

**The Exiles' Book of Consolation Contained in Isaiah XL-LXVI:**  
A Critical and Exegetical Study. By ED. KÖNIG, M.A.,  
D.D. Translated from the German by Rev. J. A. Selbie,  
M.A. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. Pp. 218. \$1.50.

The critical questions connected with Isaiah, chaps. 40-66, have been keenly debated during the past five years. Professor König has been one of the latest and most active in this contest. About two-thirds of this book appeared in two articles published in the *Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift* in 1898, but the material has been thoroughly revised for this English edition.

The first question taken up is whether the "Ebed-Yahweh" passages (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12) constitute a vital part of the narrative of chaps. 40-66. After a very minute examination of a multitude of questions involved in this discussion, the author reaches the conclusion that these passages sustain such a living and definite relation to their contexts that their divorcement cannot be considered as warranted or legitimate. They do not in any sense disturb the unity of chaps. 40-66.

The next question to engage attention is the probable date of these chapters. Were they partially or wholly post-exilic? The reply to this question carries the author into an elaborate dissection of the arguments of Sellin, who has decided that these portions of Isaiah should be dated from 515-500 B. C., *i. e.*, entirely after the return from the exile. The positions also of Ley, Laue, Bertholet, and Kittel receive their dues at his hand. His detailed examination results as follows: "The only conclusion I can arrive at is as follows: . . . . Isa. 40-55 is exilic, neither post-exilic nor eschatological, and in all probability the same holds good also for the *grand Passional*, Isa. 52:13-53:12; this, too, has for its background the sufferings of the exile; it is neither post-exilic nor timeless" (p. 153). This carries with it the conclusion that Babylonia was the place of composition, and that the conditions of Israel in exile supplied the basis for the prophet's words. "We must see the existence, the activity, and the fortunes of that Israel which in faith, in work, and in suffering was true to its God, *only* a type, but *really* a type of the spiritual and suffering Messiah" (p. 171). The author finds no direct Messianic predictions in the *grand Passional*, nor, for that matter, in any of the 40-66 passages.

The principal ideas of the exiles' book of consolation are (1) the sovereignty of Israel's God over nature and history, (2) the servant

Israel shall extend the salvation of Yahweh to the ends of the earth, (3) the righteous and the wicked shall both be yet duly recompensed.

A careful reading of the book leaves a strange impression. If one admits Professor König's premises, he will fall in with his conclusions. If he parts company with him, he can, by the same skilful handling of words, reach the conclusions of the men whom he (the author) combats.

This is one more addition, and by no means an insignificant one, to the already voluminous literature on the literary aspects of Isa. 40-66. We are now ready for a work which shall devote at least a proportionate share of its space to the discussion of the religious features of these majestic chapters.

The translator has done his work well, though some of the author's German sentences have managed to get into English dress.

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