

## THE LAST NINE CHAPTERS OF EZEKIEL.

IN many respects the last nine chapters of Ezekiel (xl.-xlviii.) stand alone in Scripture for their striking peculiarity.<sup>1</sup> Let us first (1) epitomise their contents, and then touch on the two chief problems which they suggest; namely, (2) For what object were they written? and (3) In what relation do they stand to the whole system of Levitical legislation?

I. They are entirely unlike the rest of the prophet's writings. Those writings, which were doubtless edited in their complete form towards the close of his life, fall into four parts. (1) The first twenty-four chapters, after describing the call and commission of Ezekiel, dwell on the approaching ruin of Judah and Jerusalem, as a consequence of the iniquities of the people. With the exception of the judgment pronounced upon the Ammonites in xxi. 28-32, they describe the doom which hung over the Israel of the past, a doom which approached ever nearer and nearer as the prophecies advanced. Jerusalem, then as in the days of Christ, knew not the day of her visitation, and she was overwhelmed by that final catastrophe which ended for ever a great epoch of Jewish history. (2) Turning from the fortunes of Judah, Ezekiel, in chapters xxv. to xxxii., utters a series of prophecies against seven surrounding heathen nations. (3) The next seven chapters (xxxiii.-xxxix.) deal mainly with the future triumph and restoration of Israel and God's judgment upon her enemies. That this is the general idea of the whole final section is obvious,

<sup>1</sup> "Occupatus in explanatione Templi Ezechielis quod opus in omnibus Scripturis sanctis vel difficillimum est."—JEROME, *Ep.* cxxx. 2.

but (4) in the last nine chapters (xl.-xlviii.) the prediction takes a unique form.

II. Those nine chapters furnish a singularly detailed picture of the organization which is to follow the prophesied restoration of the people, and they were evidently intended by Ezekiel to be the crown and copingstone of his work. They were written B.C. 572, in the twenty-fifth year after Ezekiel and his companions had been carried into captivity with Jehoiakin, and therefore fourteen years after the fall of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> That quarter of a century of captivity had produced an immense change in the character of the Exiles. Jeremiah (chap. xxiv.) had already indicated the marked religious superiority of the banished Jews, had compared them to very good figs, and had announced their future prosperity and faithfulness; while he had compared Zedekiah and the remnant of "the poorest of the people" left with him in Jerusalem to very evil figs, and had prophesied their total ruin and rejection. The Exiles indeed, as we learn from Ezekiel himself, had been far from perfect; but in one respect they rose superior to their predecessors. The old temptation to idolatry was now practically dead. The high places, and other local sanctuaries, which so many of the kings of Judah had tolerated, or had in vain endeavoured to suppress, were felt to be as much things of the past as the Gillulim Matzeboth and Asheroth, which had been such immemorial emblems of apostatising worship. The prophet could safely regard the old guilty past as a *tabula rasa*, and could organize the theocratic institutions of a new and better future. These nine chapters are the foil and counterpoise to chapters viii.-xvi. As those chapters had drawn the gloomy picture of a desecrated Temple, a doomed city, an insolent and corrupt aristocracy, lying prophets, and a miserable people, so these set forth a grand

<sup>1</sup> In Ezek. xxxiii. 21, "eleventh" not "twelfth" is the reading of the Peshito and some MSS., and is accepted by the best modern critics.

and richly supported Temple, a sacerdotal government, a God-fearing nation. The increase and enlightenment of the restored tribes is symbolized by the vision of the waters (xlvi. 1-12), of which an English poet has rightly seen the significance.

“ East the forefront of habitations holy  
 Gleamed to En-gedi, shone to Eneglaim ;  
 Softly thereout and from thereunder slowly  
 Wandered the waters, and delayed, and came.

Even with so soft a surge and an increasing,  
 Drunk of the sand, and thwarted of the sod,  
 Stilled, and astir, and checked, and never-ceasing,  
 Spreadeth the great wave of the grace of God.”

Of these remarkable chapters—remarkable even in their prosaic minuteness and mathematical regularity—the first four (xl.-xliii.) furnish the architectural design and measurements of the Temple, its gates, porch, chambers, ornaments, and a description of the altar with its ordinances. The next three (xliv.-xlv.) describe the relations of the Prince, the Priests, the Levites, and the people to the Temple and its worship. The last two give the vision of the waters, and describe the position of the Temple and the Temple city, and the distribution of the land among the twelve tribes, with the portions assigned to the Prince, the Priests, the Levites, and the maintenance of the sacred service.

What are we to think of these chapters, which, as a whole, are less read, and, with the exception of one or two paragraphs, seem less obviously profitable, than almost any part of the Bible?<sup>1</sup>

Are they literal or purely ideal? In other words, did Ezekiel really intend that his visionary sketch should be

<sup>1</sup> The difficulties presented by these chapters are by no means modern: Jerome says, “Principia et finem (Ezechiel) *tantis habet obscuritatibus involuta ut apud Hebræos istæ partes ante annos triginta non legantur.*”—*Ep.* liii. 7.

carried out? or was he merely throwing certain broad conceptions into a concrete and symbolic form?

1. Kuenen, among many more "orthodox" critics, still maintains that Ezekiel was intensely in earnest, and meant all his directions to be *literally* carried out by the Exiles on their return.<sup>1</sup> But the difficulties in this view are insuperable. It is impossible to work architecturally from verbal directions, and no two plans, drawn on Ezekiel's rules, are alike. His plans had no resemblance to Solomon's Temple, and quite as little to the humble structure of Zerubbabel. If they were intended to be followed it is hardly reasonable to suppose that they would have been so absolutely ignored; for though they must have been well known, neither Zerubbabel, nor Ezra, nor Nehemiah, nor subsequently the Pharisees and Boethusim in the days of Herod took any notice of them. No prophetic instructions could have been more absolutely disregarded. They were treated as a dead letter from the first. And indeed the entire directions about the division of the land among the tribes, if *literally* taken, would have been physically impossible and ludicrously unjust. The strips of land differ immensely in value, and some of them are hardly habitable. The *twelve* tribes did not return at all, but only a handful of families, mostly from Judah and Benjamin, who formed but an insignificant fraction of the entire nation. Further, some of the tribes had for long years practically ceased to exist at all. Gad and Reuben and Simeon had melted away, long before, into the mass of surrounding nomads, and

<sup>1</sup> Compare Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 60, etc. "So long as the sacrificial worship remained in actual use, it was zealously carried on; but people did not concern themselves with it theoretically, and had not the least occasion for reducing it to a code. But once the Temple was in ruins, the culture at an end, its *personnel* out of employment, it is easy to understand how the sacred places should have become a matter of theory and writing, so that it might not altogether perish, and how an exiled priest should have begun to paint the picture of it as he carried it in his memory, and to publish it as a programme for the future restoration of the theocracy."

Dan only survived in the single colony which it had sent to the north. Ezekiel's distribution is wholly different from that of Joshua, and contradicts that of Obadiah.<sup>1</sup> It simply consists of drawing horizontal lines with a ruler between the Jordan and the Mediterranean. With total disregard of all physical features, and without even noticing the territory to the east of the Jordan, Ezekiel partitions Western Palestine into twelve strips, which are professedly equal, but which, owing to the greater breadth of the land southwards, assign three times more territory to Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad, than to Manasseh or Ephraim. Moreover the arrangement of the Temple "oblation" is geographically impossible, as it would have had to encroach far beyond the Jordan, which is excluded by the stated boundaries.<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel, consciously or unconsciously, places the Temple nine miles and a half from Jerusalem, and fourteen miles and a quarter from its centre. He wholly removes it from Mount Moriah, and brings it much nearer to Mount Gerizim. He makes its precincts a mile square, which was larger than the whole area of Jerusalem, and yet places it "upon the top of the mountain."<sup>3</sup> The vision of the waters stands by itself in chapter xlvii. There is no very high mountain (xl. 2, xliii. 12) in the position described, and the stream, if understood literally, would have had to flow uphill, and over the watershed. This consideration should be sufficient to show that we are face to face with a dream or vision, representing an ideal picture. Nor is the particularity and tediousness of the detail any objection to this view, for it is characteristic of that total change of style which marks the epoch in which

<sup>1</sup> See Obad. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xlvii. 15-21.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xliii. 12. In these measurements the "cubit" is taken at an average of twenty inches, but the general facts remain unaltered if it be made a little more or a little less. See Prof. Gardiner's notes and introduction in Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary*.

Ezekiel wrote, and the commencing decadence of the prophetic and literary spirit.

2. The wild notion that the sketch is all "*futurist*," *i.e.* a prophecy which still awaits its literal fulfilment, may be dismissed without further notice. It would involve a retrogression from the spiritual to the material, from Christianity to Judaism, from the Cross to animal sacrifices, from the freedom of the Gospel of Christ to the bondage of weak and beggarly rudiments.

3. Are these chapters then *allegorical*? Do they foreshadow great spiritual lessons derivable from the attaching of a mystic meaning to their numberless details? If so, never did any allegory more absolutely fail of its purpose, and fail even to furnish the least indication that it is meant to be allegorical at all. That view may be therefore set aside as a chimera which no one now pretends to maintain.

4. Are they then *symbolical*? That they contain certain general symbolical elements seems very probable. Symbolism was undoubtedly at work in many of the Levitical arrangements, and in the order, regularity, and unity of the land and Temple, as Ezekiel sketched it, there was a visible picture, to teach

"The art of order to a peopled kingdom"<sup>1</sup>

Ezekiel probably meant his rules and measurements to add, in a subsidiary way, to the vividness of the intended plan, just as Dante did when he tells us that the face of his Nimrod was

"—lunga e grossa  
Come la pina di San Pietro a Roma";

and that three Frieslanders, standing one on another, could not have reached from his middle to his hair. The detail and particularity are only ornaments of the general

<sup>1</sup> Compare the minute particularity of St. John's details of the New Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 16, 18).

conception. They belong to the literary art of *πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν*.

5. But it would perhaps be truer to say that Ezekiel's picture is *ideal* than that it is symbolical. It is the fond dream of the exile respecting principles which he thought might find at least an analogous fulfilment, even if they could never be exactly realized. We have parallelograms everywhere, which faintly indicate the righteousness of Jehovah, and the symmetry and proportion of all that pertains to His perfectness. And everything is so arranged as to tend to the unity and centralization of worship. The Temple is to be magnificently secluded and magnificently maintained. "Holiness to the Lord" is to be visibly stamped upon all its ceremonial and all its surroundings. Its servitors are to exercise a hierarchical influence over the whole nation, and to hold a position of the highest dignity. Even the Messianic King, so gloriously heralded by more ancient predictions, vanishes before the Priestly Caste. No longer as of old is the King of the house of David to be, as it were, the vicegerent of Jehovah and the priests his servants. There is to be no prominent High Priest, and no powerful King, but only a sacerdotal order, to whom the Prince is more or less subordinate. In Ezekiel's ideal the nation has been merged into the Church; the Prophet recedes and vanishes before the Priesthood; and ceremonial takes the place of inspiration. Jeremiah, dissatisfied with the too superficial reformation in the days of Josiah, had looked forward to an evanescence of the old system, and the establishment of a new covenant. In that new covenant there were to be no priests, and no Temple. But the time for it had not arrived. The old covenant had not yet "waxed old," nor was it ready to vanish away (Heb. viii. 13). Ezekiel was a priest, and wrote with all a priest's sympathy for sacerdotalism and ritual. He establishes the foundations of the new covenant as it is given to

him to regard it, but with an ideal widely different from that of the elder prophet. The predominant conception of Jeremiah is that of moral righteousness and individual fidelity;<sup>1</sup> but Ezekiel can only conceive of these blessings with the concomitants of an established Church, an inviolable sanctuary, a richly endowed order of ministers, an elaborated ceremonial cultus, a holiness largely guaranteed by outward purifications and propitiatory offerings.<sup>2</sup> These he sets forth with all the laborious minuteness which is the characteristic of his method. And, so far from being an idle play of fancy, his scheme, though never even approximately carried out, yet produced a deep impression on the minds of his countrymen. During his lifetime he had to bear the martyrdom of hatred which awaits all precursors, but he illustrates a tendency which lay deep in the hearts of some of his contemporaries, and which, more than a century after he was in his grave, was embodied in those formal ordinances which are the essence of Judaism. The impulse which he began, and which was fixed by Ezra and Nehemiah, preserved the nationality of the Jewish remnant, and enabled them to carry out the work for which they were destined in the great Evangelic Preparation; but its exaggerated and exclusive development ended in the Pharisaism which Paul destroyed by the power of his reasoning, and on which Christ pronounced His sternest denunciations.

It will be seen then how momentous are these chapters, because they mark the transition of the monarchy into the hierarchy; of the old religion of the Hebrews into Judaic formalism; of the Prophet into the Priest. The new movement ended in the supersession of Priests themselves by

<sup>1</sup> Jer. vi. 19-21; vii. 21-26.

<sup>2</sup> How different are the tone and attitude of Ezekiel towards sacrifices from those adopted by the earlier prophets! (Amos iv. 4, 5; v. 21; Mic. vi. 6-8; Isa. i. 11-14, etc.)

Rabbis and Scribes. The study of this section of Ezekiel is as necessary for the understanding of the reformation wrought by Ezra and Nehemiah, as the study of those books is necessary for the understanding of the Oral Tradition, the Externalism, and the idolatry of the letter, which reached their zenith in Pharisaism, and which were finally crystallized in the Talmudic system.

III. But even now we have not exhausted the historic and critical importance of these chapters, nor have we even touched on the yet more curious and difficult problems which they suggest.

For when we examine more closely this reconstruction of Judaism by the idealizing imagination of an exile who was unfettered by tradition and out of contact with realities, it is found that these eight chapters abound with verbal resemblances and coincidences to certain chapters of Leviticus, so close and so numerous that only the blind tenacity of a desperate foregone conclusion can still pretend to maintain that the documents are entirely independent of each other. Even those who still think it necessary to argue that there is nothing but fortuitous resemblance between certain parts of 2 Peter and certain paragraphs of Josephus will not and cannot attempt to deny that the supposition of independent and fortuitous resemblance between Ezekiel xl.-xlviii. and Leviticus xvii.-xxvi. is absurd. This section of Leviticus has affinities to Deuteronomy; but it differs from that book in many respects, and approaches to Ezekiel both in its special conception of "*holiness*" in closest connexion with material worship, and in the use of a long list of words, phrases, and sentences.<sup>1</sup> A number of writers—and among others Vatke, George, Hupfeld, Knobel, Reuss, Lagarde,

<sup>1</sup> Wellhausen, l.c., 378. Colenso, *Pentateuch and Joshua* vi. 3-23. Horst, *Lev. und Hezekiel*, pp. 72-77. Smend, *Ezechiel* pp. xxv., xxvi. "Diese Uebereinstimmung ist um so gewichtiger als sie grossentheils eine wörtliche ist, und zwar im Worten die sich zu einem grossen Theil sonst nirgends in A.T. finden."

Graf, Wellhausen, Colenso, Kuenen, Smend, Horst, Robertson Smith—have sifted and examined these coincident phrases, and have formed their own conclusions respecting them; but neither they nor any other competent and honest critic has attempted to deny their existence. Hence these chapters have been called by Orth “the key to the criticism of the Old Testament”; and on the final interpretation of the phenomena which they present must depend in some measure our view of the true sequence of the religious history of the Jews. There have been various hypotheses to account for them, and for the peculiarities of Ezekiel in general.

An English writer in the *Monthly Magazine* of May, 1798, came to the conclusion that the last nine chapters of Ezekiel are spurious. Zunz<sup>1</sup> went further, and doubted the genuineness of the entire book, which he considered to have been written B.C. 440–400. He argued from special predictions, from the allusions to Daniel, from the mention of the wine of Halybon,<sup>2</sup> from the inconceivability of supposing that Ezekiel, in B.C. 572, could have ventured to propose a new Law and a new distribution of the land, and from various grammatical and linguistic peculiarities. He was strengthened in his view by the facts that (1) the Talmud asserts that the men of the Great Synagogue “wrote” Ezekiel,<sup>3</sup> and that (2) the canonicity of the book was still disputed by the Jews at the close of the first century after Christ.<sup>4</sup> It is needless now to examine this hypothesis, because it breaks down under overwhelming proofs of the genuineness of the book, and Zunz has, in fact, found no followers.

<sup>1</sup> *Gottesd. Vort.*, 157–162, 1832. *Gesammelte Schriften*, 226–233, 1878.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. xxvii. 18, “The wine of Chalybon in Syria was a favourite luxury of the Persian kings.”

<sup>3</sup> *Bava Bathra*, 15, 1.

<sup>4</sup> In *Shabbath*, f. 13. 2 we are told that the Book of Ezekiel would have been suppressed for its contradictions to the Law, but for Hananiah ben Hiskiah, who after long lucubrations reconciled the discrepancies.

But in 1866 Graf called closer attention to the similarities between Ezekiel and Leviticus xviii.-xxvi.;<sup>1</sup> and though his views were for a long time somewhat superciliously rejected and airily condemned, the attention of later critics was called to the phenomena which he pointed out, and various theories have been suggested to account for them.

1. Some have argued that Ezekiel copied from Leviticus, and this will probably be the only view which will be accounted "orthodox." To this view we will return later on, only remarking that God knows of no orthodoxy except the truth, and that the attempt to identify orthodoxy, without examination, with preconceived and purely traditional opinions is rooted in cowardice, and has been prolific of casuistry and disaster.

2. Graf argued, on the other hand, that Ezekiel was the actual author of that part of the "Priestly Codex," which is contained in those chapters of Leviticus.<sup>2</sup> His view has been ably supported with some modifications in the monograph of L. Horst.<sup>3</sup>

In forming this conclusion, Graf was actuated too exclusively by linguistic considerations, which can never be fully valid apart from historic examination. For if there are close resemblances of style between these sections of Leviticus and Ezekiel, there are, as Kuenen points out, remark-

<sup>1</sup> See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 11. Eng. trans.

The resemblances are most numerous between Ezekiel and Lev. xxvi. Colenso (vi. 3 ff.) counts thirty which occur nowhere else in the Bible, and Smend says, "Lev. xxvi. ist wesentlich eine Composition aus ezechielschen Redensarten," p. xxvi.

<sup>2</sup> The name of "The Priestly Codex" is given not only to these chapters of Leviticus, but also to parts of the Books of Exodus and Numbers which deal with worship and priestly functions; but it is fully admitted by the critics that it contains elements older than the Exile. It is obvious at once that Lev. xviii.-xxiii. with xxv., xxvi., differ in style from Lev. i.-xvi. and xxvii. See Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, vol. ii., p. 183.

<sup>3</sup> On Lev. xvii.-xxvi. and Ezekiel (Colmar, 1881).

able differences of legislation.<sup>1</sup> Thus the Temple of Ezekiel has only doors, while that of Leviticus has a curtain (Lev. xxi. 23, Ezek. xli. 23). Ezekiel does not so much as mention a High Priest (Lev. xxi. 10), and speaks of the sons of *Zadok*, not of the sons of *Aaron* in general. Most strange of all, Ezekiel seems deliberately to pass over if he does not exclude the Day of Atonement with its complex and deeply symbolic ritual (Lev. xxvi. 23-32, xxv. 9).<sup>2</sup> He also leaves unnoticed the feast of Pentecost and the sheaf of the firstfruits (Lev. xxiii. 10-14), while he prescribes other sacrifices; nor does he mention the use of wine at the sacrifices (Lev. xxiii. 13). On any hypothesis Ezekiel works with an independence truly amazing, if he was fully aware of the institutions now enshrined in the Pentateuch. Thus, he not only ignores the High Priest, but represents "the prince" as performing some of his functions,<sup>3</sup> and in exalting the descendants of *Zadok*, degrades the Levites into a position altogether inferior.<sup>4</sup> As though their *general* inferiority had not been recognised in the Mosaic legislation, a special and modern reason is assigned for their future subordination. In the division of the land not a syllable is said about their forty-eight cities, or even about the Refuge cities. Ezekiel sets to work as though Moses, as we have hitherto regarded his institutions, had never existed. It is strange that if the Pentateuch, or even considerable portions of Exodus, Numbers, and

<sup>1</sup> See Reuss, *Gesch. d. Alten Testaments*, p. 253. Rashi points to Ezek. xlv. 31, xlv. 20, as contradictions to the Law.

<sup>2</sup> It has been argued however, that the language of xli. 3—where the angel only enters the Holiest Place—implies Ezekiel's recognition of a chief Priest and his entrance into it once a year.

<sup>3</sup> Ezek. xlvi.

<sup>4</sup> Ezek. xlviii. 11. In the Book of Deuteronomy the name of Priests is extended to Levites, and the right of sharing in the sacrifices is conceded (Deut. xviii. 6-8) to Levites who come from distant places; but in Ezekiel a sort of compensation is given them for the loss of their maintenance and of sacrificial dues (Ezek. xlv. 10-16). In Deuteronomy we have the phrase, "the priests the Levites," but in the Priestly Codex "the Priests and the Levites."

Leviticus were in his hands, he should have ventured to prescribe an entirely different Temple, an entirely different altar, and widely different feasts, sacrifices, and priestly regulations. His views are all in the direction of those expressed in the Priestly Codex, but the differences between them are too great to admit of Graf's supposition, that he was the author of the section of Leviticus.<sup>1</sup>

3. The only other hypothesis is, that these chapters of Leviticus were a modification of the ideal of Ezekiel by some priest or priests working in his spirit, but altering his regulations into accordance with the actual condition of the exiles after their return. This is the view which seems to be taken by the majority of recent scholars who have independently examined the question. They think that the true order of documents in the Pentateuch is Jehovist, Deuteronomist, Priestly Codex; and that the latter *regulates* the actual adoption of that centralization of worship which the Deuteronomist has *demande*d. The time has not yet come to decide on these questions, but meanwhile it is remarkable to find so eminent and staunchly orthodox a scholar as the veteran Delitzsch saying, "I am now convinced that the processes which in their origin and progress have resulted in the final form of the Torah, as we now possess it, continued into the period subsequent to the Exile."<sup>2</sup>

4. Knobel, Nöldeke, and other critics agree with the ordinary view in regarding the Priestly Code as far more ancient than the Book of Ezekiel. This is indeed generally admitted, as regards many of its elements, but the literary difficulties are still unsolved. How comes it that this section of Ezekiel is completely *saturated* with the language

<sup>1</sup> For other and *verbal* differences see *Smend*, p. xxvii. He says, "Trotz dieser grossen Uebereinstimmung von Lev. xvii. ff., mit der Sprache und den Gedanken Ez.'s kann dieser doch *unmöglich* für den Verfasser jenes Corpus getten."

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschr. für K. Wissensch.*, 1880.

of one particular section of Leviticus, and of that section only? How comes it that the prophet legislates for the future in a way which was totally disregarded, and which presents so many divergences from all other parts of the Mosaic legislation, and even from the very chapter to which he presents so close an affinity? Above all, what is the relation of Ezekiel in general to Leviticus xxvi., in which both the thoughts and the language are so remarkably akin?<sup>1</sup> Is it possible to entertain the suggestion that the authors of both sections were working on some common and older document?

I do not think that the time is at all ripe for any final decision of the questions thus raised; but few of those who have studied the results of modern criticism, and who know the extent to which they are being adopted by some of our leading English scholars, can doubt that we must be prepared for considerable modifications of the traditional belief as to the unity of composition of the Pentateuch. Let me only remark in conclusion that such questions are in no sense religious questions. They do not touch even the outermost hem of religion. They are questions which in no wise infringe upon a single article of the Christian faith. Their solution can never be influenced by *à priori* bias, or by the loud assertion and thump on the table of ignorant dogmatists, accompanied by the oracular anathema that any one who thinks differently from them is "a heretic." The ultimate decision rests with the science of criticism alone. The great eternal conceptions which we derive from the Scriptures, and which make them more precious than all other literature, are entirely untouched by inquiries as to the age and authorship of certain portions of them. The eternal supremacy of the Bible depends on the moral and spiritual lessons which are to be

<sup>1</sup> Horst's book is written to prove that the chapters in Ezekiel are a redaction of the earlier sketch in Leviticus, which he also assigns to Ezekiel's authorship.

derived so richly and to so unique a degree from all its books. Our opinions as to the date or unity of these books may be inevitably changed by historical discoveries or by critical analysis, but as long as man's spirit retains the spiritual gift of discriminating the transcendent,<sup>1</sup> so long will the Bible continue to be the most precious treasure of the human race, because in it we hear—far more clearly than either in the inarticulate speech of the universe or in the articulate voices of other men—the intelligible utterance of the Word of God.

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NOTES ON THREE PASSAGES IN ST. PAUL'S  
EPISTLES.

1 CORINTHIANS x. 4: "For they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ."

It has often been remarked that St. Paul's phraseology is here probably determined by a Jewish legend respecting the well which the Israelites are related in Numbers xxi. 16 ff. to have dug upon their arrival at the border of Moab. The Targum of Onqelos exhibits to us this legend in its genesis. The passage referred to describes how the Israelites, upon reaching a place called Beer, dug a well there to the words of a song, which is quoted; and the song is followed, somewhat abruptly, by a continuation of their itinerary, the names in which, as well that of the place Beer, happen to be significant in Hebrew: thus, "(16) And thence (they journeyed) to Beer (*well*): that is the well whereof the LORD said unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. (17) Then sang Israel this song:

<sup>1</sup> καὶ δοκιμάζεις τὰ διαφέροντα.—Rom. ii. 18.