

phonetic values attached to them were the same as those which they had in the later texts is questionable.

It must be borne in mind, therefore, that in Professor Meyer's book, as in all previous works upon the Hittites, two entirely different periods of 'Hittite' history have been combined together, which it will be the business of future research to separate and disentangle. We shall probably discover that what is true of the one is not necessarily true of the other.

It is needless to say that the whole body of material at present known to us has been treated by Professor Meyer with masterly skill. Lucid arrangement, historical insight, and sound judgment are well-known characteristics of the author, and his book, as might be expected, is not a compilation merely, but contains new facts and fresh points of view. Some of the illustrations appear in it for the first time.

The seal with cuneiform characters given on page 44 seems to be an attempt to represent a real inscription and not an example of the use of cuneiform characters for ornamental purposes only. The inner circle of characters would read *us-ti(?) -ku(?) -wa-as*, while the outer circle is *si-i-e(?) -khu-us-si-ya us-te . . . -ka(?) -ar*. The statement that men and deities are not represented with a beard on the monuments of Carchemish must be corrected in the light of the recent excavations there. The identification, moreover, of Katpatuka with Kizzuwadana (as the name is written in the cuneiform tablets of Boghaz-Keui) is not due to Dr. Herzfeld, as Professor Meyer believes, but to Professor Hommel, who suggested it several years ago. In Hittite history Cappadocia took the place of Arzawa—which, by the way, is mentioned in the

Golénischeff Geographical Papyrus—just as Quê took the place of Alashiya in Eastern Cilicia during the Moschian age. But these are minute details, interesting only to the "Hittitologist"!

The first part of the report on the excavations at Carchemish conducted by the British Museum has just been issued in a princely volume entitled *Carchemish* (British Museum, 1914). It contains a short Preface by Sir F. C. Kenyon, and an exhaustive and very instructive introduction by Mr. Hogarth on Djerabis or Jerablus, the modern site of Carchemish. This is followed by a series of plates with photographs of the inscriptions and sculptures discovered by the excavators, Messrs. Woolley and Lawrence. The plates leave nothing to be desired, and the completeness and artistic finish of the inscriptions make them the most valuable Hittite hieroglyphic texts that have yet been found. They materially lighten the task of the decipherer, whose thanks are due to the authorities of the British Museum for their early publication.

Some of the oldest texts belong to Katuas, who may be the Katê of the Assyrian inscriptions, who was king of Quê in B.C. 850. One of the chapels was built by Kanas, high priest of Quê, to whom the long inscription now in the British Museum also belongs. The finest of the inscriptions, however, is that of Imeis (or Yamois), who was viceroy of the great king of Tyana.

The sculptures throw a welcome light on later Hittite art. The archæological results of the excavations, however, are not touched upon in the present volume; for these we must go to the articles contributed to the *Times* and other papers by Messrs. Hogarth and Woolley.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF ST. LUKE.

LUKE XVII. 32.

Remember Lot's Wife.

1. Lot's wife appears but a moment on the page of history. She is like a spectre, rising from the earth, moving slowly across our field of vision, and then disappearing. Hence her history is all

centred in a single point, and that the last. It has no beginning and no middle, but an end—a fearful end. Its course is like that of the black and silent train, to which the match is at last applied, and it ends in a flash and an explosion. Our first view of Lot's wife is afforded by the light of the sulphurous flames already bursting from the battlements

and housetops of the reprobate city; our last view, the moment after, by the same fires as they mount to heaven and light up the whole horizon, revealing, among many old, familiar objects, one never seen before—a pillar of salt upon the road to Zoar. That very pillar was the thing which the disciples called to mind when Jesus said, 'Remember Lot's wife.'

2. Our Lord is speaking of His advent to judge the world, whether that advent takes place when a great city, a great empire, a great economy, passes away in blood and fire and smoke, or in those crowded moments of our individual lives in which we have to make an instant and pregnant decision between the warring affections and desires of the soul that will give a bias to our whole after life. At such moments Christ 'comes' to us, comes to force us to decision, to compel us to choose between the higher and the lower aims of human life, and to show what manner of spirit we are of. He descends—so the context implies—with all His train, and flashes by us with lightning speed. If we so love Him, and all that He stands for and represents to us, that at once, without any hesitation or delay, we choose the better part and join His train, we not only escape condemnation; we save, we quicken, our life into life eternal. But if, as in the days of Noah, and again in the days of Lot, we are so busy eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, so preoccupied with the cravings and affairs of this present world, or so drowned in self-indulgence and sensuous desires, that 'the things of the spirit' have little charm and value for us, and we let the critical, auspicious moment pass; if, as the heavenly pageant flashes by, we do not lift up our heads and cry, 'Thine are we, O Christ, and on Thy side, Thou Son of Man,' we miss our happy chance, and lose our life instead of saving it.

Worldliness and carnal-mindedness are incompatible with vivid realization of the presence, grace, and loving-kindness of Christ whether directly manifested or more indirectly. It is strange and fearful how the worldly and carnal spirit at once darkens the vision and deadens the spiritual senses, and by degrees reveals its inmost essence as 'enmity to God.' 'The carnal mind is enmity to God'—nothing truer! And it is terrible how hard it is to overcome the world and the flesh, especially when aided by the devil. It is like walking up a hill when there is a thaw after frost—one toils and toils, and yet keeps slipping back almost as far as one advances.<sup>1</sup>

## I.

## THE SPELL OF SODOM.

1. We read that Lot 'pitched his tent toward Sodom.' There is quite a dramatic touch there. Not in the city, or even near to it, but in the direction of it. He was not prepared to throw in his lot with the men of that city yet. A man cannot go direct from the company of saintly Abraham to a bacchanalian crew like that which held its revels there. He slides down to them by an easy, gradual descent. A man clings hard to the remnant of his religion, even when he has allowed the greater part of it to go. He fights for the shell and form of it more than he did for the life and substance. Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, no doubt making virtuous resolutions that he would never go down to live there. He would only trade with these people, and visit them occasionally, and still hold himself in the main aloof. Alas for these resolutions of men whose hearts are on the down grade! Lot did not long remain in the remote outskirts of the city. The huge whirlpool swiftly drew him in. Presently we find him living at the very gates at Sodom—marvellously advanced in position, a man of great consequence, with his daughters married to notable citizens, and sunk down to the level of those citizens, so depraved that their after-story is not fit for decent lips; and his whole household has breathed the pestilent moral air of the place, and become diseased. A miserable journey, surely, of a life that began in a noble journey of faith. With all his getting and gains and advancements he has but a poor show to make of it in the end.

2. Perhaps Lot's wife was a native of Sodom. In the earlier chapters of Abraham's story, Lot is constantly mentioned, and 'his goods,' but there is never any mention of a wife. In the recital of Lot's rescue after the Battle of the Five Kings, it is said that Abraham 'brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.' The phraseology is too vague to make one sure that even here a wife of Lot is included, though it seems probable. May we not infer from her late appearance, that she was a daughter of the land, a native of the city 'toward' which Lot pitched his tent (Gn 13<sup>12</sup>)?

She followed 'behind him.' 'That is no true sacrifice,' it has been said, 'which is regretted.' Therefore Lot's wife never left Sodom. Her feet

<sup>1</sup> D. W. Simon in *Life*, by F. J. Powicke, 314.

took her out of the city; but she was of it all the time. If Calais was written on the heart of an English queen, Sodom was written on hers. Her husband, once started, would quicken his step perhaps: but his lingering had helped to make her steps leaden.

The tone of the narrative justifies us in concluding that, although Lot's own spirituality was ebbing away, Lot's wife sadly lagged behind her husband spiritually; he was tempted more and more to take her pace, his foot having already halted when he began to grow unfaithful to the gleam of God. This is the world's recurring tragedy—when a good man fails, because of some fault in his goodness, to redeem a dull-souled wife; or a good woman, like Abigail, to redeem her dull-souled husband. In Lot's household there is little trace of his piety: there are traces enough of a sinister influence in the callousness of his sons-in-law's families; to them 'he seemed as one that mocked.'

3. It may be that Lot's wife helped him to go down the steep descent; that she held him back—by sheer weight of indifference, or worse—from reclimbing the steep ascent. He would be free, with one firm stroke; but the chain of circumstance and of habit was too cunningly welded by the length of years, too insinuatingly a part of his very life. The newly awakened decision was goaded and yet weakened by the newly awakened anxiety:

I, in mine own love's strength seem to decay,  
O'ercharged with burthen of mine own love's might.

Given such a companionship, of a disfigured spiritual nature allied with an earthen nature never loftily moved, the moment of the former's awakening must always be as a breath of hell, because of the sense of the ineffectiveness of all struggle. The awakened soul appeals, but the other does not respond—has no response to give. It is as if a lark, suddenly feeling the joy of wings, would have the clod where its nest and nursing-place had been rise with it to sunny altitudes of the morning. The clod is clod still, though for weeks it has felt the warmth of so tuneful a breast. Lot grew disturbed, felt the power of earlier, finer feelings, became anxious not only for himself but for others: but how could the wife at his side, with no such early raptures to aid her, rise to his sudden earnestness? It is something to the credit of his influence, perhaps, that she was willing to leave Sodom

at all. But even to the last his helpfulness was imperfect. 'He lingered.' There were links of the chain not yet snapped. She must have noticed it; and it helped to quench the 'smoking flax' of her faith—or her fear.

We are to will our salvation in such sort as God wills it; now He wills it by way of desire, and we also must incessantly desire it, in conformity with His desire. Nor does He will it only, but, in effect, gives us all necessary means to attain to it. We then, in fulfilment of the desire we have to be saved, must not only wish to be saved, but, in effect, must accept all the graces which He has provided for us, and offers us. With regard to salvation itself, it is enough to say: I desire to be saved. But, with regard to the means of salvation, it is not enough to say: I desire them. We must, with an absolute resolution, will and embrace the graces which God presents to us; for our will must correspond with God's will. And, inasmuch as He gives us the means of salvation, we ought to avail ourselves of such means, just as we ought to desire salvation in such sort as God desires it for us, and because He desires it.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### THE PULL OF THE HIGHER LIFE.

1. Lot's wife, like the rest, heard the summons to escape from Sodom. God saves all He can. The door of mercy is opened to others as well as to Lot. His wife's deliverance had been cared for too, and measures taken to secure her with the rest. One of the angels clasped her hand and drew her out of the conflagration by main force. Almost against her will she was hurried so far out of danger, and the mountain-road, with its hastening fugitives, stretched out clear before her, when, in that one glance behind, her incurably corrupt nature came out, and the stroke fell.

2. The angels took them by the hand. Here is Divine importunity. The angels use gentle constraint towards Lot and his household. The narrative not only shows that the God of righteous judgment is also a God of mercy, but it emphasizes the great truth that the Divine mercy is intense and active, pressing itself even upon those who are reluctant to receive its benefits. God is more eager to deliver than to condemn all who can be brought within the range of His compassions. The Lord's messengers would not have saved Lot and his family out of Sodom unless in their urgency they had taken the group of hesitating worldlings by the hand and overborne their double-mindedness. The utmost

<sup>1</sup> St. Francis De Sales, *The Love of God*, viii. 4.

wisdom and persuasion bade fair to prove un-availing without this added mark of zeal. And if angels could do their work only at a white heat of fervour we shall not attain success in attempts made at any lower temperature.

I have known young men saved by the voice of a kindly bystander who, seeing the struggle in their face, has said, 'I would not do it, if I were you, sir,' or by a sudden recollection of a pure and loving home, and of the grief and shame with which it would be darkened were it ever known that they had yielded to a temptation so base. And how could they help being saved if they remembered that the kindest Heart in the universe would be pained by their fall?—if they could hear the tender voice of the Son of Man, saying, 'Son, remember.'<sup>1</sup>

Complain not that the way is long—what road is weary that leads there?

But let the Angel take thy hand, and lead thee up the misty stair,

And then with beating heart await the opening of the Golden Gate.<sup>2</sup>

### III.

#### FATAL HESITATION.

I. Lot's wife lingered on her way, and hastened not to escape for her life; she tempted God by her disobedience, and that disobedience, that forbidden delay, was her ruin. She was turned into a pillar of salt, which is supposed to mean that she was caught by the burning flames, which had by this time extended far across the plain; she was caught by them and encrusted, as it were, by the particles of sulphur which they contained; and so, instead of crumbling to ashes, she remained after death a standing monument of the Almighty's wrath, which is revealed from heaven against all the children of disobedience.

It is one act, one look only, and one lingering step, that has thus passed irrevocably into the rock for ever associated with the name of Lot's wife; but just as, with the saint or martyr in one great and good act of faith, there is much going before, preparing for that trial of a moment, so must it have been with her. How much may be contained in one hesitating step, and one sigh of regret! An act, a word, a look—even a thought or resolution which has had no opportunity of showing itself in act, word, or glance—has decided for ever the lot of the human soul. Was it not by one short transgression of Eve that all was lost? But why is it thus? Because, though such may

stand singly in the life of any one as it comes out to man, yet in the secret history of the soul, as seen by the eye of God, such cannot stand alone; much must have been going on before the will has taken its decided bent for good or evil.

2. 'She looked back.' The words used in Genesis when we are told that she 'looked back' on the burning city is a much stronger word than that used two verses lower down, where we are told that Abraham 'looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah.' Abraham's look was only a rapid and terrified glance; but the look of Lot's wife was a look 'of deliberate contemplation, of steadfast regard, of strong desire.' She looked back wistfully, longingly, as one whose treasure was in the city, and whose heart was there also. She would fain have gone after her heart had she dared. She would rather have stayed amid all the sins of Sodom, if she might have carried on her old easy life in it, than have climbed the mountain, to commence a new life and to dwell apart with God. Her look was an unspoken prayer; and her prayer was answered: she knew 'the misery of a granted prayer.' She lingered behind as one who would fain stay behind; and she did stay, though only as a heap of salt, and of salt that had lost its savour.

It is dangerous in religion to fall forward by overmuch zeal, yet not so dangerous as to fall backward by an unfaithful heart. The former may injure his face and lose his comfort, but the latter is in danger utterly to break the neck of his conscience, as old Eli by falling backward brake his neck bodily and died.<sup>3</sup>

3. She became a pillar of salt. Smothered with the sulphurous smoke of the volcanic flames, just as the elder Pliny was suffocated with the fumes of sulphur and bitumen at the destruction of Pompeii, she fell into a heap, and was gradually encrusted with the saline particles of which the air in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea is still full. Such heaps, or lumps, formed from spray, mist, and saline exhalations which have gathered round a core of fallen trees or beasts are still common on the shores of that Sea of Salt, and always have been common. Josephus identified one of them with Lot's wife more than eighteen centuries ago, as the Arabs do to this day.<sup>4</sup>

It is peculiarly interesting to contrast the story of Medusa with its Hebrew parallel in Lot's wife. Both are women

<sup>1</sup> S. Cox, *Expositions*, iv, 290.

<sup>2</sup> A. Procter, *Legends and Lyrics*, i, 183.

<sup>3</sup> John Robinson, in *The Pilgrim Fathers of New England*, by John Brown, D.D., 134.

<sup>4</sup> S. Cox.

presumably beautiful, and both are turned to stone. But while the Greek petrification is the result of too direct a gaze upon the horrible, the Hebrew is the result of too loving and desirous a gaze upon the coveted beauty of the world. Nothing could more exactly represent and epitomize the diverse genius of the nations.

To the Greek, ugliness was dangerous, and the horror of the world having no explanation nor redress, could but petrify the heart of man. To the Hebrew the beauty of the world was dangerous, and man must learn to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity.<sup>1</sup>

(1) The pillar of salt may be regarded as a *symbol of character*.—Lot's wife is not a pillar of salt in an Eastern land, but the expression of a life over which surges of its own past have gone till repeated acts of indulgence have formed into habit and fixed the character. The single acts seem so insignificant in themselves—the missing of opportunity, the clinging to little luxuries and indulgences. But the will is enfeebled, the signs of inevitable retribution are unnoted, and the judgment comes as a thief in the night.

In almost every case where they have found the remains of bodies among the ashes at Pompeii, they had some little bunch of keys or bag of treasure with them—evidently something which had kept them the few minutes too long. One I shall never forget. It is a woman's figure, lying as she fell, with the arm and the folds of her dress gathered before her face just as she tried to keep off the dreadful choking ashes, but all in vain. There she fell as she was running in the street; and the ashes buried her, and hardened into stone; and the body gradually decayed away, and 1700 years after, digging there, they found the hollow where it had been, like a great mould, and poured in plaster, and got the very cast of it, so that you can see the very expression of her face, and the folds of her dress, and can count the very threads of it. And see: in the skeleton fingers of one hand was found a little bag—just a few rings and brooches. She had only stopped for those. It would not take a minute. They were all on her dressing-table. Cannot you think how she would call out to her husband to go on with the children and she would be after him before he got to the city gate! But ah! when they got where they could look back safely, there was no mother, and no word of her, and never any word for all these centuries until the workman's pick came on that hollow in the lava. And now you see her with the little jewel-bag in her hand, for all the world like that old story of Lot's wife done into sad and startling fact.<sup>2</sup>

(2) The pillar of salt may also be regarded as a *monument of destiny*—a witness of righteous judgment. We are told to remember her; and when we recall her to our minds there is absolutely

<sup>1</sup> 'The Gods of Greece,' in *Among Famous Books*, by Dr. John Kelman, 26.

<sup>2</sup> B. Herford, *Courage and Cheer*, 81.

nothing to remember about her except the solitary fact that on the way from Sodom she looked back from behind her husband, and became a pillar of salt. That is all; but that is enough for our Lord. It suits Him the better because it is so simple. The great issues of life are extremely simple. Religion may be elaborated and refined to any extent. And when it is, there is always a danger of our losing sight of the simplicity of its great issues. You have got to remember Lot's wife, our Lord means to say, because her temptation, her danger, is yours; because her fate might be yours too, possibly. You, too, have to leave Sodom, the city of sin, where also your Lord was crucified. The people of the city are wicked and sinners exceedingly. You do not love the wickedness, indeed—we have no reason to suppose that Lot's wife did, nor is it likely—but the wickedness is somehow inextricably mixed up with the beauty, and riches, and ease, and luxury of the place, with its soft enervating climate, and its wealth of fruit and flowers.

It has been the ambition of some men to raise a memorial column to keep their name in remembrance, and Absalom's pillar was long all that remained to him of that earthly glory to which he aspired; but with Lot's wife it has been like a burning brand once saved, but cast again into the fire, which smoulders on, and its smoke still ascends for ever. That desolate region marks the judgment that has passed; and continues to foretell the Judgment yet to come, looking before and after. As we read in the Book of Wisdom, 'Of whose wickedness even to this day the waste land that smoketh is a testimony,' and 'a standing pillar of salt is a monument of an unbelieving soul.' Nay, it is not now a solitary pillar; for in all the pillars of salt that mark that region of death some say, 'This is the pillar of Lot's wife,' and some say, 'that'; so much does her remembrance haunt and people the plain—nay, every country under Heaven. And all this on account of the awful mention which is made of her in the Book of God; that one short verse in the Old Testament, and that one yet shorter sentence in the New.<sup>3</sup>

(3) The pillar of doom in Sodom's vale, by way of merciful contrast, *suggests the promise given to him who 'holds fast' what he hath*: 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name' (Rev 3<sup>12</sup>). Yea, surely, His new name: for with-

<sup>3</sup> I. Williams, *Female Characters of Holy Scripture*, 23.

out Him, and all the grace that is in Him, who could hope to become a fit pillar of that Temple? He helps us, not only to leave Sodom, but to be rid of the Sodom in our heart.

When wickedness is broken as a tree,  
Paradise comes to light, ah, holy land!  
Whence death has vanished like a shifting sand,  
And barrenness is banished with the sea.  
Its bulwarks are salvation fully manned,  
All gems it hath for glad variety,  
And pearls for pureness radiant glimmeringly,  
And gold for grandeur where all good is grand.  
An inner ring of saints meets linked above,  
And linked of angels is an outer ring;  
For voice of waters or for thunders' voice  
Lo! harps and songs wherewith all saints rejoice,  
And all the trembling there of any string  
Is but a trembling of enraptured love.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Verses*, 152.

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## Arabic Christian Literature.

BY MARGARET D. GIBSON, D.D., LL.D., LITT.D., CAMBRIDGE.

## I.

CHRISTIANITY must have been introduced amongst the Arabs at a very early period, possibly by one of our Lord's Apostles themselves. Wellhausen points out that *nasrānī*, the Arabic word for *Christian*, used chiefly in the Corān, must have been adopted before the Syriac word *mesheehaya* came into use; so that for philological reasons we are not justified in supposing that Arabia first received the gospel from Syria. Yet, once a spark was kindled, the neighbourhood of Christian Syrians on the N., and of Ethiopians and Abyssinians on the S.W., would help to fan the flame, and before the time of the Hegira the Peninsula was interpenetrated by Christianity. The great tribes of the Qudaā adopted it, and Nöldeke suggests that *Couri*, the battle-cry of the Gudhana, is in reality the Greek *κύριε*. Even to-day, the Bedaween of the Sinai Peninsula betray their Christian ancestry by making the sign of the cross over graves, and around their sleeping-places, to ward off demons. We may conjecture, from the child-like nature of the sons of the desert, that in many quarters outward symbols would be adopted, without any intelligent understanding of

their meaning, and that a long inheritance of heathen ideas and customs would predispose the Christian communities to heresies.

We shall begin our survey of Christian Arabic literature by mentioning what we possess in the way of translations of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible was doubtless early translated into Arabic, for the poet Al Birāk (A.D. 470-525) is said to have been taught to read it by a monk. Abu 'l Faraj (Ibn et Taib) speaks of an Arabic translation of the Bible, and says that the Patriarch Hanna (631-649) was told by the Emir Amr b. Sadb to translate the Gospels from Syriac into Arabic, leaving out the name of Jesus, and all mention of Baptism and the Cross; but on the Patriarch replying that he would rather die than leave out one jot or one tittle, the general gave way. In the Archiepiscopal Library at Diarbekr there are eleven MSS. of the Gospels, translated from the Peshiṭta; besides several commentaries, martyrologies, and sermons by Ephraim, Chrysostom, etc. We give a list of the principal Arabic Scriptures known in European libraries for which we are chiefly indebted to the work of Graf:—