BIBLICAL EXPRESSIONS IN COMMON USE

By Mamoru Shimizu

In English literature we often meet with the image of the treading of the winepress. In many of these cases it is a recollection of certain Scriptural passages, though not unfrequently in sense wholly detached from the original meaning of the Bible. The most impressive of all is Isaiah, 63. 1-3, where the address of the prophet to the advancing Hero in blood-red apparel, which is Jehovah, and the answer of the Hero alternate. In this passage "the 'winepress' is no emblem of the spiritual sufferings endured by our Lord, but of the 'fierceness and wrath of Almighty God' (Rev. 19. 15) towards the adversaries of his kingdom" (Cam. B. Is. XL-LXVI, 215). Its dramatic structure and the awful imagery is well reproduced with a sweeping vigour in the opening lines of Macaulay's The Battle of Naseby, in which the grapes are the mighty armies of the Cavaliers which were decisively trodden under foot by the victorious Roundheads as in a winepress:

Oh! wherefore come ye forth, in triumph from the North,  
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?  
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?  
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread?  
Oh evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,  
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;  
For we trampled on the thron of the haughty and the strong,  
Who sate in the high places, and slew the saints of God.

The Biblical idea is also represented, though a little modified, in Swinburne's Laus V, 189-194 "There is one end for all of them; they sit Naked and sad, they drink the dregs of it (sc. the pit), Trodden as grapes in the wine-press of lust, Trampled and trodden by the fiery feet." Again in his A Litany, 59-62 "For, behold, I God
am holy, I the Lord am strong; Ye shall seek me and shall not reach me Till the wine-press be trod'' (note an echo of John, 7. 34 'Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me'), the image seems to symbolize God's fierce judgement and so forth. But in Froude, Nem. Faith "He must tread the wine-press alone, calling no God-fearing man his friend" (N. E. D.), the quotation from Isaiah perhaps means, from the context, a Christian suffering, not the proper signification of the text. Furthermore, an image similar to what we read in Joel, 3. 13 'Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe . . . ; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great' is repeated with an astounding hyperbole in Rev. 14. 15-20 (q. v.). These passages will help our understanding Swinburne's Laus V. 206-8 "But in all these there was no sin like mine; No, not in all the strange great sins of them That made the wine-press froth and foam with wine" (i. e. of wickedness), or Shelley, Q. Mab, vii. 218 "Drunk from the winepress of the Almighty's wrath" (N.E.D.; cf. Rev. 19, 15). The image of the winepress, so remarkable in the Bible, especially in Revelation, seems to have given a suggestion to H.E.H. King's The Sermon in The Hospital, in which, however, the whole conception is quite the contrary to that of the Apocalypse, because his 'vintage' does not stand for the "ripeness of paganism for judgment" (The Expositor's Greek T. V. 441), but for the fruitage of the sons of God, to wit: "Then comes the vintage, for the days are ripe . . . But ah! the hands are there to tear down The treasures of the grapes; the feet are there To tread them in the winepress, gathered in; Until the blood-red rivers of the wine Run over, and the land is full of joy" (59-68).

We have a handfull of phrases of Biblical origin, consisting of the verb 'fall,' of which some have been introduced in the foregoing number of this magazine (Vol. XII. No. i, p. 27 f.). Here, with a gleaner's joy, I should like to add a few illustrations more.

'To fall among thieves, etc.', is nowadays one of the stock phrases, occurring since the last quarter of the twelfth century, the reference being originally to Luke, 10. 30, dear to everybody along with the 'good Samaritan' (see Brad. M.E. 224, note). As a
MAMORU SHIMIZU

title to his poem of a tale of the young British officer captured on
the Indian frontier and condemned to die at dawn, Henry Newbolt
puts the words from Luke,—He fell among Thieves, who not only
robbed, but murdered. Its Biblical colour, however, is often lost
sight of as in Shak. Cymb. III. vi. 76 "Be sprightly, for you fall
'mongst Friends"; R. L. Stevenson, An Apology for Idlers "Fred
Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were
better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes"; yet Butler, Way F.
282 "There came an even worse reflection; how if he had fallen
among material thieves as well as spiritual ones?" for example,
has something that reminds us of the original parable; and it is
openly alluded to in Tha. Nwec. 62 "If he falls among thieves, the
respectable Pharisee of his race turn their heads aside and leave him
penniless and bleeding."

Another expression of the like nature 'to fall into the hands of'
(seen since 1382) is also a Scriptural phrase common to both the
Testaments, e. g. in Heb. 10. 31, Lam. i. 7; Judg. 15. 18 'Shall I
die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised (i.e.
Philistines)?', with which we may compare Fielding, Amelia "If he
had fallen into the hands of the Philistines (which is the name given
by the faithful to bailiffs)" (N. E. D. s. v. Philistines 2), or the
following examples: Doughty, Arabia D. I. 30 "In their camps
such would be kind hosts; but had we fallen into their hands in the
desert we should have found them fiends"; Bun. Pil. Pro. 128
"to prevent those that should come after from falling into the hand
of Giant Despair." Again in his Holy War 167 "And when this
is done, one prince Diabolus shall prey upon them with ease: yea.
of themselves, they shall fall into the mouth of the Eater," Bunyan
must have quoted from Nahum, 3. 12 'they shall even fall into the
mouth of the eater.' (See further N. E. D. s. v. fall v. 19. c, 79. c,
d.)

The reference of Psalm, 16. 6 'The lines are (1535 or Psalter, lott
is) fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage'
to the marking out of land for a dwelling place, has supplied
'lines' the sense of 'lot' or 'fortune' (cf. Stoff. S.E. pp. 151, 319).
The following examples are apparently echoes of this verse: 1865 Daily Tel. 25 Oct. "The poor Pope's lines seem just now to have fallen in most unpleasant places, and are indeed hard lines" (N.E. D.); But. Way F. 77 "I have now said enough to indicate the kind of place in which Theobald's lines were cast"; Thoreau, Walden: Econ. 63 "he could not move over the rough country where our lines are cast without dragging (his traps)."

Connected with this, the frequent occurrence of such passages as Tha. New. 30 "The lad . . . received rather a better professional education than fell to the lot of most young soldiers of his days"; iò. 169 "Bayham then fell to Mr. Pendenniss's lot"; But. Way F. 15 "there is not much more solid success . . . than what fell to the lot of old Mr. and Mrs. Pontifex," can also be explained by Biblical authority, for we have similar wordings in Psalter, 16. 7 (1535, verse 6), Acts, 1. 26 or in Joshua, 16. 1, etc. Cf. 1400 Maundev. (Roxb.) "pat cuntee es called Galilea Gentium, and it fell in pe lote of Zabulon and of Neptalim" (N.E.D. s. v. lot 2. a).

There is yet another noteworthy phrase to be included here. At the beginning of Proverbs Solomon warns his son against the enticement of 'sinners' who would say (1. 14) 'Cast in thy lot among us (so 1535); let us all have one purse,' after which 'to cast (rarely throw) in one's lot with' is now a stock phrase for 'to share fortunes of.' To illustrate: Bun. Phil P. 21 "I intend to go along with this good man, and to cast in my lot with him"; Hawth. S. L. 16 "he was minded to cross over and cast in his lot with us"; J. H. Canfield, Why go to College? (Taibunsha, Essays & Sto. 9) "Some day you hope and expect to look across the table, level into the cool gray eyes of one who has gladly cast in her lot with you, who is to be a help-meet indeed" (cf Gen. 2. 18; Brad. M.E. 225, 6); a rare example is seen in Hardy, T.D. 386 "not so intense as the extreme wing of Christian believers with which I have thrown in my lot."

Though the form 'to have lot with (a person) of . . .' was formerly used, it is now obsolete, except as 'to have no (or neither) part nor lot in,' after Acts, 8. 21 (s. 1582 Rhem.) (N.E.D. s. v. lot
2. b).

Contrary to the images of humility such as 'to fall before,' 'to lick the dust,' etc. (see Vol. XII. No. 1, pp. 27 ff.) is the outstanding figure 'to lift up (or exalt) one's horn' (Psalm, 75. 5, etc.), implying to triumph over or be high and mighty. In this case, 'horn' is treated as a symbol either of might and power or of glory and dignity. The general interpretation of its origin is based on such verses as Deut. 33. 17 or Ps. 132. 17. Assuredly it is used in this sense in Kipl. Kim, 2 "It would . . . all come right some day, and Kim's horn would be exalted between pillars—monstrous pillars—of beauty and strength" (cf. Ps. 89. 17, 112. 9, etc.); Mrs. Lynn Linton, Paston Carew "Pride, when it has lowered its horns as it skirted by ruin, now raises it again as it touches success" (N.E.D. s. v. horn: 8, q. v.). Perhaps in Pil. Pro. 95 "How Talkative at first lifts up his plumes!" Bunyan has substituted 'plumes' for 'horn.'

The Scripture, moreover, contains a cluster of lift-up phrases, mostly of Hebrew origin, such as 'to lift up one's voice, eyes, hand, head, heart, ears, etc.' of which many have been used as common expressions, most of them conveying several figurative senses beyond those of the bare words. In this place mention will be made of only a few of them (see N.E.D. s. v. lift v. 5).

It is a genius of the Hebrew tongue that it delighted much in the so-called pleonasm, best exemplified by the type 'he lifted up his voice and wept (Gen. 29. 11, etc.), or 'he lifted up his eyes and saw' (1 Sam. 6. 13, etc.), though in the latter, as with some others, the phrasal part seems to reproduce the process of seeing and visualizes the expression as in Eliot, Mill F. 682 "But he presently turned, and lifting up his eyes, saw the figure . . ." There are also not a few instances in the Bible in which the apparently redundant verbs are not seen, e. g. in Job, 2. 12 or ib. 38. 34. Here are some examples of this kind: Bun. Pil. Pro. 260 "So the guide . . . awoke him; and the old gentleman, as he lifted up his eyes, cried out, What is the matter"; Ruskin, St. Mark's (E.P.N.C. p. 517) "You may walk . . . before the gateway of St. Mark's, and
BIBLICAL EXPRESSIONS IN COMMON USE  563

you will not see an eye lifted to it, nor a countenance brightened by it’; T. H. Huxley, A Liberal Education (E. P. N. C. p. 637) ‘And a few voices are lifted up in favour of the doctrine that the masses should be educated;’ Channing, Self-Culture ‘The passions, indeed, may be stronger than the conscience,—may lift up a louder voice’ (cf. N.E.D. s. v. burden sb. 8). Perhaps it is safe to say that such usages are done with little or no Biblical associations on the part of the writer, but when Coleridge puts in his Biblical work The Wandering of Cain (Canto II): ‘And Cain lifted up his voice and cried bitterly’; ‘Then the child Enos lifted up his eyes and prayed,’ he is most certainly conscious of his following the Hebrew idiom. Especially, the next example from Swinburne is purely Biblical, accompanying the sense ‘to contemplate’: Triumph T. 165-6 ‘will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss, Meet mine, and see where the great love is . . .?’

In respect to the word ‘fullness,’ the N.E.D. (s. v.) states: ‘as the existing word does not appear before the 14th c. it was probably a new formation rather than a refreshing of the older word’; and from its record we can gather that Biblical versions were an important medium through which the word was popularized. Particularly ‘the fullness of the world, etc.’ (Ps. 24. 1, etc.; see the marg. note of Isa. 6. 3 for ‘the whole earth’; since 1325 Prose Psalter) or ‘the fullness of time’ (aft. Gal. 4. 4, s. 1560), for ‘proper or destined time,’ are expressions having much Scriptural tang and colour even to-day. We may also take them as being responsible for sentences like Tenn. Lock. H. xxxvi ‘And her (sc. copse’s) whisper thron’d my pulses with the fullness of the Spring’; Baikie, The English Bible, 219 ‘Grafton then, out of the fullness of an eagerly Protestant (and business) heart, drafts a . . . scheme’; Browning, Abt Vogler 82 ‘And what is our failure here but a triumph’s evidence For the fullness of the days (i. e. all time)?’ ‘Fullness of bread’ in Ezek. 16. 49 is adopted in Shak. Ham. III. iii. 80 as ‘(He took my father grossly,) full of bread.’ Lamb too quotes the verse of Ezekiel in his essay Christ Hospital in combination with another Scriptural phrase: ‘This game went on for
better than a week, till the foolish beast . . . waxing fat, and kicking, in the fulness of bread, one unlucky minute would needs proclaim his good fortune to the world below” (cf. Deut. 32. 15).

And though there is no exact parallel in the Bible to ‘the fulness of the days,’ we have a like mode of expression ‘length of days,’ fairly frequent especially in the O. T. (e. g. Job, 12. 12, Ps. 21. 4; s. 1382). The marginal ‘Heb, (to) length of days’ of Ps. 23. 6 for ‘for ever,’ or of ib. 91. 16 for ‘long life,’ is a valuable indication of the phrase being a Hebraistic figure. In fact, it is a literal rendering of the original tongue (so in Latin). The following examples may well be taken as echoes of the same:

Bun. Pil. Pro. 62 “he had placed them in such habitations that could neither by length of days nor decays of nature be dissolved”; Swinb. Atalanta in C. 350-2 “They gave him light in his ways . . . And beauty and length of days”; id. Super F. B. 26-7 “And the summer and winter was and the length of years, And no change came”; Mil. P. L. XI. 781-2 “All would have then gone well, peace would have crowned With length of happy days the race of man”; ib. II. 274-5 “Our torments also may, in length of time Become our elements.”

(The type ‘Abstract Noun+of+Noun=Adjective+Noun’ is one quite remarkable in the Bible. Cf. ‘hardness of heart’ in Vol. XII. No. 1, p. 35)

As a portion of inquiry into the vast influence of the Bible on the speech of the English people, both colloquial and literary, a place may be dedicated to the field of compounds. The genius of the sacred translators enriched the English vocabulary by creating a considerable number of felicitous and even picturesque combinations of words. I will give here a list of a few that are in common use to-day, chiefly including those less noted as having been derived from the Bible.

1 Those that are due to Tindale: ‘busybody’ (1526 i Peter, 4.15); ‘failing’ (1526 Mat. 22. 4); ‘offscouring’ (1526 i Cor. 4. 13); ‘thanksgiving’ (1526 e. g. i Tim. 4. 4); broken-hearted’ 1526 Lk. 4. 18); ‘eye-service’ (1526 Col. 3. 22, whence perhaps ‘lip-service’); ‘good-for-nothing’ (1526 Mat. 5. 13; 1382, ‘to nothing it is worth over’; though the earliest instance involved in the N.E.D. is 1577, s. v. good a. 14); ‘like-minded’ (1526 Rom. 15. 5); ‘mercy-seat’ (1530 e. g. Ex. 25. 17; a rendering of Luther’s ‘gnadenstuhle’; ‘mercy-stock,’ however, is R.
Taverner's invention in his Bible 1 John, 2.2, published in 1539; see Krapp, R. P. 247); 'stiff-necked' (1526 Acts, 7. 51; our association of this word is some how haunted by recollections of Exodus, see e. g. Ex. 33. 3 f.; cf. 2 Chron. 36. 13).

2 Those that are due to Coverdale; 'aforetime' (Dan. 6. 10); 'birthright' which Edom despised for a mess of pottage (Gen. 25. 31); 'firstling' (e. g. Pro. 3. 9), perhaps after G. 'erstling' (N.E.D.); 'noon-day' (Job. 11. 17; often in phrase 'clear as n.'); 'winebibber' (e. g. Pro. 23. 20), invented to render Luther's 'säufer' 'weinsäufer (N.E.D.); 'blood-guiltiness' (Ps. 50. 14, i. e. A. V. 51. 14); 'dry-shod' (e. g. Josh. 3. 17); 'flesh-pots' (Ex. 16. 3); 'gazing-stock' (Nahum, 3. 7). Even 'unawares' is not known to have been used before 1535 Josh. 20. 5.

While 'tender mercy' is indebted to Coverdale, 'tender-hearted' has its first record in 1539 (Gr. Bible) e. g. 2 Chron. 13. 7. The A. V. gave us 'pruning-hook' (Is. 2. 4), and Jer. 31. 21 of the same affords the first instance of 'way-mark' of the N.E.D. (See further Brad. M. E. 220 ff.; Benn's Six. Lib.: E. Weekley, The Eng. Language, 33f.)