

# BIBLE STUDIES.

By  
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PART 1.

THE PROPHECIES OF BALAAM  
(NUMBERS XXII. to XXIV)  
OR

THE HEBREW AND THE HEATHEN.

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## PREFACE.

ALMOST immediately after the completion of the fourth volume of his Commentary on the Old Testament, in 1872, the author was seized with a severe and lingering illness. The keen pain he felt at the compulsory interruption of his work was solely relieved by the undiminished interest with which he was able to follow the widely ramified literature connected with his favourite studies. At length, after weary years of patience and 'hope deferred,' a moderate measure of strength seemed to return, inadequate indeed to a resumption of his principal task in its full extent, yet, sufficient, it appeared, to warrant, an attempt at elucidating some of those, numerous problems of Biblical criticism and religious history, which are still awaiting a final solution. Acting, therefore, on the maxim, '*Est quadam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra,*' and stimulated by the desire of contributing his humble share to the great intellectual labour of our age, he selected, as a first effort after his partial recovery, the interpretation of that exquisite episode in the Book of Numbers which contains an account of Balaam and his prophecies. This section), complete in itself, discloses a deep insight into the nature and course of prophetic influence; implies most instructive hints for the knowledge of Hebrew doctrine; and is one of the choicest, master-pieces of universal literature. Love of such a subject could not fail to uphold even a wavering, strength, and to revive an

## PREFACE.

often drooping courage. The author is indebted to these pursuits for many hours of the highest enjoyment, and he feels compelled to express his profound gratitude for having been permitted to accomplish even this modest enterprise. If strength be granted to him, he anxious, in continuation of the same important enquiry, still further to elucidate the mutual relation, according to the Scriptures and the Jewish writings, between the Hebrew and the Heathen, by commenting on the Book of Jonah, of which he proposes to treat in a Second Part of these Bible Studies.

The author would fain hope that the main portions of the work may be found of some interest not only to theologians and Biblical students, but to a wider circle of readers, since the possibility of a general diffusion of critical or historical results is the only decisive test of their value.

In the Translation and the Commentary he has adhered to the same principles which guided him in his previous volumes, and for the convenience of Hebrew scholars he has here also inserted the original Text.

Although he has neglected no available source of information, and has endeavoured to utilise, for the illustration of his subject, both the most ancient traditions and the most recent discoveries and researches, he is well aware how much his effort stands in need of indulgence but he believes that he will not appeal in vain to the forbearance of those who realise the impediments and difficulties under which he has laboured.

M. KALISCH.

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HEBREW TEXT.--NUMBERS XXII. TO XXIV.

## I.--THE PROPHET AND HIS PROPHECIES.

### 1. SUMMARY.

The contents of that portion of the Book of Numbers which we propose to examine, may be thus briefly summarised.

On their way from Egypt into Canaan, in the fortieth year of their wanderings, the Hebrews had advanced to the plains of Moab, on the east of the Jordan.<sup>a</sup> Alarmed by the proximity of such large hosts, which had just discomfited powerful opponents in the same districts, Balak, the king of Moab, after deliberating with the chiefs of Midian, resolved to summon, from Pethor on the Euphrates, the far-famed Balaam, the son of Beor, and to request him to pronounce upon the Israelites a curse, by virtue of which he hoped to vanquish them in the expected conflict.<sup>b</sup> When the elders of Moab and Midian, who were selected as envoys, had arrived at Pethor and delivered their errand, Balaam bid them stay, till he had ascertained the will of God; and when he learnt, through a vision, that God disapproved of the journey and the curse, since the Israelites were a blessed nation, he declined to accompany the messengers.<sup>c</sup> On bearing their reply, Balak sent a second and still more weighty embassy, promising Balaam the highest distinctions and rewards, if he yielded to his wishes. But Balaam declared to the nobles, that no treasures or honours,

<sup>a</sup> Num. xxii, 1.

<sup>b</sup> Vers. 2-6.

<sup>c</sup> Vers. 7-13

however splendid, could induce him to act against the command of God, whom, therefore, he would again consult. This time he received permission to proceed to Moab, on condition, however, that he should strictly adhere to God's suggestions; after which he entered upon the journey together with the ambassadors.<sup>a</sup>

Yet when he had set out, God was greatly displeased, and sent His angel with a drawn sword to oppose him. The prophet's ass, but not the prophet himself, beheld the Divine apparition. The terrified animal first retreated from the road into the field; next pressed, in anguish and perplexity, against a vineyard wall in a narrow path; and at last, unable to withdraw either to the right or the left, fell down on the ground, all this time angrily beaten by the vexed rider. 'Then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass,' who complained to Balaam of his harshness, and reminded him that she had never before behaved so strangely. 'Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam,' and the angel, now perceived by the seer, rebuked him for his cruel treatment of the faithful beast, and declared that he had come to resist the journey, since he deemed it pernicious. Balaam, mortified and penitent, readily offered to return, but the angel commanded him to go with the ambassadors, yet scrupulously to abstain from saying anything but what the Lord should prompt.<sup>b</sup> On the frontier of Moab, Balaam was met by Balak, to whom he announced at once that he could speak nothing of his own mind, but was bound to obey the voice of God alone.<sup>c</sup> Hospitable entertainments followed; preparations were made for the prophecies; and then, standing on an elevation, from where a part of the Hebrew people could be surveyed, Balaam, in the pre-

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 14-21.

<sup>b</sup> Vers. 22-36.

<sup>c</sup> Vers. 36-38.

sence of Balak and his chiefs, uttered a speech, inspired by God, in which he extolled Israel as a nation beloved and specially elected by the Eternal, exceedingly numerous, and happy through righteousness.<sup>a</sup> The annoyed king took Balaam to another place where, after due preliminaries, the prophet pronounced a second Divine oracle, affirming that the blessing once bestowed on Israel was irrevocable, since they were a pious people guided by the Lord, victorious by their prowess, and inaccessible in their strength.<sup>b</sup> Balak, troubled and amazed, once more made a determined attempt, but again Balaam proclaimed the praises of Israel, glorifying the beauty, extent, and fertility of their land, the prosperity and splendour of their empire, and the terrible disasters they inflicted upon their enemies.<sup>c</sup> In pain and rage, Balak now commanded the seer forthwith to flee to his own country. But before departing, Balaam spontaneously added a prophecy foreshadowing the subjugation of Moab herself by an illustrious king of the Israelites;<sup>d</sup> and to this he joined, moreover, oracles on the future destinies of the Hebrews in connection with Edom and Amalek, the Kenites and the Assyrians.<sup>e</sup> Then Balaam and Balak separated, each returning to his home.<sup>f</sup>

## 2. UNCERTAIN TRADITIONS.

IT is necessary for our purpose to notice the other Biblical accounts with respect to Balaam, and, first of all, to consider the following passage of Deuteronomy:<sup>g</sup> 'An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord . . . because they did not meet

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 39-xxiii. 10.

<sup>d</sup> Vers. 10-17.

<sup>f</sup> Ver. 25.

<sup>b</sup> Vers. 11--24.

<sup>e</sup> Vers. 18-24,

<sup>g</sup> Deut. xxiii. 4-6,

<sup>c</sup> xxiii. 25--xxiy. 9,

you with bread and with water on the way, when you came forth out of Egypt, and because he (the Moabite) hired against thee Balaam, the son of Beor, of Pethor in Mesopotamia, to curse thee. But the Lord thy God would not listen to Balaam, and turned the curse into a blessing for thee, because He loves thee.<sup>a</sup> Hence the Deuteronomist evidently followed a tradition very different from that embodied in the narrative of Numbers. According to the former, Balaam, when 'hired' to curse Israel, really pronounced curses which, however, God, in His merciful love of Israel, disregarded, and, annulling their intended effect, transformed into benedictions; in correspondence with which, Nehemiah, quoting and epitomising Deuteronomy, records that 'The Moabite hired Balaam against Israel, to curse them, but our God turned the curse into a blessing.'<sup>b</sup> A process so indirect and artificial is wholly at variance with the plain simplicity of the story before us. Here Balaam never evinced the least disposition or made the slightest attempt to hazard execrations which levelled against the elect of God, would have been hardly less than blasphemous. Nor did he allow himself to be 'hired' in the sense in which Balak wished to engage him; but he submitted unconditionally to the direction of the Lord, who would not permit an alien to call down upon His people imprecations, however empty and transitory. Micah, living in the eighth century B.C., alludes to the tradition concerning Balaam in a context, which leaves no doubt as to its spirit and tendency. For among the

<sup>a</sup> The change from the plural (קדמו) to the singular (שבר), without the introduction of a new subject, is indeed strange and incongruous, but hardly a sufficient reason

for regarding, with some critics, the second part of verse 5, like the following verse, as a fragmentary addition.

<sup>b</sup> Neh. xiii. 2.

signal favours bestowed by God upon His people, as their deliverance from Egyptian slavery and their safe guidance under leaders like Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, the prophet mentions this also: 'O my people, remember now, what Balak, king of Moab, schemed, and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him . . . in order that you may know the kindness of the Lord.'<sup>a</sup> Balaam's 'answers' manifestly did not satisfy the king; they were blessings and praises of the Hebrews; and Micah is, therefore, in harmony with Numbers, not with Deuteronomy.

We come to another point, in which tradition wavered. The Book of Joshua, closely connected with Deuteronomy, states that Balak actually 'waged war against Israel.'<sup>b</sup> But the Book of Judges writes distinctly, 'Did Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, strive against Israel? did he fight against them?'<sup>c</sup> And so, according to Numbers likewise, Balak's sole enterprise against Israel was his employment of Balaam. For, however eager he might have been to expel the dangerous invaders by resolute combat,<sup>d</sup> he desisted from the hopeless struggle when Balaam's co-operation had proved fallacious. Our account concludes with the words, 'And Balaam rose and went away and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way';<sup>e</sup> and soon afterwards we find the Hebrews and Moabites not merely living in peace but in friendship,

<sup>a</sup> Mic. vi. 5. By a strange misconception, many (as Bishop Butler, Lowth, and others) understood this passage in Micah (vi. 5-8) as 'a dialogue between Balaam and Balak.'

<sup>b</sup> Josh. xxiv. 9, וילחם בישראל, which cannot mean, 'he intended to wage war, the intention being deemed equivalent to the deed' (*Kimchi*); or, 'he fought by counsels and stratagems' (*Kether Torah* of Rabbi

Aaron);' or, 'not with the sword, but by imprecations' (*Keil*), which 'the writer calls war' (*Rosenmeller*); or, 'he showed a hostile feeling' (*Biur* and others); and it is gratuitous to assume 'small attacks' (*Knobel*), of which no mention is made in the Old Testament.

<sup>c</sup> Judg. xi. 25.

<sup>d</sup> Num. xxii. 6, 11.

<sup>e</sup> xxiv. 2.5; see notes in loc.

and readily exchanging their religious views and practices.<sup>a</sup>

But the most important fluctuation is the following. The Book of Joshua<sup>b</sup> clearly describes Balaam as a 'soothsayer' (קוֹסֵם), and adds, moreover, that he was, among other enemies, slain by the Hebrews in their war against the Midianites, on whose side he fought. A subsequent portion of the Book of Numbers not only repeats this latter statement, but charges Balaam, besides, with the heinous crime of having, by infamous counsels, enticed the Israelites to the grossly licentious worship of Baal-Peor, and of having thus caused a fearful plague, which fell upon the people as a Divine chastisement.<sup>c</sup> It was naturally, and perhaps excusably, supposed that, in the section under consideration, Balaam is regarded in the same light--namely, as a common magician and a fiendish tempter; and starting from this view, theologians and interpreters, in ancient and modern times, have drawn a picture of Balaam's character which is truly awful. There is hardly a vice which they did not think themselves justified in attributing to him. They uniformly discovered that our author represented the foreign seer, above all, as swayed by the two master passions of ambition and avarice to a degree almost amounting to actual madness.<sup>d</sup> But in delineating his other numerous blemishes, they differed very considerably. They variously described

<sup>a</sup> xxv. 1-4. The words in the Book of Joshua, which follow upon those above referred to, although probably coinciding with the conception of Deuteronomy, **וְלֹא אָבִיתִי לְשִׁמּוֹעַ** (Josh. xxiv. 10), may yet be considered as forming a transition to that of Numbers with respect to the first discrepancy pointed out; for they may

either mean that the curses pronounced by Balaam were turned into blessings, or that he indeed pronounced curses, but was also compelled to utter blessings.

<sup>b</sup> xiii. 22.

<sup>c</sup> xxxi. 8, 16; comp. xxv. 1-9.

<sup>d</sup> Freely applying to him the line of Sophocles: **Τομαντικὸν γὰρ παῖν**  
**f il arguron genoῖ** (Ant. 1055).

him as proud, insolent, and inflated, and yet cunning and hypocritical; as false and ungrateful; mendacious and treacherous; wavering, yet obstinate; diabolically wicked and mischievous; the primary type of all artful seducers of God's people; cruel and passionate; a sordid trader in prophecy and a mercenary impostor--the Simon Magus of the Old Testament; a sacrilegious trickster and blasphemous dissembler; an unhallowed idolater and a lying sorcerer; a profane reviler and sanctimonious scoffer.<sup>a</sup> Indeed not a few writers have produced veritable masterpieces of exegetical ingenuity.<sup>b</sup>

Justice, however, requires that, before expressing a decisive opinion, we should at least endeavour to understand this narrative by itself and apart from other Biblical notices. This 'Book of Balaam'--as we shall henceforth briefly call it--is in every way complete. It is pervaded by religious and historical conceptions presenting the most perfect unity. We shall, therefore, try to reproduce the figure of Balaam from this portion with all possible fidelity.

### 3. THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

THE key to Balaam's whole conduct lies in the words, 'I cannot go against the command of the Lord to do either good or bad of my own mind.'<sup>c</sup> The same significant term 'of my own mind,' is, in the Pentateuch, employed on another and no less remarkable occasion. When Moses announced the miraculous punishment to

<sup>a</sup> This *florilegium*--which is only a short specimen--has not been compiled at random, but we could quote authorities of repute for each individual epithet, and shall hereafter have occasion to do so to some extent.

<sup>b</sup> As Calvin, Michaelis, Hengstenberg, Baumgarten, Kurtz, Keil, Reinke, Lange, Koehler, and others who have influenced the interpretation of these chapters.

<sup>c</sup> מַלְּבִי, xxiv. 13.

be inflicted upon Korah and his associates, he said 'Hereby you shall know, that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them of my own mind.'<sup>a</sup> As Moses is the mouthpiece of God's behests and His instrument, so is Balaam. The greatest of the Hebrew prophets and the heathen seer here introduced are equals in this cardinal point, that all they say and do is not ordinary human speech and deed, but the expression of the Divine will, which, renouncing their own volition, they are ready or compelled to obey.<sup>b</sup> Can a stronger proof than this parallel be conceived of the high position and dignity which the author assigns to Balaam? From this central view everything else is easily surveyed and illustrated. Never, under any circumstances, does Balaam forget that he has no independent power, but that he is the servant of God, whose visions he beholds and whose spirit comes upon him, whose direction he seeks and whose revelations he utters.<sup>c</sup>

Balak's messengers arrive, and, in accordance with custom, bring him rewards for his expected services as an enchanter. But neither does the royal embassy, consisting of the chiefs of two nations, flatter his ambition, nor do the presents, no doubt considerable, tempt him into covetousness. When he hears the king's request, he represses both his inclination and his judgment. Not even by the slightest allusion are we informed to which side that personal disposition was leaning, since it is of no consequence or importance whatever. Declining to return an answer on his own account, he asks the messengers to wait till he has ascertained the Divine will, and when God commands him not to go to Moab to

<sup>a</sup> מַלְבִּי, Num. xvi. 28; comp. Jude 11.

<sup>b</sup> See Comm. on Lev. vol. i. p. 706.

<sup>c</sup> xxii. 18, 19, 38; xxiii. 3-5, 12, 15, 16, 26; xxiv. 4,13,16: which passages are distinct and emphatic.

curse the Hebrews, he simply communicates to the envoys this injunction, which to him is final.<sup>a</sup>

Ere long, he is visited by a second and still more brilliant embassy, empowered to make, in the king's name, the most alluring offers: 'I will honour thee greatly, and whatever thou sayest to me that I will do'<sup>b</sup> --offers of a kind which it is almost beyond human nature to regard with indifference, and which only the rarest force of character can succeed in resisting. But Balaam remains unshaken. He may, indeed, for a moment, have been agitated by an inward struggle, which the author, with the subtlest psychological art, intimates by Balaam's hyperbolical declaration, that not even the king's 'house full of gold and silver' could alter his resolution. But the temptation is no sooner felt than it is warded off, and for ever banished from his heart. He protests with greater decision than before, that he 'cannot go against the commandment of the Lord to do a small or great thing,'<sup>c</sup> and only after having received God's distinct permission, does he consent to accompany the princes to Moab.<sup>d</sup>

Balak, ready to prove that he had not spoken empty words when he promised to Balaam the highest honours, goes out to meet him at the frontier of his kingdom.<sup>e</sup> But undazzled by this distinction, most flattering according to Eastern notions,<sup>f</sup> the prophet courageously and almost bluntly warns the anxiously expectant king against too confident hopes. For, without speculating whether God's repeal of the previous prohibition of the journey involved or foreshadowed also a repeal of the prohibition of the curse, he tells Balak: 'Behold, I am

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 8, 12, 13.    <sup>b</sup> Ver. 17.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 18.            <sup>d</sup> Ver. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 36. In this survey, we pass over xxii. 22-35, for reasons which

will soon be apparent; see infra, sect. 'Original Form.'

<sup>f</sup> Comp. Gen. xxix. 13; xlvi. 29; Exod. xviii. 7, etc.

come to thee; have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak.<sup>a</sup> The next day, after having duly prepared himself, he awaits the Divine inspiration,<sup>b</sup> and having obtained it, he joins Balak, who, surrounded by his nobles, was standing at the altar and his sacrifices; and here he announces, in enthusiastic speech and without fear or hesitation, the direct opposite of what the king, as he well knew, expected of him and longed to hear.<sup>c</sup> He meets Balak's indignant remonstrances again merely by affirming that he dare not contravene the commands of God.<sup>d</sup> A never appeal for Divine direction results in similar utterances, followed by the same reproofs and the same unflinching confessions.<sup>e</sup> A third attempt differs from the former transactions only in this point, that Balaam no more goes out to secure a special revelation. For he is now certain that 'it pleases God to bless Israel.' He is convinced that he may safely surrender himself to the impulse of the moment. Indeed, when he beholds the vast camp of the Israelites stretched out before his view, he exalts their prosperity and power, their fame and triumphs, with a solemnity and fervour he had not even attained before; and he concludes with declaring, that if anyone should presume to curse Israel, it is on himself that the curse would recoil.<sup>f</sup> The king, struck by the pointed and ominous allusion, listens to those bursts of prophetic fire with increasing rage and consternation; but Balaam remains calm and unawed. He is now a hateful guest in Moab, and is bidden to 'escape;' but, regardless of the danger to which he exposes himself, he not only, with imperturbable tranquillity, reminds the

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 38.<sup>c</sup> Vers. 7-10.<sup>e</sup> Vers. 15, 16, 25, 26.<sup>b</sup> xxiii. 3.<sup>d</sup> Ver. 12.<sup>f</sup> xxiv. 1-9.

monarch of his former assurance, that not even all the golden treasures of a palace could move him to utter oracles 'of his own mind,'<sup>a</sup> but, rising to new enthusiasm, he announces to Balak, unrequested, the future fate of his own land, proclaiming that, like many other kingdoms, it was doomed to be subdued and crushed by the very people which, at that moment, was causing him dread and horror.<sup>b</sup> And then the author concludes his account of the seer, simply and quietly, 'And Balaam rose and went away and returned to his place.'<sup>c</sup>

It would not be easy to find, in the epic compositions of any country, a delineation of character more clear or more consistent than that of Balaam in this incomparable section. Firm and inexorable like eternal Fate, he regards himself solely as an instrument of that Omnipotence, which guides the destinies of nations by its unerring wisdom. Free from all human passion and almost from all human emotion, he is like a mysterious spirit from a higher and nobler world, which looks upon the fortunes of the children of men with an immovable and sublime repose.

#### 4. BALAAM'S RELIGION.

To test and to confirm this view, it will be desirable to enquire whether Balaam is, in this portion, portrayed as a true Hebrew prophet, or whether and in what respects he is marked as a heathen.

First, it is important to notice, that the God of Balaam is undoubtedly the God of the Hebrews. He is introduced with nearly all His Biblical names--*Jahveh*, *Elohim*, *El*, *Shaddai*, *Elyon*--and no other deity is men-

<sup>a</sup> xxiv. 12, 13.

<sup>b</sup> Vers. 14-17.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 25.--The passage xxiv. 18-24 must here also be excluded.

tioned throughout the entire Book. The most frequent by far is the appellation of *Jahveh* (יהוה), and it is not a little significant that Balaam uses predominantly that holy and specifically Hebrew name of Revelation and the Covenant, both in the narrative and in prophetic speech;<sup>a</sup> a few times only he employs El and once, respectively, *Elohim* (אלהים), *Shaddai* (שדי), and *Elyon* (עליון).<sup>c</sup> Wherever the author relates in his own name, *Jahveh* and *Elohim* are introduced promiscuously;<sup>d</sup> but it would not be possible, without resorting to artificial expedients, to establish a principle and design in this change or alternation. For as *Jahveh* puts the words into the seer's mouth and grants him revelations,<sup>e</sup> so does *Elohim*,<sup>f</sup> whose 'spirit comes upon Balaam.'<sup>g</sup> It is true that, in the account of the first embassy, *Elohim* is, with remarkable uniformity, used by the author, and *Jahveh* by Balaam; "but this affords only a new and striking proof of the, writer's art and care, who desired to impart to the prophet's speech the most solemn emphasis possible,

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 8, 13, 18, 19; xxiii. 3, 8, 12, 21, 26; xxiv. 6, 13.

<sup>b</sup> xxiii. 8., 19, 23; xxiv. 4, 8, 16, 24.

<sup>c</sup> xxii. 38 ; xxiv. 8, 16; comp. xxiii. 21. How can we suppress a feeling of astonishment at finding, that this very circumstance--the constant use by Balaam of the name of *Jahveh*--has been urged as a conclusive proof of Balaam's sanctimony and arrogance, of his frauds and selfish wiles' (Hengstenberg, *Authentic des Pentateucbs*, i. 407, 411; similarly Baumgarten, Reinke, *Beitraege*, iv. 227; comp., however, Staehelin, *Kritische Untersuchungen*, pp. 36, 37.)

<sup>d</sup> The former in xxiii. 6, 16;

xxiv. 1; the latter in xxii. 9, 20; xxiii. 4 ; xxiv. 3.

<sup>e</sup> xxiii. 5, 16.

<sup>f</sup> xxii. 9, 20, 38; xxiii. 4.

<sup>g</sup> xxiv. 3.--Particularly instructive is xxiii. 3-5: Balaam expects, that יהוה will meet him (ver. 3), in reality he is met by אלהים (ver. 4), and יהוה suggests to him the prophecy (ver. 5). The distinctions that have been attempted (*Hengstenb.* 1. c. pp. 409-411; *Baur*, *Alttestamentliche Weissagung*, etc., i. 334; *Ewald*, *Jabrbuecher*, viii. p. 18; *Keil*, *Commentar zu Numeri*, p. 297, etc.) are not satisfactory or convincing.

<sup>h</sup> xxii. 9, 10, 12, 20; and vers. 8,

13, 18, 19.

while preserving the greatest simplicity in his own words.<sup>a</sup> But we are not left to deduce, from uncertain inference, that the God of Balaam is no other than the God of Israel, the Eternal, the Unchangeable. This is unmistakably expressed. Balaam speaks of Jahveh as 'my God,'<sup>b</sup> just as he says with reference to Israel, that Jahveh is 'his God;'<sup>c</sup> and that term 'Jahveh my God'<sup>d</sup> is not 'merely the Hebrew designation of Balaam's monotheism,'<sup>e</sup> but involves and demonstrates the absolute identity of Balaam's monotheism and that of Israel.<sup>f</sup>

## 5. THE GOD OF BALAK.

A CLEAR light is thrown upon the subject by considering it in conjunction with Balak's religious notions.

The king sends messengers to the seer with the general charge to come and curse the Hebrews.<sup>9</sup> He does not specify the deity in whose name he desires the curse to

<sup>a</sup> By what perversion of judgment, was it possible to discover in this circumstance also 'a silent accusation of hypocrisy against Balaam, who so boastfully spoke of his Jehovah (der sich mit seinem Jehova so breit machte), constantly crying **Kurie Kurie**, although in reality he was only in connection with Elobim.'! (*Hengstenb.* 1. c. pp.409, 411; Lange, *Bibelwerk*, ii. 308, 311, 'an ostentatiously displayed belief in Jehova... ..as if he knew the God of salvation.' In the passage xxii. 22-35 also, the name יהוה prevails, whether Jahveh Himself (vers. 28, 31) or, more frequently, the 'angel of Jahveh' (vers. 22-27, 31, 32, 34, 35), while אלהים occurs but once (ver. 22).

<sup>b</sup> אֱלֹהֵי xxii. 18.

<sup>e</sup> אֱלֹהֵי xxiii. 21; comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 39, יהוה הוא אלהים; Ps. vii. 2, 4; xviii. 7, 29; Hos. ii. 25; viii. 2; Zechar. xiii. 9, etc.

<sup>d</sup> יהוה אֱלֹהֵי

<sup>e</sup> Knobel, *Numeri* erklart, p. 131.

<sup>f</sup> It is, therefore, not sufficient to say, that 'Balaam's religion was probably such as would be the natural result of a general acquaintance with God not confirmed by any covenant' (*Smith*, *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. 163): Balaam's acquaintance with God was precisely that possessed by the highest minds among the Hebrews in the author's time.-- About the question, how the Mesopotamian Balaam obtained a knowledge of Jahveh as the God of the Hebrews, see notes on xxii. 5-14.

<sup>g</sup> xxii. 5, 6.

be pronounced. It is enough for him to know that Balaam's blessing and curse are potent and irresistible. Does he, in the author's view, mean the God of the Hebrews and Him alone? This cannot be assumed; for if he had deemed this point essential, he would not have failed to insist upon it in his explicit message. He evidently knew nothing of Jahveh, or he did not heed Him. He had heard of the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, but he speaks of their deliverance as of an ordinary event, without alluding to Jahveh's assistance or intervention<sup>a</sup>--in striking contrast to Balaam, who repeatedly attributes it to the power and mercy of Israel's God.<sup>b</sup> How should he indeed expect an efficient execration from a soothsayer inspired by a strange god against his own chosen people? When Balaam, following the Divine directions, announced to the elders of Moab, 'The Lord (יהוה) refuses to give me leave to go with you;<sup>c</sup> in what form did the elders bring back this answer to Balak? They simply said, 'Balaam refuses to come with us.'<sup>d</sup> They omitted to mention Jahveh, obviously because to them and to the king He was an unfamiliar god. If Balak had specially desired that the Hebrews should be cursed in the name of Jahveh, it would have been of the utmost importance to him to learn that it was Jahveh Himself who forbade Balaam to journey forth. But the envoys and the monarch alike were concerned about nothing except the bare fact of Balaam's non-compliance.

The second embassy was despatched with the same indefinite message, no particular god being named.<sup>e</sup> However, when Balaam at last arrived in Moab, he said to the king, 'I will go perhaps the Lord (יהוה) will

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 5.

<sup>b</sup> xxiii. 22; xxiv. 8; see notes on xxii. 5-14.

<sup>c</sup> xxii. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Ver. 14.

<sup>e</sup> xxii, 15-17,

come to meet me; and whatsoever He will show me, I will tell thee.<sup>a</sup> Then was Balak, for the first time, made clearly aware that Balaam was in the service of Jahveh, and then he might easily have informed himself about His nature and His relation to Israel. Again and again, he thenceforth heard the same name from Balaam's mouth, both in the interviews and the prophetic speeches;<sup>b</sup> and when he, therefore, saw Balaam the second time return, prepared for uttering an oracle, he asked, in anxious suspense, 'What has the Lord (יהוה) spoken?'<sup>c</sup> He had learnt, that it was from Jahveh, the God of the terrible Hebrews, that he must expect his safety or destruction. But he had also learnt, that this Jahveh is the God or Elohim;<sup>d</sup> and, consequently, when he requested Balaam to make a new attempt in another place, he added, 'Perhaps it will please Ha-Elohim, that thou mayest curse me them from there.'<sup>e</sup> Yet when, this time also, Balaam pronounced a blessing and not a curse, the frenzied king, dismissing the prophet from his presence, exclaimed, — 'I thought to honour thee, but, behold, the Lord (יהוה) has kept thee back from honour'<sup>f</sup> thus mingling with his rage a derisive sarcasm, taunting Balaam's God as delighting to deprive of honours and rewards His most scrupulous worshippers; and with those defiant words, Balak, the type of blind and worldly paganism, so skilfully placed in juxtaposition to Balaam, for ever discards that Jahveh, to whom he had turned for a moment through fear and selfishness.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>a</sup> xxiii. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Vers. 8, 12.

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 17.

<sup>d</sup> xxii. 38; comp. xxiii. 21.

<sup>e</sup> xxiii. 27.

<sup>f</sup> xxiv. 11.

<sup>g</sup> Balak's disposition and views

will be more fully unfolded in the Commentary. Even Jewish tradition admits, that Balak was a more superstitious idolater than Balaam;

*Midrash Rabb.* Num. xx. 7, בלק היה בעל קסמים ובעל נחש יותר מבעלם שיהיה נמשך אחריו כסומא

## 6. BALAAM THE PROPHET.

WE shall approach still nearer to a right estimate of Balaam's character by enquiring how he received Jahveh's revelations--whether in the manner of Hebrew prophecy or in connection with heathen rites?

When Balaam hears, from the first ambassadors, the king's demand, he desires them to remain till the next morning, and promises a reply in accordance with God's injunction.<sup>a</sup> He is, therefore, sure of a Divine communication. How is it conveyed? Certainly in the night--as is not only clear from the context, but is expressed in distinct terms;<sup>b</sup> and evidently in sleep, for God orders Balaam, 'Rise and go with the men,' after which the author adds,-- 'And Balaam rose in the morning ... and went with the princes of Moab.'<sup>c</sup> He received, therefore, his communications in dream visions, and these were deemed by the Hebrews one of the legitimate and valued modes of Divine revelation.<sup>d</sup> Again, God speaks to Balaam, and Balaam speaks to God;<sup>e</sup> He 'shows him' words,<sup>f</sup> puts words into his mouth,<sup>g</sup> or gives him 'commands';<sup>h</sup> in fact 'the spirit of God comes upon Balaam;'<sup>i</sup> phrases which we find constantly applied in the Old Testament to the true seers of Israel.<sup>k</sup> Balaam's speech or address is indeed, on account of its poetical character, generally

<sup>a</sup> xxii. 8.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 20.

<sup>c</sup> Vers. 20, 21.

<sup>d</sup> Num. xii. 6 ; Gen. xx. 3; xxxi. 11, 24; xlv. 2; Job iv. 13-16, etc.; see Commentary on Genesis, pp. 608, 640.

<sup>e</sup> xxii. 8-12, 19, 20; xxiii. 26.

<sup>f</sup> xxiii.

<sup>g</sup> xxii. 38; xxiii. 5, 12, 16.

<sup>h</sup> xxii. 18; xxiv. 13.

<sup>i</sup> xxiv. 2 ; see notes in loc.

<sup>k</sup> Comp. Deut. xviii. 18; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2 ; Isai. li. 16; lix. 21; Jer. i. 9; Ezek, xxxiii. 7, etc. Balaam, says Lange (Bibelwerk, ii. 309), with a refinement we are unable to realise, had 'Verkehr' with God, but not 'Umgang:' the distinction is certainly not essential.

designated as 'parable,'<sup>a</sup> but also as 'Words of God,'<sup>b</sup> or simply 'utterance'<sup>c</sup> of Balaam, which is the specific term for prophetic communication.<sup>d</sup>

However, some circumstances are mentioned which seem at least doubtful. We may here briefly pass over the fact that the king sent Balaam 'wages' or 'rewards of divination.'<sup>e</sup> Supposing even that Balaam accepted them, he deserves no censure. For according to the notions of those times, no one ever consulted a seer without offering him a present, either in money or provisions, although the most trifling gift contented the simplicity of Hebrew prophets,<sup>f</sup> and the assertion<sup>g</sup> that the 'men of God' did not receive or take such presents is unfounded, though in some cases they may have had special reasons for refusing them.<sup>h</sup>--But preparations, apparently considered indispensable, are made for the predictions--altars are erected and sacrifices offered, at which the king is bound to stay.<sup>i</sup> As these arrangements proceed from Balaam, we are justified in presuming that the sacrifices are presented to none else but Jahveh; at the time when this section was composed,<sup>k</sup> altars and sacrifices, not yet restricted to one central sanctuary, were lawful at any place;<sup>l</sup> and although prophecies were generally pronounced without

<sup>a</sup> מִשְׁלָּה, xxii. 7, 18; xxiv. 3, 15; see notes on xxiii. 7-10.

<sup>b</sup> אִמְרֵי אֱלֹהִים, xxiv. 4, 16.

<sup>c</sup> נְאֻם בְּלִעַם

<sup>d</sup> xxiv. 3, 4, 15, 16; comp. אֵי עֵצָה, xxiv. 14; see notes in locc.

<sup>e</sup> xxii. 7, קֶסֶם, see notes on xxii. 5-14.

<sup>f</sup> Comp. 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8; 1 Ki. xiii. 7; xiv. 3; 2 Ki. viii. 8, 9; see Mic. iii. 5.

<sup>g</sup> Joseph. Ant. VI. iv. 1; X. xi. 3.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Ki. v. 15, 16, 26; comp. Gen. xiv. 22, 23.

<sup>i</sup> xxiii. 1, 4, 6, 14, 15, 17, 29, 30.

<sup>k</sup> See infra, 'Date.'

<sup>l</sup> See Comm. on Levit. i. 17-19.

The 'Moabite Stone' (line 18) mentions 'vessels of Jahveh' (כְּלֵי יְהוָה) taken from the Hebrews, at Nebo, by Mesha, king of Moab, and presented to his god Chemosh. There were, therefore, evidently in his time still (about B.C. 890) legitimate sanctuaries of God in the east-Jordanic districts (comp., on the other hand, the very different spirit in the long account of Josh. xxii. 10-34).

such expedients, various analogies are not wanting,<sup>a</sup> music especially being used as a favourite auxiliary to prophetic inspiration.<sup>b</sup> --The spot from which the oracles are delivered is repeatedly altered.<sup>c</sup> These changes are indeed suggested by Balak, who shrinks from new disclosures at a locality which had once proved inauspicious; but as traces of similar views were entertained by pious Hebrews also,<sup>d</sup> Balaam's compliance cannot be interpreted to his disparagement.--In order to secure the efficacy of his utterances, Balaam must actually see at least a part of those who formed the subject of his speeches. The king, therefore, chooses the places accordingly, and Balaam is invested with the Divine spirit only when beholding the Israelites in their camps.<sup>e</sup> But this circumstance also involves nothing which would appear strange in a true Hebrew prophet, as is proved by the close parallels which may be adduced;<sup>f</sup> and it is certainly not surprising in the comparatively early age to which this Book of Balaam belongs.

But, lastly, we have to mention a point which is not without difficulty, and must be considered decisive on the present enquiry. How are we to understand the repeated statement, that Balaam went out 'to meet God,'<sup>g</sup> which seems to have been a current technical term, and was intelligible even in the still briefer form 'to meet?'<sup>h</sup> Whenever Balaam thus goes out, he makes it essential to go alone; and it would almost seem that his main object

<sup>a</sup> Comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 23, 24, 30-33, etc.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5 ; 2 Ki. iii. 15, Elisha requested, 'Bring me a minstrel (קְנִינִי) and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him'; 1 Chr. xxv. 1, 3, where the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, are said to

'prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals' (הַנְּבָאִים בְּכַנְרֹת).

<sup>c</sup> xxii. 41; xxiii. 13, 27.

<sup>d</sup> See notes on xxiii. 11-17.

<sup>e</sup> xxii 41; xxiii. 13; xxiv. 2.

<sup>f</sup> See notes on xxii. 4 l-xxiii. 6..

<sup>g</sup> xxiii. 3, יִקְרֶה יְהוָה לְקִרְאָתִי.

<sup>h</sup> xxiii. 15, אֶקְרֶה.











































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































two neighbouring and kindred tribes, are by Hebrew writers constantly and closely coupled.<sup>a</sup> Those, therefore, who, disregarding the art and mastership in the form of the composition, looked upon the Book mainly as a national document, might consider it an unaccountable omission that the annihilation of the powerful Edomites, which was of much greater importance to the Hebrews than that of the Moabites, was not specially proclaimed. They felt, therefore, induced to supply this supposed defect, and added significant words concerning Edom, not as a distinct prophecy, introduced, like the other oracles, by the formula, 'And Balaam took up his parable,' but in direct conjunction with the speech against Moab—strangely forgetful of Balaam's clear announcement to Balak, 'I will tell thee what this people is destined to do to thy people.'<sup>b</sup> When thus the unity of the work was once deranged, the way was smoothed for further enlargements. It was considered that the admired and popular work offered a convenient framework for the glorification of Israel as a conquering people in general; and, one by one, such predictions were appended as, by the side of oracles on Moab and Edom, and in the mouth of an earlier prophet, appeared suitable or desirable.<sup>c</sup>

The total difference between these additions and Balaam's genuine vaticinations ought to be felt and recognised, it might be thought, even by the common instincts of literary taste and judgment. That difference extends alike to the spirit and the language. Where is, in these supplements, that lucid simplicity

<sup>a</sup> Comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 12-14; 1 Chron. xviii. 11; Ps. lx. 10; lxxiii. 7; cviii. 10; Isa. xi. 14; Jer. ix. 26; xxv. 21; Ezek. xxv. 8; Dan. xi. 41. We find them also combined in Sennacherib's Inscription on the 'Taylor Cylinder' (col. ii., lines 53, 54): 'Kammuz (Chemosh)-natbi, king of Moab, and

Airammu, king of Edom;' and in the Inscription of Esarhaddon (col. v., 1. 14): 'Kadumukh, king of Edom, and Mitzuri, king of Moab;' see also 'Annals of Assur-bani-pal,' col. vii., 1. 119-121, Edom, Beth-Ammen, Moab.

<sup>b</sup> Ver. 14, לעמך.

<sup>c</sup> See also notes on vers. 20-24.

which is never impaired by profoundness or sublimity? Where is that natural splendour or beauty of imagery, which, in every touch, reveals the genius and the poet? Throughout the four speeches of Balaam there is hardly a single obscurity or real difficulty in the Hebrew expression: obscurity and difficulty abound in these last few verses.<sup>a</sup> The former display transparency of plan in the whole and every individual utterance; the latter consist of a disconnected and almost monotonous enumeration of facts scarcely adorned or veiled, and yet so dim and shadowy that they sound like Sibylline mysteries. In the one, we find depth and wealth of the most fruitful ideas; in the others, there is hardly a new idea of moment. From noon-day brightness we pass to indistinct and clouded twilight. And yet even these verses are not without their own interest. Though deficient as efforts of prophecy and poetry, they possess a high value as history. While destroying the picture of Davidic times in its rounded and finished completeness, they expand it to an almost panoramic view comprising eventful centuries; and while they exhibit youth's soaring elevation and aspiring vigour lowered and weakened, they offer in compensation the maturity, though alas also the bitterness, of manly experience.

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--The numerous and singular attempts that have been made to vindicate an organic connection between these verses and the preceding portions, prove sufficiently the hopelessness of the task. Some contend that Balaam's words, 'I will tell thee, what this people is destined to do to thy people' (ver. 14), are intended a potion, that is, that Balaam indeed restricted his announcement to Moab alone, as the people of the greatest immediate importance, but that he really, at the same time, bad other

<sup>a</sup> J. D. Micbaelis writes: 'I honestly confess, that from the 18th to the 24th verse, the Hebrew text is not only difficult, but seems partly not

to have come down to us in correct transcriptions' --yet there is no reason to doubt the general accuracy of the received readings.

enemies of Israel in his mind. But is it likely that the author should, with a rude hand, destroy a finely drawn plan, which he had carried out from the beginning with such thoughtful care? The king of Moab dares to oppose Israel and their God king and must, therefore, hear the prediction of his ruin; no other people is directly concerned; the conclusion 'and he shattereth all the children of tumult' is not so much meant to depict the annihilation of the heathen world as to extol the victorious Israelites, and thus once more to condense, in a few emphatic words, a chief idea of the three preceding speeches.--It is, therefore, hardly necessary to refute the vague opinion that the narrative aims at delineating 'Israel's relations to their enemies in general,' or to announce 'the downfall of all the empires of the world,' which theme, it is asserted, the fourth prophecy carries out in detail, and in special applications (Hengstb., Bil., p. 150, etc.). But if so, why are the Ammonites not mentioned? Why not the Philistines and Midianites, nor the powerful Syrians, nor any other people in Canaan or Gilead, with whom the Hebrews exchanged constant and bitter feuds? and why not Egypt? It is, of course, not difficult to put forth specious reasons for all these omissions, but they do violence both to the sense and the words of the text. For who will find acceptable an expedient like this: 'Balaam, standing on the height of Peor, has turned round to the south, in order to cast his eye upon Moab; he then looks farther southward and southwestward, in which posture he does not behold Ammon and Aram, and therefore, delivers about them no prophecies (*Knob.*, Numer. p. 145). It is very questionable whether Balaam must not have seen Ammon from the point and in the position described (see p. 214). But supposing he saw no part of their territory, could he not turn round a little more eastward if he desired or was able to make a prophetic announcement on their future career? And was it indeed indispensable for him to behold those concerning whom he prophesied? This was certainly necessary according to the plan of the main or genuine narrative; but in these additions Balaam speaks of the Cyprians and Assyrians, whom he surely could not see from an eminence in the east of the Jordan--which constitutes an-

other notable divergence (see p. 18; about Amalek, on ver. 20). If even an approximately systematic series of prophecies had been intended, in accordance with the events narrated in the Book of Numbers, it would have been impossible to exclude the Midianites. These were in alliance with the Moabites in their contemplated execration of Israel (x-vii. 4, 7), and lived in their immediate vicinity; they were soon afterwards attacked by the Hebrews and routed with fearful slaughter (xxxi. 1-20), and for a long time they never ceased, either alone or in conjunction with other enemies, to annoy and to harass the Israelites in Canaan (pp. 85, 86). But why, in spite of all this, are they not introduced? Because, after having been completely overwhelmed by Gideon, the Judge, they had, in David's time, lost all power and importance. This one point alone ought to lead to correct inferences, and it will serve to show the weakness of the assertion that the Ammonites are passed over because, unlike Moab, Edom, or Amalek, they had 'till then' come into no contact whatever with the Hebrews, whether of a friendly or a hostile nature (so *Keil*, Num. p. 323). But without insisting that the same might be said of the Cyprians and Assyrians, who are yet noticed (vers. 23, 24), what does 'till then' mean? The author takes regard throughout of his own time, not of that of Balaam; and the Ammonites were, like the Moabites, defeated by Saul and David, were by the latter most rigorously treated, and required the continued vigilance of Hebrew kings (1 Sam. xi. 11; xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 12; x. 14; xi. 1; xii. 26-31; xxiv. 2; 2 Chr. xxvii. 5; Ezek. xxv. 2-7, etc.). Or if it is urged, on the other hand, that in these prophecies Balaam 'surveys the time from David to Hezekiah' (*Knobel*, Num. p. 144), it is permitted to ask, why in all the four preceding oracles no allusion is found, however faint or indirect, which leads beyond the time of David? For if Balaam, represented as prophesying in the age of Moses, did not hesitate to describe events reaching to the reign of David, why should he have shrunk from hinting at subsequent facts, if they lay within the circle of his knowledge or experience? How little, therefore, is gained by the remark: 'As the historical events which unroll themselves before the prophet's spirit become more

distant in time, they become also less determinate in outline! Is there for the prophet who portrays scenes occurring four centuries after his age, a distinction between near and distant? Must not all future be to him like the present? But, in reality, Balaam, that is the author of the first four oracles, is not the same as the author, or any of the authors, of these additions; the former lived in David's time, but the additions reach at least down to the age of Hezekiah. The following finely conceived theory has been proposed. The speech on Edom, observes Ewald (Jahrb. viii. 37), turned out so brief because Balaam felt already exhaustion coming upon him; 'but for this very reason he collected himself again and again after a few moments of rest, as if impelled by the spirit finally still to say all that without which the circle of his prophecies would not be truly complete.' But was that exhaustion felt by the author also? To attribute it here to Balaam, would not be art, but playfulness. The nations forming the subjects of the last oracles, were partly, like Edom and Amalek, much more dangerous enemies to Israel than Moab; the same author would not so palpably have missed the just proportions in the various predictions. The perplexity created by assuming one writer indiscriminately, is well exemplified by the same great critic, who, on the one hand, praises the skill and art of this composition in the highest terms of admiration, but, on the other hand, declares, with surprising self-contradiction, the author's style to be deficient in 'quiet beauty and harmony,' supporting his assertion by the verses under discussion, which he calls abrupt and quite ghostlike' (abgerissen and ganz geisterhaft; compare *Ewald*, *Geschichte*, i. 143, and *Jahrbucher*, viii. 1 *sqq.*, *passim*).

16. PROPHECY ON EDOM. XXIV. 18, 19.

18. And Edom is *his* possession,  
     And *his* possession is Seir, his enemies,  
     And Israel acquireth might.
19. And *he that cometh* out of Jacob ruleth,

And destroyeth the remnant from the cities.

It would be unnecessary here to dwell on the history of the Edomites in their relations to the Hebrews, as it has been sketched in another place with some fulness.<sup>a</sup> For the illustration of the words before us, it suffices to remind the reader that the Edomites, after having been vanquished by Saul, and still more decisively crushed by David, who made them tributary, liberated themselves completely in the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah (B.C. 890), since the advantages obtained against them by some later Hebrew kings, as Amaziah (B.C. 838) and Uzziah (B.C. 809), were so far from important or permanent, that, in the time of king Ahaz (B.C. 741) they were able to make a successful invasion into Judea.<sup>b</sup> Before the reign of Jehoram, therefore, these verses must have been added, possibly as early as the life-time of David or soon afterwards. They recall the subjugation of the Edomites and the dominion of Israel, the indelible enmity of the two nations and the merciless severity of the Hebrew victors. Not only did David slay, in the Salt-valley, 18,000 Edomites, and placed Hebrew garrisons in all parts of their territory, but, by his direction, Joab remained for six months as commander in those districts with his whole army, and slaughtered and devastated 'till he had cut off every male in Edom.'<sup>c</sup> To these occurrences especially may apply the words of this prophecy: 'And he that cometh out of Jacob ruleth, and destroyeth the remnant from the cities.'

It appears that the Hebrews harboured so strong a feeling of kinship, that they were reluctant to estrange themselves from the Edomites in spite of the most

<sup>a</sup> Comp. Comm. on Gen. pp. 486-489.

<sup>b</sup> Comp. 2 Ki. viii. 20-22; xiv. 7, 22; 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. viii. 14 (וַיִּשֶׁם בְּאֲדוֹם); 1 Ki. xi. 15, 16; 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13; Ps. lx. 2, 10; cviii. 10.

aggravating provocations. Leniency and humanity were indeed deplorably violated both on the one side and the other. The prophet Amos complains bitterly that Edom pursued his brother--the Hebrews--with the sword, and cast off all pity, and his anger raged perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever.<sup>a</sup> And on the other hand, the Chronicler records that, after the Hebrews under King Amaziah (B.C. 838-811) had killed ten thousand Edomites in battle, 'they carried away other ten thousand captive, and brought them to the top of a rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock that they all were dashed in pieces.'<sup>b</sup> And yet, Hebrew tradition painted Esau's character, if not favourably, at least not invidiously. It represented him as the perfect man of nature, recklessly indifferent indeed to the higher boons and privileges of religion and truth and swayed by violent passion, but generous and forgiving, brave and confiding, and even capable of deep attachment. And when, in the seventh century, under King Josiah, the early history of the people was written or compiled, Edom's old and persistent hostility against Israel could, naturally, not be concealed in the facts.<sup>c</sup> 'We turned. . . and compassed Mount Seir many days,' observes the author, because the Edomites refused the Hebrews a passage through their country. But even on that occasion the historian alludes to them in terms of friendship and affection. By God's command Moses tells the Israelites, 'You are to pass through the land of your brethren (אֶדְוִם), the children of Esau . . . . take good heed, do not strive against them . . . . because I have given Mount Seir to Esau for a possession'; and then the account concludes, 'So we passed by our brethren the children of Esau, who dwelt in Seir.' Even in the Legislation the rigorous principles ordinarily applied with respect to foreign nations were relaxed in their favour,

<sup>a</sup> Amos i. 11.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. xxv. 11, 12; comp. 2 Ki. xiv. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Deut. ii. 1-8.

because they were hardly regarded as strangers: 'Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother, . . . the children that are born of them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation';<sup>a</sup> that is, after three generations the Edomites were allowed to intermarry with the Israelites and' were admitted to all the prerogatives of the holy community.

But this sympathy found among the Edomites no echo or response. They saw in the Hebrews only their former masters, against whom they had been compelled, for centuries, to make the strongest efforts to assert and to maintain their independence. Both nations had no higher interests of faith or intellectual pursuit in common. When, therefore, not long after Josiah, ruin overtook Judah, when their capital was destroyed by the Babylonians, and king and people were carried away into captivity, the unbridled fierceness of the Edomites broke forth without restraint; in wild exultation they fired the ravaging Chaldean: 'Destroy, destroy, to the very foundation'; they seemed to bear their own affliction more willingly when they saw the cruel sufferings of the Israelites; and from this time of ungenerous and ignoble vindictiveness, a hatred against the Edomites took root so bitter and inplacable, that the Hebrews thenceforth designated their most detested foes, like the Romans in a later age, as Edomites. From this period the Hebrew writings abound in indignant invectives, and even virulent outbursts of rage, against the unbrotherly people. Jeremiah and Obadiah, Ezekiel and the second Isaiah, and later Psalmists, vie with each other in portraying Edom's ignominy and debasement, devastation and slavery, as a punishment of their taunting mockery and shameless defiance--'because they had a perpetual hatred and shed the blood of the children of Israel by the sword in the

<sup>a</sup> Deut. xxiii. 8, 9; comp. *Mishn.* Yevam. viii. 2, 3.

time of their calamity.<sup>a</sup> Therefore, the later narrative in the Book of Numbers does not state, like Deuteronomy, 'The Edomites shall be afraid of you, take ye therefore good heed to yourselves';<sup>b</sup> but it represents the Edomites as haughtily saying to the Hebrews, 'Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword';<sup>c</sup> and it designedly expresses the entreaty of the Israelites for permission of a free passage in words the most pathetic and most insinuatingly suppliant, in order to make the conclusion stand out in harsher contrast: 'And Edom answered, Thou shalt not go through; and he came out against the Hebrews with a mighty army and with a strong hand.'<sup>d</sup> But even in these later times, when the Edomites, by no means politically extinct or dispossessed of their land, but, on the contrary, successful in enlarging it, continued to foster their ineradicable spirit of turbulence and revengefulness, the Hebrews might still, with a peculiar satisfaction, point not only to the vaticinations attributed to the patriarch Isaac,<sup>e</sup> but especially to this prophecy ascribed to an old and famous seer: 'And Edom is his possession, and his possession is Seir, his enemies.' This hope seemed at last to be completely realised, when John Hyrcanus (B.C. 129) subjected the Edomites and forced them to submit to circumcision and to adopt all other Jewish rites and laws, although a century after this time, thoughtful men might have been roused to serious reflections, when they saw the Idumiean Herod acquire the sovereign rule over the Jewish commonwealth, and when they beheld the Idumaeian districts still untouched and flourishing, and not, as they read in their sacred predictions, 'a desolation ... like the over-

<sup>a</sup> Ezek. xxxv. 5; comp. Jer. xlix 7-22; Lam. iv. 21, 22; Obad. 1-21; Ezek. xxv. 12-14; xxxv. 2-15; Isa. xxxiv. 5, sqq.; lxiii. 1-6; Psalm cxxxvii. 7; Mal. i. 3, 4.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 14.

<sup>c</sup> Num. xx. 18.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. ver. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. xxvii. 29, 40, הוּה נבִיר, ואת־אחִיך תעבֹד לֹא־אחִיך.

throw of Sodom and Gomorrah ... in which no man shall abide and no son of man shall dwell."<sup>a</sup>

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--None of the attempts which have been made to prove the agreement between the two accounts on the Edomites (in Deut. ii. and Num. xx.) has been successful (comp. *Hengstenb.* Auth. d. Pent, ii. 283-288; Winer, *Real-Wart.* i. 293; De Wette, *Kritik*, i. 359, 360, etc). --From the explanation above proposed, it cannot be surprising that the speech on Edom is not given as a distinct oracle premised by **וַיֵּשֶׁא מִשְׁלַל**. But it may be observed that this phrase occurs in the whole section seven times, and it is possible that the desire of establishing this holy number of prophecies may not have been without influence in determining the additions, though it cannot have prompted the amalgamation of the oracle on Edom with that on Moab, because that oracle was probably the earliest supplement, made at a time when the composition comprised no more than the four original prophecies. In no case is the remark justified that the arrangement and number of predictions imperatively require the whole of them to be attributed to one and the same period' (*Hengstenb.*, Bil., p. 273); the symbolical significance of the numbers was but gradually developed, and an adaptation of earlier writings to subsequent notions entertained of the holiness of certain numbers is quite conceivable. On the application of the number three in the interpolated incident on the road (xxii. 22--35) see pp. 147, 148; on the number seven in the preliminaries to the oracles, p. 165.--It is hardly necessary here to enter into the relation between these verses and the Jahvistic blessing of Isaac (Gen. xxvii. 29, 40): as the former must be placed *before* King Jehoram of Judah, so the latter, on account of the allusion it contains to Edom's liberation (ver. 40), *after* that king; and as both are identical in the chief idea that he who blesses Israel is himself blessed, so they relate to the same chief enemy of Israel; for in the Jahvist's time these verses on Edom had long been

<sup>a</sup> Jer. xlix. 17, 18; Mal. i. 2, 3; 17; xii. 32, sqq. ; Jos. Ant. VIII, comp. 1 Macc. v. 65; 2 Macc. x. 15-ix. 1; XV. vii. 9; etc.

incorporated with the Book of Balaam.--To יְרֵשָׁה, *possession* (equivalent to יְרֵשָׁה, Deut. ii. 5, 9, 19 ; Josh. xii. 6, 7; *Sept.*, **kl hronomia**), we must supply his, viz., Israel's, or of Israel's victorious king (ver. 17), as can hardly be doubtful from the context; and to the same proper noun refers the suffix in אֲדָוֶם; while this substantive is in apposition to אֲדָוֶם and שְׂעִיר, analogous to, but by no means so clear and appropriate as, גֹּיִם יְצָרָיו in ver. 8; the sense being, that Edom and Seir, Israel's adversaries, shall become his possession (*Vulg.*, distinctly the first part, 'et erit Idumaea possessio ejus'; *Sept.*, the second part, **kai>[tai kl hronomia Hsau]elxqroj au[ou]?**). The construction is even less simple if the suffix in אֲדָוֶם is applied to Seir, 'a possession is Seir of his-enemies' (*Vulg.*, haereditas Seir cedet inimicis suis; *Luth.*, Seir wird seinen Feinden unterworfen sein; *Eng. Vers.*, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; *Rosenm.*, *Verschuir*, and others; but *Vater*, questionably, 'Seir, seiner Feinde Land'; *Maur.*, Seir hostium suorum, i.e, Seir terra hostium, etc ). By taking אֲדָוֶם and שְׂעִיר not as synonymous, like יַעֲקֹב and יִשְׂרָאֵל, but in a somewhat different sense, we avoid a languid repetition in the first two parts of the verse; for those terms may either be understood as Edomites and Horites (so also *Knob.* and others; comp. Gen. xxxvi. 9, 20, 'Esau, the father of the Edomites--אֲדָוֶם-- in mount Seir,' and 'The sons of שְׂעִיר the Horite, הַחֹרִי'; see *Comm.* on Gen. pp. 352, 598); or, though less suitably, as the people and the country (so *Hengstenb.*, *De Wette*, and others; comp. Gen. xxxii. 4).--As 'Edom' and 'Israel' are in juxtaposition, so are יְרֵשָׁה and עָשָׂה חֵיל; and as עָשָׂה חֵיל includes also the notion of 'dispossession' or expulsion' (comp. יָרַשׁ in this sense in Deut. ii. 12; ix. 1, etc.), עָשָׂה חֵיל must here denote an increase in property or power, as that phrase frequently involves (Deut. viii. 17, 18; Ruth iv. 11; Prov. xxxi. 29, etc.)--'and Israel acquireth might' ; yet חֵיל should not be restricted to 'wealth' alone (*Targ. Onkel.* and *Jonath.*, צֶלַח בְּנוֹכְסִים, etc.). Other translations, though not taking full account of the parallelism, imply a kindred sense (*Sept.*, **kai>[Israh]l e[po]ihsen e[ph] i[sh]xui**; comp. 1 Sam. xiv. 48; Ps. ix. 14; cviii. 14, etc.; and so *Vulg.*, *Eng. Vers.*, *Vat.*, *Gesen.*, *Knob.*, and others; or *Luth.*, Israel wird

Sieg haben; *Heider, Ewald*, and others). --The subject to וְיִרְדֶּה (ver. 19) is indeed indefinite, 'and one' or 'he *that cometh* out of Jacob shall rule' (comp. Mic. V. 1, **מִמֶּךָ לִי יֵצֵא**); but if we consider that the prophecy on Edom is designedly joined to that on Moab as closely as it could be joined, this ruler can be no other than the 'star' or the 'sceptre' that humbles Moab also (ver. 17), that is David, to whom alone the following words likewise apply, וְהָאֲבִיד שְׂרִיד מֵעִיר. It is inappropriate to understand 'the whole race of Hebrew kings' (*Hengstenb.*, Bil., 187; Reinke *Beitriige* iv. 202, and others) as the individual conception should be adhered to as far as possible. Some consider indeed that in the first part of ver. 19 David is meant, but in the second part Joab, with respect to the passage, 1 Ki. xi. 15, above quoted. (so Ebn Ezra), upon which others have improved by the still more untenable expedient of taking מֵעִיר as *avenger* (*Michael.*, *Mendels.*, and others, one who rouses or stirs up'; comp. Isai. xiii. 17).—יִרְדֶּה, the fut. Kal of רָדָה, *to be master or to rule* (Gram, § lxxvii. 15.b., not of יָרַד, *to descend* as *Onk.* וַיִּיחֹת; *Syr.* וַנְחֹת; *Sam. Vers.* וַיִּנְעַת; *Sept.*, **etegerqhsetai**), is used as an intransitive verb (as in 1 Ki. v. 4; Ps. lxxii. 8); it is, therefore, unnecessary to read וְיִרְדֶּה יֵצֵא or וְיִרְדֶּה יֵצֵא (Isai. xli. 2; so Gaab, Vuter, Knob., and others), even if the plural of the suffix admitted the conjecture. As שְׂרִיד, abandoning its strictly etymological meaning of 'one who has escaped' (comp. שָׂרִיד, Josh. x. 20; Arab., XXX like פְּלִיט), has almost uniformly the sense of 'remainder' or 'remnant' (Num. xxi. 35; Deut. iii. 3; Judg. v. 13; Job xx. 21; comp., especially, Josh. x. 20, וְהָשְׂרִידִים שְׂרִידוֹ), it seems preferable to connect מֵעִיר with וְהָאֲבִיד; thus the word was construed by the Masorites, who furnished שְׂרִיד with a distinctive accent; and הָאֲבִיד מֵעִיר (with מֵן) is 'to destroy away from' or 'out of the city' (Gram. § 105.4; not as the *Vulg.*, et perdat reliquias civitatis; the *Sept.*, indistinctly, **kai-~~apolei?~~ swzomenon ek pol~~ewj~~**, etc.), or rather 'out of the cities,' since עִיר is here used in a collective sense (comp. Job xxiv. 12)--all or the principal cities of Edom which David captured and the population of which he *partially* destroyed; for the words וְהָאֲבִיד שְׂרִיד מֵעִיר must, it is hoped, be understood as a poetical hyperbole. The translation 'Out of Jacob ruleth *Jehovah* and

destroyeth those that remain out of the town of *Zion*' (so *Ewald* and others, with doubtful reference to Ps. cx. 2), presupposes a corruption of the text for which there is no proof or trace; it yields, moreover, the artificial sense that--'God completes the subjection of all nations from Zion as His abode,' and is at variance with the context, as then the verse could hardly apply to Edom alone. Such an extension of its meaning has indeed been asserted by the defenders of that interpretation: 'the prophetic view stretches out into the distant future--far beyond David; his aspirations become in a wide sense *Messianic*; they long for and foretell a glorious time of conquest, of which David was but the prelude.' To this opinion apply all the difficulties and objections above pointed out with respect to a Messianic acceptance of these verses in any sense. The 19th verse was at least not so explained by the prophet Obadiah, who refers it literally to the Edomites, and reproduces some words very distinctly (vers. 17-19, 'ולא יהיה שריד לבית עשו וכ', comp. Am. ix. 12). Nor do these sentences in general seem to have been understood as Messianic by the ancient Hebrew writer or writers who appended the following predictions; for, if so, they would have made the additions superfluous, as they would have included the subjugation or destruction of the Amalekites and all other heathen nations. Similarly some Jewish interpreters (as *Ebn Ezra* and others) inferred from the very place which this prophecy occupies that it cannot foreshadow the Messiah, who is expected 'at the end of days,' and would, therefore, have been introduced at the conclusion, after the announcement of Asshur's annihilation. Yet other Jewish authorities uphold the Messianic conception: 'the principal empire of Edom,' says Rashi, 'is Rome, and these words refer to the king Messiah'; and a modern critic goes so far to contend that 'Edom is the immediate end and object of the whole piece' (*Ewald*, *Gesch.*, i. 148; *Jahrb.* viii. 36); whereas we have shown thnt, in the author's original plan, Edom is not even specially comprised (p. 263). It is impossible to associate these verses with Amaziah's expedition against Edom above alluded to (2 Ki. xiv. 7; 2 Chr. xxv. 11, 12), because that war was waged in the open field and not in

towns, and because, in Amaziah's time, Israel's rule over Edom had long ceased, although desultory successes were occasionally achieved.

17. PROPHECY ON THE AMALEKITES. XXIV. 20.

20. And he saw Amalek, and he took up his parable and said,

Amalek is the first of the nations,  
But his end is for destruction.

Long and changeful had been the warfare carried on by the Hebrews against the Amalekites. It began when the children of Israel had hardly left Egypt,<sup>a</sup> was renewed when they had reached the southern border of Canaan,<sup>b</sup> and continued, with varying fortunes, in the period of the Judges and Kings.<sup>c</sup> At length, in the reign or age of Hezekiah, a band of Simeonites annihilated the last remnants of the Amalekites in their strongholds of Mount Seir.<sup>d</sup> At that time, the prophecy we read in this verse might have been added: 'Amalek is the first of nations, but his end is for destruction.' Such a supplement must have seemed particularly desirable for more than one reason. First, it might appear that, as Agag had before been incidentally mentioned,<sup>e</sup> his humiliation and fate ought to be proclaimed with all possible distinctness and emphasis. A similar announcement, moreover, forced itself upon the Hebrews almost spontaneously. For though, according to the Biblical records, the Amalekites were a branch of the Edomites,<sup>f</sup> the Hebrews regarded them by no means with the same fraternal feelings, but, on the contrary, conceived against them a hatred so

<sup>a</sup> Exod. xvii.

<sup>b</sup> Num. xiv. 25, 40-45.

<sup>c</sup> Judg. iii. 13; vi. 3, 33; vii. 12; x. 12; see Commentary on Exodus, pp. 309, 310.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. iv. 42, 43.

<sup>e</sup> Ver. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16; comp. 1 Chr. i. 36: the sons of Esau, Elipbaz..., the sons of Elipbaz ... Amalek.

intense and inextinguishable, that it can only be compared to the fierce enmity of later Jews against the Samaritans. The older account, given in Exodus, of the first conflict with the Amalekites, after stating God's resolve, 'I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven,' concludes with the sentence which sounds like a real battle-cry in a holy campaign, 'War of the Lord against Amalek from generation to generation.'<sup>a</sup> For centuries, this was the spirit in which both nations met. Nothing is so much calculated to convey an idea of the untamed ferocity of those times, which the mellowing rays of a true civilisation had hardly reached beyond the surface, as the ruthless command given by the great and highly cultivated leader Samuel to the king he had anointed in the name of Jahveh, 'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.'<sup>b</sup> For when Saul, having marched out with a prodigious army of two hundred and ten thousand men,<sup>c</sup> believed, in the joy and pride of his heart, he was announcing to his prophetic guide the successful execution of the command in telling him that 'he had taken Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and had utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword;<sup>d</sup> it became clear what Samuel had meant by the injunction 'thou shalt utterly destroy them' (והחרמתם). The total reduction and submission of the Amalekites did not suffice. They and their memory were to be effaced without leaving a vestige. As long as the faintest trace remained which recalled their unhallowed existence, heaven and earth seemed outraged and defiled. The very

<sup>a</sup> Exodus xvii. 13-15, מלחמה  
ליהוה בעמלק מדר דר'

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 3, 'והחרמתם וכ';  
comp. ver. 18; xxviii. 18; also the  
brief statement in xiv. 48.

<sup>c</sup> xv. 4; comp. on this verse and  
figure *Noldeke*, Ueber die Amale-  
kiter und einige andere Nachbar-  
volker der Israeliten, p. 14.

<sup>d</sup> xv. 8; comp. ver. 20.

cattle that belonged to them was an abomination, and detested by God as sacrifices. For such an object, their king Agag alone was deemed acceptable, and so 'Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.'<sup>a</sup>

It might be supposed that this was enough of wrath and fierce persecution; but new wars and marauding expeditions followed, which were repulsed by David with a strong hand;<sup>b</sup> and under later kings also, as Amaziah, Amalek eagerly made common cause with Edom and other adversaries of Israel.<sup>c</sup> But not even their all but absolute extermination by Hezekiah could appease the burning animosity of the Hebrews. When, a century later, the Deuteronomist fixed Israel's relations to the surrounding tribes, he did not fail to enjoin upon his countrymen, 'Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.'<sup>d</sup> This feeling was, in subsequent times, most zealously fostered; it received new nourishment when the popular belief stamped Haman, 'the Agagite,' the arch-enemy of the Jews, as an Amalekite;<sup>e</sup> and it was carefully cherished by the Synagogue, which takes Amalek, like Edom, as the perpetual type of all wicked and malignant foes of Israel; although, in this respect also, a milder spirit has long since arisen, which considers it the noblest form of the festive joy of Purim, to efface all distinction between 'Blessed be Mordecai' and 'Cursed be Haman.

If we enquire after the causes of such deep and persistent aversion, the Hebrew documents declare that it originated in the base and reckless conduct of the Amalekites at the time when the Hebrews had but just escaped from an oppressive servitude and a perilous flight; not waiting till the embarrassed hosts arrived in

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 33; see Comm. on Lev. i., p.414; compare 1 Sam. xxviii. 18, ולא עשית חרון אפו בעמלק.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Sam. xxvii. 8; xxx. 1-20; 2 Sam. viii. 12; 1 Chron. xviii. 11.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Ki. xiv. 7; comp. Ps. lxxxiii. 8; As. Antiq. IX. ix. 1, 2.

<sup>d</sup> Deut. xxv. 19.

<sup>e</sup> Esth. iii. 1, 10; vii. 6; viii. 5; ix. 24.

their districts, the Amalekites marched out and met them at Rephidim, not far from the northern ridges of Mount Sinai, attacked and 'smote their rear, all the feeble behind them, when they were faint and weary;' and thus acted as 'sinners' who 'do not fear God,' nay, as enemies of the Lord.<sup>a</sup> If we recollect that the Hebrews thus saw their young liberty and new power menaced in the bud, and, instead of marching northward direct into Canaan, were compelled to long and weary wanderings round Mount Seir into the east-Jordanic country, we shall at least understand that vehement antipathy which outlasted the political existence both of the Hebrews and the Amalekites; although it cannot be fully estimated without, besides, taking into account their constant and violent collisions. For the Amalekites seem indeed to have been ubiquitous. 'We find them at the southern frontiers of Canaan, spreading almost to the coast of the Philistines and the approaches of Egypt; we meet them in Arabia Petraea and the rugged fastnesses of Mount Seir; we see them scattered throughout the peninsula of Sinai, and yet also in the tracts of Ephraim, where even a mountain chain bore the name of 'Mountain of the Amalekites.'<sup>b</sup> And wherever they dwelt or roamed, they fanned the old flame of hostility by pillage, bloodshed, and every barbarous provocation.

Now the full import of this verse may be intelligible: 'And he saw Amalek even from the summit of Peor, by the plains of Moab, branches of that far-extending tribe might be beheld, or might be supposed to be visible. 'Amalek is the first; of nations,' Balaam said--first in power and first in wantonly displaying this might against the distressed Hebrews; 'but his end is for destruction'--so literally and so emphatically to utter destruction, that he became a type and an emblem of national extinction.

<sup>a</sup> אֹיִבֵי יְהוָה comp. Exod. xvii. 8-15; Deut. xxv. 18; 1 Sam. xv. 2, 18; xxx. 26.

<sup>b</sup> Judg. v. 14; xii. 15; comp. Num. xiii. 29; 1 Sam. xv. 7; xxvii. 8; xxx. 1.

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--The author of this verse evidently meant that the prophet saw the Amalekites really, and not merely 'in his mind's eye' the addition was framed so as to harmonise with the plan of the entire composition, and the words **קרא את עמלק** correspond to **קרא את ישראל** (ver. 2). It may be difficult to prove that a division of the Amalekites actually resided in a district that could be surveyed from the height of Peor; but such a settlement, at some time at least, is not impossible on the part of a tribe so ramified and so roving; and this ideal possibility the author might plead as a sufficient justification. For he desired to describe the Amalekites as **ראשית גוים**, that is, as the head or chief and most powerful of nations; one of the principal attributes of such a people is wide extent of territory; and that impression of almost unlimited abodes is produced upon the reader by the supposition that the prophet 'saw Amalek' from Peor.-- In a sense similar to this passage, **ראשית גוים** is employed in Am. vi. 1, where the Israelites are so characterised, and whence the phrase may have been borrowed (*Sept.*, **αἰχμη** **ἐπινοή**; Vulg., principium gentium, etc.; comp. Am. vi. 6, where the chief or choicest ointments are called **ראשית שמנים**; 1 Sam. xv. 21, etc.). Israel's king has before been described as mightier than the king of the Amalekites (ver. 7); this statement is exhibited in all its force and significance by intimating that the Amalekites were the most powerful and most important of all heathen nations. It is true that Arabic writers designate the Amalekites as a very old people of true Arabs, older not only than the Ishmaelites, but even than the Joktanites, and forming the primitive population not only of Shemitic but of many other countries (comp. *D'Herbelot*, *Bibl. Orient.*, p. 110, etc.). But this was not the opinion of Biblical historians, who, as we have above observed, regarded Amalek as a grandson of Esau from a subordinate wife (Gen. xxxvi. 12, 16); and the almost absurdly fabulous, confused, and fictitious character of all Arabic accounts of the Amalekites, has been satisfactorily proved (comp. *Noldeke*, *Ueber die Amalekiter*, etc., pp. 29-42). The mention of the district of **שדה העמלקי**, in the time of Abraham (Gen. xiv. 7), is easily explained, by historical anticipation, as a country inhabited

by Amalekites in the author's time (see Comm. on Genes. pp. 355, 597). The translation 'the oldest of nations is Amalek,' seems, therefore, less appropriate (so *Sam. Vers.*, קדמאות גועיה and many others); it is, at least, not required by the anti-thesis, evidently meant as pointed, of ראשית and אחריתו, which is sufficiently distinct in the other acceptance also.--גוים is not *heathen* or *hostile* nations, so that the first words of the prophecy would denote the *enmity* which the idolatrous Amalekites were the *first* to evince against Israel (so *Onk.*, ריש קדמאות גוים; *Jon.*, *Jerus.*, *Rashi*, הוא קדם את כלם להלחם בישראל, and others), but, as usual, nations in general (comp. ver. 8, where גוים is qualified by צרי; and xxiii. 9, where בגוים is among the *other* nations').—'His end is עֲדֵי אֲבָד,' that is, literally, 'as far as those who perish,' אֲבָד being taken collectively (comp. Job xxix. 13; xxxi. 19; Prov. xxxi. 6), or 'his end will reach destruction,' the concrete, by way of metonymy, used for the abstract noun, or simply 'his end is destruction.' With respect to the Amalekites, Samuel commanded Saul: 'thou shalt fight against them עַד־כָּלוֹתָם אוֹתָם till they are destroyed' (1 Sam. xv. 18), and the preposition עַד is similarly employed in other passages (comp. 1 Chr. iv. 27; Hag. ii. 19; Job xxv. 5; Ps. xc. 3, etc.). It is, therefore, unnecessary to read עַד יֵאָבֵד (so *Sam. Cod.* and *Vers.*, *Syr.*, *Michael.*, and others, and a few MSS.), and to understand this, as the Syriac Version does, 'his posterity will perish for ever' (חרתה תאבדי לעלמין), which would require תאבד in the Hebrew text; and similarly *Sept.*, **kai-to-sperma auſou?apol eifai**, and others; see *supra*, p. 183; but *Onkel.*, 'in his end he will perish *for ever*' לעלמא, and similarly *Mendels.* and others).

#### 18. PROPHECY ON THE KENITES. XXIV. 21, 22.

21. And he saw the Kenite, and he took up his parable and said,

Strong is thy dwelling place,  
And build thou thy nest in the rock

22. Yet for destruction is Kain--  
 Until Asshur carrieth thee away captive.

In their relations to the Hebrews, the Kenites formed the most striking contrast to the Amalekites. From the beginning of their history down to its close, as far as it has been preserved to us, those relations were marked; by the sincerest friendship and goodwill; and no less strong and indelible than the hatred entertained by the Israelites against Amalek, was the gratitude they evinced towards the Kenites, on which it is more grateful to dwell. They never forgot that, in remote times, Jethro or Hobab, the Midianite priest or Emir, whom they associated with the Kenites,<sup>a</sup> afforded them advice and assistance in the toils and dangers of their desert wanderings, that he was to them 'like eyes' on their journeys and in their encampments, and that he consented to accompany them into their new homes to share their fortunes.<sup>b</sup> Indeed, from the earliest parts of the period of the Judges, we find the Kenites settled in the southern districts of Palestine, especially in the territory of Judah, to which they were almost reckoned, inhabiting their own towns and forming independent communities, but constantly exchanging with the Hebrews acts of kindness.<sup>c</sup> A portion of their number, separating from the principal stock, settled, it is true, or lived as nomads, in more northern provinces of Canaan among tribes hostile to the Hebrews; but even there they remained strongly mindful of the old bonds of sympathy. When the Israelites were compelled to encounter the powerful northern king Jabin of Hazor, it was a Kenite woman, 'Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite,' living near Kedesh in Naphtali, who delivered them from their most dangerous foe, the valiant general

<sup>a</sup> Judg. i. 16, iv. 11.

<sup>b</sup> Exod. xviii. 1-26, and notes in loc.; Num. X. 29-32.I

<sup>c</sup> Judg. i. 16; 1 Sam. xxvii. 10; xxx. 29, David sent presents from the booty also **לאשר בערי הקיני**.

Sisera; she committed that sanguinary deed in spite: of the alliance of friendship which existed between her house and King Jabin, and in spite of the sacredness of hospitality inviolable even to enemies, so deep was her attachment to Israel; and for that deed she was extolled, with fiery eulogies, by the Hebrew prophetess: 'Blessed above women shall Jael be, the wife of Heber the Kenite, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.'<sup>a</sup> And on the other hand, when Saul, engaged in his war of extirpation against the Amalekites, had advanced to their capital, he sent to the Kenites, who had established themselves among that tribe, this message: 'Go, depart, remove from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.'<sup>b</sup> Even the Chronicler connects the Kenites with Caleb, a descendant of Judah, and counts among them the Rechabites, who, living as nomads and Nazarites, were by Jeremiah praised as bright examples of filial piety and obedience. All the Hebrew records confirm this genial attachment and mutual harmony, which Jewish tradition of later times maintained with equal unanimity.

It would, therefore, be extremely surprising were we here to find a hostile utterance against the Kenites similar to that on Amalek or Edom. But are these verses indeed I conceived in such a spirit? Carefully examined, the prophecy is not hostile but sorrowful; it does not breathe hatred, but compassion; it proclaims a sad fate, but without exultation or bitterness. It simply enunciates that the rocky mountain strongholds, in which the Kenites believed themselves unassailable, proved a vain protection, and that the people, weakened by repeated losses and reverses, were at last carried away into captivity by the Assyrian conquerors. Indeed, weighing

<sup>a</sup> Judg. iv., 11, 17; v. 24.

<sup>b</sup> I Sam. xv. s.

<sup>c</sup> Comp. 1 Chron. ii. 42, 55; Jer.

xxxv.

the context, we are justified in referring to this prophecy also the author's plaintive and sympathetic exclamation immediately following: 'Woe, who may live, when God doeth this!'<sup>a</sup>

But how, it may be asked, could such an oracle find a place in this Book of Balaam? A correct insight into the origin of the 'Supplements' explains this point. It appeared suitable to join to a prophecy on the Amalekites an announcement concerning a people which, though partly domiciled among the former, and perhaps being with them of kindred race, was held by the Hebrews in deep affection, but did not escape affliction and misery. In setting forth this memorable contrast, the tone of violent indignation is naturally changed almost into mournful elegy. Such a connection is indeed loose if not extraneous, but it fully corresponds to the character of additions in which the strict plan and close unity of the main composition are disregarded. The destinies of Moab alone were to be delineated;<sup>b</sup> with some appearance of fitness, speeches on Edom and Amalek were appended, as these nations also were inveterate enemies of Israel; but how great is the anti-climax of annexing an oracle concerning a peaceful and comparatively insignificant tribe which, even if slight collisions should have occasionally arisen, never made itself conspicuous by animosity against the Hebrews!

We are not informed what disasters the Kenites suffered in the course of time. Those who had taken up their abodes in the northern districts, probably participated in the fate of the ten tribes of Israel, which Shalmaneser deported into Assyria, if they had not already belonged to those whom Tiglath-pileser carried away in the reign of Pekah, king of Israel, since among the captives we find distinct mention made of the people of Kedesh and all the

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 23.      <sup>b</sup> Ver. 14.

inhabitants of Naphtali.<sup>a</sup> After this time, therefore, the verses before us must have been added, probably by the same hand that wrote the preceding prophecy on Amalek and the following words concerning Kittim; all at least refer to the Assyrian period. We learn indeed from the Inscriptions, that the Assyrians began to come into contact with the Hebrews, and to make them tributary, from a time as early as the first half of the ninth century;<sup>b</sup> but an actual abduction into Assyria is only recorded in connection with much later expeditions, and these verses manifestly imply more than a mere menace or a vague apprehension of danger.

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--Among the nations whose possessions God promised to Abraham after the conclusion of the Covenant (Gen. xv. 19-21), the Kenites are indeed also mentioned. But the object of that enumeration was merely to describe the extent of the future territory of the Hebrews, which was to reach 'from the river of Egypt to the great, river Euphrates' (ibid., ver. 18). Not all those tribes need necessarily be considered as hostile to the Israelites, who were, of course, at liberty to allow residence among them to whomsoever they chose. It is, therefore, also an unfounded supposition to identify the Kenites with those Canaanites who, in conjunction with Amalek, fought unprovoked against the wandering Hebrews on the southern frontiers of Palestine (Num. xiv. 25, 43, 45), since even those pdltions of the Kenites that lived among the Amalekites were amicably disposed towards the Hebrews (comp. also *Noldeke*, Ueber die Amalekiter, pp. 19-23; *Kuenen*, Relig. of Israel, i. 179-182, and others).--It has been conjectured that the capital of the southern Kenites was Hazezon-Tamar, later called En-gedi (the present *Ain Djidi*), in the desert of Judah, famous for its beautiful palm plantations and vineyards and the precious

<sup>a</sup> 2 Ki. xv. 29; comp. the Inscription of Tiglath-pileser: 'The land of Beth-Omri (Samaria), the population, the goods of its people I sent

to Assyria' (Records of the Past, v. 52).

<sup>b</sup> See the events referred to in notes on vers. 23, 24.

opobalsamum (Gen. xiv. 7; 1 Sam. xxiv. 1-3; 2 Chr. xx, 2; Cant. i. 14; comp. Joseph. Ant. IX. i. 2; *Plin.* Nat. Hist. v. 17; *Robinson*, Bibl. Researches, i. 500-509, etc.), while others fix upon the summit of the cliff rising perpendicularly from the level of the western shore of the Dead Sea, about ten miles south of En-gedi, where afterwards the famous city of Masada was built: the position of either place is indeed suitable; but proofs are wanting in the one case and the other, and En-gedi is, in earlier times, described as peopled by the Amorites (Gen. xiv. 7).--The friendly spirit of Jewish tradition towards the Kenites is reflected in Rashi's explanation Blessed art thou in being so strongly fortified, for surely thou shalt no more be humbled in the world; for even if one day expelled from the place of thy habitation, and led into captivity with the ten tribes of Israel, do not be concerned; this is no humiliation but merely a change of abodes, and thou shalt certainly return with the other captives.' The last idea is also expressed in the reading of the Samaritan Codex, עַד מֵאֲשׁוּר תּוֹשְׁבֶךָ, 'till thy inhabitants return from Assyria,' and in the Sam. Vers., סַעַד מֵאֲשׁוּר עֶזְרֹתְךָ. The Targum of Jonathan renders הַקְנִי by 'Jethro who had become a proselyte' (similarly *Mendelss.* and others, 'Balaam saw Jethro and his family in the Hebrew camp'), and the Chaldee translators generally represent הַקְנִי by שְׁלֵמָיָהּ or שְׁלֵמָיָה, probably meaning the peaceful people' (compare, however, *Talm.* Bab, Batbr. 56a, where שְׁלֵמָיָה stands for הַקְדָּמוֹנִי, Gen. xv. 19, but נַפְתֹּוהִי for הַקְנִי. According to 1 Chr. ii. 51, 54, שְׁלֵמָיָה--with ש--is kindred with the Kenites).--The hypothesis of two tribes distinct from each other and both accidentally bearing the same name of Kenites, the one of Midianite descent, friendly to the Hebrews, the other of Canaanite origin, hostile to them, can neither be supported nor is it required; it was chiefly suggested by the supposed necessity that these 'prophecies of Balaam' must certainly include some representative of the Canaanites, those most troublesome and most obnoxious foes of Israel. But this opinion rests on an estimate of the economy of the last speeches (vers. 18-24), which we have proved to be untenable. And even if that necessity were admitted, why should the small and peaceful people of the

Kenites have been selected to serve as such a representative, since from the height of Peor many much more conspicuous tribes, both east and west of the Jordan, could be seen or imagined? More consistently, though of course unwarrantably, some Jewish writers (as *Abarbanel* and others) consider the Kenites here to mean the *Ammonites*. Hence it is also utterly against the context to assume that it was the Hebrews who caused the ruin of the Kenites; for though they executed punishment upon Moab, Edom, and Amalek, they were certainly not instrumental in the downfall of Asshur and Eber (ver. 24): a uniform plan, as is evident from all sides, is not carried out in the Supplements. 'The words are not a prediction of evil to the Kenites, but a promise of safety to be long continued to them,' says the author of the Commentary on Numbers in Canon Cook's Holy Bible--the only modern interpreter, as far as we are aware, who takes this view, which is alone borne out by the facts of history. If any relation be intended between this and the preceding oracle, it is that of antithesis contrasting the enmity of the Amalekites with the--friendship of the Kenites, and comparing the satisfaction felt by the Hebrews at the annihilation of the one with the pity and sympathy evinced by them in the misfortunes of the others.--The first ancestor of the Kenites is קִנִּי (ver. 22), of which word was formed the patronymic יְנִיָּהוּ, also written קִנִּי (1 Sam. xxvii. 10), or יְנִיָּהוּ (1 Chr. ii. 55; Sept., **Kinaiði**); but then יְנִיָּהוּ itself was used as the name of an individual (Judg. i. 16, יְנִיָּהוּ בֶן־יְנִיָּהוּ), and conversely, what is more natural, קִנִּי was employed to denote the whole tribe (ver. 22; Judg. iv. 11), as מוֹאָב or אֲדוֹם stands for מוֹאָבִי or אֲדוֹמִי. Whether the name is to be connected with קִנִּי *lance* (2 Sam. xxi. 16), so that it would mean *lance-bearer*, or with יְנִיָּהוּ in the sense of possession, like יְנִיָּהוּ (Gen. xxxiv. 23, etc.), is doubtful.--If we consider this passage by itself, the simplest construction seems to be to take שׁוֹמֵר as imperative Kal, which yields a good and poetical sense: 'Strong (אַתָּה יָתִיב) is thy dwelling place, and put thou thy nest in the rock, yet' etc., i.e., fortify yourselves as strongly as you may, yet, etc. We are certainly not compelled to interpret these words from the text of Obadiah (ver. 4), who freely adapted them (אַתָּה תִּגְבַּיְהוּ ... וְאַתָּה ... שׁוֹמֵר קִנְיָהּ), and to

assume an irregular or Aramaic participle passive of Kal, **שׁוּם** instead of **שׁוּם**, for the existence of which a *kethiv* of the feminine (**שׁוּמָה**) is but a feeble support (2 Sam. xiii. 32; Sept., freely, **kai-eph q ^j**; *Vulg.*, sed si posueris, etc.); still less plausibly, therefore, has **שׁוּם** here been taken as the infinitive with the force of the finite verb.—**קִנְיָה** is no doubt chosen as forming a paronomasia with **קִינְיָה** and **קִינְיָה**, and the same word has been preserved both by Obadiah and Jeremiah, although, in reproducing this verse, they apply it to the Edomites (Obad. 3, 4; Jer. xlix. 16, **כִּי־תִגְבְּיָהּ כְּנִשְׂרָה קִנְיָה וְכִי** but the metaphor is by no means unusual and occurs, for instance, in the Assyrian Inscription of the 'Taylor Cylinder' (col. iii., lines 66-70), where Sennacherib records, 'In any fifth campaign the people of ... Kua and Kana, who had fixed their dwellings like the nests of eagles on the highest summits and wild crags of the Nippur mountains,' etc. (comp. also the same king's Inscription on the slab of the Kouyunjik bulls, § 38; Annals of Assur-nasir-pal, col. i., §§ 49, 50, 64, 65; see *Rec. of the Past*, iii. 44, 45; vii. 63).--The conjunction **כִּי אִם** can here have no other meaning but that of an adversative--*except* that (Gen. xxxii. 27; xlii. 15), or simply *but* or *however* though the Kenites fix their abodes on rocky strongholds, they yet do not escape destruction (comp. Gen. xxviii. 17; Lev. xxi. 2; Num. xxvi. 65, where **כִּי אִם** is the preposition *except*; and Job xlii. 8, where it is the adverb only). The translation 'for Kain shall surely not be destroyed' (Keil, Geiger, and others), **אִם** taken in the negative sense which it bears in oaths (xiv. 23, etc.), is syntactically not so simple, destroys the obvious antithesis to the preceding verse, and gives an incongruous sense.--'Kain **לְבַעַר יְהִי**,' literally, shall be for destroying,' i.e., shall be destroyed, a not uncommon application of **הִיָּה** with the infinitive (comp. Deut. xxxi. 17, **וְהָיָה לְאֹכַל**, he shall be consumed; Josh. ii. 5; 2 Chr. xxvi. 5, etc.); which does not necessarily, as in the frequent phrase **וּבְעֵרַת הָרַע מִקְרַבְךָ** (Deut. xiii. 6; xvii. 7; xix. 1,9, etc.), involve utter and permanent annihilation, but may merely mean serious loss and injury (comp. Isai. iv. 4; vi. 13).--**מַה־עַד** for **עַד־אֲשֶׁר**, until; comp. xxiii. 3, **מַה־עַד** for **עַד־אֲשֶׁר** and **מַה־עַד** for **עַד־אֲשֶׁר**. The translation: 'How long? Asshur shall carry thee away,' is

not inadmissible (comp. Ps. iv. 3; lxxiv. 9, etc.), but seems here abrupt. The rendering of the *Sept.*, **kai>eh̄n genhtai t&? Bewr nossia>panourgiaj**, 'and if to Beor a nest of cunning is made,' is evidently based on the reading **וְאִם יִהְיֶה לְבַעַר קַן עֶרְמָה אֲשׁוּר וּכְ** 'עֶרְמָה אֲשׁוּר וּכְ', that is, even if Beor most shrewdly chooses his dwelling, he will be carried away by the Assyrians, which may be meant to predict the destruction of Balaam's own house; whereas the version of the *Vulg.*, 'et si fueris electus de stirpe Cin, quam diu poteris permanere'? pre-supposes the reading **וְתִהְיֶה לְבַחֹר קַן**, i.e., even if thou provest thyself to be a strong and elected band of Kain, thou shalt not be rescued. The text appears, from early times, to have been uncertain, but the received reading is evidently the most appropriate.--The first part of the 22nd verse, in which the Kenites are not, as in the rest of the prophecy, addressed in the second person, implies an anallage; for it cannot be doubted that the suffix in **תִּשְׂבֹּךְ**, 'until Asshur carries thee away captive,' refers to the Kenites; to apply it to the Hebrews (*Hengstenb.* and others), who are not mentioned in the whole oracle, would be as unsuitable in this speech, which begins, 'And he saw the Kenite,' as it is natural in a former prophecy introduced by 'And he saw Israel' (vers. 2, 5, 9); yet, contrary to logic and contrary to the plainest rules of construction, that explanation has been insisted upon, because it was believed that every single statement in these verses must import enmity against the Hebrews; and the sense is supposed to be this: Asshur carries Israel into captivity in defiance of right and mercy, thus commits grave sins against God's people, and must therefore himself sink into ruin (ver. 24; see supra). No dexterity or skill, even if ready to sacrifice all philological accuracy, can establish that unity or continuity of sense, which is irreparably destroyed by the appendages. Something of this irregularity has been felt by all careful and unprejudiced critics, though a clear result is impossible without distinguishing between the genuine and the interpolated parts of the piece; so, for instance, by *Schultz*, (*Alttestam. Theol.*, i. 93, 'The allusions to Asshur, very surprising in these verses, were probably added by the last redactor,' etc.), *Vater*, *Lengerke*, and others. Bertholdt, how-

ever (Einleitung, Vol. III., pp. 792, 793), goes too far in placing the whole passage from ver. 14 to ver. 24 in the time after Alexander the Great; the objections to which this and analogous opinions are open will be apparent from our notes on these verses.

19. PROPHECY ON ASSYRIA. XXIV. 23, 24.

23. And he took up his parable and said,  
Woe, who may live, when God doeth  
this!

24. And ships from the coast of Kittim,  
They humble Asshur and humble Eber,  
And he also is for destruction.

‘Until Asshur carrieth thee away captive.’<sup>a</sup> What Hebrew citizen in the time of Hezekiah could write or read these words without being agitated by the strongest and most conflicting emotions? They naturally prompted another prophecy, which, however, in a still higher degree than the preceding utterance, is covered by uncertainty and mystery. Will it be possible to lift the veil of so many ages?

After an unbroken and almost unparalleled succession of brilliant victories and conquests, east and west of the Euphrates; after Assur-nasir-pal (Sardanapalus), as early as the first part of the ninth century, had exacted heavy imposts from Tyre and Sidon, Arvad, and other Phoenician towns;<sup>b</sup> when his successor Shalmaneser II. had repeatedly, in the battle of Karkar and elsewhere, routed with terrible slaughter twelve allied kings of

<sup>a</sup> עַד־מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשְׁבֶּךָ, ver. 22.

<sup>b</sup> On his ‘Standard Inscription’ (§ 5) he calls himself ‘the king who subdued all the regions from the great stream of the Tigris unto the land of the Lebanon and the great

(Mediterranean) sea’ (compare his ‘Annals’ in Records of the Past, iii. 70-74, 99, 100; vii. 12; *Schrader*, Keilinschriften und das Alte Test., pp. 66, 309, etc., and Art. *Assyrien* in Riehm's Handwörterbuch).

Syria and the adjoining countries, among whom were *Rimmon-Hidri* (Ben-hadad) of Damascus and 'Ahabbu (Ahab) of the country of the Israelites' furnishing a force of ten thousand men and two thousand chariots,<sup>a</sup> and had again and again defeated and weakened Hazael, Ben-hadad's successor, and levied tribute not only from the towns of Phoenicia, but also from Jehu, king of Israel, as the famous Black Obelisk of Nimroud explicitly records both in word and sculpture;<sup>b</sup> after Pul, or Tiglath-pileser, had, by rigorous extortions, asserted his authority over King Menahem of Israel, Rezin of Damascus, and Hiram of Tyre, and had reduced Edom, Arabia, and Philistia to obedience and tributary dependence, had carried away large numbers of Hebrews from the northern districts,<sup>c</sup> and even interfered in the internal affairs of the country so far as himself to appoint, after Pekah's assassination, Hoshea as king of Israel;<sup>d</sup> and when at last Sargon, among other acquisitions extending from Armenia and Media to Egypt and Libya, captured Samaria, and the ten tribes were deported to Halah, Habor, and the towns of the Medes:<sup>e</sup> then the Assyrian

<sup>a</sup> Monolith Inscript. of Shalman., col. ii., §§ 90-100; Black Obelisk Inscript., Face D, lines 58-66; and Face A base, lines 87-89, 'Eighty-nine cities I took; a destruction I made of the kings of the Hittites.'

<sup>b</sup> Face B base, lines 97-99, 102-104; Face C base, line 127, Epigraph ii., 'the tribute of Yahua (Jehu), son (a successor) of Khumri (Omri) --silver, gold, bowls of gold, vessels of gold, goblets of gold, pitchers of gold, lead, sceptres for the king's hand and staves;' see Comm. on Genes. pp. 290, 296;. Records of the Past, iii. 99, 100; v. 32-41.

<sup>c</sup> *Supra*, pp. 285, 286.

<sup>d</sup> Comp. the Inscript. of Tiglath-pileser II. in *G. Smith's*, Assyrian

Discoveries, pp. 254-287; Rec. of the Past, v. 43-52, etc.; 'Pakaha, their king, they had slain ... Husih to the kingdom I appointed; ten talents of gold, one thousand of silver . . . I received from them as their tribute;' comp. however, 2 Ki. xv. 30, where the Assyrian king's share in the appointment of Hoshea is not mentioned.

<sup>e</sup> See Comm. on Genes. p. 291; 'Annals of Sargon,' in Records of the Past, vii. 25-56, 'In the beginning of my reign-B.C. 721--I besieged the king of Samaria, occupied the town of Samaria, and led into captivity 27,280 souls; I took them to Assyria, and in their stead I there put people whom my hand had con-

empire, under the rule of Sargon's son, Sennacherib, seemed to have reached the very zenith of its might and splendour. This monarch, as we now know his history and exploits from the deciphered inscriptions on the ruins of his magnificent palace at Kouyunjik, from famous cylinders, and other contemporary records, discomfited the king of Babylon, Merodach Baladan (Marduk-beladore) and his allies, the Elamites, so completely, that the Babylonian monarchy, which, for many centuries, had been to Assyria a constant source of vexation and danger, never recovered, but thenceforth remained in subjection.<sup>a</sup> Then Sennacherib, after a short repose, during which he directed 'the enlargement of his palaces and the improvement of Nineveh, which 'he made as splendid as the sun,' crossed the Euphrates, marched into Syria, defeated the kings of Tyre and Sidon, and captured other Phoenician cities, over which he placed Tubaal as tributary chief, took Ashkelon and many other coast towns, subdued Moab and Edom, scattered the united armies of Egypt and Ethiopia, 'in the plains of Altaku,<sup>b</sup> or Albaku,<sup>c</sup> and then turned his arms against the kingdom of Judah. 'Forty-six of Hezekiah's strong towns,' he declares in his Annals,<sup>d</sup> 'his castles, and the smaller towns in their

quered' etc, *ibid.* p. 28; comp. also pp. 26, 34, 'I plundered the district of Samaria and the entire house of Omri;' on the extent of Sargon's rule, see *ibid.* p. 27.

<sup>a</sup> 'I entered rejoicing,' states the Inscription on Bellino's Cylinder, 'into his palace in the city of Babylon; I broke open his royal treasury . . . his wife, the men and women of his palace . . . I carried off . . . In the power of Asshur, my lord, eighty-nine large cities, and royal dwellings in the land of Chaldea, and eight hundred and twenty small towns . . . I assaulted, captured, and carried off their spoils' (lines 6-12; comp. lines

13-34). The same events are related in an Inscription on a slab belonging to the Kouyunjik bulls (see *Records of the Past*, vii. 57, 63). Subsequent revolts, as those under Esarhaddon and Assur-bani-pal, Sennacherib's son and grandson, were easily quelled (see 1. c., i. 73-75, 79; iii. 104, 105; comp. also v. 104; vii. 26, 40-42, 47, 48).

<sup>b</sup> Eltekon in Judah, Josh. xv. 59, אֶלְתֶּקוֹן, Taylor Cylinder, col. ii., line 76.

<sup>c</sup> Sennacherib's Inscription on the Kouyunjik slab, § 24.

<sup>d</sup> The Taylor Cylinder, col. iii., lines 11-41. These incidents and

neighbourhood beyond number, I attacked and captured. I carried off from the midst of them two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty people, male and female, and horses, asses, camels, and cattle beyond number. Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city, like a bird in a cage, and constructed siege towers against him. The cities which I plundered and cut off from his kingdom, I gave to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron, and Gaza. I diminished his kingdom and augmented his yearly tribute and gifts. The fearful magnificence of my kingdom overwhelmed him, and he sent me thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver ... precious stones of large size, couches of ivory, movable thrones of ivory . . . a great treasure of every kind; and his daughters and the male and female inmates of his palace, he sent after me to Nineveh, my royal city, and his envoy to pay tribute and do homage.<sup>a</sup> Seeing all these misfortunes, a Hebrew patriot, filled with grief and anguish, might well exclaim, 'Woe, who may live, when God doeth this!' But a faint ray of hope might have animated even the desponding, when the irresistible conqueror--his Inscriptions are naturally silent on this point--in the midst of his eager preparations for the utter demolition of Jerusalem, almost without a humanly manifest cause, and as if compelled by the invisible hand of God, suddenly retreated and left the land, whether induced by a fearful plague, or by terrifying rumours of the approach of southern armies.<sup>b</sup>

facts are, with slight modifications, also recorded in Sennacherib's Inscription on slab 1 of the Kouyunjik bulls, §§ 27-32.

<sup>a</sup> See Comm. on Genes. pp. 291, 297; Records of the Past, i. 38, 39; vii. 61.-63, where the concluding lines read: 'The bullion treasure of his palace, his daughters, the women of his palace, male and female musi-

cians to Nineveh, the city of my power, he caused to carry, and for the payment of the tribute he sent his messenger.'

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings xviii. 13-xix. 37; Isa. xvii. 12-xviii. 7; xxxvi., xxxvii.; Tobit i. 21. The Inscriptions are in disharmony with the Biblical account, which does not express or imply that Hezekiah sent the priso-

It is not impossible that, encouraged by this unhopedor change in the schemes of the powerful foe, the Cyprians, strengthened by the inhabitants of other islands and coasts, attempted hostile attacks upon the Assyrian possessions in Syria, and then extended their expeditions eastward to the Euphrates, although neither the Biblical nor the monumental accounts allude to any such enterprise. We know not only that Sennacherib's predecessor, Sargon, had accomplished a successful campaign against Cyprus, where his memorial tablet has not long since been discovered;<sup>a</sup> but we learn from an

ners and the envoy after Sennacherib to Nineveh, and which, moreover, seems to convey that the Assyrian king was killed shortly after his return to his capital (2 Ki. xix. 36, 37; Isa. xxxvii. 37, 38)--the Book of Tobit says distinctly after fifty (or fifty-five) days: whereas according to the Inscriptions, his campaign against Judea took place in the third year of his reign, which lasted upwards of twenty years. In accordance with the spirit of Hebrew historiography, the Biblical writer desired to let the heathen monarch's early and unnatural death appear as a direct retribution for his impious designs against the people of God (see supra, p. 65). The 'Inscription of Esarhaddon,' found at Kouyunjik, throws no light on the discrepancy (comp. Rec. of the Past, iii. 101 sqq. The 'Will of Sennacherib,' see *ibid.* i. 136). There are very probably mythical elements in the Biblical statement, 'It came to pass that night that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when they rose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses' (2 Xi. xix. 3.5; compare Isa. xxxvii. 36; also

2 Chron. xxxii. 21; Sir. xlvi. 21; see Herod. ii. 141, where Sennacherib's sudden flight in his war against the Egyptian king Sethos is attributed to swarms of field mice, which, in the night, devoured all the quivers, bow-strings, and shield-thongs of his soldiers; see Wilkinson in *loc.*); for criticism has long since proved that the chapters xxxvi. to xxxix. of Isaiah are not authentic, but belong to the Babylonian period: yet that statement may enclose an historical kernel referring to some unexpected event which induced the Assyrian king to an abrupt retreat.

<sup>a</sup> See 'The Annals of Sargon,' in *Rec. of the Past*, vii. 26, 'I made tributary the people of *Yatnan* (Cyprus), who have established their dwellings in the midst of the Sea of the setting sun' (comp. page 27 *ibid.*). Whether the name *Yatnan* or *Atnan* has any connection with the promontory of *Acamas* (now Cape Arnauti) on the western side of Cyprus (*Strab.* XIV. vi. 2-4), is uncertain. In the Egyptian Decree of Canopus' (§ 9), important in many respects, Cyprus is described as 'the island Nabinaitt, which lies in the midst of the Great Sea' (comp. *Rec. of the Past*, viii. 84).

elaborate inscription of Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon, that, at that time, the Assyrian rule extended. in those parts over 'twenty-two kings of Syria, and the sea-coast and the islands;' that among them were, besides 'Baal, king of Tyre,' and 'Manasseh, king of Judah,' also 'ten kings of Cyprus which is in the middle of the sea;'<sup>a</sup> and that the great monarch exacted from these subjected chiefs both heavy contributions and humiliating homage.<sup>b</sup> What is, therefore, more natural than that fear and revenge alike stimulated the Cyprians, assisted by others who shared their subjection, to dare even hazardous ventures? Of one such attempt that had before been made in Sargon's reign, the deciphered 'Annals' of this sovereign contain distinct mention: 'The kings of Jahnagi of the land of Yatnan (Cyprus), whose dwelling is situated at a distance of seven journeys in the middle of the western sea, refused to pay their imposts.' The attempt failed, and the Cyprians were compelled to send to the king additional gifts of enormous value, and again to pledge their allegiance.<sup>c</sup> But they doubtless renewed their efforts after Sargon's death and Sennacherib's first great calamity, and then most likely directed their operations not only against Assyria, but also against Eber (עֵבֶר), the inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Babylonia, which countries, by Sennacherib's extensive conquests, had almost become parts of the Assyrian empire, and probably furnished their contingent of troops for foreign wars. Recent discoveries and decipherments have imparted to this subject a fresh and higher interest. On Cyprus, inscriptions have been found written in characters analogous to the Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform signs, but com-

<sup>a</sup> The kings of *Edihal* (Idalium), *Kittie* (Citium), *Sillumi* (Salamis), *Pappa* (Paphos), *Sillu* (Soloe), *Kuri* (Curion), *Tamisus*, *Amti-Khadasta*<sup>c</sup> (Ammochosta), *Lidini*, and *Upri* . . . (Aphrodisium).

<sup>b</sup> See Inscription of Esarbaddon, col. v., lines 12-26; comp. Rec. of the Past, iii. 107, 168, 120.

<sup>c</sup> Comp. the explicit statement in 'Annals of Sargon,' ii. 35; see Rec. of the Past, vii. 51.

posed in a language kindred to the Greek, and it will thus be easier to trace the relations of the Cyprians, on the one hand, to Assyria, and, on the other hand, to Greece.<sup>a</sup> It can hardly be questioned that the Cyprians, as they had the disposition, possessed, to a certain extent, also the power for such military undertakings. For their island, which formed the chief westward station of Phoenician navigators, was eminently prosperous by commerce, natural fertility, and mineral wealth. They could command the support of many allies and kinsmen, and might, above all, count upon the assistance of the Phoenicians, who, even more oppressed and imperilled by the Assyrians, hardly separated their destinies from those of the neighbouring island, the independence and friendship of which was almost a necessity for their export trade and maritime supremacy.<sup>b</sup> In the enthusiasm of the moment, some slight advantages gained by the Cyprian forces over the powerful nations of the east, may have been invested with an exaggerated importance; but certainly, although the Assyrian empire maintained itself about a century longer, a Hebrew statesman, considering its pomp and luxury, its presumption and recklessness, and firmly relying upon the judgment and retribution of a just and all-seeing God, could not be doubtful as to its ultimate fate, and he might declare with confidence, 'And ships from the coast of Kittim (Cyprus), they humble Asshur and humble Eber, and he (Asshur) also is for destruction;' although we know that the Cyprians remained tributary to the later Assyrian kings Esarhaddon and Assur-bani-pal. But beyond this circle the scope of the prophecy does not reach. It does not intend to intimate the future triumphs of the western over the eastern world, such as the conquests of the Macedonians or Romans; for the Cyprians and their

<sup>a</sup> Comp. the works of *Branzis* and *Moritz Schmidt*.

<sup>b</sup> Comp. Isa. xxiii. 1, 12; Ezek. xxvii. 6; see Comm. on Gen. p. 244.

Phoenician allies were themselves, in religion and manners, emphatically *eastern* populations. Nor is it the author's chief object to supply 'an utterance respecting the destinies of the world at large,' but he desires to it show how the Cyprians were specially chosen by God as instruments to bring ruin and annihilation upon those ruthless tyrants who had also inflicted so many and such cruel sufferings upon His elected people. However, not from the west, but from the east, ruin and annihilation came upon the Assyrians--from the rugged mountain tracts of Kurdistan, which poured forth the rapacious and pitiless Chaldeans like a scourge over the lands of Asia. Thus, in considering this section, we have passed from the happy and prosperous age of David to the fatal epoch of the Assyrian invasion; from the time when Israel, acting with independence and self-conscious power, 'devoured nations, his enemies, and crushed their bones,' to the years of decline when weakness and disunion compelled the people to leave the repulse of their enemies to other and inferior communities, and when they found their sole gratification in impotent wishes and denouncements. How many centuries of sorrowful experience separate 'Balaam's' joyous prophecies from the sad utterances which have been linked to them with so little fitness!

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--In the depth of his sorrow the author proclaims **וְאֵי מִי יִחִיָּה**, 'woe, who may live,' i.e., who can wish to live to see such dishonour and misfortune! (comp. Rev. ix. 6) not 'who can hope to live!' which is less pathetic; and still less 'who will' or 'can live,' as if all were to perish (comp. Mal. iii. 2). Those who start from the principle of literal inspiration are, perhaps, justified in accounting for Balaam's grief by the circumstance that it is his countrymen whose ruin he announces (xxii. 5; xxiii. 7; xxiv. 14; comp. Hengst 5., Bil., p. 263); but it is not probable that the author of these verses, living at a much later time, had such considerations in his mind; in the Supple-

ments the strictly historical background is abandoned, and in the genuine portions Balaam's individuality is never obtruded.--A foreign idea is associated with the words by the rendering of Targum Onkel. and Jonath., 'Woe to the sinners (אִי לַחַיִּיבֵי אֵל) who shall live,' etc.; and entirely against the context and the words (אִי וְכֹ) is the interpretation of Origen (In Num. Homil. xix. 4) and others, 'quis erit tam beatus, tam felix, qui haec videat?' viz., the abolition of all idolatry and the destruction of all demons through the Messiah. Nor does the reading אִי, instead of אִי וְכֹ, offered by some MSS. (*De-Rossi*, Var. Lection. ii. p. 18), in any way recommend itself.—מִשְׁמֹ אֵל, literally, 'from the time that God does this'--it? denoting the *terminus a quo*, and, therefore, simply *after* or *when* (comp. Prov. viii. 23; Ps. lxxiii. 20; 1 Chron. viii. 8; 2 Chron. xxxi. 10, etc.; Sept., (otan q<sup>^</sup>? **taufa o[geoj**; Vulg., quando, etc.), which seems simpler than the sense of *because* or *on account of* (comp. Deu. i. vii. 7; Isa. liii. 5, etc.). The suffix in מִשְׁמֹ refers, grammatically, to the statement of the next verse (the 24th), but, logically, rather to the preceding prophecy--to Asshur's implacable cruelty in carrying away captives, which reminds the author of the same sad fate of his own nation; for the import of the next verse implies nothing that was painful to the Hebrews, but, on the contrary, alludes to the longed for punishment of their oppressors. It is unnecessary, though it may be admissible, to take אֵל as an abbreviated form of אֵלֶּה (1 Chron. xx. 8), and then to refer the suffix in מִשְׁמֹ to God; the sense would not be different from that of the former interpretation. A possible exposition is also: 'who may live *when he considers this*' (comp. Job xxiv. 12); but it is certainly strained and artificial to understand those words thus: 'when God appoints him,' viz., appoints (comp. Hab. i. 12; 1 Sam. viii. 1, etc.) the Assyrian as His instrument to punish sinful nations (*Zunz*, *Baumgart.*, *Knob.*, and others), which idea is indeed familiar to the prophets (Isa. vii. 20; x. 5, 6, etc.; comp. Jer. xxv. 9; xxvii. 6; xliii. 10), but cannot be grafted on the two words מִשְׁמֹ אֵל. Moreover, if Asshur was the chosen rod of chastisement, it would have been impious to fight against him or to desire his destruction;

for we do not find here the slightest or remotest allusion to his 'having haughtily overstepped the Divine commission, especially with regard to Israel' (comp. Isa. x. 7-11).--It may be curious to observe that the Talmud (Sanhedr. 106a; comp. Rashi and Yalkut) interprets the words 'אוי מי יחיה וכ' by 'אוי למי שמחיה עצמו בשם אל', which is supposed to involve another of those points of contact between Balaam and Christ, to which we have above referred (pp. 30, 31); that the Sam. Vers. renders, 'מן יחי משמח חילולה', 'who shall live, if he (Asshur) destroys his (Israel's) power?' and that Abarbanel explains: 'Who can live in those days, when he--Nebuchadnezzar--makes himself a god' ('ישים עצמו אל'); but it would be impossible to notice the large number of untenable interpretations which the brevity of those words has rendered possible (for instance, Vater, 'wer ubersteht sein Verwusten?' Michael., 'wenn Gott ihn unglücklich macht;' Mendelss., 'wenn Gott es ihm zgedacht,' etc.; Gramberg, 'Wehe! wer uberlebt, was Gott festgesetzt;' Kuenen ap. *Oort*, l.c., p. 45, 'Vae quis praeteribit vitae terminos, quos ei Deus constituit;' *Luzzatto*, 'Who can live when God shall have put him--the Assyrian--into the world!' etc.; comp. also *Pirke Rab. Eliez.*, chap. 30).--צ, a rare word, synonymous with אֲנִי ship (Vulg., trieres; Targ. Jerusal., לִבְרִנְיָא liburnae, light ships, comp. Isa.. xxxiii. 21; less accurately, Onkel., סִיפֵי hosts; *Jonath.*, צִיפֵי armies; *Syr.*, לִגִּיּוֹנָא (legions); the plural is both צִיִּים (Ezek. xxx. 9) and צִיִּים (Dan. xi. 30, where we find צִיִּים כְּתִיִּים, as if in allusion to this passage; see Gram., § xxiii. 2. a). In the 24th verse some of the ancient versions point to another early fluctuation in the Hebrew text; for in the *Sept.* צִיִּים is represented by **επελευsetai**, in the *Samar. Cod.* and *Vers.* by יוציאם and אפקין, so that there was evidently in the original some form of יצא, which several modern interpreters have unnecessarily adopted (*Michaelis*, Von der Seite her kommen; *Dathe*, exeunt; so *De Geer*, and others; comp. *De-Rossi*, l.c., p. 18; Vater in loc.).--יָד, properly, side (Ex. ii. 5; Dent. ii. 37), and then coast.--כְּתִיִּים is undoubtedly the island. of Cyprus, in which one of the most ancient towns was *Citium* (**Kition** or **Kittion**), although in subsequent periods that name comprised nearly all the shores

and islands of the Mediterranean, as Rhodes and Sicily, Greece and Italy, and even Macedonia (I Mace. i. 1; Dan. xi. 30; comp. Comm. on Gen., p. 244). 'Ships from the coast of Kittim' may include auxiliaries assembling in Cyprus as a convenient station, since the Cyprians would hardly have entered upon the daring enterprise single-handed.--Josephus (Ant. IX. xiv. 2) relates on the authority of Menander, who, in writing his 'Chronology,' is supposed to have availed himself of the archives of Tyre, that, in the reign of Eluleus of Tyre, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser invaded Phcenicia, and subjected many districts; that, however, after his return to the Euphrates, some towns revolted, and among them Tyre; upon which the Assyrian monarch re-appeared, but was opposed by twelve ships of the Tyrians, who dispersed the enemy's fleet and took five hundred prisoners, by which deed 'the reputation of all the citizens of Tyre was greatly enhanced.' It is not probable that this is the event to which our text alludes, as many have asserted; for, on the one hand, it has no direct connection with the Cyprians, who in our verses are the chief actors, and, on the other hand, it does not include עִבְרָא at all; moreover, the result was too insignificant to kindle the hopes of even the most sanguine; for soon afterwards 'the king of Assyria returned and placed guards at the rivers and aqueducts, so that the Tyrians were hindered from drawing water, and this siege continued for five years.' According to the inscription on the Taylor Cylinder (col. ii., lines 35-37), and an inscription on a slab belonging to the Kouyunjik bulls (Rec. of the Past, vii. 61), Luliah, supposed to be identical with Eluleus, is mentioned as king of Sidon, who fled before Sennacherib 'to a distant spot in the midst of the sea,' or Yatna (Cyprus); and Assur-bani-pal, the son of Esarhaddon and grandson of Sennacherib, again defeated and weakened the Tyrians; 'their spirits I humbled,' he recorded, 'and caused them to melt away' (see 'Annals of Assur-bani-pal,' col. ii., lines 84-98). Still less suitable is the application of this passage to such unimportant occurrences as the invasion of the Greeks in Asia at the time of Sennacherib, who, besides, was victorious, as the Assyrian annals relate in

unison with other accounts (comp. *Alexander Polyhistor* in *Euseb. Chronic.* i. 1-4). And yet most critics base their estimate of this *entire* composition upon similar conjectures, either contending that the whole was written about B.C. 710, or that, at this time, the verses under consideration were added to the principal portion, which they consider to have been composed about B.C. 750 (as Lengerke, *Ken.*, i. 597; *Bunsen*, *Bibelwerk*, v. pp. 602, 603, who assigns vers. 20-24 to that period, although ver. 20 stands in no certain relation to the Assyrians; see *supra*, pp. 46, 47).

--כְּתִיּוֹם has by Jewish and Christian interpreters frequently been understood to mean the Romans (*Onk.*, מִרְוֹמָי; *Jon.*, לְמַבְרַנְיָא, Lonabardy and the land of אִטְלְיָא, *Italy*, in conjunction with the legions that will come forth, from קוֹסְטַנְטִינִי, *Constantinople*!; and similarly *Targ. Jerus.*, *Rashi*, רַמַּיִם; *Vulg.*, Italia, etc.)--which is, of course, out of the question.--The verb עָנָה is not a very strong or emphatic term--for it is used to express the trials which God imposes upon Israel from love (*Dent.* viii. 2, 3, 16; comp. *Gen.* xxxi. 50)--and may merely imply that the Cyprians caused to the Assyrians loss and annoyance; but even slight victories over an all but invincible enemy must have excited lively hopes, and no doubt called forth the utmost exultation.--עֲבָר־, used in the wider sense of בְּנֵי עֲבָר (Gen. x. 21, 24; xi. 15-17; comp. *Isai.* vii. 20), are the inhabitants of the land beyond the Euphrates, or of Mesopotamia (*Onk.*, לְעֵבֶר פֶּרֶת; *Jerus.*, עֵבֶר נַהֲרָא; *Rashi*, אֹתָם שְׂבַעֲבֵר הַנַּהֲרָא), and embrace, in this passage, especially the Babylonians (comp. *Comm.* on *Genes.* pp. 278, 279). The context forbids to take עֲבָר in the stricter sense of *Hebrews* (so *Sept.*, *Vulg.*, and others), who, throughout the section, are mentioned by the names of יַעֲקֹב and יִשְׂרָאֵל, and who cannot be coupled with the Assyrians as common enemies of the Cyprians; for this reason, probably, a modern critic unwarrantably identifies אֲשׁוּר with the Syrians (*Ewald*, *Gesch.*, i. 147), contrary to the meaning which that word clearly bears in the preceding oracle (ver. 22; comp. the full arguments of *Hengstenb.*, *Bil.*, p. 206-210).--וְגַם, and also, points to the prediction on the Amalekites (ver. 20)--like these inveterate and most detested foes of the Hebrews, the Assyrians are



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the Euphrates for centuries after the commencement of her rule (comp. *Dunker*, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i. 266 sqq.; *Oppert*, in *Zeitsch. der D. M. G.*, 1869, p. 144, who places the foundation of the kingdom at B.C. 1318 ; *Records of the Past*, iii. 27, etc.; Tiglath-pileser I., about B.C. 1150, seems to have made an expedition against certain 'rebellious tribes of the Kheti or Khatte,' that is the Hittites or Syrians; *Records*, v. 12, 18, 20. The statements of classical and later writers about the antiquity of Assyria are mere surmises). 'The ships from the coast of Kittim,' which 'humble Asshur,' refer to distinct and special occurrences, which could only be foretold by virtue of supernatural inspiration or announced as *vaticinia post eventum*.--Nothing but the determined endeavour to vindicate the whole of the story of Balaam to the 'Supplementer' (*Erganzer*), and to prove this writer not to have lived later than the time, of Solomon, could have induced a scholar of Tuch's critical tact and sound judgment to assert that this section exhibits merely an acquaintance of the Hebrews with the existence of the Assyrians, not a hostile conflict between both nations, and that 'the prophet, in these verses, rises to a general prediction concerning that great power advancing from the east, and as indefinitely opposes to it a western power destined one day to break its influence' (*Tuch*, *Comment. uber die Genes.*, pp. lxxvi., lxxvii., 2nd ed.). What can the sad exclamation, 'Woe, who may live, when God doeth this!' mean, if it does not refer to calamities actually inflicted by the Assyrians? (comp. ver. 22, עַד מָה אֲשׁוּר תִּשְׁבֹּךְ ). And how can 'ships from the coast of Kittim' be considered ideally to represent a power mighty enough to crush the vast Assyrian empire?

## 20. CONCLUSION. xxiv. 25.

25. And Balaam rose, and went away, and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.

Previous to the announcement of the tenth and last Egyptian plague, Pharaoh said to Moses in vehement

anger: 'Go away from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more;' upon which Moses replied: 'Thou hast spoken right, I will see thy face again no more'<sup>a</sup>--the Divine messenger and the obdurate heathen king could only meet to come into terrible collision, and then for ever to move in opposite directions. Like Moses and Pharaoh, those great primeval types, Balaam and Balak are absolutely without a real tie or bond. The former has been employed as the mouthpiece of the God of Israel, the latter does not comprehend this God and dares to defy Him, although he dreads His power. The community of the 'righteous' and the community of the worshippers of falsehood cannot dwell together in harmony or sympathy; therefore, 'Balaam rose and went away. . . and Balak also went his way.'

Commenting on the statement of Deuteronomy, that God changed Balaam's intended curse into a blessing for Israel,' the Midrash observes: 'The Lord gave power to Balaam's voice, so that it is heard from one end of the world to the other.' Taken in that figurative sense in which this remark is no doubt intended, it implies an incontestable truth. Balaam's words have passed from age to age and from nation to nation, and they will be read and admired as long as men shall delight in sublimity of thought, largeness of soul, and perfection of art.

PHILOLOGICAL REMARKS.--How is it possible even to make the attempt at reconciling the clear conclusion of this verse with the later Elohist account in the Book of Numbers? (see xxxi. 8, 16; comp. Josh. xiii. 22). Language and logic alike must be violently strained to effect the faintest appearance of plausibility. Balaam is, in those later portions, related to have given to the Moabites and Midianites the fiendish advice to ensnare and corrupt the Hebrews by licentious seduction, and subsequently, fighting in the ranks

<sup>a</sup> Exod. x. 28, 29.

<sup>b</sup> Deut. xxiii. 6.

<sup>c</sup> *Midr. Rabb.* Num. xx. 13.

of Israel's enemies, to have been killed in battle. Which are the proposals made to harmonise these facts with the verse before us? The words 'and he returned to his place' (וַיָּשָׁב לְמִקְמוֹתָיו), it is contended, do not mean that Balaamu repaired to his home in Mesopotamia--which would be the only possible interpretation, even if Balak had not, immediately before, expressly bidden Balaam, 'Escape to thy place' (אַל־מִקְוֹמְךָ) and Balaam himself had not distinctly said, 'And now, behold, I go to my people' (הֲנִי הוֹלֵךְ לְעַמִּי), vers. 11, 14; comp. Gen. xviii. 33; xxxii. 1; 1 Sam. xxvi. 25; 2 Sam. xix. 40)--but they mean, it is asserted, that Balaam went back to the place in the east of the Jordan, where he had been the day before; or they signify, 'he went away whither he would,' or 'he went to hell,' which is 'his place' (*Talm. Sanhedr.* 105a., etc.; comp. Acts i. 25); or 'he resumed his sorceries,' since he prophesied this time only for the honour of Israel (*Bechai*); or, 'he merely started to return,' or 'went in the direction of his home' (וַיֵּשְׁבֵהוּ taken in inchoative sense); or 'he intended to go and to return,' but was kept back by the Midianites. It would be unnecessary to refute interpretations which would never have been advanced had this verse been explained from its own context, and not in the light of heterogeneous accounts. But some maintain that Balaam indeed returned to Mesopotamia, but came back again to the plains of Moab. We will not stop to inquire whether there was time for such a double journey, the war against the Midianites being fought very soon afterwards, in the same year, and the distance from Moab to the Euphrates through the desert requiring not less than twenty days; nor what object so shrewd a man as Balaam could have for this waste of time and exertion, if he entertained the plan imputed to him. But the exegetical question is not what the simple words וַיָּשָׁב לְמִקְמוֹתָיו ought to mean if the unity of the Book of Numbers is to be upheld, but what they really mean according to all sound rules of interpretation--and in this respect not the slightest doubt can prevail among men who have the Scriptural text more at heart than their own theories or pre-conceptions.--The *Targ. Jon.* inserts in these verses explicitly: 'Balak put the daughters of the Midianites in tavern

rooms at Beth-jeshimoth, by the snow-mountain, where they sold various kinds of pastry (זֵינִי כִּי־סוּסִיךָ) below their value, after the counsel of Balaam the wicked, at the parting of the road' (seep. 247).--It is usually contended that Balaam, 'who, as God's mouthpiece, had blessed the Hebrews with inward repugnance, soon returned to his own hostile disposition and joined the Midianites, another enemy of Israel' (so even *Winer*, *Real-Wort.* i. 184, see *supra*, p. 50). In these chapters, Balaam is neither represented as an unwilling instrument of God, nor as an enemy of Israel, and his passive conduct in reference to Balak is in direct contrast to the restless eagerness ascribed to him in his intercourse with the Midianites. And if he indeed played so important and so fatal a part in the following events, it is surprising why, after having once been introduced so conspicuously as the proclaimer of these prophecies, he is in the next sections either not mentioned at all or mentioned quite incidentally. But still more astonishing is the amicable intercourse in which, immediately afterwards, we find the Hebrews engaged with the Moabites (xxv. 1, 2, p. 69). Almost the only point of harmony between the chapters under discussion and those which follow is the alliance or friendship which both the former and the latter state to have existed between Moab and Midian (xxii. 4, 7; xxv. 1, 6, 14-18; xxxi. 1 sqq. ). All these circumstances can be satisfactorily explained under no other supposition than that the 'Book of Balaam,' having originally formed a complete and separate work, was incorporated in the Book of Numbers without being thoroughly amalgamated with the other parts of the narrative. Even the Talmud, in declaring that 'Moses wrote his own Book, and the section of Balaam, and the Book of Job' (*Talm. Bab. Bathr.* 15a.), seems to intimate that it considers the 'section of Balaam' as a composition distinct from the rest of the Pentateuch. Hence it is not sufficient to say that 'the historian, as if touched with a feeling of the greatness of the prophet's mission, drops the veil over its dark close': the historian had, with respect to Balaam's life, evidently nothing more to add that could be of interest to Hebrew readers, or that was in direct connection with Israel's destinies.

## APPENDIX.

### THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE BOOK OF BALAAM.

IN order to exhibit the Book of Balaam in its admirable symmetry, we subjoin it, in the English Translation, as we believe it to have been originally written.<sup>a</sup>--

XXII--2. When Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites [vers. 3, 4], 5. He sent messengers to Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river (Euphrates), into the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt; behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. 6. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; perhaps I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. 7. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam, and they spoke to him the words of Balak. 8. And he said to them, Stay here this night, and I will bring you word, as the Lord shall speak to me. And the princes of Moab remained with Balaam. 9. And God came to Balaam, and said, Who are these men that are with thee? 10. And Balaam said to God, Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 11. Behold, the people that is come out of Egypt, it covers the face of the earth; come now, curse me them; perhaps I shall then be able to fight against them, and drive them out. 12. And God said to Balaam, Thou shalt not go

<sup>a</sup> The additions we have made to the received Hebrew text are marked by italics; the omissions from that 'text by square brackets []; and the alterations by CAPITALS.

with them, thou shalt not curse the people; for they are ; blessed. 13. And Balaam rose in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, Go to your country, for the Lord refuses to give me leave to go with you. 14. And the princes of Moab rose, and they went to Balak, and said, Balaam refuses to come with us.

15. And Balaam sent yet again princes, more numerous and more distinguished than those. 16. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus says Balak, the son of Zippor, Do not, I pray thee, withhold thyself from coming to me; 17. For I will honour thee greatly, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest to me: come, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people. 18. And Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go against the command of the Lord my God, to do a small or a great thing. 19. Now, therefore, I pray you, remain you also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say to me more. 20. And God came to Balaam at night, and said to him, If the men are come to call thee, rise and go with them; but only that which I shall tell thee, that shalt thou do. 21. And Balaam rose in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

[Vers. 22-35.]

36. And when Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him to the city of Moab, which is at the border of the Arnon, which is at the utmost boundary (of the land). 37. And Balak said to Balaam, Did I not earnestly send to thee to call thee ? wherefore didst thou not come to me? am I not forsooth able to honour thee? 38. And Balaam said to Balak, Behold, I am come to thee ; have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God shall put in my mouth, that shall I speak. 39. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath-huzoth. 40. And Balak killed oxen and sheep, and sent thereof to Balaam and to the princes that were with him.

41. And on the next morning, Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to Bamoth-Baal, and thence he saw the extreme part of the people. XXIII-1. And Balaam said to Balak,

Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bullocks and seven rams. 2. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. 3. And Balaam said to Balak, Stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go, perhaps the Lord will come to meet me; and whatsoever He will show me, I shall tell thee. And he went to a solitude. 4. And God met Balaam, and he said to Him, I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram. 5. And the Lord put words in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return to Balak, and thus thou shalt speak. 6. And he returned to him, and, behold, he was standing by his burnt-offering, he and all the princes of Moab.

7. And he took up his parable and said, From Aram hath Balak brought me, the king of Moab from the mountains of the east : come, curse me Jacob, and come, execrate Israel! 8. How shall I curse, whom God doth not curse? and how shall I execrate, whom the Lord doth not execrate ? 9. For from the summit of the rocks I see them, and from the hills I behold them: lo, a people that dwelleth apart, and is not reckoned among the nations. 10. Who counteth the dust of Jacob, and by number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and be my end like them !

11. And Balak said to Balaam, What hast thou done to me? I took thee to curse my enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them indeed. 12. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord puts in my mouth? 13. And Balak said to him, Come, I pray thee, with me to another place, whence thou mayest see them--only the extreme part of them shalt thou see, but shalt not see them all-- and curse me them from thence. 14. And he brought him to the Field of Seers, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. 15. And he said to Balak, Stand as before by thy burnt-offering, while I go to meet (the Lord) as before. 16. And the Lord met Balaam, and put words in his mouth, and said, Go back to Balak, and speak thus. 17. And when he came to him, behold, he was standing by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, What has the Lord spoken?

18. And he took up his parable, and said, Rise, Balak, and hear, hearken unto me, son of Zippor! 19. God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it, and spoken and shall He not fulfil it? 20. Behold, I have received command to bless, and He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. 21. He beholdeth no iniquity in Jacob, nor seeth distress in Israel; the Lord their God is with them, and the trumpet-call of the King is among them. 22. God brought them out of Egypt--they have the fleetness of the buffalo. 23. For there is no enchantment in Jacob, nor divination in Israel; in due time it is told to Jacob and to Israel, what God doeth. 24. Behold, they are a people that rise as the lioness, and lift themselves up like the lion: they do not lie down till they eat their prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

25. And Balak said to Balaam, Neither shalt thou curse them, nor shalt thou bless them. 26. And Balaam answered and said to Balak, Have I not told thee, saying, All that the Lord speaks, that I must do? 27. And Balak said to Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will take thee to another place; perhaps it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. 28. And Balak took Balaam to the summit of Peor, that looks over the plain of the wilderness. 29. And Balaam said to Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. 30. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and he offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. XXIV.--1. And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to, bless Israel, he went not, as the first and second time, to meet GOD, and he turned his face towards the wilderness. 2. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel encamped according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

3. And he took up his parable, and said, So speaketh Balaam, the son of Beor, and so speaketh the man of unclosed eye; 4. So speaketh he who heareth the words of God [אֲשֶׁר] and knoweth the knowledge of the Most High, he who seeth the vision of the Almighty, prostrate and with opened eyes: 5. How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy

tabernacles, O Israel! 6. As valleys that are spread out, as gardens by the river's side; as aloe trees which the Lord hath planted, as cedars beside the water. 7. Water floweth from his buckets, and his seed is by many waters: and his king is higher than Agag. 8. [אֵל מוֹצִיאֵם מִמִּצְרַיִם כְּתַעֲפֹת לֹא רָאִים לוֹ] He devoureth nations, his enemies, and crusheth their bones, and pierceth with his arrows. 9. He coucheth, he lieth down like a lion and like a lioness; who shall stir him up? Blessed are those that bless thee, and cursed those that curse thee.

10. And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, I called thee to curse my enemies, and, behold, thou hast ever blessed them these three times. 11. Therefore now, flee thou to thy place; I thought to honour thee indeed, but, behold, the Lord has kept thee back from honour. 12. And Balaam said to Balak, Did I not also speak to thy messengers, whom thou hast sent to me, saying, 13. If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go against the command of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind; but what the Lord says, that will I speak? 14. And now, behold, I go to my people; come, I will tell thee, what this people is destined to do to thy people in later days. 15. And he took up his parable, and said, So speaketh Balaam the son of Beor, and so speaketh the man of unclosed eye; 16. So speaketh he who heareth the words of God, and knoweth the knowledge of the Most High; who seeth the vision of the Almighty, prostrate and with opened eyes 17. I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near there cometh a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre riseth out of Israel, and smiteth both sides of Moab, and shattereth all the children of tumult.

[Vers. 18-24.]

25. And Balaam rose, and went away, and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.