

δε ἀπεκρίθη· Ναί, οἰκοδομῶ καὶ τελίσκω· διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ ἦλθον, οἰκοδομῆσαι καὶ τεκτονεῦσαι.

The τέκτων here is a builder, working in wood and stone. The special sense of τεκτονικὴν and τεκτονεῦσαι in the second quotation seems to be the architect's work rather than one department of the builder's work. The entry in a Modern Greek Lexicon is instructive: "τέκτων· A carpenter (for building): overseer of buildings; architect; οἱ (ἐλεύθεροι) τέκτονες the (free)masons."

So far the evidence is equally balanced; and τέκτων in the Gospels may be considered to mean either a builder who included carpentering among his works or a carpenter in the restricted sense. There remains a consideration which seems to weigh down the scales in favour of the wider sense. Wood is and was scarce in Palestine. "Houses were made of bricks or clay; but hewn stone was not uncommon" (*Encyclopædia Biblica*, art. "Handicrafts"). "At the present day clay-bricks are used in the plain, stone in the mountains" (art. "House"). This leads us to suppose that τέκτων in the Gospels unqualified by any material is not restricted to a worker in wood. If our Lord was a builder, passages like Matt. vii. 24-27—the parable of the two houses—and Matt. xvi. 18, "Upon this rock I will build My Church," acquire a new meaning.

In any case our Lord would have been a small master-man, working with His hands but also planning the work and responsible for its success on the business side. He must have bought His materials from merchants and have known the difficulty of financing an enterprise. He must have sent out bills and insisted on their being paid, knowing that otherwise His own responsibilities could not be met. It is suggested that the references to business in the parables are based on personal experience as well as on observation of others. Insisting as a general rule on debtors paying up, He may well have found it wise as well as kind to say to a customer in difficulties: "Take thy bill and write four score." Jesus was the Ideal Business Man as well as the Ideal Workman.

BOOK PRICES

SOME remarks on the price of theological books may interest our readers.

Let us take a book of 250 to 300 pages, of which the publisher, before the war, printed 1,000 copies. The cost of production would have varied with the amount and intricacy of the composition, but might have worked out at 2s. a copy. The publisher's unavoidable expenses, including advertising, could not have been reckoned at less than 25 per cent.—that is, 6d. a copy. Let us suppose the price was fixed at 5s.—economically, it should have been more. The rate of discount to the bookseller would have varied, but if allowance is made for some copies sold to America at a very low price (necessitated by a hostile tariff designed to keep English books out), 33½ per cent. may be taken as an average. The publisher, therefore, got 3s. 4d. for each copy sold. The margin between the cost of production and the proceeds of sales was 3s. 4d. less 2s. 6d.—that is, 10d. a copy. If profits were divided equally between author and publisher, each would get about £20, if all the copies, except those sent for review, etc., were sold. The return was little enough for the author, and quite insufficient for the publisher as an inducement to face the risk of loss.

But 1914 now seems in retrospect a golden age. The same MS. which we have been considering would now cost about 5s., for the composition, which has risen most, is the main ingredient in such a work; 25 per cent. for publisher's expenses brings up the cost of production to 6s. 3d. The published price should be 12s. 6d. if the 1914 proportions are preserved, but the publisher probably argues that the book will not stand more than 10s. The proceeds, if the edition is sold out, amount to 6s. 8d. a copy, so that the margin of profit is practically wiped out. But if 1,000 were sold before the war at 5s., the sale now at 10s. will not exceed 500, owing to the lessening of interest in theological pursuits and the poverty of scholars. The proceeds spread over the whole edition therefore work out at 3s. 4d. a copy, as against a cost of 6s. 3d.

How, then, are theological books being published at all? it may be asked. There is still a market for popular books by good authors. These probably sell better than before the war, because they have fewer competitors. But the average book which cannot expect much circulation has been squeezed out, unless the author is prepared to pay for it. This is a real misfortune. Especially in religious matters, there are always authors willing to pay in order to have their views disseminated. But books published in such circumstances are often less deserving than those written by authors who happen to have no money. A large proportion of the books now being published are issued at their authors' expense. The situation is highly unsatisfactory, and no obvious remedy suggests itself.

Can we Dispense with Christianity? The Question: its Cruz and Implications for the Modern Mind. By F. W. Butler. Student Christian Movement. 5s. net.

There must be a preliminary question, Can we dispense with religion? Those who wish to eliminate religion from human affairs, and to replace it by science or philosophy, will make short work of such a question. For them one religion is as much a complex of truth and superstition as another, and they think that the truth can stand without the help of its religious settings. But there are those for whom religion in some form is still central and basic, and such persons are compelled to come to terms with Christianity in its varied manifestations. Mr. Butler's is one of the numerous contemporary efforts to meet the needs of this class of investigators. Unless we misunderstand him, the gist of his argument is this: "The permanence of Christianity depends upon its place in the scale of valuation of religions. There are certain well-defined human needs which religion satisfies, and religions must be graded according to the degree in which they are competent to meet these needs. The supreme value of Christianity lies in its gospel of the Resurrection—*i.e.*, its confident assertion that the Life embodied in Christ was ultimately triumphant. We need this gospel—the assurance that the fruits of moral struggle do not fail from off the earth. The real alternative is not between Christianity and some other synthesis, but between Christianity and universal doubt."

This, although not by any means the whole of the case, is quite a good point, but we do not know exactly what class of reader will dig it out of Mr. Butler's book. He obscures his moral by a rather "abstract" style, and by a large number of miscellaneous quotations. Perhaps it was a little ambitious to treat his subject in so academic a manner in 200 pages, since the best manuals of the student movement have been those suited for popular reading.

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