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CRITICAL NOTICES.

E. G. KING ON "THE INFLUENCE OF THE
TRIENNIAL CYCLE UPON THE PSALTER."

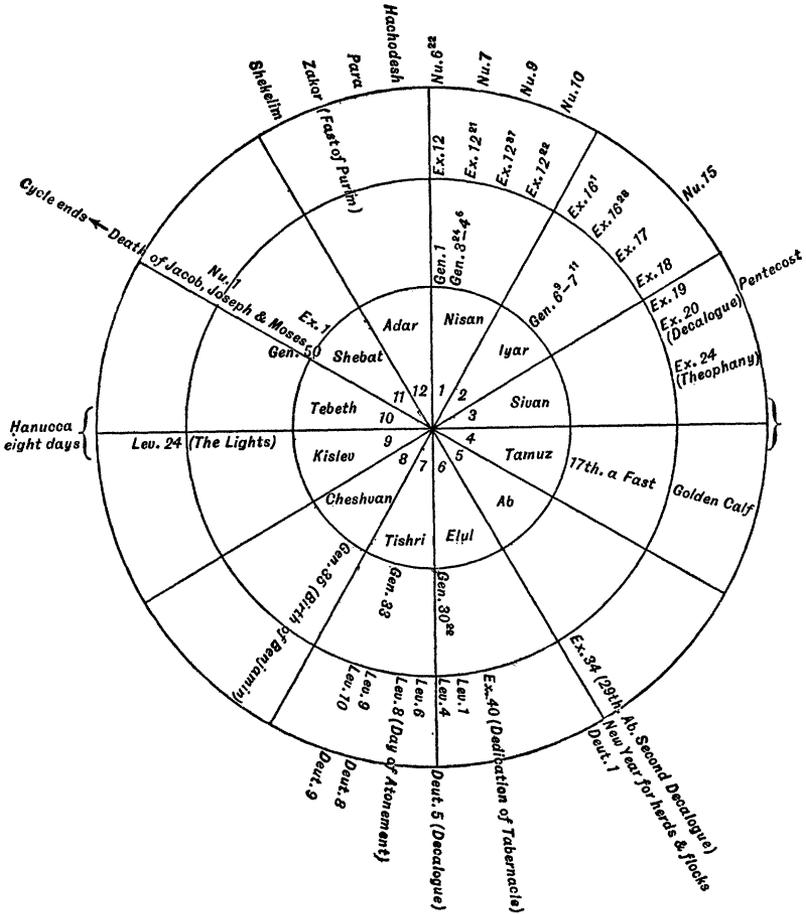
IN the January number of the *Journal of Theological Studies* Dr. E. G. King has an important essay on the above subject. The two clever diagrams which are here reproduced will explain Dr. King's theory, and he, together with the editors of the *Journal* named, are cordially thanked for permission to use the blocks of the diagrams. Dr. King has made a most welcome and original contribution to the literary history of the Psalter.

The first diagram explains the division of the Pentateuch into Sedarim on the triennial system. Dr. King follows the lines ably laid down by Prof. Büchler in this REVIEW (Vol. VI). The readings in the three years are represented by three concentric circles, and the cycle, as Prof. Büchler urged, is taken as beginning on Nisan 1. Dr. King shows (like Prof. Büchler before him) that the triennial cycle accords in a really striking manner with Jewish traditions; many incidents traditionally associated with certain dates are found to come round in the cycle to the very dates assigned by tradition. These precise dates were evolved by the Rabbis from the cycle of Sabbath-readings; that is the theory, and it is certainly very probable in the light of the facts.

Dr. King has accepted Prof. Büchler's results and has added original points of his own. Some of the most important new points must be cited. "In the first year of the cycle the readings from Genesis would have reached chap. xi, i. e. the Story of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues, at the season of Pentecost. Now it is certain that the writer of Acts ii associated the Confusion of Tongues with the Day of Pentecost, the Gift of the Spirit being a reversal of the curse of Babel." This is a very notable coincidence indeed. Again, in the second year of the cycle the Decalogue is read on Pentecost—whence, as Dr. Büchler suggested, the traditional association with Pentecost of the Giving of the Law. It is curious too that Exodus xxxiv comes round to the 29th of Ab, exactly eighty days after the 6th of Sivan

(Pentecost), and the eighty days are accounted for by the two periods of forty before and after the sin of the Golden Calf. Now Exodus xxxiv "will be found to contain the elements of a second Decalogue by J, originally independent of the Decalogue by E in Exodus xx. Thus the 29th of Ab practically marks a second Giving of the Law, and we

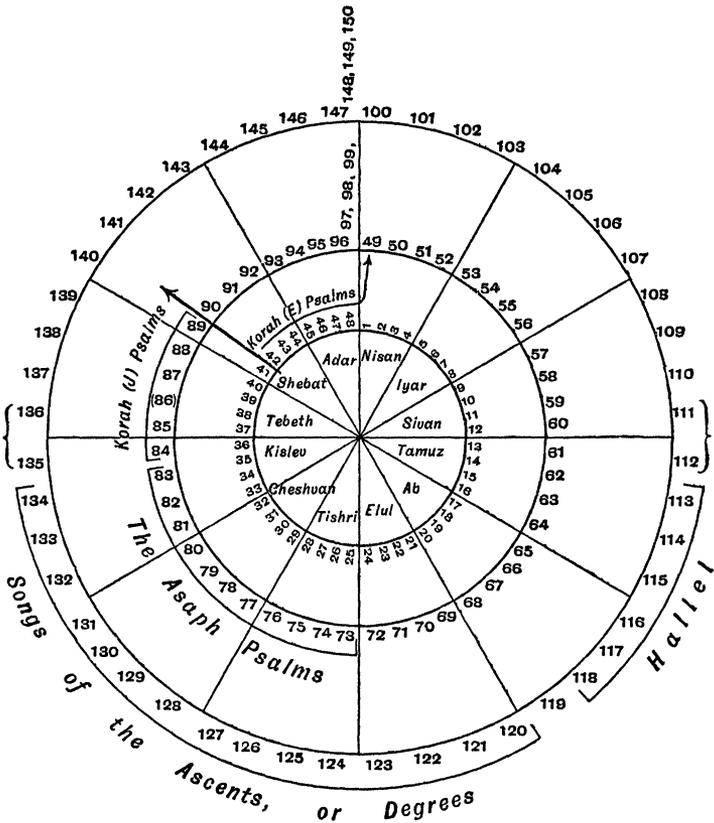
TABLE I.



may note the fact that, in the third year of the cycle, Deuteronomy began on that day." The objection to this suggestion is that it proves too much. It would mean that the triennial cycle very much affected the arrangement of the Pentateuch, and this is hardly tenable. Also the argument seems to imply two inconsistent principles : one that the accidents of the cycle affected certain traditional

dates, the other that the accidents of traditional dates affected the cycle. It is remarkable, however, that the Decalogue should be read on the 1st of Elul in the third year of the cycle, and the 1st of Elul was a New Year (Mishnah, *Rosh Hashana*, I. i). What is most significant is that Genesis ended (with the death of Jacob and Joseph) on the first Sabbath in Shebat, and that Leviticus also ended on this same Sabbath.

TABLE II.



If we now turn to the second diagram we have Dr. King's attempt to arrange the Psalter for a triennial cycle of 147-150 Sabbaths. Here Dr. King's success is very remarkable. He certainly gives us very strong ground for believing that the *arrangement* of the Psalter was influenced by the triennial cycle. Dr. King does not claim more than this. "I have no thought of suggesting," he writes, "that the Psalms were originally written for consecutive Sabbaths, but I do

maintain that certain groups of Psalms belonged to certain definite points of the Calendar, that the triennial cycle was a natural development of this earlier thought, and that this triennial cycle was known to the editor who arranged the Psalter in Five Books."

Beginning the cycle as before with Nisan, it is seen that "the first and third Books of the Psalter end in Shebat, exactly as the first and third Books of the Pentateuch end in Shebat." Further, "the second Book of the Psalter ends (Ps. lxxii) at the close of Elul, exactly as the second Book of the Pentateuch ends at the close of Elul." The benediction, as Dr. King ingeniously urges, Psalm lxxii. 19, obtains a new meaning if compared with Exod. xl. 34, read on the same day. Again the *Asaph* Psalms (lxxiii-lxxxiii) begin at the season of the Feast of *Asiph* in the seventh month, when in the first year of the cycle Gen. xxx. 22 ff. was read, which tells of the birth of Joseph, and derives the name from the root *Asaph*. Dr. King had already urged the connexion on independent grounds, and his argument is thus strangely if not strongly confirmed. Very noteworthy indeed is the fact brought out by a comparison of Diagrams I and II with regard to Ps. xc. This Psalm comes at the very time which tradition assigned to the death of Moses, and was read on or about the Sabbath on which Deut. xxxiii was read. The heading of Ps. xc, "A Prayer of Moses the man of God" (almost identical with Deut. xxxiii. 1), is thus for the first time plausibly accounted for. For this, if for no other reason, Dr. King's theory deserves respectful consideration from Biblical students. Equally strong is Dr. King's further contention that the group of Psalms xc-c has been influenced by Deut. xxxii-xxxiii which were read at the same season. Dr. King is thus applying a new and enlightening principle to the criticism of the Psalms. Further, "the Kingship of God is characteristic of the Korah Psalms exactly as it is of the group xc-c. But if we turn to Table II we shall see that the Elohist Korah Psalms xlii-xlix occupy exactly the same place in the *first* year of the cycle that the Psalms xc-c do in the *second* year, while Pss. cxliv-cl, which were sung in the *third* year of the cycle, also speak of the New Song and of the Kingship of God (cxlv. 1, cxlvi. 10); and this too at a time when, in the order of the *Sedarim*, the Song of Moses, which is the *locus classicus* for the Kingship of God, was recited." Can all this be accident, asks Dr. King. It is not perhaps accident, but some of it is a little forced.

More plausible than the last two points is, as it seems to me, the coincidence that the fifteen Songs of Ascents, the Pilgrim Psalms (cix-cxxxiv) occupy the fifteen Sabbaths from 1st Elul to Hanucca. "Thus, in the third year of the triennial cycle, these Psalms would

be the Sabbath Psalms in the Temple during those very months in which the constant processions of pilgrims were bringing the first-fruits." Again, there is a tradition (T. B. *Megilla*, 31 b) that the Pentateuchal "curses" were read in connexion with the Decalogue (at Pentecost and Rosh Hashana). The two Psalms of Imprecation (lxi and cix, see Acts i. 20) come the one immediately after 29th Ab, the other immediately after Pentecost. Again, the similarity between the closing Psalms of Book I and the closing Psalms of Book II, which are penitential in character, is explained by Dr. King on his theory, for these Psalms come at Penitential periods in the cycle: Pss. xxii and lxi-lxxii in Elul just before the New Year, and so forth. Here one feels that Dr. King is on doubtful ground, for surely the first book of Psalms was arranged on the principle of grouping together the oldest Psalms. The cycle can hardly have affected this grouping.

Without following Dr. King into his further suggestion of a Psalm-cycle beginning, not as the triennial cycle did in Nisan, but on the second Sabbath in Shebat, enough has been said to indicate the importance and plausibility of his theory. That there was "something in it" was clear enough from Prof. Büchler's investigations. Dr. King has greatly strengthened the case. Students of the Bible owe him their thanks for having placed before them a new principle of criticism which has had fruitful results in Dr. King's hands and may have further results in store.

I. ABRAHAMS.

F. R. TENNANT ON THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN.

The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin, by F. R. TENNANT, M.A., B.Sc. (Cambridge: at the University Press. 1903.)

IN this well-written and learned treatise, Mr. Tennant enunciates sound conclusions with regard to the Jewish attitude on the problems of the Fall and of Original Sin. He is to be specially congratulated on his emancipation from Weber, and Rabbinic studies must gain enormously from the fact that Christian theologians of the rank of Dr. Porter of Yale, and Mr. Tennant of Cambridge, are determined to work independently of such unsafe guides as have previously been accepted as infallible. Mr. Tennant's book is thus doubly welcome. It is intrinsically very good, and extrinsically it is epoch-making in that it marks another stage in the adoption of a truly critical and