

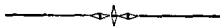
1881; the Clergy Training School, opened 1881—all three designed for distinctly religious purposes; the inauguration of the Preliminary Theological Examination, preparatory to ordination; the recent Lectures on Church Doctrine in Great St. Mary's; the founding of Ely Theological College; the new Divinity Schools (1879)—all point in the same direction.

This paper cannot be more fittingly closed than in the words of Professor Westcott—taken from his “Religious Office of the Universities,” already quoted at the commencement:—

And, to rise to the highest region of life and thought, no student of theology who has been allowed to work at Cambridge, in these later days, will refuse to acknowledge, with gratitude, the increasing opportunities which are afforded there, for realizing the power of that final synthesis of thought and experience and faith which is slowly unfolded through the ages, and yet summed up for us for ever, in the facts of our historic creed.

And in a letter to the present writer, the same author says, referring to the above-mentioned work: “Every hope which I expressed in it, has been, I think I may say, even more than realized in the fourteen or fifteen years which have passed since the papers were written.”

DONALD J. MACKEY.



#### ART. V.—RECENT ATTACKS ON THE MOABITE STONE.

THE story of the discovery of the Moabite Stone has often been told, but it will bear repeating.

In the summer of 1868 the Rev. F. A. Klein, then a missionary at Jerusalem, made an expedition through the district on the eastern side of the Jordan. He passed through Gilead, and continuing his journey southward, crossed the Jabbok and entered the land of Moab. The wild, lawless character of the natives makes a tour in that land dangerous, and Mr. Klein therefore took with him a native chief, named Zattam, who acted as guide and protector. The party met with no opposition from the tribes through which they passed, and on August 19 arrived at an encampment of the Beni Hamîdé, about three miles north of the river Arnon. The roving Arabs had spread their tents about ten minutes' walk from the ruins of Dhibân, the ancient Dibon of the Bible, and in a friendly way received Zattam and his friends.

Carpets and cushions were spread in the tents of the shiekh, and coffee was prepared with all the ceremonial of Bedouin etiquette. Before the

operation of preparing and drinking coffee had terminated, my friend Zattam, who was always most anxious to make my tour as pleasant as possible, had informed me that there was among the ruins of Dhibân, scarcely ten minutes' walk from our encampment, a most interesting stone, with an ancient inscription on it which no one had ever been able to decipher, which he would take me to see. As sunset was drawing near I was anxious to be off at once, but Zattam was not to be persuaded to get up from his soft couch, and leave off smoking his narghileh, while I was burning with a desire to see the inscription, which the shiekh of the Beni Hamîdé also described to me as one of the wonders of the region which no Frank had yet seen, and which he now offered to show me as a mark of honour to his friend Zattam, and to me, who was travelling under his protection. I of course took this for what it was in general meant to be, a Bedouin compliment calculated to bring out a nice bakshish. Still, I afterwards ascertained that his assertion as to no European before me having seen the stone was perfectly true: none of the distinguished travellers in those parts had ever seen or heard of it, or they would not have shunned trouble and expense to secure this treasure. I am sorry to find that I was also the last European who had the privilege of seeing this monument of Hebrew antiquity in its perfect state of preservation. When I came to the spot where this precious relic of antiquity was lying on the ground, I was delighted at the sight; and at the same time greatly vexed that I had not come earlier, in order to have an opportunity of copying at least a good part of the inscription, which I might then, under the protection of Zattam, have done without the least molestation. I, however, had time enough to examine the stone and its inscription at leisure, and to copy a few words from several lines at random, chiefly with a view, on my return to Jerusalem, to ascertain the language of the inscription, and prevail on some friends of science to obtain either a complete copy of the inscription, or better, the monument itself. The stone was lying among the ruins of Dhibân perfectly free and exposed to view, the inscription uppermost. I got four men to turn it round (it was exceedingly heavy) in order to ascertain whether there was any inscription on the other side, and found that it was perfectly smooth, and without any inscription or other marks. What time was left me before sunset, I now employed in examining, measuring, and making a correct sketch of the stone, besides endeavouring to collect a perfect alphabet from the inscription. What I have I now enclose, and vouch for the perfect correctness of what I give, having taken it down on the spot.

At that time a young Frenchman, named M. Clermont Ganneau, was official interpreter to the French consulate at Jerusalem. He was an enthusiast in oriental literature, and on hearing of the discovery of this ancient relic, eagerly sought to purchase it. With considerable difficulty he obtained a squeeze, which unfortunately was torn into seven tattered fragments. For nearly a year negotiations were carried on for the purchase of the stone, but the Arabs kept raising the price of it, until the sum ultimately demanded was quite exorbitant. At length an application was made to the Turkish Government, requesting that the Arabs should be compelled to deliver it up for a reasonable sum. On hearing that the Modir of Ramoth-Gilead, acting on the authority of the Government, was about to compel them to give up the stone, the Beni Hamîdé were filled with indignation, and lashed

themselves into a paroxysm of fury. Accordingly they assembled amid the ruins of Dhibân, kindled a bonfire around the precious relic, and heaved great stones upon it, so that this ancient Hebrew relic was smashed into a hundred fragments. Thus did the wild sons of the Desert bring about the lamentable destruction of the monument, and it appeared as if the triumphal pillar of the land of Moab was for ever lost to the world. Two large fragments, equal to about half the stone, and twelve small pieces were afterwards purchased by M. Ganneau, while eighteen fragments obtained by Captain, now Sir Charles, Warren, were generously sent to the scholarly Frenchman. By means of these, and a squeeze of the whole stone before its destruction, M. Clermont Ganneau was enabled to make a restoration of the inscription. He executed his work with great ability in a careful, conscientious manner; and the monument, skilfully fitted together, was ultimately deposited in the Louvre, Paris, where it may now be seen. The inscription consists of thirty-four lines written in the ancient Phœnician characters, and has proved to be an inscription of the highest interest. From it we learn that the monument was set up by Mesha, the warrior-king whose bloody campaign is recorded in the Second Book of Kings. It records his struggles and victories in his campaigns against Omri and Ahab, kings of Israel, for the independence of his country. The monument therefore carries us back almost to the time when David, the poet-king, wrote his psalms, and when Solomon erected on Moriah his magnificent temple. The inscription was probably carved about 900 B.C., and therefore leads our thoughts to the days of Omri and Ahab, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, Elijah and Elisha. In the domain of Hebrew antiquities there exists no monument of greater interest than this patriarchal stone of the land of Moab.

During the nineteen years that have intervened since its discovery, the inscription has been studied by the highest Semitic scholars of England, France, and Germany; and it may safely be said that the genuineness and authenticity of the monument have been confirmed and established beyond all reasonable doubt by the unanimous verdict of Oriental savants. The great importance of the inscription and the unexpected discovery of the monument have, as a matter of course, called forth some hostile criticism. It is desirable in the interests of truth to give expression to honest doubts, and thus permit valid objections to be carefully weighed. Doubts have been cast upon the high antiquity of the inscription, and anomalies, real or imaginary, have been pointed out in the inscription; but the genuineness of the monument has not

been seriously impugned, and it has firmly stood the test of criticism. Two hostile attacks may be noted.

In 1879, ten years after the discovery, Mr. S. Sharpe, well known as an ardent Egyptologist, published a small pamphlet under the title "An Inquiry into the Age of the Moabite Stone," in which he tried to prove that the text of the inscription might have been carved in the third century of our era by order of a Palmyrenian prefect of the land of Moab, named Maeonius. The inquiry displayed both learning and originality; but it was only regarded as a pretty theory of an enthusiast, and was never seriously discussed by either the public or the press. A somewhat severe attack, claiming greater attention, appeared in April, 1887, in the *Scottish Review*, under the title of "The Apocryphal Character of the Moabite Stone." This was written by the Rev. Albert Löwy, the secretary to the Anglo-Jewish Association, who contends that the Moabite stone is a skilfully executed fabrication made a few years ago, and being only a "stone of stumbling" ought to be consigned to the limbo of marvellous impositions. The very severity of the attack weakens its power; and the dogmatic tone of the article indicated to thoughtful men that Mr. Löwy was not a safe guide in the domain of literary criticism. His assertions were utterly opposed to the calm verdict of the most qualified savants; and seekers after truth are disposed to ask with M. Ganneau, "Has Mr. Löwy any good reason to bring forward? Has he discovered some unheeded fact which may be considered as a proof, or even the beginning of a proof? Not at all."

In 1876 the notorious Shapira imposed upon the German Government, and obtained a high price for some forged Moabite pottery. Again, in 1885, he endeavoured to impose upon the authorities of the British Museum, and offered for sale an ancient synagogue-roll, containing, in old Phœnician characters the book of Deuteronomy. This, also, turned out to be a fraudulent fabrication. These deceptions caused a cloud of suspicion to rest upon genuine antiquities, and a superficial scepticism confounded the false and the true. The tares had been mistaken for wheat, and by an easy transition the wheat is suspected of being tares. Suffering from the influence of some such hallucination of scepticism, Mr. Löwy declares the inscription of Mesha to be the work of a forger, who took possession of a dressed block of stone left in the land of Moab from the time of the Romans, and carved upon it an inscription after the style and phraseology of the inscription on the celebrated sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar. The main proof of the forgery is, in his own words: "Whilst the surface of the stone is pitted and indented in consequence of exposure to

varying influences, extending perhaps over thousands of years, the characters inscribed on the stone have in no instance suffered from similar influences, because the dressed surface is ancient, whereas the inscription is modern." This bold assertion turns out to be utterly erroneous; and M. Ganneau expresses the conviction of all qualified savants who have examined the monument when he writes: "The characters are contemporary with the dressed surface upon which they are engraved; if they are modern, it is also modern." This being the case, it follows that Mr. Löwy's fragile superstructure, built as it is upon a sinking foundation, falls to the ground. To discuss the groundless objections of the attack is beyond the scope of the present article; but it may be well to state that this has been done, and ably done, by M. Halévy, in the *Avril-Juin*, 1887, number of the *Revue des Etudes Juives*.

The attack has utterly failed, and even the scholars, such as Professors Kautzsch<sup>1</sup> and Oppert, whom he mentioned as sharing his suspicions, have somewhat indignantly rejected his theory and expressed their firm conviction in the genuine antiquity of the monument. Even had Mr. Löwy succeeded in establishing his objections, drawn, as he asserts, from internal and external evidence, there remains still an inner wall of defence within which Mesha's epigraph remains in safety, and although he makes no allusion to this stronghold, yet it is manifest that until it was demolished, the genuineness of the monument could not be overthrown.<sup>2</sup> This inner defence

<sup>1</sup> Professor E. Kautzsch, writing from Tübingen on July 4, 1887, says: "In the *Academy* of June 25, p. 454, Dr. A. Löwy quotes an old publication of mine, dating from the year 1876, in which I held the view that the genuineness of the Mesa stone was not yet absolutely established beyond all doubts. How one at that time, in the middle of the ardent disputes about the well-known Moabite forgeries, could have been induced to express such an opinion, everyone who retains a remembrance of these disputes will easily understand. Dr. Löwy, however, in quoting me, has overlooked the fact that I soon after expressly retracted my doubts when I had seen a fragment of the stone at Dr. Niemeyer's in Jerusalem. Besides that, I have repeatedly stated my present views about this question in the several editions of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar published by me (22nd-24th editions). Professor Socin, therefore, was quite right in pointing out our agreement on this question. To me, also, it appears perfectly unnecessary once more to enter, even with a single word, into a renewed discussion of the question of the authenticity of the stone."

<sup>2</sup> M. Halévy writes: "One notices that the arguments of M. Löwy are almost entirely of a linguistic order, which have their importance as additional proofs, but which vanish almost entirely in the presence of palæographical considerations, which surpass all others. Now the palæography has been entirely forgotten by M. Löwy. He has not even given himself the trouble to tell us from what Phœnician monument the forger could have borrowed the archaic characters in which the inscription

is the substantive evidence of palæography, which primarily is conversant with letters and the changes they undergo. As in architecture the date of a building can be determined by the character of the mouldings, inasmuch as there is a regular progression in the development of architectural details, so the date of an inscription in Phœnician characters can be approximately determined by the shape of the letters. The Tyrian Epoch of Phœnician writing dates from 1000 B.C. till 700 B.C., and the letters on monuments of this age have a certain distinctive form. The epigraphs on the "Baal Lebanon Bowls," Moabite Stone, and the Bronze Lions of Nineveh, belong to this early era. The Transitional Period extends from 700 B.C. till 600 B.C., and during this period many of the letters changed considerably their form. To this type and date belong the Siloam inscription.

The Sidonian Epoch dates from 600 B.C. until the Christian Era; and to this age belong the inscription on the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar, as well as that on the recently discovered tomb of King Tabnit (CHURCHMAN, December, 1887). It was impossible that the letters on the tomb of Eshmunazar could have served as a model for Mesha's inscription; for palæography, apart from the subject matter, indicates that the former dates from about 400 B.C., while the latter dates from about 900 B.C. This chronology is confirmed by Phœnician inscriptions discovered a few years ago. The Siloam inscription discovered in 1880, dating from the seventh century before Christ, shows that the Moabite Stone belongs to an earlier period; while the Baal Lebanon bowls discovered in 1872 indicate that Mesha's inscription cannot date as far back as a thousand years before Christ.

The testimony of the leading Semitic scholars during the last few months, as we have said, turns in one direction. M. Renan, Professor J. Euling, M. Halévy, Professors Socin and Kautzsch, M. Oppert, and M. Clermont Ganneau, are all in agreement. Such a consensus of opinion among the most qualified savants places the genuineness and high antiquity of the Moabite Stone beyond all reasonable doubt; and shows, moreover, the groundless assertions of recent hostile criticism. Mesha's monument, cleared of the doubts that surrounded it, now rises from the mists of antiquity, and, hoary with the age of about thirty centuries, like a venerable prophet of ancient days, brightens our hopes and strengthens our faith.

JAMES KING.

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has been engraved, doubtless with the object of extolling the value of his statement of the case."