

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

IN the *Contemporary Review* for July the last place, which we understand to be the place of highest honour, is given to an article by Dr. E. J. Dillon on the Book of Job. And every one who considers the matter at all will justify the editor's wisdom. For Job is a great subject, and in this article Dr. Dillon has something new and important to say about it.

Moreover, Dr. Dillon writes well. He has the most absolute confidence in his case (which, however, it will take more than this article to win), and he writes with a swinging, we had almost said swaggering, boldness and dash which seems to carry everything before it. Whether his case is really as victorious as he believes it to be, it is impossible yet to say, for this article gives us no evidence whatever on which to form a judgment. It simply promises that evidence "in a few days."

His case is this. The Book of Job, as we have it, is not the Book of Job as it was written. The original book has been marred in many ways. To the English reader it has been spoiled by mistranslations, some of them very serious. To all readers it has been vitiated by omissions, and by still more numerous and lengthy interpolations. "Probably no portion of the Old Testament," these are his words, "has come down to us in so corrupt a condition as the Book of Job. Parts of it are jumbled together for all the world as if they had

been written on small scraps of paper, which, the wind having blown them asunder, were joined again together at haphazard."

That is Dr. Dillon's case. And, of course, it is not new. To question the authenticity of the Elihu portion, for example, was probably the very first babe's cry that the Higher Criticism made. But Dr. Dillon holds that now for the first time evidence is forthcoming, not only that there are interpolations and omissions in the Book of Job, but exactly and infallibly what they are; and such evidence as can by no possibility be gainsaid. The novelty of his position lies there.

"One day," says Dr. Dillon, "my friend, Professor Bickell, while sauntering about Monte Pincio with the late Coptic Bishop, Agapios Bsciai, was informed by this dignitary that he had found and transcribed a wretched manuscript of the Saidic version of Job in the Library of the Propaganda. Hearing that numerous passages were wanting in the newly-discovered codex, Professor Bickell surmised that this 'defective' translation might possibly contain the Septuagint text without the later additions, and, having studied it at the bishop's house, saw his surmise changed to certainty. The late Professor Lagarde of Göttingen then applied for and received permission to edit this precious find; but, owing to the desire of the Pope that an undertaking of this importance should be carried

out by an ecclesiastic of the Roman Catholic Church, Lagarde's hopes were dashed at the eleventh hour, and Monsignor Ciasca, to whom the task was confided, accomplished all that can reasonably be expected from zeal and industry when unsupported by the learning and ingenuity which characterised his rival."

This Saidic version, then, "as embodying an earlier stage of development of the Book of Job than any we have hitherto possessed, is one of the most serviceable of the instruments employed in restoring the Poem to its primitive form. It frequently enables us to eliminate passages which rendered the text absolutely incomprehensible, and at other times supplies us with a reading which, while differing from that of the Massoretic manuscripts, is obviously the more ancient and intelligible."

But this Saidic version of Job is only the first, and it is the least, of the discoveries which Professor Bickell has made. He has also discovered the true law of Hebrew metre.

Now if that is so, it is a discovery indeed, and Dr. Dillon is well within the lines of modesty and decorum in sweeping in the results of his victory with unsparing hand. For if it is so, Professor Bickell has placed in the hands of every critic of the poetical books of the Old Testament an effective instrument by which to discern the genuine and the spurious, even in the minutest syllable. And it will now be in our power to put an end at once and for ever to all or almost all the vexatious disputes as to the true readings, not only in the Book of Job, but also in the Psalms and the Proverbs and the Prophets, and wherever the Old Testament writing is in poetry.

Professor Bickell's discovery, says Dr. Dillon, is twofold. First, he has discovered the structure of Hebrew metre; and, secondly, he has discovered that the main portions of the Book of Job, everything, in fact, except the Prologue and the Epi-

logue, are in verse. Now we have known for a long time, having a copy of the Revised Version in our hands, that the Book of Job, all but the Prologue and the Epilogue, was written in Hebrew poetry. So, of course, what Professor Bickell has discovered is not that. There is poetry and poetry. And the poetry of the Book of Job we have hitherto supposed to be nothing more than what Dr. Dillon fairly enough describes as "a kind of furious prose," containing an irregular and ever-varying number of syllables. In fact, to *our* eye, its only claim to be called poetry, so far as its form was concerned, lay in the fact that it was cut up into lines, and not printed as continuous prose. And Dr. Dillon is again quite within the mark when he says, that with a little goodwill the *Oration*s of Tullius Cicero or the *History* of Lord Macaulay might also be cut up so, and called poetry. Professor Bickell's discovery is that the Book of Job is not only poetry, but verse.

That is to say, it is divided into lines that are really as uniform in length as in the poetry of any other nation, for every line consists of a definite number of syllables. The line most frequently occurring contains seven syllables. And these syllables are alternately accentuated and unaccentuated, the even syllables having the accent and the odd wanting it. In short, we have the ordinary iambic metre, and it occurs with as much regularity in the dialogues of the Book of Job as in the dialogues of Sophocles' *Aias*.

This particular metre is uncommon and almost impossible in English poetry; but the following four lines from Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of "Anacreon" (in the *Poets of Greece*, 1869) will give a fair idea of its manner:—

"Love once among the roses
Perceived a bee reposing,
And wondered what the beast was,
And touch'd it: so it stung him."

That, according to Professor Bickell, is the metre of the Book of Job. And that metre is used throughout it with rigid regularity. Moreover, the

poem is divided into stanzas, each containing four such lines as those.

That is Professor Bickell's great discovery. As we have said, no proof is furnished yet. We have only the promise that Professor Bickell's *Kritische Bearbeitung des Iobdialogs* "will see the light in a few days." But Dr. Dillon at least is very confident that it will be victorious.

He is so confident, indeed, that, on the strength of this discovery of the metre of Job, together with the lesser discovery of the Saidic Version, and backed, it must be added, by his own sense of the fitness of things, he proceeds in this article to sweep away from the Book of Job, as we have hitherto known it, the whole of Elihu's speech and four hundred verses besides; and then calls his article "The Original Poem of Job."

Now, however unpalatable this result may be, it is not possible at present to reject or even to criticise it. For we have not all the materials in our hands. But, as has just been said, Dr. Dillon does not wholly rely upon the materials which are still in the womb of the future. He relies partly at least, possibly very considerably, on his own idea of the fitness of things. And there he is reasonably open to criticism. For example, he rejects every sentence in the Book of Job that would suggest a hope of immortality. He does not believe that it was possible for Job to have had faith in his own immortality. He quotes passages which declare that Job had no such faith. And then he sweeps into the dust-bin of mistranslation or of editorial interpolation every word upon which we have rested it.

Now the question whether there are any traces in the Book of Job of the belief in a future life is of more than antiquarian interest. Our own Christian faith in immortality has a pedigree. We have still been wont to trace its lineage back to the revelation of the Old Covenant, however gladly we recognise the influx of new life at a certain

stage in its history. It therefore touches very closely our conception of the law—and surely neither Professor Bickell nor Dr. Dillon denies that there is a law—of divine revelation. But, besides that, it raises the whole grand question of the Hebrew conception of God. If Job had no conception of a future life, then we must admit that his conception of God was not only lower than we have hitherto believed, but wholly and impassably diverse.

Dr. Dillon holds that it was impossible for the author of the Book of Job to believe in immortality. And his reasons seem to be these two—(1) Because he lived "in an age when the notion of a life beyond the grave had not yet assumed the shape even of a pious hope;" and (2) because the whole argument of the Poem contradicts it. Let us touch upon these two reasons.

Dr. Dillon places the age of the Book of Job earlier than we should have expected. Following Reuss, he says, "It is probable that the poet belonged to the kingdom of Israel, and composed *Job* after its destruction by the Assyrians, 721 B.C." And in another place: "It belongs to the golden age of Hebrew literature, which coincides with the latter half of the eighth century B.C." Now, without referring to the contemporary history of Assyria and Egypt, though it would not be hard now to show that both these nations had a very distinct and fertile belief in a life beyond the grave as early as the eighth century B.C., there are two passages in Hosea (vi. 2 and xiii. 14) and two in Isaiah (xxv. 8 and xxvi. 19) which it is almost impossible to explain in any other way than this, that they give voice to the belief in a future life with God. Certainly it is impossible to explain them otherwise and retain any fulness of meaning or comfort in them. But what does Dr. Dillon say of the Psalms—the 16th, the 49th, the 73rd? It is open to him to assign a much later date to them than the date he gives to the Book of Job. But he apparently does not do that, if we under-

stand him aright. For he speaks in one place of Job's "admirable parody of one of the Psalms." No doubt he refuses to accept the interpretation of these Psalms which finds a reference in them to a future life, and in so doing is in excellent companionship. But the scholarship that finds that reference in them is quite as modern and as estimable. And it is free from the suspicion of reasoning in a circle—as that there is no belief in a future life in the Old Testament, therefore not in these passages; there is no such belief in these passages, therefore not in the Old Testament.

But, in the second place, Dr. Dillon says that the whole argument of the poem contradicts the belief in a future life. "If Job or his friends had even suspected the possibility of this solution, the problem on which the work is founded would not have existed." So he says. And we cannot but think that he there expresses a serious error, an error that rocks if it does not wreck his whole position. For the problem of the book is not so simple as he finds it; and, above all, Job is not by any means so consistent as Dr. Dillon demands he should be. It is this that makes us hesitate before Dr. Dillon's sweeping excisions. It is this that makes us refuse some of his translations and interpretations. In the very passage which he quotes to prove that Job had not even a pious hope of a life beyond the grave, he suddenly stops in front of the verses which go to prove the contrary. It is the fourteenth chapter. Here are the verses Dr. Dillon quotes, and in his own translation:—

"There is a future for the tree,
And hope remaineth to the palm;
Cut down, it will sprout anew,
And its tender branch will not cease.

Though its roots wax old in the earth
And its stock lie buried in mould,
Yet through vapour of water will it bud,
And put forth boughs like a plant.

But man dieth and lieth outstretched;
He giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
Man lieth down and riseth not;
Till heaven be no more he shall not awake."

And Dr. Dillon ends there. There is no doubt whatever that these verses, taken alone, express the hopelessness of confinement here. But what says the very next verse? Dr. Dillon's own translation (for he gives a complete translation of "The Original Poem of Job" at the end of his article) runs as follows:—

"Oh that Thou wouldst shroud me in the grave!
That Thou wouldst keep me hid till thy wrath be past!
That Thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me!
If so be man could die and yet live on!"

Surely that is at least "the pious hope" in a life beyond the grave. And the verse that follows is more hopeful still—

"All the days of my warfare I then would wait,
Till my relief should come;
Thou wouldst call and I would answer Thee,
Thou wouldst yearn after the work of Thine hands."

No doubt the two passages are in contradiction. But why should not Job be allowed to contradict himself? Has not Dr. Dillon done so, without half the provocation? Have we not all done so, being human and liable to sudden revulsions of emotion? And do we not recognise that in the region of art such contradictions bring us into closer touch with the truth and reality of things than the rigid consistency which Dr. Dillon insists on finding in the Book of Job? Nor is there greater force in the further argument which Dr. Dillon uses that, in the Poem, Job is actually vindicated upon the earth. Job is in the hands of the author. He does not know that his afflictions have been intelligently prearranged. He does not know that they will be brought to an end on this side the grave. He has lost hope in that, and so the more passionately hopes, and the more undauntedly believes, that he will be vindicated in the life beyond. And it does not lessen his glory, though it increases our satisfaction, that the righting comes earlier than he expected. Surely the author of "one of the grandest things ever written with pen" (to quote Dr. Dillon's own motto from Carlyle) was capable of as much art as this.

As for the *locus classicus*, the great passage in the nineteenth chapter, of which Dr. Dillon says that "it has probably played a more important part in the intellectual history of mankind than all the books of the Old Testament put together," it is at once admitted that the translation of the Authorised Version is indefensible. But so also and equally so, at least as far as our present materials enable us to judge, is the translation which Dr. Dillon gives. What the Hebrew fairly yields may be seen in the Revised Version, or in the following careful rendering by Professor A. B. Davidson :—

25. "But I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And in after time He shall stand upon the dust,
26. And after this my skin is destroyed,
And without my flesh I shall see God :
27. Whom I shall see for myself,
And mine eyes shall behold and not another—
My reins consume within me !"

But this is the unrecognisable shape in which we find it in Dr. Dillon—

"But I know that my avenger liveth,
Though it be at the end upon my dust ;
My witness will avenge these things,
And a curse alight upon mine enemies.

My reins within me are consumed."

And he does not tell us whether it is in the Saidic Version, in the true law of Hebrew metre, or in his sense of the fitness of things that he has found it.

The fitness of things! The fitness of things demands that the man who had the faith in God which Job had, the man whose God was Job's God, should also believe in a life beyond the grave; and that not a mere shadowy existence in Sheol, which, we presume, Dr. Dillon will not deny to any Old Testament saint or sinner, but a conscious and blessed life of fellowship with God. Dr. Davidson sums up the whole matter in these pregnant words: "The doctrine of immortality in the Book is the same as that of other parts of the Old Testament. Immortality is the corollary of religion. If there be religion, that is, if God be, there is immortality, not of the soul but of the whole personal being of man (Ps. xvi. 9). This

teaching of the whole Old Testament is expressed by our Lord with a surprising incisiveness in two sentences :—"I am the *God* of Abraham. God is not the God of the dead but of the *living*."

"The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." For there were some things well accepted among them. And this was one: the divine source of wonder-working. That was undeniable and undenied. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And so the man went round among them with his earliest proof of the divinity of Jesus—"He hath opened mine eyes."

"He hath opened mine eyes." Dr. Clifford calls it the Fifth Gospel. He might have called it the First. For it is certain that it was in existence before any of the four, at the earliest date you will. It was first, and it was very influential. This was the gospel under which St. Peter gathered in his three thousand on the morning of Pentecost. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth *this, which ye now see and hear*." They tell us that before the Written Gospels came, there was the Oral Gospel. This is the Visible Gospel, and it was earlier and more influential still.

But it is not influential now. In that article in his *Christian Certainties* (Isbister, 1893, 3s. 6d.), which he calls "The Fifth Gospel," Dr. Clifford sets out to prove that it is influential now. But he does not succeed. "See," he says, "the good Dean Alford, his robe of fleckless white, his heart of fearless courage, his teeming activity that never knows repose, his spirit touched to finest issues by the grace of Christ. And near him stands our own honoured Baptist Noel, with a grace of manner unexcelled, a deep-toned spirituality lighting up his face that forces us to think at once of his

Master, a conscience sensitive as the apple of the eye, a perfect Christian gentleman, a lover of all good men, and a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. And next him may come George Hughes, a village squire, brave, manly, and God-fearing; and hard by, the form of Walter Powell, at once a thorough business man and a thorough Christian, with a high standard of principle in the one and of devotion in the other; and Thomas Guthrie, of tenderest compassion, weeping over a city's sins, and healing a city's sorrows; and Thomas Wright Matthews, brave as a lion, gentle as a woman, gifted in many ways, but most in the perception and enjoyment of the love of God in Christ."

Well, it is all beautiful—most beautiful, and most true. And yet it does not prove that the Fifth Gospel is influential now. It does not even prove that there *is* a Fifth Gospel now,—that this Visible Gospel was intended any more than the Oral to outlive the birth of the Written Gospels. We constantly lament the feeble influence that the lives of professing Christians have over the unbelief of the world. And we unhesitatingly attribute it to the low life professing Christians are content to live. Well, it is sad enough that such an explanation should at all be in our power to offer. But let us consider. Do we actually find that the highest and the noblest life has any marked influence as a gospel in bringing the men and women around it to Christ? Take any instance you will. Dean Alford, Baptist Noel, George Hughes, Walter Powell,—did their life convince and convert any strikingly large numbers of their neighbours? Dean Alford met many educated and uneducated unbelievers. Did his robe of fleckless white convince the one; did his heart of fearless courage convert the other? Did not the educated unbeliever proceed to explain the whiteness of his robe by the natural laws of heredity and environment, pointing all the while to unbelievers whose robes were equally spotless? And did not even the uneducated complacently reckon it the right and proper attitude for one in his official position? If they believe not Jesus and the Evangelists,

neither will they be persuaded though one rises from the dead—a phenomenon you can show them every day.

Why is it that the Visible Gospel is so unexpectedly powerless? Is it that there *is* no such gospel? Do men actually differ from one another, the believer from the unbeliever, merely in degree, and as the result of occasional circumstance, birth, or upbringing? In Matthew Arnold's famous and seemingly so victorious phrase, is religion simply morality touched by emotion? Of all the questions that are seeking an answer to-day this is the one of most vital interest. This is the question we must take up and answer first—if we have an answer for it.

And we have an answer for it. Three short courses of College lectures by the late President T. G. Rooke of Rawdon College have just been published, and are briefly noticed on another page. The subject of the first of the three is Psychology. In that course of lectures Mr. Rooke divides the life of man into three spheres—the Animal, the Rational, and the Spiritual. On two of these all psychologists are in agreement. That man is both an animal and a rational being all fully admit. But beyond that some refuse to go. They know no sphere of conscious psychical life into which man passes beyond the Rational, and they do not believe that any such sphere exists. Nevertheless, Mr. Rooke, who was no Quietest or Quaker, who was one of the most accomplished scholars in England when death snatched him untimely away, and whose ability, in the department of psychology at least, will startle those who never even heard his name,—Mr. Rooke is very sure that we have "warrant for listening to men who affirm that they have gone still further in the ascending scale of conscious life, and have verified the existence of a third sphere, into which the Rational sphere melts insensibly, just as the animal sphere melts into the Rational; but which, in its full revelation, transcends the Rational, as distinctly and as gloriously as that transcends the Animal."

And at once he proceeds to state the recognisable marks of the Spiritual life of man. These marks are four in number: First, the recognition of God as a *Personal* God; next, *communion* with this Personal God; thirdly, *love*; and lastly, the *consciousness of Redemption*. In the recognition, in the order, in the exposition of these four distinguishing marks of the spiritual life, we cannot but think that an unusual ability is displayed. But we must not do more than touch upon them now. For our present purpose it is enough to note the firmness with which Professor Rooke asserts their existence, and the confidence with which he appeals for their verification to the consciousness of every spiritually-minded man.

Seeing, then, that the believer differs from the unbeliever so momentarily that the difference cannot be described as one of degree but of kind; so that he has passed into a third and higher sphere of conscious life, the unbeliever being left behind in the second and lower,—how is it that the

unbeliever does not recognise this? Why is it that it has not an overpowering effect upon him? The old answer remains, and receives new verification every day, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Professor Huxley has heard of your spiritual sphere, and that the entrance door is theologically designated "Justification by faith." He comes before you as the applauded champion of a mighty band of unbelievers, and he says, "Justification by faith? The man of science has learnt to believe in justification by verification." What answer can you give him? Will you show him the white robe of Dean Alford, the gracious manner of Baptist Noel, the tender compassion of Thomas Guthrie? You might as hopefully set a superior dromedary, who has heard that there is a mind in man, to read Dean Alford's Commentaries. The natural *man* receiveth not. "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

A Neglected Poem.¹

BY THE REV. JOHN TAYLOR, D.LIT., M.A., WINCHCOMBE.

It would be a mere truism to say that many poems of real merit have been written within the last twenty years, but have found a sadly small number of readers. The pearls which skilled divers have brought up from the deep have been cast on the common rubbish-heap. The supply of poetry, good, bad, and indifferent, has been greater than the demand. Those who would welcome the good have more than once been so nauseated by the poems which they were unfortunate enough to peruse, that they have come now to turn away from any fresh productions save those which bear the hall-mark of an acknowledged master. On the other hand, there are lovers of good poetry who have on their bookshelves one or two small volumes written by men

who are not even included amongst Mr. Traill's "Minor Poets," but are able repeatedly to give to their readers the pleasure which genuine thought and fit expression impart. Whether Mr. A. Eubule-Evans has suffered from the cause already referred to, whether, indeed, his work belongs to a higher class than we have hitherto indicated, the readers of this paper will have some opportunity of judging. If they incline to the more flattering verdict, they will have the countenance of authorities who are not without weight.

The two versions of *Through Dark to Light* do not differ widely from each other. The first was published anonymously, and attracted the attention of men whose "kindly welcome encouraged the author to prefix his name" to the new edition. In it he omits some portions and adds others, besides recasting, in another metre, what he justly deems

¹ *Through Dark to Light*. Remington & Co., 1882. New edition. Wyman, London, 1886. *The Curse of Immortality*. Macmillan, 1873.