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A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

## *THE BOOK OF JOB.*

### VII.—THE INTERVENTION OF ELIHU.

(CHAPTERS XXXII.–XXXVII.)

WE are arrested on the very threshold of this section of the Book. Before we can enter upon it we *must*, for no choice is allowed us, raise and determine the question: Is the intervention of Elihu an integral part of the original Poem, or is it only a late, spurious, and worthless addition to it by some unknown hand? From the very first, Commentators have been very hard on Elihu. Ancient Jewish rabbis pronounced him "Balaam in disguise." Many fathers, both of the Eastern and of the Western Churches, held him up to scorn as a type of the false wisdom, the broken and misleading lights, of heathen philosophy. By modern Commentators he has been stigmatized as "a pert braggart boy" of "weak rambling speech," "a mere shadow" (Herder), "a babbler" (Umbreit), "a most conceited and arrogant young man" (Hahn): Merx, indeed, carries his contempt for Elihu so far as altogether to ignore, if not to annihilate, him, by leaving his orations wholly untouched, although they are to be found in every MS. of Job which we possess.

On the other hand, one of the most recent translators of the Book (Coleman, 1869), on the express ground that Elihu's language would be unbecoming in a mere mortal, that it is too wise and too authoritative for merely human lips, actually affirms him to be no less than "the Second Person of the Sacred Trinity," and with a sublime audacity translates the Hebrew for "Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the tribe of

Ram," by, "Elihu, *the blessed Son of God, the Despised One, of the lineage of the Most High*"!

More sober judges than these have their doubts of Elihu; they question whether the speeches attributed to him can fairly be regarded as part of the original Poem, and lean to the conclusion that they were inserted either by the Poet himself at some subsequent revision of his work, or by some later and inferior hand.

These doubts, like the adverse conclusions of the "higher criticism," are based on the following considerations. (1) That Aramaic forms of speech abound in this section of the Poem to a very unusual degree. (2) That at least the boastful exordium (Chaps. xxxii. 6–xxxiii. 7) to Elihu's "discourse" is wholly out of keeping with the Poet's manner and style. (3) That the part played by Elihu is not essential to the drama; that even when he breaks into his "discourse" he contributes nothing of any value to the argument of the Poem: so that both the man himself and his orations might be detached from it without any sensible loss, or even with obvious and positive gain.

Now, I am not of those who "deny the value of criticism, and refuse to accept the evidence of partial compilation and redaction patent in the Biblical texts;" but surely the evidence should be both "patent" and conclusive before we are summoned to yield to it. And I submit that the presumption is in favour of the text as settled by a careful collation of the MSS., and even in favour of the traditional interpretation of the text. Before we advocate any change on the sole evidence of internal criticism or evidence, it would only be fair to study the passage in question with a view to

ascertain whether, as it stands, it does not fall in, if not with our modern canons of art, yet with the design and the art canons of the Oriental poet or prophet to whom, on sufficient diplomatic evidence, it has been attributed from the earliest recoverable date. And if this course had been taken, if these Chapters had been approached with a prejudice in favour of the original text as established by external evidence, instead of a prejudice in favour of change; if, in short, the destructive critics had not shewn "that irritable kind of intellect," common to their school, "which sets an undue value on novel theories and novel interpretations," it may be doubted whether they would have found much weight in the arguments that have led them to ascribe the intervention of Elihu to a later hand, or to denounce it as a fraudulent and irrelevant interpolation. For myself, I confess that, as I approached this section of the Poem, I quite expected, so high and numerous are the authorities who have impugned it, to be convinced that it was at least a later addition to it, inserted either by the original author himself, or by some other poet who was moved by one and the selfsame Spirit; and it is with no small surprise that I have been led by a patient study of it, and after careful consideration of the objections alleged against it, to conclude that these objections carry very little weight, and that the discourses of Elihu form an integral part of the original work. To be quite frank, it is with a certain regret, as well as surprise, that I have reached this conclusion; for it imposes on me the difficult and unwelcome task of vindicating it: and I cannot but be conscious that I lay myself open to the charge of arrogance and presumption in contesting the verdict of critics many

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of whom are so much more able and learned than myself. Every man, however, like each of the Evangelists, is bound to speak the truth "according to" him: and therefore I submit for consideration the following answers to the objections most commonly alleged against Elihu, and the part he plays, and the words he speaks.

1. That Aramaisms should abound in his "discourse," so far from being an argument against its genuineness and authenticity, becomes an argument in its favour the moment we observe that Elihu is introduced to us as an *Aramæan* Arab: for who should use Aramæan words and idioms if not the one speaker in the Poem who is of Aramæan blood? That the style of this Section differs largely from that of other sections of the Poem, and is in some ways inferior to it, is, or may be, conceded: but how long has it been an offence against dramatic art that the diction of an actor and speaker should correspond to his age, and position, and race? Good critics, such as Ewald, Schlottmann, and Davidson, find fine distinctions of idiom and style, a characteristic tone, in the speeches of each of the three Friends—all old or elderly men, and all more or less closely akin. Might we not fairly expect, then, to find on the lips of a young man, and a young man of different type and blood, a still larger and more characteristic deviation from the common standard of language and manner? Are we to admire the Author for the delicate discrimination which leads him to put characteristic language into the lips of the Friends, and to blame him, or even to deny his hand, when he puts language equally characteristic and appropriate into the mouth of Elihu? Whatever "the higher criticism" has at-

tempted, or may attempt, on *Henry V.*, it would be hard to persuade Englishmen that Fluellen was not created by the same capacious mind which gave birth to the King himself and his statesmen and captains, albeit "the care and valour of this Welshman was a little out of the fashion" of the time, and Shakespeare endeavours—not with complete success, be it said with reverence—to give him the mental and verbal idioms, and even the very pronunciation, peculiar to the English-speaking Welsh.[1]

2. So, too, with the boastful exordium to Elihu's discourse, which seems most of all to have stirred the bile of the critics, which has led them to stigmatize him as a "braggart boy," and to doom him to something very like capital punishment, it may be well to ask, before we consent to that doom, whether in his conditions such an exordium might not be natural and consistent. Far too much stress has been laid on this point. Elihu is not guilty, as I hope to shew in detail when we study his orations verse by verse, of a tithe of the conceit and self-commendation which has been attributed to him. He is far indeed from being the vulgar and fluent "braggart" he has been painted. But, granting to the full all that has been alleged against him, I would still submit that he does but carry himself in a manner characteristic of his race. If travellers are to be believed, the boastful and long-

[1] Even Prince Hal himself speaks a very different language, and takes a very different tone, when rioting with his boon companions to that which he employs when, having "turned away his former self," he resumes his majesty and "shews his sail of greatness" as he discusses affairs of state with his nobles and prelates. And I do not yet despair of seeing some grave German critic of the "higher" school contrasting the style and idioms of the two so-different series of scenes, and authoritatively assigning the Falstaff scenes to the third or fourth *redacteur* of the Plays.

winded accost so repulsive to the English mind is common to many Oriental races, and may be heard to this day when Arab meets Arab in the Desert. So, also, I have somewhere read, though I cannot now recover the reference, that in their modern dramas and rhapsodies characters continually introduce themselves to the audience with a boastful recital of their claims to attention similar to the opening sentences of Elihu's discourse. Nor is this custom confined to the illiterate—to the wandering and fighting clans and to the rhapsodists who amuse their leisure. Boasts far more turgid than those attributed to Elihu may be encountered in the writings of grave Arabian historians and poets. We have a capital illustration of this singular habit in the celebrated Arab historian of the seventeenth century, Al-Makkari—or, to give him his full style, Ahmed Ibn-Mohammed Al-Makkari Attelemsari—known in the East as "the Western Traditionist and Bright Star of Religion." In the preface to his curious and erudite "History of the Mohammedan Dynasties of Spain," he thus describes his labours in behalf of a grateful and admiring posterity: "We had, while residing in the West . . . . laboured hard on the history of Andalus; we had collected for the description of that country and its inhabitants the most interesting and valuable documents, and the most complete written as well as oral information. We had described minutely the aptitude and superiority of the Andalusians in the sciences, their forwardness and courage in attacking the cruel enemy of God; the enchanting beauty of the spots they formerly inhabited, the sites of their contests and battles; *of all which we had amassed treasures enough to satisfy the*

*wishes and ambition of the most excellent historian, and collected a sufficient number of unique pearls to bewitch the mind of the reader, and gathered in the delightful paths of their literature flowers enough to gratify the senses of the studious, and strung together many useful and hitherto unknown things in a manner to make the eyes of the learned and ingenious start out of their orbits with pleasure and astonishment. All this, moreover, was written in such an elevated and flowing style that, had it been delivered by the common crier, it would have made even the stones deaf.*" If this stately and highflown vaunt be, as it is, characteristic of Arab literature from the earliest times—though I confess *this* to be the most delicious instance of it I have ever met—we need not be surprised to find some touch of it in the opening sentences of Elihu. No picture of Arab life would be complete without it. To blot it out of the Poem would be to remove one of its most effective patches of "local colour." Some touches of it we have met already—in Chapter xiii. 1–22, for example, in the elaborate preface to Job's memorable Declaration or Defence (Chaps. xiii. 23–xiv. 22), and even—though here in a much softened and half-concealed form—in Chapters xxix. and xxxi.: it simply culminates in Chapters xxxii. and xxxiii.

3. To this general defence of Elihu's exordium, so immodest to many critics, and yet to an Oriental ear suggestive of modesty, as implying that the speaker is fain to prove himself not altogether unworthy of the company into which he thrusts himself, I would add the following considerations:—

(*a*) Elihu was a *young* man; and youth is commonly positive, dogmatic, impatient.

(β) If Elihu was, as there seems reason to believe, a *modest* young man, impelled and constrained by the ardour of his convictions and emotions to thrust himself into an argument conducted by his elders, constrained even to rebuke and correct men venerable for wisdom as well as for age, like most modest and sensitive young men in that case, he would be likely to break through the restraints of youth and reverence with an effort, a rush, which would carry him to the opposite extreme—his very modesty making him seem immodest, his very reverence irreverent.

(γ) In the first five Verses of Chapter xxxii. we are told no less than four times that Elihu's "*anger* was kindled." We may therefore fairly assume that he began to speak in a white heat of passion and excitement. Hence he would naturally speak with a vehemence and impetuosity which would throw the more turbid elements of his nature to the surface; while, as his excitement found vent in speech, his spirit would calm down, and he would rise into a sobriety and elevation of thought in happy contrast to his opening words.

(δ) It was, as we shall see, a *new* thought which he had to utter—new to him himself perhaps, certainly new to the old men to whom he addressed himself; and these were men to whom that which was new and strange was also questionable, heretical, and even damnable; so that, bold as he was, Elihu hardly "durst shew them his conviction" (Chap. xxxii. 6): and what is more excited and boastful than fear?

(ε) To all this I may still add that, on my own mind, this much-incriminated exordium of Elihu's leaves the impression that it is little more, after all, than a string

of scholastic formulæ, sentences which were the current coin of debate, mere "common forms" of speech, the ancient Oriental analogues of the logical and rhetorical forms which were familiar in the Schools of Europe during the Middle Ages. Of course it is quite impossible to prove the accuracy of such an impression, —Delitzsch, however, shews that he shares it when he affirms that Elihu "speaks more *in the tone of scholastic controversy*" than any of the other combatants in this logical fray; and therefore I can only suggest it for consideration, since we have no extra-Biblical specimens of the Arab literature of that distant age. But every civilized race has, or has had, these common forms of debate, and even some uncivilized races: the Zulus, for example, are said to excel in debate, and to have attained an art and skill in oratory which it would tax all the resources of an English barrister or statesman to encounter. Such forms are a great resource for unfledged orators; and as a rule, I think, they are more generally used in the opening sentences of an oration, until the speaker warms to his work. Hence, to me, Elihu shapes himself as a young scholarly Arab, flourishing his controversial weapons, and something too conscious of their play and glitter, until he forgets all about them in the gathering heat of thought and emotion.

4. The most fatal objection to him, if it were true, or even if it could be plausibly sustained, would be that he is superfluous; that he adds nothing to the argument of the Poem; that his intervention only arrests the progress of the Drama and is utterly out of keeping with it; that it would gain much if he and his part were clean cut out of it. Against this cruel and formidable objection I would plead—

(*α*) That Elihu represents the audience, the circle of interested bystanders on the *mezbele*, whom, absorbed in the argument, we are apt to forget, despite Job's occasional allusions to them, and the indirect *ad captandum* appeals of the Friends to their convictions and prejudices. And what should persuade us of their presence, and of their profound interest in every turn of this great controversy, if not the fact that one of them, when the Friends are put to silence, can no longer contain himself, *must* speak that he may get him ease (Chap. xxxii. 19, 20), and eagerly presses forward that he may take part in the affray ?

(*β*) Elihu also represents the rising thought of the young men of the tribes, who seem to have lost faith in the accepted dogma, that sin and suffering were strict correlatives, before their elders had emancipated themselves from it; and thus supplies a very genuine and valuable addition both to the argument and to the dramatic action of the Poem.

(*γ*) He delivers the *human* verdict on the Controversy between Job and the Friends, which we want to hear almost as much as the Divine verdict; saying, in effect, what the Commentators have been saying ever since, that *both* were wrong, that a higher solution of the problem than they had attained was both requisite and attainable, and indicating the direction in which it was to be found.

(*δ*) For what he really contributes to the main argument of the Book is that suffering may be medicinal, corrective, fructifying, as well as punitive. The Friends had proceeded on the assumption, an assumption abundantly refuted by Job, that his calamities sprang, and could only spring, from his transgressions. In

their theology there was no room for any other conclusion. But, obviously, there is another interpretation of the function of adversity which needs to be discussed, if the discussion is to be complete; and this wider interpretation Elihu seeks to formulate. According to him, God may be moved to chastise men by love as well as by anger; with a view to quicken their conscience, to instruct their thoughts and give them a larger scope; in order to purge them, that they may bring forth more or better fruit; to rouse them from the lethargy into which, even when they are spiritually alive, they are apt to sink, and to save them from the corruption too often bred even by good customs, if these customs do not grow and change. His main contention has indeed, since his time, become the merest commonplace: we find, and adopt, it in many forms, and are for ever pleading that

> Heaven is not angry when He strikes,
> But most chastises those whom most He likes;

or arguing that

> There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
> Would men observingly distil it out;

or admiring the gracious Providence which raises and purifies men by their very losses and pains,

> From seeming evil still educing good.

But this pious commonplace was sufficiently new to Job and his Friends to be startling. It had not occurred to them, or had only occurred to them. It finds no place, or no adequate place, in their controversy; it was not really woven into their argument, though it had been glanced at occasionally by this speaker or that,—after the manner of our Poet, who

often sends hints to run before and prepare the way of themes which he afterwards elaborately develops and embellishes. To them, Elihu, when he contends that God often delivers the afflicted *by and through their afflictions*, must have seemed to be either uttering a dangerous heresy, or speaking as one who had received new light and inspiration from on high.

(ε) But besides this new and surprising truth, which has become a truism, Elihu adds much to the main argument of the Poem, and connects his contribution with that argument in so many ways as to render it probable almost to demonstration that his intervention was part of the original plan of the work. It is not only that this section is attached by many threads of thought and expression to the other sections of the Poem, threads too minute and subtle to have been inserted by any later hand. Nor is it only that the fine description of a thunderstorm with which the final oration concludes (Chaps. xxxvi. 26–xxxvii. 24) most fitly and nobly introduces the Theophany which closes the Book, depicting the "tempest" out of which Jehovah speaks. But, as Professor Davidson has pointed out, the contention of Elihu meets, and refutes, the main positions taken up by Job. To the very end (Chap. xxxi. 35–37) Job had demanded audience of God, imp'ying or affirming that he cried out for Him in vain (Chap. xxx. 20–24). Throughout his argument, and still to the very end, he had impugned the justice of God and of his rule over men. And even in his Soliloquy he had asserted the mystery of Providence, and the impossibility of apprehending or vindicating it (Chap. xxviii.). These, indeed, are his main positions; and Elihu assails, and carries, them all.

To his contention that God would not speak to men, Elihu replies that God *does* speak to men in many ways—instructing them by dreams, reproving and correcting them by the natural and inevitable results of their own actions, in order that by both these—by experience and by quickened and suggestive ideals—He may redeem their souls and bring them back to the light of life (Chap. xxxiii. 14–30). To his contention that God was unjust, since the righteous man was none the better for his righteousness, Elihu replies that the very creation and continuance of the world prove God to be good; that He who has the whole universe in charge cannot be inequitable (Chap. xxxiv. 10–15); that the Ruler of the world must be just, since injustice means anarchy, and anarchy dissolution (Chap. xxxiv. 16–30); that, so far from men gaining nothing by their righteousness, their courses of action, whether good or evil, must tell upon their own character and conditions, since they cannot affect Him who sits above the clouds (Chap. xxxv. 2–8); and that, when they cry out in vain under their calamities and oppressions, it is because they cry amiss—from mere fear and pain, not from love of righteousness and trust in God their Maker (Chap. xxxv. 9–16). To his contention that the Divine Providence is an inscrutable mystery, Elihu, without for a moment assuming to solve the whole mystery of Providence, replies that the very sufferings of which Job complains open the eyes and hearts of men to a perception of the meaning and design of Providence sufficient for all practical, *i.e.*, all moral, purposes, teaching them their sinfulness and God's goodness, and that the whole course of his Providential rule takes its colour from the strife between these two (Chaps. xxxvi. and

xxxvii.). "And while he is descanting on the greatness of God, *which is but the other side of his goodness*, displayed in the storm-cloud that he sees rising, suddenly he is interrupted, and God Himself speaks out of the storm."

Let these considerations be but fairly weighed, and the candid student will at least hesitate before he consents to cut out Elihu's part from this noble drama, at the bidding of critics who seem transported beyond all bounds of reason and patience by the mere mention of his name. Whatever else he may be, Elihu is no "bombastic braggart," or "chattering trifler," or "conceited coxcomb," who darkens counsel with words devoid of wisdom. To any one who has honestly and carefully studied his argument, it can hardly fail to appear that the critics who denounce him in such terms as these misconceive him as completely and sinistrously as Job himself was misconceived by the Friends; and it would be no great marvel should some of their ugly epithets come home to roost.

Among the objections which an adverse and too peremptory criticism has accumulated against this section of the Poem, one of the slenderest and weakest—though much stress has been laid upon it—is that Elihu does not appear either in the Prologue or in the Epilogue; that he is not so much as introduced to us until the Poem is drawing to a close. But unless we are to evolve the scheme of an antique Oriental poem out of our own consciousness, or demand that it should conform to our own arbitrary canons of art, instead of carefully studying the Poem to ascertain on what scheme it was actually modelled, such an objection

proves nothing but a determination to *make* the faults it cannot find. It is a sufficient reply to the objection, that Elihu *is* introduced to us, and even formally and elaborately introduced, as soon as he comes forward, as soon, *i.e.*, as we need to know him. The Friends were not introduced to us till they were wanted, till the action of the Drama compelled the Poet to make them known to us; and even then they were not introduced so formally as Elihu, nor at such length. Elihu is not in the Prologue because he is not to take part in the argument of the Poem till toward its close; and he is not in the Epilogue because the anger of the Lord was not kindled against him as it was against the Friends, because, so far as he went, he had spoken of God aright, while they had not.

## CHAPTER XXXII. VERSES 1-6.

CHAP. XXXII.—*So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.* (2) *Then was kindled the anger of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the tribe of Ram; against Job was his anger kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.* (3) *Also against his three friends was his anger kindled, because they could find no answer to Job and yet condemned him.* (4) *For Elihu had delayed to answer Job because they were older than he;* (5) *but when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, his anger was kindled.* (6) *And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:—*

From *Chapter* xxxii., *Verse* 1, we learn, as we learn more fully from Verses 15 and 16, that the Friends had ceased to argue with Job, not because he had convinced them—for, to them, he was still only "righteous *in his own* eyes"—but simply because they could not move him from his position; because, though their arguments had broken down, they had "no more," or no

more cogent arguments to allege. Our inference from their silence is thus confirmed and established.

*Verse* 2.—The word *Elihu* means, "My God is He;" the word *Barachel*, "May God bless." As proper names they imply that Elihu belonged to a family in which the great primitive tradition of one God and Lord over all was retained and accepted. The added tribal name—*Buzite*—indicates that Elihu was an *Aramæan*, since it marks descent from Nahor, Abram's brother, through *Buz* his son; and yet an Aramæan *Arab*, since Jeremiah (Chap. xxv. 23) reckons the Buzites among the Arabs proper, who were distinguished by their "shaven cheeks" or temples, *i.e.*, who cut their hair short all round because they held, with St. Paul, that "if a man have long hair it is a shame to him." [1] Within the Buzite clan Elihu sprang from the family of *Ram;* but of this family nothing is now known, though no doubt it once helped the readers of "Job" to identify him.

Elihu, then, is somewhat more fully and precisely introduced to us than any other of the interlocutors of the Poem save Job himself; and his Aramæan descent goes far to explain the Aramaic flavour of his "discourse."

In *Verses* 2 and 3 we are told what it was that induced and constrained him to thrust himself into the discussion. He had observed with indignation (1) that Job had justified himself at the expense of God; and (2) that the Friends had condemned Job although they could not refute him. It was not the mere fact that

[1] Herodotus (iii. 8) describes the Arabs as cutting their hair *à la Bacchus*, and explains, "Now their practice is to cut it in a ring, away from the temples." Comp. Jer. ix. 26; xlix. 32.

Job had held fast his integrity, that he had vindicated himself against the aspersions of the Friends, which had moved Elihu to anger; but that, in order to vindicate himself and refute them, he had charged God with injustice. Nor was his anger kindled against the Friends simply because they had condemned Job; but because they had condemned him for sins of which they had no shadow of proof, and without really clearing the character of the God for whom they assumed to speak. So far, therefore, Elihu is at one with Jehovah Himself;for He too rebukes Job for so asserting his own righteousness as to condemn Him (Chap. xl. 8), and *his* anger is kindled against the Friends for aspersing Job to vindicate Him (Chap. xlii. 7, 8).

Full of words and arguments which he felt to be far more cogent than any they had adduced, waxing wellnigh desperate at seeing so momentous a theme so grossly mishandled, he had yet restrained himself out of deference to the age of the Friends; but now, when they have manifestly failed to solve the problem submitted to them, and even Job has nothing further to allege in his own defence, he feels that he may give vent to his repressed indignation without any lack of modesty or courtesy, and state as best he can the thoughts which have risen up within him as he has listened to their long and indecisive controversy (*Verses* 5, 6). Accordingly, he proceeds in four separate discourses, which yet are one discourse, to meet the arguments of Job in what he holds to be a wiser and more convincing method than that of the old men who, as all admit, had met them neither wisely nor fairly; and to prove (*a*) that God does speak to men in many ways, though Job had complained that He would not and

did not speak (Chaps. xxxii. 6—xxxiii. 33); (β) that God is just, though Job had charged Him with injustice (Chap. xxxiv.); (γ) that the righteous man is the better for his righteousness, though Job had argued that he was not (Chap. xxxv.); and (δ) that the mystery of Providence, though it must ever remain a mystery, is not so utterly inscrutable as Job had alleged (Chaps. xxxvi., xxxvii.).

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## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

### THE LAST WORDS OF ST. PAUL.

WHATEVER views prevail with reference to the termination of St. Paul's historic captivity in Rome, all writers who admit the genuineness of the Second Epistle to Timothy agree that *that* document contains the last recorded utterance of the great Apostle. These are words dictated by him either towards the conclusion of the first and the only imprisonment, or of the second and final one, and in full view of the headsman's axe. Even Ferdinand Christian Baur, whose assault upon the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles was of prime importance to his system, in one of his later works seems to admit the possibility of the genuineness of the *Second* Epistle to Timothy.[1] It may be readily conceded that there are sundry real difficulties besetting the *First* Epistle, such, *e.g.*, as the mention of ecclesiastical orders and Church organiza-

[1] "In the great sea of possibilities it may perchance be possible to find a calm spot for the Epistle to Titus and the Second to Timothy; . . . but their entire similarity to, and their intimate connection with, the First to Timothy involves them all alike in the same condemnation."—*Paul, his Life and Works.* By F. C. Baur. Edited by E. Zeller. Translated by Menzies. F. T. L., 1875. Vol. ii. pp. 104, 105.