

*homoioteleuton* (see the writer's 'Samuel' in *Century Bible*, p. 27, and index *sub voce*). I have collected dozens of such omissions in Codex Edinburgensis, where they are specially frequent in the Book of Ezra-Nehemiah.<sup>1</sup> The most remarkable instance of homoioteleuton is one which must almost certainly have been present in the original archetype of the Massoretic text above referred to, namely, Jos 21<sup>66f.</sup> It will probably be a surprise to most of my readers to learn that these two verses form no part of the sacred text according to the official Massorah, although they are required by the context, and are found not only in the LXX and Vulgate, but in a number of Hebrew MSS (see the full discussion in Ginsburg, *op. cit.*, 178 ff., and index under the passage). They are absent from Codex Edinburgensis. It is otherwise, however, with another verse, Neh 7<sup>68</sup>, which is similarly treated by the Massorah. The consonants thereof have been copied by our scribe from his exemplar, but the Massorete has declined to supply the necessary vowels, and has besides added the *circellus Massoreticus* (°) at the beginning and end to show that the verse in question formed no part of the true text according to his school.

<sup>1</sup> It is scarcely necessary to remark that these books, as well as 1-2 S., 1-2 K., and 1-2 Ch. are written as one in our Codex.

In the case of letters, especially י and ו, and words present in the MS copied by the original scribe, but absent from the text preferred by the Massoretic reviser, the latter drew his pen lightly through the offending letter or word (see a ו, the ה of נבלה). But in the case of the tetragrammaton (יהוה), where the text followed by the reviser of Codex Edinburgensis read otherwise, it would have been sacrilege so to treat the divine name, which now appears as יהוה or יהוה.<sup>2</sup> In two places I find a peculiarly modern method of marking a mistake in the position of two letters or words. In Nu 12<sup>4</sup> the scribe had inadvertently transposed the second and third letters of פאחם. The reviser makes the correction by placing the letters denoting our י and ז over the transposed letters thus: פאחם. Similarly the transposition of the divine names in Am 6<sup>8</sup> is indicated thus: נשבע יהוה אדני.

<sup>2</sup> I regret that considerations of space preclude the discussion of the numerous passages, especially in Is 6-11 and in Am 5-7, where the scribe of Codex Edinburgensis has יהוה instead of the substituted אדני of the *textus receptus*—see Ginsburg's new editions of these books for the divergent readings of the MSS.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF THE PSALMS.

#### PSALM LXVIII. 18.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led thy captivity captive;  
Thou hast received gifts among men,  
Yea, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell with them.

1. THE period of history to which the sixty-eighth Psalm belongs is uncertain; some parts wear the appearance of being ancient, others present features which point with some cogency to a later date. The Old Testament affords many examples of a writer incorporating, and adapting to his own use, phrases, and even entire verses, originally written on an altogether different occasion and by another hand; and it is possible that this is the solution of the phenomena which the Psalm presents.

Certainly, two verses are quoted, nearly word for word, from the Song of Deborah, in the fifth chapter of the Book of Judges; and this being so, it is quite conceivable that other verses may be quoted from some earlier sources extant at the time when the Psalm was composed, but now lost.

The Psalm will in any case not be earlier than the closing years of the Babylonian captivity; and it is a reasonable conjecture that it was written in view of the approaching return of the exiled nation to Palestine, and of God's re-entry into His ancient sanctuary on Zion. The Psalmist views the coming deliverance as a great manifestation of Jehovah's power, and a triumph over Israel's foes; and so he opens in tones of hope and exultation,

almost quoting the words of the old war-cry, which was used when the Ark was moved :

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered,  
And let them that hate him flee before him.

Throughout, the Psalm is pitched in the same triumphant key : it is the most buoyant, the most animated, the most powerful which is to be found in the Psalter.

The Psalmist describes, under figures borrowed from the triumph of an earthly conqueror, God's entry into the abode He has chosen for Himself : at the head of armies of angels He enters the sanctuary on Zion :

The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even  
thousands redoubled :

The Lord is come from Sinai into the sanctuary.  
Thou hast ascended on high,  
Thou hast led (thy) captivity captive ;  
Thou hast received gifts among men,  
Yea, among the refractory also, that Jah God  
might dwell (there).

The Psalmist pictures to himself a triumphal procession, winding up the newly-conquered hill of Zion, the figure being that of a victor, taking possession of the enemy's citadel, and with his train of captives and spoil following him in the triumph.

Ps 68 is, as Ewald says, 'the greatest, most splendid, and artistic of the temple songs of restored Jerusalem.' It celebrates Jehovah's entry into Zion. This culminating verse records, as the crowning event of Israel's history, the capture of Zion from the rebel Jebusites and the Lord's ascension in the person of His chosen to take His seat upon this holy hill. The previous verses, in which fragments of earlier songs are embedded, describe the course of the divine leader of Israel through former ages. In the beat and rhythm of the Hebrew lines one hears the footfall of the Conqueror's march, as 'He arises and his enemies are scattered' and 'kings of armies flee apace,' while nature trembles at His step and bends her wild powers to serve His congregation. The sojourn in the wilderness, the scenes of Sinai, the occupancy of Canaan, the wars of the Judges, were so many stages in the progress of Jehovah, which had Zion always as its goal. To Zion, the new and more glorious sanctuary, Sinai must now give place. Bashan and all mountains towering in their pride in vain 'look askance at the hill which God has desired for his abode,' where 'Jehovah will dwell for ever.' So the day of the Lord's desire has come. From the Kedron valley David leads Jehovah's triumph up the steep slopes of Mount Zion. A train of captives, defiles before the Lord's anointed, who sits down on the throne that God gives him and receives in His name the submission of the heathen. The vanquished chiefs cast their spoil at his feet ; it is laid up in treasure to build

the future temple ; while upon this happy day of peace 'the rebellious also' share in Jehovah's grace and become His subjects,<sup>1</sup>

The expression 'led captivity captive' is sometimes taken to mean, 'led captive and subdued the power which enthralled others,' the word 'captivity' being almost personified. But, in fact, *captivity* is simply an abstract term denoting *captives*, as is at once shown by the passage from the Song of Deborah, from which the expression here used is evidently borrowed—'Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.' Thus the phrase just means, 'Hast led in triumph the captives which thou hast taken.'

In the words following, 'Hast received gifts among men,' the Psalmist alludes to the tribute offered either by the vanquished foes themselves, or by others who came forth spontaneously to own the victor, and secure his favour. And, he adds, even those who have held out most obstinately, even the stubborn or refractory ones, are now ready to offer homage, that 'Jah God may dwell (there),' in the home which He has chosen, with none to dispute His possession of it.<sup>2</sup>

A woman in Dr. Gordon's church, living in one room of a tenement house, gave a hundred and sixty pounds to the foreign missionary collection. When Dr. Gordon called and asked how she could give so much, she said she could live upon forty pounds a year for herself, and added : 'I do not know how I could go to meet my Lord, if I lived upon a hundred and sixty, and only gave Him the forty pounds.' How many of us spend more upon ourselves than we give to our Lord ?<sup>3</sup>

Björnson the poet was once asked on what occasion he derived the greatest pleasure from his fame as a poet. His answer was : 'It was when a delegation from the Right came to my house in Christiania and smashed all the windows. Because when they had thus attacked me, and were starting for home again, they felt that they ought to sing something, and so they began to sing, "Yes, we love this land of ours." They could do nothing else ! They had to sing the song of the man whom they had attacked.'

2. This verse is quoted by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, in a somewhat different form. Speaking of the various gifts conferred upon members of the Church, he writes (4<sup>7,8</sup>) : 'But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' St. Paul is not here following the genuine text of the Psalm, but is in all probability guided by an old Jewish interpretation with which he was familiar, and which, instead of 'received gifts among men,' paraphrased 'gave gifts to men.'

It must not be supposed that St. Paul quotes the text in *proof* of the Ascension of our Lord—

<sup>1</sup> G. G. Findlay, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 229.

<sup>2</sup> S. R. Driver.

<sup>3</sup> Sherwood Eddy, in *Make Jesus King*, pp. 153, 154.

which it would clearly be inadequate and unsuitable to establish: but, speaking of the gifts bestowed by Christ upon the Church, he recalls a passage which, in the form in which he was familiar with it, described a bestowal of gifts on man; and he cites it as an illustration of what he is saying. St. Paul quotes the Old Testament in the manner common to his age, and not always with that exact regard to the original sense of the passage quoted which we should expect him to show: he follows, where it suits his purpose, an interpretation current among the Jews, without stopping to inquire whether it was consonant with the sense strictly attaching to the passage in its original connexion. That he does not appeal to the text as a proof passage, appears further from the fact that there is no indication that the Psalm was treated as a Messianic one, or supposed to have a Messianic sense, by the Jews; and yet, unless this were antecedently clear, no argument could be based upon it. But St. Paul, in fact, merely quotes the passage, because he sees in it, as understood by the Jews of his own day, an anticipation of a particular truth of Christianity.

The verse in the Psalm is descriptive of a *past* fact; it describes the historical ascent of God into the 'tent' prepared for Him by David upon Zion; it is no prediction of the Ascension of our Lord; it has no reference to the future. At the same time, it is true that, as a signal and conspicuous event in the history of the Old Covenant, it may be viewed as a foreshadowing, or, as it is sometimes termed, a *type*, of the great Ascent and Triumph of Christ, the King, to heaven. And this, no doubt, is the light in which St. Paul really regarded it. The ascent of the Ark, in which God was present, into Zion, *prefigured* the Ascent of Christ into heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Taking the text, then, as a figure, if not a direct prophecy, of the Ascension of Christ, and keeping in mind St. Paul's use of its words, we have:

#### I. The Ascension as a Triumph.

#### II. The Ascension as the occasion of Gifts given to men.

#### The Triumph of the Ascension.

1. It was a great triumph. The author of the 68th Psalm is describing the triumph of God over His

enemies, when the Almighty scattered kings before Israel, the type of His Church. In graphic imagery we are told that the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. He ascended on high, and led His captivity captive. That is to say, like a great earthly conqueror, He was followed by His train of captives. In Deborah's song the same expression is used: 'Awake, awake, Deborah! awake, utter a song. Arise, Barak! and lead thy captivity captive'; lead the conquered hosts to grace thy triumph. In St. Paul's day such imagery would be very real. He was writing his Epistle during his two years of imprisonment at Rome. A triumph there had a very definite meaning. Rare as such things became in the days of the Empire, the recollection of them would be still fresh in the minds of men, and the thoughts of the imprisoned Apostle would naturally turn from that which was still the goal of every Roman general's ambition to one, a conqueror too, who had won a victory which no Cæsar ever could contemplate, and led in captivity hosts to whom the subject princes of the world-empire were as nothing. St. Paul, in the capital of that great empire, could not but look forward and backward; backward to the first founding of a little company of twelve; forward to the day when the Roman Empire should be no more, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ was Lord to the glory of God the Father. Already the triumph procession had begun, and the Conqueror had gone up on high to that place from which He had gone to victory.

2. There were many things that would give a special appropriateness to the comparison between Christ's triumph and that of a Roman general.

(1) First of all, it was decreed by Roman law that no general should receive a triumph—that is, should be allowed to enter the capital preceded by his conquered enemies, and followed by his victorious legions—*unless he had personally taken part in the campaign*. There was no such thing then as winning a victory in the seclusion of the general's tent. The general fought in the forefront of his legions, and led them to victory. And had not that great Conqueror to whom the Apostle's thoughts turned fought in the forefront of the battle—nay, fought and won alone? Had He not been the first to burst the gates of death, to die and rise again that He might destroy him who had the power of death?

(2) Then, again, no Roman general might

triumph unless his victory was final and brought with it peace. Here, again, the thought of Him whom prophecy had foreshadowed as the Prince of Peace would rise up in the Apostle's mind. He would think in the midst of trial and suffering of the inalienable gift which Christ had given! 'In me ye shall have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.'

(3) Lastly, the Roman general might have no triumph unless at least five thousand of the enemy had been slain in a single engagement. Would not the Apostle think in a moment of that last fight on Calvary, when the hosts of darkness gathered round the Lord, and the sun seemed to have given up the world to them; and yet they gathered together all their forces, only that the Victor's triumph might be more complete. Never shall the vanquished recover from that deathblow; never shall his legions triumph over them over whose heads floats the banner of the Cross, whose brows are marked with the Victor's sign. If the rejoicing people in their gladness at Goliath's death might shout, 'Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands,' what shall we, the redeemed of the Lord Jesus, say as we remember death robbed of its sting, the grave stripped of its victory, the Prince of the Power of the air driven from His kingdom, and His legions lying dead upon the battlefield of Calvary? Surely the Apostle's parallel was just. None ever gained a victory more final and complete than that which Christ had won. His Resurrection was the acknowledgment of His victory. His Ascension was the triumph of the Victor.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### The Gifts following the Ascension.

1. The gifts received among men, according to the Psalm, cannot, without great artificiality, be taken as prefiguring anything except the *tokens of homage* rendered by men to their ascended Lord. Here St. Paul substitutes a different sense altogether; for material gifts received *from* men, he substitutes spiritual gifts given *to* men. In so doing, however, as has been said, it is probable that he followed a current interpretation, or paraphrase, of the verse, which made it suitable for quotation in a context in which he is speaking of

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the manifold gifts conferred by Christ upon His Church.

The unnamed poet's triumph-song has become the inheritance of the Christian Church; and the hopes and aspirations of many hearts, and many times, have found expression in his jubilant, soul-inspiring words. The desire which his opening verses embody is one which we can at all times echo, without the smallest reserve; the majestic ascription of thanksgiving and praise with which he closes can never lose its impressiveness, or become inappropriate. The blessings bestowed on Israel, to which the Psalm so abundantly alludes, may be regarded as a figure of the blessings bestowed upon the Church; and hence its suitability as one of the special Psalms for Whitsunday.<sup>2</sup>

2. When He ascended up on high, 'He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' It was not only a day of triumph in which every Christian soldier had a part, and shone with the reflected glory of his General, it was a day of blessing. The Evangelists simply tell us that the Lord 'lifted up his hands, and blessed them'; but St. Paul sees what that blessing meant. Not for those disciples only was that blessing meant, but for *men*, for the human nature which He had redeemed and glorified. 'He gave gifts unto men.' The literal allusion, doubtless, is to the practice of scattering money among the people, in largess, as it used to be called, and distributing sums of money from the spoils to the most prominent among the victorious legions. But the gifts which the Lord Jesus secured for man by His Ascension were the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit, which He had promised to send. 'If I depart, I will send him unto you.' The disciples who beheld the Lord's departure from earth could see at first only one of the many gifts which that promise contained. The Spirit, who was to come to them on Whitsunday, was to be 'the Comforter.' They could understand that, because it was that of which they now felt most in need; but when St. Paul was writing, the manifold gifts of Christ by the Holy Spirit had begun to show themselves. He was the Comforter; but that was not all. He was a *Guide* in time of doubt, leading them as Christ had promised. He was the *Enlightener*, unfolding to them the deep things of God, the glorious future which was their right by partner-

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ship in Christ's victory. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.' He was their *Advocate* with God, pleading for them 'with groanings which cannot be uttered.' He was God's *Messenger* to them, arousing, leading, drawing them with cords of love into union with God in Christ. He was *the beginning and ending* of their spiritual life, transmitting to them the life of Christ, strengthening that life by giving more grace, kindling that life of Christ into active operation by realizing to them the Presence of Christ. He was the great *Absolver*, applying to individual souls the pardon won by Christ. He was the great *Strengthenener*, giving to them more and more of Christ Himself as they were able to bear it, till the sin-stained soul should be purified and builded into a temple of God through the Holy Spirit.

3. But the gifts of the Ascension may be thought of in a more general way than this. As the first word of the first sermon that Christ delivered was the word 'Blessed,' so the last act in which He was engaged ere the clouds received Him out of sight was this, 'He lifted up his hands, and blessed them.' And now for evermore He lives to bless, having led captivity captive. What are the gifts of the ascended Christ?

(1) The first great gift of the ascended Christ is the gift we must all receive before we are ready to receive any other gift, the gift of the Divine pardon, pardon for sin.

I was admiring a cluster of fine fruit-trees literally robed in blossoms. The old gardener, standing by, remarked, with a shrewd, complacent air, 'Well, sir, I might say I gave them those'; and then, in answer to my questioning, he went on to tell me how for seasons the trees had borne scarcely anything, and how, at last, not content with pruning them above, he had pruned them below also, digging deep round them, and cutting in twain the long tap-root of each that struck down into coarse, sour soil, and drew from thence evil for the trees—so the old gardener represented it. 'And that, sir,' he said, 'is how I gave them these beautiful blossoms—just, you see, by setting them free from the coarse, sour soil beneath, to which the tap-root bound them.' Whether or not his notion was correct, it led me to consider what giving of gifts to men there may be, and often is, in just setting them free from something—from something unwholesome, or mistaken, or wrong—to which they are in bondage.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> S. A. Tipple, p. 11.

(2) The next is the gift of preservation. So frequently young men come along and say, 'It is no use my attempting to live the Christ-life, I could not keep to it.' And then one wants to say to that young man, 'Dear friend, you have nothing to keep, you have to be kept, kept by the power of God. Salvation is not a lonely thing, it does not come to you by itself; the Saviour and the salvation come together; you cannot have the redemption without the Redeemer.'

At cool of day, with God I walk  
My garden's grateful shade;  
I hear His voice among the trees,  
And I am not afraid.

He is my stay and my defence;—  
How shall I fail or fall?  
My helper is Omnipotence!  
My ruler ruleth all.

The powers below and powers above  
Are subject to His care;—  
I cannot wander from His love  
Who loves me everywhere.

Thus dowered, and guarded thus, with Him  
I walk this peaceful shade;  
I hear His voice among the trees,  
And I am not afraid!<sup>2</sup>

(3) And then there is the gift of power for service. 'Ye shall receive power after that the Spirit has come upon you.' Oh, that the eyes of the Church might be attracted with unspeakable longing toward that prize, the gift of the ascended Christ, the gift of power. Then the prayer 'Thy kingdom come' may be more than an aspiration.

Power, that is the great practical matter for us, once our faces are set towards the light; and in the life in Christ the way of power is marked out. Everywhere, all over the world, in its darkest places, as a man follows the light he sees, the power comes, and more light comes, and power grows anew, divine power flowing in upon him and through him, whether he knows it or not. But in the Christian faith we are given an open vision of the way of power, as well as of the light and truth of men; open-eyed we may yield to Christ being made Man in us,—the Christ who ever comes to enlarge the realm of His incarnation; and we may possess and wield His power as our own, reason giving consent, heart warmed by the vision and the presence of Him who reigns. In this, too, Chris-

<sup>2</sup> Caroline Atherton Mason.

tianity stands at the centre of things, and fulfils and completes them all.<sup>1</sup>

Oh, turn me, mould me, mellow me for use.  
Pervade my being with thy vital force,  
That this else inexpressive life of mine  
May become eloquent and full of power,  
Impregnated with life and strength divine.  
Put the bright torch of heaven into my hand,  
That I may carry it aloft  
And win the eye of weary wanderers here below  
To guide their feet into the paths of peace.  
I cannot raise the dead,  
Nor from this soil pluck precious dust,

<sup>1</sup> William Scott Palmer.

Nor bid the sleeper wake,  
Nor still the storm, nor bend the lightning back,  
Nor muffle up the thunder,  
Nor bid the chains fall from off creation's long  
enfettered limbs.

*But* I can live a life that tells on other lives,  
And makes this world less full of anguish and of  
pain ;  
A life that like the pebble dropped upon the sea  
Sends its wide circles to a hundred shores.  
May such a life be mine !  
Creator of true life, Thyself the life Thou givest,  
Give Thyself, that Thou mayest dwell in me, and  
I in Thee.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Horatius Bonar.

## Pioneers in the Study of Old Testament Poetry.

BY PROFESSOR THE REV. A. R. GORDON, D.LITT., MONTREAL.

### I.

#### Lowth.

It is self-evident to the modern reader that much of the Old Testament is pure poetry. Yet this sense was long in penetrating the mind of the Church. The Reformation had broken down the magical conception of the Bible that prevailed under Romanism. But gradually the older view regained its influence. Intent as Protestant scholasticism was on rearing a solid system of infallible knowledge, its leading representatives came to regard the Bible as a mere quarry for texts, with little appreciation of the literary quality of the books. There were, no doubt, many sensitive souls who still felt the warm breath of pulsing spiritual life in those thrilling utterances of devout men of old, and æsthetic natures, often without the pale of the Church, who were deeply moved by the spell of Bible poetry. But in the orthodox schools the whole was read as hard, dry prose, and the loftiest imaginations of inspired seers were brought down to earth, and trimmed and shaped into square-cut, uniform blocks for the dogmatic structure.

The honour of having given the first impulse to better things belongs to England. By natural inheritance as well as training Robert Lowth (1710-1787) was a typical English scholar. The youngest son of Dr. William Lowth, rector of Buriton, in Hampshire, himself a distinguished

writer on Biblical subjects, he evinced from his early schooldays in Winchester remarkable aptitude in Classics and Hebrew, besides winning somewhat extravagant encomiums from admiring friends for certain poetical effusions in the then current mode. His subsequent course as a student of New College, Oxford, added to his reputation, while his ecclesiastical career was one long triumphal march. His first preferment (in 1744) was to the rectory of Ovington, in his native county; thence he was promoted successively to the Archdeaconship of Winchester, the Canonry of Durham, and the Episcopal Sees of St. David's, Oxford, and London. In 1783 he was chosen to succeed Dr. Cornwallis in the Primate's Chair; but this crowning honour he was single-minded enough to decline, on grounds of age and infirmity.

The distinction which brought himself the keenest pleasure, however, and that which was to prove so eventful for Biblical scholarship, was his appointment to the Oxford Chair of Poetry in 1741. This involved the delivery of a certain number of lectures on some aspect of poetry during the usual ten years' tenure of office. The subject chosen by Lowth—*De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum*—at once attracted attention by its novelty. Interest deepened as the course proceeded. But it was only with the pub-