

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1854.

No. I.

Geo. Henry Jones.
ART. I.—*Recent Commentaries on the Song of Solomon.*

Das Hohelied untersucht und ausgelegt, von Franz Delitzsch, Dr. u. ord. Prof. d. Theologie zu Erlangen u. s. w. 1851. 8vo. pp. 237.

Das Hohelied von Salomo, uebersetzt und erklärt, von Heinrich August Hahn, Dr. Phil. Lie. Theologie und ausserordentlichem Professor der letzteren an der Königl. Universität zu Greifswalden, u. s. w. 1852. 16mo. pp. 98.

Das Hohelied Salomonis ausgelegt, von E. W. Hengstenberg, Dr. und Prof. d. Theologie zu Berlin. 1853. 8vo. pp. 264.

The Song of Solomon, Compared with other parts of Scripture. Second Edition. London, 1852. 16mo. pp. 230.

A Commentary on the Song of Solomon, by the Rev. Geo. Burrowes, Prof. in Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. 1853. 12mo. pp. 527.

It is remarkable that such a number of Commentaries upon this brief and difficult book should have appeared within so short a period, and in places so remote from each other. This circumstance, if it be not purely casual, resulting from the accidental direction of the studies of the individuals whose productions we have before us, would seem to indicate an extensive leaning in the church at present towards the study of the Can-

ticles. This might either arise from a felt appropriateness of its lessons to existing necessities, or it might mark a struggle after, if not an advance towards its more perfect interpretation. If we may take these volumes as indicating not only the fact of an increased attention to this portion of Scripture, but the grounds from which it has sprung, we would say that the latter of the reasons suggested above predominated in Germany, the former in England and America. The German expositions originated in the conflict of opposing systems of interpretation, and seek to mediate between them, whether successfully or not, by clearing up what has hitherto been obscure, by resolving unexplained difficulties, and by assigning with greater precision and definiteness the place of the book in the general scheme of Old Testament revelation. The American and English, on the other hand, have had it chiefly in view to elucidate and to unfold what is herein contained, for the practical uses of the people of God, for the strengthening of their faith and the increase of their love. In our remarks upon these publications we shall find it most convenient to group them according to this difference in their character and objects.

The three German commentators are men of note and of ability, and fortunately of thoroughly evangelical sentiments. They all belong to the school of strict Lutherans, and are as fair exponents as could be selected of the views and tendencies of the best class of biblical scholars upon the continent. They seem too, in the present instance, to have been actuated by a singular unanimity of motive, notwithstanding the great diversity of method pursued and of results attained. Each of them prefaces his publication by informing us that the occasion of it was the new light which he had just received, or fancied he had received, upon the general meaning and structure of Solomon's Song, and which he hastened to lay before the world. Delitzsch tells us that, in the course of his lectures upon the History of the Old Testament, he came upon this Song at the close of the summer semester of 1849. He was compelled to break off, for he did not understand it. He devoted to the subject long and earnest thought, and was at length rewarded by a solution of the mystery: and we have here without essential alteration, the lectures which he delivered to his classes the following winter.

Hahn makes a similar confession of long continued doubts and uncertainty, finally cleared up by a more thorough comprehension of the doctrine of a Messiah. Hengstenberg had for many years cherished the purpose of writing upon this book. Indeed so long ago as 1828 he had projected a commentary upon it, and made some preliminary preparations to that end. It was laid aside, however, in consequence of the difficulties of the task, to which he did not at that time feel himself adequate. He comes to it now with the experience of many years as an interpreter, and with the results gathered from those fields of scriptural inquiry which his previous studies have led him to explore. The question whether he should first address himself to the Song of Solomon, or to the preparation of a second edition of his Christology, which he has for some time had in contemplation, was decided by the appearance of the book of Delitzsch, containing as it did views at variance with those held for ages in the church, and which he felt called upon to controvert by a fresh modification of old opinions.

Delitzsch, Hahn, and Hengstenberg are united of course in maintaining the canonicity of this book, its unity, its integrity, and its composition by Solomon: beyond this there is scarcely a point on which they do not diverge. We only state what our readers would probably take for granted beforehand, when we say that the unity, integrity, and genuineness of this book have been assailed in Germany. The state of religious opinion in that country during the past century, and the prevalent taste for a destructive criticism make it almost impossible for it to be otherwise. And if the Song of Solomon had been exempted from attack, it would have enjoyed this immunity alone. The ease with which the methods of an unsparing criticism admit of application to the best accredited remains, whether of sacred or of profane antiquity, and the extravagant and incredible results to which they lead, are among the proofs of its worthlessness and failure. In fact, with their novelty these processes have lost most of their terrors. They have long since ceased not only to alarm, but even in their stale insipidity to interest and amuse. It is not probable that the world will be persuaded by them that either the Iliad of Homer or the Song of Solomon is a con-

glomerate of heterogeneous fragments compacted together, but having no original nor proper connection.

Magnus, of the Royal Frederick Gymnasium at Breslau,* has gone to as great a length as any in chipping up this part of Scripture into bits, and he may be taken with his conclusions, as a sufficient specimen of the whole class to which he belongs. Upon the first page of his Introduction, he blazons his discovery that the Song of Solomon is made up of no less than five descriptions of constituents. These are—1. Fourteen complete sonnets; 2. Eight fragments, which, with one exception, are capable of being again united into three complete sonnets; thus making, in all, seventeen pieces, independently composed by different poets, and at different periods, from B. C. 924 to 490, or thereafter; 3. Later supplements to two of these sonnets; 4. Eighteen glosses, which are again distinguished as pure or mixed, original or borrowed; 5. Seven spurious repetitions. These various materials were wrought over and amalgamated by some nameless editor of unknown date, who published this compound of his own making as a single production from the pen of Solomon, and succeeded in inducing the world to believe it, until Magnus and his compeers have in these last days arisen to expose the cheat. No one certainly can ask us to undertake the thankless labour of refuting such a brain-spun theory in detail. We have no disposition to trouble ourselves or our readers by exposing here its particular extravagances and absurdities. There is a plain and direct way of establishing the truth in this matter, without the necessity of chasing every delusive light through the lonely fens and dreary morasses over which it flits.

The most satisfactory proof of unity in a composition is one which cannot be drawn out into formal propositions, nor classified under distinct heads. It is the impression silently made upon the mind of the reader in the course of perusal from a hundred nameless circumstances which he would find it impossible to gather up, and to present in full array before the mind of another. It is the same process by which we would tell

* In his *Kritische Bearbeitung und Erklärung des Hohen Liedes Salomos*. 1842. 8vo, pp. 244.

whether a manuscript we were examining was all in the same handwriting. There is something about a familiar hand which enables us to distinguish it from all others, (though we might be at a loss to explain in every case what it was precisely,) so that we can neither be misled by the similarity of the attempted imitation on the one hand, nor by the free variety in the strokes of the same vigorous pen on the other. As far as a thing of this nature is susceptible of formal proof, we may refer in evidence to the superscription itself, whether we regard this as expressive of the mind of the writer, which it undoubtedly is, or allow Magnus to have his own way when he asserts that it proceeded from the subsequent collector. The "Song of Songs," a superlative of excellence like holy of holies, heaven of heavens, evidently marks the composition as a unit; or even if we admit the explanation, which, to escape this conclusion, has, in defiance of usage, been put upon the expression—a song composed of many songs—the result will still be the same. It will still be announced as a unit, though consisting of several subordinate and related parts. Then, the subject is the same throughout, the love of the king to his bride: the same personages appear in every part of the Song—king Solomon, the Shulamite, the daughters of Jerusalem. There is throughout the same style of thought and of expression, the same fertility of illustration from nature, the same peculiarities in the language, e. g. its Aramæic colouring, the unusual form of the relative, &c.; a frequent use of the same words and phrases (ii. 16 comp. vi. 3: whom my soul loveth, i. 7, iii. 1, 2, 3, 4: bride addressed as fairest among women, i. 8, v. 9, vi. 1: sick of love, ii. 5, v. 8: thy love better than wine, i. 2, iv. 10: ii. 17 comp. iv. 6. and viii. 14: vi. 4 comp. ver. 10.) Sometimes a regularly recurring formula, as if a burden to mark the close or the opening of a strain (ii. 6, 7, iii. 5, viii. 3, 4, comp. also v. 8: iii. 6, vi. 10, viii. 5,) and even larger passages of close mutual resemblance (ii. 10—13, comp. vii. 11—13: iii. 1—5 comp. v. 2—8: iv. 1—3, comp. vi. 5—7.) A final argument may be drawn from the general structure and plan of the poem, if it can be shown that the alleged fragments are well adjusted parts of a consistent whole, and that instead of being a parti-coloured patchwork, loosely stitched

together, its beautiful pattern has from beginning to end been woven from the same threads and on the same loom. Our authors attempt to show this each in his own way. How well they have succeeded will appear in the sequel.

This Song is in its title ascribed to Solomon. Unvarying tradition corroborates this testimony. All the phenomena presented by the book itself correspond entirely with the authorship claimed for it. The figures drawn indiscriminately from all parts of Solomon's dominions, from Jerusalem, Engedi, Sharon, Tirzah, Gilead, Heshbon, Carmel, Lebanon and Hermon, present the land of Israel as still existing in its unity. The marked characteristics of this Song fall in very well, too, with what we learn from the history of Solomon's partiality for nature, for handsome gardens, for splendid buildings: and even the allusion to the horses of Pharaoh (i. 9) may be worth referring to in this connection. The theme and the spirit of the whole seem to reflect the general happiness and prosperity. Even De Wette admits that the images and allusions, and the freshness of its life, well adapt it to the times of Solomon, though he persists in denying its composition by Solomon himself.

It has been alleged on the ground of the mention of Tirzah, vi. 4, that it could not have been written before this was made the royal city of Israel, as Jerusalem was of Judah. But it is hard to see why this delightful place, as it is characterized by its very name, could not be mentioned as an image of beauty, as well before Jeroboam fixed his residence there as afterwards. In fact this very verse is alleged on the other side with at least quite as much plausibility, as showing that Jerusalem and Tirzah still belonged to the same territory, and the schism of Jeroboam had not yet taken place. The argument which Ewald* endeavours to deduce from the unfavorable light in which the character of Solomon is here presented, rests upon his mistaken view of the whole Song and falls with its refutation. That Solomon could not have spoken of his own personal appearance in such terms as are employed v. 10—16 *et passim* is an objection which lies only against the literal understanding of the Song,

* Das Hohelied Salomos (1826) p. 13.

not its composition by Solomon. Delitzsch partly relieves but does not remove it, by suggesting that he could not do otherwise than put into the mouth of his bride the language of ardent love, which is naturally that of exaggerated praise. The true and sufficient answer is, that it is not Solomon himself who is described, but One of whom he was the type and earthly representative. The Aramæic tinge of the language does not infer its composition in or near, much less after the times of the exile, but is due, as the practised scholar will at once see, to the elevation of its poetry, which delights in foreign and unusual forms. The words translated orchard, iv. 13 (עֵדֶן, παράδεισος), and chariot, iii. 9, (אַרְבֵּי, φορτίον) have been claimed as betraying the first a Persian and the second a Greek origin: and it has hence been argued that the composition of the book must be assigned to a date as late as the Persian, if not the Macedonian domination. But apart from the fact that this is too broad a conclusion to rest upon such narrow premises, the foreign derivation of these words is by no means so certain as is alleged. Hebrew etymologies have with not a little probability been proposed for both. It has never yet been made out that such a word as the first named existed in the ancient Persian, unless this be received on the statement of Xenophon and other Greek writers. In fact many scholars believe it to be of Indian origin, and explain it from the Sanscrit. The modern Persian 'fardus' has demonstrably come from the Hebrew through the Arabic since the Mussulman conquest. The second word certainly bears a striking resemblance to the Greek from which it is alleged to be derived. Still such a resemblance, however remarkable in the outward forms of words, must not be held, in defiance of their ascertained history, to establish community of origin, else we might have to admit that Jutland was thus named because it juts out so singularly into the sea, and hurricane, because it hurries away the sugar-canes of the planter. But if the non-Hebraic origin of these words be allowed, it will still have to be shown that they could not have been incorporated into the language either before or in the time of Solomon, with his multiplied relations with foreign powers, and his trade reaching even to India and to Spain.

Thus far the volumes which we are examining agree. They

differ widely, however, in their views of the character of the composition, its structure and interpretation. Delitzsch regards the Song of Solomon as a sacred drama with all the essentials of that style of poetry, though not designed for scenic representation. It contains, according to him, a distinct plot gradually unfolding itself in successive acts and scenes. He divides the whole into six acts of two scenes each: the end of three of the acts (1st, 2d, and 5th,) being determined by the adjuration of the daughters of Jerusalem not to wake the sleeping love: and the commencement of three (3d, 5th, and 6th,) by the question, Who is this, etc.? The scheme which he adopts is the following, viz.

Act I. i. 2—ii. 7.	Scene 1. i. 2—17.	Scene 2. ii. 1—7.
II. ii. 8—iii. 5.	ii. 8—17.	iii. 1—5.
III. iii. 6—v. 1.	iii. 6—11.	iv. 1—v. 1.
IV. v. 2—vi. 9.	v. 2—vi. 3.	vi. 4—9.
V. vi. 10—viii. 4.	vi. 10—vii. 5.	vii. 6—viii. 4.
VI. viii. 5—14.	viii. 5—7.	viii. 8—14.*

Both the scenes of the first act are laid in the banquet hall of the palace, and exhibit the reciprocal attachment of the king and his beloved. It is opened by a choir of virgins, the daughters of Jerusalem, praising the king and esteeming his love more than the wine before them. After them speaks one, not of their number, and who loved the king yet more than they. She owns that her beauty has been tarnished by the sun, and pleasantly laments that while she had been keeping her brothers' vineyards she had not kept her own—the king had won from her her heart. Then turning to the king, whom in the simplicity of a country maiden she can only conceive of as a shepherd, such as she has been accustomed to see, she asks him where he feeds his flocks, that she may find him alone and without a rival present. The daughters of Jerusalem adapting themselves to her simplicity give her an unmeaning answer, when the king himself tenderly addresses her, and they continue to employ to each other the language of endearment.

* Ewald in his Commentary made but four acts, the third extending from iii. 6, to viii. 4. In an article published in the *Tübinger theol. Jahrb.* for 1843, he reckons five, the third closing with v. 8, and the fourth with viii. 4. See also his *Jahrb. Bibl. wissenschaft* for 1843, p. 49.

The second act finds the loved one returned to her country home. The king is seen bounding over the intervening mountains, and in an instant is at her door enticing her abroad. She yields to his solicitation, and comes forth singing at his request a vintager's song, ii. 15, which however has a deeper meaning: and they ramble over the hills in company till night fall. In the next scene she narrates how in a dream she searched for and found her missing lover. In the third act a grand festive procession conducts the affianced bride to the palace, and the succeeding nuptials are intimated by mutual addresses of fond affection, and by the exhortation to the assembled guests to partake of the marriage feast. The Song has here reached its climax in the joyous union of the king with his bride; it only remains to make a farther exhibition of their love by scenes taken from a period subsequent to the consummation of this union. The fourth act sets forth the unalterable character of their love. The bride narrates to the daughters of Jerusalem a painful dream of partial estrangement and unsuccessful search: and in answer to their queries she indulges in praises of her beloved, and tells them where he has gone to feed his flocks. She finds the king where she had expected, and all sadness is removed by his loving address. The fifth act displays the beauty and humility of the queen, and the strength of her attachment to the king, whom she loves not for the splendour of his court, but for his own sake. In the first scene she and the daughters of Jerusalem are the speakers; in the second, she and the king. The subject of the sixth act is the renewal and confirmation of their attachment, with plans for the welfare of the sister and brothers of the bride.

According to Hahn, this Song is not a drama, but is so far dramatic in its character that it contains one action with its various incidents, and these not narrated by the writer, but all spoken and performed by the personages themselves. It lacks, however, the regular progress of the drama. The incidents do not present themselves in chronological order, but are to be gathered up from the various parts of the Song, and harmonized into one. The whole is divided into six sections precisely coincident in length with the acts of Delitzsch. The first three form one group: the last three form another supplementary to

the first, and in which each member corresponds to the same member of the first group. Thus the fourth section supplements the first; the fifth supplements the second; and the sixth the third. The chronological order is the fourth and first, the fifth and second, the sixth and third.

In the first section the maiden appears in eager quest of the king whom she loves; she finds him and enjoys full satisfaction in loving communion with him. In i. 8, she was seeking the king; in i. 9, he is already with her, giving assurance of his love. How and where she found him, we have not been informed. This interval is filled by section second. He had suddenly appeared to her in her home, to which we must suppose her despondingly to have returned, and addressed her in the language of love. But before this, she had had in the night of his absence a long and painful search for him. The conclusion of the whole is reached in section third, where the king returns in state with his bride, whom he had sought, as before described, in her wilderness home, and their mutual fondness finds expression in words of tender endearment. The second group carries us again over the same ground, its aim being to exhibit it more fully by disclosing some particulars not yet told. The fourth section supplements the first by going back beyond it to explain the origin of the love there represented as already existing. The king yet unknown to the maiden, but impelled by tender affection for her, had knocked at her door craving admission. She delayed long, and at last petulantly rose to open to him. Offended at her cold repulse he had turned away. Her love was now kindled: but he was gone and she could not find him. The fifth supplements the second by its more definite information as to the king's reappearance. Repulsed from her door he had gone down to his gardens. Thence we must suppose him to have been a secret spectator of her search, and to have concealed himself that he might better test the reality and ardour of her affection. He can refrain no longer. Before he was aware he mounted as a prince the chariots of his people, to overtake the disconsolate maiden and to bid her return. The sixth section supplements the third by speaking more fully of her final indissoluble union with the king, and of her anticipation of the time when her younger sister should share her bliss.

Delitzsch has undoubtedly improved upon previous attempts to discover a drama in this Song; but the obstacles to this assumption are too great to be overcome. In spite of all the ingenuity and skill which he must be acknowledged to have displayed, it is impossible not to pronounce his attempt also a failure. There are invincible difficulties in the way of discovering here a plot gradually developed, which arise from the simple fact that the contrary is plainly demonstrable. The advance of the action does not correspond with the progress of the Song; for the union is as intimate near its commencement ii. 6, and ii. 16, as it is at its close, vii. 10, or viii. 3. This led Hahn to fall back upon his semi-dramatic theory. Constrained to give up the onward movement of the drama, he still seeks to hold fast the unity of the action and the complexity of the plot. But he has not, by the structure which he assumes, relieved the subject. It is still too cumbrous, too artificial, too fanciful. The simple placing of these two schemes in juxtaposition is sufficient to expose their unsatisfactory and baseless character, without the need of any extended argument or minute examination. It is plain that both rest not upon the text, but upon the invention of the interpreter. To discover either of them requires, as the Germans say, a vast deal of reading between the lines. And the same ingenuity, if allowed equal liberty, could produce other schemes of the book to any amount, as far removed from these as they are from each other.

The view which Hengstenberg takes of the structure of the book, pleases us better in the general than in its details. He gives up the idea of a drama and of a plot altogether. The mutual love of the king and his bride is the theme of the Song. The relation subsisting between them is presented in its various lights. One aspect of it is more prominent in one portion, and another in another. And there are various rests or pauses, where one train of thought has run its course, and a fresh one is commenced. He quotes as applicable to this book what De Wette says of Daniel: "It has a plan, and forms one whole; but its plan is for one and the same thing to recur in a variety of ways, and thus to present itself with ever increasing definiteness and distinctness."

It is very unfortunate for the pleasure of his readers, if not

for the soundness of his expositions, that Hengstenberg has recently adopted such extravagant views regarding the use of certain numbers in the structure of the books of the Bible. We must submit to see this hobby freshly ridden to death, we suppose, in every publication of his for some time to come. He makes in all ten divisions in this book: five contain the union, and five the reunion.

FIRST PART.

- I. i. 2—ii. 7, subdivided into 7, 3×3 and 7 verses.
- II. ii. 8—17, a decade subdivided into 7 and 3.
- III. iii. 1—11, a decade of two fives with a concluding verse.
- IV. iv. 1—7, seven verses.
- V. iv. 8—v. 1, a decade of two fives.

PART SECOND.

- I. v. 2—vi. 3, subdivided into 7, 1+7, and 3.
- II. vi. 4—vii. 1, a decade of 7 and 3.
- III. vii. 2—11, a decade of two fives.
- IV. vii. 12—viii. 4, seven verses, 3 and 4.
- V. viii. 5—14, a decade of 3 and 7.

And then again under each of these divisions he finds both clauses and words numbered off in the most surprising and absurd way. If we were obliged to adopt a numerical scheme for this book, rather than fall in with all this complicated and pedantic triviality, we would choose that of Hofmann,* which has greatly the advantage as well in simplicity as in systematic regularity.

A more important question than those relating to form and arrangement is that of the interpretation of the book. Here again we find our authors divided, and that not in subordinate points merely, but upon those of greatest consequence. If any point in interpretation can be settled by the concurrent

* Into three sections of 38 verses, each divisible again into sub-sections of 23 and 15 verses.

I. i. 2—iii. 5, (38 vs.)=i. 2—ii. 7. (23 vs.) + ii. 8—iii. 5 (15 vs.)

II. iii. 6—v. 16 (38 vs.)=iii. 6—v. 1 (23 vs.) + v. 2—16 (15 vs.)

III. vi. 1—viii. 12 (38 vs.)=vi. 1—vii. 10 (23 vs.) + vii. 11—viii. 12 (15 vs.)
viii. 13, 14 is then a loosely appended close. See Hofmann, *Weissagung und Erfüllung I.* pp. 189—193.

voice of the Synagogue and the Church, the general outlines of the exposition of the Canticles are so settled. With all the diversity in minor details, the sentiment has been unanimous among the adherents to the orthodox faith from the earliest times, that the subject of this Song is not a scene taken from the life of Solomon, but the love of the heavenly Solomon and his earthly bride, of Jehovah and Israel, of Christ and his Church. Delitzsch, though he repudiates this view himself, does not pretend to deny that it has prevailed ever since the days of Ezra. In the Talmud the allegorical appears as the traditional and only legitimate view. All the canonical Scriptures are holy, it is there said, but the Song of Solomon is holiest of all: and the whole world is not worth so much as the day when Israel received it. The Targum upon this book expounds it of the Lord's relation to his chosen people, and applies various passages to those portions of their history in which his love for them was particularly manifested. All the great Jewish expositors of the middle ages pursue the same course. In the language of Hengstenberg, "All the Jewish witnesses that we can summon declare themselves for the allegorical interpretation; none against it. In several Jewish testimonies it is expressly affirmed, that a different explanation never found place among them."* The same interpretation has always been that of the Christian Church. Cyprian, Augustin, Ambrose, Jerome, Origen, Cyrill, Theodoret, in fact all the great authorities among the early fathers from whom we have any expression of their views upon this matter, treat it as an allegory, and make its subject Christ and his Church. Thus explained, it exerted a marked influence upon the mystic literature of the middle ages: and the great champions of scholasticism reserved for their ripest years the high achievement of preparing voluminous expositions of this Song. The literal explanation of it as a love song of Solomon's, or an epithalamium on the occasion of one of his marriages, has always been held in detestation as sacrilegious. It is spoken of by some of the

* So Aben Ezra: Absit, absit, ut canticum canticorum de voluptate carnali agat, sed omnia figuratè in eo dicuntur. Nisi enim maxima ejus dignitas, inter libros scripturæ sacræ relatam non esset; neque ulla de eo est controversia.

fathers, but in terms of abhorrence, and as only entertained by carnally minded men. It is reckoned as a heresy by Philastrius. It was one of the charges for which Theodore of Mopuestia was condemned by the council at Constantinople in 551. Its advocacy has always proceeded from men in ill repute with the church, such as Theodore, Castellio, Grotius, Episcopius. It never gained any prevalence until the Rationalism of Germany paved the way for the lowest and most unworthy views of Holy Writ. It has been long fashionable in that country to regard the Song of Solomon as an amatory poem, whose heroine was Pharaoh's daughter or some simple country maiden; although the allegorical view has not been without occasional defenders, e. g., Scholz, Welte, and Keil.

Delitzsch is not unaware of the strength of the presumption which lies against any other than the received interpretation. He says, p. 45, "A most serious and weighty question of conscience here arises: Is it right designedly to depart from the allegorical view, and strike into other roads, of which scarce one or two have thought before our age? The spirit of innovation must here appear the more suspicious, as the first impulse thereto, it is frankly confessed, proceeded from Rationalism, which, by reason of its thoroughly psychical and sarcical nature, could have no appreciation of another than a moral or erotic understanding of the Song of Solomon. For centuries, yes, for millenniums, the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Solomon has been current in the Synagogue and the Church; and learned and unlearned, proceeding on this hypothesis, have found in it edification and comfort. Is it perchance from a conceit of our own wisdom, and that we who are of yesterday fancy ourselves to have outdone the wisdom of two millenniums? Is it out of compliance to the influences of the reigning unbelief, and from a lack of the deep spiritual knowledge and experience of the ancients, that we, as with unwashed and criminal hands, rend asunder the garment of allegory with which the mystery of divine love has invested itself? Is it in contempt of the Spirit promised to and ruling in the Church, that we reject the allegorical explanation, by whose means, beyond all contradiction, thousands upon thousands of the mysteries of the inner spiritual life have been

unlocked to the Church, and have found their appropriate spiritual expression?" These are serious considerations. It would have been better, had they weighed more with Delitzsch than they have.

What then are the stringent reasons which have compelled him to remove the ancient landmarks which the fathers have set up, and in the face of the well nigh universal sentiment of the Church, to adopt views of such ignoble parentage? They may be briefly stated thus.

1. While germs of this idea of the Lord's marriage to his people are found in earlier books of Scripture, it is inexplicable that it should thus all of a sudden have formed the basis of an extended allegory, and have reached in it a fulness and expansion beyond that even of the later books of the Bible.

2. It is inconceivable that Solomon should thus have used his own name to represent the infinite Jehovah, at least without some more distinct indication that such was the case; or if he personated the Messiah, this book will then imply an expansion of the Messianic idea which it had not yet attained at that time, and which had not a parallel even in the prophets.

3. Some particulars are incapable of allegorical explanation, and must of necessity be literally understood.

Another argument is so thoroughly German as to be scarcely worth producing, viz., that this "allernationalste und allerinnerlichste" book as it would be on the allegorical hypothesis, would be inconsistent with the "allgemein-menschliche und praktische" tendencies of the age in which it originated. In other words, the man and the age that produced the Proverbs, could not have produced the Canticles, if an allegory: and by parity of reasoning, the author of *Paradise Lost* could not have written political essays, nor can any man, however rare his genius or sublime his inspiration, perform two things of dissimilar character.

We protest in the outset against the admission of the principle which underlies these arguments, that the sacred history and literature, or, in fact, any other, must be adjusted to preconceived notions of their peculiar development. It makes all the difference in the world in this, as in any subject, whether the facts govern the theory, or the theory governs the

facts. If the facts be carefully investigated first, and be admitted just as they are, and then the theory is shaped by them, and built upon them, it is all very well. But if the theory come first, and the facts must be trimmed and cut down to suit it, the case is altered very materially. Where is the proof that the communications of revealed truth must be by imperceptible advances, or by regularly measured steps; that some grand truth or noble conception may not blaze suddenly forth, in the writings of some distinguished servant of God specially inspired for its delivery, and stand out upon his pages with a boldness of relief and a clearness of outline, greater even than in productions of a later date, and charged mainly with a different errand? Is it so plain that this cannot be, that palpable facts must at all hazards be got rid of which demonstrate it? And must the doctrine of Messiah's expiation which bursts upon us with such sudden and glorious distinctness in Isaiah, chap. liii., be frittered away, because no succeeding one of the inspired penmen can match, as none that precedes approaches it? And because Micah first and last, and alone of the prophets discloses the place of Messiah's birth, must we, by some forced construction, deny the plain meaning of his words? This plan of compelling exegesis to bend to a previously erected theory of the historical growth of revelation, instead of suffering it to stand fairly upon its own base, is one of the things which, to the detriment of his soundness as an interpreter, our author has borrowed from Hofmann, whose colleague he now is, and under whose influence he has recently come to so great an extent;* an increased predilection for extreme literalism is another effect of this intercourse. Both are apparent in the book before us.

Even were the Lord's relation to his people less frequently and plainly presented under the figure of a marriage than it can be shown to be, that should not hinder us from recognizing it in this book, if there be plain evidence of its existence. But the Song of Solomon, unique as is its character, is not an isolated phenomenon, standing by itself, and out of connection

* A writer in a late number of Guericke's *Zeitschrift*, in commenting upon a more recent publication which betrays these same tendencies, laments that it is no longer Delitzsch—Caspari, but Delitzsch—Hofmann.

with the rest of Scripture, without either antecedents to prepare the way for its appearance, or consequents to follow from it. The figure on which this allegory is built, runs through the entire Scriptures, from first to last. The peculiar relation of intimate and exclusive love into which God entered with this alone of all the nations of the earth, and the pledges given and required of perpetual fidelity, so naturally suggest the parallel, that it would be surprising if it were not employed from the earliest period of Israelitish history. Accordingly, we find it already in the Pentateuch. The standing formula for apostasy from Jehovah is "to go a whoring after other gods," implying a breach of the conjugal relation existing between Him and the people. That this is the true origin of the phrase in question, and that it did not grow simply out of an allusion to the debasing orgies of heathen worship, is plain from other expressions which imply the same figure. Thus the jealousy ascribed to God, e. g., Deut xxxii. 16, 21; Exod. xx. 5; xxxiv. 14—16, in case Israel should forsake him for another, presents him in the light of an injured husband resenting the misconduct of an unfaithful wife. And Benjamin, as a part of the chosen people, is addressed, Deut. xxxiii. 12, by a term of endearment, cognate to one which is employed repeatedly in this Song. This figure, however, while it is contained beneath the expressions referred to above, is, it must be confessed, rather conveyed by hints and allusions than by express statements or detailed parallels. After the time of Solomon we find a marked change in the frequency and distinctness with which it is employed. It had evidently been brought out to the consciousness of the people of God, as it was not before. The first of the prophets, Hosea, presents us, in the opening of his book, with an allegory, in which he personates the Lord as Solomon does here, and Israel appears under the image of an unfaithful wife. The same idea is expanded at length by Ezekiel, chaps. xvi. and xxiii., and is repeatedly suggested by both Isaiah, (i. 21, l. 1, liv. 5, lxi. 10, lxii. 4, 5,) and Jeremiah, (ii. 2, iii. 1, 20, etc.) not to mention the abundant passages of this nature in the New Testament. What simpler explanation can there be of this plain difference between the usage of the Pentateuch and that of these later books of the Scripture, than

the appearance in the interval of Solomon's Song, allegorically understood?

Whether there are not sufficient indications that the Solomon of this Song was the heavenly and not the earthly Solomon, we will inquire hereafter. It is sufficient at present to say, that there are at least enough indications of this to have led the great body of its readers in all ages so to understand it. That David's immediate son and successor should thus stand as the representative of his great descendant, cannot be surprising to any one who remembers the language of the promise, 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, or the Messianic Psalms founded upon it, or Psalm lxxii., in which Solomon depicts the glory of Messiah's sway in figures borrowed from his own reign, or the similar employment of the name of David by the prophets, e. g., Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24, xxxvii. 24, 25. And if the connection which Hengstenberg endeavours to establish between the names Shiloh and Solomon is well founded, and besides being identical in signification, the latter name was given with allusion to the former, and because David foresaw in the prosperous and undisturbed reign of his son a type of Him to whom the dying Jacob predicted that the nations would peacefully submit, this will form another ground of intimate relationship. That the distinctness with which Christ is here conceived in his personality and in his divinity, and the vividness with which he is represented, is no argument against the reference of this Song to him, is plain from a comparison of such Psalms as ii. and cx. by David, and xlv. by the sons of Korah.

That there are some particulars to which it is not easy to attach a distinct signification in the allegory, does not lie in the slightest against the allegorical interpretation. It lies in the very nature of a figure that there is not a complete correspondence on every side, between it and that which it represents. There are certain marked respects in which the resemblance holds: and the aim of him who employs it, is to set these forth. But at the same time if he would present the image fully and vividly to the mind of another, he must give to it many subordinated touches and much delicacy of shading, whose force will reside not in any distinct and separate signification, but in contributing to the general effect. Thus in a

poem of the exquisite finish and the superb imagery of that before us, we find not bare skeleton figures, but living, breathing forms of flesh and blood. The Church presents itself to the imagination of the writer as a bride of peerless beauty, ravishing the heart of her loving Immanuel: and he does not dismiss the thought with a single sentence which shall in a bald prosaic manner suggest the comparison. He dwells upon it. It is a living form to him, and he will make it so to his readers. He draws her portrait; he catches every lineament and every feature, and transfers it to his breathing page. He sketches the very ideal of beauty, so that it shall draw the admiring gaze of every eye. He labours to depict, till all shall see her as he does, the impersonation of loveliness and grace. He shows you her hair, her eyes, her mouth, her well set rows of milk-white teeth, her ivory neck, her proudly graceful figure, with her rich attire: until she stands with all her charms before your eyes, distinct in every feature. This fairest among women is the beloved of the Lord: and as you feast your eyes upon the radiant assemblage of charms here displayed, you wonder not that the king should exclaim of his bride, the Church, in whom he sees such a combination of excellencies reflected, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair." But now, if instead of gazing upon her in the rare and delicate beauty of her features and the elegant symmetry of her proportions, and transferring the impression made upon you by the representation as a whole to the bride of Christ, the Church, which is inexpressibly lovely in his eyes, and should be in ours, you insist upon dissecting it, and tearing piece from piece and limb from limb; if the hair must be made to represent one thing in the Church, and the nose another, and the eyes, and the cheeks, and the mouth, and the neck others still, you have nought remaining of the once lovely form but mangled and unsightly fragments, and in place of an emblem both natural and expressive, you have only a multitude of fanciful and farfetched incongruities.

The true rule of exposition in the case of all extended figures, whether symbols, parables or allegories, is not that every thing is to have a distinct significance which appears in the figure, but that the grand idea of the whole is to be first

seized—what it was designed as a whole to image forth—then whatever naturally and appropriately ranges itself about this is significant: what does not, is to be reckoned subordinate, and as belonging merely to the figure as such. The great error of the allegorical interpreters of this Song, is, as it seems to us, extravagance and excess, leading as it must of necessity do to arbitrary and unwarrantable expositions. Hengstenberg has fallen into this mistake as well as others. He is not willing to admit that there is a single expression which has not its distinct allegorical signification. The investigations which he institutes are, it is true, conducted with great thoroughness and seeming caution: and they possess not a little value from the light which they serve to throw upon the usage of Scripture symbols. But it was impossible, proceeding on the principle he did, that his interpretations should not oftentimes be in the highest degree forced and unsatisfactory. No doubt an error of defect here is possible as well as that of excess. Points of really intended resemblance may be overlooked, and details actually significant may be neglected as part of the filling up. But this certainly has not been the usual error hitherto.

Although we cannot acknowledge the validity of the reasons urged by Delitzsch for departing from the beaten track of the Church in regard to this book, let us nevertheless see how satisfactory is the new path which he has struck into. After hesitating and hanging in doubt for some time, whether a fresh allegorical scheme could not be made out free from the objectionable features of the other, by making Solomon the impersonation of wisdom and the Shulamite a soul in love with it, or *vice versa*, he finally gave up this whole method of interpretation as untenable. Falling back upon the literal hypothesis he threw himself into the wake of Ewald and Hofmann, to the former of whom he gives the praise of having done more than any of his predecessors to unfold the true plan of the book, as the latter had to unfold its true idea. To Ewald is ascribed the credit of having established its dramatic unity and vindicated its ethical character, though he was mistaken in both the plot and its moral. He found in it the praise of faithful love. The true hearted Shulamite remains constant in her attachment to her absent swain in spite of all the attractions of Solomon's

court, and all the efforts of the monarch to disengage her affections and secure them to himself. We are amazed to find Delitzsch preferring this view of Ewald to the allegorical, and asserting that thus the position of the Canticles in the canon would be fully justified: whereas on this hypothesis it would have nothing to do with religion, nor even with morality. It would aim only at the inculcation of a romantic sentiment, and would have no more right to a place in an inspired rule of faith and practice than the odes of Anacreon or the novels of Scott.

The peculiarity of Hofmann's view is his attempt to link this book in with its place in the sacred history, and to derive from this its significance. His idea is, that those things are perpetually realized imperfectly and in worldly outward good under the Old Testament, which are to be more gloriously brought to pass in spirituality and perfection under the New. The imperfection which inhered in each form of good actually granted, and especially its providential removal after a period of temporary possession, were intended to awaken conceptions and desires, which could only seek and find their gratification in the higher and more permanent good things of the future. The period of Solomon was an epoch marked by the richness of temporal blessing. The summit of earthly good, after which the history had since the days of Joshua been striving, was reached. Peace and tranquillity, wealth and abundance, had raised the kingdom to its highest pitch of prosperity and splendour. The ruler of this kingdom, Solomon, found in all his realm nothing so dear to him, nothing that so possessed and charmed his heart as his royal bride: nothing yielded him such pure unmixed happiness as his reciprocated love for her. He accordingly paints for us this picture of the highest earthly bliss in his experience. This is the proper design of the Song. It is a portrait from the life of Solomon of the most exalted happiness which the history of Israel at that stage afforded. The author of the Song probably intended nothing beyond this. But as the glorious kingdom of Solomon hastened to decay, it was shown that full satisfaction was not to be found in natural but in spiritual things. The removal of the shadow was to make way for the appearing of the substance. What had in this preliminary stage been thus promised in the sphere

of nature should be fulfilled in the sphere of grace. When the King of glory appears, his people shall be his bride; and the delightful image of loving communion presented in the Song shall be realized afresh, in full perfection, in the intimacy of that personal relation which shall for ever unite Christ and his Church.

The theory of Delitzsch has been built upon this of Hofmann, with some modifications and improvements. Its meaning, according to him, resides less in the personality of Solomon, whether viewed in relation to the felicity which he enjoyed, or to his official dignity as king of Israel, than in the action itself, the marriage. He holds that it was written by Solomon to celebrate his marriage with his favourite wife. At the same time it had an ethical, an ideal, and a mystical significance. The chaste and faithful love of the Shulamite, her simplicity, modesty, delight in nature, her freedom from all pride and affectation, the noble yet childlike deportment of Solomon, and the absence of all jealousy and envy on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem together give to it a finely portrayed ethical character; and Delitzsch takes a very needless degree of credit to himself for having brought this feature out more distinctly, as he supposes, than had previously been done. The individual, local and personal allusions of the Song, are pointed to in proof that this was its main and primary intent. At the same time advantage is taken of the ordinary license of poets who are not required to confine themselves to the strictness of historical statement. The daughters of Jerusalem are not real, but ideal figures, belonging only to the machinery of the piece, made use of to furnish an occasion for the proper personages to say what could not otherwise have been so readily introduced. By an extension of this same license an ideal character was given to the whole occurrence. It is such an embellishment of real facts as makes the love of the Shulamite the ideal of woman's love, and Solomon's marriage with her likewise an ideal. The theme of the Song then, upon this view of it, what it aims to set forth in the persons of Solomon and the Shulamite, is the divine idea of marriage, that original conception in the divine mind which the institution of the relation between man and

wife was intended to realize, that intimacy of faithful love and mutual devotedness, which is properly denoted by twain becoming "one flesh." The attitude in which this Song would thus be set in respect to the original marriage, somewhat resembles that occupied by the 8th Psalm in respect to man's creation, which according to the most recent and best interpreters describes the ideal man in the position assigned him by his Creator in the world.

Upon this is built its mystical signification. That we may not fail to convey our author's meaning here, we shall employ his own words, pp. 194, 195: "The same God who as Creator has wrought in the creation a body of finite ectypes derived from infinite archetypes, as Ruler of the world and Former of its history, causes lower types to repeat themselves in higher antitypes. As in nature around us the seed corn is the prefiguration of the fruit and this latter is the higher repetition of the former, so in the world's course there is established the law of development, that historical relations or events repeat themselves ever afresh in higher or lower circles, so that the good and the bad elements of history are occupied in ascending or descending as it were a winding stairs. In the ascent of the good elements is further revealed the special law, that the type advances through the antitype nearer to the archetype, whose ectype it is in regard to its essential character. This shows itself in the work of redemption in general, and in the particular facts of redemption. Adam the man of the creation has his antitype in Jesus Christ, the man of redemption: and in him there is likewise the commencement of a humanity corresponding to its archetype and carried onward to the closest proximity to this archetype. So is it also with marriage. This relation, fundamental to all the historical life of humanity, has its antitype in the loving relation of Christ to the Church; and in this loving relation which itself describes several ascending circles, marriage is lifted out of its lower circle to the absolute sphere of its supramundane archetype."

According to this view, marriage considered as a relation instituted immediately upon the creation, has its archetype eternally existing in the divine mind, in the intimate love and union of the sacred Persons: it belongs consequently to the idea of

humanity as made in the image of God. This relation, degraded by the entrance of sin, was taken nevertheless into the service of the dispensation of grace, conditioned as this was by the chosen seed and the promised seed, and was thus redeemed, purified and lifted into a higher sphere. An antitype was projected for it in the marriage of Christ to the whole body of the redeemed, in which the original divine idea shall be most completely realized and attain its closest approximation to its glorious archetype. Marriage thus containing in itself this higher reference (comp. besides other passages Eph. v. 23—32) the Song of Solomon which exhibits it in its true divinely conceived idea, must aptly set forth likewise the antitype of marriage, the mystical union of Christ to his bride, and that in its various stages of the preliminary relation of Jehovah to Israel, the betrothing which is conducted by the Spirit, with the word and sacraments to the end of time, and the consummated nuptials of eternity.* This is not a casual or seeming correspondence, such as ingenuity might make out, or an arbitrary fancy might suppose, though no real ground for it in fact existed: but it is the living and indissoluble, because divinely designed connection between the type and the antitype. Nothing of this, however, was in the mind of Solomon when he penned the Song; he had no such thought, unless of the most vague and imperfect kind. The discovery of this mystical sense belongs not to the historical exposition, but to the devotional and homiletic application. And there will necessarily remain a residuum of the local and temporary which can by no mystical alchemy be transmuted into the spiritual and eternal.

That conception of the Canticles which has just been presented, must be carefully distinguished from that of those in-

* It may be interesting to state here that Delitzsch declares himself in favour of the millenarian view of the Last Things, p. 229. He there sums up the closing scenes of the present dispensation in the following order: the premillennial resurrection of martyrs and confessors, then the millenium with the earth inhabited partly by those belonging to the future and partly by those belonging to the present state, followed by the loosing of Satan and the final banding of Gog and Magog for the overthrow of the saints and of the literal Jerusalem, their miraculous discomfiture, the general resurrection of the dead, and the purification of the old heavens and earth by the fires of the last day.

terpreters who hold it to be an allegory descriptive primarily and in the intention of Solomon, of the union of Jehovah and his people, or of Christ and his Church, though composed upon the occasion of one of his marriages and suggested by it. This latter view is the one taken by Delitzsch himself of the 45th Psalm, which he most strangely supposes to have been written on the occasion of the marriage of Jehoram and Athaliah: though, as he admits, it was designed to have no special reference to that or to any other prince of the kingdom of Judah, and no one ever thought of him as its subject. The only objection to this in the case of the Canticles is the absence of all ground for it. The recent festivities of a wedding, whether his own or that of another, may, for aught we can say, have suggested to the mind of Solomon this beautiful allegory. But there is no more reason in saying that he could not have written it without such an occasion, than there would be in a similar assertion regarding the parables of our Lord. It might as well be said that the prodigal son, and the lost sheep, and the ten virgins, and the unjust judge, must all have had their counterparts in some recent occurrence. But, however this may be, to say of a production that it is an allegory suggested by a particular event, is a very different thing from saying that it is no allegory at all, but properly and truly descriptive of that event, though a deeper meaning was buried beneath his words than the writer or any of his cotemporaries ever imagined.

We freely concede that this view of Delitzsch is incomparably superior to those which make of this Song a mere erotic effusion with or without a moral. If the only alternative presented were this or those, we could not hesitate an instant which to adopt. It is only thus that we can reconcile ourselves to its appearance from the quarter whence it has come. It is evidently designed to mediate between the views prevalent for the last century in Germany, and that established for ages in the Church, so to raise the former as to include in it all that is essential in the latter, while it shall steer between the difficulties of both. In this feature of his attempt he has not indeed been successful. Intent upon avoiding imaginary difficulties on one side, he has encumbered himself with such

as are real and serious upon the other. In so far as it is an advance, however, it is in the right direction. And if it shall tend to infuse loftier views into the prevailing exposition of this book on the continent, if it shall gain over to that measure of truth which it contains those whom the plump propounding of the allegorical interpretation would have offended, there will be reason therein to rejoice. But as is apt to be the case with half-way opinions, it does not afford in itself tenable ground. It is useful only as beckoning those who can be induced to take it, a step in advance, and as encouraging the hope that they who take this, unable then to stop, will be compelled to continue on until they reach firm footing on the solid rock of truth.

We shall say nothing at present respecting that view of the Old Testament in the general, upon which the theory of Canticles under consideration rests. Its discussion would lead us too far from our main design. It is already known to our readers that it is adopted by a considerable and influential school of German interpreters and theologians. It is called by its advocates in distinction from the simply typical, the typico-genetic view—the name being intended to suggest a growth, an organic and vital connexion linking the type with the antitype, like that which binds together in inseparable union the seed and the fruit, the bud and the flower, the germ and the plant. It is contended for as bringing more system and greater consistency into the subject of the types and leaving less to the arbitrary and capricious fancy of the interpreter. The danger is that the general inspiration asserted of the history will be suffered to override the special inspiration of the sacred writers, and that the free and omnipotent actings of the Spirit of God will be reduced to a level with the uniform if not the unconscious operation of natural causes. Disregarding, however, as unessential to our present argument, the peculiarities of this hypothesis, we shall state a few reasons which seem to us decisive against the typical interpretation of the Canticles, in whatever form presented, and in favour of the allegorical.

The first is supplied by the place of the book in the canon of Scripture. If, as the typical theory requires us to suppose, it was in the intention of its author simply designed to cele-

brate his own marriage, how came it in this collection of sacred writings? Mystify this subject as we may, it is impossible on this hypothesis to make of the Song of Solomon anything which, in his own view or in that of his cotemporaries, could have had the slightest pretension to be classed with religious or devotional, not to say inspired compositions. Sceptical writers admit that the collectors of the canon must have understood it as an allegory, or they would not have put it where they did. That it properly belongs where we find it, can admit of no question among Christians. If there were no other proof, the authority of our Lord and his apostles has settled for ever the integrity and inspiration of the entire Jewish Scriptures. Delitzsch does not dispute this point. Evidently conscious that he is treading near dangerous ground, he takes special pains to define his position by a formal and explicit statement of his belief in the inspiration of this book, pp. 177, 178. "The Song of Solomon is no less inspired than any one of the Psalms. Moved by the Spirit of God, Solomon wrote this Song in the midst of a relation shaped by the God who was conducting the scheme of gracious revelation. Yes, we can without the imputation of a mechanical idea of inspiration maintain that his soul was the harp on which the Holy Ghost played this Song. For within the limits of this Song, to which we must confine ourselves without suffering our gaze to wander outside to Solomon's life, wedded love emerges from the troubled and unsteady billows of polygamy, in the pure and chaste form of its prime destination, the idea of marriage stands before us in the pure radiance of an inwardly effected indissoluble alliance of two souls, and our eyes are refreshed in the midst of the Old Testament with a gladsome prelude to the New Testament restoration of the prime original."

There may be detected in some of the above expressions a falling off from the strict views which our author once entertained upon this subject. But let that pass. A single word in reference to the idea of marriage as deduced by this hypothesis from the Song of Solomon. There is not in it the remotest allusion to the religious aspects of marriage, or to the religious duties which it involves. Nothing is even said in the most general way of the fear of God, as its basis; besides the fact

that other things involved in this relation or that follow close upon it are left wholly out of sight, such as domestic occupation, the blessing of children, &c. Still farther, it is psychologically as inexplicable how Solomon ever came upon the design of treating the true idea of marriage, disjoined from the perversions of polygamy, as Delitzsch can fancy it to be that he conceived this allegory. If the Spirit of God could suggest the one and enable him to its execution, he could as easily do the same in the case of the other: not to say that the single verse, vi. 8, destroys the whole hypothesis.

A second argument may be drawn from the inconsistencies and incongruities, which beset every attempt to find in the Song an actual occurrence. The numerous denials of its integrity and unity already referred to, are tantamount to a confession, that literally understood it cannot be brought into consistency and harmony. The lover is sometimes a king, sometimes a shepherd. The beloved is now a simple country damsel, i. 6, ii. 15, now a prince's daughter, vii. 1. The search for her lover through the streets of the city at night, iii. 1—4, and again v. 6—8, would be in violation of all delicacy and propriety; the assumption of dreams finds no warrant in the text, and only shows how untenable is the scheme of interpretation which requires it. In i. 4 the bride is in the palace, in iii. 6, she is coming up from the wilderness, and in iv. 8, Solomon calls her from Lebanon. Any number of such examples can be found, which are all very easily reconciled if this is an allegory, but not if it be a real occurrence.

Thirdly. There are not a few intimations of the allegorical character of the Song. The unity of the bride is occasionally lost in the plurality represented by her, i. 4, v. 1. The comparison of a bride to the horses of Pharaoh's chariots i. 9, to an army with banners vi. 4, 10, and of her neck to the tower of David with its thousand bucklers iv. 4, would be unintelligible in itself; but is plain enough if the great multitude of God's redeemed people be meant. The coming forth from the wilderness like pillars of smoke, iii. 6, is a plain allusion to Israel's march from Egypt with the Lord at their head. The praises of Solomon's beauty, v. 10—16, are only then comprehensible if the Solomon of the Song is one more exalted than

its author. Perhaps also an indication of the allegorical sense may be found in the name given to the bride vi. 13, not "the Shulamite" but Shulamith, formed from Solomon by appending a feminine termination and denoting the bride of the Prince of Peace—and in the title "The Song of Songs" which can hardly be justified in its application to this book, unless its subject be of the most exalted kind.

Fourthly. The 45th Psalm is so closely allied with the Song of Solomon that the same principles of interpretation must evidently be applied to both. Consequently the arguments which establish that to be an allegory (as Delitzsch in effect admits it to be* p. 40) prove the same for this also.

It will be sufficient to add in the last place the testimony of the New Testament. This is given not merely in express allusions to the language of the Song allegorically understood, but in adopting the figure upon which it is founded, and applying directly to Christ the title of the bridegroom, and designating his Church as the bride. Comp. John iii. 29, Matt. ix. 15, etc.

Hahn has in his interpretation again attempted an impossible medium. In his view the Song is semi-allegorical. The bride, her brothers, the vineyards, the foxes, everything but King Solomon is allegorical. Solomon stands generically for the king of Israel in an absolute sense, including with himself his successors upon the throne down to Prince Messiah. But even if this inconsistency were not of itself sufficient to wreck his theory, the application which he makes of it is utterly untenable. The bride is Japhetic Heathendom, whom the king of Israel sought in his love, and would gain to his embrace, to make them partakers of the blessings of the covenant. The brothers, the foxes, the little sister are all representatives of Hamitic Heathendom, now hostile to the kingdom of God and still unripe for fellowship with it, but regarding whom the prospect is held out of their future exaltation to covenant privileges. The thing revealed is the destination of the king of

* His conviction upon this point is either not very firm or not of long standing, as in an article published in the same year with the book before us, he ventures the opinion that this Psalm is not "directly Messianic." Rudelbach und Gueriches Zeitschrift for 1851, p. 312.

Israel. This was not accomplished, nor even aimed at by Solomon or any of the barely human princes that succeeded him. It is realized only in Christ. It will be sufficient to ask in reply to this scheme, in what passage of Scripture is the heathen world or any part of it represented as the bride of either the earthly or the heavenly king of Israel?

Hengstenberg, as already hinted, expounds this book allegorically throughout. We cannot, however, regard as improvements the modifications which he has attempted to effect of the commonly received view. He conceives this Song to be a prophetic picture of the literal Israel, who is the bride, in their relation to the Messiah before and after his coming.* The first part, i. 2—v. 1, reveals in various forms and combinations the fact of Messiah's gracious, joy-inspiring advent, that he would bear the name of Solomon, Prince of Peace, that his advent would be preceded by sore trials and sufferings, the just punishment of an unfaithful people, and arising principally from the hostility or supremacy of foreign powers. These are variously set forth as the scorching sun i. 6, the winter and rain ii. 11, the darkness of the night iii. 1, the wilderness iii. 6. They are made more intense, iii. 1—3, by the attempt of the people to help themselves, and to bring on Messiah's salvation prematurely by their own efforts. With the advent of Messiah is connected the reception into his kingdom of the Gentiles represented by the daughters of Jerusalem. Comp. Ezek. xvi. 61, Psalm lxxxvii. 4—6. The second part, v. 2—viii. 14, contains Israel's sin against the heavenly Solomon at his coming, the consequent judgment upon them, their penitence and reunion with him under the friendly co-operation of the daughters of Jerusalem, the same Gentiles to whom they had before brought salvation themselves. Thus Israel becomes again the centre of the kingdom of God, and the relation thus formed afresh shall never be broken. As these truths are for the most part revealed elsewhere in the Old Testament with greater or less distinctness, he argues that it does no violence to the scheme of divine revelation to suppose that Solomon was in this Song commissioned to disclose them.

But it is fatal to this view that the bride of Christ is not

* See the summary statement of his views, p. 239.

Israel after the flesh, but Israel after the spirit; and whatever disclosures prophecy may have made regarding the fortunes of the former, they cannot be conveyed under an emblem appropriate only to the latter. And whatever speciousness may appear to attach to this specific historical application of the Song, it is no greater than could be claimed for fifty other conjunctures in which the same great idea has found repeated realization. The mutual love of Christ and his Church, with the weaknesses and errors of the latter and the temporary withdrawments and forgiving grace of the former, is not confined to one epoch nor to one train of circumstances. There may be periods in which it is specially conspicuous: but it is more or less clearly evidenced in every part of the Church's history, and in all the Lord's dealings with her.

We are not so much surprised that this scheme has been proposed, as that it has been proposed by Hengstenberg. Its prominent features are in direct opposition to what we have heretofore conceived to be his leanings and tendencies; and the palpable objections to it are just the reverse of those which we might have been prepared by his former expositions to anticipate. He has often been subjected to the charge of finding too little, but never before, so far as we are aware, has he been guilty of finding too much in the Old Testament about the literal Israel. He has been charged with too great fondness for idealizing the utterances of inspiration; but he certainly has not been prone to err on the side of their too specific application.

It will not be possible at the close of this article, already sufficiently extended, to characterize in detail the English and American expositions before us. Nor is it necessary that we should. It belongs to the excellencies of both these works that they present few points for the critic's attention. There is no attempt in them to build up new theories, no straining after novelty, but a simple effort to bring out the spiritual meaning wrapped up in this beautiful allegory, for the instruction and edification of the people of God. In turning to these from the volumes that have hitherto engaged our attention, one feels himself to be in an entirely different atmosphere,

and is sensible of a complete change in the tone and spirit of all by which he is surrounded. The theoretical has been exchanged for the practical; the exercise of the intellect for the devotion of the heart. We are now in the domain of religious feeling. We are no longer spectators of rare feats of interpretation, but gaze upon the patient toil of those who would open up rich veins of pious thought. It is the very marrow of the soul's life, which is exposed to view in these volumes. They lead us into the inmost recesses of the renewed heart, and bid us look upon its longings after communion with the Saviour, its delight in him and in his service, its distress under the hidings of his face, its joy at his return. The idea upon which they are founded is, that what is in the Song of Solomon said of the love of Christ and his Church, may be applied in its measure to each true member of that Church. They have drawn from it consequently the ideal of the intercourse maintained between the individual soul and Christ. While there may be a tendency in this to mysticism, and some of the figures may be unduly pressed to extract from them an appropriate Christian sense, there is spread over these pages much rich instruction, upon which pious souls will feed with profit and delight. A valuable additional feature of Professor Burrowes's exposition, is the pains taken to elucidate the imagery of the sacred poet by abundant, perhaps too abundant illustrations from oriental manners, and parallels from the choicest works of profane literature. We hope that his book may contribute not a little to a fuller understanding, and a more extended devotional use of this part of holy Scripture, which, however it has been undervalued and even decried in some quarters, was the especial favourite of an Edwards and a McCheyne.