

And I may fearlessly venture to affirm that there is scarcely a language or dialect in the world, polished or barbarous, continental or insular, employed by blacks or whites, in which the same idea is not expressed by the radical of the one or the other of these terms; both of which have been employed from the beginning of time in the same quarter of the globe, and naturally direct us to one common spot, where man must first have existed, and whence alone he could have branched out. The term *father* is still to be found in the Sanscrit, and has descended to ourselves, as well as to almost every other nation in Europe, through the medium of the Greek, Gothic, and Latin. *Papa* is still more obviously a genuine Hebrew term; and while it maintains a range almost as extensive as the former throughout Europe, it has an incalculably wider spread over Asia, Africa, and the most barbarous islands of the Pacific, and extends from Egypt to Guinea, and from Bengal to Sumatra and New-Zealand. The etymons for *son* are somewhat more numerous than those for *father*, but the one or the other of them may be traced almost as extensively, as may the words, *brother*, *sister*, and even *daughter*; which last, branching out like the term *father*, from the Sanscrit, extends northward as far as Scandinavia.

The generic terms for the Deity are chiefly the three following, *Al* or *Allah*, *Theus* or *Deus*, and *God*. The first is Hebrew, the second Sanscrit, the third Persian, and was probably Palavi or ancient Persian. And besides these there is scarcely a term of any kind by which the Deity is designated in any part of the world, whether among civilized or savage man. And yet these also proceed from the same common quarter of the globe, and distinctly point out to us the same original cradle for the human race as the preceding terms. Among the barbarians of the Philippine Islands the word is *Allatallah*, obviously "the God of gods," or Supreme God; and it is the very same term, with the very same duplicate, in Sumatra. In the former islands, I will just observe, also, as we proceed, that we meet with the terms, *malahet*, for a *spirit*, which is both direct Hebrew and Arabic; *is* and *dua*, *one*, *two*, which are Sanscrit and Greek; *tambor*, a *drum*, which is also Sanscrit; and *inferno*, *hell*, a Latin compound, of Pelasgic or other oriental origin. In the Friendly and other clusters of the Polynesian Islands, the term for God is *Tooa*, and in New-Guinea, or Papuan, *Deua*, both obviously from the Sanscrit; whence *Eatooa*, among the former, is God the Spirit, or the Divine Spirit; *Ea*, meaning a spirit in these islands. And having thus appropriated the Sanscrit radical to signify the Deity, they apply the Hebrew *El*, as the Pelasgians and the Greeks did, to denote the *sun*, or the most glorious image of the Deity; whence *el-langee* means the *sky*, or sun's residence, and *papa ellangee*, or *papa langee*, fathers of the sky, or "spirits."

Allow me to offer you another instance or two. The more common etymon for *death*, among all nations is *mor*, *mort*, or *mut*; sometimes the *r*, and sometimes the *t*, being dropped in the carelessness of speech. It is *mut* in Hebrew and Phœnician; it is *mor*, or *mort*, in Sanscrit, Persian, Greek, and Latin; it is the same in almost all the languages of Europe; and it was with no small astonishment the learned lately found out that it is the same also in Otaheite, and some other of the Polynesian Islands, in which *mor-ai*, is well known to signify a *sepulchre*; literally, the place or region of the dead; *ai* meaning a place or region in Otaheitan, precisely as it does in Greek. An elegant and expressive compound, and which is perhaps only to be equalled by the Hebrew *zalmut* (צל מות), literally, *death-shade*, but which is uniformly rendered in the established copy of our Bibles, *shadow of death*.

Sir, in our own language, is the common title of respect; and the same term is employed in the same sense throughout every quarter of the globe. In Hebrew its radical import is "a ruler or governor;" *sir*, *s-her*, or *sher*, according as the *h* is suppressed, or slightly or strongly aspirated; in Sanscrit and Persian it means the organ of the head itself; in Greek it is used in a sense somewhat more dignified, and is synonymous with *lord*; in Arabia, Turkey, and among the Peruvians in South America, it is employed as in the Greek; and not essentially different in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and France;

the last country never using it, however, but with a personal pronoun prefixed; and it is the very same term in Germany, Holland, and the contiguous countries; the *s* being dropped in consequence of the *h* being aspirated more harshly: whence the Hebrew *s-her* is converted into *her*, used also commonly, as the similar term is in France, with the prefix of a *personal pronoun*.

The radical idea of the word *MAN* is that of a *thinking* or *reasonable being*, in contradistinction to the whole range of the irrational creation, by which the thinking being is surrounded. And here again I may boldly assert, that while in the primary sense of the word we have the most positive proof of the quarter of the globe from which it issued, and where mankind must first have existed, and from which he must have branched out into every other quarter, there is not a language to be met with, ancient or modern, insular or continental, civilized or savage, in use among blacks or whites, in which the same term, under some modification or other, is not to be traced, and in which it does not present the same general idea.

MAN, in Hebrew, to which the term is possibly indebted for its earliest origin, occurs under the form מנה (maneh), a verb directly importing "to discern or discriminate;" and which, hence, signifies, as a noun, "a discerning or discriminating being." In Sanscrit we have both these senses in the directest manner possible; for in this very ancient tongue, *man* is the verb, and can only be rendered "to think or reason;" while the substantive is *mana*, of precisely the same meaning as our own word *man*; and necessarily importing, as I have already observed, "a thinking or reasonable creature." Hence *Mena*, in both Sanscrit and ancient Egyptian, is synonymous with Adam, or the FIRST MAN, emphatically *the man*; hence, again, MENES, was the first king of Egypt; and MINOS, the first or chief judge, discernor, or arbitrator among the Greeks. Hence, also, in Greek, *men* and *menos* (μεν and μενος) signify *mind*, or, "the thinking faculty;" but μενος, contracted, is *mens*, which, in the Latin language, imports the very same thing. In the Gothic, and all the northern dialects of Europe, *man* imports the very same idea as in our own tongue; the English, indeed, having descended from the same quarter. In Bengalee and Hindoostanee, it is *manshu*; in Malayan, *manizu*; in Japanese, *manio*; in Atooi, and the Sandwich Islands generally, *tane*, *tanato*, or *tangi*; while *manaxe*, imports the *mind* or *spirit*; and in New-Guinea, or Papuan, it is *sonaman*, a compound evidently pronounced from *man*. In this utmost extremity, this *Ultima Thule* of the southern world, I will just observe, also, in passing, that we meet with the terms *Sytan* for *Satan*, or the Source of Evil; and *Wath* (Germ. *Goth*) for *God*.

But it may, perhaps, be observed, that in all the southern dialects of Europe, the French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese, we meet with no such term as *man*; nor in the Latin, from which all these are derived, in which last language the term for *man* is *homo*. Yet nothing is easier than to prove, that even *homo* itself, the source of all these secondary terms, is derived from the same common root. This is clear from its adjective, which is *hu-man-us*: while every school-boy knows that *man* or *men*, though not in the classical nominative case of the substantive, is included in every inflection below the nominative case: as *ho-min-is*, *ho-min-i*, *ho-min-em*, *ho-min-e*; and it was formerly included in the nominative itself, which was *ho-men*; whence nothing is clearer than that the particle *ho* is redundant, and did not originally belong to the word. And were any additional argument necessary, I might advert to the well-known fact, that this redundant particle is absolutely omitted in the negation of *homo*, which is not *ne-homo*, but *nemo*, and was at first *ne-men*; and which, like *homo*, or *homen*, runs, as every one knows *ne-min-is*, *ne-min-i*, &c. It is easy, however, to prove this redundancy of the *ho*, by showing the quarter from which it was derived. The old Latin term was *ho-men*, *ho-min-is*; which every one must perceive is literally the obsolete Greek μεν, with the article δ added to it; δ μεν or *ho-men*, emphatically *the man*. The *ho* is also omitted in the feminine of *homo*, which is *fe-min-a*, and was at first *feo-min-a*, from *feo*, to produce; literally, the producer, or bringer forth of man, or *min*. Nothing, as it appears to me, is clearer than

this, though the etymologists have hitherto sought in vain for the origin of *femina*. From *femina*, or, without the termination, *feomin*, we have derived our own and the common Saxon term, *women*; the *f*, and *v* or *w*, being cognate, or convertible letters in all languages; of which we have a familiar instance in the words *vater* and *father*, which, in German and English, mean precisely the same thing.

But this subject would require a large volume instead of occupying the close of a single lecture. It is, however, as you will find, when we come to apply it, of great importance; and I must yet, therefore, trouble you with another example or two.

Youth and *young* are as capable of as extensive a research, and are as common to all languages, barbarous and civilized, as the word *man*. I will only at present remark, that we meet with it in Hebrew, where it is *נַרְיָא* (*yuna*); in Persia, and Palavi or ancient Persian, where it is *juani*; in Sanscrit, where it is *yavran*; in Greek, *ἴων* (*yion*), from *ἴος*, or *ἴωνος*; in Latin, where we find it *juvenis*; in Gothic and German, where it is *jung*; in Spanish, *joven*; in Italian, *giovani*; in French, *jeune*; and, as I have already observed, in our own dialect, *young*.

The word *regent*, in like manner, is, and ever has been, in equal use among all nations. This, like the French *regir*, is derived from the Latin *rege*; which runs through all the southern dialects of Europe; while in Germany and the north, the derivative *recht* is the common term for *rule*, *law*, *authority*. The Hebrew is *רַגַּל* (*rag*), a conspicuous or illustrious person; the Sanscrit, *raja*; the Greek, *ῥα* and *ῥαῖος*; of the same exact import as the Hebrew; and hence *ra*, or *raia*, imports the sun, the most powerful and illustrious object in creation, among a multitude of barbarous nations, and especially those of the Sandwich Islands and New-Zealand; and *ooraye* and *rayan-ai*, the *day* or *light* itself, in different parts of Sumatra. Our own term *ray*, common, indeed, to almost all Europe, ancient and modern, is obviously from the same source; and hence the Arabic *رَاسِي* (*rayhe*), *fragrancy*, *odour*; the poetic mind of the Arabians uniformly applying this image to legitimate rule and government.

The term *name*, in like manner, runs through all the leading languages of ancient and modern ages, almost without a shade of difference, either in its meaning or mode of spelling: for we thus meet with it in Hebrew, Sanscrit, Arabic, Greek, Persian, Gothic, and Latin.

The same theory might be exemplified from many of the terms significative of the most common animals. Our English word *cow* is of this description, and may serve as a familiar example; *גוּוּחַ* (*gouah*), in Hebrew, imports a *herd* (as of oxen); the very same word in Greek, *γῶα*, means a yoke of oxen; in both which cases the word is used in a collective sense. In Sanscrit, *gāva* imports, as among ourselves, a single animal of the kind, *ox* or *cow*; in Persian, and ancient Persian or Palavi, it is *gow*; in German, *kuh*; and among the Hottentots, as an example of a savage tongue, *koos* and *koose*; while among the New-Zealanders, who have no cows, *eu* imports paps or breasts, the organ of milk.

Mouse is in like manner *מִשְׁחַה* (*musheh*) in Hebrew, literally "a groper in the dark;" in Sanscrit, *mushica*; in Persian and Palavi, *mush*; in Greek, *μῦς*, without the aspirate; in German, *mous*; in English, *mouse*; in Spanish, *musgano*: all, as I have already observed, confederating in proof that the various languages, and dialects of languages that now are or ever have been spoken, have originated from one common source; and that the various nations that now exist, or ever have existed, have originated from one common cradle or quarter of the world, and that quarter an eastern region.

Finally, and before I close this argument, and deduce from it its fair and legitimate result, let me pointedly call your attention to that most extraordinary act of correspondence between all nations whatever, in all quarters of the globe, wherever any trace of the art exists, which is to be found in their employment of a decimal gradation of arithmetic; an argument which, though I do not know that it has ever been advanced before, is, I freely confess to

you, omnipotent of itself to my own mind. Let me, however, repeat the limitation, *wherever any trace of this art is found to exist*; for in the miserable state to which some savage tribes are reduced, without property to value, treasures to count over, or a multiplicity of ideas to enumerate; where the desires are few and sordid, and the fragments of language that remain are limited to the narrow train of every-day ideas and occurrences, it is possible that there may be some hordes who have lost the art entirely; as we are told by Crantz is the case with the wretched natives of Greenland,* and by the Abbé Chappé with some families among the Kamtschatkades;† while there are other barbarian tribes, and especially among those of America,‡ who cannot mount higher in the scale of numeration than five, ten, or a hundred: and for all beyond this point to the hair of their head, as a sign that the sum is innumerable.

But, putting by these abject and degenerated specimens of our own species who have lost the general knowledge of their forefathers, whence comes it to pass, that blacks and whites in every other quarter, the savage and the civilized, wherever a human community has been found, have never either stopped short of nor exceeded a series of ten in their numerical calculations; and that as soon as they have reached this number, they have uniformly commenced a second series with the first unit in the scale, one-ten, two-ten, three-ten, four-ten, till they have reached the end of the second series; and have then commenced a third, with the next unit in rotation; and so on, as far as they have had occasion to compute? Why have not some nations broken off at the number five, and others proceeded to fifteen before they have commenced a second series? Or why have the generality of them had any thing more than one single and infinitesimal series, and, consequently, a new name and a new number for every ascending unit? Such a universality cannot possibly have resulted except from a like universality of cause; and we have, in this single instance alone, a proof equal to mathematical demonstration, that the different languages into which it enters, and of which it forms so prominent a feature, must assuredly have originated, not from accident, at different times and in different places, but from direct determination and design, at the same time and in the same place; that it must be the result of one grand, comprehensive, and original system. We have already proved, however, that such system could not be of human invention; and what, then, remains for us but to confess peremptorily, and *ex necessitate rei*, as the fair conclusion of the general argument, that it must have been of divine and supernatural communication?

It may be observed, I well know, and I am prepared to admit the fact, that the examples of verbal concordance in languages radically distinct, and not mere dialects of the same language, are, after all, but few, and do not occur, perhaps, once in five hundred instances.§ But I still contend that the examples, few as they are, are abundant, and even superabundant, to establish the conclusion; and the fact on which the objection is founded, instead of disturbing such conclusion, only leads us to, and completely establishes, a second and catenating fact: namely, that by some means or other the primary and original language of man, that divinely and supernaturally communicated to him in the first age of the world, has been broken up and confounded, and scattered in various fragments over every part of the globe: that the same sort of disruption which has rent asunder the solid ball of the earth; that has swept away whole species and kinds, and perhaps orders of animals, and vegetables, and minerals, and given us new species, and kinds, and orders in their stead; that has confounded continents and oceans, the surface and the abyss, and intermingled the natural productions of the different hemispheres; that the same sort of disruption has assaulted the world's primeval tongue, has for ever overwhelmed a great part of it, wrecked the remainder on distant and opposite shores, and turned up new materials out of the general chaos. And if it were possible for us to meet with an ancient historical

* Sect. i. 225.

† Sect. iii. 17.

‡ Robertson, vol. ii. b. iv. 91.

§ Compare also with Stewart's Phil. Essays, vol. i. p. 150, 4to. Edin. 1810.

record, which professed to contain a plain and simple statement of such supernatural communication, and such subsequent confusion of tongues, it would be a book that, independently of any other information, would be amply entitled to our attention, for it would bear an index of commanding authority on its own forehead.

To pursue this argument would be to weaken it. Such a book is in our hands—let us prize it. It must be the word of God, for it has the direct stamp and testimony of his works.

LECTURE X.

ON LEGIBLE LANGUAGE, IMITATIVE AND SYMBOLICAL.

THE subject of the vocal organs, and the scale of tones and terms to which they give rise, which have just passed under review, led us progressively into an inquiry concerning the nature of the voice itself; and the origin of systematic or articulate language.

Systematic or articulate language, however, as we have already observed, is of two kinds, *oral* and *legible*; the one spoken and addressed to the ear, the other penned or printed, and addressed to the eye. It is this last which constitutes the wonderful and important art of writing, and distinguishes civilized man from savage man, as the first distinguishes man in general from the brute creation. The connexion between the two is so close, that although both subjects might, with the most perfect order, find a place in some subsequent part of that comprehensive course of study upon which we have even now but barely entered, I shall immediately follow up the latter for the very reason that I have already touched upon the former. It will, moreover, if I mistake not, afford an agreeable variety to our philosophical pursuits; a point which ought no more to be lost sight of in the midst of instruction than in the midst of amusement; and will form an extensive subject for useful reflection when the present series of our labours shall have reached its close.

Written language is of so high an antiquity, that, like the language of the voice, it has been supposed, by a multitude of wise and good men in all ages, to have been a supernatural gift, communicated either at the creation, or upon some special occasion not long afterward. Yet there seems no satisfactory ground for either of these opinions. That it was not communicated like oral language at the creation of mankind, appears highly probable, because, first, it by no means possesses the universality which, under such circumstances, we should have reason to expect, and which oral language displays. No tribe or people have ever been found without a tongue; but multitudes without legible characters. Secondly, among the different tribes and nations that do possess it, it is far from evincing that unity or similarity in the structure of its elements which, I have already observed, is to be traced in the elements of speech, and which must be the natural result of an origin from one common source. The system of writing among some nations consists in pictures, or marks representative of things; among others in letters or marks symbolical of sounds; while, not unfrequently, the two systems are found in a state of combination, and the characters are partly imitative and partly arbitrary. And, thirdly, there does not seem to be the same necessity for a divine interposition in the formation of written characters as in that of oral language. The latter existing, the former might be expected to follow naturally in some shape or other, from that imitative and inventive genius which belongs to the nature of man, and especially in a civilized state. And, as we endeavour to penetrate the obscurity of past ages, we meet with a few occasional beacons which point out to us something of the means by which this wonderful art appears to have been first devised, and something of the countries where it appears to have been first practised.

But an exception is made by many learned and excellent men in favour of one species of writing; namely, that of alphabetic characters, which is conceived to be so far superior to every other method, as to have demanded and justified a special interposition of the Deity at some period of the creation; and, by turning to the Pentateuch, a few texts, we are told, are to be met with, which seem to intimate that the knowledge of letters was first communicated to Moses by God himself, and that the Decalogue was the earliest specimen of alphabetic writing.

Such was the opinion of many of the fathers of the Christian church, and such continues to be the opinion of many able scholars of modern times: as, among the former, St. Cyril, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Isidore; and among the latter, Mr. Bryant, Mr. Costard, Mr. Windar.* And it is hence necessary to remark, in addition to what has already been observed, that, so far from arrogating any such invention or communication to himself, Moses uniformly refers to writing, and even to alphabetic writing, as an art as common and as well known in his own day as at present. He expressly appeals to the existence of written records, such as tablets or volumes, and to the more durable art of engraving, as applied to alphabetic characters. Thus, in the passage in which writing is first mentioned in the Scriptures, "And the Lord said unto Moses, *Write* this for a memorial in a *book* or *table*."† And shortly afterward, "And thou shalt make a *plate* of pure gold, and *grave* upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD."‡ The public seals or signets of oriental princes are well known to be of the same description even in the present day, and to be ornamented with sentences instead of with figures or mere ciphers. In the State-Paper Office, at Whitehall, there are still to be seen a number of letters from Eastern monarchs to the kings of England, with seals of this very kind, the inscriptions of several of which are copied by Mr. Astle into his valuable work upon the present subject.§

In that sublime and unrivalled poem, the book of Job, which carries intrinsic and, in the present individual's judgment, incontrovertible evidence of its being the work of Moses, we meet with a similar proof of the existence and general cultivation of both these arts, at the period before us; for it is thus the afflicted patriarch exclaims, under a dignified consciousness of his innocence:

O! that my words were even now written down:
O! that they were engraven on a table:
With a pen of iron upon lead:—
That they were sculptured in a rock for ever!!

Nor do the Hebrews alone appear to have been possessed of written characters at this era. Admitting Moses to be the author of this very ancient poem, we find him ascribing a familiar knowledge of writing, and not only of writing but of engraving and sculpture, to the Arabians; for of this country were Job and his companions. And if, as appears from the preceding passages, the Hebrews were generally acquainted with at least two of these arts at the time of their quitting Egypt, it would be reasonable to suppose, even though we had no other ground for such a supposition, that the Egyptians themselves were equally acquainted with them.

We have also some reason for believing that alphabetic writing was at this very period common to India; and either picture-writing or emblematic writing to China. The Hindoo Scriptures, if the term may be allowed, consist of four distinct books, called Baidis or Beids, Bedas or Vedas, which are conceived to have issued successively from each of the four mouths of Brahma; and of these, Sir William Jones calculates that the second, or Yajur Beda, may have been in existence fifteen hundred and eighty years before the birth of our Saviour, and, consequently, in the century before the birth of Moses: whence, if there be any approach towards correctness in the calculation, the

* Compare Astle's Origin of Writing, &c. p. 11, 4to.
§ Origin and Progress of Writing, p. 14, 4to. 1803.

† Exod. xvii. 14.
‡ Job, xix. 23, 24.

‡ Ib. xxviii. 36.