THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

ARE we ever to understand what Agrippa meant when he said to St. Paul—but what did he say? Did he say, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian?' or did he say, 'With but little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian?' We do not know. We do not know for certain even the words that he used.

Mr. G. H. WHITAKER, writing in a recent number of *The Journal of Theological Studies*, suggests that Agrippa did not use the words which we find in our Greek New Testament. After offering the words which he thinks Agrippa used, he translates them in this way: 'Pray regard winning me for a Christian as a matter of little moment.'

Agrippa had expected a good time with this gifted prisoner. But the man is like to spoil the fun. He is far too earnest. Already Festus has tried to bring him to his senses: 'Paul, thou art beside thyself.' Ah, Agrippa sees the meaning of it. Paul wants to make a Christian of him. That is what is spoiling the play. He recommends the Apostle to give himself less anxiety on that score. 'Pray,' he says, 'regard winning me for a Christian as a matter of little moment.'

It is not so good for edifying as the old translation, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.' But it is better than the translation of the Revisers.

Why did Jeremiah employ a scribe? St. Paul employed a scribe because his eyesight was defective. So at least it is commonly supposed, and so the 'large letters' which he made when he added anything in his own hand are usually explained. But no one has ever suggested that Jeremiah had defective eyesight. Why did he employ a scribe?

The question is asked by a learned Rabbi, the Rev. Moses BUTTENWIESER, Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. Professor BUTTENWIESER has published the first volume of a work on *The Prophets of Israel* (Macmillan; 8s. 6d. net), a work distinguished by exact scholarship and independent thinking. And in this first volume the leading place is taken by Jeremiah.

For the author recognizes the importance of Jeremiah for the study of Prophecy as it has not always been recognized. He says, and says truly, that 'no other prophet was possessed to such a marked degree as Jeremiah by the conviction of his divine call and by the consciousness of intimate communion with God. Other prophets showed equal fervour and singleness of purpose; some even,

as the Isaiahs, excelled Jeremiah in the loftiness of their conception of God and of the universe, as in logical precision and clearness of thought, and in poetic beauty and aptitude of language—in fact, in all those qualities which pertain distinctly to the intellectual side of the prophetic movement; but as an exponent of the purely spiritual side of this movement Jeremiah stands without a peer.' Accordingly, when Professor BUTTENWIESER asks the question, Why did Jeremiah not write his prophecies himself? he asks it because the question has been asked before, and the answer which has been given to it robs Jeremiah of his eminence and Hebrew Prophecy of its glory.

The question has been asked before by STADE. Why did Jeremiah dictate his prophecies to Baruch? asks STADE, writing both in the *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (xxiii. 157) and in his *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments* (p. 208). Why did he call for Baruch even after Jehoiakim had burned the first book, and again dictate the words of that book? 'He did so,' is his reply, 'because the repetition of the ecstasy was necessary for the reproduction of the sermons delivered on former occasions, and because one can speak but not write in the state of inspiration.'

Professor BUTTENWIESER has a much simpler answer than that. To that answer he has the strongest possible objection. For it denies the difference between inspiration and ecstasy or mantic possession. And when it is taken along with another serious mistake, the belief that the literary prophets were 'the leaders and advisers of king and people in important political and religious matters,' as Kittel says in his *History of the People of Israel*, it has caused confusion all along the line. This is particularly apparent in all the attempts which have been made of recent years to show that there is nothing unique, nothing original even, about Israelitish prophecy or, for that matter, about the religious development of Israel in general.

What is inspiration in the sense of possession? 'Inspired and true divination,' says Plato in the *Timæus*, 'is not attained to by any one when in his full senses, but only when the power of thought is fettered by sleep or disease or some paroxysm of frenzy.' This theory of Plato's, as Robertson SMITH has pointed out, was applied to the prophets by Philo, the Jewish Platonist, who described the prophetic state as an ecstasy in which the human mind disappears to make way for the divine Spirit.

This is a totally different conception from that of the great prophets of Israel. The utterances of persons thus possessed are involuntary and unconscious, while with the literary prophets mind and will are awake and active to their uttermost. And is it a different conception, not only of the persons who are inspired, but also, and much more, of the God who inspires them.

When we encounter the literary prophets, we encounter a new conception of the relation between God and man, we encounter a new conception of religion. That is the glory of Hebrew prophecy. There lie its uniqueness and its worth. When they began to prophesy, God was far away. If He communicated His will to men, He came as an alien force, entering a man from without, subduing his rational faculties, and making him a passive instrument of His revelation. Then the proper channels of divine revelation were dreams, ecstatic visions, or religious frenzy. Prophecy did not express itself in clear statement or connected thought. It consisted of muttered utterances, often equivocal if not altogether obscure. And whenever the prophets of this type acted in a body, as in any great crisis, the frenzy would communicate itself from one to another, and they would frantically repeat the oracle uttered by the leader, as in the case of the four hundred prophets led by Zedekiah—'stealing my words from one another,' as Jeremiah contemptuously describes it.

The true prophets held converse with God

consciously. With alert intelligence they understood His purpose. With ready will they carried it out. Their possession was not mantic but moral. When they heard the word of God they dared not disobey it, because their whole moral nature was enlisted on its side. As Jeremiah expresses it:

> He who hath held converse with God,
> Hath perceived and heard His word,
> He who hath hearkened to His word,
> Must proclaim it.

For the first time in the history of the human race, says Professor BUTTENWIESER, 'the essential truth was distinctly realized and unequivocally expressed, that the relation of man to God is a moral relation, that it is in the conscience of man that God speaks, that man's moral convictions and promptings are the very voice of God.'

This, then, was the discovery of the prophets. God is near, and a man can hold communion with Him. There is no truth with which this present generation is more familiar. Its expression by Tennyson—

> Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet—

leapt into popularity at once because it gave voice to the common thought. To Jeremiah it was altogether new. And to the people of his own day and after, it was not only new but alien and untrue. Is it by accident or misapprehension that Jeremiah's clearest utterance of it has been obscured in the Hebrew? The occurrence is in the twenty-third verse of the twenty-third chapter. 'Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?' That is the Hebrew. But the Greek omits the interrogative, and Professor BUTTENWIESER has no doubt that the Greek is right: 'I am a present God, and not a far-off God.' Even GIESEBRECHT holds that the interrogative was inserted in the Hebrew 'for dogmatic reasons.' Later ages, failing to see the real meaning of the verse, evidently read in it a denial of the omnipresence of God.

Professor BUTTENWIESER believes that Jeremiah discovered not only that God is near, but also how near He is. He discovered that He is present in the mind and in the heart. He found God within himself, and it was because he found God in his own life that he was able to speak of Him to others with so much assurance. It was out of the fulness of his own experience that he obtained his assurance. His God was as transcendent as the God of the people. He filled heaven and earth; He was enthroned in the universe. But He was also an immanent God. He was present in every human heart.

Now Dr. BUTTENWIESER has not forgotten that the great literary prophets speak of having visions at the most momentous periods of their history. They speak of God appearing to them in a vision on the occasion of their call to the prophetic office, and again on the occasion of some great impending judgment.

First the prophets often tell us that their call came to them in a vision. Was this the ecstatic vision or dream of the diviner? It was as far removed from it as possible. Dr. BUTTENWIESER believes that in every case it was a purely spiritual experience. And just because it was purely spiritual they were compelled to speak of it as a vision. For a spiritual experience cannot be expressed directly. The man whose experience it is can convey it to another in no other way than by metaphor and image. And the illustration of a vision is the most natural, as well as the most appropriate, because it is always accompanied in the consciousness by a sense of the supernatural.

But the prophets also speak of having had a vision on the occasion of some impending calamity. The experience is not identical with that of their own call. It is more complex, and it is more

general. But it is as difficult for the prophet to convey its certainty to others without the employment of imagery. His mind is full of it. Every object he meets suggests some aspect of it. A basket of ripe fruit reminds Amos that the people are ripe for judgment. The almond tree bursting into blossom speaks to Jeremiah of the certainty and the speed of the calamities that are coming upon the nation. In every case, as it seems to Dr. BUTTENWIESER, the experience of the prophet is an inward spiritual experience. The language of dream or vision is due to its intensity and the difficulty of conveying its intensity to others.

And inasmuch as the experience is inward, the circumstances of it are of no importance. The prophets know that judgment is near because they are in touch with God in His righteousness. How the judgment will come, or when, they do not know. They may predict, but prediction is no part of their inspiration. And if they are found to have been mistaken they are not concerned: Isaiah preserved those prophecies which contain erroneous forecasts and even refers to them in later prophecies. But they never doubt the fact. In the first period of his activity Hosea predicted that the fall of Israel and the overthrow of the dynasty of Jehu would occur simultaneously (Hos $1^{4f.}$), and though the course of history disproved his expectations, he persisted, nevertheless, in his conviction that the nation was doomed. Similarly, Isaiah, when subsequent events failed to verify his prophecy at the time of the Syro-Ephraimitic campaign, that in a year's time Damascus and Ephraim, and Judah as well, would be conquered by Assyria (Is 7^{14}–8^{8}), continued to declare that the judgment was inevitable.

Why did Jeremiah dictate his prophecies to Baruch? Not for any such reason as STADE suggests, a reason which Jeremiah reckoned it his life's work to repudiate. He dictated to Baruch, says Professor BUTTENWIESER, simply because he himself had never learned to write.

Now turn for a moment to a new periodical, *Present Day Papers*, which has come to take the place of *The British Friend*. Its editor is Professor Rufus M. JONES, the writer on Mysticism. In the second number there is an editorial entitled 'In the Spirit.' The title is commonplace. And we had almost missed the curious coincidence that in this editorial Professor JONES goes over precisely the same ground as Professor BUTTENWIESER, and then carries the argument into the New Testament.

There is a great Christian doctrine which is as nearly confined to the New Testament as any of the great doctrines—as nearly as even the Fatherhood of God. It is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And the surprise is very strong when one realizes that of that great New Testament doctrine so little is made in Christian theology. There has been no lack of discussion on the Trinity. But as soon as the Persons of the Trinity are spoken of apart, the Father and the Son absorb the thinking. Little is said about the Spirit, and whatever is said is indefinite and unsatisfying. The very Christian Creeds, precise and particular as is their account of God the Father and of Christ the Son, are content to say, without explanation or expansion, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

What is the reason? Professor JONES believes that the reason is this. We have one text of Scripture about the Holy Spirit in our mind to the exclusion of other texts. The text is, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' In other words, we attribute to the Spirit action that is sudden, miraculous, and 'as he lists,' and do not even attempt to discover any law or principle in the manner of His manifestation.

The Spirit, says Professor JONES, is conceived as working upon or through the individual in such

a way that the individual is merely an 'instrument,' receiving and transmitting what comes from 'beyond' himself, no one being more surprised than himself when it does come. Consequently, to be 'in the Spirit' is to be 'out of oneself.' It is to be a channel for something that has had no origin in and no assistance from our own personal consciousness. And then Professor JONES quotes Philo, just as if he had had Dr. BUTTENWIESER's book in his hand.

Now Professor JONES does not deny that sometimes the Spirit comes unexpectedly to a man or woman, and comes apparently from the outside. God does sometimes 'give to his beloved in sleep.' He does sometimes open the windows of the soul by sudden inrushes of light and power. But that is as exceptional as it is unaccountable. To limit the sphere and operation of the Holy Spirit to these sudden, universal, miraculous visitations is to misinterpret the Scripture and fail to realize the immense importance of the work of the Spirit in everyday religious life.

St. Paul expressed the New Testament doctrine of the Spirit in its normality—and of all places in Athens—when he said, 'in him we live, and move, and are.' He said much more about the Spirit of God than that. His language regarding the Spirit is extraordinarily bold and rich, in striking contrast to the baldness and brevity of the Church's teaching. But whatever he said, even when he identified the Spirit with the risen Christ—'the Lord is the Spirit' (2 Co 3^{17})—and declared that, as the Spirit, Christ relives, reincarnates Himself, in Christian believers, he never departed from this as the central thought of all his teaching, that the normal action of the Spirit is to reveal His presence in the Christian, a presence of power and love and of a sound mind.

Mrs. Florence L. BARCLAY, the author of *The Rosary*, has written a little book on prayer, and has published it under the title of *The Golden Censer* (Hodder & Stoughton; 1s. 6d. net). She believes that to a very large extent our intercessory prayers are wholly misdirected. And she writes the book for the purpose of telling us what we ought not to pray for.

We ought not to pray for the salvation of the world or of anybody in the world. It is not possible, she says, that the salvation of the world, or of any person in it, can be brought about or in the least degree affected by our prayer. 'It is beseeching God to intervene between His own law of free-will and the souls to whom He has granted the right of choice.'

There are no such prayers, she says, in the Bible. 'One single recorded prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ was for outsiders: the Roman soldiers for whom He pleaded, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But that request was not for a general forgiveness of the sins of those soldiers, such as would affect their eventual salvation; but rather that God the Father would overlook one definite act then being done to Himself, for which the suffering Saviour, in perfect justice, but with a marvellous exhibition of loving kindness, pleaded ignorance.' Once also, and only once, is St. Paul reported as praying for the unconverted. 'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.' But Mrs. BARCLAY does not take that as more than an outburst of earnest longing. If, however, it was a real prayer, it was a mistaken one, and it was not granted; the people of Israel were not saved.

Not only did our Lord never pray for the world, He deliberately refused to do it, and said so. In the Intercessory Prayer of the seventeenth chapter of St. John, He said calmly, 'I pray not for the world.' At a Convention a few years ago, says Mrs. BARCLAY, one of the meetings 'became an all-night of prayer and testimony. Hundreds of earnest-minded people spent hours upon their knees, and a large part of the proceedings consisted

in one voice exclaiming: "O God, convert Ireland!" most of those present immediately taking up the cry, "Ireland! Ireland! Ireland!" until the entire neighbourhood rang with it. "O God, save Scotland!" came from another voice in the assembly. "Scotland! Scotland! Scotland!"—'O God, revive London!" "London! London! London!" The quiet night resounded with these cries of impassioned faith and zeal.' It was all in contradiction to the example of Christ. And it was all in vain. 'Was Ireland converted? Was Scotland saved? Has a revival reached London?'

And it is not a case in which 'no harm, at any rate, can be done,' and 'one had better err on the safe side.' Much harm is being done, says Mrs. BARCLAY, every day. We assume a responsibility which is not ours, which we are not able to carry, and which may do us irreparable harm. 'Quite lately the case was brought to the knowledge of the writer of this little book, of an aged Christian lady whose faith in her God and in prayer was practically wrecked, because her son, for whom she had prayed daily during forty years, had died, an atheist.'

What, then, are we to do? We are to preach. 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.' 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' And notice, says Mrs. BARCLAY, for her mind is quite made up, 'notice,' she says, 'that with the fulfilling of that command, our responsibility ceases. The great law of individual choice comes in. The mind, now made aware of the good news of the love of God and the finished work of Jesus, through our instrumentality and by the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit accompanying the Word, must now come to a decision, face to face with God Who calls it, and with the Saviour Who has redeemed it. "He that believeth . . . shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." He that heareth may say, "Come." But there all pressure from without must cease. The final issue remains with the individual will. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."'

Samuel Rolles Driver.

BY THE REV. G. A. COOKE, D.D., LATELY ORIEL PROFESSOR OF THE INTERPRETATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, OXFORD.

DR. DRIVER'S death is felt as a personal loss by students of the Bible throughout the country. A generation has grown up accustomed to look to him for guidance on the many problems raised by the new learning; we had come to depend upon his sanity of judgment, his unrivalled scholarship, his combination of scientific disinterestedness with religious reverence. And now, as we look back over his splendid achievement of work, we recognize the good providence of God in giving us such a scholar, placed in a position of leadership, to educate opinion and keep it on right lines at a critical period of transition. He has saved us from extravagances on the one hand, and from dangerous unsettlement on the other. He has convinced his contemporaries of the reasonableness of the newer methods of study and interpretation.

These he has based upon a foundation of accurate scholarship. First and foremost, he always insisted, must come a practical and intimate acquaintance with the sacred tongue. It was in the region of pure scholarship that he first made his mark. His *Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (1874; 3rd ed., 1892) may be taken as the starting-point of all that followed; and among the mass of his published writings, this still remains perhaps his most original and creative piece of work. It was the earliest attempt in English to deal with Hebrew syntax comprehensively, on principles at once philosophical and