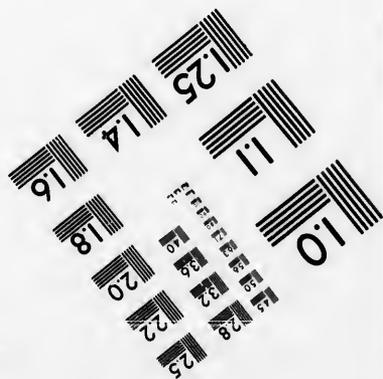
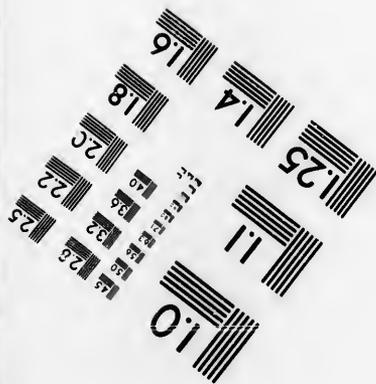
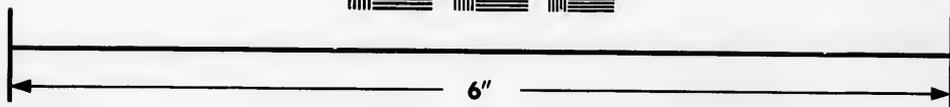
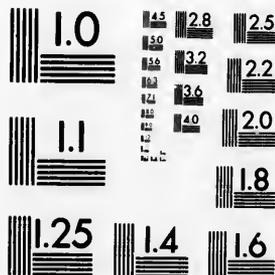


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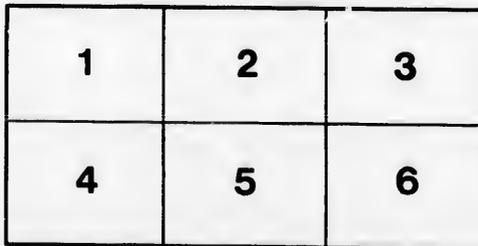
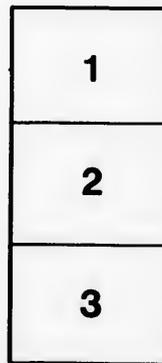
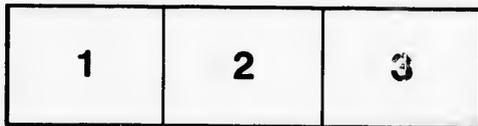
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CONTAINING

ACCURATE TRANSLATIONS FROM THE ORIGINAL HEBREW OF SELECT PASSAGES
OF THE OLD TESTAMENT; TOGETHER WITH A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE
BOOK OF JOB, THE PSALMS, &c., WITH CRITICAL, PHILOLOGICAL
AND EXPLANATORY NOTES;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A SHORT ESSAY ON THE SPIRIT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW POETRY.

DESIGNED AS A

GENERAL HELP TO BIBLICAL READING & INSTRUCTION,

ADAPTED TO ALL CLASSES.

BY

JACOB M. HIRSCHFELDER.

Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφὰς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν· καὶ ἐκεῖναι εἰσὶν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ.

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—JOHN v. 39.

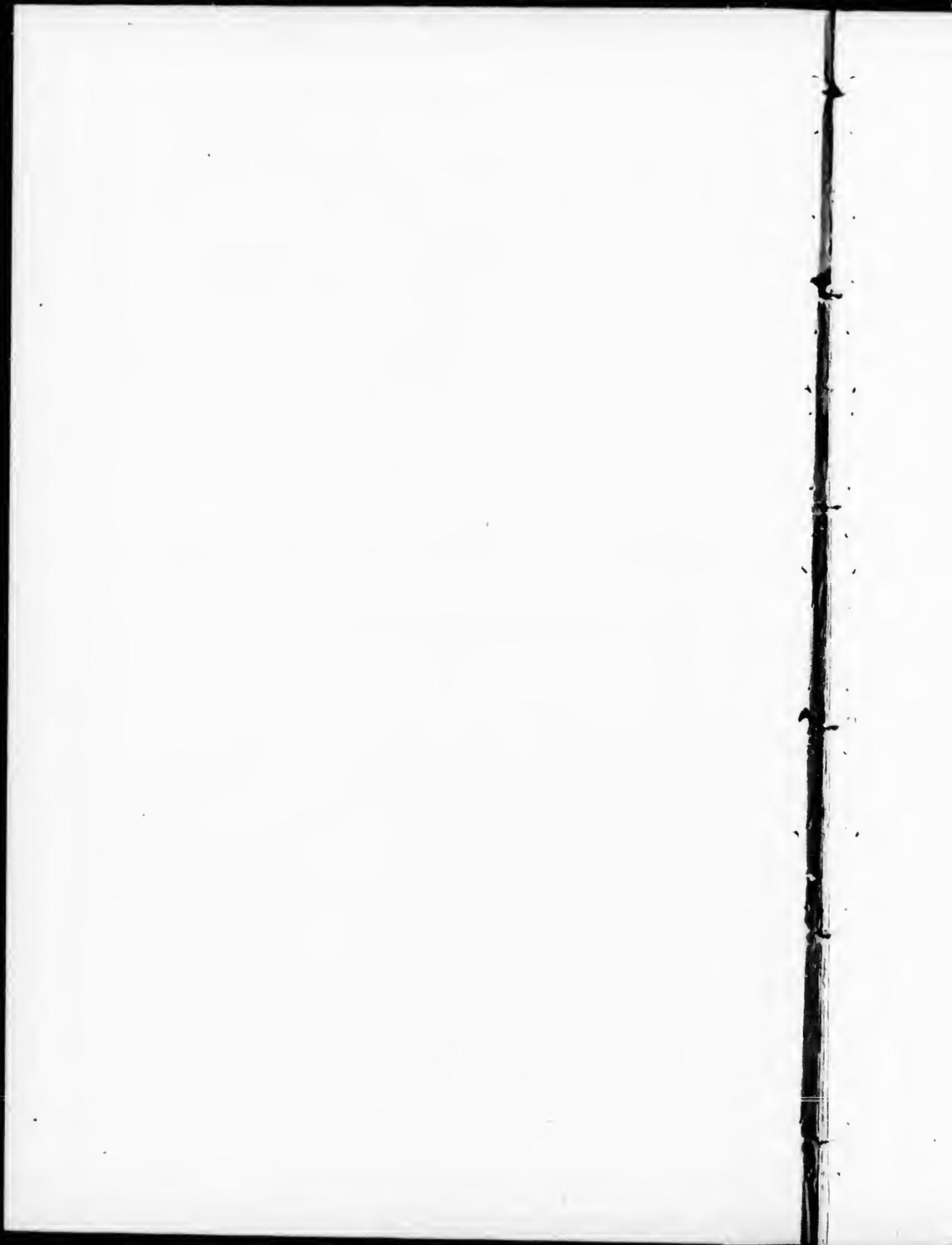
אם-הַבְּקִשְׁנָהּ כֶּסֶף וְכִמְטָמְנִים הַחֶפְשֶׁתָּהּ :
אִז תִּבְיֵן וְיָדַת וְיָדַת אֱלֹהִים תִּמְצָא

If thou seekest her (i. e. wisdom) as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.—Prov. ii. 4, 5.

TORONTO:

HENRY ROWSELL.

1855.



DIRECTIONS

FOR THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE HEBREW, CHALDEE, SYRIAC AND ARABIC WORDS
EXPRESSED IN ENGLISH CHARACTERS IN THE FOLLOWING WORK.

<i>ā</i>	like	<i>a</i>	in	father.
<i>ā</i>	..	<i>a</i>	..	manner.
<i>ē</i>	..	<i>a</i>	..	shame.
<i>ē</i>	..	<i>e</i>	..	pen.
<i>ī</i>	..	<i>i</i>	..	machine.
<i>ī</i>	..	<i>i</i>	..	pin.
<i>ō</i>	..	<i>o</i>	..	note.
<i>ō</i>	..	<i>o</i>	..	not.
<i>ū</i>	..	<i>oo</i>	..	moon.
<i>ū</i>	..	<i>u</i>	..	full.

An apostrophe after a letter stands for a short *ē*, somewhat like *e* in *begin*.

The *ch* is a hard guttural like *ch* in the Scotch word *loch*; those who are not able to give it the guttural sound, should aspirate it as strongly as possible.

The apostrophe before a letter in the Arabic words expressed in English characters denotes that that letter should be pronounced with the concluding vowel of the preceding word; as *baytu 'malik*, to be pronounced *baytul malik*.

LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL RABBINICAL WRITINGS AND AUTHORS

CITED IN THE FOLLOWING WORK.

THE MISHNA, or Text of the Talmud; compiled and arranged about the end of the second century of the Christian era, by Rabbi Judah, surnamed Hakkadosh, i. e. the Holy.

THE GEMARA; which is a comment upon the Mishna. This work was commenced by Rabbi Ashi, who kept a school at Sora near Babylon, and was afterwards completed by his sons and scholars about the beginning of the sixth century of our era, and forms, with the Mishna, the Babylonish Talmud (published subsequently in 12 folio volumes), containing the Oral Laws and Traditions of the Jews.

THE BOOK SOHAR; written by Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai. This is an allegorical commentary on the five books of Moses, copiously intermixed with cabalistic interpretations. He is supposed to have flourished not many years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

- THE MASORAH**; which is a collection of critical and other remarks relating to the Books, Sections, Verses, Words, Letters, Vowel points, Diacritic points and Accents of the Hebrew Text. This work was the production of a celebrated body of Jewish critics, generally called Masorites, who flourished in the beginning of the sixth century.
- THE BOOKS KOSRI**; composed by Rabbi Juda Hallevi, a Spanish writer of the twelfth century; professing to be a Dialogue between a certain king named Kosar and a Rabbi Isaac Sangari, who endeavoured to convert the monarch to Judaism.
- RABBI ABRAHAM BEN MEIR ABEN EZRA**, born at Toledo, A. D. 1099, died A. D. 1174; one of the greatest men of his age and nation, much regarded for his philological acuteness, both by Christian and Jewish commentators.
- RABBI DAVID KIMCHI**, sometimes also called, from the initial letters of his name, Radak, was born, as some say, in Spain, and others in France, in the year 1190. This writer is justly esteemed for his learning and good sense, and his works, especially his commentary on the Psalms, are highly valued.
- RABBI MOSES BEN MAIMON**, generally called Maimonides, and sometimes also, from the initial letters of his name, Rambam, was a celebrated and voluminous writer, born at Cordova, A. D. 1139, and died A. D. 1205.
- RABBI SOLOMON JARCHI**, also called Rashi, born at Troyes, in France; he lived in the twelfth century, and is remarkable for his strict adherence to the Targum and the Jewish traditions.
- RABBI MOSES BEN NACHMAN**, by abbreviation also called Ramban, but better known by the name Nachmanides, was born at Giorenne, A. D. 1194. He received, from his great learning, various appellations, as *the Father of Wisdom, the Luminary, &c.*
- RABBI LEVI BEN GERSON**, also called, by abbreviation, Ralbag, was a native of France. He died A. D. 1370.
- RABBI ISAAC ABARBANEL**, a writer of great intellect and comprehensive mind; born at Lisbon, A. D. 1437, died A. D. 1508.
- ELIAS LEVITA**, a celebrated grammarian and critic; died in the year 1549.
- MOSES ALSCHECH**, a distinguished commentator; flourished in Palestine in the seventeenth century.

INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to the public the following literal translations and critical commentaries, the author sincerely hopes to obtain from the general reader, as well as from the scrutinizing critic, that consideration for all imperfections which the difficulty of the task justly entitles him to expect.

The difficulties in translating, even from one of our modern languages into another of the same family, must necessarily be very great; inasmuch as every language has its idioms, and every nation its peculiar terms of expression congenial to its vernacular tongue, which, when divested of their native garb and attired in a foreign dress, lose at least much of their original force and beauty, if they do not become so disfigured as to be no longer recognized.

It is hardly possible to transfer the peculiar spirit of one language into another, however plastic, without great danger of introducing unintelligible ideas; or, by endeavouring to imitate the beautiful figures of the original too closely, producing nothing but mere caricatures. The acute Wolfgang Menzel has therefore very pertinently remarked that "a translation can never be entirely faithful: to be so in one respect, it must deviate in others."* The truth of this assertion is but too apparent in every translation that has been executed; for, even in the best, where the masterly hand of the translator has exercised its utmost ingenuity, and the richness of the language has bountifully contributed to insure success, the reader will nevertheless have to lament the absence of that indefinable *something*, which exists only in its native tongue and constitutes the whole life of the original.

Yet all that has been stated as regards the ordinary difficulties of translating falls far short of those encountered in rendering the inspired writings of the Old Testament into a language of a foreign clime. For the Hebrew, as has been aptly observed, "is the language of man in his infancy, ere his reasoning powers

* Menzel's German Literature, vol. i. p. 67.

have supplanted his feelings: simple in structure, childlike, truthful in expression, the very language of the heart in the household affections, in the ardour of faith, or the abyss of despair; or if dignified: sublime in simple majesty, recalling in the commonest metaphors the tent, the desert, the pastoral life of the patriarchal ages;—and can we translate such a language as this into that of times and people who have grown grey in philosophy and the world, and who are artificial or callous in those feelings which the Hebrew expressed with the honest fervour of youth? No, the Hebrew muse, as aforesaid, hangs her harp on the willows, and refuses to sing her native songs in a strange land.”*

Besides all this, I may mention the numerous philological perplexities with which the conscientious translator and interpreter of the sacred books has often to contend; for whilst it must be confessed that much has been achieved within the last fifty years in the advancement of Hebrew philology, it cannot be denied that much is yet to be done; and, even in that which has been done, not unfrequently a variety of opinions are found to exist. In all such doubtful cases, the translator has but the alternative either to follow the footsteps of the one or the other authority, or to strike out a new path for himself; and consequently he runs the risk on the one hand of adopting an erroneous opinion, and on the other of being misled by his own fancies.

Nor are all difficulties surmounted after the literal meaning of the words in a phrase has been ascertained. The next difficulty that presents itself is the *application* of the passage: for there are many in the Scriptures which have been variously applied, and about which the most discordant opinions prevail among commentators; not indeed that these passages admit of a two or threefold interpretation—which would reduce the inspired writings to the level of the heathen oracles—but simply because they are often conveyed to us in indirect terms, or are couched in highly figurative language and may be viewed in various lights. Here again the greatest caution requires to be exercised by the interpreter before espousing this or that opinion, lest, in the anxiety to appear original himself, he too rashly discard standard authorities, and, in thus following the phantoms of his own imagination, fare no better than the thirsty traveller of the desert, who, beguiled by a fancied lake, leaves the beaten path

* Mr. J. Nicholson in his preface to Ewald's Hebrew Grammar.

in hope of quenching his parching thirst, but is doomed to find after all, nothing more than a delusive mist.

Such, reader, are the constantly recurring difficulties which at every step beset the biblical interpreter who is fully impressed with the importance and responsibility of his undertaking, and whose sole aim is to perform the work faithfully, swayed neither by preconceived opinions nor partial motives, and who truly feels that, in entering the area of sacred literature, he treads on holy ground.

It is true that some of the difficulties above alluded to may apparently be diminished: as, for instance, when the authorized English version is made the basis of the exposition, as is indeed frequently the case. In adopting this plan, the commentator divests himself at once of all philological intricacies; but surely it will be readily conceived that a commentary thus executed must necessarily be very often defective, and in many instances even unintelligible. Such must unavoidably be the result whenever the English version differs from the original Hebrew, which, without wishing to depreciate the merits of that version, I am nevertheless compelled to state is but too frequently the case.

To illustrate what I have just stated, and to make it more intelligible to the English reader, I shall adduce some examples, and these will serve at the same time to shew that nothing, however trivial it may at first sight appear, ought to be considered by the interpreter of the Scriptures as too insignificant to be worthy of his notice; but that, on the contrary, what may on a cursory view appear of no great moment, will frequently, on a more minute investigation, turn out of serious importance. They will further shew that the imputations so frequently cast by some reckless persons upon Holy Writ, as containing many inconsistencies—or, as some have more boldly styled them, direct contradictions—are nothing but groundless assertions; and based upon a rigid and critical examination, but merely upon a superficial view or thorough ignorance of the subject.

In turning to the English Bible for examples, our attention is immediately arrested at the 2nd verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, by the peculiar phrase—"And the earth was without form and void." This language may at the first glance appear to the ordinary reader perfectly plain; but when we come to examine it more closely, we discover it to be altogether incomprehensible, and that any exposition founded thereon must

necessarily be unintelligible, as it is not easy to conceive how anything material can possibly subsist "*without form.*"* It matters not whether the verb צָרָא (bārā), in the preceding verse, be taken in the sense *he formed*, and be explained as having reference to the earth being formed from some pre-existent material into its present shape, as is held by some commentators; or whether it be taken in the sense, *he created*, and applied to its having been then first created out of nothing, as is maintained by others; in either case, after the earth had been so formed or so created, it must have had some kind of form. The difficulty, however, is entirely removed when we appeal to the original Hebrew, where we read, "And the earth was תְּהוֹה וְרֵקְוִיָּה (thōhoo vāvohoo) lit. desolateness and emptiness—i. e. *desolate and empty*, or without covering of any kind; abstract nouns being often employed in Hebrew instead of adjectives. The meaning of the passage now becomes perfectly obvious:—The earth, after its creation, was *desolate and empty*, inasmuch as no organized beings existed upon it,—they had not yet been summoned into being, or made, by the Creator. The English version has been followed by the French, "sans forme et vide," and these alone have given "*without form and void.*" As for instance, the Targum of Onkelos gives "צָרָא וְרֵקְוִיָּה" (tzādyā v'rēkōnyā) i. e. *desolate and empty*—the Syriac, "thooh v'booh," i. e. *desolate and empty*—the Vulgate, "inanis et vacua," i. e. *empty and void*—the German, "wüste und leer," i. e. *desolate and empty*—the Italian, "una cosa deserta e vacua," i. e. *a thing uninhabited and empty*—the Spanish, "desnuda y vacia," i. e. *bare and empty*. Very singular and quite inadmissible is the rendering of the Septuagint, "ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος," i. e. *invisible and unfinished*.

If we proceed a little further in the chapter, we read at the 21st verse, "And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly." It has been advanced by some, that the Mosaic account is here defective, the "*whales*" only being mentioned exclusive of all the other huge monsters of the deep, or if these be included in

* Matter, as wise logicians say,
Cannot without form subsist;
And form, say I as well as they,
Must fail, if matter brings no grist.

the expression "*and every living creature*," there is no use of mentioning whales at all. According to the rendering of the passage in the English version, the objection made to it is, no doubt, somewhat plausible; the original, however, leaves no room for such an objection, as the word תַּנִּינִים (tänninim), here rendered *whales*, would have been more correctly translated *sea monsters*, as according to the etymology of the word it may as well mean sea serpents, dragons, or any other kind of aquatic animals. Hence the Septuagint, "τὰ κίτη τὰ μέγала," i. e. the *great sea monsters*. I cannot see why the translators should have rendered the Hebrew word in the passage before us *whales*, as they have attached a different signification to it in other places, as, Psalm lxxiv. 13, "Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou breakest the heads of תַּנִּינִים (tänninim) the *dragons* in the waters." See also Psalm cxlviii. 7, which seems to shew that they did not regard it as the specific name of a particular aquatic animal.

Again, at the 27th verse, we read, "So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." This verse, according to the English version, admits of a two-fold interpretation, arising from the words *male* and *female* being adjectives, which may therefore be regarded as either singular or plural. Hence, those who hold that all the existing human races have sprung from one human pair take these adjectives in the singular, and apply them to the creation of Adam and Eve; whilst those who maintain the origin from more than one primeval stock, view them in the plural, and found upon this the hypothesis of a contemporaneous creation of other human beings, differing from Adam and Eve in colour and bodily structure. In turning however again to the original, it will be found that the words employed are זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה (sāchār oon'kēvā), which are singular substantives; and the passage ought therefore to have been rendered, *a male and a female* created he them. Accordingly, these very words are thus rendered in Lev. iii. 1, "whether it be *a male or female*, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord."

Again, ch. ii. 4, 5, we read, "These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth," &c.

In comparing this passage with the preceding chapter to which it refers, it will be found utterly incomprehensible, as no periods of time are mentioned there, to which the word *generations* would be applicable. It is true that some have attempted to reconcile this discordance by interpreting each of the six days to mean an indefinite period of time; alleging, in support of their theory, that the term *day* is sometimes employed in Scripture to denote an indefinitely long period. But this proves nothing more than that the Hebrew word יום (*yôm*), i. e. *day*, is sometimes idiomatically employed in the sense of *time*. Much stress has also been laid upon 2 Peter iii. 8, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." But does this teach that the days of the creation must have been each a thousand years? No, the contrary will become quite apparent, when we examine what gave rise to the expression. The Apostle had alluded to the prediction of the end of the world, and to the final judgment, and further, to the fact that inasmuch as no signs had yet been seen of the Lord's coming, some had begun to doubt the verity of these predictions. To dispel these doubts, and to inspire believers with the confidence that those things would surely be consummated, he says, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." No doubt intending thereby to inculcate, that God does not measure time as man does; and that although the consummation of these events, according to the ideas of men, is delayed, yet the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, but is merciful and long-suffering—having no pleasure in the death of the wicked; not willing that any one should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The six days of creation must obviously be regarded as six civil or calendar days, as they are particularly described as alternations of night and day. And the "evening and the morning were the first day;"* and so with the other days. See Gen. i. 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. If indeed the six days are interpreted to denote six indefinite periods of time, the seventh day must likewise be so interpreted.

* From the evening being mentioned first, the Hebrews have always reckoned their civil day from evening to evening. Thus the Sabbath commences with the sunset of Friday, and ends with the sunset of Saturday. It was also the custom of the ancient northern nations to count time by nights; and hence no doubt our expressions, fortnight, i. e. fourteen nights, to signify fourteen days; and se'nnight, signifying a week.

Nor is it at all necessary to stretch out those days into long periods. The Hebrew word תולדות (tôl'dôth), translated *generations* in the English version, denotes also a *history*, particularly a *family history*. As in Gen. vi. 9: "This is תולדות (tôl'dôth), the family history of Noah." English version, "These *are* the generations of Noah." Again, xxv. 19: "And this is תולדות (tôl'dôth), the family history of Isaac." English version, "And these *are* the generations of Isaac." In like manner, Gen. ii. 4 ought to have been rendered thus—This is the history of the heavens and the earth, i. e., the history of the origin of the heavens and the earth; correctly rendered by Rabbi Shalom Hakkohen in his German version,* "Dieses ist die Entstehungsgeschichte," i. e., this is the history of the origin. Compare also the French version, "Telles sont les origines," i. e., such are the origins,—the Italian, "Tali furono l'origini," i. e., such were the origins,—the Spanish, "Estos son los origines," i. e., these are the origins,—the German, "Also ist Himmel und Erde geworden," i. e., thus originated the heavens and the earth.

Again iii. 7, we read, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

In the above passage there are two terms employed, "sewed" and "aprons," which have been eagerly laid hold of by those who read the Bible, not with a view to study the divine precepts, but to search for passages which are apparently inconsistent or objectionable, by which they would endeavour to impeach the authenticity of the sacred records. But surely even the opponents of the Scriptures will admit, that it is hardly fair to criticise the writings of any foreign author merely from a translation; as the author's meaning may not have been correctly conveyed from the one language into the other. It must be recollected, that many Hebrew words have various shades of signification. Thus the verb דבַר (dāvār) generally denotes, *to speak*, yet it is used in various other senses, according as the context requires a modification of the primary signification; hence, Judges v. 12, *to utter* a song, i. e., *to sing* a song. Again, it is employed in the sense *to admonish*, *to command*, *to ask* in marriage, &c. And, in like manner, the verb תַּפַּח (tāphār), rendered in the English version

* German version in Hebrew characters, published, together with his edition of the Hebrew Bible, in 18 volumes. Hamburg.

"to sew," signifies also, *to twist, to plat, or to adjust*. In the latter sense it is evidently employed in Job xvi. 15. "I have" (English version) "sewed sackcloth upon my skin." This is impossible; it should have been translated, I have *adjusted* sackcloth* upon my skin. So also in the passage in question, *they twisted* or adjusted fig leaves together, not "sewed" (which would imply that the implements of sewing were known in Paradise), "and made themselves aprons." The word *apron* is altogether too definite a term, as the Hebrew word חֲגֹרֶה (chägöräh), according to its etymology, simply signifies a girdle, without any reference to shape or form, being derived from the verb חָגַר (chägär) *to gird, to bind round*. The fig leaves here spoken of were possibly those of the *ficus indicus*†, well adapted for this purpose, being large and broad.

In Genesis xviii. 2, we read, "And he lifted up his eyes‡ and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them* he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground."

It will at once be seen, that there exists an incongruity in this passage. If the three men stood *by* Abraham at the door of his tent, where he had been sitting, how can it be said, that he ran to meet them? The passage should have been rendered—and he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold three men stood עֲלֵיךָ (äläv) *opposite to* him, and when he perceived them, he ran to meet them. The apparent inconsistency is now removed. Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent in the heat of the day, and, lifting up his eyes, he beheld three men standing before him at a little distance; and perceiving that they stood still, the aged man, with that genuine hospitality which is always the characteristic of pure piety, eager to perform an act of kindness, ran to meet the strangers, and begged them not to pass on until

* Sackcloth was used for mourning garments.

† So counsell'd he, and both together went
Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose
The fig tree; not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arm.

PARADISE LOST, book ix.

‡ I may remark here, that the phrase, *to lift up the eyes*—does not mean, to look upwards—but rather to look directly *at* or *about* for an object. As Genesis xiii. 10. "And Lot lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan," i. e., he looked about and beheld the whole plain of Jordan.

they had refreshed themselves.* When the preposition עַל (*äl*), the primary signification of which is *upon, above*, is employed to denote the position, it may be rendered by, *at, near, by, over, against, or opposite to*.

* The act of hospitality, as described by the sacred historian in the above passage, is quite in accordance with the common practice among the Oriental nations, who have ever been distinguished for their strict observance of this virtue. In the Old Testament we find many similar instances recorded, as Genesis xix. 2, Exod. ii. 20, Judges xix. 16-21, Job xxxi. 32. "The stranger did not lodge in the street, *but* I opened my doors to the traveller." In the Mosaic law, hospitality is directly enjoined.—See Lev. xix. 33, Deut. xiv. 29. In the New Testament its observance is likewise commanded.—See Rom. xii. 13, 1 Tim. v. 10, Hebrews xiii. 2-3, 1 Peter iv. 9-10. The early Christians were so zealous in the discharge of this sacred duty, that even the heathens admired them for it. In the Rabbinical writings also great stress is laid upon the exercise of that virtue, and the rewards of paradise are assigned as a recompense for the due performance of it. Rabbi Bechai, in his commentary on the Pentateuch, says כָּל הַמְדוּקִים בְּמִצְוַת אֲכֻלְיָהּ יוֹרֵשׁ גַּן עֵדֶן i. e., every one that keeps the laws of hospitality inherits paradise. In the Koran, this great principle is likewise inculcated. In the 4th chapter there is the following command: "Shew kindness unto parents and relations, to orphans and the poor, to your neighbour who is of kin to you, and also your neighbour who is a stranger, to your familiar companion, and to the traveller." To the scrupulous and strict observance of these precepts by the followers of Mohammed the unanimous voice of all Oriental travellers bears ample testimony. An Arab, on arriving at a village, proceeds to a house of some one who is known to him, and says to the master of the house, "I am your guest." The host immediately welcomes the traveller, and sets before him the best that his house affords. Should the traveller not have any acquaintance in the place, he dismounts at any house, fastens his horse, and sits down to smoke his pipe until the master of the house bids him welcome, and offers him his evening meal. In the morning, the stranger proceeds on his journey, and offers no other return for the hospitality he had received than the usual parting salutation, "*God be with you,*" equivalent to our *good bye*.

"Being now off the track of all former travellers," says Mr. Robinson, "we came in contact here with oriental hospitality in its primitive and genuine form. The villagers supplied us with every thing we desired; regarding it as an honour, and without expecting a recompense. Such is the custom in all these mountains. The Fellâhin never sell food to one another; but every stranger is the guest of the village. Our five muleteers, honest and faithful peasants from the village of Lifta, near Jerusalem, never thought of paying for their food; not for the sake of sponging, like our former Mukäriyeh, but because it was furnished to them as a matter of course. In every village there is a public room, or more than one, according to the size and ability of the place, devoted to the entertainment of strangers. Such a room is called Menzil or Medäfeh, guest room. The guest lodges in the Menzil, and his food is supplied by the families to whose circle it belongs. Sometimes they take turns in his entertainment; at other times it is left to those who offer themselves, or rather who claim the privilege. If the guest be a person of consequence, it is a matter of course that a sheep or goat, a lamb or kid, is killed for him. The Kelsiyeh usually kill two, one for the guest, and another for the people of the place. When the guest is a common man, as a muleteer or the like, he is fed with rice, or whatever may be the ordinary food of the people themselves. The guest gives nothing as a remuneration when he leaves. To offer money would be taken as an insult, and to receive it would be a great disgrace. Such is universally the manner of entertainment in the villages throughout the provinces of Jerusalem and Hebron, as well as in the parts of Syria."

ROBINSON'S BIBLICAL RESEARCHES.

"We were not above a musket shot from Anna" (a town and caravan station of Syria), says Mr. Tavernier, "when we met with a comely old man, who came up to me, and, taking my horse by the bridle, 'Friend,' said he, 'come and wash thy feet,

In Genesis xlix. 14, 15, we read, "Issachar is a strong ass crouching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." The difficulty which presents itself in interpreting this passage arises from the Hebrew word מִשְׁפָּתַיִם (mishp'thayim) being rendered by "two burdens" (a signification which it never has), instead of *two folds or enclosures*; thereby not only rendering this part of the passage altogether obscure, but also entirely destroying the beauty of the whole figure. Issachar is here represented as a robust ass; and when we consider in what esteem the ass was held in the eastern countries in earlier times, it is evident that the comparison was not intended as a reproach. The qualities of this animal being docility, gentleness, patience, laborious exertion and great capability of endurance, Issachar, the progenitor of a race equally distinguished for their patient industry and docility, is here compared to the meekest and most laborious of all quadrupeds. He is also represented as lying down between two *folds or enclosures*, not "two burdens." This may be regarded as a proverbial expression, spoken of husbandmen and shepherds living a peaceful and quiet life; or it may refer to the two mountains Tabor and Hermon, as the beautiful valley between these became the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar. The latter interpretation is supported by the rendering of Targum* of Onkelos: "Issachar rich in substance, and his

and eat bread at my house. Thou art a stranger; and since I have met thee upon the road, never refuse me the favour which I desire of thee. We could not choose but go along with him to his house, where he feasted us in the best manner he could, giving us, over and above, barley for our horses, and for us he killed a lamb and some hens."

TAVERNIER'S TRAVELS.

Among the Hindoos, hospitality is also practiced in a most liberal manner. They not only extend it to their friends and to the stranger, but not unfrequently even to their enemies, saying, "the tree does not withdraw its shade even from the wood-cutter."

* The Targum of Onkelos is the Chaldee version of the Pentateuch, and on account of the purity of its language and general fidelity to the original, above all other Chaldee translations, was held in the highest estimation by the Jews. It is greatly to be regretted that we possess so little information respecting Onkelos, who, to judge from his translation, must have been a scholar of no ordinary character, as well as a man of great piety. The general belief is that he flourished a short time before our Saviour's nativity; that he had been a pupil of the famous Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, and that he made the translation of the five books of Moses for the benefit of the common people of the Jews of Palestine, as the Chaldee had become the popular dialect of Palestine since the Babylonish captivity. The term "paraphrase," which has been commonly applied to this class of writing, is not justly applicable to this work, as it is for the most part a remark-

possession shall be between two bounds,"—and also by the rendering of the Jerusalem† Targum—"And his boundary shall be placed between two limits."

This part of the Holy Land is exceedingly beautiful, its scenery sublime, the land "fruitful to admiration and abounding in pastures." The description therefore goes on to say, "and he saw that rest *was* good and the land that it *was* pleasant, and he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant to tribute;" which simply means that, seeing itself in possession of an exceedingly beautiful and fruitful country, the tribe devoted itself to the quiet and peaceful pursuits of husbandry, taking but little interest in the public affairs of the nation. Accordingly Josephus, in speaking of the inheritance of Issachar, says, "it is fruitful to admiration, abounding in pastures and nurseries of all kind; so that it would make any man in love with husbandry." It is strange that the translators should have rendered מִשְׁפָּתַיִם (mishp'thayim) here by "burdens," when, in Judges v. 16, they rendered it by "sheepfolds:" "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?"

Again, Exod. iii. 22, we read, "But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment." So xi. 2, "Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour," &c.

In obedience to this command, we read, ch. xii. 35, 36, "And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment: And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as*

ably literal translation. It is true that we occasionally meet with free translations of some passages, but these consist chiefly in a mere change in the words or construction, in order to render the meaning of these passages more clear, or for the explanation of tropical terms. The greatest freedom is observable in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, which is for the most part highly poetical, and abounding in figurative expressions. The term Targum is a Chaldee word signifying *translation*, and was at first applied to any translation made from one language into another; but in process of time this appellation was *par excellence* restricted to translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Chaldee.

† The Jerusalem Targum of the Pentateuch is generally considered to be a fragmentary recension of the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch. In this Targum sometimes entire chapters, and still more frequently several successive verses, are omitted. It consists of translations and remarks collected from various writers. The Chaldee of this Targum is very impure, abounding in Persian, Greek, and Latin words; and is supposed to have been written about the sixth century, if not more recently.

they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians." Now it has been said by the opponents of the Scriptures that the command to *borrow* from the Egyptians what they never intended to restore was not only an act of injustice, but that it favours theft, and is distinctly set forth by the Psalmist as a characteristic mark of the wicked. "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again"—Ps. xxxvii. 21. Some commentators have met this objection by affirming that God, who is supreme Lord of all things, may transfer, as He in His infinite wisdom thinks best, when and in what manner He pleases, the rights of men from one to another. Thus kingdoms are set up and cast down; monarchs are wholly or partially deprived of their possessions, to render others more powerful; and these again, in their turn, are subjected to similar vicissitudes. Will it be said that these are mere occurrences of chance? Certainly not. They are commanded by Him who hath said, "Surely as I have thought so it shall come to pass; and as I have purposed, so it shall stand." Isaiah xiv. 24. All things are ordered by His overruling providence, for it is He indeed that purposeth, and who can annul it? He stretcheth forth his hand, and who can turn it back?

But this view of the transaction in question, although it incontrovertibly proves that there was nothing derogatory to divine justice in transferring the wealth of the Egyptians to the oppressed Israelites, still leaves the objection to be answered, as to the *mode* by which, according to the English version, it was effected. It is upon this point, after all, that the opponents of Scripture chiefly dwell. The objection therefore must be met upon purely philological grounds, and this I think may be done in a most conclusive manner.

The Hebrew verb שָׁאַל (*shāäl*) occurs but in very few instances in the sense *to borrow*, in the whole Bible; its primary meaning is *to ask*, having several shades of signification, as *to inquire—to interrogate—to demand—to require*; and in these the verb constantly occurs. As for example, 1 Kings iii. 5, "In Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said שָׁאַל (*sh'äl*) ask," or *demand*, "what I shall give thee." So 2 Kings ii. 9: "And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, שָׁאַל (*sh'al*) ask," or *demand*, "what I shall do for thee." Again, Psalm ii. 8: "שָׁאַל (*sh'al*) ask," or *demand*, "of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine in-

heritance." See also Isaiah vii. 11, Lament. iv. 4, and so in many other places. There can, therefore, be no objection to render it by *to ask* or *demand* in the passage before us, and so it has indeed been rendered in all ancient and modern versions, the English alone excepted. Besides, if the sacred writer wished to indicate that the Israelites had only *borrowed* those things, he would no doubt have employed the usual verb לָוָה (lāvāh), to *borrow*, quite a different verb, as the reader will perceive. Thus, Deuteronomy xxviii. 12, "And thou shalt lend unto the nations, and לָוְהוּ אֶת־לְקַחְתָּ (lō thīlvēh) thou shalt not borrow." So Psalm xxxvii. 21, "The wicked לָוְהוּ (lōvēh) borroweth." Hence the participle of this verb is also employed substantively to denote a borrower, as Prov. xxii. 7, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and לָוְהוּ (lōvēh) the borrower is servant to the lender."

We maintain, therefore, that the Israelites were not commanded, Exodus xi. 2, "to borrow," but *to ask* or *demand* of the Egyptians those things, as a just payment for their services. In obedience to this command, the Israelites did *ask* (ch. xii. 35) of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment, which demands were no doubt readily acceded to, for the sacred historian tells us, verse 33, that "the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We *be* all dead men." Where is the man, however great a miser, that would not gladly give all his earthly goods, if he could thereby prolong his life even a short period of time? Is it at all strange that the Egyptians should readily comply with the demands of the Hebrews, seeing that already the first-born of every house had been laid low, and that the delay of the Israelites, but for a few moments, might possibly cause the same fate to befall themselves? I think, therefore, that Josephus is not far astray when he says, "They also honoured the Hebrews with gifts, some in order to get them to depart quickly, and others on account of their neighbourhood and the friendship they had with them."*—*Antiq. b. II. ch. 14.*

* In the Talmud the following story is related, and though its truth cannot be vouched for at the present day, I shall subjoin it, as it well illustrates what has been above advanced:—

"When Alexander the Great was in Egypt, an Egyptian prince came to him and said, 'Our nation has always heard that you are so benevolent as to pay, or *cause* to be paid, all the just claims of your poor subjects. I came therefore to inquire of you, if such be really the case?' The king replied in the affirmative, and inquired of the prince the nature of his demand. The prince then stated that the Jews, who

In Deut. xxv. 9, we read, "Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house."

The rite alluded to in this passage is observed by the Israelites to the present day, though the occasions on which recourse is had to it are indeed very rare.

The translation, "and spit in his face," has very justly given much offence to the Jews, as it represents them practising a custom which would hardly be countenanced even among savages. Besides, it has not failed to attract the attention of the opponents of the Bible, who, always ready to impugn its authority, maintain that God in His goodness could never have instituted a rite so degrading and repulsive. I am, however, happy to have an opportunity to testify that such a custom is never practised, and still more so in being able to shew that it is not at all commanded in Scripture, which simply requires the brother's wife to spit out **בְּפָנָיו** (*b'pānāv*) *before him*, or *in his presence*. In the Hebrew the word *presence* can only be expressed by **פָּנָה** (*panch*) *i.e.* *face*, hence with the

were under his jurisdiction, had several hundred years ago borrowed jewels of silver and of gold from his people, and had not as yet returned them nor paid for them, and he had now come to demand both principal and interest. Alexander wished to know what evidence he could adduce to substantiate his claim. The prince replied, the Bible. This is indeed excellent evidence, said the King; will you allow me three days to examine into the nature of your claim? The prince readily consented to this, and at the same time referred him to Exodus iii. 22 and xi. 2, as evidence. The king then consulted with his secretary, Gaviah ben Pasea, a learned Jew, who, on the morning of the third day, called upon King Alexander, and told him to get the prince when he came to consent, in the first place, that if a balance were due on either side, it should be paid with interest; secondly, that the Bible should be evidence for and against both parties; and, further, to enquire of him if their law did not allow servants and slaves a just and equitable compensation for their services, 'all of which he will no doubt readily admit. Then refer him to the Bible, where he will find that Jacob and his family or children took all their cattle and all their wealth with them into Egypt; also, state that the Israelites were three or four hundred years in bondage to his nation, and when they left Egypt they could not, as slaves, take their property with them; then estimate the value of the property that Jacob and his family took into Egypt, and the interest of it, and also the services of all the Jewish nation for four hundred years, at so much per day for each one; then add the interest, and double both principal and interest, for the Egyptians made them also double their labour, and they had also to find their own materials to make brick. Let him from that sum deduct the small amount of jewels, and there will be such a large balance in our favour that their whole nation will not be able to pay it. Besides, he does not understand our language, for the word **שָׁאֵל** (*shā'āl*) means to ask, to demand as a debt or an equivalent, and not to borrow.' In support of these allegations the learned secretary referred the king to numerous passages in the Bible. The king was highly delighted with this critical view of the case, and adopted the plan pointed out, and when the prince came, and Alexander explained the whole merits of the case to him, shewing beyond doubt that his nation was largely in debt to the Israelites, the prince fled into a foreign country."

proposition ב (b') *in*, and the pronominal suffix יָרֵךְ (av) *his*, we have the word בְּפָנָיו (b'phānāv), which is therefore as correctly translated *in his presence*, or *before him*, as "in his face." So, for instance, Deut. vii. 24, "There shall no man be able to stand בְּפָנָיִךְ b'phanēcha), *i.e.*, *in thy presence*," or, as in the English version, "before thee." Again, Deut. xi. 25, "There shall no man be able to stand בְּפָנֶיךָ (biphnechem) *in your presence* or *before you*." English version again, "before you." Also, Josh. xxi. 42, "And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that he swore unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies בְּפָנֵיהֶם (biphnēhem) *in their presence* or *before them*." English version again, "before them." It will be perceived that merely a different pronoun is employed in these examples; in all other respects the word is the same. Rabbi Shalom Hakkohen, who ought to be well acquainted with the rites of his own nation, rendered it in his German translation, "Speie vor ihm aus," *i.e.*, *spit out before him*. And in like manner D. A. De Sola and M. J. Raphall, in their united translation of the Mishna Treatise Yebamoth, page 296, have rendered the words וירקה בפניו (v'yār'kāl b'phānāv) "and spit out before him."*

In Deut. xxix. 2, 3, 4, we read, "And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land; the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles: yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." According to this reading in the English version, the concluding declaration of Moses plainly represents God as the cause of Israel not perceiving the signs and miracles; and profane writers have not failed to bring this passage forward, as one strongly arguing against the purity and holiness of the Deity. From the context, too, it is evident that Moses here reproves the stubborn Israelites for their hardness of heart and callousness in not perceiving the manifold wonders which had been wrought for them. Would

* The custom of marrying the brother's widow has been adopted from the Mosaic laws by other eastern nations, who still practise it. Olearius, speaking of the Circassians, says, "When a man dies without issue his brother is obliged to marry the widow."—*Ambassador's Travels into Persia*, p. 417, *English edition*.

Volney remarks, that "the Druses retain, to a certain degree, the custom of the Hebrews, which directed a man to marry his brother's widow."—*Voyage en Syrie*, tom. ii. p. 74.

not, therefore, the question naturally suggest itself to every thinking mind, why upbraid them for not seeing, perceiving and hearing, when God himself withheld from them the means of doing so? It would be altogether vain to attempt to reconcile the fourth verse, as rendered in the English version, either with the context, or with the divine attributes of infinite goodness, justice and holiness of God. But the whole difficulty which the passage presents is entirely owing to a mistranslation of the Hebrew word וְלֹא (v'lo) in the fourth verse, which should have been rendered interrogatively, *hath not?* instead of simply negatively, "yet hath not," the sentence would then have read, "hath not the Lord given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day?" Thus rendered, the passage becomes perfectly clear, and harmonizes in every respect with the context. The negative particle לֹא (lō) *not*, and sometimes also with the conjunction וְלֹא (v'lo) *and not*, is frequently employed for הֲלֹא (hālō), *is not*, when the question is a negative one. Thus, for example, Jonah iv. 11, וְאֵינִי לֹא אֲחַדָּה עַל-נִינְוָה (vāāni lō āchūs āl nīn'veh), lit. And I, I will not have pity on Nineveh, but this would not at all agree with the context, and would afford a meaning quite the opposite to what God intended to say; לֹא (lō) *not*, therefore, stands obviously here for הֲלֹא (hālō) *shall not*, and the passage must accordingly be rendered, *and I, shall not I have pity on Nineveh?* and so similarly the English version, "And should not I spare Nineveh?" For other examples, see also Job ii. 10, and xiv. 16; Lament. i. 12, and iii. 36. The translators appear not to have been ignorant of this peculiar use of the Hebrew negative particle, as they have rendered it interrogatively in the above quoted examples; but why they should have overlooked it in the passage in question is difficult to say.

From the many mis-translations in the Book of Job I shall only select the following:—

In Job vi. 11, 12, 13, we read, "What *is* my strength, that I should hope? and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life? *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or *is* my flesh of brass? *Is* not my help in me? and *is* wisdom driven quite from me?"

The reader will at once perceive that, according to this rendering, Job contradicts in the last verse what he has said in the preceding. If indeed his help were in him, why complain of not being able to bear the burden put upon him? Why not shake it off, if he possess the power of doing so? The last verse has, however, been altogether

mis-translated, it should have been rendered, "Lo! my help is not in me, and *succour* is driven from me." This renders the passage perfectly clear, and harmonizes beautifully with the context. The translators evidently have not perceived the peculiar force of the word חַיִּים (hā'im) in this place, standing here for חַלּוֹן (hālōn), lit. *is not*, which is frequently employed in the sense of *lo! behold!*

Again, ch. xxxix. 19, we read, "Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" According to this translation the last clause of the verse evidently refers to the neighing of the horse, which however is hardly loud and strong enough to be consistently described by the word *thunder*; besides, the powerful snorting of the horse is alluded to in the latter clause of the next verse, "the glory of his nostrils *is* terrible," which would then be a useless repetition of nearly the same thing. The passage would have been more correctly rendered, "Hast thou clothed his neck with רַעְמָה (ramah) *trembling?*" i. e., with a trembling or waving mane. So Ewald, "Kleidest du seinen Hals mit Zittern?" i. e., *Hast thou clothed his neck with trembling?* And Rabbi Shalom Hakkohen, "Bekleidest du seinen Hals mit der stolzen Mähne?" i. e., *Hast thou attired his neck with the proud mane?* And so Hirzel, Arnheim, Welte, Heiligstedt and others. The translators have evidently been led into the error by the close resemblance of the two words, viz., רַעְמָה (ramah) fem. *trembling*, and רַעַם (raam) masc. *thunder*, both words being also derived from the verb רָעַם (raam) *to tremble, to be moved*, also, in a secondary signification, *to thunder*.

The rendering of the first clause of the next verse is still more objectionable:—"Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?" This passage has also not escaped the scrutinizing eyes of the opponents of Scripture. They have asked, "How can we reconcile with common sense the question put to Job, whether he could make a horse afraid like a grasshopper, when we all know that a child can easily frighten a horse? How can we therefore, or how can any one suppose that God would ask Job if it was possible for him to do what a child would find no difficulty whatever in doing?"

It can hardly be denied that the objection is a plausible one, for, as the passage is rendered in the English version, it is impossible to reconcile it with common sense; but had the objectors taken the trouble, as they ought to have done, to examine the original, they

would have found that the apparent inconsistency is altogether owing to a mis-translation, as the passage should have been translated, "Dost thou make him, (i. e., the horse) leap like the locust?" Job is ~~in~~ the preceding verse asked, Whether it was he who gave to the horse strength, and clothed his neck with a trembling or waving mane? In this verse he is asked, Whether it was he who made or enabled the horse to leap like a locust? The verb רָעַשׁ (rā'ash) here employed, although it denotes frequently to tremble for fear, yet never signifies to make afraid, to terrify; in which case the verb יָרַע (yārē) would have been employed.

I shall adduce but one more example—one which will illustrate more strikingly than any of the preceding examples the necessity of making the original the basis of interpretation, as it will shew how even the slightest mis-translation may involve a passage in the greatest obscurity. In Ecclesiastes xii. 1, 2, we read, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain."

This passage, which otherwise would be easily explained, is rendered quite obscure by the concluding clause, "nor the clouds return after the rain;" for whilst we have often seen the light of the sun, of the moon and the stars darkened or obscured, such as indeed would take place in any rainy season, we cannot possibly conceive a period of time when the clouds do not return after the rain. Such a thing would be altogether contrary to the laws of nature, and the Bible, we maintain, contains nothing which is contrary to such laws, unless in those cases where they were suspended for particular purposes by the Lord of nature. But this passage has been made altogether unintelligible merely by the translators having translated וְשָׁבָה (v'shāvū) by "nor return," instead of *and return*, which is the correct rendering, and makes the figure perfectly clear. The inspired writer compares here, just as we frequently do, old age to winter; and in Palestine during the winter, or what perhaps might be more appropriately called the rainy season, day after day the clouds return and rain falls almost incessantly.* The

* Although the sky is not infrequently obscured by clouds during the summer, it is well known that rain during that season is hardly ever seen in Palestine. Hence, almost every house is provided with a large cistern, in which the water during the rainy season is collected. These cisterns are coated with a kind of mortar called

further, and shew that such must be unavoidably the result, in many instances, even where the English version is apparently a literal translation of the original, unless indeed the commentator possess a full acquaintance with the genius of the Hebrew language and familiarity with its peculiar modes of expression, and that without these he would be unable to give a satisfactory solution of very many intricate passages. Thus, Gen. vi. 1, 2, we read, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." To convey an accurate meaning of this passage it is necessary to ascertain the precise force of the term "sons of God," which, although a literal rendering of the Hebrew בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים (b'nē hä'ēlōhīm), fails to impart the clear intent. From the antithesis, *daughters of men*, we would naturally conclude that by *the sons of God* must be understood the angels, and this supposition is strongly supported by the same expression occurring again in Job i. 6, where it evidently has that meaning. "Now there was a day when בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים (b'nē hä'ēlōhīm) the sons of God (i. e., the angels) came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." So again, ch. ii. 1 and ch. xxxviii. 7, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." If we however attach such a signification to it in the passage before us, it will be impossible to reconcile to ourselves the idea that angels should leave their happy and exalted state, and come down to take to themselves wives of the fallen race of man. It is true it has been urged, both by some ancient and modern writers, that these were fallen angels; but I altogether deny that *fallen* angels are included in the term *sons of God*. This is quite apparent by referring to the above quoted passages, the only places in which the expression occurs besides the passage in question. In the last it will be seen that the sons of God are represented as sending forth their songs of praise to the Creator of the universe, and hence, none but holy angels can be included in the term *sons of God*; and, in the two former, it will be observed that Satan is not represented to be one of the sons of God, but simply that he also came among them, or literally, *in the midst of them*, to present himself before the Lord. The very fact of his being separately mentioned clearly shows that, whatever claim he may once have had to this high and honorable title, he had now

forfeited it, and that he was merely an intruder in that holy assembly. But let us for a moment admit that the expression, "*sons of God*," embraces also fallen angels: is it at all natural to think that those evil spirits could have taken unto themselves wives of the daughters of men, and that these could have borne to them children, who became afterwards men of renown? Truly, the interpreters who have adopted this view (and I know there are many, both Jewish and Christian), must have possessed uncommon powers of imagination.*

The English version failing to convey to us a distinct meaning of this intricate passage, we must, for a more satisfactory solution, have recourse to the Hebrew text itself, and inquire whether the usage of that language would not authorize a more suitable application.

It is not at all uncommon in Hebrew that one or other of the appellations of the DEITY is used in connection with a noun, in order to intensify its excellence or superiority to the highest degree. Hence we find the expression אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (ish hæləhîm), lit. The man of God, i. e., *The pious man*.—Deut. xxxiii. 1. See also Psalm xc. 1. נַפְתָּלֵי אֱלֹהִים (näphtülē ələhîm), lit., *The wrestlings of God*, i. e., *The most powerful wrestlings*, English ver., "*great wrestlings*."—Gen. xxx. 8. הַרְרֵי אֵל (här'rē əl), lit. *The mountains of God*, i. e., *The loftiest mountains*, Eng. ver., "*great mountains*."—Psalm xxxvi. 7, Eng. ver., v. 6. נְשִׂיאַ אֱלֹהִים (n'si' ələhîm), lit. *A prince of God*, i. e., *A most mighty prince*.—Gen. xxiii. 6. אֲרָזֵי אֵל (ärsē əl), lit. *The cedars of God*, i. e., *The finest or loftiest cedars*, Eng. ver. "*the goodly cedars*."—Psalm lxxx. 11, Eng. ver. v. 10. And so by the same rule we may, by the term *sons of God*, in the passage before us, understand *superior* or *pious men*,†—namely, the descendants of Seth, Enos and other pious patriarchs, who did not

* Of the many writers who hold this opinion I would particularly mention Josephus, as his work is so extensively read. He says, "For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength."—*Whiston's Josephus's Antiq.*, b. I., ch. iii., par. 1.

† Well rendered by Rabbi Shalom Hakkohen in his German translation, "Dann sahen die göttlichen Menschen die Töchter des gemeinen Mannes," i. e., *then the pious (god-like) men saw the daughters of the common man*." Not so well the Targum of Onkelos has בְּנֵי רַבְרָבָא (b'ne rav'rava), i. e., *sons of the eminent ones*. So the Arabic version بَنُو الْأَشْرَافِ (banu 'ashraf), i. e., *the sons of the nobles*. All the other versions, both ancient and modern, have given the literal rendering of the Hebrew, "*sons of God*." The Alexandrian text of the Septuagint, however, has "*the angels of God*."

walk in the wicked ways of the descendants of Cain. Those men, who had hitherto been distinguished for their uprightness and piety, and who had taken upon themselves the profession of God's holy name, (see Gen. iv. 26, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," or, as it is rendered in the marginal note, "to call *themselves* by the name of the Lord,") these saw the daughters of men—i. e., of those who had nothing in them but the nature of fallen and sinful man—and they took wives of all which they chose.

In Gen. xxi. 7, we read: "And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne *him* a son in his old age." Here the plural form, בָּנִים (bānīm), *children*, being employed instead of the singular, *a child*, creates apparently a contradiction of facts, as Sarah had but one child. Though few commentators have thought it worth their while even to bestow a passing notice on this peculiarity, the adversaries of the Bible have eagerly seized upon it as an additional weapon in their warfare against the inspired writings, insisting, with a stubborn tenacity, upon the literal meaning of the word *children* in the passage. I am not disposed to quarrel with them on that score, but fully admit that, according to the strict rule of language, a plural noun implies a plurality of the objects denoted by the noun. This rule holds equally good in the Hebrew. Still we find that Hebrew writers sometimes employ a noun in the plural instead of the singular, if they wish to draw particular attention to a certain fact, rather than to the object denoted by the noun. Such evidently is the design of the sacred historian in the passage in question; it is not so much his desire to set forth the number of Sarah's children, as the fact of her becoming fruitful at such an advanced age, and this he does more strikingly by using the plural בָּנִים (bānīm), *children*; as much as to say, Who could have ever thought of saying to Abraham that Sarah should yet become fruitful, being already so far advanced in years.

In further illustration of this usage of language, we may also adduce Gen. viii. 4: "And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventh day of the month, upon הָרֵי אֲרָרָט (hārē ʾārārāt) the mountains of Ararat." Now Ararat* is a very mountainous region

* The Hebrew word אֲרָרָט (ʾārārāt) occurs in three other places in the Old Testament—namely, 2 Kings xix. 37, and Isaiah xxxvii. 38: "And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch (i. e., probably, *the great eagle*, an idol of the Ninevites) his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote

in Armenia, and therefore the ark could not have rested on all its mountains, as the language employed would actually indicate. But here again the sacred historian does not desire to set forth so much the particular mountain upon which the ark rested, as the general fact that it rested upon one of the mountains in the region called *Ararat*, and hence he uses the plural.

him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of אֲרָרָט *Ararat*." English version, "into the *land of Armenia*;" and in Jeremiah li. 27: "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of אֲרָרָט *Ararat*, Minni (a region of Armenia, probably Minyas), and Ashchenaz (generally understood to be some country on the Euxine Sea); appoint a captain against her."

From these passages it is evident that *Ararat* was the name of a province or region, and not of a particular mountain. This is further confirmed by Moses Chorenensis, an Armenian historian, and also by the fact, that the Armenians to this day apply that name to a region in the centre of the highlands of Armenia.

There are some writers who have objected to the Mosaic account, which represents the ark to have rested on the mountains of *Ararat*, on the mere grounds that late travellers had discovered no olive trees in Armenia, and that therefore either the account of the dove and olive leaf must be incorrect, or the mentioning of the mountains of *Ararat* a mistake. But it might likewise be as well said, that because modern travellers have in vain looked for balsam trees at Jericho, and date trees in Babylon, except the few that are found on the banks of the Euphrates, that there were none in ancient times. Such an inference would be absurd in the highest degree. Strabo, who was a native of Asia Minor, speaks of the great fertility of Armenia, and especially of the region of Gogarene, which he particularly mentions as productive of olives.—*Lib. xi.*

That the ark descended upon one of the mountains of Armenia, after the flood, is now generally admitted, though writers are by no means agreed as to the particular one upon which it rested, and as we possess no historical data for fixing on the precise mountain, it is but natural to expect that many speculative propositions regarding it should be advanced. Of all these various opinions, or rather conjectures, two only deserve to be noticed—namely, the one which fixes on one of the chain of mountains which separate Armenia on the south from Mesopotamia, and which, as they also encompass Kurdistan, received the name of the *Kardu* or *Carduchian* chain, corrupted afterwards into *Gordæan* or *Cordyæan*; and the other, which fixes on the mountain now designated upon our maps by the name of *Ararat*. The former opinion is very ancient, since in the Targum of Onkelos, the Hebrew אֲרָרָט *Ararat* (hārē ārūrāt), i. e., *mountains of Ararat*, is rendered אֲרָרָט קַרְדּוּ (toorē kardoo), i. e., *the mountains of the Kurds*. So also in the Syriac version we have "toorai Kardoo,"

i. e., *the mountains of the Kurds*. Likewise the Arabic version, جبال كردا (jibāl Karda), i. e., *the mountains of the Kurds*. Josephus, too, (*Antiq.*, b. i. c. iii. par. 6.) quotes Berosus the Chaldean, a priest of Belus, who, in describing the flood, stated: "It is said there is still some part of the ship in Armenia, at the mountain of the Cordyæans; and that some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs." Among the Eastern Churches, and particularly those of Syria, this was also at one time the prevalent belief.

This opinion, however, although once almost universal, has gradually given way to that which fixes the resting-place of the ark on the mountain known to Europeans by the name of *Ararat*. This mountain is situated in the extensive plain of the Aras, the ancient *Araxes*, about twelve leagues east from Erivan, rising in the form of a sugar-loaf, and consisting of two summits, the peak of the lesser more sharp and pointed than that of the higher. Dr. Parrot, who was the first that succeeded in reaching the summit, in 1829, gives the perpendicular height of the great *Ararat*,

Another example we have in Judges xii. 7:—"And Jephtha judged Israel six years. Then died Jephtha the Gileadite, and was buried *בְּעָרֵי גִלְעָד* *lit.*, in the cities of Gilead." English version, "in one

as 16,254 Paris feet above the level of the sea, and 13,350 above the plain of Araxes, and that of the little Ararat as 12,284 above the sea, and 9,561 above the plain. He describes the top as a slightly convex, almost circular platform, about 200 Paris feet in diameter, composed of eternal ice, unbroken by rock or stone; and states, that on account of the immense distance nothing could be seen. Sir Robert Ker Porter has given such a beautiful and graphic description of this truly majestic mountain and its imposing appearance, that we shall quote his remarks, which may perhaps prove not uninteresting to the reader:—"As the vale opened beneath us, in our descent, my whole attention became absorbed in the view before me. A vast plain, peopled with countless villages; the towers and spires of the churches of Eitch-miadzen arising from amidst them; the glittering waters of the Araxes flowing through the fresh green of the vale, and the subordinate range of mountains skirting the base of the awful monument of the antediluvian world, it seemed to stand a stupendous link in the history of man, uniting the two races of men before and after the flood. But it was not until we had arrived upon the flat plain that I beheld Ararat in all its amplitude of grandeur. From the spot on which I stood, it appeared as if the hugest mountains of the world had been piled upon each other, to form this one sublime immensity of earth, and rock, and snow. The icy peaks of its double heads rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens; the sun blazed bright upon them, and the reflection sent forth a dazzling radiance equal to other suns. This point of the view united the utmost grandeur of plain and height; but the feelings I experienced while looking on the mountain are hardly to be described. My eye, not able to rest for any length of time on the blinding glory of its summits, wandered down the apparently interminable sides, till I could no longer trace their vast lines in the mists of the horizon; when an inexpressible impulse, immediately carrying my eye upwards again, refixed my gaze on the awful glare of Ararat; and this bewildered sensibility of sight being answered by a similar feeling in the mind, for some moments I was lost in a strange suspension of the powers of thought." Mr. Morier, another traveller, likewise bears testimony to the grandeur and symmetry of Ararat. He says, "Nothing can be more beautiful than its shape, more awful than its height. All the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared to it."

Among the eastern people this mountain is variously designated. The Armenians call it *Massis*, said to be so called from an ancient king, Amasis, the sixth in descent from Japhet, who gave also the name *Amasia* to the country, but which, according to Moses Chorenensis, the first authority among Armenian writers, was afterwards called Ararat, after a great Armenian king, Arat the Fair, who lived about 1750 years B. C. He fell in a bloody battle with the Babylonians, on a plain in Armenia, which was named after him, Arat-Arat, i. e., *the fall of Arat*, whence the name Ararat. This mountain is likewise sometimes called by the Armenians *Massiseusar*, i. e., *the mountain of the Ark*; but by the name of Ararat it is not known among them. The Persians call the mountain in question *Kahi Nuach*, i. e., *the mountain of Noah*; and the Turks call it *Agri-dagh*, i. e., *the heavy mountain*. At the foot of the mountain, is a little village called *Arghuri*, compounded of *Argh*, which in Armenian signifies he planted, and *urri*, the vine; its inhabitants alleging that Noah had planted his vineyard near that place. Likewise *Nakschivan*, the name of a neighbouring city, is compounded of *Nak*, i. e., a ship, and *schivan*, settled or stopped, rendered by Josephus *Ανοβατήριον*, i. e., *the place of descent*. Guilielmus Rubruquis, who travelled through Armenia in 1253, mentions another place near *Nakschivan* called *Cemainum*, which is by interpretation *eight*, and, as he says, was so called from the eight persons who came out of the ark. This name is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word *שְׁמֹנָה* (*sh'mōnāh*), i. e., *eight*. The whole country round is full of traditionary stories about Noah, the ark and the flood; and they firmly believe that the remains of the ark still exist upon the mountain, and that, in order to their preservation, no person is able to come near them: hence they will on no account admit that Dr. Parrot succeeded in reaching the summit.

of the cities of Gilead," having *one of* in italics, which however is no doubt the sense, as Jephtha could not have been buried in all the cities of Gilead. Here again the sacred writer evidently employs the plural, wishing to give prominence to the fact of Jephtha having been buried in his own country, but not thinking it important to specify the particular city. From these examples it will be evident that the sacred writers, for a special purpose, sometimes employed a plural instead of a singular noun, and that the apparent discrepancies which this peculiarity gives rise to admit of easy explanation.

The attentive reader of the Bible cannot have failed to notice that events are frequently spoken of by the sacred writers as having already taken place, although their accomplishment was not consummated till long after the time of narration. Thus, for instance, Gen. xv. 18, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land." The land here spoken of is the land of Canaan, which the Israelites did not possess till some centuries after this promise had been made. Hence the use of the past, "I have given," instead of the future, *I will give*, renders the passage unintelligible, at least to the English reader, who would naturally understand the expression to mean *already given*, as there exists no such license in the English language permitting of the use of the past tense for the future. In the Hebrew, on the contrary, this is a common idiom, for the sacred authors frequently employ the past for the future, when they wish to denote *absolute certainty* with regard to the occurrence of a future event. This is especially the case in the enunciation of prophecies, whether the prophet speaks in his own person or in that of God himself, regarding, as Rabbi Kimchi justly observes, the things thus foretold to be as certain as if they had been already performed, they having been long determined on. The expression, therefore, "unto thy seed נָתַתִּי (nāthätti) *lit.*, I have given this land," according to this idiom, means. unto thy seed *will I surely give this land*, having already done so in my intent.

So Exod. xii. 17: "And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in the selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt." These words were spoken in Egypt at the institution of the passover, when the armies of Israel were still in the land of their bondage. Here again the use of the preterite merely denotes a certain fulfilment of the promise—namely, *I will surely bring out your armies*.

Again, Isaiah ix. 1, (Eng. ver. v. 2), "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light,"—i. e., *shall surely see a great light*—"they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them the light shined," i. e., *the light shall surely shine upon them*. The light which the spiritually benighted people of Galilee were to see is the same which Isaiah elsewhere speaks of as "a light of the Gentiles"—Isaiah xlii. 6; and Malachi, as "the sun of righteousness"—Mal. iv. 2; and St. John, as "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John i. 9. It is also an appellation which our Saviour expressly applied to himself, "I am the light of the world."—John viii. 12. It was in Galilee that Christ first appeared as a messenger of God, and we are distinctly taught by St. Matthew that this prophecy had its consummation in that appearance.—Matt. iv. 12-17.

The preceding examples (and they are but a few of the very many that might be adduced) conclusively demonstrate that an acquaintance with the genius of the Hebrew language, and a familiarity with its peculiar modes of expression, are absolutely indispensable to enable us to interpret correctly the sacred Scriptures, even in many instances where the translators have closely adhered to the original.

Thus far I have merely endeavoured to point out the absolute necessity of making the Hebrew text the basis of interpretation, and for this a knowledge of the sacred language is indispensable: a fact which has ever been admitted by all interpreters of any note, and only doubted by those who, through indifference, or some other equally futile cause, have neglected to study it. The modest Melancthon declared, that though his knowledge of Hebrew was but little, he preferred it to all the kingdoms of the world and all the wealth of the universe. Luther said, that he was acquainted with a sufficiency of Hebrew to be able to combat all his enemies, the knowledge of which, although small, he prized above millions of gold. The Rev. W. Romaine observes, that, without being acquainted with the Hebrew tongue, no man can be a critic of the Old Testament. Dr. Adam Clark acknowledges, that but for the clear and extensive views which the study of the Hebrew language opened to his mind, he never should have thought of writing his commentary. I might go on enumerating a host of commentators and divines who have more or less strongly expressed similar views on this subject.

Let not the reader suppose that I have produced the foregoing examples, in which the English authorized version fails to afford the sense of the original, to the disparagement of that version, or with a design to lower the estimation in which it is justly held; so far from such being my intention, it affords me great gratification in being able publicly to contribute my humble testimony to its merits, for which it stands so deservedly high among modern versions. This version is undoubtedly one of great merit and excellence, manifesting throughout the unremitting labour which the learned and pious translators must have bestowed upon its execution, as well as their anxiety to accomplish their difficult task faithfully and conscientiously. Still this version has its errors, and therefore to uphold it, as some would do, as the *ultimate* authority, would be upholding such errors as parts of divine revelation.

But it may perhaps be asked, how does it happen that a translation made with so much care, and by the united labours of the most learned scholars that Great Britain could produce, should be so faulty? To such an inquiry I reply, that the translators did not possess the facilities for ensuring success which we have at the present day. It must be borne in mind that the science of philology is far more advanced now than it was then. The aids to biblical criticism have since that time been amazingly increased, in the collation of ancient manuscripts and versions, and in the publication of polyglots, concordances, lexicons and critical grammars. Eastern travellers, too, have not a little contributed to make us better acquainted with the geography, natural history, manners, customs, coins, weights, measures, &c., of the east. The increased desire within the last thirty years for the study of eastern languages, and particularly of those belonging to the Shemitic family, has been productive of a much closer inquiry into the affinities of the oriental dialects than had previously existed, and, in consequence, numerous difficulties and doubts as to the precise meaning of many words in the Old Testament, have been removed or cleared up. Hence the necessity of a new translation, or a revision of the authorized version, has from time to time been strongly urged, and a member of the British House of Commons has lately given notice that, next session, he shall move "An Address to her Majesty, praying that her Majesty will be graciously pleased to appoint a commission to inquire into the state of the authorized version of the Bible, and to prepare a plan for the further revision of that translation." This,

I may observe, is no whim of the learned of the present age, but had been already earnestly advocated by several highly esteemed writers of the last century. Thus, Bishop Lowth, in the Preliminary Dissertation to his commentary on Isaiah, in speaking of Archbishop Secker's marginal notes on the Bible, says, "These valuable remains of that great and good man will be of infinite service, whenever that necessary work, a new translation, or a revision of the present translation of the Holy Scriptures, for the use of our church, shall be undertaken." In another place he remarks, "And as to the turn and modification of the sentences, the Translator, in this particular province of Translation, is, I think, as much confined to the author's manner as to his words: so that too great liberties taken in varying either the expression or the composition, in order to give a new air to the whole, will be apt to have a very bad effect. For these reasons, whenever it shall be thought proper to set forth the Holy Scriptures for the public use of our church, to better advantage, than as they appear in the present English translation, the expediency of which grows every day more and more evident, a Revision or Correction of that translation may perhaps be more advisable, than to attempt an entirely new one. For as to the style and language, it admits but of little improvement; but, in respect of the sense and the accuracy of interpretation, the improvements of which it is capable are great and numberless."

Some years earlier Staekhouse, in the Preparatory Discourse to his History of the Bible, expressed himself still more strongly on this subject. This writer, after having briefly alluded to the origin of the common version, goes on to say, "This is the Translation which we read in our Churches at this Day; only the old Version of the Psalms (as 'tis called), which was made by Bishop Tunstal, is still retained in our publick Liturgy. And tho' it cannot be denied, that this translation of ours, especially taking along with it the *marginal Notes*, (which are sometimes of great Service to explain difficult passages), is one of the most perfect of its kind; yet I hope it will be no Detraction to its Merit, nor any Diminution of the Authority of the Holy Scriptures to wish, that such as are invested with a proper *Authority*, would appoint a *regular Revisal* of it, that, where it is faulty, it may be amended; where difficult, rendered more plain; where obscure, cleared up: and in all Points, made as obvious as possible to the apprehension of the *meanest Reader*." A little further on, after having given some rules for interpreting

Scripture, he says, "These and many more *Rules* of Interpretation, are not unknown to the Learned: But the common People, who are no less concern'd to know the Will of God, are entirely ignorant in this Respect; and therefore, if a Version be defective in several of these Particulars (as those, who have examin'd ours with Observation, are forced to acknowledge that it is), if, when the *Original* is *figurative*, our *Translators*, in several Places, have expressed it in a Way not accommodated to our present Notions of Things, when they might have done it with the same Propriety: If, when there is an Ambiguity in any Word or Phrase, they have frequently taken the *wrong* Sense, and for Want of attending to the *Transposition* or *Context*, have run into some *Errors*, and many Times unintelligible *Diction*: If they have committed palpable Mistakes in the names of *Cities* and *Countries*, of *Weights* and *Measures*, of *Fruits* and *Trees*, and several of the *Animals* which the Scripture mentions; and lastly, if, by misapprehending the Nature of a *Proposition*, whether it be *Negative* or *Affirmative*, or the Tense of a Verb, whether it be *past* or *future*, they have fallen upon a Sense, in a Manner, quite *opposite* to the *Original*; and by not attending to some *oriental* Customs, or Forms of Speech, have represented Matters in a Dress quite foreign to the *English Dialect*: If in these, and such like instances, I say, our *Translators* have made such Mistakes, the People, who know not how to rectify them, must be misled."

The force of these remarks can hardly be denied. The Bible is designed for the illiterate as well as the literate; it is the way-mark that points to an eternal land of bliss for the unlearned as well as the learned; and the former, as well as the latter, are therefore concerned in rightly understanding its infallible directions. It is true that no version, however well executed, will altogether obviate the necessity of a commentary, as its province is merely to give a literal translation of the original, and not the sense, when the language is figurative, or otherwise not quite clear. But if a version were to attach the proper meaning to words, and not one which renders the sense of the phrase obscure,—if it were to maintain a uniformity in the mode of rendering, and not attach one signification to a word in one place, and an entirely different one in another,—if this, and some other particulars, were strictly attended to, many passages in the English version, now altogether unintelligible to the common reader, would become perfectly clear. Yet, strongly

impressed as we are with these considerations, the question, nevertheless, forces itself irresistibly upon us, whether a revision of the common version would yield such satisfactory results as to warrant such a step. The task is exceedingly difficult, and the degree of success attending such an undertaking must entirely depend upon the mode pursued in its prosecution, and upon the competency, strict impartiality, and unquestionable piety of those intrusted with the work; and even though Great Britain undoubtedly might furnish many learned men possessing all the requirements necessary for this important work, still they would be no more infallible than their predecessors. They might indeed correct many of the existing mistakes, and render more intelligible many passages now obscure; but is there no danger that in their zeal to afford a version more suitable to the common reader, they might not also run into extremes, and instead of giving the plain, literal, and grammatical sense of the original, give rather a paraphrase of expressions and sentences, which, however admissible in translations merely designed for the private use of the reader, is certainly not justifiable in a translation executed for the public service of the Church? A version intended to be used in public worship should, as closely as circumstances will admit, convey the precise force of the words as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit and written down by the inspired writers, whether the language be figurative, or otherwise not quite clear. In all cases a free rendering must be carefully avoided; for, as Bishop Lowth has well remarked, "want of fidelity admits of no excuse, and is entitled to no indulgence."* I cannot, therefore, agree with the learned Stackhouse, who, in enumerating the defects of our present translation, includes the literal rendering of figurative expressions as one of the faults which ought to be remedied. He adduces, as an example, Isaiah xiii. 9, 10—"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his coming forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." On this he remarks: "But we are not to take these, and the like Words *literally*, because they were never accomplished in the full Extent of their natural Signification; and therefore to express the Meaning of the Prophet, *it seems sufficient to say, That fearful calamities should come upon the*

* Preliminary Dissertation to his Commentary on Isaiah.

King of Babylon; that his People should fall into the Hand of their Enemies; and that all Orders and Degrees of Men (here represented by *Sun, Moon, and Stars*) should be utterly dissolved: For this is all that the *Eastern Nations* (as well as the *Greeks, Latins, and Arabians*) even to this day do mean by these pompous Expressions."* Were such a mode of translation to be adopted, the result would be that we should read in our divine service the individual comments of the translators wherever an explanation was required, instead of the Word of God itself; we should have, not a *version* of the sacred Scriptures, but a *paraphrase*, which after all might be replete with wrong interpretations.

On the whole, fully impressed as I am with the extreme difficulty, nay, I may say the utter impossibility, of producing a translation of the Bible which should be regarded as altogether free from objections,—one which would give general satisfaction to all classes of English readers, particularly when we consider the great diversity of opinions that exist on religious matters, the correctness of which entirely depends upon the rendering of those passages of Scripture upon which they are based, and when we further consider the danger of too great a freedom being exercised in their revisal by those intrusted with the work,—I must confess that I greatly doubt the propriety of interfering with the present time-hallowed version. Far better would it be that its defects be supplied from time to time by commentaries, or in any other suitable way, than by disturbing a version so affectionately cherished by millions.

Not only is a competent knowledge of the Hebrew necessary to the commentator or translator of the Scriptures; but some acquaintance, at least, with its cognate languages, the Chaldee, Syriac and Arabic, is likewise indispensable, or else he would not unfrequently be entirely dependent upon the opinions set forth by grammarians and lexicographers, without possessing the means of testing for himself the soundness of their views. The Hebrew, in which it pleased God to speak to our forefathers, and to communicate his divine commandments and precepts to his chosen people Israel, has long since ceased to be a spoken language, and hence we have no longer those means of ascertaining the exact force of certain words or even whole expressions, which *usage* had attached to them while yet a living tongue. Further, there are many words which occur

* Preparatory Discourse to his History of the Bible, Article "The Defects of our Present Translation." See also Essay for a new Translation.

but once in the whole of the Old Testament, and it not unfrequently happens that the context does not positively point out the precise meaning of them; to this we may add, that besides several portions of the Bible being entirely written in the Chaldee, there are many Chaldaisms and Syriaisms dispersed throughout the sacred text. In all such textual peculiarities and difficulties, the kindred dialects (some of which still are more or less extensively spoken, and in each of which we not only possess ancient versions of the Bible, but also a great amount of other literature) cannot fail to supply very important aids in the interpretation of the Hebrew text.

But perhaps the reader may think me somewhat too fastidious, or suppose that those difficulties are merely the offspring of an overwrought imagination, or, if they do exist, their importance may after all be overrated, and might be disposed of without going to the trouble of studying these antique tongues. Such an idea has no doubt been entertained by many commentators ere this, and too frequently acted upon; but who can tell the amount of mischief that a careless mode of criticism may not be productive of?

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring;
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again."

POPE.

These remarks on learning in general are especially applicable to *Biblical criticism*. The Sacred Scriptures have nothing to fear from thorough criticism, whilst they have everything to dread from mere superficial examination. The latter fans the flames of infidelity and rationalism, as they sweep along in their devastating path; the former arrests their course, and disarms them of their pernicious influences. The interpreter, it must be remembered, has not only to explain the sacred writings, but also to defend them wherever they have been assailed; but to do this successfully he requires the necessary implements of defence, for should he be deficient in these, he could hardly hope to vanquish his opponent, who may be better equipped for the contest than himself.

The following illustration will clearly demonstrate the correctness of these remarks. In Psalm xxii. 16, we read: "For dogs have encompassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet." The English reader will discover nothing uncommon in this language, unless it be the phrase "dogs have encompassed me," which however is merely a figurative

expression, denoting fierce and cruel enemies, a figure which has been borrowed from the savage and half-starved troops of dogs which wander about the cities and villages in the east, without owners, feeding on carrion. Hence 1 Kings xiv. 11: "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat." And 2 Kings ix. 10: "And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel." Such troops of dogs are still met with in all the cities and villages of the Levant. It is however not in regard to this expression that a difference of opinion exists among commentators, but on the concluding clause of the verse—"they pierced my hands and my feet"—arising from the peculiar form of the Hebrew word כָּאֲרִי (kā'ārī), translated in the English version, "they pierced," which is by many strongly objected to, as being altogether inadmissible; they maintain that it should have been rendered *as a lion*, which would entirely divest the passage of its prophetic character, as being descriptive of the Messiah's suffering on the cross. Now it cannot be denied that the form of the Hebrew word in question apparently strongly favours the latter rendering; nay more, the very word occurs in that sense and is so rendered in the English version, in Isaiah xxxviii. 13, "I reckoned till morning, *that*, כָּאֲרִי (kā'ārī) as a lion, so will he break all my bones." The word too, according to its form in the text, if we regard it as a verb, must be derived from the root כָּאָרַךְ (kā'ār), a root which does not exist in the Hebrew, or if it even did exist, its form in the third person plural preterite ought to be כָּאֲרָרָה (kā'ārū). Some commentators, not being able to comprehend this, as well as various other philological peculiarities in the Bible, have charged the Jews with wilfully corrupting the text,* a charge which I believe to be not only without

* Among those who held this opinion we may particularly notice Isaac Vossius, as being peculiarly extravagant in his notions. This divine, contrary to the general persuasion of his Reformed brethren of the Churches of Switzerland, who enacted a law in 1678 that no person should be licensed to preach the gospel in their churches, unless he made a public profession of his belief that the Hebrew text, as it stood, was authentic and divine, maintained that the Jews had from an early period so grossly corrupted their copies of the Scriptures that no reliance could be placed upon them, and that the Septuagint, which he believed to have been inspired, ought to be strictly adhered to in all things. It is impossible that Vossius could have carefully studied that version, or he would never have ascribed such unwarrantable authority to it. For the serious consideration of those who may entertain similar extravagant notions, I may instance Isaiah xlii. 1, as a striking example of the loose renderings found sometimes in that version. The literal translation of the Hebrew is, "Behold my servant, I will uphold him; my chosen one, *in whom* my soul delights." The Septuagint gives the following rendering:—"Jacob is my servant, I will uphold him; Israel is my elect, my soul hath accepted him." The insertion of the words Jacob and Israel (which *are not* in the Hebrew) obviously makes the passage to refer

the least foundation, but also unjust in the highest degree. The Jews, who have always evinced the most scrupulous regard for the sacred text, would never have had recourse to such a base subterfuge, or have laid a sacrilegious hand upon the Word of God. It would have been far more charitable in those who preferred such unfounded charges to have confessed their own inability, than endeavoured to cloak it by ascribing evil motives to others. This accusation, I am however happy to say, has been almost entirely abandoned by recent authors, who have very properly turned their attention to a more consistent mode of criticism, and one which is likely to lead to more satisfactory results in treating the intricacies of the sacred text—namely, by bringing to bear upon it the powerful agencies which comparative philology affords.*

to the people of Israel. But St. Matthew cites it and applies it directly to our Saviour—see Matth. xii. 17, 18: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased." This application of the Evangelist is supported by the authority of the ancient Jewish Church, who understood by the appellation *servant of the Lord*, in this as well as in some other places, the Messiah. Hence, in the Targum of Jonathan, the Hebrew word עֲבָדִי (*āvdi*), lit. *my servant*, is here rendered by "MY SERVANT THE MESSIAH." It is therefore clear, that whatever value and importance may be attached to the Septuagint version, it is nothing short of folly to declare it to be the fruit of inspiration.

* We have a striking proof of the high degree of veneration in which the sacred text has always been held by the Jewish nation, in the laborious revision of the Biblical text undertaken by that celebrated body of Jewish doctors generally called Masorites, who lived about the beginning of the seventh century. These, in the course of their arduous task, met with a multitude of words which, according to the received opinion, were defectively written—errors which no doubt had their origin in the carelessness of transcribers, almost a necessary result in copying from manuscripts, unless the utmost caution were exercised. But still, not wishing to take upon themselves to make any alteration, they suffered all such erroneously written words to remain, and placed the emendation in the margin, placing a little circle above the word in the text, in order to draw the reader's attention to the existing mistake, and to direct him to look at the bottom of the page, where he would find it corrected, with the accompanying remark קָרַי (k'ri), i. e. *read*, although otherwise written in the text. Thus, for instance, Isaiah ix. 2, (Eng. ver. verse 3), according to the text reads, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and לָלֵךְ (lō) not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." It will be seen that the negative particle creates an incongruity in the passage, for if the joy of the nation be not increased, how can it be said immediately in the next clause that "they rejoiced before thee, according to the joy in harvest." The Masoretic emendation לָלֵךְ (lō) i. e. *to it*, given in the margin, obviates the inconsistency, according to which it reads, Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy, (or literally, to it thou hast increased the joy). We can now understand why they should rejoice as with a joy in harvest time. The marginal reading is here no doubt the correct one, and is also given in the margin of the English Bible. In places in which they considered a word wanting to complete the sense, they inserted merely the vowel points in the text, and placed the word itself in the margin, with the accompanying remark, קָרַי וְלֹא כָתוּב (k'ri v' lō k'tiv), i. e. *read but not written*; or, if they considered a word superfluous, they left

I have shown that the form of the word **קָאָרִי** (kāārī) *apparently* strongly favours the supposition that it is a noun, denoting *as a lion*; but when we examine it more minutely it becomes quite evident that it cannot possibly have that force in the passage before us, but that, on the contrary, everything tends to favour the signification attached to it in the English version.

it unpointed, placing in the margin the observation **קָרִי וְלֹא קָרִי** (k'tiv v'lo k'ri), i. e., *written but not read*. An example of the former will be found in Jer. xxxi. 38, "Behold the days, said the Lord," **בָּאִים** (bāim) i. e. *come*, is not in the text, without which however the sense would be altogether incomplete, and the Masorites have given it therefore in the margin, not wishing to insert it in the text, though it is obviously wanting, and it is inserted in the English version without being put in italics. For an example of the latter, see 2 Kings v. 18, where the word **נָא** i. e. *I pray*, is left unpointed, being superfluous; this is also omitted in the English version. But, besides making these corrections, which may be seen in the margin of almost every edition of the Hebrew Bible, they further numbered the verses, words and letters of each book in the Bible. Thus the number of verses in Genesis is given at 1,534, the number of words at 20,713, and the number of letters at 78,100. They have also noted the middle verse and letter of each book, or of several books combined, thus the letter **ו** (vau) in the word **גִּחְוֹן** (gūchōn), Leviticus xi. 42, is given as the middle letter of the whole Pentateuch, and, on reference to any Hebrew Bible, that letter will be found to be of larger type than the rest.

The work which contains the criticisms of these celebrated Jewish Rabbis is called **מִסְרָה** (m'serah), i. e. *tradition*, so termed from its authors recording in it what they had received from their predecessors; and, from its containing likewise the precautions which the Masorites adopted in order to shield the sacred text from violation and corruption, it has also been termed "*the fence of the law*." At first the Masorah did not accompany the text, but afterwards an abridgment of it was written in the margin, which was called the Little Masorah—*Masora Parva*. This abridgment being however found too short, a more copious one was inserted, which was distinguished from the former by the appellation, the Great Masorah—*Masora Magna*; and the omitted parts were added at the end of the books or great divisions of the Bible, which was called the Final Masorah—*Masora Finalis*. As regards the intrinsic value and merit of the labour of these Rabbis, it is generally agreed that so far as the collation of the sacred text is concerned, their labours cannot be too highly esteemed. The marginal reading is in many instances unquestionably to be preferred; and it will be seen, on referring back to the three examples above given, that in the two latter the English version has entirely followed the Masoretic emendations, and in the first it has done so in the margin. But as to the inconceivable amount of labour, which they have bestowed in the numbering of the verses, words and letters, to guard the text from contamination, though their object is no doubt highly praiseworthy, I cannot agree with the celebrated Elias Levita, who looks upon this as an *impenetrable fence*, declaring it was impossible that there ever could, by any means, occur an alteration or corruption in the sacred text, after the great precaution which the Masorites had taken to shield it from the least innovation: and that the Rabbis of blessed memory had justly called the Masorah "*the hedge of the law*." It requires, however, but little reflection to discover that the learned Rabbi has greatly overrated this part of the labours of the Masorites, for, supposing a word or letter had been added, (not that I think that such a thing is in the least likely), how could the Masorah assist us in detecting in what particular chapter or verse the addition had been made? Such a fraud could only be discovered by a careful collation of different editions and versions of the Bible, and not otherwise. Yet, though these labours may fail to realize the sanguine expectations of their authors, nevertheless this much we may fairly infer, that they who took so much pains to shield the text from corruption, would not themselves become the perpetrators of such an unhallowed deed.

Before entering on the philological investigation of the word itself, it is highly important to inquire, in the first place, who the person is that is spoken of in the Psalm, for it is necessary that the sense of the word should harmonize with the context, a principle which in critical researches must never be lost sight of, since it is in many instances not only a sure guide as to the meaning that should be attached to a word, but also how it is to be applied.

Now, as regards the application of the Psalm, commentators have taken various views of it. Some, perhaps, from the supposition that as David is the author of the Psalm, he must also be the subject of it, have referred it to his persecution by Saul, or his flight from Absalom. Others, again, seeing the many difficulties that stand in the way of that application, regard the whole Jewish nation as the subject, and look upon it as descriptive of their present dispersion and suffering; whilst by far the greatest number of interpreters, finding that there are many expressions in the Psalm which would be applicable neither to David nor to the Jewish nation, justly maintain it to be predictive of the Messiah's suffering. The first application is chiefly advocated by those commentators belonging to the rationalistic school, to which may be added, I regret to say, not a few interpreters, who, although professing to have no sympathy with the avowed rationalists, yet are often too ready to follow in their footsteps. The second application is the one generally held by the modern Jewish writers.

The opponents of the Messianic interpretation have bestowed not a little labour and expended not a little ingenuity in torturing some of the expressions of this Psalm to suit their own views; but upon none has their united strength been so much concentrated as upon the passage in question, "they pierced my hands and my feet." This expression being too plain to admit of any equivocation, and precluding the possibility of being applied either to the suffering of David or of the Jewish nation, their whole attention was directed to the philological peculiarity of the Hebrew word כַּאֲרִי (kā'ārī), insisting with singular pertinacity upon its being a noun, and that therefore it should be translated *as a lion*, supplying some verb to complete the sense.

I have already admitted that the word has precisely the same form as the one in Isaiah xxxviii. 13, where it unquestionably has the signification "*as a lion*," but it would be hardly reasonable to argue from this that it must consequently have the same signification here,

since we frequently meet with words in Hebrew which indeed have the same form, but quite a different signification. Thus, for instance, Isaiah xlii. 14, we have the word אֶפְחֵחַ (əphēh) *I will shriek*, which occurs as a verb in this place only; yet precisely the same word occurs in ch. xxx. 6, ch. lix. 5, Job xx. 16, denoting a poisonous serpent, as *a viper* or *adder*; but were we to attach this signification to the word in the first mentioned place, it would make nonsense of the whole passage. So Isaiah iii. 24, we have the word כִּי (ki), which is found only in this place as a substantive, signifying *a burning* or *a brand*; but in all other places where it occurs it is a particle, signifying *for*, *because*, &c. It will therefore be seen from these two examples, and many more might be adduced, that although words have the same form, they need not necessarily have the same meaning.

But, then, it will be asked if כָּאָרִי (kāārī), in the passage before us is a verb, from what root is it derived, and how can its peculiar form be explained? In reply to the first question I would say, that it is derived from the verb כָּרַר (koor) *to pierce through*, and although this root does nowhere else occur, yet we have the synonymous verb כָּרַח (kārah), *to dig*, *to bore through*. Every Hebrew scholar must know how frequently the same signification is found in these two classes of verbs עָרַ (āyū vāv) and לָמַד (lāmēd hē). Thus we have בִּזַּז (booz) and בִּזָּא (bāzā) *to despise*, דָּוַם (doom) and דָּמַם (dāmāh) *to be silent*, &c. Further, the verb occurring only in this place, by no means proves that it was not currently used when the language was still spoken. I have already above noticed a verb which occurs only once; so the verb חָוַג (choog) *to make a circle*, is only found in Job xxvi. 10, and the verb זָבַד (zāvūd) *to give*, occurs only in Gen. xxx. 20; besides many others, all of which were no doubt once commonly employed, since traces of them are still found in their derivatives. In answer to the second question, as to how its peculiar form can be explained, I would state that it is a participle formed after the Chaldee manner, which gives the form כָּאָרַר (kāār) instead of the regular Hebrew כָּרַר (kārr), and having an irregular plural כָּאָרִי (kāārī) for כָּאָרִים (kāārīm). The sentence then reads, "The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me, piercing my hands and my feet." We have traces of similar formations after the Chaldee manner—Judges iv. 21, בָּלְלַט (bällät), *softly*, *secretly*, from the root לָרַט (loot), *to muffle*, *to cover*; Ezek. xvi. 57,

שְׂאֲטוֹת (shātōth), part. plur. fem. of שָׂטַת (shoot) *to despise*; again ch. xxviii. 24, שְׂאֲטוּיִם (shātīm), part. plur. masc. of the same verb; also 2 Sam. xii. 1, רָאֵשׁ (rāsh), *poor*; and Prov. x. 4, instead of the regular form רָשׁ (rāsh); see Prov. xiv. 20, ch. xviii. 23, ch. xix. 1, &c. from the root רוּשׁ (roosh) *to be poor*. Instances of the irregular plural, as in the word in question, are found 2 Kings xi. 4, כָּרִי (kāri) (kārim) *executioners*. That this word must be in the plural, is evident from its being connected with רָצִיִּים (rätzim) *runners*, having the regular plural form.* I may further observe here that the word כָּר (kar) is properly a participle noun, denoting *a piercer, a stabber*, and hence an executioner, and must be derived from the root כָּרַךְ (koor) *to pierce through*, so that we have in this instance a proof of the existence of such a verb. Again, 2 Samuel xxiii. 8, רֹשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁים (rōsh hāshshālīshī) for רֹשֵׁי הַשְּׁלִישִׁים (rōsh hāshshālīshīm), *chief of the chariot warriors*†. English vers. "chief of the captains." That this also is an irregular plural form, is evident from the parallel passage, 1 Chron. xii. 18, where the regular plural occurs, also Psalm xlv. 9, מְנִיִּים (mīnnī) for מְנִיִּים (mīnnīn) *strings*. According to Gesenius the word עַמִּי (āmmī) is found three times for עַמִּיִּים (āmmīm) *people*—viz., 2 Sam. xxii. 44, Psal. cxliv. 2, Lament. iii. 14—(See *Lehrgebäude*, § 124.)

Having now fully shewn that there is nothing in the form of the contested word, either grammatical or lexicographical, which would preclude it being regarded as a verb in the sense of piercing, since the very same philological peculiarities occur repeatedly in other places in the Old Testament, let us in the next place examine which of the two translations harmonizes best with the context.

* The executioners and runners mentioned in this and the other places were a kind of body-guard: the duty of the former was to inflict capital punishment either by beheading or stabbing; and of the latter, to carry the royal messages as speedily as possible. The English version has incorrectly rendered the words by "the captains and the guards." In Esther iii. 13, the latter word is rendered by "posts," where it refers to the mounted couriers of the Persians, who carried the royal decrees to the provinces.

† These warriors were a higher class of soldiers and fought from chariots. The Hebrew word, by which they are designated, is derived from שְׁלוֹשׁ (shālōsh) *three*, as each chariot contained three persons, one of them managing the horses, whilst the other two fought. Among the recent discoveries on the site of the once renowned city Nineveh, there is one, a bas-relief, representing a chariot drawn by two horses, and containing three persons. The chief is represented to be a bearded man, raising the right arm and holding in the left hand a bow. He wears a tiara painted red, (compare Nahum ii. 4, Engl. ver. verse 3, "the valiant men are in scarlet," in prophesying the downfall of Nineveh). Behind him is a beardless slave, carrying a fringed parasol, and at his left is the charioteer holding the reins and the whip.

The reader will observe that, if we take the word as a verb, we have at once a complete sense of the passage, *piercing my hands and my feet*, agreeing in every respect with what precedes and follows; whereas, if we view it as a noun, a verb must be supplied, otherwise the phrase would be altogether meaningless. Hence some commentators supply the verb *surround* or *encompass*, from the preceding clause, and render, "As a lion *they encompassed* my hands and my feet." This view Professor Alexander seems to favour in his commentary on the Psalms. He remarks, "This idea would here be more appropriate, because the Psalm abounds in such allusions, and because the lion is expressly mentioned before and afterwards. The sense would then be: They surround my hands and my feet, as they would a lion, or as a lion would—*i. e.*, with the strength and fierceness of a lion." Others again give the same idea, without repeating the preceding verb, as for instance De Wette, who translates the verse:

"Dem mich umgeben Hunde,
Der Bösewichter Rote umringt mich,
Wie Löwen, meine Händ' und Füße."*

For dogs surround me,
The crowd of the wicked encompass me,
As lions my hands and feet.

But these translations by no means give a consistent meaning, as it is impossible to conceive how a lion or lions should surround the hands and feet. At all events, the figure would be at least unsuitable, if not altogether unnatural. This is partly admitted both by Alexander and De Wette, and has no doubt induced Gesenius to supply another verb. He accordingly renders it, "As lions *they gape* upon my hands and my feet, *i. e.*, they threaten to tear my hands and my feet."† Whether Gesenius considered the "lions gaping upon the hands and feet" a more rational idea than their surrounding them, I cannot say, but to me it appears that one is as absurd as the other. In Scripture we have many beautiful pictures drawn from the habits of the lion, as his going forth to prey, his crouching down and lurking in his hiding place, his seizing his victim and tearing it to pieces. Such pictures are perfectly in accordance with the well-known habits of this animal. Not so, however, the gaping at or surrounding of the hands and feet of its

* Commentar über die Psalmen. Heidelberg, 1836. It would appear, however, from his remarks in this edition, that in a previous edition he had regarded the word in question as a participle formed after the Chaldee manner with an irregular plural, in precisely the same way as I have done, but has now changed his opinion.

† See his Hebrew Lexicon under the article כָּרַר.

prey; if these indeed are traits in the character of the lion, naturalists have as yet failed to notice them. Again, there are others who supply either *they wound, they tear or bite*. Thus the Targum of Jonathan נִכְתֵּיךְ הַיָּדָה כְּאַרְיֵה (nūchtin hēch k'āryā) i. e. *biting like a lion*. And similarly Rabbi Shal. Hakkothen, "Wie ein Löwe zermalmen sie mir die Hände und Füße,"—i. e. *like a lion they tear my hands and my feet*. Any one of these verbs would certainly afford a better sense of the passage than the words *they surround or gape*; still the figure would hardly be more consistent. Why should the sacred writer particularly mention the hands and feet apart from the rest of the body, which is in equal danger of being *torn or wounded* when attacked by the lion? Besides, it is well known that this animal generally seizes its victim in the most vital part of the body, such as the neck, and then devours it indiscriminately. The mentioning therefore *the hands and feet* in connection with *the lion*, does not convey any clear sense of the passage, neither does it afford any appropriate figure, no matter what verb is supplied, and hence we can arrive at no other conclusion but that the word in question must be regarded as a verb, and that the proper rendering of the phrase is, *piereing my hands and my feet*.

It is strange that Gesenius, De Wette and other commentators should have laid so much stress upon the two grammatical peculiarities combined in the contested word, as to induce them on that ground alone to adopt the rendering *as a lion*, which is in no wise suitable to the context. If this were the only instance where such an anomaly occurred, there would then be some plausibility in the argument; but when we find other examples of Hebrew words having a double irregular form, it must be quite clear to every impartial mind that its importance has been greatly overrated.

All the ancient versions, with the exception of the Chaldee, have taken כְּאַרְיֵה (kāārī) as a verb, and have rendered it *they dug, or bored through*, and consequently must have read כְּאַרְוֵה (kāāroo), the third pers. plur. pret. This reading is also found in two real Jewish MSS.; and Rabbi Jacob ben Chayims, who first printed the Masorah in Bomberg's Rabbinical Bible, (3 vols. fol., Venice, 1525-6), states in the *Masora finalis* that he had in distinct Codices found כְּאַרְוֵה (kāāroo) in the text, and כְּאַרְיֵה (kāārī) in the margin. If this has been the original reading (and certainly testimonies like these, coming from purely Jewish sources, cannot be regarded otherwise

than entirely free from bias, since such a reading would altogether argue against their application of the Psalm), we must premise the existence of a verb כָּאַר (kāār) denoting *to dig, to bore through*, or of similar signification, of which however at present no other traces can be discovered, unless it be in the Arabic verb كَار (kara), but which, although having the corresponding consonants and vowels, denotes *to fold or bind round*, as a turban or wreath. To derive it from the verb כָּוַר (koor) or from כָּרַה (kārah), it would be impossible to account satisfactorily for the presence of the letter א (ālēph), as the third per. plur. pret. of these verbs is כָּרַה (kāroo); neither could it be said to have an Aramaic form, since it is only in the participle that verbs כָּוַר (āyīn vāv) assume an א (ālēph) to distinguish it from the preterite. These are considerations which speak forcibly against the reading כָּאַרְוּ (kāāroo), and to them it must be added, that unquestionably by far the greatest number of Codices have the reading כָּאַרְי (kāāri), and that the form כָּאַרְוּ (kāāroo), found in some few MSS. may have easily originated in the carelessness of transcribers, who may have mistaken the letter ר (yod) for a ו (vāv), particularly if the MSS. from which they transcribed were not perfectly legible, or written with the greatest nicety. From all this it may be safely inferred that the reading of the present text is the correct one, and Stange has very plausibly observed, that the ancient translators have regarded it as a *participle*, but have freely rendered it in the *preterite*, just as the LXX have rendered in verse 4 of this Psalm יוֹשֵׁבִים (yōshēv), lit. *inhabiting*, by σὺ δὲ κατοικεῖς, i. e. *but thou inhabitest*, and so frequently in other places.

But whether we regard the word in question as a participle, and translate, *piercing my hands and my feet*, or whether we follow the more difficult reading, as found in some few MSS., and render with the ancient translators, *they pierced or bored through my hands and my feet*, in nowise affects the application of the passage. Sufficient has been said on this subject to shew that the rendering *as a lion* is altogether inadmissible: nay, even the *Masora parva* admits that the word here has a different signification from what it has in Isaiah xxxviii. 13, which clearly proves that its authors, devout Rabbis, and hence strenuously opposing the application of the passage, as having reference to the Messiah's suffering on the cross, at least, did not allow themselves to be influenced by doctrinal prejudice.

If then the correct rendering be *piercing my hands and my feet*, the question next arises, who is the person spoken of, to whom such

intense suffering as that indicated in the passage, could be applied? There are many writers, professedly Christian, who make David altogether the subject of the Psalm. Of these I shall particularly mention Gesenius, as standing preëminent as a scholar and philologist, and as his Hebrew Lexicon, in which he freely expresses his opinion on the subject, is in the hands of almost every Hebrew student. This eminent scholar, under the article כּוּר (kooṛ) in his Hebrew Lexicon, having first expressed his opinion as to the proper rendering of the passage before us—viz., “*as lions they gape upon my hands and my feet*, i. e. they threaten to tear my limbs in pieces;” apparently not quite satisfied with his own interpretation, goes on to remark—

“Most of the ancient interpreters have taken כּאָרִי (kāārī) as a verb, and this is certainly possible, if we regard it as particip. Kal in the Chaldee manner and in the plural number for כּאָרִים (kāārīm); although to find two grammatical forms of such extreme rarity combined in this one word, is at least remarkable. In this way it would be rendered, *piercing my hands and feet*, i. e. my enemies wound me with darts and weapons on every side. And it is hardly necessary to remark, that all this applies as completely as possible to David, to whom the Psalm is assigned in the inscription; and there is at least no necessity for understanding here directly Christ affixed to the cross. A verb of *boring through*, in the sense of wounding, is aptly attributed to hostile weapons; and the hands and feet are put poetically for all the members, and so for the whole body.”

It requires but little penetration to discover in these remarks of Gesenius a strong desire to divest the passage wholly of its Messianic character. First, he endeavours to give the passage such a turn as to make it more readily applicable to David, and then when he concedes, though somewhat reluctantly, the possibility of כּאָרִי (kāārī) being regarded as a verb in the sense of *piercing*, he labours to force upon the words of the phrase a construction as arbitrary as it is uncalled for.

We have the express authority of both St. Matthew xxvii. 35, and St. John xix. 23, 24, that verse 19 of this Psalm, (Engl. ver. verse 18), “They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon (better rendered *for* or *about*) my vesture,” had its consummation in one of the events connected with our Saviour’s crucifixion, and it follows, therefore, that what is said in verse 17, (Engl. ver. verse 16),

"*they pierced* (or as it should be rendered *piercing*) my hands and my feet," must likewise have reference to some circumstance that was to transpire in his suffering, since both verses incontrovertibly allude to one and the same person. This circumstance, which the Psalmist evidently fortells to indicate what manner of death the Messiah was to suffer, we find literally fulfilled in Christ suffering on the cross, and it is therefore impossible to divest one passage of its Messianic application, without divesting the other of it likewise. If one applies to David, then the other must apply to him also; if, on the other hand, the Psalmist in verse 18 speaks prophetically of the Messiah (and thus the inspired Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. John, have unquestionably understood it, for they quote verbatim his words), he must necessarily speak of the Messiah likewise in verse 16.

But, lest there might be some to whom this argument does not appear sufficiently conclusive, we may further remark, that though David was frequently surrounded by malicious enemies and encompassed by the assembly of the wicked, still, in all his persecutions, distresses and afflictions, there is not one single circumstance to which the phrase *piercing my hands and my feet* could possibly apply. It is true that Gesenius endeavours to dispose of this difficulty, by taking the verb *piercing* or *boriug through* in the sense of *wounding*, and by regarding *the hands and feet* as put poetically for *the whole body*. But for this Gesenius has no authority whatever, and if such an arbitrary mode of interpretation were to be admitted, it would be an easy matter for every commentator to gratify his individual notions, however extravagant. The interpreter of Scripture is not at liberty to discard the literal meaning of words, as long as the sense is complete, the application obvious, and the harmony of the context unimpaired. It is only when the literal meaning of words is either improper or would involve an impossibility, or when it is contrary to common sense, to the context, to parallel passages, or to the scope of a passage, that a figurative interpretation may be assumed. None of these, as we shall hereafter shew, is the case in retaining the literal meaning of this passage, and therefore the supposition of Gesenius, that *the hands and feet* are here put for *the whole body*, is altogether unjustifiable. But, besides this expression, there are others in the Psalm which cannot in any way be applied to David. His enemies never parted his garments, nor did they cast lots for his vesture. David never was in such a state of

emaciation and exhaustion as that which we read of in the Psalm. The latter part, verse 22-31, renders the hypothesis that David is the sufferer still more untenable, as it could not be said that such momentous and happy consequences as are depicted there, and, among them, especially the conversion of all the nations of the whole earth to the true God, could possibly result from the deliverance of David from his enemies.

The modern Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Kimchi and many others, regard the Jewish nation as the subject of the Psalm, and, strange to say, this idea has been favourably looked upon by some Christian writers likewise. But this hypothesis is even less tenable than the other, for not only do the objections which have been advanced against the application to David apply with equal force here also, but there are other insuperable difficulties in the way of adopting this view. In the first place, the mode of expression throughout the Psalm distinctly points out the subject to be an individual person. Secondly, there are passages in the Psalm which entirely preclude the possibility of its being interpreted of an indefinite number of persons. Take, for instance, the 9th verse: "But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts." And again, the 10th verse: "I was cast upon thee from the womb," &c. These, and many other expressions in the Psalms, would be perfectly meaningless if regarded as spoken of more than one person. Thirdly, if the Jewish nation were the sufferer spoken of in the Psalm, how could it be said, verse 23, "Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel"? This is plainly the language of one party addressing another, and not that of a person addressing himself; and it follows, therefore, that if the Jewish nation be the speaker, "the seed of Jacob" and "the seed of Israel" must be some other party spoken to. Who then are we to understand by these terms? the Gentiles? This the Jewish commentators would hardly be ready to concede; and certainly as the גוֹיִם (goyim) i. e. *nations, other than Israel*, are particularly mentioned in verse 27 as participating in the happy and glorious results that were to flow from the deliverance of the sufferer, the terms "seed of Jacob" and "seed of Israel" in verse 23, cannot mean anything else but *the people of Israel*. Upon this point commentators are perfectly agreed, and hence the utter fallacy of regarding the people of Israel as the sufferer spoken of in

the Psalm must become clearly apparent, for it is obvious, that if they are the party addressed, they cannot at the same time be the party speaking. Besides these arguments, others might be advanced in refutation of this hypothesis, but surely sufficient has been said to shew its entire groundlessness.*

* In a little work, entitled *Essays and Miscellanies, choice Cullings, from the Manuscripts of Grace Aguilar, published by her mother a few years ago, among other portions of Scripture commented upon is Psalm xxii., where the Jewish authoress, with not a little ingenuity, endeavours to shew that this Psalm as well as Isaiah liii. is prophetic of the sufferings and miseries which the Jewish nation from time to time were to endure. As this work, like the other productions of this admired authoress, appears to be widely circulated, I deem it advisable to draw the reader's attention to it, least some who may not be capable of forming an opinion on the subject might, by the plausibility and boldness with which her assertions are made, be induced to believe that they have some truth for their foundation. I have above shewn that such an application of the Psalm is altogether inadmissible, and it is, therefore, not my intention to adduce here any further arguments on the subject, but merely to shew, by one example, to what an arbitrary mode of exposition this writer has recourse. On the 20th verse (Hebrew, verse 21) of Psalm xxii. "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog." she remarks: "What does this mean when applied to Christ? To me it signifies, deliver me from death; my darling, or my child, from the dogs: for how frequently, in the sacking of their cities, have Jewish infants been dashed from their mothers' arms, and thrown as carrion to the dogs!" This interpretation betrays in the writer a thorough want of knowledge of the Hebrew language and of familiarity with its peculiar modes of expression, or she would neither have adopted the vague rendering "my darling" of the English version, nor taken the words "from the power of the dog" in a literal sense. It has already been remarked, that the term *dogs* is often employed to denote fierce or cruel enemies. Here the singular, "dog," i. e. *cruel enemy*, is used to agree with its parallel expression, "the sword," i. e. *instrument of death or imminent danger*, in the first clause. The Hebrew word *דָּוִדִּי* (*y'chidāthi*), rendered in the English version by "my darling," whatever the translators intended to express by it, certainly cannot here mean "my child," as it stands in parallelism with *נַפְשִׁי* (*nāphshi*) "my soul." It is an adjective, signifying *only, lonely*, but is here and in Psalm xxxv. 17 poetically put for *the only one*, i. e. *life*, as not to be replaced; so that the correct rendering would be, "from the power of the dog, my *only one*;" i. e. *from the fierce or cruel enemy, my life*. The adjective *דָּוִדִּי* (*yūchid*) *only* is sometimes employed alone to denote an *only son*; or, rather, the noun *son* must be supplied; as Jer. vi. 26, "Make thee mourning, as for *דָּוִדִּי* (*yūchid*) an *only son*." See also Prov. iv. 3, Amos viii. 10, Zecl. xii. 10, just as we say the strong, for strong *men*; the poor, for poor *people*. But the adjective *דָּוִדִּי* (*yūchid*), when so applied, can solely refer to an *only son*; or, when having the fem. form, to an *only child*.—See Judges xi. 34. If therefore the inspired writer, in penning this passage, had in view the *Jewish infants* being thrown as carrion to the dogs, as our authoress will have it, he would have employed a less restricted term, as *טָף* (*tāf*), collectively *little ones*; or *עֹלְלָיִם* (*ol'lim*), *children, infants*; or *יֹדְקִים* (*yōu'kim*), *sucklings*; these words being constantly employed by the sacred writers when speaking of little children or infants. Her expositions of the other portions of Scripture upon which she has undertaken to comment, are likewise extravagant in the extreme. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in particular, is disposed of in a very summary manner. The *Jewish nation* (quite in accordance with the common interpretation of the modern Jewish commentators) is made the sufferer spoken of in this chapter, and the Gentiles*

Besides the two applications which we have just now examined, there are others; as, for instance, Hitzig, who would apply the Psalm to Jeremiah, and Jahn, to Hezekiah; but these views being glaringly absurd, and never having found many adherents, it is unnecessary to bestow upon them a formal refutation: we proceed, therefore, to shew that the Messianic application, as adopted by all orthodox Christian commentators, is the only one that can be properly reconciled with the text.

are represented as the speakers. Thus, for instance, on the first and second verses, she remarks: "The sense is, the Gentiles shall say to each other in astonishment, Who believed what we have heard concerning them, and to whom was the interest the Lord took in them made known? For it was a despised people, feeble and wretched, like a tender plant growing out of a thirsty soil," &c. Again, on verse 5: "But he was wounded for," &c., she remarks: "Instead of being victims of God's wrath, they were wounded through our cruelty, they were bruised by our iniquitous treatment; we being suffered to do so, to chasten them for their sins, and to prove their obedience; and this chastisement is that by which our peace is to be effected," &c. As this chapter will be fully commented upon hereafter in this work, I shall only offer a few brief remarks here in refutation of this truly absurd hypothesis. The prophecy contained in chap. liii. commences at verse 13 of the preceding chapter, "Behold my servant shall deal prudently," &c. The four first verses, viz., ch. lii. 13-15, and ch. liii. 1, contain a brief outline of the whole oracle; and at the second verse begins the precise description of the personage referred to in the prophecy. From the various direct applications of some portions of this prophecy to Christ in the New Testament, the true Christian can entertain no doubt as to whom this oracle refers; not so however with the Jews, with them the testimony of the New Testament avails nothing, and therefore, in arguing with them on the subject, or in refuting their exposition, it is necessary to appeal to the text itself, and to produce authorities from their own nation.

It will be seen that the personage spoken of in this prophecy is, in ch. lii. 13, called עֲבָדִי (ʾēvdī), *my servant*, an appellation frequently applied to the Israelites, as well as to many pious individuals of that nation. Jonathan ben Usiel, therefore, no doubt in order to prevent an erroneous opinion being formed on this point, at once explained who is to be understood by it, and accordingly rendered it in his Targum by עֲבָדִי מְשִׁיחָא (ʾēvdī m'shichā), i. e. *my servant, the Messiah*. Here, then, we have not only one of the oldest Jewish authorities for the Messianic application of this prophecy, but one also whose writing is held in such great esteem that some Rabbis would make us believe he was aided in the performance of his labor by the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi; whilst others go still farther, and assert that the Targum was handed down by tradition from Moses, and that Jonathan only committed it to writing. Thus Rabbi Gedalia, in his chronological and Historical book Shalsheleth Hakkabala, fol. 20, col. 1, says, הַתְּרָוּם הוּא קְבֻלָּה לְמֹשֶׁה, i. e. *The Targum was received from Moses our Master, upon whom be peace, from Sinai*. So also Rabbi Meir ben Gabbai, in his work entitled Avodath Hakkodesh; and some other Jewish writers. If, then, as these Rabbis will have it, the Targum or Chaldee translation was received by Moses from God upon Mount Sinai, and has been handed down from him through the prophets, is it not surprising that Jewish commentators, in opposition to this high authority, should apply this prophecy to *their nation*? We lay no stress however upon these Rabbinical extravagances, which would invest the Targum with almost as much authority as the Hebrew Scriptures, further than to shew that these writings, which by themselves are held nearly in as much esteem as the Old Testament itself, actually apply the prophecy in question to the MESSIAH, just as it is applied in the New Testament. We may further remark, that that writer fully acknowledges the

This Psalm, according to its import, is predictive of two events that were to transpire. The first is, that a certain person was to be persecuted and subjected to intense suffering; the second event, which arises from the first, is that the deliverance of the sufferer should be productive of great blessings, which should be extended to all without distinction, to the heathen as well as to the Jew. The inspired writer specifies neither the time when these events were to have their consummation, nor the name of the sufferer spoken of, and his absence of any direct allusion is, in my opinion, a strong proof that the Psalm is prophetic of the Messiah, as it entirely

doctrine of a suffering and atoning Messiah as taught by the prophets, and explains, in accordance with this idea, the oracle of Isaiah.

We shall forbear adducing here any other authorities from Jewish writers in support of the Messianic application, as they will be noticed when we come to interpret this chapter fully, but proceed to show from but one verse of the chapter that the prophecy cannot possibly refer to the sufferings of the Jewish nation. In verse 5 we read, "But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with (better rendered *by*) his stripes we were healed." Now, I ask, did the Jewish nation ever suffer for any one's sins except its own? Was it ever punished except for its own wickedness and perverseness since it became a nation? And who are the "we" that were healed, or rather *pardoned* by his stripes? Surely those commentators who see in this verse the suffering of the Jewish people must be perfectly ignorant of the writings of the prophets and the history of that nation. No—Israel suffered for its own wickedness only. "Ah," exclaimed Isaiah with indignation, "sinful nation, (lit. nation sinning, i. e. continually or habitually), laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."—Isaiah i. 4. This was the true character of the nation, ever blind to its own welfare, ever rebellious against its God and King, who hath done so many marvellous things for them; unthankful and ungrateful, even unlike the ox and the ass, the most stupid of the brute creation, which are oppressed by their master with daily labour; yet these acknowledge their master, they know the manger of their lord by whom they are fed, not indeed for their own, but for his good; but Israel, whom God called "my son," "my first born," "my beloved son," and who was destined to enjoy the highest dignities and honours, forsook their Lord and their God, and despised his divine commandments. It was for this unprofitable conduct towards a most gracious parent, and disobedience to an indulgent and merciful God, that the Jewish nation suffered great afflictions, and do still suffer even unto this day.

The expression "and with (lit. *by*) his stripes we were healed," altogether forbids the application to the Jewish nation, as it means, *by his stripes we received pardon or forgiveness of sin*. In Scripture, sin is frequently represented as a spiritual malady. Thus David prays, Psalm xli. 4, "Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee;" and hence forgiveness of sin is often spoken of as an act of healing, as, for example, Jer. iii. 23, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal," i. e. forgive, "your backslidings." Compare also Hosea xiv. 4, and Isaiah vi. 10.

Miss Agular has certainly displayed great ingenuity in the application of the various portions of Scripture which she comments on, but when we say this much, it is all that can be said. Her interpretations are neither supported by critical reasoning, nor sustained by standard authorities; and I should therefore never have thought of adverting to them, had not a pious friend requested me to do so, urging, as a reason, that as the authoress had obtained some celebrity by her other works, and the work in question was largely circulated in this country, it might be mischievous in its tendency, as imparting false impressions to those who may not be capable of investigating the subject themselves.

accords with the style of similar prophecies; the parties to whom they refer being generally spoken of in direct terms in the others. But although the Psalmist mentions here neither time nor name, he speaks of certain occurrences which should unmistakably mark the fulfilment of the prophecy; and we could therefore be at no loss to discover the right subject of the prophecy, if we would but search the Scriptures with an unbiassed mind.

Taking now these occurrences spoken of in the Psalm as our guide, and turning to Matthew xxvii. we cannot fail to perceive, unless indeed we stubbornly close our eyes to the truth, that they had their literal accomplishment in the crucifixion of Christ. The Psalmist introduces the subject of the Psalm as labouring under great suffering, exclaiming, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." These are precisely the words Christ uttered in his deep agony on the cross, when he was for a time deprived of the consoling influence of the divine presence. At verse 7 we read, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lips, they shake the head." This was literally fulfilled, for St. Matthew informs us that "they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads." At verse 8 we have the very language given which the mockers were to use, "He trusted in the Lord, *that* he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." St. Matthew again tells us that "the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him." At verse 16 we read, "They pierced my hands and my feet." By this the Psalmist no doubt indicates what manner of death the sufferer was to undergo, and this we have literally fulfilled in Christ being nailed to the cross. At verse 18 we read, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon (better *for*) my vesture." This was then also exactly fulfilled. St. Matthew states, "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots." And St. John gives a more detailed account of this transaction, (see ch. xix. 23, 24,) shewing how completely this event had its accomplishment in Christ. Here then we have abundant proof that Christ is the sufferer spoken of in the Psalm; all these circumstances in the history of our Saviour's sufferings on the cross coincide perfectly with those which the Psalmist a thousand years before had described. And Strauss might well (though we regret to say without any good design on his part) call this Psalm "the programme of the crucifixion of Christ."

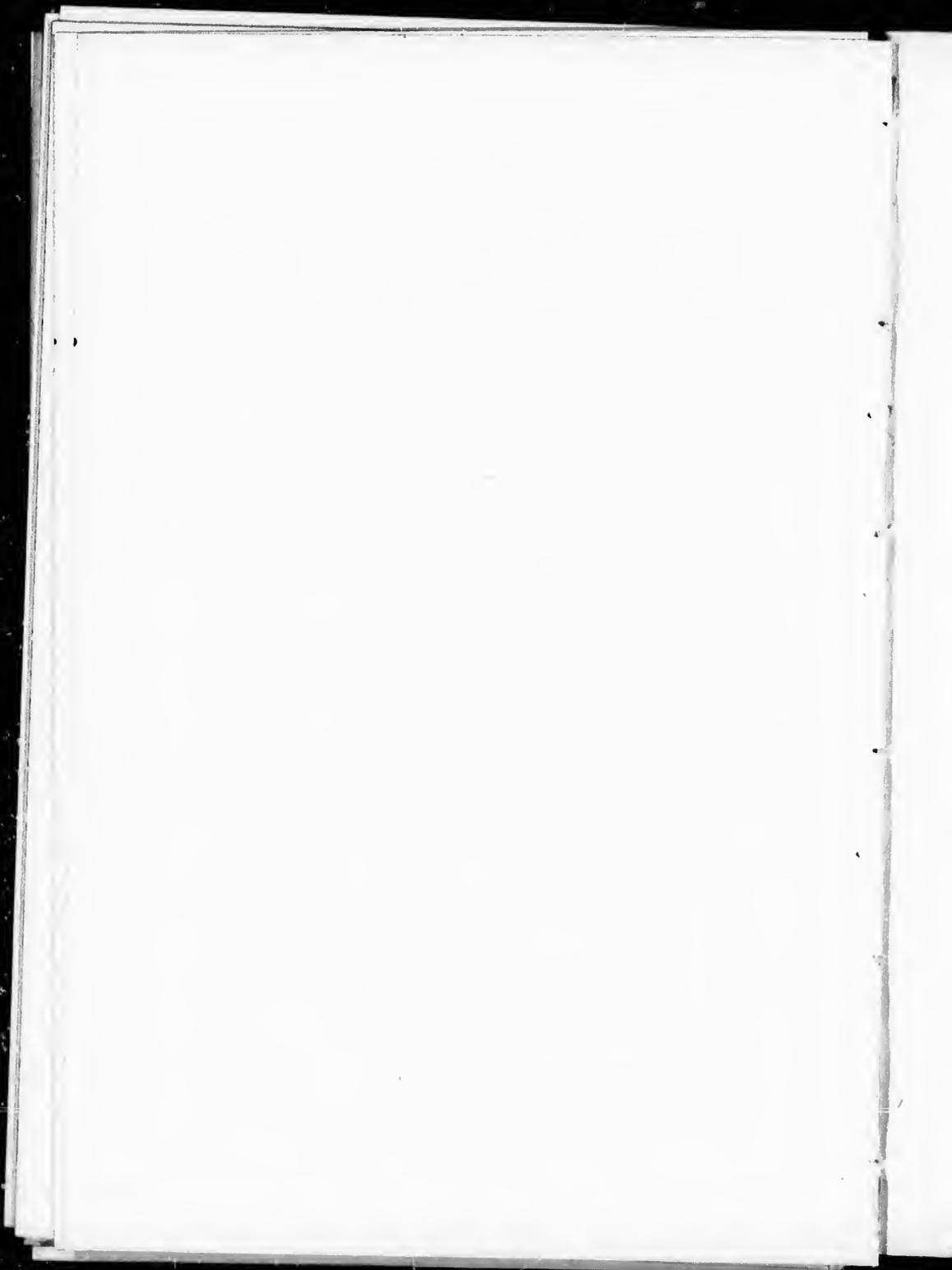
I must apologize here for bringing forward such a lengthened discussion, which would certainly have been more suitably introduced in the commentary on the Psalms; but having adduced the word כַּאֲרִי (kaari) as an example, to shew the necessity of an acquaintance with the cognate languages in the interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, it was impossible otherwise to do the subject that justice which its importance fairly claims. The reader will, I am sure, pardon this intrusion, when I tell him that the word in question has called forth more discussion than any other word in the Hebrew Bible. The modern Jewish commentators, as well as those belonging to the *rationalistic school*, seeing that, by regarding the word before us as a verb in the sense of *piercing*, it would make the passage so distinctly prophetic of an event, the fulfilment of which could only be found in the crucifixion of Christ, have laboured to shew, both by dint of argument and ingenuity in applying the passage, that the word is a noun, having the signification *as a lion*. Even some orthodox Christian commentators, who have in all other Messianic prophecies exhibited a sound mode of interpretation, have apparently not been able to satisfy themselves as to what may be regarded the correct rendering of this much contested word. Hengstenberg, for instance, has, in his Christology, at some length and with great ability defended the rendering of the word *as a verb*; but in his commentary on the Psalms, which he published some years afterwards, he adopted quite another view, and actually defends the rendering of the word *as a substantive*, shewing that all that he had advanced on the subject on a former occasion amounted to nothing. The arguments however which he adduces in his commentary on the Psalms are, in my opinion, far from outweighing those which he brought forward in his Christology. Professor Alexander bestowed likewise some remarks on this subject in his commentary on the Psalms, but being evidently at a loss to know which view he should espouse, he contented himself with merely giving the principal arguments that are advanced in support of and against each view, without expressing any opinion of his own.

In concluding these introductory remarks, it is only necessary to offer a few observations more in explanation of the plan which has been adopted in this work. And first, as to the translation, the author wishes to state, that although it purports to be an accurate rendering from the original Hebrew, he has studiously avoided any gratuitous departure from the English version, where it is not at

variance with the original text. An old friend is always more prized than a new one, and it is therefore only in those cases where the authorized version has failed to convey the genuine sense of the original that another rendering has been adopted, the grounds for doing so being explained in the commentary. Secondly, with respect to the commentary, the author must confess, that it was sometime before he could arrive at any definite conclusion as to what plan he should adopt. He felt, that to make the notes merely explanatory, to the entire exclusion of the critical element, would by no means be sufficient at the present age, in which biblical inquiries are conducted upon principles equally scientific with the investigations in other sciences. Many of the publications now in circulation, tending either directly or indirectly to undermine the authenticity of the sacred Scriptures, are of a highly critical character; and there is but one legitimate and satisfactory mode of meeting the arguments of the opponents of Christianity and the Bible, and that is by a thorough critical refutation. A mere denial of any statement can have but little weight, especially if that statement is sustained by arguments. Gesenius, for instance, in his commentary on Isaiah, holds with Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Grotius and many others, that the "virgin" mentioned in chapter vii. 14, is the prophet's wife, and "Immanuel," which she should bear, one of his sons. This startling statement (for startling it must certainly be to the Christian reader, who has always understood by *the virgin*, her of whom the Messiah was to be born, and by "Immanuel," the name of the Messiah), he supports by arguments which might at least cause many to waver, if not entirely convince them of the truth of his assertion. Will it now be said that the mere declaration of any commentator, that *Gesenius's view is altogether erroneous*, is all that is here required? Assuredly not. In order to give a satisfactory refutation of so pernicious an interpretation, it is necessary to shew that the word הַעַלְמָה (*hā'almāh*), i. e. *the virgin*, in the passage in question, cannot possibly mean the prophet's wife; but that, on the contrary, it must be referred to the virgin of whom the Messiah was to be born, and further, that Immanuel was really the name of the Messiah.

Another consideration which has forced itself strongly upon the author's mind is, that although the study of the Hebrew language has of late years been more attended to than formerly by students for the ministry, still the time generally devoted to that study is so very limited as to preclude the possibility of their obtaining a

critical knowledge of the language, and therefore, that a critical commentary cannot fail to render them great assistance in the study of Holy Writ. Impressed with these considerations, the author has determined to make this work strictly critical; but, in doing so, he has not lost sight of the fact, that a commentary is a useful aid to biblical reading in families, and he has accordingly so arranged the notes, as to be perfectly intelligible and suitable to every class of readers. The Bible being an eastern book, many of the most sublime figures are drawn from the customs, manners, rites and ceremonies of the ancient Jews and other oriental nations; and in explaining these, the works of the best eastern travellers have been consulted. There is also a description given of the countries, towns, rivers, mountains, plants and animals, an acquaintance with which is so essentially necessary to the perfect understanding of the sacred authors, as well as to enable the reader to appreciate and fully to enjoy the beauties of their sublime and lofty conceptions. No labour has been spared to render the work in every respect useful and interesting; but how far the author has succeeded in his endeavours remains for the reader to decide. In a work of this kind it can hardly be hoped to give general satisfaction; what may please one, may displease another; but whatever the public verdict regarding it may be, the author has at least the satisfaction of knowing that his whole endeavours have been to perform the task to the best of his abilities, and with the strictest impartiality.



A SHORT ESSAY

ON THE SPIRIT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HEBREW POETRY.

Many circumstances contributed to make the ancient Hebrews a highly poetic people. The nomadic and peaceful life of the Patriarchs; the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt, and their wonderful deliverance and exodus from that land; their wanderings through the wilderness; their taking possession of a land that was said to flow with milk and honey; their natural taste for music, which was afterwards carefully fostered in the Temple service; the beautiful and romantic scenery of the holy land; their magnificent Temple and its imposing service: these and many other circumstances in the chequered history of the Israelites, furnished inexhaustible sources from which the most sublime poetic images might be drawn, and which the Hebrew poets were never weary of turning to account. Hence, "the Bible," as a writer has justly observed, "is a mass of beautiful figures; its words and its thoughts are alike poetical; it has gathered around its central truths all natural beauty and interest; it is a temple with one altar and one God, but illuminated by a thousand varied lights, and studded with a thousand ornaments." The inherent love of the ancient Hebrews for poetry is strikingly apparent, even from the limited amount of literature that has escaped the ravages of time. Their language, as soon as it passes the limits of mere narration, at once becomes dignified: their blessings; their prayers and supplications; their exhortations and denunciations; their charges and admonitions; their dire lamentations and triumphant bursts of joy; all display strikingly their natural taste for poetry: and hence it is that so much of the Hebrew Scriptures is written in poetry, and that even among the prose writings we so frequently meet with poetic effusions. So early as in Genesis iv. 23, 24, we have an example of a desultory piece of poetry abruptly introduced, in the address of Lamech to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,
Wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech!
If I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt:
If Cain shall be avenged seven times,
Then Lamech seventy times seven."*

This address is in hemistichs, according to the genius of Hebrew poetry. It was, no doubt, handed down by tradition to the time

* Commentators have been not a little puzzled in endeavouring to discover the cause that gave rise to this address, so abruptly introduced. From the absence of any further information than simply what may be gathered from the speech itself,

of Moses, and is not only the most ancient piece of poetry in the Old Testament, but also the only relic of antediluvian poetry extant.

The celebrated blessing and prophecy of Jacob, as recorded in Gen. xlix. 3-27 inclusive, is also couched in highly poetic language. The striking difference in style that pervades that portion of the chapter from the rest, must be apparent to the English reader. The chapter commences with plain prose composition :—

“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, gather yourselves together, and I will declare to you *that* which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken to Israel your father.”

But at the next verse begins the prophesy, and with it a totally different style of composition ; the language becomes dignified and figurative, and assumes all the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. We shall subjoin the next four verses, that the reader may see the difference of style from those just quoted :—

“Reuben, my first born *art* thou,
My might, and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.
A boiling up as of water *art thou*, thou shalt not excel,
For thou ascendedst the bed of thy father,
Then didst thou defile it :—
My couch he ascended!
Simeon and Levi are brethren ;
Instruments of violence are their covenants.
My soul, enter not into their deliberations,
My honour, be not joined in their assembly,
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their wantonness they maimed an ox.”

Besides these there are many other poetical compositions dispersed throughout the prose books of the Old Testament. As for instance : the song by the well, Num. xxi. 17, 18 ; the prophecies of Balaam, Num. xxiii. and xxiv ; the triumphal song of Deborah, Judges v. ; the parable of Jotham, Judges ix. 7-15 ; the riddle of Samson, and the solution of it by the Philistines, Judges xiv. 14, 18 ; the exulting chant of Hannah, 1 Samuel ii. 1-10 ; the

all that can be advanced on the subject must necessarily be mere conjecture. Still, from the strain of the address it is evident that Lamech contrasts some minor offence of his own with the hideous crime of fratricide of Cain. It is, therefore, not improbable that Lamech had slain some one in self-defence, and that this address was intended to console his wives, who, perhaps, felt alarmed lest the friends of the deceased might seek an opportunity to avenge his death. To allay their fear, Lamech contrasts his offence with that of Cain ; as much as to say, surely if Cain, who had slain his brother without the least provocation, shall be avenged seven-fold should any one seek his life, then Lamech who had merely killed a man in self-defence, shall certainly be avenged seventy and seven fold ; that is, incomparably greater will his punishment be, who should slay Lamech, who has only acted in his own defence. The expressions “a man” and a “young man” do not imply that Lamech had slain two persons, as it is quite in accordance, as will be hereafter shewn, with the genius of Hebrew poetry, to repeat the same idea in different terms.

sublime elegy of David on the death of his friend Jonathan, II. Samuel i. 19-27, &c.

Of the poetical books of the Old Testament, the first that claims our notice is the book of Job, as being, no doubt, *the most ancient writing* that has come down to us. There are indeed some who maintain that the author of this book lived as late as the time of Solomon, or one or two centuries afterwards; whilst others, still more extravagant in their views, place him shortly before or during the Babylonish captivity; these are, however, fortuitous conjectures, which can neither be sustained by proof nor supported by reasonable arguments, whilst many circumstances, gathered from the book itself, plainly tend to show that the author of the book must have lived, if not in the patriarchal age, at least before the exode of the Israelites from Egypt; but as this subject will be fully discussed hereafter in the commentary on that book, it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here.

In the book of Job we possess a monument of genius, which, simply regarded as a literary production, is without doubt one of the most characteristic and sublime that has come down to us from the ancient world. The poetical merit of this book is very great; we may say, unrivalled. Its style is pure, its images are sublime, its ideas lofty, and the language and arguments at once powerful and impressive. The poesy of the book of Job is the pure poesy of nature; the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms, the heavens, the seas and their contents, all contribute richly to embellish the conceptions of the author. Job had evidently made the material universe his study, but as he rambled through its vast domain in search of knowledge, wherewith to store his inquiring mind, he beheld likewise everywhere the handy work of the Most High; and thus as he drank deeper and deeper of its intellectual draughts, he became at the same time more and more firmly impressed with the all-pervading power, greatness and love of its Lord and Creator. The study of nature had made him better acquainted with the merciful dealings of the God of nature, and hence his firm belief in the overruling power of the Almighty. In everything he perceives the hand of God, and though it be far beyond his comprehension, he still maintains that it is so ordered for some wise purpose. This doctrine he establishes by such arguments as the following:—

“Secure are the tents of the robbers,
And those provoking God *live* in tranquillity;
Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.”

Job xii. 6.

“Why do the wicked live ;
 They grow old, and even increase in wealth.
 Their seed is established in their sight, about them ;
 And their offspring before their eyes.
 Their houses are secure from fear,
 And the rod of God is not upon them.
 His ox engendereth, and falloth not ;
 His cow calveth, and doth not miscarry ?”

Job xxi. 7-10.

As much as to say : ‘This indeed may appear marvellous to us, yet so it is. The wicked live, they grow old, and even become rich. Their children are established around them ; their dwellings are secure ; no chastisements of God apparently come upon them, though they have merited them ; their cattle increase ; in short, everything seems to prosper with them. Here, then, is prosperity, where we should expect poverty ; here is what may tend to make life happy, where we should look for affliction and misery. Such are the inscrutable ways of God, such are his inscrutable dealings with man ! Truly they are past finding out !’

Upon this doctrine of overruling providence, Job takes his stand against his friends, who consider his calamities and sufferings as the consequence of some sin which he had committed. Job, on the contrary, maintains that, as the wicked do often prosper, so the most upright may frequently be very unfortunate. God acts according to his sovereign pleasure. His omnipotence is indeed apparent in every part of the creation ; but his justice in the government of the world cannot always be comprehended ; of this we have examples in the prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings and afflictions to which the righteous are frequently subjected. It must not, however, be inferred from Job’s contending that the calamities which had befallen him were no evidence of his guilt, that he entertained the idea that man may be altogether free from sin. No, he entirely repudiates such a notion :—

“Truly I know it is so,
 And how shall man be just with God ?”

Job ix. 2.

‘It is as you have stated regarding the sinful nature of man. I fully acknowledge that it admits of no doubt, for no man can be just in the sight of God.’ And again, at verse 20, he says :—

“If I am right, my mouth condemns me ;
 Am I perfect, and it will declare me guilty.”

As much as to say : ‘Although I may appear just in my own eyes, and do not feel conscious of any guilt, still my own mouth must acknowledge that I am a sinner. But whilst I fully admit that no man is free from sin, yet this by no means argues that the calamities which have befallen me are chastisements for sin.’

"One thing it is, therefore I say it,
Perfect or unjust, he destroyed."

Ver. 22.

—that is, 'One thing is certain, and therefore I say it freely, upright or wicked, all are liable to affliction, and consequently my sufferings are no proof of sin.'

Job had no doubt instituted a rigid self-examination; and although he may have seen many shortcomings in his past actions, yet he could not discover any sin of such a nature as to lead to such chastisements. His children, too, had evidently been brought up in the fear of God: this is apparent from the anxiety which he evinced in his rising up early in the morning, to offer burnt offerings as an atonement for the sins which his sons might have committed in an unguarded moment during their festivities. The sudden bereavement of possessions and children, and the infliction of such intense bodily suffering, must necessarily have been a perfect riddle to Job; and, feeling conscious that these calamities were not the consequences of sin which either he or his sons had committed, he looked upon them with an eye of faith, as instances of those dealings of God with man, which no human wisdom is able to fathom.

But although Job's sufferings and calamities were to him involved in such perfect mystery, that mystery is entirely solved in the two first chapters of the book, in which we have a full account of all that transpired with regard to Job's trial. The occurrences upon earth and the transactions in heaven, are alike brought before us in the most vivid and distinct manner, intended to bring to our view subjects worthy of the deepest meditation, and to convey lessons of momentous import.

The book begins with a brief history of Job before his trial: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name *was* Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." This verse, then, forms the grand theme of the whole book. The piety of Job gave rise to his trial, and his trial gave rise afterwards to the discussion between him and his three friends. But in order to give a full idea of the extent of Job's trial, the account goes on to say, that he had been blessed with seven sons and three daughters; that his substance was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household, so that he was the greatest of all the men of the East. Here the account might have finished; everything necessary to the comprehension of the magnitude of the trial is contained in the preceding statement. But the sacred writer tells us further, that Job's sons went and made a feast,

which they celebrated at one another's houses in turn, and which consequently lasted seven days; and that they also invited their sisters to eat and to drink with them. And further, that as soon as the days of their feasting had expired, Job always sent for them, and sanctified them, and offered burnt offerings according to their number, saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." This allusion to the customary yearly celebration of a feast by Job's sons is evidently introduced in the first place to shew that not only did Job lead a pious life, but that it likewise was his anxious desire to keep his whole family from the pollution of sin; secondly, to shew the kindly and harmonious feeling that pervaded his household; and, thirdly, to indicate by their feasting together how Job was at once bereaved of all his children.

The inspired writer having informed us of the great piety and prosperous condition of Job, next proceeds to tell us what took place concerning him in heaven. On a certain day, when the holy angels came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan, the great enemy of mankind, came also among them. And the Lord asked him, "Whence comest thou?" The reply being, "From going to and fro in the earth," the Lord enquired of him whether he had considered that truly pious and just man Job, whose equal was not upon earth. Whereupon the subtle spirit replied: "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not blessed him on every side? But put now forth thine hand upon all that he hath: deprive him of his possessions, and see whether he will still persevere in his piety." And the Lord said unto Satan: "Behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand." So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.* From this narrative we learn, then, that Job's calamities were inflicted as a trial, to prove whether his piety would cease with his prosperity; whether, when plunged from the highest pinnacle of happiness into the deepest miseries conceivable, he would still continue steadfast in the fear of God. The sequel of the narrative tells us how the good patriarch conducted himself under his heavy afflictions. So rapidly, we are told, did one misfortune succeed upon the other, that before one messenger had finished his tale of havoc, another came with still

* The scene in heaven has been imitated by Bayley, in his "Festus," and by Goethe in the "Prologue to Faust." It is much to be regretted that a subject like this, where the Deity takes such a prominent part, should have ever been made subservient to the secular drama; but it becomes still more reprehensible when the author so far forgets himself as to employ language irreligious and disrespectful to the Deity, such as Goethe puts in the mouth of his ideal demon. Its wit may indeed please some, but its coarseness cannot fail to disgust.

more appalling tidings; so that Job found himself, in but a few hours, flockless, childless, bereaved of servants—a prince converted to a beggar. But Job's piety was too firmly implanted to be shaken. Like a tree firmly rooted, which bids defiance to the raging tempest, stood the patient patriarch, unmoved by the tempests of affliction which Satan in rapid succession hurled upon him. He did not tear his gray hair in agony, nor did he break forth into a wild frenzy of grief; but, after the custom of his country, in a seemly manner, he rent his mantle* and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped, saying: "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."

The great firmness which Job displayed in this severe trial becomes even more strikingly apparent, when we consider the plan which Satan adopted in inflicting the calamities. He arranged everything in such a manner as to make Job feel them most severely, and if possible to make them effective to shake his faith. In the first place it will be seen, in enumerating Job's possessions, the sacred writer begins with his children, as the best and dearest of them all; then he mentions the sheep and camels, as forming the next most important part of his wealth; and lastly, the oxen and she asses. In the infliction of the calamities, however, we find the order reversed. First comes the messenger with tidings of the loss of the oxen and asses, the least valuable of his possessions; next he receives the news of the entire loss of the sheep, and after that, of the loss of the camels; and lastly, when Job was already enough afflicted, then comes the painful intelligence of the death of all his children. Satan, too, lets the first and third misfortunes be effected by human agents—namely, the Sabeans and Chaldeans; but the second and fourth by supernatural agencies—namely, lightning and storm. This circumstance must have greatly increased the grief of Job, as that which was most dear to him was taken from him, as he would naturally think, by God. All was therefore arranged so as to make Job feel the affliction most severely, and if possible to shake him in his faith.

* The practice of rending the clothes as a sign of mourning and expression of grief, or of horror, is very ancient. Thus Reuben rent his clothes when he came to the pit and found that Joseph was no more there. Jacob rent his clothes when he recognized the coat of his son, thinking a wild beast had torn him. Joseph's brothers rent their clothes when the cup was found in Benjamin's sack; and this custom is often alluded to throughout the Bible, down to the last age of the Jewish empire. In the Acts, xiv. 14, we read that Barnabas and Paul rent their clothes when they heard that the priest of Jupiter and the people at Lystra were about to offer sacrifices to them. It is still practised by the modern Jews at the death of the following relatives—namely, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, and wife. They make a cut with a knife in the coat, on the right side, then rend it about a hand's breadth; but for father or mother both coat and waistcoat are thus torn, and on the left side.

But the cup of Job's sorrow was not yet full; there were still other griefs in store for him. Satan had indeed put his piety to the severest test, without in the least making him swerve from his faith; but he was not contented with this trial, for it is not in his nature to desist so long as there remains a spark of hope of entrapping his victim. Hence we are told, when the sons of God came again to present themselves before the Lord, that Satan came also among them; and that when God asked him whether he had considered his servant Job, remaining still perfect and upright, notwithstanding his severe trials, Satan answered: "Skin for skin, 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." And the Lord said unto Satan: "Behold he is in thy hand, but save his life." Satan having obtained this permission (for without it he could not have touched a hair of Job's head), went forth accordingly, and smote Job with sore boils even from the sole of his foot unto his crown. But the tempter was also foiled in this attempt. Job remained as firm in his faith as before; and when his wife came, not indeed to console him in his distress, nor speak words of comfort to him, as she ought to have done, but rather to upbraid him for still retaining his integrity, he calmly exclaimed: "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Could Job but have heard the song of triumph that must have burst from the angelic host, when he uttered these memorable words, it would have been consolation to his bleeding heart, and soothing balm to his distressing sores.

This expression of humble submission to the will of God closes the trial of Job; the good fight is fought, and Satan proved a liar. But there is another struggle for him at hand. When Job's three friends heard of the evil that had befallen him, they came to mourn with him and to comfort him; and they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights. Had the friends of Job strictly adhered to this laudable intention, their words of comfort could not have failed to cheer the much-afflicted patriarch; for what can be more animating, what more consoling, than a few kind words from a sincere friend in the time of trouble and affliction? But as it was, instead of imparting comfort, they only aggravated his grief; instead of binding up his bleeding heart, they wounded it still more, by their charging him with being either a grievous sinner or a great hypocrite.

Job being at last overcome by pain and grief, endeavours to seek relief by giving vent to his long suppressed feelings. The thought that if he had never been born, or had died at the time of his birth, so that he now would be at rest and free from suffering and sorrow, wrung from him that bitter curse contained in ch. iii., which is unquestionably the most piercing cry of woe and lamentation ever uttered in this world.*

This outburst of intense grief, lays the foundation for the arguments between Job and his three friends. The profound silence that had hitherto reigned in the place of mourning being now broken by Job himself, his having given utterance to language which, in the opinion of his friends, was highly reprehensible, induced Eliphaz, as being probably the oldest of the three, to begin to remonstrate with Job on the injustice of his complaint, and in this he was afterwards followed by Bildad and Zophar; Job replying to each of them in turn. The principal points which form the subject of discussion, from ch. iv. to ch. xxxi. inclusive, may be briefly summed up as follows: his friends urge against him:

1st—That, as no man is free from sin, therefore all men are liable to misfortunes.

2nd—That misfortunes and afflictions must in all cases be regarded as visitations for some sin committed, as it is inconsistent with infinite justice to afflict without cause, or to punish without guilt; and therefore, that Job's maintaining that he suffered innocently was the height of folly, and his repining at the chastisement of God was only adding fresh sin to his former transgressions.

3rd—That although a man may for a time be chastised for sin, yet he may be restored again to his former prosperity, and even be blessed with more success, if he sincerely repent of his sins, and firmly resolve to lead a better life.

4th—That although the wicked may for a time be seemingly prosperous, yet his prosperity is never of long duration, for the judgments of God will surely overtake him sooner or later.

Job, on the other hand, maintains against his friends:

1st—That the just and upright man may at times be destined to suffer the severest calamities, while the wicked is frequently very prosperous; that it is beyond the range of human understanding

* Swift made it a practice each birthday to retire into his closet in order to read the third chapter of Job.

always to fathom God's dealings with man; that it is consequently exceedingly cruel and unjust, as well as uncharitable, to charge a man with sin because he is unfortunate or suffering under severe affliction; and that such conduct is well deserving the severest punishment of the Almighty.

2nd—That there are cases in which the sufferer has a right to justify himself before God, and even to repine at His decrees under deep affliction. This supposed right Job strenuously maintains against his friends regarding his case to be one of those in which such a liberty is questionable.

The discussion is kept up by the contending parties with great skill, and the most eloquent diction; the language becoming gradually more passionate, until at last Job silences his friends, and remains the victor. But although Job had very properly defended the principle, that the righteous may sometimes be subjected to heavy trials, and therefore, to infer from a man's misfortunes that he must be a sinner, is both unreasonable and unjust: yet as in the course of the discussion, he had made some very extravagant and unwarrantable assertions, persisting in the opinion that in many cases the sufferer might justify himself before God, and repine at His decrees, he could not be allowed to keep possession of the field. Another interlocutor consequently steps forward to reason with Job. A young man named Elihu, who had been present and heard the arguments of both parties, but according to the strict rules of etiquette, had refrained from speaking, or as the Hebrew would say, laid his hand upon his mouth until those more advanced in age had finished; when he perceived that the three friends had nothing more to reply, and that the discussion was apparently at an end, ventured likewise to express his opinion. He begins by expressing his great disappointment at the three friends not being able to convince Job of his error; and then addressing himself directly to Job, he endeavours to impress upon him by the most forcible arguments drawn from God's unlimited sovereignty and unsearchable wisdom, that it was not inconsistent with Divine justice to afflict even the most righteous, and therefore all calamities should be borne without murmur, it being ever our duty humbly to submit to the Divine dispensations. He reproves Job for boasting of his integrity, and for charging God with injustice, and urges upon him that it is for man, who is a sinful

creature, to humble himself before God, whose ways are just and whose judgments are upright.

Yea, surely God will not do wickedly,
And the Almighty will not pervert judgment.

Ch. xxxiv. 12.

The speech of Elihu, which begins at ch. xxxii. and ends with ch. xxxvii., is at once powerful, impressive and sublime, and had no doubt the effect of carrying conviction to the mind of Job, who had listened to the rebukes and admonitions of Elihu without offering a word in reply, although he had challenged him to do so.

If there are (i.e., if thou hast) words, answer me:
Speak, for I desire to justify thee (i.e., thy justification).

Ch. xxxiii. 32.

But although Elihu had silenced Job, yet he had by no means given a satisfactory solution of the question at issue. He likewise maintains, with the three friends, that no one suffers innocently, but in all cases calamities are to be regarded as punishments for sins committed, and as they are intended as corrections, they may consequently be inflicted even on the most upright man. We learn, however, from the two first chapters that Job's calamities did not befall him on account of sin, but were inflicted as a trial to prove his steadfastness in the fear of God; and we also learn further, that God justified Job in maintaining his innocency against his three friends, whilst His wrath was kindled against them, for not having spoken of Him the thing that is right, as Job had done. God indeed blames Job for not perceiving the Divine justice in everything, and for repining at His decree, instead of yielding unrestricted submission to His will; but not for vindicating his integrity against his friends. The chief point of discussion would therefore have remained undecided at the close of Elihu's speech, and as Job did not reply to him, it would have left the false impression that he was really afflicted for some sin which he must have committed, but for the final interposition of God himself. Accordingly, as soon as Elihu finished speaking, a violent thunderstorm arose, out of which the Lord addressed Job, showering down upon him question after question in rapid succession, illustrative of His omnipotence in the formation and disposition of the works of creation, and showing how foolishly the latter had acted in presuming to reason with God, when His mighty works prove His infinite Majesty, and consequently His absolute justice.

Such questions on topics so profound, so mysterious, could not fail to show clearly the shallowness of human knowledge, and to convince Job of his utter incapability of understanding the ways and designs of the omnipotent JEHOVAH. Accordingly, even before the series of questions had come to a close, he exclaims in deep humility,

Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee?
My hand I lay upon my mouth.
Once have I spoken, but I will no more reply,
Yea twice, but I will do it no more.

Ch. xl. 4. & 5.

Job having acknowledged and sincerely repented of his offence, God now addressed the three friends, and declared to them His displeasure because they had not spoken of Him "the thing that was right as His servant Job hath done," and commanded that they should bring an offering as an atonement for their guilt, and that Job should pray for them, whose prayer He would accept. These commands being performed, God made an end of Job's suffering, and granted him renewed prosperity, blessing his latter days even more than those before his trial.

From this brief analysis of the book of Job, it will be observed, that whilst it conveys many wholesome lessons, its chief design is to set forth one grand and momentous truth, viz: *that the affliction of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked are perfectly consistent with Divine justice; that calamity, as the veiled grace of God, is never alone with the upright, but that manifest proofs of God's favour always accompany or follow it.*

The book of Job will therefore ever be to the pious an inexhaustible source from whence he may draw consolations in the time of calamity. If sorrow for a time cast its dismal shades over a once happy home, the book of Job is well calculated to dispel the gloom, and cheer the drooping spirit. If calamity rack the mind and threaten to drive to despair, the book of Job affords solace to the distressed, and directs him to look up to Him who will never forsake those of a contrite heart. If sickness prostrate the frail body, and make it groan under excruciating pain, the book of Job teaches that under such a visitation may be veiled the Divine grace, and encourages to submit humbly and patiently to the will of a merciful and just God.

But it may be said; although the book of Job satisfactorily solves the question, so far as the righteous is concerned, it affords

no clear solution as regards the prosperity of the wicked. This, no doubt, is quite correct, but it must be remembered that the main point of discussion must necessarily be the calamities of the righteous, as arising from the innocent suffering of Job; the prosperity of the wicked is merely incidentally introduced, and forms no direct part of the plan of book. Indeed the problem, why the wicked often prosper must ever remain a mystery; we know it often is so, but why, we cannot tell; human knowledge and human wisdom cannot fathom it. Still, as the book of Job distinctly sets forth that infinite wisdom and justice pervade all the works of the Almighty, it follows that if the wicked be sometimes permitted to prosper, it must be for some wise and just purpose. This is all that comes within the scope of the book, and is all that is necessary for us to know.

In the book of Job we find, however, many forcible allusions to the transient felicity of the wicked. As for instance ch. v. 3 & 4.

"I have seen" says Eliphaz, "a foolish man (i.e., a wicked man) taking root; But suddenly I cursed his habitation.
His children are far from help:
They are crushed in the gate, and there is no deliverer."

Eliphaz shows here in the example of a sinner, that although he was prosperous, and thus firmly established, yet quickly matters changed, so that whilst he at first would have pronounced his habitation happy on account of such prosperity, and blessed him, regarding him as a pious man, he soon saw reason to curse the place as being that of a curse-laden sinner; for suddenly his well-merited misfortunes and troubles came upon him. And so great were the misfortunes that befel that impious man, than even his children after him suffered from it. His children were oppressed in the gate, (which was a common place of assembly for the inhabitants of a city, and also the place where justice was administered), and there was no one to take their part. The book of Job is therefore well calculated to teach the wicked, who may be revelling in luxury, that his prosperity is no indication of God's favour, but that on the contrary, His righteous judgments may even overtake him in this world; so that, where all is happiness to-day, there may be nothing but misery to-morrow.

The book of Job is a composition which is universally admired for the loftiness of its style, the magnificence of its descriptions, the energy of its expressions, the sublimity of its thoughts and the

grandeur of its imagery. It presents everything lifelike to our view; and Gilfillan has justly remarked, that "If any word can express the merit of the natural descriptions in Job, it is the word *gusto*. You do something more than see his behemoth, his war-horse, and his leviathan. You touch, smell, hear, and handle them too. It is no shadow of the object he sets before you, but the object itself, in its length, breadth, height and thickness."

Moses, the great lawgiver, has given to the poetry of his nation another turn. True, we still behold in him the poetic genius leaning upon the shepherd's staff, but then his poetical writings are embellished with rich embroidery which the Bedouin despises. His poetic pictures are chiefly drawn from the motley history of his nation, which he has painted with a masterly hand, in the most vivid colours. He is happy in prose as well as in poetry, his style, though easy, is notwithstanding spirited, and his admonitions to the rebellious Israelites are at once grand and impressive. Professor Wahl, formerly of the University of Leipzig, in speaking of the poetry of Moses, has so beautifully described its merit, that I cannot forbear quoting it, although it will lose much of its force and beauty in translation. He says: "Seine Poesie ist lebendig, wachsend, und umfassend, Moses Genius ist nicht matt; sein Flügelschlag, indem er daherschwebt, tönt reine Sphärenharmonie, bricht den Äther, und trifft die gerade Bahn zur Sonne—i.e. His poetry is animated, attractive, and comprehensive; the genius of Moses is not feeble; the stroke of his pinions as he soars aloft sends forth the pure harmony of the spheres, cleaves the æther and pursues the direct path to the sun." The song of Moses by the Red Sea* (Exod. xvi. 19.) is a song of victory, but all such songs of the Hebrews are at the same time songs of praise to Him who is the Disposer of all events. Victory was always looked upon by the pious and faithful of the nation as attained only by the special interposition of the Almighty, and accordingly, the praise of God forms always the most prominent part in their triumphal songs. The song of Moses,

*The Red Sea, or Arabian Gulf, is an extensive gulf of the Indian Ocean, dividing Arabia from the opposite coast of Africa. Its length is about 1,400 miles, and its greatest breadth about 200 miles. The English name Red Sea is a translation of the Latin name *rubrum mare*, which is again a translation of the Greek term *ἑρυθρὰ θάλασσα* (i.e., the Red Sea). There are various opinions advanced regarding the origin of this name. Some think it received it from the coral rocks and reefs with which it abounds; but it is well known that the coral of the red sea is white, and hence this supposition must fall to the ground. Others again would derive its name, either from the reddish colour of the waters, or from the red sand at the

Deut. xxxii. 1, 43, to the assembled Israelites, before his death, is a poem which strikingly displays the poetical powers of its author. The language, whilst it is full of pathos, is at the same time gentle and winning, searching the inmost depths of the soul, and, well calculated to arouse the slumbering feelings to a lively sensibility to the infinite power, majesty, and mercy of the Almighty. His last prophetic blessing of the children of Israel, Deut. xxxiii., and the xc. Psalm, entitled, "a prayer of Moses, the man of God," are other examples of highly poetic and sublime compositions of the great lawgiver and prophet.

To David belongs the honor of having brought the Lyric Poetry of the Hebrews to perfection. He evinced from his youth a passion for music as well as for poetry. His early years were spent as a shepherd in tending his father's flocks in the field, where he gathered the many flowers which so often adorn his writings. His skill on the harp procured him admittance to the presence of the king, a circumstance which must have greatly encouraged him to improve the musical talents with which he was so highly gifted. But, having several times narrowly escaped, with the harp in his hand, the deadly spear which Saul hurled at him through jealousy, he fled into the wilderness of Judea, where he wandered for several years. There in the lonely desert, wandering from place to place, seeking a safe abode, his harp was his comforter and friend. Its melodious tones assuaged his fears, and made him forgetful of envy and hatred. It was not laid aside when brighter days smiled upon him, but it still remained his companion in the royal palace,

bottom of it; but we are told by many writers that so far from its waters having a red appearance, it is rather of a greenish colour from the great quantity of sea-weeds and moss that grow in it. We may also remark that the waters of almost all shallow seas are apparently of a green colour. It is therefore more likely that it received its name from the land of Edom, as its north-eastern part washes that country. Now the Hebrew word אֶדוֹם (*ēdōm*) signifies red, and was a name given to Esau on the occasion of his selling his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage, (See Gen. xxv. 30); and from him this name was transferred to the country which his posterity possessed. Hence the name, *sea of Edom*. Prideaux tells us, (see Connection i. 14, 15), that the ancient inhabitants of the neighbouring countries called it (Yam Edom, i. e., the sea of Edom; this name, however, does not occur in Scripture. The Greek having mistaken *Edom* for an appellative instead of a proper name, accordingly called it *ἑρυθρὰ θάλασσα* i. e., the *Red Sea*. The Hebrew name is יַם סוּף (*Yām Sūph*), i. e., the *sea of Sedge*, and is so called from the great quantity of sea-weed that grows there. It is stated by several heathen writers that the *Ichthyophagi* (i. e., those Egyptians who lived near the Red Sea, and chiefly maintained themselves by the fish they catch), dwelt in huts made of ribs of fish, and covered with sea-weed.

where he continued to increase the poetry of the Hebrews; dangers, conquests, cares, grief, every pious act that he performed, presented new matter to him; and thus we have in the productions of the king of song, a true mirror of his life and times. Hence, Luther calls the Psalms: "a garden where the most beautiful flowers and fruits flourish, but where, at other times, also the most tempestuous winds rage."

Although most of the Psalms no doubt have been composed upon particular occasions, yet there are some which can neither be ascribed to any particular time, nor regarded as referring to any incident in the history of David. Thus, for instance, Psalm i., is strictly a religious song, divided into two regular strophes of three verses each; the first strophe setting forth the happiness of the pious, and the second the fate of the wicked. Of Psalms of similar import, we have several in the book of Psalms, as for instance, the cxii. and cxxv. Again, we have many hymns of praise and adoration, displaying God's power, majesty, and glory; as Psalms viii. xix. xxix., &c. In Psalm cxxxiii., we have a beautiful ode on unity and brotherly love; and Psalms xxxii., l. and cxix., are purely religious didactic poems. Many of the Psalms possess great sublimity, but softness, tenderness, and pathos are their prevailing characteristics.

Bishop Horn* has justly remarked that, "The Psalms are an epitome of the Bible, adapted to the purpose of devotion. They treat occasionally of the creation and formation of the world; the dispensations of Providence, and the economy of grace; the transactions of the patriarchs; the Exodus of the children of Israel; their journey through the wilderness, and settlement in Canaan; their law, priesthood, and ritual; the exploits of their great men, wrought through faith; their sins and captivities, their repentances and restorations; the sufferings and victories of David; the peaceful and happy reign of Solomon; the advent of Messiah, with its effects and consequences; His incarnation, birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, kingdom, and priesthood; the effusion of the Spirit; the conversion of the nations; the rejection of the Jews; the establishment, increase, and prosperity of the Christian Church; the end of the wicked, and the final triumph of the righteous with their Lord and King." Well, indeed, might

*Preface to his Commentary on the Psalms.

Hooker ask, "What is there necessary for man to know which the Psalms are not able to teach?" And well might Luther say of the Psalms: "Thou readest through them the hearts of all the saints; and hence the Psalter is the manual of all saints; for each finds in it, in whatever circumstances he is placed, psalms and words so well adapted to his condition, and so fully according with the feelings, that they seem to have been thus composed for his own sake, insomuch, that he cannot find, or even wish to find, any words that are better suited to his case."

All the Psalms, with the exception of thirty-four, are furnished with an inscription. Some of these inscriptions set forth the respective authors of the Psalms. Thus seventy-four* are ascribed to David, twelve to Asaph,† eleven to the sons of Korah, two to Solomon, one to Moses, one to Heman (one of the leaders of the temple music; see 1 Chron. vi. 33,) and one to Ethan (also one of David's singers; see 1 Chron. vi. 44.) Sometimes these inscriptions state the occasion upon which the Psalms were composed. As, for instance, the title of Psalm iii.—"A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son"; or of Psalm vii.—"Shiggaion (*i.e.* an elegy or plaintive song) of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite." Sometimes the inscription indicates the kind of composition to which the Psalm belongs—as **מַסְכִּיל** (*mäskil*) Psalm xxxii. 1—*i.e.*, a song or poem teaching wisdom or piety. **תְּפִלָּה** (*t'philläh*); Psalm lxxxvi. 1—*i.e.* a prayer. Also the kind of instruments with which the Psalm is to be accompanied, as **קְנִינֹת** (*n'g'inoth*) Psalm iv. 1—*i.e.*, stringed instruments. **קְנִינֹת** (*n'chilöth*), Psalm v. 1—*i.e.*, pipes or flutes, or perhaps wind instruments in general.

Much obscurity prevails as regards the proper import of some of the terms employed in the inscriptions, and this arises no doubt from the imperfect knowledge we possess of the temple music. The translators of our authorised version have therefore acted wisely in retaining for the most part the Hebrew words; it was far better to retain the original term, than to assume a translation based merely upon conjecture.

* To the above, the Septuagint version adds ten Psalms more, *viz.*, the xxxiii., xliii., xci., xciv. to xcix. and civ.

† Asaph was the son of Barachias of the tribe of Levi, and was appointed by David to preside over the choral services which he instituted. See 1 Chron. xvi., 4, 5.

The term הִלָּח (*sēlāh*), which occurs seventy-three times in the Psalms is commonly regarded to denote *rest* or *pause*, and as it stands generally in the middle of a Psalm at the end of a section or strophe, its use appears to have been to direct the singers in chanting the Psalms to *rest* or *pause* whilst the instruments played an interlude or symphony. This supposition is supported by the authority of the Septuagint, where the term הִלָּח (*sēlāh*) is rendered by *διάψαλμα*, i.e. *interlude, symphony*.

Solomon seems to have inherited a love of poetry from his father. We are distinctly told, 1 Kings iv. 32, that he had composed three thousand proverbs and one thousand and five songs;* of the latter, however, unhappily only two Psalms and the Song of Songs are now extant. In the writings of Solomon we have the precious relics of one who was gifted with "a wise and an understanding heart," such as has never been possessed by any human being before or since. It would, therefore, be presumption to dilate upon the excellencies of the productions emanating from a source so richly endowed with heavenly wisdom.

The book of Proverbs furnishes us with a beautiful specimen of Proverbial or Gnostic poetry of the Hebrews; and is unquestionably the most exquisite composition of its kind that has ever been penned. It contains about five hundred short and impressive sayings, the result of the profoundest human sagacity, replete with solemn truths, wholesome counsels, and tender admonitions; addressing themselves with equal aptitude to the king on the throne, and the suppliant beggar; to the advanced in years as well as the young. Who would not gather such "apples of gold with figures of silver.† (Eng. vers. in pictures of silver) Prov. xxv. 2. As brevity gives life to the proverb, the Hebrew language is particularly well adapted to this species of composition, but must necessarily lose much of its pointed-

* As early as one hundred years before the Christian era, the apocryphal book called "The Wisdom of Solomon" appeared, which is still extant in the Greek, purporting to be the production of that monarch. Its style, however, is unlike that of Solomon, and it contains expressions and ideas which tend to prove that it originated in the Alexandrian school. Indeed, from the quotations from the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, it would appear that the author, whoever he may have been, had no desire to pass it off as the composition of that monarch. The Book of Wisdom, however, has justly been admired for the lofty and sublime ideas of the perfections of the Deity which it contains, and for the highly moral tendency of its precepts.

† The Hebrew word בְּשֵׁכִיּוֹת (*mūskiyoth*), which I have rendered by *figures*, occurs in the singular, Ezek. viii. 12, "every man in the chambers of his imagery," which appear from verses 10 and 11 to have been chambers of which the walls were

ness and vigour by translation into any of our modern languages, as their structure cannot admit such brevity of expression. From the following example taken at random, the reader will be able to form some idea of the correctness of what I have stated:

kēlī	lätstsörēph	väyyētsē	mikkāsēph	sīgīm	hāgō
כְּלִי	לְצִנֹּרָה	וַיֵּצֵא	מִכְסָּף	סִיגִים	הָגוֹ
a vessel	for the finer	and there shall go forth	from the silver	the dross	take away

chap. xxv. 4.

It will be perceived that there are only six words in the Hebrew, whilst there are no less than seventeen in the English translation. The following verse has likewise seventeen words in the English version, but only seven in the original:

“Take away the wicked *from* before the king,
And his throne shall be established in righteousness.”

Prov. xxv. 5.

Although almost every nation has its proverbs, yet the people of the east seemed to have had a special fondness for such sententious sayings. With them they appear to have been a favourite mode of instruction, as peculiarly fitted to impress the mind, and imprint the truth more firmly on the memory. The Proverbs of Solomon, however, form a distinct class, altogether unlike those of other nations. The latter, it is true, often inculcate certain rules of conduct or of caution which experience has shown to be useful for some end or purpose. Some of them even convey moral instruction; take for instance the German proverb—

“Unschuld und ein gut Gewissen
Sind ein sanftes Ruhekissen.” i.e.

“Innocence and a good conscience are a soft pillow.”

Still there are many which have quite a contrary tendency, setting forth principles altogether at variance with true religion. As for example—

“Noth hat kein Gebot.” i.e.

“Necessity has no law.”

The Proverbs of Solomon, on the other hand, furnish nothing but

painted with figures of idols to which the idolatrous Israelites paid adoration. It occurs again Levit. xxvi. 1. אֲבֵן מַשְׁכִּית (ēvén māsķith) where it means a stone with the image of an idol. In Numb. xxxiii. 52., it occurs in the plural, when it no doubt means *images* made of wood or stone, (Eng. vers., pictures.) So in the above passage, it means images of silver, artfully worked in the apples of gold to increase their beauty. Some have rendered “apples of gold in baskets of silver,” but as the word מַשְׁכִּית (māsķith) no where occurs in the sense of *basket*, such an interpretation is altogether inadmissible. By the “apples of gold,” we understand such as may have been used as ornaments of dress, or for adorning vessels.

truly wise and holy precepts, calculated to promote both the moral and religious culture of the people. They constitute a mine of divine wisdom, and like a brilliant luminary diffuse their heavenly light. Well might the learned and pious Jerome in advising one of his friends, in regard to the education of his daughter, recommend to have her instructed in the Proverbs of Solomon for godly life.

The book of Proverbs consists of several independent collections. The first ten chapters form an unbroken discourse, the subject of which is almost entirely the praise of wisdom and the blessings it confers on those who diligently seek after it. From chapter x. to chapter xxii. 16, we have a collection of desultory aphorisms on various topics. At chapter xxii. 17, the style again alters, assuming an admonitory tone, with a closer connection of sentences similar to that of the first ten chapters, and continues so to chapter xxv., when the disconnected proverbs recommence. The thirtieth chapter, according to its title, contains the proverbs of another sage: "The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the saying (Engl. ver. "the prophecy") which the men spoke unto Ithiel," &c. The sayings of this sage assume more the form of enigmas, of which the oriental nations were also very fond. In chapter thirty-first we have, "The words of the king Lemuel, the sayings (Engl. ver. the prophecy*) which his mother taught him," and from them we may learn what constituted the virtues of the women of that country and age. This chapter furnishes us also with an acrostic or alphabetical poem, commencing at the tenth verse, the characteristic form of which is, that it consists of twenty-two lines, according to the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the first word of every line commencing with a letter in its order as it stands in the alphabet, so that the first line begins with the letter א (aleph) *a*, the second with ב (beth) *b*, and so on.

* The Hebrew word נִשְׁבָּע (müssä) above rendered 'prophecy' occurs generally in the inscriptions of prophecies, and as many of these are of a threatening nature, the English and some other versions have rendered it by *burden*—as Isaiah xiii. 1. "The burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." See also chap. xiv. 28, chap. xv. 1. But neither the rendering *burden* nor *prophecy* is suitable in Prov. xxx. 1, and xxxi. 1. The word in question is derived from the verb נָשָׂא (näsä) to *lift up*, sometimes with special reference to any thing lifted up or uttered with the voice, as a song; see 1 Chron. xv. 22, "And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites נִשְׁבָּעוּ (hämmüssä) in the song; he instructed נִשְׁבָּעוּ (bümmüssä) in the song, because he was skilful;" so again, verse 27, also a *prophecy, oracle or divine revelation*. And indeed, wherever the word is rendered by *burden* in the inscrip-

As the names Agur and Lemuel do not occur elsewhere in scripture, it is difficult to conjecture who these persons were. The supposition that Lemuel is a name which Solomon had assumed is merely conjecture, there not being the slightest proof to sustain it. On the contrary, we cannot easily conceive why Solomon should have assumed another name just in the last chapter of the book.

The book of Ecclesiastes may be called a sermon in the garb of highly poetic diction. Its text is "Vanity of vanities;* all is vanity:" chap. i. 2.; a fundamental truth, which indeed pervades the whole sacred writ, but is here compressed into few words. Upon this text the preacher enlarges, setting forth his own convictions regarding the uselessness and utter nothingness of all things appertaining to this life, interspersing his discourse here and there with sentences of wisdom and rules of life, and finally concluding his remarks with the brief but comprehensive exhortation: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter—fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it *be* good, or whether it *be* evil." Chap. xii. 13, 14. As much as to say—from what has been said regarding the vanity of all earthly enjoyments, or things appertaining to this life, the conclusion is, that it is the highest folly for man to set his affections upon them, seeing his life passes away like a shadow; but rather, let him fear God and keep his commandments; by which alone he may secure that happiness in the life to come, which endureth for ever.

The Hebrew name of this book is קהלת (koleleth) i. e. *a preacher*, by which title Solomon is denoted—"The words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem." Chap. i. 1. The name Ecclesiastes in the English version is merely a transcript of the Greek word Ἐκκλησιαστής from the Septuagint version, also signifying *a preacher*. It has been contended by many interpreters that Solomon cannot be the author of this book, inasmuch as words occur

tions of prophecies, one or other of these words would be more suitable, as the prophecies with which this word is found, in their inscriptions are not always of a threatening nature; some of them rather importing good. At any rate, the sense would be more clearly conveyed and better understood by every class of readers. It signifies also a *saying* or *maxim*, as in the two passages of Proverbs above referred to.

* Vanity of vanities, i. e. the most excessive vanity. This is one of the modes of forming the superlative degree in the Hebrew language, viz., by placing a noun in construction with one of the same kind in the plural. So "a servant of servants," i. e. a servant of the lowest class. Gen. ix. 26.

in it which tend to prove that it must have been written at a later period than that of Solomon, but no one has, as yet, attempted to show who is to be considered the real author. So far, on this point, we have nothing but conjectures. De Wette dismisses the subject very briefly, merely stating, "By a fiction, Solomon is introduced here as speaking."—*Introd. to the Old Test.* § 283. Professor Kurtz is somewhat more explicit, he says: "The name of the author cannot be ascertained. It is an error to suppose that he professes to be king Solomon himself; it is rather his purpose to introduce the reader, by means of poetic imagery, to an assembly in which the wise Solomon (as a representative of wisdom and the author of the proverbial mode of instruction) expresses his views respecting the problems of this life."—*Manual of Sacred History*, § 110. The supposition of Augusti is somewhat more novel. This writer maintains that Solomon merely appears in the character of *a man deceased*, or a ghost.

The supposition, on the contrary, that Solomon was really the author of it, is at least based upon something more substantial than mere conjecture. In the first place, the title of the book explicitly declares him to be the author, and this positive statement ought not, in my opinion, to be set aside merely because there are a few foreign words introduced into the book. Secondly, the affinities of Ecclesiastes in thought and style with the book of Proverbs are so marked, as to leave hardly any doubt that they are both the production of one author. Thirdly, several passages in the book agree with no other person than that prince, as chap. i. 12., chap. vii. 25, 26, 27, chap. xii. 9, &c. Fourthly, tradition and the common opinion of the ancients declare Solomon to be the author.

Every Hebrew scholar must admit that there occur in the book of Ecclesiastes not only words which are not found in the writings belonging to the golden age of Hebrew literature, but likewise also Chaldaisms. Thus, we find זמן (s'man) chap. iii. 1, *time*, for עת (eth) *time*, גומאץ (gumats) *a pit*, for בור (bor) *a pit*, הַבֵּל (häväl) *vanity*, for הֶבֶל (hevel) *vanity*. Their number has, however, been greatly exaggerated; the mighty mountain, on a closer inspection, after all turns out but a small hill, which no ordinary Hebrew scholar need be afraid to ascend, though he may not have the assistance of the Chaldee and Syriac to aid him. I am

altogether at a loss to see what should have so "greatly puzzled" Dr. Clark. One of the peculiarities which occur very frequently in Ecclesiastes, and which are said to point to a later origin of that book, is the prefix שֶׁ (she), the fragment of the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר (ăshĕr) *which*. The same peculiarity, however, is found in the books of Judges, Job, and the Canticles.

The Song of Solomon is justly entitled שִׁיר הַשְּׁשִׁירִים (shĭr hashshĭrĭm) lit. Song of Songs, i.e., the most exquisite or most excellent song. Its great poetical merit, its depth of thought and richness of sentiment, render this name highly appropriate. In perusing this beautiful literary gem, we feel ourselves transported as it were into a fairy land, with silvery fountains and rippling rivulets, with mountains of myrrh and hills of frankincense, with blooming gardens and fruitful orchards, with an azure sky and balmy breeze; where the fleet roe and young hart gambol upon the mountain of spices, and where the woods resound with the carrol of birds and the cooing of the turtle dove.

There exists a diversity of opinion among commentators as to what gave rise to this song, but that which has been advanced by Origen (who regards it as an epithalamium, or marriage song) in the preface to his commentary on this book, is unquestionably the most plausible. This opinion has been adopted by many learned divines, and among those by the learned Bishop Lowth, who remarks, "The Song of Songs," for so it is called, either on account of the excellence of the subject or of the composition, is an epithalamium or nuptial dialogue, or rather, if we may be allowed to give it a title more agreeable to the genius of the Hebrews, a Song of Loves. Such is the title of Psalm xlv. It is expressive of the utmost fervour as well as delicacy of passion, it is instinct with all the spirit and sweetness of affection. The principal characters are Solomon and his bride, who are represented speaking both in dialogue, and in soliloquy, when accidentally separated. Virgins, also, the companions of the bride, are introduced, who seem to be constantly on the stage, and bear a part in the dialogue. Mention is also made of young men, friends of the bridegroom, but they are mute persons. This is exactly conformable to the manners of the Hebrews, who had always a number of companions to the bridegroom, thirty of whom were present in honour of Samson at his nuptial feast. (Judg. xiv.

11.) In the New Testament, according to the Hebrew idiom, they are called children or sons of the bridechamber, and friends of the bridegroom. There, too, we find mention of the virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom and conduct him home; which circumstances indicate that this poem is founded on the nuptial rites of the Hebrews, and is expressive of the forms or ceremonial of their marriage." But whilst the whole strain of the poem clearly shows it to be a nuptial song, yet under the guidance of divine inspiration it was so constructed as to form a mystical allegory representing the relation subsisting between the Lord and His church, as His bride. There are several considerations which render an allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon imperative. First, its admission among the canonical books of the Old Testament; for it can hardly be supposed that a book treating merely of earthly love would have found a place among the inspired writings. Secondly, both the Old and New Testament abound with bridal and nuptial terms referring more or less pointedly to the relation of the Lord to His church. As Isaiah liv. 5; Jerem. ii. 2, iii. 1, &c.; Ezek. xvi. 8-14, and xxiii; Hosea ii. 19-20; Matt. ix. 15; John iii. 29; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Eph. v. 23-27; Rev. xix. 7, xxi. 2, xxii. 17. Thirdly, the forty-fifth Psalm, which is one of the Messianic Psalms, bears in its character a striking resemblance to the Song of Solomon, and is called "a song of loves." Fourthly, it has been well observed, that "the native soil of all compositions of the Hebrews, is religion, namely, the theocracy." Fifthly, some of the images employed in the book absolutely require an allegorical interpretation, as for example: "Thou *art* beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners." Chap. iv. 4. The beauty (i.e. excellence) of the church is compared to Tirzah and Jerusalem. The former was an ancient Canaanitish city, beautifully situated, which Jeroboam made the capital of his kingdom, and it remained so until Omri built Samaria; the latter is the world-renowned capital of the Jews. The final triumph of the church is beautifully compared to a victorious army with its waving banners. A literal application of this passage to the bride of Solomon must at best be awkward and far-fetched. Both the ancient and modern Jews have adopted an allegorical interpretation of this book, although they differ in their applications. According to the Chaldee paraphrast the poem contains a figurative description of the merciful and gracious dealings of God towards His people. Aben Ezra

maintains that the Song of Solomon represents the history of the Jews from Abraham to the Messiah. Other Jewish writers consider Wisdom, with which Solomon was acquainted from his youth, and with whose beauty he was captivated, as personified in or by the bride. All sound Christian commentators, from the time of Origen to the present day, have regarded the book as containing a divine allegory, and understand it to be descriptive of the union of Christ and His church.

We may also observe here that it has been a common practice among the Oriental nations from a very early period to express religious sentiments allegorically under the garb of amatory poems, of which the Gita-govinda* affords an example. Even at the present day the Egyptian Arabs sing religious love-songs at their festivals, in which Mahommed is the beloved subject, and which are intended to have only a spiritual sense. Mr. Lane has translated several passages to show the great similarity of these songs to that of Solomon. He further states, "Finding that songs of this description are extremely numerous, and almost the only poems sung at Zikrs; † that they are composed for this purpose, and intended only to have a spiritual sense, (though certainly not understood in such a sense by the generality of the vulgar); I cannot entertain any doubt as to the design of Solomon's Song."—*Lane's Modern Egyptians*, vol. II., pages 196 and 197.

An ancient father of the church has very pertinently remarked, "that Isaiah deserved the name of an evangelist rather than a prophet." Indeed this "Prince of Prophets," as some divines denominate him, has with such precision and clearness described events that were to come to pass in the most distant times, that his predictions resemble more histories of by-gone occurrences than

* Gita-govinda (which is one of the names of Christna) is a beautiful and popular pastoral drama by the celebrated Hindoo poet Jajadéva, who flourished about A.D. 120. The subject of this poem is "the loves of Christna and Radha," or the reciprocal attraction between the Divine goodness and the human soul. A very accurate edition of the original text, with notes, and a Latin translation, edited by Lassen, was published at Bonn, in 1836. An English translation was published by Sir William Jones, in the third volume of the Asiatic Researches.

† The performance of the Zikrs is the repetition of Allah, i.e. *the name of God*, or the profession of his unity, &c. Those who perform it bow the head and body each time they pronounce the name, alternately to the right and the left. It is sometimes performed by a great many durweeshes, who then form a ring and move round in a circle, exclaiming over and over again, Allah, bowing the head and body each time. During the performance of Zikrs they sing also religious love-songs. The Zikrs is frequently performed during private festivities.

prophecies that were only to transpire after a lapse of centuries. The style, too, of this divine writer has been universally admired as the most perfect model of sublimity. The uniform grandeur, the lofty diction, the richness of figure, the depth of thought, which pervade the whole book of Isaiah, require that it should not only be carefully read, but diligently studied, in order to be properly understood, and its beauties fully appreciated. Thus, for instance, when we read, chap. vii. 18, 19: "And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* the Lord shall whistle to (Eng. ver. "hiss for") the fly which *is* in the uppermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all the thorns, and upon all the pastures." (Eng. ver. "bushes.") It must not be understood that the land was to be afflicted by flies and bees, which for that purpose were called from Egypt and Assyria, for we should in vain look in the Jewish history for the fulfilment of this prophecy—no such occurrence being recorded therein. No—the Prophet, by a bold but appropriate figure, compares here the Egyptian armies that were to invade Judea to the flies, which the marshy grounds of Egypt produce in abundance; and the Assyrian armies to bees, which are said to abound in that country. The metaphor, "he will whistle," is taken from the practice of those who kept bees, and who were accustomed to draw them out of their hives into the fields, and lead them back again by a whistle. Virgil states, that bells and timbrels were also used for that purpose. The expression further indicates the great control which Jehovah exercises over the enemies of Judea. It requires but a whistle, and behold swiftly they come to execute his judgment. Again, when it is said, chap. xiii. 19, 20, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." It must not be supposed that all this was actually to take place when Babylon, against which this oracle is directed, was to be destroyed, for assuredly we should again in vain look in history for a literal accomplishment. This is merely figurative language, which the Hebrew poets employ in depicting the overthrow and destruction of kingdoms, or any great political

revolution. In like manner they depict, by a contrary figure, the restoration or prosperity of kingdoms, states, and princes. In those cases, the sun, moon, and stars are represented as shining with increased splendour, and never setting; the moon becomes like the meridian sun, and the sun's light is augmented sevenfold. See ch. xxx. 26.

When we cast a glance at the pictures which the book of Isaiah contains, we are lost in astonishment and admiration at the diversity of subjects which they present, as well as their life-like and natural delineations. They form one grand panorama, the scenes of which the mind never becomes weary of contemplating. But it was neither the eloquence nor the power of delineation with which Isaiah was so highly gifted, that procured for him the epithet of "Prince of Prophets," but rather the fact, that his prophetic eye scanned the vista of futurity with greater precision than any other of the inspired writers. When he foretells, chap. vii. 8, the entire depopulation of the kingdom of Israel, so that it should cease to be a distinct people, he tells the precise time when that event should take place. This prophecy had its literal fulfilment in Esarhaddon carrying away the remainder of the ten tribes that had been left by Tiglath Pileser and Shalmaneser. In describing, chap. x. 28-32, the march of Senacherib's army against Jerusalem, although by an unusual route and attended with great difficulty, he mentions with marked precision, the very places through which they should pass. It is probable that Senacherib chose this very route, although round about and by no means easy for the march of an army, in the hope of surprising the city.

But in none of the prophecies has Isaiah been so fully explicit, as in those which refer to that happy and glorious event, the coming of the Messiah. For this he may well be called the proto-Evangelist, as if we combine the various prophecies contained in the book relating to the Messiah, we obtain a complete gospel.

According to an ancient tradition, Isaiah suffered martyrdom in the reign of king Manasseh, who caused him to be sawn in two. This tradition has been retained by most of the fathers of the church, and the Church of Rome has set apart the sixth of July in her calendar in commemoration of it. The tradition is somewhat confirmed by 2 Kings xxi. 16, where it is said, "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another;" and by Josephus, who states, that "he barbarously

slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews, nor would he spare the prophets." (Ant. b. x., ch. iii. par. 1.) It is not unlikely that St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews also alludes to this when he says: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword."—Chap. xi. 37.

The writings of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets, are all highly poetical; but having already trespassed beyond the limits which had been assigned to this essay, we must, though very reluctantly, refrain from noticing each book separately, and proceed to offer a few remarks on the characteristics of Hebrew poetry.

The learned have expended not a little labour and ingenuity in endeavoring to solve the problem, as to what constitutes Hebrew poetry. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* b. ii., chap. iii. p. 4.; b. iv. chap. viii. p. 44.; b. vii. chap. xii. p. 3.) there are to be found in some of the poetical writings of the Old Testament, both hexameter and tetrameter verses. Philo likewise asserts that Moses was acquainted with metre. These positive statements, coming from such ancient sources, induced Gomarus, Grave and many others, to institute a search for those characteristic attributes of the Hebrew muse. But all their endeavours to discover either metre or rhyme proved unsuccessful; and well it might, for they were in fact seeking for a thing which never existed. "The ground of difference," as a writer has well remarked, "observable between the poetry of other nations and that of the Hebrews, lies in the fact that the prosodies of the former prescribe certain strict and undeviating limits, within which the poet is compelled to move in the expression of his feelings; such as the length of the verses, the arrangement of the syllables composing them according to quantity, the place of the cesura, &c., to which moderns have added the regular recurrence of like endings, or rhymes. The sacred Hebrew muse, on the contrary, maintaining her primitive simplicity, lays down no arbitrary laws of versification with which to fetter the genius of the poet; she requires of her votary neither more nor less than that he should find himself in that state of excited and exalted feeling which is necessary to the production of all genuine poetry, and possess the power of delineating his emotions with truth and vigour."

It is true that we meet with some isolated passages which appear to rhyme, as for instance, Psalm lxxii. 10.

yashivū	minchah	v'iyim	tharshish	malchē
יָשִׁיבוּ	מִנְחָה	וַאֲיִים	תַּרְשִׁישׁ	מַלְכֵי
yakrivū	eshkar	us'vā	sh'vā	malehē
יִקְרִיבוּ	אֶשְׁכָּר	וּסְבָא	שֶׁבָא	מַלְכֵי

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents.

The Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

See also Isaiah i. 25, 29; Prov. vi. 1, 2; Job vi. 9; and so in a few other places.

These apparent rhymes are however only produced accidentally, arising as will be seen from the pronominal suffixes of the last words. Even in the witty reply of Samson, in which rhyme was probably intended, the similarity of sound in the last syllable of each line is the necessary result of the pronominal suffixes.

בְּעֵגְלָתִי	חֵרְשָׁתְּךָ	לֹא
חֵידָתִי	מִצְאָתְךָ	לֹא

Lūlē chārāshtēm b'ēglāthī
Lō m'tsāthēm chidāthī

If ye had not ploughed with my heifer,
Ye had not found out my riddle.

Judges, xiv. 18.

But although it is certain that neither metre nor rhyme are to be found in Hebrew poetry, the reader cannot be at a loss to distinguish readily the poetical from the prose writings. There is a certain style prevailing the former, which unmistakably shows them to be compositions altogether of a grander and more elevated order. This style, which forms the chief characteristic of the sacred poetry of the Old Testament, is *parallelism*, and has its existence, not as an embellishment like the artificial decorations of metre and rhyme in the poetry of other nations, but as the natural and inseparable accompaniment of genuine poetry. Hence we find this style already employed in the very infancy of the human race, as may be seen from the address of Lamech to his wives.

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice,
Wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech!
If I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt:
If Cain shall be avenged seven times
Then Lamech seventy times seven.

Gen. iv. 23, 24.

Here it will be perceived that in the second, fourth and sixth lines the same sentiments are expressed as in the first, third and fifth, the language only being varied.

The various kinds of parallelism have generally been reduced into three classes, namely, *synonymous*, *antithetic* and *synthetic*; but these are hardly sufficient to embrace the infinite variety of construction which exists in Hebrew poetry. Still as this arrangement is the one generally adopted, and as it will suffice to give the reader an idea of the principal forms which are met with, we shall retain it here.

I. *Synonymous Parallelism*. To this class belong the following varieties, namely—

Those in which the idea of the first clause is repeated in the second, the language being merely slightly altered, as

How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?
And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied?
Balaam's prophecy, Numb. xxiii. 8.

Jehovah, what is man, that thou knowest (i.e. carest for) him?
And the son of man, that thou regardest him?

Psalm cxliv. 3.

For affliction cometh not out of the dust,
And trouble springeth not out of the ground.
Job v. 6.

Happy is the man *that* findeth wisdom,
And the man *that* getteth understanding.
Prov. iii. 13.

For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye* have desired,
And they shall blush for the gardens which ye have chosen.
Isaiah i. 29.

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood,
And establisheth a city by iniquity.

Hab. ii. 12.

Sometimes the idea expressed in the first clause, is repeated twice, thus forming a stanza of three lines, as

Let them be ashamed and confounded together who seek my life to destroy it.
Let them be driven back and made ashamed who wish me evil.
Let them be desolate in reward of their shame who say to me, Aha, Aha!
Psalm xl. 15, 16.

More frequently, however, the two first lines only are *synonymous*, whilst in the third the idea is more fully developed, as

* In the change of person in the above passage, namely, from the *third* to the *second* person, we have an example of the bold figure of speech called by grammarians *enallage personarum*, which the prophets often employ to give additional force to their declarations and exhortations. Sometimes there is also a change from the *third* to the first person, as "And he shall bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness from among thee"—Exod. xxiii. 25. So we find also the change from the *first* person to the *third*, as "And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state he shall pull thee down." Isaiah xxii. 19.

Thy righteousness is like great mountains; (lit. mountains of God.)
 Thy judgments like a great deep;
 Man and beast thou helpest, Jehovah.

Psalm xxxvi. 7. (Eng. ver. verse 6.)
 And he shall eat on the right, and he hungry;
 And devour on the left, and not be satisfied;
 Every one shall devour the flesh of his arm.

Isaiah ix. 19 (Eng. ver. verse 20.)
 Sometimes we meet with stanzas of four lines having a double parallelism, so that the second clause corresponds to the first, and the fourth to the third, as

God is not man, that he should lie;
 Or the son of man, that he should repent:
 Hath he said, and shall he not do it?
 Or hath he spoken, and shall he not perform it?
 Balaam's prophecy, Numb. xxiii. 19.

Tell it not in Gath,
 Publish it not in the streets of Askelon;
 Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
 Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
 David's elegy, 2 Sam. i. 20.

So we meet likewise with stanzas of six lines, every alternate line forming a parallelism with the one preceeding, as

Therefore as the flame of fire consumeth the stubble,
 And as the ignited grass falls away,
 So their root shall be as rottenness,
 And their blossom shall go up as fine dust:
 For they have rejected the law of Jehovah of Hosts,
 And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah v. 24.

II. *Antithetic Parallelism.* To this class belong those parallelisms in which the second clause contains an opposition of terms and sentiments, to those expressed in the first. This class of parallelism is particularly adapted to all kinds of sententious sayings, hence it occurs very frequently in the Proverbs of Solomon, where it has been employed with marked effect. The degrees of antithesis are various. Sometimes there is an exact contraposition of word to word, as

Faithful | are the wounds | of a friend,
 But deceitful | are the kisses | of an enemy.*
 Prov. xxvii. 6.

They | bow down | and fall,
 But we | rise up | and stand.
 Psalm xx. 9 (Eng. ver. verse 8.)

In like manner we meet with four lines, in which the third stands in antithesis with the first, and the fourth with the second, as

* "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," i.e. sincere are the rebukes of a friend. The Hebrew word נְעִתְרוֹת (nataroth) has been variously rendered. Literally it signifies *abundant*, but is evidently employed in the above passage in an accessory signification, *deceitful*, as the parallelism clearly indicates. So Ewald "falsch," i.e. *false*.

If ye shall be willing and obey,
The good of the land ye shall eat;
But if ye shall refuse and rebel,
By the sword ye shall be consumed.

Isaiah i. 19, 20.

More frequently, however, the contraposition of word to word does not extend throughout the sentence, as

Righteousness exalteth a nation:
But sin is a reproach to a people.

Prov. xiv. 34.

Here the two last terms, "nation," "people," are not antithetic but synonymous terms.

Sometimes we meet with stanzas of four lines, of which the two last stand in antithesis with the two preceding, as

The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass the crib of his master;
Israel doth not know me,
My people doth not consider.

Isaiah i. 3.

III. *Synthetic Parallelism.* To this class belong those in which the parallelism merely consists in the similar form of construction, and where the writer, after having expressed an idea, keeps it constantly in view, whilst he dilates upon it. As Job iii. 3-9.

Let the day perish wherein I was born,
And the night in which it was said, a man-child is conceived.
Let that day be darkness:
Let God not regard it from above;
Nor let light shine upon it, &c.

Here the idea expressed in the two first lines is constantly kept in view in the subsequent verses. Another beautiful example of this kind of parallelism we have in Ecclesiastes xii. 1-7.

1. But remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
While as yet the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.
 2. While the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be not darkened,
And the clouds return after the rain.
 3. In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men bow themselves down,
And the grinders cease because they have become few,
And those that look out of the windows be darkened.
 4. And the door shall be shut in the street,
When the sound of the mill is low;
And he shall rise up at the voice of the sparrow,
And all the daughters of song shall be brought low.
 5. Also for a height they are afraid, and terrors are in the way;
And the almond is rejected, and the locust becomes a burden, and the
[caper-berry fails.
- For man goes to his long home,
And the mourners go about the street.

6. Before the silver cord be loosed,
And the golden bowl be broken,
And the bucket be broken at the fountain,
And broken the wheel at the cistern.
7. And the dust return to the earth as it was:
And the spirit to God who gave it.*

* For an explanation of the first five lines, see Introduction, page 22. "The keepers of the house," are the two hands, which are properly so called, as they are employed to ward off any danger that may threaten the body. "And the strong men," are the legs and feet which carry the body. The legs through the relaxing of the muscles in old age bend at the knees, the weight of the body being too heavy for them. The Hebrew term **אֲשֵׁר חַיִּיל** (aushe chayil) denotes *men of strength*, *men of valour*, hence also *men of war*, i.e. warriors. Now as those who possessed great strength in the legs and feet were considered among the best warriors or strong men, the feet and legs themselves are here metaphorically called "strong men." "The grinders cease," i.e. the teeth which in old age become few. "Those that look out of the windows are darkened," are plainly the eyes. The eye-lashes are here compared to windows, or rather to the lattice-work of the windows, which is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word **אֲרֻבּוֹת** (arubboth). Lattice-work being employed in the east instead of glass, the literal rendering would be *those that look out through the lattice windows.* This figure obtains additional beauty and becomes more strikingly appropriate when we consider that in Hebrew, the *apple of the eye* is called **בַּת עַיִן** (bath ayin) i.e. *daughter of the eye*, or **אִשְׁשׁוֹן עַיִן** i.e. *little man of the eye.* "And the door shall be shut in the street." The door evidently means the lips, which form the door of the mouth. For a similar expression, see Psalm cxli. 3; Michah vii. 5.—"Keep the doors of thy mouth." The street is mentioned merely to show that the outside door is meant. "Are shut," when the teeth are gone the lips become compressed. "When the sound of the mill is low." As the teeth are in the preceding verse, called "grinders," it follows that the mill itself must be the mouth. "And he shall rise up at the voice of the sparrow." This expresses the restlessness of old age. In the east, it is a common practice both with the young and old to rise with the dawn. Some render the passage "it rises to the voice of the sparrow," i.e. it attains to the voice of the sparrow, which is very feeble, referring it to the feeble voice of the aged. But I think that although the voice generally becomes feeble in old age, still it would be somewhat excessive to compare it to the chirping of a bird. "Daughters of the song," is merely a poetic expression for *song*. So "daughters of Jerusalem," i.e. inhabitants of Jerusalem—"Daughters of Tyre," i.e. inhabitants of Tyre. And so in the Talmud **בַּת קוֹל** (bāth kol) lit. the daughter of the voice, i.e. simply *the voice.* The loss of the voice is the natural result from the loss of the teeth and the falling in of the lips. "For a height they are afraid," i.e. they have an aversion to ascend high places, being too fatiguing. "And terrors are in the way," i.e. they are in constant dread of falling, their eyesight having grown dim, and their legs become enfeebled. Hence the cautious and slow gait of old people. "And the almond is rejected." The rejection of this delicate and once favourite fruit arises from the loss of the teeth, the old being no longer able to masticate it. The English version has rendered this passage "and the almond tree shall flourish," as likewise the Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate versions, which would refer to the white hairs, here compared to the profuse white flowers of the almond tree. This figure is rendered still more appropriate by the fact, that this tree is the first which wakes from its winter slumber, hence called in Hebrew **שִׁקְקָה** (shakeh) i.e. *the waker*, and from its blossoming in Palestine in January, so that the hoary hairs of the winter of life form a beautiful similitude with the winter blossoms of the almond tree. Gesenius's objection to this comparison, "that the flower of the almond tree is not white, but rose-coloured," is altogether trifling, since white by far predominates in the blossom,

Another characteristic of Hebrew poetry, is *gradation*, i.e. where every succeeding expression is heightened in force, as

He sitting in the heavens shall laugh :
The Lord shall deride them.
Then he shall speak unto them in his anger,
And in his wrath he shall confound them.

Here it will be observed, at first God is represented as merely *smiling* at the designs of the kings of the earth, then as *deriding* them, then as *speaking* to them, or as it would be more literally rendered as *earnestly speaking* to them, and lastly as *confounding* them. Psalm ii. 4, 5.

Frequently too we find two definite numbers employed, the second being greater than the first in order to express an indefinite number, as

In six troubles he shall deliver thee :
And in seven no evil shall touch thee.

Job v. 19.

Give a portion to seven, and also to eight ;
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

Eccles. xi. 2.

and when viewed from a little distance, the rose-coloured tinge is scarcely visible. My reason for adopting a different rendering is entirely founded upon philological grounds. The Hebrew word שָׁקַד (shaked) denotes both an almond tree, see Jer. i. 11, and an almond nut, see Gen. xliii. 11, so that either rendering would do so far as this word is concerned. Not so, however, with the verb יָנַעַץ (yanets) which is the future *hiphil* of the verb נָאָץ (nā'ats) which signifies to *despise*, to *deride*, to *reject*, but never to *blossom*, in which case either the verb פָּרַח (pārāch), see Hab. iii. 17; Gen. xl. 10, or the verb נָנַץ (nūts), see Cant. vi. 11., would have been employed. Besides, the rendering which I have given agrees better with the context. "And the locust becomes a burden." The species of locust denoted by חָגָב (chagav) is according to Lev. xi. 22, permitted to be eaten. It is said that it is even to this day brought into the market for sale, and that the hard shelled ones resemble in taste the crawfish, and are regarded as a great delicacy. Diodorus Siculus speaks of a people of Ethiopia who were so fond of them that they were called *Acridophagi*, i.e. *eat-ers of locusts*. The sense of the text then is, that the most delicious viands become a burden to the old man, whose appetite fails, or who cannot digest them. "And the caper-berry fails." The caper-berry is said to be a provocative of appetite and lust, and was used as a stimulant. But even this fails to produce its usual results. At verse 6, commences another exhortation, and we must therefore supply from the first verse—Remember thy creator—Before the silver cord be loosed. "The silver cord," i.e. (the nervous system) made of silver threads, means the chain by which "the golden bowl," i.e. the lamp of life is suspended, which is here represented to fall to the ground, when the cord by which it hangs is loosed and is broken in pieces. "And the bucket be broken at the fountain, and broken the wheel at the cistern." The same idea is here repeated under a different figure. When such mishaps befall the water apparatus, no more water is to be had; so likewise when the apparatus for breathing is broken, the breath must necessarily cease.

There is still another gradation which we frequently meet with, and which consists in a thought or idea that has just been expressed being again taken up and more fully carried out, as

CURSE YE Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
CURSE YE bitterly its inhabitants;
FOR THEY CAME NOT TO THE HELP OF THE LORD,
TO THE HELP OF THE LORD against the mighty.
of Deberah, Judg. v. 28.

GOD OF VENGEANCE, Jehovah;
GOD OF VENGEANCE, shine forth!
Psalm xciv. 1.

We have yet to notice another characteristic of Hebrew poetry, and that is, *the use of certain words which are only found in the poetical writings, and for which others are employed in the prose compositions.* As for example, מַלְלָה (mǝllāh) *a word* in poetry; דָּבָר (dāvār) *a word* in prose; אֲנוּשׁ (ǝnōsh) *a man*, poetry; אָדָם (ādam) *a man*, prose. אָתָּה (āthāh) *to come*, poetry; בָּרָא (bō) *to come*, prose, &c.

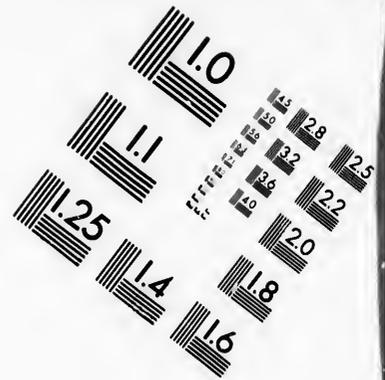
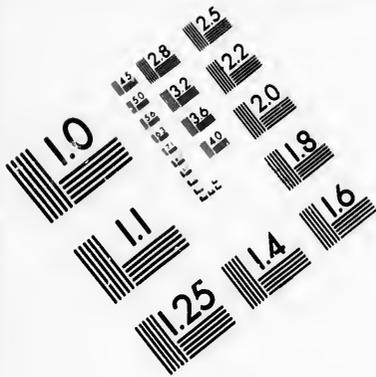
Also the use of certain epithets for substantives, as לְבָנָה (l'vānāh) i.e. *the white*, for the moon, Cant. vi. 10, Isaiah xxiv. 23; in prose always יָרֵחַ (yārēāch) i.e. *the moon*. חַמְמָה (chāmmāh) i.e. *heat*, for the sun, Job xxx. 28; Isaiah xxx. 26; in prose שֶׁמֶשׁ (shēmēsh) i.e. *the sun*, &c.

So likewise the use of the construct plural form with prepositions, as עָלַי (ǝlē) for עַל (ǝl) *upon*. אֶלַי (ǝlē) for אֶל (ǝl) *unto*. עַד (ǝdē) for עַד (ǝd) *until*.

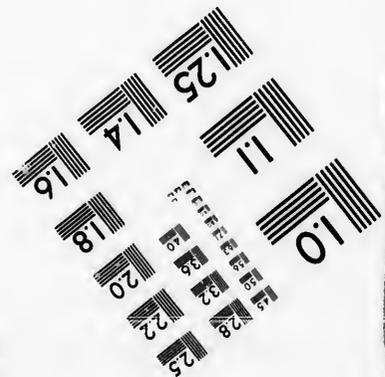
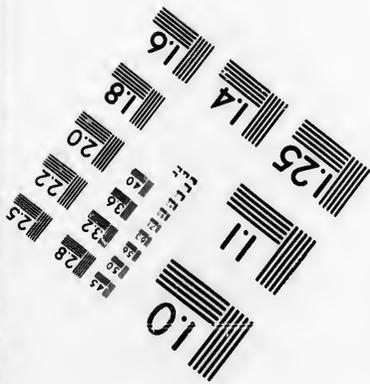
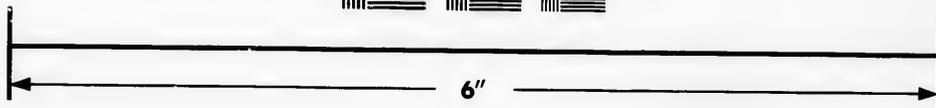
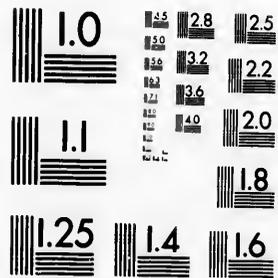
Also the use of the poetical pronominal suffix מוֹ (mō) for הֶם (hēm) *them*. And the Chaldee plural ending יִן (in) instead of יִם (im).

Now all these characteristics of Hebrew poetry exist in the books of the Prophets, as well as in the book of Job, the Psalms and the Proverbs, which are universally admitted to be poetical, and it follows therefore that the former as well as the latter must be written in poetry. It must be from a total disregard of these characteristics, or being misled by the somewhat more sententious and regular form of construction of the lines that exist in Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs, Canticles, Lamentations, and in some of the isolated poems of the Old Testament, that so many entertain the erroneous idea that the prophetic books were written in prose.





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Before concluding this essay, we shall only add a few remarks upon the acrostic or alphabetical poems to which we have already alluded. Of these poems there are twelve extant in the Old Testament, viz., Psalms xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix., cxlv; Prov. xxxi., verses 10-31; Lament. i., ii., iii., iv., and their form is: they consist of twenty-two lines or stanzas, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and every line or stanza beginning with each letter in regular order as it stands in the alphabet. Thus the first line begins with א *a*, the second with ב *b*, &c. Of these, some, however, are more perfect than others, as Psalms cxi. and cxii., and Lament. iii. The two first consist of ten stanzas each, every stanza having two lines, except the two last, which contain three lines each, thus making up the number twenty-two. As in the Hebrew Bible, the stanzas are not divided into lines; we shall subjoin here the two first verses of Psalm cxi. in regular lines, which will serve as a guide.

אֹרְחָה יְהוָה בְּכָל-לֵבִי *a*
 בְּסוֹד יְשׁוּרִים וְעֵדָה: *b*
 גְּדֹלִים מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה *g**
 דְּרוֹשִׁים לְכָל-הַפְּצִיחָם: *d*

It will be seen that the accent (˘) (athnach) marks the end of the first line of each stanza, and (.) (silluk) the close of the second. In the last two verses which each contain three lines, the (·) (r'via) marks the end of the first. The third of the perfect alphabetical poems, viz., Lament. iii. consists of twenty-two stanzas of three lines each, as

1st Stanza.

אֲנִי הַגִּבּוֹר רִאֵה עֵינֵי בְּשׁוֹבֵט עֵבְרָתוֹ: *a*
 אֹרְחָה יְהוָה וַיִּלְךָ חֶשֶׁךְ וּלְאֵ-אֹר: *a*
 אֵךְ בִּי יָשׁוּב יְהַפֹּךְ יְדוֹ כָּל-הַיּוֹם: *a*

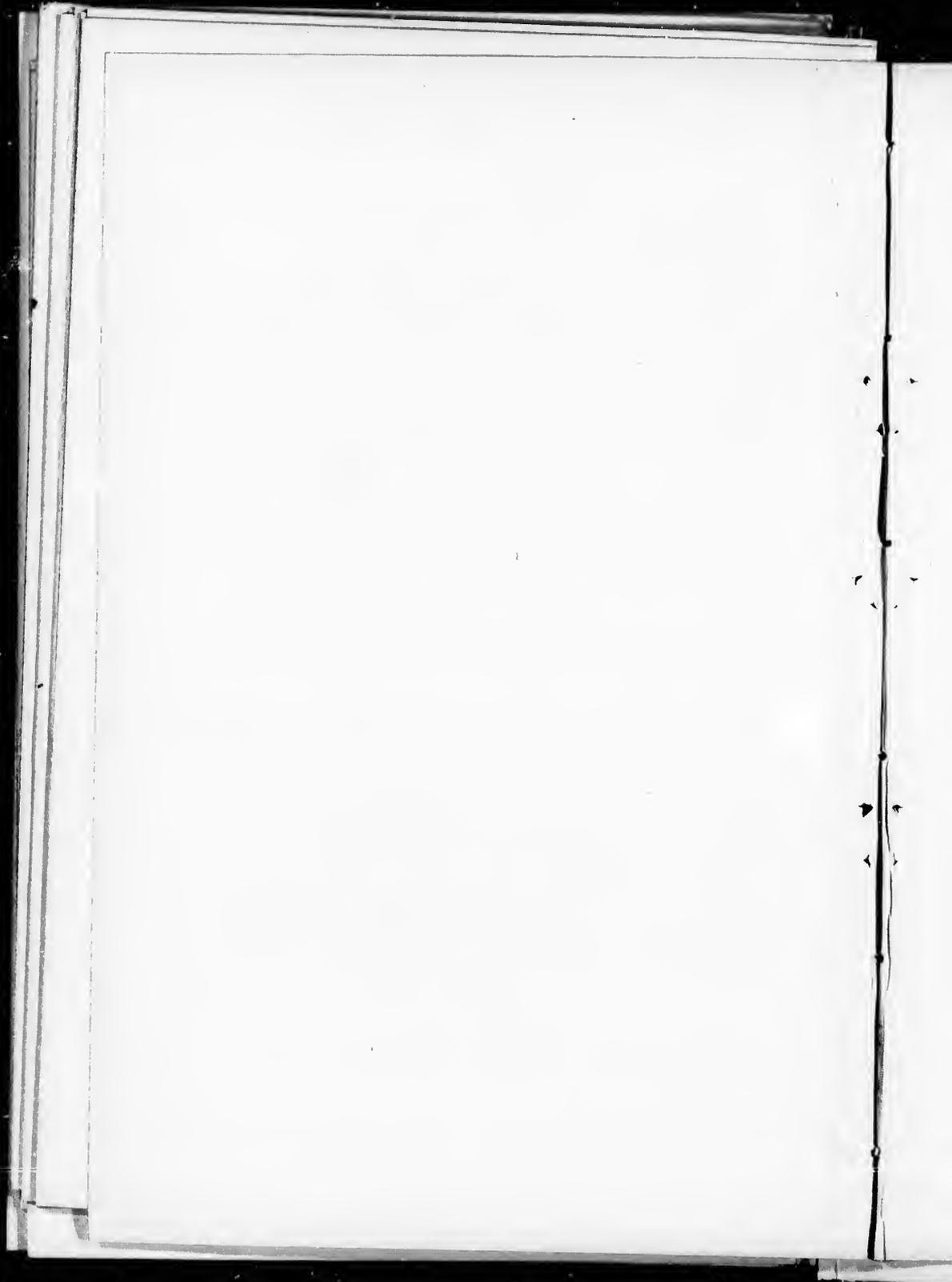
2nd Stanza.

בְּלֵחָה בְּשָׂרֵי יַעֲזוּרֵי שִׁבְרֵי עֲצָמוֹתַי *b*
 בְּקֶחַח עָלַי וַיִּנְקַח רֵאשִׁית וְהִלְאָח: *b*
 בְּמִתְחַשְׁפִּים הוֹשִׁיבֵנִי כִּמְתֵי עוֹלָם: *b*

* The third letter in the Hebrew alphabet is *g* and not *c* as in the English.

In these perfectly alphabetical poems the lines in each poem are strikingly equal to one another in length, and scarcely less so in the number of words.

The other nine poems are less perfect in their structure. In them the stanzas only are marked with initial letters. Psalm cxix. is divided into twenty-two divisions each containing eight stanzas of two lines, and all the stanzas of each division are marked by the same initial, so that the eight stanzas of the first division begin with א (aleph) *a*, and those of the second with ב (beth) *b*, &c. Psalm xxv., xxxiv. (beginning at the second verse), and cxlv., Prov. xxxi. (beginning at the tenth verse), and Lament. iv. consist of stanzas of two lines each; Lamentations i. and ii. of stanzas of three lines, and Psalm xxxvii. of stanzas of four lines. There exist, however, irregularities in the latter eight poems, which may be imputed to the carelessness of the transcribers, or to the fact of not being able to find a word beginning with the letter required. Hence we find that sometimes a letter was missed or repeated. Thus, for example, in Psalm xxv. there is no stanza beginning with ב (beth) *b*, unless we regard the word אֱלֹהַי (ēlōhai) i.e. *O my God*, as originally belonging to the first verse. The next word בְּחַי (b'chā) would then afford the letter required. Or we may suppose, with Rosenmüller and others, that the word אֱלֹהַי (ēlōhāi), like the *interjections* of the Greek tragic writers, was not reckoned with the verse. In this as well as in Psalm xxxiv., there is also no stanza commencing with the letter ו (vav). And in Psalm xxv. there is likewise no stanza beginning with ק (kōph), but two stanzas commence with ר (resh). Again in Psalm xxxvii. there is no stanza beginning with the letter ע (ayin), and the letter צ (tsade) stands before the letter פ (pē). It is difficult to determine the design of this kind of composition. Lowth thinks "that it was intended for the assistance of the memory; and was chiefly employed in subjects of common use, as maxims of morality, and forms of devotion," and in this supposition he probably may be correct.



NEW TRANSLATION OF GENESIS XLIX.,

WITH CRITICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. *And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, gather yourselves together, and I will declare to you that which shall befall you in future days.*

2. *Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and harken to Israel your father.*

Jacob had now dwelt seventeen years in the land of Goshen, (a tract of country lying on the eastern side of the Pelusian arm of the Nile, which Pharaoh had assigned to him and his household, as it abounded with fertile pasture land,) and perceiving that the days of his pilgrimage upon earth were drawing to a close, "*Jacob called unto his sons,*" that is, he sent messengers to the different parts of Goshen where his sons resided, and summoned them before him. The object of the patriarch was not merely to take his last farewell of them, but likewise that he might foretel what should happen to them and their posterity. These gave additional solemnity to this last meeting; they were to receive from the lips of their dying father, to whom God had several times appeared, the prophetic declaration of what should befall them in the days to come. The expression בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים (b'acharith hayyamim), which I have above rendered "*in future days,*" unquestionably refers sometimes to the time of the Messiah and the Gospel dispensation, and in that case is rightly translated, *in the last days*; as Isaiah ii. 2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, the mountain of the house of Jehovah shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it." So Micah iv. 2. But it is likewise used in the sense of *future time* or *future days*, not having reference to any precise or limited time, as Numb. xxiv, 14, "And now, behold, I am going to my people:

come, I will inform thee what this people shall do unto thy people in future days." (English version, "*in the latter days.*") See also, Deut. iv. 30. And so likewise in the passage before us, the context requires the phrase in question to be rendered, *in future days.*

The name יַעֲקֹב (yääkov) i.e. *Jacob*, admits of a twofold derivation, namely, *one that seizes by the heel*, and a *supplanter*, it being derived from the verb עָקַב (äkäv) i.e. *to seize by the heel*, also, *to supplant.*

The former appellation has reference to his having taken hold of the heel of his brother Esau at his birth, and the latter to his supplanting him afterwards. Hence Esau said, "Is it that his name is called (i.e. is his name not rightly called) Jacob? for he supplanted me these two times, my birthright he has taken, and behold, now he taketh my blessing." Gen. xxvii. 36. The appellation יִשְׂרָאֵל

(yisräël) i.e. *Israel*, denotes a *prince* or *warrior of God*, and was the name given by God to Jacob on the occasion of his wrestling with God. See Gen xxxii. 28.

3. *Reuben, my first born art thou,
My might, and the beginning of my strength,
The excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power.*
4. *A boiling up as of water art thou, thou shalt not excel,
For thou ascendedst the bed of thy father,
Then didst thou defile it :
My couch he ascended !*

Reuben, Hebrew רְאוּבֵן (r'üvën) i.e. *see ye a son*, was probably an expression of joy which Leah made use of at the birth of her first born, and which she imposed on the infant as his name. "*My might*," i.e. the child begotten in the full vigour of manhood. "*And the beginning of my strength*;" this expression is nearly of the same import as the preceding, and was employed to denote the first-born, perhaps from the idea of the first-born son possessing more strength than the other children. It is several times found as a parallelism with first-born, as Deut. xxi. 17; Psal. lxxviii. 51.

And he smote all the first-born in Egypt;
The beginning of strength in the tents (i.e. dwellings) of Ham (a name of Egypt).

Also Psalm cv. 36 :

And he smote all the first-born in their land,
All the beginning of their strength.

From these passages it is evident that the phrases, *beginning of strength* and *first-born* are synonymous terms, and the sense of the passage before us is therefore correctly conveyed in the Septuagint in *αρχη τεκνων μου*, i. e. *the beginning of my children*. "*The excellence of dignity, and the excellence of power.*" In the first expression, allusion is evidently made to the priesthood, an honour and prerogative pertaining to the birth-right. The latter expression refers to the rule and government of the family, which likewise devolved upon the first-born, and to the double portion of the inheritance which by right he would have received. Onkelos in his Targum has paraphrased verse 3: "Reuben, my first-born art thou, my might and the beginning of my strength; thou wouldst have received three portions, the birth-right, (i. e. the double portion of the inheritance), the priesthood, and the kingdom." The Jerusalem Targum has rendered it: "And for the sin of my son Reuben, the birth-right is given to Joseph, the kingdom to Judah, and the priesthood to the tribe of Levi." "*A boiling up as of water art thou,*" i. e. thou didst boil up like water with lust, alluding to Reuben's incestuous connexion with his father's concubine Bilhah. See Gen. xxxv. 22. The crime which Reuben had committed was one of the deepest dye, and the pain and grief which the act caused to the pious and aged patriarch, must have been great in the extreme. Such a deed demanded the severest punishment that he could inflict, and consequently he deprives him of his birth-right. "*Thou shalt not excel,*" i. e. thou art cut off from the preëminence which would have belonged to the first-born. How literally was this fulfilled! To Joseph was given the double portion (compare 1 Chron. v. 1, 2); on Levi was conferred the priesthood, (for the tribe of Levi was set apart for the worship of God, and to the family of Aaron was given the right of the priesthood); and Judah obtained the preëminence, as we read 1 Chron. v. 2. "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the prince." The tribe of Reuben never obtained any importance, and made no figure in the history of the nation. It produced neither kings nor heroes, and so far from performing any great exploits, it was reproached by Deborah for the want of courage. See Judges v. 16. At the numbering of the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, the second year after they came out of Egypt, the tribe of Reuben numbered 46,500 adult males, (Num. i. 21.) and accordingly ranked as the seventh in

population; but from the census taken in the plains of Moab, before entering into the land of Canaan (Num. xxiv. 7), it appears that its number had decreased, amounting only to 43,750, which made it the ninth in population. The doom of Reuben ought to serve as a warning, that many pleasures of this world, like some poisonous fruits which often appear attractive and beautiful to the sight, will, when tasted, prove highly injurious, if not altogether fatal to him that allows himself to be enticed by their external appearance.

The conduct of Reuben in regard to Joseph, however, presents to us a brighter picture of his character. When Joseph's brethren conspired to kill him, Reuben intreated them not to shed his blood, but to cast him into a pit, (i.e. a cistern or reservoir dug in the ground, in which rainwater is collected, and of which there are a number to be found in the desert of Arabia, but generally without water), so that he might deliver him from their hands and restore him to his father. When he afterwards returned to the pit and found that Joseph was no more there, he rent his clothes for grief, and going to his brethren, he exclaimed in frantic despair, "The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" i.e. *whither shall I turn myself?* This conduct of Reuben indicates an improved state of mind, and leaves us to hope that he had sincerely repented of his former guilt. He well knew how great a service he would render his father by saving the life of his most dearly beloved son, and thus make at least some amends for the injury he had inflicted on him. It was no doubt in consideration of this laudable conduct, that Moses in his blessings of the twelve tribes (Deut. xxxiii. 6) declared: "Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few." As much as to say, the tribe of Reuben shall exist and not become extinct. Accordingly we find that it received as its inheritance the tract of country now called *Al Belka*, also, by the Arabs *Belad al Kafer*, i.e. *the land of the unbelievers*, because many Christians formerly lived there. Its southern boundary was the river Arnon, which separated it from Moab; to the west it bordered on the Dead Sea; and to the north and east it was bounded by the tribe of Gad.

5. *Simeon and Levi are brethren ;
Instruments of violence are their swords.*
6. *In their council enter not, my soul,
In their assembly do not join, my heart ;*

*For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their wantonness they houghed an ox.*

7. *Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce,
And their wrath, for it was cruel;
I will disperse them in Jacob,
I will scatter them in Israel.*

Simeon, Hebrew שִׁמְעוֹן (shīmōn) i. e. *a hearing*. The reason why he was so called is given in Gen. xxix. 33, "And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the Lord hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon." Levi, Hebrew לֵוִי (lēvī) i. e. *a joining*. Leah had now borne three sons to Jacob, and hoping on that account to gain the affections of her husband, she gives to her son the name *Levi* as expressive of that happy event. "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi." Gen. xxix. 34. "*Simeon and Levi are brethren*," i. e. they not only are children of the same mother, but likewise possess the same wicked character and disposition. This they evinced in their being associated in the treacherous murder of the Shechemites; and, according to the uniform tradition of the Jews, they were the chief instigators of the conspiracy against Joseph. "*Instruments of violence are their swords*." Owing to the Hebrew word מְכַרְתֵּיהֶם (m'cherothem), which I have rendered by *their swords*, occurring only in this place, this passage has been variously translated. The English version has "*instruments of cruelty are in their habitations*," deriving the word from מְכַרְתֵּיהֶם (m'churah), which, however, denotes *birth or nativity*, and not *habitation*. In the margin, the passage is rendered, "*their swords are weapons of violence*," which shews that the translators thought such a rendering admissible, and is precisely the same as I have given. Others derive the word in question from the Arabic or Ethiopic, and attach to it the signification of *consultations*, and read כִּלְיָהֶם (killu) *they accomplished* instead of כְּלֵי (k'lē) *instruments*, the passage would then read *they accomplished the violence of their consultations*. This emendation, although authorised by the Samaritan and Greek versions, the latter having, "*they finished the iniquity of their chosen counsels*," is very forced, and does not convey

a clear meaning. Besides there appears to be a distinct allusion in the passage before us to Gen. xxxiv. 25. "Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males." The rendering which I have adopted is given by Luther, "ihro Schwerter sind mörderische Waffen," i. e. *their swords are violent weapons*, and in this translation he has been followed by Rosenmüller, DeWette and many others. "*In their council enter not, my soul, in their assembly do not join, my heart.*" This refers to the planning of the daring project to kill the Shechemites. The Hebrew word כְּבוֹד (kāvod) i. e. *honour, glory*, is in poetry often employed to denote *the heart, the spirit*, as the noblest part of man; as for instance Psalm xvi. 9, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my spirit rejoiceth." The English version "my glory rejoiceth," does not afford a clear meaning. Hence we find it frequently stand in parallelism with *heart, life* or *spirit*. In the above passage, it is better to render it *heart*, as it stands in parallelism with *soul*. The Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic versions have rendered the verbs in the past tense, for which there is no authority. In the original they have a future form, and as in the Hebrew prohibitions can only be expressed by a verb in the future preceded by the negative particle, the rendering of the English version: "come not thou;" "be not thou united," is not only quite admissible, but is thoroughly in accordance with the poetic style of the chapter. "*For in their anger they slew a man, and in their wantonness they houghed an ox.*" The last clause of this passage is given in the English version: "and in their selfwill they digged down a wall," the translators must have read שֹׁר (shūr) i. e. a *wall*, instead of שׁוֹר (shor) i. e. an *ox*, adopting merely a different pointing of the word from that which exists in the present copies of the Hebrew Bible, in which they have evidently followed the Chaldee, Syriac, and Vulgate versions. There are, however, several objections to this emendation. In the first place, there is no allusion, in the history to which it refers, to the digging down of any wall or to the destruction of the city, it is merely said "they spoiled" (i. e. *plundered*), the city." See Gen. xxxiv. 27. Secondly, the verb עָקַר (ākār) in the *Piel* conjugation occurs only in the sense *to hough, to hamstring*, i. e. to cut the back sinews of the legs of horses by which they are rendered useless, see Josh. xi. 6, 9;

2 Sam. viii. 4; 1 Chr. xviii. 4. It is therefore better to retain the present pointing of the word and render it by *an ox*, which is here employed figuratively to denote a man of distinction, and refers to Hamor the prince of the country, or Shechem his son, whom the two sons of Jacob induced to be circumcised, and whilst thus disabled fell upon them and slew them. We may remark here, that *bulls* in several places in the Old Testament stands figuratively for *nobles* or *great men*, as for example, Psalm xxii. 13, (Eng. version, verse 12,) Psalm lxxviii. 31, (Eng. ver. verse 30.) Many commentators take the nouns (*ish*) i.e. *a man*, and (*shor*) i.e. *a bull* collectively. Some of them explain both to refer to the males of Shechem who were slain, whilst others interpret the first noun only as referring to the male population, and the second to that portion of the cattle which Jacob's sons destroyed, as it was impossible to drive all away. The latter view is unquestionably the most rational, if we translate the words in the plural. "*I will disperse them in Jacob, I will scatter them in Israel,*" i. e. I predict that they shall surely be dispersed. The prophets, in order to give greater force to their declarations, sometimes declare themselves to do what they merely predict will come to pass. So Ezekiel xliii. 3: "When I came to destroy the city," i. e. when I came to prophecy that the city should be destroyed. Sometimes they are represented as performing what they only foretell; as Isaiah vi. 10, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears dull, and close up their eyes; lest they see with their eyes," &c. It must not be understood that the prophet was to do this by an act of his ministry, but merely that he speaks of the event as a fact which would surely happen.

The prophecy of Jacob regarding Simeon and Levi was literally fulfilled. Simeon is not mentioned by Moses in his blessing of the twelve tribes, Deut. xxxiii. The portion which was assigned to this tribe was in the midst of that of the tribe of Judah, for we read, Joshua xix. 9, "Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them; therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them." According to 1 Chron. iv. 41-43, there was an emigration from this tribe, owing probably to the increase of the population of the tribe of Judah, which made those belonging to the tribe of Simeon give way to its superior strength. The tribe of Simeon at the time of the exode, contained 59,300 men able to go forth to

war, see Num. i. 22, 23, according to which it ranked third in number ; but before entering Palestine its number was reduced to 22,200, see Num. xxvi. 14, which made it rank lowest of all the tribes.

In the Jerusalem Targum the passage before us is paraphrased, "I will therefore disperse the tribe of Simeon, that they may become scribes and teachers of the law in the synagogues of Jacob, but the tribe of Levi I will divide, that they may preside in the assemblies among the sons of Israel." The Hebrews were also accustomed to say, that every poor scribe and schoolmaster was a Simeonite.

The descendants of Levi were likewise dispersed among the other tribes, the forty-eight cities which were set apart for them being scattered over the whole land of Canaan, so that in their case also the prophecy of Jacob was fully consummated. The promptness of the sons of Levi in gathering themselves to Moses, when he stood at the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come to me," and the willingness which they evince^d to execute his commands, converted their dispersion into a benefit and blessing, in having the honour of the priesthood bestowed upon them. Exod. xxxii. 26-29.

8. *Judah! thy brethren shall praise thee ;
Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies ;
The children of thy father shall bow down before thee.*
9. *A lion's whelp is Judah :
From the prey, my son, thou hast gone up ;
He bowed, he couched as a lion,
And as a lioness ; who shall rouse him up ?*
10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
And a lawgiver from between his feet
Until Shiloh come ;
And to him shall be the obedience of the nations.*
11. *Binding to the vine his foal,
And his ass's colt to the choice vine ;
He washes in wine his garments,
And in the blood of grapes his vesture.*
12. *Sparkling are his eyes from wine,
And white are his teeth from milk.*

יְהוּדָה (y'hūhah) i.e. *Judah* was the fourth son of Jacob by Leah, the name signifies *praise*, derived from the verb יָדָה (yādāh) i.e. *to praise*. The reason why he was so called is given in Gen. xxix. 35, "And she conceived again and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah." "*Thy brethren shall praise thee*;" that is, they shall acknowledge thee as their superior, and honour thee for the high distinctions conferred upon thee. From Judah descended the royal house of David, and he was the progenitor, according to the flesh, of the Messiah whose kingdom and power endureth for ever. Some commentators render the passage, "Thou art Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee," as if allusion were made to the signification of the name. The meaning would then be, *Thy name is Judah*, that is, *praise*, and *thy brethren shall praise thee*. In this manner the learned Aben Ezra has interpreted the passage, "*Judah art thou*, according to thy name, and thus thy brethren shall praise thee." Certainly as the personal pronoun אַתָּה (attāh) *thou*, occurs in the text as well as the pronominal suffix הָ (cha) i.e. *thee*, with the verb, the rendering *Judah art thou*, is quite admissible. Jacob unquestionably alludes to the meaning of his son's name; this is sufficiently evident from the *paranomasia* or *play of words* in the original, formed by *Judah* and *praise thee* (but which is lost in a translation,) and there is therefore no necessity for adopting the latter rendering. The translation which I have given appears to me the most natural, and is quite in accordance with the usage of the Hebrew language, since we frequently meet with a pleonastic pronoun which is apparently employed merely for the sake of emphasis, but is not to be translated. See for instance, Gen. xxx. 26, כִּי אַתָּה יָדַעְתָּ (ki attah yadata), literally, for thou, thou knowest, i. e. simply, thou knowest. See also Gen. xiv. 23, xlvii. 30. Exod. vii. 2. Josh. i. 6. Isaiah vii. 14, liii. 4, and thus many more examples might be pointed out. "*Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies*." This refers to the victorious career of the tribe of Judah. It is a figurative expression denoting conquest, conveying the idea of a person flying, and the party pursuing putting his hand upon the shoulders of the fugitive to arrest his flight. In the reign of David the enemies of Judah were brought into complete subjection to him, and he evidently refers to this prophecy when he says, Psalm xviii. 41, (Eng. version, verse 40,) "And thou hast given me the neck of mine

enemies." Onkelos, in his Targum, has given the sense rather than the literal translation; he renders the passage, "Thy hand shall prevail against thine enemies." "*The children of thy father shall bow down to thee,*" i.e. they shall pay to thee that respect and honour, which are due to one who possesses the highest dignity. The fulfilment of this prophecy may be said to have begun at the death of Joshua, when the tribe of Judah by the direct command of God took the precedence of the other tribes in the war against the Canaanites (see Judges i. 2); it was still more developed on Judah's assuming the sceptre in the person of David; but as a writer has well observed, "Its complete accomplishment was to be realised only in Christ, in that transcendent dignity with which he is invested as King of kings and Lord of lords." In Revelations v. 5-8, we have a symbolical representation of its spiritual fulfilment, when the lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of David took the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb. The Hebrew verb שָׁחָה (shacha) signifies both *to bow down*, as before superiors, to pay them respect and honour, and *to bow down*, to worship God, and there can therefore be no objection to the spiritual interpretation of the passage. *A lion's whelp is Judah, &c.* In the poetical writings of the Old Testament, are to be found many beautiful and striking figures drawn from the habits of the lion, this animal being at once powerful, daring and imposing; hence it has always been the emblem of warlike valour and strength among the eastern nations. In the blessing of Judah, the figures present to us a most graphic description of the gradual growth of that tribe in strength and power. At first Judah is compared to a *lion's whelp*, indicating its infancy, and probably refers to the period of time when it first assumed the leadership of the other tribes. Next he is compared to a lion that bowed and couched down. The Hebrew word אָרַיָה (āryēh) denotes a full grown lion, one that has obtained its full vigour and strength. It is derived from the verb אָרַח (ārah) to tear, to pull, so that the word properly means, *a tearer in pieces*. In this figure, we evidently have depicted the reign of David, who subdued many nations and became a mighty monarch, and like a full grown lion which all other animals hold in fear, he became a terror to his enemies. Lastly, Judah is compared to a *lioness* which, satiated with her prey, composedly lies down in her den, but whose rest, especially when with her young, no one may disturb with-

out suffering for his temerity. The figure evidently portrays the peaceful reign of Solomon, who in calm repose enjoyed, with the nation, the fruit of David's victories, but who would have dared to disturb that repose? In the English version the word לָבִי (lāvi) is rendered by "old lion," but Bochart very properly supposes that the word denotes *the lioness* and not the *male lion*; and Gesenius assigns several cogent reasons for adopting the same view, as for instance, "it being coupled with other names denoting a lion, where it can hardly be a mere synonym. That the passages in Job iv. 11, and xxxviii. 39, and others, accord much better with the *lioness* than with a lion." It is very probable that Jerusalem may have received the appellation *Ariel*, i.e. *the lion of God*, from its having been the dwelling-place of David. See Isaiah xxix. 1: "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelled." "*From the prey, my son, thou hast gone up.*" There are some commentators who take the verb עָלָה (ālāh) in the sense of *to grow up*, and render, *from the prey, my son, thou hast grown up*, which would then refer to the great power which Judah should acquire by his conquests. But as the verb is generally used only in this sense in reference to plants and grass, I think it is better to attach to the verb here its primary signification *to go up*; the expression will then refer to the lion's returning to his den in the mountains after having seized upon his prey, and applied to Judah, it would convey the idea, that he should return victorious to his secure home with the spoils of his enemies. "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and to him shall be the obedience of the nations.*" In these words we have the prophetic declaration that the temporal dominion or preëminence of Judah, should not cease until the fulness of time, when the Messiah should come, to whom all nations should render homage. Although the prophecy is perfectly plain, yet there are not a few commentators who have endeavoured to construe it in such a manner as would entirely divest it of its Messianic character; and this they do by attaching to certain words in the original such meaning as will more readily favour their views. No doubt, the interpreters who cannot perceive in this oracle any allusion to a Messiah, have come to that conclusion after a careful investigation of the subject, and with minds unbiassed by preconceived opinions, for I cannot believe that in a matter of such vital importance to themselves—to the whole race of

fallen men,—there could be any one so reckless as stubbornly to close his eyes to the light of truth. And yet it is certain that the prophecy admits of but one interpretation; which then is the correct one: the Messianic or the anti-Messianic? To give a satisfactory reply to this question, it will be necessary in the first place to turn to the original, in order to investigate the true meaning of the words employed; secondly, to examine which interpretation agrees best with the context, and thirdly, to consult the various versions that we may see what were the opinions of the different translators from time to time.

The first word that we have to consider is שֵׁבֶט (shēvēt) the primary meaning of which is *a staff, a rod*. But this like very many other Hebrew words, has various significations, which are deduced from the primary meaning; thus it denotes *a shepherd's crook, a staff of office*, as of a leader, and hence also *a sceptre of a king*. It denotes also *a tribe*, a signification which probably became attached to the word from the circumstance recorded in Numbers xvii., when Moses was commanded to speak to the children of Israel, and to take of every one of them a rod, according to the house of their fathers; of all their princes according to their fathers, twelve rods; (which rods corresponded with the number of tribes), and to write every man's name upon his rod. These rods Moses laid up in the tabernacle, and it was afterwards perceived that Aaron's rod had budded. Now as these rods represented the tribes, it is not unlikely that the Hebrew word for *rods* came also to signify *tribes*. Some Jewish writers take the word here in its primary signification, and render "the rod shall not depart from Judah," which they explain, that the Jews shall be an oppressed and afflicted people until the Messiah shall come. But this certainly cannot be the meaning; the context altogether forbids such an exposition, since the text speaks of the rule which the tribe of Judah should exercise, and not of a foreign rule. It speaks of Judah under the figure of a lion as going forth to prey upon foreign nations, and not of foreign nations preying upon Judah. Bush takes the word in the sense of *tribe*, but regards it here as equivalent to *tribeship*, "implying that the tribe of Judah should continue *as a tribe*, and continue in the exercise of its wonted tribal authority till the coming of the Messiah, however the other ten tribes might be scattered by conquest or captivity." Of course it would be altogether incongruous to say, *the tribe shall*

not depart from *Judah*, and for attaching to the word the meaning of *tribeship* there is no authority whatever.

The true meaning of the word in this place is no doubt *sceptre*, as it is rendered in the English version, and I do not see the slightest reason for departing from that translation, as it is frequently used in this sense, as every Hebrew scholar well knows, and it perfectly agrees with the context. *רַמְחֹקֶק* (um'chokek); this word has also been variously translated. Onkelos in his Targum renders it by *סַפְרָא* (saphra) i.e. *scribe*. In the Jerusalem Targum it is translated by *skilful teachers of the law*; in the Syriac version, by *an interpreter*; in the Septuagint, by *ἡγούμενος* i.e. *a leader*; in the Vulgate, by *dux* i.e. *a leader*; and in the English version, by *a law-giver*. The proper way to decide which of these various translations is correct, is to examine in what sense the word is employed in other parts of the Old Testament, which will leave us only the option between the renderings given in the Septuagint and Vulgate versions, and that given in our authorised version, and I consider it of but little importance which of the two we adopt, although I should prefer that of the latter, since that of the former is already implied by the expression, "*sceptre*." The Hebrew word is the participle *Piel*, but is used substantively, which is very common in the Hebrew. It denotes, 1st. *a lawgiver*, as Deut. xxxiii. 21. Isaiah xxxii. 22. "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our lawgiver," &c. 2nd. *A leader*, as Judges v. 14, "Out of Machir (the name of the son of Manasseh, and father of Gilead, but is here employed poetically to denote that portion of Manasseh which inhabited Gilead beyond Jordan) came down rulers, (English version, "governors") but in the sense of *scribe, skilful teacher, or interpreter*, it is nowhere used in the Old Testament. "*From between his feet*," this is a metaphorical expression, denoting *from his seed* or *from his offspring*, (for a similar expression see Deut. xxviii. 57), and is rendered in the Targum of Onkelos, as well as in the Jerusalem Targum, by "from his children's children." According to the Samaritan Pentateuch, the phrase reads, "*from between his standards*," reading *דַּגְלָוִי* (daglav) i.e. *his standards*, instead of *רַגְלָוִי* (raglav) i.e. *his feet*, a different rendering which had its origin no doubt in the great similarity of the first letter of both words. This reading has however not been followed by any other version.

The word that comes next under our consideration is שִׁלֹחַ (shiloh) i.e. *pacificator*, which has called forth a great deal of discussion, both as regards its meaning and application in this place. Some Jewish commentators have taken the word *shiloh* as the name of the city mentioned in Joshua xviii. 1, 1 Sam. iv. 3, 12, and in many other places, and translate the passage "until he come to Shiloh," which they explain, that Judah should have precedence until there should come a king out of Judah to renew the kingdom of Shiloh which is near Shechem. The fulfilment of this they find, in Rehoboam the son of Solomon coming to Shechem where all Israel had assembled to make him king, but on his refusing to listen to their prayer to lighten their yoke, acting rather upon the advice of young men who had grown up with him, than upon the advice of the old men who stood before his father, the ten tribes rebelled against him, and invited Jeroboam the son of Nebat of the tribe of Ephraim to be their king. See 1 Kings xii.

The proximity of Shiloh to Shechem they establish from Joshua xxiv., where it is said in the first verse, that "Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem," and in the twenty-sixth verse, that "he took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the Lord," which according to Judges xxi. 19, was then at Shiloh. The words "*unto him shall be the obedience of the nations*," they explain by the subjection of the surrounding nations to Solomon, and of Israel's assembling at Shechem to crown Rehoboam.

Against the above mode of interpreting the passage, we may in the first place remark, that although the ten tribes did throw off their allegiance to the house of David, it cannot be said that the sceptre departed from Judah. Rehoboam and his successors were as much kings after the rebellion of the ten tribes as before; all that can be said is, that their dominion was greatly curtailed by that event. And, after all, the kingdom of Judah was by no means insignificant, as it embraced, besides the tribe of Judah which in itself was very large, also the tribe of Benjamin, and the priests and Levites who rallied around the house of David. Rehoboam could still muster "a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors," (see 1 Kings xii. 21.) which he would have led against the ten tribes in order to bring them again under his sway, had he not received a message from the Lord through Shemaiah a prophet, commanding him to desist from his design.

Secondly, we may observe, that all the most ancient Jewish authorities, as well as many of the most able modern Jewish commentators understood by the word שִׁילֹה (shiloh), *the Messiah*. And thirdly, we may remark, that even if we were to admit that the word *shiloh* is here the name of the city in which for a long time the tabernacle and ark had remained, still the passage could not refer to Rehoboam and the rebellion of the ten tribes, inasmuch as Rehoboam came to Shechem and not to Shiloh, to meet the assembled Israelites. As for the alleged proximity of the two places, this supposition is altogether too futile to be worthy of any notice. The ruins of Seilon which mark the ancient site of Shiloh are at least ten or twelve miles from Shechem or Neapolis, and Joshua xxiv., upon which these commentators form their supposition, does not in the least indicate that the two places were nearer to each other. The tabernacle was no doubt at Shiloh, and it is equally certain that Joshua, after having delivered his last charge to the people at Shechem, took a large stone which he set up there for a testimony under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord. Here is a difficulty, which cannot be got over by merely asserting that the two places were so close together, that any thing done in one place may be said to have been done in the other. It appears to me that the apparent discrepancy will be far more satisfactorily explained by supposing that "*the sanctuary of the Lord*," mentioned Josh. xxiv. 26, was only a place of public prayer, a *proseucha*, which the tribe of Ephraim had set up there as being the spot where God appeared to Abraham, and promised the possession of the land of Canaan to his posterity. That some such place of worship is meant here, and not the tabernacle containing the holy ark, may be inferred from the mention made of an oak which was by the sanctuary, and the setting up of the pillar under it, which would have been a direct violation of the injunction given by God, Deut. xvi. 21, 22. "Thou shalt not plant thee a grove or any tree near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set thee up a pillar; which the Lord thy God hateth." The *proseuchæ* or *oratories* of the Jews, on the contrary, were generally situated in a grove or under a tree.

Other commentators attach to the word שִׁילֹה (shiloh) the signification *rest*, and explain the passage, that Judah should retain the sceptre as leader of the tribes until they should come to their *final rest* in the promised land, when the other tribes would separate from

him to receive their own portion. But the argument which we have above adduced against the former exposition applies with equal force to this one. Judah did not lay aside the sceptre when they took possession of the land of Canaan. And further, according to this interpretation, the words, "*unto him shall be the obedience of the nations,*" would be altogether meaningless. Again, there are others who understand by the word שִׁילֹה (shiloh), *the Messiah*, and interpret the passage, that the dominion should not cease from the posterity of Judah until the Messiah should come, who should establish a kingdom which would have no end. This is no doubt the true import of the phrase before us, and harmonizes beautifully with the other parts of the prophecy. The word שִׁילֹה (shiloh) is derived from the verb שָׁלַח (shalah), i.e. *to be at rest*, and signifies *one that gives rest, or peace*, and thus is synonymous to שַׂר שָׁלוֹם (sar shalom) i.e. *prince of peace*, one of the titles applied to the Messiah, Isaiah ix. 5. Gesenius acknowledges that he formerly had attached this meaning to the word, but without assigning any reason for changing his opinion, he now gives in his Hebrew Lexicon the meaning *rest, tranquillity*, which he explains that "Judah shall not lay aside the sceptre of a leader, until he shall have subdued his enemies and obtained dominion over many nations." He, however, admits that the passage applies to the Messiah, for he goes on to say, "referring to the expected kingdom of the Messiah who was to spring from the tribe of Judah." This admission of Gesenius is somewhat important, since his views upon other Messianic passages in the Old Testament are far from being always orthodox. The ancient versions seem to have regarded the term שִׁילֹה (shiloh) as compounded of שָׁ (she) the fragment of אֲשֶׁר (asher) the relative pronoun, and לֹה (loh) for לוֹ (lo), i.e. *to him*, and render, "to whom it belongs," or "whose it is," i.e. *the authority* implied by the term *sceptre*. The copies from which they translated must have had the form שִׁלֹה, that is without the letter י (jod), a reading which is found in twenty-eight Jewish manuscripts, and in all the manuscripts of the Samaritan text. In most Hebrew manuscripts, however, and in almost all editions, the word is written with the letter י (jod), which very probably is the correct form. But whilst there exists a diversity of opinions regarding the import of this particular word, it is at least highly satisfactory to find that a greater agreement

exists in the application of the whole passage, as it is almost universally admitted, that its *real meaning* is, that the dominion shall not cease from the tribe of Judah, until the Messiah shall come. In the Septuagint, which is the oldest version of the Bible, the passage in question is rendered, "A prince shall not fail from Judah, nor a leader out of his loins, until the things come τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, i.e. which are laid up for him," according to some manuscripts, and according to others, ὃ ἀπόκειται, i.e. "for whom it is laid up." Some of the fathers might well have racked their brains in endeavouring to make sense of this obscure translation, for it would be no easy matter to say with certainty, what is to be understood by the word *things*, which is not in the Hebrew text. It would appear that the author or authors of this version read שֶׁלֹה (sheloh) for שֶׁלֹה (shelo), literally, *which is to him*, and rendered freely, "which are laid up for him," supplying as an ellipsis, "the things," which neither makes sense, nor is it grammatical, as the verb יָבֹא (javo), i.e. "*he shall come*," is in the singular. But obscure as this rendering is, we nevertheless can perceive in it an evident allusion to the coming of the Messiah. By the expression "until the things come which are laid up," or "reserved for him," may probably be meant *the things* appertaining to the spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, which was to be established instead of the secular kingdom of Judah.

In the Targum of Onkelos, which is the earliest of the Chaldee versions, and which is held in the highest estimation by Jews as well as Christian scholars, the passage is rendered as follows; "One having dominion shall not depart from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children for ever, עַד דְּיִתְּיָי מְשִׁיחָהּ (ad d'yetho m'shichah), i.e. until the Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom, and him the nations shall obey." This interpretation of the passage is very important, as it furnishes not merely the individual view of Onkelos, but that of the whole Jewish people, who hold this Targum as well as that of Jonathan ben Uzziel in almost as great veneration as the Hebrew Scriptures themselves, from which we may infer that the Jews acquiesce in the doctrines set forth in them. It is of comparatively little importance whether this version was made about the time of our Saviour's nativity, which is the generally received opinion, or whether it was executed as late as the second century, as is maintained by Jahn, Bauer, and some others. If the former

view be correct, and I doubt not that it is, then it shews what the opinion of Onkelos and the Jewish church was regarding this oracle before any controversy about it had sprang up; if, on the contrary, the latter supposition be correct, it then only shews that they considered this oracle so plainly predictive of the Messiah, as to render it impossible to put any other construction upon it, although they knew that the Christians applied it to Christ, and they would most assuredly have deprived their adversaries of this proof had it been in their power to do so. It has, therefore, always been a matter of surprise to me, that any Jewish commentator should have had the boldness to advance an interpretation opposed to this ancient and established authority.

The Jerusalem Targum, another Chaldee version of the Pentateuch, and which, as already stated, is supposed to have been written about the sixth century, if not more recently, likewise interprets this passage of the coming of the Messiah, and renders, "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skilful teachers of the law from his children's children, until the time that the king Messiah come, whose is the kingdom, and whom the nations shall serve."

The Samaritan Pentateuch agrees with the Hebrew, with the exception of its reading, "from between his standards," instead of "from between his feet."

In the Old Syriac version, generally called Pesheto, i.e. *the literal, the true*, and which is one of the oldest translations of the Bible, the passage is translated, "The sceptre shall not fail from Judah, nor an interpreter or expounder from his feet, until he come whose it is, and for him the nations shall wait." This version was probably made in the latter part of the second century, or the earlier part of the third century.

Rabbi Saadias Haggaon, who flourished in the tenth century, translates the passage in his Arabic version, "The staff or rod shall not cease from Judah, nor a lawgiver from under his rule, until he shall come whose he is."

In the Vulgate version the word שִׁלּוֹחַ (shiloh) is rendered "*qui mittendus est*." Jerome has evidently mistaken the letter ה (he) for the letter ח (cheth) and read שְׁלֹחַ (shaluach), i.e. *sent*, there being a great similarity between these two letters, and his eyes being somewhat weak, of which he himself complained.

From the foregoing quotations of the different versions, it will be

seen that they all more or less pointedly refer the passage to the coming of the Messiah, but lest there may be some who would like to see additional opinions, I shall offer a few quotations from the Rabbinical writers, many of whom are equally explicit in their views upon the subject before us. In the Talmud, *tract Sanhedrim*, fol. 98, col. 1, we read "Rabbi Milai, in the name of Rabbi Eleazar the son of Simoon, said, the son of David" (i.e. the Messiah) "does not come until all the judges and rulers cease from Israel." This opinion was no doubt founded upon the oracle of Jacob, "*The sceptre shall not depart,*" &c. Rabbi Abraham Seba speaks more plainly, he says in his book, *Ts'ror Hammor*, fol. 37, col. 2, *Parashah vayetse*, "Shiloh, signifies the king Messiah." The same view is expressed by the celebrated Rabbi Bechai in his commentary on the five books of Moses, fol. 59, col. 2, *Parashah vaychi*. Besides these we might cite other Jewish commentators, as Jarchi, Nachmanides, &c., but these will suffice to shew, that although they differ from the Christian commentators as to the fulfilment of the prophecy, they at least agree with them as to its application to the Messiah. Even the Cabalists find the same number in the words *שִׁילֹה יָבֹא* (*shiloh javo*), i.e. *Shiloh shall come*, as in the word *מְשִׁיחַ* (*m'shiach*), i.e. *Messiah*, namely 358, from which they conclude, that *the Shiloh and the Messiah are the same*. "*And to him shall be the obedience of the nations.*" As the root of the word *יִקְהַת* (*yikk'hath*), which I have rendered by *obedience*, occurs no where in the Old Testament, it is not easy to determine with certainty what its real meaning here is. In the Septuagint the word is rendered by *προσδοκία*, i.e. *expectation*, and so in the Vulgate *expectatio*, "and he shall be the expectation of the nations." The translators must have regarded the word as a noun derived from the verb *קָוָה* (*kawah*), which in *Piel* signifies, *to wait for*. But the proper form would then be *תִּקְוָה* (*tikwah*), i.e. *hope, expectation*, see Job v. 16; Prov. xxiii. 18; Ruth i. 12—and further, to render *וְלֹךְ* (*v'lo*), which signifies *and to him, or and for him*, by "and he," is altogether arbitrary, for in that case the word *וְהָיָה* (*v'hū*), i.e. *and he*, should have been employed. In the Syriac version the word is rendered by, "shall wait," as "and for him the nations shall wait," a translation which conveys precisely the same meaning as that given in the Septuagint and Vulgate, but is

decidedly preferable, as it is not open to the last objection advanced against the others. Still, if we admit this translation, we must suppose the word in question to be derived from a verb קָהַת (kahath), signifying *to wait*, which does not exist, at least not in any Hebrew writings now extant, and to derive it from the verb קָוָה (kavah), i.e. *to wait*, then the regular form of the *third pers. future masc. Piel* would be יִקְוֶה (y'kavwe.)

Onkelos in his Chaldee version has rendered the word by "shall obey," as "and him the nations shall obey," a signification which he could only have obtained by deriving the word from the Arabic verb وَكَّهَ (wakiha), i.e. *to obey*. In the Samaritan Pentateuch we have the reading יִקְהַתֵּר (yikhätü), that is, *the third pers. masc. plur. fut.* which is the proper form, as it is followed by a plural subject. In the Samaritan translation* the word is rendered by יִתְנַגְּדוּן (yithnagg'dun), i.e. *they shall stand before*, as "and the nations shall stand before him." This is similar to the rendering which is given in the English version, "and unto him shall the gathering of the people be;" only that the translators have taken the word as a noun. Many of the Jewish commentators have likewise translated the word by *gathering*, as for example, Rabbi Solomon Jarchi, Eben Ezra.

In adopting the translation *shall gather*, we must regard the word as derived from the Chaldee verb קָהַה (k'ah), i.e. *to gather*, or suppose that such a verb as קָהַת (kahäth), having the meaning *to gather* at one time existed, which would then have been synonymous with the verb קָהַל (kähäl), i.e. *to call together, to assemble*, the verb commonly employed. Or it may be that the letter ל (lamed) has been changed into ת (tav), as letters belonging to the same organ are sometimes exchanged for one another, although the commutation of these two letters is by no means ordinary. If we render it with the English version, *the gathering*, then the word has the regular *construct form* of יִקְהַה a noun which may be derived from the Chaldee verb above given. Now, as the derivation of the word is

* It is necessary to observe here, that the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Samaritan version are not the same. The former is merely the Hebrew Pentateuch in Samaritan letters, differing, however, in many instances in its readings from the Hebrew text. The latter is a translation of the Hebrew into the Samaritan dialect. Its author and age are both unknown, although there are some who ascribe it to one Nathaniel, a Pontiff who lived a little before Christ, and had great influence among the Samaritans.

uncertain, and the context in this instance fails to guide us in determining its meaning here, perhaps Prov. xxx. 17, may in some measure assist us in ascertaining its true sense, being the only other place in the Old Testament where it occurs. We read there, "The eye that mocketh at a father, and despiseth לִיקָהֵת אֵם (lik'hath em) the obedience of a mother," i.e. due to a mother (English version, to obey *his* mother), "the ravens of the valley shall pick it out." Here we have precisely the same word, the prefix ל (lamed) not in the least affecting it. The question now is what is the proper meaning of the word here? It cannot be "*expectation*," for even if it were suitable here, it cannot, as we have shown, have that meaning in the other place. The rendering, *shall wait*, would not at all do here, neither would that of *stand before*, nor that of *shall gather*. The meaning *gathering* would likewise not be suitable, although Rabbi Jarchi attaches this sense to it, and renders "the gathering of his mother," i.e. the *wrinkles* on her face; but this is a thread spun a little too fine, since we cannot easily conceive why any one should despise the wrinkles of a mother. Again, it cannot have here the meaning *shall obey*, and as to the rendering given in the English version, "*to obey*," though it would make good sense here, it certainly would not make sense in the other place. Besides, if the word be a verb at all, it then has the form of the *third pers. fut. sing. masc.* I think there can be little doubt, but that יקָהֵת (yikhath) is here a noun signifying *obedience*, and is probably derived from the Arabic verb (wakiha), i.e. *to obey*. This signification of the word is likewise suitable in the other place, and I can therefore see no reason why it should not be rendered in both places alike. It is true, the application of the prophecy is not in the least affected, no matter which of the above interpretations of the word before us we adopt, as they all, with equal force, apply to the Messiah, and in him they are all equally fulfilled; still the reader will agree with me, that it is hardly consistent to translate a word in one place as a noun and in another place as a verb, as the authors of the English version have done in these instances, and every Hebrew scholar will admit that the Hebrew words are one and the same in both places.

Although most of the Jewish commentators agree with the Christian expositors in interpreting this prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, they most strenuously deny, on the other hand, its

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having been fulfilled in the coming of Christ, but still look for its consummation. But in this they are most assuredly mistaken: if the prophecy speaks of the coming of the Messiah at all, then he must have already come. Whatever meaning is attached to the word שֵׁבֶט (shev'et), whether it be rendered *sceptre, dominion, tribe*, or whether all these meanings be combined in the word in the passage before us, they have indeed all departed from Judah. Where is now its sceptre, its dominion, its leader, or the tribe of Judah itself? Let any one go into the synagogues in London, Paris, or any other city in the world, and ask the Jews assembled there to what tribe they belong, the universal reply will be, "We do not know;" or should they pretend to know, they cannot adduce the slightest proof of it.

The departing of the sceptre from the tribe of Judah was to mark the advent of the Messiah; and as this authority has departed, we have only to inquire when that event took place, which will exactly bring us to the time of Christ. At the time when the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds who were tending their flocks in the field, and announced to them the glad tidings that "unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," Herod, who was neither of the house of David nor of the tribe of Judah, but a foreigner, was king of Jerusalem; he also was tributary to the Romans, and his power greatly limited. When his two sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, conspired against him, he could not himself condemn them, but was obliged to accuse them before Augustus. The same was the case when Antipater, his eldest son by Doris, conspired to poison him: Herod pleaded his cause before Varus, who transmitted the proceedings to Rome; and it was only after he had obtained leave from the Roman Emperor that he could punish his rebellious son. This vassalage becomes even more clearly apparent in the successors of Herod the Great; for we find Herod II., or Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea, at Rome, soliciting the emperor to bestow the whole kingdom upon him, according to the first will of his father. Archelaus, who assumed the administration of the government provisionally at Jerusalem after his father's death, did not presume to mount the throne of his father until he obtained the sanction of Augustus, although the soldiers had proclaimed him king, and the city of Jericho had offered him a crown. When those concerned in Herod's first will appeared before the tribunal of Augustus to plead their cause,

and Antipas's counsellors charged Archelaus with having anticipated the emperor's decision by assuming the crown, the latter fell at the feet of the emperor, and in that humiliating position implored his protection. The emperor, being moved by this act of submission, made him Tetrarch of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, but only promised to raise him to the dignity of king *if he made himself worthy of it by his virtue*; or, as Rufinus will have it, *if his services deserved it*. But Archelaus made himself very obnoxious by the many acts of violence and tyranny which he committed, for he would not even spare the high priests; and upon the great men of the nation complaining of his conduct at Rome, he was deposed and banished to Vienna, his estate confiscated, and that part of Judea which was under his government reduced to a province, and ruled by governors, who were sent thither and recalled at the pleasure of the emperors of Rome. At the same time the power of life and death was taken from the Sanhedrim and vested in the Roman governor—a power which they had always possessed, even under the kings of Egypt and Syria; and therefore when the Jews replied to Pilate, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," (John xviii. 31), they in fact acknowledged that the sceptre had departed from Judah. Here then, we have the literal fulfilment of the prophecy of the patriarch Jacob, delivered 1689 years previously. Herod the Great was the first king of Judea that was subject to the Roman empire, and his successors continued so until the destruction of Jerusalem, when the tribe of Judah was involved in the same calamity with the rest of the tribes, who were then scattered over the whole face of the earth. They indeed still exist as a distinct people, but without any power of self-government, subject to the laws of the lands in which they dwell; and even in this more enlightened age, they are in many countries subjected to the most unwarrantable and tyrannical treatment.

In the time of Herod the Great, Christ was born; and that the chief priests and scribes must have considered this to be about the time when the Messiah was to appear, is evident from the reply they gave to Herod upon his asking them where Christ should be born. They did not allay his fears by assuring him that the time had not yet arrived, but told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea," and in support of their assertion they solemnly quoted the prophecy which foretels the coming of a ruler out of Bethlehem that shall rule over the people of Israel. That the Jews at that time expected the Messiah

may further be inferred from the questions which the priests and levites who were sent from Jerusalem put to John, when they asked him, "Who art thou?" and when he confessed that he was not the Christ, they asked him whether he was Elias; for the Jews believed, from the declaration contained in Malachi iv. 5, that Elias was to come down from heaven to usher in the advent of the Messiah. In some of the Rabbinical writings it is indeed distinctly stated that Elias was to come three days before the Messiah should appear. Thus, for instance, in the commentary *Talkut Shimoni* on the book of Isaiah, *fol. 53, col. 3, numb. 337*, we read, "at the time when the blessed holy God redeems Israel, three days before the Messiah appears, Elias comes and stands upon the mountains of Israel," &c.

We might adduce many more proofs which tend to show that the Jews really expected the Messiah just about the time when Christ came into the world; but we shall only refer to one more, and that is the general belief entertained by them that the world was to last 6,000 years—namely, 4,000 from the creation to the coming of the Messiah, and 2,000 after his advent. This opinion is set forth by many Jewish writers. In the *Talmud, tract Sanhedrim, fol. 97, col. 1*, we read, "The world will exist 6,000 years—namely, 2,000 years emptiness or wasteness (which Rabbi Solomon interprets *without the law*), 2,000 years of the law, and 2,000 years the days of the Messiah." This notion is also set forth in the tract *Avoda Sara, fol. 9, col. 1*, and upon which Rabbi Solomon comments in his commentary as follows: "It is ordained that the world should last 6000 years, after the number of the days of the week, but on the seventh day is the Sabbath, and in the seventh thousand years the world rests. As to the first 2000 years, it was appointed that they should be waste and without the law; and 2000 were to be the days of the law, and 2000 years the days of the Messiah." The reader must not suppose that I attach the least importance to this Jewish notion; I have merely referred to it, to show that the Jews believed that at the end of 4000 years from the creation, the Messiah was to come. It was about that time, that Christ of the lineage of Judah was born, who attested that he was the true Messiah by his spotless life, his profound wisdom, by his performing miracles which showed that the elements were under his control, and that he had the power of restoring the spirit to the lifeless body; and by laying down his own life, and rising again from the dead on the

third day. It is folly for the Rabbies to say now that the Messiah did not come at the expiration of the 4000 years on account of their manifold sins; this is merely imposing upon themselves that they may impose upon others; they know full well, and believe it too, that the Messiah was to come to save a fallen world, so that the depravity of the Jews or of the world in general could have been no obstacle. But the Messiah has come, and the reason why the Jewish nation would not acknowledge him is given by Isaiah vi. 9, 10.

“Go, and thou shalt say unto this people;
Hear ye indeed, but understand not;
See ye indeed, but perceive not.
Make fat (i.e. *dull*) the heart of this people,
And heavy its ears, and close up its eyes;
Lest it shall see with its eyes, and hear with its ears,
And understand with its heart, and be converted;
And *there is healing** to it (i.e. and shall be healed.)”

I have already stated that the prophets are sometimes represented as performing what they merely foretel; and the meaning of the passage therefore is, that the people of Israel *should indeed hear, but would not understand, and see, but would not perceive; for they have hardened their hearts, and made their ears heavy, and closed their eyes, lest they should see, hear, and understand, and be converted and their sins be forgiven.* This prophecy our Saviour himself declares (Matth. xiii. 14, 15,) was fulfilled by the Jews stubbornly rejecting his divine doctrines, and by disregarding the miracles which he performed in attestation that he was truly the Messiah.

Some commentators have urged that Christ could not have been the Shiloh, since the sceptre had departed from Judah about 500 years before his birth; for there was neither a king of the tribe Judah during the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, nor was there a king of that tribe after their return from exile, but the direction of the internal administration of the country devolved upon the high priests, who were at the same time chief magistrates.

In replying to this objection, I shall not follow the footsteps of St. Cyril, who, in writing against *Julian the Apostate*, gives to Zerubabel, a prince of the house of David and leader of the first colony of Jews on their return from exile, a long posterity to succeed him

* The expression *to heal* is in Scripture often equivalent to, *to forgive, to pardon*, since the sacred writers view sin as a moral disease. As Isaiah liii. 6, “And by his bruises there was healing for us,” i.e. *we were forgiven or obtained pardon.* Jer. iii. 22, “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings,” i.e. *I will forgive them.*

in the government, down to the days of the Maccabees, for we nowhere find either the names or the actions of these rulers. It is certain that the civil power became vested in the high priests, and of these there were sixteen from the captivity to the Maccabees. The Maccabees or Asmoneans, as they are sometimes called, who were of the tribe of Levi, became kings and high priests, and continued to exercise those functions until the year 34, B.C., when Herod the Great ascended the throne of Judea, so that the regal authority ended about 500 years before Christ. Those commentators, however, who have advanced this as an argument that Christ cannot be the Messiah, have entirely been misled by the English term *sceptre*, which with us is a mark of sovereignty, whilst the Hebrew term שֵׁבֶט (shevet), denotes a *staff* or *sceptre*, which was not only borne by kings, but likewise by generals and other dignitaries, and therefore the expression, "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah," does not necessarily imply that *the regal authority* shall not depart from Judah, but may mean such as was exercised by a king, leader, or any other person invested with chief authority. Indeed, the whole blessing of Judah would be altogether stripped of its greatness, were we to interpret the Hebrew term שֵׁבֶט (shevet) as merely expressive of regal authority; for what would it amount to? Simply to this, that during the period of 1689 years, which elapsed between the delivery of this oracle and the coming of Christ, the posterity of Judah should furnish kings for the space of 468 years, as David the first king of Judah, only began to reign 1056 B.C., and Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was carried to Babylon, in fetters of brass, 588 B.C. Will it be said, that this is all that is intended to be conveyed by the blessing? Most assuredly not. The patriarch rather foretells, that the tribe of Judah should possess a *pre-eminence* above all the other tribes, which should not cease until Shiloh come. This pre-eminence might indeed vary in its character according to the times; but still, it should always be a distinctive mark of that tribe and elevate it above the rest. Now, it can easily be shown from history that Judah enjoyed such a pre-eminence until

* The name of the Asmoneans is derived from Asmonæus, the great grandfather of Mattathias. They afterwards obtained the name Maccabees, from Judas Maccabeo, who obtained the latter appellation מַכַּבִּי (makkabi), i.e., *the hammerer*, from his heroic deeds. Compare in modern history the name of Charles Martel, i.e., *the hammer*.

