

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

## Notes of Recent Exposition.

UNLESS it be fishing, there is no more fascinating occupation than textual emendation. And as the joy of the fisherman is greatest when 'they are taking,' so must the joy of the textual emendator be when he has hit upon an actual improvement in the text. Professor Carl Budde of Strassburg has made such a hit. Working upon one of the very oldest pieces of writing in the world,—that little Song of the Well in Num. xxi.,—he has made what it seems impossible to doubt is a genuine restoration of a long lost text. We do not wonder that he proclaims his discovery with exultation, and to the length of a long article in *The New World*.

Numbers xxi. 10–20 relates the march of Israel under Moses, eastward from the land of Moab through the steppe, very briefly, simply naming each encampment and the breaking up to the next. At the crossing of the Arnon (vers. 14, 15), a fragment of verse, consisting only of names of places, is quoted from the 'Book of the Wars of Yahweh.' Then it is said of the march, to translate literally, 'And from there to Beer: this is the well of which Yahweh had said to Moses, Gather the people together, that I may give them water. Then Israel sang this song—

Spring up, O well;  
Sing ye to it:  
Thou well, dug by princes,  
Sunk by the nobles of the people,  
With the sceptre, with their staves.

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And from Midbar to Mattanah: and from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth.'

It all seems to go very smoothly. But it is not so smooth as it seems. In the first place, the well is said in the introduction to be the gift of Yahweh, and that in the most pointed manner; but the song is equally pronounced that it was the gift of the princes and the nobles, dug by the sceptre and sunk with their staves. Next, the name of this encampment, Beer, is given at a curious point in the narrative. Beer just means Well. The writer wishes to say apparently that the Israelites called it Beer, because of the gift of the Well. But when you read, 'And from thence to Beer' *before* the mention of the gift, you feel that that must have been the name of the place already. Worse than that, there is no record of the departure from Beer. The usual formula is 'From A to B, and from B to C, and from C to D.' The *arrival* at Beer is mentioned, then the song is given, but when the narrative should resume, 'and from Beer' to some other place, Beer is forgotten, and we read instead, 'And from *Midbar* to Mattanah,' though *Midbar* has not been mentioned yet.

These difficulties are felt by the careful translator. Our own Revisers felt them. In order to overcome the last, they have resorted to the expedient of turning the word 'Midbar' into *wilderness*, re

suming the narrative after the song, 'And from the wilderness to Mattanah, and from Mattanah to Nahaliel.' Thus the wilderness is supposed to represent Beer, which was *in* the wilderness, and the form of the narrative is fairly well preserved. Now, to turn 'Midbar' into 'wilderness' is nothing, for that is the meaning of the word; but you cannot do it here. Midbar has no article in the Hebrew. The literal translation is, 'And from wilderness to Mattanah,' which is just as awkward and impossible in Hebrew as it is in English. Besides, there is no evidence that they did get out of the wilderness now. The evidence is all the other way. Mattanah was as completely in the desert as Beer. That translation will not do.

But now, suppose that, instead of translating only one of these words, we proceed to translate them both. If Midbar means 'desert,' Mattanah means 'gift.' Then we should have, 'And out of a desert a gift.' If this line were poetry, we could say, 'out of the desert a gift,' for the article which is indispensable in prose is freely omitted in poetry. And it *is* poetry, joyfully exclaims Professor Budde. It is the last line of the Song of the Well. To complete the parallelism, so necessary to Hebrew poetry, that song ought certainly to have six lines instead of five. As it stands at present, the first two and the second two run well together, but the fifth line swings in the air alone. Add it to the Song, and all goes happily:

Spring up, O Well;  
Sing ye to it:  
Thou well, dug by princes,  
Sunk by the nobles of the people,  
With the sceptre, with their staves:  
Out of the desert a gift!

As for the 'And' in front of the line,—'And out of the desert a gift,'—that is easily accounted for. If it is not a simple interpolation, it has come from the last word of the verse before. An archaic and unnecessary ending to one word might easily be transferred to the next where poetry is written as prose. More serious is the difficulty that, after all,

the formula of the march is not preserved. But here most fortunately the Septuagint comes to aid. Let us insert 'and from Beer' with the Septuagint, and omit 'and from Mattanah' with at least some of its important manuscripts. Then we have not only one song, complete and most beautiful, but also, and for the first time since the disturbance occurred, the prose narrative itself accurate and intelligible: 'And from thence to Beer [whereat the Song comes in], and from Beer to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth.'

The song was thrown in, Professor Budde thinks, by a later hand than that which wrote the list of encampments down. It is not a song that was composed for that occasion. It is scarcely appropriate enough for that. It was a very old song when it was inserted here. For, from the earliest times, wells were the subject of much dispute. In all that south country they are the most precious possessions, as Achsah, Caleb's daughter, knew (Judg. i. 15; Josh. xv. 19). If one is found, the finder is rightly regarded as the owner. But the same well might be found by more than one, and each may claim the ownership. Or dishonest persons may pretend that they had found your well before you, and that the ownership is theirs. So witnesses are demanded. The clan is gathered around the newly-discovered well. By a solemn and symbolic act its ownership is made sure to the true discoverers. The sheikh comes forward. With his sceptre or his staff he turns lightly a sod, or probes the yielding soil. It is the same as still remains with us when a foundation-stone is laid, or the first turf of a railway cut. When the chief has performed this symbolic act, the people burst into song. They do not forget the prince; but they give the glory to God. For it is a sacred as well as a sure transaction. And this is the song they sing. As he read the dry narrative of place after place unknown, in these journeyings of the children of Israel through the wilderness, and came to one called Beer, some warm-hearted Israelite suddenly recalled the Song of the Well, and put it in. He was not careful about the setting; but out of the

desert of earliest custom and unknown folklore he has given us a most precious and beautiful gift.

It is a surprising, and to many a most distressing thing, that English scholarship is now so largely claimed by the Higher Criticism. But it is a more surprising thing that so very many of our English preachers and intelligent laymen still refuse to follow English scholarship into it. For as soon as specialists begin to agree, however revolutionary their proposal may be, common men are nearly always ready to put their trust in it. They are even ready, readier with their practical common-sense than the specialists themselves, to set the proposal into actual working order and give it a chance to go. But they will not give the Higher Criticism that chance. They will not admit that the present proposal of Old Testament scholars ever *can* be true.

And yet the gulf of separation between 'scholarship' and 'common sense' is not so wide with us as it is in America. American scholars are, as a rule, more advanced than ours. As they accepted evolution, so now they accept the Higher Criticism, to the length of its most ruthless consequences. But American preachers and Christian laymen with one consent refuse to follow them, or even to move one single step in that direction.

It is a most unusual position. But the editor of *The Biblical World* has no doubt discovered its explanation. Preachers and Christian laymen believe that they have to make their choice between the higher critics and Christ. Christ said, or they think He said, that David wrote the 110th psalm; the critics say he did not. Christ said, or they think He said, that Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; the critics say he was not. They believe that they have to choose between the critics and Christ, and they have made their choice already.

So the editor of *The Biblical World* sent a letter to a number of American scholars about it. Did

they understand our Lord to say that Jonah was really three days and three nights in the belly of the whale? When it was time to go to press with the issue for June, he had received replies from eight of these scholars, and he published them as they came. They are all perfectly frank, and some of them very able. They are evidently a fair representation also of the necessary variety of opinion, one scholar openly declaring that he has no sympathy with the Higher Criticism, but believes the bulk of it erroneous. It is worth our while, therefore, to consider what they say.

They all saw at once that they must examine the 40th verse of the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, for it is there, and there alone, that the statement occurs. And they saw that they must examine it along with its context: '38 Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. 39 But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here' (Matt. xii. 38-41, R.V.).

Now it was obvious to them all, as indeed it is obvious to any one, that that passage reads excellently *without* the 40th verse. Then the parallel would be simply Jonah's preaching. And this is what St. Luke's account makes it (Luke xi. 29, 30). There no mention is made of the three days and three nights in the whale's belly. Jonah preached and the Ninevites repented: I, a greater than Jonah, preach, and you do not repent—that is the parallel according to St. Luke, and it is as unimpeachable as it is complete. Besides, *was* Jesus three days and three nights in the heart of

the earth? And if He told them that as Jonah was in the whale, so would He be in the earth, did He not give them the very sign that He had just refused to give?

Our American scholars knew all these things. They also knew that, influenced by these things, many men had come to the conclusion that verse 40 is an interpolation. Yet it is a remarkable fact that only one of the eight solves the difficulty that way. Dr. P. S. Moxom of Springfield begins his answer: 'I agree with Wendt that verse 40 is an interpolation.' But he stands alone among them. The others, feeling the difficulties, some of them feeling them very keenly, and seeing how easily all would be made well if that verse were out of the way, yet refuse to get rid of it. For in America, as in England, men will do anything before they will reject a verse which the manuscripts have not rejected first.

Seven, then, out of eight believe that Christ did say Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale. Yet the seven are unanimous in declaring that, for us at least, Christ's words do not touch the question as to whether the story of Jonah is true history or not. Even Professor Franklin Johnson of Chicago, the open unbeliever in the Higher Criticism, says so. For he holds that our Lord was entitled to follow the custom of the great writers and orators of all peoples and all ages, who have spoken of the characters of fiction as if they were real. 'All competent writers and orators do so to-day. Even the minister who is offended with these lines will refer in his next Sunday's sermon to the Prodigal Son, to the Sower, to the Merchant seeking goodly pearls, without telling his people that these characters are not historical. He will refer to Mr. Facing-Both-Ways, to Mr. Fearing, or to Christian at the Wicket Gate, in the Slough of Despond, or in Vanity Fair, and will tell what they did, with no thought of the question whether his statements are derived from history or from allegory.'

That, in fact, is the position of almost every one of the seven. Says Professor Thayer: 'To regard our Lord's use of the narrative as vouching for it as *history* is to confound the province and function of a "preacher of righteousness" with that of a "higher critic" or a scientific lecturer. As reasonably might one infer, from an allusion in a modern sermon to "William Tell," or "Effie Deans," or the "Man without a Country," that the speaker held these personages to be thoroughly historic, and their narrated experiences matters of fact. As warrantably might we make Christ's gratuitous mention (only three verses later) of evil spirits as frequenting "waterless places" the basis of a demonology for which He is to be held responsible.'

Professor Rush Rhees of Newton, who enters the question furthest, and speaks most fully, admits that Christ's hearers would understand Him to say that Jonah did pass through the experience referred to. 'The contemporaries of Jesus held the story of Jonah and the whale to be sober history. And Jonah is appealed to in the same way as Abraham and David are referred to in the New Testament.' Nevertheless, even Professor Rhees holds that our Lord did not raise the question of the historicity of the narrative. For he points out that the reference is only by way of *illustration*. The validity of the illustration remains when the story is found to be allegory. It serves to suggest to the questioners of Jesus the thought of His vindication by a miraculous deliverance. That was all the use He made of it, and for that end it made no difference whether it was fact or fable.

So these men very wisely refrain from raising the further and far more difficult question, whether or not Jesus knew that it was fable. It is a question we cannot answer. It is therefore a question we have no need to answer. And these American scholars have tried to show that those who shrink from attributing ignorance of the nature of the Book of Jonah to our Lord, and those who shudder at the thought of His consciously knowing that it

was fable and yet speaking as if it were fact, are delivered from either dilemma. He used the language of His day, they say; He used it in a legitimate way. He did not say, He did not need to think, whether Jonah was true or not. It was true for His purpose. And so He used it truly.

Some years ago a writer in the *Contemporary Review* spoke of the allusions to Roman law in St. Paul's writings as an unworked mine. If some one, he said, would come and work that mine successfully, most of the things that are at present hard to be understood in the Pauline letters would be rendered quite intelligible immediately. And he himself touched on one or two of the things, till we saw that what he said was very true and hopeful.

But no one has come to work it yet. It is four years since the article appeared, and we have just the light to go by that it gave us. Until this month, the subject, with all its hopefulness, has not even been mentioned again.

This month, however, two articles simultaneously appear, the one in *The Thinker* and the other in *The Bibliotheca Sacra*. Dr. G. F. Magoun, late President of Iowa College, is the author of them both. The article in *The Thinker* is short; the article in *The Bibliotheca Sacra* is much longer. But it must be sorrowfully admitted, that neither the one article nor the other adds much to the little information we already had.

There is just one thing that Dr. Magoun makes clear and emphatic. St. Paul's idea of our relationship to God the Father was essentially different from that of the other apostles. He was a Roman citizen. He had received a Roman legal education. Now there was nothing more familiar to a Roman than the adoption of sons. It was not merely common, under some circumstances it was compulsory. So when St. Paul would think of the relationship of believers to God, he at once and

inevitably falls back upon the idea of adoption. God is a Father, He has one Son, the only begotten and well-beloved. Men are outside on account of sin. But when men believe in the name of the Only-Begotten Son of God, they are accepted into that family and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Such an idea was unfamiliar, and probably almost unintelligible, to a Jew. The family registers were preserved with the utmost scrupulousness, that the true descent of the Messiah might be traced when He came. To give a member of one family a place in another would be to confound the genealogy of both, and work most unpatriotic mischief. So, when a Jew like St. John had to conceive of the new relationship in which believers stand to God, he could do so only under the thought of a new *birth*. There was but one way in which a person could become a member of a Jewish family, he must be *born* into it. There was but one way St. John could represent the change which the sinner had to pass through, he must be born again.

The image of the new birth would be intelligible enough to St. Paul, for he was also a Jew. But it would be less familiar than that of adoption. And, at any rate, we need not now be astonished that when he wrote 'to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints,' he spoke of 'the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father,' and portrayed the looking forward to its full fruition, 'the revealing of the sons of God' at the resurrection, as 'waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' Yet if St. Paul had written, say 150 years later than he did, he could not have used that language, or even employed this image of adoption at all. For about the year 180 A.D., Justinian published his Institutes, remodelling the laws of Rome. In many ways he introduced more humanity into them, and protected the rights of the dependant. And the student of Roman law is ready to recognise these changes as due to the influence of Christianity. But, among the rest, he

altered the position of an adopted son. Henceforth, he who was adopted passed simply into the succession to the estate, not into the family itself; and since he no longer received the spirit of adoption, he had no right to cry, Abba, Father.

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In the *Contemporary Review* for July, there is published a lecture delivered before H.M. the Queen of Italy at Rome in 1893. The author of the Lecture is Dr. Fogazzaro. Its subject, 'The Origin of Man and the Religious Sentiment.' Why the editor did not publish it before, he knows but does not say. Why he publishes it now will be evident to all who read it.

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For Dr. Fogazzaro, who either writes English like a Froude, or has been translated with rare felicity, has actually made these dry bones live again. Much interested in the subject himself, driven indeed to discover a workable reconciliation between religion and evolution, for he is at once a Roman Catholic and an evolutionist, he writes with so manifest a sincerity that we are touched at once into sympathetic attention. And then, when we have given our attention away, we are very soon in delightful danger of giving our assent also to the fullest claims that an evolutionist ever made.

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There are two places, Dr. Fogazzaro finds, at which the doctrine of evolution touches faith in God. The one is at the beginning of all things; the other at the beginning of Man. He takes the origin of all things first. The question is, Was God there then, and was it He that *made* the beginning? Now, Dr. Fogazzaro shows that the issue has been much confused by the popular supposition that evolution and Darwinism are one and the same. Then it is easy to shudder and say that evolution is atheistic. For Darwin, and especially the Darwinians, do not admit the need of a God, and actually find no room for Him. But evolution is not Darwinism, and it really matters little what Darwinians say. Evolution, 'the great idea of a continuous progress throughout the uni-

verse, from the vacuous formlessness of nebulae to the ordered magnificence of stellar systems, to life and consciousness,' did not originate in the mind of Darwin. Darwin only touched a fringe of that vast subject, when he 'conceived a method of explaining the supposed transformation of certain organisms' within it. So, though people may 'write and shriek, some with joy and others with horror, that a formidable army of giants is moving against God, with the name of Darwin on their banners,' that does not once touch the great question of the first beginning of all things, or whether God was there.

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In point of fact, these rebels against God are not giants, and Darwin's hypothesis is not found good for much. 'Scientific men confess that, with no light but this torch of Darwin's, it is not at all easy to see, for instance, how a species of crocodile can have become a species of bird. In order to get out of this darkness, other torches were lighted, other hypotheses put forward. But just as around a fire at night, the circle of darkness seems to grow ever vaster as the fire burns brighter, so all this light of observation, analysis, and imagination, has only increased the difficulty, in the mind of students, of penetrating the mystery of the elaboration and transformation of organisms.'

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Nevertheless, some progress has been made. Scientific men are now almost unanimous in holding that all living species have descended from one, or a few, primitive forms; 'and the shadow of a Cause operating in all things is becoming ever more apparent.' This Cause is inaccessible to the senses and superior to the intellect. But before the appearance of life, it [why not *He*, at once?] determines the mysterious regular movements of crystallisation, originates the earliest sexless organisms, generates the sexes, and draws increasing distinctions between them. It initiates those inexplicable differences between individuals of the same species on which Darwin's theory is based. It operates, not merely by strife and war, as Darwin saw it, but also by means of great alliances

between different forms of life, and great associations of beings similar to one another, almost as it were, inspired to one holy aim—fraternity.

So this great Cause not only was at the beginning, but is now and ever shall be, and you may name it God. For Dr. Fogazzaro holds, with Sir John Lubbock, that 'a doctrine which teaches humility towards the past, faith in the present, and hope in the future, cannot be irreconcilable with religious truth.' Creation may not have been in the way the writer of Genesis conceived it, still less in the way we think he conceived it; but 'I, a Catholic Christian, desire to state clearly, with valid documents in my hand, and in the face of a thousand prejudices, both of believers and unbelievers, that my faith allows me full liberty to hold that the conception of evolution does not contradict the conception of creation, but only represents the *modus operandi* of the creative intelligence.'

He is even convinced that the theory of evolution is in harmony with the Book of Revelation from the beginning to the end. 'If the writer of Genesis had in substance a vision of the gradual ascent of the Creation, from its first origin, from the imperfect towards the perfect, St. Paul saw the vision of its future ascent. St. Paul, who discerned in the far future the transformation of man, who likens our present animal body to a seed which shall generate a spiritual body, also saw the transformation of the lower creation, rising upwards after its leader, issuing from the bondage of corruption, and attaining to liberty and glory. He had another vision still more sublime. He discerned an eternal ascent for us, *de claritate in claritatem*, from glory to glory, following a line of continuous progress from the imperfect to the perfect, written in the ages which lie behind us. Many commentators, I know, have explained that marvellous passage in the Second Epistle to the

Corinthians differently; but, for my part, I like to understand it as it was understood by the Mystic of the 'Imitation,' when, speaking of the spirits of the just who have risen to a higher life, he says: '*de claritate in claritatem abyssi Deitatis transformati*, transformed from glory to glory in the abyss of the Godhead.'

But now Dr. Fogazzaro must approach the second part of his subject, the origin of Man, and he has the most lively sense of the difficulty and the danger of it. 'The passage is defended by a multitude of enemies of evolution, armed with every kind of weapon, not excepting outrage and contempt; and it is blocked by another multitude of kind and sensible persons, who shudder at the very thought of what others will dare and do. This difficult step strikes horror into many who would gladly follow me so far, but no further.' Nevertheless he goes on. And in a moment he says, very plainly, that he believes the human species also had its origin from an inferior species. He could not call himself an evolutionist, he says, if he held not that. If 'man is the central point of evolution, if we admit that all inferior species derive their origin from an evolutionary process, but that man was directly created by God, who moulded a statue out of clay and breathed life into it, then it is not worth while engaging in conflict for the sake of a theory struck at the very heart.'

Dr. Fogazzaro believes that man came from a species beneath him, as every other species did. His theory compels him to that. But he frankly admits that he has found no proof of it. 'Let us acknowledge,' he says, 'that science does not yet possess a single reliable document directly proving the origin of man from an inferior species.' What Virchow recently said is true, and he freely confesses it, that 'as to the question of man, we are defeated along the whole line.'