

And a wider responsibility still is inculcated by the Epiphany. This season is an eloquent exhortation to missionary zeal and enterprise. It tells us that we must go, like St. Paul, to initiate all the world. The day of secrecy is gone. The holy beneficent illumination is for all. "The darkness is past: the true light now shineth." If our Christianity is according to this great truth, the desire for missionary progress must be ever present with us; and we must long that our native country, its institutions, its tone of thought, the character of its people (alas! that this should be so imperfectly the case) may be "as manifestations of Christ to the Gentiles."

Finally, there is our personal responsibility. If we are true Christians, then a correct description of our life is precisely this, that it is a "manifestation of Christ" to those who are leading heathen lives around us. That many are leading such lives is too palpable. Our anxious desire must be that the light, where-with we have been illuminated, may shine upon them, so that they too may be "light in the Lord." When following such trains of thought as these, we often find our way back again to the Sermon on the Mount. "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

I regard the Epiphany as the Sunrise of the Christian Year. If we take this image vigorously into our minds—if we remember how the sun's rays, at its rising, dart everywhere, how they brighten all Nature, how they raise our spirits, relax the tension of anxious thought, invite us to cheerful views of life, to charitable feeling, to the active discharge of duty—then we shall realize what I have desired to express. The Epiphany "goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about unto the end of it again; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof."<sup>1</sup>

J. S. HOWSON.

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## Reviews.

*The Book of Psalms, with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary.* By G. H. S. JOHNSON, M.A., F.R.S., Dean of Wells; C. J. ELLIOTT, M.A., Hon. Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and Vicar of Winkfield, Berks; F. C. COOK, M.A., Canon and Precentor of Exeter, Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. New and Revised Edition. Reprinted from the Speaker's Commentary. John Murray. 1880.

THE short Notice prefixed to this Volume explains with sufficient clearness the circumstances of its publication. The general interest which was excited by the Notes upon the Psalms which appeared in the fourth volume of "The Speaker's Commentary" called forth numerous

<sup>1</sup> Ps. xix. 6.

applications to the distinguished publisher to reprint this portion of the work in a separate volume with a view to wider circulation. Under these circumstances the authors of the "Commentary" were requested to revise their respective contributions; and at the close of the last year the volume now before us was sent to the press and submitted to the judgment of that large and increasing class of readers who are ready to welcome every new effort to throw light upon the Holy Scriptures, and more especially upon that portion of the sacred volume which has been in all ages the peculiar "treasure-house" of the Church.

It would obviously be impracticable, within the very limited space at our command, to do more than direct attention to some of the salient characteristics of the volume before us. It is important, however, to state distinctly what the reader may *not*, as well as what he may, expect to find in these pages. We have heard, and, if our memory does not deceive us, we have also seen it alleged, as a grave accusation against the "Speaker's Commentary" that it is deficient in one of the most important departments of Biblical exposition—viz., in practical and devotional application. We are far, indeed, from denying that such application of the truths contained in Holy Scripture is, not only of great but of primary importance, and that without it all other exposition of its meaning will fall short of the great end for which the sacred treasure has been committed to earthen vessels. We think, however, that it will be admitted by every duly qualified expositor of Scripture, that in order rightly to apply the Word of God, we must endeavour, by the use of all the means entrusted to us, to arrive at a just conception of the literal and grammatical meaning of the language in which it is clothed. In Devotional Commentaries on Holy Scripture generally, and more especially in Commentaries of this description on the Book of Psalms, we already abound. Until a very recent period, however, little has been done in England to furnish the biblical student with an explanatory and critical commentary upon the text, together with such emendations of the Authorized Version as the scholarship of the nineteenth century has been able to supply. It is this want which the "Speaker's Commentary" was designed to meet; and it is in accordance with its success or failure in this department of biblical criticism that every impartial reader will pronounce judgment upon its merits or defects.

We are indebted to the learned and accomplished Editor for the extremely valuable and comprehensive "Introduction" to the Book of Psalms which is contained in the volume now before us. In this Introduction Canon Cook investigates with much care and candour the amount of authority which is due to the Titles or Inscriptions which are prefixed to one hundred and one of the one hundred and fifty Psalms of which the Psalter is composed. The result of this inquiry is upon the whole favourable to the authenticity of these inscriptions, the free and fearless discussion of which, however, Canon Cook considers to fall within the legitimate province of the biblical critic, and to be altogether outside the question of the supreme authority of Holy Writ.

The remarks of the Editor on the distinctive characteristics of the Psalms of David are entitled to the careful consideration of the reader, and are calculated to throw much light upon the character and personal history of the writer, as well as to impart fresh interest to that large portion of the Psalter which is ascribed to David, and which has supplied a traditional title to the whole of these compositions. The remarks of Canon Cook upon the Psalms which have been referred to the Maccabean age are also entitled to the reader's careful perusal. The result at which the writer arrives is, that whilst it is unjust to regard the modern theory which ascribes many Psalms to this late period as necessarily indicating

any tendency to scepticism, the external and internal evidence is in favour of their earlier composition; and that even in the case of the three Psalms which so orthodox a commentator as Calvin ascribes to the Macabean period—viz., the xlivth, the lxxivth, and the lxxixth, the internal evidence is opposed to the conclusion at which he arrived. The observations of the Editor upon the “ethical teaching” of the Psalter as exhibiting a considerable advance upon that of the Pentateuch, and more particularly his remarks upon the “notices of a future state,” will be read with peculiar interest by the thoughtful biblical student. In regard to the latter subject, Canon Cook observes that the xvth and xviiith Psalms, which even Hitzig allows to belong to the Davidic age, supply conclusive evidence of a deep-rooted belief in the doctrine of a future state at the time of the earliest collection of these writings. We must not fail to notice the equally interesting and important section of the Introduction which deals with the great question of the Messianic interpretation of the Psalms. Whilst justly discriminating between an absolute acceptance or rejection of the ancient and mediæval system of interpretation which saw in every Psalm such distinct utterances of the Spirit of Christ as completely suppressed the individuality of the respective writers, Canon Cook observes that were there “no alternative save that of rejecting the Messianic interpretation altogether, or of applying it throughout, few earnest Christians would hesitate to cast in their lot with those who accepted the latter.” We think that the larger portion of our readers will agree with the learned Editor that there is no necessity for the adoption of either of these alternatives, and that whilst maintaining generally the pervading tone of Messianic anticipation, and in regard to certain of the Psalms, their direct and exclusive reference to Christ, the candid expositor will not fail to recognize, even in many of those Psalms which contain strong and unmistakable reference to the Messiah, many unequivocal indications of personal feelings and many characteristics of a strongly marked individuality.

We refrain from committing ourselves in this extremely difficult subject from acquiescence in every opinion which is expressed by Canon Cook. We do not hesitate, however, to commend his thoughtful and suggestive remarks to the careful consideration of every student of that most important and most deeply interesting portion of the sacred volume which is comprised in the Psalter.

It may prove interesting to our readers if we give a few extracts from this volume by way of illustration, from which they will be enabled to form some conception, however imperfect, of the general character and merits of the work.

Our first extract shall be from the Notes upon the first Psalm. In the note upon the third verse, “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,” &c., Canon Cook refers to Dean Stanley’s suggestion that the allusion may be to the oleander, “a beautiful evergreen with bright red blossoms and dark green leaves, found now only in the valley of the Jordan.” Canon Cook observes in regard to this suggestion that the oleander is an indigenous tree, and not a tree which is “planted,” a word which, as the Editor very justly observes, is used of “the scion of a tree severed from its parent trunk and planted in a spot where it may be carefully tended.” The justice of this remark might be confirmed by reference to Ezekiel xvii. 22, where the same word is used of a young twig cut off from the highest branch of the high cedar and *planted* upon a high mountain. Its importance, in order to a just apprehension of the appropriateness of the comparison, will be apparent when the verse is viewed in connection with the beginning of that which follows: “The ungodly are not so,” and with other places as well in the Psalter, as elsewhere, where the same comparison is found. Thus, *e.g.*, in one of the passages.

to which Canon Cook refers—Jer. xvii. 5-8—the simile, as he observes, is “elaborately drawn out,” and a striking contrast is presented between the indigenous “heath in the desert,” to which the ungodly man is compared, and the “tree *planted* by the waters,” which is selected as the type of “the man that trusteth in the Lord.” We find a similar allusion in Psalm xxxvii. 35, where the beauty of the original is greatly obscured by the adoption of the rendering which we find in the text of the Authorized Version, “a green bay tree,” instead of the more correct marginal rendering, “a tree that groweth in his own soil.” The note of Canon Cook on this place is as follows:—“The margin brings out the true meaning of the Hebrew. The wicked man is described as spreading himself out with rank luxuriance, like an ‘indigenous tree,’ or rather ‘shrub,’ flourishing in its native soil.” The writer goes on to compare this passage with Psalm i. 3, and to suggest that the oleander, the tree to which Dean Stanley thought that the godly man was compared, may be the very tree which the Psalmist had in his mind as a type of the wicked man, inasmuch as it is a *native* shrub “with bright flowers but no fruit, abundance of leaves, but poisonous, growing wild, useless to men, and untended.” After directing the attention of his readers in the note on Psalm i. 3, to the fact that neither Dean Stanley nor Dr. Tristram appear to have observed that the words “that bringeth forth his *fruit* in his season” are singularly inappropriate to the oleander, Canon Cook proceeds thus:—

One evergreen, the palm-tree, carefully tended, still found in the gardens of Jerusalem of old, growing, as the Dean shows, on Olivet, giving probably its name to Bethany, “the house of dates,” and supplying branches for the Feast of Tabernacles (Zech. viii. 15), and for our Lord’s entrance into Jerusalem (John xii. 13), satisfies all the conditions of our text. It is conspicuous for its beauty; it indicates the presence of water; it bears precious fruit, and is a recognized emblem of the righteous man (see Ps. xcii. 12, 13, and compare Tristram “Nat. Hist.” B. p. 384).

Two short extracts from the Notes on the Psalm to which Canon Cook refers will add to the interest of the remarks to which reference has been already made. In the first Note on Psalm xcii. 12: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree”—we read as follows:—

The palm-tree of the Oasis is remarkable for its erect growth, notwithstanding the weight of its produce (*nittur in pondus palma*), its perpetual verdure, its power of putting forth young shoots even in old age, the quantity of the fruit which it bears, and the distance of its foliage from the earth. Growing as it does in places where no other tree is found, it is an image of life in the midst of surrounding death (see Delitzsch *in loc.*).

The Note on the following verse not only corroborates the justice of Canon Cook’s remarks on Psalm i. 3, but throws some light upon other passages of Scripture which have been thought to present considerable difficulty. The verse is as follows: “Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” After noticing that the words may be rendered, “They are planted (or, being planted) in the house of Jehovah, they shall blossom,” &c., the writer continues thus: “Dean Stanley and others are of opinion that certain trees were planted in the courts of the temple. The prohibition of Deut. xvi. 21 seems to refer solely to idolatrous images. It appears also not improbable, considering the heat of the climate, that the court of the tabernacle, and afterwards the courts of the temple, were partially shaded by the foliage of trees. Nor are there wanting passages which seem to support this idea, as Job xxiv. 26, which speaks of the oak, or terebinth, by (or in) the *sanctuary* of the Lord, and Psalm lii. 8, where the Psalmist compares himself to a green olive-tree in the house of the Lord. The righteous

are like trees planted in a good soil ("trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah," Is. lxi. 3). The LXX render *shethulim* (planted) by *πεφωτευμένοι*; the other Greek Versions render it by *μεταφωτευόμενες*, *transplanted*; St. Jerome, *transplantati*. The wicked man, on the contrary, is compared to a tree growing in its own soil. He is indigenous."

We must not conclude our notice of this volume without directing the attention of our readers to the Excursus upon Psalms xci.-c. which is found at the end of it. The object of that Excursus is to adduce some evidence of the coincidence of subject, style, and phraseology, between this series of Psalms and the earlier and later prophecies of Isaiah, more especially the later prophecies, and also to endeavour to determine approximately the date to which this series of Psalms must be assigned. Having alleged the reasons which appear to justify the conclusion that these Psalms must be assigned to a period previous to the dissolution of the monarchy, and that they may reasonably be ascribed to the time of the prophet Isaiah, the writer endeavours to show that if that prophet was not the author of this series of Psalms, there is much stronger ground for the belief that the Psalmist borrowed from the prophet than that a writer of such striking and characteristic originality as the prophet Isaiah borrowed so much of his style and phraseology from the Psalmist. The conclusion which is finally reached is, that if the above chain of reasoning be admitted to be sound, the modern theory of the "second Isaiah" or the "great unknown," which is accepted by many as one of the most clearly established results of the negative school of criticism, must be allowed to be devoid of all solid foundation.

We have already exhausted the space assigned to us for our remarks upon this valuable contribution to our Biblical literature. We can do no more than commend the volume to the perusal, not only of professed biblical students, but also of the large and ever-increasing number of those who are not content with the cursory reading of the Bible, but who desire to attain to an intelligent and comprehensive apprehension of its meaning. Such will find that, in addition to many valuable and important corrections of the renderings of the Authorized Version, and much independent research, a careful and laborious use has been made of the works of the best English and Continental expositors, and that the results of their investigations have been presented in an intelligible and concentrated form to readers who have neither the ability nor the disposition to consult the original authorities.

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## Short Notices.

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*Canonicity.* A Collection of Early Testimonies to the Canonical Books of the New Testament. Based on Kirchofer's "Quellensammlung." By A. H. CHARTERIS, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities in the University of Edinburgh. Pp. 470. Wm. Blackwood & Sons.

A WORK of singular value, based on Kirchofer. It has so grown in the author's hands that it is substantially independent of the "Quellensammlung." With Dr. Charteris it has evidently been a labour of love. For ourselves, we only regret that from lack of space we are unable—at all events, at present—to notice the work as its great merits require. The learned Professor has made good use of all the helps possible; but his judgment and accuracy are as remarkable as his research. In several passages, we observe, he points out the weakness of that—at one time much puffed work—"Supernatural Religion." In