

## Almug or Algum.

THE second name has apparently been derived from the first, by the common accident of transposing letters in Hebrew words. The first occurs in 1 K 10<sup>11, 12</sup>; the second in 2 Ch 2<sup>8</sup> 9<sup>10, 11</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

The actual tree is not known with certainty, but Josephus considered it to be some kind of fir or other allied tree.

The object before me is to show reasons for suspecting it to be the yew (*Taxus baccata*) of botanists, and *Smilax* of Theophrastus, who compares it to *prinos*, the ever-green oak, being as 'tough as oak.' Euripides and Aristophanes refer to it as *Milax*. Referring to the passages mentioned, we find in Kings that almug trees were used 'for pillars for the house of the Lord, harps also and psalteries for the singers.' In Chronicles we read the algum trees came from Lebanon.<sup>2</sup>

The LXX seems to throw some light upon the difficulty. It has no mention of 'algum' at all, but inserts 'hewn timber'<sup>3</sup> of cedar, juniper, and fir from Lebanon.

The LXX would seem, therefore, to imply that, like Josephus, it was some member of the coniferous family.

I will now approach the problem from another direction. On the discovery of the palaces at Nineveh, wooden beams were unearthed. An inscription was also found stating that 'cedar wood' came from Lebanon. A microscopical examination of a piece of wood in my possession, bought by Dr. Layard, proves it to be wood of the yew tree—a wood which is notorious for its strength, toughness, and durability.

As the yew has not been recognized in any

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Driver puts the date of Kings about 600 B.C., and that of Chronicles about 330.

<sup>2</sup> The repetition of 'from Ophir' is probably a transcriber's error (1 K 10<sup>11</sup>).

<sup>3</sup> *Xula peleketa*. *Smilax* has apparently some derivation like *smileutos*, i.e. 'cut or carved,' *smile* being a carving tool or sculptor's chisel. May not this indicate some corruption in the Hebrew text over the Greek name *Smilax*?

Hebrew word, but was called *Smilax* by the Greeks, the question is, can we discover any connexion between this word and Almug?

*Smilax* occurs in the LXX in the following passage. Jeremiah, speaking of the downfall of the king of Egypt, says: 'The sword hath devoured thy *smilax*. Why has the apis fled from thee? The young bull, thy chosen one, has not remained, because the Lord hath discharged him.'<sup>4</sup>

This *smilax* seems clearly to represent a king supposed to be firmly established on his throne, while the great age to which the yew tree will grow would be an excellent reference to the kingdom of Egypt. Of course, no yew trees ever grew in Egypt; but the tree is only taken symbolically, and would be well known in Syria and Palestine, and to the readers of Jeremiah's prophecy.

Lastly, may we guess at an etymological connexion?

Scholars are familiar with the fact that in Greek words beginning with SM, the S is often omitted,<sup>5</sup> as *smilax* itself became *milax* (Att.), just as *micros* came from *smikros*. Liddell and Scott observe that S is *added* or *left out* before M, according to convenience.

The late eminent Greek scholar, Dr. J. W. Donaldson, propounded the following change from *Borusthenes* into Dnieper. Taking the consonants, B, R(S), Th, N, (S) and removing the two S's, we get as equivalents by Grimm's Law—P, R, D, N; then by transposition DNPR, or Dnieper.

Applying these principles to Almug, transpose the M once more, or rather, I would suggest, *restore* it to its primitive position, and we start with MLG.

Supplying the lost S's, we have SMLGS, which is equivalent to *smilax*.

Almug and Algum would seem, therefore, to be Hebraic conceptions of this Greek word.

GEORGE HENSLOW.

Leamington.

<sup>4</sup> Jer (Heb. 46<sup>14, 15</sup>) LXX 26<sup>14, 15</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> S is often added to the end of a word, thus the root *tag* gives rise to *tax*.

## Entre Nous.

Allen's 'St. Matthew.'—There is no book which grows more with fuller study than the latest issue of the 'International Critical Com-

mentary.' A careful reviewer in *The Biblical World* for June says: 'Mr. W. C. Allen, of Oxford University, author of the new *Commentary on the*

*Gospel of Matthew*, shows how the Apostolic conception of Jesus grew during the Apostolic age, as evidenced by the advanced view of Christ which the Gospel of Matthew presents as compared with the Gospel of Mark.'

And then he quotes Mr. Allen: 'It is evident that contemplation of the life of the Lord and reflexion upon His person and work, and all that it meant for human life; and the deepening reverence that springs spontaneously from the life of meditation upon His words and from spiritual communion with Him, and from worship of God in His name, were gradually leading Christian writers, partly to refine and purify, partly to make careful choice of, the language in which they described His life. In connexion with His Sacred Person the choicest words only must be used—choicest not for splendour or beauty of sound or of suggestion, but as conveying in the simplest and most direct way the greatest amount of truth about Him with the least admixture of wrong emphasis. In this respect the Synoptic Gospels present in miniature the same process that afterwards took place on a large scale in the history of the creeds. Already the Gospel writers found themselves committed to the task of describing the life of One whom they knew to have been a truly human person, whom they yet believed to have been an incarnation of the Eternal.'

#### The Review of Theology and Philosophy.

—The third volume (Edinburgh: Schulze) begins in July. It begins with a 'Survey of Recent Criticism of the Books of Isaiah and Jeremiah,' by Professor G. A. Smith. Among the reviews there is a particularly interesting notice of Gennrich's *Die Lehre von der Wiedergeburt*, by Professor W. Adams Brown. He speaks of Gennrich's grip of the 'fundamentals' as in no way loosened by his adherence to critical methods. He speaks also of his knowledge of foreign theology—'But the Westminster theology, with all, for which it stands, seems to lie beyond the horizon of even the most catholic of German theological writers.'

**The N.T. Lexicon.**—In reply to a correspondent, there is no new Lexicon of the New Testament in preparation that we are aware of. In his last article in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, Professor Deissmann spoke of the need of it, and indicated the lines on which its preparation should proceed. But neither he nor any one else, so far as we know, has yet commenced the very formidable undertaking. The Lexicon at present is Thayer.

One of the most puzzling things about the study of the New Testament is the comparative neglect of Cremer's *Biblico-Theological Lexicon*. We have

no idea of the actual circulation of the book. What we mean is that we do not see it in men's libraries, not so often as we see Thayer, for example. And yet, for the preacher at least, Thayer has not, with Cremer, a look in. Moreover, it is, what the humorist calls the ordinary dictionary, a most interesting book to read.

**The Great Text Commentary.**—The following have been selected as Great Texts in Isaiah:—1<sup>3</sup>, 1<sup>18</sup>, 2<sup>4</sup>, 6<sup>1-3</sup>, 6<sup>8</sup>, 9<sup>6</sup>, 11<sup>6</sup>, 12<sup>3</sup>, 21<sup>11, 12</sup>, 32<sup>2</sup>, 33<sup>17</sup>, 40<sup>3</sup>, 40<sup>31</sup>, 42<sup>3</sup>, 50<sup>10</sup>, 53<sup>3</sup>, 53<sup>4, 5</sup>, 53<sup>6</sup>, 55<sup>1</sup>, 55<sup>6, 7</sup>, 57<sup>15</sup>, 60<sup>1</sup>, 61<sup>1</sup>, 63<sup>9</sup>.

Illustrations are invited for those texts. The source of the illustration should always be stated, if it is not from the writer's own experience. Illustrations may be sent for any number of texts, but they must all be received at St. Cyrus, Montrose, Scotland, by the last day of November. For the best illustration of each text a choice may be made of any volume of the 'International Critical Commentary,' or any volume of the 'International Theological Library,' or any two volumes of 'The Scholar as Preacher' series, or of the series entitled 'Religion in Literature and Life.'

**The Great Text Commentary.**—The best illustration this month has been sent by the Rev. R. P. Butterfield, Castle Hill, Kandy, Ceylon, to whom a copy of Davidson's *The Stoic Creed* has been sent. Illustrations for the Great Text for September must be received by the 1st of August. The text is Lk 11<sup>13</sup>.

The Great Text for October is Lk 13<sup>24</sup>—'And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' A copy of Scott's *The Fourth Gospel: Its Purpose and Theology*, or of Allen's *St. Matthew* ('Int. Crit. Com.'), will be given for the best illustration. Illustrations must be received by the 1st of September.

The Great Text for November is Lk 15<sup>10</sup>—'Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' A copy of Hodgson's *Primitive Christian Education*, or Davidson's *The Stoic Creed*, or Reid's *Jesus and Nicodemus*, or Gwatkin's *The Eye for Spiritual Things*, will be given for the best illustration. Illustrations must be received by the 1st of October.

Those who send illustrations should at the same time name the books they wish sent them if successful.