

FRESH LIGHT ON MACCABEAN TIMES.

Documents of Jewish Sectaries. Vol. i. Fragments of a Zadokite work. Edited by S. SCHECHTER, M.A., Litt.D., Cantab. (Cambridge University Press, 1910.)

THESE fragments consist of twenty leaves from the Cairo Genizah Collection, written for the most part in pure Biblical Hebrew, but containing some post-biblical terms and expressions. Dr Schechter attributes the authorship to an obscure sect long ago extinct—the Zadokites. However this may be, the fragments have points of connexion with the Book of Jubilees, Enoch, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. The Watchers ('Εγγήγοροι), Beliar, and Mastēmā, the chief of the spirits, are all found. Once more we seem to be in the literature of the Maccabean Revival. The one clear date given is Maccabean: '390 years' after Israel had been delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar 'God visited them and caused the root of a plant to spring from Israel and from Aaron, to inherit the land' (fol. 1 a, line 5). If 390 be subtracted from 586 B.C. we reach 196 B.C., and if we further subtract the twenty years during which the men of Israel were 'as blind and as those that grope for a way' (fol. 1 a, lines 9, 10), we get very near indeed to the revolt of Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees (died circ. 167 B.C.). Again on fol. 4 b, lines 10, 11, the 'cruel venom of asps' of Deut. xxxii 33 is explained to be the venom of *Grecian kings*.

Since the word 'scorning' is applied to denial of the True God, and since it was Jason who established a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem, the 'man of scorning' (נִצָּחַן, fol. 1 a, line 14) may very well be meant for the intrusive high priest Jason, who is described in 2 Maccabees as 'that ungodly man and no high priest' (chap. iv 13) and as 'the vile Jason' (ver. 19). 'As a backsliding heifer,' the Fragmentist writes, 'so did Israel slide back, when *the man of scorning* arose, who . . . caused Israel to go astray . . . and to depart from the paths of righteousness, and to remove the bound which the ancients had set' (fol. 1 a, lines 13-16). Of those who followed the man of scorning it is said that 'they transgressed the covenant and broke the statute . . . and all that walked uprightly their soul abhorred and they pursued them with the sword'. Here we seem to have a summary of the contents of 2 Maccabees from iv 7 to vii 41.

It is possible that the practice of the Fragmentist in the use of the Divine name offers another link with the Maccabean literature. In 1 Maccabees (true text) no Divine name is used; in the fragments the

Tetragrammaton never appears, nor any other designation except אל, 'God', which is fairly frequent, and עליון in the phrase קרשׁי עליון, 'saints of the Most High' (cf. Dan. vii 18), which occurs once (fol. 10 b, line 8). This point, however, must not be pressed.

It is probable, further, that the Fragments contain a reference to the removal and murder of the high priest Onias (2 Macc. iv 7, 8, 34). The passage runs: 'From the day on which the only Teacher was taken away until the time when all the men of war who went with the Man of falsehood were consumed there is a period of about 40 years' (fol. 10 b, lines 13-15). This reckoning is sufficiently accurate for the interval between the removal of Onias at the accession of Antiochus V in 175 B.C. and the surrender of the heathen garrison of the citadel of Jerusalem to Simon in 142 B.C. There is, no doubt, in the writer's mind a comparison with the forty years of the Wilderness Wandering which followed the Exodus. The 'Man of falsehood' may be either the Syrian commander who 'spake words of peace in subtilty' (1 Macc. i 30), or one of the false high priests, Menelaus or Alcimus.

Whether the fragments printed here really belong to one work is not quite certain. There is a break in the sense between fol. 4 b and fol. 5 a. Fol. 1 a-4 b have 21 lines to the page, while fol. 5 a-8 b have 23 lines. The break thus indicated corresponds further with a change in the general character of the contents from Haggada ('Homiletics') to Halacha ('Legal dicta'). The text of fol. 10 a overlaps fol. 4 b, while 10 b gives perhaps the conclusion of the discourse: 'God will make atonement for them and they will see His salvation, because they have taken refuge in His Holy Name.'

It seems ungracious to complain when so interesting a document is given to the world; but it must be confessed that the book shews several signs of haste in revision. On page xviii the date of the Karaite writer Kirkisani is given as '637' instead of A.D. 937. Both the Hebrew text and the English translation might be easily improved. On page xxxii 'They looked forward to (רצפו) the breaches' should be 'They watched (i. e. lay in wait) at the breaches' (i. e. in the ravines). On page xxxiii 'Through His Anointed He made them know His Hqly Spirit' should be read with the simplest possible correction of the Hebrew, 'He taught them by those who were anointed with His Holy Spirit'. On page xxxiv read 'The priests and the Levites and the sons of Zadok that kept the charge of my (sic) sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray from me (sic), they shall bring near', &c. The editor has exaggerated the divergence of the quotation from the text of Ezek. xlv 15. On page xxxv Dr Schechter might have adopted in the translation an emendation which he himself suggests: 'Those for whom God made atonement are to keep (שומרים) the Sanctuary.' On

page xl an unnecessary correction is followed, and a clause is consequently lost, which throws light on the exegetical methods of the Fragmentist. After quoting Amos v 26, 27 in the form 'I will cause the *sicuth* of your king and the *chiyun* of your images to go into captivity from the tents of Damascus', he proceeds to give his interpretation thus: 'The books of the Law are the *succath*¹ of the king; . . . the *King* is the Congregation . . . and the *images* is an instance of metonymy; so that the *chiyun of the images* means the books of the prophets, whose words Israel despised.' All this is far-fetched and difficult to follow, but Dr Schechter only increases the difficulty by striking out the words וְכִינִי הַצִּלְטִים as a dittography and omitting from his translation the clause 'And the *images* is an instance of metonymy'. Finally, on page xlii, 'The *venom* (רֶאֶשׁ) of asps is the *venom* of the kings of Javan' should be read, and not 'the head' (*bis*) as Dr Schechter has it, although the reference is to Deut. xxxii 33.

Perhaps I should add that I have read Mr G. Margoliouth's review of Dr Schechter in the *Athenaeum* for Nov. 26 without being convinced by his arguments.

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THE OLD SYRIAC GOSPELS.

The Old Syriac Gospels. By AGNES SMITH LEWIS, Hon. D.D., &c., &c. (Williams & Norgate, London, 1910.)

IN 1904 Professor Burkitt gave us the *Evangelion da-Mepharreshe*, taking the Curetonian MS as his basis and supplying gaps and registering variants from the Sinai Palimpsest. Dr Lewis has varied the procedure. Taking the Sinai Palimpsest as her basis, she has filled up gaps with the help of the Curetonian, and cited variants from it.

Mrs Lewis has had the advantage of four visits to Sinai since 1893, when the first transcript was made, which was published by the Cambridge University Press in 1894. She has continued her Syriac studies unweariedly, and has devoted many years of work to the text of the Codex. Faded leaves have yielded good results when treated with a reagent, and the whole MS has been photographed. Mrs Lewis now claims to have read a large number of words and even of lines which were passed over as illegible in her book, *Some Pages re-transcribed*, Cambridge 1896.

It cannot be doubted that her latest publication adds something worth having to our knowledge of the text, though the value of her work must necessarily vary with the varying legibility of the MS. Some of the new readings are probably right, many (if only slightly

¹ Taken as the equivalent of *sicuth*.