

IV. *Legislation for the life.* "Lay apart," etc.

1. Renunciation of all evil.

2. Appropriation of good.

Receive with meekness—(1) *The thing* received—its essential vitality—its fitness to human nature; (2) *The manner* of receiving it; (3) *The reason* for receiving it.—(W. R. Thomas.)

MISQUOTED SCRIPTURES.

NO. XIV.

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1. In Genesis iv: 23 we read, "For I have slain a man to my wounding," which is a very obscure utterance. Nor is the darkness removed by the margin, "I would slay a man in my wound." If we follow the oldest versions the little poem, the earliest on record, becomes clearer. Lamech has killed a youth in self-defence, and informs his wives that, in case he should suffer for it, he would be avenged tenfold more than Cain would be, according to the Lord's promise.

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech;
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me:
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold

2. In Gen. xiii: 18, Abraham is said to have dwelt in "the plain of Mamre," a phrase which is repeated in xiv: 13 and xviii: 1. Mamre was an Amorite chieftain who became a friend and ally of the patriarch. But, in the judgment of all scholars, Mamre's abode was not a plain—there is no plain in the vicinity of Hebron—but a grove, and the phrase should be rendered "the oaks (or terebinths) of Mamre." It was the custom to pitch tents under the shade of one or more lofty trees. There is still shown, not far from Hebron, what is called "Abraham's oak;" but though it is very large and venerable, one may well doubt whether its boughs ever sheltered the father of the faithful.

3. In the next chapter, it is said of Melchizedek, "He was the priest of the most high God." But the article before

priest should be omitted, both because it is wrong, there being none in the Hebrew, and because it is misleading, as if Melchizedek were the only priest then existing. As it stands in the original, the text, with some others (*e. g.*, *Revel* in Exodus ii: 16; iii: 1, is a pleasing evidence of the fact that God had at least some genuine followers outside the line of the patriarchs, and that acceptable worship was offered by some who had only the traditions in the family of Shem.

4. In the ratification of the covenant with Abram (Gen. xv: 17), it is said that after dark "a smoking furnace and a burning lamp" passed between the pieces of the divided victims. Now, while it is true that lamps were and are common in the East (candles never being found there, unless brought by foreigners), yet here the original word means a *torch*, and should be so rendered. The same term is used in the account of Gideon's three hundred men (Jud. vii: 16), who carried in their pitchers not "lamps," but torches, and also in the description of the crocodile in Job xli: 19, out of whose mouth go flaming torches. The furnace and the flame in Genesis are of course symbols of the Divine presence, and indicated the acceptance of the sacrifice.

5. According to the authorized version of Gen. xviii: 19, God assigns as His reason for making known to Abraham His purpose to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah the fact that the patriarch will command his children and his household after him. But the original will not bear this interpretation. Strictly rendered the passage runs thus: "For I have known him to the end that he may command his children, etc., that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him." According to this the reason is God's previous knowledge of Abraham, in the intense sense that word has in Scripture (*e. g.*, Amos iii: 2: "You only have I *known* of all the families in the earth." Gal. iv: 9: