The Classical Review

<http://journals.cambridge.org/CAR>

Additional services for *The Classical Review*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

The Gospel According to St. John *The Gospel According to St. John*. The Greek Text, with Introduction and Notes, by the late Brooke Foss Westcott, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of Durham, sometime Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. London: John Murray, 1908. Demy 8vo. 2 Vols. Pp. cxcvi + 283; 394. 24s. net.

T. Nicklin

The Classical Review / Volume 24 / Issue 02 / March 2010, pp 55 - 57
DOI: 10.1017/S0009840X00044425, Published online: 27 October 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0009840X00044425

How to cite this article:

T. Nicklin (1910). The Classical Review, 24, pp 55-57 doi:10.1017/S0009840X00044425

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

always to suggest *formal* reply, either actually in court or under conditions comparable with these. It is not quite correct to call *νίπτω* 'the Ionic present from which the tenses are formed' (p. 277); *νίζω* and *νίψομαι* have alike the regular treatment of the velar in the root, and *νίπτω* is simply re-made by analogy. On *οἶμαι* (p. 279) it might be added that the forms without *ο* can be cited from papyri; and on *-φάυσکو*

(p. 288) that the N. T. has the future. There are a few other gleanings that I might add on points of detail, but these will suffice to illustrate the many-sided interest of an acute and most accurate book for all who think Greek worth studying in the period which we shall, I hope, soon cease calling the period of its decline.

JAMES HOPE MOULTON.

Didsbury College, Manchester.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

The Gospel According to St. John. The Greek Text, with Introduction and Notes, by the late BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, D.D., D.C.L., Bishop of Durham, sometime Regius Professor of Divinity, Cambridge. London: John Murray, 1908. Demy 8vo. 2 Vols. Pp. cxcvi + 283; 394. 24s. net.

THE circumstances under which this work has been published necessarily make the reviewer's task less easy, and this the more, the livelier sense he has of what his own mental development owes to other work of the author. Bishop Westcott's Commentary on the English text of St. John's Gospel has been before the world for thirty years. Its publication was an interlude in his preparation for the present work, and he continued, so far as other duties permitted, to study, meditate, and write for his edition of the Greek text. Unfortunately, nine chapters have received no further treatment than is supplied by a few occasional notes; the remaining twelve chapters have been re-annotated. The introduction is verbatim the same, except for expansion of the section on Old Testament quotations. It would be unfair, therefore, and unnecessary to criticise those views which have been already so long before the world, and in respect of which this book may properly be considered to be merely a new edition of the previously published *Speaker's Commentary*. Thus the Bishop's well-known interpretation of *ἀντλήσατε νῦν* in ii. 8 receives no new support, and since scholars have long ago decided severally to accept or reject it, there is little use in pointing out

here that the reasons for that view are with one exception disposed of if we take the commentator's second alternative and suppose that the water became wine as it passed from the stone jars into the pitchers. In the stone jar it was water: it was found to be wine in the pitcher. The single exception is the question of the use proper to *ἀντλεῖν*, and for this it must suffice to refer to Dr. Abbott's *Johannine Vocabulary*, § 1710.

The extent to which the re-annotated chapters have been changed or amplified, if it may be gauged by an examination of the fourth chapter, proves to be very small. A few quotations from Origen and Rupert of Deutz almost complete the list of additions.

An illustration of the narrow limits, within which even the revised chapters must be regarded as accurately reflecting the author's final judgment, is supplied by the treatment of the familiar *οὐχ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἔτι τετράμηνός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ θερισμός ἐρχεται*; (iv. 35). Here an additional note at the end of the chapter tells us that 'Bishop Westcott had placed inside the pages of his copy of St. John's Gospel a letter published in the *Tablet* (December 23, 1899).' The writer of this letter declares: 'My contention is . . . that . . . the disciples must have remarked that the crop before their eyes was *four months old*,' and the editor, who thinks that 'it may be concluded that "the Bishop" considered the "new translation" worthy of consideration,' remarks as to the *ἔτι* (which is fatal to this interpretation) that Griesbach omits it 'on very fair authority, including the MSS. D and L.' But the Bishop's own

view of such manuscript evidence can be deduced from other passages, from his introduction, and from the text associated with his name. The writer in the *Tablet* shows the meaning of *τετράμηνος*, and that words like *παῖς* or *ᾠρα* are understood with it, but *χρόνος* rarely. Since, however, the adjective is of two terminations, *ᾠρα* may be supplied. Thus the sense is 'a period four months long is still to follow.' With this agrees the Latin vulgate 'adhuc quattuor menses sunt.'

The old *Speaker's Commentary* was, of course, in one volume. This commentary on the Greek text extends to two volumes. The difference in part is due to the larger and more legible type now employed, in part to the fact that the Greek is very wisely printed face to face with an English version, which is in the main that of the Revisers, amongst whom, as is well known, Bishop Westcott exercised a preponderant influence, so that their work may fairly be considered to exhibit in general his interpretation of the original. It is late in the day to criticise the principle which led to this version being made to all intents a concordance to the Greek text for the use of those who had no Greek; but continuing a line of thought which I opened some time back in this review (xx. 172 ff.), I must express a doubt whether there is justification for the note (vi. 54) on *τρώγειν*, that it 'expresses not only the simple fact of eating, but the process as that which is dwelt upon with pleasure,' and whether it is not rather the fact that St. John's paradigm of the verb for the idea of eating is not *τρώγω*, (*φάγομαι*), *ἔφαγον*, *βέβρωκα*. At any rate it is noticeable that he never uses *ἐσθίω*, and that that form is lost to modern Greek.

It was not to be expected that Dr. Westcott, whose death in 1901 antedated the publication of most of the papyri now accessible to us, should have realised the amount of readjustment which would be now held to be necessary in his theories of textual criticism. We have already considered one passage in which his judgment still seems to be sound; in another passage where he follows the undivided testimony of our present manuscripts and versions,

but notes that the evidence of certain early Fathers is apparently against that testimony, he hardly perhaps appreciates the strength of the internal evidence in favour of the reading apparently known to these Fathers. The passage is *ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα, ἡ ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων* (vi. 4), where the omission of *τὸ πάσχα* would leave *ἡ ἑορτὴ* to refer to the Feast of Tabernacles. The whole chronological sequence of the Gospel then becomes clear:

- January 6, A.D. 29. The Baptism of our Lord.
- February 16. Return after the Forty Days' Fast.
- February 22. Last day of the week, which is described (i. 28–ii. 11); First Sign at Cana.
- February 23 to March 18. He abode at Capernaum *οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας* (ii. 12).
- March 18. *ἐγγὺς ἦν τὸ πάσχα* (ii. 13).
- March 25 to April 1. *τὸ πάσχα* (ii. 23).
- April 2 onwards. The disciples baptize; John at Aenon (iii. 23, 24).
- May (beginning). Departure to Galilee (iv. 1, 43).
- May (middle). John's imprisonment; our Lord's first preaching (Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 17).
- June 13. Pentecost (*ἑορτὴ*, v. 1, 3).
- June (latter half) to September. Ministry in Galilee (vi. 1; cf. vii. 1).
- September (beginning). *ἐγγὺς ἡ ἑορτὴ* (vi. 4 and vii. 2).
- September 18 to September 25. Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 10).
- September 25. The Great Day (vii. 37).
- From September to end of November. ? In Galilee.
- December 3 to December 10. Feast of the Dedication (x. 22).
- December 11. Visit to Peraea (x. 40).
- ? February, A.D. 30. Raising of Lazarus (xi. 1).
- March (beginning). Retirement to Ephraim (xi. 54, 55).
- March 31. Return to Bethany (xii. 1).
- April 2. Palm Sunday (xii. 12).
- April 7. The Crucifixion.
- April 9. Easter day.

I have given the dates for the Passovers and other feasts on the assumption that the

years are A.D. 29 and 30. More will be said below as to this. Meanwhile, a few comments may be added. The evidence of Cyril and Chrysostom support our identification of Pentecost. Bishop Westcott declares that '*Pentecost* would suit well with the character of the discourse.' His difficulty that it 'would scarcely leave sufficient time for the events implied in ch. iii. and iv.' is seen to have no solidity by our table of dates. There is no ancient authority of any kind for identifying it with Purim, which moderns have been driven to do, because of the reading in vi. 4. (The only alternative explanation in the Fathers is that of Irenaeus and Eusebius, who make it a Passover.) That John was then imprisoned or dead is clear from v. 35. The words in iv. 35, discussed above, are plainly a sort of proverb. They would gain point if at the time the fields were 'white unto harvest,' and this would be the case from the middle of April to the end of May (i., p. 166; cf. p. 205). The author has insufficient warrant for saying of 'the period named' that it 'is less than the interval between seed-time and harvest.' From Christmas to the end of April is no more than four months.

It will be noticed that this scheme gives a special significance to the fact that St. Luke (iv. 18, 19) continues his quotation from Isaiah lxi. 2 to the words *κηρύξαι ἐν ἡμῶν κυρίου δεκτόν*. Modern commentators have discounted the testimony of the *Clementine Homilies*, of Clement of Alexandria, of Julius Africanus, Hippolytus, and Origen, to a one-year ministry by supposing that it was only an inference from these words of Isaiah, and due weight has not been given to the reason of St. Luke's quotation. A scrutiny of his quotations will show that he himself must have thought our Lord's ministry lasted but for a year, otherwise he would have ended the quotation earlier. It follows that the authority for this hypothesis is much older than that of the Fathers above mentioned, and it must now be insisted that this supplies the key to the difficult words in St. John's Gospel (xi. 49), *Καί ἄφ' αὐτοῦ, ἀρχιερεῖς ὧν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου* (cf. xviii. 13, ὅς ἦν

ἀρχιερεὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου), of which Dr. Westcott has been able to give even here no substantially improved exegesis.

It is very remarkable, to say the least of it, that if we accept A.D. 30 as the year of the Crucifixion, then on the hypothesis here submitted all difficulties vanish in St. Luke's date (iii. 1) for the Preaching of John the Baptist. The autumn of A.D. 28 falls in Tiberius' fifteenth year. And no one has yet explained why, unless the Crucifixion was notoriously in the next year, this date should be so carefully fixed rather than that of the Crucifixion, which must have been known to Christians when St. Luke wrote.

But to return to a more general review of the work before us. It is unfortunate that, while Dr. Westcott's attention was caught by an article in the *Tablet*, he should have either missed or attached too little importance to some work of Dr. Abbott's published in this Review (viii. 89 ff.). There can be no reasonable doubt that Dr. Abbott is right in explaining (ii. 20) *τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἑξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος* by the fact that the second Temple was finished forty-six years after Cyrus' accession to the Persian (not the Babylonian) throne in 559. In his *Johannine Grammar*, § 2023, Dr. Abbott well quotes Eusebius: *ἀπὸ δὲ δευτέρου ἔτους Δαρείου ἕως ἔκτου ἀνεπληρώθη (sc. ὁ ναός) . . . ἐν μὲν ἔτεσιν ὅλοις ἀπὸ τοῦ πρώτου ἔτους Κύρου*.

Dr. Westcott in the first instance purposely refrained from examining other modern English commentaries, and this scrupulousness of independence is intelligible. But it will be hard to find many references to any Johannine literature after 1880, and a work practically at least twenty years old cannot be expected to be as fully equipped as could be desired. It is true, however, to say that Bishop Westcott's Commentary must for many years to come be a landmark in the history of the interpretation of St. John, and that this edition of the Greek is necessarily an improvement on the *Speaker's Commentary*, of which it is a revision.

T. NICKLIN.