The metaphors of St. Paul

Howson J S
THE UNIVERSITY

OF

Metaphors of St. Paul.

AND

Companions of St. Paul.

BY JOHN S. HOWSON, D. D.,
DEAN OF CHESTER.

INTRODUCTION
BY PROF. H. B. HACKETT, D.D.

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.
Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by
THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington
INTRODUCTION.

The name of Dr. Howson, author of the tracts in this volume, needs no introduction to American readers. His writings, especially his "Life and Epistles of Paul" and his "Hulsean Lectures on the Character of Paul," have made him as well known in this country as in England. Even in these more elaborate works he has shown a rare faculty of so treating his subjects as to interest and instruct readers of every class.

The tracts here published are an outgrowth of these more extended studies to which we have referred. The one on the "Metaphors of Paul" consists of papers first published in the "Sunday Magazine" in England (1866–67), and republished at the instance of the present writer in the American "Theological Eclectic" (1867–68). The papers were subsequently brought together by the author himself in a book form and published in England in 1870. They are reprinted here from that edition.

The contents are adapted to the wants of the general reader, as well as of the student and the
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preacher. The "Metaphors" of Paul are a part of his writings that specially need such illustration. The Apostle James derives his most expressive figures from natural objects, or from permanent aspects of human life and experience;¹ and hence they are readily understood without comment or explanation in every age and by every people. The Apostle Paul has taken his imagery largely from local customs and national usages which for us have passed away; and hence the allusions to them can be fully understood only as the things themselves are explained and set before us by vivid representation. This service Dr. Howson has performed for us in an admirable manner. He gives us not tedious archaeological details; but just the requisite kind and amount of information concerning the military and agricultural usages of the Greeks and Romans, their style of architecture, and the contests of the gymnasium and stadium; and thus we are enabled to see and feel almost as eye-witnesses the force of his illustrations drawn from such sources. The study of Paul's Metaphors as unfolded in these pages reveals a striking unity in his Epistles, and thus helps to confirm their genuineness. It should be mentioned, too, that our English Version often fails to bring out the full significance of these fig-

¹ See, for example, the Epistle of James, i. 6, 10; iii. 4, 5, 7; iv 14; v. 2, 3, 7, etc.
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ures. Dr. Howson has taken pains to correct these inaccuracies, and has thus restored to the reader some of the most expressive traits of Paul's imagery, otherwise lost to us. It is surprising to find how much new beauty and instructiveness are often given to the Apostle's language by such corrections.

The crowning excellence of the work, after all, is its practical aim and earnest religious spirit. Its ample learning, its illustrations, its eloquence, are all subordinate to that end. It is adapted to stimulate religious feeling, and to impress the truth, as well as guide us to a knowledge of it.

In speaking of the other work, the "Sketches of Paul's Companions," a brief word may suffice.

The notices of the Apostle's co-laborers who appear in the Acts and the Epistles, are so scattered and incidental that the ordinary reader seldom obtains a distinct idea of their number or of their characteristics and individuality. Dr. Howson has brought together these fugitive notices in his "Sketches" so as to present the actors in their separate fields of labor as well as in their coördination to the great Apostle: and has thus given us a juster impression both of the manifold labors of these Companions of Paul and of his own greater efficiency from his having had such coadjutors. Dr. Howson's familiarity with this branch of Scripture history is shown here to great advantage.

H. B. H.
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