

THE PSALMS IN THE JEWISH CHURCH

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The psalms in the Jewish church by W. O. E. Oesterley

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W. O. E. OESTERLEY

**THE PSALMS IN THE
JEWISH CHURCH**

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JEWISH CHURCH

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BY THE REV.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

AN apology is perhaps needed for writing a book on the *Psalms*, a subject which has been so admirably treated by a number of the most eminent scholars, which has been approached from almost every conceivable standpoint, and which, therefore, embraces a literature which is already exceedingly voluminous. The writer's apology must be that, in spite of all that has been written, there is one aspect of the subject which, he ventures to think, has not been sufficiently taken into consideration, namely the *Jewish*. The attempt is, therefore, made in the following pages to give some idea of the place which the Psalms have occupied, and do now occupy, in the Jewish Church. This, it is true, involves touching upon some subjects which have been far better treated by other writers; but in dealing with the place and use of the Psalms among the Jews, such topics as their musical accompaniment, their poetical structure, etc., can scarcely be left out of account. The author has, however, sought to lay more stress on matters which are, as a rule, not dealt with, or only incidentally touched upon, in Commentaries on the Psalms, and the like. Excepting in the case of the introductory chapter and the final one, use has been

•§ Prefatory Note.

made, in the main, of Jewish authorities, a fact which, it is hoped, may make the book useful to some who have not access to this class of literature ; thus, the information to be gained from Mishnic tractates and from Midrashic works has been freely utilised, while the works of modern Jewish scholars, both German and English, have afforded the writer a great deal of help.

For one who is not a Jew either by race or religion to take upon himself the task of discussing the Jewish use of the Psalms may appear presumptuous ; but the sympathy engendered by personal intercourse with Jews, interest in Jewish institutions, and the study of Jewish literature, can to some extent qualify a Christian to write on things Jewish, even though in many respects he may feel the want of more adequate knowledge.

The writer desires to express his hearty thanks to the Rev. G. E. Friedlander, minister of the Western Synagogue, for a number of details which were of much help in writing Chapter IX., "The Psalms in the Modern Synagogue" ; also to Miss Dampier for supplying him *data* regarding the use of the Psalms in the Sephardic Ritual. Thanks are also due to the Rev. Sir W. Robertson Nicoll for permitting the writer to reprint his "Commentary on Psalm xci." from the *Expositor*.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

Hatch End, Middlesex,
October, 1910.

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