

the experience of his people Christ guarantees the fidelity of God and also the entire reasonableness of these human aspirations to which he supplies at once the standard and the spring. Hence, as usual, to look up to this Fact and Figure means to be lifted up. The motive-power in life is the direction of the heart. We stand faithful, as *we run our course with patience*—not by elaborate calculations of resources and obstacles, or by agonizing introspection, but—*looking*, looking away, looking up, to *Jesus* on the grey discouraging sky of circumstances.

JAMES MOFFATT.

OUR LORD'S USE OF COMMON PROVERBS.

It was a wise and far-reaching maxim of the ancient Rabbis that “the Law spoke in the tongue of the children of men.” And when our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of whom the Scriptures had testified, appeared in the flesh, He also spoke in the tongue of the children of men. Like the greatest of His apostles, it was not with excellency of speech or of wisdom that He came proclaiming the mystery of God. His teaching was more profound and wonderful than any philosophy, yet He clothed it in homely language such as the simplest could understand, and found heavenly parables in the rude employments of the Galilean peasantry. This characteristic of our Lord's teaching is sufficiently obvious, yet there is one evidence of it, and perhaps the most striking of all, which is apt to escape the modern reader. It is His frequent use of common proverbs—homely and pithy sayings which were often on the lips of the people and which helped to lodge His instruction in their hearts. It is well worth while to take account of this element in His teaching; for not only is it a revelation of the genial kindness of Him who spake as never man spake that He should

have deigned to make use of the quaint and often humorous maxims so dear to the common folk, but there are not a few obscure passages which are illumined as by a flood of light when their proverbial character is recognized.

1. "*It is yet four months and the harvest cometh*" (John iv. 35). It is usual to discover here a note of chronology. The harvest in Palestine began in April, early enough sometimes for the unleavened bread of the Passover, which was celebrated in the middle of the month, to be baked of new flour;¹ and, if it was four months before harvest, then it would be in December that Jesus came to Sychar on His way from Jerusalem to Galilee. This view, however, is open to insuperable objections. December is in the rainy season, and with every wayside brook running full Jesus would not have been thirsty when He reached Jacob's Well or needed to crave a drink from the woman's pitcher (cf. Ps. cx. 7). Nor is it likely that He had spent eight months in Judæa after the Passover. He had retired from Jerusalem probably to the scene of His baptism in order to collect His thoughts and brace Himself for the work that lay before Him, and His seasons of repose were ever few and brief. "We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day. The night is coming when no man can work" (John ix. 4) was the constant language of Him who came to achieve the world's redemption; and it is incredible that of the three years assigned Him for the accomplishment of that mighty task He should have spent eight months in meditative inactivity. Moreover, the explanation which the Evangelist gives of the enthusiastic reception accorded Him by the Galileans (iv. 45) implies that His miracles at Jerusalem during the Passover-season were fresh in their memories.²

¹ Orig. *In Joan.* xiii. § 39: *θερισμός οὖν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἀρχεται γίνεσθαι περὶ τῶν παρ' Ἑβραίοις καλούμενον Νίσαν μήνα, ὅτε ἀγεται τὸ Πάσχα, ὡς ἐλίπετε τὰ ἄζυμα ἀπὸ νέου σίτου αὐτοῦς ποιεῖν.*

² Orig. *ibid.*: *ὡς νεωστὶ τοῦ Πάσχα προγεγενημένου καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις πεπραγμένων αὐτῷ.*

In truth this saying of Jesus affords no basis for chronological calculations. It was a common proverb, conveying the practical lesson that results mature slowly and it were foolish to expect an immediate reward of one's labour. Jesus was prepared to sow the good seed and have long patience until the harvest should ripen; and what filled His heart with surprise and joy was the spectacle of His seed ripening in an hour. He saw the woman returning in haste from the town accompanied by an eager throng (vv. 28-31), and He broke out, "Ye have a saying,¹ 'It is yet four months and the harvest cometh.' Lo, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and behold the fields that they are white for harvest!" It was but now that He had scattered His seed, and, behold, it was already ripe for the sickle.

2. "*A prophet hath no honour in his own country and among his own kinsfolk and in his own house.*" Two occasions are recorded on which Jesus quoted this proverb (John iv. 44; Matt. xiii. 57 = Mark vi. 4 = Luke iv. 24), and it was exemplified all through His ministry. The people of Nazareth resented His words because He had been brought up among them and worked as a carpenter in their town; His relations thought Him mad; and His brethren did not believe in Him. It was a common proverb, and it originated in the treatment which the Jews all down the course of their history had accorded to their prophets.²

The proverb has a Jewish dress, but it has a universal application. It is the self-same idea that the witty Frenchman expressed when he said that "no man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre." And there is an ancient proverb

¹ λέγετε, Cf. λόγος (v. 37).

² Orig. In Joan. xiii. § 54: πατρίς δὴ τῶν προφητῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἦν, καὶ φανερὸν ἐστὶ τιμῆν αὐτοῖς παρὰ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις μὴ ἐσχηκέναι, λιθασθέντας, πρισθέντας, πειρασθέντας, ἐν φόνῳ μαχαίρας ἀποθανόντας, διὰ τὸ ἀτιμάζεσθαι περιεθόντας ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγίῳ δέρμασιν, ὑστερουμένους, θλιβομένους, κακουχομένους.

still in vogue that "familiarity breeds contempt."¹ Pericles, that brilliant statesman of ancient Athens, would never dine abroad lest he should be cheapened in the estimation of the company by the familiarity of social intercourse.²

3. The "Sermon on the Mount" abounds in proverbial snatches. "*A single iota or a single tip*" (Matt. v. 18) was like our phrase "the stroke of a *t* or the dot of an *i*." In the Talmud the Book of Deuteronomy is represented as complaining to the Lord against Solomon for his violation of xvii. 17: "Testamentum vacillans in aliqua parte vacillat in toto" (cf. James ii. 10). "Salomo," the Lord answers, "et mille similes illi peribunt, at vocula de te non peribit; apicula una de litera jod non peribit." "*Thou canst not,*" says Jesus, "*make a single hair white or black*" (v. 36); and the Talmud has: "unam pennam corvi dealbare non possunt." "*When thou doest alms,*" says Jesus, "*sound not a trumpet before thee, as the play-actors do*" (vi. 2); and a similar figure is found in the classics. Achilles Tatius has (viii. 10): οὐχ ὑπὸ σάλπιγγι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐπὶ κήρυκι μοιχεύεται. Cf. *buccinator, buccinari* (e.g. Cic. *De Div.* xvi. 21). "I have," says old Thomas Fuller, "observed some at the church-door cast in sixpence with such ostentation, that it rebounded from the bottom and rung against both sides of the bason (so that the same piece of silver was the alms and the giver's trumpet); whilst others have dropped down silent five shillings without any noise."

"*Why lookest thou at the chip in thy brother's eye, but the log that is in thine own eye considerest not?*" (vii. 3) is the question wherewith Jesus enforces His prohibition of

¹ Chrysost. *In Joan.* xxxiv. (Ed. Duc. p. 219A): ἡ γὰρ συνήθεια εὐκαταφρονήτους ποιεῖν εἴωθεν. St. Bern. *Flores*, p. 2123: "Vulgare proverbium est, quod nimia familiaritas parit contemptum."

² Plut. *Pericl.* vii.: δεῖναι γὰρ αἱ φιλοθροσύναι παντὸς ὄγκου περιγενέσθαι καὶ δυσφύλακτον ἐν συνήθειᾳ τὸ πρὸς δόξαν σεμνὸν ἔστιν. Cf. *De Imit. Chr.* I. x. § 1: "Vellem me pluries tacuisse et inter homines non fuisse."

ensorious judgment. This also was a common proverb characteristically oriental in its grotesque exaggeration. It has been suggested that ὀφθαλμός corresponds here to Ἰψ in the sense of a well: "a chip in your neighbour's well, a log in your own."¹ But Lightfoot quotes the proverb thus: "Quin si dicat quis alteri: *Ejice festucam ex oculo tuo*, responsurus est ille: *Ejice trabem ex oculo tuo*." It was a carpenter's proverb, and it is no unwarrantable fancy to recognize in it a special fitness on the lips of Him who had earned His daily bread in a carpenter's shop.² It was a Jewish proverb, but the habit it satirizes is a general and abiding fault of human nature. "Many," remarks St. Chrysostom, "now do this. If they see a monk wearing a superfluous garment, they cast up to him the Lord's law, though themselves practising boundless extortion and covetousness every day. If they see him enjoying a somewhat plenteous meal, they fall to bitter accusing, though themselves indulging daily in drunkenness and excess." Very similar is "*Physician heal thyself*" (Luke iv. 23). The Talmud has: "Medice, cura propriam claudicationem." Plutarch quotes a line from some poet: ἄλλων ἰατρὸς αὐτὸς ἔλκεσι βρύων. And Cicero (Ep. iv. 5) has: "Male medici qui ipsi se curare non possunt."

"Give not what is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine" (vii. 6). This also, it would seem, was a Jewish proverb: cf. 2 Peter ii. 22 (Prov. xxvi. 11). "What man is there of you," asks Jesus, "who, if his son ask of him a fish, will give him a serpent?" (vii. 10); and the Greeks had a proverb "Instead of a perch a scorpion."³ "*Build on the sand*" was a Greek proverb expressive of vain, and unenduring work;⁴ and Jesus' memorable par-

¹ See Bruce in *Expos. Gk. Test.*

² Just. M. *Dial. c. Tryph.*, p. 316c (mihi): ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ τεκτονικὰ ἔργα ἐργάζετο ἐν ἀνθρώποις ὢν, ἄροτρα καὶ ζυγά.

³ ἀντὶ πέρκης σκορπίον: "ubi quis optima captans pessima capit" (Erasmus).

⁴ εἰς ψάμμον οἰκοδομεῖς. Cf. εἰς ψάμμον σπεῖρεις.

able of the Two Builders is but an expansion of it. He must surely have had the proverb in His thoughts (Matt. vii. 24-27 = Luke vi. 47-49).

4. One of the most perplexing passages in the Gospel narrative is the Lord's reply to the disciple who promised to follow Him but asked permission first to go away and bury his father. "Leave the dead to bury their own dead," Jesus answered, "but go thou away and publish far and wide the Kingdom of God."

At the first blush one is startled, almost shocked, by the seeming brutality of our Lord's language. Was it not right that the man should go and lay his dead father in his grave? Even the study of the Law, that most sacred and urgent duty, must, according to the Rabbis, yield to the performance of funeral rites.¹ Is it possible that the gentle Jesus, who wept by the grave of Lazarus and had ever such tender compassion for human sorrow, should thus have trampled upon the sacred instinct of filial piety? It wants, however, only a little reflection to justify Jesus and discover the disciple's real disposition. There is force in St. Chrysostom's observation that the work of burial was not all. "It had been further necessary to busy himself about the will, the division of the inheritance, and all the rest that follows thereupon; and thus wave after wave would have caught him and carried him very far from the haven of truth. Therefore He draws him and nails him to Himself."² Though his father were lying dead, it were no marvel that Jesus should have detained the disciple lest he should be lost to the Kingdom of Heaven. But his father cannot have been lying dead, else the disciple would not have been abroad. It is necessary in the sultry East that the dead should be immediately

¹ "In deducendo funere cessat studium Legis."

² In *Matth.* xxxviii., p. 338A. Contact with a dead body made one unclean for seven days (Num. xix. 11 sqq.).

interred (Acts v. 6), and, had his father been dead or dying, the disciple would have stood convicted of heartlessness. He should have been at home attending to the funeral rites or closing the dying eyes; and it would have been utter shamelessness had he excused himself from following Jesus on the score of a duty which he was all the while palpably neglecting. The truth is that his excuse was a mere pretext for delay. He asked a truce, says Cyril of Alexandria, that he might tend his father in his declining years, promising that, when the old man was in his grave, he would devote himself to the Kingdom of Heaven. It would seem that when he said, "Allow me first to go away and bury my father," he was employing a flippant phrase which is a proverb in the East to this day. A missionary in Syria tells how he once advised a young Turkish gentleman to complete his education by travelling in Europe. "I must first bury my father," was the reply. The missionary was surprised. Quite recently he had seen the old gentleman in good health; and he expressed his sorrow at the sad intelligence of his death. The youth, however, explained that his father was not dead. All he meant was that his first duty was to attend to his relations.¹

If such were the meaning of the disciple's words it is no wonder that Jesus answered so sternly: "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but go thou and publish far and wide the Kingdom of God." The word "dead" is used here in two senses—the literal sense and the spiritual.² The burial of the dead is a task for such as are dead in sin. The heirs of Eternal Life should have other thoughts and other employments. It may be that

¹ Wendt, *Lehr. Jes.*, II. 70, n. 1 E. T.

² Ambrose: "Quomodo autem mortui sepelire mortuos possunt nisi geminam hic intelligas mortem, unam naturae, alteram culpae? Est etiam mors tertia in qua peccato morimur, Deo vivimus."

the father was an unbeliever,¹ but this would hardly be in the mind of Jesus. He meant that the disciple's thoughts should be of life and not of death. There were others who would lay the old man in his grave, and he was needed for higher work. The Kingdom of Heaven was the supreme concern, and Jesus claimed that it should rank first in His disciples' thoughts and affections. Like a physician in time of plague He would have His staff tend the living and leave to other hands the task of carrying the dead to their graves.²

Jesus had good reason to feel aggrieved. The Rabbis demanded and received from their disciples an absolute and paramount veneration. "Respect for a teacher," they said, "should exceed respect for a father, for both father and son owe respect to a teacher." "If a man's father and his teacher have lost anything, the teacher's loss has the precedence. If his father and his teacher are carrying burdens, he must help his teacher first and his father afterwards. If his father and his teacher are in captivity, he must ransom his teacher first and his father afterwards."³ Jesus had good reason to feel aggrieved at that disciple who accorded Him less reverence than the Rabbis received of their disciples.

"No one who, after putting his hand on a plough, looketh backward, is well set (εὐθετος) for the Kingdom of God" is the Lord's reply to that other aspirant to apostleship who volunteered to follow Him but wished first of all to go and bid his relatives farewell (Luke ix. 62). It is a familiar image and one that would naturally suggest itself to the

¹ Chrysost. *In Matth.* xxviii. 337B: εἰπὼν δὲ τοὺς αὐτῶν νεκροὺς δείκνυσιν ὅτι οὗτος οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῦ νεκρός. καὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀπίστων, ὡς ἔγωγε οἶμαι, ἦν ὁ τετελευτηκώς.

² *Ibid.* p. 338C: καὶ γὰρ πόλλῳ βέλτιον βασιλείαν ἀνακηρύττειν καὶ ἐτέρους ἀνασπᾶν ἀπὸ θανάτου ἢ τὸν οὐδὲν ὠφελούμενον νεκρὸν θάπτειν, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτ' ἂν ὤσων οἱ πληρώσαντες ἅπαντα.

³ Cf. Schürer, *Jew. Peop.*, II. i. p. 317.

mind of Jesus and be very intelligible to His hearers; but it is an interesting coincidence that the Romans had a proverb: "A ploughman, unless he bend to his task, draws a crooked furrow."¹ Pliny quotes it, and says it was transferred to the law court. "Conveniet," says Erasmus, "in negocium quod absque magnis sudoribus peragi non potest."

5. "It is easier for a camel to go through the needle's eye than for a rich man to go into the Kingdom of God" (Mark x. 25 = Matt. xix. 24 = Luke xviii. 25). This proverb occurs in the Koran (chapter vii.): "Verily they who shall charge our signs with falsehood and shall proudly reject them, the gates of Heaven shall not be opened unto them, neither shall they enter into Paradise, until a camel pass through the eye of a needle." It may be that Mohammed quoted it from the Gospels, but it is more likely that it was a common proverb all over the East and he used it independently. Attempts have been made to tone down the absurdity of the figure. *Κάμηλος* has been taken in the sense of *Κάμιλος*, a cable,² and the "needle's eye" has been supposed to mean a postern-gate. Such explanations, however, are alike impossible and unnecessary. The monstrous exaggeration of the proverb is thoroughly oriental, and is matched by such Rabbinical proverbs as these, all denoting impossibilities: "A camel dancing in a quart-measure" (*Camelus saltat in cabo*); "An elephant going through a needle's eye" (*non ostendunt elephantem incedentem per foramen acus*); "Putting an elephant through a needle's eye" (*introducere elephantem per foramen acus*).³

Akin to this is another proverb which Jesus quotes in His philippic against the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. xxiii. 24) :

¹ Plin. *H.N.* xviii. § 49: "Arator nisi incurvus prævaricatur." Cp. Verg. *Ecl.* iii. 42: "curvus arator."

² Suidas: *κάμιλος δέ τὸ παχὺ σχοινίον.*

³ Cf. Shak. *K. Rich.* II., V. v. :

"It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a needle's eye."

“Blind guides, ye that strain out the gnat and gulp down the camel!” Erasmus¹ quotes a Latin adage: “Transmisso camelo culex in cribro deprehensus haesit,” and refers to the bantering remark of Anacharsis the Scythian when he found Solon busy drawing up his laws and rallied him for thinking they be of any use. “They are exactly like spiders’ webs; they will hold back the weak and insignificant and be broken through by the powerful and rich.”² The proverb satirizes those who atone for laxity in important matters by scrupulosity in matters of no moment. One of the most amusing and least coarse of Ulrich von Hutten’s *Letters of Obscure Men*³ describes the perturbation of a licentious German monk who, one Friday, while on a visit to Rome, rashly devoured an egg nigh to hatching, and then bethought himself that he had committed a mortal sin by eating flesh on a fast-day. It was represented to him by a boon-companion that the chick was accounted no more than an egg until it was hatched; and he argued with himself that there are often worms in cheeses, and in cherries, and in fresh peas and beans, and yet these are eaten without sin on fast-days. Nevertheless his conscience was ill at ease, and he wrote to his superior at Rome, Magister Ortvinus Gratius, and submitted this profound *quæstio theologialis* to his decision.

His use of these familiar proverbs reveals our Lord’s kindly humanity, His sympathy with His hearers, and His desire to gain for His teaching access to their hearts. Some of them are of a humorous turn, yet one shrinks from the idea that they show a vein of humour in Jesus. There is something singularly offensive in the mere suggestion, and a believing mind instinctively revolts from it. And the instinct is just. The inquiry whether Jesus had the sense of humour is not simply trivial and irreverent: it betrays a

¹ *Adag. sub. Absurda.*

² *Plut. Sol. v. § 2.*

³ *Vol. ii. Ep. 26 (Böcking’s Edition), i. pp. 226-7.*

fundamental misconception of that holy Life of redeeming love. The burden of His mission was heavy upon Jesus all His days on earth. At the age of twelve years He spoke that word of deep and wondrous significance, "Wist ye not that I must be about My-Father's business?" To speak of the Crucifixion as an unforeseen tragedy is worse than an idle fancy: it is a radical misunderstanding. "It was necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory" (Luke xxiv. 26). This was no late discovery, no reluctant conviction forced upon Him by the stern logic of events.¹ Jesus came into the world on purpose to die. It was foreordained before the foundation of the world that the Lamb of God should be slain (1 Pet. i. 19-20; Rev. xiii. 8), and He was manifested in the fulness of the time that He might give His life a ransom for many and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. All the days of His flesh the load of a world's guilt was upon Him and the shadow of the Cross lay dark and grim upon His path. There is profound truth in the tradition that Jesus was never seen to laugh, but oftentimes to weep.² His face was the kindest that this world has ever seen. It was always gracious and benign, yet always grave and wistful. He brought peace wherever He came, but He never awakened mirth. His thoughts were ever high and awful, and their savour was in His speech.

The fact that several of the proverbs which our Lord quotes have heathen parallels raises an interesting question. Whence the affinity? It is simply impossible that it should be due to acquaintance with heathen literature. It is true indeed that Herod the Great had a taste for Greek literature and art, and surrounded himself with Greek scholars like Nicolas of Damascus and his brother Ptolemy, Andro-

¹ Keim *Jes. von Naz.* iv. 38 E.T.: "It was the death of the Baptist which, weighing upon the mind of Jesus, first matured in him the presentiment of his own near departure."

² Ep. of P. Lentulus, Procons. of Judæa, to the Roman Senate.

machus, Gemellus, the tutor of prince Alexander, Irenæus, and the Lacedæmonian Eurykles. But these Hellenizing tendencies were confined to the court and its retainers, and, though there were Pharisees of more liberal proclivities who, like Hillel and his follower Gamaliel, the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, favoured the study of the *Chokmath Javanith*, they were never more than a small and unpopular minority. The prevailing sentiment was that of the R. Akhiba who asserted that no Israelite who studied the books of the Greeks need hope for eternal life. It is absolutely certain that Jesus was a stranger to Greek literature. Celsus charged Him with borrowing from Plato His saying about the difficulty of a rich man entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, and spoiling it in the process; and Origen's reply is most just: "Who that is even moderately able to handle the subject, would not laugh at Celsus, whether a believer in Jesus or one of the rest of mankind, hearing that Jesus, who had been born and bred among Jews, and was supposed to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, and had studied no literature, neither Greek nor even Hebrew, according to the testimony of the veracious Scriptures that tell His story, read Plato?"¹

It is possible that in some cases the resemblance may be merely accidental, but in others it must be due to some sort of intercourse; and indeed, despite their exclusiveness, the Jews were not wholly impervious to influences from without. They borrowed Greek and Latin words, and even the Talmud bristles with these uncouth importations.² Nor is this surprising. For one thing, the Jews carried on a very considerable commerce. They had several industries of world-wide fame. The Lake of Galilee abounded in fish, and these were pickled and exported far and wide. The

¹ *C. Cels.* vi. 16. The Platonic passage in question is *Legg.* v. 743: ἀγαθὸν δὲ ὄντα διαφερόντως καὶ πλοῦσιον εἶναι διαφερόντως ἀδύνατον.

² E.g. סמפוניא = συμφωνία, קוביא = κυβεία, קלמוס = κάλαμος, מונפולגס = μονοπωλῆς, לבלר = librarius, סגום = sagum, דלמטיקין = dalmatica, סודרין = sudarium, ספסל = subsellium, וילי = velum, ספלקרין = specularia.

town which was the seat of this industry had a Greek name, *Taricheæ*,¹ i.e. "The Pickleries." Galilee was celebrated for its linen manufacture, and the wilderness of Judæa pastured flocks of sheep which furnished material for a thriving trade in woollen goods. Jerusalem had a sheep-market and a wool-market.² Palestine had also an extensive import-trade. The Talmud mentions Babylonian sauce, Median beer, Persian nuts, Indian cotton, Edomite vinegar, Egyptian fish, mustard, beans, and lentils, Cilician groats, Bithynian cheese, Greek pumpkins, Greek and Roman hyssop, and Spanish tunnies. Of course the merchants would bring their phrases with them, and it were no wonder though some of their catch-words became current among the Jews.

Nor were the merchants the only strangers who visited Palestine. There were Roman soldiers and Herod's mercenaries, among the latter Thracians, Germans, and Galatians.³ Herod built a magnificent theatre at Jerusalem, and an equally magnificent amphitheatre, and instituted athletic contests every four years after the pattern of the Greek Games. From the whole world (*ἀπὸ πάσης γῆς*) came competitors and spectators.⁴ Still more numerous, however, was the concourse of worshippers who year by year frequented the Holy City to celebrate the feasts in the Temple. They were Israelites devout and patriotic, but they had settled in foreign lands and had learned the languages and acquired the manners of the strangers among whom they dwelt and traded. These *Ἑλλημισταί* exercised a two-fold influence. They carried Jewish ideas abroad, and to them chiefly would be due that universal dissemination of the Messianic Hope which in the providence of God prepared the way for the Redeemer of the world.⁵ They

¹ *τάριχος*: ἐστὶ δὲ κρέας ἀλοῦ πεπασμένον (Suidas).

² *Bab. Kam.* x. 9.

³ *Joseph. Ant.* xvii. 8, § 3.

⁴ *Ibid.* xv. 8, § 1.

⁵ *Suet. Vespas.* 4: "Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus et constans opinio esse in fatis ut eo tempore Judæa profecti rerum potirentur. Id de imperatore Romano, quantum postea eventu patuit, praedictum Judæi ad se trahentes rebellarunt."

performed also this still greater service, that they did something toward breaking down the barrier betwixt Jew and Gentile and making the Christian ideal of the brotherhood of believers more easy of acceptance.

DAVID SMITH.

THE SEMITIC SACRIFICE OF RECONCILIATION.

IN a call which I made on Dr. Fred Bliss, of Beirut, who was for ten years the archæologist of the Palestine Exploration Fund, he spoke of the custom of making a feast in connexion with a reconciliation effected between two persons who had been at enmity and compared the sacrifice made on that occasion to a peace-offering.¹

At last it seemed as if there might be some trace of that which has been known to the critics as the "sacrificial meal." It was with this thought that I entered upon a new investigation. Dr. Bliss had spoken of the custom as prevalent in Syria. At an early day I began to question the natives as to its existence. The first interview which I had was with Ḥayil, of Ḳaryatên, a member of the old Syriac Church, who had mingled for long periods at a time with different tribes of the Arabs during more than twenty years.

He gave the following illustration of a reconciliation from his own experience. Enmity had developed between him and a Şulêb Arab, to such an extent that the Şulêbi threatened if he found him alone in the wilderness the result would be serious, and Ḥayil assured the Şulêbi that if he met him single-handed in Ḳaryatên he would show him no mercy. Finally mutual friends intervened and brought about a reconciliation. Ḥayil went to the wilderness to the tent of his Şulêb enemy. A sacrifice was killed and prepared as a feast, of which Ḥayil, the Şulêbi

¹ *Journal*, xiv., Spring of 1902, Beirut.