

From the perusal of various books and papers on this subject, and, more especially, from the perusal of Dr. Simpson's excellent work,* at his third and fourth chapters, which may be regarded as a kind of *concordatio argumentorum*, we are led to conclude that all objections to the superinduction of anæsthesia in labour, are founded on certain words occurring in the 16th verse of the 3rd chapter of Genesis. Now, we believe that, if it can be shown on scientific principles that the words have no such meaning as have been attributed to them by the translators of the Anglican version and others, the objections founded on them, must be considerably modified, if not entirely removed; hence, one principal portion of our labours will be a grammatical analysis of these disputed words.

As it appears to us that in conducting such an inquiry, no source of information should be neglected, however repugnant it may prove to our pre-conceived notions and prejudices, we shall not fail to seek light and assistance from Hebrew, as well as Christian, authorities. The advantage of consulting the former, must be evident to every unbiassed mind, recollecting as it needs must, that for whatever knowledge we may possess of the Hebrew language and its grammar, we are indebted to them;—that Christian compilers of Hebrew grammars and Lexicons have taught little or nothing more, and very much less, than they have taught; and that their commentaries and paraphrases, have avowedly assisted Christian translators in their renderings of the Sacred text.

But, before proceeding to our task, we think it necessary to make some observations on a passage in Dr. Simpson's work, which, we think, ought not to pass unnoticed, since it may induce many, anxious to arrive at the truth, but unable to consult the original text of Scripture, to form erroneous notions on the question under consideration, to establish false hypotheses, and to imagine that they have unanswerable arguments against those who defend on Scriptural grounds the employment of anæsthetics in labour. The passage referred to is as follows: "Those who from the terms of the first curse, argue against the superinduction of anæsthesia in labor, aver that we are bound to take and act upon the words of the curse *literally*, 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception,' or as Gesenius and other Hebrew authorities state, that being a case of Hendiadys, it may be more correctly rendered, 'I will greatly multiply the sorrow of thy conception, &c.'"[†] Now, we have to remark, that the rendering here spoken of, instead of being more correct, is most incorrect. It is plainly untenable, and if Gesenius has written after this fashion, it is truly astonishing. Not having his Lexicon, in the original, before us, we can only turn to an English translation (Gibb's), and there we find that Gesenius says no such thing. We do, indeed, find that under the root עָצַב (ngatsab) he thus remarks, "עָצַבֹּן (ngitsabbohn), verbal from עָצַב (ngatsab) means, 1, labor, toil, 2,

pain, Gen. iii. 16. עֲצֻבוֹן וְהָרֹוֹן, (ngitsebonech ve. heronech) *thy pain and thy conception*, i. e. the pain of thy conception." Here, it will be perceived that there is no case of Hendiadys affirmed, though there is one suggested. The learned Professor translates just as the Anglican authorised version translates. He says, plainly enough, the words mean *thy pain* (Authorised version, *thy sorrow*), and *thy conception*, always supposing that his translator has not misunderstood nor misrepresented him, and we have no reason to believe that he has. It is true, as we before remarked, that he *suggests* such a case, but here he speaks theologically, and we may be permitted to differ from him. Philologically, he must needs reject the theory, and for these simple reasons: prefixed to the latter of the two nouns, there is the letter ו (vau), which, when so occurring, must necessarily be translated by either of the words, *or*, *and*, or *but*; in short, ו is either a conjunctive or disjunctive. Now, the occurrence of either of these, would at once exclude from the mind of one, at all acquainted with Hebrew philology, any idea of Hendiadys. If we may be permitted to transfer here certain principles of Hebrew grammar, with which the merest tyro in that study is acquainted, but of which the holders of the opinion under notice, appear to have been ignorant, or unmindful, we should remark that Hendiadys can only obtain, in Hebrew, where two nouns are in juxtaposition; or, to speak more technically, in *construction* with each other, and for this latter purpose, the *first* noun must be in the genitive case, and have the word of added to it. Unless this rule be observed, the nouns will stand as *absolute*, or having no connection with each other. This will be more clearly seen by example. Let the two words, דָּבָר (dabbar), *a word*, and אֱמֶת (emeth), *truth*, be placed together, and the former, being in the nominative case, and therefore having the vowel point (â) called *Kamets*, must be translated as in that case; and the two words will mean, *a word truth*. But the [kamets.] being changed into : (sheva), as is required for the genitive, the words will then express, *a word of truth*, which we would render in English, *a true word*. It will be perceived, then, from this example, that, what in English requires to be an adjective, may be, and is, in Hebrew, a noun substantive, used as a definitive or predicate. And indeed, to the class of noun substantives,* almost all adjectives in Hebrew are reduced. Hence, too, it will be perceived, the figure of Hendiadys is more common in Hebrew than in other languages. But let us now apply these rules to the examples with which we have more immediate business. We observe, in the first place, that the noun עָצַבֹּן *ngitsabbohn*, is in the genitive case, and so far, agrees with the rule laid down for constructively nouns; but, we quickly perceive that it is so, not because it is in construction with the following noun, but with the personal pronoun הָ (cha) *thee*. Moreover, we observe that the second noun הָרֹוֹן (herayon), is also^{††}

* "Anæsthesia, for the employment of Chloroform and Ether in Surgery and Midwifery." By J. Y. Simpson, M.D., F.R.S.E. &c.

† "Anæsthesia, &c," p. 112, Ed. Phil.

* The early Hebrew grammarians divide the parts of speech into three only, viz., the noun, verb, and participle.