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I.—LITERARY.

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THE OFFICERS OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

In the preceding paper we saw that the membership of the Apostolic church was of two sorts, that on the one hand all adult believers in the Lord Jesus were of right members of the visible church, and that, on the other, the infants of believers were also of right members of the same body. This was shown to be the manifest teaching of the New Testament. But if New Testament teaching indicates with clearness what classes are of right members of the church, it is no less clear in setting the church forth *not* as an aggregation of units merely but as an organic thing, all its parts being, ideally at least, in vital and living union with one another.

The *organic* feature of the church is distinctly taught and emphasized in manifold ways in Scripture. Christians are represented as a growing temple : Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord ; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." Peter says likewise, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house." The Apostles felt that the ordinary house, a thing without vital connection between its parts, was an insufficient object to illustrate the body of believers, and so they spoke of a house of living stones growing together

## A BATCH OF OLD LETTERS.

PROF. W. W. MOORE

About 1500 years before Christ, while the children of Israel were still in the land of Goshen, a very remarkable woman named Thi came to Thebes as the bride of the Pharaoh, Amenophis III. This monarch is noted for the number and beauty of the monuments and temples which he erected. In all parts of the land he reared splendid structures in honor of the gods. Those which he built at Thebes for the god Amon surpassed all the others in size and magnificence. Immediately in front of one of these stately piles he placed two gigantic statues of himself, sitting figures nearly seventy feet in height—and there they sit to this day, though thirty-four centuries have rolled over them with fierce heats and shattering earthquakes and wide inundations. One of these twin colossi became specially famous as “the vocal Memnon,” which was said to break into music at the rising of the sun. The fact is indisputable, being mentioned by Strabo, Pliny, Tacitus, Juvenal, and others, and being attested also by a large number of ear-witnesses who have inscribed their testimony on the lower portion of the statue itself. But modern science has sadly marred the poetic beauty of this ancient fancy by showing that the song of Memnon was not miraculous, but the result of natural causes now well understood. Humboldt and others have demonstrated that cracked rocks or stone walls after cooling during the night, will give forth, when warmed by the morning sun, a prolonged ringing note, the change of temperature creating currents of air which rush through the crevices and produce a kind of weird music. Now there is no record of any sound issuing from the statue of Amenophis before the year 27 B. C. In that year the upper part of the stone was broken off by an earthquake, and *from that time* travellers inform us that the mysterious music was heard. These testimonies cover a period of about two centuries. But about 174 A. D. the Emperor Septimius Severus restored the monument by piling blocks of stone upon the *torso* and shaping them into a rude resemblance to the unharmed companion statue. *From that time the music ceased.* “The intention was

to do Memnon honor, the effect was to strike him dumb." The crack in the sandstone being covered by the masonry, the sound was heard no more.

These two colossi of Amenophis III have at their feet small sitting statues of his mother and his wife. This wife is the Queen Thi referred to in our opening sentence as a remarkable woman. She was most tenderly loved and most highly honored by her royal spouse. It is she who appears so frequently on the monuments beside the portraits of the Pharaoh; and, as we shall see in a moment, she exercised a quite unexampled influence upon the history of her times, causing, in the next reign, nothing short of a religious revolution in court circles, and bringing about the abandonment of the old capital at Thebes and the establishment of a new royal city farther down the Nile. She was of foreign birth. There are some indications that she came from the land of Mitanni (Northwestern Mesopotamia), and that she brought with her into Egypt a new worship, that of Aten or "Adon" (the root of the Syrian "Adonis" and the Hebrew "Adonai," *Lord*), which consisted in the adoration of the solar disk. Quite recently a tablet has been found which represents Thi paying her devotions to Aten.

Queen Thi bore to Amenophis III a son, Amenophis IV, better known by the name which he afterwards assumed, *Khuenaten* (i. e. the splendor of Aten), "the heretic king," who has been well called one of the enigmas of history. Mr. Flinders Petrie, the distinguished explorer, has recently found the plaster cast which had been taken from the face of this king immediately after his death, and in this way we have learned how he looked. "The face is full of character, the lips thin and clean cut, the mouth firmly set, showing immense determination. The aquiline nose and deeply set eyes reveal a man who could defy the whole priesthood of Amon." Through the influence of his Mesopotamian mother he embraced the worship of Aten. This would have caused but little trouble had he been contented with merely adding another God to the Egyptian Pantheon, but the new religion was monotheistic. It involved the acceptance of Aten the "God of Light" as the *only* true God.\* This attempt, therefore, to make his worship

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\*It is interesting to recall that there was at this time a large monotheistic population in Egypt, the descendants of Joseph and his brethren. Some one has pointed out also that the commencement of the persecution

the state religion was a blow at all the other gods of Egypt, and arrayed against him the whole vast power of the Egyptian priesthood. For a while after his ascension there was no open breach between the young king and the priests, but he, like his father, married a foreign wife, Tadukhepa, the daughter of Tushratta, King of Mitanni. If Queen Thi was the sister of Tushratta, as seems probable, then Tadukhepa was Khuenaten's cousin. However this may be, she seems to have brought with her from Mesopotamia and to have imparted to her royal husband a fresh access of zeal for the monotheistic cult of her native land, that northern district which was known in later times as *Beth Adini*, i. e. the home of Adon, or Aten. Khuenaten now became openly hostile to the national gods of Egypt. He was specially pronounced in his hostility to Amon, the chief God of Thebes, causing his name to be chiselled off the monuments and public buildings erected by his ancestors, and even changing his own name from *Amenophis* or *Amenhotep* (apparently given him at birth in honor of Amen or Amon) to *Khuenaten*, "the splendor of the sun-disk." These, however, were but minor indications of his zeal. The most remarkable manifestation of it is yet to be mentioned. Finding the prestige of the old worship too strong to be overcome at Thebes, where everything was connected with Amon by centuries of custom, he left the ancient capital entirely, and, turning his back on its distasteful associations and hostile priests and polytheistic temples, he moved far down the river to the north, and about half way between Thebes and Memphis built a new and splendid capital at a site now called Tel-el-Amarna, but which he of course called *Khuenaten*. Recent excavations on this site have laid bare the great temple of Aten, and the royal palace of "the heretic king," as well as other buildings and a multitude of minor objects, which not only attest the extent and magnificence of Khuenaten's new capital but also give us a very complete picture of Egyptian life in the century before the Exodus. The sculptured columns, the frescoed floors, the mosaic walls, and the inlaid inscriptions—black granite hieroglyphics standing out beautifully in white limestone tablets

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of the Israelites in Egypt coincides nearly with the downfall of the "Amon-worshippers" and the return of the Egyptians to their old creed, as if the captive race had been involved in the discredit and the odium which attached to Amenhotep and his immediate successors on account of their religious reformation. (Rawlinson's Ancient Egypt). †

and alabaster hieroglyphics standing out with equal distinctness in tablets of red granite—all demonstrate that “Khuenaten’s religious reformation was accompanied by a veritable renaissance in the sphere of art,” consisting chiefly in a return to nature. But the whole movement was a splendid failure. “A few years after his death the national religion was restored, the new capital deserted, and the brief reign of truth in art was at an end.”

The foregoing review of this extraordinary episode in Egyptian history will prepare us to appreciate the great discovery which is to constitute the real subject of this paper, a discovery which has been described as “the most important of all contributions to the early political history of Western Asia,” and which has triumphantly vindicated the aspersed statements of Holy Scripture in regard to the patriarchal period of Hebrew history.

In the winter of 1887, a peasant woman, looking for antiquities to sell, found at Tell-el-Amarna, among the ruins of Khuenaten’s sumptuous but short-lived capital, a number of clay tablets covered with cuneiform inscriptions. During that winter about 200 of these tablets were offered for sale by native dealers. Others were found later, so that about 320 pieces in all have been recovered. Of this number the Berlin Museum secured about 160, but very many of them are so fragmentary as to be unintelligible. Dr. Budge obtained 82, in a much better state of preservation for the British Museum. About 60 remain in the Gizeh Museum in Egypt, and a few are in the hands of private collectors, such as Turkish, Russian and French officials and missionaries. The tablets vary from two inches to a foot in length, with a few as large as eighteen inches. Most of them are rectangular in shape, but some are oval. Some are flat on both sides and others convex on both sides. Generally both sides are written on, and often the edges as well, but in many cases only one side is inscribed. In color also the tablets vary, and the kind of clay of which they are made sometimes indicates the countries from which they come (for these tablets are really letters which passed between two kings of Egypt and their contemporaries and dependents in various parts of Mesopotamia and Syria). Five of these letters, for instance, are written on the yellow clay that is common on the Syrian coast. Others are written on the dark red clay found in the north-east of Syria. There

is a draft of a letter from Amenophis III to Kalimmasin, King of Babylonia, written on a tablet made of finely kneaded Nile mud. The excavations of Mr. Petrie brought to light some rough pieces of clay in process of manufacture, showing that some of the tablets were made on the spot. As has been already intimated, this notable batch of old letters includes not only those addressed to Amenophis IV, the religious reformer, who built the city amid whose ruins they were found, but also those addressed to Amenophis III, the father of "the heretic king." These letters to Amenophis III, as we learn from a docket on one of them written with ink in Egyptian characters, had been removed from the royal archives at Thebes when Amenophis IV changed his residence. The tablets are written in Babylonian characters, in many different styles, including nearly every variety of cuneiform script known. The language of the inscriptions, with a few exceptions is Babylonian. But it is not pure Babylonian; it contains many non-Semitic words and constructions. In short, Babylonian seems to have been the diplomatic language of that age throughout Western Asia and Egypt just as French is the diplomatic language of to-day. The apologetic significance of these facts will be pointed out later.

The matter contained in the tablets is equal in bulk to about half of the Pentateuch, and consists of diplomatic messages, business letters concerning affairs of international interest, friendly communications between allied Kings, and reports as to the condition of subject states. These brick epistles from Mesopotamia and Syria, antedating but little the occupation of Canaan by the children of Israel, have therefore turned a brilliant search light upon a period of ancient history which lay in apparently impenetrable shadow, except for the true but scanty gleams from the pages of Scripture. Even these were disparaged by skeptics, some boldly denying the Biblical statements and implications concerning the advanced civilization of these early peoples and their mutual relations, and others viewing them with ill-concealed suspicion. But this unwarranted position in regard to the Scriptural accounts of the ancient East has been rendered forever untenable by the detailed and conclusive corroborations of them afforded by the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. The historical value of such a body of contemporary correspondence can scarcely be exaggerated. It has been justly remarked by Prof. J. F. McCurdy that the

Egyptian court documents, which by courtesy are called historical, give us only a very general and inadequate picture of the real history and complexion of the times and events which they commemorate. "For example, the adventures of all the Pharaohs in Asia are recorded in the same stereotyped fashion, each of their expeditions being represented as a sort of triumphal procession, the invincible monarch doing everything in a large, irresistible, heroic fashion that precludes the variety and detail of circumstantial action, which give life and interest to all real historical narration. The quelling of stubborn insurrections, a drawn or more than doubtful battle, a foray for plunder or provision among defenceless villages, or a hunting excursion in the north Syrian forests, are all duly recorded and vaunted as glorious triumphs and conquests. As a matter of fact, the hold of Egypt upon Asia, which was never very sure, was steadily relaxing after the time of the great Thothmes III, though one would never have learned this from the records of the kings, which are, to be sure, quite meagre, and yet have nothing to report but unbroken success. We know how valuable for the purposes of historical research in any age are even a few specimens of contemporary correspondence. Such a desideratum has been supplied in the most satisfactory manner by this now famous collection of letters." They place us in the very atmosphere of the age in which they were written. They show us the real men of the time, in the midst of their strenuous schemes for advantage and their weary struggle with difficulties. They give us a fresh and powerful impression of the familiar fact that human nature is the same in every age, even down to its ready and plausible excuses for not answering letters.

The two earliest seats of civilization were the Nile Valley and the Tigro-Euphrates Valley. As far back into remote antiquity as history will take us we find these two lines of development running parallel. Which was the earlier? Was one derived from the other? The characteristics of the two civilizations are quite distinct. Were they entirely separate and independent throughout their early stages? Or, can the apparent chasm between them be bridged at any point? However vague and unsatisfactory may be the replies which we must make to some of these questions, we can answer the last with a clear and emphatic affirmative. At various points in their long history ancient Egypt and ancient Chaldea have

been thus connected. And the broadest of these bridges—the most notable of these lines of communication between the two great valleys is the long correspondence now under consideration. It not only enables us to check our chronology, but also to understand both of these early civilizations better than we could otherwise, because of the light which each throws upon the other.

#### TRANSCONTINENTAL COURTSHIP.

Taking up the letters in geographical groups, we find that the correspondence between *Egypt and Babylonia* consists of eleven letters: One from Amenophis III to Kalimmasin, King of Babylonia; three from Kalimmasin to Amenophis III; and seven from Burraburiash, King of Babylonia (about 1440-1405 B. C.), to Amenophis IV. The principal subject of this group of letters is the intermarriage of the royal houses of the two countries, though the negotiations concerning this matter involved, not only a deal of more or less dignified haggling about dowries, but also much discussion of some larger affairs of state, such as commercial treaties and the various means of securing international peace. The letter written by Amenophis III to Kalimmasin is evidently a copy of the original, kept in the royal archives for reference, and will illustrate as well as any other both the style and the subject matter of these venerable documents. It begins thus:

“To Kalimmasin, King of Karduniyash (*i. e.* Babylonia), my brother, thus saith Amenophis, the Great King, the King of Egypt, thy brother. I am well, may it be well with thee, with thy government, with thy wives, with thy children, with thy nobles, with thy horses and with thy chariots, and may there be great peace in thy land; with me it is well, with my government, with my wives, with my children, with my nobles, with my horses, with my chariots, with my troops, and there is great peace in my land.”

As the letter proceeds we learn that Amenophis III, who had already married Kalimmasin's sister, was anxious to marry his daughter also. But the Babylonian King had replied that nothing had been heard of his sister since her marriage, and no one knew whether she was alive or dead; implying that until he was assured of the welfare of his sister he would not trust his daughter to the Pharaoh, and adding that when he had sent officials to bring back news of his sister, though all the wives had been assembled, and one of them had been pointed out as his sister, it was impossible for the envoys to recognize her and to be sure that she was not some one else.



He asks for assurance on this point, and, then, in his turn requests the hand of an Egyptian princess. In his reply Amenophis III refers to some uncivil message which his father had sent to the Babylonian court, and asks that it may be forgotten, as he desires amity between the two kingdoms; and then, referring to the complaint that no satisfactory news had been received of the princess, he says that none of the envoys who had been sent were old enough to remember her, and requests Kalimmasin to send a man of station who had conversed with her and who would be able to recognize her and to report that she was well and happy and in favor with the king, and he calls his god Amon to witness that this was so. He then urges again his suit for Kalimmasin's daughter, promising a specially handsome dowry. He asks further for a contingent of soldiers, "and sends a messenger to arrange a treaty, the condition of which was that certain duties should be levied upon gold, silver, oil, and clothing, and other objects of value which any Mesopotamian travelling in Egypt should offer for sale. He also promised to send him back his chariots laden with oil." And so the correspondence proceeds. We have not space to follow it further in detail. Suffice it to say that, after five years of such negotiation, this long-range courtship is brought to a happy termination, as Kalimmasin finally writes that his daughter is now grown and will be sent to the Pharaoh without further delay.

The seven letters of Burraburiash, who was a successor of Kalimmasin but not his son, are occupied with kindred matters. As will be seen from the following extract, he complains that Amenophis IV was sending him a much smaller quantity of gold than his father had been accustomed to send, and urges him to send more, as he needs it for the temple he is building. Speaking of the cordial relations that had existed between their predecessors, he mentions the interesting fact that when his father Kurigalzu had been invited by the Canaanites to join them in an attack upon Kannishat, a district under the suzerainty of Egypt, Kurigalzu had not only refused but had also threatened to attack the Canaanites if they attempted to carry out their purpose. One of the letters from Syria shows that this invitation was sent by Aziru, the governor of the Amorite country. Burraburiash refers to a similar overture from the Assyrians, and reminds Amenophis that so long as they two were united the rebels could do no harm.

"When my father and thy father spoke good words with one another they sent fair gifts to one another. Did they not also make fair demands of one another? Now my brother has sent me two manehs of gold for a gift. Now, send me much gold as much as thy father, or send me even half as much as thy father. Why hast thou sent two manehs of gold? There is much work now in the temple and I have undertaken much to carry it out. Send me much gold: and whatever thou desirest in my land, send me word and let them take it to thee.

In the time of Kurigalzu, my father, all the Canaanites sent to him, saying thus: "We go to Kann'shat to rebel (against the Pharaoh); let us make an alliance with thee." My father sent this message to them, saying thus: "Leave speaking with me to incite me (against the Pharaoh). If you make war upon the King of Egypt, my brother, and make an alliance with another, shall I not march against you and ravage your country? . . . . My father would not listen to them for the sake of thy father. Now the Assyrians are seeking my favor; have I not sent word to thee of what they have said? Why have they invaded thy territory? If thou remainest friendly with me, they can do thee no harm. . . . For a gift to thee, I send three manehs of lapis lazuli, and five pairs of horses, with five wooden chariots."

It appears from these letters of Burrayuriash that Amenophis IV had married a daughter of the Babylonian king, and, in addition to presents for his son-in-law, he sends various gifts for "my daughter, the wife of my son." Among other rich presents sent to this princess at different times, we read of many kinds of precious stones, artistic furniture, and various costly objects of ivory and gold, all making a strong impression of the extraordinary wealth and luxury of the time.

Passing over the letters from Assyria, Arsawa and Alashiva, we come now to the correspondence between *Egypt and Mitanni*. The letters from Mitanni, which seems to have been the country lying around Haran north-east of the Euphrates, are distinguished from the others externally by their color, being made of the dark red clay which abounds in that region. These tablets show us that Thothmes IV married a princess of Mitanni, and that his son Amenophis III., received at least two wives from the royal family of that country. We have already seen that his "great wife" or queen, Thi, was from the same region. The writer of this group of letters was Tush-ratta, King of Mitanni, who was apparently Queen Thi's brother. It has been known for some years from a text on an Egyptian scarab that Amenophis III married a princess of *Naharina*, named Kilkipa, the daughter of Shutarna, and that she arrived in Egypt with 317 attendant ladies. Whether

"Kilkipa" is only another name for Thi (as seems likely in view of the fact that Tushratta, who calls Thi his "sister," was the son of Shutarna), we do not know; but the tablets make it certain that the country called Naharina by the Egyptians is the same as Mitanni.

Amenophis IV also married a Mitannian princess, Tadukhepa by name, who, as has already been remarked, probably shared the monotheistic views of the Queen-Mother, Thi, and confirmed her husband in his resolution to become a religious reformer. Her father, Tushratta, writes to Amenophis IV as follows:

"(To Amenophis IV) My son-in-law, whom I love, and who loves me: thus says Tushratta, the great king, the king of Mitanni, thy brother, thy father-in-law, who loves thee: It is well with me. May it be well with Thi, with Tadukhepa, my daughter, thy wife; may it be well with thy children, thy great men, thy chariots, thy horses . . . . and all that thou hast."

All these letters show that Egypt was looked upon as the most powerful nation of the time and that the wealthy princes of the east were eager to purchase the friendship of the Pharaoh by the payment of great marriage dowries with their daughters. The list of objects which composed the dowry of Tadukhepa covers two large clay tablets; "they are among the largest tablets that have ever been found and are covered with very minute writing; even in their present mutilated condition they contain about 600 lines . . . . The dowry is composed of an immense number of vessels, instruments, furniture, and other objects of gold and precious stone, such as lapis-lazuli, besides many of silver and copper and a few of iron. In addition to these, there are horses, and a chariot adorned with gold, and garments of variegated stuffs; many of the metallic objects were evidently proofs of the great skill of the Mesopotamian smiths and jewelers, for some of them were made partly of gold and partly of silver, or of bronze overlaid with the precious metals, and they were often encrusted with precious stones."

#### PAVING THE WAY FOR JOSHUA.

The last group of tablets, and by far the largest and most important, is the one containing the letters from the Egyptian viceroys in *Syria and Palestine*. They belong almost entirely to the time of Amenophis IV, the heretic King, and they show that the exclusive devotion of that monarch to his religious

reformation, which weakened his government so much at home, had even more disastrous effects abroad. Egypt's hold upon the subject provinces at the Eastern end of the Mediterranean sea, which had already been relaxed by the compromising policy of Amenophis III, was now loosened still further, so that her suzerainty became hardly more than nominal. Not only were the outposts neglected, but even the most important garrison towns were left without reinforcements and supplies, that too at a time when the Hittites and Amorites were making inroads in the North and a people called the Habiri were equally aggressive in the South. The chaotic conditions resulting from this decline of Egyptian supremacy in Phoenicia and Canaan were aggravated by the policy which the Pharaohs had pursued towards the native princes of these regions. When the Kings of the 18th dynasty conquered this country they found it divided into a number of small states, each governed by an independent prince, and, instead of displacing these petty kings entirely, the Pharaohs left the government as it was, "only requiring the regular payment of tribute, and at a later time placing native Canaanites upon whom they could rely as their own officers in the cities, side by side with the hereditary prince." The rivalry, dissension, and intrigue resulting from such an arrangement may easily be imagined. That such was the actual state of the country is clearly revealed in these letters. The native princes are beginning more or less secretly to desert the Pharaoh and to ally themselves with the invaders. The Pharaoh's representatives are attacked and driven away or besieged. The governors accuse one another to the Pharaoh of disloyalty and treachery, and their reiterated entreaty is that he would speedily send them more troops.

It is interesting to observe that the names given to the country in these letters are "the land of Canaan" and "the land of the Amorites" (Amos 2:10). Among the cities mentioned we find Tyre, Sidon, Beyrout, Byblus, Acre, Gaza, Joppa, Gezer, Lachish, Jerusalem, and many others.

The letters of the viceroys may be divided into two groups, a *northern* and a *southern*. A few extracts from the northern group will indicate the hopelessness of Egypt's cause in that direction and the success of the Hittite and Amorite inroads upon her territory. These northern rebels and invaders are called "robbers" or "marauders," a term which, as Evetts has remarked, cannot fail to remind us of the ancient Phoenician

inscription at Tangier, quoted by Procopius, which stated that those who set it up had been driven out of Canaan by the "Robber" Joshua, the son of Nun. The term expresses the view which the inhabitants of a country naturally take of an army of invaders. No less than fifty of these letters were written by one man, Ribadda, the governor of Byblus, a faithful officer of the king, who was attacked and besieged by his enemies under the leadership of a traitor named Abd-Ashera and his son Aziru, who though professing loyalty to the Pharaoh were really conspiring with the Hittites. Ribadda writes thus:

"Let the king, my lord, know that the city of Byblus, the faithful handmaid of the king since the days of his fathers, is betrayed. Now let the king deliver his faithful city out of the hand of the enemy. Let the king, my lord, behold the countries which were the house of his father, that there is no faithful servant left in the city of Byblus. They do not obey thy servant, for the war carried on by the Marauders is cruel. . . .

The cities on the mountains have joined the enemy, and became part of the Marauders. Only two cities are left to me. Behold, now, Abd-Ashera has taken the city of Shigata to himself and he said to the men of the city of Ammiya: 'Kill your chief, and you will become like us, and you will be prosperous.' So they did according to his words, and they became like the Marauders.

Now, Abd-Ashera sent to the men in Beth-Ninip, saying: 'Collect yourselves together, and we will attack the city of Byblus, for the inhabitants will not save it out of our hands, and we will appoint governors out of the country, and all the lands will join the Marauders. . . .

The whole country is rebelling against the King, and what will become of us? I fear greatly that there is no one who can deliver me out of their hand. I am like a bird caught in a trap."

Other governors in the cities of the North report equal straits, and all over the country they call urgently upon the king for troops to help them. Akizzi, governor of Katna, for instance, writes that the Hittites, in company with the rebel Aziru, had ravaged his country: "Let the king, my lord, know . . . that now the king of the land of the Hittites has burnt [our cities] with fire, and carried off their gods and their inhabitants. . . . Aziru has seized the men of Katna, my servants, and [carried them away] from the country of my lord."

The salutations with which all these letters begin are full of extravagant adulation; this, for example, from Abimelech, governor of Tyre:

"To the king, my lord, my gods, my sun-god: thus says Abimelech, thy servant: Seven times and seven times I bow at the feet of the king, my

lord. I am the dust beneath the feet of the king, my lord. My lord is the sun-god who rises day by day upon the lands, according to the decree of the sun-god his gracious father."

There is here a distinct echo of Khuenaten's great reformation; Abimelech evidently knows the king's weak point and hopes to secure his favor by applying to him the most flattering of all titles, viz: "Sun-god." Especially interesting also is the occurrence of the plural "gods", as it shows that the Hebrew *Elohim*, to which it corresponds, was not intended primarily to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, as some have tried to maintain in spite of all the teachings of Biblical Theology, but was merely a plural of majesty. As Abimelech proceeds to describe his own condition, it becomes evident that he is no less sorely beset than the other governors, the enemies of the Pharaoh having shut him up on the rocky island on which Tyre was built:

"I am guarding the city of the king, which he entrusted to my charge, with all my might. My desire is to go and see the face of the king, my lord, but I cannot escape from the hand of Zimrida, the Sidonian. The king has heard that he has become great, and has made war upon me. Let the king give me men to defend the city of the king, my lord. . . . We have no water and we have no wood. . . . Zimrida has collected ships and men from the cities."

In short, the letters of the Northern group make it plain that the governors of the cities were fighting one another, that the power of Egypt was rapidly declining, and that the Hittites were pressing steadily southward.

The letters of the Southern group reveal a very similar state of affairs in the South, the country unsettled, the governors accusing one another to the Pharaoh of treason, and the Egyptian garrisons giving way before an invading people called the *Habiri*, whom some believe to be the Hebrews, while by others the word is rendered "allies" or "confederates." We shall take up this question later.

The governor of the frontier district which included the cities of Gaza and Joppa was an officer called Yabitiri. After the usual salutations, he writes in the following figurative strain concerning his loyalty and his desire to exchange his governorship for a post in Egypt in the immediate service of the king:

"See, I am a faithful servant of the king, my lord. I look this way and I look that way, and there is no light; but when I look towards the king, my lord, there is light. A tile may give way beneath its . . . but

I shall never give way beneath the feet of the king, my lord.\* Let the king my lord, enquire of Yankhamu, his Officer of the Gate, whether I am a child. Bring me into the land of Egypt, and I will go down to the king, my lord and stand in the gate of the king, my lord. Let the king enquire of his Officer of the Gate whether I defended the gate of the city of Gaza and the gate of the city of Joppa. I have been with the troops of the king, my lord: wherever they have been, I have been with them. Behold, I am with them now. The yoke of the king, my lord, is upon my neck, and I will bear it."

But the most interesting of these letters in the southern group are the six from Abdi-heba, the governor of Jerusalem. He too had been charged with disloyalty to Egypt. He pronounces the accusation false, acknowledges that he owes his position to the king, (though he seems to have belonged to the native royal family of Jerusalem)—not by descent, he says, does he hold the power, but by the grace of the Pharaoh—and hence he is under the strongest obligation to be faithful to him. The political situation as described by Abdi-heba is almost desperate. The Habiri are killing the governors and selzing the cities.

"What have I done against the king, my lord? I am slandered before the king, thus: 'Abdi-heba is rebellious against the king, his lord? See, as for myself, it was not my father or my mother who set me in this place, but it was the arm of the mighty king that brought me into my father's house. Why, then should I sin against the king? . . . . ."

All the governors are slain; there is no governor of the king left. Let the king turn h's face towards his people, and send troops. There are no longer any lands of the king left. The *Habiri* have plundered all the lands of the king. If the troops come this year, the lands of the king may yet be saved; but if they do not come, the lands of the king will be lost."

#### RESULTS.

If any of our readers have had the patience to follow us through the foregoing mass of tedious historical details, they are now prepared to appreciate the intensely interesting results of this discovery, which has brought to light what Major Conder calls "the most important historical records ever found in connection with the Bible." Of these results we can at present give only a summary, as we have already occupied our full allotment of space in this number, but in the next we shall endeavor to set them forth fully.

1. The fact that the Babylonian language was the medium of international communication, even between Egypt and her

\*Compare the protestations of loyalty on the Tell-el-Hesi tablet, *Union Seminary Magazine*, Vol. IV, p. 191.

Syrian dependencies, implies that the Babylonians had once occupied the whole of south-western Asia, and that this occupation was long enough to leave there an abiding impress of Babylonian influence and culture. The 14th chapter of Genesis contains an account of the campaign of Amraphel, King of Shinar (i. e. Babylonia), and his allies against the King of Sodom and his allies. This account has been pronounced by certain critics unhistorical (merely "a projection into the distant past of the western campaigns of the Assyrian Kings") on the ground that a Babylonian conquest of Palestine at so early a date is incredible. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets have spiked this gun effectually by showing that a Babylonian conquest of Palestine *had* taken place long before they were written, and in our next paper we shall supplement their testimony with evidence from other sources showing that such campaigns as the one described in Genesis XIV. were frequent both before and after the time of Abraham.

2. More remarkable even than the use of the Babylonian language for purposes of international intercourse is the use of the cuneiform script, not only for this diplomatic tongue but for the Palestinian vernacular as well. This native language was already essentially the same as Hebrew, as we learn from the Palestinian words which are used in the letters, not a few Babylonian terms being explained by their Palestinian equivalents. Now the fact that cuneiform writing was used to this extent in Syria 1500 years before Christ is a very suggestive one. "The study of these difficult and complicated characters must have been well-nigh universal throughout the broad area of Babylonian influence. In every one of the numerous districts of Palestine, for example, the leading men were familiar with all the niceties of the wedge-writing. . . . It is superfluous to suggest that indefinitely large auxiliary attainments in many regions of intellectual activity are implied in this single fact." Then how absurd it is to deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch on the ground that the art of writing was not known in his day, or at least not sufficiently advanced to admit of his being the author of that work! And how conclusive is the refutation here furnished of the theory that the Hebrews of this period were a barbarous people unacquainted with any of the useful arts! Recall also the richly ornamented articles mentioned in the dowry lists.

3. There was free intercourse between these ancient peoples,



letters, messengers and merchants passing constantly from Mesopotamia through Palestine to Egypt and *vice versa*. Therefore the migration of Abraham from Babylonia to Canaan, the journeys of Jacob to Padan-Aram and Egypt, the selling of Joseph to traders bound for the valley of the Nile, and the finding by Achan of the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold among the spoils of Jericho, are all in strict accord with the conditions of the times as attested by the tablets.

4. The ill-starred reformation of Amenophis IV, which produced so much confusion and strife at home, was the cause of no less disorganization and weakness in the provinces. Thus "the heretic king" became unwittingly God's instrument (Is. 45:5) for paving the way for the Israelitish occupation of Canaan. Egypt's hold upon her Syrian dependencies was loosened and indeed all but shaken off; the Hittites and Amorites were disputing successfully her supremacy in the north and the Habiri in the south; the native princes, despairing of any effectual help from the royal visionary who was completely absorbed in his hopeless attempt to reform the national religion, were allying themselves with the invaders, and yet not so as to constitute with them a new and strong single government. Therefore, when Joshua began his campaigns for the conquest of Palestine, he found not a compact nation, subject to one powerful sceptre, and ready to offer effectual resistance to his invasion, but a large number of "small states, governed by petty kings, who were constantly fighting with one another. It will be remembered that Adonibezek spoke of seventy kings whom he had vanquished and captured, and whom he mutilated and kept in his palace, where they gathered up crumbs under his table." The conditions described in the Scriptures are the very conditions to the existence of which the tablets testify.

It is interesting to observe that Jerusalem is called in these letters by the same name which is so familiar to us (contrary to the heretofore general opinion that this was a later name), and that it "has already the prominence which is assigned to it in the Biblical account of the Hebrew conquest. . . . That the King of Jerusalem should lead the southern coalition against the Hebrew invaders (Joshua 10) can [therefore] no longer excite surprise."

This brings us again to the question concerning the *Habiri*,

who, according to the letters, came from the desert, attacked Jerusalem, seized the country round Ajalon, wrecked the temples, and slaughtered the chiefs who remained faithful to Egypt. Were they mere allied clans from Mt. Seir,<sup>5</sup> or were they *Hebrews*? The answer to this exceedingly interesting question, on which scholars are sharply divided, must be reserved for our next number.

5. The 3rd chapter of Judges describes a successful campaign by Othniel against an oppressor of Israel named Cushan Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia. The most celebrated of the destructive critics of the day denies the truth of this account, because it involves too wide an outlook for the early period of the Israelitish settlement. But, as has been well said, the trouble is not that the sacred writer's outlook is too wide but that the modern critic's outlook is too narrow, as the letters from Mitanni (*i. e.* Mesopotamia) abundantly show. It is worth while to compare, in passing, *Tushratta* (the name of the Mesopotamian King on the tablets) with *Cushan-rishathaim* (the name of the Mesopotamian King in the Scriptures).

