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and the Gospels

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ness. But He does not condemn the lower goods or attempt to tear out the human instincts and cravings. Nor does He make fellowship with God depend on any kind of outward ascetical observances. Indeed, as Harnack writes, 'Asceticism has no place in the gospel at all; what it asks is that we should struggle against mammon, against care, against selfishness; what it demands and disengages is love; the love that serves and is self-sacrificing. This struggle and this love are the kind of asceticism which the gospel means, and whoever ennumbers Jesus' message with any other kind fails to understand it. He fails to understand its grandeur and importance; for there is something still more important than "giving one's body to be burned, and bestowing all one's goods to feed the poor," namely, self-denial and love' (Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 88). See also art. SELF-DENIAL and the Literature cited at end of that article. F. HOMES DUDDEN.

ASHER (LXX and NT Ἀσῆρ, Jos. Ἀσηρος) is the transliteration of the Heb. אֲשֵׁר = 'fortunate.' In Gn 30¹³ the origin of the name Asher is connected by J with this adjective, but perhaps its source should be found rather in the name of some Semitic divinity (cf. the goddess Ashera and perhaps also the Assyrian god Ashur). In Rev 7⁶ Asher appears in the list of the twelve tribes of Israel (cf. Nu 1^{13, 40}, 2⁷, 7⁷²⁻⁷⁷ 10²⁶ 13¹³ [P], Dt 27¹² [D]). The patronymic ancestor of the tribe is presented in Gn 30¹³ (J) and 35²⁶ (P) as the eighth son of Jacob: born (like Gad) of Zilpah, Leah's slave-girl. Asher is mentioned in the 'Blessings' of Jacob (Gn 49²⁰) and of Moses (Dt 33²⁴). It is put in possession of a territory in the land of Canaan (Jos 19²⁴⁻³¹ [P], cf. 21^{6, 30}, [P]), but does not succeed in making itself thoroughly master of it (Jg 1³¹); the result of which is that its territory is sometimes confused with that of Manasseh (Jos 17¹¹ [J]), and that it holds a precarious situation in the midst of the Canaanites (contrast Jg 1³² with v. 24¹). The district assigned to Asher corresponds to what was afterwards western Galilee, a very fertile country, but apparently never subdued completely by Israel; it is by a fiction that the possession of cities like Acco, Aelzib, Tyre, and Sidon is attributed to it. Asher is named in the Song of Deborah (Jg 5⁷) as devoted to navigation; it figures also in the story of Gideon (Jg 6³⁵ 7²²). But it quickly disappears from the page of history, where after all it had played a very small part. It is still mentioned incidentally in 1 K 4¹⁶ under Solomon, and in 2 Ch 30¹¹ under Hezekiah, but there is no trace of it in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The genealogical tables will be found in Gn 46¹⁷ (P), Nu 26⁴⁴⁻⁴⁷ (P), and 1 Ch 7³⁰⁻⁴⁰.

According to Lk 2³⁶ the prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, was of the tribe of Asher. The source of this genealogical statement is unknown. Its correctness has been suspected in view of similar claims made for some Jews elsewhere to illustrious origin (descent from Aaron, David, etc.). It may, however, be remarked, that there is a cardinal difference between these and the present instance: there was nothing particularly glorious in descent from Asher. LUCIEN GAUTIER.

ASHES.—Used twice in the Gospels, referring to an ancient and widespread Eastern mourning custom. The mourner, or the penitent, would throw dust, or dust mixed with ashes (σποδός), into the air, as an expression of intense humiliation, due to penitence for sin, or grief because of affliction (Mt 11²¹; for this idea in the OT cf. Mic 1¹⁰, Job 42⁶). Such symbolic use of dust and ashes was not unnatural, since grief seems to call for a prostration of the body. These, being beneath the

feet, suggest humiliation, and when thrown into the air they were allowed to fall upon the person of the mourner, that he might carry the evidences of his grief with him. Sometimes ashes is associated with σάκκος, sackcloth; the penitent or mourner sitting upon the ash-heap, his face begrimed with the dust. To this custom Christ referred when He said of Tyre and Sidon, 'They would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes' (Lk 10¹³; cf. use of τῆς in Job 2⁸, Jon 3⁶).

E. B. POLLARD.

ASS.—See ANIMALS, p. 63^a.

ASTONISHMENT, ASTONISHED.—These terms occur with some frequency in EV of OT, but in NT only in the historical books (except John), and in the RV only in the Synoptic Gospels (except Ac 3¹²). They are always used in NT as an expression of one of the emotions aroused by supernatural manifestations. The noun occurs once only in either version (but in different passages: AV Mk 5⁴²; RV Mk 16⁸); the verb more frequently. In AV the term translates sometimes ἐκπλήσσομαι (Mt 7²³ 13⁵⁴ 22³³, Mk 6² 7³⁷ 10²⁶ 11¹⁸, Lk 4³², Ac 13¹²); sometimes ἐξίσταμαι or ἐκστασις (Mk 5⁴¹, Lk 2⁴⁷ 8⁵⁶ 24²², Ac 10⁴⁵ 12¹⁶); and sometimes θαμβέομαι or θάμβος (Mk 10³³, Lk 5⁹, Ac 9⁶). In RV it is reserved for ἐκπλήσσομαι (except Mk 16⁸, where 'astonishment' represents ἐκστασις), of which it is the uniform rendering. In its etymological implication it very fairly represents ἐκπλήσσομαι, which is literally 'to be struck out (of the senses) by a blow,' and hence, to be 'stunned,' 'shocked,' 'astonished.' For its relation to words implying 'fear,' see Schmidt, *Synonymik d. gr. Sprache*, No. 139. For its place among the terms descriptive of the effect of our Lord's ministry on its witnesses, see art. AMAZE-MENT. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD.

ASTROLOGY was an important element of all ancient astronomy. The scientific observation of the positions and movements of the heavenly bodies was closely associated with the belief in their Divine character, and their influence upon the destinies of men, and formed the basis of calculations and predictions of future events. Babylonia was the earliest home of this study, which continued to be prosecuted in that part of the world with special diligence, so that in later times the word 'Chaldean' was equivalent to 'Eastern astrologer.' It is to this class that we must refer the Magi or Wise Men from the East, who are mentioned in Mt 2¹. So they had seen in their own home the rising (for so perhaps we should understand the words ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, rendered 'in the east,' in v. 2) of a star or constellation, which they connected with the expectation, already diffused in the East, of the birth of a great ruler among the Jews. Travelling to Palestine, they ascertained at Jerusalem that the Messiah was expected to be born in Bethlehem, and directing their steps thither they saw the 'star' in front of them all the way, till they came to the house where the infant Jesus was found. (This appears to be the only sense in which the popular and picturesque language of v. 9 can be understood).

The first two chapters of the First Gospel are recognized as being taken from another source than the rest of the book, and different views have been held as to their historic value. But so far as the astrological references in ch. 2 are concerned, no difficulty need be felt about the narrative. The Evangelist, it is true, does not raise any question as to the reality of the connexion between the 'star' and the birth of Jesus. On the possibility of such a connexion, no doubt he shared the common beliefs of his time. But we may accept his state-