

# THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

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## BALAAM.

NUMB. 22—24.

The history of Balaam, as recorded by Moses, Numb. 22—24, is beyond doubt one of the most interesting and instructive parts of the Old Testament. There are many things which commend it to the special study and meditation of the thoughtful and diligent Bible student. It is a singular and unique personage and character which in these chapters is portrayed to the reader of the good Book,—Balaam, the Seer,—and yet we see in this strange man the picture and type of many that have received from God great spiritual gifts and have occupied a high place in the Church of God, but, being blinded by the things of this world, have forgotten again their high calling and have rushed anew into the snares and clutches of Satan, into temporal and eternal ruin. But if the character and personage of Balaam are such as to arouse our special interest, his extraction, the remote time in which he lived, his sudden appearance in the history of Israel, and the part which he plays in it, also certainly engage our attention in no small degree. Balaam is a native of a heathen country, a contemporary of Moses and Joshua, and without having any previous intercourse with God's chosen people, he is suddenly confronted with the same, at a time when Israel had pitched its tents on the eastern boundaries of the promised land, ready to fight in the name of their God, their hearts swelled with the certain hope of victory and conquest. Called by a heathen king to

## MISCELLANY.

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A **Most Enjoyable Volume** fell into our hands recently, and we hasten to call the attention of Lutherophiles to same. It is written by an Englishwoman, Margaret A. Currie, and bears the title, "The Letters of Martin Luther." The title is somewhat ambitious, inasmuch as the author offers only about the fifth part of the correspondence of Luther now accessible. But the work is excellently done. Everybody who has essayed the task knows that translating is arduous, wearisome business; translating Luther is still more difficult, but translating Luther's letters is the most difficult task of all. This "foremost German" writes a German that is German, German in conception, German in diction, German in imagery, German in application. His allusions are German, his proverbial sayings, his bonnots, his quaint saws, his humorous explosions, his anacoluthons, his curt remarks, his terse replies are German, intensely German. But he is *Germanissimus Germanorum* when he writes to a dear German chum with the easy abandon of a confiding friend, gossips, jokes,—sometimes with startling naturalness!—and sends thoughts, reminiscences, reflections, opinions from his teeming brain and large heart rollicking and gamboling over the page like merry lambs on a spring meadow. Great credit, therefore, is due to this British lady who has entered into the spirit of Luther with such a high degree of appreciation and congeniality. She has made Luther talk real English to Englishmen. Witness the following:—

TO CHANCELLOR BRUECK.

*The Archbishop's Complaints of Luther.*

December 9, 1536.

To the learned Dr. Brueck, Chancellor to the Elector of Saxony. Grace and peace in Christ! After you told me that you had been ordered by my most gracious lord, at the instigation of the Elector of Brandenburg and his cousins, to ask me as to the proposed pamphlet against the Archbishop of Mayence, I beg to say (although I believe the good Princes mean well, and I wish them every prosperity) that I informed Their Royal Highnesses by word of mouth, both

here and at Torgau, that I would rather they tried to improve their cousin the Cardinal, and prevent him casting contempt on the Lord Jesus Christ and tormenting poor people, which would be more salutary than worrying over what I write.

And I am convinced that I cannot be convicted of insulting a whole race when I am forced to tell the truth to a knave; and if the house of Brandenburg feels itself insulted through what I have written of the Cardinal, it would be more seemly if they felt the honor of their house injured through his conduct, and punished him themselves, instead of leaving it to me to do.

It is really something quite new to defend one who does evil, and persecute those who punish it. The tribe of Judah was the highest and noblest of the whole human family, and yet it did not feel itself insulted when King Ahab was punished by the Prophet Elijah, even as prophets punished many kings. And there is no race so good that it has not at times an unworthy member. How would it be if judges, nay, even princes and lords, were to be called traducers because they justly condemned one of good family to be beheaded or hanged? Every thief would then have cause to say that he was being ignominiously treated because he was to be hanged. Yes, but, my dear fellow, why steal? Oh, dear sir, are you not, with all your wisdom, accusing me thus? In conclusion, kings and princes are subject to God, who first uses gentle means to reclaim them, even when they are very wicked. When these are of no avail, then God punishes them through His wrath. If they mock the first punishment, they must weep to all eternity over the second. If I do the Cardinal injustice, I sit here under an Elector of Saxony to be judged.

Please accept this hasty summary of the matter. If I had time I could, by the grace of God, do it better. But I shall justify myself to the Cardinal himself. For he must be laughing in his sleeve at the whole affair. I commend you to God. Amen.

Your obedient

MARTIN LUTHER.

TO WENZEL LINK.

*Luther asks for German songs. Jocular letter.*

March 20, 1536.

Grace and peace in Christ, dear Wenzel! As it is some hundreds of years since I either spoke or wrote Latin, I almost fear I have forgotten what I knew, and probably you are in the same condition; so I hope such fears will justify any mistakes I make, without any

good or evil works, for you are a gracious lord towards such offenders, even as you desire similar sins to be leniently treated by your friends.

I had nothing to write about, but did not wish Frau Detzelin with her daughter to leave without letters.

I should have liked to send some mountains of gold, but in late years our Elbe has overflowed and taken all the gold sand with it, leaving only gravel and sand behind, some of which has got a lodgment in Justus Jonas's body. I must always joke, whether sick or well, weak or strong, a sinner and yet justified, well-nigh dead and yet alive in Christ. As you are seated amid gold and silver streams, send me not poetical dreams but songs, which will give me great pleasure. You understand.

I wish to talk German, my gracious Herr Wenzel, if it be not too difficult or too tiresome, too high flown or too deep. I beg of you to ask a boy to collect all German pictures, rhymes, songs, books, etc., which have been painted, composed, and printed by your German poets and printers this year, for I have a reason for asking this. We can make Latin books here ourselves, but we are busy learning to write German books, which we hope to make so good that every one shall be pleased with them. Farewell in Christ. Pray for me. The Lord be with you and yours. Greet all our people.

MARTIN LUTHER.

TO FRIEDRICH MYCONIUS, PREACHER IN GOTHA.

*Congratulations. Luther makes jocular allusion to Myconius refusing him burial in Gotha, where he took so ill on his journey from Schmalkalden to Wittenberg.*

July 27, 1537.

Grace and peace in Christ! I rejoice with you, dear Friedrich, that God has at length given you a Fritz. Having seven daughters, I can quite believe you are delighted to have a son. So once more I wish you happiness, and pray that he may continue healthy, and be endowed with even richer gifts than his father. Amen. I laud your determination not to let me be buried within your bishopric (Gotha), although since then I have often lamented it. For now that my life has been prolonged, I see things I would not have seen had I been at rest in God, or in Gotha. But He who has put all things under His feet will also overcome this insignificant evil.

Even as the angels are round about those who believe, so those who have eyes to see find themselves surrounded by much good. My Kaethie greets you, and wishes you much happiness over the birth of your son, and advises you strongly that all the milk that can be

spared should be kept for the little son till he can take other food, and that your wife should be made to take very good care of herself. But as a husband you know all this yourself, although my Kaethie seems to have doubts on the subject. Farewell in the Lord.

MARTIN LUTHER.

By the kindness of Rev. Brauer of Crete, Ill., we were favored with a review of this book by a Chicago daily, which describes the contents fairly well and, at the same time, indicates the sort of reception which the secular mind would accord to the correspondence of Luther were it given to the world complete. Evidently there are parts in Luther's letters which the twentieth century would fail to understand or — succeed in misunderstanding. The Chicago reviewer says:

For the first time a considerable number of the letters of Martin Luther have been printed in English. In German editions containing large numbers have been in existence for many years, although they were locked up in manuscript form for centuries. Margaret A. Currie has selected and translated 500 of them — "The Letters of Martin Luther" (The Macmillan Co.). They cover the period from 1507 to 1546, the year of Luther's death, and they are so arranged as to form a sort of biography in correspondence. At the beginning of each year Miss Currie has placed a few words showing the progress of the Reformation during that time.

The letters have been rendered into idiomatic English to correspond with Luther's hearty use of his own vernacular, and the result is something almost akin to reading them as a contemporary. They certainly bring out the human side of the great agitator, and they show him keenly alert on every point of contact with life. The progress of his rebellion (?) against the church, the gradual building up of his own creed, his quarrels with his opponents on whom he does not spare any epithets, calling them "devils," "thieves," "murderers," and "ministers of Satan;" his spread of the Gospel in the vulgar tongue, his contentions with his brother reformers — all these things throw light on the man and his work.

He was in correspondence with kings, princes, electors, and hundreds of commoners in and out of the church. Now he is trying to reconcile two monarchs at odds. Now he is thanking the elector for the gift of a cheese. Now he asks work for a poor man or bread for the masses. Again he tells the plain truth to a prince who has oppressed his people, and again he corresponds with his hundred lieutenants, exhorting them to faith and good work. Like the general

he is, he directs the battle on every hand. He dispatches men and the sinews of war here or there. He cheers his forces on, and rallies and leads them when they lose heart. He preaches often, seven times a week, he opens and dedicates new edifices, he appoints officers and recommends pastors, he adjusts differences in church law and discipline. He writes letters of congratulation or condolence. He reprimands rapacity and rewards faith. He is sorry that Frau So and So is oppressed by her stepmother. And all this time he is translating the Bible, writing tracts, pamphlets, and books. He pitches into the proofreaders and scolds the printers for being backward with their work and with pirating and garbling his writing. He wrote songs and hymns. Everywhere he went he was writing when he was not preaching. His friends and admirers came in such numbers that they annoyed and interrupted him. They laid hands on his manuscripts and carried off many which he never saw again. He fled to the castles of his noble patrons, but he was always busy and often wracked with disease, which, of course, he said was Satan.

To Katie, his dear wife, he wrote much and often. Katie was as busy as he with her baking and brewing, her housewifery, her planting, her cattle, and her Bible, which she had wagered she would read through before Easter. To Hans von Loeser, Luther writes about the christening of his own son, that he wanted it done "about vesper time, so that he may not remain a heathen any longer." This was Paul Luther, who became a lawyer and died in 1593. Many of the letters, of course, are to Melancthon, his "dear Philip." Justus Jonas is told that "our town is quite desolate, but we are in good health and spirits, except for one thing—the beer is finished all over the town. It is well for me that I still have some in my cellar. The other citizens have none." Which would indicate that Wittenberg had gone "dry," though not by a local option vote.

From another place he writes: "We are beggars here. We eat the bread of the Landgrave and the Herzog of Wuerttemberg (for these have the best bakers), and we drink the wine with the Nuernbergers. We receive meat and fish from court. . . . They also have excellent trout, but they boil them in the same water with other fish, and serve them up in the soup! O what food!" Again he writes: "I eat like a Bohemian and drink like a German." Anton Lauterbach sends him a cheese, for which he thanks him, but adds, "I am not greatly enamored of that kind of cheese, being pleased with our simple cheese, made of the commonest material, so you need not take so much trouble on our behalf." He asks the three princes of Anhalt that they send some game to cheer a young relative who was about to "enter the holy and divinely appointed state of matrimony."

To George Hield he writes his opinion of the use of sacred plays. "Moses wishes God's Word to be ever before men's eyes, and this cannot be more easily obtained than by means of such plays, which are at the same time serious and modest and free from jugglery. Such plays have often more influence over the people than public preaching." He acknowledges the gift from the elector, John Frederick, of "half a cart of Suptitzer, the same of Gornbuger (wines); four pitchers of Jena wine, in addition to three score carps and a hundredweight of pike—beautiful fish!"

The following charming letter was written by Luther to his little son Hans: 1)

Sometimes he writes jocularly to his wife, but always with affection. On one occasion he addresses her as "My dearly beloved housewife, Katherine Luther, owner of Zuelsdorf and the Saeumarket, and whatever else she may be," and again, "To the deeply learned lady, Katherine Luther, my gracious consort at Wittenberg," or "To my dear wife, Katherine Luther, doctress and self-tormentor." The last letter quoted is to her and is dated four days before his death. It is a hearty, affectionate communication. Among other things it tells her that there is a report in Leipsic that "Dr. Martin has been snatched away by the devil." But Luther disbelieves it.

If ever a man's life can be read in his correspondence, Luther's can in these letters.

Miss Currie opens her preface with the remark of Coleridge: "I can scarcely conceive a more delightful volume than might be made from Luther's letters, especially those from the Wartburg, if translated in the simple, idiomatic, hearty mother-tongue of the original." (p. V.) She adds her own sentiment, as follows: "But those from Coburg Castle are not a whit less interesting, especially those to Melancthon, dated from the 'Castle so full of evil spirits,' in which he endeavors to encourage his friend. 'The six months spent here,' says a recent German writer, 'might be called the midhour of his life. He is no longer the monk who sighs over his sins, nor the embarrassed peasant's son, who, dazzled by the august assembly at Worms, begs for a day's grace before answering for himself. He has been made strong by inward and outward storms, which, however, were powerless to rob him of his childlike innocence of heart and

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1) Here follows the well-known letter.

poetic freshness of feeling; for he knows that the wondrous Christian experience with which God has honored him is now the common property of thousands. Hence he got through an amount of work which fills us with astonishment; for while holding in his hands the threads which set all the Evangelical princes and theologians in motion at Augsburg, he had leisure to be professor to his students, Veit Dietrich, etc., *seelsorger* for those in affliction, bookmaker for his dear Germans, and the most loving of sons, husbands and fathers.'” (p. IX.) Luther’s correspondence, reproduced in good, idiomatic English, would be a splendid gift to the English Lutheran Church, and a primary requisite for a good exhaustive biography in English of the Reformer, — also a desideratum.

On “The Emptiness of Spiritualistic Revelation” *The Presbyterian* has these pertinent remarks:—

There is a fascination about the subjects involved in psychic investigation which holds more than one keen and sensible thinker to continued investigation, even though the results are more shadowy than the science. It is not to be wondered at that a student of mental philosophy, or of psycho-physiology, should become deeply interested in the question whether the disembodied spirits of men can in any way communicate with those still living the physical and material life. But since that question leads the student entirely into the realm of the immaterial, it is not wonderful that the methods of material science either produce no result, or befog the investigator with a cloud of possibilities which he cannot reduce to system or coherence. And so it has come to pass that so eminent a scientific investigator as Sir Oliver Lodge has declared that he believes he has evidence of communication from the departed spirits of friends of his, who promised, before they died, that if it were in any way possible they would communicate with him. But the scientist has not yet published either the communications or his reasons for believing that they are genuine. It is hardly probable that he will be able to exhibit convincing evidence that he has spoken with his departed friends, or that they have revealed to him anything of what does in truth lie beyond the veil.

Over against this newest slip into what is hardly more than common spiritualism, Professor Scripture, formerly director of the Yale Psychological Laboratory, has written an article in which he

declares that "the problems of psychic investigation have been undertaken, money has been spent, a whole society for psychic research has been hard at work for twenty-five years, whole series of volumes have been published, and—the result has been entirely negative; not one single fact bearing upon any of the problems has been established." In accordance with the Professor's opinion of the emptiness of all such psychical research is the impression produced by a little book on "The Psychic Problem," published some time ago by a distinguished editor of this country, who has become persuaded that there is possible communication with the departed, but whose alleged facts are only the familiar ones of spiritualistic mummery, always brought to pass in the dark and through the agency of a more or less questionable "medium."

There is no wrong in reverent investigation. It is quite legitimate that the student of the marvelous nature of man should endeavor to find out the deeper relations between mind, spirit, and body, and whither the disembodied spirit may journey when released from its fleshly tabernacle. But it is hardly probable that such investigation will ever discover much. The realities of the spirit-world are still among those secret things which belong unto the Lord, our God. He has revealed so much as He has judged right. It is not probable that we by searching shall find out God nor penetrate the secrets He has chosen to reserve. If Paul is speaking of the spirit-world in his declaration that he knew one caught up into the third heaven, it is very significant that he says the things heard and seen were "not lawful for man to utter." The few who have been brought back from death by divine power, whether in Old Testament time or in New, have never spoken a word of their experiences or attempted a description of the spirit-land. It is not the will of Him who created us that we should know these things. Otherwise He would have revealed them. The imbecilities and absurdities of the alleged communications given by the Spiritualists have always sufficiently discredited them. There will be some interest in what Sir Oliver Lodge may have to report of the messages of his friends, if he should conclude to publish them. But the fact that he does not publish them as yet seems to indicate that his own belief in them is not very substantial. And it is quite certain that neither Sir Oliver, nor the Society for Psychic Research, nor the Spiritualists have anything to tell us of value concerning the other life. The Word of Jesus Christ is the substance of the revelation given us. And to any devout and reverent spirit that is enough, even though it does not tell us many things we would like to know.

**We Record Another Effort** to tell the Church that she must teach her children religion without telling her that the parish-school is, so far, the best means to that end. This time the speaker is Dr. Haas of the General Council, who says in *The Lutheran* of April 23:—

It may be of value to the readers of *The Lutheran* to read thoughtfully the following extracts from an article on "Exclusion of Religious Instruction from the Public Schools," by Edward J. Goodwin, of the Educational Department, at Albany, N. Y. The views below stated are the views of an educational expert, and as they are written from a totally general standpoint, come with a great deal of force to all of us.

"The exclusion of religious instruction from all tax-supported schools is a nearly accomplished fact. So long ago as 1892, U. S. Commissioner Harris said: 'Religious education has almost entirely ceased in the public schools and it is rapidly disappearing from the program of colleges and preparatory schools.' To be sure, in several of the States the formal reading of the Bible, without note or comment, is still permitted, and in some localities, where no objection is made, the Lord's Prayer is recited at the opening of the school. But the ominous fact still remains that the teacher cannot safely undertake even to define the elemental principles that constitute the warp and woof of a religious life. The Book of books that contains the 'Decalogue' and the 'Sermon on the Mount,' the Book whose teachings have been the inspiration of our civilization and whose doctrine of the brotherhood of man has found embodiment in so many beneficent institutions of modern times, is as rigidly excluded from the serious study of the classroom as if it were the bane, and not the blessing, of the race.

"This exclusion of religion from the public instruction is not rendered innocuous by saying that it is not the function of the State to teach even the elementary principles of religion to children in the schools. Upon what evidence can the student of history base the affirmation that belief in some religion is not necessary to a nation's welfare and perpetuity? By what process of reasoning may the student of education conclude that religious faith can long survive in the heart of a nation if its doctrines are not early implanted in the minds of the young? Guizot, in his 'History of the Civilization of Europe,' says: 'In order to make popular education truly good and socially useful, it must be fundamentally religious. It is necessary that national education should be given and received in

the midst of a religious atmosphere, and that religious impressions and religious observances should penetrate into all its parts. Religion is not a study or an exercise to be restricted to a certain place or a certain hour; it is a faith and a law which ought to be felt everywhere and which, after this manner alone, can exercise all its beneficial influences upon our mind and life.' Shall a nation, because it is free, be debarred from taking necessary measures to insure its own stability and permanence?

"It is no adequate answer to those who question the wisdom of our present policy to say that the Church and the Sunday school are organized and maintained for the sole purpose of giving religious education to the people and their children. The appalling fact is that those classes of our population which most need religious instruction and training do not attend church and do not come within the influences of church organizations. According to the estimate of the Bureau of Education, the whole number of persons in the United States from 5 to 18 years of age in 1905 was 23,410,800. The number of scholars in the Sunday schools of the same year is reported to have been less than one-half of this total, or to be exact, 11,329,253. How many of these were adults, or more than 18 years of age, does not appear in the report. Do we need any further evidence to demonstrate the otherwise evident truth that the Church does not furnish adequate religious instruction to the nation's children?

"I cannot escape the conviction that the Protestant Church gives too little time and insufficient attention to the religious training of the children that come within its own field. Attendance upon the Sabbath service and the Sunday school is not enough. It lacks fullness and proportion, and encourages the notion that piety is a Sunday dress and not a daily life. The early impressions and daily habits of childhood are most effective in determining character. Therefore, in early years, at least, religious and secular training should go hand in hand.

"The great historic Christian Church stands alone in recognition of this fundamental truth, and at great financial sacrifice accordingly maintains many separate schools to accomplish this very purpose. It is estimated that no less than 176,000 children are in regular attendance at Catholic schools in the State of New York and, while the private academies formerly maintained by Protestants are rapidly disappearing, Catholic seminaries are as rapidly being established. No less than 102 of such secondary schools have been incorporated by the State Board of Regents, and are now carrying on their aca-

demic work in accordance with the established standards of the State Education Department. But the combined efforts of Protestant and Catholic churches fall far short of reaching our entire population and therefore cannot exert that full measure of religious influence which is needed to inspire and exalt the nation and to insure its stability.

“If we affirm that religious instruction is an essential part of true education, and assume that under present conditions the home and church cannot or do not compass and accomplish it, why is it that the American people do not seriously protest against the exclusion of religious teaching from the public school, which is the only place where all the children can be taught? We hear an occasional note of alarm from some serious-minded theologian or some far-sighted student of education, but the acquiescence of the public mind is very general. It seems to be taken for granted that the question is closed and that the outcome of this experiment, which disregards the teachings of history and ignores the policy and practice of such European nations as England, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden, cannot fail to be safe and salutary. After a critical study of this problem, and a somewhat close and extended contact with educators and school officials, I can reach no other conclusion than that the general acquiescence in the exclusion of religious teaching from the schools is the result of a wide-spread belief that morality—not religion—is essential to a sound education.”

The widespread belief of which Mr. Goodwin speaks, namely, that morality is to take the place of religion, is the position which is most dangerous to the best morality of the American people. History has shown that all morality has developed from religious foundations. While a few individuals may lead a moral life, in a community whose general morality is influenced by Christianity, it is not in any way proved that the people at large can live the best moral life without the teaching and power of Christianity. Religion is needed not only as the best source of morality, but also because it offers the strongest sanction of a moral life, and helps individuals and a community to do right, when it is realized that God who is above the world is in the world with His power of righteousness and love. Morality can also not exist without an ideal, but its ideal will be weak if it has no belief in a God and immortality. It is admitted to-day that immortality as a firm belief arose through Jesus Christ. If, therefore, morality needs immortality, and immortality has become only generally helpful and accepted through Jesus Christ,

morality needs Jesus Christ. He, too, is the most direct ideal, and through faith the power to attain the ideal is granted.

These deductions which follow very accurately from Mr. Goodwin's discussion, mean practically for the Church:

First, the enlargement of her educational work for her own children.

Secondly, the more serious attempt to give religious education to the churchless children.

Thirdly, a conviction begetting active support, that the Church's educational institutions must be made more effective by a loyal support. Failure to support means a failure to help in this problem of giving America a future generation that shall not be Godless.

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