The proved need for God's law will lead men to God. It may be a long time before God brings us to the haven where we would be; but the sword will not devour for ever, and though the vision of peace tarry, we may confidently wait for it; because it will surely come.

Newport J. D. White.

SOME FRESH NOTES ON THE TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It was the fate of the present writer for some thirteen years to read with students of Theology the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. When one considers that the Hebrew Bible has been read and studied in its minutest details for over two thousand years, it will be obvious that very little that is fresh or new can be said about it. Hence recent expository work done upon it has too often consisted of the wildest extravagances and conjectures which have no basis in the text itself. Whilst, on the one hand, some scholars have attempted to reconstruct a new text for themselves in keeping with their own ideas of grammar and syntax, as well as of the progress of history, others have conceived schemes of metre into which they would force the poetical portions. In all this one thing alone is beyond doubt, and that is, that, if the Hebrew books were written in prose of a literary and classical standard and in verse of a regular number of syllables or accents, then both prose and poetry are lost to us, and to attempt to recover them at this time of day is wasted labour. In the following notes some possible renderings or readings, which seem to have escaped the notice of scholars are offered for the consideration of students, though to those accustomed to modern methods they may seem insignificant and unimportant.

1 Sam. i. 9: "So Hannah rose up after they had eaten
TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT


1 Sam. x. 2: “Thou shalt find two men . . . at Zelzah” (בצלזה). Read בצלזלים, “with cymbals,” or בצלזה, “inside the sepulchral chamber” (of Rachel’s tomb).

1 Sam. xi. 7: “Oxen” should in many places be “cows,” used for ploughing.

2 Sam. i. 21: “Fields of offerings” (חרותה). Perhaps חרותהחרותה or חרותהחרותה, “fields of silence,” that is, Death.

2 Sam. iii. 12: (Abner sent to David), “saying, Whose is the land? saying also, Make thy league with me” (לָאָםר). Render, “saying, To whom should I be pleased (לmi ארצים ולמי אме) to say, Make,” etc.

2 Sam. xvi. 5: (when David came to Bahurim), “Behold, thence came out a man (חרבה משב אשה זצא) of the family of the house of Saul.” Render, “Behold, from thence (came) man sprung from the family,” etc.

Isa. xxi. 16: “Within a year, according to the years of an hireling.” Before “year” (שנה) a numeral above ten seems to have dropped out as in 1 Sam. xiii. 1, “As the years of an hireling” means “exactly.”

Isa. xxviii. 16: “I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone”: “in Zion” means “consisting of Zion”: Zion is the stone.

Isa. xxviii. 20: “The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it.” Cf. Burckhardt, Egyptian Proverbs, No. 411, “According to the measure of the clothes stretch the legs.”

Isa. xxx. 17: “One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one.” Perhaps אלך אוגת means “A thousand and one” (shall flee, etc.).

Isa. xxxiv. 8: “For it is the day of the Lord’s vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion” (לرحم ציוו). Read לраб ציוו, “for the Lord of Zion,” on
account of the parallelism, being later Hebrew or Aramaic for the older.

Jer. xlvi. 9: The text is probably correct, the construction being the same as in Ps. lxxviii. 9.

Amos. iv. 3: “And ye shall cast them into the palace,” rather than "into the palace." One of these words is a gloss upon the other. Read either "And ye shall be cast out," or "ye shall be cast out."

Zech. i. 21: “These are the horns that have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head.” Instead of read "Judah as with a hammer: one, or he, lifted not up his head."

Zech. xi. 3: “A voice of the howling of the shepherds, for their glory is spoiled.” Read after Jer. xxv. 34 ff., “spoiled are the leaders of the flock.”

Zech. xiii. 6: “What are these wounds in thine hands?” lit. “between thine hands” (לברז), that is, on the front of the body. The expression occurs only here, but is common in Arabic in the sense of standing or appearing before a person.

“The house of my friends” (בית מיידיב) might mean “the idol temple”; is a metonymy for idol in Hosea ii. 7; Ezek. xvi., etc. The wounds are really self-inflicted, mostly on the arms: cf. 1 Kings xviii. 28 and the practices of the modern darwish.

Zech. xiv. 3: “As when he fought in the day of battle” (בחייםקרב). One would expect a proper name, as in “the day of Midian.”

Zech. xiv. 19: The punishment of Egypt is that its horses will perish.

Mal. ii. 16: “Garment” here means “wife,” as in the Korán ii. 183: “They are a garment unto you, and you are a garment unto them.”
Ps. vi. 2: “For I am weak” (אמלאל נני). Translate “My strength is withered,” פנים אלפים being for פנים אלפים. The parallel phrase is “my bones are vexed.”

Ps. ix. 12: “When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them.” “Them” may be “it,” referring to שרים.

Ps. ix. 20: “Put them in fear, O Jehovah.” Rather, "Make thyself, O Jehovah, a terror to them.” שרי is so used reflexively (Ps. iii. 6, etc.).

Ps. xxiii. 5: “In the presence of mine enemies.” The enemies might be the beasts of prey. Cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 34. The Arab poet Shanfara speaks of the beasts of prey as his friends in contrast to his tribe.

Ps. xliii. 5: “The iniquity of my heels.” For “my heels” (פירים) read “scorpions” (ḵārāḵîm). Cf. Ezek. ii. 6. There is an Arabic proverb, Al-Akārib humu’ l-‘akārib, “Relatives are scorpions.”

Ps. li. 2: “Wash me (כבלת) thoroughly from mine iniquity.” כבלת is used of washing clothes. The figure is therefore doubly metaphorical.

Ps. liv. 1: Two Hebrew verbs are translated by the English verb “to judge,” רָוֵי and שִׁלַּם. The latter is always used of judging peoples or communities, not individuals, at least in the Psalms.

Ps. lxvi. 7: “He ruleth by his power for ever” (עַלְוָל). Translate: “He ruleth the world by His power.” Cf. Eccl. iii. 11 and Ps. lxiii. 12, in which עַלְוָל perhaps means world, as in later Hebrew.

Ps. lxxviii. 9: see on Jer. xlvi. 9, above.

Ps. cv. 24: “And made them stronger than their enemies” (מעזים). Perhaps there is a play on מצרים, Egypt, or read מצרים.

Ps. cx. 4: “Thou art a priest for ever” (לעולה). לעולה only means “for life,” or the meaning is that he is the
founder of a line of priests. The chronicler makes David say (1 Chron. xxviii. 4): "The Lord . . . chose me . . . to be king for ever." Otherwise, Heb. vii. 8, etc.

Ps. cxliv. 12: "That our sons may be as plants grown up (נברות) in their youth." The LXX ὡς νεόφυτα ἔφρυμμένα, as plants full-grown, points to the reading נברות.

Prov. xxx. 31: There are four things that march well, a lion, a greyhound, a he-goat, "and a king against whom there is no rising up" (מלך אלוהים על). Various explanations of אלוהים have been given. It may be the earliest instance of אלוהים purposely disguised from motives of superstition. Thus in the Hagiographa published at Naples in 1486-7, אלוהים and אלוהים are printed יהוה and יהוה, respectively. In the Talmud (B. Kam. 106a and elsewhere) we have אלוהים. The words would then mean "a king on whose side God is."

From the fact that capital letters are not used to mark proper names in the Semitic languages, it is quite possible that there are many of these in the Hebrew Bible which have been read as appellatives. It is especially remarkable that in the Psalms, many of which are so intensely personal, so few proper names occur. Yet this may have been the practice of the times and people. In the book of Job the dramatis personae never name one another. The exception that proves the rule is Elihu. Similarly in the Korán only one of Mohammad’s disciples is mentioned by name, and that only once. On the other hand, proper names of persons may have been suppressed of set purpose, or mistaken for common nouns.

Perhaps the vocable which is most easily misread and misunderstood is the word אלוהים. This may stand for Adam (cf. Josh. iii. 16), man, Edom, sometimes for Aram (Syria), and once for עד (1 Sam. xvii. 32: in xxiv. 9 it is also to be altered: the Greek had Ἐδώρις?—"the words of those
who say”). In 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, “Let us not fall into the hand of man,” “Edom” would give good sense, being the chief adversary, and there is only one adversary mentioned in ver. 13, where it is necessary to read צַעַר instead of צַעַר.

In Ps. lxxvi. 10, “Surely the wrath of man (דָּם צַעַר) shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath (שְׁבֵי דָם צַעַר) shalt thou restrain,” we might render, omitting the first non and changing שְׁבֵי into שְׁבֵי with the LXX, “For (even) Edom (or Syria ?) shall praise thee, the remnant of Hamath shall keep festival to thee.”

Similarly in xciv. 10, 11, “He that teacheth man knowledge . . . the thoughts of man,” there would be some point in reading “Edom” for “man,” Edom being the seat of wisdom (Obad. 8; Jer. xl ix. 8). Similarly in cxxiv. 2, we might translate “when Edom rose up against us”; and in xi. 4, xii. 8 and frequently point is gained by rendering “the sons of Edom” instead of “sons of men.”

The curious expression in Gen. xvi. 12 (Job xi. 12) זָרָשׁ, “wild ass of a man,” surely means “wild ass of Edom,” especially seeing that it is descriptive of Esau. The last Omeiyad Caliph Merwan was called “The Ass” on account of his endurance. In Isa. xliii. 4, “Therefore will I give men for thee, and peoples for thy life,” instead of “men” and “peoples” we expect the names of the nations which are to become the ransom of Israel. So in xxii. 6 Kittel reads “Aram” in the second clause for “men,” parallel to Elam and Kir in the first and third. In Ezek. xxxvi. 37, “I will increase them with men like a flock” (כְּשָׁנָן אֲרָם) should probably be “like the flocks of Edom.” Cf. Mic. ii. 12, “as the flock of Bozrah.” On the other hand in ver. 38 “flocks of men” is probably right.¹

In Ezek. vii. 14, “They have blown the trumpet” (רַכֶּנּוֹ הַקֶּרֶם) for another example of this ambiguous root cf. Dr. Kennedy’s The Note-Line, p. 100.
should be "Blow the trumpet in Tekoa," with a play upon the name, as in Jer. vi. 1. The syntax is otherwise anomalous, and the text of the rest of the verse is probably corrupt also.

There is a number of passages, especially in the poetical books, in which the parallelism seems to require a proper name where now there is none, or in which a proper name would seem to be the natural completion of the sentence. Such passages are the following:—

Ps. xviii. 3:

The A.V. gives the rendering "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies." is evidently parallel to מַלְאָכָם, and one would expect it to mean "By reason of some one," I call, etc., מַלְאָך being all that remains of the enemy's name. In any case the A.V. does not seem to be possible. מַלְאָך would be identical with מַלְאָך. In the spells and incantations found at Tell Sandahanna the person devoted to destruction is mentioned by name. In ver. 5 of this song, "The sorrows of Hell (דָּם שָאֹל) compassed me about" might equally well and with much point be translated "Saul's bands compassed me about." (For דָּם in the sense of a band of men, cf. 1 Sam. x. 5, 10, etc.) One would expect Saul to be named in this poem, but the parallel clause "the snares of death prevented me" shows that here the M.T. is probably right. Again in Ps. xxii. 1:

"The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice." The last expression is not found elsewhere, and instead of נָהֲל one would expect
the name of the king mentioned in the first member of the parallelism.

It is the fashion of Persian poets to insert their own names in the last quatrain or distich of their ghazels. It is believed examples of this are found at the close of the alphabetic Pss. xxv. and xxxiv., where there is an additional verse beginning with the letter Pet, and suggesting that the name of the author of these two poems was Pedayah. In other Psalms we find illegible words in the closing couplets. In xxvii. 13 we have a word marked with dots above and below. The A.V. supplies a phrase to complete the sense, "I had fainted unless I had believed," etc. It might be a corruption of the poet's own name. "I, ———, believed to see," etc. Again the closing verse of Ps. xxx. runs, "To the end that glory (LXX δοξα μου) may sing praise to thee," etc., where the name of the poet in place of δοξα would make excellent sense. In xxii. 9 we have the untranslatable

נָלָל יְהוָה יִפְלָשֵׁהוּ (A.V. "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him.")) With מָלָל as the name of the poet, like the Arabic Jelāl, the line would run, "As for Jelāl, the Lord will deliver him." The name, however, would not be Jelāl. Proper names of authors and other persons may be concealed, sometimes through textual corruption, in such places as the following in the Psalms: xxxvi. 1; lii. 1; lv. 3; lvi. title and verses 1 and 2; lviii. 1; lxiii. 9; and elsewhere. That the old Hebrew poets did not object to introduce proper names into their odes is shown by Ps. lx.

It has long been recognised that the name of God is often used in the Semitic languages to denote nothing more than the adjectives "great," "perennial," and the like. Thus in the A.V. we have "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains" (Ps. xxxvi. 6, הָרוֹרִי אֲלֵי, lit. "mountains of
God”), “the godly cedars” (lxxx. 10, מִלְמָלָהּ, lit. “cedars of God”), “an exceeding great city” (Jon. iii. 3, יְרוֹדֵל הַנָּטֵל, lit. “a great city of God”): cf. Wright’s Arabic Grammar, ii. 150). But there are many other passages in which this construction is used. Thus in Ps. lxviii. 15, “the hill of God” of the A.V. should be “a great hill”: in Gen. i. 2 “the spirit of God” (רוּחַ אלהֹים) means “a mighty wind”; and similarly נְשָׁבָה אלֹים, Isa. xl. 7, and נְשָׁבָה אלֹים, Job iv. 9.

The practice, of which a few instances occur in the A.V., might be greatly extended in translating from Hebrew into English. Thus the expression “ark of God” would in English be “the sacred box” or “chest”: a “son of God” means a “good person,” “sons of God” “good people” (Job i. 6); the “hand” or rod “of God” (Job xix. 21; xxi. 9) means “calamity.” A striking example of this difference of idiom is the saying of the centurion at the Cross. In Matt. xxvii. 51, Mark xv. 39 it takes the form “Truly this was a son of God,” in Luke xxiii. 47 we have the Occidental equivalent “Certainly this was a righteous man.” The expressions are identical, but Matthew was thinking in Aramaic, Luke in Greek.

T. H. Weir.