

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

'God tested him' when we thus psychologically account for the testing becoming a temptation. The temptation had its origin in him, and it became a test when God received it into His plan, and gave it a pre-descried goal. God desired thus to try him that he might stand the test.—DELITZSCH.

'The land of Moriah.'—The Moriah (with the article) is the name of the temple hill in Jerusalem, from the time of Solomon the most important place of worship in the country. In spite of the objections raised, this is the place we must suppose to be intended here, for no other place of the name is found, and Abraham's greatest deed of faith was best localized in a sacred spot of importance.—DILLMANN.

'Offer him there for a burnt offering.'—The command is justified by the result. God meant to make it the means of educating Abraham, not only to a deeper faith, but to a truer view of sacrifice. Human sacrifice was common among the tribes with which Abraham was familiar, and no doubt he too believed that as one's best must be given to God, it might be needful even to sacrifice a son. The problem was to disentangle in Abraham's mind what was true from what was mistaken; to maintain in his mind the right impression that all should be given up to God, and at the same time to explode the idea that the best way to give up a life to God was to put an end to it. He is by the whole transaction made to see that it is right to sacrifice his son, but wrong to slay him; that the human sacrifice which is pleasing to God is the trusting spirit of perfected obedience, not the actual blood or deprivation of life.—DODS.

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

I.

The Father of the Faithful.

There are two aspects in which we view Abraham's life.

1. He is a great religious reformer. God called him to leave idolatry and serve the only living and true God. He was selected to begin a new and separate worship, which should stand upon God's unity and God's righteousness. He had faith in God and was worthy of the selection.

2. He is the Founder of a Family. Abraham left Ur to seek a home. His passion was to found a family. He did not find the home he sought. He wandered up and down the country,—Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, Gerar, Beersheba, Egypt, the Philistines,—and at last he had to *buy* as much ground as was necessary to lay Sarah in. But surely he will found a family. See his passionate desire for a son; and it is shared by Sarah. Ishmael is born. Then comes the promise of a son who shall be the beginning of the

great family. Abraham listens and is not unbelieving, but—'Oh! that Ishmael might live before thee!' Isaac is born. How apt an illustration is Sir Walter Scott. This was his passion also—not fame but a family. Then Abbotsford is built; then comes the failure of Constable, the gigantic debt, the heroic struggle, death. It takes fifteen years of the copyright profits still to pay the debts. The family dies out; Abbotsford passes into other hands.

But it is God's will that Abraham should found a family. Not merely to perpetuate a name; but to preserve a race, to hand down pure religion. Abraham is to be the father of the *faithful*. Hence comes discipline. No home, no son. And when Ishmael comes, there is rejection. When Isaac comes, there is sacrifice.

On that sacrifice the family was founded. Abraham received Isaac back from God the first-born from the dead. In him and in his seed we see the crucifiers of the flesh with its affections and its lusts.

II.

The Trial of Abraham.

By the Rev. F. W. Robertson, M.A.

In every life there comes one great crisis. Abraham had had many trials, but this was the chief. Trial here is indispensable for the purifying of the soul, and Abraham was by no means a perfect man; he must be perfected by trial.

1. There are difficulties in this trial. God seems to require what is wrong—to sanction human sacrifice. But take the story as a whole, and the sacrifice is forbidden. He really required the surrender of the father's will, not the son's life. God did not even require what *seemed* wrong to Abraham, for he was familiar with human sacrifices, and his conscience would not be outraged by the command as ours should be. Some men think conscience may be sacrificed as a duty, arguing that if it is noble to sacrifice life, it is more so to sacrifice your soul. Had Abraham outraged his conscience, it would not have been faith but sin.

2. The trial was made under aggravated circumstances. The command is couched in words of accumulated keenness. Abraham himself

must offer the sacrifice. There is no loophole of escape.

3. The spirit in which the trial was met. (1) Without ostentation. Abraham told no one what he meant to do, and took no witnesses. Love of display mars our sacrifices. The world knows too much of our feelings, and deeds, and sacrifices, therefore the Redeemer demanded quietness, calmness, and secrecy. (2) Abraham was in earnest. He meant to take his son's life, and really believed he would return childless.

Consider three things in conclusion.

1. The Christian sacrifice is the surrender of will. God demands entire surrender of ourselves to His will. This explains the principle of the Atonement. The sacrifice of Christ was acceptable to God, not because He delights in the shedding of blood, but because He demands the the surrender of will, the blending of the human with the divine.

2. For a true sacrifice there must be real love. 'Thy son whom thou lovest.' He who prefers his friend or child to the call of duty will soon show that he prefers himself to both.

3. We must not *seek* for sacrifices. Plenty will occur by God's appointment, and better than if devised by you. Every hour and moment our will may yield as Abraham's did, quietly, manfully, unseen by all but God. These are the sacrifices which God approves.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

GOD *tried* Abraham. He proved him whether he was worthy of being the hope of mankind. Man learns the disposition of his heart best by its manifestations; for though the will may be virtuous, it often lacks the energy to mature into deed. This effort is the merit of man, and constitutes a chief part of his earthly task. God therefore sends trials to those He loves: He tried the Israelites immediately after they left Egypt at the waters of Marah, that they might convince themselves whether they were worthy of the miraculous redemption; He tried them by the edict concerning the daily gathering of the manna; by the proclamation of the Decalogue, and by not extirpating all the heathen in Canaan, that they might show the strength of their belief by keeping aloof from contamination; He sent even sometimes false prophets, performing miracles but preaching false gods and idolatrous doctrines, to try their fortitude in adhering to the Law. But all such trials are sent only when weakness and sin preceded; although they may end in great reward, they imply the possibility of still greater sin; and, therefore, man justly prays 'not to be led into temptation.' We must understand the great trial of

Abraham from the same point of view; he had, from fear of his own life, twice risked the honour of his wife; and he might naturally have felt for his son an excessive love. By the triumph which he gained in this trial he was purified from his weakness, and he atoned for it. Hence, also, the enormity of the crime is obvious if man tries God, as the Israelites did more than once, when they desired to know 'whether God was among them or not,' a sin always counted among the most heinous forms of blasphemy.—M. M. KALISCH.

IT is recorded of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and the King of Prussia, that they were one day discussing the relative absolute unquestioning obedience of their soldiers. Each claimed the palm, of course, for his own soldiers. They agreed to test the matter at once. They were sitting in a room on the second storey in a house, and they determined each to call up a soldier, and to order him to leap out of the window. The Prussian monarch first called his man. 'Leap out of that window,' he said to him. 'Your majesty, it would kill me,' was the reply; and he was sent down. Then an Austrian soldier was called, and the emperor ordered him to leap out of the window. 'I will,' said the man, 'if your majesty really means it.' He was sent down; and the Czar of Russia called his man, and gave him the same order. Without a word the man crossed himself, and started for the window to do it. Of course he was stopped ere he could leap out, but to all intents and purposes he did make the leap; and whatever there was of agony of feeling connected with that leap, he felt.—A. C. PRICE.

IN Abraham there was really the belief that he would come back childless. Had he expected what took place, it had been no sacrifice. Some persons make sacrifices, expecting to be repaid. They say and teach: Do right, and you will not be the worse; give up, and somehow or other God will make it up to you. True, 'he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.' But if you do it with that feeling your reward is lost; it is not religion but mere traffic, barter; you only sacrifice little in order to gain much. If you make a sacrifice expecting that God will return you your Isaac, that is a sham sacrifice, not a real one. Therefore, if you make sacrifices let them be *real*. You will have infinite gain; yes; but it must be done with an earnest heart, expecting nothing in return. There are times, too, when what you give to God will never be repaid in kind. Isaac is not always restored; but it will be repaid by love, truth, and kindness.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

A MISSIONARY in China, describing in the *Sunday at Home* the sacrifices which are offered to Confucius at the autumnal equinoxes, says: 'We looked at the victims, and they were diseased, scraggy brutes: worthless offerings. Oh the mockery and the utter insincerity and indifference of the Chinese mind to all sense of honour! My friend explained the matter to me; he said they were allowed so much by the treasury for this purpose, and the cheaper they could get the animals the more they could pocket.'—J. F. B. TINKING.

LORD, what have I that I may offer Thee?
Look, Lord, I pray Thee and see.—

What is it thou hast got?
Nay, child, what is it thou hast not?
Thou hast all gifts that I have given to thee:
Offer them all to Me,
The great ones and the small,
I will accept them one and all.—

I have a will, good Lord, but it is marred;
A heart both crushed and hard:
Not such as these the gift
Clean-handed, lovely saints uplift.—

Nay, child, but wilt thou judge for Me?
I crave not thine but thee.—

Ah, Lord, who lovest me!
Such as I have now give I Thee.—C. ROSSETTI.

Sermons for Reference.

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Calthrop (G.), Eden to Patmos, 11.
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The Hittite Inscriptions.

IN REPLY TO PROFESSOR HOMMEL.

BY PROFESSOR P. JENSEN, PH.D., MARBURG.

IN the May number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES Professor Hommel criticises my last book, *Hittiter und Armenier*, without—strangely enough—saying a single word about the new arguments contained in my article in the April number of this same magazine. For his criticism I tender him my sincerest thanks, for, in seeking to represent my conclusions as weak or unfounded, he shows how little assailable they are in the main.

While in several passages in the inscriptions he substitutes other place names for the ones adopted by me, he admits—without making this prominent, to be sure—that I have rightly recognized the position of these names in the inscriptions, namely, at the beginning of the latter before a cone or an equivalent group of signs, and in this way he concedes a *chief* basis for my further decipherments. But in thus implicitly admitting that the group just named, like the simple cone, stands for 'king,' and, further, that a certain sign occurring between this group and a place name marks, at least in one instance, a genitive ending, he concedes additional data which were and are of importance for the work of decipherment. Hommel admits, moreover, that in certain inscriptions, e.g. that of Bor,

a transcription and translation of which I attempted in the April number, I have rightly taken a group x-y-z-x as indicating a title. He concedes also that I am right in taking a certain sign to mean 'queen,' and in referring it to a goddess (the great goddess). But this carries with it a further admission. For, according to Hommel, I appear to be right also in reading 'king of *Karkemish*' before this sign in two passages of an inscription of Jerabis. Now, as Hommel also agrees, the expression in question ('king of *Karkemish*') stands in the first of these passages in the nominative, and the sign for the queen-goddess, as he also admits, is followed by an expression in the nominative. But, seeing that the inscription emanates from a king, not from a queen, the 'queen' of the inscription cannot under any circumstances form an apposition to 'king of *Karkemish*,' but must be dependent upon the following nominative expression. The latter in that way will indicate a relation of the king to the 'queen,' as I have maintained, and as has proved of importance for the interpretation of the inscriptions of Bulgarmaden, Bor, and Andaval, and now of the greatest importance for the