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## I. LITERARY.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF THE "NEW INSPIRATION."

PROF. HENRY ALEXANDER WHITE.

There are some among us who first turned the pages of the Bible to see the color and pictured form of men and things whose story was already familiar from parental lips. From picture to print we passed and found the narrative there recorded in exact agreement with the stories told us in childhood. Again and again we sought the printed pages only to find all these stories linked together in one great history. The "Father in Heaven" of our daily prayer was found to be the speaker, in his own Divine Person, on many pages of the sacred book. Character by character the nature of His Personality was unfolded to us. The Creator of the opening chapter was declared to be the Moral Governor in the chapters immediately following; then, by degrees, he was set forth as the Father, the Redeemer and the Comforter of those people whom He had before selected. Yet in all these varying manifestations of His character, He was declared to be 'the same, yesterday, today and forever.'

Closely interwoven with the web of these statements concerning the character of God, we found also a history of human character. Nations and individuals were described with reference to the relationship existing between them and the Invisible God. The character of men was always measured by our infallible standard—the character of God. Hence,

## RECENT DISCOVERIES IN PALESTINE.

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

It was stated in our last number that the Moabite Stone was the oldest extant inscription in Hebrew, dating as it does from the time of Jehoshaphat about 890 B. C. Some reader may have been disappointed to learn that, after all, that inscription was not made by Hebrews and was not found in Palestine proper, and may have wondered whether any equally ancient monument of the Israelites themselves has ever been discovered. The question in just that form cannot yet be answered categorically. But about twelve years ago an inscription was found at Jerusalem which is certainly as old as the time of Isaiah and may be as old as the time of Solomon. That is to say, it is either about two centuries later than the Moabite Stone or about one century earlier. It will be our endeavor in the first part of the present paper to tell the story of this discovery and to point out briefly its importance.

### THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION.

It has long been known that the Pool of Siloam, which is situated south of Jerusalem at the junction of the Tyropoean Valley and the Valley of the Kedron, was supplied with water from an intermittent spring called the Fountain of the Virgin, which rises on the western slope of the Kedron Valley (or the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as it is more commonly called), and which is said to be the only natural spring of water in or near Jerusalem. The water flows from the Fountain to the Pool through a subterranean aqueduct under the hill Ophel, which is a southern continuation of the Temple Hill. Hence the name "Siloam," as we learn from John 9:7; when Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay, he said to him, "Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation Sent)." The rock-hewn conduit through which the water was sent from the Fountain to the Pool is 1708 feet long, 16 inches high at the narrowest part and 16 feet high at the Siloam end. Dr. Edward Robinson, who crawled through the whole length of this winding tunnel, as many others have done since, found near the center two *culs de sac*,

made by false cuttings. In June, 1880, one of the pupils of Herr Conrad Schick, the architect of the Church Missionary Society at Jerusalem, while climbing with some other boys into the Siloam end of this aqueduct, fell into the water about five yards from the mouth of the channel, and, on rising to the surface, noticed what seemed to be an inscription on the southern wall of the tunnel, where the rock had been smoothed so as to form a tablet about 24 inches square, across the lower portion of which ran six lines of writing. Mr. Schick, when informed of it, tried to make a copy of the inscription, but failed, as the water had left a deposit of lime over the letters which made it impossible to get an accurate transcript. In April, 1881, however, Dr. Guthe removed this calcareous deposit by washing the tablet with a weak solution of hydrochloric acid, and thus restored its original appearance, with the exception of a few of the characters which had been destroyed by the wearing away of the rock. Major Conder and Lieutenant Mantell sat in the water for three or four hours in a cramped position for the purpose of taking a squeeze of the inscription, "repeating the experience in order to verify every letter." Then Prof. Sayce, who had already made a provisional translation of the text from an imperfect copy that he had himself taken before the lime deposit was removed, made an improved translation, which is as follows :

1. (Behold the) excavation. Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators was still lifting up
2. The pick, each towards his neighbor, and while there were yet three cubits to (excavate, there was heard) the voice of one man
3. Calling to his neighbor, for there was an *excess* (?) in the rock on the right hand (and on the left?). And after that on the day
4. Of excavating the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against another
5. The waters flowed from the Spring to the pool for a distance of 1200 cubits. And (part)
6. Of a cubit was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators."

The language of the inscription is identical throughout with Biblical Hebrew, with the single exception of the word rendered *excess*. As that does not occur in the Bible, nor elsewhere in extant Hebrew, the signification of it is doubtful.

The record explains the two *culs de sac* near the center of the tunnel. They were made by two bands of workmen who expected to meet in the middle of the excavation, but who by some error in the calculation were about to pass by each other.

The noise of one party, however, being heard by the other through the intervening rock, the fact that they were about to pass instead of meeting was discovered, the direction of the cutting was changed, the separating rock was pierced, their work was done, the water was admitted and flowed unobstructed from the Spring to the Pool, a distance of 1200 cubits, that is, between 1700 and 1800 feet. This aqueduct therefore was made just as tunnels are now made. The two bands of workmen began on opposite sides of the hill and cut simultaneously from the two ends towards the center, a fact which argues considerable skill in engineering on the part of the Hebrews. Their success in meeting at the center, though not perfect, is the more remarkable when we remember the windings of the tunnel. The distance between the Virgin's Fountain and the Pool of Siloam is not much more than 300 yards, but by the windings of the aqueduct it is about 569 yards. It is supposed that the channel was made crooked rather than straight because of the hardness of the strata which the workmen would have encountered had they mined directly from one end to the other. However this may be, it is now certain that the Hebrews under the kings were not the unskilled semi-barbarians which it has been the fashion of an unbelieving criticism to represent them.

But the proof of the conservative position afforded by the Siloam inscription is much stronger than this. One of the fundamental assumptions of the skeptical critics is that the art of writing was practically unknown in Palestine until shortly before the exile, and therefore they hold that the earlier scriptural books are not even approximately contemporary with the events which they profess to describe, and consequently cannot be regarded as trustworthy history. The Moabite Stone is a sufficient disproof of this assumption, but, in addition to that, we now have the testimony of this ancient mural inscription from Jerusalem. This evidence is even more conclusive than that of Mesha's monolith, for "the forms of the letters used in the inscription make it quite clear that the engraver was accustomed to write on parchment or papyrus and not on stone. They are rounded and not angular like the characters on the Moabite Stone. It is plain, therefore, that the alphabet employed in Judah was that of a people who were in the habit of writing and reading *books*."

Another noticeable peculiarity about the inscription is that

it is not a public document; even the name of the reigning king is not mentioned. It must have been engraved by one of the workmen in his delight at the successful completion of the work. The careful way in which the letters are formed, and the labor involved in cutting them in a place where they were never likely to be seen, prove that writing was as familiar to him as tunneling the rock. The conclusion from this fact is obvious; if an ordinary workman was thus familiar with the art of writing, the professional scribes and priests and members of the prophetic schools must have been much more so. There is no reason for thinking that the art was not as much known and practised as it is in our own day."—A. H. Sayce. The conclusion thus expressed by a man who certainly has no dogmatic interest in the question at issue (as shown by his surrender of the canonicity of the Book of Daniel) and who is confessedly the foremost archaeologist of the age, is powerfully confirmed by the abounding evidence of the literary activity of the ancient Assyrians and Egyptians. "If the Israelites had been illiterate, living midway, as they did, between Assyria and Egypt, and bordering on the highly civilized cities of Phoenicia, it would have been nothing short of a miracle. That they were not so has now been put beyond the reach of cavil by the Siloam inscription."

The inscription contains no decisive indication of date, the only clue being the forms of the letters. These are of course the ancient characters, entirely different from the writing now seen in Hebrew Bibles and quite unintelligible even to good Hebrew scholars of today unless they have made a study of comparative Semitic alphabets. The forms in question show that the Siloam Inscription cannot be of much later date, if any, than the Moabite Stone, while some of the characters represent older forms than those of the latter. For this reason, and others which we will not stop to state, Prof. Sayce is disposed to think that the inscription belongs to the time of Solomon. But most scholars agree in referring it to the reign of Hezekiah, about 700 B. C. The tunnel is thought to have been a part of that system of hydraulic works undertaken by Hezekiah in view of the expected siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. In 2 Chron. 32:1-4 we read that "after these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself. And when

Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men *to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city*: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who *stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?*" And in vs. 30 we read that "this same Hezekiah also *stopped the upper water-course of Gihon* (which was probably the present Fountain of the Virgin), *and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David*" (which was almost certainly situated on Ophel south of the Temple site). Yet again in 2 Kings 20:20 we read that "*he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city.*" The view that these statements refer to the making of the Siloam aqueduct and pool for the purpose of bringing within the walls the water of the only unfailing spring in the neighborhood of Jerusalem is strengthened by the fact that another shaft, probably older, which leads from the Fountain of the Virgin westwards into the Hill Ophel, has been discovered, and which there is every reason to believe served the same purpose. For, after extending 67 feet westward from the Virgin's Spring, it terminates in a small chamber, the floor of which is scooped out in the form of a basin, three feet lower than the bottom of the tunnel. Over this chamber is a perpendicular shaft cut through the solid rock for 40 feet, and in the rock overhanging this shaft an iron ring was fixed for the rope by which buckets could be let down and drawn up. From this point there was a sloping ascent, communicating with a series of passages and stairways which led to an exit near the top of Ophel, at a point probably within the ancient walls. Along these passages were found at intervals niches for lamps to light those who came to the head of the shaft to draw. Thus the beleaguered capital secured an abundant supply of pure water, while the besiegers, from whom the mouth of the fountain had been concealed by the skillful use of stones and earth, were left without any except as they brought it from a distance at great labor and inconvenience. But of course there was a possibility that the mouth of the precious spring would be discovered, or that some traitor would reveal the secret, and thus the enemy be enabled not only to get the water themselves and perhaps cut it off from the besieged Israelites, but also to scale the shafts and cap-

ture the city, as Joab had probably done for David on a former occasion (for, as St. Clair points out, he did not have to "get up to the gutter," as the common version says, nor to a "water-course," as the revised version says, but to "reach them by the aqueduct," as the Hebrew says). Therefore preparation seems to have been made for even this possibility, as piles of loose stones about a foot square were found at the top of the shaft, apparently ready to be hurled on the heads of any Assyrians who might try to repeat the perilous exploit of Joab.

Before leaving the Siloam Inscription, we ought to mention, however briefly, one other fact in its history. In July, 1890, the portion of the wall containing the precious inscription was cut out by some vandal and stolen, but it has since been recovered, though in a slightly damaged condition, and is now in the museum at Constantinople.

#### THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

The Virgin's Fountain was so called in honor of the mother of our Lord who is said to have washed here the swaddling clothes of Jesus. A tradition, preserved by Mejr ed Deir, an Arabic writer, says also that the water of this spring was used as a test for women accused of adultery; the innocent drank with impunity, but the guilty died the moment they tasted it. And the story goes that "when the Virgin Mary was accused, she submitted to the ordeal, and thus established her innocence. Hence the spring was long known as the Fountain of Accused Women." This is doubtless a mere fabrication, so far as the Virgin Mary is concerned. But the view that this fountain was the scene of one of her Divine Son's miracles is more worthy of consideration, though it is also erroneous. We refer to the supposition of Dr. Edward Robinson and Sir J. W. Dawson that this spring is identical with the ancient Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus healed the man who had an infirmity thirty and eight years. Two facts seemed to lend some support to this view. One was that "the water is considered to possess healing virtue, and every day crowds of men and women, afflicted with rheumatism and other maladies, descend the steps and wait for the moving of the water." The other was that the flow is intermittent, as implied in the preceding statement, the water welling up suddenly at intervals to a depth of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and then running through a passage at the back to the Siloam aqueduct already described. The cause of

this irregularity is not known, but it is probably due to a natural syphon somewhere in the bowels of the earth under the hills of Jerusalem.

But the Virgin's Fountain is too far away from the Sheep Gate to be the ancient Bethesda. Notice the Evangelist's description, John 5:1-9—"Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market (or, as the margin and the revised version render, by the Sheep Gate) a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, [waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.] And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

So it reads in the old version; but the revision of 1885 made known to everybody what was already well known to scholars, viz., that the words which we have enclosed in brackets are not found in the most ancient manuscripts, and do not belong to the scriptures, but were inserted at some later time. The Pool of Bethesda was probably an intermittent spring, and there may have been a belief among the people (as there is to-day concerning the Virgin's Spring) that the waters possessed healing properties, especially just after a fresh ebullition as is actually the case with some mineral springs. This periodic bubbling up of the water seems to have been attributed by popular superstition to the action of an invisible angel who came down at certain seasons and "troubled" it. After the appearance of John's Gospel some well meaning but simple minded reader, who apparently knew more about popular superstitions than he did about God's methods of miraculous healing, seems to have written the spurious words on the margin as an explanation for other readers, and from the margin they afterwards crept into the body of the text. The miracle performed by Jesus was really a rebuke of



the popular superstition.

But now we come back to the question—Where was this Pool of Bethesda? Not at the Virgin's Fountain, as we have already seen. Nor was it the great reservoir called *Birket Israel*, which lies in the deep valley just north of the Temple site, as Roman Catholic tradition would have us think, for, as the valley itself was there at the time of Titus's assault upon the Temple, it would seem that the reservoir must be of later construction. The true Pool of Bethesda was found in 1838 "a short distance north-west of the present church of St. Anne. Certain works carried on by the Algerian monks laid bare a large tank or cistern cut in the rock, to a depth of 30 feet, and Herr Schick recognized this as the Pool of Bethesda. It is 55 feet long from east to west, and measures  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet in breadth. A flight of twenty-four steps leads down into the pool from the eastern scarp of rock. Herr Schick who at once saw the great interest of this discovery, soon found a sister pool, lying end to end, 60 feet long, and of the same breadth as the first. The first pool was arched in by five arches, while five corresponding porches ran along the side of the pool. At a later period a church was built over the pool by the crusaders, and they seem to have been so far impressed by the fact of five arches below, that they shaped their crypt into five arches in imitation. They left an opening for getting down to the water; and further, as the crowning proof that they regarded the pool as Bethesda, they painted on the wall of the crypt a fresco representing the angel troubling the water of the pool."—George St. Clair.

It is easy for people to see, since the discovery just described, that this is the true site of Bethesda. But some people saw it before. One of these was M. Clermont Ganneau, who anticipated the discovery by several years, saying that "the Pool of Bethesda should be sought near the church of St. Anne, where an old tradition has placed the house of the mother of Mary, calling it *Beit h'annu*, 'House of Anne.' This expression is exactly identical with *Bethesda*, both expressions signifying *House of Mercy*, or *Compassion*."

This is not the only case in which the anticipations of M. Ganneau, opposed though they were to tradition and the prevailing opinion among scholars, have been verified by subsequent discovery. One other instance we must take time to mention, viz., his view as to the site of Gezer.

## THE GEZER INSCRIPTION.

Gezer had generally been placed at Yazur near Joppa. But in 1870 M. Ganneau suggested its identity with *Tell el Jezer* (Abu Shusheh) northeast of Ekron, supporting the suggestion with classical and critical arguments. In 1873 this identification was confirmed by M. Ganneau's discovery of a bilingual inscription of three words, one Greek and two Hebrew, carved on a rock on the northeast side of Tell el Jezer. The meaning of the Greek word (*Alkio*) is not known, though it seems to be a proper name. The two Hebrew words, written in ancient square characters are גזר-גור, *The Limit of Gezer*. The second word is the name of Gezer just as it is written in the Bible. The first is a well known Talmudic word meaning *limit*, being frequently used there to describe the limit of a Sabbath-day's journey, such as is referred to in Acts 1:12 where it is said that Mount Olivet "is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey." The length of a Sabbath-day's journey was not fixed by the law of Moses (Ex. 16:20) but by rabbinical tradition. Did this stone mark merely the Sabbatic limit, or did it mark also the hieratic limit of Gezer as a Levitical city (Josh. 21:21; Num. 35:2-5), or did it possibly mark also the tribal boundary of Ephraim (Josh. 16:3)? These are questions that cannot now be answered, perhaps, but they do not affect the identification of the place as Gezer.

M. Ganneau has rendered notable service to the science of oriental archaeology, in various other ways, especially in connection with the Moabite Stone, but the most interesting and important of all the discoveries made by this brilliant Frenchman yet remains to be described.

## THE TEMPLE TABLET.

The Temple Area in the time of Christ was a great walled quadrangle containing about thirty acres, and divided into two distinct parts,<sup>2</sup>(1) an Outer Court, and (2) a Sacred Enclosure, comprising in successive terraces a series of three inner courts, all rising toward the center where the Temple edifice itself crowned the whole. The outer court, or court of the Gentiles, the lowest of all, had two of its porticoes covered to shelter the people from the sun and rain—one of these was Herod's Portico, six hundred feet long, larger than Westminster Abbey, and easily capable of covering with its roof both the Parthenon at Athens and the Capitol at Rome; the other was Sol-

omon's Porch where Jesus walked (Jno. 10:23) and where he must often have seen the suggestive inscription which we have set out to describe. This Outer Court, or Court of the Gentiles, was separated from the inner and higher courts by a balustrade of stone, elegantly wrought, which was surmounted by tablets of stone placed at equal distances from each other and bearing an inscription, some in Greek and some in Latin letters, which warned foreigners from intruding further. These facts we learn from the Jewish historian, Josephus, who states moreover that the penalty for such intrusion into the Sacred Enclosure was death, for in his *Wars of the Jews* he represents the Roman general, Titus, as expostulating with the Jewish rebels in these words; "Have not you, vile wretches that you are, by our permission put up this partition wall before your sanctuary? Have not you been allowed to put up the pillars thereto belonging at due distances, and on it to engrave in Greek, and in your own letters, this prohibition, that no foreigner should go beyond that wall? *Have not we given you leave to kill such as go beyond it, though he were a Roman?*" Josephus's credit as a historian has suffered somewhat on account of this statement, as it seemed improbable that the Romans would have permitted the Jews to inflict the capital penalty for such an offense, but his statement has been confirmed to the letter by the discovery of one of the identical inscribed stones to which he refers.

On the 26th of May, 1871, Monsieur Ganneau, while passing through a low gateway into a ruined Mohammedan graveyard, near the northwestern angle of what was once the Temple Area, noticed on a block of hard stone at the corner of a wall two beautifully cut Greek letters. He scratched away enough of the soil to assure himself that he had found an inscription of great antiquity, then covered it up again carefully, and, returning next day with suitable tools, laid bare the whole surface. It proved to be an inscription of seven lines in monumental letters, on a stone 3 feet long, 2 feet high, and 15 inches thick, and when translated read as follows:

"NO FOREIGNER IS TO PASS WITHIN THE PARTITION WALL AND ENCLOSURE AROUND THE SACRED COURT. WHOEVER IS CAUGHT THERE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN DEATH WHICH WILL ENSUE."

Before considering the relation of this tablet to certain allusions of Scripture, let us give briefly its history since it was thus brought to light after being lost for eighteen hundred

years. "All the summer of 1871 was spent in fruitless attempts to get possession of the precious monument, the sole well-authenticated remnant of the temple, and the earliest Greek of the very few inscriptions found in Jerusalem. But no sooner was attention fixed on that stone than the owners of the property conceived that it must be of immense value, and refused to have it removed or further touched except for a large sum of money. The Governor of Jerusalem cut the knot of difficulty by digging up the stone and removing it to his palace, whence it was offered for sale at \$10,000. No purchaser coming forward, the stone was lost to the sight and knowledge of the world for fourteen years, until it was rediscovered, in 1884, by another Orientalist, Dr. J. H. Mordtmann, in the Royal Museum, Tchynili Kiosk, in Constantinople, whither it had been sent in despair of finding a more profitable disposition of it." The Turkish Government will not allow casts to be made of any of its archaeological treasures except at the request of Foreign governments. But a cast of this stone was secured by France and is now in the Louvre. Moreover, through the kind offices of the Hon. J. L. M. Curry, of Richmond, Va., then Minister to Spain, and the Hon. T. H. Bayard, Secretary of State under President Cleveland, a cast was made for the Baptist Theological Seminary at Rochester, N. Y., and Messrs. Ward & Howell of that city, who secured a matrix, are now prepared to make an exact copy, indistinguishable from the original cast, for any institution desiring it. If any friend of Union Theological Seminary, who reads this article, should feel moved to give \$16.00 for that purpose, he can make a valuable contribution to the Library of the institution by ordering for it a copy of this ancient and interesting monument.

The tablet throws light upon a very exciting incident in the life of the Apostle Paul. When he returned to Jerusalem after his third missionary tour, at the suggestion of the elders he undertook a certain service in the temple which was to be accomplished in seven days. "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further *brought Greeks also in the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.* (For they had seen before

*with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.*) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together : and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple : and forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar : who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them ; and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers they left beating of Paul." (Acts 21:27-32.)

In view of such an experience as this at the hands of an infuriated mob, when the whole city was thrown into a paroxysm of rage by the mere *supposition* that a Gentile had been brought into the sacred precincts of the temple and when the Apostle himself, the "supposed" offender, narrowly escaped "lynching," it was not unnatural that, in setting forth his doctrine of a Catholic Gospel which offered its blessings to Jews and Gentiles alike, he should have drawn a figure from that memorable barrier which most sharply accentuated the difference between Jews and Gentiles. It occurs in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he reminds the Gentiles that though they had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise," yet "now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, AND HATH BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION BETWEEN US." The Rev. James King states the whole matter succinctly and effectively as follows: "The Apostle in his frequent visits to the Temple had doubtless often noticed the partition wall, with the inscribed tablets threatening death to strangers, that separated the Court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites, and regarded it as a standing monument of that exclusive spirit of Judaism opposed to the universality of Christianity. He had been suspected of taking Trophimus, an Ephesian, beyond the partition wall, and on that account narrowly escaped with his life from a Jewish mob. Already had this dramatic incident, together with the character of the balustrade, been made known to the Ephesians by Trophimus, their fellow-townsmen ; and this being so, we may be morally certain that 'the middle wall of partition' is the balustrade upon which Ganneau's inscribed tablet formerly stood. This opinion receives confirmation from the fact that St. Paul concludes the argument by imagery drawn from the

chief corner stone and the walls of the Temple. 'Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.' (Eph. 2:19-21.)"

#### THE LATEST DISCOVERY.

The Temple Tablet with its Greek inscription of the time of Christ, the Siloam Inscription with its Hebrew record of the time of Hezekiah, and the Moabite Stone with its still more ancient epigraph from the days of Jehoshaphat—the first being 1800 years old, the second 2500, and the third 2700—are all of great interest to the archaeologist and the Bible student, as we have above endeavored to show. But the latest discovery in Palestine has brought to light *a written record that was made before the days of Moses*, and which therefore excels them all in antiquity, and from one point of view excels them all in interest. The gentleman who had the honor of making this remarkable discovery is an American, Mr. F. J. Bliss, son of President Bliss of the American Protestant College at Beirut, Syria; and the discovery was not the result of accident, as in the three foregoing cases, but of systematic search.

The first scientific excavation undertaken in the Holy Land outside of Jerusalem was begun in the spring of 1890 by the celebrated Egyptian Explorer, Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie. The point of attack first selected by him was a place called Umm Lakis, supposed to be the site of the Lachish of Scripture, but as nothing of interest was found there he began operations on a great mound, 200 feet square and more than 100 feet high, which stands sixteen miles east of Gaza, a little to the north, and which is known to the natives as Tell-el-Hesy. This mound was composed of various strata of ruins representing seven successive cities built one above another on the same site, the lowest of which belonged to the Amorite period, before the exodus of Israel from Egypt. The results of Dr. Petrie's work here were somewhat disappointing, only two things of any importance being accomplished. One was the demonstration of the fact that the Biblical-Lachish must have been situated at Tell-el-Hesy and not at Umm Lakis. The other was the determination of the relative ages of the suc-

cessive strata by means of the pottery found in them, which thus furnished a fairly accurate chronometer for all other Palestinian ruins when they shall be excavated. But these results were so meagre, especially as compared with the rich rewards of his former labors in Egypt, that Dr. Petrie left Tell-el-Hesy at the end of one season and did not return; and the committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, under whose auspices the work was conducted, would have discontinued it for good, had it not been for the earnest pleadings of Prof. Sayce and his confident, though apparently wild, prediction that when the Amorite stratum was reached, cuneiform tablets would be found, *i. e.* tablets written in the language of the Babylonians with the wedge-shaped characters of which their alphabet consisted. His reason for venturing such a prediction was this: in 1888 several hundred clay tablets written in the Babylonian script had been found at Tell-el-Amarna in Egypt, some of which proved to be letters written about 1400 B. C. to Amenophis IV, King of Egypt, by vassal kings and governors of towns and provinces in Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, such as Tyre, Jerusalem, Gezer, Askalon. Two of these letters were written by governors of Lachish, one of whom was named Yabniel, and the other Zimrida. Prof. Sayce argued that the other half of this official correspondence, *viz.*, the letters from the Pharaoh to the governors, ought to be looked for in the ruins of the towns to which they were sent, and that as they were written upon imperishable clay some of them would sooner or later be found.

When Dr. Petrie quit Lachish his place was taken by Mr. Bliss. He also labored for some time without making any valuable discoveries, but just as he was suspending the work for the summer season of 1892, sick and discouraged, he reached the Amorite stratum of Lachish, and very soon unearthed some Babylonian seal-cylinders and some Egyptian scarabs and beads. One of the beads bears the name of the mother of Amenophis IV. Moreover two of these ancient beads are of amber, which therefore "testify to trade with the Baltic as far back as the century before the exodus." But it was on the very last morning of Mr. Bliss's stay at Tell-el-Hesy, when the workmen were being dismissed and their tools were being packed away, that they brought to light a tablet covered with cuneiform characters, which, as translated by Prof. Sayce, reads as follows:

[To] the Governor. [I], O my father, prostrate myself at thy feet. Verily thou knowest that Baya(?) and Zimrida have received thy orders(?); and Dan-Hadad says to Zimrida: "O my father, the city of Yarami sends to me, it has given to me three *masur*, and three - - - and three falchions." Let the country of the king know that I stay, and it has acted against me; but till my death I remain. As for thy commands(?) which I have received, I cease hostilities, and have despatched Bel(?) - bauilu; and Rabi-ilu-yi has sent his brother to this country [to strengthen me?]

From this tablet, which resembles those of Tell-el-Amarna in shape and size, and also in the forms of the characters we learn that Palestine was in a state of revolt against the Egyptian government. Zimrida is twice mentioned. A letter from the King of Jerusalem, found among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, informs us that Zimrida was murdered at Lachish by his people. "It is difficult at first," says Prof. Sayce, "to realize the full importance of the discovery which Mr. Bliss has made; but the romantic side of it cannot fail to strike everyone. The archaeological world has hardly as yet recovered from the astonishment caused by the discovery at Tell-el-Amarna, in Upper Egypt, of cuneiform tablets which contain the correspondence carried on between Asia and Egypt more than three thousand years ago. Among them is a letter from a certain Zimrida, the governor of Lachish, in the south of Canaan. Scarcely have the letters been published and read, when excavations carried on in southern Palestine, on a site ingeniously identified by Dr. Petrie with that of Lachish, bring to light a cuneiform tablet similar to those found in Egypt, and belonging to the same age. When it is copied and deciphered, it turns out to contain the name of the very Zimrida whose acquaintance we had just made. Since the days of Moses, the letter sent by Zimrida to the Pharaoh, and the letter which had been stored in the archive chamber of his own Canaanitish city, had been lying buried beneath the ground. But scarcely has the one been disinterred from its long resting-place before the other also is discovered, and the two halves of a correspondence which was already past in the time of the exodus are again joined together.

The importance of the discovery is far reaching. It is clear that Mr. Bliss has at length made his way to the governor's palace in the Amorite city of Lachish, and is already at the entrance to its ancient archive chamber. The discovery of one tablet is a guarantee for the discovery of others. Doubtless the majority of them will be letters; but the analogy of the Tell-el-



Amarna collection leads us to believe that letters will not be the only form of literature which we shall find. . . . . Who knows what is in store for us, during the next few years, if only sufficient funds can be provided for carrying on the costly work of excavation? Histories of the patriarchs, records of Melchizedek and his dynasty, old hymns and religious legends, may be among the archaeological treasures that are about to be exhibited to the wandering eyes of the present generation. A few years ago such a possibility could not have been dreamed of by the wildest imagination; now it is not only a possibility but even a probability. To dig up the sources of Genesis is a better occupation than to spin theories and dissect the scriptural narrative in the name of the 'higher criticism.' A single blow of the excavator's pick has before now shattered the most ingenious conclusions of the western critic; if the Palestine Exploration Fund is sufficiently supported by the public to enable it to continue the work it has begun, we doubt not that theory will soon be replaced by fact, and that the stories of the Old Testament which we are now being told are but myths and fiction will prove to be based on a solid foundation of truth."

We shall soon see to what extent these bright anticipations are to be realized. In the meantime, having completed our survey of the discoveries in Egypt and in Palestine, we turn (in our next number) to the third and last division of our general subject, viz., the discoveries in Babylonia and Assyria, which afford a richer body of material for the illustration and confirmation of Scripture than both of the others combined.

