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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

Him nor account for His production. The Heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; how much less our finite minds? Yet He haunts our literature and confronts all our relativity with Himself as an Absolute.

We challenge Him to give some reasonable explanation of His Presence and seeming failure, and He still points us, as of old, not to intellectual disputations concerning His Person, but to indisputable evidences of His Power. 'Go your way and tell the things which ye do hear and see: . . . And blessed is he, whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in Me.'

The world will always find it easy to pick holes in the intellectual formulation of the Christian faith. The historical happenings in a far-away past must always be open to question, and the documents which contain the records are never exempt from critical investigation. The tests which the Master Himself bids us employ are experimental in character. From the evidences of His Power we deduce His Divinity. Do we need a greater proof of His transcendence than our failure fully to account for Him purely in terms of what we know as human? Is not His omnipotence witnessed to through the ages in the story of the transformation of sinners into saints? Does not the presence of the supernatural shine through the natural as He transfigures us by His grace and reveals Himself in the Breaking of the Bread? Is it not true that there is in each one of us a region, deep in the core

of our being, into which nothing human can penetrate, but in which none the less we find Him, or rather are found of Him? His Presence, 'closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet,' binds us so vitally to the Invisible God that we need no other assurance of Advent, but in Him find that which bears with it the marks of true authentication—Immanuel, God with us.

What would we more? Why should we look for another and greater than this One when Christ sufficeth us? If at any time in a world of shadows a faltering faith halts in doubt, there is still open the way back to the very heart of mercy of our God through Jesus Christ. He withholds from us intellectual certitude, but never spiritual assurance if we ask in faith. And faith has a way of finding Eternal truth which eludes the grasp of the wise and prudent. A reckless flinging of ourselves, without reserve, into the service of the Master when all seems hopeless and lost brings with it over and over again a certitude, not otherwise obtainable, that behind the flux of becoming is Being; penetrating the natural is the supernatural; in time is eternity; working through change is the changeless God, and underneath are the everlasting Arms. The saints are His witnesses through the ages, and their verdict is unanimous at least in this: they did not look for another because in Him they found all which they sought.¹

¹ H. M. Relton, *Messages from a Troubled Church to a World in Trouble*, 53.

Recent Biblical Archaeology.

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

NEW discoveries have been made at Tell el-Amarna, in Egypt, where so many valuable texts bearing on Palestine were unearthed in 1887. Mr. J. D. S. Pendlebury, Director of the Egypt Exploration Society's expedition there, has re-excavated the official buildings, offices, and sanctuary which the 'heretic' Pharaoh, Akhenaton (previously known as Amenhotep IV.), built in the fourteenth century B.C., when he instituted his new monotheistic sun-worship, and attempted to displace the older worship of Amen. In the Records Office, where the original fragments were discovered, the excavators have succeeded in finding seven other interesting tablets, while they have discovered an eighth in the clerks'

houses adjoining. According to Dr. Cyrus Gordon, of the American School of Oriental Research, one is the filed copy of an order to Itia, the governor of Ascalon, commanding him to guard the town securely; another is a Palestinian letter, which may have come from Abdashirta, or his son Aziru, the crafty rulers of Amurru, who were attacking the Phœnician and North Syrian cities on the coast as far as Ugarit (Ras Shamra), while representing themselves as faithful servants of Egypt; a third is apparently part of the epic poem 'Shar Tamkhari' (or 'King of Battle'), relating the exploits of Sargon I. in Cappadocia; others are vocabularies of Sumerian and Babylonian signs, which were

probably kept by the foreign secretaries for reference; and among the rest are small fragments of school texts and a list of the gods. The finding of these tablets gives hope that others relating more particularly to Palestine will be discovered by the next expedition, which is already planned for the opening year. In the centre of the Temple were found the high altar, with offering tables round about, and at the farthest end the 'Holy of Holies,' the latter being screened from view by two walls, and reminding one of the Jewish tabernacle.

It is not generally realized that the Ras Shamra tablets, which may be dated from the fifteenth to the thirteenth centuries, contain traditions going back much earlier, probably to the beginning of the second millennium, *i.e.* to the epoch of the twelfth Egyptian dynasty. The tablets had probably been copied over a considerable period, and some of them in their original form date from the early epoch of the Phœnician race. It has been suggested by some scholars that they belong to the time of the great Phœnician poet, Sanchoniathon, who is believed to have lived about the eleventh century B.C., but they do not answer to his theories, and in reality go back to a much earlier age than his. They rather represent the doctrines of a certain Ben-Thabion, an ancient Phœnician hierophant, who is known to have taught the old cosmic traditions to the priests and prophets. Philo speaks of this early teacher's 'allegorical' theories as consisting essentially in 'deifying the products of the earth and considering them as gods and adoring them.'

The tablets continue to throw valuable light on many Old Testament passages hitherto obscure. According to one of them, the inhabitants had a custom of placing flat, hollowed stones at the entrance to tombs, in order to gather the rain and dew. It was believed that these forces of Nature would ultimately bring about the resurrection of the deceased, just as they revive a plant. This seems to have been the idea that Isaiah had in his mind when he wrote (26¹⁹), 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.' Again, when the god Alein, representing the summer, died, there was grievous mourning among his friends, especially on the part of his father, Baal (*i.e.* Hadad), as well as others, and this explains an enigmatical passage in Zechariah (12¹¹), which refers to the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo as an illustration of what would take place in Jerusalem. The passage has been variously interpreted, but judging from the tablets

the meaning intended is obviously this: 'Just as Hadad bitterly laments the death of his son Alein, so shall it be in Jerusalem where the inhabitants shall weep as one does for his only son.' It is worth noting, too, that the tablets clearly distinguish Astarte from Asherah as two separate goddesses. We know that some scholars have cast doubt on the existence of the latter, confining the name to the sacred tree or pole set up near an altar, or regarding it merely as another name for Astarte. But the tablets give abundant and decisive proof to the contrary. Asherah is represented as the *paredros* or associate of Hadad, and the creatress of the gods (being the mother of seventy divine children). Her separate existence leads us to see that Wellhausen, Klostermann, Kittel, and others have been mistaken in regarding the mention of the four hundred prophets of Asherah in 1 K 18¹⁹ as a later interpolation. The Baal mentioned there is Hadad, seeing that he sends the thunder and rain, and the prophets referred to are those of his *paredros*. The fact that the name Baal occurs in the story for that of Hadad, and that the goddess Asherah is mentioned, gives evidence of an ancient tradition. Similarly, the worship of Baal and Asherah, which Manasseh established in the Temple at Jerusalem (2 K 21³⁻⁷ 23^{aff.}) in imitation of Ahab, was none other than the worship of Hadad and his associate, and the couple were naturally accompanied by the host of heaven. Another goddess frequently mentioned in the tablets is 'Anath, who appears among the Israelites at Elephantinē as the companion of Yahweh, though she is not referred to in the Old Testament except in a few names. Among her numerous adversaries was one whose name is written *Adm*, which must have been pronounced Adam. This Adam is stated to have dwelt in the region of the rising sun, and we know that the Adam of Genesis was placed by Yahweh in a garden eastward in Eden. There seems, therefore, to be some similarity in the two legends, although there is no Eve in the Ras Shamra mythology.

A chief characteristic of the supreme God El in these tablets is that He appears under several hypostases or distinct subsistences, such as Beth-El ('the house which is El'), Dôr-El ('the dwelling which is El'), Shôr-El ('the bull which is El'), etc. In other words, between the great God who dispensed the necessities of life and humanity which received them there were intermediaries or mandatories, as it were. Something comparable to this seems to appear in the early parts of the Old Testament, where we have Elohim or Yahweh with

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coadjutors, such as His *Malâch* (מַלְאָךְ) or theophanic angel who speaks and acts in His name (Gn 21¹⁷ 31¹¹, Ex 14⁹, Jg 6²⁰, etc.), His warrior prince or captain who appeared to Joshua (5¹⁸), and His 'watchers' who are mentioned in Daniel (4^{13, 17, 23}). The old Canaanite pantheon has found no place in the Biblical records, but the picturesque imagery seems to persist. And, moreover, as these hypostases were all identical with the god himself, though differently named, we see clearly that, in the story of Jacob, El and Bethel are interchangeable and represent the same entity.

The question as to who the Hyksos or 'Shepherd Kings' were, who reigned in Egypt while the Israelites sojourned there, is coming nearer to solution. The excavations of Montet at Tanis (*San el-Hagar*), the Biblical Zoan, in the Egyptian Delta, combined with those at Ras Shamra, have afforded us valuable information on the matter. There seems to be sufficient evidence to prove that Avaris, the capital of the Hyksos, is to be identified with Tanis, and if we are to judge from the pantheon at this place in the time of these strangers, they must have been Canaanites of Semitic race, allied to the Phœnicians. It was held by the old Egyptologists that Avaris, Raamses (or Pi-Ramasse), and Tanis were one and the same city, and Montet's conclusions are so confirmatory of this that Gardiner, who had placed Avaris at Pelusium, has now adopted Montet's view. Probably, as early as the Old Empire, in any case under the Middle Empire, the city was called Avaris (*Ha-w'ri*), and the Hyksos made it their chief military and religious centre. Though partly destroyed at the time of the expulsion of these foreigners (c. 1580 B.C.), it was rebuilt by Ramesses II., who called it Pi-Ramasse ('House of Ramesses'). This second name continued until the revolt under Smendes, and the commencement of the twenty-first dynasty (c. 1100 B.C.), when it seems to have been changed to Tanis (*Dja'net*), a name which it took from the surrounding district. This identity enables us to discover who the gods of the Hyksos were, and consequently to what race the latter belonged. Montet has unearthed three inscriptions in the city foundations, with the formula 'Beloved of Seth, the lord of Avaris,' and another with the same words at *Tell Moqdam*, only thirty miles distant. From this we may conclude that Seth was one of the principal gods of the Hyksos. Other discoveries of Montet's show that this god was associated with the goddess 'Anta, who we know was none other than the 'Anath of the Canaanites, and, further, that he was identical with Baal (otherwise called Hadad),

for on one of two steles which Ramesses II. erected on the caravan route between Suez and the Wady Tumilât we have mention of the triad 'Anta, Seth, and Soped, while on the other the names appear as 'Anta, Baal, and Soped. If we remember, moreover, that the god El figures frequently on Hyksos scarabs (cf. Jacob-El, 'Anath-El, etc.), we have every reason to infer that the principal gods of the Hyksos pantheon were El, Baal (Seth), and 'Anath ('Anta), and these, according to the Ras Shamra tablets, were the chief divinities of the Canaanites or Phœnicians. We may therefore conclude, on mythological grounds, that the Hyksos were of Semitic race, and closely related to the Phœnicians on the Palestinian coast. Some scholars have supposed that Khian and Apachnan, two names of the greatest of Hyksos rulers, are Mitannian or Hurrian, but the former is undoubtedly Semitic (cf. Ahian, 1 Ch 7¹⁹, and especially the Arab name *Hayyan*, which is attested also in Nabatean), while the latter is originally of Egyptian formation.

At ancient Gaza (*Tell 'Ajûl*), a centre of Hyksos power in Southern Palestine, the British School of Archæology, working under Sir Flinders Petrie, has brought many new treasures to light. Over two hundred more weights, chiefly hematite, have been unearthed during last season. Most of these were found at what is believed to have been the port entrance of the city, where the chief trade went on. Nearly all of them are very light, under an ounce, only a few weighing a pound or two. They could not, Sir Flinders thinks, have been used for food in such small amounts, nor for precious metals or drugs as staple commodities, and it is difficult to think of any material traded in such small quantities. The large number of weights discovered at all the ancient sites in Palestine gives evidence of the great activity of commerce and intercourse all over the civilized world before 2000 B.C. The el-Amarna Letters are full of references to the journeys to and fro of caravans, and to the interchange of numerous articles of merchandise. Palestine was the intermediary of a great traffic between Western Asia and the far Eastern kingdoms. Petrie's excavations at this southern centre have been discontinued for the present, and he has commenced exploration in French Syria, with the object of possible excavation there, in an effort to lay bare the great civilization which flourished in that region in the Neolithic and Early Bronze ages (between 2000 and 3000 B.C.), and which, he believes has left large traces in the foreign jewellery, pottery, and other remains at Gaza. The new work will be of great importance if it succeeds in answering the

questions raised by his recent excavations in the south.

There has always been some uncertainty as to the precise location of Gibeon and the other three cities (Chephirah, Beëroth, and Kiriath-jearim) which together formed a 'Hivite' confederacy at the time of Joshua's entry into Canaan (Jos 9¹⁷). The inhabitants of these cities devised a scheme by which they avoided the fate that had befallen their neighbours, but as they had used trickery and falsehood, they were condemned to perpetual service as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' to the Israelites. It is now generally admitted by scholars, in accordance with the Septuagint, that 'Hivite' is a Massoretic error for 'Horite' (חורי for חרתי). In other words, these cities were Hurrian, *i.e.* their inhabitants were connected by race with Mitanni, in Mesopotamia, from which they must have migrated or been driven. Their tetropolis formed an 'islet' in the midst of the Amorite population, and led to the Egyptians giving the name *Haru* to the whole country. Recently, Père Abel and others have discussed the location of these cities. The conclusion come to, after a very thorough examination of all the evidence, is that Gibeon is to be identified with *el-Djib*, about seven miles north-west of

Jerusalem, as Troilo indicated as early as 1666, and Pococke in 1738. At the same time, the 'great high place' of Gibeon, where Solomon inaugurated his reign by offering a thousand burnt-sacrifices (1 K 3^{4f.}), must be placed, according to Abel, on the neighbouring summit of *Nebi Samwil*, which rises to a height of 2952 feet. Chephirah is believed to be none other than *Tell Kefireh* (about five miles south-west of Gibeon), whose ancient ruins scattered over the soil still await excavation. Beëroth corresponds, etymologically and onomastically, to *el-Birah*, about five miles north-east of Gibeon (cf. 'Ataroth and 'Affarah, 'Anathoth and 'Anatah, 'Azaweth and *Hizmah*, etc.), and this is the location adopted by Robinson, van de Velde, Guérin, Conder, and others. Kiriath-jearim (or Baalah of Judah), about whose site there has been considerable diversity of opinion, is placed by Abel on the *Tell at Qaryat el-'Inab*, about seven miles south-west of Gibeon, and quite near to Chephirah. The location of these four cities, all within a few miles of each other, seems to corroborate the Old Testament record of their confederacy. With Gibeon as their capital, they probably formed a small Hurrian state, independent of the surrounding peoples.

Entre Nous.

'He bore the heroic stamp.'

This was the impression that Charles W. Abel, of Kwato, made on one who met him for the first time in 1930 during his last furlough in England. His biography, *Charles W. Abel of Kwato* (Fleming H. Revell; 7s. 6d. net), has been written by his son Russell, who with other members of the family is carrying on the Mission work in Kwato, that small island lying off the Eastern coast of New Guinea or Papua. For forty years Charles Abel had laboured there, and the work needed a man of heroic mould. At first he went in danger of his life from the cannibal Papuans; the low-lying land was so unhealthy until the mosquito scourge was dealt with that he had constant malaria. And the Mission work showed small progress. It was incredibly difficult to bring a vigorous, independent Christian life to the Papuan, who 'is slow and lazy. . . . To see him shamble off to his garden to repair his fence, dragging his unwilling feet through the soft sand, and almost treading again

on his own footsteps, makes you yawn and feel tired yourself for the rest of the day.' It was not so difficult to break down barbarism, but the building up of a new and better condition of life to take its place was a long and difficult task. The solution Charles Abel saw was industrial Mission work, and this biography is an amazing record of the results.

It was not always easy to get funds for his plantations, sawmill, and for all the other activities. And the situation was the more difficult because just at the time when he felt it essential to enlarge the scope of the work, the L.M.S. were passing through a time of financial stringency. 'Our white civilization had burst upon the native with disastrous suddenness . . . we are doing what we can to educate him in such a way that his Christian faith may express itself through a life of usefulness and responsibility. He has responded with quite unexpected capacity to the slight effort which has been made to train him in technical knowledge.