

the editor. Next, the growing maturity of his biblical scholarship made him less and less disposed to acquiesce in provisional conclusions. And lastly, such constant progress was being made by students in the power of assimilating critical results that it seemed prudent to wait till biblical articles, thoroughly revised and recast, should have a good chance of still more deeply influencing the student world.

The waiting-time was filled up, so far as other occupations allowed, by pioneering researches in biblical archæology, some of the results of which are admirably summed up in that fruitful volume entitled *The Religion of the Semites* (1889). More and more Robertson Smith, like other contemporary scholars, saw the necessity of revising old work on the basis of a more critical, and, in a certain sense, more philosophical treatment of details. First of all, archæological details had their share—and it was bound to be a large share—of this scholar's attention. Then came biblical geography—a subject which had been brought prominently into notice by the zeal of English explorers, but seemed to need the collaboration of English critics. A long visit to Palestine was planned for the direct investigation of details of biblical geography, and though this could not be carried out, not a little time was devoted to the examination of a few of the more perplexing geographical problems and of the solutions already proposed (see e.g. *APHK*, below, col. 191 f.). This care for accuracy of detail as a necessary preliminary to a revision of theories is also the cause of our friend's persistent refusal to sanction the republication of the masterly but inevitably provisional article *BIBLE* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, to which we shall return later. The reader will still better understand the motive of that refusal if he will compare what is said on the Psalter in that article (1875) with the statements in the first edition of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1880), in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article *PSALMS* (1885), and in the second edition of *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1892).

It is only just, however, to the true 'begetter' of this work to emphasise the fact that, though he felt the adequate realisation of his idea to be some way off, he lost no time in pondering and working out a variety of practical details—a task in which he was seconded by his assistant editor and intimate friend, Mr. J. S. Black. Many hours were given, as occasion offered, to the distribution of subjects and the preparation of minor articles. Some hundreds of these were drafted, and many were the discussions that arose as to the various difficult practical points, which have not been without fruit for the present work.

In September, 1892, however, it became only too clear to Prof. Smith that he was suffering from a malady which might terminate fatally after no very distant term. The last hope of active participation in his long-cherished scheme of a Bible Dictionary had well-nigh disappeared, when one of the present editors, who had no definite knowledge of Prof. Smith's plan, communicated to this friend of many years' standing his ideas of what a critical Bible Dictionary ought to be, and inquired whether he thought that such a project could be realised. Prof. Smith was still intellectually able to consider and pronounce upon these ideas, and gladly recognised their close affinity to his own. Unwilling that all the labour already bestowed by him on planning and drafting articles should be lost, he requested Prof. Cheyne to take up the work which he himself was compelled to drop, in conjunction with the older and more intimate friend already mentioned. Hence the combination of names on the title-page. The work is undertaken by the editors as a charge from one whose parting message had the force of a command.