

when, according to the predestination of God, the Scriptures were translated into Greek.<sup>1</sup>

The result of our enquiry is that the writer's use of Tradition, attributing it to Moses, and making no distinction between its authority and that of the written Law, proves him to have been a Jew.

His so-called blunder, through the use of the Greek Scriptures, proves him to have been a Hellenist, as does his adoption, as we have seen, of the Hellenist tradition against that of the Palestinian Jews in regard to their treatment of the scape-goat. The minuteness of his acquaintance with Jewish ritual, coupled with the error about the meaning of *πάχια*, which could not have been made by any one whose knowledge had been acquired in the schools, proves him to have been one who, before the destruction of the Temple, must have been an eyewitness of its ceremonies and picked up his information on the spot.

Accordingly, this branch of the internal evidence distinctly corroborates the external testimony, that the writer of the Epistle was Barnabas of Cyprus, the companion of Paul.

JAMES C. MARSHALL.

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### BRIEF NOTICES.

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL, by *Dr. W. Robertson Smith* (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black), is a sequel to the volume of Lectures he published last year under the title *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, and carries down his review of the history of Israel to the close of the eighth century B.C. It is a singularly valuable contribution to popular Biblical literature, and even scholars will read it with

<sup>1</sup> Any one acquainted with Philo, Justin Martyr, and Origen, will understand that even by men of keen intellect, such a piece of gnosis would be deemed deep striking and true, and will be disposed to pardon the exultation with which Barnabas proclaims it.

instruction as well as with enjoyment. Its main value consists, however, not in his exposition of the—as we think, unsound—critical assumption which he has borrowed from Kuenen and Wellhausen, and which is already being superseded by the “higher criticism” of more advanced schools, but in the light it throws on an obscure period of Jewish history by illustrations drawn from the writings of contemporary prophets.

While our most able and learned scholars have eagerly seized on any verifications, illustrations, or expansions of the Sacred Chronicle to be derived from the heathen monuments of antiquity, they have too much neglected a mine of untold value which lay under their hands. For the Prophets, especially the Minor Prophets, and the later Psalms, if critically handled and examined, are capable of yielding facts, illustrations, and suggestions, that would place the history of the centuries which immediately preceded the Captivity, the Captivity itself, and the Return in a most illuminating light. Dr. Smith has seen and seized on part of this unworked historical treasure, and has done much to render it available. For the period he covers in this volume, he has gone far towards reconstructing the Hebrew story, at least for the general reader. And while thus clarifying and enriching the history of that time, he has also given us an informal but most valuable Introduction to the writings of the prophets Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, an Introduction much more helpful than most of those prefixed to formal commentaries on their Writings. No attentive reader of his Lectures can rise from a study of them without having possessed himself of many new and striking conceptions of the prophetic work, and of what manner of men they were who were called to that work. He will find, above all, that four picturesque and most impressive figures have been added to his portrait gallery, in Amos, the untrained but eloquent and resolute shepherd of the desert; in the amiable and pensive Hosea, whose sorely tried and all-enduring love—which did not “alter where it alteration found, nor bend with the remover to remove,” but shone on like a stedfast star upon the bark beneath, driven by the winds and tossed,—revealed to him the unchanging fidelity of the love of God; in Isaiah, the polished and accomplished statesman, whose political sagacity never failed him, because it was based on the great moral principles by which the world is ruled; and in Micah, the fierce democrat, who denounced the nobles of Israel, with their lusts, luxuries, and

oppressions, as the worst enemies of the chosen race, and who saw in a return to the simplicity, the plain living and high thinking, of ancient times the only hope of their redemption.

ONESIMUS. *Memoirs of a Disciple of St. Paul.* By the Author of *Philochristus*. (London: Macmillan & Co.) Fictions founded on and intended to illustrate New Testament History are seldom written by men of first-rate capacity and scholarship, and seldom therefore repay the trouble of reading them, or atone for the offence they give to certain sensitive and devout minds. Even *Philochristus*, though the work of a rare mind rarely accomplished, had to overcome an instinctive objection in many of those who most admired it, but who shrank uneasily from a story of which the Son of Man was the hero, and from that blending of fact with imagination which such a story involves. Most of them, no doubt, were reconciled to what at first they felt to be a kind of irreverence when they found that the Author used his imaginary framework of invented circumstance only to place the facts of the Gospel history in a clearer light. But in reading *Onesimus*, which is a kind of sequel to *Philochristus*, they will not meet with even this momentary drawback to their pleasure and instruction. No halo of more than mortal dignity hangs round the slave of Philemon, the convert of St. Paul. Tradition, it is true, makes him a bishop; but even bishops are but men. And certainly no one can read this story without learning much of the Christian revolution of the Apostolic age. In pure, simple, stately English, such as few writers of the present day can command, the Author tells the story of Onesimus, filling in the known details of his career with details so well imagined as that they commend themselves to us by a kind of inherent probability, and one feels that, if they are not true, at least they ought to be true. In short, one might read many grave treatises and commentaries without gaining from them so vivid an impression of the moral and social conditions of the men to whom the Christian Faith made its first appeal, or of the way in which it met their needs, and drew and held their hearts.

Much praise has been lavished on the artistic verisimilitude of the story here told, in all which, with a single qualification, we can heartily join. We doubt whether the tone and atmosphere of the story are not those of the second century after Christ rather than those of the first. That, however, would be a trifling fault, did it

not spring from what, with the most sincere respect for the Author, we hold to be a grave and serious error. The simple fact is that both *Philochristus*, and *Onesimus* are stories *with a purpose*, and a purpose which should be worked out in solid argument, if that be possible, rather than suggested by touch after touch in artistic fictions. That our canonical Gospels are of a much later date than is commonly assigned to them, and that hence there was plenty of time between the utterance of the original Gospel and our written reports of it for myths to gather round the person of our Lord, for metaphors to harden into literal facts, and for fulfilments of ancient prophecies to be read into the Tradition handed down by the Apostles, is, no doubt, a critical hypothesis which admits of being argued, although it is now being renounced by the very School which invented it; but it is an hypothesis so questionable in itself, and so evidently dictated by an aversion to the supernatural element in the written Gospels, that it ought not to be assumed as the substructure of works of art, and taken for granted where the very grave objections to it cannot be met. What we hold to be the fair and true statement of this difficult question will be found in an essay on *The Oral and Written Gospels* contributed by *Peloni Almoni* to the present number of *The Expositor*. We need not, therefore, dwell upon it here. Nor, indeed, do we see what the Author of *Onesimus* would gain even if he could prove the point which he assumes. For unless he could also prove that St. Paul's greatest Epistles were not written by him, and do not fall in the second half of the first century, it would still be obviously true that the Apostles held miracles, and above all the Resurrection of Christ, to be of the very stuff and substance of the original Gospel; and if he should ever attempt to prove that, he would stand absolutely alone, with the whole band of critics, sceptical as well as orthodox, against him.

With this one drawback, however, we can cordially commend this most beautiful and instructive story, a story which, its critical assumption notwithstanding, breathes a spirit so catholic and devout that we fail to comprehend how any one should read it without being the happier, the wiser, and the better for it.

S. Cox.

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