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Archeology's Solution of Old Testament Puzzles

How Pick and Spade are Answering the Destructive Criticism of the Bible

By the
Rev. John Urquhart

Being the Essay for Which "The Gunning Prize" Was Awarded By the Victoria Institute of Great Britain

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INTRODUCTION

On the subjects treated in "Archeology and Old Testament Puzzles," no two living scholars, I suppose, could compose fifty pages independently without developing differences of opinion. My writing this Introduction, therefore, is not to be taken as an indorsement of the particular statements made in the volume. In many of the matters treated, some of them important, I do not accept Mr. Urquhart's ideas. In the matter of errors and blunders, however, it seems to me that he is much less at fault than are some highly praised authors who advocate opinions the opposite of his. In the major part of the instances which he cites his facts are undisputed, and his conclusions are inevitable. And his contention as a whole is completely sustained by the evidence he adduces.

The question of the bearing of archeological discoveries on the Bible is one, let us remember, in which the evidence is not yet all in. As in other cases where the facts are but partly known, there may be plausible arguments on both sides. Beyond dispute, there are hundreds and hundreds of instances in which the facts of archeology explain and confirm the biblical statements; but there are other instances in which the archeological facts, as now understood, contradict the biblical statements as

now understood. The trend of discovery justifies us in expecting that future explorations will remove the inconsistencies, though our opponents of course expect the contrary. As the case now stands, there are matters concerning which we must wait for further information.

Certain points, however, are already made out, beyond peril of change in the future. Mr. Urquhart has demonstrated some of these in his little book, and he would have demonstrated them more extensively if the book had been larger.

First, the contents of the Old Testament, from before the times of Abraham, are along lines that are genuinely historical.

Second, in a multitude of instances the statements of the Old Testament have found definite and exact confirmation in the facts of archeological discovery.

Third, this is particularly the case in many instances which were formerly, for lack of information, regarded as difficult or suspicious.

Fourth, new discoveries have brought into stronger relief the marvelous exactness of the biblical writers in topography, and in other matters that depend on men's being careful observers.

Fifth, the discoveries have brought into relief by contrast the soberness and reticence of our Scriptures by the side of legendary literature found elsewhere and alleged to be parallel.

Surely these things vindicate the right of the Old Testament accounts, as they stand, to receive respectful and open-minded attention. The recog-

nition of this right, and the consistent use of it in practise, must needs revolutionize certain theories now widely prevalent; and the position thus established affords a firm and sufficient basis for all higher doctrines as to the truthfulness and the inspiration of the Bible.

WILLIS J. BEECHER.

FOREWORD

HISTORY has again and again furnished striking coincidences, but few of these have been more remarkable than one which has characterized our own times. We have witnessed, on one hand, the outburst of a scholarly, persistent, and professedly Christian attack upon the historical character of the Old Testament; and, on the other hand, the splendidly equipped and marvelously successful activity displayed in the exploration of Eastern lands. Their ancient cities have been excavated, their monuments have been deciphered, their history has been resuscitated, and primeval civilization has been unveiled. These two movements, in so far, at least, as the Bible is concerned, have been the outstanding features of the latter half of the past century and of the beginning of the present. They have arisen, and they have progressed, in entire independence of each other, but no two movements ever had a closer connection.

The historical references of the Old Testament have a wider range than those of any other ancient book. It commences with the story of primeval humanity and of the catastrophe which brought it to an end. While confining itself in subsequent portions to the story of Israel, the Old Testament nevertheless reflects to some extent the institutions,

the customs, and the international relationships, of the times with which it deals. There were occasions also when Israel was brought into contact with both neighboring and more distant countries, and the Old Testament history consequently introduces us to peoples and to personages of the time. Hence, in the recovery of documents relating to those very periods, Oriental research has come frequently, and sometimes startlingly, into line with the biblical history. How far the results of these researches support, or are in conflict with, the attack upon the historical accuracy of the Scripture, the rapid survey which follows is intended to disclose.

THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES

WE SHALL begin with the books of Chronicles. Professor W. Robertson Smith, writing in the Encyclopædia Britannica, passes a comparatively lenient judgment on their historicity. While asserting that they contain errors in numbers, and professedly historical statements which have no better foundation than inference, he dismisses the charges of wholesale fabrication which have been brought against them. This is a distinct contrast to Wellhausen's fierce attack, in which certain of the narratives are described as "frightful examples" of Jewish imagination. Others have condemned what is supposed to be their "partiality for large numbers." It cannot be said that there is at the present time any apparent tendency to reverse, or even to modify, that judgment. A publication [1] which professes to supply the public with the most recent authoritative opinion on biblical and other matters says: "The variations of the Chronicler from the latter" (the book of Kings) "are due in most instances to his religious pragmatism. Everything is done to emphasize the ancient importance of the Levites, who are introduced at points and on occasions which are most inappropriate. Taking all

[1] *The New International Encyclopædia* (1902). See art. "Chronicles."

this together, it is claimed by many that the historical value of the Chronicles, where they vary from the books of Samuel and Kings, is small; and except in some details, which have chiefly an interest as representing perhaps a more or less widespread tradition, there is a reluctance among modern critical scholars to depend upon them in the study of Hebrew history."

The unexpected testing of these books by Oriental discovery has resulted in what must be described as a contrary verdict. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this occurs in the references to King Uzziah of Judah. It is to the Chronicles alone that we are indebted for any notice of the vast importance of that monarch's reign. We are told that "he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in the country of Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-Baal, and the Meunim. And the Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong. . . . Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their reckoning made by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. The whole number of the heads of fathers' houses, even the mighty men of valor was two thousand and six hundred.

And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power" (2 Chron. 26 : 6-13). The account concludes with a reference to the "engines, invented by skilful men" for the defense of Jerusalem, which were able "to shoot arrows and great stones."

In the above there is a complete departure from the earlier narrative in Kings. The information given by the Chronicler is entirely new. We are thus furnished with a crucial test as to the historical value of his independent statements. Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria was at this time subjugating the nations of the West. His monuments were mutilated by a successor, but there is now no doubt that he was one of the ablest and most resolute of the Assyrian kings. Tiglath-Pileser's is described by Dr. Pinches as "one of the most important reigns in Assyrian history." It was supposed that, in a tablet which has come to us only in fragments, Azariah, or Uzziah, is named by the Assyrian king as one of his tributaries, but that reading has not been sustained. The references to the Jewish king convey an entirely different impression. Judah was apparently too strong to permit of an Assyrian invasion. There was a confederacy against Assyria among the western peoples of which Uzziah was a supporter, if not the instigator and chief. The confederates were subdued and punished; but though the victorious Assyrian armies were in its neighborhood, Judah was not

troubled. "It would almost seem," says Dr. Pinches, "that Azariah of Judah took part in the attempt to get rid of Assyrian influence, and, although this was fully recognized by Tiglath-Pileser, the Assyrian king, to all appearance, did not come into direct contact with his country." [1]

This fact is highly significant. Tiglath-Pileser mentions a number of cities with their surrounding territories, which he punished for what seems to have been a widespread rebellion. The inscription proceeds: "XIX districts of the city of Hamath with the cities which were around them, of the sea-coast of the setting of the sun, which in sin and wickedness had taken to Azri-a-u [Azariah], I added to the boundary of Assyria. I set my commander-in-chief as governor over them; 30,300 people I removed from the midst of their cities, and caused the province of the city of Ku—— to take them." It is clear from the above that Uzziah was the soul of the confederacy against Assyria. It was to him as Assyria's adversary that those districts of Hamath had given their adhesion. That Jerusalem and Judah were not dealt with in like manner can be explained only by Azariah's possession of power and generalship such as are ascribed to him in Chronicles. Schrader speaks of the part of the inscription above quoted as "that important passage respecting the alliance with Azarijah (Uzziah of Juda) with Hamath." He continues, "From this we learn

[1] *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records*, etc., p. 348.

that, while Tiglath-Pileser chastised Hamath for its alliance with Juda, he did not see fit to molest the latter as well; a clear proof of the accuracy of the biblical account of the firmly-established power of Uzziah."[1] In the face of the fact that, as already stated, we are indebted to Chronicles alone for our knowledge of Uzziah's greatness, it is impossible to maintain an unbroken confidence in the adversely critical estimate of these books. In any case, this account of Uzziah's warlike preparations and achievements, which was part of the supposed exaggerations of the Chronicler, now takes its place as sober history.

Confirmation has also come from other sides. "We may," writes Professor Sayce, "consider the notices by the chronicler of nations whose names are not mentioned in the books of Kings as worthy of full credit. Even the Mehunims, of whom Uzziah is said to have been the conqueror, have had light cast upon them by Oriental archeology. Professor Hommel and Dr. Glaser see in them the Minæans of Southern Arabia, whose power extended at one time as far north as Gaza. . . . As the power of the Minæans waned before that of Saba, or Sheba, any notice of their presence on the borders of Palestine must go back to a considerable antiquity. If, therefore, their identification with the Mehunims of the chronicler is correct, the reference to them bears the stamp of contemporaneous authority."[2]

Researches and excavations in Palestine have

[1] Vol. i, p. 245.

[2] *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 468.

further illustrated the minute accuracy of Chronicles. These books describe Hezekiah's preparations for meeting the Assyrian invasion under Sennacherib. "He took counsel," we are told, "with his princes and his mighty men, to stop [or conceal] the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they helped him. . . . This same Hezekiah also stopped [or concealed] the upper spring of the waters of Gihon, and brought them straight down on the west side of the city of David" (2 Chron. 32 : 3, 30). Subterranean channels and tunnels have been found which show that work of this very kind was done, and it was done with engineering knowledge and skill that astonish us.[1] A further trace of this great work was found in an inscription discovered in 1880, in what Professor Sayce believes to be Hezekiah's tunnel. It is as follows: "[Behold the] excavation. Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each toward his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to [excavate, there was heard] the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an *excess* [?] of the rock on the right hand [and on the left?]. And after that on the day of excavating the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against another, the waters flowed from the spring to the pool for a

[1] See Harper, *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, pp. 515-519; and King, *Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill*, pp. 141-148. E. Hull, "Scripture Illustrated and Confirmed by Recent Discoveries," *Trans. Vict. Inst.*, Vol. xxviii, p. 136 (1894).

distance of 1,200 cubits. And [part] of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators."[1]

The same minute accuracy is displayed in a passage which was set aside by criticism as apocryphal. In 2 Chronicles 33 : 10-13 we read, "And Jehovah spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they gave no heed. Wherefore Jehovah brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh in chains, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in distress, he besought Jehovah his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And he prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom."

"The reader is aware," says Schrader in his reference to the above, "that this passage has been the subject of much discussion. Objections were raised by the critics to a statement which had no place in the book of Kings, and it was thought that this passage should be severed from the narrative, as being altogether unhistorical."[2] One ground upon which that conclusion was based was the belief that in Manasseh's time (697-641 B.C.) there was no connection between Assyria and Judah. This has been shown to be a delusion. Esarhaddon (681-668 B.C.) conquered the whole of Syria and Egypt towards the close of his reign, and in the list

[1] *Records of the Past* (New Series), Vol. i, pp. 174-175.
[2] *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, etc., Vol. ii, p. 53.

of tributary kings he gives the name of *Minassi sar mat Jaudi*; that is, "Manasseh, king of the country of Judah." This king is also mentioned in the same way by Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C.). This king of Assyria tells how news was brought to him of Tirhakah's invasion of Egypt. "Over these things," he says, "my heart was bitter and much afflicted. By the command of Assur and the goddess Assuritu, I gathered my powerful forces, which Assur and Ishtar had placed in my hands; to Egypt and Ethiopia I directed the march. In the course of my expedition, twenty-two kings of the side of the sea and middle of the sea, all tributaries dependent upon me, to my presence came and kissed my feet."[1] In a supplementary inscription, Assurbanipal names these tributary kings, and "Manasseh, king of Judah," is on the list. Manasseh, therefore, had the long reign attributed to him, extending from the time of Sennacherib to the days of Assurbanipal. It also follows that in Manasseh's reign the hold of Assyria upon Judah was firm and continuous.

There are five other points in regard to which the inscriptions furnish welcome information. (1) The Scripture narrative plainly implies that Manasseh, described by both Esarhaddon and his son as a faithful tributary of Assyria, rebels at the end of his reign. About that very time a widespread conspiracy was organized by a brother of Assurbanipal. An inscription of the latter speaks of the rebellion

[1] George Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 317.

in the following terms: "The people of Akkad, Chaldea, Aram and the sea-coast, from Agaba to Babsalimitu, tributaries dependent on me, he caused to revolt against my hand . . . And the kings of Goim, Syria, and Ethiopia . . . all of them he caused to rebel, and with him they set their faces."[1] This reference to "Syria and Ethiopia" shows that the conspiracy had spread over the west of the empire as well, and must have involved Palestine in the vengeance which followed. Ptolemy's Canon shows that Assurbanipal became King of Babylon after the overthrow of his brother, in 647 B. C. This was four years before the death of Manasseh, who began to reign in 698 B.C., and, after a reign of fifty-five years, died in 643 B. C. It will thus be seen that the facts and dates tally completely with the Scripture account.

(2) The phrase (2 Chron. 33 : 11), "the captains of the host of the king of Assyria," attracts attention. It is unusual, and seems plainly to imply that in this instance the king was not present with his army, and also that he had delegated his authority not to one individual but to several. It is now known that it was not Assurbanipal's custom to go personally upon campaign, but he himself has shed light upon the above phrase in an inscription describing that very western expedition. Referring to Hazael, the king of Kedar, he says: "My army, which on the border of his country was stationed, I sent against him. His overthrow they accom-

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. i, p. 76.

plished.'"[1] Here the king speaks of sending, and not of leading, his army. He is plainly not personally in command of the forces. The words "His overthrow *they* accomplished" present a remarkable parallel to those of the Scripture, "The captains of the host of the king of Assyria."

(3) We are told that Manasseh was taken "among the thorns." We are now enabled to understand the circumstances of the Jewish king's removal as our translators could not do. The passage tells us that he was taken with hooks or rings. The reference is to the Assyrian and Babylonian practise of putting a ring or hook in the captive's upper or under lip, attaching a cord to it, and leading the prisoner along, an object of pity to his friends and of ridicule to his foes. Here we have an undoubted Assyrian trait, the description of which later times were unable to understand. We have also Assurbanipal's own assurance that the practise had continued to his own times. In an inscription translated by M. Alfred Boisier he says, referring to an Arabian king: "With the knife which I used to cut meat I made a hole in his jaw. I passed a ring through his upper lip. I attached to it a chain with which one leads the dogs in leash."[2]

(4) The statement that Manasseh was taken to Babylon was fastened upon as an indication that the book was written at a time when it was no longer known that Nineveh, and not Babylon, was the

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. ix, pp. 61, 62.

[2] *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, Vol. xx, p. 163.

capital of the Assyrian empire. A former high authority, Dr. Samuel Davidson, says of this passage in his Introduction to the Old Testament: "It is related that the king of Assyria took Manasseh to Babylon, instead of to his own capital, to the very city which was disposed to rebel against him! That is improbable." He explains the supposed "error" as a reflection of the later statements regarding the carrying away of Jehoiachim and of Zedekiah to Babylon. These, he says, "furnished a pattern for the alleged event." But in this Davidson was completely mistaken. Babylon was not then disposed to rebel against Assurbanipal. The city had been captured, and the rebellion had been ruthlessly suppressed. And from that time onward Assurbanipal assumed the sovereignty of Babylon. It was in strict agreement, therefore, with the events of the time that Manesseh should have been taken to Babylon where the head of the revolt had been crushed, and where Assurbanipal was re-establishing his sway.

(5) Another seemingly unhistorical event is the return of Manasseh to Jerusalem as king. The Scripture tells us that this change in Manasseh's fortunes was due to repentance and earnest prayer. This evident intention to make that event commend a return to God and trust in the Divine mercy, was perhaps enough to beget suspicion in certain minds. But, though we have as yet no direct confirmation of the Jewish king's release, we know that the act was entirely in accord with Assurbanipal's practise. Speaking of a king, evidently in the same district,

he says: "I restored and favored him. The towers which over against Babel, king of Tyre, I had raised, I pulled down: on sea and land all his roads which I had taken I opened."[1] There is also a record extant of an exactly similar exhibition of mercy by this king. The territory of Egypt had been divided by him among a number of Egyptian nobles whom he had vested with sovereign power. They revolted, and Assurbanipal tells what followed. "These kings," he says, "who had devised evil against the army of Assyria, alive to Nineveh, into my presence they brought. To Necho . . . of them, favour I granted him, . . . costly garments I placed upon him, ornaments of gold, his royal image I made for him, bracelets of gold I fastened on his limbs, a steel sword, its sheath of gold, in the glory of my name, more than I write, I gave him. Chariots, horses, and mules, for his royal riding, I appointed him. My generals as governors to assist with him I sent," etc.[2] Manasseh's restoration was accordingly in keeping with Assurbanipal's policy, and no historical statement has ever had a more triumphant vindication than that which the monuments have thus brought to this assailed portion of Scripture. In view also of this and of the preceding confirmations it will be evident that the books of Chronicles were written, not in ignorance, but with full and accurate knowledge of the times with which they deal.

[1] *Records of the Past*, Vol. ix, p. 40.
[2] Geo. Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, pp. 325-327.

DANIEL

THE book of Daniel deals so largely with contemporary history that we include it among the historical books of the Old Testament, notwithstanding the prophetic character which pervades even its historical parts. There is also another reason why it should be touched upon in this connection. Recent Oriental research has confirmed so many of its statements and references that silence on our part would be inexplicable. There has also been no book in the Old Testament Canon which has been more unsparingly condemned by criticism than this. The accepted account of it is that it is a Jewish romance composed about 168 or 164 B.C.; that is, nearly four centuries after Daniel had passed away.

The question as to the authenticity of the book is supposed to be finally disposed of by one circumstance. In the third chapter an account is given of a great Babylonian state ceremony, and in this connection six musical instruments are named. These names were claimed as Greek words, and were said to form an absolute proof that the book must have been written subsequently to the time of Alexander the Great. It was pointed out that a mistake had been made in regard to one of the names (Sambuke). Two Greek authors, Athenæus and Strabo, state that this instrument had been brought from Syria into Greece. It is probable, however, that two, if not three, of the six names are Greek; and,

speaking of this fact, a critical authority says: "These words, it may be confidently affirmed, could not have been used in the book of Daniel, unless it had been written *after the dissemination of Greek influence in Asia through the conquests of Alexander the Great.*" [1]

The importance of a point like that must not be jndged by its seeming insignificance. It is just the kind of slip which a late writer is almost certain to make at some point in a narrative professedly written in an earlier period, and, if it were certain that no Greek Instrument had entered Babylonia till the days of Alexander the Great (332 B. C.), the presence of these words in the book would be fatal to its claims. But in that contention criticism has been more than usually unfortunate. The book of Daniel was written about 536 B. C. Professor Flinders Petrie has excavated the remains of the Egyptian cities of Naucratis and Daphnæ, or Tahpanhes, which were inhabited by 30,000 Greek troops about 665 B. C.—130 years before Daniel was written. And seeing that there was constant commercial intercourse between Babylonia and the West, here was a channel by which Greek instruments could have reached Babylon long before 536 B. C. This conclusion is thus forcibly stated by Dr. Petrie. He says: "We cannot doubt that Tahpanhes—the first place on the road to Egypt—was a constant refuge for the Jews during the series of Assyrian invasions,

[1] Dr. Driver, *Introduction*, etc., p. 471. The italics are Dr. Driver's.

especially as they met here, not the exclusive Egyptians, but a mixed foreign population, mostly Greeks. Here, then, was a ready source for the introduction of Greek words and names into Hebrew long before the Alexandrian age; and even before the fall of Jerusalem the Greek names of musical instruments and other words may have been heard in the courts of Solomon's temple."[1]

A difficulty which bulked more largely than the above was the place assigned to "Belshazzar." That monarch is represented as the last of the Babylonian kings, and as meeting his death on the night when the palace of Babylon was captured by the troops of Cyrus. Apparently, however, no king of the name was known to the ancient writers who allude to this portion of Babylonian history. They name the last king Nabonadius or Nabonidus. The monuments confirmed their account by showing that this monarch was named Nabonahid. The case against Daniel thus assumed a graver aspect, for it was plainly impossible to assume that Belshazzar was only another name by which Nabonahid was known to his contemporaries. The events recorded in the life of Belshazzar had no place in that of Nabonahid. The latter did not die when the palace was taken. He was not in Babylon at all when it was captured, and he lived for years after the Persian dominion had superseded the Babylonian.

The first ray of light came from an inscription discovered in the ruins of a temple at Mugheir. It was

[1] *Ten Years' Digging in Egypt.*

an account by Nabonahid of his restoration of this temple of Sin, the Moon god, and contained the following words: "As for me, Nabonidus, king of Babylon, from sin against thy great divinity save me, and a life of remote days give as a gift; and as for Belshazzar, the eldest son, the offspring of my heart, the fear of thy great divinity cause thou to exist in his heart, and let not sin possess him, let him be satisfied with fulness of life."[1] This places it beyond question that Belshazzar was a personage of the time, and that he was the heir to the Babylonian throne. But it is contended that he never reigned. The inscriptions of Cyrus, however, leave no doubt that Belshazzar, "the king's son," played a great part in the closing days of the Babylonian monarchy. He appears to have been in command of the main army upon which the Babylonians were building their hopes of safety. He had with him "the Queen," the wife of Nabonidus, and the nobles of the empire. That great position forms a strong presumption that Belshazzar shared the throne with his father. But another discovery carries us farther. A contract tablet belonging to this period is dated in the third year of a king called "Marduk-sar-uzar." It records "the sale of a field of corn by a person named *Ahi-ittaspi*, son of a man called *Nabu-malik*, to Idina-Marduk, son of Basa, son of Nursin, as a partner in the Egibi firm."[2] This Egibi firm was

[1] Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records*, etc., p. 414.

[2] Boscawen, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, vii, pp. 27-28.

one whose transactions extended over a long period, and whose documents, now happily recovered, have greatly illuminated this portion of Babylonian history. The names of the witnesses to that special transaction show that the sale must have occurred about this very time. But there was no king of that name. The only explanation, as Mr. Boscawen points out, seems to be that "Marduk" is only another name for Bel, and is here substituted for it. Marduk-sar-uzur is consequently Belshazzar. It will be remembered that one of Daniel's visions (8 : 1) is dated in this same "third year" of Belshazzar's reign.

Other references in the book, such as that to the existence of the Palace School (a peculiarly Assyrian and Babylonian institution) in the first chapter ; to the articles of Babylonian apparel, and the place assigned to music in Babylonian state ceremonial in the third chapter, are inexplicable on the supposition that the author lived in a time when the Babylonian civilization had long been a thing of the past. No mere romance could have had the illustration and confirmation which recent discoveries have brought to this part of Scripture.

SAMUEL AND KINGS

WE NOW come to the important books of Samuel and Kings. The earlier tendency of criticism was to accept these as largely historical ; but later views have minimized that ad-

mission. The books are now regarded, not as a history, but as an exposition of the author's views illustrated by supposed historical events. "It is not surprising," says *The New International Encyclopædia* in the article on the books of Samuel, "to find incidents introduced which are intended to illustrate the narrator's conceptions of Israel's past. . . . The scene, therefore, between Samuel and the people, in which he rebukes them for desiring a king (1 Sam. 8 : 10-18), may contain but a slight historical kernel, or even be a purely fanciful elaboration. . . . Many scholars . . . believe that legendary embellishments form a factor in many of the other incidents related of him." A similar design is said to pervade the book of Kings. All disasters, we are told, are regarded as punishments. "It is therefore necessary," concludes the writer, "before utilizing the valuable material embodied in Samuel and Kings to make due allowance for this theory, and to distinguish carefully between facts and the interpretation put upon them. In the second place the careers of the favorite heroes—notably David and Solomon—have been embellished with legends," etc. That is an accurate summary of current theories. The *Encyclopædia Biblica* believes that Eli's sons were invented. "Eli's sons," remarks the writer, "do not appear to have entered into the original tradition ; they are only introduced in the interests of the later theory." Referring to the history of Elijah and Elisha, which forms more than one-fourth of the contents of the two books of

Kings, *Hastings' Bible Dictionary* says: "Like other historical parts of the Old Testament, they may have lived in the mouths of the people for generations, forming a powerful means of religious education, before they were committed to writing." The "history," therefore, occupies no higher level than legend and popular tradition.

Fortunately we are now able to compare these theories with the results of recent investigation. For a large portion of the time covered by these books, the Israelites were in contact with nationalities on the east and on the west whose records have been recovered and read. Those records and the biblical books refer to the same circumstances and narrate the same facts. If the Scripture, therefore, invents narratives, or alters history "to point a moral or adorn a tale," this will infallibly appear in the comparison of the biblical and monumental accounts. Let it be observed also that it will not be necessary to procure a companion narrative for every biblical account in order to reach an assured judgment as to the character of the Scripture history. Half a dozen test cases will form as good a basis as six hundred. Those six narratives will either prove that the current theory is correct, or they will make it plain that that theory must be abandoned.

Following our usual plan and passing upward along the stream of history, we look first at the light which discovery has cast upon the character of 2 Kings. That book begins with the statement that "Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of

Ahab" (2 Kings 1 : 1). Further information is imparted in 3 : 4-27. The Moabite king's name was Mesha. He had paid an annual tribute of "the wool of a hundred thousand lambs, and of a hundred thousand rams." The narrative proceeds to say that an attempt was made by Ahab's son to reimpose the Israelitish yoke; that he called to his aid his allies, the kings of Judah and Edom; that the Moabites attacked this army and were defeated; that the victorious Israelites pursued them, captured their cities, and shut up Mesha in his capital; that there he was so hard bestead that he offered his eldest son a sacrifice upon the wall in the sight of the besiegers; and finally, that this act led to such indignation against Israel, apparently because of its insatiable thirst for vengeance, that the confederacy was broken up and Mesha escaped.

These Scripture references to the Moabites have been so thoroughly vindicated by research that archeologists, the only "authorities" in a matter of this kind, have had to abandon the critical theory. Alfred Jeremias sums up the present position in the words, "History lays a Moabite Amonite Sara in the dust;[1] while in regard to the Mesha episode and the discovery of that king's inscription he quotes the admission of Winckler: "Mesha's statements fully accord in every point with those of the Bible," and adds, "certainly a weighty testimony for the reliability of the biblical historical sources!"[2] The

[1] *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orients*, S. 228.

[2] *Ibid.*, S. 318.

recovery of "the Moabite stone" has proved that the narrative in Kings must now be accepted as fully informed and minutely accurate history. The stone contains thirty-two lines which can be read and a number so mutilated that no translation of them can be ventured. But the portion still legible informs us that Moab had been subjected by Omri, the father of Ahab; that the subjection lasted forty years, a period which corresponds exactly with that indicated in the Scripture; that the deliverance of himself and of his kingdom was realized in a time of invasion, and that it came about in so marvelous a fashion that he calls the stone "a monument of salvation" to Chemosh, "for he saved me from all invaders, and let me see my desire upon my enemies." He then recounts his rebuilding of his cities, the capture of others from the Israelites' garrisons and the re-peopling of the land. The Scripture account is thus upheld in every detail. Nothing has been invented; nothing has been manipulated. The inscription has also proved the great antiquity of the Hebrew writing. The angular form of the letters shows, as Professor Sayce remarks, that the writing had long been used by the Moabites for monumental purposes.[1] The language also proves that the affiliation of Moab and Israel was a fact. "Between it and the Hebrew," says the same writer,[2] "the differences are few and slight.

[1] *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 387.

[2] *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, p. 373. For fuller account of the Moabite stone see *Trans. Vict. Inst.*, vol. xxviii. p. 134 (1894).

It is a proof that the Moabites were akin to the Israelites in language as well as in race."

A more famous incident is Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in the days of Hezekiah. We are told that at the outset everything went in the invader's favor. The Assyrian king captured all the fortified cities of the country with the exception of the capital (2 Kings 18 : 13-16). Hezekiah did not attempt to prolong so unequal a struggle. He sent an embassy to Sennacherib at Lachish with the message, "I have offended, return from me : that which thou puttest on me I will bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold." Sennacherib himself has confirmed that account. There had been a rising in the West against the Assyrian yoke, in which Hezekiah appears to have shared. Sennacherib tells how it was suppressed, and says, "And as for Hazaqiau [Hezekiah] of the land of the Yaudâa [the Jews], who had not submitted to my yoke, forty-six of his strong cities, fortresses and small towns which were round them, which were innumerable . . . . I besieged and captured." He then speaks of the siege of Jerusalem itself, apparently mixing up intentionally a later and unsuccessful attempt with the tribute which Hezekiah paid him. That tribute is said to have been thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, along with a number of things which are not mentioned in the Scripture account, but which no doubt formed part of the treasure sent to the Assyr-

ian king. The siege, the Scripture tells us, was resolved upon afterwards and had to be raised. Sennacherib confirms that account by his silence. He does not take the city. He does not lead away captives from it. He punishes neither the king nor his nobles. Sennacherib, in another inscription, indicates his plea for the expedition against Jerusalem. He says, "He himself, like a bird in a cage, inside Jerusalem his royal city I shut him up; siege towers against him I constructed, for he had given command to renew the bulwarks of the great gate of his city."[1] Hezekiah had in this way given fresh offense to his powerful and overbearing foe.

A discrepancy apparently exists between the two accounts of the tribute. The Assyrian, while agreeing with the Scripture narrative in regard to the weight of the gold, speaks of a much larger silver tribute—eight hundred talents instead of three hundred. This long formed a serious difficulty, but is now cleared away. The Hebrew silver talent was heavier than the Assyrian, in the proportion of eight to three, so that the eight hundred of the one account is the exact equivalent of the three hundred of the other.[2] From the above one conclusion alone can be drawn. There is absolutely no trace of legend or of the distortions of tradition in the biblical account. It is as well-informed and as accurate as the Assyrian; and it is absolutely free from the

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. i, pp. 40, 41.
[2] See Evetts, *New Light on the Bible*, p. 347.

vainglorious boastfulness which permeates and mars the great king's inscriptions.

A small detail illustrates the exactitude of the Scripture references. We are told that Hezekiah sent his tribute to Sennacherib at Lachish, a city to the southwest of Jerusalem which lay upon thc Assyrian's king's way to Egypt. There are various other Scripture references to his siege of that city; but in this inscription of Sennacherib's there is no mention of the siege. In view of the importance of the place an omission of that sort seems exceeding strange, and an inference might have been drawn that these Bible statements at least were unhistorical. But Layard discovered upon the walls of Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh sculptured slabs representing the siege of a large city in active progress. On one of the slabs the king is seen enthroned and a procession of captives proceeding towards him from the gate of the city. Over the king's head stands the following inscription: "Sennacherib, king of nations, king of Assyria, sitting on the throne, causes the spoils of the city of Lachish to pass before him."[1]

We are also enabled to test the value of the statements which are made so freely regarding the alleged mythical character of that part of Kings which records the history of Elijah and Elisha. Long ago De Wette maintained that "the whole story of Elijah and Elisha is derived, directly or indirectly, from legends of the people or of the schools of the prophets;"

[1] *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 408.

and again, "The book contains numerous mythical passages. In some of them the mythical portion is very conspicuous. Such are . . . the story of Elijah. . . . The continuation and conclusion of the history of Elijah and his successor are filled with mythical narratives."[1] This may be taken as representative of critical opinion. Now, in one of these supposed myths, we find a siege of Samaria pressed by Ben-hadad king of Syria (2 Kings 6 : 24); and we are told that the siege was raised through an alarm which seized upon the Syrian army because it was reported that the Israelites had hired against them "the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians," and that these were then rushing against them (7 : 6). This incidental reference was regarded for a long time as sustaining the critical charges. The Scripture makes frequent references to the Hittites. But who were they? Where was their location? And what had they achieved? The utter silence of history regarding the Hittite was held to be eloquent—a silence that was said to be inexplicable if the Hittites had played the part which the Bible assigns to them. Professor Sayce, referring to this passage, writes that the critics held the reference to the Hittites "to be an error or an invention; but it was only the ignorance of the critic himself that was at fault!" But even so willing and capable a defender of Scripture as Keil could only say that we must not make it responsible for the utterances of the Syrians. "The Syrians speak," he said, "not of the historically

[1] *Introduction to the O. T.*, vol. ii, p. 184.

certain, but from a mere conjecture founded upon the noise heard."[1]

The discovery of the Hittite dominion is part of the romance of eastern archeology. Theirs was a great, though a long-forgotten empire; and the Scripture references to them have been amply substantiated. This takes its place among the number. We find a record to the effect that Shalmaneser II of Assyria encountered their hosts in battle. Two of his western adversaries, he tells us in one of his inscriptions, engaged the assistance of "the kings of the Hittites," and marched against Assyria "trusting in each other's might." It will be observed how closely this tallies with the reference in 2 Kings. The Hittites were at that time a great eastern power: they were able to be "hired;" and they were governed not by one monarch, for Shalmaneser I uses the very phrase of the Scripture —"the kings of the Hittites." But what of the sister phrase—"the kings of the Egyptians?" Was that monarchy also broken up into sections? The reply is in the affirmative. The great Shishak, or Sheshonq, or Sheshenk, was unfortunate in his successors. Maspero explains that they divided the kingdom into great principalities so as to govern the land with greater ease. Some of these "comprised only a few towns, while others stretched over several contiguous nomes." The result might have been foreseen. The great potentates thus created gradually became sovereigns in their respective domains

[1] See his Commentary.

"Soon," says Maspero, "the masters of these principalities grew bold enough to reject the sovereignty of the Pharaoh . . . They usurped not only the functions of royalty, but also the title of king, while the legitimate dynasty, confined to a corner of the Delta, exercised there hardly a remnant of authority."[1] That was the condition of Egypt at this time, so that the reference to "the kings of Egypt." is equally exact with that to "the kings of the Hittites." Tested by these things the Elijah-Elisha narrative shows nothing of the well-known lineaments of legend, but displays, on the contrary, the usual features of history.

The researches of the Palestine Exploration Fund have thrown a flood of light upon the opening chapters of 1 Kings. As is well known, criticism believes that we have no really historical information regarding Israel until we reach the eighth century B. C. It is at that period that Kuenen, for example, begins his account of "The Religion of Israel." Whatever of so-called history goes back to an earlier time is set down as undoubted tradition, and the splendors assigned to the period of Solomon are largely due, we are told, to the calamities which the Israel of the narrator's time was compelled to endure. Now nothing in the history of 1 Kings is invested with such splendor as the construction of Solomon's Temple. But the magnificence of that structure has been demonstrated by the researches of Warren and others. The greatest care was exercised, for exam-

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. i, pp. 35, 36.

ple, in regard to the foundations of the Temple. The rock at one corner (the southeast) consists of soft stone. This has been cut away, and the foundation stones rest upon the hard rock beneath. That rock was struck at what Mr. King well calls "the enormous depth" of over seventy-three feet below the present surface.[1] Another speaks of the excavations as "astounding us by the stupendous nature and extent of the masonry."[2] We read in 1 Kings 5: 17, that "the king commanded and they brought great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house." This also has been confirmed. At one portion of the walls, part of the second Temple, Herod's work, rests upon a substructure belonging to the first Temple. Though the upper portion consists of large stones and excellent masonry, these are utterly eclipsed by what lies beneath. Here the stones, says Mr. King, "are magnificent blocks, with clean cut marginal drafts and finely dressed faces." And again: "The corner stone of the Great Course at the southeast angle is a gigantic block, twenty-six feet long, over six feet high and seven feet wide. . . . This colossal stone . . . weighs over a hundred tons, and is, therefore, the heaviest, though not the longest, stone visible in the sanctuary wall." The stones were also "costly" both in their material and in their workmanship. "The Temple of Solomon was built," says Warren, "of the beautiful white stone of the country, the hard *missæ*,

[1] *Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill.*
[2] *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 389.

which will bear a considerable amount of polish." He also speaks of "the marvelous joints of the Sanctuary wall stones." These are further described by Mr. King. He says the joints are so finely worked that they are scarcely discernible. "The blade of a knife," he adds, "can scarcely be thrust in between them." Here, then, 1 Kings has given us an exact description, and "legendary amplifications" are conspicuous by their absence.

Other details have had a like vindication. We are told that "the house" "was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings 6 : 7). That is, the stones were prepared and fitted for their place in the quarries. An indication that this was the case is seen in the large vermilion letters and stone marks which the underground blocks still bear. A wet finger is sufficient to obliterate them, and they were no doubt thus removed from the building that was above ground. Those marks no doubt showed the builders where the stones were to be placed, a precaution which would have been unnecessary had the stones been prepared at the Temple site. We are also told that "Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew the stone" (1 Kings 5 : 18). Were those marks, then, such as would be used by Tyrian, that is, Phœnician, builders? The late Emmanuel Deutsch, after an elaborate inquiry, replies: "*They are Phœnician* . . . Some of them were recognizable at once as

well-known Phœnician characters; others, hitherto unknown in Phœnician epigraphy, I had the rare satisfaction of being able to identify on absolutely undoubted antique Phœnician structures in Syria, such as the primitive substructures of the harbor at Sidon."

A significant mark of the antiquity of the books of Samuel is found in the name of that prophet. "Samuel," as a Hebrew word, was an enigma to scholars. Almost all the attempts to explain it were wrecked against one or other of those two middle letters *m* and *u*. The explanation to which least objection could be raised was "heard-of-God." But with that interpretation no account could be given of the absence from the name of another letter, the Hebrew *ayin*. The ancient Assyrian tongue shows us that an old Semitic word for "son" was *sumu* in Assyrian, which is no doubt represented by the first two syllables of the prophet's name. Sumu-el, or Samu-el, means then, "God's son." Hannah thus registered, in the name given to her child, her vow that he should be the Lord's.

The exploration of Palestine has resulted in the discovery of ancient sites, which compel the conviction that these books set before us actual incidents and not the creations of legend or the embellishments of tradition. After recording a number of those indentifications, Colonel Conder speaks of "the exactitude of this topography," and says that David's wanderings can now be traced by aid of the new discoveries of places like Adullam, Hareth, etc.,

not previously known."[1] That a narrative should be illuminated by such discoveries is one of the most satisfactory marks of historicity. In the eighth chapter of 2 Samuel, we have an account of David's conquests. He subdued the countries on all sides and carried his arms even to the Euphrates (verse 4). That is representation which a romancer might have found to be extremely perilous. We are now able to follow the movements of the great empires on the east and the west of Palestine into times much more remote than those of David; and it might have happened that the recorded conquests of either would have made belief in David's extended dominion impossible. But in this instance also the records of Assyria and of Egypt are in perfect agreement with the Scripture. David's reign extended from 1018 to 978 B. C. About 1100 B. C. Tiglath-Pileser I of Assyria was defeated by the Babylonians; and for more than a century and a half afterwards Assyria ceased to be the dominating power which she had formerly been, and which she afterwards again became in Mesopotamia. On the western side, Egypt was in the midst of a long period of decline. "The nineteenth dynasty," says Budge, "marks the beginning of the decline of the power of Egypt; and the decline continued without break until the end of the period of the twenty-first dynasty, by which time Egypt had become like the 'bruised reed' to which she was compared in Holy Scriptures; this period of decline lasted about three hun-

[1] *The Bible and the East*, p. 142.

dred years. . . . In the twenty-first dynasty not only do we find Egypt confined to the valley of the Nile, but even divided into two separate kingdoms of the South and the North, as in the days of the Hyksos seven hundred years before."[1] David's reign belongs to the period of the twenty-first dynasty. There was, therefore, a broad field for the achievements of the great hero-king of Israel; and the Scripture narrative is thus confirmed and explained by the records of the great empires of the East and the West.

JUDGES

THE earlier critics were inclined to attach a higher historical value to the book of Judges than is accorded to it by their successors. Dr. Driver, while admitting that it contains a large basis of fact, finds "embellishments," "exaggerations," and "expansions" in the book; and adds: "The original narrative has been combined with the additions in such a manner that it cannot be disengaged with certainty, and is now, in all probability, as Kuenen observes, not recoverable."[2] The writer of *Judges* in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary* says: "Many details have been referred, with more or less probability, to myth or misunderstanding, and not to history. Cushan Rishathaim of Mesopotamia is a shadowy and uncertain figure." The latter reference is unfortunate. "Mesopotamia" is in origi-

[1] *History of Egypt*, vi, pp. 32, 33. [2] *Introduction*, p. 160.

nal Hebrew, "Arani-Naharaim," or "Syria of the two rivers." This king is said to have pushed his conquest westward into Palestine, and to have held the Israelites in subjection for eight years (Judges 3 : 8). The ancient history of those lands is being slowly discovered through the references to them in the inscriptions of Assyria and Egypt; but enough is now known to show how dangerous it is to trust to a merely literary analysis in historical matters. Aram-Naharaim appears on the Egyptian monuments as Naharina. The district was situated in the north of Syria, between the river Orontes and the river Balikh. The Euphrates flowed through the midst of the country. On the northeast of Naharina lay the kingdom of Mitanni. Just at this time Mitanni had been combined in some way with Naharina. "The Mitanni," says Maspero, "exercised a sort of hegemony over the whole of Naharaim."

Naharaim was a populous country. It was conquered by Thothmes III. His monument at Thebes records the names of two hundred and thirty towns, and about a hundred other names have been effaced. Some reigns later, the references on the monuments show that Tushratta, the King of the Mitanni, who is named by the Egyptians King of Naharina, is a valued ally of Egypt. The letters sent from Palestine to Kings Amenophis III and IV, which were discovered at Tel-el-Amarna, show that a quarrel arose between the two kingdoms. The last contains what seems to be Tushratta's ultimatum. This rupture apparently led to an invasion of Palestine,

whose coast tribes acknowledged the Egyptian supremacy, and in this campaign the Israelites were evidently conquered. In any case, the kingdom of Naharina was then in existence. It had, as Carl Niebuhr says, a wide dominion, "extending from southeastern Cappadocia to beyond the later Assyrian capital, Nineveh."[1] And Naharina was, at this very time, on the eve of an invasion of the West. Between these facts and the statements in Judges the agreement is so striking that comment is needless.

The letters discovered at Tel-el-Amarna have a further and still more important bearing upon the questions now raised concerning this book. They make frequent mention of a people named the *Khabiri*, or *Habiri*. These people are all over the land, and are daily extending their ravages. They spare none. They are called "men of blood," and are regarded as enemies of the gods. The suggestion that these were the Hebrews was at first set aside by Assyriologists, but is now being received into favor. "By the Habiri," says Carl Niebuhr, "we must here understand no other than the Hebrews."[2] This finally disposes of the widely-accepted recognition of Rameses II (of the nineteenth dynasty) as the Pharaoh of the oppression, and of Minephtah, his son, as the Pharaoh of the Exodus—an opinion retained in spite of the references of Rameses and of his father Seti I to the tribe of Asher as resident in Palestine, and to Minephtah's own reference to the Israelites as already settled in Canaan. Viewed

[1] *The Tel-el-Amarna Period*, p. 27. [2] p. 46.

in this light, these contemporaneous letters show us the Israelites extending their conquests just as they are represented to have done in Judges.

THE PENTATEUCH

WE COME now, in conclusion, to the opening books of the Bible. Upon the age and the historical character of the Pentateuch, German and other criticism has concentrated its powers of analysis. The result has been an eleborate scheme, by which the books of Moses have been separated into sections, sometimes long, sometimes so brief as to consist of one or two words, and at times of only one word. These are said to have been drawn from the works of, or to have been inserted by, certain writers or schools of writers, often separated from each other by long intervals of time. The one broad conclusion which has been impressed upon the public mind by those elaborate works is that the books were in no sense the work of Moses; that little or nothing of them existed in his time; and that the great body of the laws and of the history came into existence only in the fifth or fourth century B. C. The representation in a word is, that this alleged history is not history; and that it is at best a very late composition of dressed-up myths, legends, and traditions, with amplifications and additions which reveal the tendencies and the character of the writers' times, but which are of little other value. That is the account which is at present

widely accepted. The frequent formula, "The Lord said unto Moses" (we are informed in a work intended for popular use) "is mainly the attribution to Jehovah of every law and regulation, every plan and purpose of ruler and teacher, every appeal, threat, and promise of reformer and prophet, that has imposed its authority so long. . . . It is generally admitted now that what are called the books of Moses were largely made up after Moses' day, chiefly about the time of the restoration from Babylonian exile,"[1] etc.

As a party to this discussion, Oriental discovery has the highest claims to be heard. It has brought back the times, and in some cases the very personages, of which the books of Moses speak. It has enabled us to see the countries and the peoples as they then existed. We read inscriptions which were then being chiseled upon the walls of temples, palaces, and tombs, or upon pillars and statues. We mark the speech, the manners and customs, of the living peoples. We march with their armies; we encounter them in their streets; we enter with them into their homes; we become their guests; we breathe with them the atmosphere of the place and of the time. Surely then, when questions arise as to what is or is not possible to those times, as to what belongs to them or does not belong to them, we also have a voice in the discussion, and some part in the shaping of the conclusion in which the discussion shall be summed up.

[1] Amos K. Fiske, *Midnight Talks at the Club*.

There is one most important fact, which has emerged in the process of Egyptological discovery. The Pentateuch is distinguished from the rest of the Hebrew Bible by the presence in it of a considerable number of undoubted Egyptian words. In addition to these we find also Egyptian names, which were given because they have certain significations, as in the case of Joseph and of the sons of Moses. In the opening books of the New Testament we have a parallel to this peculiarity of the opening books of the Old Testament. Hebrew words are transferred into Greek in the Gospels; but, in this latter case, the Hebrew words are explained to the Greek readers of the Gospels. The reason is plain. Those Greek readers for whom the Gospels were first written, were not supposed to be, and in the great majority of cases could not have been, acquainted with Hebrew. But in the Pentateuch such explanations are entirely wanting, and almost all of them had to be waited for until Oriental research made them once more intelligible. Why was the New Testament plan not adopted in the Old Testament? The reason of the difference must plainly be found in the attainments of those into whose hands the Pentateuch was first placed, and for whose use it was first of all intended. *These must have known Egyptian as well as Hebrew;* and the Egyptian words and names were not explained in Hebrew, for the good and sufficient reason that there was no call for any explanation. There is no other way of accounting for the presence of these words in the

Bible, and, above all, for their not being interpreted even in a single instance. The readers for whose use the Pentateuch was first of all written were an Egyptian-speaking, as well as a Hebrew-speaking, people. The bearing of that fact upon present discussions is not merely important; I venture to say it is also momentous. For it means that the Pentateuch belongs to the times of the Exodus. In other words, it must have been written for a Hebrew people who had sojourned in Egypt.

The discoveries touch also upon the suppositions on which the scheme of division and the dating of the alleged documents rest. It was taken for granted that the time of Moses was too early for exact history. Little, if anything at all, it was said, was then committed to writing. A nation's history, such as it was, was handed down by oral tradition, and by ballads which had been inspired by local or national events. That notion, however, has now to be discarded. There was exact history in the time of Moses. And not only so. For long ages previously monarchs had been relating their achievements and making and recording treaties; merchants had been writing out, signing and preserving contracts; priests had been registering astronomical phenomena, and had been reading and copying books on religious ritual and on various sciences. It has to be observed also that these statements are not founded upon mere inference. The documents referred to have been recovered, and are now available as proof that history was possible in the age of

Moses. They show that history was actually being written in that very time, and that the art had been in use for centuries. They show further that there is nothing in Pentateuchal history which could not have been set down by ready pens in the days of the Exodus. Egypt, like all the East, had cultivated learning for long ages. "When," says Erman, "the wise Danuuf, the son of Chert'e, voyaged up the Nile with his son Pepy, to introduce him into the 'court school of books,' he admonished him thus: 'Give thy heart to learning and love her like a mother, for there is nothing that is so precious as learning.' Whenever or wherever we come upon Egyptian literature, we find the same enthusiastic reverence for learning."[1] In the eighteenth dynasty, the time of Moses, this earnest pursuit of literature was in full career. It was an age of writing and of books. From what we now know, it would have been an almost fatal objection to any account of the work of Moses had there been no writing and no books in connection with a movement of such vast historical importance. It would have been urged, and urged with irresistible force, that the absence of literature and the presence of other marks of a rude and illiterate time showed that the mission of Moses could not possibly belong to the place and to the age with which it is said to have been associated, and that above all it could have had no such connection as it is said to have had with the Egypt of the eighteenth dynasty.

[1] *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 328.

A second assumption is that the time of Moses was much too early for so elaborate a body of laws as is contained in the Pentateuch. With the then current notions as to the state of Eastern society in 1600 B. C.—notions which were due to the dense ignorance of those times which prevailed previously to the middle of last century—this conclusion was natural. As a matter of fact, we may, indeed, go farther. Notwithstanding what was already known of the literary character of antiquity the idea that there was no law book in ancient Babylonia, for instance, was clung to tenaciously. On the very eve of the discovery of the Laws of Hammurabi, Dr. Pinches, one of the princes of archeology, wrote: "It may be noted that the ancient Babylonians had to all appearance no code of laws in the true sense of the term."[1] All that they were supposed to have had were "customs and precedents," the only legal equipment, it was said, in the age of Moses and in Israel for centuries afterwards. All this now belongs to the past. A glance at the full and able translation of the Laws of Hammurabi supplied by Dr. Pinches in his appendix to the book from which I have just quoted, dissipates the notion that the age of Moses was too early for a regularly codified body of laws. Here, five hundred years earlier, we have an equally elaborate law-book, dealing with agriculture, commerce, social relations, evidence, etc., and occasionally presenting suggestive parallels to the laws of Moses. And this important discov-

[1] *The Old Testament*, etc., p. 190.

ery takes us still farther. It shows not only that the Mosaic law was possible; it also indicates why it was given at that time and by the hands of Moses. Canaan seems to have been under the Hammurabi code. Egypt we know from ancient testimony had also a written body of laws. Now, if the Israelites were to form a separate nationality—a people sundered from every other, both by belief and by life—by what was their national, social, and individual life to be regulated? If they had retained the Egyptian law, or adopted the Hammurabi code, they would have lived in the same manner, and have continued on the same level, as the nation from which they had just separated, or as the peoples into whose midst they were now to pass. It was an absolute necessity, therefore, that Israel should have its own code of laws. Otherwise the whole intent of the Exodus would have been frustrated from the outset.

Other facts have deepened the impression of the historical character of the Pentateuch. The ceremonial laws, said to have been given at Sinai, have a distinctly Egyptian character. The circumstances stated in the history enable us to understand why that should be so. The Israelites had just come forth from Egypt after a sojourn in it of more than two centuries' duration. They had become habituated to Egyptian customs and ideas; and it was, consequently, unavoidable that, in providing them with an elaborate religious ceremonial, Egyptian customs should be to some extent reflected in the new religion. In other words, the Israelites had to be

legislated for as they then were. If, on the other hand, present theories were correct, and these ceremonial laws had really been elaborated in Babylon, their Babylonian character would have been equally marked. But, seeing that the Babylonian character is absent, and that the presence of the Egyptian is undeniable, two conclusions seem to be forced upon us. The Scripture account of the origin of the Levitical Law is quite in accord with the facts; and the critical account of its origin is encumbered with enormous difficulties.

In the years 1868 and 1869 a scientific survey, conducted by Sir Charles Wilson and others, was made of the Peninsula of Sinai, with the result that the Scripture narrative of the sojourn and of the marches of the Israelitish host was most strikingly confirmed and illustrated. It is hardly conceivable that a bit of fiction could have so fitted in with the results of a scientific investigation; and the investigators have left it on record that they were strongly impressed by the conviction that the story of the wilderness journey was a record of facts, and that the writer must have been an eye-witness of the scenes and of the incidents which he has described.[1]

Similar impressions have had to be recorded by the archeologists who, through their discoveries,

[1] A later expedition sent out in 1883-4 by the P. E. F. to explore the region between the Sinaitic Mountains and Southern Palestine was able to add much additional evidence to the history of the Exodus; see Hull, *Mount Seir, Sinai and Western Palestine* (1884).

have been able to recall the times, the peoples, and the events, to which the Genesis-history refers. Ebers, in a highly significant passage in the preface to his famous book, says: "I bring by constraint, and nevertheless with good will, many a welcome matter to those who would close the door upon the free criticism of the Holy Scriptures; for I bear to them the information that especially the entire history of Joseph even in its details must be accepted as corresponding throughout to the genuine condition of affairs in ancient Egypt."[1] The above was published in 1868, and was among the first of those surprises which generally arrest for a moment or two the hand of iconoclastic criticism. Subsequent investigations have not modified the verdict of Ebers, sweeping though it is. The inscription on the tomb of Baba at El Kab, described by Brugsch, confirmed the Scripture account of a much disputed incident—the seven years' famine. The monument belongs to the very times of Joseph; and Baba, detailing his services to the city which he governed, says: "I was watchful at the time of sowing. And now when a famine arose, lasting many years, I issued out corn to the city each year of famine." There was, therefore, in Joseph's time a prolonged famine, during which corn was supplied from the public granaries to the Egyptian cities. It will be remembered also that the Scripture tells us that Joseph entirely altered the system of land tenure in Egypt. One fact which has the closest bearing upon

[1] *Aegypten und die Bücher Mose's*, S. xii.

this statement is that, previous to the time of the Hyksos (the dynasty which Joseph served), the land is possessed by the nobles and their retainers, while at the close of that dynasty the land is found to be in the possession of the crown. In other matters the progress of discovery has poured still fuller light on the Joseph history. It was difficult to understand, for example, how the performance by Joseph of his duties as steward of Potiphar's house should have taken him into its private apartments. The discovery of the city of Amenophis IV, the Heretic King, at Tel-el-Amarna furnished Egyptologists with ground-plans of ancient Egyptian dwellings. The roofs of the abandoned city had fallen in and so preserved the foundations of the houses. The store-chambers were at the back of the house ; and, as (probably for safety) there was no door at the rear, the repositories, whence Joseph had to dispense what was needed for each day's requirements, could only be approached through the private apartments of the palace.

The experiences of Joseph were already ancient history in the time of Moses, and here we might have expected to meet the distortions and fictions of popular tradition. It must, therefore, shake the confidence of those who have accepted current theories to discover that even in a matter of this kind we are still in contact with facts. But the surprising thing in these discoveries is that however far back research carries us the result is invariably the same. We now know that in ancient Palestine the writing and language used in intercourse with neighboring

peoples were the Babylonian. The prevailing laws were also, no doubt, those of Babylonia, which had early dominated Palestine in common with the rest of western Asia. In any case, Abraham, the Scripture tells us, was a Babylonian. The discovery of the laws of Hammurabi now enables us to understand the existence of a custom in the patriarchal time which does not seem to have been retained in Israel. The childless Sarai gives her maid to her husband, and Hagar thus becomes a second wife to Abraham. The same practise is repeated in the home of Jacob. We discover no trace of it in the times after Moses; but in the patriarchal period it is regarded as lawful and seems to be a custom of the time; for in both cases the proposal occasions no surprise and awakens no protest. When we turn to Hammurabi's laws, we discover that the practise occupies that very position in the life of Babylon in this the very time of Abraham. In the marriage laws reference is made to it again and again.

There are two other incidents in the Abrahamic history which spring out of this custom, and which the Babylonian code helps us to understand. We are told that, when Hagar saw that she was to become a mother, "her mistress was despised in her eyes" (Gen. 16 : 4). Sarai lays her trouble before Abraham, who replies: "Behold thy maid is in thy hand: do to her that which is good in thine eyes" (verse 6). We now comprehend the significance of that reply. Hammurabi's law upon the matter runs thus: "If a man has married a wife, and she has given a maid-

servant to her husband, and [the maid-servant] has borne children, [if] afterwards that maid-servant make herself equal with her mistress, as she has borne children, her mistress shall not sell her for silver ; she shall place a mark [or chain] upon her, and count her with the maid-servants." The law had thus decided the case : it was now Sarai's part to apply it. Hagar was degraded. She took her former place among the servants, and not without reminders of her servile position exceedingly bitter to a woman evidently proud of the position from which she was now deposed.

The second incident arose from the spirit shown by Hagar's son. A feast was made at the weaning of Isaac ; and Sarah detected Ishmael in the act of mocking her child. To her it seems to have been eloquent of what might be expected in coming years. In that view of the matter the situation is intolerable, and she demands the immediate expulsion of "the bondwoman and her son." She said : "Cast out this handmaid and her son : for the son of this handmaid shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (Gen. 21 : 10). But now there is no acquiescence on the part of Abraham. "And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son" (verse 11). It was only after he received the Divine command to "hearken unto her voice" that Sarah's request was granted, and that Hagar and Ishmael were sent away. We are now enabled to perceive what lay behind Abraham's reluctance, and the reason—we may add the

necessity—for the Divine assurance which was given him when he was enjoined to do as Sarah said; "And also of the son of the handmaid," the Divine assurance ran, "will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (verse 13). According to the Babylonian code the disinheriting of Ishmael was illegal. "If a man's wife"—so ran the Babylonian law—"has borne him children, and his maid-servant has borne him children, [and] the father in his life-time say to the children whom the maid-servant has borne to him: 'My children,' he has reckoned them with the children of the wife. After the father has gone to his fate, the children of the wife and the children of the maid-servant shall share in the property of the father's house equally." The only advantage which the son of the free-born wife could claim was that of first choice. Now Abraham had acknowledged Ishmael as his son. As a just man he could not deprive him of the inheritance which was, therefore, legally his; and it was only the Divine communication that the lad's future was assured which enabled Abraham to comply. To have such an extremely sensitive response to the times is intelligible in a fully informed history, but would be a pure impossibility in fiction produced in other and later times.

The entire history of Abraham has been confirmed in similar fashion. He is said to have come from Ur in Chaldea. Now it might have happened that Ur had come into existence only 2000 B.C., the time of Abraham. Or it might have been founded earlier,

and by Abraham's time have ceased to be inhabited. Was Ur, then, in existence in the days of Hammurabi and of Abraham? The answer of Oriental research is that it was. But Abraham clearly belongs to a Hebrew-speaking community. Was there such a community in the Abrahamic Ur? The reply again is a decided affirmative. There was, and there had been for some centuries, such a colony in that Babylonian city. The very name Abram (Abramu) is found upon an earlier monument, and was possibly that of an ancestor of the patriarch. Abraham, we are told, goes down to Egypt, and finds that it is then open to strangers. That was quite contrary to learned belief, which informed us that it was not until the seventh century B. C., that foreigners were allowed to have free access to Egypt. But we now know that in this matter learned opinion was wrong, and that the Scripture shows us the country as it then was. The famous fourteenth chapter of Genesis must not be omitted in this connection. Three certain sovereigns of Abraham's time are named as associated in the invasion of Palestine. Among them is Hammurabi himself (Amuraphel), who is serving under Chedorlaomer, the King of Elam. This supremacy of Elam was a fact, and the men named were all of them personages of the period.

It is remarkable that Oriental discovery has also enabled us to detect the historic accent in the Scripture narrative of still earlier times. Hilprecht speaks of the "enormous sandhills" in various dis-

tricts of Babylonia, and adds, "These heaps were known to the ancient Babylonians by the name of *Tul Abubâ* ("mounds of the Deluge.")[1] The memory of the Deluge not only lived on in ancient Babylonia, but had also acquired a distinct place in its historical records. "The Deluge," writes Boscawen, "forms a dividing line between the mythic age and the beginning of history; and to both Chaldean and Hebrew writers it was a real event, for in a list of royal names in the British Museum we read, "These are the kings after the Deluge (*abubi*), who according to their relative order wrote not."[2] In the account of the settlement of the nations after the Deluge, Elam is classed among the Shemites (Gen. 10 : 22). That arrangement has till recently formed a difficulty. The ancient inscriptions clearly indicated that the Elamites were Kassites or Hamites, and not descendants of Shem. The Abrahamic history itself implies that this was so, for the very name of Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam in Abraham's day, is Hamitic and not Semitic. But the French discoveries at Susa have shown that a long Semitic period preceded the Kassite or Hamitic period in Elam, and that in Abraham's time the supremacy had passed to a Hamitic race. Here, then, we have the Scripture testimony to a fact that could not have been a matter of common knowledge even in the times of Moses, and that was certainly concealed from after times. Going still farther

[1] *Explorations in Bible Lands*, p. 41.
[2] *The First of Empires*, p. 66.

back, we find light shed upon the very beginnings of human history, as recorded in the Bible.

"Cain," says Mr. Boscawen, "flees to the land of Nod, eastward from Eden (Gen. 4 : 14). . . . The word Nod is the Nadu of the inscriptions, that is, the land of the wanderers, the *Mandu*, or 'barbarians,' the very region where we have seen the Babylonian civilization grow up."[1] Genesis 4 : 16-21, clearly indicates that building and other arts originated in the Cainite line, among those very settlers in Nod. Another curious fact provides a further commentary upon the statement that Cain named his city after his firstborn son, Enoch (verse 17). That name is, says Boscawen, "the old Sumerian *Unug* or *Unuk*, which passed into the Semitic Babylonian as *Uruk* (Erech), the word for city and especially for the ancient capital of Nimrod, *Erek*, the city par excellence."[2]

In this brief review of nearly a century's labors, it has been impossible to do more than call attention to a comparatively small portion of their abundant results. But these suffice to show how little such investigations have to be dreaded by the Scripture. Indeed, it is not too much to say that within the sphere of genuine science which has concerned itself with Scripture statements, there is to-day a higher appreciation of the antiquity, veracity, and historic value of the Bible than was to be found in any previous time since the march of modern science begun.

[1] p. 79. [2] p. 80.

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