

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### "THE THIRD COMMANDMENT."

*To the Editor of The Open Court:*

I read your article entitled "The Third Commandment" in the August issue, page 502, which is written to show that traditional interpretations of the Bible are in some cases unwarranted.

This assertion is quite true, as every advanced Bible student can see. But the instance is not well chosen, for Professor Patton's interpretation of the Third Commandment, though ingenious, is very unpalatable. May we assume that it is here as the Talmud has it:

כִּי יִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת פִּי וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִשְׁוֹנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת אָזְנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת עֵינָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת יָדָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת רַגְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת מַעְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת תַּיְבָּתוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת מַעְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת תַּיְבָּתוֹ

Apparently the master must have been fast asleep when he made that statement. I cannot understand how a learned man can advance such words. Indeed, this instance does not prove your true assertion at all. For, true that this commandment does not mean blasphemy, yet it means nothing else but perjury and verification of a falsehood by an oath, as can easily be proven as follows:

לָקַח means "to lift," "to take," "to utter words." וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ means "to desire," "to list," "to crave for something," e. g.

וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִשְׁוֹנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת אָזְנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת עֵינָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת יָדָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת רַגְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת מַעְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת תַּיְבָּתוֹ

Deuteron. xxiv. 15.

Moreover, we read in Psalms xxiv. 4:

וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִשְׁוֹנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת אָזְנוֹ וְיִשָּׁר אֶת עֵינָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת יָדָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת רַגְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת מַעְלָיו וְיִשָּׁר אֶת תַּיְבָּתוֹ

It is obvious that this means an oath to verify a falsehood.

Mark the word וְיִשָּׁר according to the לִבּוֹ which is לִבּוֹ his soul, the meaning of the verse (a) would be: "He who had no desire for something which is a לִבּוֹ" (think of וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ). But the Massorites seem to have preferred וְיִשָּׁר (on account of the parallel וְיִשָּׁר אֶת לִבּוֹ) as we read: "My soul, my being"; and וְיִשָּׁר, "the being of JHVH." The words are therefore rightly translated: "He who has not invoked the being of JHVH for a לִבּוֹ and has never sworn to a לִבּוֹ." A man who wrongfully wishes for something and in order to attain his wrong desire would invoke the וְיִשָּׁר to establish the truth of his claim, is here spoken of as a וְיִשָּׁר.

Finally I wish to remind you of Psalms xvi. 4, where we read:

זָכַר אֱשָׁא אֶת שְׁמוֹתָם עַל שִׁדְדֵי

Thus our verse will read:

לֹא תִשָּׂא (עַל שִׁדְדֵיךָ) אֶת שֵׁם גִּדְשׁ יי אֶל־הוֹדֵךְ בְּשֵׁנָא

קָרָא קָרָא denotes "to appoint somebody out of many, e. g.,

רָאָה הָרְאָהִי קָרָא בְּעִזְאֵלִי

(Exodus xxxi. 2.)

We grant that preaching was not instituted in the days of Abraham, but in the days of the narrator admonishing, teaching and preaching and pointing to the Great Name was not uncommon, and therefore the narrator tells us:

אִז הוֹבֵר לְקָרָא קָשָׁם יי

(Gen. iv. 26.)

At that period the calling out of the name of JHVH came into fashion; in the days of Enosh yet. And that Abraham built an altar,

בִּנְקָא קָשָׁם יי

Further that Abraham proclaimed the name of JHVH, seventeen generations later is not so strange. What else would one expect of a man regarding whom the Lord says:

כִּי בָרַעְתִּיו הָמִצַּן אֲשֶׁר יִצְחָק אֶת בְּנֵיו וְאֶת בְּרִיתוֹ בְּתַבְרִין וְשָׁמַיִן הַהָרִי יי בְּגִשְׁתֵּי עֲרֻקָה

וּמִשְׁפָּט.

(Gen. xviii. 19.)

What more does a modern preacher say?

That preaching the Zedakah and the Mispat commenced much later, must have been known to the narrator of Genesis, and so he uses the expression current in his time. Luther's translation is therefore quite commendable.

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TORONTO, ONT.

### KAPPAMANAVAPUCCHA.

(From the Sutta-Nipata; put into verse by E. P. BUFFET.)

"Where the spreading floods are surging,"

Venerable Kappa saith,

"All the race of men submerging—

Deluge of decay and death—

Tell me, Sage, of some lone highland

Still above the rising main;

Tell me, tell me of an island,

Refuge from return of pain."

"Where the spreading floods are surging,

Kappa," saith the Blessed One,

"All the race of men submerging,

By decay and death undone,

I will name an isle of saving;

Those who find it find the best;

Nothing holding, nothing craving,

They have reached the perfect rest.