

The Sethianic tablets belong to the fourth century; but the formulæ and the curses are evidently hereditary and of long standing. Thus No. 3 ends *ut omnes cognoscant exemplum eorum*; which is exactly in the style of the Dionysopolitan *exemplaria*.

X. THE DEMAND FOR PAYMENT.

In many cases, where some debt has been incurred to the god, the latter seeks for payment; it is probable that this demand made by the god was very similar to the order (*ἐπιταγή*) which he issued in other cases (sec. xiii.). He makes it known (whether by dream or through the officials of the temple, there is no evidence in any case to show) that a debt has been incurred, and requires

the debtor to pay. In many instances it would appear that the demand was only for public confession and acknowledgment on a *stêlē* (*στήλην ἀπαιτηθεὶς ἀπέδωκε*). In some cases a man who had made a prayer and vow (sec. ii.) did not recognize that his prayer had been granted and the payment earned by the god. In that case the god demanded payment. The commonest term is *ἐπιζητέω*, but *ἀπαιτεῖν* is sometimes used: the idea is that of the Latin legal term, *repeto*.

Ἐπιζητεῖν is common, and *ἀπαιτεῖν* occurs, in the New Testament in the same general sense as in the inscriptions, e.g. *γενεὰ πονηρὰ σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ* (Mt 16⁴), *τὰ σὰ μὴ ἀπαιτεῖ* (Lk 6³⁰), *τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ* (Lk 12²⁰). But there seems to be no case where the demand is made by God.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF GENESIS.

GENESIS iii. 15.

'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'

EXPOSITION.

'I will put enmity between thee and the woman.'—This verse adds yet another punishment [upon the serpent]. Not only is it to be an outcast creature, but also one hated with a deadly hatred. Irreconcilable enmity, a life and death struggle, is to be and continue between man and it. Since it is a penal sentence against the serpent, the principal emphasis must be laid upon man's hostile treatment of the serpent, whereas its hostility to man is introduced only as the reverse side, and as known from the relations that actually exist. But the enmity is not to be merely between her who first fell and the first seducer, but is to continue between their respective descendants, from generation to generation.

It is well known that such a deadly enmity does now actually prevail against the (animal) serpent. The worship of serpents among many peoples, as unnatural, and a sort of monstrosity, does not militate against this statement. If in any way, it is evident from this that the serpent, as representative of the evil power, is cursed. Evil thoughts, a serpent brood, ever and again steal up in enmity to the sons of men, in order to poison for them their innermost life; but by divine decree there is appointed against them unresting strife on the part of man.—DILLMANN.

The open enmity between man and serpent recurs in the whole Orient; it is everywhere impressed with a religious

character; it bears a hidden symbolical meaning; it is the combat either against the tempter, or against the prince of evil. The propriety of selecting just that reptile for such purpose has been made more manifest by the scientific study of zoology. It is argued that the organism of the serpents is one of extreme degradation; their bodies are lengthened out by the mere vegetative repetitions of the vertebræ; like the worms, they advance only by the ring-like scutes of the abdomen, without fore or hinder limbs; though they belong to the latest creatures of the animal kingdom, they represent a decided retrogression in the scale of beings (comp. Hugh Miller, *Test. of the Rocks*, pp. 82-85).—KALISCH.

'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'—The only meaning which can be philologically defended is '*crush*.' This meaning suits Job 9¹⁷ but not Ps 139¹¹. The alternative rendering is '*lie in wait for*,' which suits Ps 139¹¹ better than '*crush*,' but a word = '*cover*' is required there.

Dillmann admits that the meaning '*crush*' suits the first part of the clause, *i.e.* the man's crushing the serpent's head, but denies its application to the serpent, and adopts the rendering '*lie in wait for*'; but this meaning is not so certain as the meaning '*crush*,' and the double accusative after the rendering '*lie in wait for*' is difficult.—SPURRELL.

The sense of the whole verse is accordingly this: Instead of the friendly relationship between the woman and the serpent, which for the woman had been so unfortunate, an irreconcilable conflict is to be kindled between men and the accursed beast. In it the animal will, indeed, in its insidious fashion, continually seek to be a match for them; but they are openly and manfully to deliver the deathblow against it. That the struggle will prove in the end the destruction of the serpent (of the evil power) is not expressly stated, but

follows already from the fact that the curse of God lies upon the beast, and still more from the intention of God with regard to man, as that has appeared in his creation and previous guidance. A struggle ordained of God cannot be without prospect of success. The whole subsequent history is to bear the character of a struggle of mankind against the temptation to sin. In what manner man will carry the day does not yet need to be declared.—DILLMANN.

Since 'bruise' may just as well be understood individually as collectively, and it is not said that it shall be given to the man to beget, but to the woman to bring forth, that which shall bruise the serpent's head, the prophecy is designed by its form also to concur with its fulfilment. For it was necessary that Christ, to avoid first conquering in Himself the seed of the serpent, should be 'born of woman' in a miraculously exclusive manner, a heavenly gift of grace deposited in the womb of a woman. This first prophecy of redemption is not only the most general and most indefinite; it is also, when regarded in the light of its fulfilment, the most comprehensive and the most profound. 'General, indefinite, obscure as the primeval age to which it belongs,' says Drechsler, 'it lies marvellously and sacredly on the threshold of the lost Paradise like an awe-inspiring sphinx before the ruins of a mysterious temple'; and the Son of the Virgin was the first—we add—to solve by fulfilling it the enigma of this sphinx, which had been too difficult for all the saints and prophets.—DELITZSCH.

METHOD OF TREATMENT.

The Great Conflict.

This is the statement of a mighty conflict. And these three things have to be considered about it. How it began; How it was carried on; and How it came to an end.

I. *How this great Conflict began.*—Let us go back a little. So far as it has been revealed to us, God has made three, and only three, different orders of creatures. The first we call Angels; the second Men; and the third include the lower animals and all other created things. He created them all for obedience. But with a difference. The third order—the lower animals and all other lower things whether living or dead—He created for obedience pure and simple; but angels and men He created for obedience through love. The beasts obey because they have no choice. The sun rises and sets with unvarying regularity, and we use it to point the moral of punctual obedience.

It never comes an hour too soon,
Nor brings too long a day.

But it has no credit for that. It simply cannot help it. It was made to obey, and it has no choice but unwavering obedience. Angels and men were

made for obedience also, but not for mechanical obedience. They were made to obey through love. The sun was made to do God's bidding; angels and men were made to love the Lord with all their heart. Now love implies choice. There must be freedom. I cannot love if I cannot do else but love. I cannot love unless I am also free to hate. There must be freedom of choice.

So angels and men were left free to choose good or evil, and it is recorded that some angels and all men chose evil. The fall of the angels is not fully related in Scripture, since it does not concern us to know its circumstances. We do not even know for certain what was the cause of it. Shakespeare makes Wolsey say:

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition,
By that sin fell the angels.

And we have accepted that view of it. But whatever was the cause, we know that some of the angels chose the evil and fell.

Man chose the evil and fell also. The story of that Choice and Fall is told in this third chapter of Genesis. And the point to notice first about it is that it was brought about through the temptation of one of the fallen angels. The narrative in Genesis speaks of the serpent. And throughout the narrative the language is accommodated to the beast. But he would be a dull interpreter who saw no more in this story than an old serpent myth. We interpret Scripture by itself. And it is certain that in later Scripture it is freely recognized that the author of Eve's temptation was Satan, the first of the fallen angels.

What does that mean? It means that when an angel falls, he falls more utterly than man. No one tempted the angels to their fall. They deliberately chose the evil of themselves. And so their fall was into evil—evil absolute. Henceforth the fallen angels are only evil in will and in purpose. And their work is to do evil continually. So the prince of the fallen angels comes, and out of the evil that is in him, tempts man to his ruin.

Thus both angels and men have fallen, but the difference in their fall is very great. First, men have not fallen into evil absolutely as the angels. Their moral darkness is still pierced with some rays of light. And, secondly, men may be redeemed from their evil, the fallen angels may not.

For there is an organic unity among men. There is a human nature. And when men fall

they fall together—it is *man* that falls, not men. There is no angel nature. 'They neither marry nor are given in marriage.' Each of the fallen angels fell by himself alone. Deliberately he chose the evil for himself. So, when he fell, he fell never to rise again. Robert Burns may say :

Auld Nicky Ben,
Oh, wad ye tak' a thocht an' men',
Ye aiblins nicht, I dinna ken,
Still hae a stake.

But it is a purely human sentiment. There is no warrant for such expectation or possibility in Scripture. The warrant is very plainly all the other way.

But man falls that he may rise again. For there is a solidarity in man. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. And if only One will come and take this human nature on Him, enter this flesh of sin and condemn sin in the flesh, then will the way be open to man to return to the love and obedience of his God. And He will come.

Thus, then, the Great Conflict began. Tempted by Satan, man fell, but not utterly nor irrecoverably. He will henceforth keep up a continuous warfare with Satan. There will be enmity between Adam and Satan, and between their seed from generation to generation, till One shall come to win the victory for man.

II. *How this great Conflict was carried on.*—Eve thought it was to be a short conflict. When her first-born came she said, 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.' But Cain grew up to manhood and Abel his brother; 'and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.' The hoped-for Victor is man's earliest murderer. Then Lamech thought he had found the Deliverer. 'This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our own hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.' And he called his son's name Noah. For now in the conflict Satan has so steadily won that it is needful to sweep man from off the face of the earth, and make, as it were, a new start. But Noah cannot save his brethren. He barely escapes with his own family. And the flood is only past when even Noah himself has fallen under the lash of the Tempter.

Men have got a new start, however. Will they cope with Satan now? Not so. Steadily again Satan wins. And the earth grows so corrupt that God chooses one man and takes him out of the

surrounding abomination, to keep him apart and train him and his family for Himself and His great purpose. That man is Abraham.

Not that God now leaves the rest of the human race to the unresisted will of Satan. In no place, and at no time, has God left Himself without witnesses. Or, as the other evangelist more personally puts it, He kept coming amongst men in the Person of the Word, and whenever anyone was found willing to follow the Light, power was given to him to become a child of God. This choice of Abraham and his family is a new departure, that through him and his seed all the families of the earth may be blessed.

Is this new departure successful? Does the family of Abraham now gain the victory over Satan, and gain it always? No; not even for themselves; still less for the rest of mankind. As the same evangelist has it, 'He came unto *His own*, and His own received Him not.' But God's purpose is not in vain, nor even thwarted for a moment. Man *will* be redeemed, and the redemption is delayed only that it may be to love and new obedience, the will to choose being still left free.

And now we can trace the gradual closing of the promise on a single Person. 'A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you.' 'Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' 'The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple.' 'Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.'

Meanwhile, the world is getting more and more utterly bruised by the bite of the serpent. Read that terrible yet true description of the morals of men which St. Paul gives us in his Epistle to the Romans. Read also the scathing exposure in the Gospels of the irreligiosity of the religion of Israel, the hypocrisy and greed of the leaders and rulers of the people. Satan thinks he has gained the victory along the whole line.

III. *How the Conflict came to an end.*—Jesus had two battles to fight. First, He had to meet Satan, and gain His own personal victory over him. And so, immediately after the baptism, in which He was consecrated to His work, He is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. He gained that victory.

Next, He has to gain the victory for man, for the whole human race. That was a harder battle to fight, more prolonged, more fiercely

bitter. But He gained that victory also. And how did He gain it? Just in the opposite way in which man lost it. Man lost his battle, both in the Garden of Eden and ever afterwards, by preferring his own will to the will of God. Jesus won His battle by an absolute surrender of His will. It was a harder battle than man could ever have had. 'Father, if it be possible,' He was constrained to cry. But immediately He added, 'Yet not My will, but Thine be done.' Man lost his battle always by selfishly saving his life. Jesus won His battle for Himself and for us by losing His life.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE merely literal explanation of the verse clearly does not exhaust its meaning. There is something more in the words than a declaration that the human race will always view with feelings of instinctive aversion the serpent race. There is something more in the words than a prediction that mankind will be able to assert superiority over this reptile foe among the beasts of the field. We need not doubt that, whichever of the alternative renderings of the verb be preferred, the underlying thought is that of a spiritual conflict between the race of man and the influences of temptation, between humanity with its gift of choice and the Principle of Evil which ever suggests the satisfaction of the lower desires. But, in addition to this main thought, a twofold encouragement is given to nerve him for the fray. He is endowed with capacities enabling him, if he will use them, to inflict a deadly blow upon the adversary. He stands erect, he is made in the image of God. Furthermore, the promise of ultimate victory is assured to him.—H. E. RYLE.

TRADITIONS of the Fall are to be found in every religion of the world. 'Yeina, the first man in Aryan tradition, passed his life in a state of bliss, till he committed the sin which weighs on his descendants, and for this he was driven out of Paradise, after being a thousand years in it, and was given up to the Serpent, who finally brought about his death by horrible torment. . . . Even the prediction of the crushing of the head of the serpent has perpetuated itself in the traditions of mankind. In the oldest Hindoo temples two figures of Krishna are still seen, in one of which he is trampling on the crushed head of the serpent, while in the other the serpent clings round him, and bites his heel.'—GEIKIE.

NEAR the manchaneel, which grows in the forests of the West Indies, and which gives forth a juice of deadly

poisonous nature, grows a fig, the sap of which, if applied in time, is a remedy for the diseases produced by the manchaneel. God places the gospel of grace alongside the sentence of death.—W. ADAMSON.

WE grow all out of patience with men's crude and sweeping and unqualified epitomes of life. One man says, 'It is all good,' and will see none of the evil and sin and misery which are everywhere. Another man says, 'It is all bad'; and for him all the brightness and graciousness and perpetual progress go for nothing. One man calls humanity a hopeless brute. Another man calls humanity a triumphant angel. God in these words of Genesis says, 'Neither! but a wounded, bruised, strong creature, not running and leaping and shouting, often crawling and creeping in its pain, but yet brave, with an inextinguishable certainty of ultimate success, fighting a battle which is full of pain but is not desperate, sure ultimately to set his heel on his adversary's head.'—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

BOAST not against us, O our enemy!
To-day we fall, but we shall rise again;
We grope to-day, to-morrow we shall see:
What is to-day that we should fear to-day?
A morrow cometh which shall sweep away
Thee and thy realm of change and death and pain.
C. ROSSETTI.

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