

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

and constancy of our daily and living communion with Him. We shall then understand and prize the doctrinal statements of our faith, as the guides to its living truths and realities, and as a guarantee for them; but we shall live in the life and light of the great realities themselves. If we fall short of the gracious and glorious picture of Christian life given by the Apostle, is it not because we fail to live, as he did, in this living communion with the Saviour? His gracious influences are bestowed, now as ever, upon those who live with Him, love Him, trust Him, and pray to Him. Let Him be to us the most living and real companion of our lives; and then shall we understand better what it is to reckon ourselves "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

HENRY WACE.

*ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN INSCRIPTIONS IN
THEIR BEARING ON THE OLD TESTAMENT
SCRIPTURES.*

XVI. SENNACHERIB AND HEZEKIAH.

THE thrice-told history of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah (2 Kings xviii., xix.; 2 Chron. xxxii.; Isa. xxxvii., xxxviii.) has made his name more familiar to English readers of the Bible than that of any other Assyrian king. We have here a record which brings before us the character of the man as well as the events which brought him into connexion with the history of Israel, and have accordingly more ample materials for a comparison of what is thus told of him with what he records of himself in his own monumental inscriptions. It will be seen that the Jewish and the Assyrian chronicles look at the same events from a very different

standpoint. It will be found, I believe, that light will be thrown upon both by bringing them together.

The position of Hezekiah when he ascended the throne, in relation to Assyria, was doubtless that which he had inherited from Ahaz, as a tributary sovereign. He was under the guidance of Isaiah, and the prophet's teaching had all along discouraged any rash attempt at a premature assertion of independence by an alliance with Egypt, such as that which brought about the downfall of Hoshea, and led the king to consecrate the earlier years of his reign to the work of internal reformation. Sargon, who was on the throne of Assyria at the time of Hezekiah's accession, had probably established his reputation as an invincible conqueror whom it was hopeless to resist. He spent the later years of his life in founding a new capital under the name of Dur-Sharyukin (=the castle of Sargon), about fifteen miles from Nineveh, on the site now known as Khor-sabad, and in building the palace whose ruins have furnished such rich materials for our knowledge of his reign. In B.C. 706 the city, the palace, and the temple were solemnly consecrated to Nisroch, Nebo, and the other gods of Assyria. In B.C. 704 he was assassinated, and succeeded by his son Sennacherib. The accession of the new king brought about an immediate change in the relations of the two kingdoms. Within three years Sennacherib appears as attacking the fenced cities of Judah (2 Kings xviii. 13, 14) and reducing Hezekiah to an abject humiliation ("I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me I will bear") and to the payment of tribute. What had brought about the change?¹

¹ A comparison of the Assyrian inscriptions with the Jewish records brings to light some chronological difficulties which have been elaborately discussed by Mr. Sayce in the *Theological Review* for January 1873, and by Mr. Cheyne in his *Commentary on Isaiah* (vol. i. pp. 192-200). According to the inscriptions Sargon was not succeeded by Sennacherib till B.C. 705; while the records, according to the traditional chronology, place Sennacherib's first invasion in

The answers to that question, as far as the records guide us, point to three probable causes. (1) The character of the new king of Assyria was essentially that of a propagandist conqueror bent on asserting the supremacy of the gods he worshipped over those of all other nations. So he describes himself in what is known as the *Cylinder Inscription* in the British Museum (*R. P.*, i. 25).

“Sennacherib, the great king, the powerful king, the king of Assyria, the king unrivalled, the pious monarch, the worshipper of the great gods . . . the first of all kings, the great punisher of unbelievers, who are breakers of the holy festivals.”

One whose policy was guided by this purpose must have heard of Hezekiah's restoration of the worship of the Temple, of the new prominence given to the name of Jehovah as the Holy One of Israel, with feelings of profound irritation. It is significant that the first result of his victory was to compel the king of Judah to despoil the Temple. “At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah the king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria”¹ (2 Kings xviii. 16). That spoliation would in its turn rankle in the minds of the men of Judah. Princes and priests, and not a few of the prophets, would be burning with a fiery zeal to avenge the insult. The relations

b.c. 713, and his second in b.c. 710. It has been suggested accordingly that we should read “*Sargon*” for “Sennacherib” in 2 Kings xviii. 13, and the “*twenty-seventh*” year of king Hezekiah in Isaiah xxxvi. 1, thus placing the events which the prophet relates in b.c. 702. The illness of Hezekiah in Isaiah xxxviii. is fixed, by the promise of fifteen years of life, to b.c. 713, and the king of Assyria in verse 6 is therefore according to this hypothesis Sargon and not Sennacherib. The mission of Merodach-Baladan is left without any chronological *data*, but the absence of any reference to the alliance with Babylon in the Rabshakeh's speech makes it probable that it was some time before that envoy's mission. Another possible solution is that Sennacherib commanded his father's armies in the first invasion.

¹ This, according to the view given in the preceding note, must be placed in the reign of Sargon, though Sennacherib may have been the actual invader.

of the vassal and suzerain were rapidly becoming ripe for a religious war.

(2) The annals of Sennacherib indicate another *casus belli* that probably furnished the occasion of attack, and which, as will be seen, connected itself closely with the policy of propagandism of which I have just spoken. The war began, as is the wont of wars, from the dissensions of a comparatively unimportant city. I copy from the "Prism" inscription (*R. P.*, i. 36).

"The chief priests, noblemen, and people of Ekron,
Who Padiah their king, *holding the faith and worship*
Of Assyria, had placed in chains of iron and unto Hezekiah
King of Judah had delivered him, and *had acted towards the deity*
with hostility,

These men were now terrified in their hearts. The king of Egypt
And the soldiers, archers, chariots, and horses of Ethiopia,
Forces innumerable, gathered together, and came to their assist-
ance."

This then was the starting-point of the war. The king of Ekron¹ had been placed there to establish the worship of the Assyrian gods over that of Dagon or other Philistine deities. The people resisted this, rose in revolt, and made their king a prisoner. Hezekiah made common cause with them and consented to act as gaoler, intending perhaps to use his prisoner as a hostage or to demand a ransom. The old project of an Egyptian alliance was revived, and we probably see in Isaiah's denunciations against those who "go down to Egypt" for help (*Isa.* xxx. 2, xxxi. 1) a protest against the revival.

The inscription continues the narrative. Sennacherib led his armies to the country of the Philistines, subdued the king of Ascalon, and took Beth-Dagon, the temple of the rival deity giving its name to the city. A great battle

¹ Lenormant, by the way, reads the Assyrian word as Amgarrum, and identifies it with the Migron of *Isa.* x. 28. (*Anc. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 399.)

was fought at Altaku (the Eltekon of Josh. xv. 59) in which the forces of the allies, including "the archers, chariots, and horses of the king of Ethiopia, innumerable in multitude," were routed.¹ Ekron was taken and punished with unusual severity. Priests and nobles were put to death, and their bodies exposed on stakes round the city (*R. P.*, i. 38). Padiah was rescued from his prison in Jerusalem and reinstated in his kingdom. It remained to punish the more conspicuous rebel who had detained him as a prisoner, and Sennacherib records his victory over him at great length and in a tone of exulting pride.

"And Hezekiah
king of Judah, who had not bowed down at my feet,
forty-six of his strong cities, his castles, and the smaller towns in
their neighbourhood beyond number with warlike engines. . . .
I attacked and captured; 200,150 people, small and great, male
and female; horses, mares, camels, oxen,
and sheep beyond number, from the midst of them I carried off
and distributed them as a spoil. He himself like a bird in a cage,
inside Jerusalem,
his royal city I shut him up; siege towers against him
I constructed. The exit of the great gate of his city to divide it,²
he had given commands. His cities which I plundered from his
kingdom
I cut off, and to Mitinti king of Ashdod,
Padiah king of Ekron, and Izmi-Bel,
king of Gaza, I gave them. I diminished his kingdom.
Beyond the former scale of their yearly gifts
their tribute and their gifts to my majesty I augmented,
and imposed them upon them. He himself Hezekiah,
the fearful splendour of my majesty had overwhelmed him;
the workmen, soldiers and builders,

¹ It may fairly be conjectured, pending further discoveries, that this is the victory commemorated in the *Nahr-el-Kelb* inscriptions near *Beyrout*. See an interesting paper by W. St. Chad Boscawen, in the *Transactions of the Soc. of Bibl. Archaeology*, vol. vii. part. ii. 1881, p. 344.

² The words probably mean that Hezekiah had ordered the drawbridge before the gate to be raised so as to cut off communication.

whom for the fortification of Jerusalem his royal city he had collected within it, now carried tribute, and with thirty talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, woven cloth, scarlet, embroidered, precious stones of large size, couches of ivory, moveable thrones of ivory, skins of buffaloes, teeth of buffaloes, *dars* wood, *ky* wood, a great treasure of every kind, and his daughters,¹ and the male and female inmates of his palace male slaves and female slaves, unto Nineveh my royal city after me he sent, and to pay tribute and do homage he sent his envoy."

It was natural that the Jewish historians should pass over so great a humiliation as rapidly as they could, and hasten on to narrate at greater length the events which ultimately turned the scale once more in favour of Judah. It must be acknowledged however that they do not seek to hide its extent. The brief record of 2 Kings xviii. 14-16, quoted above, speaks volumes as to the result of Sennacherib's first invasion.

(3) Yet another event closely connected with Jewish history may have helped to bring about Sennacherib's invasion of Judah. After his recovery from his sickness, fifteen years before his death, (and therefore probably between B.C. 712-704,) Hezekiah, we read in Isaiah xxxix., received an embassy from Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon. It was an embassy of diplomatic congratulation which, in the nature of things, veiled a proposal of alliance against their common foe, the king of Assyria.

¹ The mention of daughters, and not of sons, presents an interesting coincidence with the Jewish records. Manasseh was only twelve years of age when he succeeded Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1). He was born therefore three years after his father's illness (Isa. xxxviii. 5). It is a natural inference from this that there was no heir apparent to the throne at the time when the shadows of impending death fell, for a time, upon the king's soul. The fact throws light both on Hezekiah's craving for life, and on the special thought of his thanksgiving, "The father to the children (literally 'to the sons') shall make known thy truth."

The envoys arrived apparently before the spoliation of 2 Kings xviii. 14-16, for Hezekiah shewed them, in the pride of his heart, the "house of his precious things" and all the resources of his kingdom. He was obviously disposed to trust in the arm of flesh, and to welcome the alliance of Babylon as his father had welcomed that of Assyria, as his counsellors once and again during his reign welcomed that of the Ethiopian dynasty of Egypt (Isaiah xviii., xix., xxx., xxxi.). Isaiah, consistent throughout in his policy and his faith, protested against the later scheme as he had protested against the earlier. He predicts the coming of a time when the treasures of Hezekiah should be carried to Babylon, when his children also should be taken away and be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. The inscription of Sennacherib already quoted shews that the prediction received a prompt though partial fulfilment. The daughters of Hezekiah were carried off to the harem of Sennacherib, or possibly, as before, of Sargon, who by his conquest of Merodach-Baladan added "Viceroy of the gods of Babylon, king of the Sumir and of the Akkad," to his titles. (*R. P.*, ix. 3.) Here also prophecy had "springing and germinant accomplishments." It was probably in connexion with this counsel and with the vision of the future thus opened to him that he delivered the prophecies against Babylon in his 13th and 14th Chapters.

The inscriptions of Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib throw, it will be seen, a new light on these transactions. No province had given so much trouble to this dynasty of Assyrian kings as that which had Babylon as its centre. Shalmaneser II., the king whose victory over Jehu is recorded in the Black Obelisk inscription, records his victories over a Merodach-suma-iddin, king of Gan-Dunias (= Chaldæa), whom he drove to take refuge in the mountains, and whose brother he put to death. He offered sacrifices after his conquest in Babylon, Borsippa and Cuthah. (*R. P.*, v. 33.)

Tiglath Pileser II., who claims for himself the double title of "king of Assyria and high-priest of Babylon, king of Sumir and Akkad," records the tribute which he received from a Merodach-Baladan, son of Yakin, king of the sea coast" (*i.e.*, of the coast of the Persian Gulf), how he conquered Babylon, Borsippa and Ur, and swept over Chaldæa with his armies" (Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries*, pp. 256-258), how Merodach-Baladan was "overwhelmed by a terrible fear of Assur" (*Ibid.*, p. 260) and "came and kissed his feet, and brought gold-dust and vessels of gold and precious stones as tribute."

The submission was, however, only temporary, and Sargon, in the annals of his reign recorded in the great Khorsabad inscription (*R. P.*, ix. 13), describes Merodach-Baladan as "the fallacious, the persistent in enmity," who "did not respect the memory of the gods, but trusted in the sea, and in the retreat of the marshes." He refused payment of tribute and allied himself with Khumbanigas king of Elam, and roused the nomadic tribes of the desert against the king of Assyria. For twelve years "against the will of the gods of Babylon . . . he had excited the country of the Sumir and Akkad (*i.e.* the province of Babylon) and had sent ambassadors to them." At last Sargon "decreed an expedition against him and the Chaldæans," and Merodach-Baladan fled from his approach "in the night-time like an owl" and fortified himself and his gods in the city of Dur-Yakin, "constructing a ditch round it 200 spans wide, and one and a half fathoms deep." He "placed the insignia of his royalty as in an island on the banks of the river," but the armies of Sargon prevailed, and the Babylonian rebel was again compelled to flee, leaving behind him his golden throne and sceptre, his silver chariot, and other precious things. Sargon took and destroyed the city of Dur-Yakin, dug up its foundations, and made it "like a thunder-stricken ruin," and "the

people of Sippara, Nipur, Babylon and Borsippa" were allowed to remain in their cities under the government of Assyria. Sargon after subduing Syria returned in triumph "to the sanctuaries of Bel" and transported vast treasures of spoil to the treasure chamber of the palace. (*R. P.*, ix. pp. 14-16.)

It was apparently after this defeat, possibly as late as after the death of Sargon (B.C. 704), that Merodach-Baladan sent his ambassadors to Hezekiah in the hope that taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the accession of a new king, he might once more assert his independence. The attempt however failed, and Sennacherib in the Bavian inscription (*R. P.*, ix. 26) relates how he had defeated the kings of Elam and Babylon, and taken the son of the latter prisoner. He attacked Babylon and came on it "like the coming of storms and like a rushing wind," saved the life of the king and took him and his family into Assyria as captives. In another inscription (Smith's *Assyrian Discoveries*, pp. 296-309) the king gives a slightly different account of his victories. He accomplished the overthrow of Merodach-Baladan, "with the army of Elam his helpers." Merodach fled, and Sennacherib entered into his palace and opened his treasure-house. It was full of

"gold, silver,
instruments of gold, silver, precious stones, everything,
furniture, and goods without number, abundant,
. . . his consort, the eunuchs of his palace,
the great men, those who stand in the presence, male musicians,
female musicians,
the whole of his people, all there were living in his palace, I brought
out, and as spoil I counted."

Then, in the same inscription, comes the narrative of Sennacherib's victory over Hezekiah already quoted, and then in close sequence the account of the final overthrow of the rebel king.

"The front of my feet I turned, and to Bit-Yakin I took the road.
 He, Merodach-Baladan, of whom in the course
 of my former expedition his overthrow I had accomplished, and
 dispersed his forces ;
 the march of my powerful soldiers
 and the shock of my fierce attack he avoided and
 the gods ruling in his country in their shrines he gathered, and in
 ships he caused to sail, and
 to Nagiti-raqqi, which is in the midst of the sea, like a bird, he
 fled.
 His brothers, the seed of the house of his father,
 whom he had left beside the sea, and the rest of the people of
 his country
 from Bit-Yakin in the lakes and swamps
 I brought out and as spoil I counted. I returned and his cities
 I pulled down,
 destroyed and reduced to ruins. Upon his ally
 the King of Elam terror I struck.
 On my return, Assur-nadin-sum,
 my eldest son, the child of my knees, (*i.e.* the favourite)
 on the throne of his dominion I seated, and the extent of Sumir
 and Akkad
 I entrusted to him."

Another account, but not adding anything of importance,
 is found in the inscription known as that of *Bellino's*
Cylinder, *R. P.*, i. 25.

The prince thus named, who was thus appointed as a
 viceroy over Babylon, is identified with the Esarhaddon
 whose history we shall afterwards have to trace.

It was not to be expected that the Assyrian inscriptions
 should record the destruction of Sennacherib's army and the
 consequent failure of the expedition against Jerusalem. On
 some points of that history, however, light is thrown in the
 inscriptions.

(1) The title of the Rabshakeh (literally, in its Hebrew
 form, the chief of the cupbearers, but probably, as an As-
 syrian title=chief of the officers) appears in the inscription

of Tiglath Pileser II. (Smith's *Assyr. Discov.*, p. 264) as that of an officer who acted also as a general and was sent as an ambassador to the king of Tyre. With him in 2 Kings xviii. 17 are joined the Tartan, the title of the officer whom we have already met with as acting under Sargon (see Isa. xx. 1), and the Rabsaris, or chief marshal.

(2) The trust in the "broken" (or "cracked") "reed" of Egypt with which the Rabshakeh taunts the representatives of Hezekiah finds an illustration partly in the inscriptions already referred to in connexion with the So, or Sebek, or Sabaco, with whom Hoshea formed an alliance, partly in that of Sennacherib quoted above, partly in the inscriptions of Assur-bani-pal which shew that Tirhakah the king of Ethiopia, who had probably commanded the forces of the Pharaoh his father, continued even after the death of Sennacherib to be a formidable enemy of Assyria.

Thus we have, in the annals of this king (Budge's *Esarhaddon*, pp. 109-123; *R. P.*, i. 59):

"In my first expedition to Makan and Meroe (*Milakha*, *R. P.*) then I went. Tirhakah king of Egypt and Ethiopia, whose overthrow Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, the father, my begetter, had accomplished and had taken possession of his country; then he, Tirhakah, the might of the god Assur, the goddess Istar, and the great gods, my lords despised, and trusted to his own might . . . and to capture Egypt he came against them; he entered and sat in Memphis the city which the father my begetter had taken, and to the boundaries of Assyria had added."

Tirhakah appears (Budge's *Esarhaddon*, p. 117) to have allied himself at a later period with Bahlu, king of Tyre, who trusted to this alliance as Hezekiah's counsellors had done, or were thought by Rabshakeh to have done, in the reign of Sennacherib.

(3) The siege of Lachish, near the borders of Egypt, occupies a prominent position in the Rabshakeh episode of Jewish history. Hezekiah's messengers, bearing his

promise of submission, find the Assyrian king there (2 Kings xviii. 13). Before Rabshakeh came on his second embassy he had heard that his master had departed from Lachish (2 Kings xix. 8). The whole series of facts is well illustrated by a bas-relief from Sennacherib's palace, now in the British Museum, and engraved as a frontispiece to Mr. George Smith's *Sennacherib*. The king is seated on his throne, receiving the homage of captives, and over his head is the inscription, "Sennacherib, king of the nations, king of Assyria, sate on his lofty throne." "*The spoil of Lachish before him came.*" It is significant that the captives are for the most part represented as having woolly hair, as though they had belonged to the Ethiopian army of Tirhakah.

(4) The language in which the Rabshakeh speaks of his master "the great king, the king of Assyria," (Isa. xxxvi. 4, 13) exactly corresponds with the style in which that king uniformly describes himself. Thus we have (Smith's *Assyr. Discov.*, p. 296) :

"Sennacherib, the great king,
the powerful king, the king of Assyria,
king of the four regions,
the appointed ruler,
worshipper of the great gods,
guardian of right, lover of justice,
maker of peace,
going the right way,
preserver of good, the powerful prince,
the warlike hero, leader among kings,
giant devouring the enemy,
breaker of bonds."

The style is much the same in all the inscriptions, as in *R. P.*, i. 25, ix. 23.

(5) The Rabshakeh taunts Hezekiah's ministers with their weakness, especially in their cavalry, and challenges them as to a wager. Sennacherib will give them two thousand

horses if they can find riders for them (Isa. xxxvi. 8). The taunt came with all the more pointed sharpness from the fact that in Sennacherib's first invasion, as in the inscription already quoted, he had carried off "horses and mares beyond number" and over two millions of the population of Judah. It was indeed, even then, only a "remnant" that was left, while the cavalry of the Assyrian king was perpetually augmented by the men and beasts which he carried off from other countries, as *e.g.* from the Aramæan confederates, "208,000 people, male and female, 72,000 horses and mares, 11,173 asses, 5,230 camels, 80,100 oxen" (*R. P.*, i. 26). To one whose armies had been thus largely increased, the offer of two thousand horses was but as a bagatelle.

(6) The taunting speech continues, and the Rabshakeh declares that his master is sent by Jehovah to punish Hezekiah for overthrowing the high places which had been consecrated to his worship. Mr. Cheyne (in his Note on Isa. xxxvi. 10) conjectures that this, if it was not a mere sarcasm, refers to some dream or prophetic message, such as the Assyrian kings often claimed as the warrant for their invasions. Thus, *e.g.*, in the annals of Assur-bani-pal (*R. P.*, ix. 52) the king relates that a seer "slept and dreamt a dream :

Istar dwelling in Arbela
 entered, and right and left she was surrounded with glory,
 holding a bow in her hand,
 projecting a powerful arrow, on making war
 her countenance was set. She, like a mother bearing, was in
 pain with thee.
 She brought thee forth. Istar exalted of the gods, appointet
 thee a decree
 thus: Carry off to make spoil
 the place before thee set, I will come to."

and so on, through a long series of promises of victory. Another reference to a dream oracle of the same kind is

found in the annals of the same king in *R. P.*, i. 74. In Sennacherib's own inscriptions (*R. P.*, i. 27, 39, 48; Smith's *Assyr. Discov.*, p. 29), Assur appears as the giver of confidence and courage. Had the wandering imagination of the Assyrian king, on hearing of the destruction of the high places of Judah, seen, as in vision, the outraged deity of Israel appearing as a suppliant in the council of the great Assyrian deities and asking for redress? Did he really assume for the moment the character of the champion—the "Jareb" king of Hos. v. 13; x. 6—of the Jehovah, or Jahveh, of whom he had heard as worshipped both in Samaria and Judah?

(7) The envoy of Sennacherib appears in the verses that follow in a new character. As in the royal or imperial proclamations of more recent times, as, *e.g.*, in those of the German invasion of France, and the English invasion of Afghanistan, he declares that his master, though constrained to make war against the rebellious ruler of Judah, is really the friend and benefactor of the people. The counsels of the princes will lead them only to the most loathsome extremities of famine. The king of Assyria offers them peace and safety for a time in their own land, and then a new home, in which also they might "drink every man the waters of his cistern," "a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards"; the exile which they dreaded would be a positive change for the better (Isa. xxxvi. 12-17).

It is, I think, an interesting coincidence, hitherto, as far as I know, unnoticed, that the inscriptions of Sennacherib dwell largely on the improvements which he had effected in the water supply and cultivation of his territory. Of all the achievements of his reign, these were what he was most disposed to glory in. This was what he had been doing for his subjects; while Hezekiah's measures of defence, in stopping the fountains and brooks that were outside the city (2 Chron. xxxii. 4), could not fail to aggravate the suffer-

ings of his own people within the walls, and to bring about the results with which the Rabshakeh threatened them.

Thus Sennacherib speaks (*R. P.*, i. 29) of his predecessors :

“As to caring for the health of the city by bringing streams of water into it, and the finding of new springs, none turned his thoughts to it, nor brought his heart to it.

Then I, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, by command of the gods, resolved in my mind to complete this work, and I brought my heart to it.”

Or, again, detailing his improvements in Nineveh (*R. P.*, i. 31):

“In the midst I placed my royal residence, the palace of Zakdinu-isha (*i.e.*, HAS NO EQUAL, the *Nonpareil* or *Nonsuch* of Assyria). Around it I planted the finest of trees, equal to those of the land of Khamanas,¹ which all the knowing prefer to those of the land of Chaldæa.

By my care I caused the uprising of springs in more than forty places in the plain; I divided them into irrigating canals for the people of Nineveh, and gave them to be their own property.

To obtain water to turn the corn-mills, I brought it in pipes from Kishri to Nineveh, and I skilfully constructed water-wheels.

I brought down the perennial waters of the river Kutzuru (the modern *Khausser*) from the distance of half a *kasbu* (= three and a half miles) into those reservoirs, and I covered them well.” (*Comp. R. P.*, ix. 23.)

A land so fertilised and plentiful might well be represented in the glowing terms which the Rabshakeh used in his address to “the people that sat on the wall,” when he threatened them with the horrors which have passed, if one may so speak, into a proverbial phrase which men shrink from uttering. There was indeed another side to the picture, which appears in Sennacherib’s inscriptions,

¹ The cedars and cypresses of Khamana (Mount Amanus) mentioned by Sargon in the Khorsabad inscription (*R. P.*, ix. 16).

but which was naturally absent from the speech of his ambassador (*R. P.*, i. 29), and which was perhaps reserved for those who resisted him.

“Men of Chaldaea, Aram, Manna, Kul, and Cilicia, who had not bowed down to my yoke, I brought away as captives, and I compelled them to make bricks.

In baskets made of reeds which I cut in the land of Chaldaea, I made the foreign workmen bring their appointed tale of bricks, in order to complete this work (*i.e.*, the building of his palace).”

(8) The last argument of the Rabshakeh's speech is an induction from the previous conquests of the Assyrian kings. “Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?” In the reproduction of this triumphant enumeration in *Isa.* xxxvii. 12, other nations are added to the list: “Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?” and “Hena and Ivah” are added to Hamath, Arpad and Sepharvaim.

The answer to the boastful question would have been, as Mr. Cheyne remarks, that the images of these gods were now to be seen as trophies in the sanctuaries of Assur and Istar in the Assyrian temples. This was, throughout their history, the common practice of the great monarchs of the East. So Samas-Rimmon boasts (*R. P.*, i. 14) that his general Mulis-Assur had brought out from the cities he had conquered “their *gods*, their sons and their daughters” (comp. also p. 20). So Sennacherib himself records (*R. P.*, ix. 27), as following on his defeat of Merodach-Baladan at Babylon:

“The gods dwelling within it, the hands of my men captured them and broke (them), and their (furniture) and their valuables they brought out, Rimmon and Sala, the gods of . . .

Of the temples; which Marduk-nadin-akki, king of Akkad, in the time of Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, had brought out and to Babylon had taken
for 418 years; from Babylon I caused to come forth to the temples, to their places I restored them."

Of the cities which the Rabshakeh enumerates, Hamath and Arpad were in the Orontes valley, Gozan on the *Khabour*, and Haran on the *Bilitz*, another affluent of the Euphrates. Sepharvaim is identified with the Sippara of the inscriptions, a flourishing town on the Euphrates, connected with the worship of the sun; Hena was probably near it; Ivah (probably the Ahava of Ezra viii. 15) between Sepharvaim and Henah; Telassar (=Tel Assur=hill, or high place, of Assur) probably in the same region of the Mesopotamian valley. It follows from these geographical facts that where we do not find the names of the cities thus mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, they may yet have been included in the more general terms in which Sennacherib describes his victories over the Aramæans and Chaldæans (*R. P.*, i. 26). The Khorsabad inscription of Sargon, however, records briefly, his conquest of Sippara (=Sepharvaim) after his defeat of Merodach-Baladan, at Dur-Yakin (*R. P.*, ix. 15), and at some length that of Hamath and Arpad (*R. P.*, ix. 6). It gives, in its reference to Samaria, a special reason for the emphasis with which the Rabshakeh dwells on it.

"Jaubid of Hamath, a smith, was not the legitimate master of the throne; he was an infidel and an impious man, and he had coveted the royalty of *Hamath*. He incited the towns of *Arpad*, *Simyra*, *Damascus*, and *Samaria* to rise against me, took his precautions with each of them, and prepared for battle. I counted all the troops of the god Assur: in the town of Karkar which had declared itself for the rebel I besieged him and his warriors; I occupied Karkar and reduced it to ashes. I took him, himself, and had him flayed, and I killed the chief of the rioters in each town, and reduced them to a heap of ruins. I recruited my force

with 200 chariots and 600 horsemen from among the inhabitants of the country of Hamath, and added them to my empire."

In the names of the new colonists settled by the king of Assyria in Samaria "men from Babylon and from Cuthah, and from Ava (=Ivah), and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim" (2 Kings xvii. 24), we have of course direct and independent evidence of the facts to which the Rabshakeh refers. In the mention of the more remote regions the Rabshakeh may possibly have acted on the principle of the *omne ignotum pro magnifico*.

(9) In the answer which comes from the lips of Isaiah to Hezekiah's prayer we have either an actual or an ideal report of another message sent by Sennacherib to the king of Judah, and here also it is in exact accordance with the language of the inscriptions. "By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots have I come up to the height of the mountains and to the sides of Lebanon, and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir-trees thereof, and I will enter into the heights of his border and the forest of his Carmel. I have digged and drunk strange waters; and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of the besieged places" (Isa. xxxvii. 24, 25).

Mr. Cheyne quotes two striking passages from the inscriptions of Shalmaneser and Assur-bani-pal in which they record how they had penetrated into mountain heights that were before thought inaccessible. "Trackless paths and difficult mountains," says the former (*R. P.*, iii. 85), "which, like the point of an iron sword, stood, pointed to the sky, on wheels of bronze and iron I penetrated." "Rugged paths, difficult mountains," says the latter (*R. P.*, iii. 43), "which for the passage of chariots were not suited I passed." It is interesting, however, to note that Sennacherib himself indulges in a like boast. Thus (*R. P.*, i. 77) :

“Through the thick forests and in the hilly districts I rode on horseback, for I had left my two-horse chariot in the plains below. But in dangerous places I alighted on my feet, and clambered like a mountain goat.”

So, as to the destruction of forests, we have in the same inscription (*R. P.* i. 28) :

“I cut down their woods; over their cornfields I sowed thistles. In every direction I left the land of Illipi a desert.”

The drinking “strange waters” finds a striking parallel in the Bavian inscription (*R. P.*, ix. 23) :

“I remembered the woody places surrounding it (Nineveh) which were without water. Murmurings ascended on high from the assemblies of the princes and its people. Drinking water they knew not, and to the rains from the vaults of heaven their eyes were directed.

I had drunk, and from the midst of the cities of Maditi, Kimbagabna, [a list of seventeen names follows] waters which were against Khadabiti, sixteen rivers I excavated, to the midst of the river Khusur I fixed their course. From the coast of the city Kisiri to (the midst of) Nineveh I excavated: their waters

I let flow within it: ‘the opening of Sennacherib’ I proclaimed its name. (I brought?) the strength of those waters from the midst of the country of Taz,

a difficult mountain of the frontier of Akkad, within my country. . . . The waters which were not channelled to the arid lands I abandoned them. . . . The gate of the river . . . and an enclosure for himself (Bel). It was opened, and I let flow in the waters of the great canal.”

Or again (*R. P.*, i. 4) :

“In the mountain valleys, and through flooded lands I travelled in my chariot; but in places which to my chariots were dangerous I alighted on my feet; and like a mountain goat among the lofty cliffs

I clambered up them. Where my knees
took rest, upon a mountain rock I sat down,
and water, cold even to freezing, to assuage my thirst I drank."

Sargon's inscription relates like achievements (*R. P.*, ix. 4) in which Sennacherib had probably taken part during his father's life-time:

"From the day of my accession there existed no princes who were my masters. I have not, in combats or battles, seen my victor. . . . I have opened innumerable deep and very extensive forests, and levelled their inequalities. I have traversed winding and thick valleys, which were impenetrable like a needle, and I passed in digging tanks dug on my way."

The Assyrian inscriptions contain, as has been already said, no record of the destruction of Sennacherib's army. Such documents confine themselves for the most part to victories, and do not descend to failures. That there was such a destruction, however, which left its impress on the minds of men for many generations is seen in the form which the tradition assumed in the history of Herodotus (ii. 141). He relates, on the authority of the Egyptian priests from whom he derived his information, that Sennacherib led his armies against Sethos, a priest of Hephæstos who succeeded Sabacos (the "Shebek" or "Shabatak" of the inscriptions, the "So" of 2 Kings xvii. 4), that the priest, abandoned by the caste of warriors whom he had offended, went into the temple of his god and asked with prayers and tears for help, and that the god appeared to him in a dream and bade him be of good cheer. Trusting to this vision he led an army of shopkeepers and artisans against the Assyrian army then encamped at Pelusium, and in the night myriads of field-mice swarmed into the enemy's camp, and devoured their quivers, their arrows, and the straps of their shields, so that they were left without arms and were easily defeated. In commemoration

of this event, Herodotus adds, a statue of Sethos was placed in the temple of Hephæstos, bearing a field-mouse on its hand, and with an inscription: "LET HIM WHO LOOKS ON ME LEARN TO FEAR THE GODS."

The story in this form has a singular parallel in a legend, given by Strabo (xiii. 117, quoted in Blakesley's Herodotus) that the Teucrians who settled at Chryse were attacked, with a like result, by swarms of mice who were sent against them by Apollo Smintheus, whose name, derived from *σμίθως* (=a mouse) was probably given to him in his character as sending or averting plagues of this character. The mouse probably became in this way an emblem of pestilence caused by the sun's heat;—so Apollo, also in the special character of Smintheus, sends a plague on the armies of the Greeks in Homer (*Il.*, i. 43–52),—and thus became also the starting-point of the more prosaic form of the legend related by Herodotus.

The Assyrian inscriptions are, in like manner, silent as to the murder of Sennacherib by his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer; but one document, which has well been described as his "last will and testament," supplies a probable motive for the assassination. The inscription, given in Budge's *Esarhaddon*, p. 2, and *R. P.*, i. 136, runs thus:

"I, Sennacherib, king of multitudes, king of Assyria, have given chains of gold, stores of ivory, a *cup* of gold, arms and chains besides, all the riches of which there are heaps, crystal and another precious stone, and bird's stone; one and a half manehs, two and a half cibi, according to their weight, to Esarhaddon (= Assur gave a brother), who was afterwards named Assur-ebil-mucin-pal, according to my wish; the treasure of the temple of Amuk and (Nebo)-irith-esha, the harpists of Nebo."

It is obvious that this legacy of the *regalia* of the kingdom, to a son who was probably not the eldest,¹ and the

¹ In the inscription given above, from *R. P.*, i. 28, Esarhaddon is, it is true, described as the "eldest son"; but the peculiar epithet that follows, "child of

significant change of name,¹ was calculated to rouse the jealousy of his elder brothers, and that their murder of their father was therefore part of an attempt to assert their rights and seize the kingdom for themselves. That Esarhaddon had to maintain his throne against their attacks will be seen in the inscriptions of that king given in the next paper of this series.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.

ACTS iv. 7-20.

THAT the two Apostles who had been summoned to appear before the rulers of Jerusalem exhibited, in presence of their judges, a brave and manly bearing, and returned an answer worthy of their position in the Church, is manifest at a glance. It was equally apparent to the authorities at whose bar the two brethren stood on their defence. They saw the boldness of Peter and John, and the phenomenon surprised them very much; such self-possession and resoluteness in persons of their humble position, unlearned laics, before the awe-inspiring power of the world, being quite out of the common course. The startling fact was provocative of reflection. How, the Sanhedrists asked themselves, "how is it that these two men, whom we have known as illiterate persons of vulgar station, are able to carry themselves thus in presence of their superiors?" And the explanation which occurred to them was this: "They had been with my knees," or "child of my blessings," indicates something like a transfer of the privileges of the firstborn.

¹ I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Sayce for the meaning of the new name which Sennacherib mentions in his will, as signifying "Assur is lord, the establisher of the son." Mr. Sayce reads "*Etil*" for "*Ebil*," but this leaves the meaning unaltered.