

he writes quite lucidly. There is none of the superficiality of the tourist in Professor de Groot's work. And it is so with the religion of China that the deeper you go the richer it is. Perhaps, after all, the most wonderful thing about this wonderful race is its age-long other-worldliness.

Professor G. A. Johnston Ross has republished (Revell; 1s. net) an article which he contributed to the *Hibbert Journal*. The title is *The Cross: The Report of a Misgiving*.

Sir Frederick Treves, Bart., is a distinguished surgeon and an acceptable writer of books. And he knows how to spend a holiday. He spent his last holiday in Palestine, taking his notebook and his camera with him. And now here he is giving us all the benefit he can out of it, by writing and illustrating *The Land that is Desolate* (Smith, Elder, & Co.; 9s. net). It is a fine, generous volume, worthy of the publishing house as well as the author. And, more than that, it is a real addition to the vast literature on Palestine. Sir

Frederick Treves travelled the old roads by the new conveyances as other tourists do; but he carried an eye in his head, and, as we have said, he has the gift of authorship.

The addresses that were delivered at a Conference of University Women at Oxford in September 1912 have been published under the title of *The Christian Education of Women in the East* (Student Christian Movement, 93 Chancery Lane, W.C.). The scope is wider than the title suggests; it should also be said that the thought is deeper and the expression of it more concentrated than that which is usually offered to a Conference. Three of the addresses were given by Professor D. S. Cairns.

A clever, capable and reliable writer on *Heredity, Evolution, and Vitalism* is Ronald Campbell Macfie, M.A., M.B., C.M., whose work under that title is published by Messrs. John Wright & Sons in Bristol (6s. net). He is in touch with the most recent of recent movements, in close sympathetic touch; and what he knows he can make known.

## Pioneers in the Study of Old Testament Poetry.

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

### Herder.

THE first real path-finder in our field of study had been an English scholar, who reached his results by quiet, patient investigation, inspired by loving sympathy with his subject. His successor was a seer, who lived in the world of poetic imagination, and felt its power by the immediate intuitions of the heart.

Johann Gottfried Herder was born at Mohrungen, in East Prussia, a full generation after Lowth, on August 25th, 1744. His father, Gottfried, a humble weaver and clothier, who had, however, raised himself to the position of schoolmaster in his native town, was a man of stern, inflexible character, who sought to train his children on the strictest principles of honour and rectitude. 'He was,' says Herder, 'a serious man, who used few words; our household affairs were all managed by fixed rules of time and

order: when any duty had to be done, none of the children dared offer an excuse—it *must* be done.' The mother, on the other hand, was a tender, emotional soul, full of affection and piety. Herder inherited her character. From his earliest years he displayed unusual sensibility to the charms of Nature and the sweeter joys of life. As a mere child he would often be found alone in the woods, listening enthralled to the melody of the birds and the sighing of the winds, or gazing into the face of the waters of the brook, on which he seemed to trace the reflexion of some new world of wonders. He was passionately devoted to reading as well. It was said in Mohrungen that no book was safe from his greed. If he but caught sight of one through a window, he would enter the house, and beg for the loan of it, almost refusing to leave till his request was granted. In this way

he acquired an early knowledge of many of the great classics of literature. And what he read affected him deeply. He has himself told how his first reading of Homer's famous simile of the falling leaves moved him, while still a small schoolboy, to uncontrollable tears. But, above all, the poetry of the Bible, 'with its tenderness, its grave wisdom, and its solemnity,' appealed to his heart. 'It was my early delight,' he says, 'to wander in those pasture-grounds of Paradisean beauty and innocence, in loving sympathetic association with the fathers of our race in their first experiences of life.' The kindly feeling shown by the writers of the Bible for 'the brothers of men'—the dumb creatures—gave him unaffected joy. And even at this early age the tragic sorrows of Job and the Preacher stirred him deeply. These two books were youthful favourites, and continued throughout his life to exert their old fascination.<sup>1</sup>

Herder's love of the Bible naturally directed his ambitions towards the ministry. But for a while other influences diverted his aim. His chance acquaintance with the Russian army surgeon Schwarzerloh led him to take up the study of medicine at Königsberg. His first experience of the dissecting theatre rudely dispelled that dream. But even after he had matriculated as a student of theology, the technical side of his training quite failed to win his interest. The then dominant figure in the intellectual life of Königsberg was Immanuel Kant, and the young *theolog* fell completely under his spell. So full of enthusiasm for the Kantian system did he become as actually to turn its leading ideas into rapturous verse. Yet his warm love of Nature and humanity failed to find lasting satisfaction in Kant's 'bloodless categories.' And after the first enchantment had passed, a growing alienation set in. While Kant continued to pursue his analytical process to its extreme consequences, Herder nourished his spirit increasingly on poetry and art, and all such influences as gave life its rich beauty and exultant joy. His newly formed friendship with Hamann, 'the Magus of the North,' stimulated his enthusiasm, and the two ardent spirits thus early found themselves the predestined leaders of the new Romantic movement in literature.

In 1764 Herder was installed as teacher of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinen Werken*, pp. 8 ff.

natural science, history, and *belles lettres* in the Cathedral school of Riga, the position of assistant preacher being soon afterwards added to this office. The five years of his residence in Riga were among the happiest and richest of his life. In addition to the regular duties of his twofold vocation, he immersed himself in literary studies, especially the poetry of ancient and modern times, giving to the world the first ripe fruits of what was to prove so bounteous a harvest in his *Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur* (1766-1767)—a series of *critiques* of the more recent literature as compared with Oriental and classical poetry, with many piercing sidelights on the general principles of literary criticism, the qualities that make for excellence in style, and the spiritual impulses that give birth to national poetry. In these *Fragments* we have the germinal ideas of Herder's critical method clearly unfolded. 'The true critic,' he says in his introductory remarks, 'must judge books not by the mere letter, but by the *spirit* they show, balancing their weaknesses and their strong points against each other, and seeking to do justice to the ideal at which they aim' (i. 142). He ought not to be always forcing his own pet theories and ready-made system of thought into the works he is reviewing, but should 'sink himself into his author's circle of ideas, and read the whole with his spirit,' not as 'a literary despot, but rather as a friend and helper,' who aims at 'dissecting the book to its very heart and reins,' and thus proving 'a true Pygmalion of his author' (i. 247 f.).<sup>2</sup>

In his devotion to other interests, Herder had not forgotten his first love. The Bible still remained the centre of all his studies, and the light that streamed from so many quarters was focussed there. His first direct venture on the field of Biblical literature was made, significantly enough, on those 'pasture-grounds of Paradisean beauty and innocence' that had charmed his youthful fancy. The fragment *Zur Archäologie der Hebräer*, published on the eve of his departure from Riga, may be described as a rhapsody on the early narratives of Genesis, with special reference to 'the Song of the Creation of things' in chap. i., the main interest of the essay lying in its protest against misguided attempts to read the latest results of modern science or philosophical speculation, or dogmatic constructions or mystical

<sup>2</sup> The references throughout are to Suphan's standard edition of Herder's Works (Berlin, 1877 ff.).

dreams, into the deposits of ancient Oriental tradition. We are here really moving in the wonderland of primeval poetry—'the first, oldest, simplest *Epopœe* that we possess'—and should therefore read the chapters 'according to the genius of the literature itself, and of the language and nation and region to which it belongs.' This essentially sound principle of interpretation led Herder, however, to unreined extravagance in the elaborate work to which the *Archäologie* was but a fore-study—*Die Aelteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts* (1774)—a perfect medley of fantastic ideas on Gn 1, treated as 'a monument (of Divine revelation) from which all other monuments (of human thought and art), all speeches and songs, all works of imagery, poetry and philosophy, derive their origin,' and hence as a kind of key to the elucidation of the genius and lore of all men and nations.

The latter work was written amid the *Sturm und Drang* of his exile in Bückeburg, when Herder was cut off from all spiritual association save the airy mysticism of Hamann. The summer of 1776 brought a far-reaching change in his environment, when, largely through Goethe's influence, he was called to the city church of Weimar. Herder here reached the blossoming time of his life. He was in the midst of congenial society. New studies came to restrain his fancy, and to widen his outlook. The fascination of philosophy once more seized upon him; but it was now rather the rich ethical pantheism of Spinoza than the cold analytical system of Kant that attracted him. In literature the dominating genius of Goethe and Lessing laid a deep impress on his mind. Under such stimulating influences the new evolutionary conception of history, which was to receive its classical expression in the famous *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte*, rapidly assumed clearness and wealth of content. A closer study of the works of Semler, Lowth, and especially Michaelis, 'our philological seer in the realm of Oriental languages,' led him also to saner views on Biblical criticism. His ripe thoughts on this subject are set forth in the *Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend*, a series of letters covering the years 1780–1781, intended as a guide to young pastors on the work of the Christian ministry. In the first sentence of these letters he commends the study of the Bible as the best preparation for that work, for the true function of the Christian

preacher is the exposition of the Bible. 'And the best way to read this Divine book is the humanistic—taking that word in its broadest sense and its most vital significance.' For 'the more humanly you read the Word of God, the closer you come to the mind of its Author, who formed man in His own image, and, in all the works of power and grace in which He reveals Himself as our God, works for us in human wise' (x. 7). The end of Bible study should thus be to penetrate to the living spirit of the Book (x. 14). And as the best means to this end, Herder counsels the loving concentration of heart and mind on one writer at a time, instead of that 'book-in, book-out, chapter by chapter' style of reading and commenting, so prevalent among students of the Bible, 'which can but rarely lead to the inner *idiotismus* of an author's mind, which I always regard as a sacred place, not a common highway' (x. 98). In this way alone 'can you soar with Isaiah like an eagle to the sun, and lament with the turtle-dove of Jeremiah, that daughter of sighs and tears; stand fast with Habakkuk amid oppression, and with Ezekiel on foreign mountains and by alien waters see visions and trace symbolical outlines of things to come' (x. 101).<sup>1</sup>

In a sequel to the foregoing—the *Briefe an Theophron* (1781)—Herder mentions the design he had long cherished of a new edition of the Bible, in which 'every book and every section of a book should be set in its original light, without any division of chapter and verse, to be read not as a Bible, but simply as a collection of ancient writings, the poetical passages being carefully distinguished from the history, or, where their colours blend, the difference being noted by the printed type or by short comments' (xi. 170 f.). He had already given a forecast of such a work in his *Lieder der Liebe: die ältesten und schönsten aus dem Morgenlande* (1778), a new version of the Song of Songs, arranged, with remarkable prescience of the trend of recent criticism of the book, as forty-four independent love-songs, originally held together 'by no closer link than that of a bunch of fine pearls on one string' (viii. 541). Apart from its literary theory, Herder's edition of the Songs shows a fine feeling for the luxuriance of Oriental imagination, and the sweet innocence and joy that breathe through the whole, entitling the book to its place in the Bible, as a

<sup>1</sup> These principles find still more precise expression in the second of the *Letters to Theophron* (xi. 165 ff.).

worthy expression of the tenderest and most God-like of the emotions (viii. 554 ff.). The various translations and appreciations of Biblical literature which Herder offers in the *Theological Letters* reveal his continued interest in the project. And as early as the spring of 1782 he had actually completed the first part of what was intended to be a comprehensive history of Old Testament poetry, treated as one of the noblest shoots from the stem of national literature.

The title of Herder's new work—*Vom Geist der hebräischen Poesie*—is sufficiently indicative of the nature of the advance beyond Lowth. The latter had been chiefly concerned with the artistic form of the poetry. Herder's aim was to catch the living spirit that infused the outward form. And the manner in which the two works were conceived and brought to the birth is equally suggestive. Lowth had slowly elaborated his results during the course of ten years' patient lecturing. Herder poured forth his appreciation of the poetry in a burst of glowing enthusiasm. 'For eight days,' his friend and guest, J. G. Müller, the original of Theophron, has told us, 'he remained wrapped up in his own thoughts, saying not a word about what occupied his mind, though one saw how deeply his soul was moved. Then he gathered together a number of books, glanced through them, read a good part more carefully, laid them aside, and wrote the book in a white heat, all at one stretch, and that with such feeling for his subject that I have often seen tears in his eyes when he was translating the passages from Job.'<sup>1</sup>

The first draft was in simple, direct, systematic form. And Müller has borne witness to the singular impressiveness of the sketch, as read by Herder himself to the household. But on the eve of publication it was thrown into its present dialogue style. The reason, as Herder himself has stated, was partly artistic, to lend more living, dramatic interest to the presentation, but chiefly to avoid every appearance either of pulpit rhetoric or of rigid dogmatism. He wished to appear rather the kindly guide and friend than the pedantic instructor. Of the two dramatis personæ, Alciphron is the typical young student, who finds the drudgery of Hebrew grammar almost intolerable, and, coming to the subject fresh from the enchanted fields of Greek literature, regards the speech of Oriental nations generally as crude and

barbarous in the extreme—a mere jargon of discordant sounds, destitute of any but the most primitive and savage art. His interlocutor, Eutyphron, who may be regarded as representing the views of Herder himself, has dug below the rugged surface of grammatical rules to the well-springs of poetic inspiration, and is full of enthusiasm for the fresh beauty and the Divine sublimity of Hebrew literature, and gladly offers to guide his friend to the same sources of enjoyment as he now revels in. Only let him abandon his *illuministic* prejudices, and give himself with loving, childlike sympathy to a study of the real genius of the language, reading its characteristic monuments as he would the literature of any other nation, and he will discover how rich in the purest qualities of poetic speech Hebrew is, and how inexhaustible a treasury of golden poetry it opens to us.

'Since action and delineation are of the essence of poetry, and the *verb* is the part of speech that depicts action, or rather sets action directly before us, the language that is rich in expressive, pictorial verbs is a poetical language, and the more fully it can turn its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is. A noun sets everything forth as dead; the verb sets things in action, and this arouses the feelings, for what appears in action is, as it were, infused with spirit. . . . Now in Hebrew the verb is almost the whole of speech—that is, everything lives and acts. . . . The language is a very abyss of verbs, a sea of verbs, where action rolls surging into action. . . . And yet it does not lack such *nouns* and *adjectives* as it requires. . . . It is poor in abstractions, but rich in sensuous representations, with an extraordinary wealth of synonyms, due to the desire always to name, and as it were to paint, the object in its full relation to all the accompanying circumstances, as they impress themselves upon the senses. Oriental languages, especially Arabic, which is the most highly developed of all, have as many names for the lion, the sword, the snake, and the camel, because each man originally depicted the object as it appeared to himself, and all these rivulets afterwards flowed into one. Even in Hebrew the profusion of sensuous epithets is very remarkable,—and yet how scanty are the remnants we possess of that language! More than 250 botanical names in so small a book as the Old Testament, so uniform too in the character of its writings, which consist mainly in the history

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Haym, *op. cit.* ii. 169.

and poetry of the Temple! Imagine then how rich the language would appear, if we possessed its poetry of common life and incident, or even so much as is mentioned in the books we have! Perhaps from the deluge of time, as in the case of almost all ancient peoples, only as much has been preserved as Noah was able to rescue in the ark. . . . In Hebrew, too, the *pronouns* stand out in bold relief, as in all language of the passions. The scarcity of *adjectives*, again, is made good by such combinations of other words that the attribute appears as a thing, nay, even as an actual living and moving being. With all this, then, I regard the Hebrew language as equal in poetic power to any on earth' (xi. 227 ff.).

In regard to the roots out of which these parts of speech are formed, Herder finely notes how they combine picturesque effect with feeling, repose with passion, and strength with softness of tone.

'The northern speeches imitate the sound of Nature,—but they do this roughly, and as it were from without. They creak, rustle, hiss, and jar, just like the objects themselves. . . . But the further South we go, the more delicate becomes the imitation of Nature. The words have passed through the finer medium of emotion, and are framed as it were in the region of the heart. They thus yield us not coarse reproductions of sound, but images on which feeling has impressed its softer seal, thus modifying them from within. Of this tone-blending of inward feeling and outward representation in the root of the verbs the Oriental speeches are a model.' 'In heaven's name,' exclaims Alciphron, 'these barbarous, gurgling gutturals! And you venture to compare them with the silver tones of Greek?' 'I make no comparison,' answers Eutyphron, 'for every language must suffer by such comparisons. Nothing is more national and individual than the peculiar pleasures of the ear, and the characteristic inflections of the vocal organs. Thus, for example, we make a point of speaking only from between the tongue and lip, and of opening the mouth as little as possible, as though we lived amid smoke and fog. The Italians, and still more the Greeks, have different ideas. The speech of the former is full of round vowels, and the latter of diphthongs, while both speak *ore rotundo*, not biting the lips together. The Eastern world draws its tones still deeper from the breast—out of the

very heart—and speaks as Elihu begins (Job 32<sup>18ff.</sup>). The lips being opened thus, the speech became a really living sound, an image of the object itself breathed forth in the atmosphere of emotion; and this I judge to be the spirit of the Hebrew language' (xi. 231 f.).

The arrangement of the vowels and consonants also Herder finds full of music, and the movement nobly rhythmical, the parallelism which seemed to Alciphron so monotonous—'an everlasting tautology, without any measure in its words or syllables to commend it to the ear' (xi. 226)—to his mind yielding the simplest, yet most pleasing, poetical measure, one that produces on the ear much the same effect as the dance of artless peasant choruses on the eye.

'The two members sustain, uplift, and strengthen each other in their counsel or their joy. This result is obvious in songs of triumph. The effect aimed at in the mournful accents of sorrow is that of the sigh or the lament. As the very drawing of the breath seems to strengthen and comfort the soul, so does the other half of the chorus share in our sorrow, proving itself the echo, or, as the Hebrews say, the daughter, of our expression of grief. In the case of didactic odes the one sentence supports the other: it is as though the father were to address his son and the mother repeated it. The counsel thus becomes so very true, cordial, and intimate' (xi. 237).

The various regions of emotion touched on by Hebrew poetry are next discussed by the two friends in a series of morning walks. These conversations are most artistically arranged in harmonious frameworks of natural scenery. Thus, the gorgeous dawn which welcomed them on their first meeting turned their thoughts to the Hebrews' love of Nature, and the elevation given to it by their exalted conception of the God of Nature. The dull grey of the next morning led them to a discussion of the Old Testament ideas of the underworld, with all its hollowness, gloom, and misery. But the sudden bursting forth of the sun in its majesty aroused them to brighter thoughts of the light which everywhere irradiates the Bible—the light that surrounds the throne of God, the light of a Father's love that streams thence upon man and beast, and all the trees and flowers of the field, and the light that gladdens the path of the righteous. Another fresh morning hour led their imaginations back to Paradise, that sweet

poetic reflexion of the innocence and joy of earlier days, broken all too soon by the sorrow and shame of sin. The death of a dear friend of Alciphron's here interrupted their daily walks; and the subject of their next conversation, fittingly associated with a beautiful sunset, was naturally the origin and destiny of man, as reflected in the Old Testament, with the gleams of immortal hope that here also pierce the darkness of death. And finally a series of meditations on the Fatherly Providence of God drew from Eutyphron his fine description of Old Testament poetry as essentially 'the poetry of friendship between man and God,' consecrating the whole round of human life.

A second part, issued the following year, begins the history proper. Herder's plan here assumes gigantic proportions. The history of Old Testament poetry becomes virtually a history of the Hebrew people from every point of view. This enlargement of the scope of the work was due not merely to Herder's conception of the earlier traditions of the Bible as the literary deposits of heroic folk-poetry, but also to his genetic principle, which led him to trace the streams of poetry to their hidden sources in national and religious feeling. The volume is notably defective in systematic development. Ideas of all kinds are brought together just as they caught the author's fancy. Thus often we seem to be cutting our way through a jungle. Yet Herder's feeling for poetry is always evident. He may range freely over the world of literature. But it is the distinctively poetical parts on which he throws the full sweep of his imagination. And these he sets forth in their own pure light, translated, as faithfully as he is able,

in harmony with the spirit and rhythm of the original. For he feels increasingly that the teacher must avoid all rules of scholastic art, and equally those rhapsodies of enthusiastic admiration in which he formerly indulged, and rather allow the beauty and joy of the poetry to sink quietly into the student's heart, that he also may become a worshipper at the shrine (xii. 210).

The field actually covered in this volume embraces the old folk-poetry, Job, and the Psalms. Herder intended soon to issue a third part, which should lead through 'the lovely meadow' of prophecy to 'the Heavenly Figure' who came to fulfil the whole. According to the *Letters to Theophron*, he had still more ambitious designs of including in the work a full treatment of the Apocryphal literature. But the plan miscarried, and the book remains a magnificent *torso*. The reason lay partly in publishing difficulties, partly also in the claims of other work, but largely in the feeling, awakened by the appearance of Eichhorn's *Einleitung*, that a deeper critical basis was necessary. And this is really the fundamental weakness of the book. In insight into the spirit of Hebrew literature Herder reached far beyond his day. In many of his flashes of vision he remains unsurpassed. But the very boldness of his imagination led him often beyond the confines of reality. And his purview of history is altogether lacking in perspective. It was necessary, therefore, that the intuitions of Herder's genius should be supplemented by keen, penetrating criticism based on thorough knowledge of Oriental language and literature. And this contribution was made in masterly wise by the next great worker in the field.

## Contributions and Comments.

### Two Notes on the Fourth Gospel.

(1) Jn 1<sup>47</sup>, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.' There are two points in this description of Nathanael: he is (a) a genuine Israelite, and (b) guileless. Most commentators fail to explain satisfactorily both these points. The second contains an obvious reference to the LXX text of Gn 28<sup>35</sup>, 'Thy brother came *with subtlety* and took thy blessing,' where the Greek word for 'subtlety' is

the same as that rendered 'guile' in Jn 1<sup>47</sup>. The point here, then, is that Nathanael is not a Jacobite but an Israelite.

The first point (a) in the description hangs on the meaning of the word 'Israelite.' *Israel* means here, as frequently in Philo, 'seer of God,' or 'vision of God,'—not 'hero of God,' or 'strength of God'; and this interpretation alone suits the emphasis on the word 'see' and the idea of 'vision' in the context.