

Every parable must be interpreted in accordance with the central motive which governs it. In this case the truth to be emphasized is quite other than the finality of death as regards human probation. It is a far more terrible doctrine than that. The parable teaches us that *long before death* the final doom of some people may be already settled. They have arrived at that state in which no further revelation of the will of God and of the solemnity of life's choices, even though these be emphasized by the

rising of a near relative from the dead by way of warning, would be of any avail. *These five brothers of Dives had already passed the crisis of moral choice.* In face of the full and sufficient light granted to them they had rejected the better part. The Divine resources of appeal had in their case been exhausted; not death had settled their doom but life; the only function of death in their case would be to unfold their hidden condition, and bring the retributive process to a head.—E. GRIFFITH-JONES.

Some Critical Difficulties in the Chapters on Balaam.

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MOST rash would be the person who should venture to say that nothing more could be got from the fascinating group of narratives and poems relative to the seer Balaam. Dillmann's commentary is painstaking in the extreme, but often leaves one unsatisfied; he is a noble specimen of an already almost ancient school of criticism. It is the condition upon which we work that we leave something for our successors to accomplish. Professor D. H. Müller has done admirably; he has recovered a reference to the kingdom of Sham'al in N.-W. Syria in Nu 24^{23, 24} (see *Expositor* [1896] iii. 77-80), which is now so well known to us through the discoveries at the Tell of Zinjirli, unless, indeed, anyone should prefer the ingenious conjectures of Professor Hommel (*Anc. Heb. Trad.* 245 f.). But it seems to be open to us to improve the text of vv. 23, 24 still further in connexion with the text of v. 22. Premising that C here gives worse than no help, as could easily be shown, I would propose to read vv. 22-24 thus, omitting the introduction of v. 23:—

כי אם יתקו לקצר קונו	22	But Kain shall be given to destruction,
אָדוֹם יְרוּשֵׁשׁ מִשְׁבּוֹ		Edom shall beat in pieces his dwelling.
אֵי מִי יִהְיֶה כֹּשֵׁמָאֵל	23	Alas! who will survive of Sham'al,
וַיָּצֵא מִעִיר חַמָּת	24	Or come forth from the city of Hamath?
וַעֲרָה אֲשׁוּר אֲרָמֹתָיָהּ		Asshur shall lay bare its palaces,
וְהִשָּׁמָה עָרֵי אַרְפָּד		And they shall waste the cities of Arpad.

This restoration is not quite as certain as some of those which can be produced for difficult poetic passages. It is, however, much more defensible,

as I think, than Professor Hommel's; it is at any rate an attempt to get nearer to the truth which eludes us in the Massoretic text (M.T.). Balaam and his poems (*mēshālīm* as they were called) are fascinating, as I have ventured to call them, and with a due combination of boldness and caution we may come to understand them a little better. We may be quite certain that 'ships from Chittim' (Cyprus, which was tributary to Sargon) were not represented as able to 'afflict Asshur' and to 'afflict Eber.' Neither Leibnitz and Delitzsch,¹ who suppose a prophecy of Alexander the Great and the overthrow of the Persian empire, nor Cornill,² who supposes that vv. 20-24 (or at any rate v. 24) are a late insertion of the fourth century, can possibly be right; they are all equally hasty, because they base their theories on an uncorrected text. Professor Hommel is not open to this charge. But his 'jackals and wild cats' (אֵיִם and צִיִּים), *i.e.* the predatory maritime peoples which invaded Syria and Palestine on their way to Egypt as far back as the thirteenth century B.C., are out of the question in such a poem as this; the poem is manifestly later, and the invasion would not have been thus described (contrast the Song of Deborah). 'Chittim,' then, which Professor Hommel keeps, is impossible. A mention of the kingdom of Sham'al, however, is quite in accordance with Balaam's reputed Aramæan origin, and, what is equally to the point, its name must have been familiar to Israelites of

¹ *Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft*, 1888, pp. 119 ff.

² *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 3rd ed. p. 78.

any political inquisitiveness in the Assyrian period of Israelitish history.

It may be asked, How does 'Hamath' come into the little poem on Sham'al? But how can we avoid inserting in line 2 of the poem some proper name which shall be parallel to Sham'al? To the words, 'Who shall survive from Sham'al,' we expect to find as a parallel, 'Who shall escape from α .' Now the name of the capital of Sham'al is, I believe, unknown to us; its name might conceivably be such as could be corrupted into כְּתִים. But consider this point—that though Sham'al was well known to the Israelites of the Assyrian period, it was only known as one of a group of states. The strong probability is that the name of some neighbouring state in equal danger from the Assyrians was mentioned in the second line. Now, in both the lists of tributary princes left us by Tiglath Pileser III.¹ (745-727), we find Hamath and Sham'al mentioned together. The name before Hamath is illegible in one list; in the other it is Carchemish. Hamath is again and again referred to in the Old Testament; we have a right to expect it to be mentioned in one or another of the poems ascribed to an Aramæan seer. And there are two other places which we could not be surprised at finding in such a context. These are Carchemish and Arpad, but especially the latter (cf. 2 K 18³⁴, Is 10⁹, Jer 49²³). I suppose, then, that כְּתִים in line 2 is a corruption of חֲמַת (transposition and confusion of ח and כ), just as in Is 11¹¹ חֲמַת is probably a corruption of כְּתִים, the only word which is suitable in the context (see *Isaiah*, in Haupt's Old Testament, Hebrew edition); and further, that אֲבֵר in v.²⁴ is a corruption of אֲרַפַּר—an unfortunate word, which perhaps underlies the corrupt עֲרֹעֵר in Is 17² (reading 'cities of Arpad' for 'cities of Aroer').

It may be urged, in opposition, that עֲרֵי אֲבֵר in v.²⁴ is protected by the occurrence of the same words at the end of v.²⁰, according to M.T. But I am not prepared to follow Professor D. H. Müller and Dr. Paul Ruben (see *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1899), and do not find in Hebrew poetry as much deliberate use of correspondence of expression as these able scholars. עֲרֵי אֲבֵר is such a strange expression that we are bound to question its correctness, and it is by no means

obvious that the true expression must be the same in both verses. But let us turn now to v.²⁰, which contains the improbable phrase, עֲרֵי אֲבֵר. I omit the detailed justification of the other corrections of the text which I have thus far proposed; parallels for each of them can easily be found by anyone who has enjoyed any competent instruction in textual criticism. (I will only refer for יְרִיִּשָׁשׁ to Jer 5¹⁷, Mal 1⁴; the word is obviously most appropriate in the present context.)

The difficulty of the little poem on Amalek is confined to the closing line. The reader will soon see how I deal with it—

רְאִשִׁית גּוֹיִם עֲמֻלֶךָ²⁰ The first of the nations was Amalek;
וְאַחֲרֵיתוֹ יִמְרֹס אֱדוֹם But its last man shall Edom destroy.

Dillmann has already remarked on the generality of the saying on Amalek, as given in M.T. He accounts for it by the unimportance of Amalek from the present point of view of the writer. But in this case why mention Amalek at all? The 'first of the nations' in its own estimation, surely Amalek was not out of all relation to the immediate object of the poet. The strong probability is that עֲרֵי אֲבֵר conceals a definite reference to the agent by whom the destruction of Amalek was to be effected. A somewhat enigmatical notice in 1 Ch 4^{42, 43} now comes to our assistance. It is there stated that five hundred men of the tribe of Simeon went to Mount Seir, and 'smote the remnant of the Amalekites that escaped.' From whom had these Amalekites escaped? Not from Saul (1 S 15), for David was still troubled by them (1 S 30). The conquest of Amalek ascribed to David in 2 S 8¹², is due, as Budde has shown (see also H. P. Smith, *ad loc.*) to a very late redactor. Probably, then, from their neighbours the Edomites, who were continually liable to have their settlements destroyed by those Bedouins, the Amalekites. Sam., Onk., Pesh. all read עֲרֵי יֵאֲבֵר; this is nearer the truth than M.T.'s reading. Only עֲרֵי is miswritten for [אֲבֵר].

Now we have a parallel to the definite statement which we have found respecting Edom in v.^{22b}. Edom destroys the Kenites; Edom, too, exterminates the Amalekites. The poet lived before that part of the reign of Hezekiah which is referred to in 1 Ch 4⁴², for he makes Balaam anticipate that the last man of the Amalekites will be slain by the Edomites; the chronological indication is

¹ See Schrader, *Keilinschriften und Geschichtsforschung*, p. 202.

of some slight importance. But he certainly lived not earlier than the reign of Ahaz, for he has distinctly in view the fall of Sham'al, Hamath, and Arpad.

These short *mëshālīm* (Nu 24²⁰⁻²⁴) are probably not by the author of the four longer poems (Nu 23¹⁻²⁴¹⁹). In those fine specimens of Hebrew poetry I have not many points of importance to mention. Some admirable corrections of the text have been made by my predecessors (notably Kuenen in Nu 23³); it would be pleasing to refer to them, but I leave this task to the commentator in the International Series (T. & T. Clark), and to the writers in the two new Bible Dictionaries.

The first relates to the passage (Nu 23²²) rendered thus in R.V.—

God bringeth them forth out of Egypt;
He hath as it were the strength of the wild ox.

For 'strength' a marginal substitute is given, viz. 'horns.' The Hebrew word is תְּוֹעֵפָה. I have already shown (THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, x. p. 94 [1898]) that in all the passages where this supposed word occurs, it is a corruption. The right word here is certainly תְּפִאָרֶת. עַל has δόξα, and δόξα is one of the words by which עַל is accustomed to render תְּפִאָרֶת. Render therefore v.²² thus—

God, who brought him out of Egypt,
Is for him like the wild ox's ornament.

i.e. the God of Israel makes Israel's attacks as irresistible as those of the wild ox. To this I would now add that the same word should be restored in v.^{21b}.¹ R.V. renders v.^{21b} thus—

The LORD his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them.

The words are usually explained (e.g. by Wellhausen) as referring to the kingly government in Israel. But this does not suit the context. עַל has τὰ ἔνδοξα (ἀρχόντων), i.e. תְּפִאָרֶת, which is certainly right. 'The glory of the king' (so render) means the visible presence of Yahwè, symbolized and represented by the ark (cf. Ps 78⁶¹).

The second relates to Nu 24^{6b}, rendered in R.V.—

As lign-aloes which the LORD hath planted,
As cedar trees beside the waters.

But how can cedars be said to grow 'beside waters'? Dr. Post (Hastings' *Dictionary of the*

Bible, i. 69, 364) supposes that either the location of the *ārāzīm* is poetic licence, or else some water-loving tree is intended in this passage. The introduction of the *āhālīm* (masc. plur., nowhere else) is also unexpected; the aloe-tree does not grow in Palestine. The remedy is clear. Usage requires that the 'cedars' should be described as the trees which Yahwè planted (Ps 104¹⁶). Read—

As cedars (כַּרְמִים) which Yahwè hath planted,
As poplars (עֲרָבִים) beside the waters.

Then continue, taking a hint from עַל (κυριεύσει ἔθνων πολλῶν),

יִרְדּוּ לְאֶמִּים מְחִילוֹ	Peoples shall tremble at his might,
וְיָרְעוּ בְעַמִּים רַבִּים	And his arm ⁹ shall be on many nations,
וְיָרֵם מַעוֹן מַלְכוֹ	And his king shall be higher than Og,
וְהִנָּשָׂא מַלְכוּתוֹ	And his kingdom shall be exalted.

Lastly, I come to the chief point of all. It relates to the origin of the seer Balaam.⁴ As is well known, tradition was not quite unanimous on this point. The Elohist narrative, according to M.T., makes Balaam an Aramæan of Pethor on the Euphrates. The Yahwistic narrative (J), however, makes him a resident in the land of the Ammonites (reading בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן *bnē Ammon*, Nu 22⁵), and the Priestly narrative (P) connects him with the Midianites. But there is strong reason to think that this view of E's meaning is erroneous. As that acute critic J. Marquart has pointed out (though he stopped short there), Pēthōr cannot be the Pitru of the Assyrian inscriptions with which Schrader (*Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O.T.* [KAT] 155) has identified it, and the statement in Gn 36³² suggests a revolutionary theory. In Nu 22⁵ פְּתוֹרָה is miswritten רְהוֹבוֹת. Render the verse thus, distributing it between E and J—'And he sent messengers to Balaam, son of Beor (more probably Achbor), to Rehoboth, which is by the River [of Muṣri], the land of the children of Ammon' (the words in italics are from J). 'Rehoboth' is the place to which Saul, an Edomite king, traced his origin (Gn 36³⁷); it is also, as I have shown elsewhere (*Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, May 1899), disguised under the name Dinhabah (Gn 36³²), and it is probably the Rehoboth of the story of Isaac (Gn 26²²). The reputation of the Edomites for wisdom is well known (Jer 49⁷, Ob v.⁸,

² Cf. Moore's correction יִרְדּוּ for יִקֵּה in Is 52¹⁵.

³ So already Grätz.

⁴ Cf. article in the *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, 15th May 1899.

¹ Verses 21 and 22 are not, as it seems, by the same writer. Cf. Bacon, *Triple Tradition of the Exodus*.

Job 2¹¹), and Muşri adjoined Edom. Probably, indeed, the phrase 'the wisdom of Mizraim' (1 K. 4³⁰) should rather be read 'the wisdom of Mişrim,' *i.e.* the wisdom of Muşri.¹ Mişrim and its wisdom passed away and left no trace, not from Jewish antagonism to the neighbours of the Edomites,

¹ See 'References to the N. Arabian land of Muşri,' *Jewish Quarterly Review*, July 1899.

but ultimately in consequence of the scantiness of the historical records of the Israelites. The cause of the series of misunderstandings to which the Hebrew text of Nu 22⁵ adds one more, was simply historical ignorance. We owe much to Winckler for removing the veil which has obscured the many references to Muşri, though a few of these references even he has failed to notice.

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF GENESIS.

GENESIS XXII. 1-2.

'And it came to pass after these things, that God did prove Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of' (R.V.).

EXPOSITION.

THIS first portion of the fourth section of the life of Abraham corresponds with those of the call, of the covenant sacrifice, of the institution of circumcision, which open the three preceding sections. The father of the faithful is now perfected. The obedience of faith drew Abraham into a strange land; by the humility of faith he gave way to his nephew Lot; strong in faith, he fought four kings of the heathen with three hundred and eighteen men; firm in faith, he rested in the word of promise, notwithstanding all the opposition of reason and nature; bold in faith, he entreated the preservation of Sodom under increasingly lowered conditions; joyful in faith, he received, named, and circumcised the son of promise; with the loyalty of faith he submitted at the bidding of God to the will of Sarah and expelled Hagar and Ishmael; and with the gratitude of faith he planted a tamarisk to the ever faithful God in the place where Abimelech had sued for his friendship and accepted his present,—now his faith was to be put to the severest test to prove itself victorious, and to be rewarded accordingly.—DELITZSCH.

'God.'—Literally, *the Elohim*, *i.e.* neither Satan nor Abraham himself, in the sense that a subjective impulse on the part of the patriarch supplied the formal basis of the subsequent transaction; but the *El-Olam* of chap. 21²², the term *Elohim* being employed by the historian to indicate the true origin of the after-mentioned trial, which pro-

ceeded neither from Satanic instigation nor from subjective impulse, but from God.—WHITELAW.

'God did prove Abraham.'—Much difficulty has been most needlessly found in those words. St. James tells us that 'God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man,' language which it has been thought difficult to reconcile with this history in Genesis. So some have endeavoured to explain away the words of this passage, as though Abraham had felt a strong temptation arising in his own heart, a temptation from Satan, or from self, a horrible thought raised perhaps by witnessing the human sacrifices of the Phœnicians, and had then referred the instigation to God, thinking he was tempted from above, whereas the real temptation was from beneath. The difficulty, however, has arisen from not observing the natural force of the word here rendered 'did tempt,' and the ordinary use of that word in the language of the Old Testament, especially of the Pentateuch. According to the highest authorities, the primary sense of the verb corresponds with that of a similar word in Arabic, *viz.* 'to smell,' and thence 'to test by smelling.' Hence it came to signify close, accurate, delicate testing or trying. It is translated by 'prove,' 'assay,' 'adventure,' 'try,' and that very much more frequently than it is by 'tempt.' For instance, David would not take the sword and armour of Saul, because he had not 'proved them.' Again, he prayed in the words, 'Examine me, O Lord, and *prove* me' (Ps 26²); and in very numerous and familiar passages in the Pentateuch we read of God 'proving' men, whether they would be obedient or disobedient, the same Hebrew verb being constantly made use of. Accordingly, whilst most of the versions adhere closely to the sense of 'try,' *tentare*, in this passage, the Arabic renders it very correctly, 'God did *prove* Abraham.'—BROWNE.

ABRAHAM had in the midst of his Canaanite surroundings the practice of sacrificing children before his eyes. He saw how the heathen surrendered their dearest to appease the deity and render him propitious. Hence the question might easily arise within: Wouldst thou be able to do the like to please thy God? Justice is done to the words