THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

It will be seen from another page in this issue of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES that an effort is to be made to test the question of the alleged failure of the Revised Version. On the page referred to will be found the experience of the headmasters of the great public schools. Now it will be a favour if all our readers who are interested in the matter will communicate with the Editor, giving their experience of the use of the Revised Version in public worship, from the Professor's chair, in the conduct of Bible classes, and also in private reading.

In the article by Professor Massie, entitled "Professor Alexander Roberts on Galatians v. 17," in our issue for February, one correction is required. The words—"Each [*i.e.* the flesh or the Spirit, as the case may be] desires to prevent the *one* from obeying the other," should read: "Each desires to prevent the *man* from obeying the other." And the succeeding sentence should read: "If *he* would do something fleshly, the Spirit seeks to assert itself; and if he would do something spiritual, then the flesh seeks to assert itself."

There is some prospect that the curiosity of students of ecclesiastical history respecting that remarkable work the *Law of Kings* will at last be gratified. It is a collection of ecclesiastical rules, compiled by Ibn al-Assal, the "father of virtues," in the former part of the thirteenth century, and it is said to be used at the coronation of the Kings of Abyssinia. Its interest and value, however, depend less on itself than on the fact that it is based upon a number of earlier works, an exact list of which is given in the Introduction, and which include Canons of the Apostles, Apostolic Constitutions, and a letter of St. Peter to Clement. Copies of the Ethiopic translation, as well as a few copies of the Arabic original, are to be found in several European libraries, but only in manuscript. No attempt has hitherto been made to carry either through the press. Now, however, the Italian Government has entrusted the task of publication to the well-known Orientalist of Rome, Signor Guidi, so that this almost unexplored field will soon be open to research. Professor Bachmann, to whose article in the *Studien und Kritiken* we owe the facts, believes that this *Jus Scriptum* of the Ethiopic Church contains new and important materials for the ecclesiastical historian.

The Rev. J. J. Halcombe, M.A., of Cambridge, is the author of a theory of the relation which the Gospels bear to one another. It is a theory so strongly supported by internal evidence, and (if you can for the moment forget all other theories) so persuasive in all respects, that it cannot well be passed by. Yet it works so radical a revolution in all existing criticism of the Gospels, that the temptation is to let it drop, rather than face the consequences of being persuaded by it.

Mr. Halcombe's theory has not been ignored. That were impossible. But as yet it has found little acceptance. And that is not surprising. To name but one of its characteristic positions. Mr. Halcombe holds (see the *Guardian*, Dec. 23, 1891), that what Tertullian calls his first axiom, viz. that the two Gospels by apostles (St. John and St. Matthew) preceded those by disciples of apostles (St. Mark and St. Luke), refers to priority of time and not merely of authority. It is not surprising that it should take time for such a view as that to find admittance. The surprise really is that the signs of its possible acceptance in the future are visible already. To have secured the sympathy and interest of so trained and competent a scholar as the Rev. G. H. Gwilliam, B.D., Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, and well-known from his articles in *Studia Biblica*, proves the power and persuasiveness with which Mr. Halcombe has argued his unwelcome case. No one will deny that such a revolution in our criticism of the Gospels is possible. We shall hear from Mr. Gwilliam, in our next issue, what may fairly be said for its probability.

If the resurrection of Christ is the central historical fact of Christianity, if "every hypothesis which denies the resurrection of Christ reduces the history of Christianity and of the world to a tissue of impossibilities," as Professor Agar Beet asserts in his newly-published little book, *The Firm Foundation of the Christian Faith*, it certainly is a circumstance worth noticing — the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* draws attention to it— that the Rev. H. Herbert Snell, B.A., in giving a declaration of the faith upon which he feels constrained to leave Unitarianism, does not say whether he does now or ever did believe in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The sermon which Mr. Snell preached on this occasion is at once able and intensely interesting. (It will be found fully reported in the *Christian World Pulpit* of December 30, 1891.) But the impression it makes upon one is that between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism it is in his judgment a simple question of less or more feeling for the loveliness of Christ's character. He points out with clearness and force the difficulty which is felt, and has always been felt, by the more candid Unitarian thinkers. "The trouble in Unitarianism is to avoid giving Christ a place of honour which shall in any way compete with God's supremacy;" that is to say, they lift Him up so high, their admiration of His unique personality compels them to lift Him up so high, that it becomes difficult to find a place for Him below the very Highest. And Mr. Snell changes his pulpit simply because he can find no lower place becoming to One whose beauty of character lifts Him so immeasurably above the human that we know. "It is not so much my ideas that have changed as I myself; once I believed in Christ, now I love Him; once I was drawn to Him, now I am under His spell; once I thought Him the unspeakable gift of God, now I want to give my heart and life to Him."

It is good; but is it so that we must travel the long road of more and more appreciation of the beauty of Jesus of Nazareth before we shall reach the Son of God? Has it not been a somewhat long and uncertain way for Mr. Snell himself? "From that time"—from the time of His acceptance of Peter's declaration, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God'—"from that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, *and the third day be raised up*." Raised up the third day! Waive the prophecy—it was no prophecy if not true—Was it true? *Was* He raised up? If He was, did not that fix the truth of Peter's confession? Are not the two bound together inextricably? And does not all the rest stand or all the rest fall with them? He was not raised up—then He was not the Son of God — then He was . . . not even a unique personality, not even lovable by Him who loves the truth supremely. Paul knew the beautiful life of Jesus, and remained a Unitarian. Paul accepted the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, and became a Trinitarian.

In the third volume of *Studia Biblica*, Dr. Neubauer gives an account of the earliest MSS. of the Old Testament. The conclusion he comes to there is that the oldest Hebrew MS. in existence is the Codex Babylonicus at St. Petersburg, which is dated 916 A.D. But now in a survey of the year's Bibliography in the *Jewish Quarterly* for January, Dr. Neubauer tells us that within the last few months the British Museum has acquired a MS. containing the Pentateuch with vowel points, accents, and both massorahs. Unfortunately the beginning and the end are supplied by a later hand, and thus the date of the copy and the place where it was copied are missing, if they ever were in. But, to judge from paleographical indications, this MS. seems to be much older than the Codex Babylonicus (the two MSS. seem to be of the same school of copyists), perhaps a century older. Indeed, Dr. Ginsburg thinks that it may be two hundred years older, and Dr. Neubauer suggests that we had better wait till that scholar has given his promised description of this precious MS. before we reach a final decision.

For the new number of the *Critical Review*, the first number of the second year's issue, the Editor deserves the thanks of every person who is interested in biblical study. For it is not only instructive, it is full of present interest and life. Dr. Salmond is resolved that, however scholarly, it shall not stand useless upon our shelves. The first three articles are on Pfleiderer, by Principal Fairbairn; on Cheyne, by Professor Whitehouse; and on Driver, by Professor Ryle—quite sufficient of themselves to make a magazine.

Passing down, we come upon this estimate of the Book of Lamentations by Professor A. B. Davidson, in a review of a recent commentary by Dr. Löhr: "Though too greatly neglected, the Book of Lamentations is one of the most instructive in the Old Testament. The details which it gives of the terrible sufferings endured in the siege of the city, the hopes of the people of help from Egypt, and their disappointments, and of the scenes of blood enacted within the walls by rival factions, are fresher and more full than anything supplied by history; while the glimpses offered by it into the religious feelings and condition of the mind of the generation surviving the fall of the city,—the profound sense of humiliation among the nations, the prostration under the calamity, and the weight of the unparalleled sin which had drawn down so unexampled a chastisement, more terrible in its prolonged miseries than that of Sodom which perished in a moment; and the flickerings of a faith in the future, which looks almost as if it would expire, but which dies down only to leap up again higher than before—have a value second to nothing in the prophetic Scriptures. With the exception of perhaps a few psalms, and some chapters in Ezekiel, this book alone casts any light on the state of the national mind during all the dark period stretching from Jeremiah to the second part of Isaiah."

"The labour of dictionary-making," says Professor Robertson Smith, in the *Jewish Quarterly*, "is so heavy that those who undertake it ought to receive every help that those who benefit by their toil can give." This is his "justification for putting together a few isolated remarks upon Hebrew words." The justification is scarcely needed. In the issue for January his notes deal with the single word *ēzōr* (אֵזוֹר). The dictionaries give two meanings. Mühlau and Volck's tenth edition of Gesenius has (1) girdle, (2) fetter. Siegfried and Stade, who have just issued the first part of their new Lexicon, have (1) girdle, (2) warrior's girdle, (3) bond, fetter. The meaning "bond" or "fetter" rests only on Job xii. 18. But Dr. Robertson Smith shows not only that there is no necessity for giving the word a new meaning in that place, but that the garment in question was neither a "girdle" nor a "fetter," and all the meanings are wrong.

He connects the word etymologically with the Arabic *izār*. Now, in the present day, the *izār* is a large outer wrapper used by women; but in ancient times it was a waist-cloth or wrapper,

covering only the lower part of the body, wound round the loins, and tied with a knot. "The *izār* round the loins, and the *ridā* thrown over the shoulder, are still the sacred vestments of pilgrims, who, in their visit to the Caaba at Mecca, retain the antique dress of their ancestors." "The oldest Semitic dress consisted not of a shirt and a mantle or plaid (כתנת and בגד), but of a waist-cloth and a plaid. The former is the *izār*, or *ēzōr*, which, therefore, is not a belt worn above the robes, but an under-garment, or even, at a pinch, the only garment. All the passages of the Old Testament agree with this. It cleaves to a man's loins; that is, is next his skin (Jer. xiii. 11), where it supplies a figure for the closeness of the attachment between Israel and Jehovah. The same figure occurs in Isa. xi. 5: righteousness and loyalty are the *ēzōr* of the ideal king, *i.e.* the things nearest his heart." Professor Robertson Smith concludes: "The general impression produced by a survey of the usage of the word is that among the Hebrews the *ēzōr* ceased to be part of ordinary dress pretty early, being superseded by the tunic (כתנת); but that it was used by warriors, by the meanest classes, by prophets and mourners, and that the word (or the cognate verb) was also retained in proverbial phrases or similes, just as was the case with the Arabs after they ceased to wear the *izār* in daily life."

It has often been pointed out that the popular application of the word "talent" is a misapplication. We speak of "a man of talent," and even (*horribile dictu*) "a talented man," where the talent is the natural ability or capacity of the man. But in the Parable of the Talents, from which the expression comes, the talents are not the man's abilities, but his opportunities. The talents are given "to each *according to his several ability*." The ability is already there, and according to that ability the talent or opportunity to use it is granted.

That has often been pointed out. But, according to Mr. Ruskin, there is another misconception of a much more serious nature in our popular interpretation of this parable. The president of the Glasgow Ruskin Society recently delivered an address, in the course of which he summarised Mr. Ruskin's teaching on Usury. The summary is published in *World-Literature* for February. Mr. Ruskin's first argument against usury is that "it is absolutely forbidden by the Word of God. All the Levitical law is against it, the prophets repeatedly denounce it; and the 15th Psalm, 'Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? . . . the man that putteth not his coin to usury,' is quite sufficient proof for any one who wishes it." He then adds: "The strongest passage against it in the New Testament, in the Parable of the Talents, has, by a curious misreading, been repeatedly quoted in its favour, whereas the very conception of God as 'an hard man,' shows the text clearly to mean 'You call me an hard man; if I had been so I would not have scrupled to take usury, that simplest way of gathering where I had not strawed; so you are without excuse.' We might as well imagine that our Lord, in the similar parable, meant to represent Himself as the Unjust Judge, who feared not God, nor regarded man, as imagine that He meant to represent Himself as a hard man who commended usury."

Every generation has its theological controversy, and surely we have ours. The stress of this, our controversy, may be hard upon us. But it is touching to witness the extremity of its pressure upon the Jews. And it has come upon the modern Jews with a vehemence which Christians hardly know. There is a cleavage in their community between the orthodox and the heterodox, the advocate and the antagonist of the Higher Criticism, to which ours is yet but the merest rift. Read the current issue of the *Jewish Quarterly Review*. Almost any of the articles will reveal it. But read especially Mr. Abraham's account of the life and work of the late Professor Graetz, Mr. Montefiore's review of Friedländer's new book on the Jewish Religion, or the same writer's Notes on the Effect of Biblical Criticism upon the Jewish Religion.

In modern Judaism there are three great parties. There is first the orthodox party, which abides by the old, abides with a great tenacity, because the "traitor" is now again, as in the days of Saul of Tarsus, within their own community. To this party, to which of course the vast bulk of modern Jews belong, all that has hitherto been held sacred regarding the laws and institutions of Moses is sacred and binding still.

Then there is the party that holds by what is called the "Breslau Judaism." It is indeed, as Mr. Abrahams says, "a curious product of compromise." "It would examine Jewish tradition, piece it out into its component parts, show how it developed, date it, but still go on loyally observing all that it enjoined as though Jewish science had never applied the crucible." In other words, it is a party (called into being and led by the late Professor H. Graetz), which accepts the results of the most advanced criticism *in theory*, but in practice ignores it altogether; denies the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, yet continues to hold the Passover and the Day of Atonement, and to observe the Sabbath, as if it were never questioned that all had come from the hand of God by Moses.

Lastly, there is the radical party, chiefly represented in England and America, not many in number, but full of ability and enthusiasm. To them the "Breslau Judaism" is a miserable compromise. They accept the results of criticism with a sweep which takes a Christian's breath away, and they accept them in the sphere of ritual, of present religious life, no less than of literature and history. "In religious matters," says one of its ablest representatives in England, "Graetz was fond of talking of the *juste milieu*, and for the Judaism of to-day extremes are no doubt dangerous. But to some of us it seemed as though Graetz, while equally condemning unbending conservatism and extravagant liberalism, found his *juste milieu* forsooth in *both extremes*, binding his conduct to the one and abandoning his thought to the other. There was originality, no doubt, in this species of compromise, but it need hardly be added that it had no elements of permanency. It served its purpose of reconciling the old with the new for nearly half a century. But new phases of spiritual vacillation need ever new varieties of compromise, and these saving waters will be drawn by future generations of Jews from the deep unfailing well of truth that Graetz dug out, *though it may be necessary to first remove the stone with which he himself covered its mouth.*" Whereunto will all this tend? It is a question of deep interest to us.

Canon Cheyne's Bampton Lectures.[1]

By the Rev. Professor A. R. S. Kennedy, M.A., B.D., Aberdeen.

The general position of the newer school of critics with regard to the literary history of the Old Testament has never been more happily expressed than by the ultimate founder of the school, the late Eduard Reuss. As far back as the summer of 1834, so he assures us in the preface to his *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament* (1881), he taught that "the Prophets are to be regarded as older than the Law, and the Psalms as younger than either." In this country we are now tolerably familiar with the former part of the Professor's thesis, the mutual relation of the Law and the Prophets; we are not so familiar with the latter part, the relation to both occupied by the Psalter. It will not be the fault of Professor Cheyne, if, in the future, the attention of British scholars is not drawn in an increasing measure to the many and complex problems, literary, historical and theological, presented by the "book of the praises of Israel."

Canon Cheyne's book consists of eight lectures, with a most ample array of notes, references, and

[1] *The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter in the Light of Old Testament Criticism and the History of Religions*, with an Introduction and Appendices, by Thomas K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D. 1891.