

shame with them that go down to the pit; he is put in the midst of them that be slain" (Jeremiah xxxii. 24, 25).

These passages have been understood to refer to the campaigns of Assurbanipal against Elam; but this is impossible. Assurbanipal had then been dead some time. His reign extended from 668 to 626; nor did he destroy the kingdom as is implied in the prophecies. They evidently, as Meyer urges, contemplated the annihilation of the nation, which only followed on its conquest by the Persians; and this probably took place about 596 B.C.

Having approximately fixed the date of the conquest of Elam, the next point that suggests itself for inquiry is, whence did the invading Persians come? This question involves difficulties, and is perhaps fruitful of some suggestions which I will reserve for another letter.

H. H. HOWORTH.

5. THE HUNDRED AND TENTH PSALM.

*Oriental MSS. Department, British Museum,
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SIR,—While reflecting on the date of Psalm cx. with the Hebrew text before me, it struck me that the psalm contains an acrostic, and that the name embodied in it is no other than that of Simon, Hebrew שִׁמְעוֹן. The שׁ is the first letter in the word שֶׁב, which begins the oracle in v. 1; and the headings of the next three verses—viz. מִשֶּׁה, עֹמֵד, נִשְׁבַּע—complete the name שִׁמְעוֹן.

If this be so, the theory (lately advocated with so much force by Prof. Cheyne in his Bampton Lectures) that Simon the Maccabee was the person originally addressed in Psalm cx. would appear to receive a striking confirmation from an entirely unexpected quarter. After the introductory phrase, "The oracle of Yahweh to my lord," the psalmist, bearing the name of his lord vividly in mind, proceeds to weave that name, by means of an acrostic, into the divine oracle itself; and one almost

hears the psalmist say, "The oracle of Yahweh to my lord, even to Simon: Sit thou on my right hand."

It would not be very difficult to make more or less plausible guesses as to the acrostic nature of the first letters of the remaining three verses, viz. the letters ד'ן: but, considering that competent critics look upon this part of the psalm as manifestly incomplete, the difficulty of finding a perfectly satisfactory solution for the ד'ן is at once explained. In fact, the break in the acrostic appears to confirm the theory that the latter half of the psalm is incomplete, and the theory of incompleteness may in its turn be held to confirm the acrostic theory. For, if the second part of the psalm wants a verse or two (more likely one than two), the acrostic must be imperfect also; and, as the theory of incompleteness and the acrostic theory have been proposed in perfect independence of one another, the fact of their mutual confirmation should appear to be of considerable importance.

With regard to the theological question involved in this subject, it is perhaps best to quote the well-weighed words of Prof. Driver in his "Introduction" to the Literature of the Old Testament, in a note on p. 363, where he says that the cogency of our Lord's well-known argument based on this psalm "is unimpaired, so long as it is recognized that the psalm is a Messianic one, and that the august language used in it of the Messiah is not compatible with the position of one who was a mere human son of David."

A very eminent Biblical critic, to whom I made a private communication on the acrostic, before making it public, has drawn my attention to the fact that the idea of acrostic psalms in general had occurred to Bickell (see his *Conspectus rei Syrorum Literariae*, p. 20), and also to the late much lamented Lagarde (see *Academy*, January 1, 1872). It will probably be worth while, on a future occasion, to review the observations made by these great scholars, and to make further investigations into the subject.

G. MARGOLIOUTH.