

NOTES ON COMMENTARIES.

2. JOB TO SOLOMON'S SONG (*concluded*).

I HAVE recently received from the publishers a Commentary on Books III. and IV. of the Psalter (Psalms lxxiii.-cvi.), by Messrs. Jennings and Lowe, which is not, I fancy, nearly so well known as it deserves to be.¹ At all events, I had not so much as heard of it till a few weeks ago, and even yet, for there is no preface to the volume, I am not aware whether or not these scholars have published any exposition of the earlier books. It is a cheap and compact little volume, admirably arranged and printed, and will prove of very special value to the student of Hebrew, since it deals very clearly and simply with the grammatical constructions and difficulties; and of hardly inferior value to the scholar, to whom grammar presents few difficulties, since it leans, as a rule, to the traditional and Rabbinical interpretations. These interpretations, however, are handled in a sober thoughtful way, their frequent extravagance being corrected by the sound good sense which characterizes English scholarship. And to have these ancient and Rabbinical readings, renderings, explanations, and comments brought within easy reach, will be no small boon to many a student and scholar who lives remote from libraries and can only, at the best, have occasional access to Targums, Talmuds, and Rabbinical commentaries. Even the purely English reader will find much in it that will repay careful perusal and examination.

With another Commentary on the Psalms I have been much disappointed, that of Dr. Kay.² Seeing it cited now and then by good authors, I hoped to have found it very serviceable. Candour compels me to say that neither does the translation commend itself to my taste nor do the notes to my judgment.

Perhaps I may be permitted to add that I have myself written an Exposition of the "Songs of Degrees," which has met with a very cordial reception from the critics.³ My leading aim in it was to put these tiny gems of song in their true historical setting, and so to bring out not only their real historical sense, but also the poetic beauty and the spiritual wisdom with which they are rife.

On the *Book of Proverbs* we possess two Commentaries of great

¹ "The Psalms. With Introductions and Critical Notes." By A. C. Jennings, B.A., and W. H. Lowe, M.A. Macmillan and Co.

² "The Psalms, Translated from the Hebrew; with Notes, chiefly Exegetical." By William Kay, D.D. Rivingtons.

³ "The Pilgrim Psalms." By Samuel Cox. Daldy, Isbister, and Co.

worth : the first, that of Delitzsch,¹ a translation of which has only just been published ; the second, that of Professor Plumptre, published in Vol. IV. of "The Speaker's Commentary." That of Delitzsch, besides being marked by the admirable features which characterize all his work, and to which I have so often referred already, shews even more than his usual learning and erudition. It is a noble exposition of a most difficult Scripture. Like his Commentary on Job, moreover, it is enriched by valuable notes from the learned pens of Professor Fleischer and Dr. Wetzstein. The one drawback to its general use arises simply from the fact that Delitzsch has lavished his stores of learning and reading upon it with even a more liberal hand than he is wont to do : and hence, apart from some familiarity with Hebrew, and even with Arabic and Syriac, the student is likely to be constantly arrested and perplexed. If he be innocent of Oriental tongues, let him betake himself to the admirable Commentary of Professor Plumptre. He will find there exactly what he requires—the results of learning set forth with conspicuous ability and good sense. It is one of the best specimens of popular exegesis and exposition we possess.²

The best Commentaries on *Ecclesiastes* and *Solomon's Song*, of which I have any knowledge, are the well-known works of Dr. Ginsburg (published by Longmans), albeit they are not written in the most flowing or idiomatic English. To those who mean *work*, who have set themselves to master these scriptures, they can hardly be too highly commended. A volume entitled "The Quest of the Chief Good,"³ based on Dr. Ginsburg's Commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, but also adding, it is hoped, something of its own—especially a readable translation and modern illustrations of the various moods of thought set forth in this ancient Scripture—may also be mentioned as likely, perhaps, to be useful to the general reader.

EDITOR.

¹ "Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon." By Franz Delitzsch. Vols. I. and II. Edinburgh : T. and T. Clark.

² "The Holy Bible, with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary, and a Revision of the Authorized Translation." By Bishops and other Clergy of the Anglican Church. Edited by Canon Cook. London : John Murray.

³ "The Quest of the Chief Good ; or, Expository Lectures on the Book Ecclesiastes, with a New Translation. By Samuel Cox." A Commentary for Laymen. Daldy, Isbister, and Co.