

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

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

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



Buy me a coffee

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



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

now empty Cross ; because our life as baptized believers is based on the message of Divine forgiveness—therefore we call God Father ; therefore we acknowledge Him, who to us is the Author of eternal salvation, as His Incarnate Son ; therefore we know that those influences which uphold our lives are not broken fragments of a universal spirit, but the whole and undivided God.

What, then, is the great strong fact of Christianity ? Is it salvation through the Name of Jesus, or is it the worship of the Blessed Three ? Is it the cry that goes up before the throne, ' Holy, Holy, Holy ' ? or is it ' Worthy is the Lamb ' ?

In the grey old cathedral of St. Bavon at Ghent hangs the masterpiece of Jan Van Eyck. Before you is a wide stretch of pasture, rising toward the back of the picture into low rolling hills, crowned with foliage, and beyond the towers and spires of the celestial city. The trees are laden with fruit, the meadow bright with flowers, each one painted with that exquisite patience and tender minuteness

which is the glory of early Flemish art and the counterpart of that loving workmanship with which our God, immanent in Nature, has clothed the transient grass and arrayed the lilies of the field. And in the midst, surrounded by the emblems of the Passion, and receiving the homage of apostles and martyrs, kings and priests, angels and men in a wonderful order, and pouring into a chalice on the altar the living stream of His most precious blood, stands the Lamb as it had been slain. Over the whole scene the Holy Dove spreads the benediction of His brooding presence. And seated on a great throne, with hand uplifted in blessing over a world that gathers at His feet, is the crowned figure of the Eternal Father.

It is no paradox but a plain truth, which, while others reason, we Christians know. The worship of Him of whom and through whom and in whom are all things and the adoration of the Lamb are all one.¹

¹ J. G. Simpson, *Christian Ideals*, 323.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

BY THE REVEREND J. W. JACK, D.D., GLENFARG, PERTHSHIRE.

FURTHER Mousterian deposits, deeply stratified, have been found in the caves at Athlīt, where Miss Garrod has been conducting excavations. Another skeleton, resembling *Palaeanthropus Palestinus*, has been discovered in the third layer. It should be remembered, however, that this type of ancient Palestinian man is only a transitional one, and has features which make it difficult for him to be the direct ancestor of man. Sir Arthur Keith is of opinion that the evolutionary cradle-land of modern humanity lies much farther to the east, and has yet to be discovered. Whether it will be found in Mesopotamia, as some think, remains to be seen. In recent years important prehistoric work has been done at such ancient sites as Nippur, Babylon, Ur, and Kish, but no human remains or artifacts much older than 4000 B.C. have thus far been unearthed. Probably, no scholar any longer believes that the birthplace of man was in Palestine or Mesopotamia. In recent years Central Asia has come to have the best claim to be the earliest home of mankind.

Some time ago the excavators at *Tell Billah*, in Assyria, had the good fortune to discover a number of cuneiform documents antedating the period of

Ashurnasirpal II. (ninth cent. B.C.). Though these are in an exceedingly poor state of preservation, only one of them having been baked, they have been tentatively transliterated by Professor Chiera of Chicago. The majority of them have been found to be dated to years of Assyrian eponyms, belonging to the Middle Assyrian period, and therefore much earlier than any of our hitherto discovered lists. This method of dating by the Assyrian Canon or calendar (the *limu* lists), in which every year bore the name of an Assyrian officer (an ' eponym '), has enabled us to fix the dates of many Biblical events accurately, without being dependent on the Biblical chronology. The Assyrian dynastic chronicles are not always trustworthy, for they give the dynasties one after the other as if they succeeded each other, whereas we know now that several of them were contemporaneous. Such chronicles as these were the source from which Berossus drew his information, and for this reason his dating is not always correct. With the Assyrian eponym calendar, however, the case is different. This calendar exists in several copies, all agreeing with each other, and so far as hitherto found covers the period from

893 B.C. (during the reign of Adad-nirari II.) to about 650 B.C. (during the reign of Ashurbanipal). The date of all the years has been determined from the mention of a total solar eclipse, which is stated to have occurred in the month Sivan, in the eponymate of Bur-Sagale. Astronomers have discovered that this eclipse, visible at Nineveh, occurred on June 15th, 763 B.C., and by means of this authentic guide it has been easy to determine all the dates in the Assyrian Canon, such as that of the battle of Karkar (at which King Ahab was present) in 854 B.C. Now, with the discovery of these *Billah* tablets, going back at least to Shalmaneser I. (early part of the thirteenth cent. B.C.), the eponymously attested dates will be carried back several centuries. In view of the obvious importance of the discoveries, Professor Chiera hopes to publish the results as soon as the tablets have been sufficiently treated to bear adequate handling. It is possible that considerable light may be thrown on the earlier dates of Israelite history, for which at present we have no authentic guide.

A curious discovery made by Mr. C. Leonard Woolley at 'Ur of the Chaldees' seems to show that the religious customs of the Sumerians and those of the ancient Hebrews were not unconnected. In excavating a temple, dated about 2700 B.C., he found three pits beneath the mud-brick floor of the court. In one of these, measuring fifteen feet by twelve, a number of gypsum blocks, probably 'unhewn stones,' had been laid. These blocks, which must have been brought from a great distance, do not appear to have been intended to strengthen any superstructure, but must have served as the sacred foundation of an altar. There is no other instance of such a thing in Sumerian texts, but it was the custom of the Hebrews to build their altars with 'unhewn stones' (cf. Ex 20²⁶, Jos 8³¹). In the case at Ur, no doubt, the stones are beneath, and not in the altar itself, but it seems probable that they were meant to consecrate the superstructure, and thus they bear some relation to the unhewn stones of the Mosaic tradition. On the floor of the large cave at Gezer was found an early Amorite altar, consisting of a rough undressed stone block, eighteen inches square, with the skeleton of an infant stretched upon it. Other examples found are of the same rough type. No case of an ancient altar built with dressed stones has yet been discovered. In Herod's temple at Jerusalem, as in Solomon's, the altar of burnt-offering was of unhewn stones, and the priests approached it by an ascent of the same kind. Perhaps the custom may have been due to the idea in primitive times that the

numen inhabiting the altar-stone would be driven out or perhaps injured by the process of dressing. Probably, if the long-lost site of the city of Agade (Akkad) in Mesopotamia, where the famous Sargon reigned (c. 2752 B.C.), could be discovered, we would receive valuable new information regarding these and other early Semitic customs. The Oxford Field Museum Expedition, under Mr. L. C. Watelin, which has been excavating at Kish for twelve winters, has now set itself to search for this ancient city, and if it is successful we may expect much light thrown on the early period—now largely a gap—between the Flood and Abraham.

Sufficient has perhaps been said already about *Teleilat Ghassul*,¹ but in the current issue of *Syria* Père Mallon has furnished us with a new and authentic account of the excavations, together with a detailed list of all the 'finds.' So far, there have been two campaigns of three months each, the first during the winter of 1929-30, with the collaboration of M. René Neuville, Chancellor of the French Consulate at Jerusalem, and the second during 1930-31, with the help of Robert Kœppel, D.Sc., Tübingen. The remains cover a stretch of 875 yards from north to south and 438 from east to west, and include two principal mounds with a large depression between, which represent apparently two ancient cities. The excavators have recognized four levels of occupation, separated from each other by layers of ashes and wind-blown earth, and corresponding to four successive periods of habitation. The most ancient of these rests on the sandy foundation which had formed the bottom of the sea in the Quaternary period, and here at one part a pavement of bricks has been found. The other levels rise about three feet above each other. The houses are of the rectangular type; and the building stones have no sign of cutting, having been utilized just as they were picked up in the neighbourhood, while the bricks, which are very solid and superior in density to those of Jericho, have been mostly made by hand, without a mould (many of them still bear the imprint of the workmen's fingers), and are rectangular, cylindrical, semi-spherical, or other shapes. The same type of civilization (which Neuville terms 'Ghassulian') is revealed in all the levels, though with a certain amount of development towards the top. We have thus on the same site an evolution from the Stone Age (the flint

¹ *Teleilat* is the plural of *Teleil* or *Tuleil*, 'a little hill'; *Ghassul* comes from *Ghasala*, the Arab name of the alkaline washing-plant which grows among the ruins. The site lies between the Hills of Moab and the Jordau, and a few miles north of the Dead Sea.

implements seem to be extremely abundant) to the Bronze Age, and this appears both in the ceramics and in the tools. The cities, Mallon reasserts, must have flourished during the latter part of the fourth millennium and existed until about 2000 B.C. (the time of Abraham), when they were destroyed and definitely abandoned. This dating seems to be accepted by Sir Flinders Petrie, Dr. Clarence S. Fisher, Père Vincent, Professor Garstang, and others who have visited the site. But whether these cities were Sodom and Gomorrah is still undetermined. In the first number of *Biblica* for 1933, Mallon again contests the view that the Cities of the Plain were at the south end of the Dead Sea.

A third campaign of work (the first was begun in 1927), under the young Italian archæologist, Dr. Renato Bartoccini, has just been conducted on the site of Rabbath-Ammon, the chief city of the Ammonites (the descendants of Lot) mentioned in the Old Testament, situated about twenty-five miles north-east of the Dead Sea, in the fruitful valley which forms the upper course of the Jabbok. Under Ptolemy II. (Philadelphus) the city was rebuilt and called 'Philadelphia,' but the original name is still preserved in the modern '*Amman*. Already Europeans and Americans have vied with each other in making the site one of the most important centres of archæological research. Its history is so bound up with that of Israel that much in the latter may be explained when the excavators reach the lower levels, beneath the superstructure of Roman and Byzantine remains. Meantime the Roman acropolis and temple buildings are being uncovered. The city comes into special prominence during the reign of David, who was obliged to make war upon it to wipe out the insult given to his ambassadors (cf. 2 S 10-12). It was captured at this time by Joab, David's commander-in-chief, though it was afterwards reoccupied by the Ammonites. The chief deity was Molech or Milcom (1 K 11⁷⁻³³), whose religion was of a specially cruel type, corresponding to the national characteristics.

At *Tell en-Nasbeh* (Mizpah), near Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, Professor W. F. Badè has now cleared and mapped the remaining sections of the city walls (sixteen feet thick, and once over twenty-five feet high in some parts). He has found that in two places the main wall had not been carried to bedrock, but had been raised over débris containing a large number of Early Iron potsherds, which demonstrates that it was not built earlier than about 900 B.C. He has found evidence that

it was destroyed about 701 B.C., which coincides with the campaign of Sennacherib. This Assyrian monarch, the successor of Sargon II., plundered the cities of Beth-Dagon, Joppa, Bene-Berak, and Azuru, and then took all the cities of Judah by force, and prepared to besiege Jerusalem. In the overthrow of Mizpah, we have thus another instance of this conqueror's warlike activities. The city was rebuilt later, but not the wall, for later houses seem to have been built over the top of this. The outstanding work of the season has been the exposing of the principal city gate, which has been found on the east side of the city, and is uncommonly well preserved, being one of the finest of this period so far found in Palestine. The entrance to the gate measures thirteen feet in width, and the stone doorsockets are still in place, with interesting stone benches inside. Here, as in most Palestinian towns, appear to have been 'broad places,' devoted to judicial business, traffic, popular assemblies, and gossip (cf. 2 K 7¹, 2 Ch 3²⁶, Job 29⁷, Neh 8¹⁻¹⁶). The gates of a city were symbolical of its might, and hence we read of 'the gates of Hades' (Mt 16¹⁸), *i.e.* the powers of Hades (traditionally described as a city).

Work has been going on vigorously at Jericho, under the careful directorship of Professor Garstang. The results for Biblical history are so numerous that they can only be briefly mentioned here. First, a strong fortress of Hittite construction has been uncovered, belonging, according to the pottery fragments and other evidence, to about 1200 B.C. The walls are from four to six feet thick, and faced with rough polygonal blocks, the whole building being somewhat similar to the type of Hittite palace or *hilani* at Sinjerli and elsewhere in the north. 'It would seem,' says Professor Garstang, 'that about the time when the Philistines were established upon the sea-board of Palestine, the Pharaohs reasserted their control of the trade-routes of the interior by establishing upon the ruins of Jericho an outpost of Hittite mercenaries.' Second, the Bronze Age levels have now been tested by stratigraphic methods. The deposits, consisting of local pottery and painted fabrics, have been found to coincide with the age of Thutmose III. and his immediate successors, *i.e.* about the fifteenth cent. B.C. This limiting date has been determined by the freshness of motive and execution in the local types, and especially by 'the total absence of any Mykenæan wares or imitations among the thousands of specimens that have been turned up, washed, and scrutinized.' The stratigraphic examination is thus in harmony with the evidence afforded by the

tombs, showing an interruption in the occupation of the city about the time of Amenophis III. (1419-1383 B.C.), and thus placing the entrance of Joshua during this period. Third, the signs of fierce conflagration at this time are evident everywhere. The palace, with its living chambers and external store-rooms of oil and grain, is found to have been burned in places to the ground, showing thick deposits of charcoal (in some places two feet in depth) and pockets of white ash. The traces of terrific conflagration, indeed, are so impressive that Professor Garstang is of the view that 'such an effect could only have been obtained by studied preparation.' Fourth, below this stratum of the Late Bronze Age, a Hyksos building containing twenty or more rooms, has been unearthed. It is altogether exceptional, exceeding by far the requirements of a local king. Here store vessels have been found stamped or sealed by Treasury officials of the Hyksos age. It seems possible that Jericho, in this earlier period, marked the site of what Garstang calls 'a vast emporium of the Hyksos kings.'

Mr. J. Crowfoot, the director of the Samaria excavations, has now made a detailed report on the remarkable carved ivories discovered there. These include pieces in the round, plaques in relief, and plaques in pierced work (*ajouré*). They seem to have formed part of the decorated furniture in Ahab's house, having been used for the framework of cabinets, couches, tables, stools, or toilet-boxes, and perhaps also for the wainscotting of rooms. It is clear that such ivories were largely used for these decorative purposes. A noteworthy characteristic is that, with the exception of a few purely Egyptian, the decorations correspond largely with those in Solomon's temple (cf. 1 K 6-10). The lions, oxen, sphinx-cherubim, palm-trees, flowers, chainwork, and other subjects all find a parallel in Solomon's ornamentation. There must have been skilled workers in ivory, probably Phœnician artists, resident in Samaria, just as Solomon is known to have brought his special artificers from Tyre. Perhaps such craftsmen moved about with their patterns from one court to another.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Varia.

SURELY the Book of Malachi has never been subjected to so thorough an investigation as it has received from Bulmerincq.¹ His elaborate Introduction of five hundred and twelve pages, published over six years ago, has now been followed by a Commentary running to five hundred and ninety-nine pages, which is as interesting as it is elaborate. Nothing seems to have escaped him. At every point the text is considered in the light of the versions, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and even old Slavonic, as well, of course, as Greek and Latin. Nor is the thread ever lost amid the multitudinous detail. The discussions attaching to individual verses, which usually extend to several pages, and once—in the case of the famous 1¹¹—to no less than twenty-seven, always conclude with an enlightening summary. The most recent, as well as the older books, by the scholars of many nations, are all laid under contribution. But Bulmerincq is not oppressed by his learning. He takes his own

line, and he can always give reasons for the faith that is in him. On 2¹³, for example, for, 'and this again (or *the second time*, אֲנִי־יָדוּעַ, ye do,' he reads 'and this, *which I hate*, אֲנִי־שֹׂנֵא, ye do.' More important is his treatment of 2¹⁸, which is usually interpreted as an expression of the divine hostility to divorce: he renders it, 'dismiss (or divorce) her whom the God of Israel hates.' Occasionally, as here, he puts the less generous construction upon utterances of Malachi which have been customarily regarded as great prophetic words. In 1¹¹, for example, in which many scholars find a noble tribute to heathen worship, he takes the reference to be to the worship, at Jahweh sanctuaries, of the Jews of the Diaspora. The highly controversial 2^{15a}, which a Dutch scholar has characterized as the most difficult verse in the Old Testament, he renders thus: 'No one has done this, who (reading אֲשֶׁר for שֶׁאֵר) has any share in the spirit (of God).'

He brings out very clearly the contrast between Malachi and the pre-exilic prophets, especially Jeremiah. They say that the cult is worthless, in comparison with the ethical demands of Jahweh: *he* says, it is worthless, because it is incorrectly

¹ *Kommentar zum Buche des Propheten Maleachi*, von Alexander von Bulmerincq (Verlag von J. G. Krüger, Tartu).