

caravan returning from Jerusalem to Nazareth and see if we cannot find the answer to this question. The parents of Jesus supposed Him to be in their company, but of this we may be sure, that their supposition cannot have been grounded in any converse they had had with Him. During that day's trek they had done without speaking to Him. If they had called on Him by name they cannot have waited to hear His answer. It is almost certain that they had spoken about Him to each other and to their friends, but that was not enough. They could speak about Him though He Himself had been left behind.

It is just the same in the history of the Church, it is just the same with us. There can be plenty of talk about Christ yet no converse with Him. If we want to be certain that Christ is in our company it is not enough to talk about Him; we must talk with Him. And the talk must not be one-sided, for if we do all the talking we still cannot be sure. We must listen for His voice. He Himself has told us the futility of saying, Lord, Lord, and has contrasted those who do that with those who do the will of the Father, and the Father's will can only be known if we listen for His voice. That is why we so often fail in prayer. We never get away from the sound of our own voices, from the tumult of our own desires. We must indeed ask; but what preparation do we make for receiving? We must not expect that God will always speak to us directly in some mysterious way when we are on our knees, or think that we have prayed in vain when we do

not experience that peculiar feeling of God's nearness which is called sensible devotion. Our prayers ought to include thanksgiving, self-examination, the slow and careful reading of the Scriptures, especially the Gospels, with our minds and wills set on finding out what God is saying to us and commanding us in His Word. If we do this we shall certainly receive, but if we do not thus turn our eyes to God, how shall we know what He is holding out for us?

We cannot be thinking of God all the time, no matter how eagerly we may be striving to carry out His purposes. All the more reason, therefore, that we should have definite times set apart for making sure that He is in our company. It was towards the end of the day that the parents of our Lord missed Him and began to seek Him, but too often we are content to go many days' journey without making sure that He is with us. As Mary and Joseph sought Him at the day's end, so let us be mindful to let some converse with Him, however brief, hallow the ending of each day. But as they had reason to regret that they had not sought Him earlier, so we may ask ourselves whether it is wise to leave so strenuous an exercise as prayer wholly to that time of day when we are least fit for effort. Prayer, like the frankincense of the Magi, is an offering, and why should we offer unto the Lord that which doth cost us nothing? At the cost of some self-sacrifice let us begin each day, not with the supposition, but with the assurance that the Lord is in our company.

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## Recent Biblical Archaeology.

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IF *Tell el-Kheleifi*, a small low mound on the north of the Gulf of Aqabah, midway between the east and west ends, be the Biblical Ezion-geber, as appears likely, the discoveries made there this year by Professor Nelson Glueck throw considerable light on Solomon's commercial and maritime activities. The *tell* is 717 yards from the shore, but this excessive distance seems to be explained by the fact that the site is exposed to the full blast of the north winds, and consequently, day in and day out, unceasing sand-storms from the Arabah have been depositing layers of sand between the *tell* and

the water. The result has been a gradual extension of the seashore southward to its present position. The discoveries show that the place was a busy industrial centre, as well as the naval base to which Solomon's ships brought the riches of Ophir (1 K 9<sup>26-28</sup>). It occupied a position at the juncture of the trade routes, along which the great caravans passed from Arabia and Sinai to Palestine, and was apparently a far more important town than the brief references in Biblical history would lead us to suppose. The industry carried on appears to have been manifold: the refining of copper, the

manufacture of copper implements (spear-heads, fish-hooks, nails, fibulæ, etc.), ship-building, fishing, weaving, pottery making, bead manufacture, and even the production of baskets, ropes, and mats. The copper-refining furnaces occupy a large part of the *tell*. Ten furnace-rooms have been uncovered, together with numerous rows of flue-holes (two horizontal rows on each wall), which still have a strong draught flowing through them. The site had been well chosen where the winds blow almost invariably from the one direction (the north). The working of copper deposits and their manufacture into useful articles was evidently one of Solomon's main industries. We know from Biblical history that, by an alliance with the sea-going Phœnicians of Tyre, he was enabled to build and man a fleet of merchantmen at Ezion-geber for trade with Arabia and distant Ophir (perhaps even India). These ships, when outward bound, seem to have carried cargoes of copper, both in ingots and manufactured products, returning in three years' time with gold, silver, ivory, perfumes, and other precious articles. Probably Ezion-geber was the source of the numerous copper furnishings in Solomon's royal buildings at Jerusalem, including the massive pillars Boaz and Jachin, the huge molten sea (holding 16,000 gallons of water) supported by twelve brazen oxen, the two hundred pomegranates, and many of the other adornments. The copper mines of the Arabah and the refining furnaces of Ezion-geber seem to have been to his administration what oil fields are to some modern governments, and we can understand how they brought him untold wealth (cf. 1 K 10<sup>14, 15</sup>) and led to the Queen of Sheba's visit and probably to a commercial treaty with her (cf. 1 K 10<sup>18</sup>). When we read that he left all the vessels of the temple unweighed (1 K 7<sup>47</sup>) because the bronze was so plentiful, the statement does not exaggerate. No doubt, when the Israelites first came to Ezion-geber from Kadesh (Nu 33<sup>36</sup>, Dt 2<sup>9</sup>), copper refining would be in existence in the district at that early date. The technique would be well known to the Edomites, and especially to the Kenites or 'smiths,' the tribe into which Moses married. Tubal Cain (Gn 4<sup>22</sup>), a member of this tribe, is stated to have been the first craftsman in copper and iron. Among the other industries of Ezion-geber, pottery manufacture seems to have had a prominent place. In one of the rooms opening on the street, such a large amount of fine pottery was discovered that Professor Glueck is of the view that the room may have been a store or shop for the sale of jugs and dishes.

Though no real evidence for the date of Abraham

has so far been produced by archæology, certain recent discoveries tend to bring the date nearer to the Biblical one (c. 2090 B.C.). In the Old Testament narrative he is associated chronologically with the 'cities of the plain' (cf. Gn 13, 14, 19) and referred to as contemporary with their destruction. An examination of Transjordan pottery, especially at *Bâb-ed-Drâ*, *Ader*, and other sites in the Dead Sea valley, was carried out some time ago by Professor Albright, who deduced from it that the culture and sedentary occupation of this region (Moab and Edom) came to an abrupt termination about 1800 B.C. at the latest, and consequently that the cataclysm described in Genesis probably took place about this time. This, of course, is on the assumption, for which we have no actual evidence, that the district was abandoned because of the cataclysm. For all we know, there may have been an earlier abandonment and re-occupation. But if the assumption be correct, it seemed decisive that the date of Abraham could not be placed earlier than about the end of the nineteenth century B.C., and this conclusion was supported by Professor Glueck and others. A detailed study, however, of pottery in Transjordan has recently been made by Dr. G. Ernest Wright, Old Testament Instructor in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chicago, and recent Field Director of the American Schools of Oriental Research. It is worth noting that he puts the date of the pottery referred to back to between the twenty-third and twentieth centuries, and states, in accordance with this finding, that 'it is probably more correct' to place the end of the occupation sometime in the twentieth century, and this, too, 'after allowing for a considerable lag.' Indeed, it is doubtful, he thinks, whether 'the latest elements of the culture in this region' can be brought lower than 'the first phase' of the Middle Bronze (which began in Palestine about the twenty-first and twentieth centuries B.C.). 'The pottery of *Bâb-ed-Drâ*,' he says, 'near the southern corner of the Dead Sea is roughly contemporary with *Tell Beit Mirsim J'*—a stratum which has been dated by Albright himself to 'the late third millennium.' It would thus seem that archæological evidence is coming close to the Biblical date of Abraham, whose entry into Canaan from Haran with his Hebrew followers took place, according to Biblical chronology, about 2090 B.C.

Further reports have been made by Thureau-Dangin and Charles-F. Jean on their translation of the Mari tablets, which date from about 2050 B.C., and are mostly letters addressed to Zimrilim, the last king. So far these scholars have only been

able to deal with a minute fraction of these valuable documents (amounting to over 20,000), but their reports present several new facts bearing on the Old Testament. *First*, the name David (*Dâwidum*) occurs under the same form as that of the great King of Israel (דָּוִד), but, strange to say, always as a common noun. Throughout the letters, for example, frequent mention is made of the assassination of the 'David' of such and such tribe or city or county. Such allusions seem to show that the term signified 'grand sheik' of a tribe, or chief ruler of a city or district. In the Bible the name is given to no one except the well-known king, and hitherto it has been supposed to be a shortened form of Dodavahu (2 Ch 20<sup>37</sup>), 'Beloved of Yahweh,' or of Dodo (2 S 23<sup>24</sup>), 'Beloved of Him' (= *Dâdu* of the Amarna Letters), but the occurrence of the name in the Mari tablets, written over a thousand years before the Jewish monarchy, may require a reconsideration of its derivation. *Second*, mention is made at this early date of the Benjamin tribes (*Benê-ia-mi-na*), and their kings or rulers (*šarrâni*), who inhabited part of Mesopotamia, and were at war with Mari. Their *Dâwidum*, it is stated, was slain by Zimrilim. As they are mentioned along with the Habiru (Hebrews), they must have belonged to the Hebrew race, and they certainly played an important rôle at this epoch, if we are to judge from the frequent allusions to them. They are referred to as the 'children of the south,' in contrast to the Bensimâl tribes (*Benê-Si-im-a-al*) who were the 'children of the north.' It is surprising to find them mentioned in these tablets nearly two centuries before the Biblical Benjamin was born; and it is worth noting that, according to the tablets, the derivation of the name is not 'son of my right hand,' as usually interpreted (cf. Gn 35<sup>18</sup>, R.V., Margin), but rather 'son of the south' (the termination 𐎠𐎡𐎢 having both significations). *Third*, we find that there were two kings named Hammurabi living at the time—one the well-known King of Babylon (the sixth King of the First Dynasty), and the other the King of Kurda. There are several letters from each of them, but the frequent mention of the former shows that he occupied the chief place in the political world. His date has been a *quæstio vexata* among scholars, and it now involves that of Zimrilim, who was contemporary. According to André Parrot, the director of the excavations, the style of the material unearthed in the palace is practically identical with that occurring during the Third Dynasty of Ur (c. 2280 B.C.) and the Dynasty of Larsa which

followed (c. 2170 B.C.). This places Hammurabi much earlier than many scholars have done (Aubright, e.g., puts him as late as 1870 B.C.), and bears out the date reached, after considerable research, by the late Professor Langdon of Oxford, viz., c. 2067–2024 B.C. 'The dates,' says Langdon, 'of the First Dynasty as fixed in Langdon-Fotheringham, *Venus Tablets*, p. 87, are certain, and I cannot see why anybody challenges them.'<sup>1</sup> Hammurabi thus becomes a contemporary of Abraham, and in all probability identical with Amraphel of Gn 14. It is now known that the Assyrian and Babylonian chronological lists, which have hitherto been regarded as authoritative, are not to be depended on, especially in regard to the duration of the reigns.

The last report by H. de Genouillac of the excavations at *Telloh* (ancient Lagash), in Babylonia, deals with the period covered by the Third Dynasty of Ur and the Dynasty of Larsa, to which we have referred above. There are numerous parallels in law and custom with Hebrew history. Here only two need be mentioned. One is the fact that a large number of double burials (*i.e.* husband and wife together) have been found. Whether the tombs had been reopened for the interment of the other consort, or whether the wife had been immolated on the death of her husband, remains uncertain. But, in either case, it reminds us of similar discoveries at Kish and proves the prevalence of monogamy among the inhabitants in those early days. Polygamy was undoubtedly recognized and was common, but to all intents and purposes the Babylonian appears to have been a monogamist. Similarly, among the Hebrews, it is open to question whether polygamy was at all general. The principle of one wife seems to have operated among them, although never legally insisted on. Passages like Gn 2<sup>18ff</sup> unmistakably point to this. When also the prophets represent the relation of Yahweh to His people under the figure of a marriage (Hos 2, Is 50<sup>1</sup>, etc.), it can only be a monogamous one that is thought of, for Yahweh had entered into no similar relation with any other nation besides Israel, while polygamy is represented as having its counterpart in idolatry. A second point worthy of note is that Genouillac has discovered in one of the temples the bodies of thirteen new-born children, whose deaths do not appear to have been connected with foundation ceremonies, and this corroborates once more the existence of human sacrifice. In the same way, the Israelites were not altogether free from this dreadful rite. The story of the sacrifice

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the writer, 17th June 1936.

of Isaac goes to show that it prevailed in Israel in early times. The history of Jephthah furnishes an indubitable instance of it in the period of the Judges, and there are numerous prophetic references which seem to prove that it persisted in Israel till a late period (Mic 6<sup>7</sup>, Jer 7<sup>31</sup>, Ezk 20<sup>26</sup> 23<sup>37</sup>), though it was an alien element repudiated by conscious Yahwism.

The recent discoveries made by Gordon Loud (successor to the late Dr. Chiera) at *Khorsabâd*, ancient Dûr Sharrukin in Assyria, also touch Israelite history in many ways. It was here that Sargon II., the great conqueror who destroyed Samaria, built his beautiful city and palace (the Versailles of this Assyrian Louis XIV.) at the end of the eighth century B.C., though his grandiose design was never fully realized, for on his death in 705, his successor Sennacherib brought the capital back to Nineveh. Much of the city has now been excavated, and seven gates have been found on three fronts of the great city wall. The main point of interest to the Biblical student is that the plan of Ezekiel's temple (Ezk 40-43), especially that of the gates, seems to bear a striking resemblance in almost every particular to that of this royal city. In the case of the temple, the buildings were similarly encompassed by a quadrangular wall, the gates were on three fronts only, and each gate, like those at Dûr Sharrukin, had a narrow threshold leading into a long vestibule (which served as a 'corps de garde'), at the end of which was a second threshold (Ezk 40<sup>7</sup>), the same in all respects as the other, leading through a bay or porch into the sacred enclosure. The temple of Ezekiel was only a vision and remained such, but during the prophet's captivity in Babylon

had he heard particulars of Sargon's new capital in the far north, built a century before?

According to a statement made by Virolleaud before the French Academy, the new unpublished documents from Ras Shamra dealing with Kereth, a Sidonian king and demi-god, treat of his old age and death. As the son of the god El and the goddess Asherah, he was believed by his family to be invulnerable and immortal, but at last he was grievously wounded and succumbed like ordinary mortals. The whole story has an interesting bearing on Ps 82 ('Ye are gods . . . but ye shall die like men'), and on Ezekiel's words regarding the King of Tyre (cf. Ezk 28<sup>2-9</sup>), 'Thou hast said, I am a god . . . but thou art man, and not God, in the hand of him that woundeth thee.'

There is good evidence, as already pointed out, that Lachish was burned twice by the Assyrian forces—first about 597 B.C. just before Zedekiah was made king, and later about 587 B.C. at the close of his reign. Before the first destruction there was a distance of more than forty yards between the outer and inner gates (afterwards it was considerably reduced), with strong fortifications in between. Mr. C. H. Inge, who has been carrying on the work since Mr. Starkey's death, has pointed out that at the inner gate there is a raised cobbled barrier forming a threshold, and that in ancient times this must have been bordered by two wooden beams, as there are two grooves filled with ash where the wood appears to have been. The beams were probably used to take the bolts of the doors, and the discovery explains a passage in Neh 3<sup>3</sup>, 'The fish-gate did the sons of Hassenaah build; they *laid* the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, the bolts thereof, and the bars thereof.'

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## Contributions and Comments.

### ὄχλος in Mark ii. 4 (Luke v. 19).

Μκ 2<sup>1-4</sup> (Lk 5<sup>17-19</sup>), as commonly understood, tells us that Jesus preached in some house in Capernaum; that a paralytic was to be brought to Him in order to be healed; that the people who carried him could not enter the house διὰ τὸν ὄχλον, 'because of the crowd' besieging it; and that in consequence they uncovered the roof and let the bed down that way. Now this traditional interpretation is not quite

satisfactory. For one thing, would not the crowd have made room willingly if a miracle was to be expected? And, above all, it is not easy to see how the people carrying the sick man, once the way to the door was barred, should have succeeded in taking the even more difficult route over the roof. Certainly none of these problems is insoluble:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that the bearers, as soon as they beheld the crowd, turned and ascended the roof from behind the house. There is, however, no textual