

Kurzgefasster Commentar zu den Heiligen Schriften Alten und Neuen Testaments, sowie zu den
Apocryphen

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Die Psalmen und die Sprueche Salomos

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The Presbyterian Review 10:301-303. [1889]

In the recent debate between Professors Schürer and Zöckler, as the representatives in Germany of liberal and conservative theology, the charge was brought by the former against some commentaries of this series, and especially against those prepared by Zöckler himself, that the results of modern exegesis had been disregarded in the interest of orthodoxy. This charge, whether just or unjust in the case referred to, is certainly not applicable to the work lying before us. Apart from the reverential tone preserved throughout and the laudable absence of that hypercritical tendency, which will at times find its way even into commentaries, the theological position of the authors has but slightly influenced their historical and exegetical views; and many things could be pointed out to which a person of an orthodox turn of mind might take exception. The fact is significant as indicative of the relative meaning of the term orthodox, and as showing that a view considered rather advanced here may be classified as conservative in Germany. With reference to the Psalms Hupfeld's definition of them as "memorials of subjective religiousness" is unconditionally accepted at the outset, and it is more or less owing to this that the objections, which especially from a N.T. standpoint are urged against certain prominent ideas concerning the Psalter, have not been as successfully met as would be desirable. The same conception has also interfered with doing full justice to the Messianic element. Psalms 2 and 110, it is admitted, are directly prophetic; Psalms 45, 72, 22, 69 typically prophetic; and the typically prophetic character of a third class is made dependent on the permanent validity of certain truths or general laws that apply equally to the situation of type and antitype. There can be no objection to the principle of typology, which is everywhere recognized in the N.T. itself; but we cannot, by transferring the prophetic element from the words to the facts that underlie them, avoid the necessity of recognizing it when plainly present. This rule has not always been observed, and in regard to the third class of Messianic Psalms, we may justly question the right of N.T. authors to quote them as such, if the connection between their subject and the Messiah is as loose and vague as indicated above. We cannot admit that in Ps. 22:19, the words, or rather the facts described by the words, were not intended as a prophecy and type from the beginning, and that only afterward the fate of Christ was providentially shaped in complete accordance with them. This must seem to every unprejudiced mind a perversion of the natural order that considers the anti-typical facts as the logical prius of the typical, and conceives of the latter as framed with a view to the former and not the reverse. Nor can we concede that, with reference to the 110th Psalm, Christ's argument drawn from it remains intact and valid, if the Davidic authorship be surrendered. In this case an apologetic interest has driven to a position that is far less consistent and scientific than the rigidly orthodox one.

Of about one half the Psalms that pass under David's name the claim to Davidic authorship is recognized. This view stands midway between that of Ewald and Hitzig on the one hand and that of Delitzsch on the other. The grounds of discrimination lie partly in an alleged dependence on the Book of Job, which is assigned to the last century before the exile, and on Isaiah 40-66, of which

the exilic origin is assumed, while they are partly sought in linguistic evidence and in a discrepancy between the tone and contents of some Psalms and the character of David as it is conceived of, somewhat, perhaps, under the influence of the modern reconstruction of history. It deserves special notice that those Psalms in which such marks of post-exilic origin are said to be traceable, and in which at the same time references are made to a Davidic anointed Prince, are not with Hitzig and others relegated to the times of Syrian supremacy, nor with Delitzsch assigned to some period preceding the exile, but are all transferred to the Persian age subsequent to the captivity. This view has much to recommend it, though it cannot be maintained in the case of Ps. 78, which must have been written before the downfall of the Judean kingdom. Nor can it apply to Ps. 132, where the Anointed One is clearly spoken of as a regular successor of David and the temple seems to be Solomon's. The idea of Maccabean Psalms and the notion of the school of Reuss, that there are no Davidic, and perhaps no pre-exilic Psalms at all, are positively rejected.

By far the greater part of the volume is devoted to the exposition of the Psalms. Of 392 pages 89 constitute the Commentary on Proverbs. The critical statements here do not differ materially, we presume, from those laid down by the author in his Introduction. Probably during the reign of Jehoshaphat some sage collected chs. 10-22:16 and added as introduction chs. 1-9, and as an appendix chs. 22:17-24:22 (the latter not by Solomon). The men of Hezekiah made a second collection from Solomon's proverbs—chs. 25-29. The two collections were afterward combined by some other person, who also inserted ch. 24:23-34. The question of the origin of ch. 30 is left undecided, the obscure words in v. 1 are taken in the appellative sense, and vs. 1-6 are considered not as words of Agur, but as the presumptuous language of some scoffer whom he quotes and afterward refutes. Agur (an Israelite) is assigned to the period after Hezekiah. In ch. 31:1, Massa is made with Hitzig and others a proper noun denoting the kingdom of Lemuel, but no explanation is offered as to how vs. 1-9, if written by a non-Israelite, came to be incorporated in the Hebrew Chokhma. Vs. 10-31 finally are referred to the time of Hezekiah.

Evidently the design of this commentary is not so much to give an exhaustive treatise on all exegetical questions as to serve for a guide in systematic, cursory reading of the Hebrew text. The book undoubtedly satisfies all reasonable demands that, from this point of view, can be made of it. Though offering little that is new or original, it makes a wise selection from what is common property.

In a few instances inaccuracies have crept in. In Ps. 2:7 the "to-day" refers not to the present time in which the Messianic King speaks, but to the time of the promulgation of the divine decree. In Ps. 69:9, "fernstehend" and "fremd" should exchange places. Ps. 73:4, "bands until their death," is with this rendering, necessary, since bands alone cannot be conceived of as bringing about death; but we would prefer the translation "pangs." In Ps. 91:1, the constructions of commentary and translation do not agree. In other places the explanatory notes are somewhat too terse or scant, e.g., Ps. 91:6,7; Ps. 92 from v. 13 onward. Of typographical errors we notice the failing of a Dagshesh on page 107, note c, in the reading of Ben-Asher, and the substitution of a Resh for Daleth on page 164, note e.