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THE SACRED TENTH OR TITHES IN ANCIENT

It is intended in this and following articles to inquire what may be learned from non-Biblical sources as to the practice of tithing-giving among the ancients: how far it was regarded as a duty to dedicate property to the service of the gods, and in what proportion. The survey will begin with Babylonia and some few other lands inhabited by Semites—omitting for the present the Hebrews—will pass on to Egypt; and then cross into Europe to gather evidence from the records of Greece and Rome.

ASSYRIA.

The land between the Tigris and the Euphrates is commonly spoken of as "the cradle of the human race"; in harmony with which, when I was steaming up the confluence of the two rivers some few years ago, the intervening tongue of land was pointed out as the site of the Garden of Eden. This had to be received as "according to tradition" only. But, on reaching the ruins of Babylon, there was something undoubtedly very ancient for the eye to see. We have read from childhood of the men who built the tower of Babel having bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. But though I have travelled round the world; in every country of Europe and of Asia; through North Africa and across America, it was not until descending to the excavated foundations of the reputed site of Nebuchadnezzar's palace and hanging gardens, that I ever saw bricks thousands of years old actually laid in bitumen.

But the antique objects at Babylon most in harmony with our subject were the tablets written in cuneiform character in a language that for many centuries remained unknown. Very interesting therefore it was to me at Bagdad to be guest in the Consulate, in the very room, as I was told, where Sir Henry Rawlinson when living there as Consul-General, pored over these tablets covered with what then were mystic characters and did so much towards the discoveries in cuneiform literature that made his name famous, and which have opened to us whole libraries of information concerning the early peoples of Western Asia, Persia and Babylonia, Assyria and Media, Armenia and Mesopotamia, in all of

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which countries cuneiform tablets have been found.

The arrow-headed or wedge-shaped characters called cuneiform were impressed on tablets of moist clay, which, when dried, were stowed away in royal book houses, like that of Sargon's library at Agane (about 2000 B. C.). They were kept as religious records connected with temples, while some were merchants' accounts and contracts. Among the subjects treated of are magic formulae, charms and hymns, also calendars and mythological poems, as well as works of history and chronology.

Many of these tablets have found their way, as did others before them, into the museums of London, Paris, Berlin, and as read by Assyriologists they throw much light upon Babylonia and the neighbouring countries whither Babylonian influence extended. Desiring to be able to quote from "chapter and verse" I made my way to the Assyrian department of the British Museum, and was kindly informed by Dr. Budge the Curator, concerning some half-dozen tablets, the numbers of which were given me, that:—

Nabonidus (555-538 B. C.) paid to the temple of the Sun-god on the 26th day of the month Sivan in his accession year, 6 mana of gold tithes—the gold being paid in the great gate of the temple. Again, Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus, paid 27 shekels of silver as a tithe for the daughter of a king, on the 5th day of Ab, year 17 of Nabonidus. A third tablet states that Nergal-nasir gave an ox to the temple for his tithe. A fourth says that a governor and another official, together, paid a tithe. A fifth states that two thirds of a mana and 5 shekels of silver were given to the gods Bel, Nebo, Nergal and Ishtar (lady of Erech) as tithe, whilst a sixth records that tithe for the eleventh and twelfth years of the reign of Nabonidus were paid by certain individuals.

Hence, Dr. Budge says, there is evidence that the tithe could be annual, that it could be, and was, commonly paid in kind, that two or more individuals could unite in paying a tithe, and that a tithe could be offered to a number of gods collectively. I learned also in the same department, from Dr. Theophilus Pinches, that the mention of tenth parts occurs of tablets which were undoubtedly copies of bi-lingual phrase tablets drawn up 2200 B. C. or earlier, and representing the legal expressions current among the scribes at that time; and I was encouraged to hope that when more of the tablets now in the British Museum are transcribed and published, it will be regarded as certain that tithes were given in early Babylonia to the temples of the gods 2100 years B. C., and probably earlier.

Meanwhile Professor Maspero tells of religious endowments also in ancient Chaldaea, saying: "Kings in founding a temple, not only bestowed upon it the objects and furniture required.... they assigned to it an annual income from the treasury, slaves, or cultivated lands."

Also of spoils of war, he says: "As soon as he (the king) had triumphed by his (the gods') command, he sought before all else to reward them amply for their assistance. He paid a tithe of the spoil into the coffers of their treasury, he made over a part of the conquered country to their domain, he granted them a tale of the prisoners to cultivate their lands or to work at their buildings."

In his later volume Maspero furnishes some interesting items upon tithing-giving by Tukulti-ninra, as we better know him, Tiglath Pileser: "We see him lavishing offerings on the gods, and enriching their temples with the spoils of his victories." Again, "Tiglath Pileser, after fighting in the country north of the Tigris, consecrated the tenth of the spoil thus received to the use of his god Asshur and also to Ramman." And once more; near the source of the Subnat river Tiglath Pileser recorded his victories thus:—

.....with the aid of Asshur, Shamash and Ramman, the great gods, my lords, I Tiglath Pileser..... conqueror from the Great Sea the Mediterranean..... went to Nairi, and the gods who had so signally favored the monarch received the greater part (i. e. more than half) of the spoils which he had secured in his campaigns.

The testimony of George Smith, an eminent Assyriologist, in his "Ancient History from the Monuments," is much to the same effect. He says: "The priesthood formed a privileged class: they lived on the revenues of the temples and the offerings of worshippers, while they were directly interested in war, as a portion of the spoil was dedicated to the temples." Add again: "Marching down to Babylon, Tiglath Pileser proclaimed himself king of Babylon and king of Sumir and Akkad: offering magnificent sacrifices on the national altars."

After these examples I have the pleasure of quoting from Dr. Sayce, Professor of Assyriology at Oxford, who wrote to me in a letter on our

An Ancient Foe

To health and happiness is Scrofula—as ugly as ever since time immemorial. It causes blemishes in the neck, disfigures the skin, inflames the mucous membrane, wastes the muscles, weakens the bones, reduces the power of resistance to disease and the capacity for recovery, and develops into consumption.

"Two of my children had scrofula sores which kept growing deeper and kept them from going to school for three months. Ointments and medicines did no good until I began giving them Hood's Sarsaparilla. This medicine caused the sores to heal, and the children have shown no signs of scrofula since." J. W. McGIN, Woodstock, Ont.

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will rid you of it, radically and permanently, as it has rid thousands.

subject: "The esra or tithe was a Babylonian institution which was paid to the temples upon the produce of the land, as stated in my 'Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians.' The temple and priests were supported by the contributions of the people—partly obligatory and partly voluntary. The most important among them were the 'tithes' paid upon all produce. The tithes were contributed by all classes of the population, from the king to the peasant; and lists exist which record the amounts severally due from the tenants of an estate. The tithes were paid for the most part in corn. Thus we find a Babylonian paying about eleven bushels of corn to the temple of the Sun-god (at Sippara) as the tithes required from him for the year. The tithes paid to the same temple by Nabonidus, just after his accession to the throne (555 B. C.), amounted to as much as six manehs of gold, or \$340. Voluntary gifts were common, and were often made in pursuance of a vow or in gratitude for recovery from sickness. Among such gifts various articles of dress were included, with which the images of the gods were adorned. The Professor observes also in his 'Patriarchal Palestine' that Cyrus and Cambyses did not regard their foreign origin as affording any pretext for refusing to pay tithes to the gods of the kingdom they had overthrown."

HENRY LANSDELL, D. D.
Morden College,
Blackheath, S. E.

Dr. Muhlenberg, the well-known hymn writer, made his home in later years at St. Luke's Hospital, New York, of which he was the founder. Once when he was carrying a tray of dishes down to the hospital kitchen, someone protested against that menial service. "Why not?" asked he. "What am I but a waiter here in the Lord's hotel?" One of the last moments of his life showed his bluff frankness as well as his acquiescence in the divine will. The chaplain of the hospital was praying at his bedside for his recovery. "Let us have an understanding about this," said Dr. Muhlenberg. "You are asking God to restore me, and I am asking God to take me home. There must not be any contradiction in our prayers, for it is evident He can't answer them both."

On Saturday, the State Line Construction Company was incorporated at Trenton, N. J., with a capital stock of \$5,000,000 to operate telephone and telegraph lines, establish a messenger service and furnish stock quotations.

Peter C Bouck, inventor of the safety railroad signals known as the "block system," died on the 15th inst., at 874 Greene avenue, Brooklyn.

STRICKEN WITH PNEUMONIA.

Almost Ready to Die—Alonzo W Douglas, of Woodbridge, was Saved by

FERROZONE.

"For the benefit of others," writes Mr. Douglas, "I desire to state the results I derived from the use of Ferrozone. Two years ago I was stricken with Pneumonia. So severe was the attack and so reduced was my strength that my life was despaired of. I had the very best medical attention, but made no progress toward recovery. When reduced to practically a skeleton, a kind friend told me of the remarkable powers of Ferrozone. An improvement began almost at once. I gained steadily in weight and strength until Ferrozone made me a new man. I will gladly answer enquiries from other sufferers if they care to have further particulars about my recovery. Ferrozone deserves its great measure of success. This is but one of the many cases that are being cured every day by Ferrozone. No treatment was ever known to supply a weak system so quickly with strength and energy. No tonic does its work so thoroughly. It is a specific for tiredness, languor, loss of appetite, weakness after fevers, and all debilitating diseases. Ferrozone makes you strong and keeps you strong—in a word, it assures health and costs but 50c a box, or six boxes for \$2.50 at any drug store. By mail from The Ferrozone Company, Kingston, Ont. Get a supply to-day without fail."

NOT POSTED.

"This is not much of a farming country around here, is it?" said the owner of a farm of several thousand acres in the Great West to an old resident on Long Island.

"It ain't hey?" was the contemptuous reply. "I reckon you ain't very well posted about the country round here, mister. Talk about it not being no great of a farmin' country! Well, sir, I kin tell you that Job Hawkins sold more'n forty dollars' worth o' cauliflower an' nineteen dollars' worth o' potatoes last season, an' I know o' folks clearin' a clean fifty dollars a year on their hens. An' yit some folks thinks this ain't no farmin' country!"—August Lippincott's.

ROYAL THRIFT.

When the Kaiser went sight-seeing to St. Peter's he admired the fountains. Well he might! After watching them some time he said, "Turn them off now; it's a pity to waste so much water!" Thrifty, eh? Turn off Carlo Maderno's fountains, which have danced in the sun and shimmered in the moon light three hundred years!—Maud Howe in August Lippincott's.



"Many women and doctors do not recognize the real symptoms of derangement of the female organs until too late."

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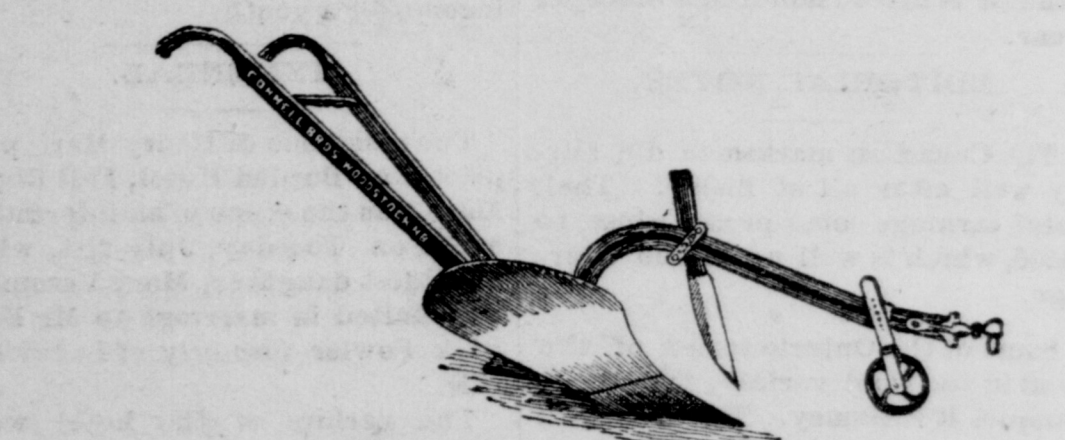
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