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the sin against which he protested. Both elements of the chapter have the same source.

Again, vv.²⁹⁻³⁰, the section of restoration to the Divine mercy, have a remarkably individual note. They are not made up of the stereotyped phrases which appear frequently in the exilic and post-exilic passages of the same character. The affinities which they reveal, both in language and idea, are rather to the series of oracles which Jeremiah in cc. 3-5 addressed to his fellow-countrymen in Ephraim. The little address was added after the collapse of Samaria, in order to hearten the remanent Israelites, who needed all the succour a prophetic message could bring them.

The same hand added v.¹⁹, the other verse in 2nd sing. which appears in the plur. section. That this has been added is clear on other grounds than the change in the form of address. The rest of the passage insists, as has been said, on one theme,

that men must make no emblem of Yahweh and employ no image in connexion with His worship. Now a warning against the worship of sun, moon, and stars is obviously out of place in this demand. Apart from the fact that men could not make the celestial bodies as they made images, these are spoken of as though they were worshipped directly, not introduced as emblems of anything. To worship them had nothing to do with image-worship; it was an offence against the primary demand of the Decalogue, that Israel shall acknowledge no other god but Yahweh. The verse is an addition which dates from the same period to which vv.²⁹⁻³⁰ have been assigned, the period when N. Israel was living alongside heathen settlers who practised the astral cults of the Assyrians. Recognizing that the law said nothing about such a danger, recognizing perhaps that the Code also ignored it, the religious leaders of the people inserted this solemn word of warning.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, M.A., GLENFARG, PERTSHIRE.

BIBLICAL ARCHÆOLOGY is that branch of knowledge which takes cognizance of the past civilizations which have moulded Biblical history, and investigates them by means of the remains of art, architecture, monuments, inscriptions, literature, language, implements, customs, and all other examples which have survived. Without such knowledge it is impossible to understand properly the background of the Biblical records and the problems that confronted the Israelite world. Every scrap of knowledge of ancient life in Bible lands serves to make the Biblical narrative much more vivid, and enables the message of revelation to be transmitted with greater efficiency. Thanks to our excavators and explorers in Palestine and neighbouring lands, facts are being brought to light which are giving us truer conceptions of ancient history and putting it on a more trustworthy basis.

In addition to the work which is being carried on at numerous sites, several societies are developing far-reaching plans for the future. Their projects may open up vistas of history hitherto undreamed of. The Palestine Exploration Fund has mean-

time resolved to proceed no further with the excavation of the hill Ophel at Jerusalem, although the important work there will probably be resumed some day. It has arranged instead, in conjunction with Harvard University, the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem, the British Academy, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, to undertake a new intensive excavation, extending over three years, of the famous site of Samaria, which yielded such valuable information (including Hebrew *ostraca*) under Dr. Reisner over twenty years ago. The work, which will be under the direction of Mr. J. W. Crowfoot, assisted by Dr. Sukenik of the Hebrew University, will probably begin in March or April of this year. Sir Flinders Petrie, along with a large party of experts, has undertaken this winter to excavate the large Hyksos camp at *Tell Ajjul*, a few miles south of Gaza, in an effort to fill in the gap of, roughly, a thousand years in the history of Palestine from the neolithic age onwards. Close by, at Gerar (now *Tell Jemmeh*), where Abraham and Isaac lived, he is also to carry out digging operations, in the hope of unearthing relics of those patriarchs. The Oriental

Institute of Chicago, under Professor J. H. Breasted as director, which has been excavating for several years at Megiddo (*Tell el-Mutesellim*), has now bought important ground there and on the adjacent Mount Carmel for archæological exploration. Deep down in this ancient *Tell*, in stratum upon stratum, lie the streets and buildings of older walled-in cities, without doubt containing important monuments and records going back over five thousand years. The excavation promises to be one of the most scientific and elaborate ever conducted in the Near East. A sign of the advancing times is that a Chair of Archæology has recently been founded at the American University of Beirut, so that natives in that region will be able to collaborate with Europeans and Americans in the discovery and interpretation of the different civilizations that succeeded each other in Palestine.

Work has begun at last on the site of Tanis (Biblical Zoan) in the Egyptian Delta, with the assistance of a grant from the French Government. Here M. Pierre Montet, the celebrated French archæologist, the excavator of Byblos, has unearthed, among numerous other valuable fragments, six granite columns, twenty-three feet high, inscribed with hieroglyphs. The inscriptions prove, he holds, that the city was identical with Raamses or Pi-Ramasse (the famous residence of Ramesses II. in the Delta), from which the Israelite host set out on its flight from Egypt (Ex 12³⁷). His argument lies in the fact that they speak of Ramesses II. as having the protection of 'Amon, Seth, Horus, and Ptah of Ramesses.' Usually in such lists of deities, the place where each is worshipped is added, such as Amon of Karnak, Ptah of Memphis, and so on. Here, however, in Tanis, Ramesses has appropriated these divinities to himself; and Montet points out that the only case in which a similar list occurs is in the texts connected with the city of Pi-Ramasse. Scholars have differed as to the site of this city, some placing it much farther to the south, and others (such as Gardiner, Peet, and Hall) at Pelusium, on the north-east coast. If M. Montet's view be correct, the 'Red (or Reedy) Sea' would correspond with the south-eastern portion of Lake Manzala, and many difficulties would be explained. But additional evidence will be required for such a view, which was at one time held by Brugsch and then abandoned by him, and which seems to conflict with the site of Pithom, which is believed by most experts to have been discovered by Naville at *Tell el-Maskûta*, in the Wady Tumîlât. At all events, the position of Tanis on the Nile, in or near to what was the land of Goshen, marks it out as a

residence of the Pharaohs, and a probable dwelling-place of the Hebrews in bondage. So far, only the gateway of the main temple and the ruins of the temple of Anta, 230 metres distant, have been uncovered, but the further excavation of the whole site will doubtless throw much light on these debatable matters.

Occasionally Old Testament texts or statements receive wonderful confirmation or illumination. The passage, for instance, in Ezekiel (23^{14f.}), describing figures of men portrayed in vermilion on the Babylonian palace walls, has been singularly illustrated by the mural paintings recently discovered at Til-Barsib (modern *Tell Ahmar*), on the Euphrates, by Maurice Dunand and Thureau-Dangin. The whole palace has been found to be decorated on the inside walls with pictures about six feet high. Altogether over fifty yards of these have been discovered, and are believed to date from the reign of Tiglath-pileser (745 B.C.). Copies of them, executed on the scale of the original, are being placed in the Assyrian department of the Louvre. The scenes portrayed are various—groups of disarmed rebels, the king with an escort of lords and nobles ('all of them princes to look upon'), galloping horsemen, wild animals, and similar representations. The vermilion colour still remains solid and adherent, while the other colours (black, white, and blue) have fallen away in many places. Ezekiel, of course, was referring to 'Chaldean' (Babylonian) palaces. By the time he wrote (592 B.C.) the Assyrian palaces had been put to the flames. Nevertheless, the discoveries at Til-Barsib afford sufficient evidence of what must have existed in Babylonia also.

Since our last review, further excavations have been reported from Palestine. The ancient town of Kiriath-sepher or Debir (*Tell Beit Mirsim*) exhibits ten different strata, separated from each other by remains of conflagration. As one of the strata (the third from the top) has also a burned level in the midst of it, it follows that this home of scribes or books was destroyed at least eleven times by fire. The lowest stratum goes back to the First Bronze Age (over 2000 B.C.). Some remarkable finds have been secured. Most interesting of all, perhaps, is a complete set of game pieces, discovered in the ruins of the palace (dating from about 1700 B.C.). The ten pieces of the game, consisting of five little three-cornered pyramids and five little cones, all of faience, together with the ivory die which was used to determine moves, have all been found, though the game-board itself is unfortunately missing. A number of *ostraca*, dating from

800-600 B.C., and bearing some incised names, have also been discovered. All are broken, but the names Gera, Nahum, and Hezekiah seem probable. Latest reports from *Tell Rumeileh* (Beth-shemesh), west of Jerusalem, where Professor Elihu Grant, of Haverford College, Pennsylvania, has been at work with a new expedition, show that the main racial features of the city were probably Canaanite to the last. Its successive conquerors, whether Egyptian, Philistine, or Israelite, provided the masters, but such people never formed the chief part of the population. It was an important centre in the latter part of the second millennium. It was here that the ark rested by a great stone in the days of Samuel, and it was one of the chief places in Solomon's province of Dan. But after the schism in the monarchy, it appears to have declined, and its poorest age has been found to be the one under the kings of Judah, from 900-700 B.C. (or later), when the population lived near the rim of the city, close to or over the remains of the old wall. At *Râmet el-Khalîl* ('The home of Abraham'), believed by some scholars to be Mamre, two miles north of Hebron, where A. E. Mader has been excavating, potsherds which can be dated some time between the ninth and sixth centuries B.C., as well as fragments supposed to belong to the First Bronze Age, have been found. At the *Teleilat* (Tells of) *Ghassûl*, in the eastern valley of the Jordan, some four miles north of the Dead Sea, Père A. Mallon has laid bare part of a prehistoric city, which appears to have been destroyed by an immense conflagration some time before 2000 B.C., and never rebuilt. The remains point to a developed and even luxurious civilization, with rectangular houses, extraordinarily uniform, constructed of stone and hand-shaped bricks (the impressions of the fingers being still visible), and with a remarkable knowledge at that early date of agriculture and ceramics. Further and more careful consideration, however, of the discoveries at these two last-mentioned places is desirable before satisfactory conclusions can be drawn. Many of the deductions put forward by Mader from his excavations at *Râmet el-Khalîl*, especially in regard to the existence of a sanctuary of Abraham and a

via sacra leading up to it, have been shown by Dupont-Sommer and other archæologists to have little or no foundation; and the idea of Père Mallon that *Teleilat Ghassûl* is probably Sodom can hardly be accepted, as evidence is against the valley to the north of the Dead Sea being the site of the Pentapolis, and in any city of the time of Abraham there would probably be more signs of metal.

The statement made in our last article that the inhabitants of Palestine were in possession of alphabetic writing long before the days of Joshua has been confirmed by the discovery at Gezer of an inscribed *ostrakon* containing three letters in a very archaic script, older still than that on the Beth-shemesh fragment to which we referred. The sherd was found by the American School on the section of the hill where Macalister located the high altar. The script is well executed, having been made by a sharp instrument before the clay was baked. When it was shown to Professor Butin, fresh from his search for new inscriptions at Serâbît, he was struck by the similarity of the letters to the Proto-Sinaitic ones (believed by many scholars to be the parent of the Phœnician) and read them יג. This led of necessity to the question of age, and the sherd was submitted to three experts in Palestinian pottery: Père Vincent, Professor Garstang, and Dr. Fisher. Each of them, without hesitation, and without knowing the opinion of the others, pronounced it to belong to the Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 B.C.). The lettering is thus the oldest yet discovered in Palestine, and its importance will occur immediately to all students of Semitic epigraphy. It gives us every reason to believe that such a script, whether Proto-Sinaitic or Phœnician, was known and used in Palestine long before the time of the Hebrew conquest. That the Hebrews themselves, during their sojourn in Egypt, were acquainted with writing, probably in the same Semitic characters, is evident from certain of their number being appointed *shatar*, 'officers' (Ex 5¹⁴ J), a word which literally means 'scribes' (cf. Assyrian, *shafâru*, 'write'; Aram., *shafârâ*, 'document'). This implies that the Hebrews kept the usual registering and account work which the Egyptian taskmasters required.