The local colour of the Bible

Budden Charles William
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Author: Budden Charles William

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THE LOCAL COLOUR OF THE BIBLE

BY

CHARLES W. BUDDEN, M.D.

AND THE REV.

EDWARD HASTINGS, M.A.

Vol. I
GENESIS—2 SAMUEL

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PREFACE.

This volume has as its object the illumination of the Text of the Bible by facts dealing with the manners and customs of the East, and by a certain amount of Geography and History. The whole has been grouped under the generic title of Local Colour, by which term is meant the Oriental setting or background. The articles which are incorporated in the book do not profess to give complete information on the subjects with which they deal, but they aim at providing interesting and instructive material in a form which can be used readily for exposition from the Pulpit, for Class Teaching, and for addresses of various kinds such as the Supplemental Talks in the modern Sunday School.

The whole Bible is to be dealt with in three volumes: Volume I., Genesis to 2 Samuel; Volume II., 1 Kings to Malachi; Volume III., the New Testament. The division of the Old Testament is the natural one, for with the accession of Solomon and the building of the Temple, the domestic and political life of the Hebrews underwent a drastic change; the local colour of the Bedawin nomad is left behind, and in its place there arises city life with its elaborate religious organization. Moreover, the historical books from 1 Kings onward are paralleled by the prophetic writers and must be read side by side with them.
It will be observed that each Book of the Bible is divided into sections covering roughly from one to ten chapters. Each chapter deals with a definite episode in Hebrew history. In this way every page of the Bible is dealt with, and by a simple system of cross reference the essential local colour of a particular portion of the Scriptures is found under its own section. To facilitate further reference there is a tabulated list of these Bible passages as well as a complete index to Scripture References in the Text. Both of these lists might be consulted whenever information about a specific chapter or verse is needed.

While both the present writers have lived for some years in the Middle East, and have travelled widely over it, they wish to express their indebtedness to other writers and travellers for much information. The most important of these sources have been acknowledged in the text, but so many hundreds of volumes have been consulted that a complete list would be too cumbersome to print.

Our thanks are due in unstinted measure to the late Dr. James Hastings, who for several years has given us the most valuable assistance. His wise counsel, based on a unique experience, was always open to us, and his immense library was placed at our disposal.

We wish also to thank Miss Lee of West Kirby, who gave great help in the early collecting and cataloguing of material, and Miss Robertson, Dr. Hastings’ private secretary, who has assisted in the correction of proofs.

CHARLES W. BUDDEN.
EDWARD HASTINGS.
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