

725TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, MAY 27TH, 1929,

AT 4.30 P.M.

SIR AMBROSE FLEMING, D.Sc., F.R.S. (*President*), IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the PRESIDENT then called on Sir Flinders Petrie, F.R.S., to read his paper on "The Materialization of Old Testament History."

*THE MATERIALIZATION OF OLD TESTAMENT
HISTORY.*

By SIR FLINDERS PETRIE, F.R.S., F.B.A.

IT is natural to man to feel a need of a material association to consolidate his verbal knowledge of past events. Personal mementoes are eagerly treasured, and every religion has its sites and objects which are sacred by reason of the history with which they are connected. Whether it be Buddhism or Islam or Christianity, either Catholic or Protestant, all have veneration for the things which are linked with the history of the faith.

So soon as the Church had a civic organization, the respect for holy places led to pilgrimages, and soon after to the veneration of objects. Both of these naturally pious interests produced an enormous growth of fable, in an ignorant age: yet the instinct was natural and true in its proper sense. The estrangement of East and West in mediæval times led to the substitution of western types for eastern realities, and hence a materialization which was absurd and misleading, especially in pictures.

In the last century or two, this estrangement has taken the form of reading eastern writings in a western frame of mind, and taking the statements or meaning of events as if they were the precise relations of a man in entirely different surroundings and modes of thought of modern times. We know, ourselves, how the statements of a Chinese or a Negro, *verbatim*, will seem quite out of joint with our sense of things, and how we must discard our frame of mind if we are to enter into their sense of things. Thus, in order to understand any document of a different country, or remote age, we must try to read it from the point of view of the writer, and with the mentality of those to whom it was written. It is only by thus reclothing ourselves in a different frame of mind, that we can begin to realise the true aspect of writings which did not start from our present position. A wholesome practice in this is to soak the mind in tales of very different civilisations—Eskimo, Tibetan, Chinese—and so learn a flexibility of thought. For half a century I have worked with Orientals, and latterly in the heart of Bedawy life, where the patriarchal tales seem to be naturally materialised as one with the life around. As Dr. Schechter said of Rumania, "In my country there is no difficulty about miracles; they happen every day."

Now we can bring our modern development of life and thought into touch with ancient times, not by pilgrimages and relics, but by unearthing the actual works of past lives, by realising the places, the conditions, the habits of people, and so living in the past as closely as we may. This is the only way in which we can get a true valuation of the records which remain to us. We must see events in the same aspect as those who wrote about them, however much we may translate them into the terms which we—or any other peoples—might employ. If I remember aright, the "Lamb" has to be rendered the "little seal" to the Eskimo.

The record of patriarchal times deals with a nomad people, and we must first realise their conditions. They were nomads

not as inferiors, but as living in a fluctuating climate, so that they had their pastures in various places, up at Hebron or north of that in a dry season, down in the Negeb in a rainy season, just as nowadays strings of camels and donkeys and sheep, as far as the eye can see, pass up from drought to green pastures. Such were the shepherd kings, known as the Hyksos, who conquered Egypt, and Abraham was an example of these people, a Bedawy chieftain, who drifted to and fro in accord with the rains. For defence these people had fixed camps surrounded by great earth banks, as in Central Asia at present. In such places they had pottery, and very fine pottery, which it would be impossible to carry about in a nomad life. They also, no doubt, had embroidered garments, like the modern Bedawy, as such are shown in the Bedawy procession at Beni Hasan. Weaving also in coloured patterns is still usual, as it was in the days of Joseph. Their weapons were good and effective, and the lyre was not despised. At present we find the Bedawy very adaptable; in a short time they will pick up delicate and minute ways of work, which seem entirely outside of their natural kind of life. Similarly the Hyksos in Egypt took up much of the old civilisation; they restored Egyptian temples with pillars and bronze gates, and the first mathematical treatise was compiled in their time. At Beth-pelet we have recovered much of the Hyksos occupation, their immense fortification by steep slopes, their noble pottery, numerous scarabs in finger-rings, daggers, and dress-fasteners. Those who remained nomadic, as Abraham, could not have pottery, and in the hill country south of Judah the named sites of well-known places have not a single potsherd; evidently only wooden and skin vessels were in use. But much else of the civilisation would be common to all the chieftains of this age.

The duration of the Hyksos rule is indicated by our finding that, late in that period, the same vizier was over both Egypt and Palestine, and scarabs of his were made in different styles according to the country. There was, therefore, a lengthy period,—probably two or three centuries or more—of united Hyksos rule.

Regarding the geography of the Exodus, there have been various theories, which are superfluous in view of the close agreement of the record with the traditional road. There is no water-supply on any other way, whereas fresh water can always be had near the seashore by digging down to the water-table. The distances

to Marah, to Elim, and to Sinai agree with the route. From Sinai the next stage was to Paran or Pharan, which is obviously the Wady Feiran, the most fertile region of the peninsula. This way led out to the east, which was, therefore, called the wilderness of Paran. It was south of Mount Seir (Gen. xiv, 6), but far to the south, as it was in ready communication with Egypt (Gen. xxi, 21; 1 Kings xi, 18), and was limited by Hazeroth just east of Wady Feiran (Num. xii, 16). The name applied to all the wilderness up to Kadesh Barnea (Num. xiii, 26; Deut. i, 1), and that mount may be the holy place Mount Paran, named in later times (Deut. xxxiii, 2; Hab. iii, 3). It is needful to point out these connections, as there have been various sites of Paran named, while they may well be all reduced to the Wady Feiran, and the wilderness which the Israelites approached through that valley, and named after it. This is like the transfer of the name of the little tribe of Græci to the whole of Greece, because the Romans knew that tribe first.

The entry into Palestine has been much confused by the treatment of the site of Jericho; that has been cut to pieces without any reliable dating of the various walls, and is now at last to be scientifically examined. The questions raised by the great stele of Merneptah, which describes that in his reign "the people of Israel are laid waste—their crops are not," seem to have been satisfactorily answered by Mr. Wiener. He refers this defeat of the Israelites to their rout and destruction when they attempted first to enter Canaan (Num. xiv, 45). As the land was under the dominion of Egypt at the time, a defeat of would-be invaders was reckoned as a triumph of Egypt. It is stated after naming all the cities, and is a defeat of a people without a city, only followed by a general statement of all Palestine being in subjection.

We must turn back somewhat now to the Philistines. It is at present generally accepted that a class of pottery in Palestine which is obviously degraded from Cretan and Mykenæan types was introduced by the Philistines, as they are the only people in Palestine who appear likely to have come from the west. This agrees with the relation of the Philistines to Caphtor or Keft, a region of South Anatolia or Crete. A main objection to this view is that the Philistines spoke Semitic, and had they come in as a whole people at the fall of Crete under the "Dorian" migration, they would have kept their own language. They first appear in Egyptian records as one of the western peoples of

Crete and Sicily (?) allied with the North Syrians, in 1194 B.C., and this may well have been the time of the principal migration; but most migrations are prepared by an infiltration long before. The Palestine coast was known to the Cretans for two thousand years before this period, as Cretan pottery came into Egypt with oil and ruddle in the first dynasty. The coast round from Crete to Egypt must have been familiar.

Let us now look at the references to the Philistines, disregarding conjectural emendations which are the refuge of ignorance. At the time of Abraham and Isaac there was a king of the Philistines in Gerar, with a Syrian, Phichol (Pa-khal Egn.) as his captain of the guard. The dominion of the Philistines extended to Beersheba, where they stopped the wells of Abraham. This does not imply any large body of men, but rather a control exercised through a native police force under a Syrian. It would be much the same as the British control at the present time with native police. The reason of the Philistines occupying this coast was not only for securing the ports of Gaza and Askelon, but for holding the Shephelah by residents at Ekron, Ashdod, Gath, and Gerar. The purpose of such a control seems probably the obtaining of supplies from this fertile corn land to feed Crete, and perhaps South Anatolia. The rich population of Crete, in a rocky island, would need to import corn, and the placing of Philistine lords in the corn lands, and the two ports, seems naturally explained by the economic necessities. Such residents would soon speak the Aramaic of the country, like Turkish officials now. Then when trouble fell upon Crete, by the northern migration which swamped the older civilisation there, the Philistines naturally pushed over into a land already well known to them, and from which their food had come. At the Exodus there appear the familiar phrases of "the land of the Philistines" for the coast road, and the "sea of the Philistines" for the Mediterranean. This region was not extended by the time of Joshua, who carefully left the Philistines alone in their five cities. But soon after they desired the other great corn plain of Esdraelon, and by 1030 B.C. they held the key position of Beth-shan at the head of that plain, which controlled the access from the south. The Philistines continued in possession of their southern pentapolis all through the age of the prophets, and Nehemiah was greatly troubled by the intermarriages of Babylonian Jews with the Philistines of Ashdod. No doubt the Jewish peasantry who were left in the land had freely mixed

with the Philistines before that time. This leads to considering the interesting paper by Dr. Redcliffe Salaman on the modern types of the Jews. He distinguishes the Hittite, the Semitic, and the fair Western type which he identifies with that of the Philistine. The profiles of the Philistines on the Egyptian monuments are strikingly the same as those of the Cretans, and appear to be continued in the fair, thin-featured, light-haired Jews of the present day.

Of the materials that were in use, we have learned much from recent excavations. We now know how Isaac reaped his hundredfold crops with sickles made of flints set with plaster into wooden handles. This was a form also used in Egypt, but the Palestine flints were much deeper and shorter. Bronze seems to have been too valuable for it to be in common use among reapers, and flint sickles continued in use until 1350 B.C., and gradually died out by 1100. Overlapping these, the iron sickles began about 1250, and are usual from 1000 B.C. onward. Iron knives first appear about 1300 or 1250 B.C., and heavy agricultural tools belong to 1150 B.C., found alongside of the iron furnaces. Thus iron was in full use during the period of the Judges, though apparently kept reserved to the Philistines; while at Beth-pelet, beyond the Philistine rule, flint was still in common use.

The extent of the Egyptian conquest of Palestine under Sety I in 1325 B.C., and their hold on it for a century after that, has been well exemplified by finding long inscriptions of Sety and of his son Rameses at Beth-shan, on the high road to the northern country in which most of their fighting took place.

The rise of David's power seems to have been largely due to the trained bodyguard of Cherethites and Pelethites. They were entirely under the rule of Benaiah, son of Jehoiada. The Cherethites are linked with the Philistines as late as Zephaniah and Ezekiel, and the general view is that they were Cretans settled about Gaza at the southern end of the Philistine land. The Pelethites were more closely connected with Benaiah. Their name shows them to have belonged to Beth-pelet, the strongest fortress of the south, and Benaiah's father Jehoiada was a valiant man of Kabzeel. That place was the chief sanctuary, the "assembly of El," which heads the whole list of cities of the Negeb. Benaiah, therefore, represents the influence of the south country in David's party, doubtless from the early days of the wild life at Ziklag. Joab, on the contrary, represented the

influence of the hill country of Bethlehem. Though Joab was David's sister's son he did not follow David's bequest of the kingdom to Solomon, but joined the party of Adonijah, son of Haggith, a Hebronite. The contest of the succession was between the hill party of Joab and the host, and that of the Negeb party of Benaiah and the bodyguard. The latter, being in possession of Jerusalem, carried the day for Solomon. This was rewarded by Solomon ordering his own cousin Joab to be slain by Benaiah, and the pretorian guard of Cherethites and Pelethites won the supremacy, with their leader as the ruler of the host, in place of Joab. The southern interest thus prevailed over the Bethlehemite. The site of Beth-pelet is one of the most important, from its strength under the Hyksos, and its being the centre of the bodyguard of the south country. The clearance of it would throw much light on the early history, and two seasons' work have hardly yet opened the subject. Unhappily England does not support such work effectively, and the contrast with the support of American work is pitiable. We are lamentably hindered unless the public will take the need of our researches more seriously into account.

The buildings of Solomon have lately come to light very notably in the great stables of Megiddo. Each block is for twenty-four horses and their chariots. There is a central avenue to hold the chariots, and on either side twelve great pillars with tether holes, and stone mangers placed between the pillars all the way. The horses were thus outside of the rows of pillars, and the grooms went up the chariot avenue to feed them. Many such great stables remain, and some others of lesser size. One of the small stables for half a dozen was unearthed long ago, and duly regarded as a sanctuary with sacred pillars. The great stables have completely cleared up this position, and it is only stones very different in form and arrangement that we can in future suppose to have been sacred. The whole of Megiddo may probably be cleared by about 1960 or 1970, and as Mr. Rockefeller has given a trust fund permanently for this work, it may be hoped that it will be completely carried out and published by Mr. Guy.

From our own work at Gerar it is evident that Palestine in the age of Solomon was far more wealthy and prosperous than either Egypt or Babylonia. The fine stone jewellery of this age is much more costly and beautiful than anything made then in Egypt; it rivals the best work before that in the XVIIIth

dynasty. Such wealth can only be explained by the mercantile activities of Solomon dealing in horses and linen, and above all, by his control of the whole trade between east and west. By holding Ezion-Geber as a port he cut out Egypt, as the Gulf of Suez is dangerous owing to coral reefs. By reaching the Euphrates he also controlled the northern trade route by Iraq. Thus astride of the lines of trade both south and north, he was able to levy toll on the whole of the Eastern commerce.

The parade through Palestine in the end of the reign of Shishak, and his looting of Jerusalem, is borne out by finding part of a very large stele of this king at Megiddo. The more permanent remains of his reign are the rebuilding of Gerar and the immense wall which still stands at Beth-pelet. These buildings are notable for the depth of their foundations, in which the large clay bricks are laid in clean sand. The great wall of Beth-pelet, twenty-two feet thick, has foundations eight feet deep, to ensure that it should not slip by subsidence of the hill. Such work must imply enormous activity in the last few years of his reign.

Of the monarchy, not much has been found that is distinctive. At Samaria the palace was finely built of large blocks, and there were many ink-written labels, which show how usual writing was. Yet there is a strange dearth of written record in all the sites of Palestine. If we could afford much wider clearance of sites we might hope to secure more documents, but for the present the material remains and their interpretation are all that we can obtain as aids to further understanding the Israelite history.

Jerusalem has been much examined, but with less result than would be expected elsewhere, owing to the restrictions of property, the high expenses of land and labour, and the need of avoiding work which might offend any of the religions there entrenched. The continuous occupation of the site, and the many destructions that have overtaken it, also make the interpretation of the remains difficult and often doubtful. The most decisive recent discovery is that of a great gateway on the west of the ridge of Zion, now Ophel. This is stated by Mr. Crowfoot to have been built in the Bronze Age or Early Iron Age, say the XIXth dynasty, about 1300 B.C., and to have been used, with various repairs, down to the time of Titus. This delimits the width of the ridge to only 400 feet, or less for the higher part; so it was much the same size as the other early hill forts, and not a fiftieth of the size of the fortified Jerusalem of late times. Such

was the Zion of David, and the threshing floor of Araunah was a quarter of a mile away to the north, much further up the ridge, out in the fields of those days. The ruin of Zion was the fatal cutting down of the hill by the Maccabees in order to prevent the temple courts being overlooked. This cleared away all the early town, and now it is only in the rubbish below the hill that anything early could be found.

Whenever excavation on a large scale could be supported, a most interesting place to search would be the Tyropeon valley behind the temple site, north of Wilson's arch, where probably remains of the masonry of each temple would be found overthrown. Much has been done in tracing walls and rock scarps, but the absence of any means of dating these hinders their appreciation historically. A large portion of a wall of immense blocks has lately been uncovered near the Palestine Museum, far to the north, assigned to the fortification of Agrippa.

Not only in Palestine but also in Egypt may material remains be found of Jewish history. As early as before the Exodus there appears a large tablet of an Egyptian officer, engraved by a scribe called Yehu-naam, or "Yehu speaks," the converse of the familiar phrase, "Thus saith the Lord." This can hardly be other than a Jew of the bondage period, who became a highly skilled artist in Upper Egypt. Later, in Middle Egypt, there is an old tomb which was re-used by a family who wrote their memoirs in Aramaic on the walls, showing that they were in Egyptian politics from the time of Tirhaka, that is in the reign of Manasseh, a century before the destruction of the temple.

After the captivity there is the contact with the history of Jeremiah at Tahpanhes, where the arrangement of the fortress explains the narrative, which otherwise seemed hard to understand. This great camp of the Greeks was the familiar stage to every Jew who went down into Egypt during seventy years before the captivity. Any number of Greek objects and their names would pass thence into familiar Jewish use. It was the first step in the Hellenization of the Jewish race.

The settlements of the Jews in Egypt extended up to the southern frontier at Aswan. There the Diaspora was so strong that a temple was built, probably at the Persian conquest, as it was destroyed in 411 B.C. The well-known papyri from there show an absence of the fanaticisms of the Babylonian Judaism. The Jews intermarried with the Egyptians, who took Jewish names and gave them to their sons. The mixture was rather

an accession to Judaism than otherwise, like the cases of proselytes. This carries our review down to the end of the Canon, and the mass of later links of Judaism are beyond our scope.

We may now briefly see what are the means for bringing to light the material history. In the first place there is the necessity of working with an accurate dating; it is almost useless to find a wall or a tomb if the date of it remains in doubt, and if we cannot put the knowledge that we reap into its historic connection. In the past there has been a great lack of such needful attachment. It is only from the neighbourhood of Egypt, the importation of Egyptian objects, and the dating of Egyptian conquests, that any precise historical status can be given to the Palestinian antiquities. Sometimes large monuments are found, as at Beth-shan and Megiddo, with the names of conquerors, but such are only of rare occurrence. There are also many small objects which can be dated by their Egyptian relation, and these are naturally most frequent on the southern border. It is therefore by a preliminary knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, and by working on sites near Egypt, that we can lay the foundations of the history of Palestine. It is for this reason that the British School of Egyptian Archæology has entered on the entirely neglected field of the Negeb. Gerar proved an ideal place to begin with, as it had been rebuilt every two or three centuries, and being entirely of clay brick it wore down equably, forming about five feet of ruin between each rebuilding. There all the products of the civilisation from 1500 to 500 B.C. could be dated, to form a scale for future work. Beth-pelet is not quite so complete in its series, but every stage of it can be linked with Gerar, except that it provides the Hyksos remains and even pre-Hyksos, thus carrying the chain of civilisations back to the XIIth dynasty. Whenever the Megiddo work reaches back to the earlier ages we shall learn much more, but it will be some years yet before the period of the Judges is exposed.

What hope is there of doing more on the dozens of city mounds which await our search in Palestine? Only a small fraction of the whole will be done in a century, and for the sake of history the available working power will be best applied by complete work on selected portions, examining those parts of sites which will best give their history.

For such work the limit of convenient management is about 400 or 500 men and children, divided in small groups. The difficulty of drawing men from far, and the lack of discipline in

very large bodies with fluctuating attendance, makes larger numbers unsuitable. The camp, with trained archæologists to manage it, and the publication, will cost about £3,000 a year, without allowing for salaries, but only bare costs. If the superintendence were on a professional scale, £5,000 a year would be needful.

It seems absurd to say that England cannot afford £30,000 a year for half a dozen such expeditions, when we look at the immense waste going on in all classes of society. One *per cent.* on any of the great sources of waste would pay for all that is wanted. Yet actually there is great difficulty in raising even £1,500 a year, and we are heavily depleting the resources of our School of Egyptian Archæology, which will soon be exhausted. The opportunity is here before us to learn of the past, but few there be that will accept it.

DISCUSSION.

Sir AMBROSE FLEMING (President) said: I feel sure I shall be giving expression to the predominant sentiment of this audience in stating our great obligations to Sir Flinders Petrie for the address he has given us to-day. We are very much indebted to him for granting us a share of his valuable time and thought in the preparation and delivery of this interesting paper.

It would hardly be possible to name any subject for discussion more in accordance with the main objects of this Institute than that of the historical basis of our religious faith, and sacred Book. Literary criticism has been busy in the past, and is even in the present, in endeavouring to reduce much of the Old Testament narratives to mere folk-lore or legend. The subjects of its life-like biographies in the patriarchal period, at any rate not so long ago, were claimed to be merely the names of tribes or clans, and as having no individual existence. But the spade of the archæologist has many times over undermined the hasty conclusions of the literary critic, and may do still more yet in the same direction. Both persons and places mentioned in the Old Testament are continually becoming more and more real to us, and the history of the Book declared to be fact, and not fiction, in virtue of archæological exploration.

The discoveries made lately, and the objects exhibited in the British Museum, found at Ur of the Chaldees, for instance, have shown us the state of civilization, in art and building, at and before the date of Abraham. The city of Ur was, I believe, a place devoted to the worship of the Moon-God Sin, and its elaborate ritual.

Now it seems not at all improbable that Terah the father of Abraham, who, we are told, lived in Ur, had become impressed with the idea that these celestial bodies, the moon and planets which move about over the celestial vault, were not living creatures to be worshipped but the creations of one invisible living God, and hence he, becoming displeased and dissatisfied with this astronomical idolatry, determined to migrate with his family westwards, and find a fresh place for free worship of the single Supreme Deity; just as the Pilgrim Fathers went forth more than 300 years ago, from Europe to North America, to find religious freedom and worship there.

I am much interested in the statement (on p. 263) that the site of the Canaanite Jericho is to be scientifically examined. Last January, on a lovely day, I drove down from Jerusalem to Jericho, or rather to one of the Jerichos—because there are three sites. There is (1) the old Jericho, which is now merely great mounds of stones and dust, partly opened up, revealing the shells of a few houses; (2) the remains of Roman Jericho; and (3) modern Jericho, a collection of untidy houses, and a few third-rate hotels. The old Jericho, of which I took a photograph, lies about a couple of miles higher up the Jordan valley than modern Jericho. It would be extremely interesting if proper excavation could reveal whether this old Jericho was a walled town, and whether there is any evidence that these walls all fell down at some time simultaneously on all sides, in accordance with the Old Testament narrative in the Book of Joshua.

In view of the importance of such exploration, I am sure we can all heartily endorse the regret of Sir Flinders Petrie that it is so difficult here in Great Britain to secure funds for scientific work—when we remember what large amounts of money are expended annually on alcoholic liquors, tobacco, and amusements, and in preparation of films for moving pictures.

Another matter in which I am interested is the mention, on p. 265,

of the first use of iron. I should like to ask where the Philistine iron ore probably came from, and whether there is any evidence of the invention of bellows or chimneys for producing a forced draught, at the time of the first use of iron? The ordinary iron ores are—*magnetite*, which is a tetroxide of iron; *hæmatite*, which is most abundant and is a sesquioxide; and the *clay ironstone*, which is a carbonate of iron, and supplies two-thirds of the iron now produced in Great Britain. It is not difficult to reduce the pure oxides of iron to metallic iron by heating it with charcoal, provided fairly high temperature and a pure oxide is obtainable. If, however, there is much silica or clay mixed with the ore, then it is necessary to use limestone, or calcic carbonate, to form a fusible flux, and this requires a much higher temperature than the reduction of a pure oxide of iron. According to Xenophon, metallic iron was first prepared by the Chalubes, a people living near the Black Sea. Hence our word “chalybeate” for water containing iron. The first preparation of steel, which is an alloy of iron and carbide of iron, came much later.

In the Book of Genesis (iv, 22) we have a mention of Tubal Cain, “an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.” In Deuteronomy (xxvii, 5) we are told that in building an altar “thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon it”; and in Joshua (xvii, 18) we are told that the Israelites were to “drive out the Canaanites though they have iron chariots.” The date of the first use of iron in weapons of war is important, as it would give great advantage to the people possessing them. I should like to ask whether it is not possible that iron was in use before 1300 B.C.?

As there are, no doubt, many present who will like to speak or to ask questions, I shall not trespass at any greater length on your attention, but ask you to approve by your applause the formal vote of thanks to Sir Flinders Petrie, which I have now the pleasure of proposing, for the very interesting and valuable paper he has read to us to-day.

Mr. R. DUNCAN said he counted it a high privilege to have had the opportunity of listening to one whose fame as an archæologist must be world-wide. There were a couple of points in the paper on which he desired to touch:—

- (1) Did the description of Abraham as “a Bedawy chieftain”

quite accord with the circumstances? Was he, for instance, any more a Bedawy chieftain than Colonel Lawrence, who, in the Great War, lived with the desert Arabs, and was their leader in raids, yet remained English to the core? Although called, comparatively late in life, to be a tent-dweller, was not Abraham, as a matter of fact, town-bred, hailing, as he did, from Ur of the Chaldees? When, with advancing years, his possessions multiplied, had he not, as his steward, a townsman, Eliezer of Damascus? and, if importance is to be attached to what the Epistle to the Hebrews says of Abraham's outlook, did he not continue, to the end, a townsman at heart, "for he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God"?

(2) The circumstance that the district now "Feiran" was called by the Israelites "Paran" suggests the query whether there was, in the speech of the ancient Hebrews, an inability to pronounce the "f" sound at the beginning of words, and a tendency to have recourse to the "p" sound instead. It is interesting to note in this connection that the lists of proper names in Cruden's Concordance contain no Hebrew ones under the letter "F."

Lieut.-Col. F. A. MOLONY said: The Victoria Institute is much indebted to Sir Flinders Petrie. The title of his paper might well have been "Confirmations of the Old Testament." As Sir Flinders has frequently mentioned dates, we should like to know whether he regards Archbishop Usher's chronology as fairly accurate back to Moses. According to the Archbishop, there was a gap of 235 years between the close of the Book of Judges and the opening of the First Book of Samuel, and of 388 years between the capture of Jericho and the slaying of Goliath, which, according to Matt. i, 5, 6, should only have been four generations. Hence it would seem probable that the Books of Samuel follow more closely on Judges than Archbishop Usher supposed.

Mr. W. N. DELEIVINGNE said: The lecturer, in his extremely interesting paper, remarks (pp. 266, 267) that from the work of the British School of Archæology at Gerar it is evident that, in the age of Solomon, Palestine was far more wealthy and prosperous than either Egypt or Babylonia; and he goes on to state that its wealth can only be explained by the mercantile activities of Solomon

dealing in horses and linen, and, above all, by his control of the whole trade between east and west. By holding Ezion-Geber as a port, he says, Solomon cut out Egypt, and by reaching the Euphrates he also controlled the northern trade route by Iraq; and thus, being astride of the lines of trade both south and north, he was able to levy toll on the whole of the Eastern commerce.

As regards the growth of Solomon's wealth and power, it must be remembered that, not many years previously (about forty), the power of the Israelites had been broken when they were utterly defeated by the Philistines at the battle of Mount Gilboa, and their king, Saul, and his son were slain. It is remarkable, therefore, that not only should they have been able to make so rapid a recovery under David and Solomon, but that the latter should have succeeded in extending his kingdom to the port of Ezion-Geber (on the Red Sea) on the south and as far north as the River Euphrates. In the Biblical record we are told very little as to how the military power of the nation was restored and increased under David and Solomon, and it would be interesting to know how, in face of the Egyptian power on the south and the Assyrian power on the north, Solomon was able, not only to maintain his hold on the port of Ezion-Geber, but also to assert his authority as far north as the Euphrates with such success as to be in a position to levy toll on all the trade coming down from the north by the regular trade routes. Will the lecturer be good enough to throw further light on this point?

Mr. W. HOSTE said: The details (on p. 265) as to the use of stone, iron, and occasionally bronze sickles as far back as the time of Isaac are very interesting, as illustrating the fact that what are known as the stone, bronze and iron ages were not necessarily successive, but contemporaneous, or, at all events, overlapping. Would not this necessitate a revision of some calculations as to the extreme antiquity of certain objects and their makers? Then Isaac's long flint sickles, which the lecturer points out were of the Egyptian model, and not that usual in Palestine which, perhaps, were brought by Abraham from Egypt, *circa* 1900 B.C., and did not die out till 800 years later, were in use contemporaneously for at least 150 years with iron tools. No doubt in Africa or Asia to-day, all "the ages" can be found running contemporaneously in different parts of the

continents, according to the supplies available. For instance, one sees copper in common use among the natives of Katanga at the south extremity of the Congo Free State, and in the Zambesi Valley native ironsmiths working with their primitive bellows producing their native steel, and no doubt in regions not far distant you could have had your skull cracked with a stone hammer, if so disposed, not so many years back.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS.

From Mr. W. R. ROWLATT JONES: I notice that Sir Flinders Petrie throws the weight of his authority on the "Bedawin chieftain" aspect of Abraham's life. This tends to obscure the possibility that he was of royal descent, and closely allied to the reigning houses of early Babylonia. It might be that his strong monotheistic views rendered him distasteful to his kingly and priestly relatives, and the Divine call fell on prepared ground. In thus leaving his royal surroundings, he would be a type of *the One* who, two thousand years later, did the same. Further, when he left Haran to go into Canaan, Abraham would be the forerunner of *the One* who left home, mother, and property in Nazareth, when about thirty years of age, to adopt a nomadic career. I suggest the view, doubtless strange (in spite of several texts supposed to prove the contrary) that Joseph and Mary and their son and heir were people of substance, with property both at Nazareth and Bethlehem.

From Dr. J. W. THIRTLE: Day by day, before our eyes so to speak, the materialization of Old Testament history proceeds, with incidents that in many cases are full of interest. I shall not, I think, be deemed an obscurantist if I indicate a typical aspect of the general subject. I call attention to something which for many generations was a shadowy allusion in literature, but which in our own time has materialized and makes its appeal as an object of profound importance.

First, the historical allusion. Who does not recall words, coming to us from the Pentateuch, in a passage wherein the Divine Law was eulogized before the children of Israel? The words were:

“ What great nation is there that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day ? ” The passage is familiar, but its implication is not so readily gathered. One thing is certain, however—we have here a definite allusion to the fact that before the days of Moses, and the law which he promulgated, surrounding nations had their codes of laws ; and, further, we gather that great nations had such codes, although the statutes and judgments were not so righteous—so noble and equitable—as was the Law which, by Divine ordinance, had been given to the small nation of Israel. As to their character, the statutes and judgments of the great nations were comparable with those of the Chosen People, but as to their substantial nature they were manifestly inferior. This thought lies in the passage, Deut. iv, 8, R.V.

For thousands of years this allusion has had its place in the literature of Israel, but until recent times no material counterpart was at hand. Should we look to Egypt, the land which meant much in patriarchal days, then the institutions observed would be of a far different order : they would lack real correspondence with the familiar Hebrew reference. At length, however, in the Providence of God, the things indicated—like thousands of others within the scope of the lecture to which we have listened—have materialized. We go back to the beginning of the present century, and we find that, thousands of years after enactment, a code of laws was recovered from the dust of ages—a code which fills the bill in regard to the “ statutes and judgments ” by which great nations regulated their social life in days long gone by.

As to the materialization. It was in the year 1901, while excavating at Susa, that M. de Morgan discovered a huge block of black diorite, with a bas-relief representing King Hammurabi receiving a code of laws from the sun-god, Shamash, with laws inscribed on the front and back sides of the stele. Some part of the code had been erased, but there remained 248 enactments, relating in large measure to civil and criminal law ; and, to use the words of the late Professor Driver, they were “ remarkably similar to corresponding provisions of the Hebrew codes preserved in the Pentateuch.”

Going back to the third millennium B.C., this code, among others, may well have been in the mind of the Hebrew Lawgiver, when comparing to their virtual disparagement, the statutes and judgments of the great nations with those of the righteous law given by

God to the little nation of Israel. For many generations there had been no material counterpart of the Deuteronomic allusion, but now at length the code of the Elamite empire had proclaimed its affinity (though not otherwise related) with the Law of Moses. Found along with cuneiform letters and contract tablets, the code had slept for thousands of years, and the people whose lives were ordered thereby, along with their god Shamash, had long passed into oblivion.

My point is : The Hammurabi stele explains the Pentateuchal allusion ; in a word, it materializes it, and enables us, by contrast, to see the excellence of the Mosaic institutions, and to realize therein a system of law worthy of the God of heaven and earth. It does more : it serves as a symbol of the entire process of materialization, as this latter has interpreted to men and women of our own time the life and literature of ancient days.

THE LECTURER'S REPLY.

The source of iron was in the common nodules of hæmatite from the stream-bed ; these were apparently produced by hot springs leaching the sulphur from the pyritic nodules in the chalk and limestone. No reduced iron is known before 1350 B.C. ; but meteoric iron was occasionally worked even in prehistoric times.

The Bedawy are nomads, like Abraham, because they live in a half-arid region, and have to move according to rainfall ; but that is no reflection on their abilities or character.

The Hebrew "P" is always "F" among Arabs, as they have no labials beyond "B" and "F."

Chronology can only be dealt with on the basis of recent knowledge.

David and Solomon rose to power during an eclipse of Egypt under the decadent Ramessides, and of Babylonia crushed by an Assyrian invasion.

Flint implements continued in common use till 1100 B.C., and in some cases much later.