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Dr. Biesenthal on Matthew 2:23

Joachim Biesenthal



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ARTICLE VIII.

DR. BIESENTHAL ON MATTHEW II. 23.¹

TRANSLATED BY CASPAR RENÉ GREGORY, LEIPZIG, GERMANY.

"And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene (*Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται*)."

"Though the synagogue has fallen, fallen deep, yet she was once in the possession of great knowledge. In her were many who waited for the consolation in Israel. And the understanding of her past, of her long vanished greatness, may afford the best means of reaching an understanding of the New Testament. The keys of the New Testament are in the synagogue, not in the profane writings of the Gentiles. Who would expect to gather grapes from thorns?"²

THERE are few theologians, or Bible readers in general, who might not be greatly embarrassed at one of the very first citations in the New Testament from the Old Testament; and that, too, a citation that should be found in several of the prophets (*διὰ τῶν προφητῶν*), for no trace of the passage occurs in the prophets. If this be the case with the learned or practical theologian, the embarrassment referred to increases for a missionary who wishes to preach the gospel to the Jews, and the more, because the latter are not accustomed to be easily satisfied with a half explanation, and always strike again at the plural form *προφητῶν*. Under such circumstances the writer may readily be excused for making a new attempt, not only, in fact, to authenticate in several ways in the "prophets" of the Old Testament these passages cited by the Evangelist, but also to dispose of still farther, and as yet less censured, linguistical difficulties, and thus, perhaps, to advance somewhat the solution of this question.

Meanwhile, before we take up the explanation of the passage,

¹ Dr. J. H. R. Biesenthal, the celebrated Rabbinical scholar, the friend and teacher of the translator, wrote this Article for a Jewish-Christian Monthly several years ago. A translation of it appeared in the Oxford Review. This is a new translation, made at the request of Dr. Biesenthal.

² From a letter by an English clergyman.

we shall attempt to present, with all brevity, the manifold efforts of those who have preceded us.

From Jerome and Chrysostom (Origen's Commentary begins only at xiii. 36) to the latest times, many attempts were made to give these words some possibly enduring meaning or suitable sense. Scarce one of the interpreters was entirely satisfied with the explanation offered by those before him; and no more with the explanation he himself gave. They conjectured that the book of the prophet in which Matthew's citation should be found was lost, and hence, that it is impossible to find it in the Old Testament canon. Farther, they suggested that the citation slipped into the Gospel through a misunderstanding of some passage in the Old Testament, or that Matthew took into account a prophetic tradition that was propagated orally, but never written down.

As for the first allegation, that a book which was in the canon of the Old Testament at the time of Matthew has since been lost, every one who is in the least acquainted with the course and history of the canon will easily perceive the untenableness of such a hypothesis. The Jews were not at all times faithful keepers of the spirit and substance, but they surely were, more than any other nation, the guardians and preservers of the word of the Old Testament. They have constantly, with the greatest self-denial and sacrifice, with the devotion of all the good things of life, yes, even of life itself, taken pains to preserve the books of the Old Testament. Countless precepts threaten the woes of hell to the copyist of the scriptures of the Old Testament if he should dare to add or leave out a syllable. "Never," says Eichhorn,¹ "has so great industry been expended upon a work of antiquity as, since the birth of Christ, upon the copies of the books of the Old Testament. Reverence for them, even in the earliest times, devised laws that the most patient industry has scarcely ever followed exactly, but which must have secured the Hebrew text from many dangers to which it would otherwise have been exposed. Without them the oldest and best among the new manuscripts would differ far more frequently from the reading which Jerome and Origen, in the third and fourth centuries, found in their manuscripts. Moreover, the industry and the exactness of the Jews cannot have been less acute and patient in

¹ *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (4th edition). Göttingen, 1823, 1st part, p. 380 f.

the centuries before the birth of Christ. Genesis and Job have been copied, from the first, with such religious faithfulness that even yet the names of God, Jehovah and Elohim, in which interchange would have been so easy and pardonable, alternate most correctly; and in the later books of the Old Testament a new orthography rules, which in the probably older books of the Old Testament is not found at all." If the remark of Eichhorn upon single words be true and correct, who would be so credulous as to assume that this nation, which was so conscientious about consonants, syllables, and single words, would have let a whole book of a prophet perish? Then again, suppose that the original of the prophet from whom Matthew's citation was borrowed had perished, yet the translations of it, or at least the one by the seventy, would have preserved it among the many copies that have existed, especially of the latter. And if we passed this by, and were inclined to assume the impossible as a fact, the difficulty would be only in part removed, — the question would remain how the plural, *διὰ τῶν προφητῶν*, permits of explanation by a single book of a single prophet.

The second view — that Matthew took his citation from a prophetic tradition that was not committed to writing — is as little able to hold its ground. Long before the destruction of the Temple, the Jews with unrelenting strictness took care, not only that no apocryphal book should be bound with the twenty-four canonical books, but also that the former should by no means be laid in one and the same chest with the Old Testament. Books of this kind were seldom allowed to be in the house of a believing Jew. "He who brings into his house more than the twenty-four books of the canon, brings a destruction (*מחרמה*) into his house": so reads the Talmud's saying as to Apocrypha. And in the Mishna it is expressly taught:¹ He who reads *ספרי חצוניים* (books that must be kept separate from the canonical ones) forfeits eternal life. Under such books the Talmud reckons even the Jesus, son of Sirach. With such strictness against uncanonical books, Matthew would hardly have dared to bring a citation from a book of that kind, into a Gospel which he had written in Hebrew, and, without doubt also, originally only for Hebrews.

¹ Tractatus Synhedrin, section 10, at the beginning (Berlin, 1863), Vol. iv. folio 104. The only possible correct meaning of the phrase *ספרי חצוניים* is, libri, qui extra scrinium librorum canonicorum conservandi sunt, and hence it differs from the phrase *ס' מיניים* heretical books.

It is no better with the newer explanations. They say that the author of the Gospel considered the word נָצְרָה in Isa. xi. 1 as equivalent to the Greek *ναζωραῖος*. He who has the ability to write a book in the Hebrew language might well know, at least, so much as not to confound נָצְרָה with *ναζωραῖος*, and be guilty of such a mistake. Besides, this explanation does not remove the difficulty of the plural, δὲ τῶν προφητῶν.

We must notice one more method of explanation; namely, that the phrase "He shall be called a Nazarene" means the same as the words in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, "He shall be despised (נִבְזָהוּ)," because all Nazarenes were despised; as Nathanael expresses it in John i. 46: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Yet the fact of the contempt for Nazarenes may be doubted. Nathanael does not say this of Nazarenes in general; he merely suggests that, as the common belief was that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, no Messiah was to be expected from Nazareth. This, however, is not contempt, as expressed in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Nor can we approve of the view which declares that *ναζωραῖος* is to be derived from נָזִיר, because Christ was appointed to be a נָזִיר אֶרְמִיָּהוּ (Gen. xlix. 26). The fundamental idea of, and the laws for, a Nazarite are given in Num. vi. 1-21, and we find nothing in the life of Jesus to show that he fulfilled a single one of the duties of a Nazarite. Indeed, the opposite could easily be proved from Matt. xi. 19, where the Jews call him *ὁβισοτόγης*.

These difficulties are more or less felt by most expositors. Before giving our explanation, however, we take the liberty of calling attention to another difficulty, less commonly urged. We refer to the form *Naζωραῖος*. Whether the name of the city be Nazrath, Nazzereth, or Nezer (נָצְרָה, נַצְרֵת, נַצְרָת),¹ the reading *Naζωραῖος*, which the most codices have, cannot be justified grammatically. The form נָצְרָה or נַצְרָה as a segholate, has its definite modifications with suffixes; either נַצְרָהּ, like נַבְרָהּ בְּנֵי, or נַצְרָהִי, like סַלְמֵהּ טַלְמֵהּ, or finally נַצְרָהֵי, like נַבְרָהֵי בְנֵי. The ω in the form *ναζωραῖος* cannot be explained from any of these forms.

¹ According to Hengstenberg, *Christologie des Alten Testaments*, Isa. xi. 1 (on Matt. ii. 23), Vol. ii. (2d edition, 1855), pp. 124-129, the home name of the place seems to have been נַצְרָה and not נַצְרֵת. And, in fact, in scripture use we find proper names of one and the same city with double endings, masculine and feminine. For example, Judg. xiv. 1, 2, נַצְרֵתָא, and Gen. xxxviii. 12, which may come from the form נַצְרָהֵי, and yet the Gentile noun is נַצְרֵתָא as if it came from נַצְרָה.

Farther, before entering upon our attempted solution of the difficulties just mentioned in the passage before us, it may be permitted us to settle two points particularly. We mean, first, the importance of proper names, and the value laid on them both in Jewish and heathen antiquity; and second, the special proofs and signs of true Messiahship, which Christ vindicated for himself from the scriptures.

1. *Proper Names.*

The ancient nations showed great care in choosing and fixing the names of their children.¹ In the Old and in the New Testament we find touching and deeply moving sayings of the parents, their gushing joy, their raising their souls to the Giver of all things, at the sight of the new-born child. The name to be given to the new-born was a weighty thing, and not to be left to chance. The books of the Old and New Testament tell us that the angel of God had fixed the name before, or fixed it after, the birth of many persons who afterwards became famous. The ancient world was sublime, like her monuments, temples, statues, and symbols. All was powerful; and so, too, of necessity, were the signs and bearers of an idea, in order to express the sentiments, the faith, and the feeling in their whole fulness. It was an object of the greatest attention to make the character and being of the person correspond to his name. Hence it may be fairly asserted that in the whole Old Testament no occurrence and no person of any moment appears, whose name does not really have an especial importance, or in whose case the relator does not seek, at least for the chief persons, to make the sense of the name prominent so as to be able to weave it into the history. Not only among the ancient heathen nations, ran the saying, *Nomen et Omen*, but also much respect is paid to it in the Bible. Thus the son of Lamech received the name Noah (נֹחַ) as an omen: "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed" (Gen. v. 29). And Esau, in his grief at the loss of his blessing by means of his brother, cries out, "Is he not rightly named Jacob

¹ Arvieux gives us a remarkable instance in his *Customs of the Bedouins and Arabians* (pp. 128, 129, of German translation, Rosenmüller, 1789). The Arabians, like all Orientals, love their children very much, and even take the name of one of them. If a man named Mahomed has a son named Ali, he lays his own name aside and calls himself Abu-Ali, or Ali's father, and his wife, Ali's mother.

(צפצפ)? For he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing" (Gen. xxvii. 36). In this way, too, Abigail, the wife of the notorious Nabal the Carmelite, defends her husband to David with the words, "Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Beñal, even Nabal (נָבָל); for as his name is, so is he: Nabal [i.e. fool] is his name, and folly is with him (וְכִי כִּי שְׁמֵוֹ נָבָל וְכִי כִי שְׁמֵוֹ נָבָל)" (1 Sam. xv. 25). Grecian antiquity favored this view, too, and, Aeschylus, in his Agamemnon,¹ makes the chorus in alternate song proclaim solemnly the following weighty words:

Τίς ποτ' ὀνόμαζεν
 ἔδ' ἐς τὸ πᾶν ἐτηγύμης —
 μή τις, ὅστις οὐχ ἠρώμεν,
 προνοίαισι τοῦ πεπωμένου
 γλώσσαν ἐν τύχῃ νέμων; —
 τὰν δορίγαμβρον ἀμφιεικῆ
 δ' Ἑλέναν, ἐπεὶ προκότως
 Ἑλένας, Ἰλαῖδρος, ἐλίπτολις.
 ἐκ τῶν ἀβροτίμων
 προκαλυμμάτων ἔπλευσεν
 Ζεφύρου γίγαντος ἀρῆ.

It must by no means be supposed that this reverence for the favorable application of a name was cherished only by a few persons. On the contrary, we find in the history of classical antiquity countless traces, and sometimes detailed information, to show that the meaning of names played an important part on many and weighty public occasions. Tacitus² relates that the soothsayers prescribed many strange ceremonies at the renewal of the Capitol. Then he proceeds: "On the twenty-first of June, a bright day, the whole space set apart for the temple was surrounded with fillets and garlands. Soldiers with favorable names entered, bearing fortunate branches."

In like manner they saw to it, that the first soldiers enrolled, and that the children used in the sacrifice-service, should have lucky names; and, on the other hand, they dreaded the names which

¹ Agamemnon, line 689 sq. (edit. Enger, Leipzig, 1863), p. 47.

² *Historiae*, iv. 53; *Opera* (edit. Haase, Leipzig, 1865), Vol. ii. p. 161. "Undecimo kalendas Julias serena luce, spatium omne, quod templo dicabatur, evinctum vittis coronisque; ingressi milites, quis fausta nomina, felicibus ramis." "Fausta nomina" were Salvius and Statorius, as, on the other hand, Furius, Minutius, and Hostilius were names of more evil import. Compare Lipsius in his note on this passage.

indicated sad and unpleasant things. But they went farther. The name of a man, or of a beast, who chanced to come by, often gave the turn in the weightiest matters of public business. Thus we read in Suetonius, that Augustus, as he was preparing himself to fight that memorable battle at Actium, met a man with an ass. He asked him what his name was, and received the answer that he was called Eutyclus, and his ass Nikon. Since he had the name of good-fortune, and his ass that of victory, both were honored by having their image in brass set in the temple which Augustus built upon his camping-ground after the victory was won.¹ Tacitus has preserved a like story about Vespasian. After Vespasian had finished his prayer in the temple of Serapis, it seemed to him that he saw behind him Basilides, one of the most distinguished Egyptians and the meaning of whose name, "king's son," was an omen to him that he should become emperor.²

Moreover, even in the earliest biblical antiquity we find the same reverence for proper names, and the same care of the parents at their choice is often remarked. God himself gave the first man the name Adam: "In the likeness of God made he him, male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam" (Gen. v. 2). At other times, he fixed the name through an angel. Thus the angel announced to Hagar (Gen. xvi. 11) that she should call her son Ishmael, because the *Lord* had heard her affliction. Zacharias was to call his son John (Luke i. 13); Mary was to call hers Jesus (Matt. i. 21; Luke i. 31), because he should save his people from their sins. As men became worse, and the angels no longer stood in such direct intercourse with men about the cradles of their children, the parents themselves gave the children names, which, later, served also as family archives; for the position and the history of the parents were often expressed in these names. Jethro took the wife of Moses and her two sons "of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he [Moses] said, I have been an alien in a strange land; and the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, said he, was mine help" (Ex. xviii. 3, 4). But the mother often borrowed the name from mere accidents, when a

¹ Suetonius, Octav. Caes. Aug., cap. xcvi. 5 (edit. Jencker, Leipzig. 1734), p. 192. *Vitae Duodecim Caesarum*; "Utriusque simulacrum aeneum victor posuit in templo, in quod castrorum suorum locum vertit."

² Tacitus, *Historiae*, iv. 82, ut supra, Vol. ii. p. 177. "Tunc divinam speciem et vim responsi ex nomine Basilidis interpretatus est."

particularly prominent attribute of the child's bodily form was remarked, as in Gen. xxv. 25, or when something strange occurred in the birth, as in Gen. xxv. 26 and xxxviii. 29, 30. This custom, according to Seetzen's testimony,¹ is still retained among many nomadic Arabs. Thus he tells us, that if, for example, an Arabian woman gives birth to a child before the gate Bab-el-Duma at Damascus, she names the child Dumân, if it be a boy; Dumâh, if it be a girl. If an ass happens to be near at the birth, the boy is called Kurra, the girl Dshesh. If she observes at the birth a shooting-star, she names the boy Nidshem, the girl Nidshme; if it rains, the boy is called Mathor, the girl Mathrà.

In the Old Testament prophets, too, the names were often full of meaning, and became symbols and signs of great events for the present, for the future, and often for both at once. Isaiah was commanded by God to name his son Maher-shalal-hash-baz, as a sign of the downfall of Damascus and Samaria, and, at the same time, as a type of great events in the future, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh (Isa. viii. 3, compare vii. 14 and Heb. ii. 13). The English Independents and Millenarians of Cromwell's time, afford us a parallel in later days. Hating everything that might recall Romanism and Catholicism, they gave their children whole sentences as first names, thus: Be-steadfast; Weep-not; Stand-fast-in-the-faith; If-Christ-had-not-died-for-me-I-should-have-been-damned. A certain Barebones had the last of these names.² Thus the spirit of the times mirrors itself, its wishes, its fears, its expectations, and its hopes, in the names. In want of historical monuments, these are often safe leaders. Judaism, especially in the later time, about the years 536-432 B.C., proves this. The proper names show us clearly what that age was doing, what it hoped and waited for with ardent desire. Their hope and their confidence in the Star of Jacob, that was promised to the fathers, expresses itself in names, such as מִדְּיָדָי whom God Jehovah redeems, חַסְדֵי יְהוָה the grace of Jehovah, רִפְאוֹת יְהוָה whom Jehovah will heal, נֶחֱמוֹת יְהוָה the comfort of Jehovah, אֲלֵי יְהוָה אֲפָרְצֵי unto Jehovah mine eyes (are directed), אֲלֵי יְהוָה אֲפָרְצֵי whom may God lead back (to his native land), יִיְיָ רֵיב whose cause Jehovah may judge.

¹ Beiträge zur Kenntniss der arabischen Völker-Stämme, in von Zach's Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beförderung der Erd- und Himmels-Kunde. (Gotha, 1809), 19 Bd. p. 214.

² Gesenius, Philologisch-kritischer und historischer Commentar über den Josaia (Leipzig, 1821), 1ter Theil, 1te Abtheilung, p. 329.

Thus the names of later Hebraism appear full of hope and anticipation. They are documents of the most intimate and secret emotions. Their bearers look longingly to a time which, though still distant, seems about to open upon them, to the time when the angel announces concerning the child to be born of the virgin, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." And in fact, at a time of vain self-righteousness, sensuality, and Pharisaic dominance, what more important could be announced than that the Redeemer would save them from their sins? To a nation, which on every occasion boasts of the merits of its father — which always says, "Abraham is our father"; to a nation which, blinded in self-righteousness, cherishes a dead sacrificial worship, and looks upon this as an *opus operatum*, the call from their "sins" must be, and that to every one that hears it, a fearful novelty and warning, and cause reflection. It is this meaning name that must be the mightiest trumpet to wake them from their sleep of sin, from their self-righteousness, to open their eyes and bring them to perceive that they were naked, and that, in spite of their temple and their many sacrifices, they were wanting in the righteousness which avails before God.

Thus the name Jesus was the first signal and the first sign that all had fallen under sin, that none of them remained untouched, that sin had the absolute mastery over them all, and that he would appear in the world to free all from this bondage. Meanwhile, this designation was not special enough to be understood by all. The means, the art, and the manner of salvation and of freeing from sin were given, yet not in the signification of the name. And now, to throw a little light over this, Matthew begins with the flight of Christ to Egypt and closes the first section of his account with the settlement of Joseph at Nazareth so that the words "of the prophets" should be fulfilled, "he shall be called a Nazorene."

2. *The Special Proofs and Marks of the true Messiahship, which Christ himself vindicated for himself from the Scriptures.*

We have attempted to show the great importance and the high value that all nations, and especially the Jews, laid upon proper names at the time of Christ. This we have done to justify the prominence of the name of Jesus, which Matthew strives for. This great importance extends, moreover, to the names of places. Classical, biblical, and Talmudical literature afford us remarkable

examples of the meaning of such names, and of the extension of it to the inhabitants. References to, and suggestions of, these names, and transfers of the meaning of the names of places to the moral, religious, or political condition of their inhabitants, are often found in the Old Testament. Thus, for example, in Micah i. 14, "The houses of Achzib shall be a lie" (בְּתֵּי אַחְזִיב לִאֲכֶזֶב); in Zeph. ii. 4, "Ekron shall be rooted up" (עֲקָרוֹן תִּזְקַר); and in Jer. xlvi. 2, "In Heshbon they have devised evil against it" (בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן הִשְׁבִּי עֲלֶיהָ רָעוּ).

Such allusions and explanations of proper names by paronomasia, which is peculiarly at home in the Hebrew language, were favored in the biblical age. In later times, after the Hebrew had ceased to be the language of the people, many dialects were formed under the influence of Syriac, Latin, and Greek. We wish to call particular attention here to a kind of speech which they named the wisdom-language (לשון חכמה). This was a manner of speech, now New-Hebraic, now Hebraeo-Aramaic, and now Aramaic, in which the speaker was accustomed purposely to conceal the thoughts that he wished to express under a poetical or some other odd disguise. It appears in the Talmuda only as a play on words, or a pun, and is, so far utterly different from the Grecian wisdom (חכמת יוּנִיָּת), at once a secret speech and a secret written language. Proper names, both of persons and places, were especially used to make such a pun, sometimes to praise, sometimes to tease a person. In the tract Gittin, a rabbi compliments another named חסדיא, by remarking, "Thy name is grace (חסדיא) and thy speech is full of grace (חסדיא בלתי). In the Midrash¹ the question is offered: Why was the name of the prophet, Jeremiah? Because in his day Jerusalem was made an *ἐρημία* (desert). We may note the meaning of the name of a man from Gimso, a well-known city in the tribe of Judah, see 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. The question is thrown out: Why was the man from Gimso thus named? The answer is, because even in the hardest events and blows of life, in confidence on God, he never used to murmur; for he said, "This, too, is for good" = גַּם זֶה לְטוֹבָה, because there is no misfortune that we cannot imagine that it might have been greater. Hence, from the words "This too" = גַּם זֶה, he received his title "from Gimso."

Thus we perceive a transfer of the attributes of a man to the meaning of the place of his birth. In order to approach the solution

¹ Midrash, Koheleth Rabba, at the beginning (Frankfort, 1623), folio 82.

ירמיהו ולמה נקרא שמו ירמיהו? שכימדי נעשית ירושלים ארמיהו.

of the theme we have undertaken, let us inquire into the Messianic marks in the scriptures, as Christ himself, and partly, too, his apostles, gave them.

Man sees with the eyes of the flesh, and finds it hard to comprehend the things of the Spirit. It is long before he accustoms himself to them and learns to grasp them. The Jews, as well as in part the disciples of Jesus, were surrounded by a Pharisaic world and ruled over by Jewish Romans; they could hope for "the salvation in Israel," for the "Star of Jacob," but never in the least were they able to hope and believe that the Saviour and Anointed of the God of Jacob would appear in poverty; and, least of all, that his end would be full of suffering and contempt. Hence we find, through the whole of the New Testament, that the Lord Jesus and his apostles had ever anew to point to his sufferings, because this passion, lasting and unbroken to its end,—yes, the fact that his end itself should be one of woe and despite,—had appeared to them altogether incomprehensible and strange.

In order to a clear view of this, we present here a number of the passages in which our Lord and his apostles treat of this point: We follow the order of the books.

Matthew: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things" (xvi. 21). "But I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them" (xvii. 12).

Mark: "And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things" (viii. 31). "And he answered and said unto them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man that he must suffer many things" (ix. 12).

Luke: "But first must he suffer many things" (xvii. 25). "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken; ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets* (ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν), he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (xxiv. 25).

Acts: "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets (πάντων τῶν προφητῶν), that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" (iii. 18). "I continue unto this day, saying none other things than those which the prophets (οἱ προ-

φῆται) and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer" (xxvi. 2).

2 Corinthians: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (i. 5).

Hebrews: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (ii. 18; compare ix. 26 and xiii. 12).

1 Peter: "Because Christ also suffered for us" (ii. 21; compare iii. 18; iv. 13).

From these and many other passages it appears clearly, that Christ and his apostles did not declare that his miracles and wonders were foretold in Moses and all the prophets, but that his sufferings were thus given. This matter of the sufferings, the least evident and most difficult to make comprehensible to the Jews, had to be referred to again and again. How hard it was, in spite of all preaching, to make this truth evident to them appears from the seeming harshness and indignation of Him who would not break a bruised reed towards the men on the way to Emmaus. He called them "fools and slow of heart," though they only said, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel."

Matthew seems to have collected the single occurrences of the life of Jesus, from his birth to his glorification, from this stand-point, in order to show how at his birth, his flight into Egypt, and his return to Nazareth, every link joins link to make a chain of suffering which should surround his whole life. Cornelius Nepos, in his biography of Atticus, boasts that the latter considered the first great gift of fortune to be his birth in the very city in which the dominion of the world should centre.¹ At least with equal right could Matthew designate the chance residence of Christ at Nazareth as the "first great misfortune," because from his chance residence many sufferings afterwards arose. It is true that in the expression of Nathanael, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46), we do not perceive a general contempt for all Nazarenes. At the same time, it is certain that his residence in that town, and in its province of Lower Galilee, would be of little service to him among the Jews, in recommending or strengthening the

¹ Cornelius Nepos, *Imperatorum Vitae*, Atticus, xxv. 3. 3 (edit. Tzschacke, Göttingen, 1804), p. 115. "Igitur primum illud munus fortunae, quod in ea potissimum urbe natus est, in qua domicilium orbis terrarum esset imperii ut eandem et patriam haberet et domum."

truth that he was the Messiah and Anointed of the God of Jacob. How different would it have been, humanly speaking, if the Lord had settled in Jerusalem! David himself, in the Holy Ghost, boasts of Zion: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her" (Ps. lxxxvii. 5).

Thus the residence of the Lord in Nazareth was a misfortune to him, as his early flight into Egypt had been. Others, suffering in later or riper years, might at least find comfort in recalling the fortunate years of youth; but the fate of his earliest years took this comfort from him, so that the measure of his sufferings is not lightened by a consoling thought of youthful memory. The Aramaic and Syriac noun ܨܘܪ is equivalent to the Hebrew ܨܘܪ, pain, suffering: the verb from this in the Pael means "to bear pain or suffering [?], to cause suffering."¹ According to analogy, as from the verb ܨܘܪ a proper name ܨܘܪܐ is formed, so from the verb ܨܘܪ can an adjective ܨܘܪܐ be formed, with the meaning "laden with suffering and pain." Matthew, after the manner of the wisdom-language (לשון חכמה), that we mentioned above, seeks from the residence at Nazareth a play on the word ܨܘܪܐ which sounds like ܨܘܪ, so as to prove that the apparently chance residence of the Lord in Nazareth also forms a member in the great list of his sufferings, so that the words of the prophets, he shall be a pain-laden sufferer (ܨܘܪܐ) may be fulfilled.

According to this view of his day, Matthew here puts great value on the proper name of the city Nazareth, so as to make a play with the word ܨܘܪܐ, and thus to make prominent the sufferings as the most important mark of the Messiah, foretold in many passages of the prophets, as they were understood by Christ himself. He wished to make the beginning and the first parts of Christ's sufferings, and all to the very end, follow each other in logical order.

The Greek for *vaλωπαίος*, with ω, can be explained by this derivation of the adjective ܨܘܪܐ from the Syriac and Aramaic verb ܨܘܪ. It is well known that the Arameans and Syrians pronounce the Hebrew vowel "a," especially the long one, in an open syllable, always with their vowel Sekofo, the long "o." They write Odom

¹ Buxtorf, *Lexicon Chaldaicum* (Basle, 1639), pp. 1931, 1932. "ܨܘܪܐ, ܨܘܪܐ Dolor, Moeror anxietas, sollicitudo, afflictio et refertur tam ad corpus, quam ad animam. Respondet Hebr. ܨܘܪ (in Pael); dolore, moerore afficere, affligere, cruciari, contumelliam officere."

for Adam, Abroham for Abraham, and Naphtoli for Naphtali. Likewise he who wishes to write such a word with Greek letters, must use the Greek ω to express the Syriac and Aramaic *Sekofa*. Since the whole structure of the word ω is Syriac and Aramaic, we need no longer wonder that ω appears instead of the expected α in the name *va\omegapatos*.

ARTICLE IX.

THE HOUSE OF PUDENS.

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Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens and Linus and Claudia. So writes the apostle Paul to Timothy. Of Eubulus nothing farther is known. Linus appears in the catalogues of Roman bishops. Around the names of Pudens and Claudia cluster many traditions and conjectures. Some of these it is worth while to consider.

According to Baronius, an eminent Roman Catholic historian of the sixteenth century, Pudens was of senatorial rank, and the father of two sons and two daughters, Novatus and Timotheus, Praxedis and Pudentiana. His house was situated at the foot of the Viminal hill, near the Esquiline, and was the place where Christians were in the habit of assembling.

In certain ancient documents, called the Acts of Pastor, it is recorded that Pudens, after the death of his wife, desired that his house should be consecrated as a church, and that this was done; that subsequently, at his daughters' request, a baptistery was constructed there; that these daughters gathered together their slaves, both from the city and from their country possessions, and gave liberty to those who were Christians, and exhorted those who were not to faith in the holy law of Christ, and that the act of manumission was celebrated in the *tile* (church) established by Pudens; that there, also, in a time of persecution, Praxedis and Pudentiana sheltered those who through their instrumentality had become believers; and that afterwards, when the latter, and her brother Novatus also, were dead, his property, with the consent of Timotheus, passed into the hands of Praxedis, by whose request the *thermae*, or baths, of Novatus, which are described as spacious and no longer in use, were consecrated as a church, in the name of Pudentiana, by Pius (bishop of the church in Rome, A.D. 139-155). In this place, it is farther reported, Pius also consecrated a baptistery. Here, moreover, afterwards, when a great persecution arose, numbers of Christians were concealed by Praxedis, and nourished with