OLD TESTAMENT NOTES.

I. The 'Sign' of Immanuel.

The aim of this note is to review the circumstances of Isaiah's 'Sign', as recorded in Isa. vii 1 sqq., and to suggest that a reconsideration of the evidence which lies at our disposal is likely to produce conviction that modern explanations of its character must be regarded as unsatisfactory, and that the traditional view that the 'Sign' was to be of the nature of a portent, and that this portent was a miraculous birth, has much that may be urged in its favour.

This view I have already suggested tentatively in an article on Messianic prophecy which appeared two years ago in *The Interpreter*.[1] After further consideration I have endeavoured to restate the evidence which seems to support it, and it is only since so doing that I have consulted Dr Gressmann's book on Eschatology, and have seen that the view which he proposes in this important work to some extent anticipates my argument.[2] It may not, however, be out of place to state the line of thought which has led independently to a somewhat similar result.

The grounds upon which the traditional interpretation of the 'Sign' was first abandoned are familiar, and need not be gone over at length. Observation of the fact that the term עַלְמָה, which is used in Isa. vii 14 to describe Immanuel's mother, does not necessarily denote a virgin, but merely a girl who has arrived at marriageable age, led to the conclusion that, if the virginity of the mother had constituted the portentous character of the 'Sign', Isaiah would have used an unambiguous term to emphasize this fact, i.e. not עַלְמָה but בְּתוּלָה. Thus another explanation of the 'Sign' was sought, and more than one has been proposed. It has been maintained that the 'Sign' is not particular but general—any young woman of marriageable age may name her first-born son Immanuel in view of the near approach of the deliverance of Judah from her foes. Or, secondly, the suggestion has been made that under the title עַלְמָה Isaiah is referring to his own wife, elsewhere called 'the prophetess' (Isa. viii 3), and that Immanuel was to be the prophet's own son, bearing, like Isaiah himself and his other sons, a symbolical name.

Against both these explanations it has been rightly urged that they are inconsistent with the rôle which is assigned to Immanuel. He is a definitely pictured individual; not merely a token of deliverance, but

[1] 'The Christian Interpretation of Messianic Prophecy', *Interpreter*, April 1906, pp. 267 sq.

[2] H. Gressmann *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* pp. 270 sqq.

in some sense its embodiment. The land of Judah is spoken of as his land (viii 8), and the mere mention of his name inspires Isaiah with so extraordinary an enthusiasm as must make it clear to the sympathetic reader that the prophet's hopes are set upon the individual of his vision, and not merely upon the theme which is betokened by his name (viii 9, 10). Hence we are led to the conclusion that 'the language of Isaiah forces upon us the conviction that the figure of Immanuel is an *ideal one*, projected by him upon the shifting future—upon the nearer future in ch. vii, upon the remoter future in ch. ix, but grasped by the prophet as a living and real personality, the guardian of his country now, its deliverer and governor hereafter'.[1] This is doubtless true, as concerns the figure of Immanuel; but, if it be contended that the remarkable character of the 'Sign' is satisfied by the fact of what the child was to become, presumably when grown to man's estate, then it must be replied that this explanation also is insufficient to account for the circumstances under which this sign was offered and given.

Let us consider briefly what these circumstances were. Isaiah's invitation to Ahaz to choose a sign for himself as a test of Yahwe's power and purpose had been intentionally couched in such a form as to indicate that nothing that human imagination could devise would be too miraculous to expect. No limits are set to the possibilities of the king's choice. He may make it deep as She'ol,[2] or high as the height above. When, on Ahaz's refusal to accept the offer, Isaiah states that Yahwe Himself is about to give a sign unasked, it is surely inconceivable that this unsolicited sign is something less marvellous than Ahaz might possibly have demanded had he chosen to use his opportunity. Yet when full allowance has been made for all that Immanuel was to become as the future deliverer of his land and as endowed, we may believe, with superhuman attributes—since all this could not be realized until the child had grown up and proved himself in action,—there still remains in the 'Sign' itself something of a bathos. How could the expectation of what an unborn child might achieve in the far future have availed to convince Ahaz that it was unnecessary to take immediate steps to relieve his kingdom from the instant danger of the Syro-Ephraimitish coalition?

Thus the conclusion seems to be pressed home that there was something in the predicted birth itself which was of the nature of a portent. This seems to be the only solution which does justice to the circumstances in which the 'Sign' was offered.

Now though *to us* the terms in which the 'Sign' is formulated appear

[1] Driver *Isaiah, his life and times* pp. 41 sq.

[2] Adopting the obvious emendation הַעֲמֵק שְׁאֵלָה in place of the text הַעֲמֵק שְׁאָלָה 'Make deep the request'.

to be ambiguous, this need not have been the case with Isaiah's contemporaries. May it not have been the case that the prophet was merely setting a time to the realization of an expectation which was *already in the air*, and that thus the meaning of his words would be immediately obvious even to the least intelligent of his hearers?[1]

It is natural to enquire what evidence can be adduced in favour of the probability of such an hypothesis.

On looking back over the old narratives of the early history of Israel —narratives which must, at least in substance, have been familiar to the men of Isaiah's age—it can scarcely escape notice that a large number of the outstanding characters in early times were born under exceptional circumstances. In the cases of the births of Isaac (Gen. xi 30 J, xviii 9 sqq. J, xxi 2, 6, 7 J), Esau and Jacob (Gen. xxv 21 sqq. J), Joseph (Gen. xxx 1, 23, 24 JE), Samson (Judges xiii), and Samuel (1 Sam. i) it is related that the mothers were previously barren, and that the births took place markedly through divine interposition, and wholly beyond human expectation. Moses, though not related to have been born in an exceptional manner, was believed to have been preserved from death in his infancy through a remarkable interposition of divine providence. With this story of the preservation of Moses we are bound to compare the legend of the birth and infancy of Sargon of Agade, the founder of Babylon (circa B.C. 2800 ?). It is related that Sargon, after having been born in unusual circumstances, was placed by his mother in a basket of reed-grass and committed to the river. Here he was found by chance by Akki the irrigator, who drew him out and brought him up as his own son.[2] Whether we have in the case of Sargon the suggestion that he was of reputed human parentage on his mother's side only is not clear. If the term used to describe his mother, *enitum*, means 'priestess' or 'vestal', then the inference to be drawn from the statement *abi ul idi*, 'my father I knew not,' seems obvious. His mother being attached to a temple, the assumption was that her child was the offspring of a god. But is such an explanation tenable in view of the immediately following statement, 'the brother of my father inhabited the mountain'? Possibly this may mean that Sargon, though not recognizing his father, was acquainted with his father's clan. Be this as it may, it is sufficient for our purpose to note the fact that we have here from Babylonian sources evidence for the antiquity of the view that the circumstances attending the birth and early days of a great personality were expected to form the object of an extraordinary providence; and in the close

[1] This point has been seized and ably handled by Gressmann *op. cit.* pp. 273 sq.

[2] Cf. *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* III i pp. 100 sqq.; Jeremias *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients* pp. 410 sqq.; King, *Chronicles concerning early Babylonian Kings* ii pp. 87 sqq.

analogy between the story of Sargon and that of Moses we are bound to trace a common 'motive' which cannot be merely accidental.

In view of these facts it seems altogether probable that, if the expectation of a future Messianic ruler was current in the days of Isaiah, something of the nature of a remarkable portent in connexion with his birth may have found a place as the initial token of the greatness which he was destined to achieve. That such an expectation *was* current at the time is indicated by the words of Isaiah's contemporary Micah (v 2 sqq.). Micah, in predicting the birth of a Messianic champion at Bethlehem Ephrathah, says that 'his goings forth are of old, from everlasting', a statement which, whether it refers to 'the pre-existence of the Messiah in the eternal purposes of God', or to 'his descent from the ancient Davidic family',[1] at any rate seems to indicate that the expectation thus formulated was not something new, but would be immediately recognized by those to whom the prophet's words were addressed. The same inference is to be drawn from Micah's succeeding statement, in which he predicts that Yahwe will deliver up His people into the hands of their foes 'until the time that she who shall bring forth hath brought forth', a period which is to be marked by the moral and spiritual restitution of Israel. This allusion can scarcely be independent and unconnected with Isaiah's 'Sign'; and the most satisfactory explanation of this connexion seems to be, not that Micah was drawing upon the teaching of his contemporary, or that the verse as it stands in Micah's prophecy is a later insertion based upon Isaiah, but that both Isaiah and Micah were giving shape to a popular expectation, and that this fact would be immediately recognized by their hearers. The Micah passage, like that of Isaiah, appears ambiguous apart from an acquaintance with the thought of the time, and the reference to her that shall bring forth at least suggests that some exceptional function is attached to the mother. If this is not so, it is not clear why she should thus be specified, rather than the father of the destined deliverer.

Supposing, then, that it is true that Isaiah, in formulating his 'Sign', is fixing the occurrence of an event of which there was a popular expectation, his choice of the term עַלְמָה to describe Immanuel's mother need no longer excite perplexity. Had his prediction of a virgin-birth been a hitherto unimagined phenomenon, he must have chosen in preference the term בְּתוּלָה; but, granted the existence of such an expectation, he may well have used עַלְמָה, which, though it does not *necessarily* imply virginity, yet is most naturally used with reference to a virgin-woman. The use of the term is not unlike our English use of 'maiden' and 'damsel', terms which do not in themselves connote virginity, yet would scarcely be used of any but an unmarried woman. That such is

[1] Cheyne *Camb. Bible* ad loc.

the case with the occurrences of עַלְמָה in Hebrew which come under consideration may be accidental, but the *fact* cannot be doubted. Thus in each of the passages, Gen. xxiv 43, Ex. ii 8, the particular עַלְמָה mentioned is certainly a virgin. In Prov. xxx 19 the term is used of one who is at least unmarried, and the same must be the case in Cant. vi 8 where the עֲלָמוֹת in Solomon's harem are distinguished not only from the queens but also from the concubines. So also the reference in Cant. i 3 is clearly to unmarried girls.

We have also, on this theory, an explanation of the definite article prefixed to עַלְמָה. She is הָעַלְמָה, '*the* maiden,' because she was expected, and the part which she was to play was understood.

If the view here advocated be correct, the import of Isaiah's 'Sign' lay in the fact that he actually ventured to set a time—and that in the immediate future—for the advent of a portent which was currently, though vaguely, expected. It may be said that, from the point of view of his contemporaries, his prediction was a failure. In a sense this is true, not merely of this 'Sign', but of the picture of the suffering Servant as portrayed by Deutero-Isaiah, and of many other Old Testament prophecies. Those, however, who believe that the prophets were endowed in a special sense with the spirit of Him with whom 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' will not doubt that such predictions, though springing out of merely local and temporal circumstances, were divinely directed towards a wider and more glorious fulfilment.

II. Rhyme in the Song of Songs.

So far as I am aware, the use of rhyme in the poetry of the Song of Songs has hitherto passed unnoticed. The first instance which attracted my attention was ch. viii 1–3. That this little poem is intended for the bridal song seems clear from ch. vii 12–14, which leads up to it, and also from the succeeding poem ch. viii 5 sqq. in which the Shulammite and her lover are united in wedded happiness. In a sense, then, ch. viii 1–3 is the culmination of the drama, and the author has marked the occasion by the construction of an elaborately rhymed poem of great beauty.

Mí yittenká ke'ah lí
yonéq shedé 'immí
  'emça'aká baḥúç 'eshshaqeká
gám lo yabúzu lí
  'enhageká 'abi'aká
    'el béth 'immí telammedéni
  'ashqeká miyyén haréqaḥ
mé'aṣíṣ rimmoní
  semólo táḥath roshí
wíminó teḥabbeqéni.

Here the rhyme of lines 1, 2, and 4 is repeated in line 8, and into this scheme there is woven the rhyme of lines 6 and 10. A subordinate rhyme or assonance may be found in the repetition of the suffix *-ká* in lines 3, 5, 7.

The following is an attempt to reproduce rhyme and rhythm in English:—

Woúld that thóu wert my bróther
Who súcked at the breásts of my móther!
When I foúnd thee withoút I would kíss thee,
Nor feár the reproách of anóther;
Would leád thee, would bríng thee
To the houíse of my móther who traíns me,
Would gíve thee to drínk spiced wíne,
Púre pomegránate, none óther.
—His léft arm is únder my héad,
And seé! his ríght arm enchaíns me.

The poem of ch. vi 1–3 is complete in itself, and makes use of the masculine plural termination *-ím* to furnish a rhyme in lines 2, 7, 8, 10.

'Ána halák dodék
háyyafá bannashím
'ána paná dodék
únᵉbaqshénnu ʿimmák
dodí yarád lᵉgannó
láʿᵃrugáth habbósem
lirʿóth bagganním
wᵉlilqóṭ shoshanním
'ᵃní lᵉdodí wᵉdódi lí
haroʿé bashshoshanním.

Whíther wént thy lóve,
Thóu whom beaúty dówers?
Whíther túrned thy lóve?
Lét us seék him wíth thee.
My lóve has gone dówn to his gárden,
Dówn to the béd of the spíces,
To ténd[1] in the bówers
And gáther the flówers;
Í am my lóve's and my lóve is míne
Who ténds among the flówers.

[1] The ambiguous לרעות is here taken to mean 'to tend his flocks'. An analogous ellipse of the object is found in Hos. xii 13 ובאשה שמר 'and for a wife he kept [sheep]'.

These two poems by no means stand alone as illustrations of the author's partiality for rhyme. Other instances of its employment may be gathered from all parts of the book. Thus in viii 6 we have

Siméni kaḥothám ʿal libbéka
kaḥothám ʿal zᵉroʿéka
ki ʿazzá kammáweth ʾahᵃbá
qashá kishᵉʾól qinʾá
rᵉshafṓha ríshfê ʾésh
shalhébethyá.

Here we notice that the system of the rhyming lines 3, 4, and 6, with a non-rhyming 5, is the same as that of viii 1 rhyming lines 1, 2, and 4, with non-rhyming 3, and vi 1–3 rhyming lines 7, 8, 10, with non-rhyming 9. This reminds us of the scheme of rhyme in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. Perhaps this scheme is also illustrated in viii 8 :—

ʾAḥóth lánu qᵉtanná
wᵉshadáyim ʾên láh
mannáʿᵃse láʾᵃḥothénu
bayyóm sheyyᵉdúbbar báh.

Here, however, it may be objected that line 1 does not rhyme accurately with lines 2 and 4. This is a matter of uncertainty.

In iii 11 the daughters of Zion are invited to go forth and look at king Solomon in the crown :—

sheʿíṭṭᵉra ló ʾimmó
bᵉyóm ḥᵃthúnnathó
bᵉyóm simḥáth libbó.

Here I have excised the prosaic conjunction ו at the beginning of line 3.

In v 1 every word in each line rhymes with its corresponding word in lines 1 to 4, and there is a similar correspondence between 5 and 6 :—

Báthi lᵉganní ʾᵃḥothí
ʾAríthi morí ʿim bᵉsamí
ʾAkálti yaʿrí ʿim dibshí
Shathíthi yênî ʿim ḥᵃlabí
ʾIklú reʿím
Shᵉthú dodím.

Here the omission of כלה at the end of line 1 is demanded both by metre and rhyme. The word appears to have been inserted in imitation of iv 9, 10, 12. Similarly ושכרו must be omitted from line 6. Probably *shikru* was first a marginal suggestion in place of *shᵉthu*, as rhyming in both syllables with *ʾiklu*.

Instances of rhyme formed by use of the plural termination *-ím* are

too numerous to quote. Such may be seen in ii 16, 17 (reading *bᵉsamím* 'spices' in verse 17 c in place of *bether* viii 14), iv 13, 14, v 9–16. In ch. ii it should be noticed that the scheme *-ím, -óth, ím* of verses 2, 3 a is repeated in verses 8 b, 9 a, while in verse 9 c we have the reversed arrangement *-óth, -ím.*

The question suggests itself whether this use of rhyme in the Song of Songs has any bearing upon the date of the work; but this is improbable. Since the Song stands alone as a representative of this class of Hebrew literature, we can base no inferences upon the poetical devices employed by the author. All that can be affirmed is that the ease and grace which the device assumes in his hands—well marked, yet not insisted upon with that desire for a hard and fast system which stamps the prosaic mind—proves that the use of rhyme must have long been familiar in the popular songs of Israel. One illustration, dating undoubtedly from ancient times, is preserved in the triumph-song of the Philistines over the captive Samson in Judges xvi 24 :—

Nathán ʾᵉlohḗnu bᵉyadénu
ʾeth ʾóyᵉbénu
wᵉʾéth maḥᵃríb ʾarçénu
waʾᵃshér hirbá ʾeth hᵃlalḗnu.

This is popular doggrel, and not poetry; yet the intentional production of a rhyme is evident.

The only other instance of rhyme which I have noticed in the poetry of the Old Testament occurs where perhaps we should least expect to find it—at the close of the first poem in Lamentations. Here, if we excise לְפָנֶיךָ in verse 21ᵃ (as is demanded by the qîna-metre), and read sing. פָּשָׂעַנִי for pl. פְּשָׁעָי in verse 21 b, we obtain a very regular rhyme :—

Tabó kol raʿathám
wᵉʿolél lámo
kaʾᵃshér ʿolálta lí
ʿal kól pishʿí
kí rabbóth ʾanḥotháy
wᵉlibbí dawwáy.

III. Who were the hosts of the Egyptian Sinuhe?

Can anything be ascertained as to the tribe which hospitably received Sinuhe, the political exile from Egypt during the reign of Sesostris I (1980–1935 B.C.), and among whom he made his home for so many years?[1]

The district to which he fled is called Ḳedem (*Ḳdm*), a name which,

[1] See Petrie *Egyptian Tales, first series* pp. 100 sqq.; Breasted *Ancient Records of Egypt* i §§ 486 sqq.

if it corresponds to the Hebrew קֶדֶם, should denote the district to the East of Canaan. After spending a year and a half in this district, Sinuhe fell in with the sheik of Upper Tenu, which, according to Breasted, is an error for Upper Retenu, 'the usual designation in the Empire for the higher portions of Palestine.'[1] The district occupied by this Sheik is thus described :—

> 'It was a goodly land, named Yaa;
> There were figs in it and vines,
> More plentiful than water was its wine,
> Copious was its honey, plenteous its oil;
> All fruits were upon its trees.
> Barley was there, and spelt,
> Without end all cattle.'[2]

This description of the fertility of the land would be appropriate to a district in the middle part of the Palestinian hill-country.

The name of Sinuhe's host, as given by Petrie, is Amu-an-shi, or, as transcribed by Breasted, Emuienshi. The purpose of this note is to make a tentative suggestion as to the clan which was headed by Amu-an-shi, based upon consideration of the name of the sheik.

The first portion of the name, *Amu*, suggests the Semitic *Ammu*, 'kinsman,' which enters into the names of the first Babylonian dynasty Ammurabi, Ammiditana, Ammisadugga, and into the Hebrew names Amminadab, Ammizabad, &c.

The remaining portion of the name, *an-shi*, can scarcely be originally Semitic, but has the appearance of being Sumerian. Now the Sumerian ideogram which denotes *the ass* is pronounced AN . SHU. Some time ago my friend, Mr C. J. Ball, called my attention to the fact that in a syllabary published in *Brit. Mus. Cuneiform Texts* XI, pl. 3, col. iv, l. 19, we find the pronunciation AN . SHI. The Babylonian equivalent of this ideogram is, of course, *imēru*, i. e. the Hebrew חֲמוֹר *ḥămōr*. Is it, then, beyond the range of likelihood that the name Amu-an-shi may denote 'kinsman of the ass', and that the bearer of the name was sheik of the בְּנֵי חֲמוֹר, the sons of Ḥămōr, who were probably so called because the ass was their clan-totem? The district of Shechem inhabited by this clan (Gen. xxxiii 19, xxxiv, Josh. xxiv 32, Judges ix 28) would seem to answer exactly to the land of Yaa as described in the Egyptian story.

It may be questioned whether it is probable that the name would have been pronounced with one element Semitic and the other Sumerian. This is a point which my slender acquaintance with Assyriology does not permit me satisfactorily to elucidate. I imagine, however, than an illustration of such a combination may be found in the fact that the

[1] Breasted *op. cit.* p. 238 *n.* b. [2] The translation is that of Breasted.

name of the goddess NIN . KI . GAL was pronounced also as Ereshkigal. It seems even possible, in view of the fact that we have numerous instances of the Semiticizing of Sumerian words (e.g. KI . GAL, *kigallu*; E . GAL, *ekallu*) that *anshu, anshi* may have been taken over into Semitic. A parallel may be found in the fact that the Sumerian ideogram for 'lion', UR . MAG ('great dog'), is read in Babylonian *nêshu*, but there also exists a Semiticized Sumerian name *urmaḫḫu*, so that *nêshu* and *urmaḫḫu* stand side by side, just as, upon this theory, *anshi* and *ḥămōr* would do.

It would be interesting to hear what professed Assyriologists have to say as to this suggestion.

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ST JOHN AND ST JAMES IN WESTERN 'NON-ROMAN' KALENDARS

THE Dean of St Patrick's (in the *Irish Ch. Quarterly* Jan. 1908) and the Dean of Westminster (in a note appended to his *Advent Lectures*, published during the course of 1908) have recently discussed the supposed corroboration of St John the Evangelist's alleged martyrdom from ecclesiastical Kalendars. They quote the Syriac martyrology (of the early fifth century) and the Carthaginian martyrology (of the early sixth) to shew that St John the Evangelist was at one time associated with his brother St James the Great for commemoration on December 27 as 'martyrs'. A certain amount of homiletic evidence is also adduced by them, with which I am not now concerned. Their conclusion is that the Evangelist was only called 'martyr' in the broader and earlier sense, which included those who were afterwards distinguished as 'confessors' from those who actually were slain for the Faith: and that thus 'the general tradition of the second century which assigns to St John the Apostle a peaceful end cannot be set aside by' the 'slender evidence' (attributed to Papias) 'for a martyr's death': and few will be found to reject such a conclusion.

It is rather interesting to carry the investigation into the connexion of the two sons of Zebedee with the Christmas festival a little further. The closing days of December appear from an early date to have been associated with a group of commemorations containing (1) St Stephen, the first martyr, (2) St Peter and St Paul, (3) St James and St John, the sons of Zebedee: to these were rather later added (4) the Holy Innocents. Pairs (2) and (3) in this group were not always in this order, and in the West the winter commemoration of St Peter and St Paul soon gave way, if it ever was observed, before the more favoured