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# Address

Delivered at the Meeting of the British  
and Foreign Bible Society, by  
His Excellency Sir William  
MacGregor, G.C.M.G.,  
C.B., etc.

St. John's, Newfoundland,  
26th March, 1908.

## APPROXIMATE DATES OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO JEDONIAH'S LETTER.

1550 B.C.—Thothmes I., of Egypt, conquered Nubia and invaded Asia.

1500-1400 B.C.—Egypt a world power, Thothmes II., Amenophis IV.

1480 B.C.—Kings of Babylon and Assyria have boundary treaty.

1440-1306 B.C.—Seti I, Ramses II. and Menephtah oppress the Hebrews.

930 B.C.—Shishak of Egypt spoils the temple under Rehoboam (2 Chronicles XII, 9.)

884 B.C.—Shalmaneser of Assyria makes Jehu tributary, according to the Black obelisk of Nineveh (Layard.).

771 B.C.—Pu., of Assyria, makes Menahem of Israel tributary (2 Kings, XV, 19.)

747 B.C.—Tiglathpaleser II. of Assyria invades Palestine (2 Kings, XV, 29.)

747-727 B.C.—Tiglathpaleser III., makes Assyria a world power; subdues Palestine.

722 B.C.—Sargon of Assyria takes Samaria; leads captive 27,280 families; makes war on So of Egypt, the ally of Hoshea (2 Kings XVIII, 4.)

720-680 B.C.—Sennacherib takes Babylon; invades Palestine (2 Kings, XVIII, 13, and XIX, 35.)

680-640 B.C.—Esarhaddon, "Conqueror of Egypt," carries Manasseh to Babylon (2 Chronicles, XXXIII, 2.)

625 B.C.—Nineveh destroyed by Cyaxares and Nabopolassar; end of the Assyrian empire and supremacy.

625-604 B.C.—Nabopolassar makes Babylon a world power.

586 B.C.—Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem and leads the Jews captive; and 569, conquers Egypt

under Amasis.

538 B.C.—Cyrus destroys Babylon. End of the Chaldean Empire and supremacy; Palestine thus passes to the Persian kings.

536 B.C.—Cyrus (Ezra I, 1-4.) issues a Proclamation for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem, when (Ezra II., 64.) 42,360 Jews return to Palestine under Zerubbabel.

529-522 B.C.—Cambyses defeats Psammatik III., destroys the Egyptian temples and makes Egypt a Persian satrapy which lasts to 405.

522-521 B.C.—Smerdis. Darius Hystaspes, (521-485.)

519 B.C.—Darius makes a decree for building the temple (Ezra VI., 6-12.)

485-465 B.C.—Xerxes (Ahasuerus.)

465-425 B.C.—Artaxerxes; gives letter, 457, to Ezra, to go up from Babylon to Jerusalem with all the Jews that wished to return, to re-establish Jewish worship in the temple (Ezra VII, 11-26.)

445 B.C.—Artaxerxes (Nehemiah II.) gives Nehemiah a letter to proceed to and rebuild Jerusalem, to the great mortification of Sanballat (Nehemiah II, 10.)

433 B.C.—Nehemiah (Nehemiah XIII, 6.) returns to Jerusalem and banishes (Nehemiah XIII, 28) the grandson of Eliashib, the high priest that had married Sanballat's daughter.

425-425 B.C.—Xerxes II.

425-424 B.C.—Sogdianus.

424-405 B.C.—Darius Nothus.

410 B.C.—Destruction of temple at Jeb.

405 B.C.—Jedoniah's letter to Bagohi.

# ADDRESS

Delivered at the Meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, St. John's, Newfoundland, 26th March, 1908, by His Excellency Sir William MacGregor, G.C.M.G., C.B., &c.

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Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is not possible for those of us who have been in the habit of attending these annual meetings of the British and Foreign Bible Society to not feel that there is here to-night a vacant place, the position so long occupied by the late Honourable James Johnson Rogerson.

No person was more earnest, more zealous and sincere, had his heart more truly in this work than our venerable friend who is gone. But though he has left us, his work remains, and we have before us his example, which I trust may long be remembered in the local branch of this Society.

During the last year or two we have read every now and then of what is called the "New Theology." I do not quite know what is meant by the phrase unless it is intended to express the advocacy of a more Christian interpretation by thought and action of the old Bible. If that is what is conveyed by the new theology, then I am humbly, but strongly, in its favour. There is, so far as I know, no place for a new theology that is not based on the old Book. At the same time it is impossible for any fair minded man to read history, especially ecclesiastical history, without seeing that there is still room for immense improvement in the practice of Christianity under an enlightened interpretation of the Scriptures. Great changes

have taken place, and are at this moment more active than at any preceding time, in the interpretation of

Bible, in spirit, and even in the letter. One cannot but see that there is a wide difference between the more severe and imperious spirit of the Old Testament and the brotherly feeling of the New; and that the tendency of the age, and it may be supposed of the "New Theology," is clearly towards the atmosphere and teaching of the New Testament. As this tendency increases mankind will understand the Bible in a more enlightened and less material way than at present, more in a spiritual sense, and less and less in a gross, material, and worldly way. There can be but little doubt that mankind is slowly but perceptibly becoming more developed intellectually. We know sufficient of the earlier races of mankind to feel certain of the progress that man is making in evolution, and we are justified in believing that his development will be continued. I therefore entertain no doubt that even in a thousand years from now, a great advance will be made in understanding the Scriptures in a more celestial and less in an earthly sense, and in interpreting into action the teaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom that is hot of this world. This can be done, I humbly believe will be done, without going to an extreme in Modernism.

But even in interpreting the "letter" of the Scriptures an important advance has been made in recent years. For example, the University of Manchester, recognizing that the "New Testament is the layman's Book," has recently appointed a layman to be "Greenwood Lecturer in Greek New Testament." In his inaugural Address, delivered on the 30th January, 1906, Mr. Moulton, the new lecturer, insists on the great discovery made in the last half score of years from the study of secular papyri of New Testament times, and shows that the Greek of the New Testament is the Greek that was spoken as the world language of the period in which it was written, which differs in many respects from the more artificial, literary Greek. A single example must suffice here. In 1 Corinthians IV., 21, St. Paul says: "What will ye? That in a rod I come to you, or in love, in the spirit of meekness." It was thought the "in" was in this sentence a mistranslation of the Hebrew by Paul. In the spoken Greek of the period "in" meant "with," and the language used by Paul is perfectly correct as then spoken. I have myself not known any man that speaks as he writes. It was the same then as now in that respect. Much light has also been cast on New Testament literature by Professor Sir William Ramsay, with whom I sat on the same benches in the Greek class at the University. He is the greatest living authority on all that pertains to Asia Minor in apostolic times. This is not the time or place for me to discuss the question of the general authenticity of the Bible, of its inspiration, of its truths, or to shew you what it has done for the world. All that, and what the Society is doing, I leave to other speakers, and I shall not encroach on their domain. I desire, however, to call your attention for a few minutes to a recently discovered concrete ex-

ample of an ancient document that has reference to one or two names that occur in the Old Testament, and in ancient profane history. What I have to say will be found to have a direct bearing on the special authenticity of at least two Books of the Old Testament. It has been remarked, probably by many people, that references to Bible characters are singularly rare in ancient documents or inscriptions. Of David and Solomon, for example, we know only from the Bible. When such references do occur, they are consequently of the greatest value; and perhaps nothing is or could be of greater interest.

As no doubt many of you know, the Moabite Stone is almost the only ancient Hebrew inscription we possess that has a direct historical allusion to an Old Testament episode. It was discovered in 1868 by the German missionary Klein. I do not hesitate to detain you a few minutes on this celebrated relic of ancient Palestine, because the inscription is seldom given in books of reference, and also because the subject is cognate with what I have to say further on.

You will remember that Moab was the son of Lot by his own elder daughter, while the younger daughter became similarly the mother of Ben-Ammi. As Lot was the nephew of Abraham, the Hebrews and Moabites had descent from an original common ancestor; but their history was as different in earlier as in later times. The Israelites occupied the country between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, while Moab dwelt on the east side of that lake, and was thus cut off from the Ocean. The value of the Mediterranean was already perfectly well known to the great maritime people of Tyre, who were closely related to the Hebrews and Moabites. Indeed Tyre was already a colonising power, and was founding the Colony of Carthage

about the time that Mesa was superintending the carving of the Moabite stone.

No doubt it was the same then as now; an inland people cut off from the sea would desire an ocean outlet, and that Moab could not reach except through the country of the Israelites. These circumstances, and probably the incestuous origin of Moab, and the idolatry of the Moabites, intensified the bitterness of the family quarrels between them and the Hebrews. David, who was a mighty warrior, and able to hold his own against Egypt, Assyria or Babylon, subdued the Moabites. On the division of the Jewish Kingdom, in B.C. 975, into Judah and Israel, the Moabites seem to have passed to Israel, to which crown they were subject in the reign of Ahab. On the defeat and death of that king at the hands of the Syrians at Ramoth-Gilead, B.C. 897, the Moabites rebelled, as stated in the first verse of the first chapter of Second Kings, under the reign of Ahaziah, son of Ahab. It has indeed been suggested, as by Ragozin in his "Assyria," that the Moabite stone refers to the third chapter of Second Kings, in the 27th verse of which it is related that "the Israelites departed from an invasion of Moab, and returned to their own land."

It seems, however, clear that the reference is to the rebellion under Ahaziah. The Moabite stone is a block of black basalt nearly four feet by two, thus in appearance closely resembling Hammurabi's column near to which it is preserved in the Louvre, at Paris. It is inscribed in the Hebrew-Phœnician character, and is the oldest Semitic inscription that is known, and has been said to be the most ancient specimen extant of alphabetic writing. The date assigned to it is B.C. 850. The inscription, as far as preserved, runs as follows:

"I am Mesha, the son of Khemosh-gad the Dibonite. My father reigned

over Moab thirty years, and I reigned after my father, and erected this sanctuary in Karkha. . . . because he assisted me against all my foes, and let me feast my eyes on all my haters. Omri, the King of Israel, oppressed Moab many days, for Khemosh was wroth with this land. And his son followed him, and he also spake: I will oppress Moab. In my days he spoke thus, and I feasted my heart on him and his house. And Omri had taken possession of the land of Medeba and dwelt in it. . . . the days of his son, forty years. And Khemosh restored it in my days. And the men of Gad had dwelt in the land also, not from of old. And the King of Israel had built Oltarot for himself. And I fought against the city, and took it and slew all. . . . to repolee the eyes of Khemosh and Moab. . . . And Khemosh spake to me: Go take Nebo from Israel. And I went at night, and fought against it from the rising of the morning dawn until midnight, and I took it and slew all 7,000. . . . women. . . . and maidens I consecrated to Khemosh's Ashtoreth (or to "Khemosh, Ashtoreth?") and I took thence the vessels of Yahveh and dragged before Khemosh.

"And I built Karkha. . . . I built its gates and its towers. And I built the royal palace. . . . And there was not a cistern inside the city in Karkha. . . . Then I spoke to all the people: "Make each a cistern in your houses."

Then follow some mutilated sentences. The last intelligible fragment is: "Khemosh spoke to me: "Go down against Khoronan." The inscription breaks off at the thirty-fourth line.

The Omri mentioned in the inscription was the father of Ahab. The royal seat of the kings of Moab seems to have been at Dibon, still called Diban, some score of miles East of the Dead Sea. The God Khe-

mosh mentioned on this stone was the national idol, the Baal, or Sun-God, of the Moabites, the worship of which was established or permitted by Solomon, along with that of Moloch, on a hill near Jerusalem.

"Jephthah (Judges 1, 39) speaks of Khemosh, "wilt thou not possess that which Khemosh thy God giveth thee to possess."

Yaveh in the Moabite inscription means our Jehovah. It appears that Mesa, though no mention is made of this in his victory column, led his country of the Israelites, in the 27th verse of the third chapter of Second Kings, by the horrible rite of sacrificing his own son. That human sacrifice was common then is certain, and therefore this barbarity would not make Mesa of Moab worse than his neighbors, a fact that we should remember, for we owe much to Mesa. We remember the episode of Abraham, who was about to sacrifice Isaac, his son; and that Jephthah, about 1,134 B.C. sacrificed his only child, his young daughter, to Jehovah. But we have only too obvious traces of human sacrifices at a later date.

Ahaz, 2 Chr. XXVIII (about B.C. 741), burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and "burnt his children in the fire."

"Josiah (about B.C. 623) tried to put down this by defiling Topeth, 2 Kings, XXIII, 10, "that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire."

Jeremiah states (about 600 B.C.) that the children of Judah have built the high places of Tapheth "to burn their sons and daughters in the fire."

Perhaps the latest European classical example of a similar event is that of the Norwegian ruler, Earl Haakon, who, in the great battle with the Jomsvikings, in 986, at Tjorungavaag, seeing that his men were being defeated, went ashore, and sacrificed his son Erling to

Odin, with a result, if the Saga is to be believed, as successful as that obtained by Mesa. Earl Haakon. It may be observed, probably did more for the spread of Christianity in Norway by that abominable deed than any other man before or since. Of all the horrible crimes ever perpetrated in the name of religion surely the most odious is that of a man sacrificing a human being, especially of the victim is his own child. This awful rite now lingers in only a few dark corners of the world where the light of the Gospel has not yet penetrated. It is an abomination that I can understand by having been brought into personal contact with it; but without that realism what I have said may suffice to shew you that the character and course of humanity was changed, changed forever, when Christianity was born.

I wish, now, to call your attention specially to-night to a recent discovery, which is perhaps of greater and wider interest than the Moabite stone.

Just north of the first cataract of the Nile, there once stood two fortresses near to each other, erected there on the southern border of Egypt to protect it from the Nubians and others that lived further south. One of these forts was at Assouan, then called Syene; but in the Aramaic tongue Sewen; the other stood on the island in the river Nile called Elephantine, in the language of Egypt, Ibu, that is "ivory"; and in Aramaic, Jeb. It was so called because it was the great mart for ivory at that time. In speaking of Elephantine in this paper the name Jeb is generally used.

A year or two ago Messrs. Sayce and Cowley published ten ancient, but well preserved, records, found at Assouan, to which place they had evidently been taken from Jeb. They were put away in an earthen vessel after the manner of Jeremiah XXXII 14, and were dated in the years of

the Persian Kings, Xerxes (B.C. 485-465); Artaxerxes I. (465-425); and Darius Nothas (424-405). They consisted of the business papers of a Jewish family. They were written in Aramaic; and to the surprise of historians shewed that at that date there was a community of Jews settled at the extreme southern border of Egypt. They lived at Jeb with native Egyptians, Nubians, Aramaens, Babylonians, and Persians, then the rulers of the country. Aramaic was at that time the principal business and official language of all that part of the world. But the Jews of Jeb would know the language of their fathers, as a matter of course for the performance of their religious duties, though it is very probable that it is because the Jews of Egypt had become weak in Hebrew that we owe the Greek version of the Bible that we call the Septuagint, prepared, however, at a somewhat later date, when Greek had taken the place of Aramaic as a world language. The Jews of Jeb seem from these papers to have occasionally intermarried with other races, and to have at times become influenced by their religion, and also to have made proselytes, very much as the Jews of Jerusalem did in Nehemiah XIII, 23-25, at about the same time. Egypt was then, as often since, and as now, a sort of whirlpool of races and religions, which made it very difficult for the Jews to maintain their exclusiveness at Jeb. Indeed it would appear certain from Isaiah and Jeremiah that the Jews always had a weakness for Egypt and things Egyptian.

The Jewish family to whom the Sayce-Cowley papers refer, and apparently all their countrymen at Jeb, were commission agents, bankers, and merchants, but not engaged in agriculture or any other industry.

The community possessed some jurisdiction among themselves, and could, for example, pronounce di-

voice among their own people. They had also a temple dedicated to their God Yahu in the form of the name always used in these records, corresponding to our Jehovah, and to the Yaveh of the Moabite stone.

These family papers shew a wonderfully perfect official style, and a highly developed business life; and throw much light on the early history of the administration of justice, all of which was the outcome of the previous ancient Babylonian culture and civilization.

All this highly interesting information, and much more, has been supplied by the Sayce-Cowley records. They are, however, thrown in to the shade by a record found by Rubensohn at Jeb, and now in the Berlin Museum. Several copies more or less perfect have been discovered of this document, of which the following is a translation from the German of Hermann Gunkel, in the *Deutsche Rundschau* of February last.

"To Our Lord Bagohi, Governor of Judah, thy servants Jedoniah and his colleagues, priests in the garrison of Jeb, may our Lord, the God of Heaven, grant grace abundantly for all time. May he bestow on thee favour with King Darins and the princes of the royal house, a thousand times greater than even now, and grant to thee long life. May you be happy and well always.

Now thy servants Jedoniah and his colleagues speak as follows:—

In the month of Tammuz, in the fourteenth year of King Darius (July 411-410 B.C.) when Arsham had left and had gone to the King, the priests of the God of Chnub in the garrison of Jeb, with Waldrang, who was Governor here, formed a conspiracy, that the temple of the God Yahu, in the garrison of Jeb, should be destroyed.

Thereupon this Waldrang, who was a Lechlter, sent letters to his son Nephajan, who was in command

of the garrison of Sewen: the temple in the garrison of Jeb should be destroyed. Thereupon Nephajan brought Egyptian and other troops; they came with their. . . to the garrison of Jeb, forced their way into this temple, and destroyed it down to the ground.

The stone pillars that were there-in they broke in pieces; also this happened, that they destroyed the five entrances built of hewn stone that were in this temple; the door-leaves only left they standing and the brazen hinges of these door-leaves; the roof which consisted entirely of cedar beams with the rest of the (wall?) and whatever else was there, have they utterly burnt up with fire. The gold and sprinkling urns, and the utensils that were in the temple, all that have they robbed and appropriated.

But already in the days of the Kings of Egypt had our fathers built this temple in the garrison of Jeb; and when Cambyzes invaded Egypt, he found this temple already constructed; and the temples of the Gods of Egypt were all torn down; on the other hand no one inflicted any damage on anything connected with this temple.

After they (Waidrang and the priests of Chnub) had acted as told above, we, with our wives and children, wore sackcloth, fasted, and prayed to Yahu, the God of Heaven, who has given us an answer even in this Chalibiter Waidrang: the buckles have been taken from his feet; all the treasures that he had acquired have been lost; and all the men that wished evil to this temple, lo they have all perished; that have we seen (with joy.)

Moreover we wrote formerly, at the time this misfortune befel us, a letter to you our Lord, also to Jehochanan, the High Priest, and to his colleagues, the priests of Jerusalem, and to his brother Ostan, that is Anami; and to the nobles of the

Jews; but they have sent us back no letter.

And since the Tammuz day of the fourteenth year of King Darius, even to this day, we wear sackcloth, and fast; our wives have become as a widow—also marriage does not take place in such mourning—we have neither annointed ourselves with oil, nor drunk wine.

Also from that time to this day of the seventeenth year of King Darius, have we in this temple offered no meat offering, incense, or dance.

Now, thus speak thy servants Jedoniah with his colleagues, and the Jews, all citizens of Jeb: If to our Lord it seems good, trouble thyself about this temple, to rebuild it, as it is not allowed to us to build it again. Think of those here in Egypt who have received thy benefits and favour. Let a note be sent from thee to them touching this temple of the God Yahu, to rebuild it in the garrison of Jeb, even as it was formerly. So shall we offer in thy name, on the altar of the God Yahu, meat offering, and incense, with dancing; and we shall at all times, with our wives and children, and all the Jews here, pray for thee, as indeed shall be done till this temple is rebuilt.

And thou shalt have a portion before Yahu, the God of Heaven, from each one that offers to him a dance offering and tithe offerings, to the value of 1000 Knhr of silver. And with respect to the gold, thereon have we sent a message and communication. All these things have we in a letter in our own name communicated to Delaya and Shelamja, the sons of Sanballat, Governor of Samaria. Also, of all that has happened to us, Arsham has had no knowledge.

On the 20th of Marcheswan (November) of the seventeenth year of King Darius."

That the request was complied with is shewn from another leaf that has been found, in several different



copies, no doubt to prevent its being lost, which reads:

"Minute of that which Bagothi and Delaja (Sanballat's elder son) have said to me, minute as follows: It is incumbent on thee, in Egypt, in the presence of Arsham, to order with reference to the Altar house of the God of Heaven, which had been built in the garrison of Jeb, before our time, before Cam'yases, and which Wabrang, the Lachiter, had destroyed, in the fourteenth year of King Darius, that it be rebuilt on its site, such as it formerly was, meat offerings and incense shall be offered on this altar, even as it was formerly the custom to do."

The date of the above letter or petition is the seventeenth year of the reign of Darius Natus, not the Darius of Daniel, but the Darius whose acquaintance we make at the Grammar School as the husband of his sister Parysatis, and father of Artaxerxes and Cyrus. It was therefore written in 407 B.C. or 2,315 years ago, according to our reckoning of time.

How does it come about that we have here at this date a Persian Governor in Egypt and another at Jerusalem? Egypt, a small country of some 13,000 square miles, with an unwarlike agricultural population, has always been more rich than strong, has consequently been invaded successively by Bedouins, Ethiopians, Nubians, Libyans, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and Romans in ancient times. Apepl, the Pharaoh of Joseph, was for example the last of a foreign dynasty of Kings of Bedouin race that ruled Egypt from 1700 to 1550 B.C. Egypt was, during the time the Hebrews were there, happy and flourishing, especially from 1500 to 1400 B.C. and under Thothmes III. and Amenophis IV., the leading great power, drawing tribute from Asia Minor, Palestine, and Mesopotamia, thus

providentially preventing the rise of any great empire that could impede the Hebrews when they invaded Palestine. Thothmes III. won this position by his victories at Megiddo, about 1500 B.C., when he defeated "all the people dwelling between the river of Egypt on the one hand and the land of Naharrain (Mesopotamia) on the other." This place was on the coast route from Egypt to Mesopotamia, which explains also how Pharaoh-Necho had to fight Josiah at the same place about 610 B.C., when Josiah would not allow Pharaoh to pass to the invasion of Assyria, 2 Kings XXIII, 29. Even then Egypt was able to make Israel tributary. The oppressors of the Hebrews, Seti I, Ramses II, and Menephthah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, were, by their wars with the Hittites, confirmed in the possession of Palestine, but Egypt weakened by the Exodus, lost Palestine, which was soon after occupied by the Hebrews, and under Saul, became a Kingdom, about 1095. In 975 B.C., this Kingdom was divided into Judah and Israel, the latter apparently retaining the dependencies, such as Moab.

About 721 B.C. Shalmaneser of Assyria conquered Israel, took Samaria, and repopled it with foreigners, hence the Jews in apostolic times had "no dealings with the Samaritans." So, or Shabak, 2 Kings XVII, 4, should have assisted Hoshea, his ally, but did not act up to his engagements. Sargon, son of Shalmaneser, invaded and conquered Egypt, shewing that she was really "the broken reed" of Isaiah XXXVI, 6. Then we find Assyria weakened by the great disaster that befel Semacherib (B.C. 602-690), son of Sargon, when the Assyrians lost in one night 185,000 men, which the Egyptians, then allied with Hezekiah, in their vain glory ascribed to the action of their god.

By the capture of Nineveh, B.C. 625, and the destruction of Assyria by Nabopolassar, the Chaldean, and his ally Cyaxaras, King of the Medes, the Assyrian dependencies of Egypt and Palestine fell to the share of the Chaldeans. Both countries rebelled against the new master, the King of Babylon, and were in turn subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, who twice took and plundered Jerusalem and led the Jews captive under Zedekiah, B.C. 586. Apries the Pharaoh-Hophra of Scripture, who had by promising assistance to Zedekiah led the latter to rebel against Babylon, was then subjected to obedience by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 568. He went up country as far as Jeb "destroyed the idols and made the images cease (Ezek. XXX, 13.) This verse would leave the temple at Jeb untouched, for it is seen from the petition that there was no image or symbol worship there. Nebuchadnezzar was thus at his death B.C. 561, lord of both Egypt and Palestine. He was a general of ability, but abominably cruel. He was exceedingly able and saw that agriculture made Egypt the richest of nations. He profited by what he saw there, irrigated Mesopotamia from the Tigris and Euphrates, became the greatest farmer the world has seen, and made his empire the envy of the nations, by farming.

About 568, Cyrus, of the Arian race of the Persians, rebelled against the kindred Medes, and as king of both Medes and Persians became so powerful that all Western Asia wished to combine against him. He attacked them one by one. Croesus of Lydia, the most powerful ruler in Asia Minor, he conquered first and treated well, about 547 B.C. In 538 he attacked Nabonadius and took Babylon, putting an end to the Chaldean empire, and thus obtaining the reversion of the tributary states, Egypt and Palestine. Egypt rebell-

ed, the Jews were in captivity, and dispersed and could not rebel. In 536, B.C., Cyrus issued a Proclamation for the Jews to return home and build the temple at Jerusalem. The new temple was finished B.C. 516. Fresh bands of Jews returned under Ezra, B.C. 458, and under Nehemiah, B.C. 445. When Darius, (Ezra VI, 1.) made his decree, about B.C. 519, it is not improbable that his Council had before it some knowledge of the temple and Jews of Jeb, and of how they had been favoured by Camlyses only a very few years before. This knowledge may have been influenced by the decree for the re-establishment of the service at Jerusalem, of Nehemiah VI, 9. Camlyses, on succeeding his father Cyrus in 529, had to subdue rebellious Egypt, which he accomplished in 525. This was the beginning of the Persian rule in Egypt, which continued down to the date of this letter. These few facts shew how we find Governor Arsham at Jeb, and Governor Bagohi at Jerusalem, as representatives of the King of Persia.

Bagohi, or Bagoas, is a Persian name. We have some account of him in Josephus (Antiquities, Book Eleven, Chapter Seven.)

"Eliashib the High Priest was succeeded by his son Judas, whose son 'John' succeeded him in turn in that dignity. Now Jesus, the brother of John, was a friend of Bagoas, who was general of one of Artaxerxes' armies, and was promised the priesthood by Bagoas. Jesus provoked a quarrel with his brother John, and the latter slew Jesus in the temple. Bagoas came to Jerusalem and said to the Jews "Have you had the impudence to perpetrate a murder in the temple?" He proceeded to enter the temple. The Jews forbade him, but he entered, and polluted it, and punished the Jews seven years for the murder of Jesus by his brother John, the High Priest. In the daily sacrifices they

had to pay Bagoas a tribute of fifty shekels on each lamb. (This fine, imposed as a tax is very interesting in connection with the offer of a similar payment to Bagoas by the Jews of Jeb.) When John died he was succeeded by Jaddua, his son. He had a brother named Manasseh. Now there was one Sanballat who was sent by Darius the last King of Samaria. He was a Cuthean by birth. He knew how troublesome the Jews were to the Assyrians, so he gave his daughter Nicaso in marriage to Manasseh, the brother of the High Priest, to secure the good will of the Jews. The Jews, incensed by this mixed marriage, forbade Manasseh to go near the altar. Manasseh then told Sanballat he could not on Nicaso's account deprive himself of the sacerdotal dignity, and Sanballat promised to give him the power and dignity of a High Priest and make him his successor as Governor, if he would keep his daughter for his wife, and to get the consent of Darius to all this."

As Jedoniah wrote his letter in 407 that is during the reign of Darius Nothus (424-404), and as Josephus shows that Bagohi was still a Governor under Artaxerxes II (404-358) it follows that he was in office under at least two Kings. It would appear from this letter, and from what Josephus says, that Governor Bagohi was of doubtful rectitude in money matters. He had no overland telegraph or ocean cable to interfere with him, he was his own Auditor-General, and probably thus became a little selfish in the exercise of his office. In any case one cannot but admire the delicate and diplomatic way in which he is offered money from the Jews at Jeb.

The name of Jedoniah, the chief of the Jewish priests at Jeb, occurs frequently in the records published by Sayce and Cowley. The tendency of the Jews was always towards a

theocratic form of government, whether in Palestine or elsewhere. Thus we find that the High Priest at Jerusalem was the chief authority in the country, even under the Persian rule there and about this time Jedoniah was therefore quite within his rights in taking the lead in this letter, as being the High Priest of the community.

The definition that these isolated Jews employ in this letter, "the God of Heaven," is one that we know from other sources the Jews constantly employed in their intercourse with the Persians, as in Ezra VI, 10, and VII, 23; Darius uses the same distinctive appellation in Ezra, VI, 9, in his royal decree. The phrase "be happy and well" was an Egyptian formula that courtesy required to be invariably used after the name of Pharaoh.

The date of the destruction of their temple at Jeb is stated as the 14th of Darius, that is of Darius Nothus, (424-404) and therefore actually occurred in 410, B.C. Tammuz, in the Babylonian Calendar, corresponded to our July. During the reign of this Darius down to a year or two after this letter was written, Egypt remained perfectly quiet under the Persian Governor.

Of Arsham I know nothing further than is stated here. Evidently he was the Persian Governor of Egypt at this period; but he had gone to visit the King of Persia at the time the temple was destroyed, and the petitioners are doubly careful to make this known to Bagohi, the colleague of Arsham, for had the local Governor been concerned in destroying the temple at Jeb, Bagohi could have done nothing, as it would then have reflected on his colleague to interfere.

The God Chnub is the ram-headed Anubis of the Greeks, to which there was a celebrated temple at Elephantine. Chnub was the God of the cataract, and was held in great

respect in Nubia and in Egypt, but was, later on, thrust into the background by the shrine of Isis on Philae. The mummies of the holy rams of Chnub were recently found in their granite sarcophagi. Manifestly the priests of Chnub hated and resented deeply the presence of the foreign Yahu temple, but it was under the protection of the Persian Governor, so that it was only in his absence that they could move against it. The Jews returned this hatred with interest, for in their letter they call the priests of Chnub by a contemptible name, not priests, but "priestlings" or "shavelings."

The Chnub priests combined with Waidrang, who was at that time Governor of Jeb, and was probably acting for Governor Arsham, who was on leave. We learn from the Sayce-Cowley records that, nine years before this date, Waidrang was Commandant. From other records we know that he was bribed by the priests of Chnub. Waidrang was himself a civil functionary, and he therefore sends to the neighbouring Syene for his son, who brought Egyptian and other troops under his command, and utterly destroyed the Yahu temple, a work that would be very pleasant to the Egyptian soldiers in the Persian service, as they would be Chnub worshippers.

The description of the Jeb temple shews that these Jews were wealthy. The blocks of hewn stone they would easily obtain from the Syenite and granite quarries of Syene; but the cedar beams from Lebanon must have been exceedingly costly when brought to Jeb. They seem to have possessed rich vessels of gold and silver, which we may compare with Nehemiah VII., 70-72, where we find they start the new temple with 41,000 drachms of gold, and fifty basins; and 4,200 lbs. of silver; and with Numbers VII., 13-86, with its many golden spoons, and silver chargers and bowls. Hatred and

cupidity combined probably, therefore, led to the destruction of the temple at Jeb.

It is clear that the garrison at Syene (Hebrew Seveneth) was an important command, for Ezekiel XXIX, 10, and XXX, 6, speaks of its tower in terms that shew it to have been one of the greatest strongholds of Egypt. This probably explains how the Jews offered no resistance to the sons of Waidrang when he destroyed the temple, as he must have had a very strong force under his orders.

We know from the Book of Esther that the Jews were prosperous in the Eastern provinces of the Persian Empire. They were no doubt equally so at the trading centre of Jeb.

It is remarkable that though Solomon's temple had but one door, this temple at Jeb had five. Evidently they had adapted their building to climate, and did not hold the design of Solomon's temple as binding on them.

It is noteworthy that no Jew was killed at the sacking of this Jeb temple. There is some reason to believe that Joel wrote his prophecy about this time, and if this is so, Joel III, 19, would shew that Jew-baiting had already begun in Egypt, as we know it existed there after the Persian rule came to an end.

We cannot learn when the Jeb temple was built, but we know that Cambyses conquered Egypt in B.C. 525, and this petition states that the temple was there then. It was thus certainly more than 115 years old. The last preceding Egyptian Kings, under whom, according to the petition, the temple could have existed, had been: Psammatic II, B.C., 594-589; Apries (Pharaoh-Hophra) B.C. 588-570; Amasis, 569-526; Psammatik III, 525. We know from Jeremiah that when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, B.C., 586, many Jews settled in Egypt in spite of the denunciations of the prophet, as

contained in Jeremlah XLII, 13-22, and XLIV, 1-30. Jeremiah was, however, only emphasizing Deuteronomy XVII, 16, where the Jews are forbidden (about 1,300 B.C.) to multiply horses as an excuse for going to Egypt. Not improbably this Jewish community and temple arose in Jeb under Psammatik II (B.C. 594-539), who, we know, undertook a great expedition in which he employed Jewish soldiers against the Ethiopians. This King on the same expedition had with him other foreigners, for one of his generals was Apollonius, a Greek, to whom probably we owe the oldest Greek inscription, a record of this same expedition carved on the knee of one of the great figures in the temple at Ahusimbul, between the first and second cataracts. This inscription shews that Psammatik's expedition started from Elephantine, the Greek, and the present, name of Jeb.

It is clear from this petition that at the time Cyrus—about B.C. 536.—issued his Proclamation, Ezra, I, 1, for restoring the temple at Jerusalem, the Jews of Jeb, had their own temple and regular service "to the God of Heaven."

The trading instinct of the Jew was too keen to be restrained by any authority from going to Egypt. It is clear from Isalah XIX, that Egypt was destined to be largely peopled and influenced by the Jews. This Jeb letter seems to throw some dim light on that somewhat obscure chapter. Jeb, was, it is thought, one of the five cities of verse 18, which were to "speak the language of Canaan and swear to the Lord of Hosts." Jeb could not be the site of the altar of verse 19, (unless Nubia were held to be part of Egypt, which is possible), but could well be held to be "the pillar at the border thereof to the Lord," for Jeb was at the frontier of Egypt proper. It was already known from Greek sources that Cambyses

had acted quite up to the character of the "cruel lord" predicted for Egypt, Isalah XIX, 4; and had treated the Egyptian deities, except the Goddess Neith at Sais, with gross indignity, stabbing an Apis bull, and scourging the priests, and profaning the temples. It has often been doubted whether Cyrus, the father of Cambyses, really allowed the temple of Jerusalem to be rebuilt to "the God of Heaven." That we find Cambyses honouring the Yahu temple at Jeb, is of weight in behalf of the belief that Cyrus actually did the same for Jerusalem. The Jews of Jeb were grateful, for we learn from another record of Jeb that during a rebellion in Egypt they remained loyal to the Persians.

The manner in which the Jews at Jeb mourned for their temple and service we are familiar with in the Psalms, for example. It was practically the same as in Nehemiah IX, 1, nearly at the same time. Then follows punishment for sacking the Jeb temple. Apparently Governor Arsham returned, and dismissed Waidrang, and executed the other men concerned in this outrage. Another document found at Jeb shows, by way of complaint to Arsham, after his return from leave, that Waidrang was guilty of many high handed acts in his absence.

Arsham, however, was no doubt afraid of stirring up fanatical strife if he built, or allowed the rebuilding of the Jeb temple; so the Jews try to bring outside support and influence to bear, and for this purpose write to Bagohi and to the Jews in Jerusalem. As they had received no reply to their first application, they now write a second time to the Governor of Jerusalem, as he, by virtue of his office, naturally had the special charge of the Jews. It is manifest that they had confidence in the spirit of justice and toleration of their Persian rulers. It is also evident that religious animosities were as

sharp and bitter then as since, and that peace between the sects in Egypt was only maintained by the strong hand of the law.

Of the high priest Jehochanan mentioned in this petition I have already spoken in respect of his relations with Bagohl, the Governor. Their quarrel, as related by Josephus, was at a date subsequent to Jedoniah's letter. Of this high priest and his family we have the following in Nehemiah III 1, "Then Eliashib the High Priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they bulled the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the door of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel." (This was John's grandfather.)

XII, 22, "The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers; also the priests of the reign of Darius the Persian.

XII, 23, The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers were written in the Book of Chronicles even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib."

XIII, 28, "And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the High Priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite; and therefore I chased him from me."

Here we learn from Jedoniah that John had another brother not previously known to us. Why did the High Priest, John, and others in Jerusalem, pay no attention to the application of the Jews at Jeb? I would suggest two reasons: The Jews of Jerusalem wished their temple to be the centre of Judaism, that it should be the holy of holies, the capital of the world, in the spirit of Isaiah II, 2. A rival temple would both lower the prestige of Jerusalem, and diminish their revenue, both directly, and by reducing the pilgrimages made to the holy city. And the mere fact that John, the High Priest at Jerusalem, slew his

own brother in the temple would tend to shew that he was not a person of high principle, that would set the interests of religion above his own.

But there was probably also a ritualistic reason. Under the rescript of Darius, and the service described in Ezra, Chapters Six and Seven, there was a considerable departure from the ancient liturgy in the temple service at Jerusalem. Dancing formed a popular and expressive part of the religious rites of the Jews,—as probably amongst most races at one time or another—from Moses up to David. It seems to have fallen into disuse by the time of Hezekiah and Josiah, in the seventh century B.C. The dance is mentioned three times in this letter, and seems to have been an important part of their service in the temple at Jeb. It would therefore perhaps not be unreasonable to infer that the Jeb ritual, which was clearly of the old type, had been established there even before the days of Josiah. It certainly would not be pleasant to the high priest at Jerusalem to find that at Jeb the more modern service was not followed. It will be noticed that in the minute authorising the rebuilding of the temple of Jeb, the Dance is not mentioned, though meat offerings and incense are specified. This was in conformity with the ritual of Ezra then in use at Jerusalem.

There is much significance—beyond the light thrown on the character of a Persian Governor—in the promise of the Jews of Jeb to present offerings on the altar of Yahu in the name of Bagohl. This promise shows a marked contrast between Rome and Persia in religious policy. With the early Roman Emperors Christians would have been allowed to have their own religious service, provided that they recognized the divinity of the Emperor, which was an absolute obligation on

all subjects of the empire. This was the "Test Act" of the Roman Empire. No such pretension was advanced by the King of Persia. We learn from Ezra, VI, 10, that the object of the decree of the King of Persia in having the Temple of Jerusalem rebuilt was "That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the King and his sons." It is in this frame of mind that the promise is made by the Jews of Jeb to Bagohi, the Persian Governor, that he shall always be remembered by the petitioners in the service of Yahu "the God of Heaven." This, and gold, are the inducements held out to Bagohi.

There is unquestionably a wonderful parallelism between the doctrines of the Old Testament and those of Zoroastrianism, the belief to which the King of Persia and Bagohi belonged. With them Ormuzd, the good, the pure, the holy, had his abode in heaven; and at the "Accountant's bridge" the good and bad deeds of the disembodied soul were weighed against each other, and, if he had a credit balance, he passed to bliss. This parallelism is all the more remarkable as the Jewish religion arose among Semitic people, and Zoroastrianism among Aryan races. It explains the constant use by the Jews of the phrase "God of Heaven" in dealing with the Persians; it accounts also for the promise to Bagohi in this letter; and it throws light on the edict of Darius to restore the temple worship at Jerusalem. It was easy for them, Jews and Persians, to believe that Yahu and Ormuzd represented the same, or cognate faiths. Probably in this affinity of religious beliefs, which were such as to raise the Persians and the Jews far above all other peoples in the matter of religion, may be found the explanation of the marked preferment and privileges granted by the Persians to the

Jews. Probably the same line of reasoning could be applied to Apepi, the presumed Pharaoh of Joseph. That king was of the shepherd dynasty and worshipped the Hyksos God Sutekto, described as "the Great Ruler of Heaven." Apepi was thus a monotheist, and his supreme deity, like that of Joseph and his family, was "the God of Heaven." This parallelism in religion probably facilitated the marriage that took place between Joseph and the daughter of the priest (or prince) of Heliopolis, Gen. XLI, 45, for the god worshipped at Heliopolis was Ra, the sun, the heaven god.

It is of great interest to all readers of the Bible to find the name of Sanballat in this petition. He is called by Nehemiah II, 10, "the Horonite;" which seems to mean that he was a native of Horonaim, a city of Moab that happens to be mentioned as Khoranan in the Moabite Stone of Mesa.

At the date of Jehoniah's petition Sanballat, who had been Persian Governor of Samaria, was dead; but his sons remained men of weight and importance, and the Jews of Jeb diplomatically endeavour to enlist their influence. Moreover we learn from Nehemiah XIII, 28, that the high priests's family was allied by marriage to that of Sanballat, which also may have influenced Jehoniah and his colleagues to apply to Sanballat's sons. Their sister, Nicaso, would be sure to have some friends in the high priest's family, as the members were apt to disagree among themselves. The Jews of Jeb will have known quite well of the rivalry between Jerusalem and Samaria, and they skillfully took advantage of it. If Jerusalem would do nothing for them, then the Jews of Jeb could affiliate with Samaria, and their temple at Gerizim, which the Samaritans had built as a rival to the temple at Jerusalem.

These are the principal references to Sanballat by Nehemiah, which show very clearly what he thought of the Jews of Jerusalem. His sons would probably be equally willing to checkmate that city.

II, 10: "When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

II, 19-20. "But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the servant the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the King?"

20. "Then answer I them, and said unto them, The God of Heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build, but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem."

IV, 1. But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

IV, 7. But it came to pass that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made, and the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, (8) And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it"

VI, 1. "Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates);

VI, 2. That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief,

3. And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"

4. Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort and I answered them after the same manner.

5. Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

6. Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their King, according to these words.

7. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying: There is a King in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the King according to these words. Come thou therefore and let us take counsel together.

8. Then I sent unto him saying, there are no such things as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

12. And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

14. My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetness Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear."

It is stated by Gunkel that the Persian records quoted in the Book of Ezra, the genuineness of which in the Aramaic had been called in question, so exactly resemble the style and language of this letter of Jehoniah that the latter puts beyond any doubt the authenticity of the Aramaic parts of Ezra, so exactly do style and language correspond in both.



We do not learn from the petition very much as to the details of Jewish worship. It is noteworthy, however, that they make no mention of sacred images or symbols in enumerating the contents of the Jeb temple; and that they do not seem to have contributed to the maintenance of the temple of Jerusalem, or to have imitated it in structure or ritual, as already pointed out. In short, they might almost be regarded as protestant Jews.

Very different was the position taken by the Jew Onias, as related by Josephus, who obtained permission from Ptolemy VI, Philometer, (B.C. 181-146) and from Queen Cleopatra his wife and sister (not the Cleopatra of Shakespeare, who was also, at least nominally, married to her brother) to build a temple, of the size and form of that at Jerusalem, at Leontopolis. The object of Onias was, according to Josephus, to gain fame for himself; to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah; and to put an end to disputes among the Jews concerning the holy places. Some seem to have contended that contributions should be paid only to the tem-

ple of Jerusalem. This Egyptian temple was accordingly built at Leontopolis by Onias, but it was "poorer and smaller" than that at Jerusalem. This was at a period some 250 years later than the petition before us. How far the temple of Jeb may have been implicated in this dispute about holy places in the time of Ptolemy VI, and Cleopatra, it is impossible to say, for Jeb is not mentioned by Josephus, and it is doubtful that Onias knew anything about Jeb.

Jedonih's letter cannot but raise in us high expectations of what may yet come from Elephantine. The probabilities are great that the Jews of Jeb possessed ancient versions of the Hebrew scriptures, and that these may be found, in many copies, and legible, like the Sayce-Cowley records, and the document we have been considering.

The one record dealt with in this paper, even of itself, affords, as far as it goes, some clear proof of the authenticity of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as they have come down to us.

