

THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

Notes of Recent Exposition.

THE contemporary evidence for the life and work of our Lord on the earth, the evidence outside the New Testament itself, is somewhat scanty. If it had not been so scanty, how could DREWS and his friends have dared to deny His existence? To its small bulk one item of first-rate importance has just been added.

It is not the discovery of a new document. It is the new interpretation of an old. Some months ago Professor BURKITT contributed a paper to a Dutch periodical in which he argued for the genuineness of the famous passage about Jesus in the *Antiquities* of Josephus. Professor HARNACK read the article and was impressed by it. He hesitated for some time. But at last, to the *Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst, und Technik*, he contributed an article in which he asserts his belief that the passage is genuine, though the question 'is not yet *certainly* decided.'

What are the arguments that have convinced him? The first is that the passages about John the Baptist and about James 'the brother of Jesus who is called Christ' are undoubtedly genuine, and it is reasonable to expect that there should also be a distinct reference to Jesus Himself and His work. The second is that the whole tone of the passage is un-Christian. A Christian interpolator would not have written it if he could, and

could not if he would. There is 'a cool patronising tone' about it which no Christian could have adopted.

In the *Contemporary Review* for January, Professor Emery BARNES surveys the whole of the evidence, external and internal, and concludes emphatically for the genuineness of the passage. The part which Professor HARNACK finds most difficulty with is the reference to the Resurrection. Professor BARNES points out that although the words in this case—'for he appeared to them the third day living again'—could be used by a Christian, it is not the characteristic language which Christians applied to the Resurrection of our Lord, but rather the phraseology which a heathen or a Jew might employ. In particular, the phrase 'on the third day' is good Josephan Greek; it is not the Christian phrase commonly used in this connexion.

Dr. Emery BARNES thinks it probable that all the trouble over the passage has arisen from an unacknowledged presupposition that Josephus was a Jewish theologian, and would necessarily write as one, if he wrote of Jesus and the Christians. But Josephus was rather a man of affairs, intensely proud of his race, but not a divine. He could write respectfully of Jesus and calmly about the Christians from his comfortable house in Rome

whither came only faint rumours of Christian activity. He probably reckoned the followers of Jesus to be as harmless as the Essenes, and in any case he recognized the fact that they had not contributed like the Zealots to the catastrophe of Jerusalem. Moreover, he could not help feeling a certain sympathy for a Jew whom Jews had delivered to Gentile death. The figure of Jesus, the wise man, the wonder worker, the teacher of true words, stands out in its purity and simplicity against the blood-stained annals of the time, and wins a certain respect from the Jewish historian.

At the present day 'the Testimony concerning Jesus Christ,' as WHISTON calls it, is of no little value. 'Josephus completed the *Archæology* in the thirteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Domitian, *i.e.* in 93 or 94 A.D., having for the first thirty years of his life, *i.e.* up to 70 A.D., lived in Palestine, both in Jerusalem and in Galilee. As an early Jewish witness, he supplies testimony of an unique kind to some of the outward facts of the beginnings of Christianity, and he blocks the path of those who try to think that "there is no historic reality" in the figure of Jesus the Christ.'

When the Rev. John BAMPTON, Canon of Salisbury, wrote his last will and testament, in which he made endowment for 'eight Divinity Lecture Sermons' to be established for ever in the University of Oxford, he laid down within rigid lines the scope of the Lecture Sermons. 'I direct and appoint,' he said, 'that the eight Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached upon either of the following subjects:—To confirm and establish the Christian Faith, and to confute all heretics and schismatics; upon the divine authority of the holy Scriptures; upon the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the primitive Church; upon the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; upon the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; upon the Articles of the Christian Faith, as comprehended in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.'

It has been the sincere desire of the latest Bampton preacher to preach within these lines. In particular it is his desire to support the authority of the writings of the primitive Fathers. He delivers his lectures with the definite purpose of proving that the Church in Rome was founded by St. Peter, and that St. Peter was its first presiding *episcopus* and chief pastor.

The Rev. George EDMUNDSON is the lecturer. His lectures have the title of *The Church in Rome in the First Century* (Longmans; 7s. 6d. net). Mr. EDMUNDSON traces St. Peter's active life to the house of Mary in Jerusalem. The story of his release from prison and passing visit to that house 'has every internal mark of having been derived directly from the maid-servant Rhoda, whose name is otherwise so unnecessarily mentioned.' From the house of Mary, St. Peter disappears into the obscurity of the night. And, so far as his active career is concerned, he disappears henceforth from the pages of St. Luke's history.

What became of him? Mr. EDMUNDSON believes that he went to Rome and founded the Church there. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans speaks of that Church as already in 57 A.D. long established and of world-wide repute, into which, as being built on 'another man's foundation,' he had not thought it right to intrude. To Mr. EDMUNDSON it is evident that that other man was St. Peter.

The proof is not easy. It occupies the whole of the volume. St. Peter arrives in Rome in the year 42, and before he leaves that city, in the year 44, he has established a Christian Church, and inspired St. Mark's Gospel, which was written in Rome in 44-45 A.D. In the spring of 46 St. Peter is in Jerusalem. From 47-54 A.D. he makes Antioch the centre of his activity. Along with Barnabas he returns to Rome in the beginning of 55 A.D., and remains for fully a year. He pays his third visit to Rome in 63, the year after the Book of Acts comes to an end, and remains in

Rome till his martyrdom there in the summer of the year 65.

There is probably no easier and there is certainly no surer way of keeping abreast of the study of the Old Testament than by reading the successive editions of Dr. DRIVER'S *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* as they appear. For Dr. DRIVER keeps the whole range of Old Testament study within his observation, ever increasing though the range is, and misses nothing. The ninth revised edition of the Introduction has just been published (T. & T. Clark; 12s.).

The most striking fact which is brought out in the new edition is the way in which scholars, after fuller study of the Old Testament, become supporters of the critical position. The example of Canon STREANE of Cambridge has already been referred to in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES. Not less important is the example of Professor KITTEL. Twenty-five years ago, when he published the first edition of his *History of the People of Israel*, Professor KITTEL was of course a critic as he is a critic now. Now, however, in issuing the second edition, he accepts the position of WELLHAUSEN, with reservations similar to those with which Dr. DRIVER accepts it.

One of the new notes deals with the title 'King of Persia,' as it is used in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. It is unnecessary, however, to repeat what Dr. DRIVER says, as that title is the subject of an elaborate article in the present number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES.

There are two topics to which Dr. DRIVER gives some space. One is the occurrence of Aramaic words in Daniel; the other is the use of the various names for God in the Hexateuch. The latter is the most plausible argument against the Higher Critical hypothesis that has yet been found. It appears to strike at its very root. It is easily apprehended, besides, and it has been used with

considerable popular applause. Is there anything in it?

No. There is nothing in it. After all that has been said about the use of the Divine names, and probably all has now been said that can be said, the critical position is still held securely. For in the first place—to put Dr. DRIVER'S careful and conclusive argument into a few sentences—the occurrence of different names for God in different strata of the Hexateuch is only one of more than fifty indications of diversity of authorship. That is to say, there are fifty other *phraseological* criteria, and the phraseological criteria are only a part of the total evidence. In the next place, it is taken for granted that when a particular name for God appears in the Septuagint or other ancient version, the corresponding name was found by these translators in the Hebrew. How utterly unlikely that is, will appear to any one who has had to do with translations. For all we know, some of the Septuagint translators may have deliberately changed their renderings for the mere sake of variety, as the translators of the Authorized Version did.

Dr. Timothy RICHARD, formerly Chancellor and Director of the Shansi Government University, is one of the most learned men in China. We do not say one of the most learned *white* men, for he stands beside the foremost Chinese scholars in knowledge of Chinese history and literature. A year or two ago he published in this country *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*. Perhaps the title was not taken seriously. It was more serious and more true than men were aware of. Now he has issued in Shanghai, at the Christian Literature Society's Depot there, *A Mission to Heaven* (\$6.00). And by the issue of that book he demonstrates his scholarship and—a much greater matter—the fact that China has been already captured for Christ, and now only awaits recapture by the right method.

About the year 100 A.D., there lived at the court of Kanishka a man named Ashvagoshā, who wrote

a remarkable book called *The Awakening of Faith in the Great Religion*. This book was translated into Chinese, and began the movement in religion known as the Higher Buddhism. Soon after, there was translated into Chinese another book, called the *Lotus Scripture*. These two books formed the Bible of the Higher Buddhism. Dr. RICHARD compares them to the Epistles of St. Paul and St. John's Gospel. And so, when he translated them into English, he called his book *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*.

Now this Higher Buddhism is a wholly different thing from primitive Buddhism. When books are written in Europe or America on Buddhism, it is on primitive Buddhism that they are written. The truth is, Western scholars do not know what to make of the Higher Buddhism. It seems to lack all the features that make Buddhism Buddhism. It seems to possess all the features that would make Buddhism Christianity. Dr. RICHARD believes that it is Christianity. He believes that the Nestorian Christians personally, and yet more by books, converted China to Christ, and this Higher Buddhism is the Christianity which the Chinese were prevailed upon to practise.

What kind of Christianity is it? We see that when we read the book which Dr. RICHARD has just translated and published. This book, written by a man who was supposed to be a Taoist, by name Chiu Chang Chun, in the beginning of the thirteenth century, became the commentary on the New Testament of Higher Buddhism, a commentary which enjoyed greater popularity than the original scriptures. It is more closely to be described as the *Pilgrim's Progress* of Chinese Christianity. For the 'Master,' who is the

'Christian' of the book, is represented as making his journey through many lands and many adventures till he reaches heaven at last.

As he makes his journey we learn what are the fundamental doctrines of his religion almost as clearly as we learn those of Bunyan's Pilgrim. We see that his creed is not Confucianism, or Taoism, or primitive Buddhism, but something superior to all three. It rests on these fundamental beliefs: first, God is man's ideal of perfection; secondly, Christ is God incarnate, putting an end to death and transgression, and opening the way direct to immortality and heaven, without any series of incarnations; and thirdly, the Holy Spirit is the chief agent in repentance and the new birth, inspiring men to follow God in works of mercy.

How is it, then, that we have not heard more of this Nestorian conversion of China and of this Christianity? The answer, says Dr. RICHARD, is very simple. And now let us quote his words: 'Instead of the study of universal religion a monopoly of religion has been given to one religion, with the same result as in Islam, in Roman Catholicism, in the Greek Orthodox Church and in Protestant Christianity—the narrowness and arrogance of the dominant religion and the oppression and starvation of all the rest. From the beginning of the Ming dynasty, A.D. 1368, to the present time, a period of over five hundred years, the only religion patronised by the state has been Confucianism, and all the fat posts of the government were given to its followers while Buddhists, Taoists and Christians in China and Korea have not only been starved in their education but have also been persecuted without mercy.'