

**THE SONG OF SONGS. A
REVISED TRANSLATION
WITH INTRODUCTION AND
COMMENTARY. [1862]**

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The Song of Songs. A Revised Translation with Introduction and Commentary. [1862] by
Joseph Francis Thrupp

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A REVISED TRANSLATION

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE object of this volume is to unfold the meaning of one of the least appreciated portions of Holy Scripture. It is hoped that neither the necessary references to the original Hebrew, nor the discussion, which can be passed over at pleasure, of the principal counter-theories of interpretation, will render it less acceptable to the majority of readers. It seemed undesirable, in the interest of the truth, to leave room for suspicion that the traditional interpretation of the Song, howsoever it might have ministered to the edification of nearly fifty generations of Christians, would not be borne out by the results of the investigations of modern scholarship. I have therefore sought throughout to build on the surest attainable foundation. That I have written to the best of my own judgment, not defending received

opinions simply because they were received, the opening section of the Introduction will shew. But as it is in reference to the manner in which the Song should be interpreted that the authority of the general consent of the Christian Church will carry most weight, so also am I firmly persuaded that the conclusions of sober criticism will here be found to accord with the traditions of Christian teaching; and that the more closely the Song be examined, the less compatible will its language and structure prove with any other theme than that of the mutual love of the Incarnate Son of God and his redeemed Church.

The use made by me of the labours of others, of whatever critical school, will sufficiently appear in the course of the work itself; which I now humbly commend to Almighty God in the hope that it may in some measure serve to the promotion of his glory.

BARRINGTON VICARAGE, ROYSTON,
November 1862.

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THE SONG OF SONGS.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1.

THE Hebrew title of this Book is שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים
לְשִׁלְמוֹהַ אֲשֶׁר אֲשֶׁר *Shir hash-shirim asher li-Shelomoh*,
E. V. "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

The authenticity of this title has been by many called in question on the ground that it contains the relative אֲשֶׁר in its full and usual form, instead of the provincialism, archaism, vulgarism, or abbreviation, אֲשֶׁ, which is uniformly employed throughout the Song itself. But it can hardly be deemed unnatural that the idiom of the title should here not conform to that of the Song. And the argument to the prejudice of the title derived from this circumstance is more than counterbalanced by the argument for its authenticity furnished by the homœophony of the words אֲשֶׁר and שִׁיר (*asher* and *shir*), homœophony of a kind of which we have throughout the Song many examples (see on i. 3).

The earlier part of the title denotes "the best or most excellent of songs."

The latter part has been almost universally understood as ascribing the authorship of the Song to Solomon; and it must be admitted, from a comparison of the superscriptions of the psalms, &c. that this is the obvious and *primâ facie* interpretation of its meaning.

The internal evidence of the Song itself does not, however, when fairly weighed, confirm us in the conclusion that Solomon should be viewed as the author.

We know, in the first place, that it has generally pleased God to set apart the fittest human instruments for the different branches of his earthly work. In most books of Scripture there is an evident native harmony between the prophet and the message which he was commissioned to deliver, between the writer and the theme which he was selected to illustrate. Does it then appear from all that can be gathered of the character of Solomon, that he was the man to whom the execution of the Song of Songs was likely to be divinely entrusted?

Some qualifications for the task may indeed be fairly conceded to him. Such were his taste for the beauties of nature, and his scientific acquaintance with those natural objects, animate and inanimate, whence many of the images of the Song are drawn. Such also were his taste for all kinds of artificial magnificence, and the familiarity with such magnificence which he was enabled to acquire by reason of the wealth at his command. On these points the upholders of the Solomonic author-