

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

UNDER the title of *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler* (Clarendon Press, 4s. 6d.), Mr. Gladstone has just issued another volume in the line of his present interest. There are evidently some things in the book it will be a pleasure to speak about. But we cannot speak of them now.

One thing only may be mentioned. It is clear that the chief importance of the volume lies in the revelation it makes of Mr. Gladstone's own thinking—his thinking on the Future Life. And is it not becoming that it should be so? No doubt it is a surprise to find that it is not that doctrine of the life to come we should have said his thinking would inevitably lead him to. But there is a greater surprise than that. Mr. Gladstone must have looked forward to this day for many a year that is past, and steadily prepared himself for it. There is no other explanation of the abundance of the literature he has gathered, and the degree he has mastered its contents.

Of both these matters an evidence is found in his handling of Salmond's *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*. He who could read that book and sift it as Mr. Gladstone has done, must have been ready for it when it came, made ready by much previous study and consideration. But he does not follow it. 'Dr. Salmond, to whose work I have

already presumed to refer with honour, dismisses the theory of Universalism with decision, and that of Conditionalism almost with severity; and does not shrink from showing that man determines his own immortality for weal or for woe, and determines it finally, not for weal only but for woe.' So here is the point. Dr. Salmond holds that man determines his destiny for woe as well as for weal; Mr. Gladstone is sure about the weal, but he is not so sure about the woe. What he does believe about the woe has been touched upon already, and may possibly be touched upon again.

'All students of the Bible and of the Apocrypha will be interested to learn that, among the fragments of Hebrew MSS. which my sister Mrs. Gibson and I have just acquired in Palestine, a leaf of the Book of Ecclesiasticus has been discovered to-day by Mr. S. Schechter, lecturer in Talmudic to the University of Cambridge. The Talmud contains many quotations from the Book of Ecclesiasticus which are not always accurate, and Jewish writers of the ninth century have also preserved some passages for us. But now, for the first time, we have a leaf, albeit a mutilated one, of the original. The leaf is paper, and measures $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The writing is in two columns, hanging from the line.

Mr. Schechter is now studying it, and he hopes soon to publish its text.'

Thus wrote Mrs. Lewis to the *Academy* of May 16. Mr. Schechter has now finished his examination of the leaf, and both the text and a translation of it appear in the *Expositor* for July. It is all that Mrs. Lewis promises, and a little more. For not only is it, in Mr. Schechter's judgment, an actual part of the original text of Ecclesiasticus, from a manuscript of the eleventh or twelfth century, but it settles once for all the controversy about the text of that book which rose to rapid interest six years ago, and has never been altogether at rest since then.

Six years ago—it cannot be forgotten—Professor Margoliouth published a pamphlet in which, 'with marked power and ingenuity,' he propounded the theory that the Book of Ecclesiasticus was written in *metre*. And that was all very well, though not perhaps very likely. But when Professor Margoliouth, working on the basis of that metre, proceeded to turn the Greek translation we possess back into the possible original Hebrew, the matter assumed a serious aspect. For Professor Margoliouth found that the Hebrew it resolved itself into, was not the Hebrew of the Bible, not the Hebrew even of the Book of Daniel, but the 'New Hebrew' of the Jewish Rabbis. If that is so, if Professor Margoliouth's restoration of the original of Ecclesiasticus is approximately right, then the Book of Daniel (and many a book besides) was written far earlier than modern criticism allows. For the Book of Ecclesiasticus was itself composed about two hundred years before Christ. And to give time for the Hebrew of Daniel to deteriorate to the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus a very considerable period must be conceded—and the 'critical' date is utterly astray.

So Professor Margoliouth's restoration was examined. Professor Nöldeke examined it; Professor Driver examined it; and Dr. Neubauer

examined it also. And they all came to the conclusion that the original Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus was never in metre, nor was it the Hebrew Professor Margoliouth had restored it to.

Well, here comes a fragment of the original Hebrew. The controversy had never quite been laid to rest. But this fragment is enough to lay it to rest for ever. There is no metre here. And what is more important, the Hebrew is biblical,—more biblical, and contains fewer 'new' words, than even the Book of Ecclesiastes.

Mr. Schechter says nothing of this in the *Expositor*. But almost simultaneously with the article in the *Expositor* appears a paper by Professor Driver in the *Guardian* of 1st July, in which this lucky leaf is admirably described, and its value—its critical and linguistic value—made clearly to be seen. And then, at the end of that paper, comes the greatest surprise of all.

'I had written thus far,' says Professor Driver, 'and supposed that my paper was at an end, when I met accidentally Dr. Neubauer, the sub-librarian of the Bodleian Library, who surprised me with the information that the Bodleian Library had been so fortunate as to acquire, almost simultaneously, nine leaves containing another longer portion of the same long-lost Hebrew text.' Whence or from whom the Bodleian 'acquired' this fragment, we are not told. But to make the wonder greater still, it is found to fit in exactly where Mrs. Lewis' fragment comes to an end. The leaf which Mrs. Lewis found begins in the middle of the fifteenth verse of the thirty-ninth chapter, and ends with the sixth verse of the fortieth. The newer discovery commences with the ninth verse of the fortieth chapter, and runs to the tenth verse of the forty-ninth. Granting that two verses have been cut or worn away from the bottom of Mrs. Lewis' leaf, the two fragments, one of which was found on Mount Sinai, and the other in Oxford, are consecutive portions of the very same text and the very same manuscript.

Professor Driver quotes a few verses from the Oxford fragment, and then he ends his paper thus: 'The spontaneity and vigour with which the poet writes, the light and graceful movement of his verse, the idiomatic freshness of his diction, will be apparent to every one conversant with the language. Clearly, within half a century of the age of the Maccabees, the Hebrew muse had still not forgotten her ancient cunning, and had not yet learnt the "language of the Rabbis." And if she could sing in strains as fine and sweet as these, what other melodies might she not have sung in the same age?'

There is nothing that is so dangerous to dabble in as derivation. There was a time, we almost all remember it, when every proper name in the Old Testament had its meaning confidently attached to it. But as the tongues most closely akin to the Hebrew, especially the Assyrian tongue, began to be understood, this confidence vanished away. There still are publications, especially those that appeal to the much-enduring Sunday-schoolteacher, in which the old impossibilities reappear with all the certainty of inspiration. But where scholarship is at work, the page is now freely besprinkled with points of interrogation, or the meaning is left unattempted.

The most startling result perhaps of the study of the Assyrian language is the discovery that many of the derivations, which seem to have the sanction of the biblical writer himself, will not stand. Familiar examples are Cain, and Moses, and Samuel. Dr. Driver has an interesting note on the last name in his *Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, in which he suggests that what the writer gives he did not mean to give as *derivation*. We read in the First Book of Samuel (i. 20) that Hannah called her son's name Samuel, (saying) 'Because I have asked him of the Lord.' 'What the writer means,' says Dr. Driver, 'must be (as often in the Old Testament) an *assonance*, not an etymology; that is, the name Samuel

(שמואל) recalled to his mind the word *shâ'âl*, "asked," though in no sense *derived* from it.'

But if that is the most startling, the most momentous result of recent studies in the Assyrian tongue is the detection of polytheistic elements in the Hebrew proper names. An example is just to hand, in a letter which Mr. Buchanan Gray of Mansfield College, Oxford, has written to the *Academy*. Mr. Gray has made the origin of Hebrew proper names his special study for some years. He has a book on the subject at present in the press. Whatever he says about a Hebrew derivation may be accepted as the highest reach of modern English scholarship.

Well, in a recent issue of the *Academy*, Mr. Gray suggests a new derivation of Ebal. In the old dictionaries Ebal meant 'stony'—a harmless derivation and prosaic. Mr. Gray's derivation is neither so prosaic nor yet perhaps so harmless. Like a watchful and well-equipped philologist, he does not offer more than he can account for; so he offers the meaning of only half the name as yet. What the 'E' is, he does not know. He thinks it is the same as elsewhere stands alone in the name of the city Ai; but then he does not know what Ai means. The other half, however, he believes is nothing less than the name of the Assyrian god Bel.

It is a bold suggestion. But Professor Cheyne, for one, is greatly drawn to it, and ventures to think it right. To say that the *person* Ebal has a name compounded with the Babylonian Bel is not new. Winckler said that already. But the suggestion that the Mount of Cursing has the same god's name within it, is both new and bolder; and yet Professor Cheyne believes it right. For 'Ebal and Gerizim must both, it would seem, have been sacred mountains; and just as Mount Hor seems to have been Tur-Baal ("rock of Baal"), and a famous Moabite mountain is even called "Mountain of Nebo," so it would be very natural to hear that a great central mountain bore the name "mountain" or "rock of Bel."

Having accepted this derivation, which he does in a subsequent issue of the *Academy*, Professor Cheyne is not content. He then goes on to accept an emendation from another man, and an identification from a third.

There is a passage in the Book of Nahum (ii. 7) which, as the Hebrew stands, is not only difficult but untranslatable. The difficulty arises mainly, if not entirely, from the presence of a word (העלתה), which our Authorized Version renders, 'She shall be brought up,' but the Revised Version, 'She is carried away.' In either rendering there is absolutely no ascertainable sense. It struck Mr. Paul Ruben, a writer in the *Academy*, that two letters of the word had been transposed; turn them about and you get a word (העתלה), which the Assyrian *stellitu*, 'exalted,' applied to women, countenances and explains. This word would mean 'the Lady.' Whereupon the passage does become possible and almost acceptable: 'The palace is dissolved, and Huzzab the Lady is uncovered, and her handmaids mourn as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts.' Nor is that passage alone made possible; but a meaning is found for a Hebrew proper name. Athaliah, that wicked wife of Jehoram, who introduced into Judah the worship of Baal, had a name, it now appears, which daily mocked her idolatrous practices, for it meant that 'Jehovah is exalted.'

That is the emendation. The identification comes from Egypt. Professor Flinders Petrie's discovery there is already the occasion of some dispute. At the recent meeting of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, Sir Peter le Page Renouf, the President, challenged Professor Petrie's translation of its most significant item, and denied that the Israelites are mentioned. It is *Jezreel*, said Sir Peter Renouf, that Professor Petrie has mistaken for Israel. Professor Flinders Petrie replied that the word is spelt with an *s*, while *Jezreel* would require a *z*. But to that Sir Peter made answer that as the Egyptians had no *z* they could not very well help themselves.

If Sir Peter Renouf is right, here is a rapid disappearance of the biblical difficulty which we have all been trying to resolve. But is Sir Peter right? Professor Cheyne does not think so. And Colonel Conder does not think so either.

In the newly issued *Quarterly Statement* of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Colonel Conder writes some Notes on the new discovery. He accepts Professor Petrie's translation, 'the people of Israel is spoiled.' He adds that 'the text shows clearly that the people so ravaged were in Palestine, not in Egypt.' And he holds the result to prove that we have been wont to place the Exodus much too late. It must have occurred long before the time of this King Merenptah.

And Professor Cheyne does not seem to think that Sir Peter Renouf is right. Apparently Professor Cheyne accepts Professor Flinders Petrie's reading not of the word 'Israel' only, but of all the words around it. *Askadni* is Ashkelon; *Kazmel* is Gezer; and *Yenu* is Janoah, the Janoah of 2 Kings xv. 29, which is now clearly seen to have been a frontier city of Israel towards Tyre, 'whose riches allured Tiglath-Pileser as they had long before allured Thothmes III.'

Professor Henry Preserved Smith has been reading over again Mr. Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, and he contributes to a recent issue of the *New York Evangelist* some illustrations of Old Testament language which he has discovered there. Mr. Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* was published in 1888. It was at once acknowledged to be both authoritative and highly instructive. But scarcely a man could read it. Some authors are unreadable because they cannot form a paragraph, some because they cannot construct a sentence, and some because they cannot use an ordinary English word. Mr. Doughty is unreadable because he cannot do any one of the three. That in the 'dark unfathomed caves' of these impenetrable pages

there lies 'many a gem of purest ray serene'—that is to say of modern Arab custom that will illustrate the Old Testament—we all believe. But who is to bring them forth? Professor Smith has kindly done it for us.

It is said in the First Book of Kings that when Hiel the Bethelite built the city of Jericho 'he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub.' In these words, 'however we may interpret them,' Professor Smith sees 'some reference' to the widespread custom of sacrificing to a god as the foundation of a building is laid. Accordingly he finds some illustration of it in Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*. The husbandmen in Central Arabia, to use Mr. Doughty's own peculiar language, 'sprinkle new break-land with the blood of a peace-offering: the like when they build they sprinkle upon the stones.' And he mentions the case of an Arab who opened a new well and watered a new plantation without performing this ceremony. 'The crop was fine, but within the year the owner died'—as the modern proverb has it, 'The house was finished, and the hearse was at the door.'

Well, we have had our surprise also, though it is not so great as Dr. Driver's. We had written thus far when Dr. Clay Trumbull's new book came into our hand, direct from the publishers. The very first page we examined introduced the story of Hiel the Bethelite. Not only so, but that story is handled quite on the lines of Professor Smith's conjecture, and to so much fuller purpose as to turn that conjecture into a practical certainty.

It was the sight of Professor Cheyne's name that made us open at the story of Hiel the Bethelite. For when Dr. Trumbull had finished his new book, of which the title is *The Threshold Covenant*, he sent the proof-sheets of it to a number of eminent scholars that they might estimate the worth of its startling position, and criticise it in

details. Then he published these criticisms at the end of the book, and one of them is by Professor Cheyne.

'I notice,' says Professor Cheyne, 'on p. 46 f. a reference to the foundation of Jericho by Hiel. It appears to me that the idea suggested by archæology is only defensible on the principles generally associated with historical criticism. If this idea is in any way historically connected with the act of Hiel related in 1 Kings xvi. 34 (wanting in the LXX), and pointed to, whether in reality or in the honest, though faulty, imagination of the writer, in Joshua vi. 26, we must suppose that the act of Hiel was misunderstood by the writers of these two passages. For the deaths of Abiram and Segub are referred to as divine *judgments* upon Hiel for his violation of the *hêrem* or ban laid upon the site of Jericho, whereas, according to the archæological theory, Hiel offered his children as foundation sacrifices, believing that he could thus bring a blessing on the city of Jericho. No plain reader will understand the connexion of the archæological idea and the two passages of the Old Testament—as it appears to me.'

Those are Professor Cheyne's words, and part of Professor Cheyne's letter to Dr. Trumbull about his book. The point of the quotation lies in this, that Dr. Trumbull has not shown much 'fellow-feeling with the critics,' as Dr. Cheyne elsewhere puts it, but he is an archæologist of the first rank,—'I have never,' says Dr. Cheyne, 'doubted your singular capacity for archæological work,'—and in this volume he has expressed an idea (expressed it and supported it by an extraordinary weight of evidence) which in Professor Cheyne's judgment is compatible only with a 'critical' estimate of these passages in the Book of Joshua and in the First Book of Kings.

In Syria and in Egypt, at the present time, when a guest who is worthy of special honour is

to be welcomed to a home, the blood of a slaughtered, or a *sacrificed*, animal is shed on the threshold of that home, as a means of adopting the new-comer into the family, or of making a covenant union with him. And every such primitive covenant in blood includes an appeal to the protecting Deity to ratify it as between the two parties and himself. While the guest is still outside, the host takes a lamb, or a goat, and tying its feet together, lays it upon the threshold of his door. Resting his left knee upon the bound victim, the host holds its head by his left hand, while with his right he cuts its throat. He retains his position until all the blood has flowed from the body upon the threshold. Then the victim is removed, and the guest steps over the blood, across the threshold; and in this act he becomes, as it were, a member of the family by the Threshold Covenant.

Thus the threshold is the family altar, on which the sacrificial blood of a covenant welcome is poured out. It is therefore counted sacred, and is not to be stepped upon, nor lightly passed over. Almost innumerable, of widest range, and intensest interest are the examples Dr. Trumbull quotes, but we cannot quote them here. Here we can only refer to two of the Scripture passages that come within his range. One is that passage about the building of Jericho, to which we have been so unexpectedly led. The other is a far more searching matter—the institution and meaning of the Passover.

The passage about the founding of Jericho is easily passed. Dr. Trumbull has never, as Dr. Cheyne has already told us, been ranked among the higher critics. The question of authorship or date of that passage, and whether its editor understood it or not, has never given him trouble. But he does see in it an illustration and example of that strange custom of sacrifice, as the foundation of a building is laid. For 'threshold' and 'foundation' are terms that are used interchangeably in primitive life. 'The sacredness of the threshold-stone of a

building pivots on its position as a foundation-stone, a beginning stone, a boundary stone. Hence the foundation-stone of any house or other structure was sacred as the threshold of that building. According to Dr. H. V. Hilprecht, in the earlier buildings of Babylonia the inscriptions and invocations and deposits were at the threshold, and later under the four corners of the building. But when they were at the threshold, they were not under the corners, and *vice versa*. Whence it would appear that the corner-stone was recognised as the beginning or the limit or the threshold of the building.'

The foundation-stone of a new building, then, is in a sense the threshold of that building, and to lay the foundations in blood is to proffer blood at the threshold. Traces of this custom, continues Dr. Trumbull, are to be found in the practices or the legends of people well-nigh the world over. Apparently the earlier sacrifices were human victims. And again we have abundant illustration. Whereupon we come to the case of Hiel the Bethelite and the laying of the foundation-stone of Jericho—and plainly Dr. Trumbull holds, as Professor Cheyne holds, that it was originally a deliberate sacrifice, however the narrator understood it.

But a greater matter is the Passover. And if Dr. Trumbull in his *Threshold Covenant* wholly overturns our common conception of the Passover, as he certainly means to do, let us not forget that he does so of no mere wantonness. He overturns our common thoughts because he cannot help it. He offers a new interpretation because he is driven to it. The whole idea of his book, and his almost innumerable examples, force him in that direction. Conservative to a fault, he is nevertheless authoritative on such a question as this, beyond most scholars of our day. And as regards the special matter in question, it is not Professor Cheyne only who says, 'You are very convincing about the Passover blood.' Professor Hommel also wholly coincides. And Professor Hilprecht writes: 'Of

the greatest importance for the study of the Old Testament religion is your doubtless correct explanation of the Passover. It is entirely in harmony with ancient customs, with philology, and with common sense.

What Dr. Trumbull's explanation of the Passover is, may now be told in a sentence.

The Passover night was a night to be remembered. But long before that night the custom had existed, and the Israelites must have been familiar with it, of welcoming a guest, or of accepting a bride or bridegroom who was to become one of the family, by the outpouring of blood on the threshold of the door,—by staining the doorway itself with the blood of the covenant. On this night Jehovah announces to the Israelites that He is to enter into a covenant with them. And the covenant must be ratified with blood according to the well under-

stood and inevitable formula. Each Israelite household must prepare a sacrifice, and the blood of the sacrifice must be poured out upon the threshold before Jehovah can pass over that threshold to enter the house as its honoured and welcome Guest. If there is no blood upon the threshold,—and there will be no blood this night upon the threshold of the Egyptian homes,—then He cannot enter that home as a Guest, only as an Enemy and Avenger. But if the blood is on the threshold, He will pass over it into the house; the Threshold Covenant is made; He will go into them and sup with them, and they with Him.

So, the Passover is not so called because the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites as He went to slay the firstborn among the Egyptians. It is so called because Jehovah passed over the Israelite threshold when the Covenant Blood was there.

The Spirit of Power.

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PART II.

HAVING seen what is implied by being filled with the Spirit, let us see how that state came to pass. We must first notice the outer means employed; and, having disposed of that as the least important part, we shall then try to see the inner temperament which accompanied and marked the conditions into which we are inquiring.

Let me say at once that the outer means varied, though there seem to have been methods which were considered regular in ordinary circumstances, and could be relied on for effect. The means was like the miraculous signs which interpreted and evidenced the blessing when that had come; it was something merely to help men to receive that more easily and surely, and was, as we shall see, no more essential than the signs were. The regular means was preaching, followed by baptism and the laying on of hands. For the last part of

the process, the deacon evangelist Philip seems to have been insufficient, and had to send for the Apostle Peter; whilst in another case Ananias of Damascus was sufficient when no apostle was procurable. The explanation of the difference is difficult; but I may slightly forestall what I have yet to say by suggesting that the person who used the sign was one in whom the subjects of the rite had confidence. As used by him, the sign really roused their expectation, and enabled them to lay hold for themselves on God's pledge. This explains what occurred in the case of the Samaritans. To them the blessing came along with conversion. It was the exalted or ideal state of men very thoroughly and quite suddenly converted. Philip did not carry for them the authority of an apostle. He had preached, and they had believed; but only as Simon Magus did too (viii. 13), with a historical faith which recognised the Messiahship of Jesus,