

LITERARY ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

II.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL (*continued*).

xi. 33b. "It is sometimes argued that religious convictions are not as strong as they were in old times." But "that the fervour for truth is not diminished may be seen in regions outside theology. . . . At this moment hundreds of educated men are defying the whole power of the Russian empire in the struggle for constitutional liberty. Every month sees a score or more of them consigned to a hopeless dungeon or sent to Siberia, and the ranks close up again firmer after every fresh gap. Some of us cannot have forgotten how a crowd of Poles, men and women, knelt down in 1861 in the great square of Warsaw, praying and singing hymns, as fifteen volleys of grape shot tore through their ranks. The sacrifice was unavailing; but it is by sacrifice of this sort that national character is regenerated, and as long as the spirit of martyrdom lives, there seems no need to despair of the future of humanity" (C. H. Pearson).

xi. 35. See Browning's poem, "A Lost Leader."

Even to the time of the end. "In Greek authors of classical times there is no trace of the thought that the human race as a whole, or any single people, is advancing towards a divinely appointed goal; there is nothing of what the moderns mean by the 'Education of the World,' 'the Progress of the Race,' 'the Divine guidance of Nations.' The first germ of the thought is in Polybius¹ (*circ.* 204-122 B.C.), whose work illustrates the idea of a providential destiny presiding over the march of Roman history, and building up the imperial power of Rome for the good of

¹ i.e. a contemporary of the prophet who wrote the book of Daniel (J. M.).

mankind" (Butcher's *Aspects of the Greek Genius*, pp. 155-156).

xi. 36 f. "Others may occupy themselves, if they will, in seeking a nostrum to destroy the phylloxera; be it mine to find one that shall destroy the Christian religion" (M. Paul Bert).

"Can there be a more dreadful delusion than to see God where He is not, or to imagine ourselves more enlightened than Jesus Christ?" (Dr. William Barry).

xi. 43-45. "I can never forget the inexpressible luxury and prophaneness, gaming and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se'nnight I was witness of, the king sitting and toying with his concubines, a French boy singing love songs, in that glorious gallery, whilst about 20 of the greatest courtiers and other dissolute persons were at Basset round a large table, a bank of at least 2,000 in gold before them, upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflexions with astonishment. Six days after was all in the dust!" (Evelyn's *Diary*, Feb. 1685).

xii. 3. "I do believe the station of a popular preacher is one of the greatest trials on earth: a man in that position does not stop to soberly calculate how much, or rather how little is done when there appears a great effect, nor to consider how immense is the difference between deeply affecting the feelings and permanently changing the heart. The preacher who causes a great sensation and excited feelings is not *necessarily* the one who will receive the reward of shining as the stars for ever and ever, because he has turned many to righteousness" (F. W. Robertson).

xii. 3. "Yonder stars are rising. Have you ever noticed their order, heard their ancient names, thought of what they were, as teachers, 'lecturers,' in that large public hall of the night, to the wisest men of old? Have you ever thought of the direct promise to you yourselves,

that you may be like them if you will? 'They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.' They that be *wise*. Don't think that means knowing how big the moon is. It means knowing what you ought to do, as man or woman; what your duty to your father is, to your child, to your neighbour, to nations your neighbours" (Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*, lxxv.).

"I like to associate my friends with particular stars, there is something so sweet and intimate and confidential in a star. The sun and the moon, but especially the sun, are too universal and general for particular friendship; but you may consider a star as your own" (Erskine of Linlathen).

xii. 4. "The art of printing appears to have been providentially reserved till these latter ages, and then providentially brought into use, as what was to be instrumental for the future in carrying on the appointed course of things. The alterations which this art has already made in the face of the world are not inconsiderable. By means of it, whether immediately or remotely, the methods of carrying on business are, in several respects, improved, *knowledge has been increased*, and some sort of literature is become general" (Butler).

xii. 4, 9. "My book will await its reader; has not God waited 6,000 years before He has created a man to contemplate His works?" (Kepler).

xii. 10. *They that be wise*. "God will not judge men by what they know; yet to have used knowledge rightly will be a staff to support and comfort us in passing through the dark valley" (Jowett).

xii. 13. *For thou shalt rest*. "Nature in her grave nobleness is not less, but more dear now, when I remember that I shall soon bid her good even, to enter into the

presence of her Lord and mine. New heavens and a new earth—I cannot sever my human heart from mine own land ; and who shall say that those noble countries, casting off all impurity in the fiery trial that awaits them, shall not be our final heaven ?

“ I love to think that it may be so ; I love to think that the Lord, in his humanity, looks tenderly upon the mortal soil on which he sojourned in his wondrous life, and that here, perchance, in these very lands, made holy by his grace and power, our final rest shall be. It may be but a fancy ; but it comes upon me with gentle might, like the whispered comfort of an angel. A new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness—a glorified humanity which, remaining human, is mortal no longer ! with the judgment and the condemnation and the wars of the Lord overpast, and the earth and the heaven one fair broad country, and Himself over all, blessed for ever ! These are the old man’s dreams ; and they shed new glory over the pleasant places in which my lines have fallen ” (From *Adam Graeme of Mossgray*, by Mrs. Oliphant).

“ Spare no deceit. Lay the sword upon it ; go over it : keep yourselves clear of the blood of all men, either by word or writing ; and keep yourselves clean, that you may stand in your throne, and everyone have his lot, and stand in the lot in the Ancient of Days ” (Fox’s *Address to the Quakers*, 1656).

Thou shalt rest.—

“ Brother, we do not lay you down so deep
 But we ourselves shall overtake you soon :
 We dream a little longer, while you sleep ;
 And sleep than dreaming, yours the better boon.

Who sleeps not and is thankful when he can ?
 In dreaming there is little rest, be still.
 We are but oxen of the Husbandman,
 In his good time we sow what seed he will.

Till Earth put out her dead like buds in spring,
 'Twere well to sleep the whole black winter through.
 Sweetly the cool earth round your ears shall cling;
 We turn to dreams again; sleep soundly, you."

(Prof. J. S. Phillimore.)

ADDENDA.

ii. 40. *The fourth kingdom . . . shall break in pieces and crush.*

"Let's have no more dominant races; we don't want them; they only turn men into insolent brutes" (Burne-Jones).

iii. 15.

"I saw an Image, all of massie gold,
 Placed on high upon an altare faire,
 Not all, which did the same from farre beholde,
 Might worship it, and fall on lowest staire.
 Not that great Idol might with this compare,
 To which th' Assyrian tyrant would have made
 The holie brethren falslie to have praid."

—(Spenser's *The Ruines of Time*.)

iv. 4-5. *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace. I saw a dream which made me afraid.*

"Remember," wrote Mr. F. W. H. Myers to a friend, "that first of all a man must have, from the torpor of a foul tranquility, his soul *delivered unto war*."

iv. 27. *Wherefore, O king, break off thine . . . iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.*

"Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
 That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
 How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
 Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
 From seasons such as these? O I have ta'en
 Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
 Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel."

—(The King in *King Lear*, Act iii. Scene 4.)

“A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization” (Dr. Johnson).

iv. 28. *All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.*

“Express confessions give definiteness to memories that might more easily melt away without them” (George Eliot).

v. 1-17. “From the words of Daniel it appears that Belshazzar had made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. The golden and silver vessels are gorgeously enumerated, with the princes, the king’s concubines, and his wives. Then follows—‘In the same hour came forth fingers of a man’s hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the *king* saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the *king’s* countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosened, and his knees smote one against another.’ This is the plain text. By no hint can it be otherwise inferred, but that the appearance was solely confined to the fancy of Belshazzar, that his single brain was troubled. Not a word is spoken of its being seen by any one else there present, not even by the queen herself, who merely undertakes for the interpretation of the phenomena as related to her, doubtless, by her husband. The lords are simply said to be astonished; i.e. at the trouble and change of countenance in their sovereign. Even the prophet does not appear to have seen the scroll which the king saw. He recalls it only. He speaks of the phantom as past.” From Charles Lamb’s essay on *The Barrenness of the Imaginative Faculty in the productions of modern art.*

v. 22. *Thou hast not humbled thine heart.* The late Mr. F. W. H. Myers, speaking of his early passion for the classics, confesses that they “were but intensifications of my own being. They drew from me and fostered evil as

well as good; they might aid imaginative impulse and detachment from sordid interests, but they had no check for pride."

v. 25 f. In describing the squalor of Vauxhall Walk, Lambeth, Wilkie Collins observes that "in this district, as in other districts remote from the wealthy quarters of the metropolis, the hideous London vagabond—with the filth of the street outmatched in his talk, with the mud of the street out-dirtied in his clothes—lounges, lowering and brutal, at the street corner and the gin-shop door; the public disgrace of his country, the unheeded warning of social troubles that are yet to come. Here the loud assertion of Modern Progress—which has reformed so much in manners, and altered so little in man—meets the flat contradiction that scatters its pretensions to the winds. Here, while the national prosperity feasts, like another Belshazzar, on the spectacle of its own magnificence, is the writing on the wall, which warns the monarch, Money, that his glory is weighed in the balance, and his power found wanting" (From *No Name*, Scene Three, chap. i.).

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(To be continued.)