

thoughts of the Apostle's mind is that the Church must not only suffer, but suffer as Jesus did. She must tread her Lord's path to heaven, fight a similar battle for similar victory, bear the same cross if in due season she would wear the same crown. That is not the lesson of St. John only, but of Christ Himself, and of all the sacred writers. Let us suppose then, what is the fact, that it fills St. John's mind, animates his whole being, is his key to the problems both of this world and the next, and it seems most natural that, with his Gospel telling of the fortunes of Christ in his heart if not in his hand, he should write his Apocalypse. The voice of that Book to Christ's people is, "Expect only in this world what befell your Lord; but expect also, at his Second Coming, what befell Him when his work was accomplished; cherish the "patience and faith of the saints;" and cry, "Conre, Lord Jesus."

WM. MILLIGAN.

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### THE CHRONICLE OF BALAAM.

#### § 2. *The Journey* (Numbers xxii. 22-34).

OF Balaam's long journey from Mesopotamia to Moab only a single incident is recorded, and this, apparently, occurred as his journey drew to a close. All the graphic and local touches in the description of the road he took,—first, through the open field where the ass could turn aside, then along a path between high vineyard walls against one of which the terrified and shrinking ass crushed his foot, and then along the strait place, the narrow causeway, where there was no room to turn—indicated that he was approaching a city; for only in the environs of a city would he be likely to pass successively through cultivated fields, carefully guarded vineyards, and the raised narrow way which led up to the gate. And it has been conjectured,

with much probability, that the city he was approaching was Ir-Moab, or Ar of Moab, on the eastern border of Balak's kingdom, near the spot where the Upper Arnon receives its tributary Nahaliel. One of the upper branches of this stream still bears the name *Balû*, and in this name there is very possibly a reminiscence of *Balaam*.

Only one incident of the journey is recorded, but this incident is so singular in itself, and, in the shallower sort of mind, has assumed such undue proportions and given rise to so much sceptical and jesting comment, that it is impossible to pass it by with the few words which are all that it really deserves. That "the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, should rebuke the madness of the prophet," is but a theme for ridicule and merriment to many; while, to many more, it presents a grave and serious difficulty any solution of which they would thankfully welcome. I myself can well remember a time when Balaam's ass was a much more perplexing figure than Balaam himself, and when I turned with disappointment from any sermon or essay on the character of this singular prophet—even the weighty and illuminating discourses of Bishop Butler and F. D. Maurice—which made no attempt to explain this incident in his story. And as there must be many who are still as immature and perplexed in thought as I then was, it may be well to treat this incident as if it were of more importance than I think it is, and to deal with it at somewhat disproportionate fulness and length.<sup>1</sup>

The angel appeared, then, and the dumb ass spake "to rebuke *the madness* of the prophet." What was his madness? in what did it consist? is, therefore, the first question we ask; for if we can get at the motive of this strange intervention, that may go far to explain the intervention itself.

<sup>1</sup> The solution of the problem that I am about to offer has already been given, in substance, to the readers of this Magazine. *First Series*, vol. viii.

Here, then, was a man of high prophetic gifts, and very proud of the gifts which raised him so high above his fellows (Chap. xxiv. 3, 4; 15, 16); a man, too, of a conscience so far quick and sensitive that he could not enter on any course without first persuading himself that he had Divine sanction for it: and he is going on an errand which he feels to be a dubious one, an errand in which he is conscious that his own wishes and interests are not in harmony with the will of God. He wants to curse the people whom God has commanded him to bless. And though he quite means, or has persuaded himself that he quite means, to obey the Divine command, he would gladly induce God to modify it; while in the darker corners of his soul, into which he does not care to pry, there lurks perhaps a hope that he may hit on some means of evading that command while seeming to obey it, without doing too much violence to his conscience. And so, as he goes on his way, he plots and broods and schemes; he bids his brains go about and devise some plan by which, while true to the letter of the Divine command, he may yet be false to its spirit.

We are doing him no injustice, I hope and think, in assuming that this was the point about which his thoughts hovered and revolved during his long journey; for we base the assumption not simply on the course he ultimately took, but also on all the details of the strange intervention by which his thoughts and schemes were arrested at the close of the journey, and on one or two direct hints which the Chronicle yields to an attentive student. Thus, in Verse 22, we are told that "the anger of the Lord was kindled against him *as he was going*"; not "*because he was going*," as in the Authorised Version, but by something transpiring within the man as he went. Now God is not angry without cause; and the one cause which makes Him angry with men is some unrighteousness in them, or some inward

leaning toward unrighteousness. And what could the unrighteous leaning of Balaam be but that, in the conflict between his own interests and desires and the will of God, he was permitting his interests and desires to prevail over his sense of duty, suffering the baser elements of his nature to override the promptings of that in him which was highest and best, giving way, in short, to the temptation which Balak had held out before him, and scheming how he might please man without altogether breaking with God.

So absorbed is he in his schemes, so preoccupied, that this man, ordinarily so alert, so quick to discern omens, so sensitive to spiritual intimations, so proud of his open eye, actually does not see the angel who stands full in his path, with his sword drawn in his hand. So unlike himself is he that, forgetting his customary composure and moderation, he cruelly smites the ass who is saving him from destruction, and only longs that his staff had been a sword that he might slay her!

*This inward preoccupation and deterioration* was "the madness" which the dumb ass forbade and rebuked. And how severe and humiliating, yet how merciful, the rebuke! How humiliating that he who prided himself on being "the man whose eyes are open, who heareth the words of God and seeth the vision of the Almighty," should find himself outdone by the very beast he rode, blind to what even his ass could see; so insensate, so "transported from himself" as that he had sought to slay the very creature who had saved him! And yet what a wonder of mercy and grace was it that even while, as the angel told him, his way was rash, foolhardy, full of hidden perils which he ought never to have affronted, God had not forgotten or forsaken him, but had miraculously interposed to warn him that the course he was meditating could only lead him to destruction, to arrest him in his downward path, to quicken his attention, to open his eyes to the spiritual facts and omens

of which he had lost ken, and to call him back to the allegiance he so loudly professed !

These are the thoughts naturally suggested by this incident to reflective and spiritual minds : and it will be admitted that it is somewhat depressing to be called down from such thoughts as these—thoughts which throw so much light on God's providential dealing with us and with all men—to a consideration of the mere form of the narrative and of the difficulties which it suggests to the inquiring and sceptical intellect. But since this also is a necessary part of our task, let us at once address ourselves to it and get it out of our way.

Now, of course, if we are to approach this problem in a fair and reasonable spirit, we must peremptorily banish from our minds all the sordid and ludicrous associations which, here in England, have long been connected with the ass. We have only to go as far as Spain to find a much nobler strain of this patient and useful beast ; while, in all Eastern lands and from the earliest times, the ass has been as habitually ridden by the learned and dignified classes in time of peace as the horse in war. More sure of foot than the horse, of a steadier nerve, more patient of labour and distress, it is eminently suited to such lands as Syria and Mesopotamia, where stretches of burning sand alternate with lofty mountain ranges, with their difficult rocky passes and steep dangerous ascents and descents.

Then, too, if the angel of the Lord appeared, as we are told, in a visible, and probably in a human form, brandishing a drawn sword against the advancing prophet, we need find no difficulty in the fact, need betake ourselves to no theory of instinct to understand, that the ass *saw* him, and sought to avoid the peril to which both she and her master were exposed ; while the prophet himself, brooding over his schemes with downcast and introverted eyes, might very well see nothing beyond the ass on which he rode,

even when his attention was partly aroused by its unwonted behaviour.

The real difficulty of the incident to those who feel a special difficulty in it consists, I suppose, in the alleged fact that the ass *spoke*, spoke in apparently human words and with a human voice. And this difficulty has, to say the least of it, been very neatly turned by many of our ablest critics and commentators, some of whom have as little love for miracles as the veriest sceptic. They say: Balaam, the soothsayer and diviner, was trained to observe and interpret the motions and cries of beasts and birds, and especially anything that was exceptional in them; to draw auguries and portents from them, to see in them the workings of a Divine power, to infer from them indications of the Divine will. When, therefore, the beast he rode shewed so strange and unwonted a reluctance to advance; when he first "turned aside out of the way," then "crushed" Balaam's foot against a wall, and then fell down groaning in "a narrow place where there was no room to turn either to the right hand or the left," all the diviner woke in the man. Here was a portent indeed, and he must interpret it. And to him it seemed that the ass was striving and remonstrating with him; that, conscious of a presence of which he himself was unaware, it was seeking to save him from a doom which he was heedlessly provoking. And so, with the dramatic instinct of an Oriental poet, either Balaam himself or the original writer of the Chronicle *translated these subjective impressions into external facts*, and made the ass "speak" the meaning which he read in its motions and groans.

Nor is it only rationalistic critics who lean toward the interpretation which makes Balaam read the speech or rebuke into the dumb ass's inarticulate cries. It is adopted in one of the most orthodox of recent commentaries—the Speaker's Commentary, where we read: "The cries of

the ass would seem to have been significant to Balaam's mind only," and not to have meant anything to the servants and the envoys who were with him; just as Saul alone heard "words" on the way to Damascus, those who journeyed with him hearing a "sound," indeed, but finding no articulate meaning in it. "God may have brought it about that *sounds uttered by the creature after his kind became to the prophet's intelligence as though it addressed him in rational speech.* Indeed to an augur, priding himself on his skill in interpreting the cries and movements of animals, no more startling warning could be given than one so real as this, yet *conveyed through the medium of his own art*; and to a seer, pretending to superhuman wisdom, no more humiliating rebuke can be imagined than to teach him by the mouth of his own ass."

Then, too, to complete their case, those who hold this hypothesis proceed to point out to us the congruity of the speech with the supposed speaker. If, they say, the ass had had any profoundly spiritual truth put or read into its mouth, there would or might have been a marked and repulsive disproportion between the truth revealed and the medium through which it was conveyed. But no such truth is attributed to her; what she says, or is supposed to say, is wholly in keeping with her animal nature and conditions. It is simply what myriads of the animals who have been reduced to the service of man might and would have said could they have spoken with man's voice. All she does is to remonstrate against the injustice and cruelty with which she has been treated, to appeal to the fidelity of her service as a reason why she should not be suspected of wilful disobedience. Virtually she says to her master (Verse 30): "You have smitten me these three times. You would have slain me if you could, although my only offence is that I have been trying

to save you from a danger you did not see. Why have you treated me so cruelly? Have I not served you faithfully ever since I was thine? Have I ever disobeyed you before, or disobeyed you without sufficient cause? Am I wont to do so unto thee? If not, why forget my past service and fidelity? Why did you not conclude that I had good reason for disobeying you now?"

Certainly, if an ass could speak, she could hardly speak more appropriately. She is simply speaking for the whole animal race, and once for all protests against and rebukes the madness and the cruelty with which these poor relations of ours upon the carnal side are only too often treated.

The whole hypothesis is reasonable enough, indeed; for surely nothing is more probable than that a soothsayer and augur, accustomed to find omens in the actions of beasts and birds, should find a spiritual significance in the motions and groans of the ass beneath him which those who travelled with him did not so much as suspect. And if there are still any who find it a relief to look at the incident in this light, they will do well to look at it in this light. There is no need to say a word against it,—no need even to remind them that the only Scripture which describes the ass as actually speaking *with man's voice* is the so-called Second Epistle of St. Peter, and that this Epistle, which was not admitted into the canon of the early Church, seems in a fair way of being cut out from it by the scholarship of the modern Church. Nay, even if any should conclude that the Divine warning to the prophet was thrown into a fabulous or legendary form by the simplicity of ancient times, I for one will not quarrel with them for that; but will rather admit that, as we find some admixture of fable or legend in all ancient literatures, so also we may reasonably expect to find some such admixture in the ancient Hebrew literature, since the Spirit of all truth, as He has used most of the other literary forms



in which men instruct or delight each other, may very probably have used this form also for our instruction.

For myself, indeed, I care very little what interpretation may be placed on this singular passage in Balaam's story, and would as soon believe that the mouth of the dumb ass was really opened to utter articulate human words as that Balaam's sensitive and practised ear heard these words into his groans and cries. I would say, with F. D. Maurice: "*How* the dumb ass rebuked the madness of the prophet I know not, nor care to know. But I believe that whatever sounds it uttered they did convey exactly that meaning to the mind of the prophet which it is said that they conveyed. He felt that the instinct of a brute was made the instrument of teaching him, that what he would not learn by gracious inward discipline was brought home to him by rough, humiliating, outward discipline. I feel too deeply the essential veracity of the story to be troubled with minute questions about its details." And hence I do not need to say with Ewald, "A beast is often more sagacious and foreboding than an obdurate man;" or with Keil, "that animals have a perception of the abnormal and even of the supernatural, is the popular belief of all ages." I could be content with Robertson<sup>1</sup> to pass it by with the curt parenthesis, "The intervention of the ass, *whether literal or figurative*," or even to pass it by, as Bishop Butler did, without a single word.

For, after all, what does it matter *what* we do with it, *how* we read it? Get rid of the speaking ass, if you will; you do not thereby get rid of the speaking angel. And if, as I suppose, the angel stood at least as high above the Prophet as the ass stood below him on the scale of being,

<sup>1</sup> Robertson (of Brighton) does indeed add a few words, very few, on the several ways in which the incident has been explained; but it is only to conclude, with Maurice: "There is too much profound truth throughout this narrative for us to care much about either the literal or the figurative interpretation."—*Sermons*, vol. iv. p. 40.

the question how the angel could so speak as that Balaam should understand *him* is to the full as difficult and perplexing as the question which has been so long discussed,—how the ass could so speak as to be understood by the Prophet. Nay, if we are to talk of the difficulties of this ancient Chronicle, who will explain how, in what form and method, God Himself came to Balaam at night, and said: “Who are these men that are with thee?” or how the Spirit of God came upon him on the mountain, and opened his eyes to see the distant future, and taught his tongue to utter oracles the full meaning of which he himself could not grasp? The story is full of miracles—miracles so strange, complex, awful, that this poor wonder of the speaking ass sinks into utter insignificance, and one can only marvel how men should have been so profoundly impressed by this and yet so little moved by those. Nay, more, if we do but think of it, what—as Carlyle has asked—is the fact that man himself can speak, and speak with most miraculous organs, but a miracle? this miracle of Speech, too, running up into the still greater miracles of Thought and Life: all of them wonders which no advance of science is at all likely to explain, least of all that science which sees the promise and the potency of all things in an infinite cataract of infinitesimal atoms, and whose votaries

“Hedge their minds by present things,  
The small parochial world  
Of sight and touch.”

To escape from miracles is simply impossible.<sup>1</sup> Every man who believes in God at all believes in the supernatural—believes, that is, in a supernatural order underlying the natural order; believes even in a supernatural Being who

<sup>1</sup> “Before giving a too credulous ear to those who would persuade us that this or that is incredible because it is a miracle, it were prudent to require them to put their finger on something that is not miraculous.”—*Julian Hawthorne*.

originated the natural order, who is immanent in it and transcends it. And every man who believes that God has in any way, or at any time, revealed his will to men, believes that the supernatural order has broken through the natural order which it underlies and in which it is immanent, believes that the supernatural Being has, so to speak, come forth from the secret places of the pavilion in which He habitually dwells, to manifest Himself to mankind. But if we believe in miracles at all, and especially if we believe them to be the necessary and inevitable adjuncts of any revelation of the Divine will, is it not a little childish of us to compare this miracle with that, and say, "This we can accept, but not that?" Is it not more than a little childish of us to stand discussing the inevitable accompaniments of Revelation while we neglect the revelation itself, and so fail to learn the very lesson for the sake of which the miracles were wrought?

As many of us as have received the Bible's own account of itself decline to be so childish. We have reached a point of view from which all such difficulties as this cease to have any power over us, and stand on a rock from which we can be swept by no wave whether of Criticism or of Scepticism. For we believe that God's revelation of his will has been gradual and progressive, and that even to the end we have this heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. We believe that God revealed the truth to men as they were able to receive it, in and through the words with which they were familiar, in and through the mental and imaginative forms with which they were familiar. We believe that, if He deigned to speak to men at all, He *must* speak to them in the verbal, literary, and imaginative forms which they had invented, and which they employed *at the time He spoke*. And hence it does not disturb our faith in his Word to learn either that, when He would teach men that all things were created by Him at the

beginning, He disclosed that initial and pregnant fact in the scientific terms of the age to which He taught it;<sup>1</sup> or that, when He would rebuke the madness of a diviner, He should deign to use the forms in which such a man thought, or even the art which he pursued, and humble him by setting his own ass to prove how blind he was, despite his "open eye." It matters little to us whether the ass actually spoke or did not speak, whether we have history here or fable. Nor does it perplex us to see that inspired writers regarded as history what we, perhaps, can only receive as parable. We say: If God was to speak to men, He could only speak to them through the words, the thoughts, the conceptions and beliefs, current among them at the time, just as a man can only speak to a child effectually by speaking as a child and thinking as a child. And if these verbal and mental forms were imperfect—as doubtless they were and still are—nevertheless the lessons conveyed through these imperfect forms were of a perfect wisdom. Though the vessels of Revelation be of earth, the treasure they contain is heavenly and from Heaven.

Hence it is that we can say with entire frankness and honesty: Put what construction on the talking ass you will; call it fact, call it fable, or say that Balaam read an ominous rebuke into the natural cries of the beast on which he rode,—whatever the construction you put upon it, you will be little the wiser for it, little the better, unless you listen to the appeal, to the rebuke, which Balaam heard from the mouth of the ass or put into it. That lesson may be, and is, a very simple one; but its very simplicity at once makes it the more valuable and renders it the more probable that, much as we need to learn it, we may have overlooked it.

What, then, was this lesson or rebuke? The ass said,

<sup>1</sup> See "Miracles—the Problem Stated," by Almoni Peloni, in the *EXPOSITOR*; *New Series*, vol. iv. p. 241.

or Balaam took her to say, "Wherefore smite me? Have I not served you faithfully ever since I was thine? Am I wont to rebel against you?" And how could one who had been accustomed to look for ethical and religious meanings in all the signs of nature fail to look for an ethical meaning in this appeal, or fail either to find it, or to find how heavy a rebuke it carried for himself? He too had a Master, a Master in heaven, and was loud and frequent in his protestations of loyalty to Him. Yet could *he* look up to heaven and say to his Master, "Why hast Thou checked and rebuked me? Have not I served Thee faithfully ever since I was thine unto this day? Am I wont to disobey thy word?" Why, at that very moment he was untrue, disloyal, to his Master; he was plotting how he might speak other words than those which God had put into his mouth, and serve his own will rather than the Divine will! Might he not, then, well hear in the rebuke of the ass some such appeal as this: "Have you been as true to your Master as I to mine? Have you been as mindful of the heavenly vision as I of the heavenly apparition which I have seen? Has your service been as faithful, as patient, as disinterested as mine?"

The lesson is simple enough, I admit; but is it not also most necessary and valuable? Once of old God Himself had to appeal to those who professed to love and obey Him: "If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my reverence?" Might He not make the same appeal to-day? And if He did, which of us could look up and reply: "Have not *I* been true to Thee ever since I was thine? Am I wont to disobey Thee?"

The miracle of the speaking ass is, however, only one, and one of the least, of the many marvels of this ancient Chronicle. It sinks into utter insignificance when com-

pared with the fact that God permitted his servant to go on an errand on which He had forbidden him to go, and was then displeased with him for availing himself of that permission. For if man can give a voice even to things without life, as the pipe or harp, and if God daily speaks to us by all the creatures He has made, insomuch that, albeit there are "so many kinds of voices in the world," yet "none of them is without significance for us,"<sup>1</sup> it may well have been that He should speak to the soothsayer by the dumb ass, and rebuke his madness by teaching him the significance of her movements and cries. But how are we to explain the fact that God should say to his servant both "Go" and "Do not go,"—should both allow him to set out on an errand He had prohibited and withstand him as he went upon it? Can we say that here too the difficulty is largely of our own making, and that we should never have been perplexed by it had we read the Chronicle with open eyes?

Yes, even here, and great as the difficulty seems to be, it is of our own making, at least in this sense, that it is not peculiar to the Bible, much less to this particular narrative in the Bible, but meets us at every step we take, and pervades the whole structure of human life. For is it only in the Bible that two potent but opposed voices are heard to speak within the soul of man? Is it only in the Bible that we find men allowed to disobey a Divine command, and yet withstood at every step in their downward course, and threatened with destruction should they persist in it? Do we not daily meet with those who, confessing that they too have a Master in heaven, confessing even that his commandments are good and right, nevertheless struggle against his high pure will, and plot how to disobey the very commands which they acknowledge they ought to obey? And if the Bible is to reflect human life fairly and

<sup>1</sup> Corinthians xiv. 7, 10.

to explain its true significance to us, must it not record this perplexing element in human life, and tell us what it means?

This, in brief, is the key to the whole mystery which confronts us here; and we have only to expand the thought and illustrate it in order to arrive at a teaching full of comfort and of large hopeful suggestion.

Balaam, then, as we have seen, was a man of like passions with ourselves. In him, as in us, the flesh made war upon the spirit; base cravings for reward and for personal distinction struggled within him against his sense of duty and the noble aspirations and inspirations which impelled him to follow after truth and righteousness. It was to his interest, he thought, to curse the people whom God had bidden him bless; and there is too much truth in the bitter sarcasm of Epictetus, "Few men love anything, even their God, so much as their own interest." As he brooded over Balak's invitation, with its manifold promise of honour, reward, and influence, and prided himself perhaps on his courage in declining it, many regrets seem to have mingled with his self-approval, and to have prepared him to yield to the second and still more promising invitation when it reached him.

We are not to blame him, we do not blame him, simply because, when this second invitation came, he consulted God again to see whether He had anything "more" to say to him, any new command to give him. But we cannot but blame him if, as there is too much reason to believe, he went to God a second time to "get his duty *altered* rather than to learn what his duty *was*;" for, in that case this lover of righteousness betrayed that his fundamental conception of righteousness was inaccurate and misleading, and shewed that he conceived of "the will of God as *making* right rather than as *being* right," as able, therefore, to sanction things wrong in themselves if only they were

plausibly presented to Him or artfully veiled from his sight. Assuredly many since his time have thus thought of God; they have conceived of his will as a personal caprice, liable to alter with every wind of supplication, every breath of desire, instead of thinking of it as the steadfast and righteous law of the universe which, simply because it is right, cannot change. God might be "managed," he hoped, and induced at least to connive at the course he wished to take, or even tricked into conceding his sanction to it unawares. In short, he appears to have been in a very similar position to that which many men still take when, craving an indulgence very strongly, they half persuade themselves that it is not so sinful as they have been wont to think it, or that God will not be strict to mark and punish a sin to which they are urged by impulses so strong and so natural.

Now when a man's whole soul is darkened and confused by this conflict between interest and conscience, between duty and desire, mere words, however prohibitory and threatening, are of little avail. What can be said to him which has not been said to him already, and has not already quickened echoes of assent within his own conscience and heart? As a rule, and if he is to be saved from his sin, and taught that God's will does not make right but is right, and cannot therefore vary with his varying moods, he must be allowed, he is allowed, to go out after the desire of his heart, to indulge his craving, and to see what comes of it. "When the spirit of a man thus contradicts itself, God becomes a contradiction to him, and He who had said 'Go not,' now says 'Go.'" With the froward God shews Himself froward, as with the upright He shews Himself upright; and that not in the Bible alone, but in the broad fields of daily human experience. Words of warning may still be vouchsafed; they were vouchsafed to Balaam; for when Jehovah, replying to the unspoken desire of his heart,



I do not see how any thoughtful man can consider this story without discovering why God allows men to enter on ways which are not good, and which are therefore full of peril, and why He nevertheless "withstands" them when they walk in them. He allows them to enter on such ways that they may come to know themselves as they are, in their weakness as well as in their strength, that they may see clearly what is evil in their nature as well as what is good; and He withstands them in order that they may become aware of the perils to which they are unconsciously exposing themselves, may feel their need of his guidance and help, and may suffer Him to save them from their sins, and out of weakness make them strong.

There is nothing in this miraculous intervention of the angel and the ass comparable in value to this revelation of the redeeming love and purpose of God. What does it matter how we read it, whether we take it as parable or history, if only we see in it how the very anger of God is but a form of his grace, and how He strove by warning and rebuke, by now appealing to his higher nature, and now appealing to his lower nature, to shew Balaam how low he had fallen, to chasten from his soul that selfish hankering after reward and distinction which was overmastering his love of righteousness, his sense of duty, to drive him from halting between that in himself which was good and honourable and that which was base and bad, and so to save him from the destruction which he had provoked? To my mind there is an infinite pathos, as there is also a teaching the most pertinent and valuable, in this detailed description of the struggle between the pure will of God and the impure will of man, in this patient and most merciful endeavour to unite a divided heart, and to purify a heart tainted with selfish and covetous desires. Any glimpse into a human heart thus at odds with itself could hardly fail to be impressive and instructive, for in

every such heart we may find a reflection of our own. But when we see God ranging Himself on the side of all that is good and pure in such a heart, and seeking by means exquisitely adapted to its needs to recover it to a settled love of truth and a steadfast pursuit of righteousness, we may well be rapt with wonder and with joy at so striking and pathetic an illustration of his love for us and of his method of dealing with us. For if even his anger be a redeeming anger, and his very rebukes be intended for our salvation; if even when we walk in paths of our own choosing He is still leading us, still warning and protecting us against the unseen dangers we have affronted; if He is striving to make us true when we are most untrue, honest when we are most dishonest with Him and with ourselves, pure when we are most impure: if *this* be the secret of his Providence, what is any other secret to us as compared with this? What could more effectually nerve us for our daily struggle with the evil within us, or cast a more welcome and radiant light of hope on the great conflict between good and evil which is going on around us, in the world at large and in every human breast?

That this *was* the end and purpose of God in dealing with Balaam is plain. To whatever depths of infamy he ultimately fell, he was for the time a saved man. Let Balak tempt, let him flatter or browbeat Balaam as he would, day by day the Prophet consistently refused to go against the commandment of the Lord, or to speak any words save those which God put into his mouth. As we follow him from mountain to mountain, weighing every action and word, and half expecting that he will yield to his own base craving or to the pressure put upon him by the disappointed and incensed king, we detect no sign of irresolution in him; no faltering tone falls from his lips; and when at last Balak drives him from his presence with bitter ridicule and contempt, he can honestly and proudly

claim that he has been true to his vow, and has neither done nor said anything, good or bad, of his own mind, but has faithfully uttered the words that were given him to speak.

And why should we doubt that God's purpose in withstanding Balaam is also his purpose in withstanding us? What *can* He desire for us but that we too should rise into a settled love of the truth and a steadfast pursuit of righteousness? If we are to remain men, with discourse of reason, and to be taught why our wills are our own, He cannot stop us by force when we set out in wrong and foolhardy ways; nor, when we have walked in those ways, can He relieve us from the pressure of the evil past we have left behind us. That would be to reduce us from men to mere automata, to degrade us into the mere puppets of his power. He can only permit us to walk on in the paths we have chosen, to gratify our clamorous desire, and take the wage we have thereby earned, and discover how little it is to our mind. Or, if He is to arrest us in our course, it can only be by revealing its dangers to us before we are overwhelmed by them, warning and instructing us by appeals to all that is highest and noblest in us, or by the rebukes of pain and fear and loss. If He makes our way hard, it is that we may leave it; if He permits the consequences of past transgressions to gather round and upon us, it is that we may renounce them; if He teaches us the vanity of our desires by granting them, it is only that we may be henceforth true to our loftier aims. What should, what can He "withstand" us for but to turn us back? Why should He lead us to the dizzy edge of the precipice and light up its depths with the warning flashes of his anger, save that we may recoil from it? What can be his purpose in teaching us that "the end of these things is death," but that we may turn and live?

To the spiritual and attentive heart all the miseries that

wait on sin are but the pangs and sobs of his wounded love, crying to us, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" And the great value of the story of Balaam is that it confirms this intuition of the heart, and shews us the love of God streaming through the rebukes with which He visits transgression, and working through them for the redemption of a great yet sordid soul, a soul in which good and evil were blended as in our own. No revelation can be more acceptable or helpful to us than this. As we stand scanning the various ways of men, and marking how strangely good and evil are blended in every soul and therefore in every lot, and how human life is but an evolution from the past conducted along the lines of an iron necessity, so that no man can escape from himself and the conditions which he has created for himself and the punitive consequences of his own deeds, we should altogether lose heart did we not know and believe that this evolution is conducted by a Divine Hand; that a Heart of Mercy beats under the iron necessities of the law by which we are governed; and that the free grace of God is able to quicken a new spirit and therefore a new life in men, and so to set new forces at work for their redemption, nay, to compel even the necessities of pain and shame and loss to contribute to their redemption. And hence it is that the spectacle of this Love and Grace at work for the redemption of a spirit in which the elements were so mixed as they are in us touches us very nearly, and kindles within us a sure and certain hope both for ourselves and for the world.

Here, then, I think we may pause. We have run our small problem up into that great mystery of Necessity and Freewill, against which men have bruised their brains for the last four thousand years; and perchance even that great mystery may have grown a little less oppressive to us if we have learned that, while we are bound by the chains which we and our fathers have forged in the past, all escape from

them is not impossible, since the grace of God may quicken and call into action new and redemptive forces within us which, if only we are true to them and give them free play, will yet raise us from our low and fallen estate, conduct us into new happier conditions, and so lift us into a new and better life.

SAMUEL COX.

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SOME CRITICISMS ON THE TRANSLATION OF  
THE REVISED VERSION.

In concluding my Article<sup>1</sup> on the uses of *ὅτι*, I drew attention to a curious text, namely verse 18 of 1 Corinthians ix. This central text is an important one, standing midway in a long argument. Like Janus, it looks backward and forward, connecting what precedes with what follows. It is therefore desirable, if possible, so to render the Greek that the English translation shall fit in with what goes before and with what follows. The correctness of the translation appears to depend entirely upon the selection and adoption of the right use of the particle *ὅτι*. Of the three uses of this particle, namely the *definitive* and the *telic* and the *subjectively ecbatic* or use of contemplated result, only two seem to be admissible here. These two are the *telic*, meaning "in order that one may do so and so," and the *subjectively ecbatic*, which denotes "requiring or making it possible that one should," or "inducing, causing one to do so and so." The question then is, which of these two admissible uses will make the passage yield the best sense; which of them will give such a turn to the rendering of the text, as shall place it in logical touch with the foregoing and succeeding contexts. Both the Authorised and Revised Versions have adopted the *telic* or final use of *ὅτι*, rendering

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. pp. 653, ff.