

Discussions.

“SPADE AND BIBLE.”

(“*The Churchman*,” October, p. 749.)

It is, perhaps, unfair to criticize a paper before it is completed, but in his interesting communication, “The Spade and the Bible,” Mr. Linton Smith appears to me not to grasp the real matter at issue between those who feel compelled “*stare super antiquas vias*,” and the fashionable, up-to-date schools of Old Testament teachers. I am an out-and-out traditionalist, but the question to my mind is not whether the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua were written by one man, or by twenty, but whether the writers were able, by the time at which they lived and the authorities they had access to, to hand down a record which, weighed by the rules of historical criticism, may be accepted as generally true history, or, on the other hand, do these six books give us myths and folklore first put into writing several centuries after the settlement in Canaan. I am aware that the Higher Critics allow that embedded in this folklore is much ancient matter of a trustworthy character, and the moderate English School probably allow Moses and the Patriarchs to be real historical characters; but I fear they would find it as difficult to write out any detailed incidents in their lives which they would consider historically established as they would to do the same for King Arthur.

It is because this is the real issue between the parties that the evidence, which Mr. Smith disparages, seems valuable. If one wishes to know whether an historical book contains true accounts or not, especially if it deals with remote times and other works to compare with it are few and fragmentary, he will be anxious to see if the state of society and civilization in which its characters and incidents are placed is such as it represents; and, therefore, the discoveries as to the old life of Western Asia which the last half-century has seen, appear to have a great bearing even on facts that they do not directly demonstrate.

Without “any judicious manipulation and selection” let me just mention some of these discoveries. To begin, then, the reading of the hieroglyphic and cuneiform writings has shown that the age of the Exodus was, in Western Asia and Egypt, a distinctly writing Age. Writing was more general, I would venture to say, than it was in England in Anne’s reign. Now, is this a discovery which has no bearing on our present issue because we have not dug up autograph copies of Genesis and Exodus? Surely it goes to the very root of the question. If Moses led out his people at this period, it is almost unthinkable that he was not compelled to legislate for them, and that such legislation should not have been at once expressed in writing;

and it is scarcely less easy to believe that the way in which the Exodus was brought about, and some account of the events which marked the people's progress from Egypt to Palestine, should not also have been written *down at the time*. This discovery, therefore, seems to go a very long way to prove that in the days of Moses and Joshua Israel had a written law, and very probably written records, which, by whatever hand they were written, were rightly considered to be issued with the authority of the great Legislator. Now, I will admit that in the stormy days between Joshua and David Israelitish culture must have suffered; but there is no reason to believe that the knowledge of writing was lost, and much reason to believe the contrary, and therefore the very awkward question confronts the higher critics at what period before J and E and D, to say nothing of that gentleman P, "born out of due time," did this genuine Mosaic legislation vanish altogether, or become so obsolete that it could be almost entirely rewritten? This, I think, is a question that calls for an answer. The New Testament has passed through a similar ordeal. To readers of the *Record* I need not argue the point that the dogmas and practices of Christendom in the fifteenth century were very far removed from the letter and spirit of the New Testament, and yet even in that period the genuine book did not perish and have its place taken by another embodying the ideas of the priests of those days. Indeed, can the critics, who profess to follow sound historical methods, supply us with *any* analogous case?

Then, again, the discovery of Khammurabi's laws seems to me strongly to support the Traditional School, for not only does it explain much in Abraham's treatment of Hagar, but it shows an archaic mixture of law and religion, which suits the still early date of Moses far better than the epoch at which the present School of Critics place P, or, rather, the various P's. And while on this subject, may I crave for a little enlightenment on one simple matter? One argument in favour of the Higher Criticism is that it is in harmony with the law of development. Now, what I cannot understand is how the legalism of the P school is a development of the spiritual teaching of the Prophets. Here it always has seemed to me the higher critics have built their pyramid on its apex.

Then, thirdly, the discovery of the Tell Amarna tablets shows Palestine to have been in those days in a condition which squares with that depicted in Joshua, and accounts for the conquest of the country by a race who have never been a warlike people; while the discoveries at Gezer, and elsewhere, show that the Amorite races did practise the abominations which were said to have drawn down God's wrath on them. I do not wish to weary your readers, but I should like to point out one discovery which enables us roughly to date one of the authorities the writer of Genesis used. If one compares verses 1, 4 and 5 of Gen. xiv., we observe that in the first verse Amraphel, King of

Shinar, is given the precedence, while the latter verses clearly show that at the time of the raid Chedorlaomer was the ruling sovereign. I will not taunt the Higher Critics with their former dogmatism over this part of the history which they have now very wisely dropped, but it is only comparatively late discoveries that have taught us that Chedorlaomer was at first the chief sovereign in Elam and Lower Mesopotamia, and that his power was broken by Khammurabi or Amraphel, and therefore the record here used was probably made soon after the latter's victory.

Before concluding may I ask your readers to read through *continuously* the Hebrew Old Testament; and then ask themselves, Is the Hebrew of the Pentateuch later in date than that of the Prophets and Historical Books? Of course, people may be so occupied over words that they may be blinded to style, unable to see the wood for the trees; but if the Pentateuch is not more archaic Hebrew than Jeremiah, say, I shall expect to hear that Chaucer has been discovered to be later than Crabbe.

I have, unfortunately, been so much at issue in these remarks with my friend Mr. Linton Smith, that I am glad to find some point in which I do agree with him. He calls attention to the uncertainty which attaches to the Hebrew text, as it does to almost every document of antiquity. Mr. Wiener has done yeoman service in showing how the existing versions prove that we are no more sure of the true readings of particular passages than we are of certain passages in the New Testament; and that this uncertainty very frequently besets the use of the words Jehovah and Elohim, and very unkindly throws great doubt as to the mood of the verb in Exod. vi. 3,¹ on which the critics have based so much, which perhaps they will be wise now to sponge out. But does not this uncertainty as to the words of the original text cut away the ground from under the mangle-mangle to which the critics have reduced the text, sometimes a single verse being broken up between two or three different authors. I feel very grateful we traditionalists are not required to believe in this absolutely unique patchwork.

Mr. Smith also allows "responsible scholars," whoever they may be, to believe in the "general historicity of the stories of Ahab," a disagreeably limited admission; but I would ask, May scholars believe in the *historical* truth of the histories of Ahab's contemporaries—Elijah and Elisha—as recorded, say, in 1 Kings xvii., 2 Kings i., ii., iv. and v. ? and if not, why not ? Are the detailed accounts of Gideon and Samson credible history ? Or, when the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews and St. James based exhortations to their fellow-Christians on the relation between God and His servants, as shown by the Bible accounts of these men, were they only following "cunningly devised

¹ The Septuagint reads τὸ ὄνομά μου κύριος οὐκ ἐδήλωσα αὐτοῖς.

fables" ? It is because the legitimate outcome of the Higher Criticism compels such questions to be asked, and not from any dislike to sound criticism resting on proved facts, and not on such unsubstantial imaginings as J and E, and P and D, that an increasing number of people are looking into the foundations of this still fashionable teaching, and find them, to say the least, unsatisfactory.

I. D. TREMLETT.

"THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY."

(*"The Churchman,"* October, p. 773.)

To an untrained layman "Pastoral Theology" taken as a science seems a misnomer. It is as though the duty of a shepherd were to feed his flock on the agricultural science of the production and upkeep of suitable pasture, instead of simply to lead the sheep to the pasture itself already provided, where they may satisfy their hunger to the full.

The title of this paper gave hope that a clear distinction between it and the science of Theology would be afforded. It is, therefore, a disappointment to find a subject so vital to the efficient training of candidates for Holy Orders should be treated entirely academically.

It is, however, the writer's main contention that in practice the distinction between the two sciences has not been kept—that one has been allowed to obscure the other as in the case of Dogmatics, Liturgies, and Ecclesiastical History. These, he says, should be studied first of all as part of General Theology alone, and afterwards "gone over again" as part of Pastoral Theology.

He seems just here to miss the point—the real distinction between the two subjects—viz., that the latter is no science at all, but the art of applying pastorally certain of the definite results obtained from Theology. How much or how little of the science of Theology the candidate should study for himself to fit him or unfit him for pastoral work depends on his capacity for utilizing it. The author of "Across the Bridges" would be able to give valuable advice to an examining chaplain on that question. Certain it is that before he decides on becoming a candidate for Orders in the Church of England, the student must conscientiously "approve" of the doctrines of the Prayer-Book (see last clause of the preface), after satisfying himself that they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture. This implies a thorough knowledge of a considerable amount of the New Testament.

He should, of course, have had a good all-round education, including the elements (not a smattering) of the natural sciences and their correlation—an important part of the "Science of God"—together with the mathematics which they require, and which would lead him to form a habit of correct thinking.

Again, as a *sine qua non* he should know the Love of God, and

heartily desire to devote his life to the communication of the same to his fellow-men.

It follows, then, that the chief subject of his pastoral study, whether subsequent or previous to the above, will be the nature of these fellow-men—their various habits of mind and expression, their doubts and difficulties, their various spiritual needs, and how to show them that these needs have been satisfied in men like themselves and in himself. This would be best carried on during some years of secular occupation that brought him into contact with men, with an extension of such contact in his hours of leisure as at a “settlement,” or otherwise.

He must learn, in fact, how to put himself in the place—not so much of a shepherd, but of the leading sheep of a flock—one who has gone the way to the pastures and fed there, and is able to tell them in their language all he knows of the one true Shepherd of their souls, and of his.

In the letter of Samuel Johnson, cited by Mr. Rogers, the need of such training and the humiliating result of its neglect is strikingly shown. A clergyman had in his parish a woman whom he could not bring to Communion, “and when he *reproved* her or *exhorted* her she only answered that *she was no scholar*. He was advised to set some good woman or man of the parish to talk to her in a *language level to her mind*.” (Italics to save comment.)

The student must (would that we might say of course) learn to use his natural voice in speaking, reading, and talking. Then, with the presupposed Love of God in his heart, he will find the proper performance of a prescribed liturgy an easy matter, requiring no special study of “Liturgies” or the Laws of “devotion and worship.”

F. A. LE MESURIER.



Notices of Books.

INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY. By the Right Rev. Archibald Robertson, D.D., Bishop of Exeter, and the Rev. Alfred Plummer, D.D. Edinburgh: *T. and T. Clark*. 12s.

Of making many commentaries there is no end, but that before us will take a high place in the final array, besides adorning the series to which it belongs; moreover, “much study” of it is *not* “a weariness to the flesh.” Indeed, it is not extravagant to predict that “Robertson and Plummer” on 1 Corinthians will be as indispensable to the theological student as “Sanday and Headlam” on Romans. In spite of its 500 pages it is not obese. It does not suffer from the pointless platitudes and nebulous speculations and fantastic theorizings which increase the bulk and decrease the usefulness of some commentaries. What is more, it is not a congealed mass of cold and clever criticism, penetrable and appreciable only by the keen scholar; it