealth and poverty, in honor and disgrace, in health and sickness, in youth and age, on the bed of death and in the parting hour,—on all the occasions when the human heart needs solace or warning or promise, they are ever full, ever ready, to supply its wants. And yet they are poetry—but poetry on which the Spirit of God has breathed His blessing, to which He has imparted a vivifying power, on which He has set the seal of His own image. They are as a temple built of precious words and strong, in which His presence dwells, and where we may ever seek and find His face and hear His voice. And they have their foundation in unfailling faith, a faith that could say: “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy trusty shepherd’s staff is my comfort and support.”

How beautiful, how sacred, is the confidence in God’s watchfulness and constant protection in the 121st Psalm!

“I lift my eyes and look to the hills,  
From which cometh my help.  
My help cometh from Jehovah,  
Who hath made the heavens and the earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to slide;  
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold! He that keepeth Israel  
Will neither slumber nor sleep.

Jehovah will be thy keeper.  
Jehovah will be thy shade.  
Who goeth (as a friend) at thy side,  
That the sun smite thee not by day,  
Nor the moon afflict thee by night,  
The Lord preserve thee from evil,  
The Lord preserve thy soul.  
The Lord shall guard thy going out  
And thy coming in now and for evermore.”

As, in a manner, the completion of this picture of the love and confidence which exist between God and His faithful servants, we find, in Isaiah, a description of perfect peace, of a community of happiness, in which even the brute creation have their share:—

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
The leopard shall lie down with the kid,  
The calf, the young lion and the fating together,  
And a little child shall lead them,  
The cow and the bear shall feed quietly;  
Their young shall lie down together,  
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.  
The suckling shall play on the hole of the asp,  
The weaned child on the cockatrice’ den;  
There shall be none to hurt nor destroy  
In all my Holy Mountain,  
For the earth is full of the knowledge of Jehovah,  
As the waters cover the sea.” (Isa. xi. 6-9.)

And this paradise of Isaiah is still more fully described in the vision of the great Christian Prophet:—

“I heard a voice from Heaven, saying,  
Lo! the dwelling of God is with men,  
And He will dwell with them,  
And they shall be His people,  
And God himself shall be with them  
As their God.  
And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes,  
And Death shall be no longer,  
Nor sorrow, nor lamentation, nor pain,  
For former things have passed away.”

And is it not to this consummation that the whole Bible points, whether it be poetry or prose? Is it not to satisfy our yearning for that perfect peace, that fullest light, that complete blessedness, that eternal rest in God’s presence, that it was all written? Was it not to set before us the *reality* of that “world to come” for which God has created, as part of us, a longing that can be stilled by nothing else, which is as

“The desire of the north for the star,  
Of the night for the morrow;  
The devotion for something afar  
From the sphere of our sorrow.”

This is the great aim, the great work of revelation. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him. *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”