

uttered. He died on April 25, 1800. "From the moment of his death until the coffin was closed," says Mr. Johnson, "the expression into which his countenance had settled was that of calmness and composure, mingled as it were with holy surprise." The exquisite lines of Mrs. Browning are the most fitting commentary on these words :

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses,
That turns his fevered eyes around—"My mother! where's my mother?"
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other!

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love—the unwearied love she bore him!
Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic eyes which closed in death to save him.

Thus? Oh, not *thus*! no type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew—"my Saviour! not deserted!"

JOHN VAUGHAN.



ART. V.—THE OLDEST COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS.

STUDIES IN THE "MIDRASH TEHILLIM."—No. II.

WE cannot penetrate far into the "Midrash" without encountering remarks that bear upon questions which are at the present day being earnestly debated amongst ourselves. Prominent among such subjects is the question of the so-called "headings" of the Psalms. The reader of the "Midrash" is at once reminded of the gulf which divides the current English view of the subject from the view of these earliest native expositors.

In the original language the heading, it should be remembered, is sometimes a portion of the first verse of the psalm, as in Ps. xv. and *passim*; sometimes it constitutes an entire verse, as in Ps. lxiii.; while sometimes, again, as in Ps. xviii., it forms an entire verse and runs into a second; and in Ps. li. it occupies two entire verses.¹ Now, the third psalm is the first psalm in the Psalter which has a heading—"A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son"—but what is

¹ See the disquisition on the subject in my work, "The Gradual Psalms; a Treatise on the Fifteen Songs of Degrees, with Commentary based on Ancient Hebrew, Chaldee, and Christian Authorities." Hayes, London, 1874.

striking in the "Midrash" is that considerably more than one-half of the entire exposition of the psalm is devoted to a discussion of this heading. It is a very unsatisfying discussion, it is true: it guesses a moral reason why this psalm should stand next to its predecessor, because a bad son is worse than the worst enemies who rage against the Lord; it constructs a trivial parable of a king enraged with his son to explain how David, on his ascent of Mount Olivet to escape from Absalom, could weep, and at the same time say this psalm; it blunders in its etymology both Hebrew and Greek, playing upon the name of Hushai the Archite, at one moment as if "Archite" had something to do with the Greek ἀρχή, and the next confusing it with the Hebrew word of similar sound, which means "my companion—and mine own familiar friend," but which, unfortunately for such a reference, begins with an entirely different letter of the alphabet. Such a discussion is not edifying as regards its substance; but as regards its mere bulk it is significant and representative. It is representative of a fact which pervades the entire range of Hebrew literature upon the Psalms—the fact, that is, that in the Hebrew view the so-called "headings of the Psalms" were, so to speak, no headings at all, but each an integral part of the psalm to which it belongs, and never (so far as is known) omitted from the recitation of the psalm. With ourselves, on the contrary, the fashion has prevailed of regarding them as a kind of gloss, supposed to be due to what is often the clumsy guess of some editor of the collection, and lightly to be stripped off by the more enlightened science of the modern student. It is a fashion which has no doubt been in some degree supported by the unfortunate way of printing the psalm-headings in the Authorised Version of the Bible, where they are separated in type from the remainder of the psalm, and are not included (as they invariably are in Hebrew) in the verse-numbering of the psalm. But of such an idea there is not a trace in Hebrew literature. That there are difficulties in the way of these psalm-headings is undoubted. But it is not so clear that we are upon the right track for overcoming those difficulties when it is gravely asserted that the headings of the Psalms belong to the same category as the subscriptions to the Pauline Epistles of the New Testament. In what does the resemblance consist, it may be asked, save in the difficulties in which the subscriptions would involve the expositor? If, in the true spirit of science, we endeavour to lift ourselves above the embarrassments of the commentator and view the question as one of precise and accurate reasoning, then, as regards all external considerations, the psalm-headings and the New Testament subscriptions stand in a position not of analogy, but of

the most marked contrast. In the case of the subscriptions we know who made them; we know when and where they were made; and we have ancient copies of the Epistles, which do not contain them. But in the case of the psalm-headings we have nothing of the kind; we can find in the literature of the Hebrew nation no trace of a time when they were not known to the commentators upon the Scriptures, and (so far as the world knows) there never was an ancient copy of the Scriptures which did not contain them.

The "Midrash," on the fourth psalm, opens with an observation which is of some service to us in one of *our* embarrassments in our interpretation of the Psalms. The first verse of the psalm begins with the words: "To the Chief Musician on Neginoth, a Psalm of David. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness." The "Midrash" continues: "R. J." (who may be R. Judah or R. Isaac¹) "says, Whatever David said, David said with reference to himself, and with reference to the congregation." The observation is of value to us, because it is precisely the principle to which we are obliged to resort in applying certain psalms to Christ. In a psalm, for example, like the forty-first, which, by general admission amongst Christians, is applied to the Passion of Jesus of Nazareth, describing the treachery of Judas in the words, "Yea, Mine own familiar friend, whom I trusted, which did eat My bread, hath lifted up his heel against Me"—in such a psalm we encounter words of a different tone: "I said, Lord be merciful unto me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." How can such words be applied to Jesus of Nazareth? How could orthodox Christianity put into *His* mouth such a phrase as "I have sinned against Thee"? The difficulty is at least as old as the time of Augustine in Christian thought.² We must understand, he says, that Christ speaks in such passages in the person of His members. In fact, to adopt the words of the Hebrew expositor of the "Midrash," what the Son of David said with reference to Himself He said with reference to the congregation. It is pleasant to find that a principle of interpretation which is quite indispensable to us is conceded by those who would dissent so widely, as the author of the "Midrash" would, from many of the theological positions which we occupy.

For yet one other reason the opening of Psalm iv. is noticeable. It presents the first occurrence in the Psalter of that

¹ Perhaps R. Isaac, editor of "Tosaphos." Or may it be (Rosh Yeshibak), Head of the Academy? See Wolf, ii. 918.

² Aug. Enarr., in Ps. xl. (41 Authorised Version), vol. viii., p. 149, c. 1, Ed. Paris, 1635.

term which has occasioned so much discussion and is rendered in the English Bible by the words, "To the Chief Musician." Notwithstanding several differences of opinion as to details, almost all modern expositors seem to be agreed that the term has reference to some feature or other of the musical presentation of the Psalm to which it is prefixed. This applies not only to writers in English or Latin or German, but even to Hebrew writers of post-mediæval, or comparatively late date. Thus, in the latest reprint¹ of the great Rabbinic Bibles there are two modern Hebrew commentaries in which this sense is unreservedly assigned to the word. At an earlier date Ibn Ezra, amongst Hebrew writers, recognises it; Rashi recognises it and Radak recognises it. But the line adopted by the "Midrash" reminds us of the very striking contrast between all this and the older Hebrew learning upon the question. In the older learning it is hardly too much to say that there is not a trace of the word being understood in a musical sense. The line adopted by the "Midrash" is to a certain extent representative of the line that was generally accepted, not only in early Hebrew literature, but in early Christian learning likewise. It should be remembered that the root of the word for "To the Chief Musician" also means in Hebrew (1) *victory*, and then (2) *continuance, permanence, eternity*. Now the "Midrash" takes the three words in the superscription of the Psalm together: *To the Chief Musician: On Neginoth: a Psalm*. "This Psalm," it continues, "is to be uttered with three kinds of praise corresponding to these words: with perpetuity; with minstrelsy; with psalmody. With minstrelsy, which belongs to prophecy, according to what was said by Elisha the prophet: "But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him" (2 Kings iii. 15). *Lammenatzaach* means "Him to whom it is seemly to conquer: whose eternity is for ever and ever." Another exposition is: "To Him who is conquered by His creatures." This is entirely at one with the earlier versions and commentaries upon the word, while one and all seem to ignore any connection of the word with musical performance. The LXX. rendered it by εἰς τὸ τέλος. The Vulgate accordingly has it *in finem*. St. Jerome gives *Victori*.² Aquila has τῷ νικοποιῷ. Symmachus has ἐπιὶ κικίον. The Chaldee Targum paraphrases it by a word which means *for singing*; not as Delitzsch puts

¹ Warsaw. The commentaries alluded to are called "Metzudas David" and "Metzudas Zion."

² Hieron. "In Librum Commentariorum Danielis ad Pammachium et Marcellum. Proœmium."

it: "liturgisch zu singen," for there is no notion of "liturgisch" inherent in the word. And the Talmud¹ refers it to the world to come. The preponderance of considerations, no doubt, justifies our modern way of understanding the word; but this unanimous silence in antiquity upon our way is at least striking. One modern writer observes that the LXX. and Vulgate rendering defies all reasonable conjecture. It is perhaps a question of which we have hardly got to the bottom as yet. And if our judgment is ever revised it will probably be in some degree due to men's attention being arrested by these unexplained phenomena in the problem, and by this contrast between the old learning and the new.

The "Midrash" on the fourth Psalm contains a fine description of God hearing prayer, which it may be well to quote as one of the better specimens of its style. The extract turns, it may be premised, upon the passage in Ezekiel, which places the throne of the Most High above the living creatures and the firmament:

R. Phinehas said in the name of R. Judah: "An idol is called near, but it is in reality far off. As it is said in Isaiah (xlv. 7): 'They bear him on the shoulder; they carry him;' but the end of the matter is, (though the idol is) with him in the house. Isa. xlv. 13, mixed with the above text. One cries unto him, yet can he not answer. But the Almighty is not so. He is far off, yet He is near, and there is none nearer than He is." As R. Levi said: "From the earth to the firmament is a journey of 500 years; and the clouds of the firmament are a (further) journey of 500 years; and so between one firmament and another; and above the firmament are the hoofs of the living creatures (in Ezekiel's vision)." R. Chaldo said: "Even the hoofs of the living creatures are a journey of 500 years; and the legs of the living creatures are as much as all this; and the backs of the living creatures are as much. And the throne of the Most High is at as great a height as all the rest put together above His world. But when a man enters the synagogue and stands behind the pillar, muttering his prayer, the Almighty, blessed be He, gives ear!"

The seventy-second Psalm is one of the so-called Solomon Psalms. The "Midrash" yields little or no help towards the solution of the one or two difficulties of translation which it presents. It passes in total silence, for example, the very important clause which one English translation gives as "Prayer also shall be made *for* Him continually," and the other, "Prayer shall be made ever *unto* Him." It is commonly said in the English world of the present day that the rendering "unto" cannot be defended, and must be given up in favour of "for." This occasions some distress to those who regard the Psalm as a poetical prophecy of Christ, and who are in the habit of addressing prayer to Christ. It is therefore worth while to say that the familiar translation "unto" is

¹ Pesachim, 117a, med.

not quite so incapable of defence as it is sometimes conceded to be.

Gesenius says that the word "unto" indicates, broadly speaking, neighbourhood. He assigns to it the meanings: (1) *juxta*, (2) *post*, (3) *circa*, (4) *inter*, (5) *metaphorically*, *pro*.

From an entirely different point of view Rashi reaches a similar conclusion, and (on Jonah ii. 7) says that whenever the word occurs in Holy Scripture it is to be taken as "opposite to," "in front of."

In this connection it is worth while to cite Gen. xxv. 21 (though the word is not the same): "And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife." Here again there is no authority for saying that the word means strictly "for," though no doubt the passage comes to that. Gesenius says that it means *Coram*, *ante oculos*, etc., as it undoubtedly does; and we can hardly be surprised that the Talmud should say, "Prayed opposite his wife for his wife;" and that Rashi should explain it of Isaac standing in one corner and Rebekah in the other, and so offering their prayers.

The argument, then, is this: In the Psalm passage we have a word which strictly means neither "unto" nor "for." It is a word of locality. Taken literally, the statement is: "Prayer shall be made ever in front of Him." Whether that is to be explained as "to Him" or as "for Him" is a question that must be decided by other considerations. It is, in any case, time the world knew that those who have with many a sneer driven out the old translation in the English Prayer-Book have not got the argument quite all their own way.

The "Midrash," indeed, yields no light upon this particular question; but it is, nevertheless, quite explicit on the subject of applying the Psalm to Christ. One of its expositions says: "'Give the King thy judgments.' This is the King Messiah."

The direction which it takes in dealing with the heading of the Psalm is perhaps worthy of notice. The translators of the English Bible seem to have had some hesitation in dealing with the preposition which is susceptible of so many senses. They have put it "A Psalm for Solomon," while in the margin they give the alternative, "A Psalm of Solomon." Even that, it might be contended, did not necessarily mean that the authorship might be attributed to Solomon. The "Midrash" does not entertain such a thought. The Psalm with them is David's Psalm, and the reference is to Solomon. David said with respect to Solomon also, "Give the king Thy judgments, O God." And according to the "Midrash" the prayer was fulfilled in Solomon's judgment of the two harlots, when Solomon illustrated not man's judgment, but God's, in that

he reached his decision without witnesses and the usual formalities of a human court.

The "Midrash" on the seventy-second Psalm introduces us to what is the universal view of the Hebrew writers upon the two words for God in the Old Testament, *Elohim* and *Jehovah*. It will be seen that the fact of there being two words for God in Scripture was no discovery of modern writers, although the conclusions drawn from that fact as to the authorship of Scripture are entirely products of the atmosphere of modern thought. The Hebrew writers with one consent appear to take *Elohim* as describing God in His attribute of justice and *Jehovah* as God in His attribute of mercy. Rashi points out that in the account of creation the Bible says, "God (*i.e.*, *Elohim*) created," and not "the Lord *Jehovah* created," because at first God intended to create the world in His attribute of justice, and it was only when He saw that it could not continue on those conditions that He introduced the attribute of mercy. The universe, in fact, which God made at first was a universe that needed no exercise of mercy—that demanded nothing but that it should be made in perfect justice, each part in its place and none intruding upon the province of another—a universe in which anything like mercy or forbearance might be conceived as a superfluity or even an impertinence until the balance was disturbed by the calamity of the Fall. Now, the "Midrash" on the Psalms, starting from the words, "Give the king Thy judgments, O God," dwells upon the quality of mercy as conveyed in the name *Jehovah*, though it brings the attribute of mercy into creation also.

"R. Jusiai bar Chanina said, when the Almighty sought to send Moses into Egypt, Moses said to Him (Exod. iii.), And when they shall say unto me, What is His name? [what shall I say unto them] the Almighty said to him, I tell thee (it is) 'I AM THAT I AM.' You find (the word) I AM written three times (indicating, say the Jews, that God meant He would be the same in the creation, in the present deliverance, and in the future). The Almighty said, 'In mercy I created the world and in mercy I will guide it.'"

Now that this distinction between the names *Elohim* and *Jehovah* prevails consistently in the usage of Scripture can perhaps hardly be maintained. Nor, however, does the unquestioned distinction between *Jesus* and *Christ* consistently prevail. We find *Elohim* used in places where the design is to describe God as the God of mercy and deliverance; for example, in the exclamation of Balaam upon the deliverance of Israel from the plot of Balak, and conversely we have *Jehovah* used in passages where the idea of judgment seems to be dominant. It is only fair to the old Hebrew writers to

say that these things were all noticed by them and explanations of the anomaly were suggested. Whether we agree with them or not, many a passage of Scripture will be found to receive a higher light and a deepened colour if regarded through this medium. A reader who had expected the contrary might be surprised to find in how many of the passages of the Hebrew Concordance not only a certain propriety is discoverable, but a new force and beauty is imparted by observing this distinction in the names of God. Elohim, it is well known, is not strictly speaking a personal name at all, but rather an official name. In connection with this attribute of justice, it is itself a common name for judges; thus in the case of the servant whose ear was to be bored with an awl (Exod. xxi. 6), "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges" (Elohim), and in the offence of trespass, "the cause of both parties shall come before the judges (Elohim), and whom the judges shall condemn he shall pay double to his neighbour" (Exod. xxii. 9). It is presumably this usage of the word that underlies that distinction of it as a name of God which the Hebrew writers endeavour to establish.

With respect to the name of Jehovah, which the "Midrash" regards as the personal name for that particular *El* or *Elohim* whom the Hebrews acknowledged, it is worth while to notice under what particular colour Scripture exhibits it upon one or two significant occasions. When Moses stood upon Mount Sinai with the two tables of the Commandments in his hands, "the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord" (Exod. xxxiv. 5). It was apparently the object of God to declare the precise character in which He wished to be regarded by man. But what did He say? The true force of God's declaration is in some degree obscured by the way in which the words are grouped in our English Bible. There the Divine proclamation stands thus: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth" (Exod. xxxiv. 6). But in the Hebrew Bible the words are differently grouped by very strongly marked divisions in the accentuation: "The Lord, the Lord; a God merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth."¹ In short, the subject of the whole proclamation is the incommunicable name, the Lord—the Lord; and the drift of the predication about it was that that name stood for God, manifested in His attributes of mercy, long-suffering, and grace.

There was one other occasion when God Himself dwelt upon

¹ Or perhaps even: "The Lord, the Lord, is a God merciful and gracious;" for that is the correct Hebrew idiom.

the associations of the name *Jehovah*. It was the occasion referred to by the "Midrash" when Moses was to be sent to rescue the chosen people. God says: "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but by My name *Jehovah* was I not known unto them." It was an act of mercy that He was about to perform in deliverance, and this He will have ever associated with His name *Jehovah*. He does not say that *Jehovah* was not known: we are told, on the contrary, that it was; but, as Rashi points out, He says He was not known by it, *i.e.*, men had not thought of Him under it as the God of mercy—a character of which the name *Jehovah* was for ever intended to be the monument. Hitherto men had thought of Him chiefly as the God of justice, or as the God of power, or as the God of origin; but henceforward He would be known primarily as the delivering God.

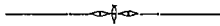
It is in exact accordance with this conception that in Scripture the name *Jehovah* first appears upon the scene, when the effect of man's sin upon God's creation is to be narrated. Then it was that the universe first needed the exercise of mercy; first needed (so to speak) to meet God under a new character; and so, in the twentieth chapter of Genesis, the story of creation has to be told again, but this time in a relation wholly new and with *Jehovah*, the name that was to suggest "the kindness and philanthropy" (Tit. iii. 4) of God, added to the old name *Elohim*, which had set forth God in His character of abstract justice.

And before passing away from the subject, it is well to notice that there is one verse in the Scripture, the whole point of which probably lies in the contrast between these two names of God. In the most familiar of our English versions of the Psalms it runs thus: "In God's word will I rejoice: in the Lord's word will I comfort me" (Ps. lvi. 10, P. B. V.). That rendering tends to obscure the contrast which the psalmist intended to bring out. It seems to fix attention upon some contrast between *rejoice* and *comfort*. No such antithesis was known to the psalmist. He meant to contrast nothing else but the two names of God. The structure of his verse is in the highest degree artificial. In Hebrew it consists of only six words, three in each of the two clauses into which the verse is divided. The words in the second clause are identically the same as those in the first, with one exception, and that is that the name for God is changed. Rendered with precision the words stand thus: "In *Elohim* I will praise a word: in *Jehovah* I will praise a word." In point of fact, what the psalmist probably meant is that under whatever aspect he contemplated God he always found material for praise; and the

“Midrash Tehillim” is probably scientifically correct when it comments on the verse in these terms :

“In God will I praise a word ; in the LORD I will praise a word.” What is the meaning of “In God” and what the meaning of “in the Lord” ? Where it is written “God” it (refers to) the attribute of justice, and where it is written “Lord” (*i.e.*, Jehovah) it (refers to) the attribute of mercy ; as it is said (Exod. xxxiv. 6), “The Lord, the Lord, an El merciful and gracious.” David said before the Almighty, “If Thou comest upon me with the attribute of justice I will praise Thee” : (that is the meaning of) “In Elohim I will praise a word.” “And if Thou comest upon me with the attribute of mercy I will praise Thee” : (that is the meaning of) “In Jehovah I will praise a word.”

H. T. ARMPFIELD.



ART. VI.—THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHURCHES.

IN the anxiety of many excellent persons that there should be as little difference as possible between the chief branches of the Christian Church, they are in danger of forgetting to some extent the independence of different Churches one of the other, and the unimportance of uniformity, or even similarity, so long as they hold the main essentials of the Christian faith.

The origin of National Churches was even to be distinguished in the time of the Apostles, when St. Paul grouped together “the Churches of Judæa,” “the Churches of Galatia,” “the Churches of Macedonia.” Another instance of nationality is seen in the fact that the converts from Judaism were always allowed to continue the Mosaic worship, while the Gentiles were free from its regulations. It was not till the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, about 135 A.D., that the main body of Jewish Christians finally separated from the Law.

Dean Jackson points out that the Churches planted by St. Paul could not appeal to St. Peter, nor those planted by St. Peter to any other Apostle. “Admitting,” he goes on, “the laws and discipline of all the Churches planted by St. Peter, by St. Paul, and other Apostles had been the self same, yet could they not in this respect be so truly and properly said one visible Church, as the particular Churches planted by St. Paul, especially in one and the same province, were one Church, albeit their laws or ordinances had been more different. It is probable, then, that there were as many several distinct visible Churches as there were Apostles, or other ambassadors of Christ. . . . It is, then, profession of the same faith, participation of the sacrament, and subjection to the same laws and ordinances ecclesiastic which makes the visible Church to be