

Note on the "Critical Notes" of Dr. J. P. Peters.

PROF. T. K. CHEYNE.

OXFORD, ENGLAND.

A BRIEF note may be permitted on Dr. J. P. Peters's interesting and to some extent helpful paper of "Critical Notes" in the last number of the JOURNAL. It would seem from it that the learned writer is forming a critical theory to account for the Psalter, and I can only hope that he will go on, and furnish us with such a many-sided theory as the case demands, confirmed by evidence internal and external, historical, linguistic, and exegetical, and by its agreement with sure results of Old Testament criticism.

Dr. Peters's previous contributions to scholarship, however, justify the expectation that his theory will not be deficient in originality, and that he will make demands on the indulgence of his readers. I think, therefore, that he would act wisely in avoiding unnecessary brusqueness of style, and that he may well be on his guard in referring to the opinions of others. On page 57 he gives a wrong impression of the theory offered in my *Origin of the Psalter*; and his account needs to be corrected in accordance with the last two sentences of paragraph 1 on page 119 of that work. I am sure that this error is quite involuntary, and equally sure that Dr. Peters has in reserve arguments for his own theories which will commend themselves more than his present ones to some less daring scholars.

I have myself hitherto received but little help from other critics in the solution of the problems of the Psalter, and would gladly receive suggestions. Professor Briggs gave a tantalizing hint in the *North American Review*; Professor Budde made a suggestion on Ps. cxxxvii., based on his (I venture to think) greatly over-pressed *K'tna*-theory, which, however, I could not find very probable; and Professor Robertson Smith in the new edition of his *Old Testament in the Jewish Church* restated his old theory on Ps. xliv., lxxiv., and lxxix., more completely and persuasively. That is the sum total of recent help. If Dr. Peters in his article (which I have not yet

read) on the Development of the Psalter, in the *New World* for July, has made a few more contributions to constructive criticism, I can hardly doubt that some of them will be less difficult than those which he has made on pages 57-60.

With regard to his note on 2 Sam. i. 21, has he not anticipated his principal suggestion (that on שררה) elsewhere? or has he been anticipated by Friedrich Delitzsch? I have no books at hand to enable me to answer my own question. But what he says on pages 54-56 strikes me as strangely familiar.

I am glad he has abandoned the difficult rendering 'great dismay' for קצף קדול in 2 Kings iii. 27; that rendering was one of a number which I have queried in my copy of his *Scriptures*.

The suggestions on passages in Ezekiel are decidedly helpful; that on the διαγεγραμμέναι of Ezek. xlii. 3 LXX. seems brilliant, though it is strange that this should be the only instance of such a note. For more such suggestions, and for any Assyriological help Dr. Peters can give us, we shall all be sincerely grateful.

T. K. CHEYNE.

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P.S. — As an instance of the danger of analytic criticism of the Psalms, I may notice that Mr. E. I. Fripp (who has done better service in the analysis of Genesis) actually proposes to bisect Ps. xxiii. (review of Kuenen and Driver in *Jewish Quarterly Review*). I do not, of course, refuse to analyze the Psalms, but I should not like to follow Mr. Fripp, or even Dr. Peters. The grounds for analysis must be very clear.

There may even be imbedded pre-exilic fragments in the Psalter, as I have said before Dr. Peters; but this ingenious scholar has not, I fear, in his present paper, produced such. It still seems to me critically a bare possibility that such fragments may exist.