

ing largely upon the sanction of Jahweh obtained by gift or proper rituals naturally forced upon the verb the idea of God's pardon. Jer 18<sup>23</sup>, we have the piel of estimation, or declaration; <sup>1</sup> *'al kappēr* *'al-wōnam*, 'Do not thou declare purged upon their sins.'<sup>2</sup> A more developed usage in Ps 78<sup>38</sup>, where God *kappēr 'āwōn*, 'will pardon iniquity.' The piel of inner condition of the subject<sup>3</sup> in

<sup>1</sup> See Brockelmann, *Vergleichende Grammatik*, p. 509, end of § β; Gesenius-Kautzsch, § 52 g.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the LXX (μη ἀποβόησ) have comprehended the force of this piel.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Brockelmann, *ibid.*

*kappēr l'annū kā*, 'be merciful to thy people,' i.e. be in a state of pronouncing thy people purged.<sup>4</sup> Again, *kapp'rī lāk kōl-'asithā*, 'when I am reconciled unto thee for all thou hast done.'<sup>5</sup>

It is not my intention to make an exhaustive study of this root in Hebrew. The student of the Old Testament has here before him the entire Assyriological material now at our disposal. We seem to be dealing in Hebrew with a Babylonian cult term, based originally upon magic, but developed by Hebrew theology in manifold and complicated senses.

<sup>4</sup> Dt 21<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Ezk 16<sup>63</sup>.

## The Hebrew Word for 'Atone.'

### II.

BY THE REV. C. F. BURNEY, D.LITT., FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

DR. KÖNIG, in his article in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES for February, maintains for the Hebrew verb *kipper*, 'atone,' the ground-meaning 'cover' as against that of 'wiping clean,' and concludes his article by stating that 'no new light has been shed on the matter by the Babylono-Assyrian literature.' In a note which I wrote for the *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 1910, I have maintained the contrary; and the fact that Dr. König does not seem to have seen this note is my excuse for again bringing forward the evidence there cited.

That the verb in Babylonian has the meaning 'wipe away' is clear from a passage in the story of Nerigal and Ereškigal, col. ii. line 20, *išbasima unaššaḫši dimtaša ikappar*, 'he caught her, and kisses her, and wipes away her tears.' But more important for the ground-meaning is a Babylonian syllabary (contained in *British Museum Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets*, vol. xii. plate 6) which gives the various equivalents of the sun-ideogram. Most of these have to do with the idea of *brightness*: e.g. *ellu<sup>m</sup>*, 'bright'; *namru<sup>m</sup>*, 'bright'; *namāru<sup>m</sup> ša ūmu*, 'the brightness of day';<sup>1</sup> *nūru<sup>m</sup> ša išāti*, 'the light of fire';<sup>1</sup> *šit (ilu) Šamsi*, 'sunrise,' etc. There also occur *kapāru<sup>m</sup> ša kēmi*, apparently 'the whiteness of

wheat-flour,'<sup>2</sup> and *kuppuru<sup>m</sup> ša išaru<sup>m</sup>*, 'the cleansing (brightening) of the righteous(?)'.<sup>2</sup> If such a sense is rightly to be inferred from the parallels, the root-notion of the verb *kapāru* seems to have been that of *whiteness* or *brightness*, and the causative *kuppuru* will therefore mean *to make white* or *bright*. This inference is supported by the fact noticed by Dr. Schrank (*Babylonische Sühnriten*, pp. 81, 87), that in Babylonian ritual texts *kuppuru* is used with a significance similar to *ubbubu*, 'make white (candidus),' *ullulu*, 'make bright,' and tells, as it seems, against Dr. Schrank's own conclusion that the root-meaning of the word is 'smear over,' all cases cited by him being susceptible of explanation in the sense 'purify' ('make bright'). The idea of *whitening* or *brightening* naturally comes into connexion with that of *wiping (polishing)*; and just as the sense of 'wiping' is found in the Syriac usage of the root, both in Pe'al and Pa'el, so the idea of brightness is doubtless inherent in the Hebrew *kēphōr*, 'hoarfrost,' which may appropriately have been thought of as 'the white or bright thing.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Here perhaps 'whiteness, [said] of wheat-flour,' 'brightening, [said] of the righteous.'

<sup>3</sup> This root-meaning (previously unidentified) for *kēphōr* was suggested to me by Dr. C. J. Ball. That it is more appropriate than that suggested by Dr. König ('covering' sc. of the ground) scarcely needs to be argued.

<sup>1</sup> Or perhaps we should render in these two cases, 'brightness, [said] of day,' 'light, [said] of fire.'

Thus, when Dr. Robertson Smith (*O.T.J.C.*<sup>2</sup>, 381), in advocating the sense 'to wipe off' or 'wipe clean' for the Hebrew *kipper*, compared the Arabic expression 'whiten the face,' he seems most acutely to have divined the underlying significance of the Hebrew root as we now have it confirmed from Babylonian sources. When any Mohammedan writer speaks of the 'whitening of the face,' he probably has in view (as I am informed by Dr. Margoliouth) the passage in the Qur'ân, *Sura* 3<sup>102f.</sup>: 'A day whereon faces shall be white (*tabyađđu*) and faces shall be black; and as for those whose faces shall be black, [we shall say to them,] "Did ye disbelieve after your believing? Then taste punishment for your unbelief." As for those whose faces are white, they are in the mercy of God.' Here, of course, the idea conveyed by 'white' is 'free from guilt,' and the causative 'whiten' is to render thus free.

We may now proceed to examine the usage of *kipper* in Hebrew as cited by Dr. König, in order to ascertain whether the meaning 'cover' is, as he claims, 'manifestly the only legitimate one.' The first point that strikes us is the confusion of ideas which seems to be inherent in this interpretation. There are three distinct objects which may be thought of as to be 'covered': (1) the face of the injured party, so that he may not see the cause of offence (so, according to Dr. König, Gn 32<sup>21</sup>, 'ākappērā pānāv); (2) the sin, so that it may not be seen by the offended party (in the phrase *kipper 'al* followed by the word for 'sin,' Jer 18<sup>23</sup> etc.); (3) the sinner, or, similarly, the polluted object (also *kipper 'al*, Ex. 30<sup>15</sup> 29<sup>36</sup> etc., or *kipper bē'ad*, Lv 9<sup>7</sup> etc.), in order, we must assume, that they may not be seen by the offended party. Now the idea of *covering the sin* in order that it may not be regarded by the offended party is reasonable in itself, and also actually occurs in a few cases in which the verb *kāsā*, *kissā*, 'cover,' is so employed (Ps 32<sup>1</sup> 85<sup>3</sup>, Neh 3<sup>87</sup>). But since the whole purpose of the act (ritual or otherwise) denoted by *kipper* 'is that the offending person or object may in the future be favourably regarded by the offended person,' it is difficult to conceive how the idea of *covering* is appropriate either to the offender or to the face of the offended one. Cover the one or the other, and the sinner, as well as his sin, disappears from the sight and memory of the offended one; remove the 'covering,' and favourable regard is still impossible because the

sin, as well as the sinner, once more stands revealed. This may seem like pushing technical language to the length of absurdity; but it is really a necessary deduction if we are to find in the phrase *kipper 'al* the sense 'cover over,' as postulated by Dr. König.

Proceeding to deal with cases in which *kipper* is construed with the accusative of the sin, Dr. König remarks that 'not only does the rendering "cover the sin (that it may not displease the eye of a holy God)" yield a perfectly good sense, but the meaning "wipe" must be transformed into that of "wipe away" if it is to suit the object "sin." We may notice once more that 'wipe away' is the very sense which the word possesses in the Babylonian passage noticed above, *dimitāša ikappār*, 'he wipes away her tears.'

The argument which follows may equally well be inverted against Dr. König. I place Dr. König's words in the left-hand column, and the inversion in the right:

But Hebrew has at its disposal another word, namely, *māhā*, to express the idea of 'wipe away' or 'destroy.'

Our conclusion that *kipper* means 'cover' = 'atone' (or render ineffective) is strengthened by analogies in the linguistic usage of the Hebrews. We have already noted the employment of *kissā*, 'cover,' etc.

But Hebrew has at its disposal another word, namely, *kissā*, to express the idea of 'cover.'

Our conclusion that *kipper* means 'wipe away' = 'atone' (or render ineffective) is strengthened by analogies in the linguistic usage of the Hebrews. We have already noted the employment of *māhā*, 'wipe away,' etc.

Thus it appears that, so far from the meaning 'cover' being clear for the cases cited by Dr. König, very grave doubts must be cast upon its suitability even in the instances in which, according to him, this meaning is 'manifestly the only legitimate one.'

How, then, are these instances to be explained upon the interpretation of *kipper* which I am advocating?

In Gn 32<sup>21</sup> the sense 'brighten' is highly appropriate. I would render 'ākappērā pānāv *bam-minhā*, 'I will brighten his face with the gift.' This explanation surely accords better with the words following—'and afterwards I shall see his face; perchance he will accept my face'—than the explanation ('cover his face') offered by Dr. König. It may be paralleled by the frequent Hebrew expression *hillā pēnē*, 'appease the face' of

some one, whether we are to explain *hillā* in the sense 'make sweet' on comparison of Arab. *hala*, *haliya*, Aram. *hāli*, as is generally done (cf. *B.D.B. Lex.*, s.v.), or (as Dr. Margoliouth suggests to me) in the sense 'make clear,' comparing Arab. *hala*, as in Qur'ān, *Sura* 12<sup>9</sup>: 'Slay Joseph, or cast him in some land; that your father's face may be clear (*yahlu*) for you, and ye may be, after he is gone, a people who do right.' With Gn 32<sup>21</sup> we may associate Pr 16<sup>14</sup>, 'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death; but a wise man will appease (brighten) it (*yēkappērennā*).' Here the wrath is 'brightened' through removal, i.e. it is wiped away, just as tears are wiped away in the Babylonian phrase already noticed, and, as we shall see, both the sinner is brightened through the removal of his sin, and the sin is brightened through being wiped away, in the ritual usage of *kipper*. For the idea of *brightening* or *whitening* the *sin*, we may compare Is 1<sup>18</sup>, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white like snow.' Here, too, we may notice the somewhat difficult passage Is 47<sup>11</sup>: 'mischief' is brightened through its removal (through being averted); cf. the phrase 'the dawn of brighter times.'

Coming now to the cases in which *kipper* is followed by 'al or *bē'ad*, I feel confident that the true explanation is that the verb has gained a kind of secondary sense in ceremonial parlance, 'perform the act of purgation (brightening),' and that the force of the particles 'al or *bē'ad* is *on account of* or *on behalf of*, the application thus being appropriate either to the sin or to the sinner. That this is the sense of verb and particles in these cases is confirmed by the similar use of the preposition *lē* before the person or object on whose behalf the action denoted by *kipper* is performed, since the sense of *lē* can only be 'for,' i.e. 'on

behalf of': cf. Dt 21<sup>8</sup> 'Atone for (*lē*) thy people'; Ezk 16<sup>63</sup>, Is 22<sup>14</sup>, Nu 35<sup>33</sup>. And further, though I know that it is never wise to speak dogmatically, yet I am tempted to maintain that the sense *on behalf of* is the *only* possible sense of 'al when thus used in cases in which the preposition *min*, 'from,' precedes the sin or pollution which is to be removed. So Lv 4<sup>26</sup>, 'And the priest shall perform the act of purgation *on his behalf, from* his sin'; Lv 5<sup>6, 10</sup> 14<sup>19</sup> 16<sup>16, 34</sup>, Nu 6<sup>11</sup>. It is true that *B.D.B. Lex.*, 3c, gives to *min* the sense 'because of' (so in Lv 4<sup>26</sup>, 'because of his sin'): but that such a rendering is highly unnatural will, I think, be generally admitted; and that it is *wrong* is proved by Lv 16<sup>30</sup>, where *min* is expanded into *lētahhēr min* 'to cleanse from': 'One shall perform the act of purgation on your behalf (*yēkappēr 'ālēkhem*) to cleanse you from (*lētahhēr 'ethkhem min*) all your sins.'<sup>1</sup>

I maintain, then, that the sense 'perform the act of purgation,' with the ground-meaning 'make bright,' is suitable to all passages where *kipper* is used in a ceremonial sense and followed by the prepositions 'al, *bē'ad*, *lē*, as noticed above; that, when followed by the accusative, the sense 'purge' (the altar, etc.) or 'purge away' (the sin) is in all cases appropriate;<sup>2</sup> and, finally, that the sense advocated is similar to *tiḥhar*, 'cleanse,' *ḥiddēsh*, 'sanctify,' and *hittē*, 'free from sin,' which, as Dr. Driver notices in Hastings' *D.B.*, 'Propitiation,' § 12c, occur with some frequency as parallels.

<sup>1</sup> The sense of *min* here advocated is adopted by Dr. Driver in Hastings' *D.B.*, 'Propitiation,' § 12a.

<sup>2</sup> When the subject of *kipper* is God (as in Dt 21<sup>8</sup> 32<sup>43</sup>, Ezk 16<sup>63</sup>, Ps 65<sup>2</sup> 78<sup>38</sup>), the idea of purgation seems to be present apart from the notion of a ritual act; though it is, of course, possible that the ritual usage may be present in the writer's mind, and his thought may be that God can perform directly the action which the priest, as God's intermediary, performs through a ritual act.

## Contributions and Comments.

### The Earlier Emphasis of St. Paul.

A STUDY of the earlier utterances of St. Paul impresses one with the retrospective drift of his thought. He sees his gospel in its relation to the already written and already enacted history of religion.

We have two single-sentence references to the content of his earliest preaching. He preached Jesus as Christ (Ac 9<sup>22</sup>) and as Son of God (9<sup>20</sup>). Both are titles with religious history packed into them. Of the history behind the word 'Christ' it is unnecessary to speak; the other title is no less charged with history,—with the idea of a