

THE

# BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF OUR SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE.

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THE "LAND AND THE BOOK."

#### NO. I.—INTRODUCTION.

"THE kingdom of heaven is at hand," was the startling cry of the voice in the wilderness of Judea. What it meant we do not now stop to consider. It coincides, however, with our general purpose to remark that the "voice" could only have been uttered in Palestine. Elsewhere the very terms of the proclamation would have been incomprehensible. There the solemn announcement was not only understood, but it arrested the attention of the whole community. It was not the first time the thing had been heard of. This is implied in the abrupt form in which the proclamation was published. The Baptist knew that the idea was quite familiar to those he addressed; that it, in fact, embodied the hope of Israel. From the very beginning the promise had gone forth, and in manifold forms had been repeated, that God would in his own time set up a peculiar kingdom on earth. Under figure and shadow and symbol and type, this promise had been renewed from age to age; and towards the fulfilment of it prophets and kings and holy men had directed their longing eyes, "but died without the sight." The delay had indeed been long, and trying to the faith of the saints;

but no longer than was necessary. A vast and complicated system of preparation was essential for the establishment of such a kingdom among men, and this could not be hastened. The kingdom was to be diverse from all others—moral, spiritual, and not of this world. To reveal and permanently establish such an empire demanded, amongst other things, as an indispensable prerequisite, an adequate means of communication between the creature and his Creator; in a word, a peculiar spiritual language, by which the thoughts of God could be made known to man. Without this no such kingdom was possible, and the attempt to establish it must have proved a failure.

The main object of this and of some ensuing essays is to investigate the methods adopted by divine wisdom to evolve, enrich, and perfect this language of the kingdom. It is satisfactory to find at the outset that, numerous and complicated as were the instrumentalities employed, and extending over so many generations of marvellous history, they may for the purpose of study and illustration all be ranged under two fundamental expedients; the selection, training, and governing of a peculiar people; and the creating and fitting up for them an appropriate home. Abraham and Canaan; the Hebrew nation, and the land of promise; these are the pivots on which the entire scheme, so far as our present inquiry is concerned, is made to revolve. By and through the Hebrew people, their marvellous history, and the long ongoing and outworking of the Mosaic economy, in conjunction with the physical phenomena of their earthly inheritance, did the Spirit of inspiration evolve and perfect man's religious language. Palestine, fashioned and furnished by the Creator's hand, was the theatre, and the people of Israel were the actors brought upon it, and made to perform their part of the work by the Divine Master.

To find or form a nomenclature for the thoughts of God and the spiritual wants of man: this was the problem; and a little reflection will convince any one that it was a work quite beyond the unaided skill of man to achieve. As matter

of history, it took Infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power fifteen centuries of time, with the aid of an endless number and variety of providential arrangements, co-operating with human and superhuman agents, to bring this language of the kingdom to the needed perfection. Palestine was the theatre where all these subordinate agencies and influences were gathered. They included the entire range of natural and historical phenomena of that country, its geological structure and physical features, its natural productions, its social, civil, and religious institutions and customs, in fact, every external element from which moral and spiritual terms and phrases have been introduced into our religious nomenclature. When the end and aim of all had been reached, the King himself appeared, the theatre was closed, the scenery taken down, the actors dispersed, and the gospel of the kingdom sent forth on its high mission among the nations of the earth.

But, as in the resurrection, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual; so has it been in the process of developing man's religious language. It was preceded by the natural and the mundane. From the material and the human was evolved the spiritual and the divine. To witness this transfiguration of language we must resort to Palestine. Here it was that the dialect of the kingdom was first learned and spoken. Like other books the Bible has a home, a birthplace, but beyond all other examples, this birthplace of revelation has given form and color to its language. It was taught by a marvellous combination of physical phenomena and human history, brought together in this land, and miraculously guided and controlled so as to work out the intended result. The land has had an all-pervading influence upon the costume of the book. Without the former, the latter as we now enjoy it could not have been produced. Palestine is therefore, and was intended to be, an integral element of divine revelation, and not merely an accidental associate with it. To ascertain this fact, and to show how

our spiritual nomenclature has been made to grow up from and out of this fertile soil, is the main purpose of the writer in preparing these essays. For nearly forty years he has resided in this land, in daily communion with its scenes and scenery, and in personal contact with those external and physical influences which suggested so large a part of our religious language. In this way, and to this extent only, can he pretend to any special qualification for the task he has undertaken. The more recondite, but rich field of philological research he leaves to the lexicographer, the grammarian, and the professional critic, and deals mainly with biblical language in its secondary and popular sense. His aim is to show by what process of analogy, of contrast, or otherwise, things physical and mundane come to signify and illustrate things spiritual and heavenly. That the essays are very imperfect the writer is painfully conscious, but he ventures to give them to the public, in the hope that with all their deficiencies they may impart fresh interest to the devotional study of the word of God.

An additional thought or two may not be out of place in these introductory remarks. It is possible that the fundamental idea which underlies this whole discussion may be questioned, or even denied. There may be some who still believe that from the very beginning man was miraculously endowed with a rich and largely developed spiritual language. The author of "Paradise Lost" represents Adam and Eve even in the garden, as holding high converse not only with each other, but also with angelic visitants, and with the Infinite Creator himself, whom no man hath seen, or can see. But, although this may be cheerfully granted to the poet, as a necessary part of the machinery of his magnificent poem, it cannot be accepted as historic truth on this subject. Relegating therefore this theory to the domain of romance, to which alone it belongs, and reverently assigning to super-human aid whatever of linguistic endowment was required to enable our first parents to meet the exigencies of their unique condition, we may be allowed to prosecute undi-

turbed, our inquiries on the lower level of human history and experience.

Philologists with one consent teach us that human language, even in its primary and mundane sphere, is of very slow growth. Some of them demand many thousand years for its development. But upon this debatable ground we need not enter. Sufficient for our purpose is the admitted fact that, in the infancy of society, human language is quite limited in its range, and material in character — of the earth earthly. As in other matters, so here, necessity is the mother of invention. At first men seek only names for things with which their physical senses and wants are conversant. Hence any primitive language is material, rather than spiritual; physical, not metaphysical. This fact presented one of the greatest difficulties to be encountered and overcome before a divine revelation, such as man needed, was possible. The invisible and immaterial had to be made known through a clumsy and material vehicle. Holy men of God, though moved and guided by the Holy Ghost, were nevertheless compelled to employ the common language of mankind, and to describe the world within by the world without, the soul by the body, heaven by earth, and even the invisible God by frail man. Examples of this occur in the very beginning of the Bible: “God *said* let there be light”; and again, “God *saw* the light that it was good”; thus endowing the Almighty with our vocal organs and optic apparatus. And, so from the commencement to the close of the sacred volume, we read of his head, his hands, his feet, his arm, his finger, his eye, his ear, his heart, etc.; and emotions, words, and works appropriate to these various members of the human body are fearlessly ascribed to him. This is not only natural, but inevitable. *We* see with the eye, hear with the ear, work with the hand, and speak with the tongue; and, as action without these instruments is to us impossible, we transfer the same to God, forgetting, or seeming to forget, that he needs no such instrumentalities; that he can and does act wholly independent of them. But with

the mind fully aware of the tendency of such language to materialize the Deity in our conceptions of him, we nevertheless find it impossible to adopt any other. We can scarcely think of, and still less speak about, God without using these physical, corporeal terms. Hence it is that children must make a long advance in mental culture ere they can escape from this physical image of God. And, as in the infancy of society all men are children in this respect, their God will be merely a *very great man*. He sees vastly farther than we do, but yet he does really see. His sense of hearing may be infinitely more acute than ours, yet is it a real sense; and so of all other human attributes and faculties ascribed to him in the Bible. And it may not be amiss for each one, however intellectually cultivated, to inquire whether there may not still be some image of God floating in the imagination, vastly refined it may be, and endowed with attributes co-extensive with the universe, but still a real, substantive image. If so, our Jehovah is only a most marvellous man. This is not a matter of minor importance, God himself being judge. On no other point are his admonitions and warnings so minute and emphatic.

“Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth; and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven” (Deut. iv. 15). This comprehensive and most earnest admonition is by no means superfluous at the present time, and never will be. We learn from history that idolatry is the religious heresy which man-

kind has ever been most prone to embrace ; and from the Bible that this is the one thing which the Lord most intensely abhors. Take good heed ; we are always in danger of this kind of pollution.

A similar caution is equally applicable and needful in regard to our ideas about the kingdom of heaven and the nature of true religion in the soul of man. The same difficulty in human language meets us. It has a mundane, physical basis, easily misunderstood, which has in fact been very generally perverted so as to teach ruinous error. Thus the Jews could not divest the Messiah's kingdom of those external worldly elements with which the earth-born language of the prophets seemed to invest it. Even the apostles, under the immediate instruction of the King himself, learned slowly and with difficulty, that this kingdom was spiritual, not temporal ; not of this world, but of heaven. Nor have succeeding ages been essentially wiser in this fundamental matter. To this hour the vast majority of nominal Christians do not understand the peculiar language of the kingdom any better than did the ancient Jews. It is of the utmost concernment, therefore, that we so study the holy oracles as to escape these seductive but fatal errors. The Bible is a rich storehouse of histories, parables, prophecies, proverbs, precepts, prayers, psalms, and hymns. It contains an endless variety of figure and metaphor and symbol, selected and set forth with superhuman skill, to reveal and illustrate the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. To the obvious and the literal, there is a hidden and higher meaning ; and if we cannot discover this, we do not truly comprehend the book. Our present essays may, it is hoped, afford some aid in this important study.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Max Müller in one of his Lectures on the Science of Religion, has some profound remarks on this general subject. "Ancient language," he says, "is a difficult instrument to handle, particularly for religious purposes. It is impossible in human language to express abstract ideas except by metaphor, and it is not too much to say that the whole dictionary of ancient religion is made up of metaphor. With us these metaphors are all forgotten. We speak of spirit without thinking of breath ; of heaven, without thinking of the sky, etc. But

There is one aspect of this general subject of such vital importance that the writer desires to present it with special distinctness and emphasis. Properly treated it will form a valid and cumulative argument for the reality of divine revelation. The testimony which this study gives to this fundamental problem is, to a certain extent, the complement of that which the material universe bears to a Creator. The numberless evidences of design in the visible creation necessarily imply the hand of an all-wise Designer, and they constitute the basis of our natural theology. So, likewise, do the countless arrangements devised and carried into effect through long ages for this specific purpose testify to the reality of a higher and a heaven-taught theology. Nor does the fact that there are unexpected obscurities, and to us even inexplicable difficulties, in the outworking of the scheme of divine revelation, disturb our faith; for similar perplexities abound in the material creation. But in neither case should they be allowed to unsettle our confidence that all has been devised and guided by him whose thoughts and ways are high above ours as the heavens are above the earth, and infinitely more wise. We cannot, of course, discuss in this place, or even allude to, the entire list of these divine arrangements. Indeed, our programme restricts us mainly to one class of them—to those, namely, by which an adequate spiritual language has been provided. On this limited field of inquiry the following propositions will indi-

in ancient languages every one of these words, nay every word that does not refer to sensuous objects, is in a chrysalis stage, half material and half spiritual, rising and falling in its character according to the varying capacities of the speakers and hearers." Max Müller illustrates, at considerable length, the processes through which ancient religious teachers had to grope their way in painful search for adequate names for their ideas about God and spiritual things; and adds: "The language of antiquity is the language of childhood; and we, ourselves, when we try to reach the Infinite and the Divine by means of mere abstract terms, are but like children trying to place a ladder against the sky. The '*parler infantine*,' in religion is not extinct; it never will be. . . . In all our religion, and in the language of the New Testament, there are many things which disclose their true meaning to those only who know what language is made of; who have not only ears to hear, but a heart to understand the real meaning of parables."



cate with sufficient precision the nature and force of this argument :

1. The invention of a spiritual language adequate to meet the demands of divine revelation transcends the unaided powers of the human mind, and yet it has been actually accomplished.

2. The special providence of God can be traced throughout the whole process by which this language has been originated and developed ; in creating and fitting up this terrestrial home of the Bible in a peculiar and exceptional manner for this purpose ; more distinctly, in establishing and controlling the condition of the human actors and agents ; in bringing to pass suitable historic incidents and miraculous interpositions, and causing them to be recorded by prophets, poets, and apostles, whose birth and education in Palestine admirably fitted them for their special office ; and finally, by the constant and fearless use of this spiritual nomenclature by God himself and by men inspired, whereby we are enabled to understand and rightly to employ it.

3. This heaven-taught language, having received all the development needed at the time of Christ and his apostles, there was no further occasion for the historic and peculiar economies and providential interferences from which it sprang and by which it had been so largely enriched, and they were accordingly allowed to pass away.

We do not, of course, maintain that our present study will furnish a systematic argument for any particular theory of inspiration. It takes a wider range, and aims to show that from the very "beginning, or ever the earth was," the Creator designed to hold intelligent spiritual converse with his creature man, and made provision for it. And since, to render such intercourse possible, an adequate medium of communication was indispensable, he adopted a definite plan to secure this medium, and carried it out during a long series of ages. The execution of this plan was commenced far back in time, even before man himself was created and brought into co-operation with it. In

working out the scheme, God was in no sense restricted to the conscious co-operation of men technically inspired. They had their place, a most important one in the work, but an endless variety of other agents and agencies, natural and supernatural, was also employed. Physical phenomena, human history, and superhuman interference, meet and cross each other on this immense arena in numberless lines, of infinite, and to us inextricable, complexity. Good men and bad, and even wicked spirits, willingly or against their will, are made to do service in this matter. Through and by all these subordinate agents and agencies, has God — the sole Author of inspiration — chosen to make known his will to man. To this extent they are all channels of divine revelation. And, to confine our view to the specific study in hand, each was made to contribute something towards the development and perfection of that spiritual language through which God has chosen to communicate his will to man.

The theatre where these manifold agents and agencies were to meet and co-operate in effecting the contemplated result was Palestine. Infinite wisdom selected and so fitted up this land as to render it in all respects admirably adapted to become the birthplace and home of revelation, in the sense in which we are now considering the subject. Even the geographical location was divinely chosen. "When the Most High divided the nations; when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii. 8). At the head of this greatest of inland seas, with Mesopotamia and Chaldea on the east; Egypt and Sinai southward, the wilderness and the desert all around, and the vast Mediterranean, holding in its bosom the isles of Chittim, towards the setting sun, Palestine formed the connecting link between the three continents of the Old World. It was thus the best geographical point on the globe upon which to erect the moral light-house of the world, especially so long as there was but one, which continued to be substantially the case during the long centuries,

while the language of revelation was growing up to needed perfection, and, in fact, until the volume itself was closed and sealed. Then, as to physical constitution and character, Palestine contained within itself all that the purpose in view required. It is neither fiction nor extravagance to call this land a microcosm — a little world in itself, embracing everything which in the thought of the Creator would be needed, in developing this language of the kingdom of heaven. Nor is it easy to see how the end sought could have been reached at all without just such a land, furnished and fitted up as this was by the overruling providence of God. All were needed — mountain and valley, hill and plain, lake and river, sea and sky, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, trees, shrubs, and flowers, beasts and birds, men and women, tribes and nations, governments and religions, false and true, and other things innumerable; none of which could be spared.<sup>1</sup>

Think, if you can, of a Bible with all these left out, or others essentially different substituted in their place — a Bible without patriarch or pilgrimage, with no bondage in Egypt, or deliverance therefrom, no Red Sea, no Sinai with its miracles, no wilderness of wandering with all the included scenes and associated incidents; without a Jordan with Canaan over against it, or a Dead Sea with Sodom beneath it; no Moriah with its temple, no Zion with palaces, nor Hinnom below, with the fire and worm that never die. Whence could have come our divine songs and psalms, if the sacred poets had lived in a land without mountain or valley, where were no plains covered over with corn, no fields clothed with green, no hills planted with the olive, the fig, and the vine? All are needed, and all do good service, from the oaks of Bashan and the cedars of Lebanon, to the hyssop that springeth out of the wall. We can

<sup>1</sup> The writer must not be understood to assert, or imply, that it would have been impossible for Infinite Wisdom to hold spiritual converse with man at all, without these Palestinian appliances. It is very far from his thought thus to limit the Almighty. Nothing more is intended, here or elsewhere, than that, without these, or some other equivalent external and physical arrangements, no such revelation as that which we now have was practicable.

dispense with none of them. The tiny mustard-seed has its moral, and lilies their lessons. Thorns and thistles utter admonitions, and revive sad memories. These, and thousands of other things, like or unlike them, furnish the stuff out of which our spiritual language is manufactured. The sheep and the fold, the shepherd and his dog, the ass and his owner, the ox and his goad, the camel and his burden, the horse with neck clothed with thunder; lions that roar, wolves that raven, foxes that destroy, harts panting for water-brooks, and roes feeding among lilies, doves in their windows, sparrows on the house-top, storks in the heavens, eagles hasting to the prey; things great and small; the busy bee improving each shining hour, and the careful ant laying up store in harvest—nothing too large to serve, too small to aid. These are merely random specimens out of a world of rich materials; but we must not forget that they are all found in this land where the dialect of God's spiritual kingdom was to be taught and spoken.

Again, if the social, civil, and religious condition of the people who were associated with these external phenomena had been essentially different from that of the Hebrews and their neighbors, the result required could not have been worked out, at least not in the form in which we now have it. Not to multiply examples unduly, suppose there had been no heathen in their borders with idols to corrupt, no enemies to fear and resist, no Philistines, no Midianites, nor Canaanites in the land; or, to vary the inquiry, if there had been no temple, altar, priest, sacrifice, fast, or feast, or solemn assembly, or if the customs and occupations of the people had been other than they were, and there had been no shepherd on the mountains, no plowing and no sowing, no seed-time nor harvest, no reaper with his sickle, and no summer threshing-floor with useless chaff; no vineyard, nor vine-dresser with pruning-hook, no vintage, no wine-press; if there had sailed over Galilee no boat, and no fisherman had cast net into that lovely sea; if there had been no weaver with his shuttle and loom, no refiner with his furnace,

no smith with his forge, no potter with his wheel; or — to change the inquiry once more — had there been no warrior with bow and battle-axe, sword and shield, no fierce horseman, no jumping chariot, no bloody battles, no slaughtered victims, no prisons, chains, or captive slaves — nothing, in short, in all the land to mar and destroy — no floods to drown, no famine to consume, no earthquake to terrify and overwhelm, no pestilence to desolate, no rust to corrupt, moth to eat, locusts to lay waste, scorpion to sting, serpent to bite, — and it is supposable that the biblical writers might have been born and bred in some such peaceful Arcadia; but then would it not have been utterly impossible for them to have either invented, understood, or used such a religious language as we now actually possess? Enough has been said to establish our position that there have been designedly gathered into this land of Palestine all the manifold agents and agencies which divine wisdom foresaw would be needed for the development of man's spiritual language. Let us deal reverently, therefore, with it. Thoughtless traveller! walk softly over those acres once trodden by the feet of patriarchs, prophets, and sacred poets, and, most of all, by the Son of God himself. Put off the soiled sandal of worldliness and sin as you enter this consecrated domain. There is design in this grouping of mountains and plains and deserts, lakes and rivers, with all their vegetable and animal inhabitants, and their marvellous and miraculous incidents and phenomena. These things were not the result of blind chance — were not merely natural, but beyond and above that, we see in them the supernatural and the divine. Do you doubt? Then take your Bible, and make the following simple experiment. Erase from its narratives, its prophecies, its parables and proverbs, sermons and songs, all that has a manifest connection with, and necessary basis in, this land, and then see how much of a revelation will remain. Or, attempt to fill up these erasures by other names, narratives, and symbols, and see what it will come to. Take the Psalter, and, after striking out all the thoughts, words, imagery, and

poetic phrases whose natural basis is in this land, produce, if you are able to do it, "a book of praise for the service of song in the house of the Lord." The mere idea is absurd.

One other remark of a general nature may be needed to avoid mistake. It may be objected to this line of argument, that, if the dialect of the kingdom of heaven is so largely dependent upon, and derived from, things found only or chiefly in Palestine, then the ability to comprehend it will be in exact proportion to the individual's acquaintance with this country and its phenomena. To place all on a fair equality in this respect it would seem to be necessary that this microcosm should be transported, as a sort of hand-specimen, to all other countries.

We may admit, and do at once, that this objection is not altogether imaginary, but still the difficulty is not insurmountable in any case, and will be found quite limited in actual experience. It had been foreseen and provided for by divine wisdom. The collections and grouping together of all the natural elements necessary for the end required were so marvellously numerous and diversified, and of such a peculiar character, that this hand-specimen can in reality, for all practical purposes, be transferred to any country and studied by all people. The apparent exceptions are so few that they need not enter into the account; and therefore we do not hesitate to repeat the declaration that a spiritual nomenclature has been actually developed, in this home of the Bible, adequate to the wants of the whole human race, and available to all.

In claiming for Palestine the high distinction of being the divinely chosen centre and home of revelation, we of course do not exclude from all participation in this work, the neighboring countries. Indeed the student is often obliged to resort to them for explanation and illustration of words, phrases, and things, whose origin was outside of Palestine. Moreover, it is of essential importance to ascertain and keep in mind the peculiar history and circumstances of the writers and actors whose works we are studying. Thus Moses, for

example, was born and bred in Egypt, and yet spent a large part of his life in the desert, and hence in the valley of the Nile, and in the wilderness of wandering, is to be found the explanation of many of the thoughts, figures, and allusions in the Pentateuch, and, perhaps, of a few even of his sacred symbols and typical institutions. And so too, the marvellous machinery, and gorgeous imagery of Ezekiel's visions may have been borrowed from or suggested by the architectural and artistic creations which the prophet had seen on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. The same considerations apply to the author of the Apocalypse, and to nearly all the biblical writers. Familiarity with such things would inevitably influence their language, and hence the necessity of becoming acquainted with them.

But, lest we be led too far away from our specific study, and into fields of questionable speculation, we must return at once to the book itself whose language we are seeking to illustrate.

In carrying forward our study from general considerations to particular examples, taken for the present from the poetry of the Bible, more is demanded than merely to show that our spiritual vocabulary has been largely enriched from this source. This is too obvious to need either proof or illustration. The church has, in fact, transferred the entire Psalter bodily into her bosom; and without it her children would scarcely know how to conduct the devotions either of the closet, the family altar, or the public worship of the sanctuary. But this of itself does not establish our proposition. It must be further shown that this poetic dialect is essentially Palestinian, having its natural basis in this land of the Bible. This is the exact point to be made and illustrated. It is not at all necessary, however, to maintain that the elements of poetry, the phenomena upon which its existence and culture depend, are confined to this country. The raw material out of which it is woven exists in all lands, and for certain varieties of poetry it may be found elsewhere more abundant, and in higher perfection than here. But what we attempt

to show is that in Palestine those phenomena, both natural and moral, which inspire *spiritual* poetry, are more numerous, beautiful, and suggestive than elsewhere; and further, that they are all found concentrated in this very small territory. Palestine contains within itself specimens, hand-specimens if you choose, of all which elsewhere lies scattered and dispersed over regions vast and widely separated. Here all are grouped together, and arranged, as in a cabinet, for the hand of the artist, or the eye of the poet. Sufficient for our purpose, however, is the historic fact, that Palestine is the true birthplace of the sacred psalm, the devout hymn. For this and no more we here contend. For this we believe the Divine Author of our religious life and language made special provision when creating, furnishing, and adorning this home of the Bible.

No elaborate description of the physical features of the country is needed, and we merely remark in passing that there is something eminently poetic in much of the natural scenery of the holy land. Though visited a hundred times it always awakens the same emotions. By some subtile and mysterious influence many of these scenes diffuse over the soul a delicious mental repose, or a dreamy spiritual exaltation, ever and irresistibly inclining the heart to adore and worship, to break forth in songs of praise, and even to shout out aloud, as did the poets and worshippers of old. And this devout and poetic inspiration is clearly traceable to the direct influence of these external influences. In a word, God made both the holy land and the sacred poet, the one for the other. Both were necessary. Neither could realize the divine intention alone. They must be brought together and act and react upon each other. Without this grand Palestinian orchestra, built by the Creator, no poet, however gifted, could have called forth the heavenly harmonies that lie slumbering in the bosom of nature's vast organ. But this external and physical machinery was not enough. It needed, and it was actually associated with, an endless array of moral influences and historic incidents of transcendent interest.



In no other country have these been so numerous, so impressive, or so admirably adapted to the wants of the sacred poet. Nowhere else have the alternations in human experience been so extreme and violent, from the utmost prosperity and the highest material happiness to the deepest abyss of poverty and wretchedness. Every chord in the human harp has here been struck in turn by the great Performer — now evoking sweetest symphony, now crushing down its thousand strings in harshest discord. There is not an emotion, desire, fear or hope possible to man's heart, but has here been awakened and expressed. In this field there is nothing left for him that cometh after the king to know or make experiment upon. Between these wide extremes, and all along the vast domain that lies within them, there can be no new regions to explore and possess. There is no untrodden height to which the poet can soar, no depths unfathomable in which to sink, no unknown joy to gladden, no untasted cup of sorrow to drain. The entire material out of which poets build their lofty verse has been gathered up and appropriated. Love more fervent and delicious, hatred more intense, jealousy more cruel and consuming, ambition more intoxicating, piety purer and more godlike, wickedness more satanic, ingratitude and treachery more base, affection more constant and reliable, benevolence more comprehensive and self-sacrificing, no other land has either known or shown. Choicer specimens the poet himself can neither find nor fancy. On the other hand, does he ask for scenic beauty? The hills and valleys of Palestine are baptized with it. The magnificent and the sublime? Lebanon with his cedars, and Hermon with his head among the stars, overpower and captivate the imagination. He need not wander far nor toil hard to find or fashion an appropriate theatre, or suitable machinery. The whole are furnished ready made, and need only to be worked up by the plastic power of his muse. The land of the Bible contains, or did contain, in itself all the machinery, all the natural and moral elements requisite for the very highest style of poetry.

It may be objected: If this be so, how comes it that Palestine has never produced any great poet, or grand epic? The answer is, that biblical poets had a different and far higher mission than Homer or Virgil, Milton or Shakespeare, or any other name among these sons of song. They were commissioned and inspired to reveal to man the thoughts of God, to be his interpreters and messengers to a benighted world. On this high plane they stand unrivalled and alone. In the lofty region of sacred song the prophet-poets of the Bible have no peers and no parallels. But it is no part of our present task to substantiate this high claim. We must leave this to others, and turn at once to the specific aim and purpose of this inquiry, which is not to establish the superiority of Hebrew poets or poetry, but to show in what ways and to what extent our religious vocabulary has been enriched from this poetic source. For this purpose we may begin with the beginning, that is, with the very first Psalm, as well as anywhere else. A very simple process of analysis and comment will show, that in these sacred lyrics not only the illustrative comparisons, metaphors, and figures — the entire ornamental drapery and costume — are specifically Palestinian, but that the very thoughts themselves were commonly suggested by things and conditions in this land. Let any one take the first verse in the collection, and carefully analyse it with this idea in view. To walk in the counsel of a person, to stand in the way, to sit in the seat, are forms of expression so familiar that one can scarcely realize the fact that he is not using words and phrases in their original prosaic sense; and yet they are, one and all, employed in this verse figuratively, transferred by easy and obvious analogy from things natural to those which are moral and spiritual. Nor is this the whole truth in the case. There is a distinct Palestinian air about these and such like analogical transferences from the visible and natural to the moral and spiritual. In many such examples it may be difficult to put this fact into verbal expression sufficiently definite and tangible to enable one not familiar with this country to ap-

preciate it, yet it is none the less real and important. The author of this first Psalm — no matter who he was, or when he wrote — must have been an inhabitant of this country. The figures, phrases, and comparisons would not have occurred to any one residing in climes essentially different from this ; in a country, for example, cold and stormy, with ways wet and muddy, used merely to pass from one place to another. Along such uncomfortable ways men do not saunter in converse and counsel ; neither do they stand idly plotting mischief in such paths, nor are seats placed there for the accommodation of scorners, or any body else. One may wander for hours even in ornamental parks, in such lands without finding so much as a stone upon which to sit and rest. Very different is the case and the custom in such mild and seductive climates as this of Palestine. Here people pass a great portion of their time in the open air. They ramble at leisure along their pleasant and picturesque paths, stand in groups gathered under cool shade-trees planted by the wayside, and there prepare they their seats, and pass away the time in mirth or mischief. Now, no poet of frigid Siberia for example, or in the burning desert of Sahara, could or would have written this first verse of the first Psalm. Neither the thoughts nor the figures would have occurred to him. Nor, on the other hand, could one born and bred on the banks of the Mississippi, or the shores of Lake Superior, have composed the third verse : “ He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither.” Where the writer of this essay passed his early life, the greatest trouble and toil of the inhabitants were to cut down, burn and destroy the trees ; and no body would have thought of comparing the man that was blessed to one of these formidable giants of the forest. Then, this tree of the Psalm was *planted*, and by the rivers, or rather, by the water canals, made for irrigation ; all very appropriate to this country, but not to lands overshadowed by dark primeval woods, or where the chief anxiety is to get safely rid of a

superabundance of water. In such regions trees grow without being planted, anywhere and everywhere, quite as well as "by the rivers of water." Again, this was a fruit tree, an incident eminently natural here, where, as the Arab proverb tells us, many trees are planted, but only that is preserved which bears fruit. Few things in this country struck the writer more forcibly when he first came to it, than this high estimate of trees founded simply upon their fruit. The reason for this, however, is obvious enough. A large part of the daily food of the people is derived from the various kinds of fruit which these planted trees produce. In many parts of the country it is the chief dependence. No explanation is needed of the additional fact mentioned by the poet, that the leaf of a tree thus planted by the water-courses would not wither, or of the implied fact, that in this burning climate the case would be very different with trees standing in the parched deserts of Southern Palestine.

Finally, no one can read, in this country, the fourth verse of the Psalm, without having instantly presented to his imagination the summer threshing-floor, in the open air, upon some exposed hill-top, with the vehement wind catching up in its wings the useless chaff, and whisking it away amongst the ragged rocks. This doom is in vivid contrast to the green tree by the water-channels, with fadeless leaf and branches bending beneath their burden of delicious fruit.

Here, as well as anywhere, we may dwell for a moment on the ever-recurring use of the word "fruit." Whatever results from a person's course of conduct, whether good or bad, is said to be the fruit of it. The transfer from the natural to the moral and the spiritual idea is made without the least conscious effort. The Great Teacher, therefore, did not need to explain his language, when he said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into

the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." Nor did he explain the words: "Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Nor did the apostle explain himself, when writing to the Galatians, that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," and all the other spiritual graces. They did not pause to explain, neither shall we. It is sufficient for our purpose to notice, in passing, that our spiritual nomenclature has been abundantly enriched from this source, as will be apparent to all who call to mind the many passages where these and cognate words and phrases are employed.

Something more may be said about this chaff chased by the wind—driven away by the whirlwind, as Hosea has it. Chaff is the metaphorical symbol of the ungodly and their doom. John Baptist expands the allusion by mentioning the fan by which the floor was purged—the chaff separated from the wheat, and then burned up with unquenchable fire. This final portion of their doom was probably suggested by a custom which the writer has noticed more than once, and the Baptist had no doubt noticed the same. In "purging" the floor the following results occur. As the mixed contents are tossed up to the wind, the wheat falls nearest the operator, the *tibn* or ground-up straw next, and the light dust and useless chaff are carried further off—quite outside the floor, if the wind be strong. This useless chaff is often burnt on the spot. A farmer once told the writer that he thus burnt it, not merely because it was of no use, but also because there were mingled with it the seeds of tares and noxious weeds, which would be dispersed over his fields by the wind, or carried thither by the first autumn rains. It was not merely valueless, but positively mischievous; and so are the ungodly, who shall perish like the chaff.

We have not yet exhausted the contributions to our religious language which this short Psalm has made. The two last verses introduce us to an Oriental court, with the litigants or the accused standing before the judge, just as they do still, and the resultant condition and behavior of the good and the evil. But it would be tedious to notice

all those incidental, and yet accurate, touches which an unconscious reference to the customs and incidents of an Oriental "judgment-seat," have added to this picture. Nor will time or space permit us to enter into such minuteness of analysis and illustration in dealing with other Psalms; though they may be equally suggestive, and even more appropriate to our general purpose. We can only glance at a few examples taken at random from the vast poetical storehouse of the Bible. These specimens will be selected with sole reference to the matter in hand. Our search is after the natural, physical basis of our spiritual language, and wherever that leads we will follow.

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## ARTICLE II.

### ENGLISH ELOQUENCE AND DEBATE.

BY THE LATE GEORGE SHEPARD, D.D., PROFESSOR IN BANGOR THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

I PROPOSE in this Lecture to speak of eloquence as it has appeared in connection with the English tongue. The Grecian and Roman eloquence is often treated, and greatly praised. The question presents itself, Is there not something in the records of our own language and race which, at least, approaches these renowned specimens of antiquity? I think we can show that there is. Something, at least, worthy our study, our admiration, and imitation.

I shall confine myself very much to the eloquence of debate, and shall, in the first place, attempt a very rapid sketch of eloquence in the English field, giving prominence to the conflicts and progress of debate on the parliamentary arena; giving also certain facts in the history of leading speakers, and deriving from the whole certain principles and lessons such as may be profitable to those who aspire to anything in the same line.

In glancing over the field of English eloquence, as I propose to do first, we find but little that is satisfactory in parlia-