

ance of which was necessary for the continuance in belief of persons who were not afraid to follow their premisses to their conclusion.'

We are not quite sure that we understand Professor Margoliouth's second alternative. But for the first the subsequent speakers gave him little encouragement. And yet the subsequent speakers were men who would fain have been with him if they could. There was Dr. Frederick Watson, for example, Hon. Canon of Ely, and Vicar of St. Edward's, Cambridge. 'If we admit,' said Canon Watson, 'that the Bible is a book as truly human as it is Divine, we must not recoil from the consequences. Men argue that since the Bible is God's Word it must be free from all imperfection. The argument is equally valid that since the Bible is man's word, it cannot be thus free. I hope I shall not pain any one when I express my own opinion that the Bible is not free from imperfection, error, and mistake in matters of fact. Let me add that it is a conclusion to which I have slowly and reluctantly come. For example, it would seem impossible to deny the existence of errors in the Old Testament numbers. These errors arise from different causes; but it is clear to my mind

that they cannot be merely corruptions of transmission, the errors of later scribes. I think that we ought to confess that some of Bishop Colenso's arithmetical puzzles were incapable of solution.'

And there was also Dr. Chadwick, the Bishop of Derry. He would put the matter to one small and simple test, and he chose the first chapter of Matthew. In that chapter it is said that 'all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the carrying away into Captivity are fourteen generations, and from the carrying away into Captivity to Jesus Christ are fourteen generations.' Here, said the Bishop of Derry, was a plain statement of a plain historical fact. Was it the literal truth? Every one of them knew that the second list of fourteen was obtained by leaving several names out, and the third list by reckoning Jechonias a second time. And the author when he wrote it knew this well. Explain this action as they might—he thought the object was a mystic one, namely, by reckoning six sevens to make the Church occupy the place of the seventh seven,—but in any case it was evident that the writer was not careful to state historic fact with literal prosaic accuracy.

What Have We gained in the Sinaitic Palimpsest?

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I.

St. Matthew's Gospel.

THE text of the four Gospels from the Syriac palimpsest which I discovered in the Convent of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai in 1892, has, since its publication in 1894, attracted an increasing amount of attention from all lovers of biblical science, and has more than justified the high opinion formed of its value by its first transcribers, Professor Bensly, Professor Rendel Harris, and Mr. Burkitt. And since I succeeded in filling up some of the *lacunæ* left by these earnest scholars,

during my third visit to Sinai in 1895, it has been pronounced by Professor Harnack to be 'one of the most important, yes, probably altogether the most important of witnesses for our Gospels' (*Preussische Jahrbücher*, Mai 1898, p. 197). I propose to give in this paper a detailed list of those of its readings which may possibly affect any future revision of our English New Testament, or will at least have to be taken into consideration. But I must first state some of the reasons why so

much importance is attached to the document itself.

Not only has the Gospel-text which forms the under-script of this palimpsest lain untouched since the year 778 A.D. (or possibly 697 A.D.), when John the Stylite of Beth-Mari Qanūn, or Ma'arrath Mesrin, near Kaukab of Antioch, covered it over with his biographies of women saints, but it is the only nearly complete specimen which we possess of the Old Syriac version of the Gospels, a version which has not, like the Peshitta, suffered revision at the hands of those who would fain have assimilated it to the Greek text approved in their day, thereby destroying its witness to what the four Gospels were before any well-meaning people attempted to harmonize them with each other. Or, to use the words of Dr. Rendel Harris in the *Contemporary Review* for November 1894: 'A text has been recovered, superior in antiquity to anything yet known, and one that often agrees with all that is most ancient in Greek MSS; a text which the advanced critics will acknowledge to be, after allowance has been made for a few serious blemishes, superior in purity to all extant copies, with a very few exceptions.'

Before the year 1892 the only specimen of the Old Syriac Gospels extant was the fragmentary one brought to the British Museum in 1842 by Archdeacon Tattam, from the Nitrian desert, which Canon Cureton discovered, and which he edited in 1858.

The Curetonian manuscript is not a palimpsest, and was therefore more easily read than the Sinai one. It has been assigned, chiefly from the appearance of its handwriting, to the middle of the fifth century of our era. To this period I assigned the under-script of the Sinai palimpsest also, at the time when I discovered it. But this was a mere guess, formed from considerations connected with the upper writing, whose date I had read as 697 A.D. I was led to this conclusion because I could not imagine a document so carefully written becoming obsolete and fit only to be used as writing material in less than two centuries after its production. The portions which I read of its text whilst it was being transcribed by the three Cambridge scholars in 1893, convinced me that it is at the least fifty years older than Cureton's, and I shall be surprised to learn that Messrs. Bensly, Rendel Harris, and Burkitt were not under the same impression.

This Old Syriac version bears an unmistakable witness to the antiquity of the Fourth Gospel. How great this gain is, can perhaps only be estimated by those who recollect, as I do, the impressions produced on religious thought by writers in popular magazines, who, twenty years ago,¹ tacitly assumed that this Gospel could not have been written earlier than the middle of the second century, when its presumed author had been in his grave for at least fifty years. True, the discovery of the Arabic version of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, in two manuscripts, had shaken this hypothesis, for the *Diatessaron* is a harmony, as its name implies, of all the Four Gospels, and Tatian wrote it about 160 A.D. Still the fact that the Fourth Gospel was included in a version earlier than Tatian's *Diatessaron*, and from which it probably derived some of its materials, is an additional testimony to the futile character of the attempts which have been made to dissociate it altogether from its traditional author, and from this we may surely learn that the theories of even the most learned of biblical critics are not to be considered infallible, unless they have the witness of incontestable facts.

But the chief virtue in the text of the Sinaitic palimpsest is its purity and its conciseness. Alone among the class of MSS to which it belongs, the so-called 'Western' texts, it exhibits an almost perfect freedom from interpolations, and confirms in a startling way the judgment of nineteenth century scholars, of our English New Testament Revisers, and especially of Westcott and Hort. For all those passages which they have marked as doubtful, by brackets or otherwise, are in this fourth century manuscript conspicuous by their absence. If Dr. Rendel Harris or I had performed the miraculous feat of which a Socialist once accused us, and had forged the palimpsest (thereby deceiving all the Syriac scholars of Europe), we really could not have done this part of it better. But I fear we should not have possessed imagination enough to introduce those interesting readings which I am about to describe in detail. I shall give these only which distinctly affect the sense, and can be readily understood by biblical students who are unacquainted with Greek. For this reason I omit the minute

¹ See *Contemporary Review* for September 1877, p. 542 (Ernest Renan); also for October 1877, p. 769, for Beyschlag on the other side.

touches by means of which Canon Robinson has detected the dependence of the Armenian version upon the Old Syriac one (*Euthaliana*, pp. 75-82). To avoid repetition, I have indicated by an asterisk those variants which occur in the Sinai palimpsest only, concerning which no corroboration in other MSS has as yet been observed. The Revised Version is the standard of comparison.

Mt 1⁸.—Here the names of the three additional kings which we find in the Curetonian MS., Aliazia, Joash, and Amazia, and which were introduced probably for the sake of historic truth, and would bring the number of generations between king David and the Captivity up to seventeen, are quite absent.

Mt 1^{15, 16}.—‘Jacob begat Joseph; Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus, who is called the Christ.’

This is doubtless the most serious of the ‘blemishes,’ to which Dr. Rendel Harris alludes in the *Contemporary Review*. It is the passage which has caused the whole manuscript in some quarters to be considered heretical, and has led to the supposition in others that vv. 16, 21, and 25 of this chapter had been tampered with by the Ebionites. Dr. Rendel Harris’ paper was written immediately after the publication of the text, before it had been subjected to the close scrutiny which it soon afterwards underwent from the eyes of other competent scholars. A discussion of this passage took place in the columns of the *Academy*, from 17th November 1894 till 23rd February 1895, conducted chiefly by Dr. Sanday, Messrs Charles, Allen, Badham, Conybeare, Skipwith, Rahlfs, Nestle, and White. It brought clearly into light, not only the contradictory nature of the passage itself, but the relation which it bears to the forms of the verse found in other ancient manuscripts. I shall not attempt to give a summary of these, but shall content myself with stating what appears to me the most obvious explanation.

The genealogy is a purely official one, having regard only to the social status of our Lord. This view receives strong confirmation from two obvious mistakes which have been detected in it. Jechoniah, of whom it was said, in Jer 22³⁰: ‘Write ye this man childless,’ is here, as in all other MSS of St. Matthew, represented as the father of Shealtael; and it is said that Joram

begat his own great-great-grandson Ozias. The story of Mary’s ‘being found with child of the Holy Ghost, when they had not come near one to the other,’ and of Joseph’s ‘being minded quietly to put her away,’ comes immediately afterwards in vv. 18 and 19. It is quite inconceivable that an Ebionite scribe, who had already edited v. 16 so as to expunge from it all trace of our Lord’s supernatural birth, should have allowed vv. 18, 19 and 20 to stand as they are. I submit that all these discrepancies, together with the expression in v. 21, ‘And she shall bear to thee a son,’ and in v. 25, and ‘she bare to him a son’ (instead of ‘and knew her not until she had brought forth a son’), may be satisfactorily explained by a consideration of those social customs which have been ever in vogue amongst Semitic peoples.

Joseph was, without doubt, the foster-father of our Lord, and if any register of births were kept in the Temple or elsewhere, he would probably be there described as the actual father. Such he was from a social point of view, and it was therefore no wilful suppression of the truth when the most blessed amongst women said to her Son, ‘Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.’ The subject is wonderfully illustrated by the domestic customs of the Arabs, as described by Dr. Robertson Smith in his *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*—

‘I now proceed to show that the Arab idea of paternity is strictly correlated to the conception just developed of the nature of the contract of marriage by purchase. A man is father of all the children of the woman by whom he has purchased the right to her offspring that shall be reckoned to be his own kin. This, as is well known, is the fundamental doctrine of Mohammedan law, *el walad lil firash*, the son is reckoned to the bed on which he is born,’ p. 109.

Again: ‘Ultimately, if a child is born in the tribe of a woman brought in by contract of marriage, it was reckoned to the tribal stock as a matter of course, without inquiry as to its natural procreator,’ p. 120.

Again: ‘As there was no difference between an adopted and a real son before Islam, emancipated slaves appear in the genealogical lists without any note of explanation, just as if they had been pure Arabs,’ p. 45.

We do not know if a similar social custom

prevailed amongst the Jews in our Lord's time, but I submit that unless He had passed in common estimation for the son of Joseph, the latter could not have gratified his wish 'not to expose Mary' (v.¹⁹), and the unbelieving Jews would not have said thirty years later, 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' There may have been no formal law on the subject, yet it was entirely in harmony with the trend of Semitic thought.

Since writing the above I have found a fresh and wholly unexpected witness to its truth. All scholars know the *Protevangeliū Jacobi*, edited in Greek from MSS of the tenth, twelfth, and fifteenth centuries by Tischendorf, and in Syriac, though in a mutilated form, from a fifth century MS. by Dr. William Wright of Cambridge. It is, as Professor Ewald (quoted by Dr. Wright in his preface) says: 'the firm foundation of all the unfortunate adorations of Mary, and of a hundred superstitious things which, from the fifth century onwards, press into the Church always more and more irresistibly, and which have contributed so much to the degeneration and lowering of all better Christianity. The whole *cultus* of Mary in the popish Church rests on this book.'

Now it happens that I possess the most ancient complete text of this document hitherto known, in the form of a palimpsest, whose upper script is some of St. Athanasius' works in Arabic, and its under-script chiefly Syriac of the fifth or sixth century, the *Protevangeliū Jacobi* and *Transitus Mariæ* being inserted in it as one book. Will it be believed that in this document, composed expressly for the honour and glory of Mary, on whose perpetual virginity it insists with a somewhat tiresome iteration, we find the angel saying to Joseph, 'She shall bare to thee a son,' in the exact words of the Sinai palimpsest? Its text is a rather close translation of Tischendorf's Greek one; and I firmly believe that the words I have just quoted were in the mind of the translator an exact equivalent for *τέξεται δὲ υἱόν* (Tisch. cap. xiv. l. 9). A later MS. of the *Protevangeliū*, belonging to Dr. Rendel Harris, contains the same passage without 'to thee,' and the eleventh century one edited by Dr. Wallis Budge has nothing that comes exactly near it. But the Curetonian version of the Gospels unquestionably has 'to thee' in v.²¹. We must therefore beware of reading Aryan ideas into Semitic idioms.

Mr. Skipwith has pointed out (*Academy*, 19th

January 1895) that the first clause of Mt 1¹⁸, 'But the birth of the Christ (my translation of τοῦ δὲ Χριστοῦ ἡ γένεσις, or γέννησις) was on this wise,' reads very much as if it were an explanation of the genealogy, or Βίβλος γενέσεως which precedes it, and which had probably been a separate document current amongst some of the disciples before it was incorporated in the Gospel of Matthew. By the light of the narrative in Mt 1¹⁸⁻²⁵ we are therefore to understand in what sense Joseph was called the father of Jesus.

Mt 1²².—Which 'was spoken of the Lord by Isaiah the prophet' (with Codex Bezae, the Curetonian, and the Palestinian Syriac).

1²⁵.—'And knew her not until,' is omitted.

*2².—'For we have seen his star from the east.'

*3³.—'The voice of one crying in the wilderness,' and 'make his paths straight,' are both omitted. 'Prepare ye a way for the Lord,' alone remaining as the quotation. Without its usual context it is more emphatic.

*3⁴.—'With a girdle.' The word 'leather' is not there. 'And honey of the mountain (or field),' is an idiom for 'wild honey,' found also in the Palestinian Syriac version.

3¹⁰.—'The axe has reached the roots of the trees' (with the Curetonian).

*3¹⁰.—'Every tree that yieldeth not fruit is cut down,' 'good' being omitted. It perhaps came from Lk 3⁹.

3¹⁵.—'Then he suffered him to be baptized,' an addition found also in the Curetonian.

*4⁸.—'And the glory of them,' is omitted.

*4⁹.—'And said unto him, These kingdoms and their glory thou hast seen; to thee will I give them,' etc.

4¹¹.—'Then the **tempter* withdrew from him for a time' (with the Curetonian.)

*4¹⁶.—'Saw a light,' the word 'great' being omitted.

*4¹⁶.—'Those who sat in sadness and in the shadow of death,' etc.

4¹⁷.—'Saying, The kingdom of heaven hath come near.' 'Repent ye,' is omitted (with the Curetonian). It was perhaps transferred here from Mk 1¹⁵.

4²².—'And they left their father in the ship, and followed him.' 'Straightway,' is omitted.

*4²⁴.—'And the report of him went forth into all

Syria' is omitted. It perhaps came here from Lk 4³⁷.

*4^{24†}.—'Possessed with devils, and epileptic, and palsied,' is omitted.

4²⁴.—'And on each of them he laid his hand, and he healed everyone' (with the Curetonian).

5²².—'That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause' (with Codex Bezae and other ancient Greek MSS, the other ancient Syriac versions, and the Coptic).

*5²⁵.—'And the judge deliver thee to the officer,' is omitted.

5³⁰.—'And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell,' is omitted (with Codex Bezae). It has possibly been carried here from chap. 18⁸.

5³².—Instead of 'his wife, saving for the cause of fornication,' we have, 'his wife, against whom adultery hath not been alleged' (with the Curetonian).

5⁴⁷.—'And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?' is omitted (with the Latin Codex Bobbiensis (k)).

*6⁵.—'And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward,' is omitted.

6⁷.—The meaning of this verse is precisely the same as the English rendering of the Revised Version. Yet the two Syriac words used to represent the Greek *βατταλογήσητε* (say vain things) have enabled Dr. Blass of Halle to suggest a few better derivations for that word than any which we can find in a Greek lexicon, and thereby to determine its exact significance. It does not come from *βάττος* 'a stammerer' (see Liddell and Scott). Our Lord surely did not tell His disciples not to stammer in prayer; but it is one of those hybrid compounds which come into existence in countries where two or more languages are spoken. It is composed of the Aramaic *b'tal*, 'vain,' 'useless,' and of the Greek *λογέω*, from *λόγος*, 'a word.' The word *b'tal* is from a common Semitic root, which appears also in Hebrew and in Arabic. No word is more frequent on the lips of the Syrians and Egyptians of to-day, whether it be used of a

neighbour who has incurred the speaker's dislike, or of the refuse which is thrown into the gutters, *nass battāl* being equivalent to *canaille* and an expression of utter contempt. It is not therefore against repetitions that we are warned (we may say the Lord's Prayer three times in succession with a clear conscience), but against that clatter of the lips which the heart does not follow. A like expression occurs in the Palestinian Syriac version, but not in the Curetonian nor the Peshitta. We find a form of the verb *b'tal* used also for 'make void' in Mt 15⁶.

From chap. 6¹⁰ to chap. 8³ is on pages which were lost before the writing of the upper-script in 778 A.D.

*8^{5. 8. 13}.—Instead of the word 'centurion,' we have 'chiliarch,' the commander of a thousand.

*8²⁴.—The word 'lake' is used instead of 'sea.' This seems a peculiarity of the manuscript.

10²³.—'When they persecute you in this city, flee ye from it to another: and if they persecute you in the other city, flee ye to another' (with Codex Bezae).

12².—'Upon the Sabbath,' is omitted (with the Curetonian and the Latin Codex Bobbiensis (k)).

12³⁵.—'And a good man out of the good treasures which are in his heart' (with the Curetonian).

12⁴⁷.—'And one said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee,' is omitted (with the Sinaiticus, the Vaticanus, the Latin Codex Bobbiensis, and the Curetonian.)

13¹¹.—'kingdom' instead of 'kingdom of heaven.'

*13¹².—'And he shall have abundance,' is omitted.

13¹³.—'Because of this speak I with them in parables: that what they see they may not see; and what they hear they may not hear, and may not understand, and they may never be converted' (with Codex Bezae and the Curetonian).

13¹⁵.—'And their ears have they made heavy, that they may not hear.' This corresponds with its sequel, 'and their eyes have they closed' (with the Curetonian and the Coptic).

*13¹⁵.—'And should turn again, and I should heal them,' is omitted.

13³⁵.—'I will speak hidden things which are from of old' (with the Curetonian).

*13⁴⁶.—‘A merchantman seeking pearls:’ ‘goodly’ is omitted.

13⁴⁶.—‘And when he had found one *good* pearl of great price’ (with the Curetonian).

*13⁶⁵.—‘Is not this the son of Joseph?’ (the Curetonian has here, ‘the son of Joseph the carpenter’).

14².—‘Therefore great is his power’ (with the Curetonian).

15¹³.—‘Every plant which *the* Father in heaven hath not planted, shall be rooted up.’ This slight variation is also found in the Latin Codex Corbejensis. And it must have been in the Greek text, of which the text of the Sinai palimpsest is a translation, and also in the one which was quoted by the author of the Clementine Homilies (iii. chap. 52). Was the manuscript which this writer read the not very remote parent of our palimpsest text?

15¹⁴.—‘They be leaders of the blind’ (with the Coptic version).

15²⁷.—‘Even the dogs eat from the tables of their masters, *and live*’ (with the Curetonian, Peshitta, and Palestinian Syriac versions).

16^{2, 3}.—‘When it is evening, ye say, Fair weather: for the heaven is red. And in the morning, Foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times,’ is omitted (with many ancient Greek codices, and with the Curetonian).

16¹³.—‘What do men say concerning me? who then is this Son of man?’ (with the Curetonian).

18¹.—‘Who then shall be *great* in the kingdom of heaven?’ and v. 4 ‘He shall be *great*’ (with other Syriac versions).

*18¹⁷.—‘Tell it unto the *synagogue*: and if he will not hear the *synagogue*’ (with the Palestinian Syriac). Here the word used is *k'nushhta*, the plural of which is translated ‘synagogues’ in Mt 6⁵, whilst its singular stands for synagogue in twenty-two other passages of the other three Gospels. We find the word *étta*, ‘church,’ in the Curetonian and the Peshitta, but these have, doubtless, suffered a revision for the purpose of bringing them into harmony with Greek MSS. Synagogues existed in our Lord’s day, they were a feature of Jewish national life; how natural that he should have counselled an appeal to one of them rather than to a ‘church,’ which was not

then constituted.¹ And was it not equally natural that in later times, when the church took the place of the synagogue, the new word should have been read into this passage?

The text of v. 20 occurs on a spot where the vellum has been much damaged; and a difference of opinion concerning it exists amongst the surviving transcribers. But there is no doubt about v. 20, which reads, ‘For there are not two or three gathered together in my name, and I not amongst them’ (with Codex Bezae).

18²².—‘Until seventy times seven seven’ (with the Curetonian and the Peshitta).

19⁴.—‘Have ye not read, that he who made the male made also the female?’ (almost with the Curetonian).

19⁹.—‘Whoso shall put away his wife, *when there is no adultery*’ (with the Curetonian, the Corbejensis, and some other Old Latin MSS).

19¹⁶.—‘Good Teacher,’ instead of ‘Master’ (with the Curetonian and the Coptic).

*19¹⁸.—‘Thou shalt not steal,’ is omitted.

19²⁰.—‘All these things have I observed, *lo! since I was a boy*’ (with Codex Bezae, and several Latin MSS, the other Syriac versions, and the Coptic).

*20¹⁴.—‘Take thy penny, and go.’

20¹⁶.—‘And the first last: *many be called, but few chosen*’ (with Codex Bezae, and all the Syriac versions).

20²⁵ to 21³⁰ is on lost leaves; but there is no room for the long interpolation which the Curetonian exhibits in v. 28.

21³¹.—‘Whether of these did the will of his father?’ They say unto him ‘*The last*.’ This strange and to our minds paradoxical rendering is found also in the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Bezae, in some Latin MSS, the Palestinian Syriac, and the Coptic.

*21³².—‘And ye, when ye saw it, *at last repented yourselves*, that ye might believe in him.’

21⁴⁴.—‘And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whosoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust,’ is omitted (with Codex Bezae and some Latin MSS).

*22⁴.—‘I have made ready my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed,’ is omitted.

*22²⁴.—‘And raise up seed unto his brother,’ is omitted.

*22³⁶.—‘A lawyer,’ is omitted.

¹ See Mt 16¹⁸, ‘Upon this rock I *will* build my church.’

*22²⁷.—‘And with all thy strength,’ instead of, ‘and with all thy mind’ (with the Curetonian). The Peshitta and the Palestinian Syriac have both.

*23¹³.—‘Ye hold the key of the kingdom of heaven before men.’ The Scribes and Pharisees were intrusted with the key, and they made use of it to keep themselves and others out.

*23²⁷.—‘For ye are like unto sepulchres, which are whitened outside, and within are full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.’ Note that this is more concise than any other known text. It omits a clause, and yet loses nothing.

*24².—‘See ye not all these stones?’

*24³⁰.—‘And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,’ is omitted.

24³⁶.—‘Neither the Son,’ is omitted (with some other ancient MSS).

25¹.—‘And went forth to meet the bridegroom and *bride*’ (with Codex Bezae, the Peshitta, and a few other MSS).

*26²⁷.—‘And he took the cup, and gave thanks *over it*.’ Probably a Syriac idiom.

26²⁸.—‘This is my blood, the new testament’ (with Codex B of the Palestinian Syriac version).

26⁵⁰.—‘But Jesus said unto him, Wherefore art thou come, my friend?’

*26⁵¹.—‘And behold, one of the *disciples* of Jesus stretched out his hand,’ etc.

26⁷⁰.—‘I know not what thou sayest, *neither do I understand*’ (with Codex Bezae, some Latin MSS, and the Palestinian Syriac).

*26⁷¹.—‘And when he had gone out to the *door of the courts*.’

27⁴.—‘They say unto him, What is that to us? Thou knowest’ (with the Peshitta).

27⁹.—‘Jeremiah’ is omitted, and justly so, for the quotation about the thirty pieces of silver is from Zechariah (with the Peshitta and some Latin MSS). It is, indeed, singular to find what must be the true text preserved in the versions.

27⁹.—‘Which I was valued at by the children of Israel; and I gave them for the field of the potter, as the Lord commanded me.’

27¹⁶.—‘A certain notable man, whose name was *Jesus Bar Abba*’ (with the Palestinian Syriac).

*27¹⁶.—‘He had been thrown into prison because of the evil (things) he had done, and he had committed murder,’ is added.

27¹⁷.—‘*Jesus Bar-abba*’ (with the Pal. Syriac).

17²⁴.—‘Ye know,’ instead of, ‘see ye to it’ (with the Peshitta).

27²⁸.—‘And they stripped him,’ is omitted.

27²⁸.—‘And they clothed him with robes of purple and scarlet’ (with Codex Bezae and some Latin MSS).

27³⁸.—‘That is to say, The place of a skull,’ is omitted.

*There was no need to explain the meaning of ‘Gogultha’ in a Syriac version; yet the clause is found both in the Peshitta and the Palestinian Syriac; the Curetonian being here awaiting.

27⁴⁶.—The explanatory clause in this verse is in like manner omitted (with the Peshitta and Palestinian Syriac).

*27⁵⁶.—‘Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *daughter* of James, and the mother of Joseph.’

28⁸⁻²⁰ are on a lost leaf.

The Songs of the Ascents.

BY THE REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A., TULLIALLAN.

I.

Their Historical Setting.

THESE fifteen Psalms (120-134) form a distinct group, a little Psalter, as it were, within the Psalter. It is not merely that they bear a common title; still less is it that one Psalmist wrote them all. It is a deeper unity that pervades them. They have to do with one great national experience,

and they all throb with a kindred passion. They exhibit, indeed, the most diverse emotions—despair and exultation, abandonment and faith, defeat and triumph; but those varying moods do but mark the progress of the drama. It is a great national disaster and a great national deliverance