

# "CONFIRMING THE SCRIPTURES"

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[Metropolitan Museum, New York  
PRINCESS HATSHEPSUT, the "Pharaoh's  
Daughter"]

THE WITNESS OF  
ARCHÆOLOGY TO THE  
TRUSTWORTHINESS OF  
BIBLE HISTORY



[Courtesy the Cairo Museum.  
THUTMOS III: The Pharaoh of the  
Oppression]

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THE WITNESS OF ARCHÆOLOGY TO THE  
TRUSTWORTHINESS OF BIBLE HISTORY

*By*

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*Photo]*

[*The American Colony, Jerusalem,*  
SECTION OF THE WALL OF THE AUGUSTEUM, THE MARBLE TEMPLE DEDICATED TO AUGUSTUS  
CÆSAR AT ANKARA (ANGORA), TURKEY.



SECTION OF THE WALL OF THE AUGUSTEUM, THE MARBLE TEMPLE  
DEDICATED TO AUGUSTUS CÆSAR AT ANKARA (ANGORA), TURKEY.

Covering the wall is the famous Inscription, composed by Augustus in A.D. 13-14. It records his public offices and honours, his benefactions, and his military and administrative achievements, including his famous Census, when he caused "all the world to be enrolled" (Luke 2 : 1 R.V.). The Inscription is in Latin on the inner wall (shown here) of the temple, and in Greek on the outside wall.

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# CONFIRMING THE SCRIPTURES

## I

### EVIDENCE FOR THE FLOOD

It is roughly forty years since the Church (in this country) began, in any large measure, to open her arms to the Higher Criticism. Even then, as the Duke of Argyll insisted, the excavations in Bible lands left little enough room or justification for any theories that largely impugned the historical accuracy of the Scriptures. For something like forty years we have watched the increasing spread of beliefs that fatally undermine the authority and converting power of the Bible.

Ever since Gladstone in 1890 published, under the bold and arresting title of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, certain papers that had appeared in *Good Words*, and Huxley dogmatically proclaimed the fall of the Christian's Gibraltar, some people—perhaps many—have been asking, sometimes under their breath, sometimes more loudly, “But wasn't Gladstone right after all?”

And why do people ask this? One reason at least is that a Voice, ventriloquising from the bowels of the earth, is confirming afresh from one year to another



the historical truth of the Bible. That Voice is the voice of Archæology.

Archæology is the science that investigates antiquity or ancient things—that digs below the surface of the ground for what remains of ancient cultures and ancient civilisations—that interprets in the light of newly acquired knowledge ancient inscriptions carved upon the face of a cliff or upon the walls and pillars of an ancient temple, or, it may be, written in strange characters on a papyrus rescued from the dust and rubbish of centuries.

The investigations of Dr. Langdon, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, and the other excavators of Kish, a city some eight miles east of Babylon; of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur of the Chaldees; of Professor Garstang at Jericho; of Sir Flinders Petrie in Palestine and Egypt; of M. Charles Virolleaud and the other French archæologists at Ras Shamra; of the Wellcome Archæological Research Expedition to the Near East, on the site of Lachish; of the Palestine Exploration Fund; of the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem: these have all laid the Christian Church under an incalculable debt of gratitude. Those, too, who have financed these undertakings, notably Sir Charles Marston, F.S.A. (author of *The Bible is True*), the late Lord Melchett, the authorities of the British Museum, the Field Museum of Chicago, and the University of Pennsylvania; also influential dailies, such as *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, which have been quick to recognise the value of discoveries relating to the Bible and to accord them a generous hospitality: these have all made us their grateful debtors. Wealthy lovers of the Bible, indeed, can find few better

outlets for their money than in the endowment of archæological research.

It is impossible in a short space to summarise the achievements of archæology in confirmation of Scripture. We propose rather to consider a few outstanding performances, chiefly taken from the recent history of archæological research.

Let us consider first the DELUGE.

As is well known, there are traditions of a great Deluge all over the world. For centuries past travellers from Christian lands have been surprised to find in heathen countries traditions of a great flood which occurred in or near the dawn of history—traditions often wonderfully resembling in their details the Bible story of the Flood. Such stories have been found—outside the cradle of Christianity and outside the Christian lands of Europe and the Mediterranean seaboard—in India, Burma, China, Malay, Polynesia, and in all the Americas, North, Central and South. The Spanish conquerors of the New World in the sixteenth century were astonished to find in Mexico the story of the Flood.

The universality of the traditions of the Deluge does not, of course, prove a universal deluge. Rather does it prove a universal dispersion over the face of the earth of the families of those who survived the awful disaster.

But sooner than admit an inference so much in agreement with the scriptural story, the Higher Critical author of the article on the "Deluge" in the last edition (1929) of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* prefers to quote the view of Sir James Frazer (the author of *The Golden Bough*), that "Many of the stories



arise from the inundations caused by the far-reaching tidal waves that accompany earthquakes, and some from inundations caused by rain." Inundations, that is to say, are common in all parts of the world, some caused by tidal waves, some by rain; hence the numerous Deluge stories, arising independently in widely scattered parts of the world!

So, too, the late Professor Peake (*Peake's Commentary*) says: "It is still debated whether the legends go back to the primitive period of history before the dispersion; this is not probable, for the date would be so early that oral tradition would hardly have preserved it [Why not?]. *Presumably many were local in their origin*" (italics mine).

The force of prejudice must indeed be great which can ignore the remarkable resemblance of the Deluge stories. The arm of coincidence may be long, but is it long enough to account for the *Mexican* legend, in which the "Noah" sends out from his boat or raft various birds, the last of which returns with a leafy branch in its beak? Is it long enough to account for the *Hindoo* legend, in which the "Noah" (who, by the way, is called Satya, "*the righteous*") is told to build a ship and to take into it "the seven Rishis, or holy beings"—making in all *eight* souls? Or for the Malayan tradition, in which also *eight* persons were saved from the flood? Or for the deluge story of the *Chinese*, according to which Fuh-he, the Noah of the Bible, escaped from the flood with *his wife, his three sons and his three daughters*—here again making in all *eight* souls?

The Babylonians, who were Semites, had a legend (long preserved in the pages of Berossus, a Babylonian

priest of the third century B.C., but traced to its source in the cuneiform tablets some sixty years ago by George Smith of the British Museum), so extraordinarily and minutely similar to the flood-story of Genesis that it was impossible for anyone, however prejudiced, to doubt that they had a common origin.

There was a yet older legend. The Semitic Babylonians were preceded in the land by the non-Semitic Sumerians—an ancient race of a very high degree of civilization, literary and artistic—who left behind them at Nippur, one of the oldest cities of Babylonia, their clay deluge-tablets (dating from about 2,000 B.C. and evidently closely related to the Genesis account), which were unearthed in 1906 by Professor Hilprecht, of Philadelphia. Hilprecht, who had been himself a Higher Critic, was convinced by the Nippur tablets of the reality of the Noachian deluge.

But a yet more remarkable discovery has been made within the last few years. The famous Ashmolean Museum of Oxford purchased in Baghdad a series of cuneiform tablets, one of which, known as the “chronological prism,” contains an inscription described by Dr. Langdon, the Oxford Assyriologist, as “the most important historical document of its kind ever recovered among cuneiform records.” An interesting photograph of this clay prism (which was inscribed near Ur of the Chaldees, probably at the time when Abraham was actually living there, that is, about 2,000 B.C.) is reproduced in Sir Charles Marston’s *The Bible is True*.

This prism, which Dr. Hart-Davies (*Biblical History in the Light of Archæological Discovery*) describes as



“a plain unvarnished catalogue of kings and dynasties, capital cities and dynastic changes,” is not entirely without “varnish.” The “varnish” is a most arresting allusion to “the Deluge.” The first line of the tablet runs, “Rulership which from heaven descended.” The second and third lines run, “At Eridu rulership began,” “At Eridu Alulim was King.” Some lines lower down we are told that “the rulership was established at Larak,” and again that “the rulership passed to Sippar.”

“Presently” (we quote Dr. Hart-Davies) “the attention is riveted by the following: Line (39) The Deluge came up (40) After the Deluge had come (41) The rulership which descended from heaven (42) At Kish there was rulership.”

The deep significance of this record is that it confirms the story of Genesis in more ways than one. It emphasizes the Deluge as something that makes a break in the dynasties so complete that God has again to delegate specifically the dominion of the earth just as He had done at the beginning—“Rulership which from heaven descended” is given originally to Adam, and after the Flood the same heaven-descended rulership is revived in Noah.

Further, “in the statement, ‘the Deluge came up,’ we can perceive a confirmation of the Biblical record that ‘the fountains of the great deep were broken up’—the flood being caused not simply by the rain coming down, but also by the waters of the ocean, through some cataclysm occurring in the mighty deep, coming up like a gigantic tidal wave” (Hart-Davies).

More sensational still was the announcement made in 1929 by Dr. (now Sir) Leonard Woolley, that he had actually found in the earth itself the unmistakable deposits of a great Flood. Sir Leonard Woolley, as director of an expedition financed jointly by the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, has been digging for some dozen or more years past upon the site of Abraham's city. In his book, "Ur of the Chaldees," he tells of his thrilling discovery: "Suddenly the character of the soil changed. Instead of the stratified pottery and rubbish we were in perfectly clean clay, uniform throughout, *the texture of which showed that it had been laid there by water. . . .* The clean clay continued without change until it had attained *a thickness of a little over eight feet.* Then, as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and we were once more in layers of rubbish full of stone implements and pottery" (italics mine).

What was this great bed of clean clay, breaking suddenly and dramatically, the continuity of the history revealed by the strata of pottery and rubbish? "No ordinary rising of the river," says Woolley, "would leave behind it anything approaching the bulk of this clay bank; eight feet of sediment imply a very great depth of water, and the flood which deposited it must have been of a magnitude unparalleled in local history."

"The disaster," said Dr. Woolley in an article that appeared in *The Times* of March 16, 1929, "which thus buried the old settlement and caused a breach in the continuity of civilization can on the face of it be nothing other than the Flood of Sumerian history. . . . He would have been an optimist indeed who

had hoped to produce material evidence for such an event as the Flood of the Sumerian legend, which is also the Flood of the Book of Genesis; but in no other way can I interpret the facts which our excavations here give us."

Almost coincidently Dr. Langdon found an alluvial stratum (two hundred miles away from Ur) running through Kish, near old Babylon, where as Director of the Oxford Field Museum Expedition he was conducting excavations. Writing in *The Times* two days after Dr. Woolley, he said, "When we made these discoveries two months ago we were loath to believe that we had obtained confirmation of the Deluge of Genesis, but there is no doubt about it now."

The proof, then, is conclusive that there was in Mesopotamia somewhere about the time suggested in the Hebrew Scriptures a flood so vast as to be easily capable of submerging the entire population. One cannot help wondering to what extent the article on the "Deluge" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* will be modified or amplified in the next edition.

And the following from Gore's *New Commentary* might profitably, like some ill-weaved garment, be let out a little in order to cover facts that are now public property: "The ultimate origin of the legend is probably to be found in some disastrous flood in Babylon caused by an overflow of the Euphrates, in which the city of Shurippah was destroyed, and from which only a few managed to escape by means of a ship."

But what shall we say about the following extracts from Leonard Huxley's *Life of Professor Huxley* :

"Huxley proceeds [in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1890] to examine the story of the Flood and to show that the difficulties were little less in treating it . . . as a partial than as a universal deluge." But the cream, clotted at that, is served up in an article entitled "Hasisadra's Adventure": "The greater part of the article, however, is devoted to the wider question—How far does geological and geographical evidence bear witness to the consequences which must have ensued from a universal flood, or even from one limited to the countries of Mesopotamia? And he comes to the conclusion that *these very countries have been singularly free from any great changes of the kind for long geological periods*" (italics mine). Comment is indeed superfluous.

The words used above, "submerging the entire population," bring up the question whether the Deluge was partial or universal. It seems more than possible—it is even probable—that there have been in geological times very extensive world-inundations, and attempts have been made to bring these, or one of these, down to some date compatible with the Bible story. But these events in geological time are exceedingly difficult to date within a few thousand years. The chief reason, however, for declining to bring into our discussion the rather problematical events of the great Ice Age is that it is really entirely unnecessary.

The object of the Deluge was specifically to destroy the Adamic race, which was then confined within the restricted area of the great Sumerian deluge. "Words in the Bible," as Prof. Rendle Short says (*The Bible and Modern Research*), "as in any other old book, are used in the sense that they bore at the time of writing

. . . It was the *then known* world that went under the Deluge, and the then known animals that were preserved alive." Again, "when Luke says all the world was to be taxed, he obviously didn't mean South America. Similarly, amongst St. Peter's audience on the day of Pentecost were men 'from every nation under heaven'; in each case it obviously means all the then known world."

These considerations show how entirely inept and irrelevant are calculations (indulged in even by writers of the mental calibre of Professor Peake) of the depth of water required to submerge the highest mountains of the world, and of the total amount of water available for the purpose.

The treatment accorded by Higher Critics to the Biblical story of the Deluge throws so much light on the fallaciousness of their methods that it is worth while to refer to it. The Higher Critics in their minute dissection of the books of Moses have discovered, as they think, that these books have been put together by some diligent (if rather wooden-headed) editor or succession of editors, out of several old documents. In particular, a certain *J* (the name by which his contemporaries knew him has not yet come to light, but he lived about 800 B.C.), who spoke of the Deity as "*Jehovah*," wrote his narrative. Another author, *E*—also still anonymous—who always referred to the Deity under the title "*Elohim*," wrote another narrative. *D* is so-called because he is largely responsible for *Deuteronomy*, but he does not concern us. *P*, so-called as the *Priestly* writer who somewhere about 450 B.C.—*i.e.*, after the exile—invented the *Levitical Code*, worked over a lot of the old ground—in the



interests, it is said, of his own priestly caste. He is of great importance in connection with the story of the Deluge. (There were other alleged writers, J<sub>2</sub>, J<sub>3</sub>, . . . E<sub>2</sub>, E<sub>3</sub>, etc., and various editors or 'redactors,' R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, etc., who between them wove a very complicated fabric; but they do not concern us.)

Now the critics discovered that, broadly, there were in the seventh and eighth chapters of Genesis two different accounts of the Deluge, one by J and one by P. In J's account there is no suggestion that the Flood was in any way due to man's sin, or that Noah was commanded to build an ark. P, however, supplied these, as well as other points that were missing; he seems to have known all about the ark and that it rested on Mount Ararat, and he knew about the bow in the cloud.

Archæology has blown the whole of this engaging speculation into the air. For the Babylonian version of the Deluge, known as the Gilgamesh Epic, which was discovered on clay tablets in 1872 by George Smith, *incorporates all these details*, whether those of the illusive J or those of the conjectural P.

The blow was a shattering one, but some show of maintaining in an erect position the critical "men of straw" (J and P) had to be made. The device was to assume that the Israelites, during their pre-exilic sojourn in Canaan (a land long under Babylonian influence), and also after their exile in Babylonia, came into contact with these debased polytheistic stories of the Deluge, were attracted by them, adopted them, and purified them to fit their monotheistic faith. "But," asks the late Professor Orr, "is it credible that legends so polytheistic and grotesque would at

any time be borrowed by the Israelites? or that the work of 'purifying' them—a huge and formidable task—was one that would commend itself to really pious minds?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means necessary to assume that the Pentateuch was written originally as an independent and connected whole. Moses' inspiration may have largely lain in editing, unerringly, older accounts, transmitted either by writing (which was a very much older accomplishment than the critics used to believe) or orally.

## II

### THE PATRIARCHS IN EGYPT

FROM a distant date the critics of the Bible have denied the historic personality of the patriarchs—of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Of late years there has been a tendency amongst them (as, *e.g.*, in Dr. Skinner's *Commentary on Genesis*) to allow that there may have been a real Abraham underlying the stories told about him. But for the most part the patriarchs have, for the critics, been legendary figures.

Driver and Cheyne, for instance, followed by many lesser lights, urged concerning all the four great patriarchs what is called the *eponymic* theory. *Eponymic* or *eponymous* was a term applied in ancient Greece to a mythical hero who was supposed to have given his name to a country, city, or nation. According to the eponymic theory, heroes, called in this case patriarchs, were invented to account for the people of the patriarchal times. The patriarchs of Old Testament history were, in fact, resolved into mere tribal personifications.

What have the monuments to say about the patriarchs? They have nothing, or next to nothing, to say. The name *Aberamu* has been found on Babylonian contract-tablets of about 2,000 B.C.—that is, just about the time of the Abraham of the Bible; but there is no evidence of the identity of the two. Jacob and Jacob-el

also are found on contract-tablets, and the names Jacob-el and Joseph-el are found on a monument of the Egyptian King, Thotmes III (the Pharaoh of the Oppression). But there is nothing in these to connect them with the patriarchs.

But what then? What are the chances that the name of the patriarchs would actually be found on the monuments? It is only a very small proportion of surviving memorials that has come under our scrutiny; and the number of surviving memorials is only a small proportion of the original memorials. Add to this that most of the patriarchs, living the life of nomads, dwelling with their flocks and herds away from the busy towns—"pilgrims and strangers in the earth"—effected few contacts with the political life of their times. The chances, then, are very few that we should actually find their names in the hieroglyphic and cuneiform memorials of the past.

Joseph did, indeed, make a very remarkable contact with the politics of his time, inasmuch as he became the viceroy of Egypt and the most powerful man of his time. M. Chabas, the famous Egyptologist, tells the story of an undated monument, now in the Turin Museum, erected, as the inscription tells us, to an anonymous slave who did his duty towards his parents, became a favourite of Pharaoh, who, amongst many other distinctions, made him superintendent of the public granaries. That there is no mention in the inscription of the gods of the country involves an omission so remarkable that it suggests that this promoted slave whom the Pharaoh delighted to honour was a foreigner of an alien religion. The story cer-

tainly bears an extraordinary resemblance to the story of Joseph.

Again, the chances of Joseph's name surviving on Egyptian monuments, notwithstanding the mark that he made upon the contemporary life of Egypt, are not great. Joseph's royal patron was one of the alien Hyksos dynasty (of which we shall speak presently), and it is well known that after the final expulsion of the Hyksos the native Egyptian Pharaohs systematically destroyed the monuments and memorials of their predecessors.

How, then, it may be asked, are we to judge of the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, if we can find no contemporary evidence of the patriarchs themselves on stone or brick or papyrus?

To answer this we must remember that the actual man who played his part in history and even the actual part that he played, are not so important for the present purpose as the background against which he stands out and the atmosphere in which he works.

The first piece of advice that a tyro anxious to try his hand at a work of fiction is likely to receive from an experienced senior is that he should write of a society or a period with which he is personally and directly familiar. It is unsafe to place the plot of your tale in Samoa or Honolulu unless you are familiar not only with the outward aspect, but with the society and the manner of life, of those places. It is unsafe to portray the intimate life of the East End if your own life has always been lived in the West End. Whatever natural ability you may be endowed with, it is unsafe, if you keep a coffee-stall in the Brixton Road,



to attempt a story of undergraduate life in Oxford or Cambridge—unless you have come down very much in the world. The reason is that, though you may write a good story and a story which in all its outward incidents is plausible, you will be almost sure to go wrong in some detail of background—local colour, social manners, or what not.

Now we propose to show that the discoveries of archæology have not only revealed in a very surprising manner the plausibility and even accuracy with which certain incidents in history have been represented in the Bible, but have shown, mirrored with extraordinary fidelity in its pages, all the local accessories of those happenings—the manners of the natives, local customs, political atmosphere, topography, and even the flora and fauna.

To deal exhaustively with the accessible volume of evidence would require many chapters. Let us consider the narrative of Abraham's brief visit to Egypt and the narrative of Joseph's long life spent almost entirely in Egypt.

Abraham, the Bible states, under stress of famine, "went down into Egypt to sojourn there." Afraid that he would be killed for Sarah's sake, he bade her call herself his sister. His fears were partially realised, but Heaven-sent plagues prevented Pharaoh from carrying out his purpose of making Sarah his wife. For her sake, we are told, Pharaoh "entreated Abram well," giving him "sheep and oxen and asses . . . and camels."

This brief story is told in eleven verses, but we know now, what was not always known, that it faith-

fully reflects, both in what it tells us and in what it does not tell us, the life of Northern Egypt in the twenty-first century B.C. It tells us by implication that Egypt was a place where it was likely that famine-sufferers might find food for themselves and pasture for their cattle: that Egypt was easily accessible to strangers, at any rate, to a Semitic stranger like Abraham: that for all their hospitality to Semitic strangers the Egyptians were licentious and unscrupulous: that women went about unveiled in Egypt: and that the Egyptians possessed sheep, oxen, asses, and camels, but no horses.

From immemorial time Egypt had been famous for the fertility of its soil, a fertility that it owed not (directly, at least) to rain, but to the annual inundation of the land by the Nile. Egypt became the great granary of the civilized world. But a low Nile spelt famine, and during the twelfth dynasty there were severe famines in Egypt. The monarchs of that dynasty, unlike their predecessors of the sixth to the eleventh dynasties, were an energetic and progressive race. They not only promoted the adequate storage and distribution of the fertilising waters of the Nile by means of dams and barrages, but they organised public granaries under State superintendence. This was the Egypt visited by Abraham in the thirteenth dynasty. (It has been usual to say that Abraham went down into Egypt in the twelfth dynasty. Sir Flinders Petrie, who speaks with high authority, holds that it was in the thirteenth dynasty.) Had the visit been paid much earlier, as the late Rev. John Urquhart said, this prosperous state of things might not have

been found, and Egypt might not have been so well qualified to meet the wants of her famine-stricken neighbours.

More remarkable is the implied statement that Egypt was accessible to strangers. Abraham had apparently no fear of being refused admission. His entrance into Egypt seems to have been a simpler matter than would be the entrance of an Englishman of the present day, hampered as he is by passports and visas. When we consider the suspicions and jealousies that divided ancient races and closed their doors against strangers, this is very remarkable, and the old-time critic was not slow to remark it. He was able to quote Strabo, the Greek geographer and historian, who shortly before the Christian era stated that not till the time of Psammetichus (654 B.C.) did Egypt open its ports to strangers or grant security to foreign traders.

But though that attitude of aloof hostility undoubtedly characterised ancient Egypt, the discoveries of archæology have shown that at the time of Abraham it was not so. In one of the tombs at Beni Hassan, in Northern Egypt, is an illustration of a scene—at one time supposed to portray the arrival of Abraham himself—showing a company of Asiatics visiting Egypt, the chief of whom is called a “prince,” or head of a tribe. They come because of a famine; they bring gifts; and are received with distinction. Now, here was a fact—an attitude, rather—unlikely and little to be expected, destined, before long, to be replaced by a totally different attitude. How did the sacred writer know of it? Who knew it in the eighth century B.C., the time at which

according to the critics, the stories of the patriarchs were written?

The implication that with their hospitality to Semitic visitors the reigning caste united an unscrupulous licence is very aptly illustrated by an ancient papyrus, relating to the eleventh dynasty, now in the Berlin Museum. "A foreign citizen," writes Rev. John Urquhart, "enters Egypt and has his ass seized by an inspector. He appeals to the Governor, who sends on the cause to the King Neb-Ka-Ra of the eleventh dynasty. The result is that the Pharaoh of the time seizes the foreigner's wife and children, and orders so much bread and beer to be given daily to the workman. As in the case of Abraham, the woman is seized and the husband is provided for out of the royal bounty."

Another feature in Abraham's story is that the Egyptians evidently had no difficulty in seeing Sarah's face. It is evident, therefore, that she went unveiled. Now, vaguely, we know that Oriental women shield their faces with the *yashmak* from the public gaze. The critics of a former generation pounced upon this evidence of the sacred writer's ignorance. Clearly, they said, he was importing into his story the ideas of a later age and of another country. The monuments, however, prove that the mistake lay with the critics. Then, as now, the critics of the Bible were too apt to make their own limited knowledge the measure of what was credible. On the monuments—*e.g.*, on the tomb at Beni Hassan, already referred to—we see Egyptian women, moving about freely amongst men, like modern Europeans, and always with faces unveiled.

When a lady asked Dr. Johnson how he had come in his dictionary, to define *pastern* as the "knee of a horse," he replied, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance!"

There remain to be noticed the animals kept as "stock" amongst the Egyptians. Pharaoh loaded Abraham with presents—presents suited to a nomad *sheikh*—sheep, oxen, asses, and camels. Von Bohlen many years ago fastened upon this statement as a clear proof that the Jewish author was not personally acquainted with Egypt, and merely mentioned the animals known in his own country. Confidence of assertion once more stood in an inverse ratio to the knowledge of the assessor. Contemporary and even older monuments and papyri reveal the presence of large herds of sheep, oxen, and asses. Camels, it is true, are only doubtfully found in sculptures. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1911 edition) says: "It is thought that the camel is shown in rude figures of the earliest age, but it is scarcely traceable again before the twenty-sixth dynasty," *i.e.*, in the seventh century B.C. M. Chabas, the French Egyptologist, who seventy years ago concurred with Von Bohlen in this matter, afterwards recanted his belief. W. H. Boulton (*Egypt, Ancient Lands and Bible Series*) writes: "The inclusion of the camel indicates that it was a dynasty of the northern part of the country" [for a long time there were concurrent dynasties in Northern and Southern Egypt, a fact that has greatly obscured Egyptian chronology] "that received Abraham, for the camel was not an ordinary animal of early Egypt, *though well known on the borders of the land*" (*italics mine*).



But Von Bohlen thought that the author still further revealed his ignorance by omitting all mention of the horse. "He has said nothing of his (Abraham's) receiving horses, and yet horses were exceedingly plentiful in the valley of the Nile." Now, here was a boomerang that recoiled very heavily upon the luckless critic. Let it be remembered that we are now dealing with the story of Abraham, and are, therefore, at some date like 2000 B.C. Later in the story of Israel the horse was undoubtedly well known in Egypt—in the time of Joseph, for instance (eighteenth and seventeenth centuries B.C.), and of Moses (sixteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C.), as the Bible clearly shows (see Gen. 41: 43; 50: 9; Exod. 14 *passim*). But by the testimony of the monuments the horse was unknown in Egypt before the time of the Hyksos dynasty, the Shepherd Kings, as they are called, under whom Joseph rose to power.

Maspero, the distinguished Egyptologist, states that "the 'shepherds' introduced the horse into the land," and he adds the interesting observation that the Shepherd Kings perhaps owed the extraordinary rapidity of their success to the terror which their steeds inspired in the first encounters with the Egyptians. If this is so, it is an intriguing anticipation of the conquest of Peru by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century A.D., which was said to be largely due to the fear struck into the Peruvians by the unfamiliar horses, the "huge earth-shaking beasts," which the Spaniards brought with them. Interesting confirmatory evidence is that the Egyptian horses were of Asiatic type, and that the names applied to them and to the war-chariots for which they were chiefly used were Semitic. Here,

then, is an evidence of the minute photographic accuracy of the Bible. The horse was not known in Egypt when Abraham visited the country, but became known not very long after upon the advent of the Hyksos.

### III

## JOSEPH IN EGYPT

LET us now consider Joseph in Egypt. Joseph lived some two or three hundred years later than Abraham. He made a much more prolonged and intimate contact with Egypt than Abraham had made. The opportunities of error for his biographer were, therefore, proportionately increased. Joseph no more than Abraham is mentioned on the monuments, but the Egyptian background is abundantly depicted there. Let us see whether it is faithfully reproduced in the story of Joseph.

First of all, a word about the Hyksos, who were in power in Egypt when Joseph first reached that country, and were still there when he died in Egypt. A knowledge of these Hyksos or "Shepherd Kings" throws light upon some obscure places in the story of Joseph. "Every shepherd," we are told (Gen. 46: 34), "is an abomination unto the Egyptians." Consequently "the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews" (Gen. 43: 32). Jacob and his family were sequestered in the land of Goshen because of this antipathy on the part of the native Egyptians. And why this antipathy to the shepherds?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Yahuda, who holds for not very convincing reasons that Joseph's Pharaoh belonged to a pre-Hyksos dynasty, says that shepherds were held in abomination in Egypt long before Joseph's date. This might be conceded and it might be believed at the same time that this feeling was deepened and intensified by their resentment against their oppressors, who were known as the *Shepherd Kings*.

A mysterious race, now gradually emerging from the shadows of nearly four millenniums, the Hyksos (a term meaning "Royal Shasu"—Shasu is an Egyptian word denoting the Arabs or Bedouins of the deserts) conquered Syria and Palestine, where Flinders Petrie has in recent years identified many of their fortified strongholds, and then spread south into Egypt, where, at first in Lower (or Northern) Egypt, and afterwards for a time at least in Upper (or Southern) Egypt as well,<sup>1</sup> they established a powerful alien dynasty, reducing the native Egyptians to subjection. For some hundreds of years this race of aliens, proclaimed as Semites by their features in an ivory group discovered in a tomb at Abydos, held ruthless and efficient sway not merely in Egypt but over an empire spreading from Baghdad in the north to the First Cataract of the Nile in the south. The important point is that, being Arabs, they were Semites and near kin to the Hebrews. This explains much of the favour shown by them to Jacob and his family. It also explains the use of "Egyptian," as we shall see, in various passages in Genesis to signify the native Egyptians as distinguished from the alien Hyksos.

Joseph was sold by his brethren to "Midianites, merchantmen" who were going down into Egypt. "The Egyptians themselves do not appear to have taken much part in international carriage or transport. In their own land the Nile was the convenient mode,

<sup>1</sup> Professor Yahuda bases one of his arguments for the pre-Hyksos date of Joseph's Pharaoh on the Hyksos never having extended their rule over the whole of Egypt, but being practically confined to the Delta region. This can hardly be true, as the monuments and scarabs of the Hyksos are found both in Southern and Northern Egypt.

and the development of other methods seems to have been left to others. There is thus a touch of reality in the fact that Joseph arrived in the land as the property of 'foreigners'" (Boulton: *Egypt*).

He was sold to Potiphar. The very name of this man bears witness to the writer's familiarity with Egypt. It is a genuine Egyptian name, found in an ancient papyrus by Champollion, the famous Frenchman who discovered the key to the hieroglyphic language. It signifies "consecrated to Ra," the sun-god who was worshipped in Lower or North Egypt, the Egypt in which the Hyksos' power was mostly concentrated. The very name with its northern flavour was appropriate to a native of the northern kingdom. The author writes with a sure pen.

Now, who was this Potiphar? He is described as "an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard" (Gen. 37: 36; 39: 1). The Hebrew word translated "officer" means a "eunuch," as the margin says. Older critics believed that this description of Potiphar reflected the experience of a writer who was familiar with the court officials of the kings of Israel at a much later date, but was ignorant of the Egypt of Joseph's supposed date. Von Bohlen, the German already quoted, said that there were no eunuchs in ancient Egypt, and that such a term could not therefore be used to denote a court official in Egypt.

But monuments and manuscripts leave no doubt whatever that there were eunuchs in Egypt, and even that they married. Probably by the time of Joseph the term had become a mere generic title for a court official, and Potiphar would be quite correctly described as an "officer of Pharaoh."

But he is also "captain of the guard"—margin, "chief of the slaughterers," or executioners: much what we should understand by a provost-marshal. The Septuagint translators assumed that such officers were slaughterers of *animals*, and called the chief of them "the chief cook." But the story shows quite plainly that these officers were in charge of the King's prison, and were executioners in the proper sense.

Genesis 39, which resumes Joseph's story after the parenthesis of chapter 38, recapitulates by saying that Joseph was brought to Egypt, and that Potiphar bought him from the Ishmaelites. The writer describes Potiphar again as "an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the king's guard," but he adds the words "an Egyptian." Driver, in his book on Genesis, appended a note to this verse: "If the name and description of Joseph's master originally stood here, the addition 'an Egyptian' seems superfluous." But a careful reader will notice that the very next verse says that "Joseph was in the house (*i.e.*, was taken into the household) of his master, *the Egyptian*," and three verses lower we read that "the Lord blessed *the Egyptian's* house for Joseph's sake." There is clearly some significance attached to the fact that Potiphar was an "Egyptian." It would not be thought necessary, as Boulton says (*Egypt*), to refer to an officer of the English court as an Englishman.

But the Egyptian court in the time of Joseph was the court of the alien Hyksos or Shepherd Kings, who had ousted the native Egyptian kings. The Hyksos conquerors, however, often employed for administrative and executive posts the native Egyptians. Potiphar, then, was one of the original natives of the land, racially



distinct from the Semitic "shepherds" who occupied the throne. There is a special appropriateness in this emphasis on Potiphar's Egyptian birth; for it may explain why Potiphar merely put Joseph in prison instead of putting him to death, when his wife laid so serious a charge against him. Joseph was a Semite, and as Boulton says, "all documents relating to condemned criminals had to be seen by Pharaoh before the condemnation could be carried out."

Joseph is rapidly advanced in Potiphar's household until he becomes superintendent and general manager of what was apparently a large establishment. The management of the whole estate and staff was entrusted to a slave. This is completely in accord with the possibilities of ancient Egypt. Many of the monuments show us the steward of a large estate with his symbol of office, often with a writing-tablet and stylus, superintending and directing the labours of the staff, himself being a slave. Such a man was called in Egyptian *mer per*, "lord of the house"—the title given in the Bible to Joseph when Potiphar made him "overseer over his house."

The critics of a past generation adduced the seclusion of women in Egypt as a reason why Joseph could never even have seen Potiphar's wife. The writer, it was said, judged Egypt by the customs of another country and a later date. It is true that in Egyptian houses the men's and the women's quarters were separated, but the monuments show that women mingled unveiled and with perfect freedom with men at banquets, in markets, in the streets. Women occupied a position of great respect. Like modern Englishwomen since the Married Women's Property Act, Egyptian

married women retained their own property and handed it on to their children. Indeed, their position resembled that of the modern European woman far more than it resembled that of the Oriental woman—that, *e.g.*, of the Syrian woman, with whom a Hebrew writer would naturally be more familiar.

In the tomb of a certain high-priest, named Mery-Ra, were found paintings which enabled a plan of his house to be made (see Erman's *Life in Ancient Egypt*). This plan shows that in a large Egyptian house the store-rooms, which would naturally be a special object of Joseph's care, were at the back of the house, and that in order to reach them he would be compelled to pass through the house itself. This shows how true to the circumstances are the words (Gen. 39: 11) that "Joseph went into the house to do his business."

An old Egyptian story, recovered from a papyrus, and related at length by Petrie, bears a curious resemblance to the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. It is known as "The Two Brothers," and is frank fiction. In this story the wife of the one brother, having made immoral advances to the other brother and being repulsed, takes her revenge in exactly the same way as Potiphar's wife did, and the innocent brother is killed by the deceived husband. The critic, Eduard Meyer, Prof, Yahuda tells us, found the resemblance so striking that he could not conceive the Joseph narrative as anything but fiction, and suggested that it was a mere adaptation of the Egyptian story. "Unfortunately," Prof. Yahuda adds, "he forgot that he belonged to the chorus of those scholars who decried the author of the Joseph narrative as completely

ignorant of Egyptian matters." Like many another, he wanted to have it both ways.

The Meyer incident, however, is quite characteristic. As long as it is at all possible, and perhaps a little longer, the critic denies the truth and even the possibility of some Bible story. Find him from the monuments some apt parallel or analogue to that story, and at once he says the Bible story was borrowed from it. It was so with the Biblical story of Noah's Deluge. It was denied with derision. When the Babylonian account of the Deluge with its striking parallels was discovered, the critics said that the Hebrews had borrowed their story from the Babylonians. The story of "The Two Brothers" is considerably later than the Biblical date of Joseph, and the believer in the Bible would have no difficulty in drawing the inference that "The Two Brothers" was borrowed from Joseph. As a matter of fact, it is the sort of plausible story that might have originated independently in almost any part of the world.

The story of the chief butler (Gen. 40) furnished the older critics with yet another target. They said that in that early age there were no vines in Egypt and wine was not drunk. Had not Herodotus said that "the Egyptians use wine prepared from barley, because there are no vineyards in their country"? But, as a matter of now undisputed fact, Herodotus was wrong, and wine, its use and its abuse, were well known in Egypt from earliest times. "A hieroglyph of a wine-press," said Boulton (*Egypt*), "goes back as far as the First Dynasty, and according to Egyptian tradition the god Osiris knew the vine and made wine from its grapes." On a tomb at Beni-Hassan, as Urquhart

tells us, are representations of Egyptian servants bearing away upon their shoulders the intoxicated guests at a banquet. All the processes, too, through which the grapes pass in the production of wine are shown on the monuments.

But even after it became clear that wine was made and drunk in Egypt, it was objected that the chief butler in his dream did not serve his master with wine, but with grape-juice ("I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup"). But some sixty-five years ago M. Naville, the eminent Egyptologist, published a picture of the Temple of Edfu, representing the king offering to the god grape-juice which has been pressed into water in a cup. It was in solemn memory of a victory of the god Horus. The practice was probably, therefore, ceremonial and rare.

The chief baker is also true to life—that is, to the old Egyptian life. "Behold," he says, "I had three white baskets on my head" (Gen. 40: 16). "The bakers carry their wares on their heads," says Ebers. There is a picture of the palace bakery of Rameses III, in which one of the bakers is shown carrying the bread in a basket on his head.

The fate of the chief baker furnishes a further illustration of the writer's intimate knowledge. He was "hanged" (40: 22), but not in the ordinary way of hanging. His death was by beheading ("Pharaoh shall lift up thy head from off thee"), and the dead body was then hanged to be a prey for the birds of the air ("and shall hang thee on a tree"). The interest of this is that a Jew, with no particular knowledge of Egyptian customs, would not have introduced decapitation here; for this was not a Jewish punishment.

Pharaoh's dreams, too, are true to the life. Their setting is characteristically Egyptian. From the second of these dreams it is evident that the writer regarded wheat as the staple food of Egypt. But here again in bygone days Herodotus was quoted against the Bible. He had said that in Egypt it was regarded as a disgrace to feed on wheat. But those who were in haste to back Herodotus against the writer of Genesis had leisure to repent their rashness. "In spite of Herodotus," says Maspero, "the usual food of the people was wheat and other cereals, which the soil of Egypt produces in abundance." The paintings of her temples bear abundant witness to this fact. Egypt was not only famous for its wheat, but grew, as Wilkinson (*Ancient Egyptians*) tells us, just that "seven-eared variety" which, though unfamiliar to other lands, is described in Pharaoh's dream—another of those slight unobtrusive evidences of genuine familiarity with the country.

When Joseph was summoned in haste from the dungeon to appear before Pharaoh, we are told that he "shaved himself." Here is another sure mark of the familiarity already referred to. The Hebrews, and indeed, Semitic peoples generally (witness the Assyrian sculptures of hirsute and bearded men), did not usually shave. In the Egyptian monuments, as Boulton tells us, "when hair is shown on the head of anyone it is a wig and not the natural hair," unless, as Wilkinson says, he were "a man of low condition or a slovenly person," or wished to express mourning. It was necessary, therefore, when Joseph was to appear at court, that he should be completely shaven. Herodotus, accurate in this, describes with care the washing and shaving ritual of the Egyptian priests.

The account of the honours and gifts conferred on Joseph is essential Egypt. The ring from Pharaoh's own hand, the fine linen, the gold chain (or rather collar), are Egyptian. The luckless Von Bohlen wrote on this subject that "it is hardly necessary to remark that these objects of luxury, especially engraved stones, belong to a later epoch." These signet-rings, insignia of high office in the land of Egypt, to which was often attached the emblem of the *scarab* (the sacred dung-beetle of the Egyptians), dating from at least as far back as the twelfth dynasty—a time considerably antecedent to Joseph—have been found in hundreds, and can be seen in the British Museum at the present day.

"The gold chain," says Boulton, "was really a gold collar, and the word used in the Hebrew only occurs in the account of Joseph's advancement, and in Ezekiel, where it is used in relation to Israel's sojourn in Egypt. It is, therefore, essentially Egyptian. Such collars are represented on the monuments where investitures are shown, and it is definitely stated that those whom the king honoured by the gift of gold collars wore them on every occasion."

Prof. Yahuda mentions<sup>1</sup> a scene in the reliefs at Amarna, in which Mery-Ra, the high priest of Aton, is being invested with a gold neck-chain by order of Amenophis IV, because "he filled the storehouse with spelt and barley." This gold chain, he says, was not a mere present, but marked the investiture of a high state dignitary; the ceremony was known as the conferment of "the gold of praise." The practice dates from the earliest times of the Middle Kingdom, say about 2200 B.C.—long before the time of Joseph.

<sup>1</sup> *The Accuracy of the Bible*. By A. S. Yahuda. 10/6 Heinemann.

A very magnificent specimen of one of these gold collars, now in the Boulak Museum, was found upon the neck of a mummy of the seventeenth dynasty—that is, of or about the time of Joseph.

Professor Yahuda draws attention to Joseph's concise summary of his own office and dignities in Gen. 45: 8: "God hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt." Such a summary, he says, "can only have emanated from someone who was intimately familiar with the hierarchic state institutions of Egypt, and knew that these were the most important offices which were embodied in the person of a vizier." Joseph was, in the first place, a *father* to Pharaoh. By the conferring of this title there was given to Joseph the priestly rank that befitted the vizier in a hierarchic state where Pharaoh was a god—a priestly rank that was emphasised by the gift in marriage of the daughter of the priest of On, that holy city which the Egyptians held in so deep a reverence.

The second title, "lord of all his house," is the Egyptian *mer per* (already alluded to in connection with Potiphar). Joseph was not only a priest to the god Pharaoh, but a mayor of the palace.

The third title, "ruler over *all* the land of Egypt," emphasises, Yahuda believes, that both Upper and Lower Egypt were placed under his control as the deputy of a Pharaoh whose permanent title was *neb tawy* ("lord of the two lands"). "This remarkable emphasis," says Yahuda, "assumes special historical significance when it is recalled that before the New Kingdom there was only one vizier for both territories, and that it was only in the New Kingdom that two



viziers came on the scene, one for Upper Egypt (Vizier of the South), and the other for Lower Egypt (Vizier of the North)." This circumstance emphasises the sacred writer's intimate acquaintance with the history of Egypt's changing dynasties.

Yahuda notices, as an intimate Egyptian touch, the fact that when Joseph was presenting his brethren with "changes of raiment" (Gen. 45: 22, 23), he gave *five* to Benjamin. This number, Yahuda says, was regarded by Egyptians as a special distinction, and he quotes the Egyptian story of Wen-Amon's mission to the King of Byblos, to whom, amongst other presents sent by the Egyptian ruler Smendes, there were *five* suits of garments of excellent Upper-Egyptian linen and *five* pieces of the same linen. It is also noted that in Gen. 43: 34, when Joseph sent "messes" to his brethren, Benjamin's mess was "*five* times so much as any of theirs," and in 47: 2 Joseph chose *five* men from among his brethren to introduce to Pharaoh.

Professor Yahuda lays great stress on the permeation of the Hebrew language with Egyptian words, a process which, he argues, could only have been the result of a long stay in Egypt. "A great deal of Egyptian life," he says, "is illustrated with a wealth of detail which could only have been derived from thorough knowledge and exact observation at close quarters." He speaks of the "vivid picture of the manners, customs, and usages of the Egyptians in all walks of life and domains of thought, set out in language which has likewise absorbed the spirit of Egyptian both in speech and style. This surprising acquaintance, this most intimate familiarity with Egyptian life, is everywhere

apparent in both the language and modes of expression." He remarks that the Hebrew writer was so little troubled by the alien origin of some of his words that, in one verse alone, *viz.*, Exod. 2: 3, he used no fewer than four Egyptian words—for *ark*, *bulrushes*, *slime*, and *river*.

In the relation of Pharaoh's dreams there are two or three genuine Egyptian words. Pharaoh in his first dream stood by "the river." This was, of course, the Nile. But the term here used, we are told, is not *napi*, the sacred name of the Nile, but *yeor*, the common vernacular name of the Egyptians for their river and its numerous canals—used here for the first time in the Bible, and, indeed, as Boulton tells us, seldom used for any other river than the Nile—the name that a foreigner might use if he had lived among the Egyptians. Again, the word translated in the A.V. "meadow" (Gen. 41: 2: "they fed in a meadow"), more correctly the "sedge" or "flags" that grew at the river's margin, is *akhu*, a genuine Egyptian word, used in only one other place in the Bible (Job. 8: 11: "Can the *flag* grow up without water?").

Dr. Melvin Kyle remarks that art can never take the place of experience in the use of words: "In the colloquial use of words," especially. Here "no amount of study can ever take the place of actual experience." "Sooner or later art will always stumble and fall. Where there is no stumbling, we may know of a certainty that it is not art, but experience." Kyle instances a strictly local slang or colloquial word *bayou*, used only in reference to the waters of the lower Mississippi, and he says: "When the writer [of Genesis] refers to Egypt, he drops into the use of *yeor* as naturally

as an American writer into *bayou* when referring to the lower Mississippi." He concludes that such discriminating use of the colloquial meanings of words shows that the author was familiar by actual colloquial experience with the Egyptian tongue (*Moses and the Monuments*).

The most interesting, perhaps, of all these Egyptian words incorporated in the Hebrew Scriptures is *abrekhh*. One of the distinctions heaped by Pharaoh upon Joseph was that "he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee." At the time that our A.V. was made, and also at the time of the R.V., the word translated "Bow the knee" was unknown. The margin of the R.V. says: "Probably an Egyptian word, similar in sound to the Hebrew word meaning *to kneel*." Professor Yahuda very kindly informs me that the old derivation of the word *abrekhh* from the root *barak*, which both in Arabic and in Hebrew means "kneel down," is grammatically untenable, and he points out that, as it is the actual word which the Egyptian runners used as they cleared the way for the royal chariots, it must be an *Egyptian* word.

He tells us, too, in his *Accuracy of the Bible*, that this practice of runners clearing the way for kings, princes, viziers, and high state personages has persisted in Egypt right through the ages down to the khedives and viceroys of modern times. "Probably Lord Kitchener was the last counterpart of Joseph to have the *sayis* (Arabic 'runners') with swords in their hands running in front of his carriage." The word that was shouted by the *sayis* was *abrekhh*, not an invitation to kneel down in the road, but a brisk adjuration

to "mind" or "look out." "The most amazing thing," adds Yahuda, "is that even the expression which was shouted by the runners in Joseph's time is still alive in present-day Egypt."

Kyle has here an excellent comment (*Moses and the Monuments*). Speaking of Joseph's titles and the cry *abrek*, he observes that the Oxford Hexateuch, a Higher Critical production, assigns *abrek* to J (the Jehovistic writer, supposed to date in the ninth or eighth century B.C.). He continues: "That an eighth or even seventh century writer in Canaan [the critics differ as to the precise centuries of J and E, the Jehovistic and Elohist writers] should have described the titles of Joseph or have assigned him an outrunner in Egypt, is not incredible, but who can imagine his knowing or quoting the exact Egyptian words, or, if that be thought within the bounds of possibility, his expectation that his readers would understand these words without any explanation?" And he asks finally whether such pedantry as obscure allusions that would not be understood is consistent with the simplicity of the literary methods of that period of Israel's history.

Another native Egyptian word used in the story of Joseph is *shesh*, "linen." Even the Egyptian fellaheen wore linen, and mummy-cloth has been found on examination to be every thread linen. Now, although Hebrew had its own words for "linen," *shesh*, transliterated into Hebrew, was always used in the account of the ritual of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. This pure Egyptian word is used no fewer than thirty-four times in the Pentateuch. Kyle (*Moses and the Monuments*) points out that of these thirty-four passages

thirty-three are assigned in the Oxford Hexateuch to P. Now this P was the anonymous priestly scribe who, according to the critics, after (or during) the exile, invented the Levitical legislation for the magnification of his own caste. "How," says Kyle, caustically, "this word *shesh* escaped selection by the distinguished Oxford scholars as one of the distinctive marks of P is a mystery. Probably its Egyptian character was known to them, and silence was the better part of discretion. . . . It would have been a great stretch of the imagination to try to conceive of a scribe in the Northern or the Southern Kingdom of Israel, in the eighth or seventh centuries B.C. [the supposed dates of J and E], using this Egyptian word instead of one of the Hebrew words for 'linen'; but that anyone should be asked to believe that a scribe, a priest-scribe of Babylon, during or after the exile, should have used this Egyptian word instead of Hebrew words in thirty-three passages, or if he wished to borrow a word, that he did not borrow a *Babylonian* . . .," this was, in fact, to be asked to believe that the priestly scribe was an arch-philologist and an arch-pedant!

It was long ago made an argument against the authenticity of the Joseph story as an expression of actual Egyptian experience that the names, *e.g.*, in particular Zaphnath-Paaneah, did not occur in Egypt until the twenty-second dynasty, that is, somewhere around the ninth century B.C. Driver says cautiously that the names do not become frequent till the later dynasties, but allows that "those of the type of Asenath are found now and then earlier." Dr. S. A. Cook ("Joseph," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition) says: "It may be added that the Egyptian names in

the story of Joseph are characteristic of the twenty-second and subsequent dynasties." Orr (*The Problem of the Old Testament*) says, however, "The alleged lateness of particular names rests . . . on the argument from silence, which may be upset at any moment and fails to take account of the fact that the Hyksos period, to which Joseph belonged, is well-nigh a monumental blank. It is doubtful, besides, whether all the names have been rightly interpreted."

The exception taken to the early character of *Zaphnath*, the first part of Joseph's assumed name, has been rendered null and void by the discovery of lists of Hyksos kings, amongst which Lieblein has pointed out three royal names of date antecedent to the time of Joseph, which are compounded with the etymologically puzzling *Zaphnath* (Kyle: *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments*). Lieblein interprets the name as "the food-man," i.e., the one who supplies the nourishment. Professor Yahuda's interpretation is much the same: "food of the land," a conception, as he says, "substantially supported by the fact that the idea of the King being the feeder of the land was very current both in royal names and in praising phrases applied to the Kings. Thus "Amenophis IV was called 'the food of Egypt,' which offers a direct parallel to Joseph's name. A king of the thirteenth dynasty [several dynasties earlier than Joseph] bore a honorific name 'Feeder of the Two Lands,' and the first element, *dzefa*, of Joseph's name was frequently contained in the princely names of the thirteenth and fourteenth dynasties."

*Asenath*, the name of Joseph's Egyptian wife, was identified with the Egyptian *Nes Neit* ("belonging to Neith") and used by Dr. Driver and Sir George Adam

Smith to support the late authorship of the story. But Brugsch, a great authority on Egyptian antiquity, identifies it with Asnat, an Egyptian woman's name from the eleventh dynasty on to eighteenth incl. (*i.e.*, before and during Joseph's time).

On the whole it can hardly be said that in the light of modern discovery there is very much left of the Higher Critical objection to the Joseph story based upon Egyptian proper names.

Professor Yahuda, in the book already quoted, emphasizes the sure touch with which the writer of Genesis treats of the death and obsequies of Jacob (Gen. 50: 2-7). Forty days were ordained for the embalming of the body, and seventy for the public mourning for the highly placed, among whom was certainly reckoned the aged father of the mighty viceroy. This is all in strict accord with Egyptian custom.

A very delicate touch is imparted to the narrative in verse 4, where "Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh." Why could not the second man in Egypt speak directly to Pharaoh? Why must he ask members of the household to speak on his behalf? The reason was, as Yahuda tells us, that Egyptian custom forbade mourners, however high their position, to approach the king while their dead were yet unburied.

The long and elaborate procession of the *cortège*, accompanied by a large and imposing band of mourners, was quite in the Egyptian fashion. Yahuda draws special attention to the intimate knowledge of court etiquette and the gradations of state officialdom shown

by the writer when he says (verse 7) that "with Joseph went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt." "The 'servants of Pharaoh' were the court officials, who formed a sort of bodyguard of the king, and stood nearest to him; the 'elders of his house' are identical with the *shemessu-hayst*, which means the elders of the hall, who held high court rank. In the 'elders of the land of Egypt' we have to understand the high counsellors representing all districts of Egypt who had seats in the supreme council of the king." Such details could only be familiar to one who had lived in the country.

In a lecture delivered a few years ago at Berlin to the fifty-fifth Congress of German Philologists, and translated into English, the Egyptologist, Professor Spiegelberg, while professing admiration for the literary excellence of the "legends" about Joseph and of the account of the Exodus, complained that their Egyptian background was so colourless and featureless! Most people would probably feel that, whatever faults there might be in these narratives, a want of "colour" hardly ranked amongst them. Apparently, however, Professor Spiegelberg bases his charge upon the fact that the Egyptian king is never referred to by name, nor, though the opportunity is given, is any building mentioned. "One feels certain," he says, "that the Old Testament writer had never been in the Nile Valley."

Commander Trumper, writing on this subject a few years back, pointed out rather aptly that the text of the then recent Treaty between Great Britain and the Hedjas, and the correspondence relating thereto, contained the phrases "His Majesty the King," or "His



Britannic Majesty," but no mention of the name George: and again that the text of the Treaty between His Britannic Majesty and the King of Iraq contains the former title ten times and the latter title thirteen times, but the personal names not once. Could it lawfully be inferred that those who drew up these documents did not know the personal names of these sovereigns?

The argument of the critics was thought to be strengthened by the fact that in the historical books of the Bible, as well as in Jeremiah, the personal names are added to the official title Pharaoh, *e.g.*, Pharaoh-Necho, Pharaoh-Hophra, and in the case of Shishak (1 Kings 11: 40) the personal name is given without the official name. But Yahuda tells us (*Accuracy of the Bible*) that it can be shown by many examples from Egyptian literature that it was just about the time of the New Kingdom that the proper name of the king was given only in solemn inscriptions or in purely historical records, and not in popular stories of the Joseph and Exodus type. It was within the time of the New Kingdom (1580-945 B.C.) that these narratives were in all probability composed (Yahuda). It is also to be borne in mind that those for whom they were written could be fairly assumed to be familiar with the names of the Pharaohs in question.

Yahuda also gives the interesting information that in many hieratic documents of the twenty-second dynasty (945-745 B.C.) coinciding in time with the beginning of the kingdom in Israel, "Pharaoh," or "King" of Upper and Lower Egypt, is followed by the name of the king. "Just as 2 Kings 23: 34 and Jeremiah 46: 2 speak of Pharaoh-Necho . . .

Pharaoh-Hophra, so the Egyptian annals of that time refer to the very same Pharaohs" (Yahuda). Thus the argument designed to throw discredit upon the Bible has served, through the researches it has evoked, to bring into display the photographic accuracy of the Holy Scriptures.

"It is always difficult," said the late Professor Orr (*Bible under Trial*), "to describe with accuracy the conditions of life, customs, domestic and social arrangements, political circumstances, of a foreign country; to picture its life in public and private, in courts and in humbler ranks, in slave-market, prison, and household, with ease, naturalness, and fidelity of colouring. Yet this is what has been accomplished in the history of Joseph. Egyptian life, manners, customs, relations of men and women, masters and servants, king and subjects, are by general consent pictured to perfection."

So exactly does the Bible story duplicate the picture of the monuments, that Bishop Gore's *New Commentary* (1929), prejudiced as it is in a "higher critical" direction, says, with regard to Gen. 39: 6 ("And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought that he had, save the bread which he did eat"), that it is "one of the many indications which show that the writers of these stories had an intimate knowledge of Egyptian life and customs."

But the modern critic, compelled by hard facts to make such admissions, yet loyal to his theory of the late non-Mosaic authorship, is in a truly parlous position. How could a Palestinian Jew, living a thousand years later, have written stories so saturated with the thought and customs and life of old Egypt? Stories so

life-like in their unconscious accuracy must be of contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous date, and the fruit of an intimate experience.

But, it may be said, Moses, the traditional author of Genesis, though contemporaneous with the Egypt of the Exodus, was separated by some 150 years from the Egypt of Joseph. It is sometimes forgotten that Moses was brought up at the court of Pharaoh, and was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and had probably, therefore, access to contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous documents. Allowing for the destructive fury wreaked upon the memorials of the Hyksos dynasty, enough may have escaped to furnish Moses, writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, with the materials that he required.

## IV

### ABRAHAM AND THE FOUR KINGS

WHEREAS Joseph, from the time when as a mere lad he was sold into captivity until his death at the age of 110, passed most of his days in the fierce light that beat upon the second throne in Egypt, Abraham made but few contacts with the political history of his time.

The most startling and dramatic of these is the story of Abraham and the Kings—a story which casts a vivid flash of light upon the political relations of Canaan and Babylon nearly 4,000 years ago, a period otherwise covered until recent years in profound darkness. The story also presents Abraham in a new and unaccustomed light as a skilful, prompt, and daring soldier.

Also, with striking audacity, the narrative commits itself to a number of names of Kings of whom secular history had never heard, multiplying the chances of error and exposing a wide front to attack. Professor Spiegelberg complained of the colourless and featureless character of the Egyptian background presented in the story of Joseph, because forsooth the writer had not indicated to what place in what dynasty the Pharaoh of Joseph's time was to be assigned. Judged by this peculiar colour-test, the story of Abraham and the Kings must be reckoned to be colour-full indeed. For four Kings are pitted against five, and the names of all are given.

After serving Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, for twelve years, the five small kinglets of Sodom and its neighbourhood rebelled. In the next year Chedorlaomer, with three subordinate allies, Amraphel, King of Shinar; Arioch, King of Ellasar; and Tidal, King of Goïm (A.V. "nations"), marched up through the valley of the Euphrates and skirting the great Syrian desert turned south by Damascus and took the road on the east side of the Jordan valley, past the sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, on to Mount Seir, smiting various small tribes of Canaanites on their way. At Mount Seir, south of the Dead Sea, they turned west to Kadesh, and then north to the Vale of Siddim, where they joined battle with the five kings. The men of Sodom and their allies were defeated and despoiled.

Amongst those led away captive by the victorious four was Lot. Abraham, hearing at Hebron of the disaster that had befallen his nephew, promptly armed his trained servants, and together with his confederates of the plain of Mamre dashed after the invaders, whom he "smote and pursued unto Hobah" which is near Damascus. From the slaughter of the four kings he returned to Sodom with the spoil and the captives, including his nephew Lot.

Now this remarkable story has been from an early date a favourite target for critical arrows. It not only assigns to the Elamites a position of suzerainty in the valley of the Euphrates somewhere about 2100-2000 B.C., but it assumes for them a power extending over Palestine. It also mentioned the very names of the Elamite king and his three confederates—names unknown to history. The critics took wide exception

to the whole story. The hapless Von Bohlen said that the story had not so much as a single traditional event at the back of it. Knobel in 1860 rejected as utterly unhistorical the implied supremacy of Elam (the ancient Persia). The conviction of another famous critic that the overrunning of Palestine by the Babylonian power at that early date was impossible was supported by the ingenious surmise that the story was based upon the later invasion of Judah by the Assyrian Sennacherib, who (like Chedorlaomer) came up "in the *fourteenth* year." Hezekiah had a deliverance "in the *fourteenth* year," and, of course, every reader has noticed that the story of the Elamite invasion is recorded in the *fourteenth* chapter of Genesis!

In 1869 the famous Semitic scholar, Professor Nöldeke, published a treatise on the unhistorical character of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis. The political situation implied by the story was incredible, the invasion of Palestine from the east was extremely improbable, and the names of the kings were fictitious. "The chapter begins with the impossible enumeration of kings in whose time the narrated event is alleged to have occurred. . . . Whence the narrator got these names we cannot say."<sup>1</sup> The story was "for ever disproved by criticism." Wellhausen lent his great name to the support of Nöldeke's conclusions. Nöldeke had given the story its "deathblow," and Nöldeke's criticism was "unshaken and unanswerable."

But the rubbish-heaps of Babylonia had a word—indeed, many words—to say to all this. Contemporaneous monuments, as is not now disputed, establish

<sup>1</sup> Some eminent Semitic scholars traced the etymology of these unfamiliar names to the Sanscrit!

that Elam had conquered Babylonia, made her kings vassals of the Elamite dynasty, and become "supreme from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and from the eastern borders of Persia to the Mediterranean." They also confirm the suzerainty of Elam over the land of the *Amurru* or the Amorites, the name by which Canaan went in Babylonia at that time. For Kudur-Nankhundi, King of Elam in 2280 B.C., was called "Father" or "Governor" of the land of the Amorites. This Kudur-Nankhundi conquered Babylon and carried off to Susa, the capital of Elam, the statue of the goddess Nana. This statue Assurbanipal (the Asnapper of the book of Ezra), grandson of Sennacherib, did—as he tells us in an inscription which is now in the British Museum—recover when he captured Susa in the seventh century B.C. A brick, also, was discovered at Ur of the Chaldees by George Smith of the British Museum, stamped with an inscription of one Kudur-Mabug, a somewhat later King of Elam) described also as "Father of the land of the Amorites," *i.e.*, of Palestine.

The status and power of Elam was one chief point in the story that the critics assailed: with what success we have just seen. The other chief point was the names of the four kings—Amraphel, Arioch, Tidal, and Chedorlaomer—which the critics alleged to be fictitious. One of the most interesting revelations of archæology in Bible-lands is the discovery of all these names.

George Smith in 1871 identified *Arioch*, King of Ellasar, with Eri-aku, King of Larsa, son of the Kudur-Mabug just mentioned—an identification now generally accepted not only by Assyriologists but by the Higher Critics themselves. The next identifica-

tion was of *Amraphel*, King of Shinar (or Babylon), with Hammurabi, a king of the First Babylonian Empire, now one of the best-known kings of antiquity, and the author of the famous Code of Hammurabi. This code is inscribed on a stele (an upright slab) now preserved in the Louvre in Paris, of which a cast can be seen in the British Museum. Hammurabi who in Gen. 14 is rightly spoken of as subordinate to Elam, was later able to expel the Elamites and establish an undisputed empire in Babylonia. This identification also is accepted by the critical school. Gore's *Commentary*, for example, says: "The identification of Amraphel may be regarded as reasonably certain. Arioch may now be safely identified with Eriaku."

There remain *Tidal* and *Chedorlaomer*. Of Tidal, Dr. S. A. Cook, of the critical school, says (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1911 edition): "The name of Tid'al, King of Goïm (A.V., "nations") may be identical with a certain Tudhulu . . . mentioned in Babylonian inscriptions, and Goïm may stand for Gutim, the Guti being a people who lived to the east of Kurdistan." Of Chedorlaomer, Dr. Cook says: "Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, bears what is doubtless a genuine Elamite name." *Chedor* is, in fact, by admission the same word as *Kudur* in Kudur-Mabug and Kudur-Nankhundi, and signifies "servant" in the Elamite language. The second part of the name is also, by admission, to be identified with the name of the Elamite deity *Lagamar*. Chedorlaomer means therefore "the servant of Lagamar." (The Hebrew *la'omer* is written *logomer* in the Septuagint.)

Chedorlaomer, then, was recognised as a genuine Elamite name. This was a striking admission when



one recalls the old contempt poured upon the names of the four kings. But was the name, though well constructed, actually to be found in the cuneiform monuments?

The answer to this question is to be found in what are known as the Spartoli tablets, which were deciphered by the late Dr. Pinches, of the British Museum. These tablets tell how Babylonia was laid waste by certain kings. They were in a very imperfect state, but three names were made out—Tudkhula, Eri-eaku, and Kudur-lakgumal, and the last was designated “King of Elam.”

Now when it is borne in mind that at the time when Dr. Pinches published his discovery Arioch had already been identified with Eri-aku, it would seem fairly obvious to an unprejudiced person that his two associates on the Spartoli tablets must be the two associates of Arioch in Gen. 14, whose names Tid'al and Chedorlaomer (Kudur-lagamar) are so extraordinarily similar. But Dr. Pinches, who was a man of great natural modesty, said when commenting on his discovery: “With such imperfect texts as these, dogmatising is impossible, and the author disclaims any such intention . . . but if they (the persons named) are not what they seem to be, it is a remarkable historical coincidence and deserves recognition as such.”

The *Church Times*, always Higher Critical in its attitude, took advantage of Dr. Pinches' unnecessarily modest tone and wrote: “That is not the way men talk when they have made an important discovery . . . after this its advocates can do no less than give their dead tablet a decent and honourable burial.”

But for the plain man, with no pet theory to champion,

the tablet is far from "dead," and there is no reason why it should be buried because it disturbs the peace of mind of the *Church Times*. As Dr. Pinches himself said, "It is in the highest degree unlikely that tablets containing the names of Tidal and others closely resembling Arioeh and Chedorlaomer, the last being designated 'King of Elam' and 'the Elamite,' should not, after all, refer to these personages." In a letter written later (April 6, 1900) to the late Rev. John Urquhart, Dr. Pinches caustically remarked: "It is as if it were contended that a piece of an old newspaper mentioning Wellington or Wellington, Blüchere, and Napo . . . n, Emperor of the French, did not refer to Wellington, Blücher, and Napoleon I at all." This is the sort of question that might rightly and safely be put, not to critics and experts, but to twelve plain men in a jury-box. For the answer demands not scholarship but common sense.

One of the most learned and respected protagonists of the Higher Criticism was the late Dr. Driver. Driver in his *Authority and Archæology* energetically attacked Sayce's allegation that archæology had entirely invalidated Nöldeke's arguments. "The fact is," he said, "Nöldeke's arguments on Gen. 14 have not been refuted, or even touched, by archæology.. Professor Sayce has simply not mentioned Nöldeke's real arguments at all. Nor are they mentioned by Dr. Orr or Professor Clay. . . . Nöldeke never questioned, as Professor Sayce declares that he did, the general possibility at this time of an expedition being sent from the Far East into Palestine."

We quote this to show how a distinguished critic, whose honour was not to be questioned, could treat

a subject of this kind. Dr. Melbin Kyle has dealt with this point. "Driver's representations of Nöldeke's views," he writes (*The Deciding Voice of the Monuments*), "are fairly well sustained by the particular passage from Nöldeke's *Untersuchungen* ("Researches") to which he refers, taken alone, and seem to have been based upon those statements, but Nöldeke's statements in the *Wissenschaftliche Theologie* ("Scientific Theology") are absolutely ignored. . . . He seems not to have known of these further statements. . . . Nöldeke does plainly teach the very things which Driver so categorically says he did not teach: the incredibility of the political situation presupposed by the narrative in Gen. 14, the questionable character of the story of a warlike expedition from the East to Palestine in that age, the fictitious character of the names of the principal persons in the narrative, in most cases no more than poetical fancies or etymological inventions, and the generally unhistorical character of the narrative which he characterises as a 'free creation throughout' and 'a conscious fiction.'"

It seems very strange, and it is gravely disqualifying, that a man of Driver's standing should have ventured to criticise so dogmatically Sayce's contention without having first put himself in possession of all the facts. We cannot, of course, suspect our Higher Critical friends of deliberate or conscious disingenuousness. But their attitude sometimes suggests a rather determined blindness. For instance, Dr. Böhl, formerly Rector of the University of Gröningen, writing on "Abraham" in the last edition (1929) of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, says: "The identification of these kings with the great Babylonian King Hammurabi

and those of his time would seem to be erroneous. It is probable that the chapter deals with a primitive expedition undertaken by two princes of the Middle Euphrates (Amraphel is Amurapel, and Arioch is Ari-aka) in the service of the allied King of Khatti (Tid'al or Tid'alia, Dudhalia). Now, of these kings we know from the cuneiform inscriptions that Tid'al was the founder of a dynasty of the kingdom of the Hittites (Hatti), and that he lived somewhere about 1550 B.C. (or at the latest 1450 B.C.). It is therefore probable that we must place the time of Abraham about this date."

It will be noticed that in this passage (1) Chedor-laomer (Kudurlagamar) is entirely unaccounted for, (2) that the coincidence of two princes from the Middle Euphrates, having the names *Amur-apil* and *Arioch*, assisting or serving a Hittite prince whose name is *Tid'al*—three names extraordinarily resembling those of three of the four kings mentioned in Gen. 14—is not so much as noticed, and (3) it is assumed that the Tid'al associated with Amurapil and Arioch must necessarily be the Tid'al who founded a Hittite dynasty about 1550 B.C. (which is about 500 years after the universally accepted date of Abraham) as though there could not have been more than one Tid'al.

But for the most part the critics appear to accept the identification of two of the four kings as fairly established, and of the other two as likely or possible. What, then, is their attitude towards Gen. 14, seeing that the old twofold indictment, viz., the unhistorical background of a wide Elamitic supremacy and the fictitious character of the names of the kings, has completely collapsed? They admit that Gen. 14 rests

upon some actual basis of historical fact and that the names have an appearance of genuineness. How is this to be explained? They say, substantially, what Meyer (quoted by Urquhart) said in 1884, that this story is one of the latest portions of the whole Pentateuch, and was inserted after the exile by a Jew who, having obtained exact information in regard to the early history of the country, foisted Abraham into the story of Kudur-Lagamar's campaign. On this Hommel pertinently remarks that "it is absolutely inconceivable that a Jew of the post-exilic period should have been the first to derive from the sacred Babylonian records such exact information in regard to an incident in the history of the earliest kings of Babylon—an incident, moreover, in which the King of Babylon played a passive and comparatively subordinate part."

But the critics would say that the story in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis is not to be regarded as a forgery, but as a historical romance like the book of Judith. But the episode of the four kings against five is incorporated in the history of Abraham without the smallest indication that the writer either thought of it as romance or wished others so to conceive it. It is told as sober history, with many circumstantial touches of the historical expositor, such as the explanatory notes added to ancient and unfamiliar names of places ('King of Bela, the same is Zoar'—'the vale of Siddim, the same is the Salt Sea'—'En-mishpat, the same is Kadesh'—'the vale of Shave, that is, the King's Vale').

And anyway, the critics say, though the names of the kings may have been derived from a trustworthy source and the invasion of Palestine by the kings may

represent a "possible situation," "there is as yet no monumental evidence in favour of the genuineness of the story" (Cook, s.v. "Abraham," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition). "Monumental evidence that the narrative is historical is at present entirely lacking" (Driver, *Genesis*).

This is characteristic of the perverse and unfair treatment to which the Biblical record is subjected by the critics. The chances are few that any individual's name will be found in the comparatively few cuneiform inscriptions that have been deciphered. The chances are few that the name of Abraham should be found in an inscription in such a way as to establish its identity with the Abraham of the Bible. And the chances are fewer still—indeed, altogether negligible—that an incident in which a Hebrew sheikh routs and slaughters the flower of Babylonian armies should be recorded on Babylonian tablets. Had this been a chapter from secular history, the fact that it has stood the test in all points in which we have been really able to test it—the fact that the progress of knowledge and the accumulation of fresh facts have only added to its credibility—the fact that it presents a historic background that archæology has remarkably confirmed—the fact that the names of the great contending kings, long a subject of contemptuous derision, have been recovered in triumph from the bowels of the earth—all these facts, added to the fact of its traditional acceptance through thousands of years, would certainly have ensured a practically unanimous endorsement of its claims.

"That the names may be those of historical personages," says Dr. S. A. Cook, "is no proof of historical accuracy," and he quotes Professor W. H. Bennett,

who says (Century Bible: *Genesis*): "We cannot, therefore, conclude that the whole account is accurate history, any more than we can argue that Sir Walter Scott's *Anne of Geierstein* is throughout a correct account of actual events because we know that Charles the Bold and Margaret of Anjou were real people."

It is difficult to understand how people at once intelligent and candid can deceive themselves with an argument so sophistical. For the argument assumes that a knowledge of the names of genuine historical personages carries with it in every age and under all circumstances the same implications. The average moderately educated person knows quite well the names of Charles the Bold and Margaret of Anjou. But a knowledge of the names of these quite genuine personages does not imply or import much other knowledge. It is merely a knowledge common to all people of a certain level of culture, and if they presumed upon this knowledge to pose as authorities upon the period of Charles the Bold and Margaret of Anjou, there are plenty of "sources" by which their pretensions could be checked.

But the knowledge that the Genesis-writer has of the names of the four kings is "in a different street" altogether, and carries with it entirely different, implications. Writing at least four or five centuries after the event, he mentioned names so remote from the general knowledge that their very genuineness was boldly denied and could not indeed be confirmed until the only other fountain of information was opened up, that is, the monuments of archæology. Clearly this writer was not drawing upon a floating tradition of knowledge general in his time, but was tapping some

genuine but not general source of history. If that were so, it is a fair inference that he was able to supply much more than the mere names. As a matter of fact, he supplies not merely the names of certain great historical figures, but a definite and (again) unexpected and (until recently) much-disputed political background to their exploits; and both alike have been confirmed by the monuments.

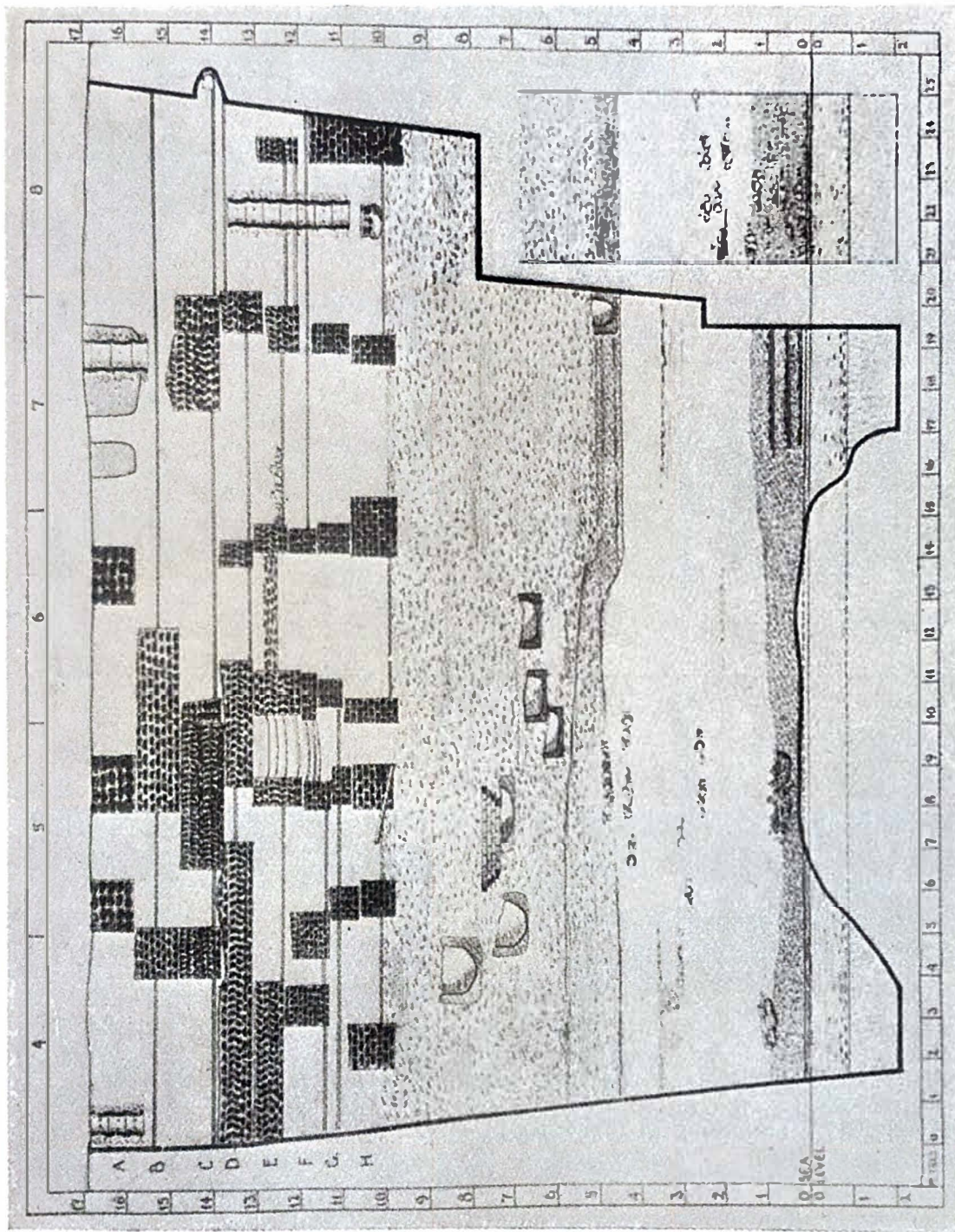
The route taken by the four kings has been subjected to considerable criticism. "Assuming," says Peake (*Peake's Commentary*), "that the object of the campaign was to crush the rebellion of the five kings, its course as described from verse 5 to verse 8 is very curious." But what right has anyone to assume that the campaign had no other object? Even if it were the primary object, is it impossible or even unlikely that the four kings should think the opportunity good for killing several birds without unnecessary expenditure of stones?

It is particularly interesting that Dr. Albright, the well-known American archæologist, should have written as follows (*The Archæology of Palestine and the Bible*): "Formerly the writer considered this extraordinary line of march as being the best proof of the essentially legendary character of the narrative." His reason for a change of front was that in 1929 he discovered a line of Early and Middle Bronze Age mounds, some of great size, along the route of the King's march down the eastern side of the Jordan, and especially at places named by the sacred writer, Ashtaroth, Karnaim and Ham. He found, that is to say, dating back to between 2500 and 1600 B.C.—within which period fall the times of Abraham and the Eastern kings—centres of popu-



lation and culture; long since dead and (save in the book of Genesis) unrecorded, where lived the Zuzims, the Emims, and the Rephaims—forgotten tribes against whom the Mesopotamian kings may, for aught we know, have long cherished schemes of cupidity or revenge.

# PLATE I



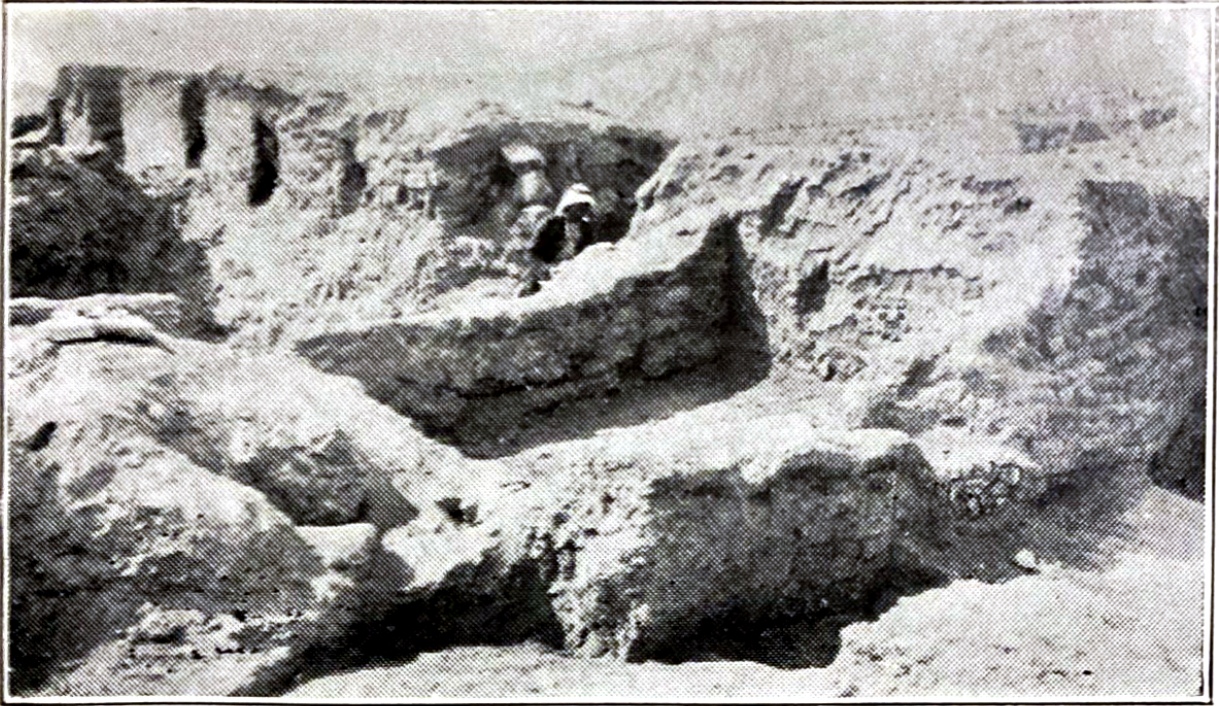
In the upper part are eight distinct building levels (marked A to H). Next (from metre 10 down to metre  $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) is a belt containing ashes, broken pottery, and potters' kilns. Below that (between metres  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and 1) is the Flood Stratum. From metre 1 down to sea level, is the refuse of the Pre-Flood Civilization.

[By the Courtesy of the British Museum.

SECTION OF PIT SUNK BY SIR LEONARD WOOLLEY AT UR, SHOWING FLOOD STRATUM.

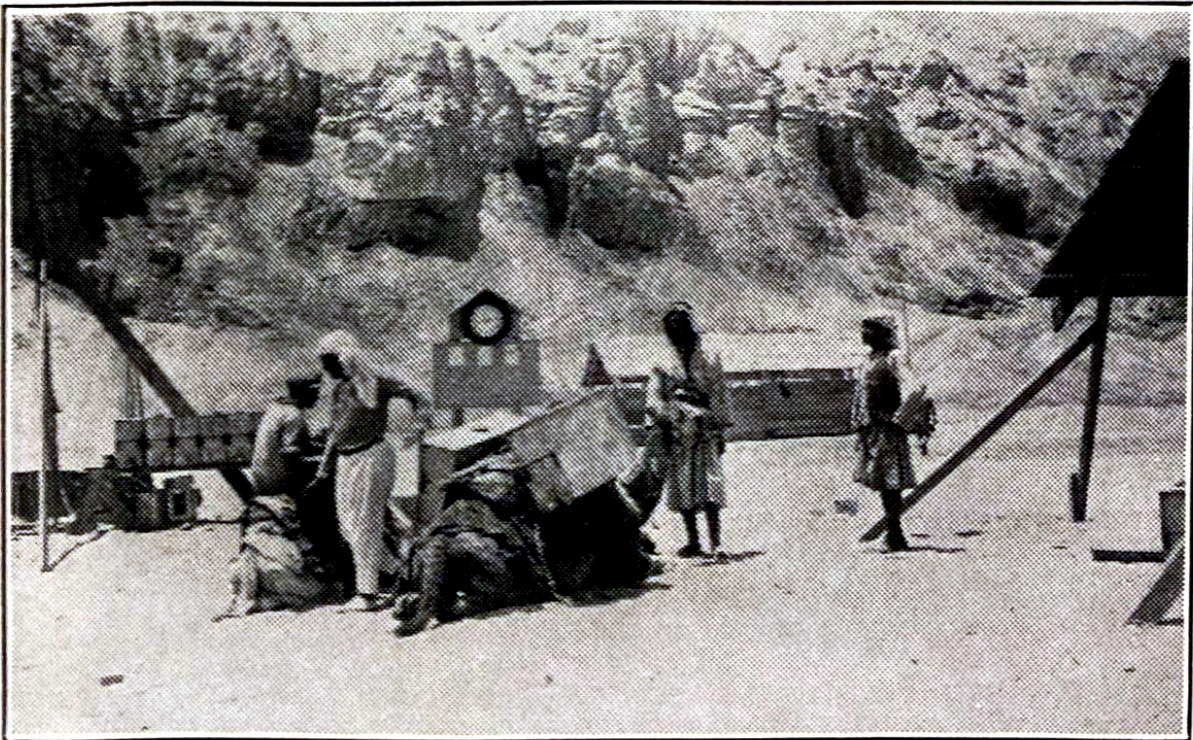


PLATE II



[By the Courtesy of Sir Charles Marston.]

REMAINS OF A HOUSE AT JERICHO OF THE TIME OF JOSHUA.



[By the Courtesy of Palestine Potash, Ltd.]

THE ROCK-SALT HILLS OF THE DEAD SEA.

Within recent years a great chemical industry has been established for the commercial exploitation of the vast mineral wealth of the Dead Sea. Some of the buildings of Palestine Potash Ltd., the company working the concession, are seen on the shore. A brochure, issued by the Company states: "The Dead Sea owes its origin to one of the oldest cosmic catastrophes known to mankind. That catastrophe is described in the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah."



## V

### WHO WAS MELCHIZEDEK?

ON his return to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem from his night-march against the Kings, Abraham was met by a mysterious personage, called Melchizedek, who was both a King and a priest. He was "King" of Salem (Jerusalem), and he was also a "priest of El Elyon," that is, the Most High God. He conferred a priestly blessing upon Abraham in the name of the Most High God, and as a priest of the Most High he received from Abraham the tenth part of the spoils of the slaughtered kings.

From the reverent Christian and devout Bible-student this story demands much more than the interest of the archæologist—great as that naturally and rightly is—for the New Testament reveals (what the 110th Psalm foreshadows) that Melchizedek is a type of our Lord in His priestly office. It is, therefore, in a subdued and reverent frame that we inquire what knowledge, in the providence of God, has been given to us concerning this Melchizedek.

From the brief narrative of Genesis we gather that this Canaanitish prince was a monotheist, worshipping and serving one supreme God, El Elyon, the Most High, who is possessor of heaven and earth. Probably he had inherited, uncorrupted by the circumnate welter of idolatry, the monotheistic faith of his ancestor Noah, handed down over ten generations. We notice

also that, while he brings forth bread and wine for the patriarch's refreshment, he offers no sacrifices, although the recovered flocks and herds of Sodom are all around—an anticipation of his great Antitype, who, having offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, inaugurates a priesthood which offers no sacrifice. Such a prophetic anticipation of the Heavenly Priesthood of Christ sets, for the reverent believer, its own seal and stamp of truth upon the narrative. Christ is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

We pass by the strange vagaries of Jewish Rabbins and Christian commentators who would identify Melchizedek with Shem, or Ham, or Enoch, or with Christ Himself, and we ask whether archæological research has anything to say about this Melchizedek story.

What, in the first place, about the seat of Melchizedek's kingdom? What about Jerusalem? The critics used to contend that this fortress of the Jebusites did not get the name of Jerusalem until the time of David. This, of course, was deemed evidence of the late date of the Abrahamic narrative which calls Melchizedek King of Salem, and of the books of Joshua and Judges, which frequently mention Jerusalem.

The critics were wrong. They do not repeat now that particular blunder. It was exploded in 1888 by the discovery of the famous Tel-el-Amarna tablets. These cuneiform writings were discovered in Upper Egypt, and consist of state documents, largely letters addressed to the last two Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty by the vassal kinglets of the cities of Palestine which had been reduced to subjection by the Egyptian power. These tablets, whose date is mostly in the

fifteenth century B.C. (that is, about the time of Joshua), mention Uru-salim, "the city of Salim," the god of peace (*uru* was a Canaanitish equivalent of the Babylonian *alu*, which means "city").

Hence Melchizedek, as King of Uru-salim, is called "King of Peace." That he is called simply "King of Salem" in Gen. 14 need present no difficulty. For the Egyptian monuments definitely refer to Jerusalem as Salem. Rameses II, for example, inscribed upon the walls of the Ramesseum, at Thebes, a list of the cities in Southern Palestine that he had captured in one of his raids, and in this list occurs Shalam, or Salem. "Melchizedek" itself signifies "King of Righteousness," and this association of *Zedek*, signifying "righteousness," with the city of Jerusalem, is interestingly duplicated by the case of "Andoni-Zedek" ("lord of righteousness"), also a king of Jerusalem, who, some six centuries later, provoked a disastrous encounter with Joshua (Josh. 10: 1, 26).

In the article on "Melchizedek" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1911 edition), written by Robertson Smith and S. A. Cook, both of the critical school, we read: "So far no evidence has been found in the cuneiform inscriptions or elsewhere in support either of the genuineness of the episode in its present form or of the antiquity which is attributed to it."

It is true that the episode is not mentioned in the monuments. What likelihood was there that it should be? It is, in fact, but one incident in the larger drama of the slaughter of the kings. Now, as has already been remarked, the slaughter of the kings was quite unlikely to be celebrated in the monuments. Obviously Abraham would not be likely to blazon his victory

on stone, or brick, for the wonder of posterity. Equally obviously the Babylonians and Elamites would 'not be likely to blazon their own defeat. And who would be in the least likely to erect a monument or inscribe a tablet to commemorate the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek? That meeting is profoundly interesting to the Christian heirs of the ages, but it could have had little interest for the godless idolators of Canaan.

But is there anything that lends to the story an accessory confirmation?—a corroboration coming, so to speak, by a side-wind? We think there is. To appreciate such confirmation, it is necessary to read, in conjunction with the Genesis narrative, the inspired commentary of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The seventh chapter of that Epistle recounts the brief story, omitting only the "bread and wine," and then adds as a fresh piece of information, "without father or mother, without descent (or genealogy), having neither beginning of days nor end of life."

We might think that this statement was mere commentary—a simple exposition of the story as told by the author of Genesis, rather than the communication of fresh facts concerning Melchizedek. Melchizedek flashes meteorically across the scene. Nothing is known of his antecedents. No genealogy of him is given. There is not even a reference to his immediate parents. Of his priestly days there was, so far as history tells, no beginning, and of the end of his priestly life we are equally ignorant. There could be no apter image, surely, to foreshadow the eternal and intransmissible Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But archæology has thrown an exceedingly interest-

ing and unexpected sidelight on the parentless state of Melchizedek. This light also comes from the Tel-el-Amarna tablets.

Some 600 years after the time of Melchizedek, another king of Jerusalem, who was tributary to the Egyptian King—one Abdi-Tâba (as Pinches calls him)—sent certain letters on baked clay tablets to his suzerain lord of Egypt. In three of these letters he harps on his own office as a vassal-king, and each time in very similar language.

“Behold this land of Jerusalem, *neither my father nor my mother* gave it to me—the hand (arm) of the mighty king gave it me.” (Pinches). And again: “Behold, I am not a prefect, I am an employee [some translate ‘friend’] of the King my lord, and one who brings the tribute to the King. *Neither my father nor my mother*, but the arm of the mighty King has set me in the house of my father” (Pinches). And yet again: “Behold, I, *neither my father nor my mother* set me in this place. The arm of the mighty King caused me to enter into the house of my father” (Pinches).

These passages from the Amarna tablets certainly suggest an excellent interpretation—slightly different from the usual one—of the passage in Hebrews: namely, that Melchizedek’s priesthood was no family affair derived from father or mother, but was the direct bestowment of the Mighty God, El Elyon.

The threefold repetition of this unusual phrase about his father and mother is in itself remarkable. But, when we further consider that it comes from a successor in the petty kingship of Jerusalem, it seems difficult to regard it as a mere coincidence, and not rather connect it with the similar formula used



in the case of Melchizedek. Indeed, it strongly suggests a formula with which Abdi-Tâba was familiar, transmitted in the archives of Jerusalem from the time of Melchizedek. In any case, the formula is very old—as old as some date near 1400 B.C.

A singular detail in this matter is that this *tour de phrase* found in the tablets is not given us in the Genesis-story, but only in the Hebrews-application. How did the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews know what was not mentioned in Genesis? He might, of course, have received it by direct inspiration; but he might also have availed himself of some ancient Jewish tradition derived from the original archives which, as the city of the Jebusites was never destroyed, might quite well have been preserved.

In any case we are not without some side-testimony to the antiquity and genuineness of the story of the meeting of Melchizedek and Abraham.

## VI

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CITIES OF THE PLAIN

FIFTEEN years—uneventful as men judge of such things—had elapsed since Abraham's dramatic incursion into the contemporary politics of Palestine and Babylonia. The dashing warrior had quietly subsided once more into the nomad shepherd, dwelling peacefully in tents. Then once again Abraham is brought into contact, not indeed as an active participant, but as a profoundly interested spectator, with the unquiet politics of Canaan—this time, of the Cities of the Plain, the wicked cities with which his nephew had cast in his lot.

For such wickedness as has passed into a proverb, "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven . . . and Abraham looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and towards all the land of the plain, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." This incident has been a subject of gaping wonder to some and of cold contempt to others. Some have believed that a hail of sulphurous bombs fell from a blue sky upon the devoted cities; others have derided the story as pure myth.

It is generally agreed now that what happened was a natural occurrence on a grand and spectacular scale. To this belief the Christian adds the rider that this

stupendous explosion of nature was directed and timed by God to fall upon the guilty cities when the cup of their abominations was full.

The country itself has proved perhaps the best commentary upon the inspired text. Dr. Melvin Kyle (*The Deciding Voice of the Monuments*) writes: "Professor Emerson, one of our most eminent geologists, describes the region about the Dead Sea as one 'where sulphur, deposited by many hot springs, is abundant in the clay, and where bitumen ["slime" or asphalt] oozes from every crevice of the rock, and every earthquake dislodges great sheets of it from the bottom of the lake.'"

Dr. Kyle continues: "A bituminous region, a great stratum of rock-salt capped by sulphur-bearing marls and conglomerates cemented by bitumen, an explosion of pent-up gases which collect in such geological formations, blowing the burning sulphur high up into the air, and the waters of Jordan coming down and dissolving the ruptured rock-salt stratum—all this provides for exactly what the Bible describes and for the conditions found there to-day; the pillar of smoke rising up to heaven, the rain of fire and brimstone falling . . . and the catching of Lot's wife in the cataclysm and her incrustation with salt." ("Bitumen" is asphalt, and the "slime" of Gen. 14: 10, "the vale of Siddim was full of *slime*-pits": cp. Exod. 2: 3, "ark of bulrushes . . . daubed with *slime* and pitch.")

In his *Explorations at Sodom* Dr. Kyle says: "This region was found by the geologists to be a burned-out region of oil and asphalt. . . . Wherever these conditions exist there is an accumulation of gases . . .

when the explosion of gases took place, this stratum of salt mixed with sulphur was ruptured into the other strata, and the salt and sulphur carried up into the heavens red-hot, and so rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and over the whole region. . . . Mixed with the salt and sulphur was also the asphalt, heated to a high degree," which boiling asphalt might easily create a smoke "like the smoke of a furnace."

The materials of the fiery cataclysm were present in abundance—the salt, the sulphur ("brimstone"), and the bitumen. But what set the materials aflame? What caused the sulphur and the salt to rain down upon the country, and its smoke to go up as the smoke of a furnace? The usual, and a most plausible, answer is that an earthquake (always a common occurrence in the neighbourhood of the Valley of the Jordan) caused a fissure through the strata of salt and sulphur (Dr. Kyle states that a rupture of the strata can still be clearly seen) and released petroleum gases from subterranean reservoirs, which readily ignited, either spontaneously or through lightning, and thus caused a vast conflagration, in which the whole country would seem to be alight and the sky alternately dark with bituminous smoke and aflame with burning sulphur.

Sir J. W. Dawson, the famous geologist, mentioned (*Egypt and Syria*—quoted by Driver) how in a petroleum district of Canada a bore-hole struck a reservoir of compressed gas which, rushing upwards, spontaneously ignited, throwing up a dense smoke together with burning bitumen and wrapping fifteen acres of country in its resultant flame.

Genesis 19 undoubtedly presents a background which is strictly in accord with archæological discovery. But

so barren, so scarred and seared, so "sown with salt," is the whole region that critics were wont to be exceedingly incredulous about the "garden of the Lord." Genesis tells us that before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah the plain of Jordan was well watered everywhere, "even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt." But this, Dr. Albright, Director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, tells us is "absolutely in accord with the archæological facts."

Albright quotes the famous ancient historian, Eduard Meyer, one of the critical school, as having so recently as 1928 exposed his complete ignorance of recent research in the following remarkable passage: "Absolutely barren [in the fifteenth century B.C.] lay also the Jordan Valley south of Beth-shan and Pella . . . here the attempt was never made to utilize the soil and to make it productive by systematic irrigation, as was done in the Nile Valley under essentially the same conditions."

Meyer's object is obvious enough. The Bible was wrong in attributing the sterility of the Jordan valley to the blasting stroke of Jehovah's judgment. The Bible was wrong in its description of the country as, before that stroke, "like the land of Egypt." It had never been anything but sterile; for no effort had been made to render it fertile. Thus spoke the critic.

But the spade and pick of the excavator are even more penetrating tools than the pen of the critic, and get nearer to the heart of history. When Meyer wrote, the American school under Dr. Melvin Kyle (with whom Dr. Albright was working) had been already four years at work around the Dead Sea, and had

definitely established that at the time when the Israelites entered the country—the time that archæologists know as the Early Bronze Age—the country where the Cities of the Plain stood had been “exceedingly fruitful and well peopled.”

Though the “cities” themselves have not been discovered, contemporary cultures have been dug up and examined, and all bear witness to a flourishing civilization round about 2000-1900 B.C. “The civilization represented in the Bible story, that of the Early Bronze Age, 2500-1800 B.C., the civilization of Abraham and Lot and of Sodom and Gomorrah, was clearly established, by indubitable evidence, to have been on the Plain at that time.”

But what is even more remarkable in its confirmation of the Bible story is that “this civilization abruptly ceased on the Plain.” So Kyle said, and he continued: “The most careful search of the Plain from one end to the other with soundings down to virgin sand and gravel” has shown that from this period in the Bronze Age right on to the end of the Biblical period and even later “there was no civilization of any kind on the Plain.” The Plain was deserted. Herein, to adopt some words of Kyle, is negative evidence that has positive validity.

It may fairly be said at this point: “No doubt your background for the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is all right; but can you produce the cities themselves?” The answer to this is that Sodom and Gomorrah have not actually been identified. The explanation of this, to quote the rhetorical language of Kyle, is that “in a few feet of water and mud the ruined cities hide their shame.”

It is sufficiently clear from the language of Scripture that the guilty cities were not, as some seem to imagine, engulfed in the waters of the Dead Sea at the time of the disaster. In the centuries immediately before and immediately after the birth of Christ, Strabo the geographer and Tacitus the historian both refer to the sites of the cities as being in their day burnt up, scorched, for ever infertile, but give no hint of their being submerged. In Deuteronomy 29 the sacred writer speaks of the plagues that should fall upon Israel, "the whole land whereof is brimstone and salt and burning, and is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overflow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger"—language which implies desolation but not submergence. Jeremiah 49 bears a similar witness.

The error appears to have arisen from a misinterpretation of Gen. 14: 3, which says that the four kings against five "were joined together" in battle "in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea." Now the vale of Siddim was the scene of the battle, not the site of the cities. "The field of battle," as the late Rev. John Urquhart justly said, "would be at some distance from the cities, as the battlefield was chosen to prevent Chedorlaomer's threatened inroad." The four kings were advancing from the south, and the five kings were anxious to place a strong force between them and the cities.

But from the fact that the cities were not buried in the waters of the Dead Sea at the time of their destruction it by no means follows that they are not under water now. For long there have been two schools, the north school and the south school:

those who look for the ruins of the cities in the neighbourhood of the northern part of the Dead Sea, and those who look for them in the southern part. The southern school would seem now to be in the ascendant, largely owing to the recent researches of Drs. Kyle and Albright and Père Mallon. Near the south-east end, where the shallow waters of the Dead Sea have long been encroaching on the land, have been found the remains of the modern Zoar, successor of the small city near Sodom to which Lot was allowed to escape, and from which in fear for his safety he retired to a cave in the mountains of Moab. It is inferred that the cities themselves have been submerged in these shallow waters.

It is significant that in this same narrowing space between the sea and the mountains have been found *five* oases formed by *five* streams of fresh water, which could correspond to, and supply the wants of, the *five* doomed cities. "The encroachment of the deadly salt water," said Dr. Albright, "has forced the irrigated oases upstream towards the foot of the mountains on the east" (the mountains of Moab). The Dead Sea, which has no southern outlet, has in fact been steadily rising, especially since the beginning of the Christian era. "The slow elevation of the level of the Dead Sea," says Père Mallon, the leading archæologist of Dr. Kyle's expedition, "is an incontestable fact." These discoveries explain why it is impossible now to "produce" the blasted Cities of the Plain.

The mention of the shallow waters of the southern end of the Dead Sea brings up a point of some interest. Professor Peake in his Commentary says: "The narrative apparently suggests that the Dead Sea came into



existence at a later time; for it identifies the vale of Siddim with the Salt Sea ['the vale of Siddim which is the salt sea,' Gen. 14: 3]; but the geological evidence decisively proves that the Dead Sea existed as early as the Tertiary period."

This is only a partial statement of the case, and characteristically that part has been put forward which seems to tell against the Bible. Many years ago an American expedition explored the Dead Sea very thoroughly, and found that the bottom consists of two submerged plains, an elevated northern plain, averaging a depth below the surface of *thirteen hundred* feet, and a shallow southern portion averaging only *thirteen* feet. The idea at once springs to the mind that this shallow southern plain was the "salt sea" that represents the vale of Siddim. This idea was denied on geological grounds by Lynch, who commanded the American expedition, but Lynch admitted that he had not fully investigated the ground. A later writer, M. Lartet, a French geologist, quoted by Urquhart, says in his book (*Exploration Géologique de la Mer Morte*) that the indications point to this shallow submerged portion as having been the vale of Siddim; and Urquhart aptly draws attention to the two facts, that the vale of Siddim was, in the Bible story, "full of slime-pits," and that these slime-pits are still a feature of the shores of the Dead Sea.

Driver (*Genesis*), writing long before Peake, is fairer. He says of the identification of the vale of Siddim with the Dead Sea that it is "a statement which can be correct only if the reference is to the *southern* part of the sea, which is very much shallower than the northern part, and where in Abram's time there *may*

have been dry land." He adds, "It seems in fact at least geologically possible . . . that what is now this part of the Dead Sea was in the time of Abram dry ground." This is perhaps more cautiously expressed than it would have been had it told in the opposite direction; but it does at least recognise that the upholder of the Bible statement occupies a tenable position.



PLATE III



*[Courtesy of the British Museum.]*

REMAINS OF A HOUSE OF THE TIME OF ABRAHAM, AT UR  
OF THE CHALDEES.

The discoveries of Sir Leonard Woolley have shown that in Abraham's day Ur was a great city with a high level of civilization. Yet, until a few years ago, critics regarded Abraham as a mere "desert sheikh."



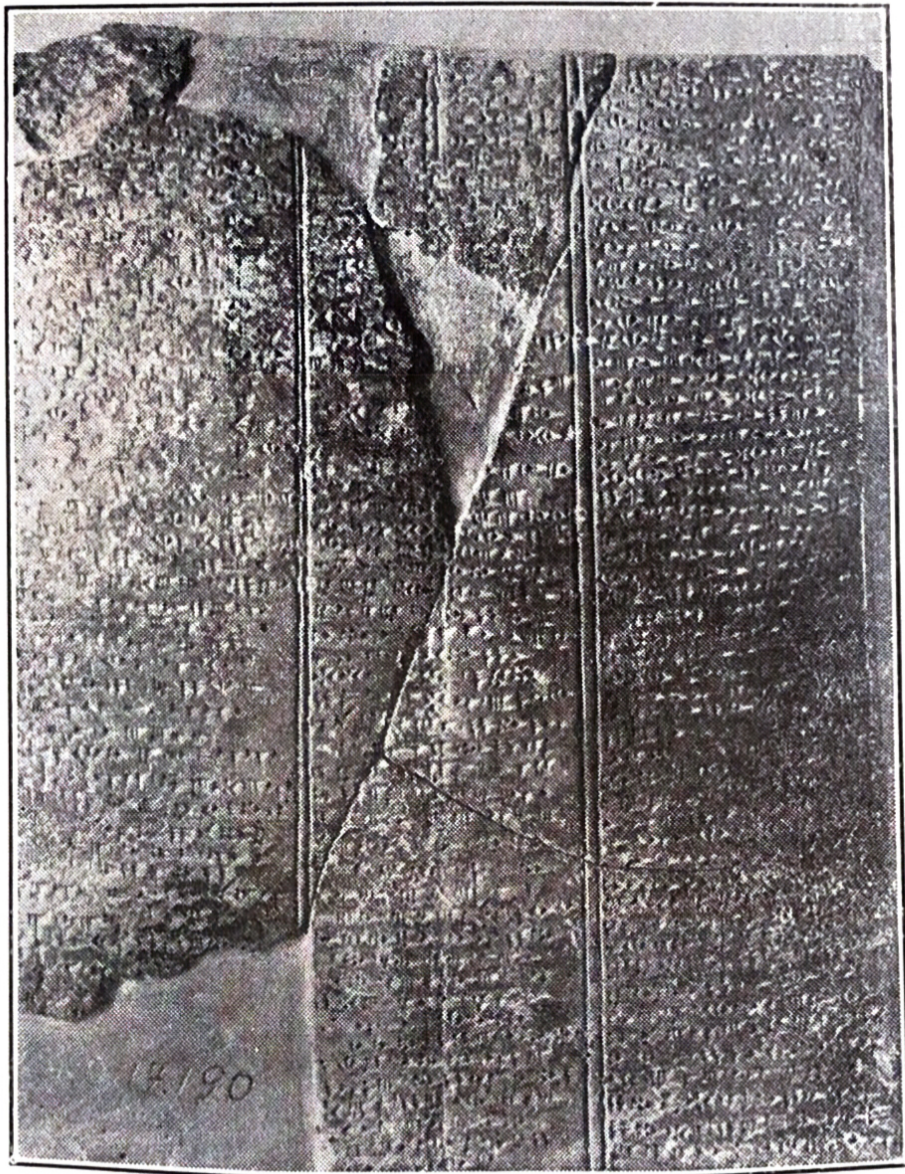
*[Courtesy of the British Museum.]*

BAKED CLAY CYLINDER OF NABONIDUS, INSCRIBED WITH A PRAYER  
ON BEHALF OF BELSHAZZAR, HIS SON.

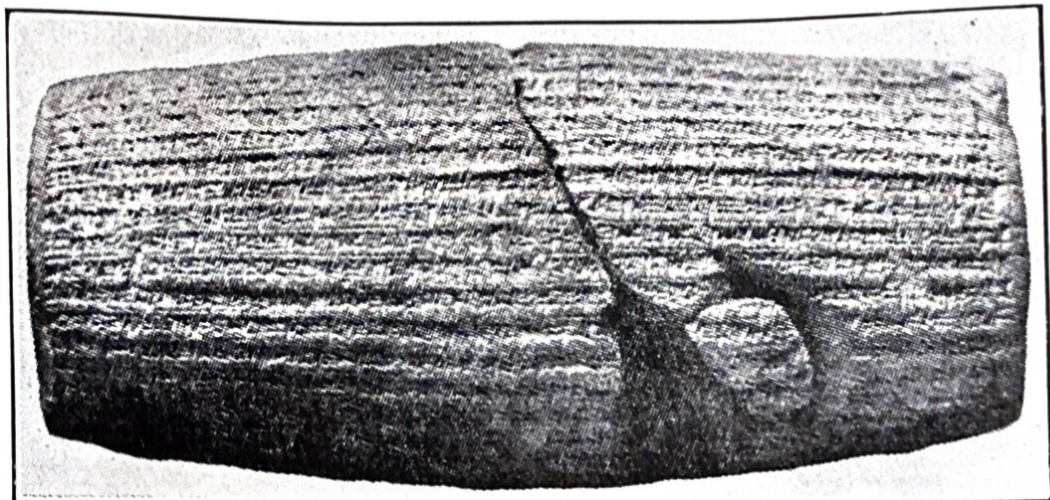
*[Facing page 80]*



PLATE IV



A TABLET FROM RAS SHAMBRA. *[The Louvre, Paris.]*



BAKED CLAY CYLINDER INSCRIBED WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
CAPTURE OF BABYLON BY CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA, 538 B.C. *[Courtesy of the British Museum.]*

*Facing page 81*

## VII

### JERICHO AND TEL-EL-AMARNA

GORE's *New Commentary* says that the statement that the walls of Jericho fell down flat must be taken as literary exaggeration. "Probably nobody would be more amazed than the actual writer to learn that his words were ever required as a point of faith to be understood literally."

Now, one of the sensational discoveries of Professor Garstang, the excavator of Jericho, is just this—that the walls of Jericho *did* fall flat. "The walls fell outwards so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over the ruins into the city" (Garstang, *The Foundations of Bible-History—Joshua, Judges*). "The wall fell down flat ('in its place,' R.V. margin), so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him" (Josh, 6: 20). The harmony of these two accounts is very striking.

The *New Commentary* is not only ludicrously in error when it says that "this chapter describes *in dramatic metaphor* the ease with which the tribes under Joshua took Jericho by assault," but it gives countenance to a very popular fallacy when it says that "had the walls collapsed entirely, Rahab and her household could not have escaped." Nowhere does Scripture say or imply that the whole wall collapsed. The common sense of the incident is that enough



of the wall fell outwards to enable the attacking force to go straight up into the city. Economy is always exercised in the divine miracles. It was not necessary that the whole wall should fall. A moderately careful reading of the sixth chapter of Joshua shows clearly that the writer did not for a moment imagine that the walls had fallen completely.

But some may demur to the use of the phrase "divine miracles." There is evidence, they say, in Garstang's work that the cause of the collapse of the wall of Jericho was an earthquake shock. The whole Jordan valley is extremely subject to earthquakes. There were earthquakes in 1927, which did a great deal of damage in several places, including modern Jericho.

There is nothing in the Bible story to exclude seismic action. No one supposes that there was any mystic power in the blast of the ram's horn trumpets. God was teaching His people that power belongeth unto the Lord. *How* He exercised that power is not told. If He chose to intervene by means of an earthquake, His miraculous working was shown in the earthquake being exactly timed to synchronise with the blast of the horn and the shout of the people.

Other confirmations of the Bible narrative are, firstly, that Jericho was evidently given promptly to the flames without any attempt to save the abundant foodstuffs, of which the houses were full and which, reduced to charcoal by the action of fire, have been found by the excavator; and, secondly, that, though the Jericho of Joshua was a city of the Bronze Age, no bronze or other metal has been discovered by the

excavators. Evidently the Israelites, before setting fire to Jericho, collected the precious metals and put them aside for "the treasury of the Lord" (Josh. 6: 19).

But considerably the most important fruit of the Jericho excavations is the establishment of certain chronological data, which wonderfully confirm the chronology of the Bible and confound some of the "assured results" of the Higher Criticism.

The science of chronology, in connection with the archæology of Palestine, has been revolutionized within the last ten years by "pottery dating." Many of the old sites in the Holy Land, such as Ai, Hazor, and Jericho, have witnessed the rise and fall of many civilisations or "cultures." Cities have been destroyed, and new cities built upon their sites. The modern excavator uncovers culture after culture as he digs ever deeper and deeper. Each layer reveals its own particular type of pottery. Sir Flinders Petrie was the first to make use of the changes in fashion of pottery for chronological purposes. Pottery dating is considered accurate within a margin of some twenty-five years.

"So great," says Sir Charles Marston (*The Bible is True*) "was the importance of verifying the date of the destruction of Jericho that, in 1930, Prof. Garstang and his wife cleaned and examined no fewer than 60,000 fragments from the strata of the burned city. At the expedition in the following year (1931) another 40,000 fragments were treated in a similar manner. They all attested the same date, that of the middle of the late Bronze Age (1400 B.C.)." A further piece of evidence was that no Mycenæan

ware, confidently referred to the fourteenth century, was found in old Jericho. The destruction of the city must be dated earlier.

This conclusion was extremely disconcerting to the critics, who, with others, had confidently placed the fall of Jericho somewhere about 1180 B.C., some 220 years later. The discomfiture of the critics was reflected in a review of Sir Charles Marston's earlier book (*The New Knowledge About the Old Testament*), which appeared in the *Congregational Quarterly* of January 1934. In this review Professor Wheeler Robinson remarked: "It is a pity that the author should show such animus against the literary criticism of the Old Testament. The data for this criticism in the language and contents of the Bible are just as much to be considered as the pieces of pottery from which the archæologists assign dates to different strata of ruined cities. The conjectures of archæologists are not intrinsically more certain than those of philologists and historians."

The "critical" toad under the archæological harrow is indeed in an unenviable position, from which it is only natural that the toad should seek to extricate itself. "It is not easy," as Sir Charles Marston truly says, "for authorities on any subject to change their views on important questions; and rather than do so in the present instance, the system of pottery dating, at least so far as Jericho was concerned, was called in question."

But a later discovery converted what Professor Wheeler Robinson called, with however little accuracy, the "conjectures" of archæologists, into practical certainties. Professor Garstang discovered, upon a



site between the city mounds and the western hills, the cemetery in which the dead of Jericho had been buried from the earliest times. "Covered over and concealed by the sand of the plain, the tombs had escaped the notice of countless generations of plunderers, and their contents lay intact." In these tombs were found 1,500 unbroken pottery vessels of all periods of the Bronze Age, and in some of the richer were scarabs, eighty in all, inscribed with the royal symbol of the reigning Pharaoh. These scarabs "served to date the pottery in their particular tombs, which in turn could be compared with the broken ones found in the burnt city." The later tombs were, of course, those farther away, and here was found a series of eighty scarabs bearing the symbols of the Hyksos and the eighteenth dynasty. "In one was unearthed the joint names of Princess Hatshepsut and Thotmes III (1501-1487 B.C.), and in another two royal seals of Amenhetep III (1413-1377 B.C.). As the series of dated scarabs all come to an end with the two royal seals of Amenhetep III, there is evidence, quite independent of the pottery, that the city also ceased to exist during that period. . . . Thus everything pointed to the reign of Amenhetep III (1413-1377 B.C.) as marking the period when Jericho fell" (Sir Charles Marston, *The Bible is True*).

A word should be said about the famous Tel-el-Amarna tablets; for they are intimately concerned with the times and doings of Joshua in Canaan; and they throw a very striking light upon the political state of Canaan at that time. These tablets, 320 in number (of which eighty-two are now in the British Museum), were discovered in 1888 at Tel-el-

Amarna, a place in Upper Egypt, 180 miles south of Cairo.

The finding of these tablets created an immense and immediate sensation, partly because they showed how habitually and extensively the art of writing was practised at that early date; partly because the writing was not in Egyptian hieroglyphics but in Babylonian cuneiform (showing that Babylonian was the *lingua franca* of the day); but also—and most important for our present purpose—because of the light that the tablets throw upon the state of Palestine and Syria round about the time of the Wanderings in the Wilderness and the Entry into the Promised Land.

Thotmes III (the Pharaoh of the Oppression, as we shall see later), Amenhetep II (the Pharaoh of the Exodus), and his successor, Thotmes IV, had repeatedly invaded Palestine and Syria, captured their walled cities (Hazor was one), subjugated their petty kings and made them vassal-governors under the Egyptian power. (It is nothing strange, by the way, to find in the remains of these cities those Egyptian scarabs which help so much to date the different kinds of pottery.) The Amarna letters consist largely of the laments of these “kings” on the state of the country and appeals to Amenhetep III and Akhenaton, the last two Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty, to help them against the incursions of their active foes on the north-east and east. (The years of these Pharaohs’ reigns extended from 1413 B.C., when the children of Israel were still wandering in the wilderness, to 1361 B.C., when they had already been some forty years in the Promised Land.)

Thus Abdi-Khiba, King of Jerusalem, writes to Akhenaton: "The cities of my lord the king, belonging to Elimelech, have fallen away, and the whole territory of the king will be lost. . . . The king has no longer any territory . . . if no troops come, the territory of my lord the king is lost." Letters of this sort were constantly coming in to Tel-el-Amarna.

But who were these pertinacious foes, whose aggressions were thus sapping the Egyptian power in Palestine? Hittites, no doubt, pouring in from the north-east—but the interesting people from our point of view are the people called Khabiri or Habiru. "The Habiru," says one of our tablets, "are occupying the king's cities. There remains not one prince to my lord the king; everyone is ruined." And again: "The territory of the King has fallen into the hands of the Habiru."

*Habiru*, as the name of a tribe thus actively disturbing the peace and comfort of the Canaanites, naturally and immediately suggests the Hebrews. But this identification was difficult so long as the late-dating of the Exodus (1220 B.C.) prevailed. For with this late date, the Hebrews must have been still in hard Egyptian bondage at the time spoken of in the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. But when the dates have been accurately adjusted in the clear light of the pottery and scarabs unearthed from the site of ancient Jericho, everything settles into its place. The Habiru of the tablets seem to have come up from the direction of Mount Seir in the south-east; this we know was the way by which the Hebrews under Joshua came. Some of these piteous and despairing tablet letters actually come from Hazor and Lachish, cities which, as the

Bible tells us, the Hebrews under Joshua did in truth capture and destroy. Finally, having left Egypt in or about 1440 B.C., and having wandered for forty years in the wilderness, the Hebrews about the year 1400 B.C. were beginning their systematic hostile penetration of the lands of Egypt's little vassal-kings. This date admirably fits in with the date of the Amarna tablets. He is a hardy sceptic indeed who can doubt that the Habiru of the tablets are the Hebrews of the Book of Joshua. And what about Joshua himself?

Sir Charles Marston (*The Bible is True*) quotes a recent writer in "a well-known agnostic English journal" as saying in effect: "Find the names of David or Solomon or Joshua among these contemporary inscriptions, and we will believe!" Sir Charles takes up the challenge and quotes the Amarna letters. One Mut Baal, a chieftain of the Jordan Valley, writes that Aiah, the King of Pella (a stronghold on the east side of Jordan), had fled before him. Upon scepticism being expressed, Mut Baal replies: "As the king my lord liveth, Aiah is not in Pella. For two months he has been in hiding. Ask then Benenima, ask then Tادua, ask then *Jashuia*."

The conquest of the tribes of Palestine and Syria by the powerful Pharaohs of the eighteenth dynasty has, in yet another respect, a particular interest for the Bible-student. What, after all, was the mighty Thotmes, the third of his name, what were Amenhetep II and Thotmes IV, but instruments in the sovereign hand of Him who doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth? Had not Jehovah said that He would not drive out the

Canaanites from before Israel in one year? "By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased." With this assurance He had joined a mysterious undertaking to send "hornets" before Israel "which shall drive out the Hivites and the Canaanites and the Hittites." A similar reference to the "hornet" sent before Israel to drive out the kings of the Amorites is found in Joshua 24: 12. What was this "hornet"?

Some have taken it to be a figure for some plague or pestilence attacking the body; some for a sudden panic attacking the spirit. Some have even interpreted it as a visitation of literal hornets, a peculiarly large and vicious species of wasp. One remembers to have read of a swarm of bees breaking up a prize-fight that was going forward in the open air (an encounter, it was said, between the Hivites and the Hittites!), but it seems a little far-fetched to suppose that clouds of skirmishing wasps preceded the campaigning Israelites. Again, what was the "hornet"?

We have here one of those delicate touches of authenticity that are so inimitable by art, that convince by their very artlessness, that display an intimate but unparaded knowledge. The "hornet," as Professor Garstang's book (*The Foundations of Bible History*) tells us, was the badge of Thotmes III and his successors. These conquering Pharaohs were the ruthless stinging hornets employed by Jehovah to break and enfeeble the Canaanitish nations and render them helpless before the onset of the Chosen People. Here is a touch—it is no more than a touch, no explanatory gloss is given for the information of ignorant readers—

that reveals an intimate acquaintance with the Egypt which, according to the Bible-story, the Israelites had so lately left; a touch that is difficult to reconcile with the Higher Critical hypothesis of an eighth century date for the Pentateuch.

## VIII

### MOSES AND THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

POTTERY-DATING, confirmed by the Egyptian scarabs, enables us, not conjecturally, but with a large measure of precision, to date the fall of Jericho between 1413 and 1377 B.C., an earlier date by over 200 years than the critics had assigned to this event.

But some may ask, Does it greatly matter in what approximate year Jericho fell? The answer is, that it matters very much. If we have an approximate date for the fall of Jericho and allow forty years for the Wandering in the Wilderness, then we know approximately the date of the Exodus—between 1453 and 1417 B.C. The date of the Exodus is a matter of considerable speculative interest, and for a long time past the questions, who was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and who was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, have been thrashed out with much energy and no little skill.

But the supreme importance of the date of the Exodus is that the Bible itself gives us a very precise indication for placing it. For it tells us that Solomon began to build his temple exactly 480 years after the Exodus. "And it came to pass in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel . . . that he began to build the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 6: 1).

Now the date, or the near date, of Solomon's accession is a matter of general agreement. The *Cambridge Ancient History* gives the date as 970 B.C., Sir Flinders Petrie as 960 B.C. The year of the foundation of the Temple, then, is either 967 or 957 B.C. (Josephus actually gives the date as 966 B.C.). If 480 years are added to these figures, we get 1447 or 1437 for the date of the Exodus. These dates, it will be seen, duly fall between the two archæological dates given above (1453 and 1417 B.C.)—the latter of which is an extreme outside limit. This is a fact deeply significant of the accuracy of the Bible record.

If the Exodus took place, then, in or between the years 1447 and 1437 B.C., the fall of Jericho, being forty years later, must have taken place in or between 1407 and 1397 B.C. "Since Amenhetep III began his reign in 1413, either of these dates would allow sufficient time for two of his scarabs to be buried in Jericho's necropolis" (Marston).

We are now in a position to determine with authority who were the Pharaohs of the Oppression and the Exodus. The Exodus took place between 1447 and 1437 B.C. A reference to the tables of the Egyptian kings shows us that at that time the eighteenth dynasty was on the throne.<sup>1</sup> This was the native Egyptian house that drove out the hated Hyksos, the alien dynasty of Shepherd kings under whom Joseph came to greatness. Hence it is said of the Pharaoh of the Oppression that he was "a new king *that knew not Joseph*." The mighty viceroy and the protecting throne under whose

<sup>1</sup>The obscurity that hangs about some of the earlier Egyptian dynasties does not prevail here. Egyptologists are in substantial agreement on the dates of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties.



shadow the families of Jacob had dwelt secure had both passed away, and the Israelites had to taste the steady resentful hostility of their new masters.

We must first fix the Pharaoh of the Exodus. We find that Amenhetep II (formerly known as Amenophis, as Manetho and Josephus call him), the sixth king of the eighteenth dynasty, reigned from 1447 to 1423 B.C. He, then, is the Pharaoh of the Exodus and his predecessor, referred to as dying "in process of time" (Exod. 2: 23), and included amongst "all the men" who were dead that had sought the life of Moses (Exod. 4: 19), was Thotmes III (often now called Tethmosis or Tuthmosis), the most powerful monarch that ever sat on the throne of the Pharaohs and the first conqueror to attain a world fame. We know from Scripture that Moses had been absent from the court of Pharaoh for forty years. If then the identification be correct, Thotmes III should have reigned at least forty years. He reigned, as a matter of fact, for fifty-four years.

The late-date theory of the Exodus places it around 1220 B.C., when Merenptah (also called Merneptah or Minepta) was the reigning Pharaoh, and makes his predecessor, Rameses II, the Pharaoh of the Oppression. Rameses was one of Egypt's great builders, and one of the treasure-cities (or store-cities) built by the forced labour of the Israelites bears his name (Pithom and Rameses). But Rameses II was notoriously addicted to putting his name wherever he could and even obliterating the names of his predecessors, so that the fact, *e.g.*, that M. Naville found on excavating the ruins of Pa-Tum (Pithom) the name of Rameses affords hardly any presumption that Rameses was

the builder. It has been quaintly alleged that, as an examination of the mummy of Merenptah shows that he suffered from a premature arterio-sclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and therefore suffered from such a narrow outlook and want of enterprise as the Pharaoh of the Exodus evidently had, Merenptah is very likely to have been the Pharaoh of the Exodus!

The late date of the Exodus is not supported by any really cogent evidence, and it has the great disadvantage, from the point of view of the Bible-lover, of making hay of Bible chronology. To the critics this, naturally, does not seem a disadvantage. The late date also enables them to argue that, as there is evidence for the tribe of Asher being settled in Palestine in 1300 B.C. (eighty years before the late Exodus date), probably most of the twelve tribes never went down into Egypt at all, and this makes hay of Bible history.

Thus in an article in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary* on the "Exodus and Journey to Canaan," by J. Rendel Harris and A. T. Chapman, we read: "It must not be supposed that the result [of decipherment of inscriptions and papyri] is an unmixed confirmation of the Biblical account. A recently deciphered Egyptian inscription, for example, shows that the Bēnê-Israel were already in Palestine at the time of the Exodus, so that the migration must have been partial and not national."

With the faulty dating of the Exodus this seemed plausible. But the establishment of the earlier and scriptural date makes these vagaries look not a little foolish. No wonder that the Higher Critics are sore about all this pottery business at Jericho!

The early date to which the Jericho discoveries of Professor Garstang compel us to refer the Exodus, puts Moses right back in the greatest times of Egyptian history—times when Egypt was at the height of her power. We have fixed the Exodus at some year around 1447-1437—call it in a round number 1440 B.C. As Moses was 80 years of age at that time, he was born round about 1520 B.C. Now at that time there was reigning in Egypt the most remarkable woman in Egyptian history—indeed, one of the most remarkable women in all history. Her name was Hatshepsut. She was the daughter of Thotmes I, the third king of the eighteenth dynasty, that native dynasty which expelled and succeeded the alien Hyksos. (It is of interest to note that this Thotmes I was the first of the long line of kings to be buried in the Valley of the Tombs, a few miles from Thebes. Their mummies, including that of Thotmes III, the Pharaoh of the Oppression, were discovered here in 1881, and are now in the museum at Cairo—so that it is possible actually to look upon the mummy of that formidable tyrant who laid such heavy burdens upon the wretched Israelites.)

Now this Thotmes I in the later years of his reign associated with himself upon the throne his daughter, Hatshepsut. She married her half-brother, who succeeded his father as Thotmes II, and thus remained on the throne. (The Egyptian Pharaohs often married their sisters.) Thotmes II only reigned two or three years, and then in the minority of Thotmes III Hatshepsut, acting as regent, assumed the full and undivided power of royalty, and appears on her monuments in male attire—and even at times with a cere-

monial beard!—to make her kingly rank. On some monuments of this period, we are told, her name appears alone; on others, associated with that of her stepson, Thotmes III. Scarabs bearing the joint names of Hatshepsut and Thotmes III have been found at Jericho.

The regal dates of Thotmes I are 1539 to 1514 B.C. In 1520 B.C. (see above) Moses was born—*i.e.*, at a time when Hatshepsut either was, or was shortly to be, associated with her father upon the throne. Who can this be but that “Pharaoh’s daughter” who compassionated and adopted the infant Moses whom she discovered in the ark of bulrushes? She must have been a person in the very highest authority to be able to save and adopt one of those Hebrew infants whom the royal decree had doomed to death.

This conclusion is curiously confirmed by the Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus gives us the history of his own people from the earliest times, following the lines of the Jewish Scriptures but giving many details that are not found in these Scriptures but were no doubt a part of the floating traditions of his people handed down through the centuries. Now Josephus, in relating the fortunes of the infant Moses, calls the king’s daughter *Thermuthis*, a name which has an obvious similarity to *Thotmes* and was possibly intended to be a feminised form of the name of the three Pharaohs with whom Hatshepsut was associated as co-sovereign, wife and queen, and regent.

It is curious to reflect that “Pharaoh’s daughter,” whom the artists have always represented as a woman of sweet Victorian benignity looking down upon the

infant Moses, was one of the most masterful feminists in history. (That she should have been moved with womanly pity for the beautiful little Jewish derelict is by no means inconsistent with her dominating personality.) This remarkable princess was a great builder and beautifier of temples, and she figures most interestingly in connection with the ancient Temple of Serabit in the limestone plateau north of Mount Sinai, which was explored and described by Sir Flinders Petrie (*Researches in Sinai*, 1906).

It is worth while bearing in mind that the Sinaitic peninsula lies like an inverted triangle or delta between the Gulf of Suez which separates it on the west from Egypt and the Gulf of Akaba which separates it on the east from Midian. At a very early date the Egyptians conquered Sinai and worked, rather intermittently, the turquoise mines at Serabit. The Midianites were not only "merchantmen," the bagmen and commercial travellers of those parts (as we see in the story of Joseph, for they "travelled in" slaves as well as other commodities), but they were miners on quite a large scale, and there is evidence that, being so near to Sinai, they helped to work the turquoise mines at Serabit.

Now the Midianites were a Semitic people, deriving from Abraham by his secondary wife, Keturah. For this reason, doubtless, Moses, a Semite, was able to find a congenial home for forty years amongst the people of Midian and to take a wife from the daughters of the monotheistic "priest of Midian." He, like the Midianitish miners, may have become familiar with Serabit. His adoptive mother, Hatshepsut, was certainly familiar with Serabit; for during her association

with Thotmes III on the Egyptian throne she became the greatest patron of the Temple of Serabit.

It is remarkable that Moses, when he led the Israelites forth from Egypt, headed at once in this direction, and it is an interesting surmise that, when Moses spoke to Pharaoh about going three days' journey into the Wilderness to sacrifice "unto the Lord our God," he had Serabit in his mind. Not that Moses would have joined in the idolatrous worship of Hathor, the goddess of turquoise; but the worship, though debased, was Semitic and stood nearer to the pure fount of monotheism than did the degraded polytheism of Egypt. This, indeed, was the most remarkable discovery that Petrie made at Serabit—that the worship of this temple which Hatshepsut, the Egyptian queen, honoured and decorated, was Semitic and not Egyptian. One cannot help associating this fact with her patronage of the Semite Moses.

"An enormous mass of burnt-offerings is shown by the bed of ashes before the sacred cave; tanks for ablutions are found in the temple courts; altars of incense are in the shrine itself. . . . All of these belong to Semitic worship" (Petrie), and all these—burnt-offerings, lavers of purification and altars of incense—are found in purified surroundings, in the Levitical cultus. That a cultus or form of religious worship, bearing such a strong resemblance to that laid down in the "books of Moses," should have been in regular operation in this Sinaitic temple before the time of Moses—a cultus, too, with which it is at least highly likely that Moses was well acquainted—this presents a problem to the Higher Critics with their late date for the Levitical system, which we shall

have something to say about when we come to Ras Shamra.

Another interesting discovery at Serabit was that, in addition to Egyptian monuments with their characteristic hieroglyphs, there were inscriptions in a peculiar alphabetical script, presumed to be the script of the Semitic workers and dating back certainly before Moses. Other "traces of this Sinai script were found [in Palestine] on a potsherd at Gezer and on an ostrakon (oyster-shell) at Beth-Shemesh by Dr. Grant. Mr. Starkey's discovery of the ewer at Tell Duweir (Lachish) . . . definitely connects the Sinai script with the Phœnician alphabet" (Marston). Alphabetic writing, in which each sign represents a letter and not, as in the hieroglyphs, a word, indicates an advanced stage culture, in which, as Dr. Hart-Davies well remarks, "Such a system of religion [as that of Serabit and the very similar Pentateuchal system] could have been carefully written down and described as it is in the book of Moses."

Sir Charles Marston is surely justified in saying that "the fact that alphabetical writing was in existence in Sinai long before Moses, and the fact that it was in use by the Semitic race to which Moses belonged, is strong presumptive evidence in favour of the Israelite use of writing in the Wilderness." Although the Higher Critics allow, as they cannot help doing, what their predecessors in the art of criticism did not allow, that "all sorts of writing, cuneiform and hieroglyphic, were in common use in Syria and Palestine at the very time of Moses," they still seem to think that the narratives of J and E (the Jehovistic and Elohistie "sources") were based upon

*oral* traditions. "It is," says Sir Charles Marston with warrantable causticity, "as though someone were now to affirm that, although handwriting was practised in Norman times and, moreover, was superseded by the printing-press, yet nevertheless the account of the Norman conquest of England only existed in the form of oral tradition at the time of the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II."



## IX

### RAS SHAMRA

FOR many years the impression has been gaining depth and force that "something is rotten," to adapt the immortal words of Hamlet, "in the state of" the Higher Critical "Denmark." During that period the proofs have been accumulating of the essential unsoundness of the foundations upon which the "critical" fabric has been erected.

But the last ten years have witnessed what can only be called the crushing and overwhelming defeat of the Higher Criticism. More particularly as the result of the discoveries at Ras Shamra in 1929, the sensational character of which was not immediately appreciated owing to difficulties of decipherment, the theories of Graf and Wellhausen—the "assured results" of the critics—so long taught in theological halls, preached in pulpits, and broadcasted in the Press, "became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away."

There have been one or two minor but significant rehearsals of Ras Shamra.

The most obvious, perhaps, is the Samaritan Pentateuch. To this day a few Samaritan families, living in Nablus (the ancient Shechem), practise their heretical worship, and offer their unorthodox sacrifices upon Mount Gerizim. For many more than 2,000 years the Samaritan community has, with religious care and

veneration, preserved its version of the Pentateuch—a version which is clearly based upon some ancient text of the Jewish Pentateuch, although altered here and there to support the Gerizim-worship.

The origin of the Samaritan community and the Samaritan worship is given in 2 Kings 17: 24-41. When the ten tribes were carried into captivity, the king of Assyria planted a number of Gentile families from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, in the depopulated cities of Samaria. These heathen settlers, plagued by lions, and attributing the scourge to their own ignorance of the way in which “the god of the land” should be approached, appealed to Esar-haddon, the Assyrian king, who gave instructions that one of the Jewish priests who had been carried away from Samaria should be sent back to teach this mixed population “how they should fear the Lord,” that is, what ceremonial and sacrificial ritual they should adopt.

Such is the Biblical account of the origin of the Samaritan worship. It is confirmed by the words of the Samaritan “adversaries of Judah and Benjamin,” when they asked (Ezra 4: 2) to be allowed to take part in the building of the Temple: “For we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon, King of Assur, which brought us up hither.”

If this were taken to be an account of the origin of the Samaritan Pentateuch (which is plausible, but cannot be definitely asserted), then the Levitical ritual would plainly antedate the Exile, and the theory of the critics, which dates the ceremonial law in exilic or post-exilic times, would be null and void.

The "critical" writer on the "Samaritans" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th Edition) says: "According to modern views the books of Moses were not reduced to their present form [this euphemism covers the sheer fabrication of the ceremonial law] till after the exile, when their regulations were clearly intended to apply to the rebuilt temple of Zion. The Samaritans must in that case have derived their Pentateuch from the Jews after Ezra's reforms of 444 B.C. Before that time Samaritanism cannot have existed in the form in which we know it, but there must have been a community ready to accept the Pentateuch."

This grotesque theory reads like an admission of the weakness of the "critical" case. For one has only to read with moderate care the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, to see that, in the state of intense mutual irritation and contemptuous hostility that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews, the very last thing the Samaritans would be likely to display was a grateful readiness to accept the newly invented Pentateuch from the hands of Ezra and his friends.

Another rehearsal of Ras Shamra, distinctly damaging (to say the least) to the Higher Critics, was the discovery, at Assouan, in Egypt, in the early part of this century, of some papyri which throw considerable light upon the life of certain Jewish settlers who, upon the invasion of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzar—*i.e.*, before the exile,—took refuge in the island of Elephantiné (an island in the Nile, opposite Assouan). From these finds it appeared that, though their worship had become corrupted with pagan practices, these

Elephantiné Jews still kept the Passover and the Levitical feasts.

Now, these papyri, bearing witness to the Levitical feasts, date from the early part of the fifth century B.C., about fifty years before Ezra's reforms. It is impossible, therefore, to suggest that the Jews in Elephantiné derived their Levitical ritual from Ezra. An additional date-mark, and (for the Higher Critics) a rather damning piece of negative evidence, is found in the fact that, amidst the Levitical sacrifices observed by these Jews, no trace has been found of the Feast of the Dedication of the second Temple. From this it is naturally inferred that the Levitical sacrifices antedated the destruction of Solomon's temple. That is to say, P would arrive upon the scene to find his work already done!<sup>1</sup>

Ras Shamra, which has been identified with Ugarit, the seaport mentioned in Egyptian texts of the 13th century B.C., is situated in North Syria, opposite the island of Cyprus, about 140 miles north of Damascus. Here, in May, 1929, were discovered, by two French archæologists, a number of tablets inscribed with a peculiar and unfamiliar kind of cuneiform writing. Like the script discovered at Serabit in the Sinaitic peninsula, it was alphabetical, but it could not at first be deciphered. Subsequently it was found to be in an archaic Hebrew dialect. The tablets are now in the Louvre Museum at Paris.

<sup>1</sup> The "black Jews" of Abyssinia, recently mentioned in the papers, are the so-called Falashas, a tribe of Hamitic stock, in appearance very like the ordinary Abyssinians, but professing the Jewish faith. They are possibly descendants, through inter-marriage with the natives, of the Jewish colonists above referred to. They also, while familiar with the Levitical feasts, observe neither the feast of Purim (exilic) nor the Dedication of the Temple (post-exilic).

Ras Shamra was not only a busy, polyglot seaport town, but the seat of a seminary or college, attached to a temple, and complete with a well-equipped library of clay books. Eight different languages appear to have been spoken in Ras Shamra, and the pupils at this college were taught the various scripts. These included, besides the archaic Hebrew under consideration, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Babylonian cuneiform, the older Sumerian, and Hittite, as well as three unknown languages.

Before discussing the contents of the strange archaic Hebrew tablets, it is natural to inquire who the people were who used this script. Sir Charles Marston has told us that Mr. Theodor Gaster, who did much to elucidate these tablets, based upon cultural and linguistic grounds a considered conclusion that this Hebraic civilization had reached Ras Shamra from Sinai and the extreme south of Palestine.

The writers of the tablets themselves claim to be descendants of Arabs who had come from the extreme south of Palestine, in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. Some of their inscriptions refer to rites celebrated in the wilderness of Kadesh, which lies between Sinai and the Dead Sea and figures in the journeyings of the children of Israel. Ashdod, which is in the south of Palestine, and was at a later period a city of the Philistines, is also mentioned, and there would appear, from a passage in 2 Chronicles (26: 6, 7), to have been some association between Arabs and Ashdod.

Another evidence of the association of Ras Shamra with the Sinaitic peninsula lies in the fact that, when the temple at Ras Shamra was excavated, a sphinx

of green stone was discovered, which was shown, by a hieroglyphic inscription upon it, to have been the gift of a Pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty, Amenhemat III, who was also interested in the temple of Serabit in Sinai (Marston).

Alphabetical writing, in which the signs represent letters and not words, has usually been regarded as the achievement of the Phœnicians, and has been dated back to about 900 B.C. But recent discoveries in the lands of the Bible show that alphabetical writing dates from a much earlier age. At Serabit, in Sinai, in the far south, a specimen of this writing has been found (as related in *Moses and the Date of the Exodus*), which is dated back nearly to Abrahamic times. Traces of this Sinaitic script have been found, we are told, at Gezer in South Palestine, and at Beth-Shemesh in Middle Palestine.

In a small temple outside the walls of the ancient Lachish (Tell Daweir) have been recently discovered by Mr. J. L. Starkey, of the Wellcome Archæological Research Expedition, forty fragments of pottery which, when put together, formed a ewer, round the neck of which, painted in red, was some writing in alphabetical script. This script has been investigated by six leading authorities, including Professor Langdon and Theodor Gaster, and it is regarded as a connecting-link between the Sinai script of Serabit and the Phœnician script.

It is interesting to trace this advanced alphabetic script from the temple of Serabit in Sinai, up through Palestine, to the Ras Shamra tablets in Northern Phœnicia, which are dated about 1400 B.C., the date of Joshua's invasion of Canaan. It is also

interesting, as Sir Charles Marston remarks, that the Phœnician Arabs of Ras Shamra should have made the experiment of reproducing the script in cuneiform characters instead of in the earlier Sinaitic form.

But the interest of the peculiar script, or manner of writing, of the Ras Shamra tablets, is nothing to the interest of the things written. Truly the script does link Ras Shamra with Sinai, but the things written form a much more significant, and, indeed, irrefragable link.

In these tablets appear, albeit in a polytheistic setting, the very names of the Deity—*El*, and the plural form, *Elohim*, and *Yah* (Jah or Jehovah)—with which the Hebrew Scriptures have so long made us familiar. Moreover, the tablets describe a whole series of ritual sacrifices which duplicate most of the familiar sacrifices of the Pentateuch, and they do so under technical titles which are a reproduction of the terms of the Bible. Thus we find in these tablets the Trespass Offering, the Peace Offering, the Burnt-Offering, the Whole Burnt-Offering, the Wave Offering, the Oblation of the First-Fruits, the New Moon Offerings (“in the beginnings of your months,” Numbers 28: 11).

We find here the “bread of the gods,” the polytheistic debasement of “the bread of thy God” (Levit. 21: 8). We find frequently here the sacred number “seven” so familiar to the student of the books of Moses.

Not sacrifices only, but the Tabernacle and its furnishings are here duplicated. There is here a “courtyard of the tent” to correspond to the Biblical

“Court of the Tabernacle”—“the Holy Place of the Holy Places,” an exact echo of the “Holy of Holies”—the “Table of Gold in the Sanctuary,” recalling the table of shew-bread which was “overlaid with pure gold.” Lastly, the name for the priest in the Ras Shamra ritual is *Kohen*, the name always given to the Hebrew priests (also, as Marston observes, to Melchizedek, *priest* of El Elyon, and to Jethro, *priest* of Midian).

It seems at least possible—especially in view of the similarity of the scripts of Sinai and Ras Shamra—that the Arabs of Ras Shamra, being Semites of kindred race, derived from the Israelites and their leader Moses the details of their ceremonial law. It is also possible that they both derived their ritual from a common source.<sup>1</sup> But what is quite impossible is that the Levitical law was the work of an exilic or post-exilic priest-scribe, writing in the fifth century B.C., and hiding himself modestly under the initial P.

Now this fact is of a seriousness which it is hardly possible to exaggerate. The late exilic invention of the Levitical code in the interests of the priestly caste is an integral and essential part of the system of the Higher Critics. It is a main pillar of their temple.

It is interesting to recall, as emphasising the importance attached by the critics to their contention that the ceremonial law was later than the prophets, some words of Canon Driver's. There is little doubt that

<sup>1</sup> This is not to deny that Moses received the ceremonial law from God, but merely to admit the possibility of God having utilized some elements of a primitive revelation on the subject of ceremonial service, which the Arabs might also have utilized but corrupted in the process.



the critics, in placing the law as late as they did, were a good deal influenced by a belief that elaborately codified law was not to be expected in the primitive times of Moses, and Sayce had cited, in evidence against the late dating of the Mosaic law, the discovery of the Code of Hammurabi (dating about 2100 B.C.), which was not only extremely elaborate, but contained a number of regulations notably reminiscent of the laws of Moses.

In reply to this, Driver, in his preface to the eighth edition (1909) of his *introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, says that "when the critics are said to 'place the prophets before the law,' what is meant is the *priestly* law, the ceremonial regulations of P: no critic doubts that the laws of JE (Exodus 21-23, etc.) are earlier than the prophets. The resemblances between the Code of Hammurabi and the law in the Pentateuch are, however, entirely concerned either with the civil and criminal regulations of JE or (less often) with those of Dt. and H (Lev. 20: 10, 11, 12, 14) . . . there are *none* with any of the ceremonial laws of P. Even supposing, therefore, in spite of what has just been said, that the code of Hammurabi had a bearing on the date of some of the laws of JE, Dt., and H, it is clear that it could have none on the date of the laws of P, the only laws that are regarded by critics as later than the prophets."

But the defects of the Code of Hammurabi have been supplied by the Tablets of Ras Shamra. Precisely those ceremonial "laws of P, the only laws in the Pentateuch that are regarded by critics as later than the prophets," are duplicated in the ritual of Ras

Shamra, dating from about 1400 B.C., that is, about the time of the death of Moses.

Here is no question of demolishing some unimportant outpost. The citadel is stormed. To use the figure of the late Professor Sayce, the rout of the Higher Critics is complete.

## X

### THE BOOK OF DANIEL: WHO WAS BELSHAZZAR?

THE Book of Daniel affords an admirable example of the way in which modern archæology tends to confirm traditional views of the Holy Scriptures.

It is not that there are no longer any difficulties about Daniel. But it would be as irrational to dispute the historical value of Daniel on the ground of difficulties as it would be to reject Christianity on the ground of its indisputable difficulties. The march of archæological research tends to show that the difficulties of rejecting Daniel as a historical document greatly outweigh the difficulties of accepting it.

The late Mr. A. A. Bevan, for many years Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge, wrote in 1892 a short commentary on the Book of Daniel. In the general introduction to that book he wrote: "During the last sixty or seventy years almost all writers unbiased by dogmatic prejudices have maintained . . . the theory of its Maccabean origin. Even as to the interpretation of details there has been little disagreement."

It might have been a little difficult to defend the extensive reference to "sixty or seventy years," except by the simple expedient of disqualifying on the ground of dogmatic prejudice all who held a different opinion

from that which prevailed amongst the majority of scholars in 1892.

But the passage is quoted in order to show how the whirligig of time is bringing in its revenges. To quote one of the most recent and authoritative books on Daniel, "Archæology," says Professor J. A. Montgomery (*Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* in the "International Critical Commentary" Series) "has inspired a considerable revival of the defence of the authenticity of the book." And again he says "There still remain excellent modern scholars who vigorously defend the traditional position." This testimony has the more value that Professor Montgomery is himself no traditionalist.

His position, however, is extremely interesting and extremely instructive, when it is remembered for how long the Maccabean theory has exercised a hardly challenged supremacy. The "orthodox" Maccabean theory, based on historical and linguistic evidence, is that the Book of Daniel is not a historical record composed by someone who had lived in the reigns of the later Babylonian kings and the first King of Persia (that is, in the sixth century B.C.), but an edifying work of religious fiction, with possibly some negligible background of history, written in the time of the Maccabees, somewhere about the middle of the second century B.C., and designed to strengthen the faith of the Jews in that "fiery trial" which fell upon them at the hands of Antiochus Epiphanes. (It is interesting that this "modern" view of Daniel originated in the third century of our era with Porphyry, the apostle of paganism and one of the deadliest enemies of Christianity.)

But Dr. Montgomery's view marks a very definite advance—or retrogression, according to the point of view—from the fashionable Maccabean. In his Preface he says: "In some respects, *e.g.*, the dating of chapters one to six, I have broken, along with a number of recent scholars, with the regnant view . . . that the whole book is Maccabean." While he regards the second or apocalyptic-prophetic half of the books as of Maccabean date, he finds himself, under the compulsion of hard facts archæologically established, assigning a much earlier date to the first or historical part.

It would be impossible in the space at our command as well as alien from our present purpose to allude to all the debated points connected with the Book of Daniel. There are, however, two or three points—partly historic, partly linguistic—upon which discovery has thrown a good deal of light.

The affair of Belshazzar, formerly the arch-stumbling-block of the book, has evidently, more than anything else, been the effective cause of the partial conversion of Dr. Montgomery in the direction of traditionalism. Daniel, Dean Farrar said (*Daniel: Expositor's Bible*), abounded in "violent errors," one of which was that there was such a person as "Belshazzar the King." Professor Sayce (*The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*) says: "But Belshazzar never became King in his father's place" (the Bible nowhere says "in his father's place": that is the critic's gloss) ". . . nor was Belshazzar the son of Nebuchadnezzar as we are repeatedly told in the fifth chapter of Daniel."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is only right and fair to say that at a later date Sayce recanted his "critical" views on Daniel.

Before proceeding further with Belshazzar, it may be as well, in the interest of readers unacquainted with the history of the last Babylonian dynasty, to mention a few relevant details concerning it.

It has been made a matter of critical remark that the author of *Daniel* mentions no Babylonian kings except Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, and the inference has been drawn that he was not acquainted with any others. Such criticism could only be justified if the author of *Daniel* had professed to be giving a history of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But there is nowhere any hint that this was in the writer's mind.

As a matter of admitted secular history, the first king of the dynasty was *Nabopolassar*, the father of the next king *Nebuchadnezzar*, who after a reign of forty-three years (605-562 B.C.) was succeeded by his son *Evil-Merodach* (Amel-Marduk), who reigned two years (562-560 B.C.) and was himself succeeded by *Neriglissar*, a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned four years (560-556 B.C.). After Neriglissar came his son *Labashi-Marduk*, a child who only reigned a few months, and was succeeded by *Nabonidus* (Nabunaid), who reigned seventeen years (556-539 B.C.), the last Babylonian king known to secular history. Nabonidus was made prisoner, but not killed, when Cyrus in 538 B.C., having captured Babylon, proceeded to erect upon the ruins of the Babylonian kingdom the empire of the Medes and Persians. Of Belshazzar our secular authorities, the classical Greek historians, Herodotus and Xenophon, the Chaldean priest-scribe Berossus, and Abydenus, make no mention whatever.

The chief charges, then, against *Daniel* on historical

counts are, first, that it makes no reference to a real king Nabonidus, and second, that it introduces an imaginary king, Belshazzar.

The first charge is untrue; for, as we shall see later, there is a distinct allusion to Nabonidus in Belshazzar's promise to make Daniel "the *third* ruler in the kingdom" (Daniel 5: 16).

But what about the second charge? Is "Belshazzar the King" a figment of the imagination of "a pious Jew" in the Maccabean period? "There is, therefore," says Professor Bevan, "no room for a king Belshazzar who, according to Daniel 8: 1, must have reigned considerably over a year on the most moderate computation."

In this connection Bevan is amusing in a way that he can have as little desired as he anticipated. He observes, sarcastically, in a footnote, that the older apologists who lived before anyone had heard of Bil-shar-usur had no difficulty in identifying this Belshazzar of Daniel—some said he was Evil-Merodach others confidently held him to be Nabonidus. "It would be interesting," he adds, "to know who is destined to be the Belshazzar of the apologists twenty years hence." Bevan, who was personally known to the present writer, was not only a brilliant Semitic scholar but a master of "apes and gibes."

But *rira bien qui rira le dernier*, as the French say. They laugh best who laugh last. Twenty years from the date of the *Short Commentary* brings us to 1912. At that time "the Belshazzar of the apologists" was no other than Belshazzar himself—Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus—"Belshazzar the King." It is not likely that Bevan accepted him in 1912. In the

*Encyclopædia Britannica* of 1911 (the eleventh edition) s.v. *Daniel*, Dr. J. D. Prince, Professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University, New York, said: "There can be no doubt that the author of *Daniel* thought that Belshazzar, who has now been identified beyond all question with *Bel-sar-uzur*, the son of Nabonidus, the last Semitic King of Babylon, was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and that Belshazzar attained the rank of king. This prince did not even come from the family of Nebuchadnezzar."

In answer to the suggestion that the writer of *Daniel* believed Belshazzar to have been *co-regent* with his father Nabonidus, Dr. Prince wrote: "If Belshazzar had ever held such a position, which is extremely unlikely in the absence of any evidence from the cuneiform documents, he would hardly have been given the unqualified title 'King of Babylon' as occurs in *Daniel*. . . . Such attempts are at best subterfuges to support an impossible theory regarding the origin of the Book of *Daniel*, whose author clearly believed in the kingship of Belshazzar and in that prince's descent from Nebuchadnezzar."

But alas, for the hardy dogmatism of Dr. Prince! Alas, for the biting gibes of Mr. Bevan! When the next and last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* appeared in 1929—within Bevan's lifetime, whose lamented death occurred little more than a year ago—the writer on *Daniel*, Professor Torrey, of Yale, while holding in the main the "orthodox" critical position, yet says: "The picture of Belshazzar in Chapter V has quite generally been pronounced un-historical by modern scholars, but recent discoveries have tended to show that the historical background



of the chapter is substantially correct. Documents in cuneiform prove that Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, exercised at Babylon such administrative powers as belonged to no mere crown prince; indeed it is expressly stated that in the third year of Nabonidus, the King entrusted the *kingship* to his eldest son, Belshazzar (Sidney Smith, *Babylonian Historical Texts*, 1924, pp. 84 *sqq.*). This would seem to explain the dignity of 'the third ruler in the kingdom' conferred upon Daniel." To this Dr. Torrey adds, in a subdued tone unusual in Higher Critics, "Whether, and in what way, Belshazzar could be correctly described as the lineal descendant ('son') of Nebuchadnezzar is a question which future discoveries may settle." Here surely breathes a wholesome fear of what the cuneiform inscriptions may yet reveal.

Future discoveries may, as Dr. Torrey says, settle this question. But discoveries already made appear to suggest an extremely probable solution. Dr. Dougherty, Professor of Assyriology at Yale, to whose learned and elaborate book entitled *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (1929) the revolution in the views of scholars on the subject of Belshazzar is largely due, writes: "It seems quite probable that Nabonidus was connected by marriage with the family of Nebuchadnezzar. A grandson of Nebuchadnezzar would rise quickly to a post of authority, and Belshazzar, we know, served as a chief officer of the King before Nabonidus ascended the throne." Nabonidus, Dougherty holds, was not a common usurper, as he has generally been represented, but had probably married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and having moreover shown himself a man of administrative ability, had been made King by common

consent after the death of Labashi-Marduck. "Wedded to a princess of the royal line he would certainly regard himself as a legatee of the former Kings." "Nabonidus made no claim that he was establishing a new dynasty; he regarded himself as in entire accord with the great kings of the Neo-Babylonian Empire."

Boutflower (*In and Around the Book of Daniel*, 1923) says: "On his celebrated stele Nabonidus says: 'Of Nebuchadnezzar and Nergal-sharezer, the Kings, my predecessors, their delegate am I: their posts to my hands they entrusted.'" And Boutflower adds: "He would not neglect the easiest and most effectual way, marrying the wives or daughters of his predecessors." Boutflower also draws particular attention to the punctilious style of the queen-mother—"The king, Nebuchadnezzar, thy father, the king, I say, thy father" (Daniel 5: 11).

If Dougherty is right Belshazzar was a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar and the Bible is confirmed. (That Belshazzar is called "son" presents no difficulty, as the Hebrew uses the same word to indicate both son and grandson.)

But to return to Professor Montgomery—a few years ago Rev. A. H. T. Clarke, writing in the *Evangelical Quarterly* (April 1931), made the following extremely interesting statement: "In the course of publishing a full-length defence of the Higher Critical point of view Dr. Montgomery received from Dr. Dougherty . . . an advance copy in MS. of his forthcoming work on *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (Yale and Oxford 1929). Unable to rewrite the whole of his work Dr. Montgomery paused. He definitely 'broke' for ever

with the Maccabean date as regards the whole Book of Daniel (preface)."

So deeply impressed was Montgomery by the evidence presented by Dougherty that he frankly admitted that the conclusion drawn from yet earlier data by Pinches, Dougherty, and others, "is now brilliantly corroborated," and quotes the saying of Dougherty that "it appears that Belshazzar was invested with a degree of royal authority, not only at the close of the reign of his father but *throughout a large part, if not the whole, of the reign of Nabonidus.*"

Now it is important to grasp the full significance of the authentication of Belshazzar. At first the critics, with the secular histories under their eyes, declared that there was no such person. Belshazzar was a creature of the pious fictionist's imagination. But in 1854 Sir Henry Rawlinson discovered in Ur of the Chaldees the famous cylinders upon which Nabonidus, King of Babylon, inscribed his prayer invoking the preserving mercy of the Moon God upon himself and upon his eldest son, Bel-sar-ussur. Subsequently quite a number of tablets were discovered, recording business transactions of Belshazzar's, and, in particular, showing that quite early in his father's reign he was old enough to have a household of his own.

Belshazzar, then, had come to light, not only as a genuine person, but as a son of Nabonidus the last King of Babylon. The critics thereupon contented themselves with denying—until the researches of Sidney Smith, of the British Museum, and Professor Dougherty made denial foolish—that Belshazzar was ever himself King of Babylon. But it is now established that Belshazzar was a genuine and authentic

King of Babylon—a fact that gives an unescapable point to the offer of the “third” rulership in the Kingdom and shows plainly that the innuendo that the author of *Daniel* knew nothing of Nabonidus is baseless.

The picture of Daniel V is yet further confirmed by the monuments. The fact, formerly urged against the author of *Daniel*, that there is no direct mention of Nabonidus in Chapter V, does in fact tell strongly in his favour. Nabonidus is not mentioned for the good and sufficient reason that he was not in Babylon at the time. The Annalistic Tablet of Cyrus makes plain (what Berossus also asserts) that at the time when the city was finally captured, Nabonidus had actually been a prisoner in the hands of the Persian invaders for four months. The story of the fifth chapter is further confirmed by Xenophon who tells us that Babylon fell during a night in which the inhabitants were holding high revelry, and also that its “king”, standing with his sword drawn, was killed.

But even at other times than the eve of the capture of the city the picture of Belshazzar lording it in Babylon with an undisputed and undivided sovereignty among “a thousand of his lords” would have been exceedingly convincing. There is abundant cuneiform evidence, collected by Dougherty, to show that throughout (probably) the greater part of the long co-regency of Nabonidus and his son, Nabonidus lived at Temâ in Arabia. A cuneiform text, now in the British Museum translated by Sidney Smith, tells us that Nabonidus in the third year of his reign entrusted the kingship at Babylon to his son Belshazzar, in order that he himself might conduct a military campaign against

Temâ in Arabia. Nabonidus captured Temâ and for some reason, not clearly elucidated, established there his dwelling and court, adorning the city "with the glory of Babylon," while year by year, as Boutflower tells us (*op. cit.*), we are confronted with the statement in the Annalistic Tablet: "The King was in Temâ, the King's son, the *nobles*, and the soldiers were in the country of Akkad," *i.e.* Babylon. Boutflower points the comparison with Dan. 5: 1 ("Belshazzar the King made a great feast to a thousand of his lords") "where the Aramaic word translated 'lords' comes from a kindred root to that translated 'nobles' on the tablet."

Now how came it to pass that the authors of *Daniel* had all this accurate information about Belshazzar, when none of the secular historians knew so much as his name? Herodotus wrote about the middle of the fifth century B.C., and Xenophon in the earlier half of the fourth century. How then could the author of *Daniel* have written so late as the middle of the second century? He must have written earlier than Herodotus; but as Cyrus overthrew the Babylonian kingdom in 534 B.C., this is to push the date of *Daniel* back, substantially, to the time traditionally assigned to it.

How the name of Belshazzar came to lapse into such complete oblivion, we do not know. The fact remains that only the author of *Daniel* preserved it. Other historians mentioned, correctly, that Nabonidus was the last King of Babylon. Only the author of *Daniel* knew that there was *another* "last king." A *trace*, it is true, of "Belshazzar the King" may be found in Herodotus, who tells us that the last *two* Kings of Babylon were Labynetus. Labynetus is an obvious

corruption of Nabonidus (sometimes written Nabonnedus). It looks very much as if Herodotus was aware that Nabonidus had a son who was also King of Babylon, and not knowing the son's real name gave him the name that his father bore.

## XI

### THE BOOK OF DANIEL: DARIUS THE MEDE AND OTHER QUESTIONS

BUT what about "Darius the Mede," who, according to the author of *Daniel*, "took the Kingdom" on the death of Belshazzar? It is extraordinary—and yet, we cannot help saying, extremely characteristic of the Higher Critical School—that Professor Montgomery, after candidly acknowledging that Belshazzar as a king was undeniably authentic, proceeds to solve the mystery of "Darius the Mede" by supposing that the writer had taken Darius Hystaspes, who came to the throne seven years after the death of Cyrus, out of his place and put him before Cyrus. Is there the slightest likelihood, seeing that the new king mounted the throne on the night on which Belshazzar was slain, that the author who had such exact, such (almost, if not quite) contemporaneous, knowledge of Belshazzar, should have blundered so helplessly over "Darius the Mede"? The idea is hardly less crazy if we suppose that this master of religious fiction was writing in the times of the Maccabees. For how can we imagine that this devout Jew, with the fifth and sixth chapters of Ezra before him, could have perpetrated a "howler" so egregious?

Driver, while he remarks that "there seems to be no room for such a ruler," adds, with a caution that

he does not always display, that "a cautious criticism will not build too much on the silence of the inscriptions, where many certainly remain yet to be brought to light."

Bevan, after alleging—rather disputably—that the difficulties of Belshazzar shrink into insignificance compared with those of Darius the Mede, boldly says: "It need scarcely be said that of a Median King Darius reigning over Babylon before the accession of Cyrus there is no trace whatsoever in history."

But this is to state things much too positively. There is certainly some evidence of a king, and a king named Darius too, *before* Cyrus. There is also at least one piece of evidence, namely, the fact that with the inauguration of the new dynasty the state garb became the Median robe and not the Persian, that strongly suggests that such a king was a Mede.

Eusebius quotes Abydenus as saying that "Cyrus, after he had taken possession of Babylon, appointed Nabonidus governor of the country of Carmania. Darius, the king, removed him out of the land." Now who was this Darius? If it had been Darius Hystaspes (the Darius, that is, of Ezra), whose date is 521 B.C.—that is, seventeen years after the fall of Babylon, then it would seem that Nabonidus must have been at least 100 years old, and probably well over that. (For Dougherty tells us that Nabonidus is described in a cuneiform text as being "over the city," *i.e.*, in charge of the city's affairs, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar.) The inference is that it was an earlier Darius. Who, then, but "Darius the Mede"? And



it was clearly a Darius who did not hesitate to reverse an appointment of Cyrus himself—a Darius, that is, who was no mere viceroy.

A small piece of evidence pointing in the same direction is the following. The “daric” was a well-known Persian coin, circulating widely in non-Persian lands. Harpocraton, a Greek grammarian of Alexandria (whose date is uncertain—some put him in the second century A.D., some much later), wrote a lexicon which contains explanatory notes on the Attic orators. Lysias mentions the daric, and Harpocraton has the following note: “The darics were named, not from Darius, the father of Xerxes, but from another more ancient king.” Pusey and others drew attention to this, and asked who this “more ancient king” could be unless it were “Darius the Mede.” Bevan entirely discounts this evidence on the ground that Harpocraton’s lexicon was “compiled, it would seem, long after the Christian era.” But this is neither fair nor rational. Without accepting this statement as evidence that will stand by itself, one sees that it points to a tradition of some vitality. It is not advanced by Harpocraton in support of any pet theory and certainly not to bolster up the traditional dating of Daniel.

A third piece of evidence is quoted by Urquhart from Lenormant. Referring to the two years’ reign of Darius, Lenormant says: “I have found an indication of it in this significant fact, that on the Babylonian and Chaldean contracts in cuneiform writing Cyrus is designated ‘King of Babylon, King of the Nations,’ only from *the third year*, counted from the capture of the city. In the contracts of the year 1, and of the

year 2, he is called only 'King of the Nations.'" Urquhart points out that *Daniel* provides a full explanation of this singular fact. "During these two years Darius the Median wielded in name, and with all the insignia of royalty, the sovereignty of this ancient mistress of the world."

Who "Darius the Mede" was, we do not know. A very good case has been made out by Pinches, Boscawen, and others for Gobryas (or Gubaru), Governor of Kurdistan, the general who commanded the army of Cyrus at the capture of Babylon. But why Gobryas should be called Darius, unless that were an official title, we are unable to say.

Few more confident assertions have been made by the critics than that the use in *Daniel* of the term "Chaldeans" to signify a class or caste is a glaring anachronism. "Chaldeans," they said, was an ethnic term—a term, that is, indicating a nation (they were a Semitic race from the region of the Lower Euphrates); but as a class-term, signifying a magician or a fortune-teller, it was not, they alleged, used till very much later.

In the Book of Daniel "Chaldeans" is used both as the name of a race and also as the designation of a caste. But it is not used in the sense of quacks or cheats (as Cicero and Juvenal at a much later date use it), but of a high class, probably the highest class, of the "wise men" of Babylon. That the term was thus used is plain from Herodotus. Herodotus visited Babylon less than a century after the time of Daniel—about the middle of the fifth century B.C., and in his description of the temple of Belus (Bel-Merodach)—that "house of his god" into which Nebuchadnezzar

brought the vessels of the house of God—and of its wealth and its offerings, he quite definitely applied the term “Chaldeans” to *the priests of Belus*, never referring to the rest of the Babylonian people by any other term than “Babylonians.” This is a point that anybody can verify for himself; and that Driver should say that this use of the word “dates from a time when ‘Chaldean’ had become synonymous with ‘Babylonian’” shows a carelessness unworthy of a great scholar.

A favourite charge against the author of *Daniel* in this connection was, and still is, that he should have represented his Daniel, a strict and devout Jew, as being made “chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.” Such a stumbling-block was this to Lenormant, a staunch defender of the historicity of *Daniel*, that he resorted to the dangerous expedient of explaining it as an interpolation. Now it is usual to represent the author of *Daniel* as a truly devout and Godly Jew. If he were such, he would surely be quite as jealous for the credit of his hero and his hero’s God as the critics are. Driver admits that the argument based upon the improbability of a strict Jew accepting such a position is not weighty and “should be used with reserve.”

The fact, of course, is that we know too little of the circumstances and conditions of the appointment to hazard any dogmatic opinion. We have certainly no right to say that Daniel was committed to anything unworthy of a worshipper of the one true God.

We approach now the question of the language of Daniel. The Hebrew, say the critics belongs to

a time much later than the traditional date of *Daniel*, and the same is true of the Aramaic in the Aramaic portion of the book (II. 4-VII). Pusey, it is true, expressed the judgment in his book on *Daniel* that the Hebrew was "just what one should expect at the age at which he lived." But as Pusey died as an old man in 1882, some might think that he was out of date.

Sir Robert Anderson (*Daniel in the Critics' Den*), writing so recently as the first decade of the present century, says: "One of the highest living authorities, who has been quoted as favouring a late date for the Book of Daniel, writes in reply to an inquiry I have addressed to him—'I am now of opinion that it is a very difficult task to settle the age of any portion of that book from its language.'" It is a pity that Sir Robert had not permission to give the name of this high authority. He also quotes Cheyne as saying (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Daniel," tenth edition) that "from the Hebrew of the Book of Daniel no important inference as to its date can be safely drawn." Even Farrar writes: "The character of the language proves nothing."

In regard to the Hebrew and Aramaic, Driver says, with some caution, in an oft-quoted passage, "The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear . . . the Hebrew *supports*, and the Aramaic *permits*, a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great*"—(*Daniel*—Cambridge Bible).

But even this guarded verdict had to be modified. For it is remarkable that in the language, as in the history, of *Daniel* the tendency of archæological discovery is to confirm traditional views.

The discoveries relating to a colony of Jews in the island of Elephantiné, just below the first Cataract of the Nile, to which reference was made in the chapter on *Ram Shamra*, are linguistically as well as historically instructive. Of the papyri, written in Aramaic, that have been discovered in Elephantiné, Professor Sayce says: "Now for the first time the Aramaic scholar has before him a series of connected and fairly lengthy documents, clearly written and but little injured and furnished with exact dates. A fresh light is thus thrown on the history of the Aramæan language as it was spoken and written in the fifth century B.C."

It was this fresh light from the Upper Nile that caused Driver, as Boutflower (*op. cit.*) tells us, to write a letter to the *Guardian* (Nov. 16, 1907) in which he admitted that the Aramaic spoken in Egypt in 408 B.C. "bears many points of resemblance to that found in the Old Testament—in Ezra, Daniel, and Jeremiah x. 11."

"These remarkable documents," said Boutflower "enable us with confidence to assign a much earlier date to *Daniel* than Antiochus Epiphanes. The critics fix *Daniel* at 165. Now these documents are 408, nearly two and a half centuries earlier and rather more than a century after the date of Daniel who was living in 535, the third year of Cyrus. During the interval 538-408 very little change can have taken place in the language. If then it can be shown that the Aramaic of the latter is essentially the same as the Aramaic of Daniel, then there is nothing (as to language) to prevent our referring the date of Daniel to a period as early as the closing years of Daniel . . . the type of

Aramaic employed in these papyri of 408 bears such a striking resemblance to the Aramaic of *Daniel* as to allow of that book being written as early as 535 and to make that date far more likely than 165."

If the critics' estimate of the Aramaic of *Daniel* has been so wide of the mark, we may encourage a hope that their estimate of the Hebrew is not much nearer the truth.

Professor Montgomery, while admitting that the papyri invalidate many of Driver's contentions for the late character of the Aramaic of *Daniel*, will not go the whole way with Boutflower, but holds that the Aramaic of *Daniel* is not earlier than within the fifth century and is more likely younger. "As he holds that chapters 1-6 are earlier than chapters 7-12, he has no disposition to date down the former section to far." But how different even this conclusion is from the old Maccabean dating!

Before leaving this part of our subject, one should take into account the well-known fact, emphasized by Sir R. Anderson (*op. cit.*) that, as the Talmud declares, *Daniel*, in common with some other parts of the Canon, *viz.*, *Ezra*, *Ezekiel*, and the Twelve Minor Prophets, "was edited by the men of the Great Synagogue, a college which is supposed to have been founded by Nehemiah, and which continued until it gave place to the Great Sanhedrin." Such a revision, while making no substantial change in the inspired book, might, as Anderson suggests, account for modifications in Hebrew idiom and vocabulary. It might account, he thinks, for such inaccurate spellings as Nebuchadnezzar

(for Nebuchadrezzar) and Abed-nego (for Abed-nebo).

Speaking of these last, one has to protest against the statement of the late Dean Farrar (*Daniel—Expositor's Bible*): "It is noteworthy that in this Book the name of the great Babylonian conqueror . . . is invariably written in the absolutely erroneous form which his name assumed in later centuries—Nebuchadnezzar. A contemporary familiar with the Babylonian language could not have been ignorant of the fact that the only correct form of the name is Nebuchadrezzar." A commentator familiar with his Old Testament could not, we should say, have been ignorant of the fact that the name in the form given by Daniel appears in all the books of the Old Testament—nine in number—in which Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned, save only in Ezekiel, and that in Jeremiah it is actually spelt *in both ways*, proving clearly (as Anderson points out) that the now received spelling was in use when Daniel was written. As we cannot suppose that a professed theologian was ignorant of this, we can only say that he was lamentably careless.

We come now to the Greek and Persian words in *Daniel*. Of these Driver said in the well-known passage already partly quoted: "The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear. The Persian words *presuppose* a period after the Persian empire had been well established; the Greek words *demand* . . . a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great." As regards the Greek words (the names of three musical instruments), Farrar, alluding to what he calls "the startling fact that the Book of Daniel contains at

least three Greek words," remarks: "This circumstance has always been to me a strong confirmation of the view that the Book of Daniel in its present form is not older than the days of Antiochus Epiphanes." These views are now obsolete, being clearly only the expression of their authors' ignorance. As Nebuchadnezzar is now known to have actually employed Greek craftsmen, the presence of a few Greek instruments of music, carrying with them (as they naturally would) their native names, can cause no surprise. On the other hand, that there should be no more than three or four Greek words in a *Daniel* written in the Maccabean period, that is, between one and two hundred years after Alexander's conquests, would be very surprising.

One of these instruments is the *Kithēros* (Greek *Kitharis*, Lat. *cithara*), the lyre or seven-stringed harp, "is ascribed to Terpander about 650 B.C.; and on the Assyrian monuments this *cithara* with seven strings appears only from the time of Assurbanipal (668-625)." The coincidence of dates, as Lenormant says, is highly suggestive. The new instrument had hardly been invented in Greece when it was carried to the Assyrian court.

The only "critical" argument against the Greek words that has any plausibility is put by Bevan, who mentions what he calls the "positive consideration" that one of the terms, *sūmpōnyah* (Greek *symphonia*, doubtfully translated "dulcimer"), is peculiar to late Greek—"in the sense of a musical instrument first used, probably, in Polybius" (Montgomery). This "positive" consideration is really negative; for it means that in the Greek classics that have survived



we have not found *symphonia* used for a musical instrument before the time of Polybius. Such a negative argument is very precarious. Also, Hommel claims that the word *sūmpōnyah* is not Greek, but Chaldean.

Montgomery writes guardedly: "Without doubt we may no longer close our eyes to the interchanges of the currents of the Eastern Mediterranean civilisations," but adds that "as the evidence stands, these Greek words must incline the scales towards a later dating," with the further qualification that Driver speaks "too positively" when he says that "the Greek words *demand* a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great."

There remain the Persian words, some seventeen or twenty, in the Book of Daniel. These, according to Driver, "*presuppose* a period after the Persian Empire had been well established." Boutflower argues cogently that these Persian words so far from presenting any real difficulty supply strong confirmation of the traditional view. The writer, he says, was evidently a Jew, a member of a race even then cosmopolitan and ready in the acquisition of foreign languages, a courtier and a statesman, who spent the greater part of a long life in Babylon, first under the Babylonian kings, and afterwards under the Median Darius. "Here is a book," says Boutflower, "written by an old man, a courtier and a diplomat, a man of wide outlook." Is there anything very strange in his introducing Persian words into his narrative, especially such Persian words as he uses? For "at least fourteen out of the twenty are of a legal, official and state character, no less than eight being titles of office." Sir

R. Anderson (*op. cit.*) makes the remark: "That the Persian language was unknown among the cultured classes in Babylon is incredible. That it was widely known is suggested by the ease with which the Persian rule was accepted."

## XII

### THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF ST. LUKE

THE rehabilitation within the present century of St. Luke's reputation as a historian is mainly due to Professor Sir William Ramsay, of Aberdeen. This is the more instructive that Ramsay was himself in his youth an adherent of the critical school, the more conservative members of which "as a rule thought the wisest plan of defence for the New Testament was to say as little as possible about the Acts."

When Ramsay went to Asia Minor on his exploration work, he made a special study of the geography of the places mentioned in Paul's missionary journeys. Indeed the first thing that ingeminated in his mind a doubt of the critical views he had imbibed was a discovery that he made in connection with the predominantly geographical statement that Paul and Barnabas "fled [from Iconium] into the cities of Lycaonia and the region round about" (Acts 14: 6).

Now Iconium is described in modern books on ancient geography as a city of Lycaonia. *Chambers' Encyclopædia* (1880) says that Konieh, the ancient Iconium, was famous in ancient times as the capital of Lycaonia. The maps of the missionary journeys of St. Paul in the ordinary Teachers' Bibles mark Iconium definitely as in Lycaonia. In the light of these statements Luke's language seems as inept

as if one should say that a man fled from Edinburgh and went into Scotland. For Luke's words imply that in going from Iconium to Lystra the Apostles passed from one country to another; that Iconium was not in Lycaonia, whereas Lystra was. The inference was that Luke did not know what he was writing about and probably invented the story of fleeing into Lycaonia in order to give plausibility to a more or less fictitious narrative.

As a man of Greek culture Luke might have known that Xenophon in the *Anabasis* (about 400 B.C.) speaks of the Greeks reaching Iconium and, after leaving it, *crossing the frontier into Lycaonia*. But if he had studied the Roman classics, he might have learned that Cicero, living about 350 years later, had visited Iconium and described it *as being in Lycaonia*. Lastly, if he had lived on into the middle of the second century A.D., he would then have known that Iconium was truly in Lycaonia.

Nevertheless, the fact is now no longer a matter of dispute, that in A.D. 47, when the Apostles visited Iconium and Lystra, Iconium was outside the Lycaonian frontier. Early in the second century the boundary was changed, so that Iconium came to be as it has ever since been, and as it was in the days of Cicero, a city of Lycaonia.

"We had imagined," says Ramsay, "that this detail was a blunder due to stupidity or ignorance or misplaced ingenuity on the part of the author: it has now been found to show excellent knowledge and the minute accuracy which comes from the faithful report of an eye-witness and participator in the action."

It has also been definitely ascertained that the people of Iconium were of a different stock and spoke a different language from the Lycaonians. Hence, as Ramsay says, Paul was struck by the difference of tongue when the people of Lystra cried out (Acts 14: 11) *in the speech of Lycaonia* that the gods were come down in the likeness of men.

Another unobtrusive mark of genuineness is that the men of Lystra "called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercurius" (Acts 14: 12). Ramsay tells us that inscriptions prove that Zeus and Hermes (the Greek equivalents of Jupiter and Mercury) were commonly regarded in the region round Lystra as associated gods.

One of the most convincing proofs of the meticulous accuracy of St. Luke is to be found in the titles he gives to the governors or chief officials of the various cities visited by Paul in his missionary journeys. Under the Empire there were two kinds of Roman provinces, senatorial and imperial. Senatorial provinces were governed by an officer known as a *proconsul*, appointed yearly and representing the Roman Senate. Imperial provinces were governed by a *proprætor* representing the Roman Empire.

Now Luke tells us (Acts 13: 7) that Sergius Paulus was "proconsul" (R.V.—"deputy" A.V.) of Cyprus, when Paul, in the reign of Claudius, visited that island. Now Cyprus in the reign of Augustus had been an imperial province governed by a *proprætor*. Luke might well, therefore, have called Sergius a *proprætor*.

But we know from Dio Cassius that Augustus himself handed Cyprus over to the Roman Senate: from

which time, of course, the governing official would become a proconsul. Dio Cassius has been confirmed by the discovery of a coin showing a proconsul of Cyprus in this very reign of Claudius.

In Acts 18: 12 Gallio is mentioned as proconsul (R.V.) of Achaia. Now the curious thing is that, after having been a senatorial province governed by proconsuls, Achaia had been made an imperial province governed by a proprætor, by Tiberius, Claudius's immediate predecessor on the imperial throne. Luke might well, then, have called Gallio a proprætor. But Claudius, succeeding Tiberius, had some six years previously restored Achaia to the Senate, which forthwith once more sent out proconsuls. So Luke was right again.

But "proconsul" was no generic name with Luke for all high officials. When Paul in Ephesus got embroiled with Demetrius and his unruly craftsmen, "certain of the chief of Asia" (A.V.), more correctly *Asiarchs*, were his friends, and an official called the "town clerk," the chief magistrate, harangues and dismisses the assembly (Acts 19: 31, 35, 40). In Philippi the chief officials are called *strategoi*.

Another kind of official is mentioned in Acts 17: 6, 8, when Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica—"the rulers of the city" (A.V. and R.V.). The word in the original is *politarch*, evidently a technical term. Now this word is found nowhere else either in the Bible or in any extant literature. Did Luke invent it in order to add colour and verisimilitude to his narrative? An inscription has been found in Thessalonica which calls its magistrates by this very name and tells us the number of them.

Again, when Luke speaks of the governor of Melita (Malta) in Acts 28: 7, he calls him the *protos* (lit. "first"—"chief man," A.V. and R.V.). Inscriptions have been found in modern times on the island of Malta which use this very term as an official designation of the governor or chief magistrate of Malta.

Whether, then, Luke calls the chief authority in a city a *proconsul*, or an *asiarch*, or a *strategos*, or a *politarch*, or a *protos*, he is always, by the testimony of archæology, right, and often right where the odds against his being right were very considerable.

Another interesting point to which Ramsay draws attention, as illustrating both the accurate information of St. Luke and the early date of the Acts, is the nature and variety of the legal accusations made against Paul and his companions in the places that they visited. "The accusation varies in each case; it is nowhere the same as in any other city; yet it is everywhere in accordance with Roman forms."

At Philippi it was urged that "these men, being Jews . . . teach customs which are not lawful for us . . . being Romans." Their teaching was, in short, un-Roman or anti-Roman. At Thessalonica the charge was that these revolutionaries were anti-imperialists and supported the claims of "another king, one Jesus." At Ephesus Paul was accused of charging the heathen with idolatry—their gods, made with hands, were no gods. The Jews endeavoured to stir up popular feeling, partly on the ground that Paul persuaded men to worship God *contrary to the law*, and partly on the ground that he went about to profane the temple. In short, although it was Christianity that inspired men's hatred and their zeal for its destruction, some

other charge had to be preferred than that of being a Christian. Never was Christianity in the times of the Acts alleged as in itself a crime.

Now from about A.D. 78, that is, in the time of the Emperor Vespasian, it was never thought necessary to cast about for some plausible charge against a Christian teacher. From that time Christianity was itself a crime, to be visited with the penalty of death. "On this one consideration," says Professor Ramsay, "the argument for the early date of Acts . . . might be rested quite securely."

The last but most striking evidence of the historical trustworthiness of St. Luke to which we shall draw attention is connected with that ancient storm-centre—the first three verses of the second chapter of his Gospel. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. (And this enrolment was first made when Cyrenius [or Quirinius] was governor of Syria.) And all went to be enrolled, everyone into his own city."

"One could almost wish," said the late Professor A. B. Bruce, "that verse 2 had been omitted, or that there were reason to believe . . . that it is a gloss that has found its way into the text, and that Luke is not responsible for it—so much trouble has it given to commentators"—a remark that evokes from Ramsay a caustic reflection upon "the convenience of the commentator" as a test of truth!

Before the discoveries of the present century the situation, not for the commentator alone, was difficult. There were difficulties about the census—as to whether there had been an imperial census at all, and especially



as to whether in its execution it was really required that every enrollable person should go up to his own city. But the chief difficulty was the governorship of Cyrenius—for Cyrenius was known to have been governor of Syria from A.D. 6 to A.D. 9, a date some ten years at least after the then accepted date of the Nativity.

Now all these points have been absolutely cleared up, and the accuracy of St. Luke as a historian stands out with a lustre all the more conspicuous for the clouds that seemed once to tarnish it. And not only his accuracy as a narrator of events: but his credit as a man of honour—for it used to be freely suggested that he invented the imperial census that required Mary's presence in Bethlehem, in order to account for the alleged birth, in the royal city, of a Son whose mother lived in Nazareth.

If St. Luke was a liar, he was a very circumstantial, elaborate, and ingenious liar. He did not "invent" a single census, which was all that he really needed for his fraudulent ends. He "invented" a census that was the *first* of a series—"this enrolment was *first* made . . ." (Luke 2: 2). Quite casually he "invented" a second census in Acts 5: 37—"after this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment." This is *the* census, *i.e.*, the great census, which, as we now know, was instituted when Judaea in A.D. 6 was made an imperial province—that is, when Cyrenius began his governorship of Syria. We see, therefore, at once a possible, even a probable, solution of the Cyrenius difficulty, to which indeed the R.V. of Luke 2: 2 gives a clue—"this was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria." This suggests first, that

Luke knew of, and assumed, a regular census system in the Roman Empire, and second, that he knew and assumed that Cyrenius had been governor of Syria *more than once*.

Discovery has confirmed the truth of both these points. An inscription found in a temple to Augustus at Antioch in 1914 has shown that Quirinius was in command in Syria in 8 B.C. He was thus governor of Syria twice, and each time he conducted a census. This, of course, puts back the birth of Christ from 4 B.C. (formerly the accepted date) to 8 B.C.

Is there any corroboration of this early date for the Nativity? There is the evidence of Tertullian, who says that Christ was born when the census was made in Syria by Sentius Saturninus. Now Josephus, an excellent witness, tells us that Saturninus was governor of Syria from 8 B.C. to 6 B.C.

But this deposition of Tertullian, if it solves one difficulty, raises another. It confirms Luke's implied statement that Jesus was born in 8 B.C., the year of the first census; but, whereas Luke says the census was made when Quirinius was governor, Tertullian says that it was made by Saturninus. The explanation is really quite simple. It is a well-established fact, says Sir W. Ramay, that in various other cases two *legati* of the Emperor were present in a province at the same time. Quirinius, as commander of the forces engaged in frontier war, ranked as superior to the civil governor, Saturninus. The census, then, of 8 B.C. was made in the military governorship of Quirinius by the civil *legatus* Saturninus. Luke and Tertullian thus agree in putting the date of the Nativity in 8 B.C., a date now largely accepted by scholars.

That there was a regular census system in the Roman Empire has been proved by the discovery of census-papers, all carefully dated, which have been recovered from the dry soil of Egypt. The papers for A.D. 62 have been found, and there are indirect allusions to the censuses of A.D. 20 and 48.

There can be no doubt that these enrolments were made at fourteen-year intervals. If then we reckon back fourteen years from A.D. 20, we come to A.D. 6, already referred to as "the" census (see Acts 5: 37). Another fourteen years backwards brings us to 8 B.C.—the year already arrived at for the military governorship of Quirinius, the civil governorship of Saturninus, and the Nativity of our Saviour.

But even if there were such a periodic census in the Roman Empire as Luke assumes, how preposterous, said the old critics, was the story that Joseph was called up for enrolment from Nazareth, where he was living at the time, to his original home of Bethlehem! And still more preposterous the allegation that Mary also would have to return to Bethlehem, as if it were not enough that the head of the house should so return! Yet both of these so confidently derided assertions have been proved absolutely true. Every member of every household had to attend in person at his native city for the purpose of the census.

Three scholars, Sir W. Ramsay tells us, almost simultaneously announced the discovery of this census-system in Egypt. One of them, named Wilcken, deciphered a papyrus (now in the British Museum), containing an edict by an Egyptian prefect, G. Vibius Maximus, of date A.D. 104, which shows that every member of the household, including "all who for any

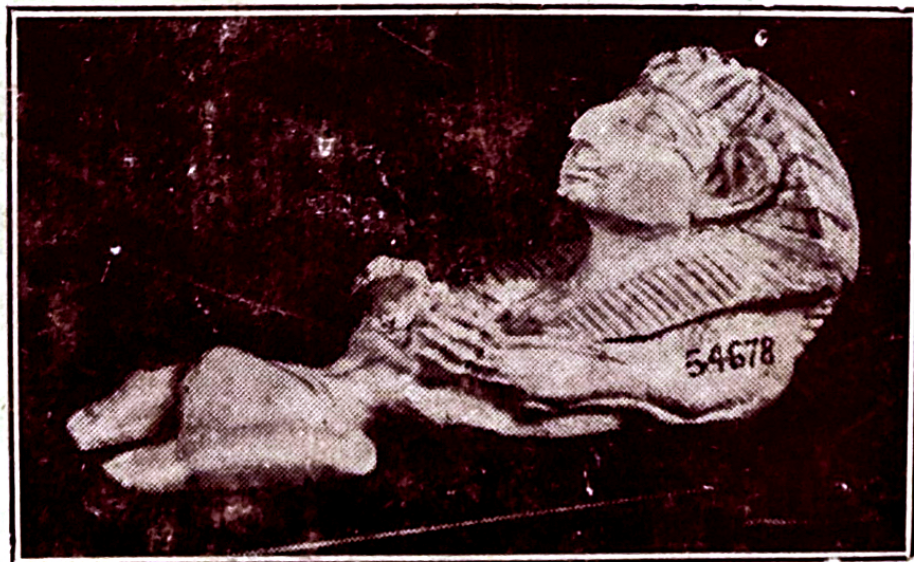
cause whatsoever are outside their homes," had to be present for enrolment. Not merely the male householder, but the family, had to return for a household enrolment to their proper home.

We may close with a reference to the famous *Marmor Ancyranum*. This is an inscription, duplicated in Latin and Greek, on the walls of a temple to Augustus in Turkey's new capital in Asia Minor, Ankara, better known as Angora and in ancient times as Ancyra. This long and elaborate inscription, which is an autobiographical record of the achievements of Augustus, includes a mention of that famous "taxing" with which the Birth of our Saviour is for ever inseparably associated.





"DANIEL'S TOMB" AT SUSA (SHUSAN)



[Courtesy of the British Museum]

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