

ANNUAL MEETING.

THE Annual General Meeting of the above Fund was held on Monday, June 22nd, 1903, at the Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, London, W., when the Bishop of Salisbury presided.

The CHAIRMAN.—I will ask Dr. Wright, our American Honorary Secretary, to be good enough to propose the adoption of the Report.

Professor THEODORE WRIGHT.—My Lord Bishop, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I have great pleasure in moving “That the Report and Accounts already printed, and in the hands of subscribers, be taken as read, and be received and adopted.” Americans are exceedingly interested in the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and although, Sir, of course, we have a certain pride in ourselves to accomplish what we can under our own name, I think it is to our great credit so far that we have attempted nothing but to give every assistance possible to this Fund. We are deeply interested also in the work carried on in the way of excavation in other lands. We see the magnificent results in Egypt and Babylonia compared with the more modest results achieved in Palestine. We believe in this work, and especially we see that it not only recovers the life of the far past, but it gives a support to the sacred Scriptures which we so dearly love. We do not approve, Sir, of those who under the name of archæology go out of their proper field to dogmatise either for the Scriptures or against them; we honour the Fund that it has so strictly confined itself within its proper field. I must not take up your time, but it seems to me that one is reminded, when he thinks of that little country, so significant yet so small, one is reminded of the Spartan with the nightingale who thought that if he could eat it he might obtain its voice, but when he had stripped it of its feathers, he said: “It is a voice, and nothing else.” Palestine is only a little country, but what a voice—the voice of the ages, the voice of God! Sir, I beg to move the resolution.

Professor EDWARD HULL.—My Lord, I have great pleasure in seconding the adoption of the Report, which, though I have not read, I am quite sure is adequate to the occasion and full of interest as we shall find when we read it.

The resolution was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Canon DALTON.—The names that have been put into my hands to ask you to agree to add to the General Committee of the Fund are the Very Rev. the Dean of Westminster, the Rev. Dr. James Hastings.

Rev. ARTHUR CARR.—I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The resolution was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Admiral Sir JOHN HAY.—My Lord, I have been asked to move the following resolution:—"That the Executive Committee be re-elected, and the Rev. Robert Forman Horton, D.D., Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, be elected thereto." I have great pleasure in proposing that resolution.

Sir WILLIAM CHARLEY, K.C.—I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN.—I have great pleasure now in asking Sir Charles Wilson to address you, and describe the work of the excavation of Gezer.

Sir CHARLES WILSON.—Before drawing your attention to Mr. Macalister's work at Gezer, I should like to reply to a question which is frequently asked. It is this: How is it known that any particular object belongs to the Aboriginal, the Canaanite, the Jewish, the Greek, or the Roman period? To answer this it is necessary to explain the law of stratification upon which the whole groundwork of scientific exploration depends. The occupation of a site by a town, or village, is always marked by a bed, or stratum, of rubbish which contains the foundations of walls, and specimens of the weapons, the tools, and the objects connected with the domestic and religious life of the occupiers. The bed of rubbish varies in thickness according to the duration of the occupation, or the period that has elapsed since the site was abandoned. When a site has been occupied continuously for several centuries, and by different races, the accumulated rubbish forms a series of beds, or strata, of varying thickness, which lie one above the other like the strata of sedimentary rocks. As each geological formation has its characteristic fossils, so, in the remains of an ancient city, each bed of rubbish contains something which differentiates it from the two beds between which it lies. Sometimes certain forms, or objects, survive through many

centuries, and are found in several successive strata; sometimes the action of sun and rain carries a small object down to a stratum to which it does not belong; and sometimes, in sinking for foundations, the contents of lower strata have been brought to the surface, and again covered up in their false position by later accumulations. These disturbances, as a rule, can be readily detected, and the skilled explorer is able to refer nearly everything he finds to its proper stratum, and, consequently, to the period during which the rubbish of that bed was accumulating. The determination of the date and duration of the period which each bed, or stratum, represents is rendered exceptionally difficult in Palestine by the small number of objects found which can be dated with certainty. But, within certain limits, a trained archaeologist is able to read the history of an ancient city which he is excavating with very considerable accuracy.

The excavations at Gezer have disclosed the stratified débris of seven periods of occupation. During the first and second periods, which are represented by the two lowest strata, the site was occupied by an aboriginal, non-Semitic race, of slight build and small stature—none exceeded 5 feet 7 inches, and most of them were under 5 feet 4 inches. These people, who in some respects resemble the occupants of Europe during the Neolithic Age, lived in caves, or in rude huts of mud and stone, and cremated their dead in a cave specially prepared for the purpose.

Between the second and third strata there is a distinct break, indicating the advent of a new race. The Neolithic cave-dwellers gave place to a Semitic people of stronger build and more advanced civilisation. These Semites were from 5 feet 7 inches to 5 feet 11 inches in height, and had well-developed skulls; their racial type was not unlike that of the modern Arab. They lived in houses of mud and stone, crowded together like those of a Palestine village, and surrounded them with walls. The Gezerites of this period buried their dead within the walls, making use of the crematorium, and other rock excavations of their predecessors. Sometimes their food vessels and sometimes their exceptionally fine bronze weapons were buried with them. Scarabs and impressions of scarab-seals of the Egyptian Middle Empire occur in abundance, and a fragment of an inscribed statue of the same period was uncovered. Amongst other finds are broken statuettes of a cow divinity; a little bone needle-case containing a

bronze needle; moulds for casting arrow-heads; cylinders of Babylonian and Syrian origin; and a great number of terra-cotta plaques with figures of Ashtaroth in low relief—all broken as if some rite connected with the goddess involved the fracture of her image. Some of the pottery types, in both strata, are common to Gezer and Lachish, indicating a connection between the two places, probably tribal or racial, that may be inferred from the Bible narrative and the Tell Amarna letters. In the upper stratum the influence of Ægean art is very clear in much of the pottery.

The most interesting discovery in connection with the pre-Israelite strata is that of the *bāmāh*, or "high place" of Gezer, which dates from the early Semitic period, and was apparently altered and enlarged in the period represented by Stratum IV. The "high place" consists of a megalithic structure, standing in a court, or *ḥaram*, which has a well-defined floor of limestone chips.

The megalithic structure consists of a group of monoliths from 5 feet 5 inches to 10 feet 9 inches high, aligned in a gentle curve of which the chord is nearly north and south. West of the north end of the alignment, and evidently belonging to the scheme of the high place, is a circular structure, 13 feet 8 inches in diameter, consisting of a rude wall, now about 6 feet high, in which there is no opening. Within the precincts of the high place was found the skull of a man, of different race from that of the occupiers, whose head must have been intentionally deposited in the temple of the town divinity. With this may be compared the head of Goliath, which David buried at Jerusalem.

The *bāmāh* or "high place," which is synonymous with "holy place," was *par excellence* the sanctuary of the Semites. It was most frequently on a hill, near a spring or in a grove of trees, but at Gezer it was on the saddle between the knolls. Perhaps, remembering the large part which the worship of caves played in popular Semitic belief, the selection of the site may be attributed to some legend connected with a cave of the Neolithic race which was altered and utilised by the Semites in connection with their religious rites.

There is evidence that the high place retained its sanctity until a late period of the Jewish monarchy, when it appears to have fallen into disuse.

The fifth and sixth strata represent the occupation of Gezer by the Israelites. In the fifth stratum—that is the town which was

destroyed by the father-in-law of Solomon—private houses are found, for the first time, to have encroached upon the precincts of the high place. The stratum is characterised by the appearance of iron, by lamp and bowl deposits under the foundations of houses, and by the transitional character of the pottery from pre-Israelite to Jewish. Bronze is the common metal, but flints are still used.

In the same fifth stratum several instances occur in which the bones of infants have been built under or into ordinary house walls. It seems clear that we have in this discovery evidence of infant sacrifice in connection with the widespread custom of foundation rites, and it is interesting to note that Dr. Sellin has found the bones of both infants and adults in or under the foundations of houses at Taanach.

The lamp and bowl deposits disappear completely at the time of the Captivity, and this circumstance led Mr. Macalister to conclude that they were connected with some rite peculiar to the Israelites. Recently, however, he has uncovered a remarkable deposit beneath the foundations of an undoubted pre-Israelite house, which may lead him to modify his opinion. It consists in a jar on its side, containing the remains of two infants. Above the jar are two saucers, one containing two others, and behind it are two jars standing upright, and two lamps, one inside the other. This discovery suggests to me the idea that the Israelites may have adopted the foundation rites of the Canaanites only so far as the deposit of lamps and bowls was concerned, and that the infant remains were the result of sacrifice either by Canaanites living amongst the Israelites, or by Gezrites of the period just before the capture of the city by the Pharaoh of Egypt when Gezer does not appear to have been in the possession of the Jews. The questions connected with the practice of infant sacrifice at Gezer cannot be adequately discussed until the completion of excavations. It may, however, be remarked that the custom was not common amongst the Jews until the latter half of the period of the monarchy. The sin is denounced by the prophets of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., but, the case of Ahaz excepted, is not mentioned by those of the eighth century.

The sixth stratum may be assigned, with certainty, to the period of the Jewish monarchy, for it contains the jar-handles with "royal stamps" bearing the legend "To the king," in old Hebrew characters.

The lamp and bowl deposits continue; there is a further encroachment by private houses on the precincts of the high place; Jewish types of pottery prevail; iron is in general use; but bronze weapons are common, and flint implements have not disappeared. The flint objects are inferior, as if the art of making them had been lost. One flint axe-head has an *aleph* of the old Hebrew alphabet scratched on its calcareous surface.

Amongst the finds in this stratum were a fine bronze statuette of Osiris with remains of gilding; a bronze statuette of Ashtoreth Karnaim or horned Astarte, the only perfect image of the goddess, I believe, that has yet been found (the horns seem intended to represent rams' horns rather than the crescent moon); and a saucer bearing a legible but almost unintelligible group of old Hebrew characters.

The city represented by the sixth stratum was confined to the western half of the mound, and this seems to indicate that Solomon, in rebuilding Gezer, restricted the area, and made the place a fortified post. Before the close of the sixth period the "high place" appears to have lost most, if not all, of its sanctity—a result possibly due to the reforming zeal of Josiah.

The seventh stratum represents the occupation of the site during what might be called the Syro-Egyptian period; that is the period during which the country was alternately occupied by the followers of Alexander the Great, and saw the temporary consolidation of Jewish power under the Maccabæans. The stratum marks a complete break in the history of Gezer. Flint implements and the lamp and bowl deposits disappear; iron is in common use; bronze is only employed for ornamental purposes; there is no trace of worship in connection with the "high place"; and the masonry of the houses and the types of pottery are similar to those found in the Ptolemaic town of Marisa (Tell Sandahannah). Amongst the objects found in this stratum are an Egyptian inscription of the fourth century B.C.; a Greek inscription which appears to have belonged to a votive offering dedicated to Hercules; Rhodian jar-handles, saucers, ointment bottles, and imported Greek bowls. In the destruction of some of the stones at the north end of the megalithic monument at the high place, Mr. Macalister finds the work of Simon Maccabæus, who purified the places polluted by the idols, cast out all the pollutions (of Gezer), and placed such men there as would keep the law.

The CHAIRMAN.—I believe it is now my very pleasant duty to thank Sir Charles Wilson for his excellent lecture, and the not less excellent exhibition of the very remarkable slides which you have seen. I think that he has answered very well the question which was so naturally put to him, as to whether we can have confidence in these investigations. The best answer to such a question as that is to show the way in which one thing follows on after another, and to make it clear by actual instances of the superposition of one stratum and one series of objects upon another that they do correspond not only to what we know externally from history, but that they follow in a natural series. As, for instance, we see flint and bone being superseded by bronze and iron in the ordinary way. And I think that what he has said not only is illustrated by, but does very much illustrate, the record of the Bible on the subject generally. I think that we have to thank these excavations for helping us, I won't say to have a more decided faith in the accuracy of the Scripture record, but helping us to understand it better. I fully believe that is what we mostly want to do—understand it better. We can believe it without understanding it, but we cannot believe it in a fruitful manner unless we understand, and the understanding of the Scripture record is to me a very great blessing which this Society has brought to our own generation. We need all the possible confirmation that we can have, and we find that confirmation in the excavations and in the very learned and remarkable works which are written in explanation of those excavations, not merely this excellent report of Mr. Macalister's, but in the many other publications of our Society which we find advertised along with it, and the excellent work by M. Clermont-Ganneau, which you so often find in the pages of the *Quarterly Statement*. I have travelled myself twice to Jerusalem, and was very thankful to see, not merely with my own eyes, but with the eyes of those who had been working on the spot as agents of our Society, what I could certainly not have seen with my own eyes. There is no doubt that our Society has done a very great work in developing a class of man, going back a long time to General Gordon and General Kitchener as they came in after time, and Colonel Conder and the rest of the early workers up to the present day. We have had a succession of very able men serving the Society who have raised the whole standard, I think, of such investigations, not only in England, but in very many other parts of the world. I won't say

that our English excavators are always the best; we owe a great deal to German, we owe a great deal to French excavators, and we owe something, no doubt, to the Americans who have worked so loyally with us. It is a very great thing to have a Society which, having no party principle of any sort, is able to go to work at the problems suggested by the Scriptures and by the country, and to give us the information with trained eyes and trained minds. As we get older, we are all, I think, more ready to defer to authority than we were when we were young, and we see that everybody must be trusted in his own art, and a scientific excavator, such as those we have had and are having still, really becomes to us an authority of the very highest rank. We know that it is quite impossible for us individually to test everything that is said and done; but we know that by creating a society, as we have done, for the purposes of scientific excavation, we have created a perpetual instrument of inquiry and a perpetual instrument of criticism which makes the work that is done very solid and real, and I am extremely thankful for this "Report on the Excavation of Gezer" in many different ways. I have read it twice with the greatest possible interest, and I commend it to you most heartily. There is a certain amount to be added from the last *Quarterly Statement*, but the main interest lies in this larger Report, which we hold in our hands to-day. We see that God chose the land for the purpose of being the nursery of His people for very many reasons which we can understand, and others which we cannot understand, but I suppose in order that it might be close to the great ancient civilisations of Egypt and Babylonia, might draw from that which it was well it should draw, at the same time that it should be independent, and that it should have to supersede a race which could be—if one may venture to say so of any of God's nations—superseded without much loss to humanity, it was necessary that the Canaanite civilisation, such as it was, should come to an end. Nothing, I think, that has been discovered makes us feel any regret at the supersession of Canaanite civilisation by Israelite civilisation. We cannot see that there was anything in their culture or their religion which was worth preserving for any length of time, and I think that these infant burials and other elements of religion at Gezer make us feel that the Bible has not misrepresented at all the abomination of the Canaanite culture which was superseded by the Israelite culture. We are thankful for that, sad as it is that humanity should have been so

depraved as it was. Then that is one lesson, I think, from these excavations, besides the main lesson that we may depend upon those who teach us about these things. Another lesson, of course, is to feel the continuity of history, and to feel that what is here brought to light illustrates so many things all over the world. I am, perhaps, a little disappointed to find that there is nothing to illustrate Stonehenge, which is so near my home in Wiltshire, and so far as I can understand—although I dare say I am wrong—there does not seem to have been any orientation about the stones such as there certainly is at Stonehenge. There we have, as you know, a stone over which the sun rises on the longest day, as it did yesterday, with great precision, and I am thankful to know there was a large number of people seeing that sun rise yesterday, and that they were able to do so after waiting six or seven years. I have not heard there is anything of the kind in Palestine, but perhaps we may yet find it. But we do see in all the different alternations of burial and the pottery and the cup marks, and many other details which were brought before our eyes so rapidly just now—we see that there is a general continuity and likeness, not absolute identity, between the work of man in a great many different parts of the world, one may almost say in all parts of the world. That, I think, is a very valuable lesson that these excavations bring out to us—that humanity even in its earliest stages is humanity, and is humanity of the same kind as that which we know living now. These very few remarks I have made rather from the wish to show my thanks to Sir Charles Wilson than to say anything which might be specially worthy of your notice. I have had the pleasure of knowing him for a number of years. His brother was a very loving and affectionate and helpful fellow-worker of mine at Salisbury, and it was always a pleasure to meet him and be with him in any good work. I do not know whether I may go on to add to what I have said a vote of thanks to the workers and local Secretaries. I dare say there will be others to speak to them, but I must confess that, living as I do a busy, fully-occupied life, unable to go into these things at first hand, I am exceedingly obliged to all those who give so much of their time and thought to these very difficult works which are done both at home and abroad; and I should like to be allowed, as Chairman, especially to thank the Secretary and others who have given us this great pleasure this afternoon by arranging this meeting. (Applause.)

Mr. WALTER MORRISON (Treasurer).—My Lord, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I have been asked to propose this resolution, which I am sure will meet with your cordial support :—

“That this meeting desires to express its thanks to Mr. R. A. Stewart Macalister for his zealous and diligent conduct of the excavations, and his care in noting and reporting the results; also to Mr. Hanauer, Dr. Masterman, and others resident in Palestine, or visitors, who have contributed the results of their local observations for publication by the Fund.

“The meeting also desires to thank the several local Hon. Secretaries for their assistance in making known the work of the Fund, and particularly Professor Theodore Wright, our able and zealous Hon. General Secretary for the United States, who has for so many years been an enthusiastic worker for the interests of the Palestine Exploration Fund.”

I am sure you will all agree with me that in Mr. Macalister we have the right man in the right place. He was trained under Dr. Bliss, an American citizen, by-the-bye, who worked for some years for us, who in his turn had been trained by Professor Petric, who was one of the most remarkable excavators who ever lived in the world, and who seemed to have a sort of instinct, as it were, to scent ancient remains under surfaces which were sometimes very unpromising. When this Fund was first started, we at a very early period of our work undertook excavations at Jerusalem, and that work will always remain on record, and I do not suppose there is very much left to be found in Jerusalem itself. It is a very lucky thing that 35 years ago we began to excavate at Jerusalem. It would be a far more expensive and difficult task now, because during those 35 years Jerusalem has grown almost as rapidly as a city in the Western States of America. When we had pretty well finished our systematic excavations, we had to rely upon such an accident as someone building a new house, when some of our friends at Jerusalem would go and examine the foundations, and would find perhaps the vestige of a wall or something. Then we went further afield to excavate the mounds which are scattered largely over the country. Of course, it has been rather a lottery—you may find very interesting remains, and you may find very little indeed; and it certainly was a very fortunate decision on the part of our advisers and of the Committee that we should go and

excavate the site of Gezer. Perhaps I should mention that there is no doubt whatever about this being Gezer, because M. Clermont-Ganneau, when he was in our service, found some marks on a stone which meant "The limits of Gezer," which was one of the Cities of Refuge. We appeal to our fellow-countrymen to furnish us with the necessary means to carry on these excavations rapidly. Our firman expires in the middle of next year, but perhaps we can get it extended; and I can tell you, as the Treasurer of the Fund, that at this present moment we have only just money enough in hand to a little more than pay a certain bank overdraft, and it is eminently desirable that we should be able to go on with these exceedingly interesting discoveries. They are the most remarkable in many ways we have ever made in the Holy Land, and certainly they throw a lurid light upon the nature of the Canaanites and their religion, who were superseded by the irruption of the Israelites; and so we can read the denunciations of the Prophets with greater interest, and we are able to realise the reason of their indignation against these practices. Well, now I would point out that we are very much obliged to accidental visitors to Palestine if they will give us any information they may pick up. It is just as well to write to our office about what they see. It may, perhaps, have been discovered before, and may be recorded in our office, but it is just as well to let us know anything they see which appears to be of any value. It is a case of eyes and no eyes. Many Europeans had climbed to Mount Pisgah and saw no monument, but Lieutenant Conder went and saw some 300 or 400 of these rude stone monuments somewhat analogous to Stonehenge. People travelling in Palestine come across not only rude stone monuments, but other things, and should direct the attention of our Society or some other scientific society to any place or discovery which may be of value. I have very great pleasure in asking you to give a very cordial vote of thanks to Professor Theodore Wright, who has been our indefatigable Secretary in the United States; and we are very grateful indeed for the sympathy which has come to us across the Herring Pond in the form of very substantial dollars, and all the more so because, though the Americans are our kinsmen, it is not an American society. America is the land of the Bible as England is the land of the Bible, and so there is a real, genuine interest felt in our work; but, at the same time, you could conceive that there might be a certain amount of jealousy shown to a society

belonging to another country. I think it would be very unlikely that we should find the Germans, for instance, sending us any subscriptions, or that we should send any money to Germany for carrying on excavations in the Holy Land. Professor Wright has for many a long year been our Hon. Secretary, and to him we owe everything we have received from the United States of America. I would venture to appeal also to the people of this country to give us the necessary funds to carry on this work vigorously, and I would fain hope at an early date, because when the hot weather is over we shall be able to work with greater energy than we can do in the extreme heat of the Maritime Plain. England may not be as wealthy now as the United States, and you cannot expect very much, I am afraid, from the agricultural interest; but our towns are very wealthy, and it is to be hoped that we shall get better support from them. I only wish that all our local Secretaries were as energetic and devoted to our cause as Professor Wright is in the United States of America. The days are gone by when we used to receive cheques for £100 from noblemen and gentlemen who gave £100, or it may be more, to help the Society, and then they think they have done their duty, and do not send yearly subscriptions. We now have to depend, as you will see from the Report, much more upon the guinea and half-guinea subscriptions than we did in the early days of this movement. As you have already heard, we have only excavated as yet one-eighth of this mound, and there are hundreds of these mounds scattered about the country, any one of which when opened might turn out to be as fruitful in surprises as the excavations of Mr. Macalister.

Dr. GINSBURG.—My Lord, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—I have very much pleasure in seconding the resolution.

A SUBSCRIBER.—In rising to support the resolution, I should like to ask my lord a question. I have heard within the last ten days that the Mohammedans have begun to enclose the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto, and also they have begun blasting the face of the rock. I should like to ask if there is any news from Jerusalem confirming that or not?

The CHAIRMAN.—Perhaps Sir Charles Wilson will answer that.

Sir CHARLES WILSON.—There has been a report that the Mohammedan cemetery has been enclosed by a high wall. I may perhaps be allowed to mention that we have only just heard that during some excavations at Jerusalem they have found jar burials

like those at Gezer, and a cave in which a number of men had been buried.

Sir WILLIAM CHARLEY, K.C.—I am very glad that Sir Charles Wilson in his able Papers in the *Quarterly Statement* has left the question open as to the identity of the Holy Sepulchre. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Dr. WRIGHT.—My Lord Bishop, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—Americans are modest (laughter), and they are feeling humble just now, because they have lately been buying ships over here and they are sorry they did. Therefore, Sir, we are eating our bread in silence. But, speaking more seriously, I may say that it has given me the very greatest pleasure to be of any service in this work, and that I have always met with the most kindly reception wherever I have gone in our country. Unfortunately, it is so large that it is impossible to reach many places, but I know very well that there is a rising appreciation of this work, and I consider it most fortunate that the Fund has not only always employed in the field men of the highest character, but that its utterances through the medium of the *Quarterly Statement* have always been of a cautious and wise character. That is why, perhaps, it has not excited the greatest enthusiasm, but while, of course, under the circumstances it could never make large promises to museums or to rich men in America, who are endowing museums as means of gaining private reputation, as well as doing public good, it has done its own work carefully and well. The question was raised about the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto. I met an Englishman who had just come from there, and he said it was being enclosed, and he had some difficulty in getting upon the hill. I mention this because he said they were doing it in order to prevent Americans from holding Christian services amongst those graves as they had been doing. If Americans had been less forward in the matter, probably the wall would not have been put up. As I said before, Sir, our work is of exceeding importance, and it is a great privilege as I deem it to have any part in carrying it on.

Mr. CRACE.—I have a very short and pleasant duty to perform. It is to propose "That the thanks of this meeting be conveyed to the Board of Managers of the Royal Institution for kindly granting the use of their Lecture Theatre for this occasion."

This is not the first occasion we have had the pleasure of meeting in this theatre, a theatre devoted to science, and science in so many many forms, and our requests, whenever it has been possible to answer them favourably, have always been received so courteously that I feel a vote of thanks of a very warm kind is due to the Committee of Management.

Major-General Sir FREDERICK GOLDSMITH.—Mr. Chairman,—I have been asked to second this resolution, and it is with great pleasure that I rise to do so, for it is one not only which I have great pleasure in with regard to the occasion and being asked to do so, but it is one that from old association I am aware is well merited.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Sir CHARLES WILSON.—It is now my pleasant duty to ask you to pass the following resolution unanimously :—"That this meeting tenders its hearty thanks to the Lord Bishop of Salisbury for presiding." I think we are all greatly indebted to the Bishop for having given up so much of his valuable time to the presidency of this meeting, and I am sure his presence in the chair to-day will be a great encouragement to our future work. The Bishop, as I know, visited Jerusalem, and whilst there took the greatest interest in the antiquities to be seen in the city, and I think he has also communicated a paper to our *Quarterly Statement* on the d'Aubigny tombstone.¹ I do not know whether his lordship is aware of it, but that stone was unfortunately broken during a quarrel some months ago between the Greek and the Latin monks as to whose right it was to clean the steps leading up to a little chapel from the courtyard of the Sepulchre. Some monks who had got on to the roof of the Church threw down stones on those who were fighting below, and, unfortunately, one of these stones fell on the tombstone of Philip d'Aubigny and broke it. I have not heard what became of the remains of the stone, but I hope good care was taken that they should not be lost. It is very kind of his lordship to come here and give his approval of the manner in which our work is being carried on. We have in Mr. Macalister a skilled explorer, and we desire to encourage and support him in every possible way, and, without agreeing fully with his tentative conclusions as to the results of his discoveries, I think we may absolutely

¹ *Quarterly Statement*, 1900, p. 192.

depend upon his judgment whenever he says that a particular object belongs to a Jewish or a Canaanite period. His drawings are exceedingly good, and I look forward with the greatest interest to his discoveries in the future. What we hope to find, and I think we may find, is a series of tablets completing the correspondence with the Pharaoh of Egypt. We have letters in the Tell Amarna series from the Governor of Gezer, and we hope to find replies from Egypt in some part of the mound. One tablet was found at Lachish, but at Gezer there is a wetter climate, and these clay tablets have an unfortunate habit of disintegrating in a rainy country. We hope, however, to make some finds, and that by this time next year we shall be able to give you as satisfactory an account of the excavations as we have been able to do for the past 12 months.

Colonel WATSON, R.E.—I have much pleasure, Sir, in rising to second the vote of thanks, and I am sure we are all very much indebted to his lordship for being so good as to come and preside over us on this occasion. I believe there is no one on the episcopal bench who takes more interest in our excavations than the Bishop of Salisbury.

The resolution was carried with acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am much obliged to you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your kindness, and particularly to Sir Charles Wilson for the way in which he has spoken. It is a great happiness to me to know that the Society is closely connected with that college at Jerusalem which is the centre of Bishop Blyth's work where I had the honour to go and consecrate the church in the year 1898. I hope that that is evidence that the work of my dear brother, Bishop Blyth, is of a national character. This is a national Society, and it is very naturally and wisely connected with the work of the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem. We do not wish in the least to claim anything specially of a Church character for the work of the Society, but we are very thankful that it accepts our hospitality, as I believe many visitors to Jerusalem are inclined to do. I do hope that the college may be a real national centre utterly removed from anything to do with party where any Englishman or Englishwoman travelling in that part of the world may find a hearty welcome. (Applause.)