

THE EXCLUSION OF CHANCE FROM THE BIBLE.

THERE is, perhaps, no point more impressively dwelt upon by the Hebrew Prophets in their interpretation of history or of human life than the exclusion of chance as an element to be taken into account. This teaching of a Divine purpose in all things is given in clear and even in remarkable terms, as, for instance, when Amos says (iii. 6) : " Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it ? " the unmistakable inference is that, whatever may have been the secondary cause, Divine purpose ultimately determined the event. Again, the point of Habakkuk's complaint, " Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance ? " (i. 3) lies in the conception that calamity is due not to some chance or turn of fortune, but to the direct ruling of Divine providence. The same perplexity is expressed several times by the patriarch Job, as when he says, " God hath made my heart faint " (xxiii. 16), *i.e.* it is God and not any cause external to Him that brings the sense of terror into my soul. Citations to the same effect might be multiplied. But it is unnecessary. The pervading prophetic interpretation of history and of men's lives is that events are ordered and determined by the Divine will, and not by luck or chance or happy accident. We see this in the image of the potter (Jer. xviii. 1-17), and in the ordering, whether of the stern Nebuchadnezzar (Jer xxvii. 6), or of the humane Cyrus (Isa. xlv. 28), to execute the purposes of Jehovah.

It is manifest that such an interpretation of events, or, as it might be termed, such a philosophy of sacred history, would (1) identify purpose and result in the Hebrew mind, and (2) would leave no place for chance or fortune in any theory of life or in religious terms.

The object of this paper is to show how the influence of

this thought has made itself felt in the grammar of Hellenistic Greek, and in the language of the Old and New Testaments. And, secondly, to indicate the prevalence of the worship of Good Fortune, and consequently the need of such protest against it as is found in the language, and in the omissions of Holy Scripture.

1. Greek grammar, in its purest and most exact phase, kept the distinction clear between final and consecutive clauses. In other words, it indicated by separate particles or forms of expression the difference between result and fulfilled intention. But since, in the case of Divine action, the Hebrew mind, as we have seen, conceived all results as purposed, it follows that there would be a tendency for grammatical forms, as expressions of thought, to merge the distinction between intention and result. To illustrate by an example: the sentence, "the vessels approached so closely as to come within range," marks result; but "the vessels approached in order to come within range," marks intention or purpose. In the first form the circumstance might be accidental or it might imply purpose. The second form definitely expresses intention. But to a mind which excludes the possibility of accident in events, the distinction vanishes. This is what happened when the Greek language came to be moulded by the Hebrew intellect. To a large extent the distinction between final and consecutive particles was lost.

In classical Greek the intention, purpose or aim is indicated by the final particles *ἵνα*, *ἵφρα*, *ὅπως* and *ὥς*; or, later, by the genitive of the article with the infinitive; and result is expressed by *ὥστε* with the indicative or infinitive mood. In the Greek of the LXX. and New Testament *ἵφρα* is not found; *ὅπως*, *ὥς* and the genitive of the infinitive retain their final signification, but *ἵνα* has acquired a consecutive force, and, on the other, hand, *ὥστε* has come to be used in final sentences.

It is true that the consecutive force of *ἵνα* has been denied by some scholars, as Winer (with the possible exception of Rev. xiii. 13), and by Meyer and Alford; on the other hand, it is maintained by Lightfoot on Gal. v. 17, *ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντικεῖται, ἵνα μὴ, ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε, ταῦτα ποιήτε*, comparing 1 Thess. v. 4, *οὐκ ἐστὲ ἐν σκότει, ἵνα ἡ ἡμέρα ὑμᾶς ὡς κλέπτας καταλάβῃ*; and by Ellicott on Eph. i. 17, *μνείαν ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς . . . δῶῃ ὑμῖν πνεῦμα σοφίας*. To these may be added an example from the LXX. Gen. xxii. 14, *καὶ ἐκάλεσεν Ἀβραὰμ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου Κύριος εἶδεν ἵνα εἴπωσι σήμερον, Ἐν τῷ ὄρει Κύριος ὤφθη*. Readers of the EXPOSITOR will also remember the able and convincing argument to the same effect of Canon T. S. Evans in vol. iii., second series, of this periodical.

The use of *ὥστε* to mark design is admitted even by Winer (p. iii., § xliv. 1). Instances are, St. Matthew xxvii. 1, *συμβούλιον ἔλαβον . . . ὥστε θανατῶσαι αὐτόν*; and St. Luke ix. 52, *ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλος . . . ὥστε (B. ὡς) ἐτοιμάσαι αὐτῷ*.

This evidence of the subtle influence of Hebrew thought on the grammar of Hellenistic Greek is supported by the clearer testimony of language. It is remarkable that neither *τύχη* nor any other word signifying luck or chance or accident occurs in the New Testament. The seeming exception of the adverbial expression, *by chance* (*κατὰ συντυχίαν*) a certain priest was going down that way (St. Luke x. 31), is not really an instance to the contrary. We meet with the same phenomenon in the Old Testament. The Hebrew *וַיִּזְכֹּר* and its Greek equivalent *τύχη* occur in two passages only of the Old Testament, namely, Genesis xxx. 11, and Isaiah lxxv. 11. An examination of these passages will show that they are instances where *exceptio probat regulam*.

From the language of the Authorised Version it might

seem that a third passage should be added, where a Syrian warrior is described as "drawing his bow at a venture" (1 Kings xxii. 34); but the literal rendering "in his simplicity" only implies the unconsciousness of the instrument in carrying out the Divine purpose, and certainly conveys no thought of chance, for never was weapon more divinely guided in its aim. In Ecclesiastes ix. 11, "chance," ἀπάντημα LXX., is simply an occurrence, and in 2 Sam. vi. 9 the expression is adverbial. In Genesis xxx. 11, where the A.V. reads: "And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad," the R.V., with much greater probability, renders, "And Leah said, Fortunate! (גַּד) and she called his name Gad" (*margin.*, that is, *Fortune*). So also the LXX. καὶ εἶπε Δεῖα· Ἐν τύχῃ καὶ ἐπωνόμασε τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Γάδ, which the Vulgate follows: Dixit: Felicitas; et idcirco vocabit nomen ejus Gad. Whether Leah's exclamation refers to the Syrian God of Fortune, as has been conjectured, or whether *Gad* is an abstract term for prosperity or happiness, there is certainly nothing in the expression to imply a formal recognition of good luck or fortune as a force determining events.

The second passage where the word *Gad* occurs (Isa. lxxv. 11) is more important, and contains a direct protest by the prophet Isaiah against the worship of Fortune or Good Luck as a divinity. In the A.V. the words are: "That prepare a table for that troop, and furnish the drink offering unto that number." The correction of the R.V. is clearly right: "That prepare a table for Fortune (*margin.* Heb. *Gad*), and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny." The LXX. renders: καὶ ἐτοιμάζοντες τῷ δαιμονίῳ τράπεζαν καὶ πληροῦντες τῇ τύχῃ κέρασμα; and the Vulgate: Qui ponitis Fortunæ mensam, et libatis super eam.

It will be observed that in the LXX. version the Hebrew *Gad* is represented by τῷ δαιμονίῳ, and that τῇ τύχῃ is used

to translate the Hebrew *Meni*. In the Vulgate *Meni* is not represented. According to Schleusner, however (*sub voc. τύχη*) the positions of τῶ δαιμονίῳ and τῇ τύχῃ were reversed in some MSS., and in the Old Latin version, on which Jerome comments, "fortunæ" appears in the first clause, and "dæmoni" in the second. And in his notes he expressly states that the LXX. translated *Meni* by τῶ δαιμονίῳ. But in any case the parallelism of the Hebrew text shows that *Gad* and *Meni* are synonymous terms, signifying divinities who represented or personified fortune or good luck.

The passage is invaluable not only as giving evidence of the existence of such divinities and of the temptation which their cult offered to the Jews, but also as supplying a reason why the very word τύχη, together with the theory of life which it involves, is studiously excluded from the Biblical vocabulary.

It requires only a glance at Greek literature to understand how remarkable this omission is. To cite one out of numberless possible quotations, how natural is the expression of the messenger in the *Antigone* (l. 1158):

τύχη γὰρ ὀρθοὶ καὶ τύχη καταρρέπει
τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα τὸν τε δυστυχοῦντ' αἰεί.

And yet prevalent and natural as such an expression is with the Greek dramatists, the idea of Chance is as foreign to the primitive theology of Greece as to that of Israel. τύχη does not occur in the Homeric Epos. We find it indeed in the fragment of a hymn to Athene, probably post-Homeric:

χαίρε, θεά, δὸς δ' ἄμμι τύχην εὐδαιμονίην τε.

And there it is used in the sense of prosperity or success rather than of lucky accident. And indeed in its original significance τύχη did not imply undetermined luck or chance. Etymologically, it is connected with τέκνον, child;

τέκμαρ, goal; τόξον, bow; τέχνη, art; τέκτων, carpenter (Curtius, *Greek Etymology*, § 235, vol. i. p. 271).

The root idea of the word then is achieved purpose, an end arrived at by deliberate aim, so success. To begin with, therefore, the word would express precisely the Hebrew thought of destiny moulded by Divine operation, to which ultimately it was opposed. For in course of time τύχη came to signify an element or force in the movement of life and history distinct from the ordered course of Divine government, and incalculable in its action. And this is the sense in which it is ordinarily used, and in which it became personified, and afterwards identified with the Syrian divinity Gad.

The passage in Isaiah plainly indicates that the Jews of the Exile had been attracted by the cult of Fortune; and external research has shown how widespread this cult was in all ages under different forms and names.

Gesenius, *sub voc.*, identifies Gad and Meni with the planets Jupiter and Venus, which are called by the Arabs "the Greater" and "the Lesser Fortune." It is somewhat surprising, as Baethgen remarks (*Beiträge zur Semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 79), that the name of Gad does not occur in the Babylonish *Pantheon* so far as has yet been discovered. It is however probable that the name of the divinity may have been imported into Chaldæa from Syria, where the cult was especially prevalent. There are, says Baethgen, numerous traces of the cult of Tyche, the Greek equivalent of the Semitic Gad, in the Greek inscriptions of the Hauran. Temples called τυχαία, in honour of the goddess, were built in the cities of Syria and Phœnicia, often at the expense of the community, sometimes by private liberality. In Palestine itself evidence of this worship is found in such place-names as Baal-Gad (Josh. xi. 17, xii. 7, xiii. 5) and Migdal-Gad (Josh. xv. 37). The name Azgad ("strong is God"), Ezra ii. 12, may indicate

that a Jewish family had at one time devoted itself to the service of Fortune.

The origin and identification of Meni are more obscure. It is however clear that this also was a title under which Fortune or Destiny was worshipped. The meaning of the word "number" connects it with the numerical calculations of Chaldean astrology, and suggests the words of Horace (*Od.* i.-xi. 1-3):

Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi,
Finem Di dederint, Leuconoe; nec Babylonios,
Tentaris numeros.

Movers (*Die Phönizier*, p. 650) traces the root in the Etruscan and Roman Minerva, and points out its occurrence in Cappadocian and Persian names. He also refers to a curious passage in Strabo, xii. p. 31, where there is a possible identification between *τύχη* and *Μήν*. Speaking of a temple of the moon named *Μήν Φαρνάκου* in the city of Sebaste, he adds: *ἐτίμησαν δὲ οἱ βασιλεῖς τὸ ἱερόν τοῦτο οὕτως εἰς ὑπερβολὴν ὥστε τὸν βασιλικὸν καλούμενον ὄρκον τοῦτον ἀπέφηναν, τύχην βασιλέως, καὶ, Μῆνα Φαρνάκου.*

But apart from the question of identification of Gad and Meni there is abundant evidence that the worship of *τύχη* or Fortune was widely prevalent.

We learn from Macrobius (*Sat.* i. 19) that among the Egyptians two of the four deities who preside at birth were *δαίμων* and *τύχη*. This corresponds with the *δαιμόνιον* and *τύχη* of the LXX. (Isa. lxx. 11), and illustrates the exclamation of Leah on the birth of her son. *Τύχη* had a recognised place in Greek philosophy. Plato speaks of it as ruling all things in conjunction with God: *μετὰ θεοῦ τύχη καὶ καιρὸς τὰνθρώπινα διακυβερνῶσι συμπάντα* (*De Legibus*, iv. p. 709). Aristotle also cites the opinion of those who hold that *τύχη* is a cause of things, obscure (*ἄδηλος*) to the human understanding, having a divine existence and nature: *θειὸν τι οὔσα καὶ δαιμονιώτερον*

(*Physic.* lib. ii. c. 4). On which the ancient commentator Simplicius remarks that the divine nature of Fortune may be clearly inferred from the worship paid to her (*ἐκ τοῦ προσκυνεῖν τὴν τύχην ὡς θεάν*), the temples raised in her honour, and the songs sung in her praise. Selden (*De Diis Syris*, p. 273) cites a striking passage from Pliny to the same effect: *Toto Mundo et locis omnibus, omnibusque horis, omnium vocibus Fortuna sola invocatur et una nominatur, una accusatur, una agitur rea, una cogitatur, sola laudatur, sola arqitur, et cum conviciis colitur, etc.*¹

The Romans attached the epithet "primigenia" to the goddess Fortune, and in her honour a temple was dedicated on the Quirinal B.C. 193. The same designation, which is also found in inscriptions at Præneste and elsewhere, seems to indicate the primitive character of the worship, or else the connexion of Fortune with birth and with the progress of life. "Up to the latest times," writes Döllinger (*Gentile and Jew*, i. 99), "Tyché was revered as the dispenser of the affairs of cities and people. The division of one goddess into a number of little Tychai was pressed so far, that by degrees a Tyché of their own was attached to each family, and to each individual member of a family."

The above quotations may suffice to show how abundantly *τύχη* entered into the life and literature and the worship of the ancient world; but one must be added from Pindar—the first of the poets to address *Τύχη* as a goddess—to illustrate an element in this cult of Fortune which is connected with the Jewish recognition of the goddess. Pindar writes (*Ol.* xii.):

Λίσσομαι, παῖ Ζητὸς Ἐλευθερίου,
Ἰμέραν, εὐρυσθενέ ἀμφιπόλει, Σώτειρα Τύχα.
τὴν γὰρ ἐν πόντῳ κυβερνῶνται θεαὶ
νᾶες.

¹ Fortune is included in eleven out of thirty-one groups of gods named on the Phœnician dedication tablets in the British Museum.

“I pray thee, Saviour Fortune, daughter of Zeus Eleutherius, protect wide-ruling Himera, for by thee are swift ships steered in ocean.” Now in regard to the epithet *Σώτειρα* Dr. Donaldson has pointed out that “gods who particularly favoured the mariner in his difficulties were called *σωτήρες*,”—*e.g.* *τύχη δὲ σωτήρ ναυστολοῦσ’ ἐφέζετο* (*Æsch. Agam.* 664). *Τύχη* therefore and the divinities who possessed her attributes “would be regarded as the special saviours and protectors, not only of sailors, but of all who were engaged in the risky operations of trade.” Now it has been suggested with great probability by Rev. G. A. Smith that this practice of “preparing a table for Gad, and filling up mixed wine to Meni,” may be closely connected with the commercial spirit which the Jews imbibed for the first time during the Exile. “The merchants of Mesopotamia had their own patron gods. In completing business contracts a man had to swear by the idols, and might have to enter their temples” (G. A. Smith’s *Book of Isaiah*, ii. 62). In this way the Jewish trader would be drawn into idolatry.

If this conjecture be true,—and it carries with it the highest probability,—how closely does the whole subject connect itself not only with the commercial transactions of the present day on their speculative side, but with the spirit of gambling generally. It was quite in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture that games of chance were repudiated by the stricter Jews (Schürer, ii. 1, 36). Indeed so pernicious and so prevalent had the custom become that even pagan morality was shocked, and gambling repressed by law (*Hor. Od.* iii. 24, 58: *vetita legibus alea*).

It has sometimes been thought difficult to discover a principle on which to base a general condemnation of games of chance. However this may be, a sufficient justification will be found for discountenancing and condemning

what Bishop Cosin calls "inordinate gaming," not only in the stern reproof of the prophet (Isa. lxx. 11), but in the whole of the remarkable and suggestive contrast presented to the life and literature of pagan civilization by the thought and utterance and silence of the Bible.

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