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I.—LITERARY.

THE DEACON'S OFFICE AND WORK.

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It has been suggestively said by Prof. Witherow of Londonderry that, "all offices in the Christian church take origin from the Lord Jesus. He is Himself the author and embodiment of them all." Not only were they appointed by His authority; they were embodied in His person, and illustrated in His ministry. This follows as a corollary from the familiar New Testament doctrine that the church is the Body of Christ. The expression is not figurative, nor, as some would have it, anticipative; it is the statement of a real, present fact.

Two phrases occur in the New Testament which seem, at first sight, synonymous, but which are never used interchangeably. The one is the "Body of Jesus" or the "Lord's Body." This always has reference to that material body in which he tabernacled during his earthly ministry; which was nailed to the cross, laid in Joseph's tomb, raised from the dead and afterward received up into glory. The other is the "Body of Christ." This, if I mistake not, is always used to denote his Mystical Body, the church. The church is not simply likened to his body, but in a most real sense it is his body. It is the body of which he is the animating, guiding and ruling Head; in which he dwells by his Spirit; through which he perpetuates his presence among men, and carries on his work. In order that he might discharge his personal ministry as our

WHO WERE THE HABIRI?

PROF. W. W. MOORE.

In the article entitled "A Batch of Old Letters" (*Union Seminary Magazine*, November-December, 1894), we gave some account of the recent discovery at Tel-el-Amarna, in upper Egypt, of a large number of clay tablets covered with cuneiform inscriptions, which proved to be letters written in the fifteenth century B. C. to the Pharaohs, Amenophis III. and Amenophis IV., some by various Mesopotamian kings who were in alliance with them, and others by various governors of the Syrian towns and provinces which were then subject to Egypt. It was shown that the letters of these Egyptian viceroys revealed to Amenophis IV, "the heretic king," a very discouraging state of things, their provinces being honeycombed with treason, they themselves being at strife with one another, and the troops at their command being utterly inadequate to the assertion of Egypt's authority over her Syrian dependencies, inasmuch as the Hittites and Amorites are reported as making steady inroads upon the Egyptian territory in the north, while the garrisons in the south are giving way in like manner before an invading people called 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. All the letters from the governors of the towns in southern Palestine, such as Gaza, Joppa and Askelon, are written in the same strain and describe the situation as well-nigh desperate, but the most interesting are the six letters from Abdi-heba, the governor of Jerusalem, who says in one of his communications that the *Habiri* are killing the governors and seizing the cities.

"All the governors are slain; there is no governor of the king left. Let the king turn his 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."

Now who were these *Habiri* who thus overran southern Palestine? This, as we shall see in a moment, is to Bible

students the most interesting of all the questions connected with these celebrated tablets.

1. *Some say that the Habiri were a confederacy of the nomadic tribes of southern Palestine.* This is substantially the view put forward by Prof. A. H. Sayce in his volume entitled "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," (a book whose title makes a bid for the support of the great body of conservative students of the English Bible, by using the term "Higher Criticism" in an unscientific and opprobrious and misleading way, while the contents of the work repeatedly betray the conservative cause and advance some of the wildest and most destructive theories concerning various parts of the Holy Scriptures). He translates the word *Habiri* "confederates," and even endeavors to connect it with the name of the city of Hebron, saying that "Hebron" signifies "confederacy" and "indicates that the old sanctuary which stood there was the meeting place of tribes or races of different origin. The letters of the king [or governor] of Jerusalem, Ebed-tob [Abdi-heba], in the Tel-el-Amarna collection, are full of references to the Habiri or 'confederates,' who had already occupied a part of the province of the Egyptian Pharaoh, and were menacing Jerusalem itself. As Hebron is never mentioned in the letters, although they show that the territory of Jerusalem extended to the south of it, I believe we must see in these Habiri a confederacy of Amorites and Hittites, and possibly other tribes also, which gave a name to the common sanctuary at which they assembled. In this way we should account not only for the origin of the name but also for the double title under which the city was known."

2. *Others say that the Habiri were the Hebrews.* This identification was suggested by Major C. R. Conder and Dr. H. Zimmern, independently of one another, in 1890. The name *Habiri* seems to be that of a particular tribe or people who, according to the tablets, came from "the land of Seir," and it corresponds exactly to the name by which the descendants of Abraham are called in the Old Testament, viz.: '*Ibhrim* (עִבְרִים) or, as given in the English version, *Hebrews*. The fact that the initial consonant of '*Ibhrim* (Hebrews) is '*Ayin* (ר), while the initial consonant of *Habiri* is *Heth* (Hebrew ח), is not a decisive philological objection to this identification, for '*Ayin* is frequently represented by this guttural *h* in the cuneiform script and especially in Palestinian names (cf. the Assyrian

Hazzalu for (עזה) *Gaza*, and the Assyrian *Humri* for (חמרי) *Omri*). So then the name of these victorious invaders of southern Palestine, the direction from which they came, the territory which they conquered, and their apparent hostility both to the Egyptian government and the Amorite religion, would all lead us to believe that the *Habiri* were no other than the Hebrews who conquered Canaan under Joshua.* But this conclusion involves the surrender of the view which is now generally accepted as to the date of the Exodus, viz: that it took place under Menepta II about 1300 B. C. For Amenophis IV, to whom these letters concerning the *Habiri* were written, lived at least a century before that time. In other words, if the *Habiri* of the tablets were the Hebrews under Joshua, the Exodus must have taken place more than a hundred years before the date fixed for it by Brugsch and the great body of modern Egyptologists. Which of these views, if either, is correct?

(1.) One of the chief arguments relied upon for placing the Exodus in the time of Menepta II. is the supposed identification of his father, Rameses II, with the Pharaoh of the Oppression. That identification rests in part upon the inscribed monuments unearthed at Pithom, which seem to show that he was the founder of that city, since his are the earliest of all the inscriptions found there, and we know from Ex. 1: 11 that it was for the Pharaoh of the Oppression that Israel built Pithom. This is an apparent demonstration that Rameses II was the Pharaoh of the Oppression. If so, then Menepta II, his son (or, at farthest, Seti II, his grandson) was the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

(2.) On the other hand, if we accept the identification of the *Habiri* with the Hebrews under Joshua, we must carry back the date of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan to the 15th century B. C., for that was the century in which Amenophis IV, to whom these letters were written, lived. This would seem to lend support to the impugned statement of 1 Kings 6: 1 that it was "in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt" that Solomon began to build the temple. For, as we

*Major Conder even asserts that the names of Japhia, King of Gezer (Josh. X. 3), Adoni-Zedec, King of Jerusalem (Josh. X. 3), and Jabin, King of Hazor (Josh. XI. 1), occur among those of the writers of the Tel-el-Amarna letters.

know that Solomon came to the throne about 1000 B. C., the Exodus, according to the statement just quoted, must have taken place about 1480 B. C. Subtracting from this the forty years of the wandering in the wilderness, we have as the *approximate* date of the Hebrew invasion of Palestine 1440 B. C. If Solomon's accession was in 992 and his foundation of the Temple in 988, then the *exact* date of the Exodus, according to 1 Kings 6: 1, was 1468, and the date of Joshua's conquest of Canaan, forty years later, was 1428. The passage in 1 Kings 6: 1 is in sore need of support, as may be seen from the remarks of Canon Rawlinson quoted in our footnote,* as well as from the statement of Hales in his "chronology" that

*1 Kings 6: 1, *And it came to pass [in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt], in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.* It is upon this statement that all the earlier portion of what is called the 'received chronology' depends. The year of the foundation of the temple can be approximately fixed by adding the remaining years of Solomon's reign, the years of the kings of Judah, and the seventy years of the captivity, to the received date for the accession of Cyrus to the throne of Babylon. The chronology thus obtained is checked and (in a general way) confirmed by the ancient document called the Canon of Ptolemy, by the recently-discovered Assyrian Canon' and again by the chronology of Egypt. Amid minor differences there is a general agreement, which justifies us in placing the accession of Solomon about B. C. 1000. But great difficulties meet us in determining the sacred chronology anterior to this. Apart from the present statement, the chronological data of the Old Testament are insufficient to fix the interval between Solomon's accession and the Exodus, since several of the periods which make it up are unestimated. The duration of Joshua's judgeship, the interval between his death and the servitude of Chushan-Rishathaim, and the duration of the judgeships of Shamgar and Samuel, are not mentioned in Scripture. Again, the frequent occurrence of round numbers (twenty, forty and eighty) in this portion of the chronology seems to indicate an inexact reckoning, which would preclude us from fixing the dates with any accuracy. Under these circumstances chronologists have found in the present verse their sole means of extraction from the difficulties which beset this portion of the inquiry: and the 'received chronology' in its earlier portion, is (as has been already observed) based entirely upon it. But the text itself is not free from suspicion. 1. It is the sole passage in the Old Testament which contains the idea of dating events from an era—an idea which did not occur to the Greeks till the time of Thucydides. 2. It is quoted by Origen *without the words*, 'in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt' (Comment. in S. Johann 2: 20). 3. It seems to have been known only in this shape to Josephus, to Theophilus of Antioch, and to Clement of Alexandria, who would all naturally

"the period of 480 years is a forgery foisted into the text." The date is rejected also by Jackson, Clinton, Stuart Poole, Bunsen, Lepsius, Lenormant, Brugsch and others. It is defended by Canon Cook and others. Leaving this difficult question undecided, we may proceed to notice a third view, by which we may make the *Habiri* of the tablets mean Hebrews and yet *not* surrender the view now commonly accepted as to the date of the Exodus, viz.: that it took place not far from 1300 B. C. under Menepthah II.

(3.) The supposition that the *Habiri* were Hebrews does not necessarily imply that they were the Hebrews returning from Egypt who under Joshua conquered Canaan. They may have belonged to a Hebrew stock which remained behind when Jacob and his sons went down into Egypt in the time of Joseph. "From a number of different sides," says Dr. Ward, "the question has lately been raised whether the migration into Egypt did not leave behind a considerable part of the Hebrew race. The term *Hebrew* seems to have a different use from the more common term *children of Israel*. The latter was the people's own designation of themselves, in the narrower sense of those who drew their descent from Israel, and came out of Egypt. The other appears to have its origin in the Terahite and Abrahamic migration from Babylonia, and before it became limited to the children of Israel may have included other allied clans which did not go down into Egypt."

(4.) Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr. is disposed to recognize in the

have referred to the date, had it formed a portion of the passage in their day. 4. It is, to say the least, hard to reconcile with other chronological statements in the Old and New Testament. Though the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel furnish us with no exact chronology, they still supply important chronological data—data which seem to indicate for the interval between the Exodus and Solomon, a period considerably exceeding 480 years. For the years actually set down amount to at least 580, or, according to another computation, to 600; and though a certain deduction might be made from this sum on account of the round numbers, this deduction would scarcely do more than balance the addition required on account of the four unestimated periods. Again, in the New Testament, St. Paul (according to the received text) reckons the period from the division of Canaan among the tribes in the sixth year of Joshua (Josh. 14) to Samuel the prophet, at 450 years, which would make the interval between the Exodus and the commencement of the temple to be 579 years. On the whole, therefore, it seems probable that the words, 'in the four hundred and eightieth year,' etc., are an interpolation into the sacred text which did not prevail generally before the third century of our era."

Habiri, and in the "sons of *Milkil*" (who also are among the most active opponents of Abdi-heba), the Hebrew clans of *Heber* and *Malchiel*, which in no less than three passages of the Old Testament occur in juxtaposition as subdivisions of the tribe of Asher (Gen. XLVI. 17; Num. XXVI. 45; and 1 Chron. VII. 31).

Similar to this question concerning the *Habiri* is the question concerning the *Yaudu* mentioned in one of the letters of Aziru, one of the governors in northern Syria. In this letter the name *Yaudu* is spelled in exactly the same way as in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings many centuries later when they are referring to *Judah*. Moreover *Yaudu* apparently refers to a clan, *the Judean men*, and Aziru declares that they were trying to induce him to assume a hostile attitude towards Egypt. To the objection that it is difficult to account for the presence of Jews so far to the north of Palestine at so early a period, the advocates of this somewhat startling identification have only this reply, that there may have existed in northern Syria a clan bearing this name as early as the 15th century B. C., which subsequently became fused with the southern tribe of Judah. We need not pursue these conjectures further.

Our not very satisfactory conclusion is that there are not yet sufficient *data* for the settlement of the question either as to the *Yaudu* or the *Habiri*. We wait for more light.

