

the real study of the Written Word, the true essence of which study is the reverent endeavour to ascertain precisely what the Divine Voice has said and is saying to us. Needless to say, however, even critical research designed to ascertain the correct text of the inspired books is of the highest possible value, as also—perhaps even more—is critical establishment of the species of literature which the inspired writers are employing, and careful investigation into the extent to which the ancient conception of historical narrative differed from that which is now in vogue—a matter upon which perhaps a good deal more has, by qualified investigators, yet to be said.

I would repeat and slightly enlarge upon the opening sentence of this article—such as it is. I have no claim to be considered either a trained theologian or a scientific exegete; and I want everything that I have said to be corrected by such if need be. I have thought, however, that there might be some, even readers of *SCRIPTURE* (a periodical for which I am deeply grateful) who would be interested to some small extent in learning how an amateur student of the Written Word, who has felt difficulties, has to his own satisfaction resolved the bulk of them. The great Bishop of Hippo felt many difficulties and in various of his writings—e.g. in his book on the Harmonization of the Gospels, in *De Civitate Dei* and in *de Genesi ad Litteram*—outlined adequately perhaps for ever—so to me it seems—the principles upon which the problems must be solved. St Thomas seems to have in the main followed and relied upon St Augustine. It is of course true that St Augustine's difficulties do not always coincide precisely with our difficulties, and that some of his solutions are in detail too much coloured by the mentality of his age to be entirely acceptable to us of the twentieth century; but this is a subsidiary question merely.

Perhaps I may emphasize here that my rather discursive paragraphs represent only a selection and compression of what I have written elsewhere—perhaps never to be polished and published.

SENEX.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How do we know that Quirinius was consul in 742 A.U.C. (12 B.C.)?

We know it because his name occurs in that year in the consular list. By comparing together a number of imperfect lists which have come down to us, we have now got a complete and reliable list from about 250 B.C. to the end of the Roman Empire. It is accepted by all scholars, and there can be no reasonable doubt about the date of Quirinius's consulship.

How do we know that Quirinius's mission to Armenia occurred in 754 A.U.C. (A.D. 1)?

This date is not in fact certain. It is not accepted by all scholars. But all, I think, would agree that Quirinius in A.D. 1 was in Syria with Gaius Cæsar, and that the two went to Armenia either in that same year or in the next one. The opinions of historians are divided between 1 and A.D. 2, but the choice is limited to those two years.

The statement that it must have been either A.D. 1 or 2 is a conclusion from a mass of evidence too complicated to be stated briefly. I can only give a few items. Tacitus says Quirinius was with Gaius Cæsar in Armenia (*Annales* iii, 48), Gaius could not have entered Armenia before A.D. 1 for he was Consul in that year, and no consul could perform the ceremonies of entering on his office except on Roman territory. On the other hand one of the old consular lists says expressly that Gaius was wounded in Armenia in September A.D. 3, and died in the following February. Now everybody is agreed that the war in Armenia could have begun as late as A.D. 3 So there must have been at least two campaigns in Armenia, possibly three. These are just some of the chief reasons leading to the above conclusion.

See account of the war in my article on Quirinius in *SCRIPTURE* of July 1948, pp. 79-80.

W. REES

What times had the author of Ecclesiastes in mind when he wrote that there is 'a time to scatter stones and a time to gather' (iii, 5)?

First, as regards the translation, it is of interest to compare the succinct and rhythmical phrasing of the Douay Version quoted in the query with the Authorized Version: 'a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together'. This translation is preserved unaltered in the Revised Version. The idea of contrary action, which is characteristic of the pairs mentioned in this chapter of Ecclesiastes, is better brought out by 'scattering' than by 'casting away', as unwanted stones may be and sometimes are cast away into a heap. When this is done, the stones remain gathered in one place. The root meaning of the Hebrew verb is simply 'to throw'. Whether the sense is merely that of 'throwing' or of 'throwing away' or 'throwing down' or 'throwing about', that is of 'scattering', can only be decided by the context.

Secondly, as regards the meaning, some curious views have been proposed. The words have been explained of destroying and erecting buildings. This is clearly erroneous as the idea has already been expressed two verses earlier, 'a time to break down and a time to build up'. To limit the meaning to precious stones is to give an arbitrary interpretation with no warrant in the text. And the same verdict is called for by the