

- iii. Meyer, *Abraham; or, The Obedience of Faith.*
- iv. Marcus Dods, *Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.*
- v. Hanna, *The Patriarchs.*
- vi. Dodds, *Life and Times of Joseph.*
- vii. Tomkins, *Joseph: his Life and Times.*
- viii. Taylor, *Joseph the Prime Minister.*

- ix. Symington, *The Story of Joseph read in the Light of the Son of Man.*
- x. Geikie, *Old Testament Characters*, pp. 1-77 (Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Esau, Judah, Joseph).
- xi. Whyte, *Bible Characters*, i. 'Adam to Achan.'

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF GENESIS.

GENESIS XLVII. 9.

'And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.'

EXPOSITION.

'The years of my pilgrimage.'—That is 'sojourning,' migratory life. The expression is the more appropriate as applied to Jacob's life, because he was ever on the move, without fixed abode or proper home, and had come to live in Egypt after having lived in two other countries before.—DILLMANN.

THE idea of a pilgrimage is a modern one. Even in 1 P 2¹¹ 'pilgrim' means in the Greek a stranger who has settled in a country of which he is not a native. So, too, here Jacob was not a pilgrim, for he was no traveller bound for religious motives to some distant shrine, but he was a sojourner, because Canaan was not the native land of his race.—PAYNE SMITH.

'Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life.'—Jacob feels himself at the close of his life, and regards the one hundred and thirty years of it which are past as the whole. In comparison with the years of his fathers he calls his own few; and he calls them *evil* when he thinks of his long oppressive service for Laban, and of the misfortunes his sons had brought him.—KNOBEL.

THE Jews speak of Jacob's seven afflictions: (1) the persecution of Esau; (2) the injustice of Laban; (3) the result of his wrestling with the angel; (4) the violation of Dinah; (5) the loss of Joseph; (6) the imprisonment of Simeon; (7) the departure of Benjamin for Egypt. They might well have added the death of Rachel and the incest of Reuben.—BROWNE.

METHODS OF TREATMENT.

I.

Two Retrospects of One Life.

(Gn 47⁹ 48^{15, 16}.)

By the Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D.

These are two strangely different estimates of the same life to be taken by one man. The latter

contradicts the former in everything. Jacob was possibly in a melancholy mood when he spoke to Pharaoh,—depressed and bewildered by his new surroundings. Perhaps the words express only conventional humility, a piece of court etiquette. More likely they express the true feeling of the moment, in a mood that passed and was followed by a more wholesome one.

I. Here are two possible views of life. The difference is that in the former there is nothing about God; it is all about Jacob; in the latter there is much more about God than about Jacob. Shut God out and all is dark; let God into your life and it changes like a landscape when the sun comes out. Jacob says his days have been few and evil. He calls them evil, yet complains of their brevity. Life is both short and long,—short as compared with man's capacities, long enough if it manifests that God cares for us, and serves us to build a God-pleasing character. So in Jacob's dying remembrances he says that God has 'fed' or 'shepherded' him all his life long. 'Few and evil' he called his days when he was not thinking about God. His life had been evil, whether we mean sorrowful or sinful. But he has been tried by sorrows, cleansed from sins, and at the end he says, 'the angel redeemed me from all evil.'

II. The wisdom and duty of taking the completer and brighter view. The first words are often quoted as an example of pious resignation, but if Jacob believed what he said he was ungrateful and shortsighted. If his days had been evil he had made them so. We may choose which of the views we will take. We may look at the darker or the brighter parts of our past. There will be plenty of material for complaint if we choose, but there will also be enough to make us ashamed of murmuring. There are facts for both views, but those that feed melancholy are partial and super-

ficial, those that exhort 'Rejoice in the Lord always' are deep and fundamental.

III. It is a blessed thing when the last look is the happiest. When we are among the mountains they are barren, stony, steep. When we get away from them and look at them across the plain we see their beauty. In the midst of life's struggle we think the road rough, but if we keep near our Lord, when the end comes, and we are far enough away from some of the sorrows to see what they lead to, we shall be able to thank God for the way He has led us. Jacob can speak calmly at the end of his life, even of its central sorrow, the death of Rachel, and depart 'satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord.' So let us anticipate our dying verdict, by the confidence in the midst of our toils and sorrows that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'

II.

Jacob's Retrospect of Life.

By the Rev. W. H. Simcox, M.A.

Jacob had lived a long life as we should count it. It had been prosperous on the whole, and a holy life. The great sin of his youth had been punished by a hard discipline which had not been in vain. His father had blessed him again without deceit; his brother had forgiven him, and God had been with him. He had faith in God, and he knew whither he was travelling. Surely he would gladly have reached home. Can the days of a *pilgrimage* be too few? is it not the pilgrim's object to reach home as soon as he can? Or, if few, why were they evil? Year after year had brought him nearer to God. Beginning with faith that God would do His part, he had slowly and painfully learned to add to his faith virtue, and become like God by the spirit of holiness; and were not those days well spent? Or if by evil he means suffering, he had suffered much, but was it not made up to him in blessings? Surely he had lived long enough and happily enough.

Enough by our standard, but not by his. Abraham had walked before God for more than one hundred years; Isaac for a hundred and eighty, in almost unstained holiness. Jacob felt travel-stains upon him which his father never knew. He 'halted upon his thigh,' able to reach the goal like his fathers, but with less of profit to show by the way.

There is no envy in his words but holy discontent and dissatisfaction with self. St. Paul says of certain false teachers, 'They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.' Jacob was not like those. Not to be satisfied while greater holiness could be attained—such was the temper of Jacob and of St. Paul.

Let it be our temper too. In the past year we have had our measure of God's grace, and we have done some sort of service for Him. Yet were not its days too few for us? and with all God's grace were they not evil? Our Redeemer, in the days of His pilgrimage, fulfilled the whole law perfectly. Let us not be satisfied with less than the fulfilment of all righteousness as He fulfilled it. To sin—to repent; to sin again a little less often—to repent again a little more deeply; to do some duty grudgingly—to learn slowly to do it more cheerfully, and then, perhaps, to do some harder work for God—such is our pilgrimage at best. If we had walked in the light as He is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ should have cleansed us from all sin; having the hope in us that we have, we ought to have purified ourselves as He is pure. Till we have done this let us think nothing done. Yet let us not lose hope. Though Israel's days have not attained to the days of the life of his fathers, when they are done he is not unworthy to lie in Abraham's bosom. So, looking to Jesus, we are humbled, but we are also saved, and, made like Him by keeping His commandments, we trust to be found righteous in His righteousness when our pilgrimage is over.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

WHEN I look back to the earlier and middle periods of my life, and now, in my old age, think how few are left of those who were young with me, I always think of a summer residence at a bathing-place. When you arrive you make acquaintances and friends of those who have already been there some time and who leave in a few weeks. The loss is painful. Then you turn to the second generation with which you live a good while, and become most intimate. But this goes also, and leaves us alone with the third, which comes just as we are going away, and with which we have nothing to do. I have been esteemed one of Fortune's chiefest favourites; nor will I complain or find fault with the course my life has taken. Yet truly there has been nothing but toil and care; and I may say that in all my seventy-five years I have never had a month of genuine comfort. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone which I have always had to raise anew.—GOETHE.

SUPPOSE a wall papered with paper of two colours—one black, say, and the other gold. You can work your eye and adjust the focus of vision so that you may see either a black background or a gold one. In the one case the prevailing tone is gloomy, relieved by an occasional touch of brightness; and in the other it is brightness, heightened by a background of darkness. And so we can do with life, fixing attention on its sorrows, and hugging ourselves in the contemplation of these, with a kind of morbid satisfaction, or bravely and thankfully and submissively and wisely resolving that we will rather seek to learn what God means by darkness, and not forgetting to look at the unenigmatical blessings and plain obvious mercies that make up so much of our lives. We have to govern memory, as well as other faculties, by Christian principle.—A. MACLAREN.

MR. HUGHES tells a characteristic anecdote of starting one winter's night with his friend, Charles Kingsley, to walk down to Chelsea, and of their being caught in a dense fog before they had reached Hyde Park Corner. 'Both of us,' Mr. Hughes adds, 'knew the way well, but we lost it half a dozen times, and Kingsley's spirits seemed to rise as the fog thickened.' 'Is not this like life?' he said after one of our blunders; 'a deep yellow fog all round, with a dim light here and there shining through. You grope your way on from one lamp to another, and you go up wrong streets and back again. But you get home at last—there's always light enough for that.'—*Clerical Library*.

Good Life, Long Life.

He liveth long who liveth well;
All else is life but flung away;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of true things truly done each day.

Then fill each hour with what will last;
Buy up the moments as they go;
The life above, when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure;
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
And find a harvest-home of light.—H. BONAR.

Sermons for Reference.

Brown (J. B.), Sunday Afternoon, 336.
Brown (H. S.), Manliness, 160.
Fairbairn (A. M.), Christ in the Centuries, 107.
Maclaren (A.), Worn Christ, 223.
Moorhouse (J.), Jacob, 69.
Newman (J. H.), Parochial and Plain Sermons, iv. 214.
Nicholson (M.), Redeeming the Time, 108.
Oosterzee (J. J. van), Year of Salvation, ii.
Raleigh (A.), Thoughts for the Weary, 241.
Simcox (W. H.), Cessation of Prophecy, 30.
Winterbotham (R.), Sermons and Expositions, 36.

Professor Margoliouth and the 'Original Hebrew' of Ecclesiasticus.

BY PROFESSOR ED. KÖNIG, PH.D., D.D., ROSTOCK.

III.

THE next task is to determine the character and origin of the *marginal notes* appended to H.¹

(a) On the margin of H we find notes regarding the orthography (e.g. חעלה for חועלה, 41^{14c}), the system of terminations (e.g. שרי for שרה, 40^{22b}, or פיהו for פיו, 39^{31b}), the linguistic usage, and regarding real or supposed corruptions in the text. Examples falling under the last-named categories will be adduced in the course of the following investigation.

(b) With reference to the origin of these marginal notes, Margoliouth (p. 4) puts forward the hypothesis that the retranslator noted on the margin forms and phrases which he might have chosen, but which he finally rejected. Elsewhere (p. 6) he adds: 'He may for some reason or other have abandoned the task of translating before he got his work into proper shape.' But

¹ H stands for the Hebrew Text of Cowley and Neubauer, G and S stand for the Greek and Syriac versions respectively.

does he actually mean that all the notes on the margin of H may be explained in this way? He cannot mean it, surely, for instance, in the case of ער לשוב, 'until the return,' of 40^{3b}, which originated from a reminiscence of ער שוכן of Gn 3¹⁹, and the marginal note, ער לובש, 'unto him that is clothed,' which corresponds to the parallel participle of v.^{3a}. But his view of the origin of the marginal notes of H appears to me to be a natural one in only a very few instances. It may be natural in the case of נבראו (Smend, נעשים), which is read instead of נוצרו on the margin of 39^{28a}. But even in such cases Margoliouth's assumption is not *necessary*. He says, indeed (p. 4), 'On the margin of a late copy of a work professing to be original, and handed down as books were handed down before the invention of printing, such a quantity of variants would be astounding.' But, in the first place, even manuscripts of parts of the Old Testa-