

**SERMONS IN ACCENTS;  
OR, STUDIES IN THE  
HEBREW TEXT. A BOOK  
FOR PREACHERS STUDENTS**

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Sermons in accents; or, Studies in the Hebrew text. A book for preachers students by John Adams

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**JOHN ADAMS**

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# SERMONS IN ACCENTS

OR

STUDIES IN THE HEBREW TEXT

*A BOOK FOR PREACHERS AND STUDENTS*

BY

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*Inverkeilor*

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"THE MINOR PROPHETS"

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1906

## PREFACE

THE aim of the present volume is to furnish a readable yet sufficiently accurate account of Hebrew Accentuation. It is an attempt, however imperfect, to illustrate to others, what the author has found in his own experience, that a working knowledge of accentual law no less than of Hebrew Syntax or of Septuagint Greek can frequently be turned to good account in the practical work of preaching. Hence the choice of the main title, "Sermons in Accents". The phrase does not mean that the outstanding feature of the book is homiletical or expository. It suggests simply that the subject has been treated from the standpoint of the preacher, and that the technical results thus won at the desk can readily be utilised in the service of the pulpit. The expository outline, in a word, is not the essential feature of the work; it is merely the spice to make it palatable.

The sub-title, "Studies in the Hebrew Text," is slightly more ambitious. It expresses the

conviction that the preaching of the present is needing infused into it rather more of the Biblical element. It does not savour, as Scottish preaching used to do, of an intimate familiarity with the written word. In truth, we are reading too much about the Bible, and too little *in* it. Not, indeed, that one has any desire to revive the naïve literalness of the handy concordance plan. That method is dead and cannot be revived. The term "faith," for instance, in Hab. ii. 4 does not mean the same thing as in Gal. iii. 11; and it serves no good purpose to write and preach as if it did. Biblical preaching means the preaching that is based on Biblical Theology, and this in turn presupposes a first-hand acquaintance with the text. But how is this to be attained? How is the modern preacher to make sure that he is retailing week by week the fully verified results of Biblical exegesis? Only in one way: he must get back to the ordinary Hebrew sources and verify the results for himself. If the cause of truth is to be safeguarded from the extravagance of *ἀγνοσία*, the preacher of the future must sit down and grapple with the minutiae of the text.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If we mistake not, this is the one weakness in Dr. Orr's comprehensive and painstaking volume, *The Problem of the Old Testament*. One may read it from cover to cover

It is to this twofold service that the present work is dedicated. It seeks to go back to the Hebrew sources, yet keeps in view the practical bearing of the subject—not souring the mind by unnecessary technicalities, but introducing as much of accentual and syntactical law as to whet the desire of the average student to know more. The measure of success which has attended these efforts must of course be appraised by others; nevertheless the following statement by one who has made a special study of the subject, and who has read the volume in MS., may fitly close this prefatory note: “I have looked through your MS. and have read enough to show me (1) that you have well mastered the technical details involved, and (2) that you have succeeded admirably in making a clear and what one might call ‘popular’ presentation of these details. (3) Your exhibition in each chapter of a text to be treated homiletically on the basis

and never once feel the necessity of turning up a single Hebrew word. This is a grave, if not a fatal, flaw. The psychological moment may have arrived for leading a strong reaction against the prevailing school of Old Testament criticism; but if so it will have to be inaugurated and pressed home along another and very different line of attack. It will begin in the regular work of the Hebrew class, when the average student has been taught to prize and put to practical use the ordinary Masoretic Text.



of the accents is very happy in conception and in execution ; it clinches your argument in a forcible and impressive manner. I cannot but commend your diligence in working your subject and your ready style in presenting the fruits of your labours. I should hope that there are a sufficient number of our students of divinity and young ministers so much in earnest in the study of the Old Testament Scripture that your book would receive adequate recognition and acceptance."

NOTE.—To meet the needs of the Hebrew student, a few blank pages have been inserted throughout the volume. Additional examples will constantly be met with in the course of his Hebrew studies; and if he has got into the habit of noting these under their respective sections, the inserted leaves may become, not simply a record of his reading, but a valuable addition to the present text-book. (*Cf.* p. 91, etc.)

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