

**ORIENTAL OBSERVATIONS AND
OCCASIONAL CRITICISMS,
MORE OR LESS ILLUSTRATING
SEVERAL HUNDRED PASSAGES
OF SCRIPTURE**

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Oriental Observations and Occasional Criticisms, More or Less Illustrating Several Hundred Passages of Scripture by John Callaway

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JOHN CALLAWAY

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ORIENTAL OBSERVATIONS,

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**MORE OR LESS ILLUSTRATING SEVERAL HUNDRED
PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.**

BY JOHN CALLAWAY,

Late Missionary in Ceylon.

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PREFACE.

IN publishing this Collection of Notes, with a view of illustrating passages of Scripture, obscure from antiquity, or reference to some eastern usage, nothing is less desired than to supersede any other work on the subject. Travellers in the East, during the last century, have furnished an ample commentary on difficulties formerly deemed unrelievable; but what strikes one, may escape the observation of another; and in this lower application, the Apostle's suggestion holds good: "Ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."

The Cingalese, among whom the writer resided about ten years, though a different people from the Hindoos, and settled far from Judea, appear to have been no distant neighbours of the chosen race, previous to the period when they were expelled from the Continent, and took refuge in Ceylon. Their usages, being immutable, and frequently bearing a resemblance to those of the Jews, may heighten the palpability of the cloud of witnesses for the truth of Scripture, and dart illumination on a variety of passages, to a Western reader quite obscure.

In the library of a minister habituated to estimate

books by their tendency to illustrate the Sacred Volume, the best authors on this subject are indispensable; while in general, they are too voluminous and expensive for the younger classes of readers, into whose hands this publication may fall. What the writer, chiefly for their sakes, has borrowed in the words of another, is distinctly acknowledged. In some cases, a casual remark led to a particular inquiry, and an appropriate illustration. For many hints, the writer thankfully owns himself indebted to the invaluable labours of Father Calmet, and his ingenious and judicious Editor;—and for most of the notices relative to the Hindoos, it will be easily seen, that the Illustrations of Scripture by the late lamented Mr. Ward, of Serampore, have been consulted.

Though Asiatic usages forcibly tend to illustrate Scripture, they come under the personal observation of few among those who feel most interested in inquiring, what are *the true sayings of God*. The writer, therefore, indulges the hope that the result of his labours will not be unacceptable; and commends them, in humble confidence to the blessing of Him who *spake in time past unto the fathers, by the prophets, and hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son—that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.*

ORIENTAL OBSERVATIONS,

AND

OCCASIONAL CRITICISMS.

Genesis, iv. 15. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

Without attempting to support any of the opinions relating to the mark supposed to be fixed on Cain, which Dr. Shuckford has been at the pains to collect, and which may induce readers of his valuable *Connexion* to anticipate more frequent recreation than they are likely to enjoy,—the grounds on which Calmet's learned Editor* judges the English reading defensible, are entitled to great attention. Cain, apprehensive that his sin was inexpiable, and sensible that his life was in continual danger, penitently deplored his condition. From a God of mercy he received an assurance,—probably with a remission of the moral consequences of his offence, (see Psalm xcix. 8,) that his life was secure; but he was nevertheless sentenced to suffer a judicial infliction of the commutatory kind,—perhaps similar to the designatory brand fixed on the forehead of the criminal, convicted of a high offence by the statutes of Menu,—derived, it may be, from this very fact. The

* The late Mr. Charles Taylor.

mark, it should seem, admonished Cain of his offence, and not only reminded the beholder that God had reserved the chastisement of the criminal to himself, but operated as a warning against intercourse with him, lest it should be followed by consequences fatal as the death of Abel. Judicially and necessarily a fugitive, and finding banishment from society a life of misery, he moved off with his family, and formed a distant settlement.

Genesis, iv. 23. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

The difficulty in this passage is insuperable, without adopting the opinion of Dr. Shuckford, that the true reading is the interrogative: "*Have I slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt?*" In this view, the speaker, alluding to the murder of Abel by the patriarch of the family, on whose account he seems to have been menaced with danger, confidently appeals to his personal innocence; and analogically predicts accumulated vengeance on whoever would compass his death: "*If Cain [though guilty] be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech [being innocent] seventy and seven-fold.*"—Mr. Bate, I find, is of this opinion. See his *Critica Hebræa*, under כִּי: "Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech, כִּי הִרְגֹתִי, *Have I slain a man to my wounding?*" Is it so?—כִּי "If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold [who did slay one], truly Lamech [who hath not], seventy and seven-fold."

Genesis, vi. 1—4. . . . There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

The first verses of Gen. vi. seem very obscure,

and the expositions of them are much more so. One of our late divines removes all obscurity, by giving this general sense: "*When men began to multiply on earth . . . the CHIEF MEN—took them wives—of all the handsome POOR women . . . whom they chose. There were TYRANTS in the earth in those days. (And also after the ANTEDILUVIAN days, POWERFUL MEN had criminal conversation with INFERIOR WOMEN, and the children who sprang from this illicit commerce, were the renowned HEROES of whom the heathens made their gods.)—Sons of Elohim, are vicious sons of POWERFUL men. Daughters of Adam, the modest, beautiful, daughters of the poor.—Giants, TYRANTS, madmen—men of renown, HEROES.—Wall, in Robinson's Claude.*

Genesis, ix. 4. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. Leviticus, xvii. 10. And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

The custom among the Arabs, of cutting steaks from a living animal, with other such barbarities mentioned by Bruce, gives additional force to the prohibition against eating blood,—at least during the institution of sacrifices. In Acts xv. 20, 21, the interdict, standing on the footing of eating things sacrificed to idols, 1 Cor. viii. 1—9, which is shewn by the Apostle to be a thing in itself indifferent, but to be forborne on its giving offence to a converted person, 1 Cor. x. 28, seems founded on tenderness to well-meaning Jews. See *Dodd. Lect. Prop.* 174. sc. 1.

Genesis, ix. 23—25. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And

Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Doubtless Noah's prophecy relates chiefly to the posterity of his three sons: nevertheless, what Bishop Newton says by way of relieving the difficulty in this passage, arising from the change of Ham to Canaan, appears to be as probable an opinion as any. The Arabic, says he, has, the *Father of Canaan*; and some copies of the Septuagint have *Ham*. Metrically, the words *Ham abi* are considered by the best critics in Hebrew poetry necessary to fill the verse. May we not suppose, therefore, that the copyist by mistake wrote only *Canaan*, instead of *Ham the father of Canaan*?

Genesis, xii. 13. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister; that it may be well with me for thy sake: and my soul shall live because of thee.—Genesis, xx. 13. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.—Solomon's Song, v. 1. I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse.

Among christians several words of the kindred class are not confined to their strict application;—and probably the usages of the Jews set the example. It seems more than intimated from Solomon's Song, that *sister* was one of the usual names of the bride. Hence the equivocalness of the appellative is glanced at by Abimelech, who to Sarah sarcastically styles Abraham her *brother*. Moses, in Levit. xviii. 18, (see margin,) by *sister*, meant another wife while the former was alive, but the double meaning of the word induced the Jews to restrict it to a sister by blood; and hence their pretext for polygamy. Abraham in two cases, and Isaac, betrayed a want of confidence in divine protection in the way of duty; but the more extended application of the word *sister* than prevails with us, should moderate their fault in