

## Pathros in the Psalter.

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THAT the 68th Psalm is one of those in which textual emendation is most called for, is hardly to be denied, and the number of corrections already proposed is not inconsiderable. Professor Nestle, of Tübingen, whose fine scholarship and critical insight are well known, has favored the readers of this Journal with some fresh emendations of much interest (Vol. X. p. 151 f.). Three verses of the psalm are affected by them, viz. 28, 31, and 32. It is not, however, verses 28 and 32 on which I have to speak—others have already, as it seems to me, done all that is needed (רִנְּשָׁתֶם, קָדִים, הָשֵׁם), but verse 31. For some time I was unable to do Professor Nestle justice, because some of his suggestions seemed to me plainly unacceptable. He says, Read verses 30 and 32 together, and ask yourself what the intermediate verses ought to contain. He then suggests that, since we evidently want a reference to offerings, קָנֶה must mean 'sweet cane' and קָרְבוֹת 'oblations,' while בְּרִצֵּי should be בְּצִרֵי (I had proposed בְּבִצְרֵי; cf. Job xxii. 24, 25), and בְּיָר should be בְּדוֹר (cf. the corruption in Ps. liii. 6, cl. xiv. 5). And above all, the very strange word מְתַרְפֵּס should be מִפְתָּרֵם, "from Pathros."

With all this, no better sense seemed to be produced, and it seemed plainly unfair to forget verse 29 (read imperatives in both halves of the verse), which answers to verse 31 as verse 30 answers to verse 32. But how if we adopt the last emendation only, and suppose a word or two to have fallen out? We then obtain the following very plausible view of the verse :

Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds (*i.e.* Pharaoh; cf. Ezek. xxix. 3), the troop of bulls (*i.e.* princes or generals),

The lords (or leaders, בְּצִלֵי) of peoples from Pathros (*i.e.* the Egyptian army);

. . . on them that have pleasure in silver (*i.e.* mercenaries),

Scatter the peoples that delight in wars.

One of these "lords of peoples from Pathros" might be Scopas the Ætolian, who, "in the enforced absence of Antiochus the Great,

sought to reattach Syria to Egypt, and among other cities captured those of Judæa" — a period to which I have ventured to assign Ps. xlii.—xliii. and (with some hesitation) Ps. lxviii. (*The Origin of the Psalter*, etc., p. 114). M. Halévy, it is true, assigns Ps. lxviii. to "the *coterie* which so vehemently strove with Jeremiah and his partizans." He says "our Psalmist utters the same prediction as Hananiah the son of Azur (Jer. xxvii. 16, xxviii. 17); viz. that the Babylonian invaders shall be entirely destroyed and the Jewish captives restored." He even thinks that, "the likeness being so great," Hananiah, "the personal enemy of Jeremiah," may be the author of our psalm (*Revue des Études Juives*, Juillet-Septembre, 1889, p. 15). Many bold exegetical suggestions are offered in support of this view, with which I will not occupy the space of this JOURNAL. M. Halévy seems to have undertaken to reconstruct the literary history of the Old Testament on the ruins of the criticism of the last eighty years!

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## Light Thrown on Some Biblical Passages by Talmudic Usage.

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IT is a fact to be greatly regretted that the Talmudic and Midrashic literature is but rarely consulted for the interpretation of difficult Biblical passages. This is as true of Christian as it is of Jewish commentators of modern times; nor is it difficult to account for this neglect. The modern interpreter desires, by means of grammatical and etymological analysis, to arrive at the true and direct meaning of words and sentences, irrespective of religious, or dogmatic, or even homiletical associations which may be found in the text or, more often, put into it.

No such plain and unbiased interpretation is expected of the Talmudic or Midrashic discussions on Biblical texts; and the attempt, therefore, to search the vast "Ocean of the Talmud" — as this literature is often called — for an accidental pearl of good, sound, verbal explanation is soon abandoned, if ever made. And yet it must be obvious to every unprejudiced Biblical student that those among whom the Biblical language was still, to a certain extent, a living tongue, or, to say the least, a living stream of tradition, must have