

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON MY HEBREW
NEW TESTAMENT.

II.

PROFESSOR E. SCHUERER in an article on "The Idea of the Kingdom of Heaven as set forth in Jewish Writings," in the *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie* for 1876, has endeavoured to show that מלכות שמים in post-biblical Jewish literature is quite the same as מלכות האלהים, *kingdom of God*. In his *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, second edition, vol. ii., p. 171, he repeats his statement and confirms the result of his careful inquiry. One of his chief arguments is this, that as מלכות השמים never occurs, but in every case simply שמים without the article, it is like a proper name which is determinate in itself. With the exception of הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, *the Holy One, blessed be He*, there is no name of God more commonly used than שמים. Everywhere in the two Talmuds and in the Midrashim we meet with phrases like the following: יִרְאֵה שָׁמַיִם, *fearing God*; מוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם or יִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם, *the fear of God*; שֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, *the name of God*, etc. What Josephus says about the Pharisees' doctrine of predetermination and liberty is confirmed by the Talmudic maxim, "All is in the hands of Heaven save the fear of Heaven"; that is, piety or impiety depends upon man's own will. This reads in Hebrew: הַכֹּל בְּיַד שָׁמַיִם חוּץ מִיִּרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם (*Berachoth*, 33b). And what in this utterance is called יִרְאֵת שָׁמַיִם is elsewhere more exactly defined as קַבֵּל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם, *reception of the kingdom of heaven*; or קַבֵּל עוֹל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם, *taking up of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven*. Everywhere from the Mishna down to the Jewish Siddur or Prayerbook מלכות שמים is quite a common phrase, whereas מלכות השמים never once occurs.

It cannot indeed be proved that in biblical Hebrew

heaven is ever used as the name of God. But in the book of Daniel we seem to have something like the transition to this use of the word. There in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chap. iv., in one sentence, vers. 23, 29, we have the phrase, "the Most High ruleth," followed by the equivalent phrase, "the Heavens do rule," where שמיא with indifferent article is used. And if we turn our attention to the term "*kingdom of heaven*," we shall find that there is only one passage in the New Testament¹ in which "heaven" is employed as an equivalent of "God"; viz. in the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke xv., where the penitent says to his father, Πάτερ, ἤμαρτον εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ ἐνώπιόν σου, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight*. Evidently he intended to say, to express ourselves talmudically according to *Sanhedrin*, 27a, that he had been רע לשמים ורע לבריית, that is, *bad toward God and toward men*. The Hebrew equivalent here is לשמים ולפניך. The fact that the Greek text has εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν and not εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς might have afforded a valuable hint as to the correct rendering of the phrase. Nevertheless both in Salkinson's Hebrew New Testament and in my own it has been rendered by לשמים with the article. This is an error that requires correction.

On the other hand, the translation of the New Testament phrase βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, though peculiar to the Hebrew-Christian gospel of Matthew, and never interchanged with βασιλεία οὐρανοῦ, by the Hebrew phrase מלכות השמים is perfectly correct and quite irreprehensible, because ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is really, though not logically, the same as ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ of the other evangelists, and is by no means identical with מלכות שמים of the synagogue. I refer my readers to the article in Cremer's *Biblio-*

¹ For Luke xviii. 13 is not to be regarded as a case in point. There εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν signifies "*up to heaven*," and is rendered in my version לשמיים, and by Salkinson לקירום.

Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, especially to the fifth edition of that work in the German, published in 1888. The evangelical notion is fuller and deeper and wider. The *kingdom of heaven* (heavens) is the new system of the world, appointed and governed by God in His Christ, a new system of heavenly origin, of heavenly nature and universal extent, comprehending as well the heavenly as the earthly world, and some way transforming the earth into heaven as the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven."

In the translation of βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν however, we are presented with a case altogether different from the question of the translation of Καῖσαρ. The Hebrew rendering קיסר, must be given, just like the Greek rendering Καῖσαρ, in every case without the article. I know of only a single instance in the Talmud in which קיסר has the post-positive Aramaic article; namely, in the *Aboda zara* 10b, where the question is raised, מאי הוי דההוא קיסרא דהוה, *What is the matter with that emperor who was*, etc.? But even in this case there are certain manuscripts, such as that of Munich, which give קיסר, and that too is the rendering of the celebrated extract of the Talmudic Haggadoth (*Stories and Sentences*) entitled "En-Jacob."

As the emperor is always rendered קיסר, not הקיסר, and God always השמים, not שמים, so we may conclude that the Hebrew equivalent for ζωὴ αἰώνιος is not היי העולם, but היי עולם. This too is another point in which my translation is in need of improvement. Salkinson has quite correctly used היי עולם without the article. The question, however, now presents itself as to whether this rendering is sufficient as an equivalent for the determinate phrase ἡ αἰώνιος ζωὴ or ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος. The discussion of this point must be reserved for our third paper.

III.

In the biblical Hebrew, and likewise in the biblical Aramaic, the noun עולם, of the same form as חותם, a signet ring, means in every case a period of long endurance (*αἰών*), and in no case the temporal world (*κόσμος*). There is only one passage, and that in *Ecclesiastes* iii. 11, a book belonging to the very latest age of biblical Hebrew, in which with any show of plausibility "the world" might be given as the equivalent of העולם. But even there the rendering of the margin of the Revised Version, "Also He hath set eternity in their heart," is preferable to that of the text. The idea of the writer is: The thought of eternity, the yearning after infinity, is implanted in the human soul.

The biblical usage allows us without the slightest risk of ambiguity to say not only חיים עדי-העולם (Ps. cxxxiii. 3), but also חיי העולם, as well as חיי עולם (Daniel xii. 2). Indeed in the seventh verse of this same chapter of Daniel God is called חי העולם, He who liveth for ever, or eternally.

On the contrary, in the post-biblical Hebrew, both as spoken and written, a clear and well-defined distinction was made between חיי העולם, *life of the world*, and חיי עולם, *eternal life*. When used to denote eternity, עולם never has the article. The Hebrew translator of the New Testament cannot forbear using עולם as a homonym for *αἰών* and *κόσμος*, and must, for that very reason, the more carefully observe that difference in usage just indicated between העולם, *the world*, and עולם, *eternity*. It is quite right to translate ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς (John vi. 51) by בעד חיי העולם, as is done in Salkinson's version and my own; πνεῦμα τοῦ κόσμου (1 Cor. ii. 12) by רוח העולם, as is also done in both; τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου (1 John iii. 17) by נכסי העולם (where Salkinson more biblically, as he thinks, but not so properly, renders הון בארץ); and in Christ's inter-

cessory prayer, ἐγὼ οὐκ εἶμι ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου (John xvii. 16), by אֲנִי מִן־הָעוֹלָם, as is done in both. But the equivalent for αἰώνιος ζωή is חַיִּי עוֹלָם. This is the rendering given to the phrase in my translation of Matthew xxv. 46, Luke x. 25, John xii. 50; but I confess ingenuously that my lamented friend has been more consistent than I have been in the regular omission of the article in such cases.

There are several passages however in which the Greek text has ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή, or ἡ ζωή αἰώνιος, or ἡ ζωή ἡ αἰώνιος. Now in such instances, where the notion of eternal life is conceived of in so determinate a way, it is quite necessary that the grammatical form of expression should be correspondingly determinate. The translator may indeed seek to get over the difficulty by using חַיִּי נֶצַח or חַיִּי עַד, because נֶצַח and עַד, in the sense of “the everlasting,” “the eternal,” never take the article, but without it have the idea of determinateness in themselves. But this device is, after all, only a half measure, which does not succeed in removing altogether the ambiguity. We have a better expedient, of which Salkinson has not made any use; while I myself have made a very liberal use of it, but, unfortunately, very seldom in the proper place. In John xvii. 3 we read, αὐτὴ δέ ἐστιν ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή. For this distinctly assertory form of the original Salkinson substitutes the interrogatory phrase, וּמָה חַיִּי עוֹלָם, and *what is eternal life?* In my translation, on the other hand, וְאֵלֶּה הֵם חַיִּי הָעוֹלָמִים is not only literal, but, as I am about to show, unquestionably idiomatical.

The benediction, בְּרִכָּה, which ought to be repeated by any one who undertakes to read the book of the Thorah, has in *Massecheth Thorah* xiii. 8 the following ancient form: “Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast given us a law from the heavens,” חַיִּי הָעוֹלָמִים מִמְרוֹמִים, “*the eternal life from the heights.*” When closing the book he says, “Blessed be the Lord, who has given us a law of truth, and has

implanted in us **חיי עולם**," or, according to another reading, **חיי העולמים**.

The same tendency to vacillate between **חיי עולם** and **חיי העולמים** is to be found at the close of the treatise of the Mishna entitled Tamid, which deals with the daily morning and evening sacrifices. There the inscription of the ninety-second Psalm, "A Song for the Sabbath Day," is interpreted, "*for the day which is entire Sabbath and rest for eternal life.*" The text of the Mishna here varies between **חיי עולמים** and **ומנוחה לחיי העולמים**. The Mishna on which the Palestinian Talmud rests, edited by W. H. Lowe from the unique Cambridge manuscript (1883), has **מנוחה לחיי העולמים**; and in this form the phrase is received into the blessing used at the table (see Baer, *Abodath Israel*, Siddur with Commentary, p. 561). Yet, even in this case, the reading fluctuates, and an old text issued at Treves in A.D. 1525 gives **חיי עולמים**, without the article.

The result of the investigation is, that *ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή*, wherever it is necessary to express distinctly the determinateness of the phrase, can be idiomatically rendered by **חיי העולמים**, and that *ζωὴ αἰώνιος* can be rendered either by **חיי עולם** or **חיי עולמים**; but that **חיי העולם** for "eternal life" is equivocal, or not agreeable to the usage of post-biblical Hebrew, nor even, it appears from Daniel xii. 2, to that of biblical Hebrew.

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