



[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.]
AN EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS, GEZER

[Frontispiece

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THE ANCIENT LANDS AND BIBLE SERIES. No. 1

W. H. BOULTON

PALESTINE

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. SOME INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS	I
II. THE LAND OF PALESTINE	9
III. ARCHÆOLOGY IN PALESTINE	16
IV. LIFE IN ANCIENT PALESTINE	30
V. THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE	37
VI. THE PALESTINE OF THE PATRIARCHS	43
VII. PALESTINE BEFORE THE CONQUEST	54
VIII. THE CONQUEST TO THE FALL OF JERICHO	62
IX. THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND	73
X. THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES	82
XI. THE MONARCHY AND THE CITY OF JERUSALEM	97
XII. THE ERA OF SOLOMON	104
XIII. JERUSALEM AND ITS TEMPLES	113
XIV. THE NORTHERN CAPITALS	120
XV. IN THE DAYS OF HEZEKIAH	132
XVI. AFTER THE EXILE	139
XVII. EARLY RELIGIOUS CULTS OF PALESTINE	145
XVIII. THE PHILISTINES AND THEIR CITIES	156
XIX. EDOM, MOAB, AND AMMON	165
XX. THE HITTITES	175
INDEX	181

NOTE

ONE of the problems which has to be met in a book of this character is the spelling of Ancient Names. Although much progress has been made in the decipherment of the early languages there is still much difference of opinion concerning the pronunciation of Egyptian, Assyrian, and other Names. To ensure uniformity the latest forms adopted by the Trustees of the British Museum will be used throughout the *Ancient Lands and Bible Series*, except where the Bible use of a name has made it so customary that it has become too familiar for any alteration to be desirable.



ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACE PAGE
AN EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE TRADE ROUTES OF PALESTINE	10
TELL-EL-HESY	26
A VIEW OF SHILOH	94
SAMARIA: A CORNER OF THE WALL	126
THE COURSE OF THE SILOAM TUNNEL	134
THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION	134
A VIEW OF JERUSALEM	142
THE HIGH PLACE AT GEZER	150

PALESTINE

CHAPTER I

SOME INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

THE countries directly connected with the Bible story occupy a comparatively small portion of the total land area of the globe. A circle with a radius of 800 miles, with the city of Jerusalem as a centre, would include almost all of them. Of course there are allusions to others, for example, the Table of Nations in Genesis 10, and the missionary labours of Saul of Tarsus, which take the interest westward to Europe. These, however, are exceptions to the general rule. It is within this circle that our interests will lie in this and the following volumes of the series, until we reach the wider activities of the Apostolic Age.

Over many of the lands within the area desolation has long reigned supreme. Palestine itself is an example of this, so is Mesopotamia. In Egypt there has been both population and cultivation, but that, too, has been the home of ruins—temples, palaces, and tombs, all testifying to a past in striking contrast with its present. In most of the lands within our circle such ruins exist, some of them open to the eyes of all who pass by, others covered by the dust of ages. In addition to ruins there



are the tablets of Mesopotamia and the papyri of Egypt. All these were practically unknown until comparatively recently.

In these countries now lying so desolate, the historians of the past have pictured the active scenes of busy peoples. Herodotus, Berosus, and others have recorded more or less definite accounts of their inhabitants; above all, so far as our purpose is concerned, the Bible has many references to these countries wherein great men, good, bad, and indifferent, have appeared and played their part in the world's affairs. The three principal districts in the area are Palestine, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. In the first of these, Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, and others lived and laboured. Through it Egyptian armies marched to victory and defeat. Then Israel took possession of the land, and the events recorded in the Bible took place. Under David and Solomon its power and influence increased, and though there was a great decline in its glory and prestige in the centuries that followed, the land throbbed with life and movement until the end of the two kingdoms which succeeded that of Solomon.

Mesopotamia, the home of the Assyrians and Babylonians, was also the theatre of life and motion. The Assyrians of the northern portion were the great Imperialists of their times; they sent their victorious armies to the ends of the earth as they were known in those days; Asia Minor and Egypt both realised the might of Assyria. When the mantle of Empire passed from Assyria to Babylon equally stirring times were experienced, and there is plenty of evidence to show that under Nebuchadnezzar Babylon must have been a great



city humming with industry, and the centre of a thriving commerce.

Egypt has had a long and varied history, wherein times of greatness and of abject failure have alternated. It has trodden down other peoples and been trodden down by them. But whilst Mesopotamia became a land of desolation Egypt has always been inhabited by a people engaged in the active pursuits of life. It is, however, full of evidences of a past, reminders of a greatness strikingly different from its present condition, and teeming with information about its Pharaohs and its people.

For ages these evidences of the past were waiting study. Where they could be seen, as in Egypt, they excited wonder but nothing more. More often they were unseen and unknown, hidden away in the dust. It is no presumption which sees in this fact an evidence of Divine providence. During many centuries the lands in question were under the dominion of the Moslem, and there is no doubt that if the things which have been discovered there had been found whilst they held undisputed sway, they would have been ruthlessly destroyed. That this is no idle supposition will be evident from the following account given by Sir Henry Layard in the Introduction to his book on *Nineveh and its Remains*. Referring to the discoveries of Mr. Rich, the first to carry out excavations on the site of Nineveh, he says: "He learnt from the inhabitants of Mosul that, some time previous to his visit, a sculpture, representing various forms of men and animals, had been dug up in a mound forming part of the great enclosure. This strange object had been the cause of general wonder, and the whole population had issued from the walls to



gaze upon it. The Ulema having at length pronounced that these figures were the idols of the infidels, the Mohammedans, like obedient disciples, so completely destroyed them, that Mr. Rich was unable to obtain even a fragment."

It is now considerably over a century since the attention of scholars was seriously directed to the ruins of the past within our suggested circle, and men began to speculate as to their meaning. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt marks the real commencement of this interest, for although his main purpose was military, he was accompanied by a number of savants whose duty it was to collect and copy the memorials of the temples and other buildings which they inspected. Mesopotamia came to the front later when, first Mr. Rich and M. Botta, and then Sir Henry Layard, began to excavate the ruins of Nineveh and, later, of Babylon. Similar activities were carried on in Palestine, and gradually the main history of the whole of the civilisations connected with these centres has been reconstructed.

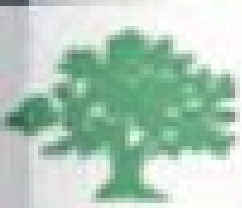
The results of this resurrection of a past world have sometimes been of a startling character, and their combined results have revolutionised our ideas of the earlier history of the Middle East. Outside the scope of our subject, but illustrating the principle involved, the discoveries of Schliemann on the site of Troy may be mentioned. As men grew more critical it became the generally received opinion that Homer's account of the siege of Troy was mostly mythical and had no real foundation in fact. Some, of course, retained a belief in its actuality; amongst them was Schliemann himself, whose dream it was for many years to be able



to carry out investigations on the spot. At last the opportunity came. With great enthusiasm he excavated at Hissarlik. As a result he found the ruins of great buildings and a vast gold treasure, which he called the Treasure of Priam. Unbelief and scepticism received a rude shock, and men realised that there was at least some actual history behind the poems of Homer. Schliemann's ideas concerning the ruins he examined proved to be incorrect; he thought them to be those of Homer's Troy; actually he had discovered the ruins of a city which pre-dated Troy by many centuries, and had added hundreds of years to the history of Greece.

Similarly changed views resulted from excavations that were carried on in Crete, where the assumed fable of the Minotaur was found to have a basis of fact. True the discoveries gave quite a different set of facts from the old fables, but it was proved that underlying the mythical history there was actual truth.

As the supposed myths and legends of Ancient Greece and Crete have been proved to have substance behind them, it is natural to examine the position of the Bible in the light of modern discoveries. For some considerable time now it has been customary to question the accuracy of many of the Bible records. The process of disintegrating its books into sections defined as J, E, JE, and so forth, unfortunately led to discrediting its histories, biographies and narratives, until many of its chief characters have been reduced to little more than myths. In the most extreme critical quarters even Jesus of Nazareth, the greatest figure of all, has been discredited, or at least stripped of all that was miraculous in relation to him. Abraham has



been spoken of as a solar myth and detailed incidents in connection with his life as absolutely unhistorical.

Seeing that Homer has been proved to be historically correct, coloured perhaps by poetic license, it is natural to ask whether a similar process has taken place in relation to the Bible and its records. If Troy after all did exist, with Priam and Ajax and its other heroes, then Moses and Abraham, and David, and many another, may also have been real historical personages, and the accounts contained of them in the Bible may be true. The question raised is one of supreme importance. Troy stands for little more than its past history and the gallant deeds of the Greeks and Trojans. Abraham and David stand for something of much greater importance. If the records of the life of Abraham are true then there is a definite and Divine promise that in some way all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him and in his seed. If David be a real historical personage to whom the events recorded in the Bible happened, then God made with him an everlasting covenant, "ordered in all things and sure," which he himself has described as being "all his salvation and all his desire". If Jesus of Nazareth really lived the life, suffered the death, and experienced the resurrection described in the Gospels, then he was the Lamb of God manifested to take away the sin of the world, and must at some time be "King of Kings and Lord of Lords", the world's Redeemer. These are some of the things opened up by questions as to the credibility of the Bible.

Those who have in any way followed the researches of the modern science of Archæology will be fully



aware that of all the lands in which the archæologist has been at work, and in which his great discoveries have been made, those connected with the Biblical narrative occupy a foremost place. Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and other districts which enter into Bible history, have given up first-hand evidence of the things which took place in them in the days of old. These records can be placed by the side of those in the Bible and the records compared. To say that the results of this procedure have shaken the theories of Bible critics is to speak in terms of strict moderation; actually they have vindicated the Bible over and over again, sometimes in relation to the very events or records which have been most seriously challenged.

The museums of Europe and elsewhere store much of the information which has been obtained. Amongst them the British Museum stands virtually unrivalled. There, particularly in the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian Rooms, may be seen many of the things to which attention will be directed in this and the following volumes. It does not possess many things from Palestine, but even these are increasing in number. In other similar places, such as the Louvre in Paris, the Berlin Museum, and at Gizeh and in the museums of America and elsewhere, more may be seen, but whether the articles are on view or not, whether they are capable of being moved or not, the records of the excavators and investigators are open to all, and on these it is intended to draw freely for information.

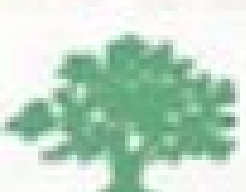
One other source of information remains to be noted. If history and biography are truly recorded, the geographical facts of the countries concerned are bound



to be referred to, and may often be used to prove or disprove the accuracy of the record. In dealing with the Ancient Lands and the Bible this phase of information will not be overlooked; it is of special importance in connection with the subject of the present volume. In this respect, too, very much has been discovered during the last century. Palestine and the surrounding countries have been surveyed and the results recorded in a series of maps and publications, and as a result we know very much more about them now than we did even a few years ago.

The present is an opportune time for the issue of a series of books such as is proposed. There is an influence at work in the minds of many which is leading to a renewed interest in the Bible. Reading in the daily papers about Jericho, Gaza, Ur of the Chaldees, Egyptian tombs, and other like matters, the mind turns again to the old and long familiar stories contained in the Bible. Finding that so many of the things which have been discovered have explained or confirmed the well-known histories, people have realised that after all the critics may be less reliable than was at one time supposed. To put it very moderately, the story of Jerusalem is just as likely to be true as the story of Troy. Actually there is far more evidence available for the truth of the history recorded in the Bible than there is for that of the wars of the Greeks and Trojans.

What is needed is the presentation of facts, not theories. Theories may be ingeniously built up to establish a proposition, which a single fact may upset. Such is the purpose before us; it will be for those who read to decide how far it has been attained.

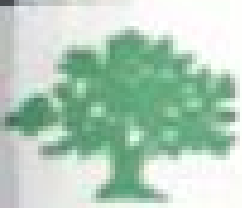


CHAPTER II

THE LAND OF PALESTINE

IN a general sense Syria is the name given to that stretch of country which forms the eastern boundary of the Mediterranean Sea; in a more restricted sense it is confined to the northern portion thereof, reaching from Alexandretta almost to Acre, and extending eastward to Mesopotamia. It forms the connecting area between Europe and Asia Minor and the countries of the Euphrates. It was therefore a land of considerable importance in connection with the great Empires which successively arose in the Near East. In the south was Palestine, the country of the people of the Bible. Necessarily Syria enters largely into the Bible story.

Within the limits of the land certain general features stand out. The most prominent of all are the mountain ranges of Lebanon and Anti Lebanon. The mountains of Lebanon extend for a distance of about one hundred miles and reach an elevation of nearly ten thousand feet. At one time this range was well wooded with cypresses, cedars, and firs. The cedars of Lebanon occupy the highest place among the vegetation mentioned in the Bible. In the writings of the prophets they represent the great Empires which exalted themselves over the peoples of the earth. Parallel with Lebanon is the Anti Lebanon range, which includes Hermon, over nine thousand feet in height. The chief rivers of the country are the Litany and the Orontes.



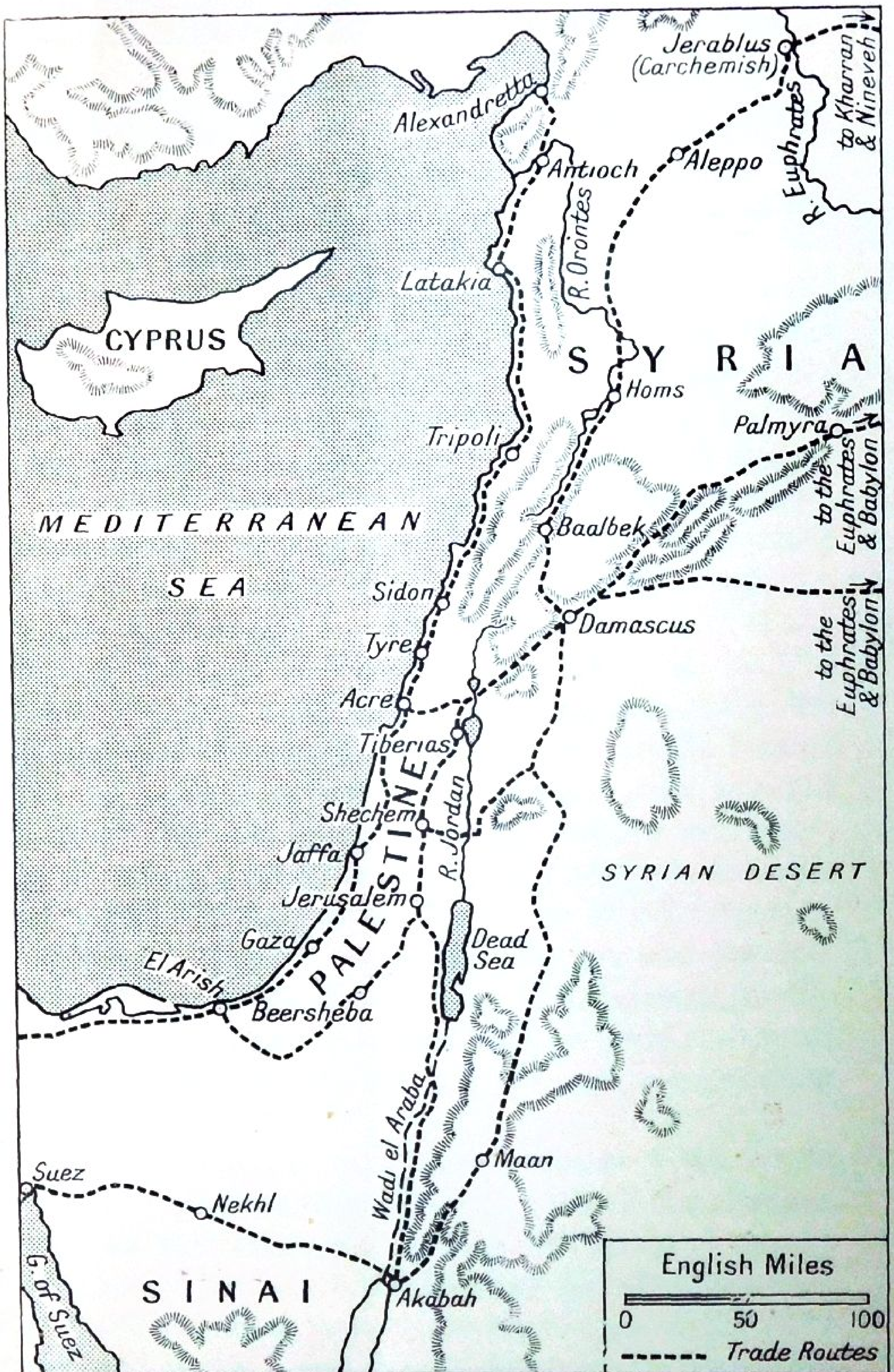
Damascus, the principal city of Syria, is one of the most ancient cities in the world. It is a green oasis on the edge of the desert. Tadmor, or Palmyra, is another important city. On the sea coast there are Tyre and Sidon, the great commercial centres of the past. In the times with which the Bible mostly deals these were part of the Phœnician territory, but to-day are parts of Syria itself.

In the Hebrew of our Bibles Syria is called Aram, usually in conjunction with some determinative suffix:—Aram Dammasec, i.e. Syria of Damascus, Aram Naharaim, Syria of the two rivers, now Mesopotamia, and Padan Aram, the plain of Syria. The second of these will not enter into our considerations at present.

Of the countries included in the land of Syria, the most important is Palestine, the principal subject of this volume. It also contains a number of smaller States such as Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These have made very little impression upon the history of the human race, and do not call for much attention here, though at least some consideration will have to be given to the Moabite Stone, which refers to incidents that occurred between Israel and Moab. Edom, with its wonderful ruins at Petra, must also be mentioned before the task in front of us is finished.

Palestine is essentially the country of the Bible; it is a land which has exerted an influence on the world altogether out of proportion to its size. First it was a land of promise, then a country of occupation. Through all the vicissitudes which have marked the history of the people of Israel it has remained their great Homeland, either in fact or in longing. Even to-day, when





THE TRADE ROUTES OF PALESTINE AND SYRIA

[Face page 10



the Jews are living amongst all the peoples of the earth, Palestine is still their Land of Hope. The Zionist Movement, recognised in the Mandate of the League of Nations, is an indication of the reality of the hope which centres in the land.

In a map of the world prepared in the time of the Crusades, Jerusalem is marked as the centre of the world, and on the floor of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in that city the priests show the very spot which is that centre. Most people will be inclined to regard this as a mere imagination begotten of a patriotic love of Zion as the cradle of the Christian religion; actually there is a great deal to be said for the idea. Professor Mackinder, writing a few years ago, said of it: "If the World-island (that is the three Continents of the Old World—Europe, Asia, and Africa) be inevitably the principal seat of humanity on this globe, and if Europe . . . be central in the World-island, then the hill citadel of Jerusalem has a strategical position with reference to world realities not different essentially from its ideal position in the perspective of the Middle Ages, or its strategical position between Babylon and Egypt." That such a position should have been selected for the home of a chosen people is significant; it gives additional interest to the land, and it explains much in connection with its history.

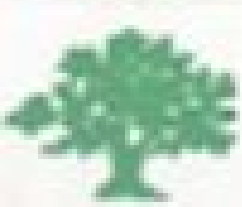
In Bible times the great trade routes of the world passed through Palestine. To-day, with all the changed conditions that exist, Palestine is still situated on the great trade routes which run through the Mediterranean and Red Seas. It is just by the water-way of the Suez Canal, and in the Great War of 1914-18, its possession



was found to be essential in the preservation of Britain's routes to the East.

In this central land Israel were placed within well-defined limits. Although Israel did not often own all the territory which had been assigned to them, the intended boundaries are recorded, and those boundaries are almost as significant as the position of the land itself. It is a strange fact that although centrally situated Palestine is actually isolated. There are mountain barriers in the north, the harbourless shores of the Mediterranean Sea on the west, the wilderness on the south, and the immense rift of the Jordan Valley and the Syrian Desert on the east—Isaiah expresses it in his wonderfully poetic way when he says: "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it (margin: made a wall about it) and gathered out the stones thereof" (Isa. 5. 1, 2). It was therefore an ideal position for the people who were to occupy such an important place in working out the Divine purpose among mankind. Centrally situated, yet in a sense cut off from the rest of the world, closely associated with great trade routes, it was a fit homeland for a people who were to be the "vineyard of the Lord of Hosts". As Balaam expressed it the people were to dwell alone and yet were to be amidst the nations.

A people living in a land with a harbourless sea coast could not be expected to develop as a seafaring nation, and this fact explains the attitude of Old Testament writers to the Sea. It was an unknown region. The Hebrews knew the Sea of Galilee, the home of their fisheries and a centre of activity, but that was only a lake. The wider Mediterranean never invited them to



seek an extension of their kingdom or of their interests to the West. Not once in all the history of the people is there a reference to any expedition, commercial or otherwise, which travelled westward on the waters of the Great Sea. The only incident recorded in relation to it is the voyage of Jonah who journeyed from Joppa to "flee from the presence of the Lord". It was an unknown way, just as in later ages the Atlantic was "the Green Sea of Darkness" to the Saracens in their home in Spain. The harbourless coast which geography reveals is the explanation of this silence concerning the Great Sea and the absence of any reference to adventures upon it.

Although the mountains of Israel ran down through the land like a backbone, something like the Pennine Chain in Northern England, there are breaks where transverse valleys cut through and divide the land into sections. Going eastward from the sea the construction of the land is the Maritime Plain, varying in width from six to thirty miles. This was the great military highway through the land from earliest times. Next came the Shephelah, a name which means low, or lowland, and is applied to the lands which slope down to the Maritime Plain and the coast. The word is sometimes translated plain. Eastward of this is the great mountain range, the central feature of the land. From this height the land drops rapidly to the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. So steep is the drop that although it is only about fifteen miles as the crow flies from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, whilst Jerusalem is 2,582 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, the Dead Sea is 1,292 feet below it, and soundings have revealed a depth of at least 1,300



feet. On the other side the land rises again to the Syrian Desert. The transverse breaks are (1) In the north the great Plain of Esdraelon, the Valley of Jezreel and the Valley of the River Yarmuk. (2) In the centre the so-called Nablus Gate, where the mountains sink to a lower level, continued eastward by the River Jabbok. The result is the formation of distinct territories, Galilee and Bashan in the north, Samaria and Gilead in the centre, and Judah and the land of Moab in the south.

It will be seen that this resulted in a sixfold division of the land, three sections east and three sections west of the Jordan. In the light of this it is interesting to note that when Cities of Refuge were provided for the protection of the unwitting slayer, one was situated in each of these six sections of the land. They were Kedesh and Bezer in the north, Shechem and Ramoth Gilead in the centre, and Hebron and Golan in the south. Little facts like these help to impress upon readers of the Book the historicity of its records.

Occupying the highest point on the Central Range stood the "hill citadel" Jerusalem. Strong in its mountainous position, difficult of access from most points, it was a natural seat of government for the tribes who inhabited the land, and, as we shall see later, was an essential acquisition for any people who desired to enjoy security in Palestine. Its position is often referred to: "The mountains are round about Jerusalem"; it is established "in the top of the mountains", "beautiful for situation", "the City of the Great King".

A knowledge of the geographical construction of the land will help the reader to understand and appreciate the history recorded in the Bible from the time when



Israel first entered the land until they were driven therefrom. A typical illustration of the use of geographical considerations is to be seen in the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon. The border of the two kingdoms was affected by the lie of the land; the very difference of outlook between those dwelling north and south made the division a natural one. The deep Jordan Valley explains why it is always described as "going down" to Jericho. Other illustrations will no doubt occur as the history of the people is considered.

Geography is the background of all history, in fact it is difficult to understand any historical allusions unless we know something of the places where history has been enacted. Hence the inclusion here of such considerations as well as of those which have been established as a result of the Archæological investigations of the past hundred years.



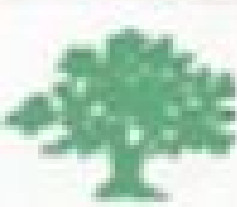
CHAPTER III

ARCHÆOLOGY IN PALESTINE

BEFORE proceeding further it is desirable that some account shall be given of the various Archæological and other researches which have been carried out in Palestine during the last hundred years or thereabouts.

Although certain people who travelled through the country during the past few centuries have placed on record various facts which they observed, the real work with which we are concerned commenced with a visit which Dr. Edward Robinson paid to the land. He had been appointed Professor of Biblical Literature to the Union Theological Seminary of New York, and felt that he could not do justice to his post unless he gave some personal study to the Holy Land. It was in the year 1838 that he first went to Palestine. He took the Bible as his guide, from it he had prepared data which he properly classified. With this to assist him he wandered through the land endeavouring to identify the sites associated with the various incidents related in the Scriptures. In 1852 he paid a second visit and obtained further information. The results were published as *Biblical Researches in Palestine*.

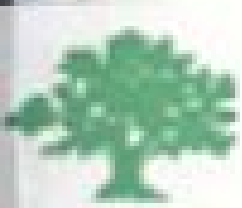
Actual excavation came later. In 1865 the Palestine Exploration Fund was founded for the purpose of obtaining all possible information concerning the country, including, of course, Archæological investigations. Survey work was also carried on by Captain Wilson, of



the British Army. This survey was followed by others at various dates, so that to-day the whole land has been surveyed and the results mapped and tabulated. The intimate knowledge thus acquired has been invaluable to those who have attempted to follow in detail the historical records in the Bible.

When the Palestine Exploration Fund was established, one of the first works which it undertook was the exploration and excavation of Jerusalem by Lieut. (afterwards Sir Charles) Warren. There are obvious difficulties in carrying out such work in a place which is inhabited and the work undoubtedly suffered in consequence. The method adopted was to sink shafts and make tunnels. Such methods miss much that is valuable, for a most important "find" might be a few inches away, and not be seen. It is hardly to be wondered at that the total result of his labours was not great. Yet one of the finds proved to be of considerable importance, as we shall see later. It was a shaft, which has since been known as "Warren's Shaft". His work finished in 1870, and for some years excavation in Palestine remained in abeyance.

The surveys of Palestine called attention to the large number of "tells" that were to be found in the land. A "tell" is a small hill, with sloping sides, and it is estimated that there are something like two hundred of them in the country. Every one of these tells is likely to mark the site of an ancient city or village, each at one time the scene of the busy life of a people. It is obvious that by the excavation of these tells much may be learned of the past. Each may represent a number of cities which have been successively built upon the ruins of a previous one. Thus whilst the lowest



layer of the tell might disclose the remains of a Canaanish city, the topmost might represent one of Roman times or even later.

It was not until 1890 that the tells of Palestine began to be systematically explored. In that year Sir Flinders Petrie (to give him his present title) spent a few weeks at a mound called Tell-el-Hesy, excavating on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund. No man was better fitted to inaugurate this kind of work. A life-long archæologist with years of experience behind him, he realised the importance of little things which less experienced excavators might miss. Pottery, in particular, was noticed and registered by him as part of the evidence which was to give information concerning the past of the land. As the years passed various sites were thus examined, Tell-el-Hesy, Tell-el-Safi, Gezer, Samaria, Beth-shemesh, Beth-shan, and many others have been the subject of excavations, and the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings have been carefully explored. More recently much attention has been given to Jericho, where careful and sustained researches have revealed matters of intense interest to the Bible student. The results of some of these excavations will engage our attention in due course.

Although it is not the purpose of this book to describe the various excavations which have taken place in the land of Palestine, one or two illustrations of the work will perhaps be useful as indicating the kind of matters which they reveal. Gezer is a city in the southern territory originally allocated to Dan, not far from the Philistine border. It was an ancient city of Canaan whose inhabitants were destroyed by the Israelites



under Joshua. It was given to the Levites, but continued to be inhabited by people of the old race. It was destroyed by Pharaoh of Egypt in the time of Solomon, and the site of it was presented to that monarch when he married a daughter of Pharaoh. Solomon rebuilt the city, and though no further reference is made to it in the Old Testament, it evidently continued to have a chequered history. It was therefore an ideal site for investigation. The work at Gezer was carried on during the years 1902-1905, and again from 1907-1909. The remains which were discovered ranged from the Stone Age, when it was inhabited by cave dwellers, to the times of the Maccabees. Some of the things which were disclosed in the course of the excavations will be referred to in later chapters.

For something like ten years the University Museum of Pennsylvania has been carrying out excavations at Beisan. The results have been unusually interesting and complete, and give a clear indication of the history of the town during a very long period. It will be appreciated that the lessons which it has to teach can only be learned if the articles found in the various layers are noted and studied together. This has been done in Beisan, and by the time the work is finished we may expect to know a great deal more about the general history of Northern Palestine than we do now. At present only certain layers have been dealt with, but even so, a general idea can be formed of the leading events which took place there from a time approximating to 1500 B.C.

It will be helpful to set out, first of all, the general results of the excavations so far as they have gone, indicating the various levels which have been reached,



and the times to which they refer. The information is taken from a Report by Mr. Alan Rowe, who was in charge of the Expedition. It relates to the work which was done during the season of 1927. Nine levels had been discovered, and certain leading buildings are named in regard to some of them, together with the approximate dates to which they belong. The order in which Mr. Rowe has given them has been reversed so as to indicate their actual order downwards.

CITY	HISTORICAL PERIODS REPRESENTED BY LEVEL	DATED A.D.
	I. Arabic (Mosque), Crusader, etc.	636—19th Century
	II. Byzantine, or Eastern Roman Christian (Circular church)	330—636
	III. Hellenistic (Temple), Jewish and Roman	301 B.C.—A.D. 329
	IV. Late Rammesside, Philistine, Israelite, Assyrian, Scythian, New Babylonian, Old Persian, etc.	B.C. 1224—302
	V. Rameses II. (Two Canaanite temples. Southern one for the God Resheph—the Temple of Dagon of 1 Chron. 10. 10, and northern one for the Goddess Antit—the "House of Ashtoreth" of 1 Sam. 31. 10. Both were in use until at least Israelitish times, i.e. 1000 B.C.)	1292—1225
	VI. Seti I. Two levels—Late Seti and Early Seti (Canaanite Temple)	1313—1292
	VII. Amenhetep III and Post-Amenhetep III (Canaanite Temple).	1411—1314
	VIII. Pre-Amenhetep III.	1446—1412
	IX. Tuthmosis III. (Two Canaanite Temples. Southern one for Mekal, the God of Bethshan, and the northern one for his female counterpart)	1501—1447.



A glance through the particulars given in the middle column will indicate the interest that is likely to be developed as the excavations proceed. If there were nothing beyond the Temple of Dagon and the House of Ashtoreth, there would be sufficient to make students of the history of Israel wait with a good deal of expectancy for the further results which are likely to be forthcoming when the labours of the expedition are finished.

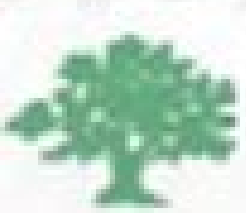
To appreciate the results so far as they have gone it will be an advantage to recount the history of the city Beth-shan, to give it the name it has in the Bible, so far as it is mentioned there. It will be found that we knew very little indeed about it before Archæology enabled us to read the lessons of the actual ruins. Beth-shan was a city situate in the Valley of Jezreel, about fifteen miles south of the Sea of Galilee. The Valley of Jezreel leads from the Plain of Esdraelon to the River Jordan, four miles to the east of Beth-shan. The name signifies the House of Rest or Security. Whatever may have been the reason for the adoption of the name, it was far from being characteristic of the state of the City. Its actual history shows that it must have experienced very little security or peace. It was a city of the Canaanites, and when Israel invaded the land its inhabitants were able to resist their attacks, for it is recorded that Manasseh did not drive out its inhabitants, "the Canaanites would dwell in the land." In the time of Solomon it became the centre of one of the economic units of the country. In the early days of the Monarchy, when Saul and his armour-bearer were found dead after the battle of Gilboa, the Philistines fastened the bodies of Saul and his sons on the wall of Beth-shan, and placed



Saul's armour in the House of Ashtoreth. The significance of this will be seen when the Philistines are considered in a later chapter; meanwhile the parallel between the history and the reference to Dagon and Ashtoreth in the table on page 20 will be apparent. The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of the city and buried them. Jabesh Gilead is some twenty miles away on the other side of the River Jordan, so that the men of that city showed a real regard for the first King of Israel who had effected their deliverance in the early days of his kingship.

The foregoing is practically all that is recorded of the city of Beth-shan until the time of the Maccabees, when it again comes into the historical record under the name of Scythopolis. It received this name consequent upon an irruption of Scythians into Palestine somewhere about the year 600 B.C. on their way to attack Egypt. Under its modern name of Beisan it became a Christian centre, as is indicated by the remains of churches which are referred to in the account of the various levels of the ruins.

We may now look at what Archæology has shown us in addition to the scanty history of a town which lay near the great battleground of Palestine. In the table given on page 20 it will be noted that the earliest period marked is that of Tuthmosis III. That is not the earliest time on which the excavations may be expected to throw light, for there is a pre-Tuthmosis level, attributed by the Museum Expedition to the era of the Hyksos, but as this has not yet been explored nothing can be said of it at present.



In Chapter VII a résumé is given of the incidents which preceded the invasion of the land by the Israelites. In that résumé reference is made to the campaigns of Tuthmosis. In the level which appertains to his times two Canaanite temples have been found. They are made of brick, built upon stone foundations. The southern temple, which is the larger of the two, is dedicated to a god called "Mekal, the God of Bethshan". It is assumed that the northern temple of this period was dedicated to Mekal's female counterpart. In a later period such a joint dedication applies, and it is natural to assume that as there are two temples in this level the same principle would apply. From remains which have been discovered it seems that the temple was given up to some form of serpent worship. In the temple presumed to be dedicated to the female divinity a figure of Ashtoreth was discovered. There were also a number of square models of bread cakes, made of mud, three and a half inches long, evidently intended to represent the cakes which were offered to the Queen of Heaven. It will be remembered that this was a custom which Jeremiah protested against as one of the idolatrous ways of the people of Jerusalem in the days immediately before its destruction by the Babylonians.

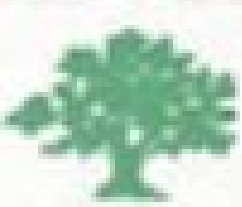
Between the Tuthmosis level and that of Amenhetep III there is a layer of débris in which the excavators found a pottery mould for making figures of the Goddess Ashtoreth, and a number of mud models of cakes and serpent forms. The presence of the bread cakes indicates the continuance of the worship of the Queen of Heaven through the changing circumstances of the



town. This may help us to realise the extraordinary hold which this form of devotion had upon the peoples of so many centuries ago. One of the most remarkable finds of all was that of a drain *in situ*, very similar to some which have been found in Crete in connection with the great palace there. From this we may conclude, what many other lines of evidence tend to confirm, that a very high standard of civilisation existed in Palestine in those days. This is a point which cannot be too strongly emphasised, in view of the general impression that has prevailed for so long that the peoples who lived in the times covered by the earlier histories of the Bible were of low development.

The Amenhetep III level is marked by another temple dedicated to the Goddess Ashtoreth, or Astarte. It contains an altar such as may have been used by the inhabitants of Jerusalem when they poured out their drink offering to the Queen of Heaven. In this temple about fifty Syro-Hittite seals, gold rosettes, Egyptian glass vases, and other things were found, including a very fine example of a Hittite battle-axe. It is rather strange to find such a thing for the Hittites were the great enemies of the Egyptians at this time. Were it not for the Syro-Hittite seals it might have been regarded as a war trophy. From the remains which have been found it is evident that at this time two outside influences were at work in Beth-shan, the influence of Crete or Cyprus, and that of the Hittites. The peoples of the Mediterranean were moving, and fore-runners of the Philistines of later ages may probably have settled or sojourned there.

This was the time of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets,



which show the unsettled state of Syria. It is not necessary to repeat what will be found in Chapter VII, but reference may be made to a letter which Abdi-Khiba, the King of Jerusalem, addressed to his overlord in Egypt. In it he states that the men of Gath were in occupation of Beth-shan, thus showing an early association between these two towns, something like that which existed in later years when the Philistines were at home in both.

Following the unsettled state of the land in the times of Amenhetep we pass to the period of Seti I, when the next move of Egypt against Syria took place, then to his son and successor Rameses II. In the reign of the latter two more temples were constructed at Beth-shan. The northern one was dedicated to Resheph and the southern to Ashtoreth, who upon this occasion is described as "Queen and mistress of all the gods". It seems that these two temples survived the withdrawal of the Egyptians from the land of Palestine, and that they were still standing in the days when Beth-shan had become a city of the Philistines. Finding two temples, one of which was dedicated to their own female deity, the Philistines seem to have adopted the other as a Temple of Dagon, their own male god. This explains their action when they defeated Saul at the Battle of Mount Gilboa, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. According to the chronicler they put Saul's armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the Temple of Dagon. The record in Samuel supplies a little further information: "They put his armour in the house of Ashtoreth; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan." It is rather striking to realise



that the expedition of the Museum of Pennsylvania has excavated the very temple which is referred to in these records. Dagon was the principal god of the Philistines and had temples in other Philistine towns.

No record exists of the destruction of the temples at Beth-shan to which allusion has been made. Perhaps they were destroyed during the wars of David against the Philistines. Meanwhile the excavations are still going on, and it may be anticipated that much more information will yet be recovered.

Another illustration of excavations in Palestine, giving very different results, is the work carried on at a mound called Tell-el-Hesy. This has been identified with the place known in Bible times as Lachish, but as will be mentioned presently this identification is now questioned. It was in 1890 that the excavation of the site was first undertaken by Flinders Petrie. Professor Petrie gave a new turn to Palestinian exploration. He is a man who seems to miss nothing, and who finds information from the smallest things. It is, therefore, something of a coincidence that the results of the excavations at Tell-el-Hesy have mostly yielded up only small things. Although it has been called the Mound of Many Cities, because eleven distinct cities have been traced upon the site, very little of a startling character has been discovered. During Petrie's excavations, and the excavations of his successor, articles of pottery were the principal finds. A few weights, bits of bronze and iron, some tools, a few scarabs, stone weapons and such like, constituted the bulk of the "spoil". By the time the work was completed a portion of the site had been cleared to



[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.]

TELL-EL-HESY: A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF A PALESTINE TELL

[Face page 26



the virgin rock. One single tablet was discovered written in the usual cuneiform script.

The reason why the site was supposed to be that of the city of Lachish was that it had been frequently fortified and was near Um Lakis. Professor Garstang now suggests that the place is really Eglon. Up to about 1450 B.C. three cities had already existed upon the site, and Egyptian influence was evident in the various layers, as might have been expected from the situation of the town.

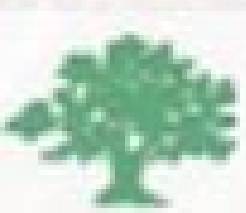
From a general consideration of these sites, especially when they are placed against certain others, some fundamental facts arise. Where Egyptian or Babylonian influence had not penetrated fairly deeply in Palestine, very little is found by excavators that appeals to the imagination. The finds are comparatively small and, to the general individual, rather uninteresting. This fact is important for it tells something about the people of Israel. They were not at any time great builders. Whenever any great architectural undertaking was in hand it may be surmised with considerable certainty that outside help was available. The cases of David, Solomon, and Ahab are sufficient illustrations of the fact. David could organise the capture of the Hill of Zion, but when it came to making a palace for him to reside in, "Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons; and they built David an house". When the time arrived for the erection of the Temple it was again to Tyre that Solomon sent for the necessary material and workmen. Even in the northern kingdom, which was much more progressive than the southern, it seems to have been Ahab's alliance with the



King of Sidon that enabled him to provide a palace for himself so much better than that which his father had constructed. (See Chapter XIV.)

When these facts are considered an important truth emerges. The Bible represents Israel as a special people who were chosen to be the depositories of the knowledge of the One True God, the exponents of Monotheism in the midst of a world given up to the worship of gods many and lords many. For such a mission it was not the great and capable that were needed. Egyptians, Babylonians, and Assyrians entirely eclipsed the Israelites as temple and palace builders. But though Israel so frequently failed in their high mission, one thing is clear as the past is reviewed, it was among that little people, living in the little land of Palestine, that Monotheism was established and through them it finally permeated the world. Even before the days of Jesus of Nazareth the doctrine of One God had travelled, and was recognised by many outside the Jewish race. It was from them that Jesus of Nazareth came. That was their place in the great World plan, and though their own failings brought about the tragedy of Calvary, the light of Truth reached the world through a Jew and Jews. That Archæology has so little of the spectacular to show in Palestine is only what might have been expected in all the circumstances of the case.

It will be obvious that with such investigations as those briefly referred to going on in various parts of the land an enormous amount of information has been accumulated which will throw light on the past history of the peoples who have inhabited the country. This is the kind of information which it is desired to use in this



book, with the general idea of comparing it with the records of the Scriptures. Often the information will merely confirm the Bible accounts; frequently, however, the two sources of information will be found to supplement each other, and by placing the two side by side the full story may be seen.

In carrying out the programme two methods are available. It would be possible to take the various sites which have been examined and see what they have disclosed concerning the historical circumstances of that particular spot. The obvious objection to such a method is that it would be necessary to refer to the same times over and over again as they were illustrated in the remains of various sites. Alternatively it is possible to get a general historic survey, dividing it into periods, and see what the combined testimony of the various excavations has to say on the matter. This is the method which it is proposed to follow; it will serve the double purpose of giving a general outline of the history and enable the testimony of Archæology to be fitted into the comparatively brief records of the Scriptures.



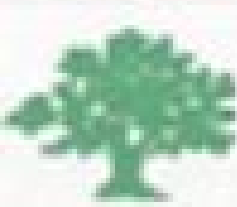
CHAPTER IV

LIFE IN ANCIENT PALESTINE

THE earlier generation of Archæologists cared little or nothing for the things which had to do with the everyday life of the peoples. Their attention was almost wholly given to great and massive monuments and to the records of the kings of Assyria, Egypt, etc.; the little things were treated as of no value unless they were intrinsically so. The result of their failure to appreciate the importance of these things has caused much to be destroyed which might have given a considerable amount of information concerning the ancient peoples of various lands.

To-day the excavator proceeds on very different lines. He looks for and notes the little things because he knows their importance. Now when a site is to be excavated everything is noted, measured, compared, recorded, and, if necessary, photographed. By this means the results of an investigation can be available for all who are interested in the subject, even though, as is occasionally the case, some things may have to be destroyed to get at other objects of importance.

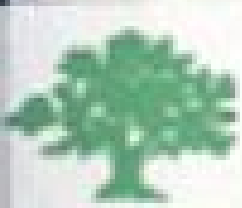
It needs little reflection to show that this is the correct procedure for an Archæologist. Life itself is made up of little incidents, the outstanding events in the experience of any ordinary person are very few. There was only one Tuthmosis III, but there were multitudes of people living in his days, men and women who passed



their lives in the everyday affairs of the times, buying and selling, planting and reaping, and carrying on the various occupations and duties that make up the daily round. However much we may be interested in the accomplishments of the Tuthmoses, the Asshur-bani-pals, and the Nebuchadnezzars of history, they are, after all, only the exceptions among men. As in relation to English history Green taught us to realise the real interest that lies in the life of the community, so the modern Archæologist has brought us to see that there is far more to be learned by knowing how the people lived, what they thought, and how they worshipped, than by following the history of the ruthless conquests of great warriors.

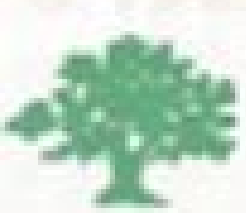
One of the first things that must impress a careful reader of books relating to the discoveries of Archæologists in Palestine is the small size of the early towns. It is natural for a modern reader to think of the past in the light of the present. To us a town is a place of some size. A small place would be merely a village or a hamlet. It was otherwise in ancient Palestine. One or two cases will illustrate this better than any comments.

Jerusalem, the Jebus of the Jebusites, is an excellent example. Jerusalem of to-day is a comparatively small town; in Bible times it was even smaller. By the side of Jebus of the Jebusites, however, it was a large city, for the latter was quite a tiny place. It comprised an area of about twelve or thirteen acres at the most. Ancient Jericho is another illustration. It measured about 230 yards in length and 130 yards in breadth, where the measurements were greatest, the whole cir-



cumference being about 650 yards. The area was therefore somewhere about six acres. These examples are sufficient to show that some discretion is necessary when reading the Bible narrative. Babylon, Nineveh, and other cities of Mesopotamia were of great extent, the early cities of Palestine were small. It is no wonder that in such confined areas houses had to be placed very closely together.

Houses in Palestine were generally built of mud, brick, or stone. When stones were used they were of various sizes, and as neither cement nor mortar were used, the life of a building was short. The bricks were usually unburnt and therefore did not last long. This accounts for the considerable growth in the height of a town site as the ages passed. Houses built of these materials were sure to collapse within a short space of time. When that happened it was the practice to build another house on the site of the old, the new construction being, necessarily, somewhat higher than the old one. Sometimes they did not trouble to remove any of the débris of the fallen house, but built above it with fresh material. In Taanach the excavators found a house which had collapsed. As they examined the ruins they found the remains of a woman, with her five children round her. She was wearing her amulets and ornaments, and held a knife in her hand. Near by were food vessels. When the new house was built even these gruesome remains were left undisturbed. The use of such materials in house construction will explain Ezekiel's action in digging through the wall (Ezek. 12). As a rule houses had no drainage arrangements, and the floor was the earth hardened as much as possible by hammering.



One of the principal aims of a modern Archæologist is to date the building or city which he finds. This may be done by an inscription or an object associating the place with the reign of a certain king. In Palestine this is unusual, except in buildings constructed by Egyptian monarchs, or where Egyptian articles have been found. Some other method of ascertaining the date is therefore necessary, and this is found in the remains of the domestic articles which are recovered. In attempting to arrive at such dates nothing is more useful than potsherds. This may seem a strange statement, for in our experience potsherds are of no value; we throw them away because they are potsherds! So did the ancients, and for this very reason they are now valuable to the Archæologist. A statue once made remained until it was cast down and thrown away. When such a thing is found, unless there is writing on it, it tells us nothing unless it happens to be found with other articles, or something like it has been discovered before. A potsherd is quite a different matter. There are thousands of them, they occur in every strata of an excavated site. If, therefore, it is possible to fix the period to which a particular style of pottery or its decoration belongs, the period of the layer in which it was found can be fixed with some degree of accuracy.

This has been done with pottery found in Palestine. The earliest inhabitants in the land, the cave-dwellers, used a very primitive kind. It was formed by hand without the use of a wheel, and was made of ordinary clay without any attempt being made to clean or refine it. Sometimes it was fused, but more often it was merely dried by the sun. There was very little attempt



at decoration. When pottery of this type is found it indicates that the things which may be found with it belong to the earliest times of human occupation of the country.

As peoples from other lands began to invade Palestine, the character of the pottery changed. The use of the potter's wheel was introduced, and vessels of better shape were produced. There was also a greater variety in the shapes, and larger vessels were made. Decoration became more frequent, and the articles were sometimes burnished. As the horizon of the inhabitants extended, and the peoples of Mediterranean lands commenced to trade or settle in the land, the shapes and decoration usual in Crete and the Ægean began to appear. The influence of Egypt also had a considerable effect upon the pottery. All these influences tended to alter and improve the material, the form, and the decoration, and by a careful notation of these things, pottery has become one of the most important and valuable finds in any excavated site.

Up to the point indicated above there had been a general improvement. The pottery of the early Hebrew age, however, shows a distinct falling off in style. A little later decoration again improved, showing influence of a Cretan type. The cause for this is obvious. The Israelites came as a new people who had to fight and win their way in the land. They were not likely to be of a highly artistic type, their Law rather discouraged it. But they could not live so near to the Philistines without being affected by them, and the Philistines were of Ægean descent. Moreover, as the Israelites settled down in the land, and became the predominant race,

it was only natural that taste would develop and better forms and decoration be adopted. After this had taken place the style remained more or less unaltered until the time of the exile, after which entirely new influences affected the land.

Although the Hebrews came from a highly-organised country like Egypt, the remains of their general domestic appliances do not suggest a high state of culture. They were mainly an agricultural community; apart from a few towns like Jerusalem and Samaria, they lived in small groups. Even as late as the times of Jesus of Nazareth this was their condition. The illustrations which formed the basis of his parables are not often taken from the life of the city but from the pursuits of the husbandman and the fisherman and the incidents of a home. When something of a higher state of development was required to be used in a parable it was the estate of the nobleman, or the vineyard of a great owner. Even Isaiah, apparently a kind of Minister in the Court of King Hezekiah, gives as the ideal of the future a time when every man shall sit "under his own vine and under his own figtree." In such circumstances it is not surprising that comparatively few things have been discovered which throw light on the domestic life of the Hebrews. Some of these may be mentioned.

Ovens and baking trays were found at Gezer; they illustrate the methods of cooking. The articles to be cooked were placed inside and the whole affair put in the fire, which was made of wood, dry grass or other combustible material. This will enable us to understand how Ezekiel could be told to cook his food by burning manure. It also illustrates Jeremiah's lament over the



destruction of Jerusalem: "Our skin was black like an oven." Other things which have been found are needles and pins made of bone and bronze, whorls for spindles, combs, children's toys which suggest Zechariah's picture of the boys and girls playing in the streets of Jerusalem. These and rattles and such like things indicate something of the homely domestic life of the people. Bracelets and necklaces, perfume boxes and other similar articles suggest Isaiah's references to the daughters of Jerusalem decked out in all the finery of their tinkling ornaments, the chains and the bracelets, the tablets (margin "houses of the soul", actually perfume boxes) and the earrings, the rings, nose jewels, and crimping pins (Isa. 3). Then there are tools, saws, knives, chisels, awls, adzes, hammers and nails which tell of the manual labours of the people, some of these suggesting the workshop of the Carpenter of Nazareth. Swords, spears, and other weapons speak of the military side of the activities of the people, and are again reminiscent of Isaiah's ideal future when "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

All these things are interesting because they tell of the actuality of the past. None of them is of much importance by itself, but if they do anything to enable people of to-day to appreciate the reality of the peoples of the past and enter into the spirit of Bible expressions they are of value.



CHAPTER V

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE

ALTHOUGH the Biblical interest in Palestine commences with the immigration of Abraham, there are a number of allusions to earlier times and peoples, to which some attention must be given. The sources of the information are the Bible, and to a small extent the discoveries of recent times.

When Abraham reached the land of Canaan he found it occupied by a number of different tribes. Sometimes these are summed up by the general name Canaanites, a term naturally applicable to the inhabitants of Canaan. In the Table of Nations which is given in Genesis 10, it is stated that "Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad" (Gen. 10. 15-18).

Although the term Canaanite has this somewhat uncertain application it correctly refers to the dwellers in the lowlands of Palestine, the Maritime Plains and probably the Plain of Esdraelon. "Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South, and the Hittite, and Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea and along by the side of Jordan" (Num. 13. 29. R.V.). On other occasions the term is evidently used in the more general sense.



The Canaanites were a people with an advanced civilisation, dwelling in organised communities. They were able to put forth a considerable military opposition to Israel when they invaded the land. The settled character of these people at this time presupposes a fairly long occupation of Palestine before the coming of Israel. Some idea of their advanced state may be gained by noting the spoil which Egyptian conquerors claim to have taken from them. It included furniture, staves made of ebony and cedar inlaid with gold, a golden plough, tent poles set with precious stones, rich embroidery and other things which could only be associated with a people who had attained to a considerable degree of culture.

One of the most remarkable indications of the advanced civilisation of the early inhabitants of Palestine is the provision made for water-supply. Reference will be made in some detail to the tunnel at Jerusalem,¹ but a few words here in relation to one at Gezer may be useful. The tunnel leading to the water was cut out of the solid rock and was entered by a flight of rock-cut steps. It was entered through an archway 23 feet high and nearly 14 feet broad. The tunnel was about 130 feet long and led to a cave in which was a spring. The floor of the cave is 94 feet 6 inches below the level of the rock underneath the city. Judging by the articles found in the soil the tunnel was closed between 1450 and 1250 B.C., and the steps are so deeply worn that it is assumed that they must have been in use for 500 years. Such a work could only have been undertaken by an organised people working together for the good of their city.

¹ See page 101.



The Canaanites were evidently not the original inhabitants of the land, and clear indications of still earlier peoples are found. There were, for example, those spoken of as the Rephaim. In the Authorised Version these are sometimes referred to as the giants, in fact they are only twice mentioned by name in the Authorised Version though in the Revised Version there are fairly frequent references to them as the Rephaim. They were a tall race, hence the translation "giants". One section of them, the Anakim, was descended from Arba, who gave his name to the city afterwards known as Hebron. They were in Eastern Palestine at the time of the Elamite invasion in the days of Abraham; they were still there in the days of Joshua. The Horim, or Horites, were another of the early races of the land. These were particularly associated with Mount Seir, or Edom, and seem to have been the earliest occupants of that part of the country. Their name is expressive of their antiquity; it means a cave dweller, or troglodyte. Caves abound in Palestine. Sometimes they consist of a series of chambers prepared with great care, and of considerable size. Inside there are definite indications that proper provision was made in them for water storage, oil presses, and various other necessities for a place of fixed residence. Others are more primitive. The access to them is sometimes by means of a flight of steps cut out of the rocks. In those which have been explored crude pottery, stone knives and implements, millstones and other articles have been found. The presence of millstones supposes a settled habitation and the cultivation of grain by these early peoples. No metal has been discovered in them except in circumstances which

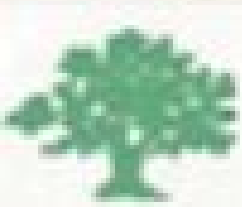


suggest that it must have been washed in by rains from a higher deposit. These caves are found in the south of Palestine, in the Jordan Valley, and in Edom, especially in Petra where there are hundreds of them.

Related to the same times were the Emim, the Zuzim, and the Zamzummim. The former appear to have been the original inhabitants of the land of Moab. "They dwelt therein aforetime, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim". Practically nothing is known of them. The name is derived from a Hebrew root meaning terrible, which was applied to them probably because of their great stature.

The Zuzim and the Zamzummim are thought to be different sections of the same race. The names seem to be derived from the idea of prominence or conspicuousness, though some see in them an allusion to their barbarous speech "murmurers". The Septuagint speaks of them as "strong people", though one authority gives the meaning as dwarfs. They were exterminated by the Ammonites. All the people referred to are mentioned in the account of the war waged by Chedorlaomer, and were encountered by him on his outward march on the east side of the Jordan.

These peoples all go back to the Stone Age. Palestine has furnished many examples of the implements and weapons of that time. All parts of the country, including the Maritime Plain, the hills of Judea and the land of Phœnicia, bear evidence of occupation in that early age. Of the later Stone Age many relics are known. These, too, have been found in various parts of the country. Some which were discovered at Tell-el-Hesy were used as sickles; they had been inserted in grooved wooden



handles, and indicate that the inhabitants were given to the cultivation of corn. At Gezer, where artificial caves abound, rude drawings of cows and other animals have been scratched on the walls. There are poorly drawn, and are much below the artistic level of those found in the caves of Europe, but they imply a desire to represent the familiar things of life in pictures.

These early inhabitants of the land were evidently non-Semitic. Later on various Semitic tribes entered the land and imposed their sway over the ruder peoples of the past. The chief of these were the Israelites, but before they came other Semitic tribes settled there. Thus the Horites were dispossessed by the descendants of Esau (Deut. 2. 12), the Emim by Moab (verses 10 and 11), and the Zuzim by the Ammonites (Deut. 2. 21). Generally speaking, the members of the Semitic race were content to settle down side by side with the various Canaanitish tribes.

As these other peoples came into the land from time to time the individualistic ways of the primitive races gave place to properly organised States. When, however, it is remembered how many different tribes there were it will be evident that the communities were small. In the majority of cases the unit was the City-State and this continued until the days when Israel invaded the land. An illustration of this may be seen in the little summary of the Wars of Joshua given in chapter 12 of his book. Nearly all the thirty-one kings who are mentioned were only rulers of a city, controlling perhaps in some cases the territory surrounding it.

Such a position of political disunion made the land



an easy prey to an organised invader, whether the military power of Egypt or the tribes of Israel under Joshua. The inhabitants were but a number of units without unity. An invader could deal with them one by one, and in such a circumstance find his task a comparatively easy one. Temporary associations such as took place to resist Joshua might be formed from time to time, but they fell apart as soon as the crisis had passed away. Moreover, the very fact that these associations were temporary makeshifts deprived them of real strength. It will be seen, therefore, that the condition of things in Palestine was favourable for the Israelite invasion which was to take place.



CHAPTER VI

THE PALESTINE OF THE PATRIARCHS

THE first definite connection of the Bible with the land of Palestine is the call of Abraham to leave his native city, Ur of the Chaldees, and journey to a land unnamed, but which was to be indicated to him. From that time Palestine is the centre of interest in all Bible history until the missionary labours of the Apostle Paul move the scene to Asia Minor and Europe.

It was a strange call for a man to receive. In those days Ur was a great city, a centre of civilisation, education, and commerce. To-day her ruins testify to the character of the place. It is not long since certain critics of the Bible story considered the Bible account of Abraham to be largely mythical; and even questioned his existence. The extraordinary discoveries which have been made in and around Ur during the last few years have done a great deal to discredit these ideas. If they have done nothing more they have shown that the circumstances of the place and times are in no way opposed to the Bible story. We are not concerned with these discoveries at present, and it is only necessary on this occasion to refer to them for the purpose of showing that Ur was a great city, far beyond what most people realised even a few years ago. The houses of Ur, in one of which Abraham may have lived, were of ample proportions, well arranged to provide for the



weather conditions of the neighbourhood, with good accommodation and proper means of sanitation. Moreover, there were written records in the cuneiform script, a sufficient indication, with the foregoing facts, that Abraham, living in his ancestral home, was no mere nomad. He was the product of an organised and civilised State, and he had much to lose and apparently nothing to gain by leaving the home of his fathers and seeking another in a land which he did not know.

In the Bible Abraham is frequently represented as a man of faith. He is spoken of as "Faithful Abraham"; his faith, we are told, was counted to him for righteousness, he is called "the father of all them that believe". For such and other reasons he has been given the honourable title "the Friend of God". These expressions will be better appreciated if we understand the facts recorded in the previous paragraph. To leave a civilised and settled state of society where it was usual to live in the comfort afforded by the things which have been mentioned, and to become instead a wanderer without a permanent home, on the strength of a promise that some unknown land should be given to him at some undefined time, was an act of supreme faith and confidence in the Divine Promiser.

It was no small journey that he undertook. Ur is situated in Southern Babylonia, not far from the Persian Gulf. Abraham's line of route took him along the Valley of the Euphrates, past Larsa, Erech, and Babylon, all important cities in their day, then through the land of Assyria until he arrived at Kharran. Up to this point he was accompanied by his father and other members of the family. He remained at Kharran until



the death of his father. The language of the record is definite: "They went forth from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran (Kharran) and dwelt there." Though Abraham had followed the call of his God, his father seems to have remained constant in the worship to which he had been used in the city of Ur. When he arrived at Kharran he found a similar worship established there, and evidently decided to go no farther.

Kharran was something of an advanced guard of the Chaldean civilisation in the north, and was the key to the route by which the commerce of Babylon reached the countries round the Mediterranean. The same Moon-god, Sin, presided over the affairs of Ur and Kharran, and Sin of Kharran had a renown almost equal to that which he enjoyed in Ur.

Whether it was the appeal of the familiar worship or whether it was advancing age that caused Terah to stay at Kharran cannot be said. Whatever it was, the journey was interrupted and was not resumed until afterwards. Finally, at the age of seventy-five, Abraham moved into the Land of Promise accompanied by his nephew Lot. From Kharran he journeyed to the River Euphrates, which he crossed. Once across the river he was free from all the old associations, for the Euphrates marked the boundary between the territories of Mesopotamia and Syria. It was Abraham's Rubicon, his back was turned upon the land of his fathers, his face to the Land of Promise. Travelling southwards, he evidently passed through Damascus, where it may be presumed he secured the services of his steward—Eliezer of Damascus. Still he set his face southwards, passing

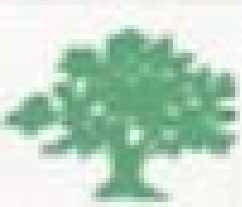


probably through Bashan, then along the Valley of the Jabbok, where he would cross the Jordan, and thus stood at last within the Promised Land.

At Moreh the promise which had led him to leave his home in Ur was renewed and extended. The original promise contained no reference to any possession of the land, it was less tangible but more important: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12. 2 and 3). At Moreh the promise was, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Personal association of Abraham with the promise was first made in the account given in chapter 13.

Still Abraham moved on from time to time, first to a point between Bethel and Ai. Then he passed to the Negeb, translated "the south" in the Authorised Version. "And there was a famine in the land," says the record. The name Negeb means the dry or parched land. It is a country in which the hills run east and west, not like the great range which goes through the land from north to south. Even in times of wet the Negeb has little vegetation; in summer it dries up and reveals the nakedness of the land. In a time of famine a sojourn there was impossible, hence Abraham moved down into Egypt until such times as it would be possible for him to return to the land of Canaan. Of his stay in Egypt there is nothing to record here.

When Abraham returned from Egypt he again took up his abode between Bethel and Ai. His riches had increased, and as they consisted mainly of flocks and



herds a considerable area was required to provide the necessary pasturage. This fact led to disputes between the herdsmen of Abraham and those of his nephew Lot, and this in turn to the separation of the two families. With a real nobility of character, Abraham left it to Lot to choose the direction in which they should respectively go. Lot chose "the Plain of Jordan," as it is termed, really the Kikkar of Jordan. It was in those days "well watered everywhere." Its fertility appealed to the possessor of flocks and herds, and Lot took his way to Sodom. At first he seems to have stayed outside the city, but later took up his residence inside the city walls.

What was the Kikkar of Jordan? It was evidently situated at the end of the Jordan Valley, just before the river entered the waters of the Dead Sea. The Jordan and copious springs provided plenty of water and sustained the vegetation which promised abundant food for the flocks. That it is otherwise to-day is due to the calamity which destroyed Sodom and the other cities of the Plain.

The nature of the calamity which effected the overthrow of Sodom is well expressed in the following quotation. "There is no need to invoke the volcano, and those are more in harmony with the narrative who judge that in this heavily bituminous soil there took place one of those terrible explosions and conflagrations which have sometimes broken out in the similar geology of the oil districts of North America. In such soil great reservoirs of oil and gas are formed, and are suddenly discharged by their own pressure or by earthquake. The gas explodes, carrying high up into the air masses of the oil which fall back in fiery rain, and are



so inextinguishable that they will float afire on water. Sometimes brine and saline mud are ejected, and over the site of the reservoirs there are tremors and subsidences. Such a phenomenon accounts for all the statements of the narrative." Some such catastrophe evidently overwhelmed Sodom and Gomorrah in accordance with the warnings given to Abraham and to Lot.

The situation of the cities of the Plain has been the subject of discussion from time to time, some contending that they were at the south end of the Dead Sea. A fatal objection to this is the fact that if they were so far south they could not be seen from a point between Bethel and Ai. For some time past the waters of the Dead Sea have been receding at the north end. Now it is stated that at a spot situated some three miles east of the Jordan, ruins have been found which show that at one time it was a place of habitation. The ruins and relics indicate that it was the abode of a people of high culture, when the neighbourhood must have been a well-watered plain. The foundations of the houses are covered with ashes, and various domestic articles have been found. Until something more definite is made known this is all that can be said with any degree of certainty, but it is remarkably suggestive of "the cities of the Kikkar."

In the days when Abraham sojourned in Palestine it was inhabited by a number of tribes, some of whom have been mentioned already. In the account given in Genesis reference is made to the Canaanites in general and to a number of separate races such as the Perrizites, the Girgasites, and so forth. In addition mention is made of the Hittites and the Philistines, to both of

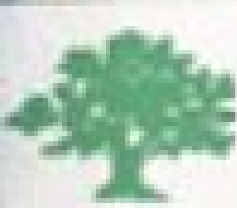


whom, in view of their importance, separate chapters must be given.¹

Although the invasion of Palestine by Chedorlaomer properly falls into the volumes dealing with Babylon and Elam, some allusion to it is necessary here, if we are to understand the position in the land in the days of the patriarchs. In association with the kings of Shinar, Ellasar, Elam and the Goim, Chedorlaomer invaded the land of Palestine and fought with the kings of Sodom and the neighbouring cities of the Kikkar. The army from Elam marched through the Euphrates Valley, crossed the river, and then moved southwards on the east side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. On the plateau to the east of the Jordan they met the Rephaim, in Ashtoreth Karnaim, in the land of Bashan. Passing southward, the Zuzim were defeated, then the Emim at Kiriathaim, a city in the territory afterwards assigned to the tribe of Reuben. Still going southward the Horites of Mount Seir were defeated. After this the armies turned to commence their homeward march, travelling now on the west side of the sea, until they reached the cities of the Kikkar.

Against such military leaders as the kings of Southern Babylonia, who had already conquered so many peoples, the kings of the small territory could do nothing. The battle took place in the Vale of Siddim, "which is the Salt Sea." "And the Vale of Siddim was full of slime pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there." The words for slime pits are *beeroth chenar*, and to-day a somewhat similar name is used for bitumen—*biaret hummar*. This bitumen is found on the western

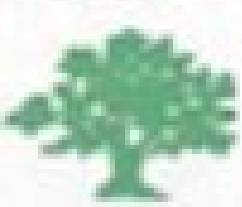
¹ See Chapters XVIII and XX.



shore of the sea. The bitumen is thrown to the surface of the sea; in the heat of the sun in the deep valley it is liquified. It then becomes viscous and floats until it reaches the shore. Caught in pits of bitumen the five kings of the Kikkar were trapped and defeated, and carried off to captivity. Lot being an inhabitant of Sodom, and evidently an important one, was also taken away.

With the record of the pursuit of the kings by Abraham and the rescue of Lot, every Bible reader will be familiar. It is probable that Abraham did not have to deal with the main force of the invaders, but with a section of them which was in charge of the prisoners and the spoil. With his trained servants he caught up with them at Dan, defeated them and pursued them as far as Hobah, to the west of Damascus, recapturing all the prisoners.

At this point of the narrative a strange figure appears upon the scene, Melchizedek, king of Salem. He was the priest of the Most High God, and brought bread and wine. From a New Testament reference to Melchizedek this mention of him assumes an importance which might not have been seen in the record itself. The terms applied to him by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews read strangely and have given rise to much conjecture. He is there said to be "without father, without mother, without descent." Until quite modern times there was very little that could be said definitely about such remarkable terms. In the Tell-el-Amarna tablets which were discovered in 1887, and which deal very largely with the affairs of Palestine, there are certain expressions which enable us to appreciate the language used and understand what it conveyed to people of times not far removed from those of Abraham.



The following are examples: they were written by Abdi-Khiba, a vassal king of Jerusalem, the city of which Melchizedek was king. He lived a long time after Melchizedek, and at the time the city was included in the Egyptian Empire, though the whole of the Asiatic dominions of the Pharaoh were in a state of confusion. Writing to his royal master he said, "Lo, in so far as I am concerned, it was not my father who installed me in this place, nor my mother, but the arm of the mighty king has allowed me to enter into my ancestral house." In another letter he says: "Lo, in this city of Jerusalem, it was not my father, not my mother who gave it me, but the arm of the Mighty King gave it to me." A little consideration will show that the idea conveyed by the strange expressions is that the dignity of his position was not dependent upon family descent, but upon the choice of the "Mighty King." Professor Sayce has suggested that this may be a reference to the God who was worshipped in the neighbouring Mount Moriah. If the phrase has such an implication it is possible that in the case of Melchizedek he received his position as the result of a Divine call. It is, however, impossible to either prove or disprove such an idea, but he was "Priest of God Most High." However, the incident throws an interesting light on the conditions of Palestine in the days of the Patriarch.

Of the remainder of the Patriarchal times, and the evidence of the land in relation to them, there is little to be said. Isaac and Jacob succeeded Abraham, though the latter lived for a considerable portion of his life outside the Land of Promise. Isaac's life was a quiet one compared with that of his father or with that



of his son. It was a life in keeping with his character, and was probably affected by the fact that he was the son of a couple advanced in years.

Jacob, the supplanter, who became Israel, a prince with God, is an interesting character; the change from the schemer to the docile old patriarch is extremely interesting, but lies outside the scope of this volume.

Summing up the history of Patriarchal times in relation to the land of Palestine, the strange thing that emerges is the extraordinary regard which they had for a land in which they never possessed a single yard beyond that which Abraham purchased for a burying place, and that which Jacob obtained from the sons of Shechem. Abraham travelled over a thousand miles that he might live there as a stranger and a pilgrim, with no settled dwelling, moving from place to place as circumstances required. When the time came to take a wife for his son, he sent the steward of his house to Padan Aram for a woman of his kindred. Though insistent that a woman of Canaan must not be chosen, he was, in a way, even more insistent that under no circumstances whatever should his son go to Padan Aram. "Beware that thou bring not my son thither again!" Isaac, too, was faithful to the call of the land. Even when there was a famine there he remained in it; he did not, like his father, go down to Egypt, the granary of the times. As for Jacob, though he sojourned long in Padan Aram, and his children were born there, the call of the land was irresistible. Even the fear of facing an angry brother could not keep him away. Again, in the old familiar places, when in fear of the men of Shechem he remained in the land, and when at last



the call came for him to go down to Egypt, where his beloved Joseph was waiting for him, he did not go until he had received a Divine intimation. "Fear not to go down into Egypt . . . I will also surely bring thee up."

What was the reason for this extraordinary attraction of a land in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had little more than a burying-place and a "parcel of a field"? Their actions were not those of men moved by the ordinary influences of life. Guided by all ordinary principles their home would have been fixed where land could be obtained for settlement in comfort. But the land was in the possession of others, and it was also marred by the iniquities of its peoples. Nothing but the facts recorded in Genesis can account for the strange influence which Palestine exerted on these three people; it was a Land of Promise. As Stephen declared long afterwards, "God gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on." Yet the land was promised to them, and they cherished the hope of the fulfilment of that promise. More than all they evidently associated it with something far greater, the promise that in their seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Nothing but an assurance that sooner or later these promises should find an accomplishment can account for the strange behaviour of the patriarchs in relation to the Land of Canaan.

To-day the same principles apply in a somewhat different way, and it is the association of the land of Palestine with Him in whom the promises find fulfilment that has made it the Holy Land for Christian as well as for Jew.



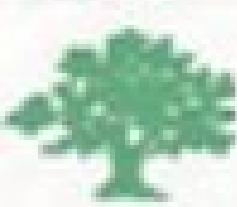
CHAPTER VII

PALESTINE BEFORE THE CONQUEST

WITH the departure of Jacob for Egypt in response to the invitation from Joseph, the centre of interest passes from Palestine to Egypt. Beyond promises of Israel's inheritance, and references to the hopes for consummation of the wilderness journey, there are practically no allusions to the land in the rest of the Pentateuch so far as the historical side of the narrative is concerned. If, however, it is desired to get a complete view of the situation and understand the later events, it is necessary to know something of what took place there during the intervening years.

It is generally accepted that Joseph was sold into Egypt during the period of the Hyksos kings. These were of Syrian origin, and therefore would have more reasons for treating Joseph well than would have been the case had he been but an interpreter of dreams to a native Egyptian Pharaoh. The Egyptians regarded the Hyksos kings as foreigners, and no nation can be expected to accept with equanimity the rule of a foreign race, even though it complies more or less with native customs, as the Hyksos kings of Egypt did.

Towards the end of their rule various attempts were made to get rid of them. For some time a number of the kings who reigned at Thebes in Upper Egypt waged war against them, but without much success.



It was not until the rise of the XVIIIth Dynasty of Egypt, somewhere about 1580 B.C., that the native princes asserted their independence and drove the Hyksos from the land. The king who accomplished this was Aahmes, the founder of the Dynasty. He was a man of energy and was not content with capturing Avaris, the stronghold of the Hyksos at the north-eastern portion of Egypt, but carried the war into Palestine and captured the city of Sharuhén, situated in the southern portion of the land, afterwards assigned to the tribe of Simeon.

A theory has been put forward in recent times that the expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt is the basis for the account of the Exodus of Israel from that land as recorded in the Bible. Those who adopt the theory suggest that the Egyptian records of the Hyksos retreat represent the Egyptian view of the incident, and the Book of Exodus the Israelitish view of the same. There are very serious difficulties in the way of accepting such an idea. Not the least important difficulty is the chronological one. Just as the old theory that the Exodus took place in the reign of Mer-en-ptah causes a difference of something like two hundred years in the two accounts, so, on the other hand, the suggestion that the Hyksos and the Israelites are one and the same people, places the incident a century earlier than the chronology of the Bible requires. However interesting, therefore, the theory may be, it cannot be accepted as correct. It is, of course, possible that certain members of the tribes of Israel may have left Egypt with the Hyksos, but this is merely a suggestion, and does not in the least affect the record given in Exodus concerning the flight of the



body of the Israelites from the house of bondage under the leadership of Moses.

The early kings of the XVIIIth Dynasty were men of great energy, and under them Egypt advanced to power and Empire. Their military prestige was great, and the territorial possessions of Egypt were widely increased. The first Tuthmosis waged war in Northern Syria. Tuthmosis III, however, was the great king of the Dynasty. The events of his reign are recorded by him in considerable detail, but our attention must be confined to those only which affect the land of Palestine. Under his leadership Egyptian armies advanced into that country. He occupied Gaza, and then passed on to Megiddo, which capitulated to him and paid tribute. The whole land was completely subjected by him, in fact his armies advanced as far as the Euphrates. He was the greatest warrior of all the kings of Egypt. No fewer than sixteen expeditions into Palestine are recorded in his annals, and it is apparent that on each occasion he left some of his army behind him to serve as an outpost ready for his next advance.

Tuthmosis' reign was the high-water mark of Egyptian Imperialism. He erected a tablet by the Euphrates to indicate the limits of the Egyptian Empire in that direction. Although his troops passed beyond this, he was wise enough to limit his Empire to countries south of the higher reaches of the Euphrates. The Hittites paid him tribute, Egyptian garrisons were placed in various centres, and nominees of Tuthmosis were placed as governors over various cities. These governors were often native chiefs attached to the Egyptian interest. Some of them were sons of local



chieftains who in youth had been taken to Egypt and given an education similar to that of the Egyptian princes. By such means Tuthmosis hoped to secure the land of Syria as an Egyptian possession. As a matter of policy it was undoubtedly a good one, though it failed to accomplish the intentions of the Egyptian king. The failure is not to be attributed to the policy, but to changes which took place in Egypt, though, of course the spirit of independence in the conquered territory helped the decline which set in later. It was only an early example of a principle and a process which may be seen over and over again in the history of the world.

The effect of the invasions of Syria by the Egyptians was the subjection and disintegration of the people of the land. It is probable that this is the historical event alluded to by Moses when he said that the Lord would send the hornet before Israel to drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, doing it by little and little until Israel had increased sufficiently to occupy the land (Exod. 23. 28-30; Deut. 7. 20). Joshua, rehearsing the events of the conquest, makes a similar allusion, pointing out that as a consequence Israel had obtained a land for which they had not laboured, cities which they had not built, and vineyards and oliveyards which they had not planted. There is something significant in the symbol. The word *Tsurah* (wasp or hornet) comes from the verb *tsara*, to scourge or smite as with some venomous or noxious matter. According to Parkhurst in his Hebrew Lexicon, the Arabic has words apparently from this root for smiting or beating down, laying prostrate, or the like. This idea of the word is, to say the least, suggestive, and the conquests of



Tuthmosis III and his predecessors may well be the historical facts to which allusion was made in the language of figure. Speaking of the various military expeditions which Egyptian monarchs of the XVIIIth Dynasty carried into Palestine and Syria, Professor Garstang writes in his book, *Joshua and Judges*: "The successive expeditions continued to drain the country (Palestine) of its resources, including almost yearly supplies of slaves, gold and silver objects, cattle and sheep, together with all the produce and all the fine, fragrant woods of the country. The harvests carried away included much clean grain, barley, incense, oil, wine, and fruit. On the ninth campaign the levy was even heavier, after a year or two's respite, including again a large consignment of slaves, cattle, wine, wood. If the spoliation was in fact anything like that depicted in the records, the triumphs of Egypt meant in effect the ruin of the country, and account in large measure for the decay of the old Canaanite power and civilisation." He also points out that the hornet or the wasp was the hieroglyphic representation for Lower Egypt.

Sinai was another district in which the great kings of Egypt were interested. Even as early as the times of the Pyramid builders the mines of Sinai were worked by them, regular expeditions being sent there for malachite and turquoise. In this area, too, the Egyptians must have prepared the way for the sojourn of the Israelites.

Although Egypt was at this time the paramount power in Western Asia, and held Palestine and Syria as part of its Empire, it was not the only power whose influence was felt in the land. From quite early times Babylon,

or rather peoples of the Babylonian race, had conquered Syria. Sargon of Agade, whose reign is placed earlier than 2000 B.C., did so. The influence of Khammurabi of Babylon is evident, and is illustrated in several incidents in the lives of the patriarchs. He called himself king of Martu (Syria). Even in the days when the Egyptian Empire was established in the land, the writing and language of Babylon were used in the official correspondence which passed between the Egyptian governors in Palestine and the Egyptian monarchs. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets are a well known example of this. It will also be remembered that later on, during the period of the conquest under Joshua, Achan took a Babylonish garment from the spoil of the city of Jericho. Syria and Palestine were thus the meeting point of the two great peoples of old, those of Mesopotamia and those of Egypt. So long as the Empire of the World was disputed by these two races, Palestine and Syria were bound to be affected by the conflicts. It was a convenient battle-ground for the peoples of north and south. This fact accounts for many of the great incidents which have taken place there.

The maintenance of an empire like that of Tuthmosis in Syria depends upon the ability of the conquering race to maintain their vigour and their capacity to rule. In the empires of old this was a most unlikely combination for any long period; it proved to be so in the case of the Egyptian dominion in Syria. On the death of Tuthmosis III, his successor, Amenhetep II was able to retain his hold on the land and so was Tuthmosis IV. He married a lady who is supposed to have come from the kingdom of Mitanni, in Northern Syria, and as her



son succeeded to the throne as Amenhetep III the blood of the royal house was no longer pure Egyptian, but had an admixture of Syrian in it. The effects were disastrous. Amenhetep favoured a new religion—the worship of the Solar disc, or rather of the Deity whose glory shone through the disc. Such an action was a serious offence to the priests of the old worship—that of Amen. Nothing particular took place during the reign of Amenhetep, for he was a vigorous ruler and enjoyed a prosperous reign, but when his son succeeded as Akh-en-Aten (his original name was Amenhetep) the whole polity collapsed, and the Egyptian Empire in Syria ended, at least for a time. Aten was the name of the Deity of the Solar disc, and the change of name was a direct challenge to the hierarchy of the old religion.

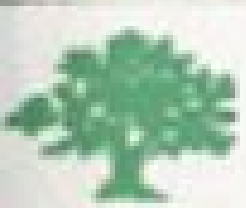
Akh-en-Aten gave much more attention to the affairs of the new religion than he did to matters of State. The priests of Amen sullenly looked on for a time, waiting a suitable time to assert themselves. Meanwhile the position in Syria drifted. Religion gave the king no time to note the rapidly changing scene there. The Egyptian governors found themselves deserted by the suzerain and threatened on every side by powerful enemies.

The Tell-el-Amarna tablets give a graphic account of the state of affairs. The whole land was in a condition of anarchy. The tablets contain a large number of despatches from the overlords of the various cities to the Court of Egypt. Their tale is one of unbroken disaster. The governors were jealous one of another, and there was no one to reconcile them or settle their differences. All through the land enemies were advanc-



ing, and there was no power to stop them. Some of the complaints in the letters are very pitiful. "The land of my Lord the King has fallen away to the Habiru." "The land of my Lord the King is ruined." "Let my Lord the King send soldiers." One writer states that he has many enemies but no helper, "Let my Lord deliver his land . . . but if not let my Lord the King send chariots and carry us into Egypt that our servants may not rise up against us." So they go on, and then there is silence. The conflict was over, and Palestine ceased for a time to be an Egyptian province in anything more than name.

Some have questioned whether the Habiru were the Israelites. It is not at all likely. They were in wrong positions to answer to the account of the conquest of the land. They were more likely tribes of other peoples trying to find a home in the land. But their fightings all helped on the general disintegration of the people of Palestine, and prepared the way for Israel.



CHAPTER VIII

THE CONQUEST TO THE FALL OF JERICHO

ALTHOUGH the conquest of the Land of Canaan really commenced with the crossing of the River Jordan, it is necessary to go back a little in order to note some of the incidents connected with the acquisition of the land on the east of that river. The territory was that assigned to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh. These lands were conquered during the lifetime of Moses.

When Israel removed from Kadesh-barnea in the extreme south of Palestine, they applied for permission to pass through the territories of Edom and Moab. In each case permission was refused. They therefore passed to the east of those countries and entered the land from the east instead of the south or south-east. Northward of the land of Moab was the country of the Amorites. At one time the land which they then occupied had been the territory of Moab and Ammon, but the Amorites had conquered it. Though the Amorites had no kinship with Israel a formal request was made to them for a right of passage, but it was peremptorily refused. Not only so, but "Sihon, the king of the Amorites, gathered all his people together and went out against Israel into the wilderness." The attack was repulsed and the Amorites so completely defeated that Israel took all the cities of Sihon and dwelled therein.



Thus various towns were secured "so that from Aroer which is the brink of the River Arnon and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for them." By this means the first step towards the conquest was successfully taken.

The defeat of Sihon stirred up Og the king of Bashan, also an Amorite, to fight for his land and cities, with a like result. Recapitulating the matter, it is stated in Deuteronomy: "We took all his (Og's) cities at that time, there was not a city which we took not from them, three score cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan." Bashan is a comparatively restricted territory and it is surprising to read of so many as sixty cities being contained in it in the days of Moses. Yet the statement has received confirmation. The following extract will be interesting: "But mysterious, incredible as this seemed, on the spot with my own eyes I have seen that it is literally true. The cities are there to this day. Some of them retain the ancient names recorded in the Bible. The boundaries of Argob are as clearly defined by the hand of nature as those of our own island home. The ancient cities of Bashan contain probably the oldest specimens of domestic architecture now existing in the world." The latter part of this statement, which was written in 1865, is of course not correct in the light of modern discoveries, but this does not invalidate the former portion.

The testimony of Porter, from whose writings the foregoing has been taken, has been somewhat impugned, and therefore, though he gives a good deal of detailed information about Bashan, it is best to leave the matter



where it is. There are, however, one or two other points in relation to which it is not necessary to rely on his writings.

In the book of Numbers we are told that the reason why the tribes of Reuben and Gad desired to settle in the lands east of the Jordan was that they had a great multitude of cattle, and the land was suitable for their support. Here the testimony of geography is valuable. Eastern Palestine has a much better water supply than Western Palestine. For pastoral and agricultural purposes the land occupied by Reuben was the most favoured of all in the country, as it consisted of alluvial deposits and was abundantly supplied with water storage accommodation. Thus geography explains the history.

The second point refers to the cities of Bashan. Some of them are almost unique, for they are underground cities. Mr. Laurence Oliphant has some interesting remarks concerning them. "There is probably no country in the world where an immigrant population would find such excellent shelter prepared for them, or where they could step into the identical abodes which had been vacated by their occupants 1,500 years ago, and use the same doors and windows." The reference to the period of 1,500 years arises from the fact that the cities in question seem to have been last used in the early Christian Era.

Another traveller who visited Edrei describes it as "the subterranean labyrinthine residence of King Og." He found there a broad street, with dwellings on either side; the temperature was mild and pleasant. There were several cross streets, and above there were occa-



sionally windows or air-holes. In the centre of the city was a market place with numerous shops. He spent an hour and a half examining this strange city of Bashan. Mr. Oliphant visited others though he did not explore them. In the circumstances of Israel's conquest and future actions such cities must have been extremely valuable.

It was providential that the peoples of Sihon and Og decided to oppose the Israelites. As soon as the circumstances made it necessary for Israel to enter the land from the east, the conquest of the lands lying on that side of the Jordan was inevitable. No invader of Syria from the south-east has crossed the Jordan without first having to conquer Eastern Palestine, sometimes as far north as Damascus.

With the acquisition of the land on the east side of Jordan, with cities eminently suitable for the safe dwelling of women and children, the conquest of Palestine itself could be undertaken. By that time Moses was dead and had been buried in the land of Moab. Before his death he was given a view of the land. Of that view Condor writes in *Heth and Moab*: "The land of Naphtali (extending to Tabor) can be seen, and the mountains of Gilead, the land of Ephraim and of Manasseh, of Judah, with the Negeb (the dry or south country), are seen for more than a hundred miles. Jericho, the city of palm trees, and its plain, is at our feet unto Zoar, which lies at the foot of the Moab chain. If we make the simple change of reading 'towards' instead of 'unto', in the cases of Dan and the western sea (the Mediterranean)—a change not forbidden by the meaning of the Hebrew particle—the



whole account reads as correctly as that of an eye-witness; but it is certain that Dan (if the site near Banias be intended), and the utmost or hinder, or most western sea, cannot be visible to any mortal eye. It is a physical impossibility to see either because the Palestine watershed hides the Mediterranean, and the ridge of Mount Gilead bars out the view of Hermon."

With the women and children of the two and a half tribes safely provided for, Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, took in hand the conquest of the land west of Jordan. The river was crossed, the waters of the Jordan being restrained whilst that event took place, a similar incident to that of the crossing of the Red Sea some forty years before. The record of the drying of the river is as follows: "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant before the people; and as they that bare the Ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down towards the sea of the plain, even the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off, and the people passed over right against Jericho" (Josh. 3. 14-17.) The Revised Version makes a rather important geographical alteration, it says the waters rose up "in one heap, a great way off, at Adam." This is no doubt the correct reading. Adam is presumed to be the name of a city some fourteen miles up



the river, near which is the ford now known as the Jisr el Damieh. On two or three occasions during comparatively recent times a similar phenomenon has been known to take place, occasioned by a great fall of rocks and cliffs and huge quantities of earth, which, acting as a dam thrown across the river, held the waters of Jordan back for a time. On one occasion the waters were held for a period of sixteen hours. During the earthquake period of 1927, when earthquakes occurred in Palestine, the west bank of the ford collapsed and some of the cliff fell into the river, with the result that no water flowed down the Jordan bed for over twenty-one hours. It seems likely that some similar event took place when the Israelites crossed the river on their way to Jericho. That it was a time of earthquakes in the land is evident, as will be seen later. That Joshua should have taken advantage of a natural phenomenon does not detract from the narrative; sometimes the synchronising of an event in Bible history with natural transactions marks the Divine control of the events themselves. In any case, the fact that such occurrences have taken place more than once during the times of recorded history is a matter of considerable importance.

A memorial of the crossing was erected at Gilgal, a spot some five miles from the west bank of the river, the scene of the first encampment of the people in the land itself. From the narrative it will be seen that Gilgal became the standing camp of Israel for quite a time. After the first campaign it was the place to which Joshua and the people returned. Gilgal was something like a spearhead of the advance into Western

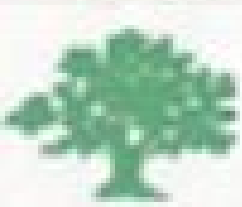


Palestine with the territory of the two and a half tribes behind as a base of operations.

Before the actual work of conquering the land was undertaken two things were done. First Joshua sent out spies to ascertain the state of affairs in the country. Secondly, whilst the people were at Gilgal they were circumcised in accordance with the terms associated with the Covenant of their ancestor, Abraham. Thereby the "reproach of Egypt" was "rolled away." The name and the incident accord with each other, for Gilgal means rolling.

From Gilgal to Jericho is but a short distance. Jericho is situated near the foot of the mountains in the Jordan Valley. It was a walled city and a place of some wealth, though it does not seem to have been a really strong city, especially having regard to its position on the road to the central heights. Its real importance to Joshua lay in the fact that it was a gateway to the land, for from it there opened out passes which led right through the hills of Judah to the city of Jerusalem and to Bethel. It stood in a place of considerable fertility, with a sub-tropical climate, for it is about eight hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea. This fact may partly account for the character of its inhabitants, who appear to have possessed none of the warlike attributes of the peoples who lived further in the land.

In the military annals of the world the official record of the siege and fall of Jericho must be unique. That a leader of the type which subsequent events proved Joshua to be should give orders for his army to go round about the city once every day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day, seems an absurd pro-



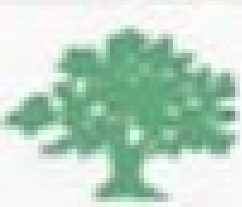
cedure. Yet it was done in connection with a promise that when a long blast was blown on the rams' horns carried by the priests "the wall of the city shall fall down flat (Hebrew, in its place), and the people shall go up every man straight before him." According to the record that actually took place. In view of what follows it is worth while reproducing the comments of two modern writers on this statement. "None of the fortification works at Jericho show any sign of having been destroyed to the extent that a reader of Joshua 6 would naturally suppose." "Excavations reveal no trace of such complete destruction as would be required by a literal interpretation of the phrase."

Until recently very little was known, archæologically, about Jericho. In the years 1907-1909 a German Society carried on excavations there, but not much was discovered beyond the usual supply of pottery and other articles. An Egyptian scarab which was found indicated that the city was inhabited about the year 2000 B.C. It was shown that the city was a very small one, and that it contained a citadel with a double wall.

Recently, however, very careful excavation has taken place on the site of Jericho, under the leadership of Professor Garstang. The work is still in progress, and therefore all that may be revealed is not yet forthcoming. What has been ascertained is of unusual interest. It has been proved, for example, that there was a Jericho before the one which was destroyed in the time of Joshua. It was inhabited by peoples of the Stone Age. In what is defined as the Middle Bronze Age the city expanded considerably, and in the Late Bronze Age another set of fortifications was prepared for the city.



From the evidence of pottery and other articles which have been forthcoming, the destruction of the city is estimated to have taken place about the year 1400 B.C., a date which, it will be noticed, closely approximates to that given by the chronological scheme of the Bible. From the perusal of Professor Garstang's account of the discoveries he has made, there is no question whatever that, as recorded in the Scriptures, the walls of Jericho fell. The matter cannot be presented better than in his own words: "As to the main fact there remains no doubt; the walls of the city fell outward so completely that the attackers would be able to clamber up and over the ruins into the city." His more recent examination of the site leads to the suggestion that the actual agency which caused this collapse of the walls was an earthquake. At first he was disinclined to believe this, but in his latest statement he says: "Further investigations at Jericho in the Spring of 1931 disclose the possible effects of earthquake shock affecting particularly the western wall, but not affecting the northern and southern walls. The eastern wall is entirely destroyed. These observations indicate tremors east and west across the Rift, as was apparently the case in the earthquakes of 1927-8." Bearing in mind the allusion to an earthquake as the probable cause which led to the waters of the Jordan being held up at Jisr el Damieh, and the suggested cause for the collapse of the walls of the city, it is of some importance to note that Jericho lies in the earthquake zone. That an earthquake should be used to bring about the fall of the city at a time indicated beforehand is a manifestation of the ways in which, in old times, God worked for the fulfilment



of His purpose with Israel. There seems to be some allusion to the idea of an earthquake in the Song of Deborah: "Lord, when Thou wentest out of Seir, when Thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water."

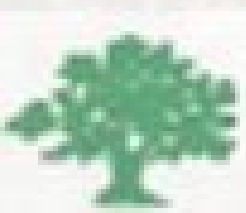
The destruction of Jericho was evidently intended to be an object lesson to the peoples of the land. Joshua had devoted the whole city to the Lord, together with all that was in it, save Rahab and her household. "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." "And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein; only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord."

Here again Archæology is very definite in its testimony to the truth of the record. There are evidences of fire everywhere, masses of brick, cracked stones, charred timbers. Houses are burnt to the ground with all the domestic pottery therein. Even grain stored in bins in the corners of rooms in the houses was charred by fire. Black layers of burnt matter are to be seen running down from the parapet of the outer wall. All these things indicate the character of the destruction which took place when the city was taken.

Before leaving the subject of Jericho there is one other matter that must be referred to. The record in Joshua reads: "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof



in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." The sequel is found in the Book of Kings. "In his (Ahab's) days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub." Ahab reigned about 950 B.C. The excavations reveal that although the city was continually inhabited from about 2000 to 1400 B.C., there is no indication whatever on the site of any subsequent buildings until somewhere about 900 B.C. The ruins of this era are superimposed directly on those of 1400 B.C. There are indications of occupation outside the city walls, which no doubt represents the city of palm trees referred to in the Book of Judges, but Jericho itself remained uninhabited for nearly five hundred years. The agreement between Scripture and Archæology is so apparent that it need not be emphasised.



CHAPTER IX

THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND

ARCHÆOLOGY may have somewhat less to say in relation to the further conquests of the cities and kings of the land, but the narrative in the Book of Joshua will be much better understood if it be read in conjunction with a map of Palestine. It will then be found to be the record of successful strategy and great celerity, both testifying to the military efficiency of the leader of the armies of Israel.

At the risk of unnecessary repetition, it is well to point out here that the inhabitants of Canaan at the time of the invasion were not a united people under one ruler. Numerous tribes, living in city-states mostly independent of each other, were faced with the invasion of a people under the leadership of a capable commander, and also under the influence imparted by a belief that the land was theirs by right of a long-made Divine promise. That influence had just been intensified by the way they had been enabled to cross the Jordan in the time of harvest and to capture the first city in the land. The weakness caused by the divided state of the peoples was increased by the effects of the troubles associated with the collapse of the Egyptian power, and the removal of Pharaoh's strong hand. There may be some difficulties in exactly fitting in the chronological notes of the times and the records of

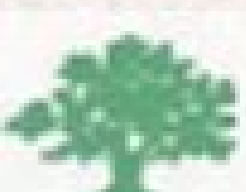


other peoples, but the whole position of the land and its peoples as represented in the Book of Joshua accords with the conditions of the land during the times illustrated by the Tell-el-Amarna tablets during the reigns of the successors of Tuthmosis III.

It was but natural that in face of the danger which threatened there should be some attempt on the part of sections of the people to combine in defence of their cities and lands. The Book of Joshua indicates that this happened. The combinations which are described are, generally speaking, just what the lie of the land would suggest, and it will be a help to the understanding of the incidents to be described to reperuse the geographical details given in Chapter II. It will be found that the formation of the land, and the position of the valleys which run through it, have a considerable bearing on the leagues of the peoples and the actions of the Israelites.

Immediately after the success at Jericho the invaders met with a serious reverse at Ai. The reverse is attributed to the action of Achan, who took from the spoil of the city of Jericho a wedge of gold, two hundred shekels of silver, and a Babylonish garment. In passing, it may be pointed out that the latter is an indication of the lasting influence which Babylon exercised on the people of Palestine. Although Egypt had been for many years the paramount political power in the country, the fashion of the clothing worn by the Syrians remained true to the modes of Babylon. The seriousness of Achan's action turns on the fact that the whole city and its spoil had been "devoted" or dedicated to the Lord.

The risk of a second repulse could not be taken; and strategy was adopted to prevent a repetition of



untoward happening. The march from Jericho was made by night, and presumably by a route which kept the people out of sight of any possible watchers in the town. By daybreak the army was in position before and behind the town. An ambush was set probably in a crevasse which exists in a hill overlooking Ai from the west. By this means the town was taken on the second attempt. Once again an object lesson had to be given to the surrounding peoples, doubly necessary this time because of the reverse which might have encouraged opposition from the peoples of the country. The whole population of the city was destroyed. "And Joshua burnt Ai and made it a heap for ever, even a desolation unto this day."

At this point the peoples of Palestine realised the necessity of drawing together. From Lebanon, on the north, to the neighbourhood of Jerusalem the danger was recognised. But effective opposition involved united action, and united action was not forthcoming. Instead, a wedge was driven into the peoples of the land. One section stood out from the projected coalition, the Hivites of Gibeon, who dwelt in their cities to the north and north-west of Jerusalem. Their cities were Gibeon, Beeroth, Chephira and Kirjath-jearim. Gibeon is described as "a great city, as one of the royal cities." Excavations which have taken place at Beeroth reveal massive stone ramparts forty feet high with a thickness of sixteen to twenty feet. They were constructed of rough blocks, some of them of great size, the whole resting on a made platform of immense rocks. To make the approach more difficult for an enemy the lower part of the wall face was coated with a yellow plaster to the



height of fifteen or eighteen feet, so as to prevent an enemy scaling the walls and obtaining an entrance to the city. If the defences of Beeroth were as strong as this it may be presumed that those of the "royal city" of Gibeon were even more so, though nothing is known of them. There are plenty of traces there of occupation during the Iron Age, but excavations are not yet finished.

The inhabitants of these towns sent a deputation to Joshua, and by an artifice secured an understanding with the Israelites. By this means a wedge was driven almost across the whole of the hill country of Judea, which effectually prevented any general combination of northern and southern peoples against Joshua. The reasons for the action of the Gibeonites becomes plain when the map is consulted. The road from Ai leads directly to the towns forming the Gibeonite confederation. Whatever hopes the tribes of the north might have had of overcoming the invasion, Gibeon was too near to risk the chances of war. The object lessons of Jericho and Ai, burnt and destroyed, were too clear to leave them any hope of escape. They would have been the next to be dealt with in the ordinary course of events. Their action, therefore, was natural, and though the understanding was gained by deceit, it saved them from the fate of the other cities and districts.

The action of the Gibeonites prevented any project of united action by north and south. But the threat to the inhabitants of the land was even more serious now, and something had to be done. This time it was the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon who banded together to punish the Confederation of Gibeon for making peace with Israel. These



cities were all situated in the southern portion of the land, Jerusalem being the farthest north and Hebron the farthest south. These two cities were on the highlands which form the backbone of the country; Jarmuth lies westward towards the Shephelah, where the hills are lower. Eglon and Lachish are still further west, the latter being in the Plain of Philistia.

It reads in the record as if the king of Jerusalem took the initiative in this confederation. The Tell-el-Amarna tablets of this time represent the ruler of Jerusalem as a loyal servant of Egypt, who warned his sovereign of the dangers in which the country was placed by the various invaders. It was quite likely therefore that on this occasion the confederates were striking not only for their own safety but on behalf of their Egyptian overlord.

The action of the kings was against Gibeon and its sister towns, not directly against Joshua. The Gibeonites however, sent word to him at Gilgal, where he and the armies were encamped. Joshua accepted the opportunity. He "ascended from Gilgal, he and all the men of war with him." As on the occasion of the capture of Ai, Joshua adopted the plan of a night march so that the enemy might get no warning of the threatened attack. From Gilgal to Gibeon is a distance of some eighteen miles, and the journey involves a rise of about four thousand feet. It is quite evident that such celerity would have been totally unexpected, and the enemy were taken completely by surprise. The battle was joined, and Israel chased the enemy "along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon . . . and it came to pass as they fled before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-



haron that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah."

It was a decisive victory, for it placed the whole of the southern portion of the land in the hands of Israel. The various towns around were quickly subdued: Makeddah, Libnah, Lachish, Gezer, Eglon, Hebron and Debir are mentioned. The result is summed up in the words of the record: "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; he left none remaining." "Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon." It will be seen that this includes practically all the country to the south until Palestine joins Arabia, to the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and as far as Jerusalem in the north. It broke once and for all any possibility of a general coalition, and Israel returned again to the base camp at Gilgal having made a great advance towards their objective.

It was on the occasion of this conflict that the well-known incident referred to in the words of Joshua took place:

"Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon;
Thou moon in the Valley of Ajalon."

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jaser?" The Book of Jaser is one of the lost books referred to in the Old Testament. What the means were that were employed to give the answer to Joshua's request it is impossible to say. The main thing is that in some way the light



was extended, unless an alternative theory be correct, and the light was dimmed so that the discomfiture of the Canaanite allies might be more complete. The reference to hailstones has at any rate some suggestion of darkness. Whatever it was that happened the victory was complete.

Some of the towns named have been excavated. Libnah has been found to have been intensively occupied during the Late Bronze Age, the period of the conquest, but it was then an unwalled city; its walls being built later. Lachish used to be identified with Tell-el-Hesy; it is now, however, assumed to be Tell-el-Duweir and has not been excavated. Gezer has been well excavated and is frequently mentioned in various connections in this volume. It was strongly protected, and had no less than thirty towers. Eglon (Tell-el-Hesy) was strongly defended by a wall of sun-dried bricks after the manner sometimes adopted in Egypt. The wall was nearly 29 feet thick. A cuneiform tablet was found here which mentions one Zimrida of Lachish who is mentioned in the Amarna tablets. Soon after 1375 B.C., or thereabouts, Eglon was destroyed and a layer of ashes left by alkali burners or furnace workers has been found over the site. Finally, Debir has been the subject of excavation, and though the work is still in progress there appear to be definite evidences of an exceedingly well-protected city with solid walls of masonry which were destroyed by fire somewhere about the age of Joshua.

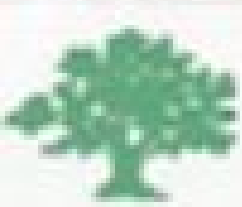
It was now the turn of the North. This time the confederacy was on a very great scale. It was organised by the king of Hazor in the extreme north of the land. He had established a headship over various portions of



the surrounding country; and the federation included Madon, west of the Sea of Galilee; Shimron, near Carmel; Achsaph near Acco (Acre); the people who were to the north of the mountain area, those of the plains south of Chinneroth, and in the borders of Dor (a sea coast town on the Plain of Sharon) on the west. In addition to the kings particularly named there were Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizites and Jebusites of the mountains, Hivites from Mount Hermon, still further northward, and from the land of Mizpeh.

The king of Hazor, the head of the confederation, was, like the king of Jerusalem before him, a loyal servant of Egypt. According to his own statements in the Tell-el-Amarna letters he had already suffered for his allegiance for he wrote: "Let my lord the King recall all that Hazor and its King have already had to endure."

The battle took place at the Waters of Merom. These "waters" are usually supposed to be the small lake which is formed by the River Jordan north of the Sea of Galilee. The term occurs nowhere else, and it seems altogether unsuitable as a name for a single lake. It is probable that the place intended is a point further westward, where several of the roads in Galilee meet, and where there is a plentiful supply of water. It is some miles west of the north-western shore of Lake Huleh and appears to answer all the requirements of the context. Here the various kings were assembled. Once again it was the rapidity of Joshua's movements that settled the conflict. "So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them." Jericho or Gilgal is something like a hundred miles away, and



the Israelites appear to have travelled by forced marches, and given battle before the assembled armies had time to arrange themselves. They needed time and space for the use of their horses and chariots, which formed an important part of the northern people's military organisation; Joshua evidently gave them no time. The defeat was overwhelming. The defeated armies were chased as far as Zidon, to Misrephoth-maim, and the Valley of Mizpeh—that is to say, northward, westward and eastward. These directions answer to the ways open to a defeated enemy from the place which is assumed to be the "Waters of Merom."

In the process of following up the victory it is said, "he (Joshua) burnt Hazor with fire." "But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only, that did Joshua burn." Hazor was the subject of excavation in 1928. The area includes a great camp enclosure which is however thought to be associated with the earlier times of the Hyksos. On the site of the city itself layers of burning are traceable. As, however, details of the work of excavation have not yet been published, nothing more can be said at present.

According to a brief summary in the book of Joshua, this victory was followed up by a long warfare by which the position of Israel in the land was strengthened, although it is evident that even then much remained to be done. War had accomplished a good deal; it had established Israel at various strategic points; it remained now for them to take possession of their heritage in the length and breadth of the land. How they failed to do this effectively every reader of the Book of Judges knows.

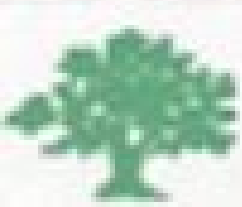


CHAPTER X

THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

WITH the record of the conquest of the thirty-one kings of Canaan of which a summary is given in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Joshua, the military interest of the Book finishes. The rest is mainly taken up with an account of territories assigned to the various tribes, and certain incidents in connection therewith. From time to time we read such expressions as "They (the Ephraimites) drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer, but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day and serve under tribute." "Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in the land. Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out." A similar state of things is disclosed in the opening chapter of the Book of Judges. Thus: Judah "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." Benjamin "did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem." "Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh."

It is clear that the position in the land was a very mixed one for a long time. The various incidents recorded in the Book of Judges imply a divided state of affairs between the tribes, each of them more or less independent, suffering from time to time from the oppression



of one or other of the nations around. It was in such circumstances that the Judges arose. They were usually deliverers of the people, who were accepted as rulers, generally over a restricted portion of the land. On some of these occasions certain of the tribes joined together to fight against a particular oppressor, but they soon fell apart again. All through the Book of Judges there is no such thing as a great national rising on the part of the whole people.

A glance through the Book of Judges will show that the various oppressions that took p'ace were due to the peoples immediately surrounding the land. The first recorded oppression, however, is an exception to this rule, for it is attributed to one Chushan-risathaim, king of Mesopotamia. It has been suggested that this may be an error of transcription at some time by a scribe copying the ancient record. The reason for this suggestion lies principally in the fact that the deliverance came through Othniel, whose possessions were in the south of the land, whereas the principal sufferers from an oppressor from Mesopotamia would have been the northern tribes. Be that as it may, it will be found that through the rest of the record the oppressors named are the Moabites, Philistines, Canaanites, Midianites, and Ammonites, all of them peoples dwelling in or around the land of Palestine.

It would be a long task to go through the history of the times of the Judges, and it would not be of much service to the purpose before us here, that is the bearing of the land itself and the ancient records which are now available on the Bible history. Yet something should be said in relation to the period to indicate the bearing

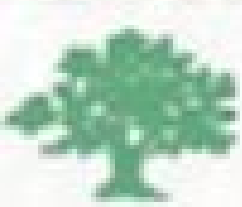


of the narrative on the general outline of Israel's development.

We have assumed hitherto the correctness of the theory which places the Exodus from Egypt in the times of the XVIIIth Dynasty, and not those of XIXth. The reasons for this it is hoped to discuss in a later book of the series, when attention will be specially directed to Egypt and its place in the Bible record. Here the period has been more or less taken for granted, although certain facts which have an important bearing upon the question have been referred to in passing. There is, however, a phase of the matter which is affected by the records of the Book of Judges, and some little attention must be given to it.

In Chapter VII a brief epitome has been given of the history of Egypt in relation to the land of Palestine. It went as far as the times of Akh-en-Aten and the religious revolution of his reign. It was seen how, as a result of the weakness of Egypt, her hold on the land of Canaan declined. From the Tell-el-Amarna tablets it is apparent that during this time the land of Canaan was in a most unsettled state. Among other things they tell of an invasion of the Habiru, of revolts of the Hittites, and of general unrest all through the country. Akh-en-Aten was succeeded by Smenkhkara who only reigned for two years, and he in turn by Tut-ankh-Amon. He was a young man and only reigned for a comparatively short time, being followed by Hor-em-heb. The latter had been a military leader of the time of Tut-ankh-Amon, and had done something towards re-establishing the Egyptian dominion in Syria and Palestine.

At this point there was a change of Dynasty in Egypt,



the XIXth succeeding to power. The first king of this new Dynasty was Rameses I. A change of Dynasty in a land like Egypt probably had a somewhat unsettling effect on the outlying provinces of the Empire, and for a time Palestine appears to have been again a seat of trouble. When, however, Seti I succeeded and was well established on the throne, he proved to be a most capable king, who restored the dominion of Egypt in Asia. He was followed by his son Rameses II, who had been associated with his father during the latter's lifetime. It was during his reign that a great contest took place between the Egyptians and the Hittites which resulted in an agreement which handed over the land of Palestine south of the Dog River to Egypt—that is to say, the two peoples agreed to recognise that the southern portion of the land was in the Egyptian "sphere of influence," the Hittites retaining the north as their sphere. Rameses reigned sixty-seven years. The result was a settled state of affairs, for the power of Egypt, unchecked and unchallenged by Hittite pretensions, was too great for any of the petty local peoples to think of trying to secure additional territory, or of setting themselves up over the other races in the land. After Rameses there was a decline in Egypt under Mer-en-ptah, and when he died a state of anarchy set in. There was a slight revival under Rameses III, and then all pretence of an Egyptian Empire in Syria was dropped.

Such is, in brief, the Egyptian history of about two hundred years. If the Exodus took place during the period of the XVIIIth Dynasty, this time must synchronise with a portion of the history recorded in the Book of Judges. A careful analysis of the history and



the narrative in Judges will show many notable parallels, and the fact is an additional argument in favour of the suggested time for the Exodus.

The outstanding features of the Book of Judges are the alternate periods of oppression and quietness which Israel experienced. The periods of rest are usually of forty years duration, but in one case, that which followed the oppression under Moab, it extended to eighty years. These are presumably intended to be round numbers and not exact time measurements.

After the first oppression by Chushan-risathaim the forty years of rest would come somewhere about the reigns of Tut-ankh-Amon and his successors, when it will be remembered Egyptian authority was once again established in the land, preventing any of the petty powers claiming supremacy. But the really interesting parallel is the one next in order, the eighty years referred to in the preceding paragraph. Roughly speaking that period answers to the time of Rameses II, whose reign of sixty-seven years, coupled with that of his father and extended into the early part of his successor's reign, gives a long period during which Palestine was held by the Egyptians too strongly for any other people to question it. The Hittite agreement gave Egypt a free hand in the whole of that portion of the land where Israel was dwelling, gradually consolidating themselves in the territory allotted to the tribes. In such a time there would be no opportunity for the races around to interfere in the affairs of Palestine.

Of course it might be objected to this suggestion that an Egyptian control of the land does not seem to accord with the penetration of the land by Israel. But so long

as the peoples of Palestine were quiet, and tribute was forthcoming, the overlordship of Egypt was not likely to be an oppressive one. On the other hand, the very quietness enjoyed by the inhabitants of Palestine would help to the multiplication of the people, and thus enable them to spread abroad and take possession of their lands. That the Book of Judges contains no allusion to Egyptian advances through the land is not to be wondered at. The regular route for Egyptian armies passing through Palestine was by way of the Maritime Plain, the way of the Philistines as it is called in the Bible. Any punitive expedition passing through the land by this route need not come into contact with the settlements of Israel to any extent, for they seldom held the lands bordering the Mediterranean in the southern half of the country.

By the end of the eighty years respite, Israel had increased sufficiently to be a power in the land themselves, and the future periods of oppression and quietness were independent of the Egyptians, who by that time had entered upon a process of decay and were not in a position to take any part at all in Palestinian affairs.

The final pictures of the Book of Joshua are those connected with the Philistine domination in the land. Little need be said concerning them here; a special chapter will tell of their entry into Palestine and of their cities. They appear to have come first as mercenaries in the armies of the Pharaohs. Later on various Ægean tribes joined them and helped to bring the civilisation of those lands into Palestine. With no menace from Egypt they were able to become a real military power, and to maintain their position until the rise of the



Hebrew monarchy under Saul and David. The latter broke their power.

During the period thus roughly sketched, there are two or three points of contact between the Bible and the Egyptian records which call for notice. They are comparatively small matters, but of interest, and in one case at least of some importance. In the days of Seti I there is a reference to a portion of the land as Asaru. It was off the general route of the Egyptians, and is thought to answer to the territory of the tribe of Asher, just north of Mount Carmel. A similar reference is found in the reign of Rameses II. The name is given A-sh-r. The Egyptian military route would usually diverge eastward through Esdraelon on reaching Carmel and would thus just miss the actual territory of Asher.

During the reign of Rameses II there is a record of an alliance made with one Ben-Anath who is described as a Syrian sea captain. Although the main body of the Philistines only came into the land slightly later, they evidently attempted settlements in those days, and according to the Book of Judges, "Shamgar the son of Anath (Ben-Anath) slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad; he also delivered Israel." The coincidence of the name in this case is merely suggestive, there is, at present, no ground for putting it higher than that.

Finally, there is a reference of Mer-en-ptah to Israel in a stele recording his victories. The inscription reads as under:

The kings are overthrown, saying Salaam,
Not one holds up his head among the nine nations
of the bow.



Wasted is Tehenu,
The Hittite Land is pacified,
Plundered is the Canaan, with every evil,
Carried off is Askalon,
Seized upon is Gezer.
Yenoam is made as a thing not existing,
Israel is desolated, her seed is not,
Palestine has become a (defenceless) widow for
Egypt,
All lands are united, they are pacified;
Everyone that is turbulent is bound by king Mer-
en-ptah.

It will be seen that on this occasion, as was suggested before, the Egyptian forces followed the coast road through Gezer and Askalon. By such a road the people dwelling in the southern portion of the territory in which Israel dwelt at the time would be very little affected, for they do not appear to have taken actual possession of the sea coast even before the Philistines made it particularly their own.

These contacts between the two sources of information may seem of small importance but they are interesting, and so far as they really apply to Israel are further indications of the date of the Exodus. Certainly in the time of the Pharaoh who, until lately, was usually supposed to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Israel were established in the north of Palestine.

The period of the Judges ended in the days of Samuel, when Saul was chosen to be the first king of the united people. It closed amid disaster that might well have resulted in the entire disintegration of the people, the



triumph of the many gods of surrounding nations and the disappearance of the worship of Yahweh who was the God of the spirits of all flesh. Israel and the cause of monotheism were saved under the monarchy. Meanwhile the last tragedy of the time of the Judges is summed up in the events which took place at, and near, Shiloh.

When the Israelites are first introduced as a nation their religious centre was the Tabernacle which Moses had constructed in the Wilderness. If a people who were journeying from place to place, dwelling in tents themselves, were to have a centre of worship, it was necessary that it should be of a movable kind.

When the people crossed the Jordan to commence the conquest of the land it was necessary to find a clean place where the Tabernacle might be pitched. For such a purpose it must be a place where there had been no previous human habitation. Such a site was found at Gilgal, and there the Tabernacle was pitched and remained until a more permanent and convenient place could be found for it. That Gilgal had not previously been inhabited is indicated by the fact that it is not mentioned in the enumeration of the towns of Benjamin in whose territory it was situated.

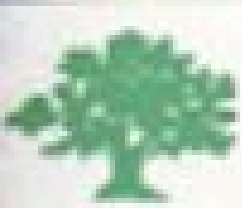
When the time came for a more permanent position to be found there were three main considerations to be borne in mind. (1) The site must be a "clean" one, therefore a place not previously occupied. (2) It must be convenient of access so that all the tribes could, in accord with the provisions of the Law, meet there from time to time to keep the feasts of the Lord. (3) It must be a place of safety where enemies were not likely to injure the sacred tent and its belongings. The place



chosen, and which fulfilled these conditions as far as possible, was Shiloh, in the territory of Ephraim, certainly the most warlike of all the tribes. Shiloh was evidently a new place, not hitherto used for habitation. Like Gilgal it is not mentioned in the enumeration of towns. Taanath-Shiloh (Josh. 16. 6) is formed by a circle of hills which surround a slight eminence on which the Tabernacle stood. It is easily accessible, and it is just about midway between Dan and Beersheba. It was situate on the highway which led from Bethel to Shechem. Its safety depended partly on the warlike character of the Ephraimites and on the fact that it was centrally placed.

The Tabernacle was brought from Gilgal to Shiloh during the lifetime of Joshua, and it remained there during the stormy, unsettled times of the Judges. To what extent the various feasts and fasts of the Law were carried out in those days it is impossible to say. Probably they were for the most part neglected, for every man, we are told, did that which was right in his own eyes. One festival was certainly carried out there each year, the one at which the daughters of Shiloh "danced in dances," as it is expressed in the record of the Judges. Something of the ritual of the law is implied by the fact that Elkanah, the father of Samuel, went up yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh.

The failure of Israel to realise the true character of their religion was never more definitely indicated than in the events which took place at Shiloh in the days of Eli. The Philistines had invaded the land, and by their superior military skill had gained an advantage



over Israel. In their dismay Israel's leaders came to a most unusual decision. They decided to fetch the Ark of God from Shiloh. The reason given sounds strange, and clearly demonstrates how completely the real meaning and intention of their religious symbols had gone from the minds of the people. "Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh, unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hands of our enemies." IT may save us! The Ark of the Covenant had become to them something little better than a mascot: they could not distinguish between the Ark and the Lord of Hosts in the worship of Whom it was intended to be used. It was no more to them than the image of Dagon was to their Philistine enemies. In such circumstances there was no Divine intervention for the people. The Ark of God was taken, and Israel suffered a most disastrous defeat.

What happened to Shiloh? The history in Samuel does not say; it tells what happened to the Ark, and how it came back to Israel, though it is particularly noticeable that it did not go back to Shiloh. Obviously there was a reason for this. For a time it remained at Bethshemesh, then it was taken to Kirjath-jearim. Strangely enough there is no answer to the question which opens this paragraph until we come to the Book of Psalms. Even then it is referred to in a psalm which was evidently composed after the division of the kingdom. There we evidently have an account of the disaster which overwhelmed the place.

They temped and rebelled against the Most High God,
And kept not His testimonies;



But turned back, and dealt treacherously like their fathers:

They were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

For they provoked Him to anger with their High places,

And moved Him to jealousy with their graven images.

When God heard this He was wroth,

And greatly abhorred Israel:

So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,

The tent which He placed among men;

And delivered His strength into captivity,

And His glory into the adversary's hand.

He gave His people over also unto the sword;

And was wroth with His inheritance.

Fire devoured their young men;

And their maidens had no marriage song.

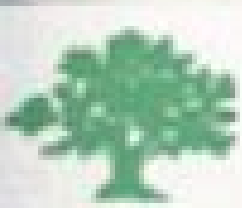
Their priests fell by the sword;

And their widows made no lamentation (Psalm 78.

56-64).

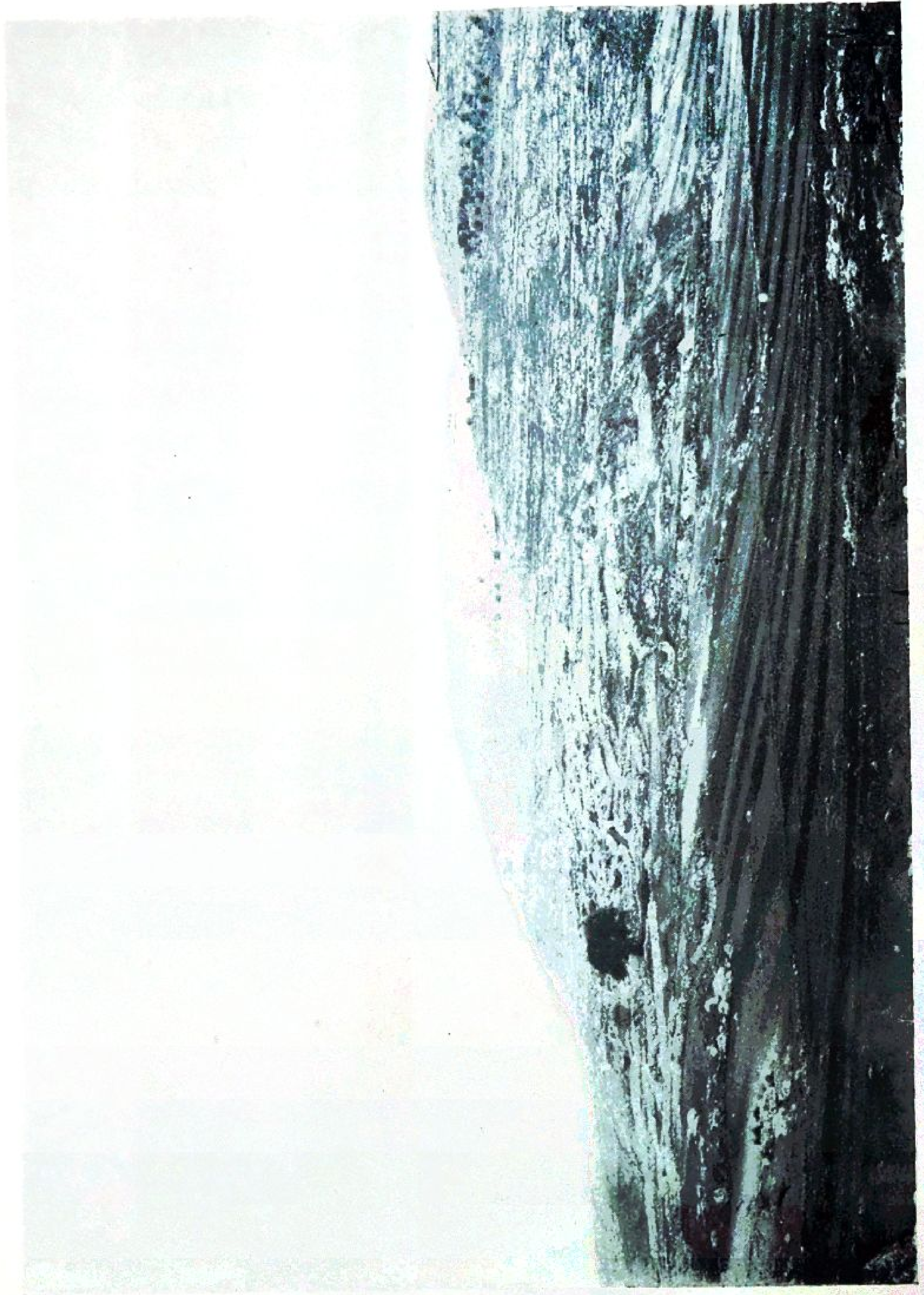
Jeremiah refers to it: "But go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. 7. 12). See also Jer. 26. 6. Shiloh was apparently destroyed with all the horrors of warfare. It may be safely assumed that the Philistines, having captured the Ark and defeated the people, marched to Shiloh and razed the place to its very foundations.

Evidently the Tabernacle was saved, for we next hear of it as being again at Gilgal. It may be assumed that when the terrible tidings of the capture of the Ark came to Shiloh and Eli died so tragically, Samuel



arranged for its removal to a place of safety. What place could be better than the spot which had already been its home for some years in the early days in the land? Hence it is found at Gilgal. Still later it was moved to Gibeah, "for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God which Moses, the servant of the Lord, had made in the wilderness." We also read of it at Nob.

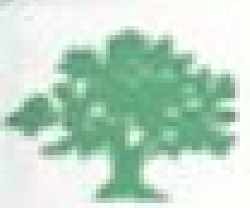
In the years 1926-28 a Danish expedition conducted some excavations on the site of Shiloh. A further expedition visited the spot in 1929. In the course of their examination of the site they came upon evidences of some importance. The earliest times at which the place appears to have been inhabited were what are termed early Israelitish times. The "evidences" were mostly pottery. "Of pottery of a markedly pre-Israelite type there seemed to be none." There were certain Stone Age relics, or rather what might have been assigned to the Stone Age had there been other supporting or qualifying evidence. They consisted of small flint knives and small flint scrapers. The presence of these articles in a site of Israelitish times where the Tabernacle was kept is easy to understand. It is one of the strange conservative instincts of the human mind that matters of ritual are the last to change in times of change. Plenty of examples of this will be found in connection with Great Britain, where many mediæval customs still survive in State ceremonies. It was so in Israel, for when the people were circumcised at Gilgal after crossing the Jordan knives of flints were used for the purpose. In view of this it may be taken as certain that Shiloh was a "clean" place when the Tabernacle was first



[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.]

A VIEW OF SHILOH

[Face page 94]





taken there, and that the flint knives were used in the rite of circumcision.

In the later report of the Danish Expedition it is pointed out, "In Iron Age I an old town was situated on the site. It existed to a certain time within Iron Age I . . . about 1150. At this date it was destroyed by fire, and it seems likely, at least, that this took place by the hands of an enemy. Not till much later, at the earliest in the centuries immediately before the Christian Era, was a new city wall built, which for reasons not directly obvious, was placed further in, on the remains of the old, forgotten town." The date, it will be seen, is approximate, but it agrees almost exactly with the date assigned to the disaster to Israel when the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines. The evidence of the Danish Archæological Expedition explains all that has been referred to in this chapter, and which is not to be found in the history in Samuel. It explains the language of the Psalm, which in turns fills in the silence of the historical record. It explains the allusion of Jeremiah, and why he invited the people of his days to "go and see" what had happened to Shiloh, for it was in his days still a ruin.

The religious history of Israel is a very unsatisfactory one. One of the great objects for which they were chosen as a people was that they might be the depositories of a knowledge of the One True God, in the midst of the surrounding idolatries. Strangely enough the object of conveying the Truth concerning the One True God has been accomplished in spite of the failure of the original depositories. Every heathen cult that was practised by the nations around them seems to have



been adopted by Israel from time to time. Yet amongst them the pure monotheism was preserved. The stern Elijah is an illustration of it, and while every prophet testifies to the failure of the people as a whole, he at the same time indicates by his words that there were some who were faithful. They might often think as Elijah did that they only were left, but probably in all their days, as in his, there were "seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal."



CHAPTER XI

THE MONARCHY AND THE CITY OF JERUSALEM

HAVING brought the history of the land down to the time of David it is necessary to turn to matters connected with Jerusalem. Jerusalem, the Holy City of three religions, is one of the most interesting cities in the world, it is also the one which has had a most exciting and changeable history. Its name, Jeru-Salem, originally Uru-Salem, means the City of Peace. As a matter of fact, it has probably seen more of warfare, suffered more sieges, and been the scene of more human suffering than any other on the face of the earth. In Bible times we read of attack after attack upon it, and since those days there have been many more. Associated in the popular mind with the Jew it has been ruled over since Bible times by Romans, Persians, Saracens, Crusaders then Saracens again, and the Turk. Now it has been delivered from its subjection to the Gentiles and is becoming once again the home of the Jew.

Its origins lay far in the past. If first comes before us in the Bible as Salem, with Melchizedek as its king. How much farther back its records may yet be traced cannot be said, but even from that time there are some four thousand years of history. During that long time it has experienced great vicissitudes, from the glory of the days of David and Solomon to its miserable condition when Nehemiah viewed its crumbling walls by night. Even worse was its condition in the times when Roman



Emperors ordered that a ploughshare should be driven over its ground as a sign of a perpetual interdiction of it as a home for the Jews.

It is a strange fact that excepting the reference to it as Salem in the days of Melchizedek there is not a single allusion to it in the first five Books of the Bible. That is to say, there is no mention of it by name. Several times in the Book of Deuteronomy there is a veiled allusion to it as "the place which the Lord thy God shall choose." A nation in the position of Israel needed a central place for the worship of its God, and though the Tabernacle, whether at Shiloh or elsewhere, provided such a place for a time, it was by no means a suitable centre for the nation when it was effectually settled in the land.

Although the king of Jerusalem was one of those conquered by Joshua, the conquest was not of such a character to cause the city to pass into the possession of Israel. As we have seen, the Jebusites retained it as their own, and it remained a Jebusite island surrounded by the territory assigned to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin until the times of the monarchy. It must have been a constant eyesore to Israel, and a danger to them also on account of its strong position.

The Jebusite city must not be conceived as covering the whole of the site of the modern Jerusalem, or even as being as large as it was in the time of the Hebrew kings. If a plan of Jerusalem is examined it will be found to include several hills. In early days the valley described as the Tyropoeon was a very real one. This valley, nearly a mile long, commences north of the Damascus Gate, and runs between the hill on the west and the Temple enclosure. Near the Temple site the



original level of the valley is fifty feet below the present surface; at the south-west corner of the Temple it is between eighty and ninety feet below. Thus the approach to the hill east of the Tyropoeon Valley was protected by strong natural features, now much modified by the constant accumulation of rubbish. To the east of the Tyropoeon Valley, between it and the Valley of the Kedron, is the great rock called Ophel, a narrow mount, averaging on top only about forty yards in width. The whole surface is estimated to include not more than twelve acres.

This site, which is the original Jebusite city of Jerusalem, has been the subject of excavation. Its ancient walls have been traced on the summit of the rock which rises precipitately from the valleys below. By the gate which gave entrance to the city the walls were twenty-six feet thick. On the western edge there was first a steep drop of ten feet, then a level shelf from ten to thirteen feet wide, then another drop of eight feet; below this there was a sloping shelf nearly forty feet broad. Even to-day, where the walls of the Jebusite city have been cleared, they rise to a height of about twenty-seven feet. It is not to be surprised at that the inhabitants of a city so well placed, and so fully protected by the walls which they had provided, felt themselves secure. So safe did they deem themselves to be in this strong city that in their taunt to David they implied that the blind and the lame were sufficient to defend the city against its foes. Bearing in mind the size of the city, and the fewness of its total inhabitants, there is something very suggestive in this taunt.

One of the most thrilling episodes in the history of



Israel is that of the capture of Jerusalem in the reign of David. David was a statesman and an organiser, as well as an experienced soldier. It was clear to him that he could never feel that he had full control of the country so long as the Jebusites owned their strong city of the top of Ophel. Its existence in the hands of another people was a constant threat. He therefore determined to obtain possession of the city. We have two accounts of the incident. The first reads: "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land; which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame thou shalt not come in hither; thinking David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, let him go up to the watercourse, and smite the lame and the blind" (2 Sam. 5. 6-8). The second account which is given by the chronicler is: "And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (the same is Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land were there. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come in hither. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David. And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. And Joab the son of Zeruah went up first and was made chief. And David dwelt in the stronghold, therefore they called it the City of David" (1 Chron. 11. 4-7).

A good deal of uncertainty used to prevail as to the meaning of the account, given in Samuel, especially the reference to the watercourse, which, in the Authorised



Version, reads gutter. One commentator said in reference to it, "The sense of this passage is obscure, partly from the difficult construction, partly from the uncertainty of the meaning of the word gutter. . . . The ancient versions differ in their interpretations, but the most probable sense is watercourses, such as were connected with the precipices around Mount Zion. . . . The word 'getteth', by a very slight change in the Masoretic vowels, becomes 'cast' or 'hurl.' The whole clause will then read, 'Whosoever smites the Jebusites let him hurl into the watercourses (i.e. down the precipices), the lame and the blind.'"

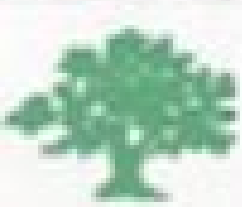
The foregoing attempt at exposition is given because it serves to illustrate very effectively one of the advantages of Archæology in relation to the Bible. To-day there is no doubt whatever as to the meaning of David's words, nor as to the action which was carried through by Joab, and by which he secured the position of chief in the armies of Israel. By the aid of Archæology we can accompany Joab step by step in the thrilling incident the nature of which has been obscured for ages.

Some of the earliest works of excavation in Jerusalem were carried out by Lieut. Warren (see Chapter III). Although the results of his work were not very great, for reasons already explained, he made one discovery which has proved to be the first step towards understanding the incident before us. He found a shaft, now known as "Warren's Shaft." It had evidently been made by the Jebusites to enable them to get to the water-supply of their city. Water has always been one of the great problems of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In those early times there were no reservoirs or cisterns,

such as were made later, and the only supply always available was that provided by what is now known as the Virgin's Fountain. It is situated in the Kedron Valley on the east side of Ophel. Thus the inhabitants of the city at the top of the hill had to fetch their water from a well right down in the valley. The way down was steep, and therefore the process of water-getting was difficult. But if such a course were possible at ordinary times, in times of war or invasion it was a positive danger. In fact if the city were besieged, it would probably be impossible to get to the water at all, and the inhabitants would be compelled to capitulate for want of that necessity of life.

To meet the difficulty and the danger the Jebusites constructed a tunnel and a shaft. From the city the work commences with a stairway cut out of the rock. Beyond the stairs there is a perpendicular drop followed by a doorway. Then the tunnel descends gently until a shaft, forty feet in depth is reached. This shaft leads to a cave chamber, into which the waters of the Virgin's Fountain were led through another tunnel. How the perpendicular drop was negotiated by the water-drawers does not appear, but that has no bearing on the incident now being considered.

The word used for the shaft in the account just given was *tsinnor*, a word which only occurs in one other place, namely Psalm 42. 7, where it is translated "waterspouts." It contains the idea of a spout, or pipe, or conduit, and as the term "up" is associated with it, it evidently was intended to apply to what is now known as Warren's Shaft. It is evident that by some means David knew of the existence of these



tunnels and shaft. To get into the Jebusite city by such means was a hazardous undertaking, in which only a very few people could take part. It was no doubt this fact which caused David to connect a great reward with the successful carrying out of the project.

Joab undertook the task. Probably by night, he and a few chosen companions made their way through the lower tunnel which conveyed the waters of the Virgin's Fountain to the rock cistern. This was a distance of fifty or sixty feet. Then came the vertical shaft which rose to a height of about forty feet or thereabouts. Up this they must have climbed one by one as silently as they could. Then the upper tunnel and smaller shaft had to be climbed, until the little band stood at the top, inside the city. The exploit has been repeated in modern times, but on that occasion there was no danger of meeting hostile defenders at the top. Evidently the Jebusites had no idea of what was going on. The shaft was only used for water drawing, and therefore by women, and they never dreamed of the possibility of the tunnel being used to gain an entrance into their city.

The totally unexpected appearance of Joab and his companions must have thrown the Jebusites into confusion. Foes within and foes without were too much for them, and as the record so laconically puts it, "David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the City of David."



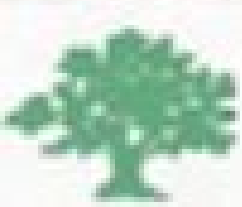
CHAPTER XII

THE ERA OF SOLOMON

DURING the reign of Solomon the Israelitish monarchy attained the high-water mark of its existence. The Empire reached the limits of the land as set out in the original promise, "from the River of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates." The River of Egypt is not the Nile but the stream in the Wady el Arish, which was and is the natural boundary between Egypt and Palestine. Inland it went much further south, for it extended to the head of the Gulf of Akaba at Ezion-geber and Elath.

Looking round the world in the days of David and Solomon there were two things which had a great influence upon the circumstances which helped to the great increase of power for Israel at this juncture. The reign of David may be placed somewhere about 1055-1015 B.C., and that of Solomon from 1015 to 975 B.C., a period of eighty years. What was happening about this time in the other parts of the world in close association with the land of Palestine?

In Egypt the power of the great Rameses had gone. When the XIXth Dynasty to which he belonged was ending, Egypt fell into a state of anarchy which lasted for some time. Order was restored by Set-nekht, who founded the XXth Dynasty, and by his son, Rameses III, who proved to be a capable ruler; but it was only for a short time, and immediately afterwards the Egyptian



power again rapidly declined. A succession of Rameses occupied the throne, but they were mere shadows of the second of that name, and the reign of eight of them only occupied a period of about thirty years. This brings us to the year 1100 B.C. Then followed the XXIst Dynasty, during which Egypt was divided, and two kings reigned simultaneously at Tanis and Thebes respectively. Speaking of them the Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum says: "The reigns of all these kings are historically of little importance." One of the chief operations of the time was the removal of the royal mummies from one hiding place to another to avoid the depredations of the tomb-robbers, a very definite indication of the low state to which the land had sunk under these rulers. Temporal affairs were neglected. Thus on the southern borders of the land of Palestine there could be no opposition to the consolidation of the Israelitish monarchy. More than this, as the record in the Bible shows, the Pharaoh of Egypt was glad enough to arrange a matrimonial alliance between his daughter and the king of the rising royal house of Jerusalem. The marriage was accompanied by the gift of the city of Gezer which had formerly belonged to the Canaanites.

Assyria also was in a state of comparative insignificance. The great kings whose reigns marked the rise of Assyria to power had not yet appeared. The king lists of the time contain names of rulers little known to history. It was not until 966 B.C. that Assyria began to put forth those efforts which ultimately made her the greatest power of the time. "Tiglath-pileser, whose reign is dated 966-934 B.C., is the first of the great

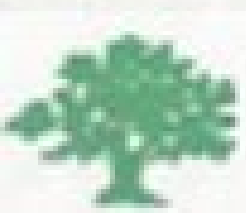


warrior kings of Assyria to stand out before us with any definite individuality." He was of course too late to have any influence upon the land of Palestine in the reign of Solomon. Even had it been otherwise he had quite enough to do nearer at hand to prepare for the future greatness of his nation.

Saved from the rivalry of the great powers to the north and south, Israel was able to grow and prosper. Solomon was a great king in some ways. He had an immense revenue, and apparent stability, though his son paid dearly for the former. Solomon consolidated the kingdom and strengthened it. Other causes assisted him in this process.

Mention has been made before of the movements of the Ægean peoples of the islands and coastlands of the eastern and central Mediterranean. This stream of peoples, prevented from settling down in the land of Egypt, had established themselves on the border lands of the Mediterranean, known as Philistia. They formed a connection between Palestine and the lands of the West. Such a position was a great menace to the maritime people of Tyre and Sidon. Those ports had been the centre of the trading activities of Palestine and the lands along the Mediterranean seaboard as far as the Straits of Gibraltar, if not to places beyond.

The constant friction which marked the relations between Israel and the Philistines, particularly during the reign of David, was a very welcome thing to the Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon. It helped to keep the Philistines in check, and prevented any development of trading activities in opposition to those of the Phœnicians. It was therefore part of the settled policy of the



rulers of Tyre and Sidon to cultivate terms of amity with the kingdom of Israel. Thus it is recorded that "Hiram (the king of Tyre) was ever a lover of David," with whom he entered into a "brotherly covenant." Later, when Solomon was engaged in the work of constructing the Temple and building a palace for himself, it was from Tyre that he obtained the necessary supplies, assistance, and transport. When he embarked on trading matters on his own account, and constructed ships at Ezion-geber, the servants of Hiram went in the ships, supplying the needful knowledge of navigation, a phase of activity which was never cultivated by the Israelites themselves.

It will be seen therefore that everything conspired to make the reign of Solomon one of prosperity, and enabled the new monarchy to pose for a time as head of an Empire.

It was probably this association with the trading peoples of Phœnicia that caused Solomon to turn his attention to trade. His position as ruler of the land of Palestine gave him an advantageous status in the matter of which he could not well be deprived. The great trade routes of the period passed through his territory. By reason of this he was able to establish a trading monopoly in such articles as yarn, also horses and chariots. He was situate between Egypt and the nations to the north, and was able therefore to act as a trader between the various peoples concerned. He "had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so for



all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means." In regard to other articles and commodities which were not made the subject of a government monopoly, his possession of the great trade routes enabled him to collect tolls from those who carried on the trade of the times.

Such a policy as this led to, in fact, necessitated, the building of cities where the trading affairs of the kingdom could be regulated. Solomon therefore built Tadmor in the wilderness and store cities in Hamath. The former is the city afterwards known as Palmyra. It had an outstanding incident in its later history when its Queen, Zenobia, challenged the might of Rome. Such a city, built right on the trade route, was a great asset, and though some have questioned whether the city did really owe its origin to Solomon, there is every reason to conclude that it did. With such trading activities in operation which made use of the trade routes so much more than had been the case formerly, there was every reason for establishing a trading centre in that part of the north. In a corresponding passage in Kings the Hebrew mentions Tamar, and not Tadmor. An examination of the two passages will show that the associations of the two places are different. Tadmor is connected with store cities in Hamath, in the north, whereas Tamar in Kings is connected with Gezer, Beth-horon, and Baalath, all of which were cities in the south. At the same time even in Kings, Tadmor is given as a marginal note in the Hebrew, and our translators were so satisfied that Tadmor was really intended that they have adopted it as the reading of the text.

Tadmor may well be described as in the wilderness.



An early explorer speaks of it thus: "We had scarce passed these venerable monuments, when the hills opening discovered to us, all at once, the greatest quantity of ruins we had ever seen, and beyond them, towards the Euphrates, a flat waste as far as the eye could see without any object which showed either life or motion." The ruins which this traveller saw relate to a date long anterior to the time of Solomon, but the situation described clearly indicates them as being "in the wilderness."

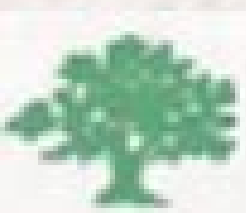
Some interesting considerations are opened up by the record of Solomon's maritime expeditions alluded to earlier in this chapter. A good deal of discussion has arisen concerning the neighbourhood of Ophir and the places from which the shipmen brought gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. Many have identified Ophir with India, and most convincing arguments can be adduced to show that the names given in the Hebrew of the record for some of the articles named are undoubtedly of Indian origin. For example the word for ape is *koph*, in the Sanscrit it is *kapi*. Similarly the word for peacocks is *tukki*, and in Tamil, a language of India, the peacock is called *toka*. That all the commodities named can be obtained from India is obvious. Indeed, in the case of the peacock it may be pointed out that the common peacock is a native of India and Ceylon, though they are found in other parts of Asia. But it is essentially an Asiatic bird; the importance of this fact will be apparent as we proceed.

On the other hand it has to be remembered that although the reference to the peacock occurs in connection with the navy that went to Ophir, it is not said



that they were brought from that place. The passage actually reads: "And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents" (1 Kings 9. 28). Two other places have been suggested as the site of this noted place, Arabia and Africa. That gold is a product of Africa is of course unquestioned, and there are many ruins in that land which indicate that the gold workings on that continent are very ancient. Some have gone so far as to say that they are those from which Solomon's navy fetched the gold. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that the navy went there, but it must be pointed out that some of the ruins which were at one time thought to be those which were worked in Solomon's days have now been conclusively proved to be much less ancient.

The third suggested identification is Arabia. Ophir is certainly associated with that district in the table of nations given in Genesis 10. Recently Mr. Bertram Thomas has made a journey across Arabia from Salalah, on the Indian Ocean, to Dohab, on the Persian Gulf. His account of the journey is of extreme interest, and was given in a series of five articles in *The Times*. He tells how one day his guides suddenly exclaimed, "Look, Sahib, there is the road to Ubar." In response to his enquiries he was told that Ubar was a great city of old time, a city of much treasure, and had a fort of "red silver." Possibly this was a local name for gold. For ages, he was told, the city had been engulfed in the sand of the desert, but the tradition of its existence remains. Not only so, but Mr. Thomas states that from the point where he was there were a multitude of tracks running west-north-west, an evidence of



long usage by large caravans in some distant past. Was this the Ophir of the Bible? and was it from thence that Solomon obtained his gold? It is impossible to say definitely at present, but there is no inherent reason why it should not have been so.

The fact that all three places which have been suggested are well within the limits of a journey of three years from Ezion-geber makes it practically impossible at present to decide which of the three was the one in question. The ships must have gone to India, the peacocks at all events could not have been obtained from either Africa or Arabia. There is the evidence of language, and there is the further fact that the almug, or algum, trees which were brought back by the same expedition have been identified with the sandalwood tree, which is an Indian product. On a journey to India, which is necessitated by these facts, the south-eastern corner of Arabia would be passed, and ships could call there for the gold of Ophir if that place was actually situated in Arabia. If, on the other hand, Ophir was in Africa, it would still be within the limits of a three years' journey which the navy undertook. Remembering the extraordinary daring of the Phœnician mariners, and the understanding between Hiram and Solomon, such commercial undertakings as that of Solomon were not only possible but probable. Meanwhile further information of an archæological character must be awaited before final conclusions are reached. For the present the balance of probability rests with India.

It may be but a coincidence, but it is at least an interesting one, that in Gezer, the city presented to



Solomon by Pharaoh, a small clay model of a boat has been found in the Solomonic layer of the ruins. It is similar in type to the Phœnician ships represented on Assyrian sculptures. Seeing that Israel has so little to do with the sea the coincidence of the model, the reign, and the city, is suggestive.

CHAPTER XIII

JERUSALEM AND ITS TEMPLES

WHEN Jesus was leaving the Temple for the last time his disciples, we are told, came to him and said, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here!" Such a saying was an expression of the natural pride of Jews in their Temple, the one great building in which they could feel a profound personal interest and pride. From the days of Solomon it had been the religious centre of the nation. Often they had forgotten the claims of the God for Whose worship it had been constructed. Prior to the captivity it had even been defiled by the presence of idolatrous symbols, and the practice of idolatrous rites in its courts. Yet as a race they felt a real pride in the building, for it was the outstanding architectural feature of Jerusalem.

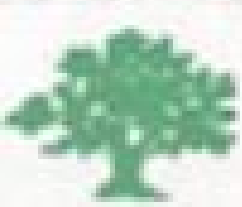
The invitation of the Apostles to consider and admire the stones of the Temple building is a fitting introduction to the subject of this chapter, the Temples of Jerusalem. Three buildings in succession had stood upon the site, the Temples of Solomon, of the returning exiles, and of Herod. The first of these had been designed by David, who also made considerable provision for its construction, though it was built by his son; hence it is always known as the Temple of Solomon. It was intended to be "exceeding magnificent," to quote the quaint words of the Scripture. For the



time and place it undoubtedly was so, and it must have been an edifice of considerable beauty. In the times of Ezekiel, for example, it was spoken of as "the sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes."

The Temple was erected on the Mount known as Moriah. The general idea underlying its architectural features seems to have been that its measurements were to be double those of the Tabernacle which had been made during the journey through the wilderness, so that it was in effect a permanent form of the Tabernacle.

There is one point in connection with it which is worth special mention here, especially as it does not appear to be generally realised. It was usual in Babylonia and in Assyria to place temples and palaces on artificial platforms, thus raising them above the general level of the ground. There is reason to believe that a similar course was adopted in the construction of the Temple of Solomon. Although there is nothing in our English Versions to directly suggest that this was done, there are indications which lead to this conclusion. Before looking at the passage suggesting such an idea, it may be pointed out that when Herod undertook to provide a new and more ornate Temple in the place of the one which was constructed after the Captivity, Josephus states that he "took up the old foundations, and laid others, upon which he erected the Temple." Had the foundations been prepared in the usual way of digging out the solid rock on which the Temple was built and placing the foundations therein, such language would hardly have been employed to describe the work undertaken by Herod's workmen.



In the account of the construction of Solomon's Temple there is an allusion upon which the idea has been based, although our version does not bring it out. The passage is, "And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle; and he made chambers round about." The word which is translated chambers, is never so rendered anywhere else in the Bible, and in the Revised Version the term stories has been substituted for it. Even that seems a questionable rendering as a representation of the idea inherent in the Hebrew. The actual word used was *yatsuwa*, which is derived from *yatsa*, to strew as a surface. The meaning of the word itself is given as "spread as a bed." Except when used in connection with the construction of the Temple it is translated bed or couch, and although translators of both the Authorised and Revised Versions have adopted the idea of a chamber or a story, and this is given by lexicographers as a possible meaning of the word, there seems something strained in so doing. As the basic meaning of the word is that of spreading as a bed, and as it is so used elsewhere, it seems only reasonable to assume that some such meaning was intended to be conveyed when the word was selected to describe a part of the construction of the Temple. If that is the case it seems it can only refer to the bed on which the Temple was erected. Sometimes it evidently has a more restricted meaning when applied to parts of the Temple, but that seems to be the general intention. It gave an even surface for the building.

The fact that the site of the Temple is still occupied



by the Mosque of Omar, the holy building of the Mohammedans, has prevented any very definite examination taking place on the spot to test the idea, but so far as it has been possible to examine the site no ordinary foundation trenching has been discovered. While, therefore, the suggestion can hardly be said to be proved or disproved at present, it is a reasonable one in the known circumstances of temple building at the time, and is therefore put forward here.

The Temple of Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, and laid desolate until the return of the captives in the days of Ezra. Then it was rebuilt in response to the urgings of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Later on, as already indicated, Herod rebuilt the Temple, though he had to give an undertaking that no part of the old one should be destroyed or removed until the new was ready. Unlike their fathers, the Jews of the time of Herod were punctilious in the discharge of the Temple duties, though in its very courts they were ready soon afterwards to reject the Lamb of God who trod its stones and graced the place by his presence.

It was to this Temple that the words of the Apostles quoted in the opening of this chapter referred. They elicited the startling reply: "Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." These words of Jesus have been fulfilled completely. All the beautiful superstructure that could be seen in those days has disappeared. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies under Titus, the Temple shared the fate of the city, though Titus desired to avoid its destruc-



tion. For more than eighteen centuries and a half the state of things in Jerusalem in relation to the Temple has been an unchallengeable witness to the accuracy of the prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth. No Ezra has appeared this time to rebuild the Sanctuary, no Haggai or Zechariah has arisen to urge the people on to rebuild the House of the Lord. The Roman Emperor Julian, "the Apostate," endeavoured to rebuild it, but his project came to naught. All that remains on the Temple Hill is the Mohammedan Mosque which occupies the site of the Temple which was once the centre of the worship of Jehovah.

One of the first aims of the Palestine Exploration Fund was to discover all that it could concerning the Temple buildings of Jerusalem. Lieut. Warren went out for that purpose, but as we have seen he was not able to carry on his investigations in the complete way that has been possible in the deserted sites of Mesopotamia. Tunnelling and boring are at the best but poor methods. Yet it was the best that could be done in the circumstances, and with all the disabilities of the method, that which has been discovered is most interesting.

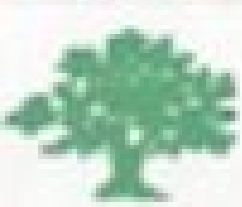
One great result of his work was to disclose the vast preparations that had to be made on the site of the Temple. The ground was not level, nor was it such that the plans of the designers could be at once carried out. The main idea was that the whole conception should have some relationship to the Tabernacle in the wilderness. It was therefore first of all necessary for a platform to be made on which the necessary buildings, including the base already referred to, might be constructed. When Herod built the latest Temple even



more ground was required, and the prepared area had to be extended. The work has been thus described: "The plateau is about 1,500 feet from north to south, 900 feet from east to west, sustained by a massive wall rising on the exterior from fifty to eighty feet above the present level of the ground. The general level of this plateau is about 2,400 feet; but towards the east at the Golden Gate, it is not filled up to this level by some twenty feet or so." When the work of excavation was carried out it was found that the outer walls were far more extensive than they appeared to be. Part of the walls was hidden by rubbish, and it has been proved that in places they rest on foundations as much as 125 feet below the present surface. Many of the stones in this vast wall are of great size, some of them weigh as much as one hundred tons, and are nearly thirty-nine feet long. It says much for the abilities of these ancient builders that such stones could be quarried and placed in position.

The stones which were used in connection with the construction of the Temple were brought from quarries near Bezetha, north of Jerusalem. Much labour must have been incurred in preparing the site, and ground varying from two to eight feet in depth had to be removed in the process. Special attention should be called to the fact that amongst all this mould no stone chippings have been found. The fact recalls the statement that "no tool was heard" whilst the walls of the House of God were being erected.

It will be remembered that the Temple was built on the site of the threshing floor of Araunah. There David had offered up sacrifices on the occasion of the great plague of



Jerusalem. It was then that he recognised that the place must be the one where the Temple should be built and the regular sacrifices in future be offered. One spot on the hill remains untouched, it is probably the rock on which the sacrifice was offered on that occasion.

One remarkable discovery in relation to the Temple was that of the many rock-hewn cisterns for water storage. Thirty-four of these have been found, the largest, known as the Great Sea, is forty-three feet in depth and has a storage capacity of over two million gallons; another close by will contain 700,000 gallons.

What memories cluster round that spot and the Temple precincts generally! But none are so great as those that have to do with Jesus of Nazareth who taught in the Temple courts. It was there that some of his most memorable words were spoken. "I am the Light of the World; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." In that same Temple area his follower, Saul of Tarsus, was nearly killed by the Jews because he had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Now its glory has gone, only the memory remains; but the religion of Jesus still lives, and his words to the woman of Samaria sound very real in the light of the ruined Temple. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet in Jerusalem worship the Father. . . . God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

In the Temple of the time of Jesus Christ and the Apostles there was a Court of the Gentiles. A reference to this, and its bearing upon certain allusions to it in the New Testament, will be found in Chapter XVI.



CHAPTER XIV

THE NORTHERN CAPITALS

ALTHOUGH the glory of the reign of Solomon appeared to promise a long period of prosperity, it was only an outward show. Within the seeds of decay were already germinating. Solomon was not another David, he never appealed to the people as his father had done. David had been a national hero who had saved them from the powerful Philistines, and secured them freedom from the domination of any of the surrounding peoples. Solomon inherited all the advantages of the organising genius of his father, but his own conduct inevitably led to trouble.

The majesty of the kingdom was based too much on the oppression of the people, who were taxed beyond their powers to maintain the glory of the king. It only waited for the removal of the son of David for all the latent rebellion to be roused up to seek for a redress of grievances and a removal of the crushing burdens.

Even in the reign of Solomon various enemies had arisen both at home and abroad, and when the representatives of the tribes came to Shechem to meet Rehoboam, it would have needed a very wise and conciliatory person to prevent the disruption of the tribes. Unfortunately for the kingdom, Rehoboam was not a wise man, nor was he prepared to listen to the advice of the wise men of his father's day. His answer to the



people's petition was provocative. "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins," was his reply to a request for the redress of grievances, with a further threat of substituting scorpions for whips. In modern times, with our ideas of monarchy and democracy, it is hard to understand the psychology of a king who could reply to such a request in these terms. But Oriental potentates of three thousand years ago were very different persons from the occupants of thrones in the West in the twentieth century. Probably Rehoboam's answer was what most kings of his time would have made under similar circumstances.

Even in the time of David there had been indications of a feeling of intense jealousy existing between the tribe of Judah and the double tribe of Joseph, particularly in the Ephraimite section of the latter. The jealousy was the outcome of the past, like most political movements in ancient and modern times. The Ephraimites, as the chief representatives of the descendants of Joseph, prided themselves on their descent from the saviour of the people, on the blessing pronounced by Jacob on their ancestor, and on the further fact that Joshua, the leader of the people in the conquest of the land, had been a member of their tribe. From time to time mutterings of their jealousy were heard; now at the commencement of the reign of Rehoboam, they broke out into something like open rebellion.

The division of the people into two sections which resulted from Rehoboam's rejection of the people's petition, answers somewhat to the geographical division of the land. The occupants of the mountainous districts around Jerusalem and those to the south thereof



remained true to the house of David. The peoples of the Mount of Ephraim and the territory northward, also the tribes dwelling on the other side of the River Jordan, renounced their allegiance, and established an independent kingdom under the rulership of Jeroboam.

The decision of the eastern tribes to join with the revolting tribes is easily understood if the position of their territory in relation to the divided kingdom is noted. Between the land of Judah and the eastern tribes there lay the waters of the Dead Sea with its steep descent and ascent on its two shores. Judah offered no protection for Reuben or Gad in the case of troubles arising with the neighbouring kingdoms of Moab and Ammon. The northern portion of the kingdom was near, and the Jordan formed no difficult barrier. It was fordable at points, and assistance could readily be given in times of trouble, though as a matter of fact when that trouble did arise later on in connection with the advance of Assyria, the help was not forthcoming, Israel as a whole was then too weak to assist. When to this is added the blood relationship between the two sections of the tribe of Manasseh, half dwelling on each side of the Jordan, it will be seen that the association of the eastern tribes with the northern section of the divided kingdom was inevitable.

“Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim and dwelt therein, and went out from thence and built Peniel.” The choice of Shechem was a wise and diplomatic move. Shechem was hallowed by many memories of the past. It was associated with the life of Jacob, it was one of the cities of Refuge, there Joshua gave his final address to the tribes and “made a covenant

with the people, and set them a statute and an ordinance," there too he set up a great stone under an oak as a memorial and a witness. Perhaps to a people like Israel it was even more important that "the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph." Shechem was therefore associated with the greatest memories of the people. How much this stood for may be gathered from the fact that Rehoboam went there when he met the tribes on the occasion of the critical interview already mentioned.

Geographically Shechem occupies a most convenient position. It is situate in the pass which runs across Samaria, giving access from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan. In that valley it is placed between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim just where the watershed of the area divides eastward and westward. It was a natural site for the headquarters of the new monarchy.

It had, however, disadvantages of a serious kind. It was too easily reached by an enemy, for it was placed on the highways which ran through the land. It stood in a valley, whereas its great rival, Jerusalem, was situated on the hill tops of Judah, almost inaccessible on three sides. In the circumstances it is not surprising to find that Jeroboam built the city of Penuel and also lived at Tirzah. None of the three cities, however, was really suited to be the capital of a country so surrounded with enemies as Israel was, and when a really great king came to the throne one of his principal undertakings was the provision of a capital city strong enough to resist its



potential enemies. The site of the ancient city of Shechem has been excavated. It had great walls in an early age of its existence. In later days, a great tower was made, and the city was subjected to considerable alteration. As the excavations are not yet finished, nothing more can be said at present.

One of the greatest kings of Israel was Omri. Although we read little about him in the Bible there is very good evidence upon which we may judge his abilities. Not only did he found a short Dynasty, but he so impressed his name on the country over which he reigned that for a long time afterwards it was referred to in the Assyrian annals as Beth-Omri, the Land of Omri. Even more remarkable is the fact that when Jehu was king, the Assyrians called him the Son of Omri, although he was actually a usurper who had attained to the throne by the slaughter of the House of Ahab the son of Omri.

A capable ruler and a militarist, Omri recognised that the old capital and the other towns where the Court lived at various times were quite unsuitable and that it was necessary to seek some other centre for his kingdom. Shechem was too weak, and he himself had captured Tirzah. He therefore sought for and found a spot which was as nearly ideal for his purpose as could be expected. According to the record, after reigning six years in Tirzah he bought the hill of Samaria of one Shemer, for two talents of silver (say, 250 lbs. troy). He built on the hill and gave the place the name of Samaria. It was thus an entirely new city, built on virgin ground. The first reference to the place is a few chapters before the record of the purchase, and then only in connection with a prophecy concerning it.



The name Samaria is derived from the root *shamar*, to hedge about, to guard or protect, a watch or a guard. The name is also connected with a watch tower, an idea which sufficiently indicates the character of the site and the reason for its choice. So well was it situated for the purpose that its name became that of the whole province, and when it was besieged by enemies it was always able to withstand all attempts to capture it for a considerable time. Although the choice of Samaria was chiefly dictated by military considerations, it was also a place of beauty, a fact to which allusion is made in the Prophets.

In a wide space forming a kind of basin caused by a bend in the hills and a junction with another valley, there is an isolated hill. This is the site of the city of Samaria. Captain Condor speaking of it, says: "Though it would now be commanded from the northern range, it must, before the invention of gunpowder, have been almost impregnable. So long as the Kingdom of Israel lasted, Samaria was its capital, a fact which shows the wisdom of Omri's choice. Not only so, though its history was a troubled one, though it found itself at war from time to time and was besieged, yet it was always a troublesome place to capture. When finally it fell to the Assyrians, it was only after a three years' siege which had tried the patience of the Assyrian troops to their very limit and brought about a camp conspiracy against the Assyrian king."

Of its general position in relation to the country we may judge by the following facts. On three sides it was shut in by ranges of hills, too far away to be dangerous, as already indicated. To the west its outlook

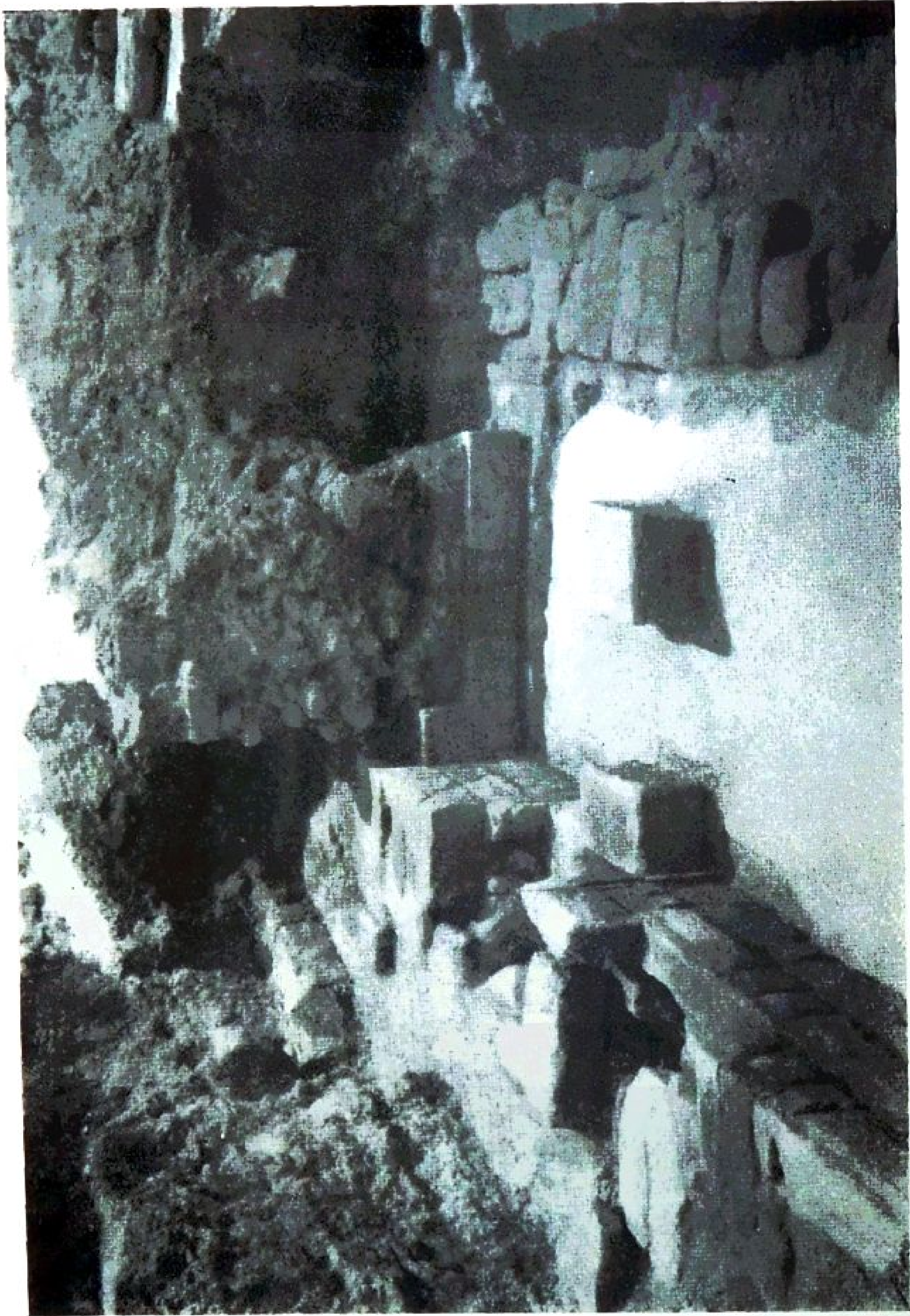


was across a great and broad valley to the Mediterranean Sea twenty miles away. The beauty of the site appeals to all. Even in a prophecy of its downfall Isaiah referred to it as a "faded flower of his glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley."

Here Omri built himself a palace, so did his son Ahab. For some time past excavations have been made on the Hill of Samaria, Sebastiyeh, to give it its other name. During the years 1908 to 1910 the Harvard University carried on a series of works and excavations. They found that three palaces had been successively erected upon the central spot, and that they were evidently palaces of three kings of Israel. The conclusion then reached has since been confirmed, and the palaces are now known to be those of Omri, Ahab and Jeroboam II. With regard to the first named it is significant that it is built directly upon the virgin rock, indicating that the site of the hill had never been used for such a purpose before the time of Omri. This is, of course, exactly what we should expect from the account of the purchase of the site and the building of the city as recorded in the Book of Kings. It is, however, worth mentioning as an illustration of the way in which the work of the Archæologist of the twentieth century confirms the historical statements of the Bible.

An examination of the site showed that the rock had been dressed to take the lines of the walls that were to be built. The spaces within the walls were covered with a light layer of clean masons' débris. Much of the rock had been scarred by quarrying and the stone thus obtained had been used in building operations





[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.]

SAMARIA : SHOWING A CORNER OF THE ISRAELITISH WALL

[Face page 126



which had been carried on in the city. The buildings are described as of royal size, they "were conceived on the same scale as the palaces of the great Kings of Assyria. The masonry is by far the finest of the period which has been found in Palestine," and the first of the palaces must have been constructed in the ninth century B.C. This date is fixed by many of the articles which have been found in the course of the excavations. Roughly the epoch of the palaces may be placed at 920 to 820 B.C., the period covered by the reigns of the kings from Omri to Jeroboam II.

Work is still going on on the Hill of Samaria, and it is anticipated that much more information will be forthcoming to throw light on the city and its structures. Meanwhile sufficient has been discovered to give the work great interest, and a few facts which have been established in relation to the palace of Ahab may be mentioned.

When Ahab came to the throne he built a palace for himself. Like the Assyrian kings shortly afterwards this seems to have been quite a usual thing in some of the ancient lands. His palace is considerably larger than that of his father, and it is of much finer construction. Having married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon, he probably had at his disposal workmen of the Phœnicians, just as in earlier times Solomon had for his buildings. Summing up the reign of Ahab, the record in 1 Kings says, "Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" Amos, who prophesied in the reign of



Jeroboam II, said, "And I will smite the winter house with the summer house, and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the Lord."

It is not to be supposed that the houses alluded to as ivory houses were actually constructed of that material, though they may have been adorned in some parts with it. It is, however, a fact that the second palace in Samaria, that is the palace of Ahab, was faced with white marble, a stone eminently suitable for a construction that was intended to be known as the Ivory House. The marble was smoothly faced, which would accentuate the ivory effect. It is evident that Ahab's position in Samaria was more definitely established than his father's had been, and that he was able to undertake much greater works. This is but natural. His father was a usurper who had first to consolidate his position. Ahab succeeded to the throne in the natural way, and was strengthened by his matrimonial alliance with the daughter of the King of Sidon. Omri was the soldier, Ahab was the fortunate son who inherited the results of his father's deeds.

During the reign of Jeroboam further additions were made to the palace, at least two wings and a tower being affected by the additions.

The city walls of Samaria of the Israelitish period have been unearthed. The stones of the face of the wall are all bossed, and, with one or two exceptions, have drafted margins on three sides of each stone. It is described as a splendid example of this kind of wall, and is of the same age as the palaces of Omri and Ahab. It is assumed to be the main wall that was constructed round the



acropolis of Samaria. At one corner there was at one time a tower, the plan of which suggests that the gate of the city was thereabouts. Maybe it was here that "the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place (margin, Hebrew floor) in the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them." There is a threshing floor close by the site of the tower and the supposed gate. Another interesting feature which has been found is a tank in association with the palaces, inside the great wall which enclosed them. Was this the "pool of Samaria" where they washed the chariot of Ahab (1 Kings 22. 38)?

One portion of the walls which has been uncovered is made up quite differently from the other sections. The upper course is of immense boulders but the lower is composed of smaller stones, roughly dressed. The excavators suggest that this represents a repair of the wall which had been broken down during one of the sieges to which Samaria was subjected during its occupation by the Israelites.

Before leaving the subject of Samaria, one other fact recorded by the American investigators deserves to be noticed. Above the ruins of the Israelitish city there are the remains of a city evidently built by the Assyrians. This was assumed by reason of the materials employed and from the fragment of a clay tablet that was found there. At the same time a fortress was built upon the ruins of the Israelitish palace, the walls of which it incorporated in part. It was enclosed by a massive wall. Some of the material which had been used to form the Israelitish construction had been torn down to provide

the building material for the new construction, most of the older masonry being broken up into smaller stones. The siege of Samaria by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser is well known to every student of the Bible history. A three years' siege was needed to reduce the city, and when the Assyrians, then under the rule of Sargon, actually captured it, it met with the fate usually meted out to a city which had resisted its besiegers so stoutly.

At that period of the Assyrian monarchy, however, it was their policy to build up an Empire. With this idea they carried the Israelites into captivity, and brought people from elsewhere to populate Samaria. These peoples came from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvaim. For them the Assyrian city of Samaria was evidently built, and the fortress which took the place of the palace is significant of Assyrian methods. It would probably hold a governor and a garrison. It was from the mixed people, named above, probably with a mixture of the poorer people of Israel who would not be considered of sufficient importance to be carried away, that the Samaritans of the later times of the Bible were descended.

A somewhat unusual find by the Harvard Expedition at Samaria was a collection of ostraka inscribed in the old Hebrew script. They were evidently intended for labels on jars of oil or wine, giving names perhaps of owners or makers, and the year of the king's reign. The writing is easy and flowing and is similar to that on the Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription. Many of the names are quite familiar, such as Abiezer, Elisha, Asa and Nathan. The noticeable feature is that they include "El" and "Baal" names, and some with "Yo,"

which has been thought to be a form of "Yah." The occurrence of this and "El" is significant in a time when Elijah thought he was alone in his faithfulness to God—El or Yah—and received the assurance that there were seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. The evidence of the names is important as indicating the unjustifiable pessimism of Elijah, for people wholly addicted to the worship of Baal would certainly not incorporate either Yah or El in their names.

Altogether Samaria has had a strange and tragic history, second only to Jerusalem so far as the cities of Palestine are concerned. It was at the gate of the city that they washed the blood of Ahab from his chariot when dogs licked his blood as the prophet had foretold. As the head city of the Baal worshippers it witnessed the destruction of the priests of that cult when Jeroboam II carried out his reforms. There Israel suffered the horrors of the three years' siege and there in after times Herod murdered the members of his own family.

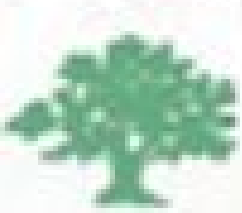


CHAPTER XV

IN THE DAYS OF HEZEKIAH

IN the days when the northern kingdom of Israel came to an end, as briefly mentioned in Chapter XIV, Judah was ruled over by Hezekiah. The circumstances which led to the fall of the northern kingdom were necessarily threatening to the southern kingdom also. It was a time of great anxiety to Hezekiah and his counsellors, one of whom appears to have been the prophet Isaiah. The main interest in the period lies in the position of Judah in relation to the policy of the kings of Assyria, and the parallel records of the two peoples concerning the events of the time. Here we are not concerned with that aspect of the matter which principally turns upon the official records of Sennacherib, the Assyrian king. In this volume we are concerned with affairs where Palestine itself has something to tell us about the Bible history, hence the wider aspect must be passed by. There is, however, a considerable amount of interest in the land itself in relation to the times in question.

Three hundred years had passed since David obtained possession of the city of Jerusalem. Since that time the city had gone through experiences of war and siege. A city where so much treasure had been accumulated during the reign of Solomon, with a Temple lavishly decorated with gold, was likely to prove attractive to any neighbouring kingdom which felt itself strong



enough to face the risk of attacking it. Rehoboam was not a brave man, and therefore when the Egyptians under Shishak, or Shashanq, invaded the land he appears to have made no attempt to defend the city, but capitulated at once. According to Josephus he acted in this way relying on a promise from Shashanq that the city would be spared. Whether that be so or not, the Egyptian spoiled the city and the Temple, and took away a vast treasure, including a number of golden shields.

In the reign of Jehoram the Philistines and Arabians broke into the city and carried away the treasures of the King. On another occasion the northern kingdom captured the city after breaking down a portion of the wall. Uzziah rebuilt the walls, but apparently they suffered from the earthquake which occurred during his reign, and is referred to by the prophet Amos, though somewhat strangely it is not mentioned in the histories of the people.

When Hezekiah came to the throne that was the condition in which he found the city of Jerusalem. The prospect of an approach of the Assyrian army was a very serious threat to the kingdom, and Hezekiah and his counsellors were impelled to look round and see what it was possible to do to meet it. This turns attention again to the tunnel which brought the water of the Virgin's Fountain into the city of Jerusalem. The danger which had been averted by the disuse of the Virgin's Fountain as a water supply for the city, had caused another danger to arise, particularly with the approach of such an army as that of the Assyrians. Water is a necessity for an army, and there was water

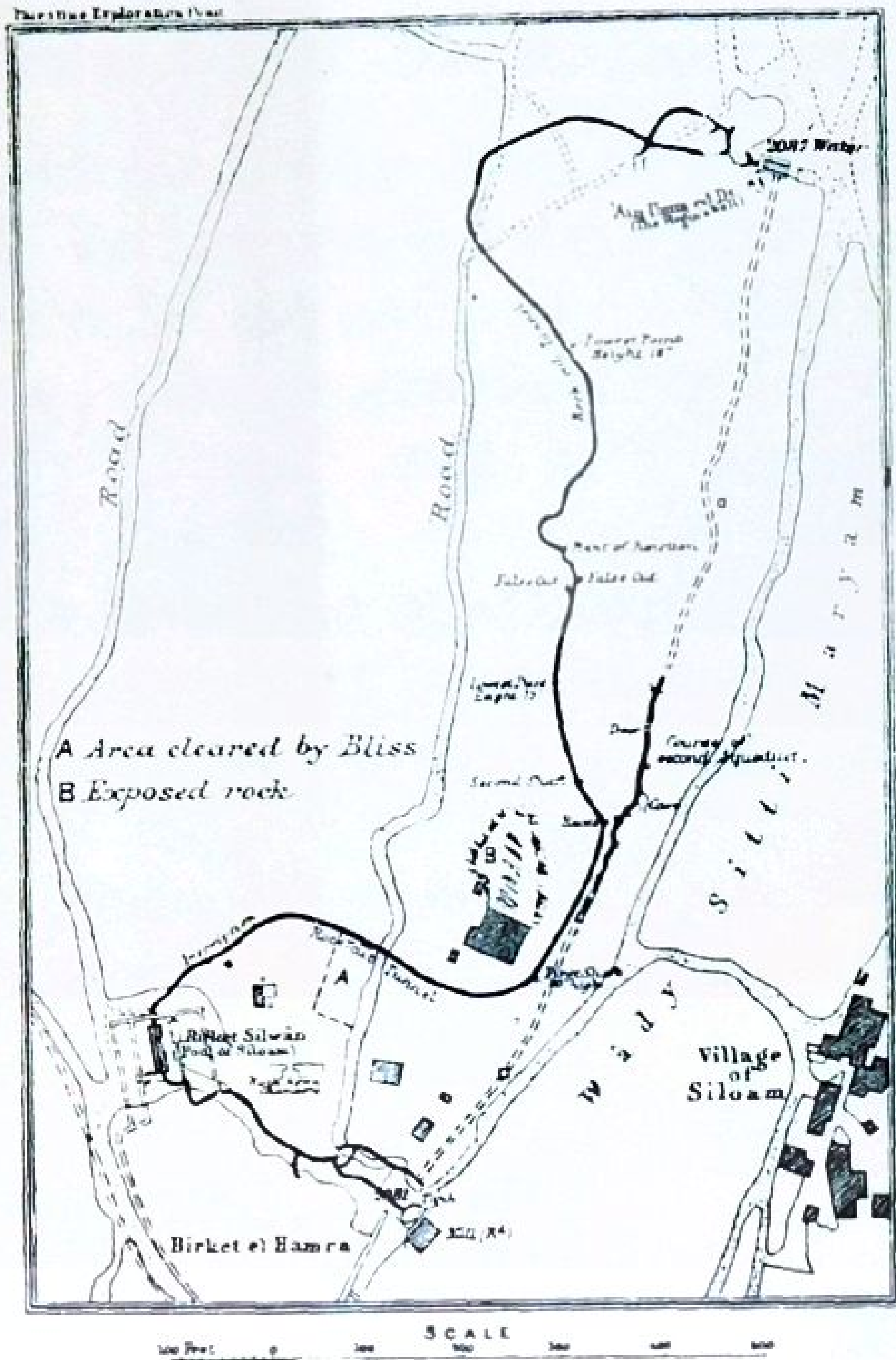


running down the valley ready for their use. If something could be done to prevent that supply being available for the invaders it would put at least some obstacle in their way. The old tunnel was still there running into the rock, and it was used now to help meet the emergency.

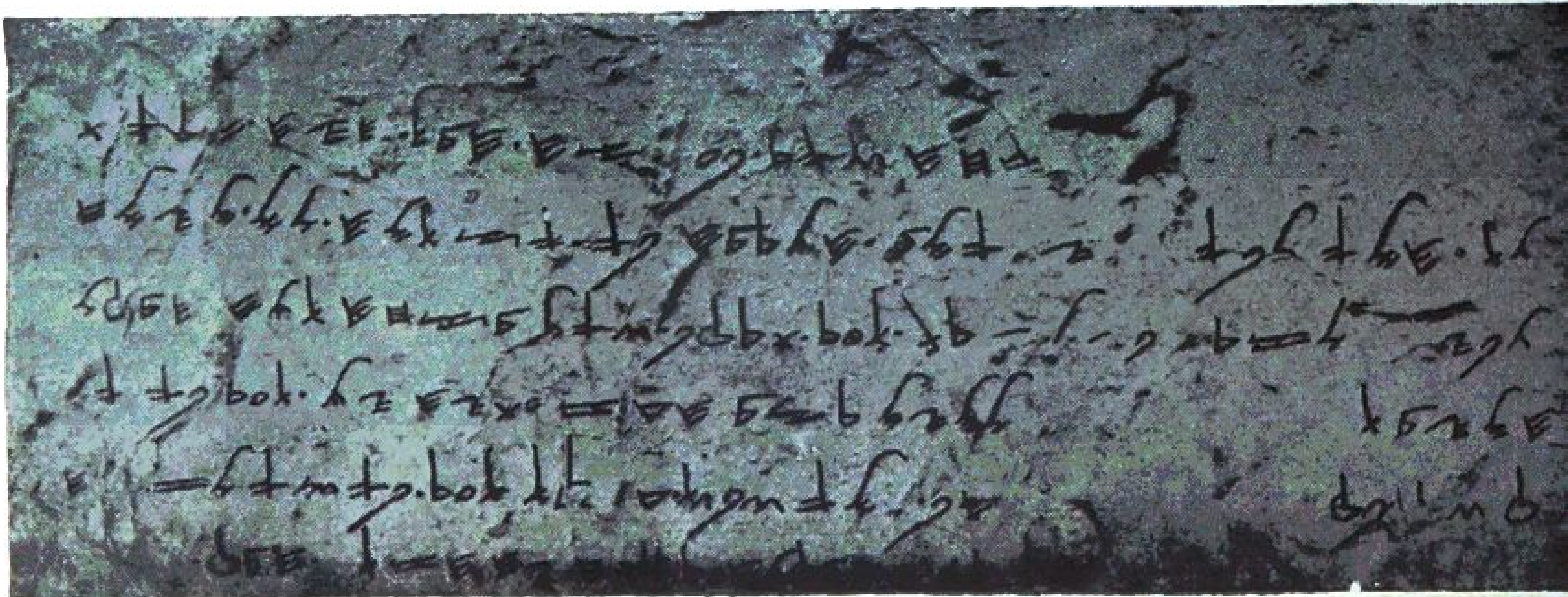
The record of what was done is given by the Chronicler as follows:—"And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they did help 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? Also he strengthened himself and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David. He also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David." In the Kings it is stated that he made a pool and a conduit and brought water into the city. In an apocryphal book there is a somewhat more explicit account. There it is said that he "fortified his city and brought water into the midst thereof, he picked the hard rock with iron and made wells for the water."

Isaiah has preserved a graphic picture of the times. "Ye have seen the breaches of the City of David that they are many: and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool. And ye have numbered the houses





[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.
 THE COURSE OF THE SILOAM TUNNEL



[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.
 THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION



of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall. Ye have made a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool." There is a sense of feverish haste in the preparations for defence, when the "joyous city" found itself in a day of trouble and of perplexity (Isa. 22).

Except for the statement in the Apocrypha there is not much in these records to indicate very definitely what the work was that Hezekiah and his helpers put in hand. Had it not been for the discovery of the tunnel it is doubtful if we should have any real idea of what it was. Fortunately we now know exactly what was done in relation to the water supply, and can better appreciate the steps that were so hurriedly taken in an effort to put as many obstacles as possible in the way of the Assyrian army.

What the workmen of Hezekiah's day did was to cut a tunnel right through the rocks under Mount Zion to serve as an aqueduct to bring the waters of the Virgin's Fountain through to the western side of the mount to a pool which was made in the Tyropoeon Valley, which by that time had become a part of the city. The walls of Hezekiah's time came just sufficiently westward to enclose the waters of the new pool. By this means there was an additional supply of water in the city, and what was of almost equal importance, a good supply of water, previously available for the use of an approaching enemy, was diverted. The work therefore served a double purpose.

The account given by Isaiah seems to indicate that the work was done in a hurry, and it may well have been so. In a time of threatened invasion every possible



means of expediting work is adopted. It is possible that this fact accounts for the winding character of the aqueduct and the changes of direction which it sometimes takes. But however hard pressed for time they may have been the work was finished, and someone found time to cut an inscription in the tunnel giving an account of the work. The inscription, written in old Hebrew characters only slightly differing from those on the Moabite stone, reads as follows:—"Behold the excavation. Now this is the history of the excavation. While the excavators were lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to [excavate, there was heard] the voice of one man calling to his neighbour, for there was an excess in the rock on the right hand [and on the left]. And after that on the day of excavating the excavators had struck against pick and pick, one against the other, the waters flowed from the Spring to the Pool for a distance of 1,200 cubits. And a hundred cubits was the height of the rock over the head of the excavators." The translation is that of Professor Sayce. The words shown in brackets are supplied from conjecture. Here and there the inscription is so defaced that the forms are uncertain, but the intention of the inscription is obvious.

The inscription was discovered by accident, and much difficulty was experienced in getting the proper reading. During the centuries the letters had become filled up, but by the use of chemicals the deposit was dissolved away and the inscription can now be read except for the two or three places indicated above.

When the tunnel was first discovered it was described

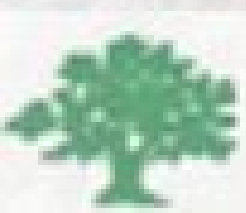


as a somewhat poor affair, though, allowing for the times, and the hurried circumstances, it would hardly have been surprising if that had been the case. In the year 1909, however, the whole tunnel was carefully cleared out by an expedition which is supposed to have been in search of the treasures of the Temple. It was stated that they had some information that they had been hidden in the tunnel when the city was in danger of capture by Nebuchadnezzar. As might be expected, the treasures were not discovered, but the very idea of treasure trove was sufficient to cause those in charge to see that the work of clearance was thoroughly done, and the Archæologist cannot help feeling thankful for the work of clearance. The result was that the tunnel could be seen as it was when Hezekiah's workmen finished their work and the "waters flowed from the Spring to the Pool" for the first time. It was seen that the work was one of considerable magnitude. The tunnel is about 1,700 feet long and has a height of six feet in its lowest places. At some parts of it a visitor can walk upright and then have a clear space of four or five feet above his head. The flow of water through the tunnel varies according to the quantity given out by the spring, but when Mr. Macalister, who was at one time the Director of Excavations for the Palestine Exploration Fund, went through it, he found the water to be waist deep.

It will be seen that the Virgin's Fountain and its water courses have been associated with most interesting incidents in the history of the city of Jerusalem. They tell of Joab and his intrepid feat and of the deliverance of the city in the days of Hezekiah. There is a lesson



for all time in the latter incident. When the approach of the Assyrians to the city brought dismay to the inhabitants, Hezekiah realised that his confidence must be in his God. When an insulting letter from the Assyrian was brought to him, he spread the letter before the Lord in the Temple, and received an assurance through the prophet Isaiah that the city should be delivered. But like a wise man Hezekiah had taken all possible steps to forestall the danger and had made what provision he could to meet the threatened emergency. It is thus an instructive illustration of the right frame of mind in which difficulties should be met. Prayer for aid is quite justifiable; it is essential. But prayer without action is useless, unless the circumstances are such that nothing can be done. There is a homely proverb, "God helps those who help themselves," and Hezekiah's actions in the face of the Assyrian invasion furnish an excellent example of the principle.



CHAPTER XVI

AFTER THE EXILE

IT is sometimes supposed that when the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem, they carried the whole population of Judah into captivity. Evidently this was not so. The numbers which are given of those who were carried away cannot account for the whole of the people, and it is stated that the poor of the land were left to be vine-dressers and husbandmen. It was the upper classes, the artisans and the smiths, who were taken away, evidently in accordance with the Babylonians' general policy. The Temple and the royal palaces were destroyed, and everything that was of value was removed.

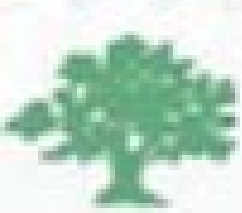
When the decree of Cyrus was issued giving permission to the Jews to return to the land of Palestine, charging them to rebuild the House of the Lord, the former part of the decree was carried into effect, but it was some time before the returned exiles had sufficient energy to discharge the latter. That part of the decree waited for the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah. Then the Temple was re-erected on its old site. There were differences between the old and the new constructions. In the past, royal buildings had been placed near the Temple. In the restoration Temple there were courts where the people could congregate but no palaces for kings. In this way religion became, for the time at all events, more real, and occupied



a more leading place in the minds of the people as a whole.

Although the decree of Cyrus was fulfilled by the construction of the Temple, Jerusalem itself remained in ruins. No one seemed to care to live in the old city. It was not until Nehemiah obtained an appointment as Governor, and set about reviving the city of his fathers, that anything of importance was done. To enable him to carry out his desires he obtained a decree from the Persian king for the rebuilding of its walls. This is the decree referred to in Daniel 9. 25.

When Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem one of his first tasks was to view the walls. It was a sorry sight that he saw. He went out by night, and he has left a most interesting record of his journey and what he saw. He left the city by the Gate of the Valley. This was a gate on the west side of the city opening into the Valley of Hinnom. He went, so he tells us, toward the Dragon Well. No such well is known around Jerusalem, and considerable difference of opinion has been expressed concerning it. On the whole the evidence seems to point to the Virgin's Fountain being the place intended. The Dragon Well was certainly a fountain, for the word for it is *ayn*, an eye or fountain. It is stated that even in recent times there was, among the more ignorant of the people, an idea that the intermittent flow of the water of the fountain was caused by a great serpent which drank the water from time to time. A journey from the Valley Gate to the Fountain would enable Nehemiah to examine the whole of the western and southern walls. He evidently did not go right round the city for he distinctly says he turned back and entered



into the city by the Valley Gate. The various places named by him will therefore lie between these two points.

The work of reconstruction which Nehemiah carried out in the face of great difficulties was accomplished in a short space of time. The opposition of the peoples around was mainly political in character. Sanballat the Horonite appears to have been the Satrap of Samaria, and he evidently foresaw that the rebuilding of Jerusalem would result in that city becoming again the principal one in the land, a position which Samaria had occupied during the period of Jerusalem's desolation. In the face of the opposition the work was pressed forward and was completed in fifty-two days, men and women of all grades in society taking part in it.

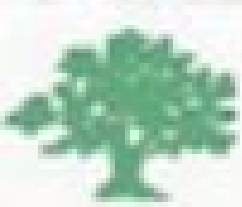
The third chapter of Nehemiah is interesting as supplying particulars of the various sections of the work. There are about forty sections mentioned there, but as some of them are undefined, and others are only denoted by the houses of certain individuals, the number of named places is much less, only about twenty. Many of them have been identified; not much purpose would be served by looking at all of them, but a few of the principal may be mentioned. The Sheep Gate, which is the first point named, appears to have been at the corner of Mount Moriah conveniently situated for the entry of sheep intended to be used in the Temple services. The Fish Gate was at the north, no doubt it obtained its name because through it fish from Sidon and Galilee was brought into the city. The Old Gate is not mentioned elsewhere, but is thought to have been at the north-western corner. The Dung Gate was

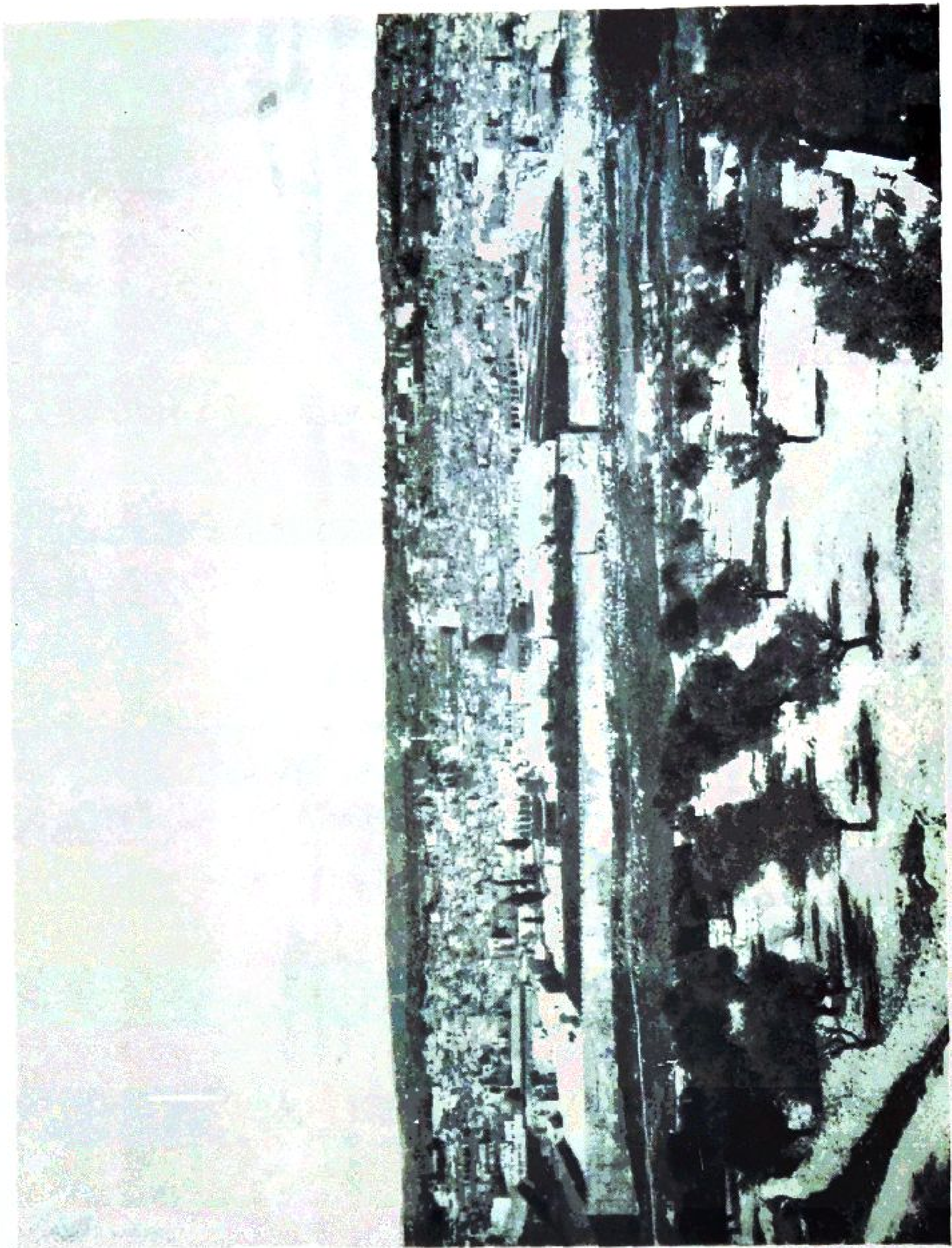


another exit to the Valley of Hinnom, whilst the Fountain Gate gave an approach to the Kedron Valley, as did also the Water Gate and the Horse Gate. The stairs which are mentioned are those which led down the steep sides of Ophel.

When the work was finished a great dedication ceremony took place. The priests and Levites, the singers with instruments, and the princes of Judah, marched in procession round the walls in two companies. They started from the Valley Gate, one going round the south side of the city and the other round the north; they met at the Temple, where a service was held.

Here the Old Testament history of Jerusalem ends, and though the city passed through many vicissitudes during the next few centuries they are outside our scope. It does not come before us again until the early years of the Christian era. Then it was the scene of some of the episodes in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. He walked its streets, he taught in its Temple, from whose precincts he drove out the money-changers and others who had made his Father's House a den of robbers. There he was openly derided and rejected. Yet this was the city over which he wept: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you. Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And this was the city which soon after shouted for his death, and outside whose walls he was crucified!





A VIEW OF JERUSALEM, SHOWING THE TEMPLE AREA



Over the sites associated with his death and burial discussion has raged. They are altogether immaterial, and if Archæology has nothing to say on the matter it is no loss. Christianity depends not on pilgrimages to shrines and sacred places, but on a belief in its founder and an acceptance of him as the guide of life.

Of one thing alone in reference to the later days need anything be said. The Temple of the days of Jesus and the Apostles had a court of the Gentiles. Between that and the Court of Israel was the Soreg. Josephus has described it thus: "When you go through these first cloisters unto the Second Court of the Temple, there was a partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits, and its construction very elegant; upon it stood pillars, at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek, and some in Roman letters that no foreigners should go within the sanctuary. Beyond that no Gentile was allowed to go on pain of death." There is an interesting allusion to it in the Epistle to the Ephesians where Paul speaks of Christ breaking down the "middle wall of partition."

In the year 1871 M. Clermont Ganneau made a discovery in Jerusalem directly bearing on the question of the Soreg. Close to the Via Dolorosa, and near the Haram area (the Temple enclosure), in a gateway M. Ganneau noticed two or three Greek characters on a block forming the angle of the wall. Scraping away the soil he was able to read the whole of the inscription. It was in Greek which, translated into English, read as follows: "No stranger is to enter within the balustrade round the Temple and enclosure. Whosoever is caught will be responsible to himself for his death, which will



ensue." The original of this is at Constantinople, but a cast of it may be seen in the British Museum. Thus after eighteen hundred years an inscription which was no doubt read by Jesus of Nazareth and the great Apostle to the Gentiles, was once more read, to remind all who are concerned, that in Christ the old barrier is removed for he "hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition."

CHAPTER XVII

EARLY RELIGIOUS CULTS OF PALESTINE

THE religious aspect of a people's life is the most important of all. A religion in which people really believe has a profound influence upon their characters, much greater than that exercised by anything else. If religion be real it affects the inmost thoughts and therefore the actions of its professors. For this reason a knowledge of the religions of the past is a matter of considerable importance if it is desired to understand the ancient peoples and their history. In this respect the Archæologist has given much help to the student. The re-discovery of the myths and legends and the religious beliefs of Egypt and Mesopotamia has done more to recreate the old peoples for us than the great memorials of the past which occupy so much space in the principal Museums of the World.

All who are familiar with the Bible will be able to recall many passages which speak disparagingly of the religions of the inhabitants of Palestine, prior to the coming of Israel. It is evident that although there was a considerable amount of culture, the religious ideas which prevailed were of a low character, associated with rites which to-day would be justly regarded as impossible in religious ceremonies. The well-known expression "the iniquity of the Amorites" evidently had a religious basis, and the principal "iniquities" were, to a great extent, the rites connected with their religion.



There are a number of statements in the Bible which allude to the beliefs and practices of the earlier inhabitants, which may help to an appreciation of the point. Thus among other references of a religious character we read: "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee" (Deut. 9. 5). An even more definite intimation of the evils practised in the name of religion is afforded by the following: "When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them and dwellest in their land, take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire to their gods" (Deut. 12. 29-31). That there is no exaggeration in the language used here will be apparent as the evidence of Archæology upon the matter is considered.

One of the things frequently denounced in relation to the religious practices of the past was the use of what are called High places. When some of the things which are said concerning them are considered it is somewhat surprising to read of kings who are spoken of as good, using such places, or at least permitting them to be used during their reigns. Thus in the days



of Solomon we are told that the people sacrificed in the High places. Solomon himself did so; he went to sacrifice at Gibeah "for that was the great High place." As the historian records that it was there the Lord appeared to him in a dream and offered him the choice of one of three blessings, it is evident that the practice was not considered to be inherently evil. Yet there was evidently something objectionable about them even in those days, for the language used implies that they were undesirable places, to use a modern word, unorthodox. The following may be taken as an example of the kind of statements in view: "And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. Only the people sacrificed in High places, because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord, until those days. And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father; only he sacrificed and burnt incense in High places." The emphasis which seems to be placed on the word "only" in this account is both noticeable and suggestive. It seems to convey the idea of not right but permitted.

High places were chosen for religious purposes because they were high, and therefore nearer to heaven where God, or in the case of the heathen, the gods, dwelt. The name used in the Hebrew is *bamah*, and signifies nothing more than to be high. There could be nothing wrong in using a High place for such a purpose any more than there was in establishing a place for



worship in Jerusalem which had a high situation. It might indicate a lack of appreciation of the truth that God cannot be confined to any particular time or place, but that was a conception which was not highly developed among the people until later. In those times it was very dimly perceived even by some of the best of men. It is evident from these considerations that the features which caused the High places to be objects of abhorrence to the prophets were the practices which were carried on in connection with them and their rivalry to the Temple of Jehovah.

The High place at Gezer may be taken as an example of these religious centres. It has been excavated and examined very methodically, and gives clear indications of some of the practices with which such places were associated. One of its outstanding features is a collection of upright stones which still stand there. They vary in height from 5 feet 5 inches to 10 feet 9 inches. There is one group of seven and a separate group of three. One stone is of a different kind from all the others; it is conjectured that it was probably the sacred stone of some other High place which had been brought to Gezer and added to those already there. Speaking of these stones and referring to the allusions in the Bible to the "iniquity of the Amorites," Mr. Macalister says, "What rites did these hoary pillar stones witness in ancient times? The iniquity of the Amorites is a recurrent phrase; but we should be careful of the sense to be attached to the expression. There is an implication of moral turpitude, of a deliberate choice of evil, in our use of the term iniquity, which it would be inexact to emphasise in this particular connection. Doubtless the rites of the High



places would appeal to an individual morally warped. Doubtless they would have a subtly deteriorating effect on the morals of the community at large; the licence which they encouraged, and on occasion even enjoined, would in itself be destructive of personal self-control." It is a guarded statement, certainly not overdrawn, but it does give an insight into these High places and the practices with which they became associated. To this extent it explains the attitude of the prophets towards them.

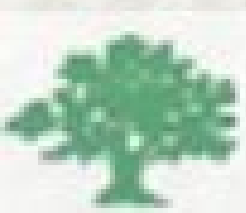
Further on he says, "The continued maintenance of the cult of the High places was incompatible with a growth of grace. The prophets were quite justified in their denunciations of them. No balanced moral sense could become evolved in a people who at certain seasons of the year indulged in rites that involved sexual orgies. Some of the results of excavation have shown the necessity for their abolition. In the soil, in and around the High places at Gezer, large numbers of phallic emblems were discovered. In all excavations that have been conducted in the country hitherto, among the commonest objects have been plaques of terra-cotta, bearing, on one face, stamped in low relief, a representation of the Oriental mother-goddess. This figure is invariably ugly, and crudely executed; its very repulsiveness must have induced a degraded conception of godhead. The goddess is always naked, save for an Egyptian-like wig and, occasionally, a necklace and bracelets; and it is clear that the nudity is designed to give an opportunity of emphasising the parts of the body associated with the functions of maternity." In the light of these things it is easy to understand why Israel were commanded to



destroy the High places, and why every reforming king did something to prevent their use.

Another element connected with the worship of the early inhabitants of Palestine and of the surrounding countries was the Asherah. There are frequent allusions to them in the Old Testament, although in the Authorised Version they are usually termed groves. They too were frequently placed on high hills like the High places themselves. Thus they "built them High places and images (margin, standing images or statues) and groves (Asherahs) on every high hill, and under every green tree." The Asherahs were usually made of wood and for this reason no doubt they have perished. The allusions to them are sufficiently explicit to show that they must have been something like the sacred tree so constantly represented on the Assyrian sculptures.

As the Asherahs were usually connected with the High places it is only to be expected that the worship associated with them partook of the character already described. The Asherah had its houses, in the Bible spoken of as "hangings." We read in the Books of the Kings of the women who made hangings for the Asherah, and find that they were by "the houses of the Sodomites," an association sufficiently indicative of the character of the proceedings which were likely to be carried on in them. (Perhaps it is desirable to point out that the term Sodomite does not refer to a dweller in Sodom. The word used was *kadesh*, which in itself simply signifies that which is set apart from its common use to some higher use or purpose. Its meaning therefore in any passage depends upon what that "higher purpose" was. In the case of the idolatrous customs of the early peoples





[By courtesy of the Palestine Exploration Fund.]

THE HIGH PLACE AT GEZER, SHOWING THE PILLAR-STONES

[Face page 150]





of Palestine it was a dedication to the unnatural lusts of the religion of the land. The practice was by no means confined to the Canaanites and their neighbouring peoples, it was widespread and continued for a very long time.)

In these houses of the Asherah, often hung with the choicest tissues, the devotees of the goddess carried on their rites. Dedicated to the goddess of fertility they seem to have considered that all that had to do with the process of generation was a fit manifestation of religious feelings. The pomegranate was a favourite symbol because of the multitude of seeds it contained. A recognition of the fact that such practices were carried on in the name of religion, will give a keen point to Paul's pictures of human apostasy from original truth, as given in the latter portion of the first chapter of his letter to the Romans.

It is no wonder that the prophets denounced such places and practices. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars; whilst their children remember their altars and their Asherahs by the green trees upon the high hills." Israel constantly fell into such ways. In the times of the Judges and in the days of the Kings such things took place. Maachah, the mother of King Asa, made an abominable image for the Asherah, which Asa cut down and destroyed. In the days of Uzziah an Asherah was set up in the Temple itself. It was connected with Baal-worship, for Ahab, with his wife Jezebel, the greatest supporters of Baal-worship in Israel, made an Asherah, and the prophets of Baal and of the Asherah were both



present on the memorable occasion when Elijah vindicated the claims of the God of Israel on Mount Carmel, to the discomfiture of the king and queen.

The reference to Baal-worship leads to a consideration of that Deity. The name Baal simply signifies a Lord, in the sense of being a master or an owner. In its religious usage it became identified with the chief God of the Phœnicians of Tyre and Sidon. Under the name of Molech, Baal was served by the sacrifice of children who were "passed through the fire" to the god. The people of Israel were at times just as prone to this horrid rite as were any of the surrounding nations. More can be learned about Baal worship from other sources, especially from the accounts which have reached us from Roman and other historians concerning Carthage, the daughter city of Tyre. Little need be said here as it comes from sources outside Palestine; the following extract will give all that is necessary. "The Rabbinical description of the image of Molech, that it was a human figure with a bull's head and outstretched arms, is confirmed by the account which Diodorus gives of the Carthaginian Kronos or Moloch. The image of metal was made hot by a fire kindled within it; and the children, laid in its arms, rolled from thence into the fiery lap below. . . . The parents stopped the cries of the children by fondling and kissing them, for the victim ought not to weep, and the sound of complaint was drowned in the din of flutes and kettle-drums."

One could hardly expect to find much in the excavated cities to throw light on this practice, common as it must have been at times in the land. At Gezer some light on this or a similar practice has been found near the High



place of the city. The proximity is significant as indicating that the practice which the find reveals must have been connected with the religious rites of the High place. Round the High place there was what has been described as a cemetery of new-born infants. None of them was more than a week old, and it was quite impossible to tell whether they were all of one sex. Some of the bones bore evident marks of fire, and all the bodies were deposited in jars, the body being, in every case, placed in head first. In addition to this a number of bodies of infants were found buried under the walls of houses. These are presumed to be illustrations of an old practice of foundation—or threshold—sacrifices, another widespread practice in early days.

Whatever the Gezer High place child cemetery may involve it is clear that child sacrifice formed an essential part of the ritual of the place, and the discovery throws an unpleasant light on the practice so sternly denounced by the prophets. In every way Baal, or Molech, worship was a horrid thing, and though in those times it would have been justified on the ground that the parents were sacrificing their most cherished possessions to their god, it was a sign of the depraved condition into which a civilised people could descend. Such practices were altogether opposed to the religion of Israel. Though under the Mosaic Law the firstborn were dedicated to God, it was provided that in the case of children they were to be redeemed and the altar of Jehovah was not defiled with such horrible sacrifices. The evidence of the Gezer High place emphasises the point of Micah's enquiry and answer: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? shall I



come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? ”

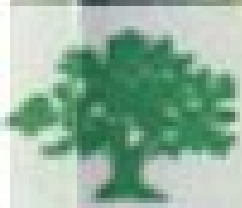
Baal and his female consort were the favourite deities of the people of Canaan and Syria, represented in different places by varying names. Many of these will be found mentioned in the Scriptures, such as Baal-berith, Baal-zebub, and so forth. Though the names differed the worship remained constant.

Baal's consort was Ashtoreth, the Queen of Heaven, to whom reference is made in the chapter dealing with some typical excavations. Allusion is made there to the clay or mud buns, or bread-cakes, which have been found. They are a reminder of the statement of Jeremiah that the children gathered the sticks, the fathers made the fire, whilst the mothers kneaded dough to make cakes for the Queen of Heaven. The worship of Ashtoreth was one of the most widely practised of all the early religious cults; figures of the goddess have been found in many places.

Seeing that the people of Israel were introduced into a land defiled for ages by such practices, and that they themselves were so prone to fall into the ways of those amongst whom they lived, it was a wise injunction that their High places should be destroyed and the ways of the peoples discarded. Unfortunately Israel never really rose to an appreciation of their intended position among



the peoples during the whole of their occupation of the land, and it was not until after the exile that they were prepared to put away idolatry and conform to the Mosaic worship and the principles of the second commandment.



CHAPTER XVIII

THE PHILISTINES AND THEIR CITIES

THE Philistines present something of a problem to the student of the Scriptures who is interested in Archæology. An early use of the name in the Bible is in connection with the life of Isaac, when reference is made to certain dealings which took place between him and one who is termed the "king of the Philistines," who dwelt in Gerer. Gerer is in that part of Southern Palestine, which in later times belonged to the Philistines. It seems to have been some distance south of Gaza. The district is one which was eminently suitable for a pastoral people such as Isaac and his household were. Water could be obtained by digging shallow pits; they required to be redug from time to time because they gradually filled up, as the water flowed beneath the surface of a shingly torrent bed. It will be seen that this condition fits the incidents which took place there in the life of Isaac. In passing it may be noted that when Abraham lived in the same district no reference is made to the Philistines, although there is an allusion to their land. In one place the king is called Abimelech, king of Gerer, in the other Abimelech, king of the Philistines. Gerer has been excavated to some extent, and six town levels have been found. Iron furnaces and iron tools indicate the use of that



metal as early as 1150 B.C., that is, after the arrival of the Philistines in the land.

The next reference to the Philistines is in the Book of Judges. In an early chapter there is an account of one Shamgar, the son of Anath, who slew six hundred men of the Philistines with an ox-goad. There is no need to repeat what will be found in Chapter X concerning this incident. By the time we reach the end of the Book of Judges and the times of Samson, the Philistines occupy the principal place in the record, and from that time they are the bitter and redoubtable enemies of the Israelites.

Who were this people? where did they come from? and when? These questions open up one of the problems associated with the subject of this chapter. There can be no question that the main body of the Philistines entered Palestine somewhere about the reign of Rameses III of Egypt. That gives a date of about 1200 B.C. or a little later. On this point the evidence of Archæology is definite. Yet there is the allusion to them in the times of Isaac hundreds of years before that date. The incident of Shamgar, the son of Anath, must also be placed earlier than the time of Rameses III, though that does not offer the difficulty which attaches to the first named instance. With the evidence at present available there is little doubt that the introduction of the Philistines into the history of the patriarchs is an anachronism. Taking all things into consideration, it rather appears that at some time a scribe, copying the ancient records, has inserted the term Philistines, because he knew that the territory in question belonged in later times to that race. It is something like the



reference to Dan as the extreme northern point of the land of Canaan long before the name of the city was changed from Laish to Dan. Until further information is forthcoming no more definite explanation can be advanced.

Outside the Bible the principal sources of information about the Philistines are the inscriptions of Egypt, though some of the articles which have been found in the Philistine towns have a bearing on the matter. These articles are of Cypriote and Minoan origin. They are usually found where there is also evidence of Egyptian influence, a point of some importance in the matter. It is well known that by the time of Rameses II, the Egyptian armies had a large admixture of mercenaries, and that many of these were of Greek, or Ægean origin. In his expeditions through Palestine Rameses was accompanied by these troops, and as he left garrisons in the various strategic towns, it is probable, if not quite certain, that some of the Ægean mercenaries would be left as the principal part of the garrisons. The native Egyptian troops would not welcome being left behind in a foreign land, they would naturally desire to return to their homes. The foreign mercenary would regard himself as better off as part of a garrison than being engaged on a long and arduous expedition with all the uncertainties of war.

So long as Egypt remained strong these garrison troops would remain loyal to the Pharaoh, but as the power of Egypt declined in the reign of Mer-en-ptah nothing is more likely than that they should establish themselves as a superior caste in the towns where they were placed. Settling down, and inter-marrying with



the women of the place, a regular dominant order would be established, strong in reliance on their military power. All this is more or less conjecture, but it is conjecture based upon known facts and strong probabilities.

In the days of Rameses III the peoples of the Ægean districts were stirring. It was one of those epochs which have arisen from time to time, when the more hardy races of the north and east have borne in upon the less vigorous peoples of more favoured lands, causing them by pressure to seek new homes. In such circumstances a great movement of peoples from the Ægean took place. They included a number of tribes, amongst whom were the Pulosathu and the Thekel. The former will be easily recognised as those who became known in Bible history as the Philistines. The various peoples of the movement came from different lands of the Mediterranean area, as far west as Sicily at all events. The flood of people advanced by sea and by land. It was no mere military raid bent upon plunder. Women and children accompanied the armies, with the evident intention of taking possession of a new home where they could settle and enjoy the security they had lost. They passed into the land of Syria, the fleet following the coast. The country of the Hittites was overrun and their power broken. They established a camp in Amor; a name which presumably represents the country of the Amorites, the earlier occupants of Canaan. Egypt was their ultimate object, for that was a land worthy of occupation and promised them rich rewards if they could only establish themselves as its masters.



Egypt was in a declining state at the time, but its king proved worthy of the great name he bore, the name of Rameses. He met the intended invaders before they could reach Egypt. Of the land battle little is known, but Rameses has recorded the sea fight in considerable detail. Egypt was saved, and the threatened invasion prevented. Foiled of their hopes of Egypt the remainder of the invading hosts settled down in Palestine. There they found peoples of the same race who had been in the armies of Rameses II. No doubt the two peoples coalesced, and, together, formed the Philistines of Biblical history.

The Egyptian sculptures have made us familiar with these people. They have faces of Ægean type. They wore a cap and a kilt something like those which may be seen drawn upon Greek pottery of the Mykenæan period. Coming from such lands it can be well understood why they proved to be such capable enemies of the Israelites. They were representatives of the Iron Age meeting those who were only at the end of the Bronze Age. In the time of their supremacy they endeavoured to retain this advantage by prohibiting the Israelites from using iron weapons. During the reign of Saul there was one occasion when it is said there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan. The words are probably intended to show that the levies of Israel were practically unarmed, whereas the Philistines were well armed and fully accoutred for war.

Recently another suggestion has been put forward concerning the origin of this people. According to the



Bible they were originally known as the Caphtorim. Jeremiah and Amos both bear witness to this. It has been assumed that the Keftians of the Egyptian monuments were the Caphtorim of the Bible. The alternative suggestion sees in the name a reference to the eastern lands of Asia Minor, which border upon the Mediterranean Sea. The basis for the idea is the fact that in the Septuagint, whenever the word Caphtor or Caphtorim is translated the names Kappadokia or Kappadokes are used to represent them. It is an interesting variation, though it does not make any important difference so far as we are concerned. In either case the basic ideas of the invasion are unaltered.

Whoever they were, and wherever they came from, they were of Ægean origin and they settled down on the seaboard of Southern Canaan. They proved to be of such importance there that they gave their name to the whole land, for Palestine is obviously Philistine-land. Their cities were Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath. Later they pushed northwards and an Egyptian papyrus records how their kinsmen, the Kakkal, settled in Dor, south of Carmel. Later on they advanced inland and took possession of Beth-shan. Some of these towns have been the subject of excavation, and a few words about them will be of interest.

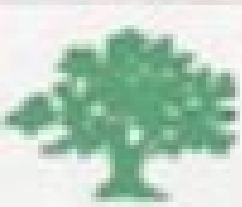
Of the first-named city, Gaza, not much is recorded nor has much been discovered there. It has always been an important point on the way from Egypt to Palestine, right down to the time when the British invaded Palestine during the War of 1914-1918, when they were held up there for a considerable time. Near Gaza, five miles from the modern town of that name,



is Tell el Ajjul, where Sir Flinders Petrie excavated during the years 1930 and 1931. From what he has found he is satisfied that the place is the site of the ancient Gaza. It has an extent of about thirty-three acres. So far his latest find is placed approximately at 2250 B.C. so that the place was evidently abandoned before the coming of the Philistines and the conquest of the land by Israel. It was a Hyksos city and was strongly defended, and seems to have been left for reasons of health, as the neighbourhood is subject to malaria.

At Gaza itself the remains of a Philistine wall have been discovered. Whenever the Philistines may have first taken possession of the city Rameses III claims to have conquered it. But as his hold on any part of the country was very brief, his claim does not affect the Philistine character of the town even in his days. Gaza was the scene of many of the exploits of Samson, and it is to be hoped that further information will be forthcoming when excavations have proceeded further.

Gaza is mentioned in the New Testament, and it is worth while to break in with a few words in relation to it at that stage of its history. During the wars of the Jews in 96 B.C. Alexander Jannæus besieged the city for a whole year, during which time the oasis in which it stood was laid waste, the town was burnt and its occupants slaughtered. It was rebuilt in 57 B.C. on a new site. New Gaza flourished, but the old city was not forgotten, indeed it is thought that it was still occupied to some slight extent because the main road from Egypt passed by it. This will explain the New Testament reference to it. The evangelist Philip was told to go



toward the south, the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, "which is desert." The new Gaza was near the sea-coast, but Philip was to join the Ethiopian eunuch who was returning to Egypt by the old road. It was therefore necessary for Philip to do down to the old Gaza "this is desert" (see R.V.).

Ashkelon was the second city named. It is on the sea-coast about seventeen miles from Gaza, and has been excavated on behalf of the British School of Archæology in Jerusalem. Like Gaza, it seems to have had some association with the Hyksos and was defended on behalf of the Egyptians in the reign of Rameses II. The evidence of potsherds indicates that the Philistine city extended beyond the original boundaries and may have occupied the whole of the central hill. Unfortunately the Roman buildings which were subsequently erected there prevented a proper examination of the Philistine works. Enough, however, has been discovered to show that the city associated with the times of Rameses II was marked by a layer of ashes and débris from the Philistine occupation which followed. It was a place of importance because being on the sea coast it permitted reinforcements to be obtained from the Philistines' kindred beyond the seas. It is noticeable, too, that the number of Mediterranean products of pottery and other things found in Ashkelon is unusually large.

Archæology has not yet told us much about Ashdod. It was a military centre of the Philistines. Later it was besieged by Sargon and by Sennacherib, and afterwards experienced a twenty-two years' siege by Pharaoh



Psammeticus. It had a Temple of Dagon, the Philistine's chief god, as late as 48 B.C.

Of Ekron there is nothing to be said, but Gath calls for some consideration. The site of the city is supposed to have been the place now known as Tell-es-Safi. For a long time all knowledge of the situation of Gath was lost. Amos speaks of it as existing in his day, but after that it disappears from the pages of the Bible altogether. Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Zechariah all make references to the Philistines, but not one of them makes an allusion to Gath, nor does the name appear in the books of the Maccabees. Josephus does not mention it in connection with any time later than the eighth century B.C. (The expression "Tell it not in Gath" in Micah, is an exception, and seems to have been used as a kind of proverb.) It seems certain that the place was destroyed in Old Testament times. Although its site is supposed to be at the place named there are difficulties in the way of investigation. A wall of a Canaanitish sanctuary has been found with three unhewn pillar stones standing in a row, but these are of pre-Philistine date, and throw no light on the people with whom we are concerned in this chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

EDOM, MOAB AND AMMON

EDOM, Moab, and Ammon were kindred races of Israel. The Edomites were descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother; Moab and Ammon were descended from Lot, the nephew of Abraham. They were also neighbouring peoples in their settlement in the land and the adjacent country.

As the twin brother of Jacob, Esau, or Edom, possesses the greatest personal interest. In the blessing which Isaac pronounced upon his sons he said of Esau, "Behold of (or, as the margin more aptly seems to render it, Away from) the fatness of the earth shall be thy dwelling, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and thou shalt serve thy brother. And it shall come to pass when thou shalt break loose, that thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck" (Gen. 27. 39 and 40).

The territory of Edom was the mountainous district eastward of the Arabah, the valley which leads from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah. It is sometimes called Mount Seir. Occasionally it is termed the "field" of Edom. This is not a field in our understanding of the term. The word used implies flatness and, in the case of Edom, refers to the plateau which is to be found above the rocky slopes leading down to the valley. Elsewhere the land is called the Wilderness of Edom, a name which indicates the



general character of the country, though there are parts which are fertile. The principal towns of the country were Selah (later Petra), Elath, Ezion-geber Bozrah, and Teman. In after times the name of Edom, in its later form of Idumea, was applied to a much wider district, in fact during the days of the Maccabees Idumea extended westward as far as Hebron.

The outstanding features of the country of the Edomites are its mountains and rocks and the strange situation of its capital city, Petra. Rising from the Arabah the hills are of calcareous limestone; beyond these are sandstone mountains, rough and rugged, and through these masses of basalt and porphyry break through. The combination gives the rugged appearance suggested by the name of Seir, which expresses the idea of shagginess.

In such a country caves naturally formed the dwelling places of the early inhabitants, but, whereas in most places these sooner or later gave place to houses, the caves continued to be used in Edom for a very long time. It is in keeping with this that the earliest occupants of the land were called Horites. They have been mentioned before when dealing with the peoples of the land in the times of the Patriarchs. Even as late as the time of Jerome (died A.D. 420), the inhabitants of Edom lived in caves, partly because such dwelling places afforded grateful shade from the heat of the sun. The Horites, the original occupants of the land, were evidently an organised community, for we have a record of the names of a succession of "Dukes" who reigned over them.

Although the land generally is rough, Petra was in



some respects a contrast. There is an abundance of pure water there, a matter of supreme importance in a land which can be spoken of as the Wilderness of Edom. Between the River Jordan and Central Arabia, Petra is the one place where waters are not only abundant but invitingly pure. This fact lends interest to a peculiar reference in the Bible in relation to the sons, or descendants, of "Seir the Horite." It is said of one Anah, "this is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." The word which is used for hot springs is unknown in the Hebrew. When the Authorised Version was being prepared the translators used the word "mules" to represent it. This is certainly incorrect, and in the Revised Version the term hot springs has been substituted for it. That the word refers to waters is now generally agreed, and it is probable that what Anah actually found were the clear, pure waters of the oasis of Petra. If that was so then Anah did much more for the Horites and their successors, the Edomites, than has hitherto been thought.

The Horites were destroyed by the descendants of Esau; the Edomites were partly Semitic, partly Canaanite, for Esau married wives of the Canaanites and Hittites. One of them is referred to as a Hivite, and it is supposed by many that these people were really a branch of the Horites, with whom, therefore, Esau became connected by his marriage. Succeeding to their territory, the Edomites at first adopted some of their customs, and used the same title, "Duke," for their rulers, though later they changed it to King. All through their history the Edomites were a wild and fierce race. Their



blood relationship did not make them kindly disposed towards Israel; they were generally enemies, and very vindictive ones at times. Obadiah gives a graphic picture of their sustained animosity when he speaks of Edom's "violence against his brother Jacob" in the time of the latter's calamity.

Unfortunately not much is known of the lands east of the Jordan, and very little archæological investigation has taken place in relation to the country or its cities. Petra is the one exception, though even there the investigations which have taken place have been rather superficial. Some day no doubt the place will receive the attention it deserves, and we may expect to know a great deal more about it than we do at present.

In modern times Petra appears to have been visited first by Burckhardt; since his days many others have been there and have given excellent descriptions of the place. The entrance to it is through the Sik, a narrow defile, varying from eight to thirty feet in width, with rocks rising perpendicularly from the base. Such an approach made Petra almost impregnable, the only possible place of attack being on the north. An enemy reaching the town through the Sik could be cut down by a few men holding the pass at a narrow point. An early visitor to Petra, describing his approach to the city says, "The ruins of the city here burst upon the view, in their full grandeur, shut in on the opposite side by barren craggy precipices from which numerous ravines and valleys branch out in all directions; the sides of the mountains covered with an endless variety of excavated tombs and private dwellings, presented altogether the most singular scene we had ever beheld."



These cave dwellings were often approached by flights of steps which were cut out of the native rock. To-day many of these are worn away, and the caves are unapproachable. There is, however, sufficient to be seen to enable a visitor to realise why the Edomites trusted in their inaccessible position. Knowing the character of the approach, and the ease with which their city could be defended against tremendous odds, their boasts are understandable. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitat on is on high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" "Thy terribleness hath deceived thee and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill." Having regard to the strength of its situation the Psalmist's reference to it will be appreciated.

"Who will bring me into the strong city?

Who will lead me into Edom?

Wilt not Thou, O God, which hadst cast us off?

And Thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?" (Psa. 60. 9 and 10).

All its pride was of no avail; to-day Edom is a desolation and Petra a ruined city.

After Edom, Moab calls for attention. The land of Moab is situated to the east of the Dead Sea, having the sea-coast as its border. The River Arnon marked its border to the north; its boundary to the south was the line at which Edom and Moab joined. It was only a very small country but what it lacked in extent it made up in fertility. Its highlands formed a rich pasturage,



and in the Bible the land of Moab is noted as a sheep raising country.

Originally the land of Moab was inhabited by the Rephaim, who became extinct as the Moabites grew and multiplied. The claim of the Moabites to the land was disputed by the Amorites, a warlike nation who took possession of the northern portion of their original territory, that is the part lying to the north of the Arnon. It was this circumstance which gave that portion of the land to the Israelites when they defeated the Amorites under Sihon. Within the circumscribed territory which remained, the Moabites were fairly secure; the Arnon runs through a deep chasm, to the west there were the steep slopes to the Dead Sea; on the east and south were hills.

With a territory running parallel with that of the eastern tribes of Israel, and with a memory of kinship which led back to Abraham in each case, it was natural that the relations between Israel and Moab should have been fairly close. The incident of Ruth, and David's action in placing his father and mother with the king of Moab when he himself was fleeing from Saul are illustrations of this feeling of kinship. After that, however, the relations between the two peoples became generally hostile.

In the year 1868 a stone bearing a Semitic inscription was observed at Dibon in Moab. Unfortunately both French and German representatives let it be known that they desired to possess the stone, with the result that the Arabs thought it must be worth something for magical purposes. They broke it into pieces, but fortunately before they did so a squeeze had been taken of it. Most



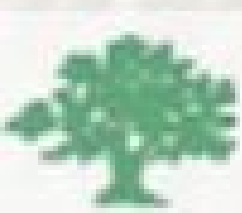
of the pieces were recovered and by means of the squeeze have been pieced together again and the stone may be seen in the Louvre in Paris. There is a copy in the British Museum. It is a block of black basalt and contains thirty-four lines of inscription. The language used is not very different from the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the stone is the oldest known example of an inscription in any dialect related to the Hebrew.

The stone was set up by Mesha, king of Moab, who is mentioned in 2 Kings 3. The following is a translation of the salient portions of it: "I am Mesha, son of Chemoshmelek, King of Moab, the Dibonite. My father ruled over Moab thirty years, and I ruled after my father. And I made this High place to Chemosh in Qarhah because of the deliverance, because Chemosh saved me from all the kings, and because he caused me to see my desire upon all that hated me. Omri, king of Israel, he oppressed Moab many days, because Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him, and he also said I will oppress Moab. In my day he spoke according to this word but I saw my desire upon him and upon his house, and Israel utterly perished for ever. Now Omri had possessed all the land of Medeba and dwelt in it his days and half the days of his son, forty years, but Chemosh restored it in my day. And I built Baal-meon and I made in it the reservoir (?), and I built Kiriathaim. And the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the king of Israel had built for himself Ataroth. And I fought against the city and took it, and I slew all the people of the city, a sight pleasing to Chemosh and to Moab. And I brought back from thence the altar-hearth of Duda and I dragged



it before Chemosh in Kiriath. And I caused to dwell in it men of Sharon (?) and the men of Meharoth (?). And Chemosh said to me 'Go take Nebo against Israel'; and I went by night and fought against it from break of dawn till noon, and I took it and slew all, seven thousand men, boys (?), and women and girls, for I had devoted it to Ashtar-Chemosh. And I took from there the altars of Yahweh and I dragged them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built Jahaz and dwelt in it while he fought with me, and Chemosh drove him out before me. And I took from Moab two hundred men, all its chiefs, and I led them against Jahaz and took it to add unto Dibon." . . .

As is sometimes the case in connection with the Bible and Archæology the information given in each of the accounts is supplementary to the other; it is often the combination of the two that enables us to get something like a full picture of what happened. The subjection of Moab to Israel commenced in the days of David. Why David dealt with that people so drastically as the Bible records show is not apparent. It has been suggested that the king of Moab betrayed the trust that David reposed in him when he committed his father and mother to the care of the king. That, however, is only supposition, and cannot be put any higher than that. During the troubled times of the severance between Israel and Judah, Moab evidently regained its freedom, but in the reign of Omri it was subdued by Israel. When Ahab succeeded to the throne the Moabites began to kick against the overlordship of Israel, and after his death they definitely rebelled. This is implied in the statement "Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king



of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams with the wool. But it came to pass when Ahab was dead that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel" (2 Kings 3. 2 and 3). This brings us to the reign of Jehoram.

There is of course a difference between the two records in this respect. Mesha however admits that Omri and his son "possessed all the land of Medeba . . . forty years." Now altogether Omri and Ahab only reigned thirty-four years (Omri twelve, Ahab twenty-two), so that a period of forty years reaches to the reign of Jehoram where the incidents of the rebellion are placed in the Bible account. According to that record the kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom were leagued against Moab. They invaded the land from the south and thus passed through a dry country where there was no water. In such circumstances they were seriously discouraged, but when the sun arose on the following day they found that, in accordance with a prediction of Elisha the prophet, the ditches were filled with water. The rising sun shining upon this water gave it the appearance of blood, and the Moabites came to the conclusion that the three kings had fallen out and that there had been a great battle between the allied armies. With a cry of "Moab to the spoil" they rushed to secure the anticipated booty. Instead they found the allies ready for them. A terrible defeat and the spoliation of the land followed; wells were stopped, trees were cut down. Finally Mesha took refuge at Kir-haraseth. But this city was surrounded by hills, and from thence the allies discharged volleys of stones upon the town. In his distress Mesha offered up his eldest son as a sacrifice to Chemosh. The rest of the



record is disappointingly brief. "And there was great indignation against Israel; and they departed from him and returned to their own land."

There are clearly differences between the two records. They may refer to different incidents in the war of rebellion, it may be that the Stone gives the details which the "indignation" implies. It is best to leave the two accounts to stand side by side, but it may be noted that all through the Bible there is no further reference to the subjection of Moab by Israel.

Although Ammon was, like Moab, a descendant of Lot, the Ammonites were a very different type of people from the Moabites, though they seem to have retained some ideas of their kinship with them. Originally their territory lay to the north of that of Moab between the Rivers Arnon and Jabbok. They were dispossessed of a portion of the territory by Sihon king of the Amorites, which thus passed into the possession of the Israelites of the tribes of Reuben and Gad. This fact explains why in the times of Jephthah the Ammonites claimed the land occupied by Israel in the east of Jordan as theirs. Rabbah seems to have been the only important city in their territory; the Ammonites evidently remained nomads like the Bedouin.

There were many conflicts between Israel and Ammon and when Israel was beginning to fall before Assyria, and the eastern tribes were carried away by Tiglath Pileser, the Ammonites took possession of their cities. The bitterness between Israel and the Ammonites survived the exile, for one of the principal opponents of the returned people was Tobiah the Ammonite. There is, however, little to be said of them, for a race of rovers has left practically nothing for the Archæologist to seek.



CHAPTER XX

THE HITTITES

ALTHOUGH the Hittites were not a race native to Palestine or the surrounding area, nor even prominent inhabitants of it in later ages like the other peoples that have been mentioned, they occupied a sufficiently important place in the land during a portion of the times covered by the Bible history for some account of them to be necessary. The first mention of them in the Bible is in connection with the promise to Abraham when it was confirmed by the strange proceedings which took place on the altar which he had prepared (Gen. 15). On that occasion they were included among the peoples related to the land. There are a number of such references, but it was not until Abraham had to purchase a burying-place for his dead wife that there is any allusion to an actual Hittite. It was of Ephron the Hittite that the field and the cave of Machpelah were purchased "in the presence of the children of Heth."

It is not very long ago since doubts were entertained as to the existence of Hittites so far south as is implied by this incident. Very little was known of the people at all, and unfortunately ignorance often gives rise to doubt. As will be seen later there is no reason to think that no members of the Hittite race were in the land of Palestine during the times associated with Abraham.

There are three or four references to the Hittites in the Book of Joshua. These however are general in



character, and need not be referred to in detail. The same may be said of those in the Book of Judges. They next appear in the record of the reign of Solomon. In referring to his trading activities it is said: "Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And they fetched up and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty; and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria." Later they are referred to in the reign of Jehoram when Samaria was besieged by the Syrians. When the city was delivered the Syrians are said to have fled, saying, "The king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians." It will be noted that in each of these cases it is assumed that there are a number of Hittite communities, and that in the latter instance they lived sufficiently near to the land of Israel for the king of that land to be able to hire them to assist in the deliverance of Samaria.

Who were these people? As was said before, not very long ago it would not have been possible to give a definite answer to this enquiry. There they were in the records of the Bible and at one time that was practically all that was known about them. To-day a considerable amount of information about them is available, though there is still much to be learned.

The earliest account we have of them takes us back to somewhere about 2500 B.C. when they were living in Asia Minor. They appear to have been a confederation of tribes rather than a nation, but were gradually welded into a single people, ready for a great forward movement.



About the year 1925 B.C. they descended from Asia Minor, invaded Mesopotamia, and advanced as far as Babylon, which they sacked. It was possibly in connection with this movement that some of the members of the race entered Syria and found their way into Palestine, settling down among the native races and acquiring property. Anything more definite than this cannot be said at present.

The great advance of the Hittites from their early home, their definite appearance in the recorded history of the world, and the movement which brought them into contact with Israel, must be dated about the year 1400 B.C. This was a time of general unrest in the world, and is just about the time when the Israelites, having escaped from Egypt, were entering Palestine from the south-east whilst the Hittite invaded it from the north. Both peoples were seeking new homes; and though Israel, certainly the weaker of the two, remained, the Hittites eventually withdrew, though individuals remained, settling down among the peoples of the land. They are represented by people such as Uriah the Hittite, who was one of David's chief men.

At the time indicated the Hittites were ruled over by a king named Subbiluliuma. He was a man of great ability and introduced a forward policy into Hittite affairs. He invaded Northern Syria, and for a long time that portion of the country was part of the Hittite Empire. Carchemish became the centre of the area, and was a Hittite city for centuries. Many memorials of the Hittite occupation have been found there. The British Museum have sent expeditions to work at Carchemish, and interesting memorials of the people

have been recovered and may be seen in the Museum. Subbiluliuma entered into alliance with the Amorites of Central Syria; he thus gained a footing further south, and opened up the way for the penetration of Palestine. His Empire lasted for about a hundred years.

At this point the Hittites enter into the Egyptian records. It has been related how Seti and Rameses II undertook the task of re-establishing Egyptian ascendancy in Palestine. In this they found in the Hittites one of the principal enemies that they had to meet. They had taken advantage of the unsettled times of Akh-en-Aten and his successors to establish themselves in Syria. So long as they were there the Egyptian Empire could not be again set up, and war between the two peoples was inevitable.

The armies of Rameses and the Hittites met at Kadesh about the year 1288 B.C.—that is, during the times of the Judges of Israel. According to Rameses the Egyptians obtained a great and glorious victory. Reading between the lines the victory was by no means so decisive as he claimed. A treaty was eventually made between the two peoples under which each party undertook to respect the other's rights and not to trespass on that part of Syria which was allotted to the other as a sphere of influence. Northern Syria remained subject to the Hittites, Egypt remained dominant in the South.

For some time the Hittites continued to be a more or less powerful people in Northern Syria. Their principal cities were Carchemish and Aleppo. From what has been ascertained up to the present, it seems that in this region they were arranged in military



groups, settling down in various places as far south as Hermon. Hittite remains have been found at Tiberius, on the road to Beth-shan. At Beth-shan itself various Hittite weapons and objects of Hittite art have been discovered. Even as far south as Shechem, Jerusalem, and Gerar articles of Hittite origin have been found. In view of these facts it has been said "it is increasingly probable that the prophet Ezekiel's allusion to Jerusalem 'thy father was an Amorite and thy mother a Hittite' really discloses the original racial stock of the city's population."

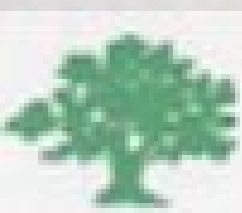
Unfortunately although our knowledge of the Hittites is growing, it is nothing like as complete as our knowledge of the other ancient peoples of the time, but such as it is it fits in generally with the Bible allusions to them. The great forward movement of the twentieth century before Christ, when Babylon was sacked, gave ample opportunity for the penetration of Palestine by members of the race in the days of Abraham. Their invasion of Palestine in the times of the Tell-el-Amarna tablets, and their establishment at such places as Carchemish and the south caused them to be mentioned in a general way among the nations of the land, and accounts for the mention of them in the Books of Joshua and Judges. With regard to the references in Kings and Chronicles, it will be remembered that they speak of the kings, and not the king, of the Hittites. This is just what the case requires owing to their organisation as groups rather than as a united people.

The rediscovery of this ancient people is one of the romances of Archæology. They were known from the Egyptian and Assyrian records, as well as from the



mention of them in the Bible; now their own inscriptions and sculptures have been found in various places in Asia Minor and Syria, to tell of the military power of a people who had been practically forgotten.

Reference has been made to the treaty which was made between the Hittites and the Amorites. In the Bible these two people are frequently associated. It is so in relation to the origin of the city of Jerusalem. Both peoples dwelt at Hebron when Abraham bought his burying-place. In just the same way they are associated in the Egyptian records. Whilst, however, the Amorites spread through the land, sufficiently for their name to stand at times for the land as a whole, the Hittites' principal possessions were in the north, only small communities being established in the south. For this reason, interesting as their history is, they do not come before us very often in relation to the land of Palestine.



INDEX

A

Aahmes, 55
 Abdi Khiba, 25, 51
 Abraham, 6, 43, 156, 175
 Achan, 74
 Adam, City of, 66
 Ahab, 126, 172
 Ai, 74
 Akh-en-Aten, 60, 178
 Amarna (*See* Tell el-A.)
 Amenhetep III, 20, 60
 Ammonites, 174
 Amorites, 62, 180
 Anah, 167
 Anakim, 39
 Archæology, 16, 30
 Ashdod, 163
 Asherah, 150
 Ashkelon, 163
 Ashtoreth, 22, 149, 154
 Assyria and Assyrians, 105, 130
 132

B

Baal, 152
 Babylon, 58, 74, 177
 Bashan, 63
 Beeroth, 76
 Beisan (*See* Beth-shan)
 Beth-shan, 19
 Bitumen, 49
 Boundaries of Palestine, 12

C

Canaanites, 37
 Caphtor, 161
 Captivity, 139
 Carchemish, 177
 Caves and Cave-Dwellers, 39
 Chedorlaomer, 49
 Child Sacrifice, 152
 Chushan-Risathaim, 83
 Circumcision, 68, 94
 Cities of the Plain, 47
 Cities—Small, 31
 City of Palm Trees, 72
 City States, 41, 73
 Crete, 5
 Cyrus, Decree of, 139

D

Dagon, 25
 Damascus, 10, 45
 David, 6, 26, 99, 104
 Debir, 79
 Domestic Utensils, 35

E

Early Inhabitants, 37
 Earthquakes in Palestine, 67, 133
 Edom, 165
 Eglon, 27, 79
 Egypt and Egyptians, 46, 54, 84,
 104, 178



Emim, 40, 49

Empire of Solomon, 106

Excavations, 16

Exodus, 55

Ezra, 116

F

Flint Knives, 94

Foundations of Temple, 114

G

Gates of Jerusalem, 141

Gath, 164

Gaza, 161

Geography, 7, 14

Gerer, 156

Gezer, 18, 38, 111, 148

Gibeah, 94

Gibeon, 75

Gilgal, 67, 90, 93

Groves, 150

H

Habiru, 61, 84

Haran (*See* Kharran)

Hangings for the Grove, 150

Hazor, 79

Hebrew Culture, 34

Herod, 131

Hezekiah, 132

High Places, 145

Hiram, 107

Hittites, 24, 85, 108, 159, 175

Horim or Horites, 39, 49, 166

Hornet, 57

Houses, 32

Hyksos, 54, 81

I

Idumea (*See* Edom)

Iniquity of the Amorites, 145, 148

Inscription, Siloam, 136

Isaac, 51, 156

Isaiah, 134

Israel's Mission, 28

Ivory Houses, 127

J

Jacob, 51

Jebus and Jebusites, 31, 98

Jericho, 31, 68

Jeroboam I, 122

Jeroboam II, 128

Jerusalem, 10, 14, 31, 51, 76, 97, 113, 132, 140

Jesus of Nazareth, 6, 113, 119, 142

Joab, 100

Jordan, 13, 66

Judges, 82

K

Khammurabi, 59

Kharran, 44

Kikkar of Jordan, 47

L

Lachish, 26, 79

Layard, Sir Henry, 3

Libnah, 79

Lot, 47

M

Maritime Plain, 13

Mekal, 23

Melchizedek, 50, 97

Mer-en-ptah, 55, 88, 158



Merom, Waters of, 80
 Mesha, 171
 Middle Wall of Partition, 143
 Moab, 169
 Moabite Stone, 170
 Moses, 62
 Mosque of Omar, 117
 Mountains, 13
 Museums, 7

N

Names, in Samaria, 130
 Nehemiah, 140

O

Og, 63
 Omri, 124, 172
 Ophel, 99
 Ophir, 109
 Ostraca, 130

P

Palaces of Samaria, 126
 Palestine, 10
 Palestine Exploration Fund, 16
 Patriarchs, 43
 Petra, 166
 Phallic Emblems, 149
 Philistines, 21, 87, 91, 106, 156
 Phœnicians, 106
 Pillar-Stones, 148
 Pottery, 33
 Promises—Divine, 46
 Providence, 3

Q

Queen of Heaven, 23, 154

R

Rameses II and III, 20, 85 156.
 178
 Refuge, Cities, of, 14
 Rehoboam, 120, 133
 Religion, 90, 95, 145
 Rephaim, 39, 49, 170
 Robinson, Dr., 16

S

Samaria, 124
 Samaritans, 130
 Saul, 21
 Scythopolis, 22
 Sea, The, 12
 Seir (*See* Edom)
 Seti, 20, 85
 Shaft, Warren's, 17
 Shamgar, 88, 157
 Shashanq, 133
 Shechem, 122
 Shephelah, 13
 Shiloh, 91
 Shishak (*See* Shashanq)
 Sihon, 62
 Siloam Pool, &c., 135
 Sodom, 47
 Sodomites, 150
 Solomon, 104, 120, 147, 176
 Soreg, 143
 Stone Age, 40
 Stones of Temple, 118
 Subbiluliuma, 177
 Surveys, 16
 Syria, 9

T

Tabernacle, 90
 Tadmor, 108