

Discussions.

“HAS THE TIME ARRIVED FOR A FRESH REVISION?”

(*The Churchman*, April, 1911, p. 244.)

Is it allowable for one who cannot claim to be an expert to express considerable doubt as to whether the time has fully come for a further revision of the Scriptures? As regards the New Testament I suppose it must be conceded that immense progress has been made with Textual Criticism, but are we yet in possession of all the available evidence from the papyri and the ostraca of the ancient rubbish heaps? Surely Dr. Deissmann, Dr. Moulton and other labourers in this field are but the pioneers who have broken up the first clods of a new field of knowledge, and we may yet look for much further light from the ancient East.

It must, moreover, be remembered that in many quarters the Revised Version has been largely used for many years, and although I would not for a moment condone the many harsh alterations from the musical Authorized Version (as for example “that gratulation of yourselves” in Gal. iv. 15), yet the unsettlement of another revision would be a very grievous thing *unless we can reach some measure of finality*.

And when we come to the Old Testament, there seems still more reason for patience. As Mr. Harold Wiener has so forcibly pointed out in his Pentateuchal studies, hardly any effort seems to have been made to ascertain the accuracy of our Massoretic text or to collate it with the texts of the Septuagint version. Yet he has made it abundantly clear that the Septuagint text throws a wondrous light upon numerous difficulties, while its study seems to render it increasingly difficult for scholars to accept the Graf-Wellhausen theory. I must not, however, dwell upon the latter point, but confine myself to the question of an *accurate text*, without which no revision can be anything more than experimental. The day of Septuagintal criticism of the Old Testament seems to be dawning, and I suppose we shall soon have the inevitable swing of the pendulum in that direction, so that we may possibly have to wait another generation before anything like a reasonable consensus of opinion can be reached as regards the Text of the Old Testament. Meantime we can surely struggle on with an Interlinear or Two-Version Bible for our Old Testament studies, while as regards the New Testament we have Nestle's Bible Society edition of the Greek Text, and the Authorized Version, the Revised Version, and Weymouth's Version of the English. These latter versions have been supplemented by the Revised Version with fuller references by Greenup and Moulton; and when to these is added the text of the whole Bible in the version of the American revisers, I contend that we can afford to wait the advance of knowledge and the Holy Spirit's further enlightenment. Meanwhile

for public use the cheapening of the Interlinear Bible would seem to be the chief need, and this I understand is now being, effected by the proprietors.

GEORGE DENVER.

“HISTORICAL RECORDS AND INSPIRATION.”

(*The Churchman*, May, 1911, p. 337.)

SIRS,—I have read with attention Mr. Russell’s “Historical Records,” in which he criticizes Mr. Pilter’s Islington paper. Being a higher critic—*i.e.*, a student of the signs of compilation and stratification in the Scriptures, and a member of the Biblical Archæology Society for many years, I venture on a word of caution. I understand that Mr. Pilter’s view is that the accuracy of the Old Testament is taken for granted in the New Testament, and that it is confirmed by modern research. I do not know that he holds what Mr. Russell calls a “mechanical theory” of inspiration, or that he would accept the infallibility of the Bible in every particular. Such expressions require careful consideration. Probably he would say that the “Christian” view means the view taken by Christ and His apostles. As instances of what this view is I would refer to the way in which Christ reverts from Moses to “the beginning,” in the matter of marriage, and to Paul’s use of the historical fact that certain promises bearing on pardon were uttered to Abraham, not after, but before, he was circumcised. The “traditional view” of the Bible is that God has revealed Himself and His purposes not only by what He has said but by what He has done, specially in regard to certain historical events leading up to or connected with the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The Christian Church is based upon these historical events. If our histories are “unhistorical,” which to an ordinary person means “untrustworthy,” where are we? Christ and His Apostles not only claimed the Old Testament as authoritative, but supported it by appeals to conscience, common sense, etc. There is nothing inconsistent in this, and I do not see why Mr. Pilter should be blamed for illustrating and confirming the Sacred Records by modern discoveries. What an ordinary man wants to know is whether the words recorded in Scripture and the deeds narrated are really true. Those who are called “evangelical” specially feel the need of such assurance because they accept the Scriptures as their court of appeal. They search the Scriptures to find out if Christ is going to judge the world, if He really gave His life and shed His life-blood for the remission of sins; if death came into the world through sin; if Moses spoke of Christ, and Christ of Moses. These and a thousand other things are settled in Scripture, and if we are not to accept them as true on this ground, we must wait till all critics of all ages and countries shall issue their schedule of what may be taken as historical according to the canons of criticism which shall finally prevail. Mr. Russell holds that

inspiration and historical infallibility are "unconnected," but that all godly and sensible men may be presumed trustworthy. I think that we ought to go farther. The intervention of God in the affairs of men which culminated in the mission of His only Son has been recorded all the way through by Prophets and Apostles who wrote under authority. The things which they record set forth God in history, and historical accuracy must have been sought and found by the writers as a gift from the Spirit of Truth, just so far as it was needed either for the *Præparatio Evangelica* or for the Gospel narrative. Christ is thus the criterion of Scripture inspiration. If this or anything like this view would be accepted by critics of various schools, there would be a step taken in the direction of harmony.

In closing I should like to call attention to Professor Kittel's "Scientific Study of the Old Testament" (Williams and Norgate), also to Dr. Pinches' paper on the new Deluge fragment read before the Victoria Institute in April, and to the important discussion which followed.

R. B. GIRDLESTONE.

"FRESH LIGHT ON THE DATE OF THE CRUCIFIXION."

(*The Churchman*, April 1911, p. 265.)

I shall be grateful for a small space in which to reply to Mr. Bothamley's interesting comment. There are fashions in chronology, as in other things; and fashions tend to move in circles. Half a century ago it was customary to date the Crucifixion Nisan 15, A.D. 30. Now it is more usual to put it on Nisan 14, A.D. 29. Both dates, I think, are wrong; and my own plea was for the restoration of an older date, A.D. 33. The question of the year is only of chronological interest; but the question of the day involves that of the Christian fulfilment of the Old Testament symbolism of the Sacrificial Lamb and Offering of the Firstfruits. Nisan 15 may be called a little heresy. The day was Nisan 14. The year was either 30 or 33.

I have no quarrel with Salmon. Recent calculation confirms Salmon's Table of New Moons; but it also clears up much that Salmon perforce left doubtful. What is more, it prohibits "tinkering" with Salmon in the manner of those chronologers who wish to have the Moon an hour or two earlier, or later, as best may suit their fancy. The uncertainty of the evening on which the Moon could first be seen must disappear. The days of the Jewish month may be identified with confidence. Unfortunately some uncertainty may still be left as to the months of the year.

In the year 29 a New Moon fell on March 4, and a new month began soon after. That month cannot have been Adar. Salmon supposed it to be the intercalary month Veadar. It is more often taken now as the month Nisan. On the whole, I am inclined to think

that Mr. Bothamley is right in following Salmon, though I gave the earlier date for Nisan as a concession to Mr. Turner and most modern chronologers. Now, if Salmon is right, 29 disappears from the case at once. But *if* we can make this doubtful month Nisan, and *if* we can further squeeze the moon's phasis a little so as to make it visible a day sooner than the tables warrant, then Nisan 14 can be brought to a Friday as required. But the application of stricter astronomical calculations shows such squeezing to be impossible. Whether Nisan of A.D. 29 began in March or in April, the year is equally excluded.

So I only differ from Mr. Bothamley in preferring 33 to 30. At His Baptism I believe our Lord had just turned thirty-three. Mr. Bothamley does not like to think that in such a case St. Luke would have called him "about thirty." But why not? A number (especially one of the round tens) introduced by "about" is necessarily indefinite, and three years is surely no unreasonable latitude to allow the Evangelist. Let us consider this indefinite "thirty" in comparison with another vague number. "Thou art not yet fifty years old," said the Jews, in St. John viii. 57. Now, the Jews would hardly have said "not yet fifty" had they known that "not yet forty" would suit their purpose better. Clearly they did not know on which side of forty our Lord then was. It is better, therefore, to suppose He was thirty-six than thirty-two or thirty-three, and hence this Feast of Tabernacles is more probably that of 32 than that of 29. In either case the Crucifixion was six months later.

Mr. Bothamley has not hit me hard enough with regard to the expression in St. John ii. 20: "Forty and six years was this Temple in building." The foundation of Herod's Temple is generally put in Chisleu A.U.C. 734 (20 B.C.), so that the forty-sixth year brings us to A.U.C. 780 (A.D. 27), the Passover of which year is the very date Mr. Bothamley requires. But it is a mistake to assume that the date so given is that of the cleansing of the Temple, and of the Jews' controversy with our Lord. Surely it is that of the last cessation of work on the building and its temporary completion. The Aorist (*ἐκκοδομήθη*) suggests that the building had then stopped; though as a matter of fact further additions were subsequently planned and carried out. Rightly considered, therefore, the verse indicates a date shortly after 27, rather than the year 27 itself. And in my opinion it was 30.

Perhaps I said enough about Augustus and Tiberius in my former paper. Tiberius was not the first to be chosen as successor to Augustus. Only after the deaths of Marcellus (23 B.C.), Lucius (A.D. 2), and Caius Cæsar (A.D. 4) was he adopted by his stepfather. No doubt the titles and offices conferred on him were intended to secure the succession; but, even so, Tiberius feigned reluctance in assuming the purple, and the death of Augustus was the signal for mutiny in more

than one province. Indeed, the very idea of succession marks the difference between the two during the lifetime of the elder. There was nothing that could be called a "reign," or hegemony, of Tiberius till August, A.D. 14; and for that reason I would put the appearance of St. John in A.D. 29 rather than in 26 or 27.

I quite agree with Mr. Bothamley in preferring a ministry of four Passovers to one of three. So I put our Lord's Baptism in January, A.D. 30, and His Death and Resurrection in April, A.D. 33. It is certainly curious that, while St. Luke's approximation, "about thirty," led Dionysius Exiguus in ancient time—and the whole Church following him—to date our Lord's Birth four years too late, so it has also led most living chronologers to date His Crucifixion four years too early.

D. R. FOTHERINGHAM.



Notices of Books.

A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By F. Warre Cornish. London: *Macmillan*. Price, 2 vols., 7s. 6d. each.

These are the last volumes of the "History of the English Church," edited by the late Dean Stephens and Dr. Hunt, and the editors are to be warmly congratulated upon the selection of Mr. Cornish as the writer of that section of the history which, with the possible exception of the Reformation period, makes the greatest demands upon the ability of the historian. Mr. Cornish possesses the rare capacity of being able to write history and to comment upon it, with a sympathetic regard both for those with whom he agrees and those from whom he differs.

Most Churchmen will find some things that are not entirely to their mind in these volumes; the mere partisan will find many things. But all will realize that Mr. Cornish has tried to do his work with real impartiality, and we are inclined to say that he has entirely succeeded. The book is very full; every topic of importance is dealt with, and generally fully dealt with. The story of the Evangelical Movement, of the Oxford Movement, and of "Essays and Reviews," is told in each case with scrupulous fairness. Mr. Cornish sees clearly the strong and the weak points of each movement. Probably the High Churchman, the Evangelical, and the Broad Churchman, would like to write a commentary on those portions of the history where each is criticized; but Mr. Cornish's shrewd criticisms, and his judicial putting of both sides, will make most fair-minded men hesitate to cavil. We, for our part, are content to very warmly thank the writer for the fullest and fairest, the most interesting and the most instructive account of the Church in the nineteenth century which we possess.

Mr. Cornish has the eyes which see beneath the surface and behind the